

ABSTRACT

Blind Ambition

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This screenplay explores the challenges and triumphs of blind rehabilitation through the eyes of journalist Lilly Tsang. Through characters inspired by real-life veterans and VA staff, this story investigates the why of healthcare beyond diagnosis and disease. In an environment where kindness and sacrifice signal naïveté, veteran Charles Avery challenges Lilly to rediscover the value of teamwork, kindness, and respect. The introduction details research and story design methodology and personal lessons from project development. By elucidating the community and resilience embodied by veterans and blind rehabilitation staff, *Blind Ambition* invites readers to reconsider standards of success in a world where things are not always what they seem.

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BLIND AMBITION
AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
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Honors Program

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DEDICATION

To my mom and dad.

INTRODUCTION

Behind the Scenes of a Creative Thesis

Besides food, reading was my first (non-divine) love. As a kid, I spent hours in the bathroom, not from digestive distress, but from opening a book on the toilet and reading until my legs went numb. At potlucks, I exchanged living rooms for Victorian mansions and elvish forests. I trailed my mother through department stores like a follow-me drone, nose stuck in a book. At school, I sped through classwork in order to escape to the library. As a shy kid, a racial minority, and an only child, I often struggled to relate to or fit in with my classmates. Characters like Hank the Cowdog, Gregor the Overlander, and Bilbo Baggins didn't discriminate. They invited me into their worlds, were vulnerable in their struggles, and welcomed me along for the ride. As Dr. SJ Murray would say, the internal landscape of my mind sprouted a skyline of adventure. From underground rat factions to smoking dragon lairs, the story world became a second home.

As secondary schooling took its course, the architecture of this second home began to change. Skyscrapers developed by *The Little, Brown Handbook* overshadowed the old wild terrain. The mystic heart of story grew faint, drowned out by analyses of sentence structure, story maps, and literary terms. Book reports and essays on Victorian tropes in *Hard Times* and *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* congested the road back to what C.S. Lewis would call literary reading. The irresponsible voyeurism of getting lost in a story lost its urgency and charm.

For as much as I read, I rarely wrote. Sure, I invented stories for stuffed animals

and comic strips, but “real” writing was sacred ground. (“Real” writing meant creative works intended for publication – novels, short stories, screenplays, etc.) Back then, research papers and book reports did not fall under “real” writing. They came with clear-cut directions, expectations, and format- a “First,” “Next,” “Then,” and “Finally.” Follow instructions, avoid grammatical errors, and you had yourself an A. Creative writing seemed a whole different undertaking. There was no template, no how-to, and no specifications besides a mind-blowing final product. Somehow, a flashing cursor on a blank page was supposed to transform into a world of adventure. Real writing was a task reserved for creative geniuses who knew what they were doing: for *writers*.

In college, courses in organic chemistry, microbiology, and physiology propelled my brain far from the land of literary fantasy. Leisure reading felt like an urban legend instead of an old friend. Any opportunities to “catch up” with reading over coffee were surrendered with little resistance to YouTube videos and BuzzFeed quizzes. What happened? Somewhere along the line, I had stopped prioritizing reading. The blame lies only on myself, not on the pre-med schedule or English writing classes. While I used to finish classwork early to sprint to the library, I now left assignments until the last minute. It’s no wonder I had no time or desire to read. I forgot getting lost in a good story was something I used to make time for. The less I read, the harder it was to write. Even research papers, the most straightforward of them all, became dreaded tasks. Then, one day, in SJ’s GTX 2302: Medieval Intellectual Tradition, my world changed forever.

Our homework assignment was to watch *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*. SJ was out on business, and Courtney, our TA and peer mentor, had been tasked with teaching us “Three Act Structure.” In twenty minutes, Courtney laid out, step by step,

how *Star Wars* followed an objective story template. It was a concrete, directional outline shared by everything from *Finding Nemo* to *The Proposal* to *The Shawshank Redemption*. Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*, C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, all the beloved stories: they too "followed" Three Act Structure. It was like the Matrix had been decoded.

After class, I bee-lined home and re-watched *Star Wars*. And *The Lion King*, *Jurassic Park*, and *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days*. It was true. These stories didn't begin with a flashing cursor on a blank page. They began with the foundation of three act structure and a skeletal system of story beats. Just like us, they began as idea embryos that developed a skeleton, organs, and then muscles and superficial features. Full grown, they looked and behaved uniquely, but inside, they shared the same genetic code. The door to real writing had been thrown wide open. Creative writing finally made sense.

Dr. Murray's research in story design empowered a "STEM brain" like mine to venture back into the land of storytellers. Turns out the landscape I once believed was only for the greats was open to the hopeful, the brave, the terrified – the human. This thesis was a chance to drive past the skyscrapers of literary criticism and the museums of physical science and step back into the land of dwarfish kingdoms, time travel, and subway rat wars. It was an invitation to make time to imagine, wonder, and create. Developing this story allowed me not only to run around the story world, but to build my own structures, even if they were terrible. (Initially, I also thought it would be fun and entertaining, but those were words of the naïve and inexperienced.)

This thesis represents a chance to tie together the compassion of healthcare, precision of science, imprecision of language, and creativity of being human. At its core,

it explores the *why* of science and healthcare in a more human way. Creating the world and characters of this story allowed me to digest and understand the situation of my future patient. Most of all, it was a chance to honor and remember the heroes at the VA and the stories they shared with me every Tuesday afternoon.

Research Methodology and Story Design

This project began in 2017 in Building 7 of the Doris Miller Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Waco, TX. Building 7 is home to the Blind Rehabilitation Unit (BRU), one of thirteen centers in the United States that offers inpatient care to blind and visually impaired veterans. Tailored courses in orientation and mobility, vision rehabilitation, living skills, manual skills, and assistive technology help veterans regain confidence and independence in their everyday activities.

As part of the Pre-Optometry Professional Society's (POPS) weekly service, four to five other students and I spent an hour a week visiting with inpatient veterans. Each hour usually began the same way. We watched the local news broadcast, reviewed the state of Waco's Mexican food, danced around politics, and decried the construction on I-35. Sometimes, a veteran would launch into a story from Vietnam or their post-war adventures. If more than one felt talkative, they might even one-up one another with exotic tales of intrigue and domestic mischief.

There was one veteran in particular whom I will never forget. I only met Mr. David twice, the first time on one of my very first trips to the VA. When I asked him what he used to do, he said he'd been an airplane mechanic for over fifty years. Then, his

countenance fell and his shoulders drooped. “But no one needs a blind airplane mechanic.” I didn’t know what to say. I sat, mute, as the conversation drifted on.

The next week, I met Mr. David on a bench outside Building 7 basking in the spring weather. His whole person had transformed, from his posture to his tenor. He said he was going home that day, but oh, what a week it had been! A few days earlier, his old friend in Bahrain had called. He was about to take some visitors on a flyover, but could not get his plane’s engine to start. Mr. David told his friend to hold the phone up to the engine so he could listen to its hum. Within seconds, he knew the “box” was broken. His friend replaced the part, and lo! The plane was fixed. Mr. David was now a blind airplane mechanic who had repaired a plane on the phone from the other side of the world.

Mr. David’s phone rang, and I left to meet the other veterans. I never heard the rest of his story. Was a stay at the BRU always this life-changing? How could one week revive so much hope and vigor in someone facing irreversible vision loss? I had to know.

By this time, seeds of a creative thesis had taken root in my brain. I arrived at the BRU each week armed with a notebook and pen. With the veterans’ permission, I recorded details of their lives and what they did at the BRU. From how their fathers quit smoking to how they forced their son to haul a pink piano into a new kitchen, I soaked in every story. The fact that I was writing a story opened the door to more opinions and anecdotes than I could record. One veteran, Mr. Espinoza, served as an infantryman in Vietnam. He had lost both of his eyes to Agent Orange and was only recently informed he was eligible for \$49,000 worth of disability compensation. The doctor who informed him of his benefits warned him not to disclose his source of information, for fear of professional repercussions. I was appalled by the level of bureaucratic disorganization in

a system meant to serve our veterans. The veterans at the BRU opened my eyes to a spectrum of healthcare experience, from unfair portrayals of disabled people in media to varied opinions on VA privatization. Their personalities inspired the characters of Charles Avery, Johnny Rodriguez, Athol Levitt, Caspar Hebert, and Alfredo Gonzales.

To learn more about younger veterans' experiences with the VA, I reached out to Mr. David Smith, Navy veteran and founder of Stories in Uniform Vetting America (SIUVA). In our October 2017 phone call, he expressed his frustration at the VA's failure to sufficiently aid veterans struggling with PTSD and other mental health disorders. He shared stories of substance abuse, cycles of VA psychiatrists, and close friends lost to suicide. In his experience, veterans felt guilty or embarrassed for struggling with mental disabilities and only reached out to the VA as a last-ditch effort. David's own triumph over addiction and mental health stigmas inspired him to advocate for other veterans facing the same hidden struggles and disabilities. "We shouldn't have to go to war, go home, and hate our lives," he said. "We just want to come back to a world that feels like home, but it never does." His earnestness, honesty, and indignation at a system that failed him and his loved ones served as inspiration for the character of Theo.

For insight into the reporting world, I spoke to Sara Jerving in November 2018. Sara was an investigative reporter who had written several articles on VA overpayment. In our phone call, she detailed the process of writing an article, from the initial tip to interviews with lawyers and family members, to Freedom of Information Act requests and back-and-forth talks with the VA. When Sara published her article on VA overpayment, she received an overwhelming response from veteran families undergoing the same struggle. Most often, they thanked her for reviving hope that they weren't alone in

the battle. Sara's drive in journalism was "to give voices to those who feel they don't have any leverage to have their story heard." She inspired aspects of Lilly's character and professional motivations. The miscommunication and disrepair she exposed in parts of the VA system informed the fictional veterans' frustrations and Dr. Witt's schemes.

To understand the day-to-day of blind rehabilitation, I shadowed Orientation & Mobility specialist Julia Davis at the BRU in spring 2018. For about eight weeks, I followed Julia and her patient Mr. Vara through VA hallways, residential sidewalks, and streets of downtown Waco. I learned alongside Mr. Vara as Julia explained how to use different canes, stay oriented in residential neighborhoods, and cross busy streets. It was a privilege to watch his development from hesitant shuffling down a hallway to confident, independent crossing of downtown streets. The shortcomings Julia exposed in the city's accessibility and transportation inspired several scenes in the story.

Both Julia and Mr. Vara took generous care to articulate their thought processes during each session. For instance, Mr. Vara said his biggest fears while walking were surprise slopes and curves. Julia shared that in order for patients to learn techniques effectively, they first had to acknowledge their situation, fears, and present abilities. The days I spent furiously scribbling notes behind Julia and Mr. Vara all around Waco were my most treasured days from this project. Through ordinary walks in the neighborhood, they demonstrated the heart and compassion behind blind rehabilitation. The spirit of determination and hope they carried each day set the tone I hoped to set for the story. They spurred me to leave my audience as hopeful, joyful, and grateful as they left me.

In addition to Julia and Mr. Vara, I also interviewed Mr. Barry Francis, a low vision expert, and Michelle, a nurse at the BRU. Their expertise on blind rehabilitation

and assistive technology helped shape the world of the fictional VA. Before the BRU, my only personal exposure to veterans had been in primary school. My knowledge of veteran care in the United States had not grown since I played military anthems for Grandparents Day or welcomed service members at the airport on a field trip. When I dug into articles on VA mishandlings, I was shocked and confused by accounts of irresponsible care and unmet medical needs. Was this really how our country treated its service members?

When I posed this question to the veterans, they gave mixed reviews. Overall, they praised the Waco BRU for its dedicated staff and quality care, but took care not to generalize their experience to all VA hospitals. Veteran Mr. Ramirez compared VA and private hospitals to employers Walmart and Costco. When employees feel effective and appreciated, they provide better care. Workers who feel unappreciated are less likely to take extra initiative to inform veterans about benefits and resources. While only part of the problem, the VA's uncompetitive pay and outdated personnel management systems made it difficult to attract and retain highly skilled doctors and staff. According to Mr. Smith, cycles of new and less experienced doctors disincentivized some veterans from seeking treatment, especially mental health treatment, at the VA.

“Let me put it this way,” Mr. Ramirez said. “There are people in the VA who don’t give a damn, and there are people in the VA who do.” It is the exhausting and disheartening task of sorting through these people that discourages veterans from seeking help at the VA. Conversations with staff and patients led me to the conclusion reached by many reporters – when you’ve seen one VA hospital, you’ve only seen one VA hospital. The spectrum of care varies widely around the country, and it would be untruthful and impractical to generalize the VA as either a systemic failure or crowning success.

After months of research, I found myself with a mountain of information, but no sign of a story. The task of distilling varied anecdotes and news articles into a story seemed like a maze with twenty entrances. Enter SJ's *Basics of Story Design*. To develop a coherent story, I began with a sliding scale of values: truth versus corruption. Lilly, the protagonist, represented truth in her mission to inform the public through journalism. The antagonist, Dr. Witt, represented corruption enabled by arrogance and a broken system.

Next, I nailed down “story beats” for the protagonist. These specific events defined the ups and downs of the overall story, a kind of skeleton around which to add muscle and skin. These beats included the opening image, inciting incident, dilemma, crossing the threshold, character moments, midpoint, brick wall, plan, climax, and resolution. Next, these beats expanded into individual scene outlines. Each scene contained a setup, event, and reactions to the event. Objective criteria for each scene included a desire line and at least three obstacles between the protagonist and her desire line. Once all forty to forty-five scene outlines were complete, I moved on to writing and rewriting a script with dialogue. The old idea of writing a script from page 1 with no outline was far gone. Once a full script was complete, it was deconstructed and reconstructed to heighten conflict, fix plot holes, and enhance secondary character arcs.

Building a story is like building a house. You start from the foundation of values, construct the framing of beats and scene outlines, and then add windows and doors of character and dialogue. From experience, this process does not stifle creativity, nor does it make creative writing boring. No one ever said you *have* to build a house in order, but it tends to stand a lot better when you do. Even the most imaginative architects must abide by the laws of physics.

The Story

The opening image of a story establishes the dominant and underdog values. The dominant values are in power at the beginning of the story and are typically represented by the antagonist. The underdog values are jeopardized by the dominant values and are typically represented by the protagonist. For instance, the opening image of *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* shows Darth Vader, the antagonist, demolishing a Rebel ship. The audience instantly distinguishes the “good guys” from the “bad guys.” In this story, the dominant value of corruption manifests in Dr. Eric Witt’s illegal drug trial. His execution of an unsanctioned lethal experiment demonstrates the reaches of his influence and the brokenness of the system that enables his schemes. Unbeknownst to him, a video recording of the experiment is taken and stored in a USB drive and yellow envelope.

The ordinary world reveals the character of the protagonist through her choices and actions. For instance, *Star Wars* depicts Luke Skywalker dissatisfied with life on his uncle’s farm. In *The Proposal*, the morning routines of Margaret Tate and Andrew Paxton disclose everything the audience needs to know about their characters. In this story, Lilly is an investigative reporter who struggles to be a team player at her news media startup, Veritas. Her character is revealed through her negotiations with media executives and her team. Dr. Witt’s character is revealed in the taping of his television show. Both Lilly and Dr. Witt strive to dominate their fields, no matter the cost.

The inciting incident is the event that changes the protagonist’s world forever. It is the lighting of the stick of dynamite that sets the protagonist’s adventure in motion. In *Star Wars*, R2-D2 plays a scrap of Princess Leia’s message to Luke. In *Notting Hill*, William Thacker bumps into famous actress Anna Scott in his bookstore. In this story,

the inciting incident occurs when Lilly receives a yellow envelope with a video-recorded tip of corruption at the VA. It is the video recording of Dr. Witt's botched drug trial.

After the inciting incident, the protagonist, though troubled, continues in her ordinary world. Luke does not immediately choose to go with Obi-Wan, just as Frodo resists the journey to Mordor. It is not until the dilemma that the protagonist must choose whether or not to depart on the adventure. The dilemma presents the protagonist with an ultimatum: she can either stay in her world threatened by the inciting incident, or commit to the adventure or quest. In this story, the dilemma is triggered by an impending company merger. Lux media's stipulations for a profitable buyout force Lilly to make a difficult decision: stick with her team to earn funding, or ditch them to pursue the solo glory of a national headline story.

At the dilemma, the protagonist stalls and resists the call to adventure. Her decision to commit to the quest marks the crossing of the threshold. While she cannot be led across the threshold, she may be guided by a threshold guardian. Gandalf, Hagrid, and Obi-Wan Kenobi represent well-known threshold guardians. In this story, Lilly's misdirected ambition drives her to work with Dr. Witt on an unsanctioned project at the VA Blind Rehabilitation Center (BRC). When he offers her an off-the-books media position, Lilly commits to exposing the corrupt VA physician for personal fame and glory. Success for both characters is represented by making the cover of TIME magazine.

Once the protagonist crosses the threshold, she enters Act 2 and the extraordinary world. Here, she meets the B character, a foil that will challenge her along her adventure. Well-known B characters include Han Solo in *Star Wars*, Dory in *Finding Nemo*, Hector in *Coco*, and Samwise Gamgee in *The Lord of the Rings*. In this story, Lilly immerses

herself in the BRC and meets a group of inpatient veterans. She follows veteran Mr. Charles through his rehabilitation sessions and gathers clues on the corrupt VA doctor.

Throughout Act 2A, events occur in the protagonist's favor. The upward trajectory strengthens her confidence and abilities as she explores the extraordinary world. Lilly discovers incriminating evidence against anesthesiologist Dr. Nguyen and outs him as the corrupt doctor on Dr. Witt's show.

In the first character moment, the protagonist does something she would not have done in Act 1. This action demonstrates her growth and adaptation to the adventure. In this story, Lilly's first character moment manifests in her toast to Theo during the VA fish fry. It demonstrates her evolution from selfish tantrums to respectful appreciation.

Act 2A climaxes at the midpoint. For comedic stories, the midpoint represents a false low for the protagonist. In tragedies like *Macbeth*, it is a false high. At the midpoint, the protagonist shifts from passive to active. In *Star Wars*, Luke leads the team to rescue Princess Leia. In *Wonder Woman*, Diana leads the fight over No Man's Land to save the besieged city. In this story, Lilly discovers Dr. Nguyen, the man she accused of murder, is innocent. She takes full responsibility for her actions and re-commits to the completion of the quest. Inspired by the veterans' determination and sacrifice, Lilly commits to bringing Dr. Witt to justice, no matter the cost to her professional reputation.

This decisive act of commitment catapults the protagonist into Act 2B. In contrast to Act 2A, Act 2B represents a downward spiral for the protagonist where the antagonist gains the upper hand. Lilly decides to pursue the evidence trail against Dr. Witt, but her leads dead-end as he remains one step ahead of her. Lilly discovers damning evidence against Dr. Witt, but with no means or time to disseminate it, all seems lost.

Act 2B climaxes in the brick wall, the moment in which all hope seems lost for the protagonist and the underdog values. The brick wall is a direct result of the protagonist's commitment at the midpoint. In *Star Wars*, Luke finds himself and his team trapped in a deadly garbage chute. Voldemort kills Harry Potter. Marlin sees Nemo belly up in a plastic bag and believes he is dead. In this story, Lilly finds herself jailed and disgraced, with no means to save the veterans from a merciless death.

However, all is not lost. A pep talk, usually delivered by the B character, revives hope in the cause. In *Star Wars*, Han Solo's desertion speech inspires Luke to fight on with the Rebellion. Dory inspires Marlin to persevere in the search for Nemo. Nala convinces Simba to rescue the Pride Lands and reclaim his throne. In this story, Mr. Charles urges Lilly to give up her solo act and redirect her ambition from personal accolades to a greater and higher good. The pep talk signals a moment of self-actualization for the protagonist, who emerges ready to take on the antagonist in Act 3.

Act 3 begins with a plan, which inevitably fails against the dominant forces' attack. The Rebel ships are shot down, Scar coerces Simba to confess to Mufasa's murder, and the Phantom drags Christine down to his lair. In this story, Lilly digs deep inside and realizes the truth is bigger than herself and her career. She calls on her old team for help, and together, they set out to bring down Dr. Witt once and for all. Empowered by their blind rehabilitation training, Mr. Charles and the veterans reclaim their narrative of teamwork and resilience to help Lilly and her team take down Dr. Witt.

At the climax, the protagonist faces off one-on one with the antagonist. Luke races Darth Vader to the exhaust port, Harry Potter duels Voldemort, and Christine kisses the Phantom. In this story, Lilly faces off against Dr. Witt on the internationally

broadcast MedCon stage. She exposes his murderous history, rescues the kidnapped veterans, exonerates Dr. Nguyen, and redeems her journalistic credibility. Justice is served as Dr. Witt is arrested and the drug trial is derailed. Most of all, Lilly demonstrates her evolution from a heartless lone wolf to an empathetic team leader. Corruption is defeated, and truth triumphs.

Finally, the story closes with the resolution. Loose ends are tied, and the new world barely resembles the old. Luke and Han Solo receive medals of honor, Simba and Nala gaze at their kingdom, and Marlin and Nemo set off to school. In this story, Lilly and Dr. Witt make the cover of TIME (just not for what they had expected), and Mr. Charles and the veterans return home reinvigorated and hopeful for their next adventure.

Lessons Learned

Write what you know. I thought this was obvious until I started writing this thesis. Write what I know. What did I know? Turns out, not a lot. My life experience consisted of twenty-one years of relatively smooth sailing. I'm not a journalist, I'm not a veteran, and I'm not a medical professional. No one in my family is any one of those things. My eyesight, with contact lenses, is 20/20. How, then, was I supposed to compose a magnum opus that would redeem the struggles of the visually impaired, expose the misdoings of the VA, and right all of humanity's wrongs? To write what you know, you must first be honest with yourself about yourself.

On one hand, I had to come to terms with my limited knowledge and ability. With little working world experience and only a few dozen hours of exposure in one building of the VA, I felt severely unqualified and egregiously pretentious. Who did I think I was, taking on a project like this? I felt like Nemo swimming up to "touch the butt." Fears of a

colossal diver named Reality trapping me in a plastic bag labeled “Consequences” and “Public Shame” still haunt me.

On the other hand, I had to believe this story was planted in my head for a reason. I had witnessed life-changing transformations at the VA BRU and felt stirred to share them with others. There was no denying the unplanned sequence of events that led me to this story. From Courtney’s talk on Three Act Structure to volunteering with POPS at the VA, it was too significant to ignore. My curiosity and desire to explore and understand this side of healthcare was not for nothing. This story offered a chance to share, with permission, the veterans’ stories and elucidate the world of blind rehabilitation. Even if I felt like I didn’t have much to say, I knew the characters, stories, and lessons I learned at the VA were worth sharing.

The construction of the story world was like a giant therapy session. It revealed, in concrete terms, buried foundational aspects of my own worldview. For instance, I have historically felt most comfortable and “inspired” writing stories for kids. These stories represent a simpler world: a world where the bad guy is bad, and the good guy is good. *Blind Ambition*, a story about real-world adults with unclear and untrustworthy motives, was a challenge. It forced me to examine darker parts of my soul and perspective on human relationships. It challenged my understanding of trust and goodwill. Most of all, it pushed me to reexamine the definition of success and purpose in a world where things are not always what they seem.

In addition to forcing introspection, this thesis taught me about writing and creativity via trial by fire. I don’t claim to write well. The writing process has, however, taught me some qualities of good writing. For instance, adverbs are wildly inefficient

communicators that usurp the place of a stronger verb. (Why say, “She ran away quickly,” when you can say “She fled?”) Effective sentences communicate a single idea. Boring scenes lack tension. I admit, chunks of this thesis fail to meet these standards. This room for improvement led to my second lesson on writing.

Writing is not editing. They are two different things and should be treated as such. Self-editing while writing is like over-pruning a plant. The first time through, write everything. Get it out of your system. Relieve your brain. Write everything, and *then* go back and edit. All good writing is rewriting, so rewrite the whole thing, and repeat. I had to allow myself to be a bad writer, just as a beginner pianist must allow herself to sound awful, and a beginner figure skater must expect to fall. No one expects the first try to be good. The key is to keep going and not give up.

This was the toughest part of the thesis: finishing a bad prototype. As I avoided this ordeal the night before a due date, one of Chrissy Teigen’s tweets sent me back to the keyboard- “I f***ing haaaaaate testing a new recipe for the book/site and knowing halfway through I’m gonna have to do it all over again. having to finish a failure to figure out its faults kjshfoiahyeforeqwrflaif.” Finishing a failure to figure out its faults. I was not alone in the struggle. This is where this thesis taught me humility, patience, and perseverance (and mad respect for full-time writers).

Creativity takes practice, and practice takes time. This was the third lesson. Practice took many forms, the first of which was reading good writing. Dante, Lewis, Shakespeare, and PIXAR modeled how to design a good story. The second form was to take notes from the greats. Lajos Egri, Richard Walter, Stephen King, and others gave instructions on how to write. Over time, their advice trained my brain to think like a

writer. Third, be part of fellow writers' processes. Brainstorming and troubleshooting my friends' projects opened channels to detect and resolve similar problems in my own story. Good writing doesn't "just happen." Like every other skill, it requires discipline, patience, and an ocean of frustrated tears.

The story I set out to write is different from the story I wrote. My "taste" in stories says this story in its current state falls short. It lacks the dimensions and revelation I had hoped to achieve. Rather than quit discouraged, I have learned to press on, to do it again and again until it is done. As Ira Glass says, it is the work, the practice that pushes us closer to the North Star. It is the humility to discard the forty-sixth draft and begin again that merits the pride of a "finished" work. To choose to go through this process to find the story and set it free is, I think, what it means to be a writer.

Finally, this thesis taught me to be grateful and take nothing for granted. Health, relationships, education, and eyesight: all these could be gone in the blink of an eye. This story taught me the same lesson the veterans teach Lilly, to appreciate what we have when we have it. It opened my eyes to appreciate veterans, their families, VA staff, and journalists and writers who bring attention to their stories. *Blind Ambition* is a reminder to guard against selfish ambition and vain conceit, to value others above ourselves in humility, and to develop eyes to see what truly matters.

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Blind Ambition

By

Tiffany Lu

FADE IN

INT OPERATING ROOM DAY

A gloved hand muffles a the howls of a PATIENT (50). His body THRASHES on the operating table. Handcuffs chain his battered wrists to the metal frame.

A team preps for surgery. An ASSISTANT (40) gloves DR. ERIC WITT (30). Anesthesiologist assistant ANDREW (25) receives the OK from DR. VINCENT NGUYEN (35) and places the breathing mask on the patient.

A red REC dot flashes on the inside edge of the patient's GLASSES. His head swivels to avoid the mask. Firm hands grasp either side of his head.

DR. WITT
Unacceptable. Careless, incompetent
staff, leaving glasses on a
patient.

A NURSE (35) snatches the GLASSES and stuffs them on a shelf by the door, lenses toward the operating table.

The anesthesia takes effect, and the patient's thrashing stops. The blood pressure monitor SCREECHES.

NURSE
110/60, blood pressure's too low.

Andrew attaches the appropriate drug vial to the patient's IV. Dr. Witt clasps Andrew's shoulder just as his finger alights on the syringe.

DR. WITT
Patient's allergic to midodrine.
Use this.

He hands Andrew a deep purple vial.

ANDREW
Sir, I don't recognize this.

DR. WITT
Fludrocortisone.

ANDREW
Fludrocortisone's not purple.

DR. NGUYEN
Clock's ticking, folks.

Andrew injects the drug, and the blood pressure BEEPS back to normal.

DR. WITT
Scalpel.

Dr. Witt makes an incision in the patient's sternum. His hands work like a machine.

DR. WITT
Dr. Nguyen, perhaps we should tighten our vetting process, seeing as Andrew nearly killed our patient.

DR. NGUYEN
The VA hardly passes *their* job vetting processes. Low salary, harsh environment-

A CHORUS of monitors goes berserk.

DR. WITT
What now? Vincent?

Blood spurts from the patient's chest. Dr. Witt scrambles to locate the source.

DR. NGUYEN
Pump's crashing, we need to cut power and redirect to the heart.

DR. WITT
That will kill him.

DR. NGUYEN
It'll kill him if we let him bleed out.

DR. WITT
There's another way.

The patient seizes on the table.

DR. NGUYEN
Andrew, cut the power now.

ANDREW
The power to what, exactly?

DR. NGUYEN

Now!

Andrew pulls the main power plug to the operating equipment. Surgical lights go dark. Monitors flutter and black out.

DR. WITT

Good god, not the power to my
equipment. The power to the pump!

Dr. Nguyen shoves Andrew aside, yanks the heart-lung machine cord out, and stabs the main cord back in the outlet. Andrew slumps to the floor. Purple fluid drips from the operating table onto his shoes. He recoils, horrified.

DR. NGUYEN

What the hell did you inject?

Lights flutter on and the seizures stop. Monitors resume their screaming as the EKG flat lines.

NURSE

Patient's in cardiac arrest.

Dr. Witt charges a defibrillator.

DR. WITT

Charge to 20.

DR. NGUYEN

Clear.

No effect.

DR. WITT

Charge to 30.

DR. NGUYEN

Clear.

The EKG tone signals the battle is lost. Dr. Witt rips off his surgical gown and glares daggers at Dr. Nguyen.

DR. WITT

Incompetent, unprepared.

DR. NGUYEN

It was a long shot. There's nothing
else we could have done.

Dr. Witt smashes his fist down on the patient's GLASSES on the shelf, breaking the nose bridge in half, and storms out of the OR.

The red REC light still flashes on the GLASSES. A gloved hand sweeps the broken glasses into a yellow envelope.

EXT LUX HEADQUARTERS DAY

LILLY TSANG (25) flies out of a cab in front of LUX MEDIA's sprawling "organic architecture" headquarters. Manicured sidewalks wind through like the Gardens of Versailles.

Inside, four millennials strap on helmets around a kombucha bar. ED (25), the goofball genius, sports recording glasses similar to the man's. Lilly jogs to meet the group.

ED

Two fifty-nine... Three o'clock.
Just in time.

LILLY

Thanks for waiting.

LIZA

Thanks for coming. It's great to
meet you.

LIZA (29), an accountant cliché, thumps a helmet in her hands and motions at Lilly's heels.

LIZA

Might wanna lose those.

LIAM (27) ducks under the counter and produces sneakers.

LILLY

Thanks, but whatever it is, I can
do it in heels.

Liam shrugs and leads the team toward a five-person conference bike.

LIZA

We've reviewed your funding
application, and it looks like you
have a solid startup.

The team mounts the bike and whizzes down the sidewalk. Ed texts and steers. LIONEL (30) swats Ed's phone away.

LIAM

Here at LUX we're all about shining
light on important issues. Darkness
falls in the light of truth.

A dog flees as the bike whizzes past its nose.

LIONEL
Your news startup, uh-

LILLY
Veritas.

LIONEL
Veritas has quite the team. Ivy League grads, award winners, top level connections. Quite frankly, it doesn't look like you need us.

The bike whirls around a corner like an amusement park teacup ride. Lilly hangs on for dear life.

LILLY
We do need you, sir. We need your platform and financial backing to get eyes on our articles.

Lilly slides into Liza as they round another corner.

LILLY
Right now, we're a light bulb. Your support would give us the extra voltage we need to be a spotlight.

The team members exchange glances. At Liza's nod, they all latch onto their bike handles.

LIAM
No, what you lack isn't money, or voltage, or whatever you call it. You lack a leader.

LILLY
At Veritas, we collaborate as equals. It's one of the things that makes us great.

LIONEL
I don't see your equals here to voice their support.

LILLY
I just happen to be our spokesperson.

LIAM
Capable startups need capable captains. Show us what you've got.

At once, Ed releases the steering wheel and all four team members stop pedaling. The bike careens onto a field and grazes a hedge. Lilly grasps the steering wheel and pedals like there's no tomorrow.

ED

She wasn't lying about her heels.

LILLY

Where should we go?

The bike inches back toward the sidewalk. The team speaks at once.

LIAM

Cafe.

LIONEL

Swings.

LIZA

Coffee shop.

ED

Bathroom.

LIAM

Wherever your heart desires,
captain.

All eyes on Lilly. Beads of sweat sting her eyes. She stutters.

LILLY

OK, let's take a vote, then. Show
of hands for going to the cafe.

Liza and Lionel raise their hands. Lilly whips her head around to search for options. A matcha stand beckons from the end of the sidewalk.

LILLY

Matcha it is. Everyone go.

Everyone pedals full throttle. The bike lurches forward. Lilly clings to the handles. They blow past the matcha stand.

LILLY

Stop!

The bike skids to a stop. Lilly, thrown off balance, flies off the bike to the lawn. Flattened lawn decorations lie in the bike's wake.

LIAM
Looks like you could use some help.

LILLY
Please.

Liam pulls Lilly up. She brushes off her skinned knees and plops back in her seat.

LILLY
On second thought, I'm not really feeling matcha. Had quite enough for today.

LIZA
Ed, take us to the drop-off.

ED
Aye-aye, captain. Low speed, folks.

Ed reclaims the steering wheel. The bike returns to a normal pace. Lilly slumps.

LIAM
A team, no matter how talented, can't go far without a captain.

LIONEL
A good captain, however capable, doesn't carry the team, she leads it.

The bike pulls over below an arch that reads "Come See Us Again."

LIAM
Come back and see us when you and your college buddies are a real team.

LIONEL
Too much voltage will burn up a weak light bulb filament.

Ed pulls a trigger on the bike that lowers Lilly's seat like a see-saw. Lilly slides onto the sidewalk.

LILLY
We're better off without your playground of a company anyway.

INT VERITAS OFFICES DAY

Lilly pushes aside the Japanese restaurant curtains to reveal Veritas' "Writing Dojo." Unfinished walls, dingy lighting, futons, and a ball pit make it the opposite of LUX's aesthetic. Journalism awards line the wall behind the ball pit.

Photos of interviewees and newspaper clippings line the cork board above Lilly's desk. The only framed picture is of her in her uniformed father's arms. Coworkers TIM (26), ANITA (28), and EDEN (27) hunch behind glowing laptops.

ANITA

Hot pantsuit, Lils. Finally ditching us for the corporate world, huh.

LILLY

You know I would never. Press junket at Witt MD this afternoon.

ANITA

Fancy. You got a package.

Lilly ignores the yellow envelope on her desk and yanks the rope that dings the "TEAM MEETING" bell. No one budes. She rings again. No response.

LILLY

I brought boba.

Attention secured. No boba's in sight.

TIM

Lies.

LILLY

Ball pit, now.

Tim stays put while the rest of the team inches toward the ball pit conference room.

TIM

No boba, no ball pit.

EDEN

Here we go.

LILLY

No ball pit, no boba. Get in.

TIM

You're not my real mom.

Lilly motions at Eden. Eden takes a running start and tackles Tim into the ball pit.

LILLY

Eden, tell me our financials are out of the red.

Eden stalls.

EDEN

Good news and bad news. Good news is we were out of the red this morning. Bad news is a \$20 Postmates boba delivery put us back in the paint.

All eyes on Lilly. Tim chucks a ball at her. She dodges.

The door bell rings. A DELIVERY MAN (20) hands off five boba teas to Lilly. Anita throws her hands up in victory.

LILLY

Don't look at me, I paid for those myself. You should be thanking me.

TIM

You could've swiped a twenty off some poor guy on the subway. Like back in the old days.

LILLY

You know I don't do that kind of thing anymore.

She wings the ball back at Tim, a near miss. He grins.

ANITA

Y'all. We don't have time to be petty. Our company is failing. We're going bankrupt.

TIM

We wouldn't be bankrupt if Queen Lilly here wasn't spending a fortune in entry fees for stupid media competitions.

LILLY

Show me a better way to get companies to invest their fortunes

LILLY
in our paychecks. I don't wanna
work out of this hole forever.

ANITA
I like our hole.

EDEN
There is one company called LUX
Media that seems right up our
alley. They have a rolling
application for young media
entrepreneurs to get full project
funding. Closes May 1st.

Lilly chokes on her boba and waves her hand in dissent.

TIM
May 1st is next Saturday.

ANITA
Let's do it.

LILLY
No.

EDEN
No, you'll love it, Lils. Their
headquarters are literally the
dream.

LILLY
No. I checked them out earlier.
Clickbait articles, viewer counts,
quantity over quality. Totally out
of line with our mission.

TIM
We have a mission?

LILLY
We have to choose our story for
this month.

EDEN
I've got a juicy lead on college
admissions scandal.

Tim wings a ball at Lilly's boba. It misses and knocks
Anita's drink over. Milk tea spills into the ball pit. Lilly
leaps out and escapes to her desk. Anita tears paper towels
from the roll that hangs from the ceiling. Eden and Tim fire
balls at each other.

ANITA

This is why we can't have nice things. Let's go for the LUX application.

INT VERITAS OFFICES DAY

At her desk, Lilly rips open the envelope. A broken pair of glasses spills onto the table. They are the same glasses that belonged to the fated patient. She peeks back into the envelope to find a typewritten note that reads "Got your name from your VA article. HELP. He's killing us alive."

Lilly examines the glasses. A half-crushed mini-USB port catches her eye. She stuffs the note in her pocket and brings the glasses into the adjoining room.

Lilly pries the port back into shape and connects the projector. Pixelated video flickers onto the projector screen. Static thunders from the speakers. Lilly dives to turn down the volume. Tim yells from the other room.

TIM

Volume button's broken, you have to use the remote.

Lilly feels for the remote. It's nowhere to be found. Protests explode from the desks.

ANITA

My eardrums are exploding.

LILLY

Which one of you idiots took the remote?

Her fingers recoil from a spiderweb beneath a shelf. A grainy video of Dr. Witt's surgery plays unnoticed on the screen.

EDEN

On the projector.

Lilly glares up at the taller-than-her projector. She scales the back counter, leaps toward the ceiling, swipes the remote off the projector, and lands on a futon. It snaps closed with her inside. The static volume reduces and her ears are spared.

LILLY

I hate this place.

She fixes her attention on the fated end of the surgery.

A hazy Dr. Nguyen throws his hands up as Dr. Witt, seen only from the back, balls up his surgical gown. Just before Dr. Witt's face becomes clear, a fist comes down on the camera. The video cuts to black.

ANITA

Lilly, Daniel wants to know if
you're still coming to lunch.

Lilly sits in shock. Anita knocks on the door panel.

ANITA

That was an awful ruckus. Daniel
says he's been waiting for 20
minutes.

Lilly scrambles to her feet.

LILLY

Rats. I promised I wouldn't be late
today.

ANITA

What were you watching?

LILLY

It was nothing. Thanks, Anita.

She severs the glasses from the projector cords, stows it under her coat, and rushes out.

ANITA

With you, it's never nothing.

EXT CARNIVAL FOOD TRUCK DAY

DANIEL (28) peruses a copy of TIME, preemptive order of cheese fries in hand. Lilly flies around the corner and slams into him. She apologizes through a mouthful of fries.

DANIEL

Took you long enough. Nice
pantsuit.

LILLY

I'm sorry. There was a boba spill,
we lost a remote. You're right.
Excuses. I am late for no good
reason except who I am as a person.

Daniel ushers his hangry girlfriend to the food truck window. RAHUL (45) the owner salutes his two regulars. Daniel fingers the model airplane on the counter.

DANIEL

You'd make a terrible pilot. The usual, please, Rahul.

LILLY

I'll pay.

Lilly rummages in her purse for an unrealistically long production of "Let me find my wallet" and fools no one.

DANIEL

I got it.

Lilly peers at the milk jug carnival booth. Emoji plushies beckon from the prize stand.

DANIEL

Our flight simulation team presented for Boeing today, and I think they loved it. You're not listening.

LILLY

I want the poo.

Lilly points at the emoji plush. Rahul exchanges a sympathetic glance with Daniel and hands him his order.

Daniel shells out money to the carnival VENDOR (20), who hands him three baseballs.

DANIEL

Let's fly out to the country this weekend. Now that I have my pilot's license, we can get away whenever we want.

Lilly digs into a taco. Daniel misses his first pitch.

LILLY

Can't. I have to churn out stories of the year to keep Veritas afloat and you have a project due next week.

Daniel misses his second pitch by an inch. A line of PROTESTERS gather outside the neighboring VA hospital. Lilly squints to make out a protest sign.

DANIEL

I'll always have a project, you'll always have a story. I'm tired of putting us off for the sake of work. We both deserve more.

LILLY
"It's our right."

DANIEL
To work.

LILLY
No, look.

Daniel droops at the sight of the protesters. Lilly ruffles through her bag for her recorder.

LILLY
I have to go.

DANIEL
You don't have to go.

LILLY
You know I do. This job means everything.

She gives a peck on the cheek and turns to leave. Daniel tugs her around to face him. His eyes gut Lilly's conscience.

LILLY
Almost everything. I'll make it up to you tonight, I promise.

She disappears into the crowd. Daniel chucks the final ball at the jugs. They collapse in a crash. The vendor hands Daniel the poo plush.

EXT VA HOSPITAL DAY

Lilly pushes through protesters in front of Dr. Witt's hospital office and recording studio.

PROTESTERS
Hey hey! Ho ho! Insurance companies gotta go! They don't care if people die! Health insurance is a lie!

Signs reading "Don't Take My Care" and "Freedom of Health Care" block Lilly's view. She squeezes through to the studio doors.

INT WITT MD STUDIOS DAY

A studio audience applauds as cameras swivel back to Dr. Witt. He is every dreamy TV doctor in the flesh, worshiped by all.

DR. WITT
Welcome back to WITT MD. Today
marks a momentous day in medical
history.

Massive background screens display the VA hospital.

DR. WITT
For too long, our nation has
ignored our most deserving
population. Veterans. Congress
failed them, the VA failed them. We
the people cannot fail them.

A curtain pulls back to reveal a row of veterans saluting the U.S. flag.

DR. WITT
I'm proud to announce that as of
today, my practice will be
embarking on a joint venture with
the VA to provide top quality
health care to our veterans.

The audience erupts in cheers and applause.

DR. WITT
This is the very first
collaboration of its kind. Having
served in the military myself,
there is no greater honor than to
care for our nation's heroes.

Dr. Witt approaches veteran CHARLES AVERY (73) and shakes his hand. Charles betrays no emotion.

DR. WITT
Tell everyone your name.

CHARLES
Charles Avery, sir.

DR. WITT
We thank you for your service. A
round of applause for our heroes of
Vietnam.

Audience applause.

DR. WITT
Mr. Avery, if you could, please
read the text on the banner for us.

CHARLES
I cannot see the text, sir.

A massive 3D eyeball rolls onto the stage. It opens to a cross-section with a crumbling macula.

DR. WITT
That's right. Mr. Avery and each
one of the vets here suffer from a
condition called macular
degeneration that robs them of
their eyesight. Lucky for them, my
colleagues and I have developed a
new stem cell serum drug that will
repair the blood vessels of their
retina.

A purple fluid runs through the eyeball for demonstration.
The macula reassembles. Normal coloration returns. More
audience applause.

DR. WITT
We will premiere this
groundbreaking clinical trial at
our very own MEDCon next weekend on
Witt Island. Thanks for tuning in
to WITT MD, we'll see you all
tomorrow.

Cameras stop recording and Dr. Witt deserts the stage. The
veterans remain in salute. A PA (25) herds them off stage.

Dr. Witt exits to the press junket.

INT PRESS JUNKET DAY

Lilly shoves her way to the end of the press line. She
extends her recorder toward Dr. Witt.

LILLY
Hi, Dr. Witt. Lilly Tsang with
Veritas media.

Dr. Witt offers a warm handshake.

DR. WITT
So glad you could come.

LILLY

There's been news of veterans
feeling unsafe at the VA. How is
your collaboration going to improve
their hospital stay?

Dr. Witt's pager beeps. He ignores it.

DR. WITT

I don't know where those reports
are coming from, haven't heard of
any complaints from our patients.

LILLY

We've also received reports of
botched surgeries and conflict
between physicians.

DR. WITT

Conflict between doctors is only
natural, we each have our own areas
of expertise. As for the surgeries-
better check where you're getting
your news.

A nurse calls Dr. Witt to the medical bay. He waves her off.

LILLY

I have my sources.

DR. WITT

And I have mine.

LILLY

Let me see for myself at the VA.
One day of interviews is all I
need.

DR. WITT

I'll do you one better: come work
for me.

LILLY

Work for you? I already have a job,
sir.

Dr. Witt puts his arms around Lilly's shoulders and ushers
her toward the hospital doors.

DR. WITT

Sure, you have a job. Writing
articles nobody reads for a company
nobody's heard of.

LILLY
On the contrary.

DR. WITT
Come work for me, and we can get to the bottom of these reports together. I came here to fix the VA, to make it better. Between the two of us, I think we can clean up the dirt that's been on these walls for far too long.

LILLY
I'm flattered, Dr. Witt, but that's not an option.

Dr. Witt slides her his business card and disappears down a hallway.

DR. WITT
Think about it.

INT GAME ROOM NIGHT

Lilly, Daniel, Anita, and Anita's boyfriend THEO (30) exchange fire in a heated table tennis match. Theo is a Desert Storm vet who heads a successful demolition business.

ANITA
He straight up offered you a job.

Anita punctuates her disbelief with a smash.

LILLY
Yep.

Lilly smashes back. She overshoots. Theo chases down the ball.

THEO
And you took it.

No.	ANITA	No.	LILLY
-----	-------	-----	-------

DANIEL
He's the top physician executive in the country. Working for him is like working for Miranda Priestly, but better.

LILLY
I don't think anyone enjoys working
for Miranda Priestly.

DANIEL
Doesn't seem like you enjoy working
at Veritas either. No offense,
Anita.

Daniel smashes.

ANITA
Offense taken.

Anita smashes back. Daniel lunges and slices just beyond the
net. Theo fails to reach it in time.

LILLY
Just couldn't let me score, could
you.

DANIEL
We're on the same team.

Anita and Theo throw up their hands in surrender. Theo grabs
a drink from the fridge.

ANITA
In other news, the VA's spending
another \$26 million to find the \$13
million in supposed veteran
over-compensation.

THEO
Classic VA. Making veterans pay for
their stupid mistakes.

ANITA
And million-year-old computers.

LILLY
They're probably trying to save
money.

Theo SLAMS his drink on the table so hard the glass in the
room TINKLES. Stunned SILENCE.

ANITA
I think what Lilly meant to say is
that-

LILLY

I meant the government only has so much room in its budget.

THEO

The same government budget that pays for presidential joy rides to Mar-a-Lago.

LILLY

We can't give money to whoever asks for it, it has to be justified.

Daniel stands back. Lilly got herself into this. Theo's dwindling composure gives way.

THEO

And losing a limb, losing your eyesight, losing your *life* isn't enough to justify a government paycheck?

Lilly flushes red. The gravity of her statement settles in.

LILLY

You're right. I'm sorry, Theo. I shouldn't have said that. I wasn't thinking.

THEO

Damn right you weren't thinking. Maybe you should take the job at the VA. The people there might teach you a thing or two about sacrifice.

The clock chimes 22:00. Theo reaches for his coat and hands Anita hers.

THEO

It's late, I gotta go. Early job tomorrow.

ANITA

Theo-

THEO

Thanks for dinner, Daniel.

Daniel hugs them both as Lilly sulks by the counter. Daniel closes the door behind them and turns to Lilly.

LILLY
I'm sorry the night ended like this
That was stupid. I'm stupid.

DANIEL
That was stupid. You are not
stupid. Insensitive, sure.
Impulsive, sometimes. Irritating.

LILLY
I get the point.

DANIEL
You're not stupid. You're a
brilliant, beautiful, inspiring
journalist who's making the world
better one article at a time.

LILLY
Which is why working for Dr. Witt
would be so perfect.

DANIEL
And exactly why you should consider
it.

LILLY
I couldn't betray my friends like
that. We made a promise to see
Veritas through.

DANIEL
I know. Just think about it.

He reaches for the carnival poo emoji plush.

DANIEL
And don't be a poo.

LILLY
That's how I'm gonna feel with Mom
tomorrow.

Lilly clutches the plush and shuffles to the door.

DANIEL
You know she wants the best for
you.

LILLY
I know.

DANIEL

So do I.

LILLY

Thank you.

INT HOSPITAL DAY

Lilly sits with her MOM (60) in the oncology waiting room. Mom peruses PEOPLE magazine. Lilly presents her dilemma to the smiling face of Joanna Gaines on the cover.

LILLY

So either I take the job with Dr. Witt and climb that ladder, or I stay true to our team and trust our vision.

MOM

And say no to the best opportunity you've every had.

LILLY

I do have a promising new lead. Someone mailed me this pair of glasses.

MOM

You would not have this problem if you hadn't chosen to be a reporter.

LILLY

Journalist.

MOM

Instead of a doctor, lawyer, engineer.

LILLY

Three options isn't a lot to choose from.

A knock on the door. Oncologist DR. SINGH (40) enters with Mom's test results.

DR. SINGH

Excellent news, Mrs. Tsang. All tests came out clear, your cancer is still in remission.

Lilly embraces her mother.

DR. SINGH
Congratulations. Here's your
treatment plan moving forward. Your
remaining chemo schedule is here,
and the fees are in this column.

Mom's eyes widen at the cost. Dr. Singh's pager beeps.

DR. SINGH
If you'll excuse me, they need me
in the bay. Give me a call if you
need anything.

Dr. Singh pats Mom on the shoulder and rushes out the door.

MOM
That's it. I pay \$200 for her to
talk to me for 30 seconds.

LILLY
See, that's something I could
address in an article. People would
sympathize and share it, and
doctors would read it and things
might change.

Mom shoots Lilly a look of pity. They head to the payment
counter.

MOM
Your friends, their parents have
money. They don't need Veritas to
succeed to survive. We're not like
that.

LILLY
Success isn't about making money,
Mom.

MOM
When your father was alive, he
worked two jobs, neither of which
were his passion. He did it so he
could provide for our family.

LILLY
This job can provide for us.

MOM
Look at the cost of this treatment.

LILLY

Just give me a few more weeks.

A copy of TIME lies on the payment counter. Lilly's phone buzzes.

MOM

I'll believe you once I see your work on this cover.

LILLY

I can't deal with this right now.

Lilly hisses goodbye and storms off to work.

EXT VERITAS OFFICES DAY

Lilly spots a five-person conference bike parked outside their office.

LILLY

Oh hell no.

Lilly bursts through the office curtains. Fluorescent office lights illuminate spotless desks arranged in the center of the room. A coffee table sits on a wooden board where the ball pit used to be. Three bike helmets hang on door hooks.

LILLY

I'm in the wrong building.

Tim and Eden give Liam, Liza, and Lionel an office tour. Anita snatches Lilly aside.

ANITA

You're not gonna believe this.

LILLY

I already don't believe this. Tim is drinking green juice.

ANITA

Eden submitted an application to the LUX funding project, and get this: they sent a team to come check us out.

LILLY

They sent a team.

Lilly sinks into a chair. Tim brings the team over.

LILLY

Oh.

TIM

And this is our always-late
teammate, Lilly Tsang. I kid, she's
only sometimes late.

Liam grabs a helmet off the door hook and thumps it in
Lilly's hand.

LIAM

Ms. Tsang, good to see you again.

EDEN

You guys know each other.

LIONEL

Lilly was at our offices yesterday
to discuss a previous proposal from
you guys.

They freeze. All eyes on Lilly.

EDEN

We didn't submit another proposal.

LILLY

I told you, I was just checking
them out.

Tim takes back Lilly's helmet and replaces it on the wall.

TIM

You said LUX was "totally out of
line with our mission."

EDEN

Looks like you were the one who was
out of line.

Lionel sinks onto the fake bench that covers the ball pit.
It collapses and he falls in. Eden and Anita rush to save
him.

LIZA

It seems like y'all are a great
candidate, but before we move
forward with the grant process, we
have a few stipulations. Three.
First, you need a leadership
hierarchy.

LIONEL

Second, get rid of this idiotic ball pit. This is an office, not a playpen.

Lionel plucks old boba off his shirt. Anita scrambles to replace the bench and re-disguise their shambly office.

LIZA

Lilly, you said you were the acting head.

TIM

I don't remember making Lilly CEO.

ANITA

Between LUX and Dr. Witt, I'm starting to think we should be concerned about your loyalty to Veritas.

LILLY

My loyalty to Veritas. My loyalty. My all-nighters, my applications, my rent checks.

TIM

All I know is I haven't invested four years into working for you, for you to throw it all away.

Tim tugs a beanbag from under desk and settles into a sulk.

LILLY

You said there were three things.

LIZA

Yes. One, establish a clear leadership structure. Two, publish a story that makes national headlines. Three, you must trade jobs for the entire project.

ANITA

Trade jobs?

LIAM

Yes, do each others' jobs. You're all fully capable journalists, but you're incapable of working as a team.

The Veritas team stares in stony silence. The LUX team takes their helmets.

LIZA

Most of all, you've only got a week to do it. Let us know what you decide.

Eden ushers the LUX team to the door. Anita and Lilly flop into the ball pit.

LILLY

We can make this work.

TIM

There's no way this is gonna work.

ANITA

Off to a great start.

Eden returns to survey the damage.

EDEN

Financially speaking, this is our best shot. And probably our last shot.

ANITA

Guess we'll go with college admissions. National news for sure.

Eden and Tim signal their agreement. All eyes on Lilly.

LILLY

College admissions is iffy, might get suppressed. I have a VA scandal that could be huge.

TIM

Oh, and that won't get suppressed. You've done enough to derail this team already. I'm game for college admissions if you guys are.

Anita and Eden give the OK. Tim sticks his head out the window to the LUX team below.

TIM

Game on!

The LUX team returns a thumbs up.

TIM

That's right, Lilly, your job's mine now. I'm self-declared boss of everyone, and you're the office jester.

LILLY
You're gonna regret this.

ANITA
Enough. Tim, prep the write-up.
Lilly, reach out to legal. Eden,
take care of digital and I'll cover
financials.

The team breaks. Lilly returns to her desk to find Dr.
Witt's card on top. She picks up the phone.

INT VA HOSPITAL DAY

MADDIE (29), Dr. Witt's secretary, shows Lilly down a
hallway of fluorescent-lit, standard offices. Maddie stops
at the last room. Lilly sets her bag on the desk. A FIRE
EXTINGUISHER stands out in the corner.

LILLY
A real office with actual desks and
a spinny chair. And a fire
extinguisher.

MADDIE
That's not your office.

She opens the door to a sprawling, carpeted conference room
turned office. Windows facing the skyline, leather couches,
glass trophy shelves, the whole nine yards.

MADDIE
This is your office.

Lilly lets her bag drop to the floor and examines the glass
shelves.

LILLY
Glass bookshelves were a bold
choice.

MADDIE
This used to be Dr. Witt's second
office. Those shelves were for
awards, not books.

LILLY
Proud choice.

Maddie fans out a stack of papers on the desk.

MADDIE

Dr. Witt gets out of surgery at two. I have a few official papers for you to sign, then you're free to explore.

LILLY

Those can wait. I'll read them and bring them by your desk later.

MADDIE

I'm afraid they can't wait. If you're not comfortable signing them, I can always show you back to the lobby.

LILLY

Not after you've shown me this office.

Lilly signs the stack of contracts without reading them. Bad move.

Maddie snatches the forms up and lays a card stock map on the desk. A flier for "Blind Archery at the BRU" catches Lilly's eye.

LILLY

Blind Archery. Sounds safe.

MADDIE

Yes, the occupational therapists at the Blind Rehabilitation Unit have a host of recreational training techniques.

LILLY

I want to see it.

MADDIE

Unfortunately, one of our assistants was not properly trained and we had to temporarily shut down the program.

LILLY

Please tell me no one got shot with an arrow.

Maddie says nothing, but her face says yes.

MADDIE

We do have table tennis going on
right now.

LILLY

Blind people playing ping-pong.
Sign me up.

MADDIE

Follow me.

INT RECREATION ROOM DAY

Maddie swings open double doors to the BRU. Blind
rehabilitation specialist JULIA (40) ushers Charles Avery to
his chair.

MADDIE

Julia, meet Lilly. She's in charge
of media for Dr. Witt's VA
collaboration.

Julia gives Lilly a firm handshake. Maddie departs.

JULIA

Good for you. I'm going to turn on
the music. Go ahead and meet the
guys in the chairs.

Julia departs. Four veterans, Charles, JOHNNY RODRIGUEZ
(40), ATHOL LEVITT (85), and CASPAR HEBERT (65) stretch by a
ping-pong table. Lilly ventures over.

LILLY

Do you mind if I join you?

Johnny and Caspar jump in surprise.

JOHNNY

Geez, miss, you scared me there. My
peripheral vision's no good.

CHARLES

Come sit with us. You're mighty
dressed up for a place like this.

JOHNNY

She dressed up because she knew I'd
be here.

ATHOL

Ignore them. You must be here to visit somebody.

LILLY

No, I'm here to shadow Julia for a piece I'm writing.

CASPAR

You're a writer.

LILLY

I'm a journalist.

JOHNNY

We're gonna be famous. You're gonna put our faces on Forbes magazine right by Oprah.

CASPAR

Nobody wants to see that face on their doorstep.

CHARLES

A journalist. That's neat.

LILLY

What'd you do before you ended up here?

Charles sits and looks at the ground. His spirit and shoulders droop.

CHARLES

I used to be an airplane mechanic, 45 years.

LILLY

That's neat.

CHARLES

But no one needs a blind airplane mechanic.

Lilly opens her mouth, no words come. Julia arrives just in time.

JULIA

Speakers won't work. Johnny, you're up first.

Julia unlocks a robotic ping-pong machine and hooks its net up to the table. Johnny grabs a paddle and lines up.

CASPAR

We're watching you, Johnny. Don't break the machine like you did last time.

Julia turns on the machine. It SPITS a ping-pong ball toward Johnny's hand. He swings and misses. Julia positions him square to the table.

JULIA

Remember, this is for your shoulder mobility. Extend and flex.

ATHOL

If it's stories you want, you should come out to the Fish Fry tonight.

CASPAR

They'll have hush puppies.

JULIA

It's at eight, you're welcome to come. People are a more willing to share their stories over a plate of good food.

LILLY

I'll be there.

The machine shoots another ball. Johnny hits it into the net.

CHARLES

You remind me of my daughter.

LILLY

You must be very close with her.

CHARLES

She disowned me.

Lilly fails to generate a response. On to a new topic.

LILLY

Mr. Charles, you wouldn't happen to know anyone who owns a pair of recording glasses, would you?

CHARLES

Most of us own a pair. They use artificial intelligence to help us read, recognize faces, and use our phones.

The machine speeds up. Johnny misses shots and balls roll on the floor.

JOHNNY

Not again.

LILLY

I assume patients don't wear these glasses into surgery.

Charles leans away. Lilly knows something she shouldn't.

CHARLES

No.

LILLY

So if someone wore them into surgery they'd have to be medical staff.

CHARLES

I don't know what you're talking about.

The machine malfunctions. Balls explode onto the floor. Julia pushes all the buttons. Nothing works.

JULIA

Nobody move.

She kicks balls out of the way and ushers Johnny back to his seat.

LILLY

Somebody here tipped me off, and I'm going to get to the bottom of it.

Elton John BLASTS from the speakers. Julia jumps and slips on a ball.

CHARLES

With all due respect, I don't know you. Until I know you're trustworthy, you're not getting anything from me.

Before Lilly can reply, Maddie returns. She kicks balls in disdain and turns down the speaker volume.

MADDIE

Dr. Witt wants to see you.

INT DR. WITT'S OFFICE DAY

Maddie plops Dr. Witt's mail on his desk. Martin Shkreli's face stares up from the TIME cover. Lilly marvels at Dr. Witt's celebrity photos and golden cougar statues.

DR. WITT

Still haven't made the cover of TIME. Might be the only thing that'll convince my parents I've made it. Take a seat.

LILLY

No kidding. World-famous doctor with his own TV show isn't good enough.

MARIA (30), the maid, enters to dust the awards weighing down the shelves.

DR. WITT

I don't usually invite people to my private office, but you're a special case. Tell me about these botched surgeries.

LILLY

Truth is, there's not much to know. Right now it's mostly whispers in the dark.

DR. WITT

Maria, you missed a spot.

Maria backtracks to polish a nook of a trophy.

LILLY

No one wants to talk.

DR. WITT

Not that one. Two over, the Most Valuable Physician trophy from the Noble Academy of Physicians.

He turns to Lilly with a wink. Maria makes a face into the trophy.

DR. WITT

You were saying.

LILLY

There's not much to go off of, just word of surgeries gone wrong and unexplained patient deaths.

Maria stops dusting.

DR. WITT
We'll take it from here, Maria.
It's been a while since I've
rearranged the shelf.

He shoos Maria out the door. She sears Lilly in her memory.
Dr. Witt shuts the door and pulls trophies off the shelves.

DR. WITT
Can't be too careful these days.
Never know who's on your side and
who will sell you out for a raise.

LILLY
Let me give you a hand with those.

They compile the trophies onto a neat pyramid on the floor.

DR. WITT
This information you received, it
was more than word of mouth.

LILLY
More than word of mouth.

Lilly reaches for an obelisk atop a wooden box. As she tilts
it down, the top of the box opens like a lid. Dr. Witt
lunges to grasp the trophy.

DR. WITT
No need to worry about that row. I
never move them anyway. You said
something about a recording.

Lilly inches into a chair.

LILLY
I didn't say anything about a
recording.

DR. WITT
Forgive me. You said something
about patients dying in
unsanctioned surgeries.

LILLY
That's a possibility. My sources
suggest it may be a male surgeon,
likely a general surgeon.

DR. WITT
You're putting a lot of trust in
your sources.

LILLY
I have good reason to trust them.

Maddie knocks and opens the door. It catches on the pile of
trophies.

MADDIE
Rearranging again. Representatives
from the state legislature are here
to see you, Dr. Witt.

DR. WITT
I want to hear more of this source
of yours, Lilly. If it's general
surgeons you're looking at, your
first stop is down the hall. Dr.
Vincent Nguyen, new guy, very
smart.

He follows Maddie and Lilly out the room and locks the door
behind him.

MADDIE
Lilly, there's a man in a black
Toyota out front. I think he's
waiting for you.

Lilly sprints out the door.

LILLY
I told him I wouldn't be late.

Maddie leads Dr. Witt to a waiting group of legislators. She
whispers in his ear.

MADDIE
MEDCon is a go. Drug injections on
standby.

DR. WITT
Nothing gets to the press. This is
our little secret.

He greets the legislators.

DR. WITT
Gentlemen, welcome.

EXT BRU NIGHT

A spotless black sedan waits as Lilly sprints from the BRU. The car door opens to Daniel, dressed in full evening attire. He gets out to escort Lilly to the car.

DANIEL
I've waited all day for this.

LILLY
Daniel, I'm so sorry.

DANIEL
I know, I didn't have to, but it's been forever since we've gone out for fancy food.

LILLY
You shouldn't have.

DANIEL
I asked Anita to grab the dress you like, it's in the back. Our reservations are in an hour.

LILLY
You're not listening to me.

Lilly heaves a sigh. Her eyes trail to the BRU, where veterans load up into their van to the Fish Fry. Daniel follows her gaze, then fixes his eyes on hers and waits.

LILLY
They have catfish and hush puppies.

Daniel wrings his hands.

LILLY
We can bring Theo, we've been meaning to do something with him for ages.

DANIEL
That's true.

LILLY
Babe, I'm sorry, I'll make it up to you, I promise. The LUX grant has eaten up my schedule, and this whole thing with Dr. Witt has been so unpredictable.

DANIEL
 Unpredictable is O.K. Tight
 schedules I can deal with. My
 nonexistence within all of that?
 That's not O.K.

LILLY
 After MEDCon, I'm all yours. I
 promise. I'll tell everyone at work
 I'm out sick with Ebola and it'll
 kill them all if I come in.

She wrestles a smile from his face.

DANIEL
 If you say so. We'll pick Theo up
 on the way there.

INT VA COMMUNITY CENTER NIGHT

Lilly, Daniel, and Theo wade through a smoke-clogged bar
 area. Lilly fans the air in search of a door.

LILLY
 I hope we came in the wrong door.

Theo points to a "FISH FRY HERE" sign.

THEO
 There.

They file into a large multi-purpose room with metal chairs
 around round tables.

JULIA
 Lilly, glad you could make it.
 We'll start serving the food here
 in a minute.

A VOLUNTEER (40) unloads Styrofoam plates into Lilly's and
 Daniel's arms and shows Theo to a seat.

Lilly and Daniel heap food onto each plate with other
 volunteers. They make their rounds and serve the plates to
 the veterans.

DANIEL
 We could be eating pumpkin gnocchi
 right now.

LILLY

I know, I'm sorry. I'll make it up to you.

The volunteer takes the mic on stage.

VOLUNTEER

Now for one of my favorite Fish Fry traditions, Appreciation Shout-Out. If you're a vet or a friend of a vet, here's your open mic time to let 'em know you appreciate them. All yours.

The silence holds for two seconds while everybody looks at each other. Conversation buzz breaks out again and the stage stands empty. Lilly and Daniel grab seats by Julia, Charles, and Theo.

LILLY

That's nice. People must have a lot to say.

JULIA

Sometimes, but no. Actually, never.

She shrugs.

JULIA

It's the thought that counts. We're not used to expressing ourselves this way.

THEO

That's a shame. Julia, you served in Iraq, right?

JULIA

I did two years in Iraq in '03, before you were there.

Lilly rises and grabs her drink. Daniel gives a covert thumbs-up.

Lilly floats up the steps to the stage and takes the mic. The mic emits a bat-pitched wail, and the volunteer scrambles to turn down volume.

LILLY

I don't know if anyone actually does this, but I'd like to give a shout out to one of my dearest and bravest friends. Theo, you were and

LILLY
are one of the most patient and
kind-hearted people I know.

Theo raises his head. The veterans and volunteers look up.
This is a first.

LILLY
You've been patient with me when I
take your sacrifice for granted.
You've stood up for me even when I
pissed you off. You've been strong
for me even when you were the one
who needed support. Thank you,
Theo, for your loyalty, your heart,
and your friendship. And thank you
to everyone here for your service.

Lilly raises her glass to Theo. Theo lifts his a centimeter
off the table.

DANIEL
Hear, hear.

The silence in the room holds for two seconds before
conversation buzzes again. Lilly creeps off the stage and
slides into her seat.

JULIA
That was beautiful.

Theo shifts his stare from his plate to Lilly.

LILLY
I'm sorry for what I said
yesterday. It was completely
unwarranted and I was an idiot.

THEO
It's alright. Water under the
bridge.

LILLY
Thanks.

Lilly turns to Charles.

LILLY
I have a proposition.

CHARLES
Uh-oh.

Volunteers go around the tables to collect money for a lottery drawing. Charles buys 3 tickets. Elton John SINGS from the speakers.

LILLY

You're the only one who seems to know anything about what's really going on. I'm at a dead end here.

CHARLES

My position from this afternoon still stands.

LILLY

I'm more capable than you think I am. I'll do anything.

Charles pauses. Two volunteers take the stage to announce the lottery winner.

CHARLES

Get Elton John to come perform for us, and I'll tell you what I know.

Lilly opens her mouth, but no words come out.

VOLUNTEER

Ticket number 41319.

CHARLES

That's me.

He rises to claim his prize.

CHARLES

Elton John, Lilly. Then I'll tell you everything you wanna know.

INT VA MEETING ROOM DAY

Lilly organizes a performance by an Elton John impersonator and draws a crowd. She pulls the squeamish IMPERSONATOR (20) aside backstage.

LILLY

Do exactly what I told you.

IMPERSONATOR

I don't think it's gonna work, ma'am. I've only been doing this for two days.

LILLY

Listen, I paid you already, so get out there and do your job.

Lilly finds Charles in the audience.

CHARLES

There's no way. It hasn't even been 24 hours.

LILLY

Ladies and gentlemen, Elton John.

A rendition of "ROCKET MAN" BLARES from the speakers. The other veterans are in on the joke. They perform as backup singers and instrumentalists.

CHARLES

You're slippery.

LILLY

It's part of the job.

CHARLES

Not good enough. I said Elton John, not their look-alikes. I'm a man of my word.

LILLY

He is Elton John. They legally changed their names.

CHARLES

Slippery.

LILLY

I kept my end of the deal. Your turn.

The performers SCREECH a chorus.

CHARLES

That's awful. Let's get outta here.

INT MEDICAL BAY DAY

Charles and Lilly walk past Maddie's front desk.

CHARLES

His name is Dr. Nguyen. Everything started going haywire when he announced the new clinical trial drug.

A commotion echoes from the file room behind Maddie's desk. Andrew thuds a cardboard "laid-off" box on the table.

ANDREW

You can fire me, but you can't shut me up. You're traitors, all of you. I don't know how you can live with yourselves.

Lilly presses "REC" on her recorder. Andrew scoops up his box and marches out of the office. He freezes as he passes Dr. Witt.

ANDREW

You, sir, are a fraud and a disgrace.

He turns and marches out the doors. Dr. Witt, unfazed, turns to a SECURITY GUARD (30).

DR. WITT

Make sure we get his badge back.

He turns to Maddie.

DR. WITT

Pull his file.

Maddie nods and heads not to the file room, but to Dr. Witt's office. Lilly and Charles slip past the front desk into a hallway.

CHARLES

It's all in a brown leather notebook.

LILLY

And your sources are trustworthy.

CHARLES

He was the best.

LILLY

Was?

CHARLES

We lost him in surgery last week.

Lilly's eyes widen in understanding.

CHARLES

They blamed it on heart failure.

LILLY
But it's slippery.

CHARLES
Or worse.

INT CLINIC DAY

Lilly, dressed in scrubs, procures a map of the clinic and traces her way to Dr. Nguyen's office. She sidles past the SECRETARY (45).

SECRETARY
If you're looking for a building, I can point you in the right direction.

LILLY
I'm a new intern in Dr. Witt's office, he sent me here to grab an employee file. She transferred from this office last week.

SECRETARY
I'm not authorized to release employee information, but I can check with my boss. He's the only one with the key to our file room. I'll just need your ID.

LILLY
It's no problem. I'll ask Dr. Witt to request a fax.

Lilly walks toward Dr. Nguyen's office. Hallways clear, she ducks into his empty office. Every surface is spotless, sparkling, sterile. No file cabinets or keys in sight.

A stack of mail beckons from his table. Lilly fans out the letters. Nothing.

She spots a page with a list of names. The veterans' names are highlighted. Just as she picks it up, Dr. Nguyen appears in the doorway.

DR. NGUYEN
Lilly. What a pleasant surprise.

Lilly jumps and sputters.

LILLY
 Surprise, yes. Surprise! Just
 passing through to say hello. Dr.
 Witt said I should meet you.

Dr. Nguyen eases to his desk.

DR. NGUYEN
 I hear you're investigating ethics
 violations at the VA hospital.

LILLY
 Of sorts.

DR. NGUYEN
 I would say tampering in a private
 office is an ethics violation in
 itself.

LILLY
 I wouldn't call it tampering if
 it's operating for the greater
 good.

DR. NGUYEN
 Not a great start.

Charles bangs his walker against Dr. Witt's door frame.

CHARLES
 Pardon me, I'm still learning how
 to aim this darned thing. Lilly,
 we've been waiting for you.

LILLY
 Charles, no, I went to look for
 you.

CHARLES
 Come, come, I have good news.

He turns to Dr. Nguyen.

CHARLES
 Please, excuse us.

The two hightail out of Dr. Nguyen's office. Lilly sinks
 into a chair by Charles' walker.

CHARLES
 That was your plan.

LILLY
I improvised.

CHARLES
You improvised. Now we don't have
the notebook and he's on to us.

LILLY
We don't know if he's on to us. You
stress too much, Charles.

She pulls out Dr. Nguyen's leather notebook and the list of
names.

CHARLES
If he's not on to us now, he sure
will be soon.

INT WITT MD STUDIOS DAY

Dr. Witt wraps up a segment on the gut microbiome.

DR. WITT
If you're not taking Witt
probiotics now, you better start
soon. Your body will thank you as
the fat melts away. We'll be right
back, a shocking reveal you don't
want to miss, right after the
break.

Audience applauds. The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (40) conducts the
set. Dr. Witt motions to Lilly. She hands him the notebook
and a list of names.

DR. WITT
Excellent work. If I hadn't watched
the whole thing unfold, I would've
said it was too easy.

LILLY
Couldn't have done it without your
help, sir. And Mr. Charles.

DR. WITT
Mr. Charles.

LILLY
Charles Avery, sir. He's the real
MVP here.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Thirty seconds to air.

DR. WITT
I see. Well, you can join me on stage at the end. It'd be a shame not to give credit where it's due.

LILLY
Sure. I'd be honored.

Dr. Witt motions to Maddie. She brings over a stack of forms and a MAKEUP ARTIST (30).

MADDIE
Sign the last page. Media release of consent, yada yada.

The makeup artist gives Lilly a few touch-ups. Lilly signs the bottom page without reading a word.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Ten seconds.

Cameras swivel as the commercial break ends. Dr. Witt hands notes to a PA (20). The AD counts down to air.

DR. WITT
Welcome back to WITT MD. For our next segment, I'd like to invite my colleague, Dr. Nguyen, to join us on stage.

Dr. Nguyen takes a seat across from Dr. Witt.

DR. WITT
Dr. Nguyen, a recent addition to the VA hospital, has already involved himself in some of our most important projects.

DR. NGUYEN
I've been honored to work with Dr. Witt on drug trials to combat macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Our hospital is the center of ground-breaking research that will change the lives of many.

DR. WITT
As a matter of fact, Dr. Nguyen's work has already changed the lives of many of his patients, some of

DR. WITT
whom are here today. Miguel,
Marcus, and Stephanie, come on out.

MIGUEL (35), MARCUS (50), and STEPHANIE (39) sit on a couch
across from Dr. Witt.

DR. WITT
All three of you were patients of
Dr. Nguyen's in the last two
months.

MIGUEL
Yes.
MARCUS
Yes.

STEPHANIE
I was.

DR. NGUYEN
They aren't my patients.

DR. WITT
And you've all experienced
life-altering complications after
he operated on you.

They nod in consent. Dr. Nguyen objects and whips his head
around in search of his assistant.

MIGUEL
Dr. Nguyen told me I was going in
for a cataract surgery and when I
woke up, my vision in my left eye
was gone.

MARCUS
We have reason to believe he was
conducting illegal testing of the
macular degeneration drug on
veterans before it was approved by
the FDA.

STEPHANIE
And we were the lucky ones. Others
died in surgery, and the record
attributed it to heart failure or
natural causes.

DR. NGUYEN
That's not true. None of that is
true. You have no evidence to
substantiate your claims.

Dr. Witt motions to a PA to bring out the leather notebook.

DR. WITT

Dr. Nguyen went to great lengths to make sure there was no evidence. All surgeries were performed after-hours with no digital record. No trail. Spotless.

DR. NGUYEN

I'm not going to sit here and be framed for a crime I did not commit. You're a monster. I'm calling my lawyer.

DR. WITT

He destroyed every shred of evidence. Everything, except for this notebook.

DR. NGUYEN

I've never seen that notebook in my life. Let me out of here.

Security GUARDS (30) swarm down the aisles toward the stage.

DR. WITT

This notebook contains meticulous notes of experimental trials-illegal trials on patients-veterans, no less.

OFFICER

Vincent Nguyen, you are under arrest for second-degree manslaughter, fraud, and attempted murder. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

Dr. Nguyen struggles as guards lead him backstage.

DR. NGUYEN

You can't do this, Eric. You're a thief and a liar.

PAs calm the crowd as Dr. Witt straightens his tie. As Dr. Nguyen passes Lilly, he stops to face her.

DR. NGUYEN

Don't make the same mistake as your father.

An OFFICER (30) shoves him forward.

DR. WITT
None of this would have been
possible without Lilly Tsang, our
investigative director and head of
media.

Lilly, stunned, stumbles onto the stage.

DR. WITT
As a thank you for her work, I've
invited her to join me and and
other rising stars for a good old
fashioned party at my penthouse.
What do you say, Lilly?

LILLY
It'd be an honor.

DR. WITT
That's all the time we have today,
join us tomorrow for the truth
about vaccines.

Lilly and Dr. Witt shake hands. The AD announces they're
wrapped. Dr. Witt hands Lilly two passes to his penthouse.

DR. WITT
My treat. See you tonight.

INT PENTHOUSE NIGHT

Elevator doors open to Dr. Witt's lavish penthouse floor.
Servers with hors d'oeuvres, disco lights on a dance floor,
infinity pool, he has it all. Lilly takes Daniel's arm as
they step out of the elevator.

DANIEL
I still don't know how you paid for
that dress. Or the limo. Or got
invited to this thing.

LILLY
Perks of the job, babe. This is me
making things up to you.

The EMCEE (25) takes the stage as the music fades.

EMCEE
Ladies and gentlemen, it is my
pleasure to introduce your host for
tonight, Dr. Eric Witt.

DR. WITT
I'm so glad you all could be here
tonight. Please help yourselves to
the food.

Lilly and Daniel load up their plates with food. Lilly holds
her plate out to Daniel.

LILLY
Hold on to this, please. I'll come
find you.

DANIEL
Not again.

LILLY
I was in a rush and forgot to pee.

DANIEL
Every time.

Lilly rushes toward a SERVER (20).

LILLY
Where are the restrooms?

The server gestures to the end of a hallway. Lilly hustles
as fast as her heels can take her past a row of doors. As
she passes the door before the restroom, it flies open. An
arm shoots out and yanks her into a dark electrical closet.

Lilly yells, but a hand clamps over her mouth. The lights
turn on to reveal Andrew and a bag of electrical tools.
Lilly wrestles him off and lunges for the door handle.

ANDREW
It's locked.

Lilly twists the knob and pulls with all her might. It's
locked. She whips around to face Andrew.

ANDREW
I'm not here to hurt you.

LILLY
You're the one Dr. Witt fired.

ANDREW
Yes. You're the one who accused an
innocent man of murder.

He turns to check the supercomputer. A screen attached to a
USB drive flashes red and reads "SERVER UPLOAD FAILED."

ANDREW

Rats.

LILLY

I found his notebook. It had everything.

ANDREW

How do you know it wasn't planted there for you to find?

Lilly bangs on the door to the hallway. Andrew pulls out a folder of papers from his bag.

ANDREW

You signed these your first day.

LILLY

How did you get those?

ANDREW

Doesn't matter. Read them.

He turns to drill open the electrical box. The only other way in is a fingerprint and retina scan.

LILLY

"I hereby acknowledge and approve all clinical testing conducted at Witt Medical Center." These aren't employment forms.

ANDREW

No, they aren't. You signed your life away to be their fall person.

Lilly slumps to the floor. Andrew's drill fails to make a dent.

LILLY

No. You're lying.

ANDREW

How do you think he pays for the TV studio? The fancy office building? The private islands? This penthouse? No doctor makes that much money from seeing patients.

LILLY

I'm not even medical personnel. I have no relevant credentials.

ANDREW
Doesn't matter.

LILLY
It matters in court. This would
never hold up.

Andrew's watch screen lights up with the warning "PERSONNEL
APPROACHING. 100 METERS." He scrambles to throw equipment in
his bag.

ANDREW
The only court Eric Witt cares
about is the court of public
opinion. That's what counts. He's a
media genius with enough cash to
buy off or blackmail anyone in his
way. We have to get out of here.

He shoves an electrical shorting device in Lilly's hands.

LILLY
And I signed up to be his
scapegoat.

ANDREW
It's not too late to change that.

LILLY
Give me one reason why I should
believe you.

ANDREW
I watched him kill a patient to
test an unapproved drug. I can't
let that happen again. Also, you're
screwed and I'm your only way out.

LILLY
Tell me what to do.

Andrew's watch flashes "PERSONNEL APPROACHING. 50 METERS."
He points at the USB drive in the supercomputer and the
electrical box.

ANDREW
This bug can't hack the system
unless it does a full reboot. I
can't force a reboot without
cutting the power to the floor.

LILLY
I plug this into a socket to short
the power, it reboots, and your bug
hacks the system.

Andrew gestures at his watch and the closet door unlocks.
Lilly reaches to open it.

ANDREW
Not any socket. The only one that
will work is in the center console
in his booth.

LILLY
Someone's coming.

ANDREW
You have to plug it into that
socket.

LILLY
I'll figure it out.

Lilly flings open the door and slips into the hallway.

INT PENTHOUSE HALLWAY NIGHT

Daniel turns the corner into the hallway. Lilly stuffs the
device into her clutch.

DANIEL
The restroom's that way.

LILLY
I know. Saw a closet and had to fix
a wedgie.

DANIEL
You were gone so long I thought you
got lost. Or eaten by a tiger.

LILLY
No tiger, just cramps. A tiger
clawing its way through my uterus.
Let's go.

They return to the main room. Daniel leads her toward their
table. Lilly spots Dr. Witt's booth.

LILLY
I want you to meet somebody.

DANIEL
Your food is cold.

Lilly pulls him toward the booth. He resists.

LILLY
It's fine. Not hungry.

DANIEL
You're never not hungry. What's
going on, Lilly?

Lilly KNOCKS on the side of the booth and interrupts Dr.
Witt and two starstruck YUPPIES (20s).

DR. WITT
Lilly, so glad you could make it.

LILLY
Dr. Witt, this is my knight in
shining armor, Daniel Lee.

DANIEL
It's an honor to meet you.

They shake hands. Lilly scans the booth for the socket.
Nothing in sight, only a chic black table.

LILLY
Looks like a party in here. I hope
it's not too crowded to join.

YUPPIE 1
It's too crowded.

DANIEL
It's OK, we were just stopping by.

He pulls her away. Lilly grasps onto the booth. Dr. Witt
waves good-bye.

LILLY
I did just catch a murderer. That
should at least earn me a spot at
the table.

Daniel shrinks back, appalled. Dr. Witt gets out from the
booth.

DR. WITT
There's room for two. You sit
inside.

DANIEL

I couldn't. I'll be at the bar.

Lilly slides into the booth. Before Dr. Witt sits down, she sticks her head under the table to check for a socket. Nothing.

DR. WITT

There's no gum under there, I hope.

LILLY

No outlet, either. My phone's at two percent.

YUPPIE 1

Your poor boyfriend.

YUPPIE 2

I have a power bank.

Yuppie 2 hands Lilly a power bank. Dr. Witt slides into the booth and presses a hidden button. A wall panel sinks back and a brick of six sockets slides onto the table.

DR. WITT

Here's the cool part about being rich. Charge away.

Lilly opens her clutch. The device looks nothing like a charger. Yuppie 1 puts her drink on the table.

LILLY

Your drink looks amazing. Let me see it.

Yuppie 1 pulls the drink away. Lilly reaches and knocks it over. Liquid spills over the sockets. Dr. Witt and Yuppie 2 leap out of the booth. Lilly plunges the device into the center socket. Nothing. Before Dr. Witt can turn back, she points at the bar.

LILLY

There's a towel.

Dr. Witt lunges for the towel. Lilly plugs the socket to the left. Nothing. She plugs the one to the right. Dr. Witt turns back.

The lights flicker and go black.

INT RECREATION ROOM DAY

Lilly, Charles, and Athol gather around Andrew and his computer screen. Johnny and Caspar rally at the ping-pong table.

LILLY
Tell me it worked.

ANDREW
It kind of worked.

ATHOL
Remind me why this man is here.

Lilly leads Athol and Charles back to their seats. She catches Johnny's ball in mid-air.

LILLY
We got the wrong guy.

CHARLES
That's impossible. We found the notebook.

LILLY
It was planted. Dr. Nguyen is innocent.

Johnny rallies with a new ball. Lilly catches it before it gets to Caspar.

JOHNNY
This doesn't concern us. Give it back.

LILLY
This is important. A man died for this.

JOHNNY
Men die for a lot of things.

Athol snatches the paddles from their hands. Andrew recoils from his computer. Lilly draws a diagram of Dr. Witt's building on a dry erase board.

ATHOL
They don't have to die in vain.

ANDREW
Last night, at Dr. Witt's party, Lilly and I planted a bug in Dr. Witt's software system.

LILLY

Dr. Witt is a fraud and a murderer.

Johnny and Caspar return to their seats. She has their attention.

LILLY

He runs unapproved clinical trials under the table for pharmaceutical companies. Your macular degeneration drug is no exception.

ANDREW

When Lilly let slip she received a tip from the VA, Dr. Witt set up Dr. Nguyen and planted the notebook in his office for her to find.

LILLY

And made me the fall person in case he's ever exposed.

The diagram on the board expands to a 3D model of Dr. Witt's building.

ANDREW

Dr. Witt would never keep a physical notebook. All his files are stored in a private server room in the floor below his penthouse.

The 3D model zooms to a room of supercomputers. All but four supercomputers turn a pale color.

ANDREW

The bug we planted in his system gives me eyes to unimportant controls: elevators, kitchen ovens, lights. What we need is in here.

One of the four supercomputers blinks red.

ANDREW

This is Dr. Witt's red book. All his experiments, offshore accounts, hush money, it's all here.

CHARLES

Just get your bug to hack it too.

LILLY

It's not that simple. These supercomputers have extra walls of

LILLY
security. The only way to retrieve
data is to download it in person.

The model zooms out to show the hallway to the server room.
A badge floats to an electronic reader.

ANDREW
To access floor, you need an
electronic badge.

LILLY
Only two maintenance staff, one
technician, and Dr. Witt can access
this floor.

The model zooms in to the door to the server room. A retina
scanner and microphone extend from the wall.

ANDREW
In addition to the badge, there's a
retina scanner and voice
identification. If you fail more
than three times, you're zapped.

The model simulates an alarm. The lock electrocutes the
perpetrator. Simulated security guards swarm the hallway.
The diagram fades back to Lilly's drawing.

ATHOL
This red book in the server room is
enough to put away Dr. Witt.

ANDREW
I am sure of it.

JOHNNY
We have to get it before he injects
the drug in fifty people at MEDCon.

LILLY
And MEDCon is tomorrow.

Julia rolls in boxes of ping pong balls.

JULIA
Y'all are here early. We kept
losing balls, so I bought them in
bulk. This should last us a while.

CHARLES
It's impossible.

JULIA

I know. It's a lot, but they were on sale.

LILLY

Not if we work together. Julia, I need to borrow Charles for today.

CHARLES

For an interview. I'm telling her all about our glasses.

INT COMMUNITY CENTER DAY

A crowd gathers around the stage. A banner reads "WELCOME MISS AMERICA." Lilly guides Charles by the stage ramp. PEYTON JAMES (20), Miss America, waves and the HOST (40) takes the mic.

HOST

One more round of applause for Miss America, Ms. Peyton James. If you would like to meet Miss America, she will be making her way around the room shortly.

Peyton descends the ramps and shakes hands with veterans. Charles taps a button on the side of his glasses.

CHARLES

You're sure this will work.

LILLY

We'll find out.

Peyton approaches Charles and Lilly. Charles clasps her hands in a handshake.

CHARLES

Tell me your name one more time, young lady.

PEYTON

Peyton James, sir.

Charles taps the side of his glasses twice. He looks her in the eye.

CHARLES

I'd love to get a picture with you. For my granddaughter, of course.

Charles hands Lilly his phone. She snaps a picture. Peyton moves on to the next person.

Lilly checks her phone. Peyton's retinal scan appears on her screen. She taps the scan. The recording of Peyton stating her name plays back.

LILLY

It works. Now for the real deal.

HOST

We'd like to thank our sponsor for this event, Dr. Eric Witt.

The crowd applauds as Dr. Witt steps onto the podium. He's wearing his glasses today.

DR. WITT

Thank you all for coming. Hope you all tune in to MEDCon tomorrow for exciting news.

CHARLES

I can't ask him what his name is.

Dr. Witt walks down the ramp on the opposite side of the stage from Charles. Lilly shoves through the crowd to lead Charles to him.

Charles taps his glasses and reaches for Dr. Witt.

CHARLES

Thank you for putting this together. Doctor Aaron, is it?

DR. WITT

Eric. You're welcome.

CHARLES

Eric. Doctor Eric Twitt.

DR. WITT

Witt.

A beat.

CHARLES

Dr. Twitt, I would love to take a picture with you. To show my family I've met someone famous.

He hands his phone to Lilly. No retina scan appears.

DR. WITT

Lilly, I haven't seen you since the party. The power outage was bizarre.

LILLY

Bizarre indeed. Your glasses cause a glare in the photo. Let's try without them.

Dr. Witt hangs his glasses on his shirt. Charles pats him on the arm to hold his gaze.

DR. WITT

When we looked into it, the outage was caused by our booth.

LILLY

Must've been the drink I spilled. I'm sorry. Got the picture, Mr. Charles.

INT VA BREAK ROOM DAY

Maria and two janitors, MACK (50) and MOSES (45), rest by the table. Maria punches her selection into the vending machine. She reaches for cash. Lilly slips two dollars into the machine from the machine.

MARIA

You scared me.

LILLY

Snacks on me today.

Mack and Moses turn around.

LILLY

For Maria. Sorry.

Lilly leads Maria out of earshot.

LILLY

I'm sorry Dr. Witt yelled at you in his office the other day.

MARIA

Wasn't your fault. He's not the best, but we do our job, and he pays us.

LILLY
Your job includes cleaning the
floor with the computers.

MARIA
I take turns with my boss.

LILLY
I have a favor to ask you.

Mack and Moses eavesdrop as they walk past. Lilly pauses
until they're gone and pulls out an envelope of cash.

LILLY
It's about your ID. My friends and
I need to borrow it just for
tonight.

Maria counts the cash. She tucks the envelope under her arm.

MARIA
I don't know what you're talking
about.

LILLY
I'm going to need that back.

MARIA
I'm going on break.

Maria turns back to the break room. Lilly spins her around
to face her.

LILLY
Please, Maria. I'll do anything.
Whatever you want. Spa
certificates, coffee for a month,
I'll even take your shift.

Maria's gaze falls to Lilly's Jimmy Choos. Lilly falls back.

LILLY
No. Not those.

MARIA
You said anything. You finish my
shift and I get your shoes. That's
my price.

Maria returns to the break room table. Lilly squirms. It's a
big price to pay. She catches sight of Johnny and Charles
practicing ping-pong through the recreation room window.

LILLY

They gave up their sight. Their
friends gave up their lives. I can
do this.

Lilly slips off her heels and hugs them tight. She goes to
find Maria.

LILLY

This plan better work.

Maria secures a maintenance vest around Lilly. She rolls out
the cleaning cart and supplies. Lilly checks herself in the
mirror.

LILLY

I'm going to need a hat.

Maria pulls out a landscaper's sun hat with cloth around the
edges.

MARIA

It's all we have. Take out trash,
mop floors, wipe mirrors and sinks
in the BRU rooms.

LILLY

Fourteen rooms. I can do this.

Lilly cleans the inpatient bathrooms. She fails to lock the
cleaning cart and it rolls down the hallway. She chases it
down and locks it in front of the bathroom.

One bathroom stench is too much. She revisits it after
cleaning the next bathroom.

Johnny comes in as Lilly cleans his bathroom. He makes fun
of her hat and throws extra paper towels on the floor. She
shoos him away.

The cart's trash can fills as Lilly cleans. She forgets the
cart is locked and pushes too hard. The trash can falls over
and trash spills onto the floor. Lilly gathers it back into
the trash can and mops the floor.

Finished, she pushes the cart back to Maria in the break
room.

LILLY

I don't know how you do that every
day.

MARIA

Now you know. It's hard. My ID is
in the locker.

Maria opens the locker. It's empty. Lilly falls back into a
chair. Moses dangles the keys.

MOSES

My job is hard too.

LILLY

It better be quick.

Lilly helps Moses trim the shrubs outside the building. She
wipes her sweat with the cloth on the hat. Johnny takes a
picture of Lilly in her hat.

Lilly makes a dip in the straight line of shrubs. Moses
makes her level it by trimming the rest of the line. They
finish, and Moses hands over the ID badge.

MARIA

If it's not back in the locker by
tomorrow morning, I'll make sure
you do this for the rest of the
year.

Lilly salutes in understanding and puts the badge in her
pocket.

INT COUGAR HABITAT NIGHT

Dr. Witt glides past and inspects his five cougar
enclosures. Each is lavishly equipped with trees, fish
ponds, cougar hammocks, and waterfalls. The floor doubles as
a lab space.

DR. WITT

My darlings.

The first three cougars pace by the viewing window. The last
two lie by the pond. The fifth cougar is ill.

Dr. Witt records data on his tablet. He inspects the first
cougar.

DR. WITT

Subject #136. Five days since last
oral administration. Behavior
normal. No change apparent.

The second cougar paws at the window. It bites the glass to no avail. Dr. Witt presses a button on his tablet. A sliding door opens in the second enclosure to reveal a hunk of meat. The cougar abandons the window for its meal.

DR. WITT
Subject #137. Five days since
intravenous administration.
Irritable and destructive behavior.
Monitor closely.

The third cougar goes berserk at the sight of Dr. Witt. It throws itself against the glass and foams at the mouth. Its claws pierce the glass. Dr. Witt's fingers fly on the tablet. A gun appears from the enclosure ceiling and shoot a tranquilizer at the cougar. It falls back.

DR. WITT
Subject #138. No longer useful for
future study. Subject terminated.
Note to self, tell Maddie to get
two new cats.

A CLUNK resounds through the air conditioning vents. Dr. Witt freezes. He checks the windows. Nothing unusual sighted.

DR. WITT
OK Witt Med. Run system
diagnostics. Sweep floor with
thermal cameras. Report anomalies
immediately.

Dr. Witt spots the dying fifth cougar.

DR. WITT
Subject #140. Twenty days after
oral administration. Subject
lethargic, weak. Dosage trial.
successful.

He rests his hand on the glass.

DR. WITT
If it's strong enough for you, it's
strong enough for them.

INT RECREATION ROOM DAY

Andrew gapes at his monitor and waves Lilly, Charles, and Johnny over.

ANDREW

The man has real live cougars.

LILLY

We already knew he was crazy.

JOHNNY

That's a whole new crazy bracket.

Lilly boots up Andrew's machine. A hologram of Dr. Witt's retinal scan projects into the air.

LILLY

Andrew, tell me you pieced together his voice from the Miss America event.

ANDREW

I pieced it together, but it won't work. He needs to say his first and last name together. It's like he's purposely avoiding it.

Johnny sits and finishes tying knots on a leather bag he's making for his goddaughter. Charles turns on the recreation room TV to the WITT MD show.

CHARLES

Surely he says it on his show.

ANDREW

Nope. I've scrubbed every episode.

DR. WITT (V.O.)

Welcome to WITT MD. I'm Dr. Witt, but you can call me Eric. I'm kidding, call me Dr. Witt.

ANDREW

Told you.

Charles switches the TV off. Lilly grabs the recreation room phone.

LILLY

It must be in his voice mail message.

ANDREW

As if he would leave his own message. Tried it already. It's his nosy assistant Maddie.

MADDIE (V.O.)

You've reached the office of Dr. Eric Witt. Sorry we missed your call.

Lilly hangs up the phone and dials again.

ANDREW

I tried all the numbers.

Lilly puts the phone down. She pokes Johnny.

LILLY

I hope you're close with your goddaughter.

INT DR. WITT'S CLINIC DAY

Johnny holds his goddaughter JEMIMA's (10) hand. He hands her a sour gummy worm.

JOHNNY

Let's go over the two questions one more time.

JEMIMA

No. I can remember two things.

JOHNNY

Just to be sure, Jemmie.

JEMIMA

I say, "How do you say your whole name? Everybody always gets mine wrong." And then I ask him whatever I want.

Johnny gives her a high five.

JOHNNY

Excellent. You're a good girl.

JEMIMA

And then you take me to get ice cream.

JOHNNY

As long as you don't tell your mother.

Johnny and Jemima approach Maddie's desk. She leans over to greet Jemima.

MADDIE

How can I help you today, little lady?

JEMIMA

I want to be a doctor when I grow up.

JOHNNY

She wants to ask Dr. Witt a few questions for a school project. Please see if he can spare two minutes.

Dr. Witt emerges from his office.

MADDIE

I'm sorry, sweetie, but he can't see you today. Dr. Witt is a very busy man.

DR. WITT

Not too busy to greet a future doctor.

Dr. Witt squats down to shake Jemima's hand. Jemima holds out a mini microphone. Johnny keeps his head down.

DR. WITT

I hear you have some questions for me.

JEMIMA

What is your long name? My whole name is Jemima Maranatha Herrera and everybody gets it wrong.

DR. WITT

That is a long one. My name is not as complicated as yours, it's Eric Jason Witt. But when you're a doctor, people just call you Dr. Witt or Doc.

JEMIMA

Why do you have cougars?

JOHNNY

On the wall. Why do you have
cougars on the wall? I personally
prefer tigers. More fierce.

Dr. Witt stands to get a better look at Johnny. Johnny grabs Jemima's hand and they hightail it out of the clinic. Jemima waves goodbye to Dr. Witt.

INT RECREATION ROOM DAY

Johnny hands the miniature microphone off to Andrew. He gives Jemima a piggy-back ride while Andrew checks the audio.

ANDREW

We got it, folks.

Lilly, Johnny, Charles, and Athol cheer. They all high-five Jemima.

ATHOL

You're a superstar.

JEMIMA

You can all buy me ice cream.

LILLY

We did it. Retina scan, ID badge,
voice recognition and all.

Andrew closes down the equipment and waves everyone to the door.

ANDREW

Not yet. This all has to work.
Everyone go home and get some rest.
Big day tomorrow.

EXT APARTMENT NIGHT

Lilly steps out of Daniel's car and wipes ice cream from her mouth.

LILLY

I needed that.

DANIEL
Rough day on the job, huh.

LILLY
You have no idea. Come up and have
some coffee with me.

Daniel turns off his engine and stands on the curb. Lilly
waltzes to her door.

LILLY
Come on, slow poke.

DANIEL
Lilly, we need to talk.

She freezes on the steps. Daniel motions for her to join him
by the car.

LILLY
I've been a terrible girlfriend
lately. I know it's unfair to you
and I'm sorry. As soon as this is
over, I'm all yours.

DANIEL
We both know that's not true. As
soon as this is over, something new
will start. This is not the first
time, Lilly.

She turns to face him.

LILLY
I know it's not new. We foresaw
this before we decided to give us a
shot.

DANIEL
And you promised to make our
relationship a priority.

LILLY
And you promised to understand and
be supportive of my career.

DANIEL
I've been nothing but supportive.
Don't get me wrong. I love
supporting your work and you
deserve all the recognition in the
world.

LILLY

But.

But each time I sacrifice my time to support your work, it feels like it's expected instead of something meaningful. It's supposed to be a two-way street.

LILLY

You know I appreciate you.

DANIEL

That's the thing. I don't know anymore.

She takes his hands. He shrugs her off.

LILLY

We can work things out. I'll do better.

Daniel isn't convinced.

DANIEL

You've said it too many times. Show me you can do better. Until then, I think I need some time apart to think this through.

Lilly stares at him, stunned. He slides back into his car.

LILLY

Don't go. Please.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, Lilly. I can't do this anymore.

He drives off. Lilly rushes into her apartment and sinks onto her couch. A picture frame of her with her father smiles down from a shelf. Lilly moves it to the table.

LILLY

"You're a superstar, Lilly. I'll see you soon." Those were the last words you said to me. You were wrong about both. I'm no superstar, and I definitely didn't see you soon.

Lilly sobs into a pillow. Her calico cat comes to comfort her.

LILLY
I'm not going to fail you, dad. I'm
going to make things right. I
promise.

INT VAN DAY

Lilly, Andrew, Charles, and Johnny make final preparations in a van outside WITT TOWER. Andrew straps an equipment belt onto Lilly. He pats each item as he places it in the belt. Charles taps his foot, a nervous tick.

ANDREW
Map of the servers. The one you
want should be bottom center left.

LILLY
You'll tell me which one, though.

ANDREW
Yes. Retina hologram is here. So is
microphone and USB drive.

He pats her right pocket.

LILLY
Remind me why you can't be the one
to go to the server room.

ANDREW
Dr. Witt put my face in the
security system. If the cameras see
me anywhere in the building, I
don't want to know what will
happen. Full lock down at best.

LILLY
He'd probably sic his cougars on
you.

Andrew hands Lilly a mini earpiece. She tucks it in her
hear.

ANDREW
You're all set.

Lilly fist bumps everyone in the van and marches into the
lobby.

ANDREW
Go get 'em cougar.

LILLY
I'm not a cougar.

ANDREW
That came out wrong.

Lilly hits the button for the maintenance elevator. A
CONCIERGE (30) stops her.

CONCIERGE
Ma'am, you need special access for
the elevator.

LILLY
I have access.

Lilly waves the badge. The concierge points at a wall
scanner.

CONCIERGE
You'll want to scan that there.

LILLY
Right.

She scans the badge. It beeps red. DENIED. She scans it
again. DENIED. The concierge talks into her walkie-talkie.
Lilly prays to the heavens.

CONCIERGE
First floor security, we need some
assistance by the mechanical lift.

LILLY
This always happens. Third time's
the charm.

Lilly scans it again. Green. The elevator doors open. The
concierge bows. Lilly pushes the button for the
seventy-fourth floor.

The elevator doors open to a plain hallway with a single
door. Lilly takes out the retina hologram. She points it at
the scanner. The hologram flashes in her eye.

LILLY
Wrong way. Ow.

She turns the hologram around. It works. Lilly presses play
on the voice recording. No sound. She bangs it on her hip.
Still no sound.

LILLY

Andrew. Voice recorder doesn't work.

ANDREW

Make sure it's turned on.

LILLY

Of course it's turned on. I'm not an idiot.

Lilly double checks the ON/OFF switch. The switch is OFF. She flicks it to ON.

DR. WITT (V.O.)

Eric Jason Witt.

The door to the server room swings open. Lilly tiptoes in and closes the door behind her.

LILLY

Never mind. I'm in.

The rows upon rows of supercomputers in a fluorescent white room disorient her sense of direction. Lilly pulls out the map. She follows it to where the left center server should be. She looks up. It's not here. Instead of a six-foot computer system, there is nothing.

LILLY

Andrew, we have a problem.

The power goes out. Lilly's earpiece goes out.

LILLY

Andrew, you there? The power's out. Hello?

The lights flicker back on. Lilly looks right into the face of Dr. Witt. He holds up Andrew's blackout device.

DR. WITT

Curious thing. Found it in my booth after you left.

Lilly makes a run for it. Dr. Witt shoots a taser. Lilly falls to the floor.

DR. WITT

Wouldn't run if I were you. You won't get very far.

LILLY

So it is you. The world-renowned physician, the miracle worker, it's all a sham.

DR. WITT

It am a physician. I have done what people call miracles. Perhaps not in the method that they believed.

LILLY

You kill people for money.

DR. WITT

I study people for the greater good. To improve medical treatment. I've made greater strides in my lab in the last year than the FDA has in a decade.

LILLY

At what cost? You can't get away with this forever. We know the truth.

DR. WITT

If you think you and your ragtag team of heroes can stop me, you're mistaken. This scheme of yours has been fun to watch. The Miss America photo, Johnny's goddaughter. Cute. But the fun and games are over.

Dr. Witt signals to the guards. They handcuff Lilly and cover her head with a soundproof helmet. She fails to wrestle them away.

DR. WITT

I have MEDCon to attend to. Too bad I won't see you there. Throw her in with the rest.

INT COUGAR LAB DAY

The guards toss Lilly into an empty cougar habitat. Andrew, Charles, and Johnny raise their heads from the back corner. They too are bound and gagged.

GUARD 1

No funny business, or we'll feed you to the cats.

GUARD 2

The last guy lasted less than a minute.

The door CLANGS shut. Andrew wriggles to remove the mouth gag. It doesn't budge. Lilly waddles to Charles and Johnny. She notices a buckle the gag. Andrew lifts his head back to bash the gag against the rock. Lilly and Charles CRY out in alarm. Johnny tackles Andrew to the ground.

With her hands tied, the only way Lilly can access Andrew's buckle is to sit on his back. Andrew's not a fan. Lilly finds the buckle and undoes Andrew's gag. They release him.

ANDREW

You didn't have to sit on me. Turn around.

He turns so their backs face each other. He fails to find the buckle. He After five configurations, Lilly loses patience and lies down.

ANDREW

I had it.

Johnny threatens to tackle him again. Andrew concedes and undoes her gag. They turn to Johnny and Charles.

ANDREW

We can't sit on them.

LILLY

It will if we each take one side.

They ungag Charles and Johnny. Andrew finds a rock and rubs the cords binding his hands against it. Lilly and the veterans follow suit.

LILLY

I'm sorry I let you down.

CHARLES

It's not your fault.

LILLY

It is my fault. If I hadn't pushed Dr. Witt about the tip, he wouldn't have caught on to your case.

CHARLES

You don't know that.

Half of Andrew's cord snaps.

LILLY

If I had been more thorough, Dr. Nguyen wouldn't be in jail. If I hadn't left the blackout device in Dr. Witt's booth, he wouldn't have found us in the server room.

Andrew breaks free of his restraints and climbs the rock to examine the ceiling of the enclosure.

LILLY

I've ruined everything good in my life, my old job, my new job, my friends, my boyfriend. And now I'm the reason we're going to be eaten by cougars.

LILLY devolves into sobs. Andrew rips the tranquilizer gun from the ceiling tile.

CHARLES

The first day you came to mobility training I thought you were just another self-absorbed, naive young reporter there to sensationalize a story. I didn't trust you then.

LILLY

You had good reason not to.

CHARLES

And I have every reason to trust you now. You didn't walk into the VA by accident. You saw the lead and you chased it. You believed we were worth fighting for, and you didn't walk away. This is the closest we've come to taking this monster down. We can't give up now.

LILLY

What if I screw it up again?

CHARLES

Then we've got your back.

LILLY

That makes me just like him. Putting innocent lives on the line for a chance at success.

CHARLES

There's a difference between teamwork and tyranny. Teammates sacrifice, tyrants subjugate. Dr. Witt cannot be allowed to work in darkness. People deserve to know the truth. That's why you got into this business in the first place. To bring the truth to light.

LILLY

You're right.

Andrew leaps down, tranquilizer gun in hand. He unties them.

ANDREW

Took you long enough.

JOHNNY

Time to bust out of here.

LILLY

We're trapped.

ANDREW

Oh ye of little faith.

Andrew pulls out the blackout device and points at the door.

ANDREW

This will short the system from the wire in the ceiling. The door unlocks, and we run for our lives.

CHARLES

Son, I'm seventy-three years old.

LILLY

We'll cart you out of here.

ANDREW

There's one problem.

LILLY

The other enclosures unlock too.

JOHNNY

We have a gun, two fire extinguishers by the exit, and each other. They're just cats.

LILLY
Hungry cats.

ANDREW
It's now or never. On the count of
three. One. Two. Three.

Andrew jams the device into the ceiling. The lab goes black and the emergency lights turn on. The door clicks open. They run out. Charles and Johnny hop on a cart.

Two cougar habitats are empty. Lilly throws Johnny a fire extinguisher and grabs one for herself. Andrew opens the lab door. A cougar leaps out toward Charles. Andrew shoots it with the tranquilizer gun. It falls back. Andrew punches the elevator button.

LILLY
The power's out, genius.

Lilly uses the fire extinguisher to knock the lock off an electrical box. The enclosure doors open, and guards head toward them. Johnny fends off the second cougar with a fire extinguisher. Lilly flips the electrical switch. Nothing. She flips it again. No effect.

ANDREW
The blackout device.

Andrew sprints back to the enclosure and tears the device from the ceiling tile. Lilly flips the switch again. Lights power on. A guard tackles Andrew. Andrew shoots him with his last tranquilizer and waves Lilly, Charles, and Johnny on.

ANDREW
Go. I'll hold them off.

Johnny and Lilly use what's left in the fire extinguishers to obscure themselves. They push off on the cart with Charles into the elevator. The doors close on Andrew as he keeps the guards at bay.

The elevator doors open to the lobby. They walk out, covered in baking soda. The concierge runs over in alarm.

LILLY
Air vents. Really gross.

INT RECREATION ROOM DAY

Lilly regroups with Charles, Johnny, Caspar, and Athol. Johnny practices with the ping pong machine to help him think straight. Lilly locks the door behind them. Athol helps Charles tend his wounds with a first aid kit.

LILLY

Something doesn't add up. If Dr. Witt knew we wouldn't find the private server, he could have just let us come up empty.

CHARLES

He had to make sure we didn't break in anywhere else.

LILLY

He was afraid we already knew where it was. He needed us out of the way.

Johnny misses a ball. It rolls with twenty others on the floor.

ATHOL

Those are tripping hazards. I refuse to die by slipping on a ping pong ball.

JOHNNY

Andrew said the server floor is the most secure place in the building. Only the most trusted cleaning staff have access.

LILLY

His office.

CHARLES

I've seen his office. Nothing but certificates and trophies.

LILLY

Trophies. That's it. I know where the red book is.

The machine runs out of balls to feed. Johnny takes a box of balls from the wall and dumps it into the machine's reservoir.

CHARLES

This is our last shot. You better be sure.

LILLY

When I was in his office, Maria came in to dust the trophies. When she got to a particular shelf, he got antsy and sent her out. When I reached up to grab one of the obelisk trophies, he freaked out and almost tackled me.

CASPAR

You think the drive with the red book is in the trophy.

LILLY

I know the trophy has something to do with it.

ATHOL

That's a long shot.

LILLY

It's the only shot we have.

Charles bandages his last cut and shuts the first aid kit.

CHARLES

It's impossible to get in. His minion Maddie guards that place like a hawk. Like several cougars.

CASPAR

Between the five of us, we should be able to hold her off.

ATHOL

There are security guards.

LILLY

As long as we can keep them out of the office long enough for me to get the drive.

Johnny misses another shot. It rolls to Lilly's feet. The team looks at the towers of ping pong balls on the wall.

INT DR. WITT'S CLINIC DAY

Lilly, Johnny, and Caspar push a cart loaded with twenty boxes of ping pong balls. They halt just out of Maddie's view. On the opposite side of her desk, Athol and Charles take their places with their walkers. Maddie types away on her desktop.

Charles fakes a fall. Athol CRIES out.

ATHOL

Somebody help! I think he's having
a heart attack.

Maddie turns toward them and grabs the phone to call for help. Lilly, Johnny, and Caspar sneak the cart past her desk into Dr. Witt's hallway. Maddie's screen flashes
"UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL IN HALLWAY."

Dr. Witt's minimalist door betrays no handle or door knob. Lilly pushes on one side. It's locked. Johnny and Caspar each grab a box of ping pong balls and position themselves at the ready. Lilly pulls Maria's badge out from under her shirt and waves it at the door. Nothing.

LILLY

Only an egotistical, psychopathic
maniac could mess up a door. Dr.
Eric Witt, to think I wanted to
work for you.

The door beeps green at the sound of Dr. Witt's name. Lilly delivers a kick to the edge of the frame. The door swivels open from the middle. Lilly sprints to the trophy shelf to find the obelisk on a box.

Maddie returns to her desk. Her screen flashes an emergency red. "UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL IN OFFICE." She presses a button to call security. Alarms BLARE. She leaps over the counter and runs to Dr. Witt's office.

Lilly snatches the obelisk off the shelf and opens the box. It's empty. She holds the obelisk up to the light. Nothing unusual. She sets it back on the shelf and turns it ninety degrees right and left.

LILLY

There has to be a hidden panel
somewhere.

Lilly strains to see under the shelf. She grabs a chair to stand on. She loses balance and grabs the obelisk to stabilize herself. It falls into a nook on the shelf. As she pulls herself back up, the obelisk sinks into the nook. A panel in the wall opens to reveal a retina scanner.

Lilly digs in her tool belt and comes up empty. She dumps the belt out on Dr. Witt's desk. The retina scanner falls to the floor. She grabs it and the voice recorder. This time, she points the retina hologram the correct way. She presses the voice recorder.

DR. WITT (V.O.)
Eric Jason Witt.

The panel recedes into the wall. The trophy shelves swing open to reveal the missing supercomputer. Lilly jams the USB drive in and jabs "DOWNLOAD."

Maddie and security guards swarm the hallway. Johnny and Caspar dump all the boxes of ping pong balls on ground. Guards slip and fall. The download reads "25% COMPLETE."

Johnny breaks the fire extinguisher case and sprays Maddie and the guards. The guards army crawl through the balls. "50% COMPLETE."

Lilly peeks into the hallway. Two guards have made it past Johnny and Caspar. She runs back into the office and grabs two large glass trophies. She hurls them at the guards. She misses the first one, but the second knocks the guard out.

She runs back for another weapon. "76% COMPLETE." She uses a tall trophy like an axe and comes down on the guards head. He falls to the ground. Lilly takes his taser. "90% COMPLETE."

Another guard makes it past the cart. Lilly tases him. "93% COMPLETE." Charles and Athol join Johnny and Caspar in the fight. They use their canes to trip the guards. Athol slams her walker down on a guard's foot.

CHARLES
If you have the drive, go. We'll be OK.

Lilly tases a second guard. "99% COMPLETE." Lilly throws a chair to break Dr. Witt's window. "DOWNLOAD COMPLETE." Lilly snatches the drive and jumps out the window. She sprints to her car.

INT VERITAS OFFICES DAY

Lilly BUZZES the Veritas intercom. No reply. She BUZZES again.

LILLY
Guys, please. I know you're up there.

TIM
Go away, Judas.

The office window is open. An argument between Anita and Eden ECHOES in the street. Lilly makes her plea.

LILLY
I'm sorry for being a selfish, arrogant, and egotistical idiot. I'm sorry for not listening and for being a terrible teammate.

The argument stops. SILENCE

LILLY
I didn't deserve a team like you. I took you for granted and went behind your back and I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

The door BUZZES open. Lilly ascends the staircase to the Writing Dojo. Tim, Anita, and Eden stand, wary.

ANITA
I'm going to punch you.

Eden holds her back. Lilly stops at the doorway.

LILLY
I deserve it. I'm not asking you to take me back. I'm asking you to help me make things right.

TIM
Give one reason why we should believe you.

LILLY
I'm not doing this for me. Dr. Witt is about to sentence fifty people to a slow, painful death at MEDCon, and this drive is the only thing that can stop him.

EDEN
A USB drive.

Lilly steps into the office. The team moves back. Lilly walks to her old desk. It's covered in trash and sticky notes that read "Screw you." Lilly pushes them aside and puts the drive in the computer.

LILLY
It's a red book. It has his experimental records, illegal payments, payouts to hit men, everything.

ANITA
Go expose him yourself.

LILLY
I can't. After what I did to Dr. Nguyen, no one would believe me. I have no credibility. I need you all to break the story.

Tim, Anita, and Eden confer by the ball pit. Lilly removes more insulting sticky notes to uncover the framed picture of her dad. Her old team returns.

ANITA
You have no idea how hard it's been to keep this ship afloat.

TIM
You owe us big.

LILLY
I know.

ANITA
If anything goes wrong, it's all on you. If it goes right, we get credit.

LILLY
One hundred percent. Whatever you ask. I'll even buy you boba for a month.

Lilly chucks an empty boba cup in the trash. Eden opens their cabinet.

EDEN
No. Food for a month. Three meals a day plus snacks.

LILLY

A month?!

TIM

Oh and he's vegan now. Paleo on Wednesdays. Keto Thursdays. Cheat days on Saturdays and sometimes Sundays.

LILLY

I'm unemployed and broke.

ANITA

So were we.

LILLY

Fine. You have a deal.

They shake on it. Anita grabs a ring of keys. The team puts on jackets and grabs headsets and helmets.

TIM

To the van.

LILLY

It's a miracle that thing still drives.

EXT TOP OF PARKING GARAGE DAY

Tim, Anita, Eden, and Lilly brace against the wind as they run to the van. Anita tosses Tim the keys. Eden tosses equipment into the back.

LILLY

I'm not getting on if Tim's driving. He's going to kill us all.

ANITA

He's the only one with an unexpired license.

TIM

Just got it last week.

The team piles in the van. Anita takes shotgun. Lilly and Eden strap in by the door. Tim starts the engine. It SPUTTERS and stops. Tim switches it on again. No good.

TIM

Not this again.

LILLY
Tell me you can fix it.

TIM
Do I look like a mechanic to you?

EDEN
Don't look at me.

Tim hops out of the car to check the engine. Lilly whips out her phone and dials Charles. It goes to voice mail.

CHARLES (V.O.)
You've reached Charles Avery. Sorry
I missed your call.

She dials again. Voice mail. One last try. Charles answers from the backseat of a van.

CHARLES
Lilly. I'm glad you made it.

LILLY
I need you to fix a van.

CHARLES
I was an airplane mechanic and
haven't done that in twenty years.
Without my eyesight, I'm useless.

LILLY
I need you to fix this van. It's
the only way we'll make in time. We
can't get the engine to start.

CHARLES
Put the phone up to the engine.

Lilly leaps out of the car and holds the phone to the engine. Tim waves her away. Lilly shoves him back.

CHARLES
I can't hear anything.

LILLY
Tim, go start it again.

Tim holds up his hands in surrender and goes to turn on the switch.

CHARLES
The box is turned off. You have to
turn the box on.

Lilly waves Tim back.

LILLY
He says the box is turned off.

TIM
There's no box.

CHARLES
It's under the tube looking thing.

Tim lifts the tube and finds a box. He switches it on. The engine comes to life.

LILLY
You're the man, Charles.

CHARLES
I just fixed a car over the phone!

Lilly and Tim clamber back in the van. The team buckles in and takes off.

TIM
It's going to be a bumpy ride,
folks.

INT MEDCON CONVENTION STAGE DAY

MEDCon is in full swing on Dr. Witt's private island. Private jets fill his hangar. Tents and vendor booths are set up behind his sprawling mansion. Pharmaceutical, medical, and media REPRESENTATIVES flood into his convention center.

Spotlights swivel as Dr. Witt takes the stage to thunderous applause. The WITT MD logo flashes on a giant OLED screen.

DR. WITT
Thank you all for joining me on
this momentous occasion. No other
lab has achieved this level of
success in treating what everyone
else believed to be incurable
diseases.

Two PAs roll giant eyeballs onto the stage. The PA opens one of the eyeballs, where the macula flushes red. He hooks up an over-sized IV tube for demonstration.

DR. WITT

Using Japanese molecular synthesis methods, we developed a novel drug to repair the damage caused by macular degeneration.

Dr. Witt pours colored liquid into the tube. It flows through tubing to the demo eyeball. When the fluid reaches the macula, the red flushing stops.

DR. WITT

Using a combination of pharmacological and stem cell treatment, we have not only stopped the progression of the disease, but reversed its effects.

The audience gives a standing ovation. Dr. Witt motions five of his guinea pig TRIAL PATIENTS (60) on stage.

DR. WITT

Tell these people your names.

TRIAL PATIENT 1

Yvonne.

TRIAL PATIENT 2

Gregory.

TRIAL PATIENT 3

Larson.

TRIAL PATIENT 4

Leslie.

TRIAL PATIENT 5

Yolanda.

Dr. Witt gestures for them to sit in the hospital beds. Five nurses roll out IV bags and needles.

DR. WITT

These patients have almost no vision left. This terrible disease has robbed them of their lives. Today, with our new drug, we will reverse the course of history.

EXT MEDCON CONVENTION CENTER DAY

Lilly and her team pull up to the MEDCon convention center. It's on a peninsula of its own, accessible only by a bridge or by pedal boat. The boats are all on the opposite bank. There's no way across but a long hike on foot.

TIM

We're gonna have to book it across the island.

LILLY

We don't have time.

Lilly dumps her equipment in Eden's hands and tucks the USB drive in a waterproof pouch under her shirt.

LILLY

I'm jumping in.

ANITA

You're insane.

EDEN

The equipment can't get wet.

LILLY

Not you or the equipment, just me. I'll stall long enough for you to meet me there. Go get a boat, Tim.

Tim sprints toward the nearest boat. Lilly psyches herself up to jump in.

ANITA

This is crazy. I forgot what working with you was like.

LILLY

Once Tim lands, you haul the equipment to the stage. Eden, you take over audio/video controls. Anita, I need you recording the whole thing. Tim, keep eyes and ears out for security.

Lilly takes off her heels and leaps out into the water. Underwater, the waterproof pouch floats off her head. She swims to grab it. Before she gets to it, a fish snatches the string. Lilly bobs up for breath and throws her heels on the bank.

She goes back under and swims after the fish. She snatches the pouch and swims back to the surface, fish and all. She resurfaces by a tree, rips the fish from the pouch string, and throws it back into the water.

Tim barter for a boat ride. Lilly squeezes out her dripping pantsuit and puts on her heels. She replaces the pouch with the USB drive around her neck. It's game time.

INT MEDCON STAGE DAY

Dr. Witt double checks the IV fluids. Nurses prep the patients for the infusion. On the screen, NURSES (40) in remote clinics follow suit.

DR. WITT

We couldn't keep this discovery to ourselves. We couldn't be selfish.

Dr. Witt zooms the screen out to a map of the United States. Ten dots blink red across the country. A PA brings out a box with a button that will trigger the transfusions.

DR. WITT

Ten other clinics across the country are participating with us in this historic moment. We are changing lives together.

Lilly bursts through the auditorium doors. An USHER (20) holds her back. Lilly shoves her away and sprints toward the stage. It's a long way.

LILLY

Stop! He's lying.

Security guards rush in from the sides. Lilly ditches her heels and races toward the stage. She kicks a guard in the knee. He buckles. She snatches up his taser and sprints to the front row. She stands in front of one of the cameras.

LILLY

Dr. Witt is a liar, a fraud, and a murderer.

DR. WITT

Ladies and gentlemen, I apologize for the disturbance. Get her out of here.

Andrew pulls a nurse aside on the side of the stage. The nurse returns on stage and whispers to the other nurses. Lilly tases the nearest security guard and climbs on stage.

LILLY
 Innocent lives are at stake. You're
 sending these patients to their
 deaths.

The patients sit up in alarm. Dr. Witt sees his way out.

DR. WITT
 Nonsense. Some of you might
 recognize this woman. She is the
 same reporter who framed Dr.
 Vincent Nguyen for murder last
 week. I believed you in the
 beginning, but this is starting to
 look like a pattern.

The crowd BOOS.

DR. WITT
 We will not let people like her
 stop us. We at WITT MD are not
 reckless, but fearless. My medical
 genius has saved hundreds of
 thousands of lives around the
 country. We do whatever it takes.

The crowd CHEERS. Dr. Witt presses the infusion button.
 Purple fluid flows through the tubes.

Eden hijacks the A/V booth and turns the stage lights to
 blind the security guards. Tim joins Lilly on stage. She
 tosses him a taser. He holds it to Dr. Witt's back.

LILLY
 We're not finished.

Andrew rolls out a miniature chemical analyzer. He takes
 collects a vial of the macular degeneration drug from a
 patient's IV bag and puts it in the analyzer. An analysis of
 the drug ingredients shows on the screen. The third
 ingredient on the list is N-nitroso-N-methyl-4-aminobutyric
 acid (NMBA).

ANDREW
 NMBA. A chemical known to cause
 cancer in humans. Dr. Witt put
 trace amounts in this drug to
 ensure his patients would get sick.

Patients pull out their infusion needles in panic and
 horror. They're not connected to anything. Andrew had
 instructed the nurses to disconnect the tubes before the
 infusion.

LILLY

As they get sick, they come to him,
the miracle doctor, for treatment.
He prescribes a costly treatment,
bills the insurance, and gets paid
for their suffering.

DR. WITT

These are false accusations. You
have no proof.

Lilly holds up a USB drive.

LILLY

We found it. It's over.

Dr. Witt lunges and snatches the drive from her hands. Lilly
shrugs and walks to the podium.

LILLY

Cute. Wasn't the real one.

Lilly plugs the real USB drive into the laptop on the
podium. Images of drug synthesis schemes, account books, and
illegal transactions flash across the screen.

LILLY

This is his red book, a record of
all his unapproved trials and
payouts. His reckless
experimentation has cost dozens of
innocent lives. Animal lives
included.

A live feed of the cougar lab flashes on screen. A terrified
Maddie can be seen in an empty enclosure.

LILLY

You thought you could hide it in
the shadows and buy your way
through your lies. What you didn't
count on was the strength of a team
fighting together for the truth.
It's over now. You're done.

Lilly signals security. Dr. Witt is arrested. A photographer
snaps a photo of the moment with Lilly and her team behind
Dr. Witt.

INT VERITAS OFFICES DAY

The photo appears on the cover of TIME on a coffee table at Veritas's remodeled office space. The Veritas team throws a party to celebrate their merger with LUX. A poster on the wall reads "VERITAS x LUX: BRINGING THE TRUTH TO LIGHT."

Lilly scoops up the TIME cover and holds it up to her mom.

LILLY

I hope you're satisfied.

MOM

I'm proud of you. Dad would be too.

Anita grabs Lilly to join the team. The LUX team shakes hands with Lilly and her team.

LIZA

You did it.

LIAM

We didn't think you could make it,
but you pulled it off.

ANITA

The office remodel was worth it.

LIONEL

Glad to see you got rid of the ball
pit.

TIM

Now the only thing we can throw at
each other are succulents and nice
vases.

LIZA

Welcome to the team. Group picture!

Lilly sets her drink down on her desk by the photo of her dad. It is now joined with a framed photo of her and the veterans in front of the BRU. Beside it is a signed ping pong paddle from Charles, Johnny, Caspar, and Athol.

Lilly joins Anita, Eden, Tim, Liza, Lionel, Ed, and Liam under their new banner. Theo takes the photo with a flash.

FADE OUT