

DIAGNOSIS MURDER
"Murder By The Busload"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - NURSING STATION - NIGHT

Mark goes over a file as Steve checks his watch anxiously.

STEVE

Dad...

MARK

Almost done.

STEVE

The game is in two hours, and these tickets cost me...

(it's big:)

A lot.

MARK

Well, you picked the right night. I just have to peek in on one patient and we're out of here.

(then, bemused:)

How much did they cost?

STEVE

They're floor seats, Dad. Lakers and Chicago.

MARK

And translated into dollars, that would be...?

STEVE

I've already spent my inheritance.

Mark puts down the file, finished.

MARK

I had no idea.

(then:)

I hope you'll at least let me pick up dinner.

STEVE

My credit cards were counting on it.

Mark enters the EXAM ROOM, where a QUEASY MAN, 30s, is sitting on a bed, a BEDPAN on his lap, a nurse at his side. Steve stands back at a discreet distance.

MARK

(to man:)

You're going to be fine, just a little food poisoning. We're going to treat you for dehydration and try to calm your upset stomach.

(to nurse:)

Start an IV, normal saline, 20 milliequivalents of potassium chloride per litre, 150 CCs per hour. And compazine, 5 mg PRN for three hours.

(to man:)

If I were you, in the future I wouldn't buy seafood from a van parked on a freeway offramp.

The man nods enthusiastically. Mark turns to Steve and takes off his WHITE COAT.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's it.

STEVE

You sure?

MARK

Positive.

He draps the coat over his shoulder and they turn the corner into the

INT. ER

and MAJOR PANDEMONIUM. JESSE, AMANDA, other doctors, nurses and orderlies charge every which way, preparing for a crisis. A SIREN can be heard CLOSING IN. Mark stops Jesse.

MARK

What's going on?

JESSE

Major bus accident on the west side.

Before Mark can reply, the doors SMASH OPEN in front of him, two EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS (EMTs) rocket in a GURNEY. The patient is a with HOMELESS MAN, 50s, in FILTHY, RAGGED, BLOODY CLOTHES. His neck and back have been braced. Mark examines him.

EMT #1

He was smashed between two seats. Unconscious, severe head and body trauma, possible internal injuries. We immobilized his neck, started an IV, D5W.

MARK

Trauma One. STAT.

The orderlies take over the gurney, and Jesse runs with them to trauma one. We can still hear APPROACHING SIRENS in the distance. Mark turns to the EMT.

MARK (CONT'D)
How bad is it out there?

EMT #1
A war zone. There's six more ambulances coming in right now.

Mark turns to Steve. It's clear Mark isn't going anywhere.

STEVE
I'll save you a seat.

Mark puts on his WHITE COAT and rushes into the TRAUMA ROOM. And on Steve looking after him, and the sirens approaching, we FADE OUT.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. TRAUMA ONE - NIGHT

The gurney with the HOMELESS MAN is brought alongside an operating table.

MARK
On my count. One. Two. Three.

They lift the man onto the table and the EMTs leave with the gurney as Mark and Jesse take over. Jesse aims a flashlight into the man's eyes. Mark listens to his breathing with a stethoscope. NURSE REED, 40s, stands nearby.

JESSE
Pupils are dilated and unresponsive.

REED
Pressure 50/30, pulse 120.

MARK
(to a nurse:)
Type and cross, four units, whole blood, packed cells. I need a CBC, Chem 7, abdominal and cranial CTs. I'm intubating him.
(to Nurse Reed:)
Laryngoscope.

Nurse Reed hands him the tool, he works it into the man's throat.

MARK (CONT'D)

8.5 ET Tube.

She gives it to him, Mark works the tube in.

MARK (CONT'D)

(to nurse Reed:)

Bag him.

Nurse Reed hooks the patient to a ventilator.

JESSE

He's stable and breathing. Pressure 90/50, rhythm and sinus regular, 90 per minute.

MARK

(to nurse:)

Sedate with 3 mg morphine IV and rush the cat scan.

REED

Yes, Doctor. Anything else?

MARK

Try to find his family. Get them down here as soon as possible.

JESSE

If he has one.

JESSE WALKS OUT INTO

THE ER - NIGHT

as the doors BURST OPEN, two EMTs wheel in DUSTIN WOODS, 50s, on a GURNEY. JESSE, TWO ORDERLIES and a NURSE rush up to them. What happens next happens FAST...

JESSE

(to the EMT)

Talk to me.

EMT #2

Adult male, 50s, thrown over the seat in front of him. He's suffering from severe abdominal pain. We started an IV of D5W and 10 mg of Demerol at the scene.

WOODS

How is much that going to cost me?

Jesse quickly examines the man while NURSES take over the gurney from the EMTs and start taking vital signs.

JESSE

Does this hurt?

Jesse presses the flesh under the ribs on the man's left side. Wood's YELPS. Jesse slaps a YELLOW TAG on the gurney.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(to nurse:)

Full panel, type and cross, four units whole blood. I also need a chest x-ray and abdominal cat scan.

The nurse nods.

WOODS

That oughta buy a new set of tires for your Porsche.

That's when - POW!-- Another GURNEY slams through the same doors, and we LEAVE JESSE go with it. It's pushed by EMT ROY GAGE, 30s. His partner, EMT TANYA WELLS, 20s, is on top of the gurney, straddling the sweat-suit clad patient, FRED TALISKER, 40s, and providing vigorous CPR. Mark rushes out of Trauma One to meet it.

TANYA

He's in full arrest!

Mark steps in, does a quick examination as:

ROY

When the bus tipped over, he was slammed against the window. He's got massive head and body trauma.

(Note: his head wound is on the BACK OF HIS HEAD.) Mark looks up, shares a grim look with NURSE REED, and puts a BLACK TAG on the gurney.

MARK

DOA. Record the time of death at 8:51 p.m.

TANYA

Just give me another minute. He's going to pull through.

Tanya continues to pump his chest. Mark gently touches her shoulder.

MARK

You did your best, Tanya.

Tanya reluctantly gets off the gurney and it's whisked away as -- POW another gurney blasts in and we go with AMANDA as she meets it and SARA GILBEY, 20s, her BRUISED AND BLOODIED LEFT LEG braced.

AMANDA

What happened?

EMT #3
Apparent broken femur, multiple
contusions and lacerations.

SARA
How bad is it?

Amanda examines her left leg, touching for a pulse below the
knee, checking if the skin is pale, cold or purple.

AMANDA
There's no exposed bone, the skin is
warm and pink, I think we can rule
out vascular involvement -- actually
it looks like a nice, clean break.

SARA
And that's a good thing?

AMANDA
As broken bones go.

Amanda slaps a GREEN TAG on the gurney and turns to the nurse.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Give her 20 mg Demerol and send her
to x-ray.

Another GURNEY crashes through the door and Jesse moves to
it, greeting BUD THE BUS DRIVER, 40s, bloody and in pain.

EMT #4
We got the bus driver. He was wrapped
around the steering wheel. Neck,
chest, and pelvic pain.

JESSE
(to nurse:)
Start an IV, TKO, and 3 mg morphine
IV push. Cross-table C-spine, chest
and pelvis x-rays.

AS HE LEANS OVER THE DRIVER:

ACROSS THE ER
as EMT #5 wheels in MELORA, 30s,
moaning in pain. Amanda meets them.

AMANDA
Give me the headlines.

EMT #5
We found her under a seat, no signs
of trauma, contusions or lacerations,
but she's suffering neck, back, arm,
and leg discomfort.

MELORA

I'm fine.

AMANDA

Let me be the judge of that.

Amanda does a quick examination and puts a GREEN TAG on the gurney.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Give her 3 mg morphine for the pain
and send her to x-ray.

(to Melora:)

We'll talk after I look at the film.

An orderly wheels the gurney away and Amanda takes a breath, then looks up.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Next?

She looks around. Jesse is with the bus driver. She rushes over to him.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You okay?

Jesse motions to the orderly, who wheels the bus driver away.

JESSE

It's under control.

He looks around. Suddenly, the ER is quiet, all the patients dealt with. He smiles.

JESSE (CONT'D)

It's all under control.

And as he and Amanda share the moment of victory:

INT. ER - NURSE'S STATION

Amanda and Jesse join Mark and the two EMTs, Tanya and Roy, who are filling out reports.

JESSE

What's the tally?

MARK

Two green tags, two yellow, one red
and two DOAs.

AMANDA

Two? I only saw one.

ROY

He hasn't come in yet the Fire Department is trying to peel his body out of what's left of his car.

TANYA

The guy ran a red and clipped the bus -- the bus driver lost control, jumped the curb, and slammed head-on into the side of a building.

ROY

The driver of the car still had a beer can in his hand when I found him.

AMANDA

How long after the accident did you arrive at the scene?

TANYA

Five minutes, tops. The dust hadn't even settled yet.

ROY

All the victims were trapped inside the bus. We had to force open the doors to get in.

(then:)

It was pretty ugly in there.

Amanda picks up a file and moves off, Mark follows. We go with them.

MARK

Amanda, I'd like you to take a close look at the DOA that came in.

Amanda shows him the file she just picked up.

AMANDA

I was just getting on it. Fred Talisker, 34, brought in with severe head and body trauma.

(then:)

What's up?

MARK

All the victims sustained trauma to the front of their bodies but it was the back of Talisker's head that was wounded.

AMANDA

There could be a dozen explanations for that.

MARK

I'll settle for one.

AMANDA

You got it.

She goes off. Nurse Reed comes up to Mark.

REED

Steve left this for you, said he'd meet you there if you could get away.

She hands him a ticket. Mark takes it, suddenly remembering the game.

MARK

Floor seats...Steve is going to kill me.

INT. ER - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Amanda is on her way to pathology, the Talisker file under her arm, as a woman calls out from the EXAM AREA, a LARGE ROOM with SEVERAL BEDS, which are separated by CURTAINS. Other ER patients, some from the bus crash, others not, fill the other beds.

FEMALE VOICE

Excuse me, Doctor?

INT. ER - EXAM AREA - NIGHT

Amanda steps into the room, and sees that the person calling her is Melora, lying on the bed nearest to the corridor. There's a GREEN TAG on the foot of the bed, along with her CHART.

AMANDA

Yes?

MELORA

I was beginning to think everyone had forgotten me.

AMANDA

The curse of the green tag.

MELORA

I've been called a lot of names, but that's a first for me.

Amanda smiles, lifts up the tag at the end of the bed for Melora to see.

AMANDA

It's our triage system. Red tags mean critical, yellow means urgent, and green --

MELORA

(with a smile)

-- means why is this idiot taking up
a valuable ER bed?

AMANDA

That's not exactly the terminology
we use.

MELORA

But it's close enough.

(then:)

When they brought me in, I saw one
guy with a black tag. Is that what I
think it is?

AMANDA

DOA.

MELORA

Poor guy. That could have been me.

AMANDA

Be grateful it wasn't.

MELORA

I am. That's why I was calling you.

AMANDA

Do you need something?

MELORA

Yeah to get out of your way. Give
me some papers to sign and I'll go
home.

AMANDA

Are you sure you're feeling all right?

MELORA

Aside from a bizarre compulsion to
call my mother and apologize for all
the rotten things I ever did to her,
I feel great.

Amanda checks the chart at the end of her bed.

AMANDA

It looks like your x-rays came back
clean, Ms. Jackson, no sign of any
injuries.

MELORA

That's a relief. And you can call me
Melora.

AMANDA

I'll get a nurse to bring you the
paperwork.

Amanda motions a nurse to come over, then starts to leave.
Melora sits up then freezes, gasping in pain and grabbing
her lower back.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MELORA

My back. My neck. Oh my God, that
hurts so bad.

Amanda and the nurse gently eases her back onto the gurney.

AMANDA

Is that better?

Melora nods bravely, fighting back the pain.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I think you'd better stay with us a
little bit longer.

(then:)

You might have a herniated disc. I'd
like to run a few more tests.

MELORA

If you say so.

Melora picks up a tattered magazine from the bedside table.

MELORA (CONT'D)

Besides, how often do I get the
opportunity to read a six month old
issue of People?

AMANDA SMILES AND WE GO TO:

ELSEWHERE IN THE EXAM ROOM

Jesse goes to Dustin Woods, who is laying on a bed with IV
tubes in his arm. Woods glares at him.

JESSE

How are you feeling, Mr. Woods?

WOODS

Like I'm being mugged. I could buy
three beds for what you're charging
me to lie on this one.

Jesse lets that one go by.

JESSE

I've been looking over your test results. Your hematocrit is 20, hemoglobin is 7, which tells me you're severely anemic and probably bleeding internally.

(then:)

I suspect you have a lacerated spleen. We're going to have to operate immediately.

WOODS

Forget it.

JESSE

MR. WOODS, I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND—

WOODS

(interrupts:)

I understand perfectly. If I walk out right now, you only get four figures. Get me into an operating room, and we're into five figures before you even cut me open. Forget it.

He tries to sit up, but is driven back by the pain.

JESSE

If we don't suture your spleen, you will bleed to death by morning.

(off his glare)

You want a second opinion, I'll be glad to get another doctor down here right now.

Woods snorts derisively.

WOODS

And your buddy'll tell me I need two operations. I know how you guys work.

(then:)

I guess you have me right where you want me.

JESSE

I'll schedule you for the first open O.R.

Jesse starts to go, then turns back.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Mr. Woods this is a clear-cut case, your insurance company won't contest the claim.

WOODS

The only people more crooked than doctors are insurance companies. To hell with the bunch of you.

JESSE LEAVES GOES OUT TO

INT. ER - NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

and up to the nurse.

JESSE

Notify the OR and prep Dustin Woods for surgery.

She nods and picks up the phone as Tanya and Roy walk by. She stops at the nurses' station and drops a stack of paperwork.

ROY

(to Tanya:)

I'm going to restock the unit.

TANYA

(re: the paperwork)

Sure you want to leave me with the glamorous part of the job?

ROY

I'll meet you outside.

Roy moves off. Jesse drops his chart and smiles at Tanya.

JESSE

Heading out again?

TANYA

Shift's just starting.

She finishes up her paperwork and starts to go.

JESSE

Listen, you think I could ride along with you two some night?

TANYA

Need a little more excitement in your life?

JESSE

Always.

(then, serious:)

What you guys do is incredible. I'd like to get a hands-on lesson in your methods.

TANYA

Clear it with whoever has to clear these things and you can come anytime.

JESSE

Thanks.

(then:)

So, how's your studying going for the med school entrance exams?

TANYA

The MCATs are next month and with this job, I've had no time to study. I need a miracle.

JESSE

What I coincidence, I perform miracles as a hobby.

(then:)

You let me ride with you, I'll help you pass the tests.

TANYA

You do that, I'll even let you run the siren.

The share a smile, a friendship being born. And we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. HOSPITAL - HOMELESS MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

The HOMELESS MAN is lying in bed, unconscious, looking pretty lousy. Mark is reviewing his chart as Nurse Reed looks on.

MARK

We still don't have an ID on this man?

REED

He wasn't carrying any identification. The police are doing what they can.

Mark nods.

REED (CONT'D)

How is he?

MARK

Not good. I'm concerned about the possibility of acute tubular necrosis. Put him on a sodium bicarbonate drip and keep me updated on his condition every half hour.

Mark's beeper goes off. He looks at it.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's Amanda. I'll be in pathology
if you need me.

INT. PATHOLOGY - NIGHT

Talisker is on the autopsy table. Amanda is leaning over him
as Mark enters.

MARK

Your beep is my command.

AMANDA

Fred Talisker sustained severe
abdominal and chest trauma, resulting
in a lacerated liver and massive
internal bleeding, all injuries
consistent with being thrown forward
in the crash.

MARK

That's a relief.

Not to Amanda. She not done yet.

AMANDA

But it was the blow to the back of
the head that killed him.

MARK

Blow?

AMANDA

Take a look at this.

She motions to the microscope. He peers inside.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I recovered these from his head wound.

MARK

It looks like bits of rock.

AMANDA

The shape and impact of the wound
suggest the edge of a brick.

Mark looks up from the microscope, a grim expression on his
face.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Didn't the paramedics say all the
victims were trapped in the bus when
they arrived?

(off Mark's nod:)

So how did Fred Talisker get hit in
the back of the head with a brick?

MARK

Because the accident didn't kill
him. Fred Talisker was murdered. And
the murderer is in this hospital.

And Mark and Amanda sharing a look, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ER NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

An obviously irritated Steve strides past the station where
Nurse Reed is dropping off a file.

NURSE REED

How was the game?

STEVE

The first three quarters will go
down in history as one of the greatest
athletic competitions of all time.
After that, who knows?

NURSE REED

You didn't stay for the end? After
what you paid for the ticket?

STEVE

How did you know about that?

NURSE REED

Your father mentioned it. Said he
felt real bad about standing you up.

STEVE

He has a funny way of showing it.

He stalks on by as Nurse Reed turns on a small radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...and Shaquille from the three-point
line, tying the score and proving
why he's worth every penny of that
\$121 million.

Steve shoots the radio a dark look, then marches towards

INT. DOCTOR'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

where Mark, Jesse, and Amanda have gathered.

MARK

Steve will understand. I know he will.

Jesse and Amanda don't look convinced. That's when Steve comes in not looking very understanding.

STEVE

Good news, the one homicide detective in all of Los Angeles has arrived.

JESSE

The one?

STEVE

If there were any other detectives on the force, I'm sure my father would have called them before pulling me out of that game.

AMANDA

I don't think he understands.

MARK

I'm sorry, Steve. But --

STEVE

-- you didn't want to let the killer know you figured out Talisker was murdered. So you couldn't have a platoon of police steamrolling through the halls of Community General.

Mark shoots a triumphant look at Jesse and Amanda.

MARK

I knew you'd understand.
(to Jesse and Amanda)
I told you he'd understand.
(to Steve)
You do understand, don't you?

STEVE

The logic is flawless. As long as the killer is actually in the hospital.

JESSE

Everyone who was on the bus is still here.

STEVE

Right. But what if the killer wasn't on the bus?

MARK

He had to be. Talisker didn't sustain the head wound in the accident.

AMANDA

And he certainly didn't walk on the bus with it.

JESSE

So it must have happened in the five minutes between when the accident occurred and the paramedics got there.

MARK

And during that time, the passengers were trapped inside the bus. No one could get in or out.

STEVE

Okay, I'm convinced. He was killed by someone on the bus. But why?

MARK

One thing's for certain, this murder wasn't planned.

JESSE

Unless the accident was part of it...a cover up for an assassination.

STEVE

Not a chance. We've tracked the drunk driver back to three different bars tonight -- and there was nothing phony about the way he was drinking.

MARK

So the accident really was an accident, and the murder is a crime of opportunity.

STEVE

What do we know about the victim?

Amanda hands Steve a small box.

AMANDA

Just what he had in his pockets...a wallet and a set of keys.

They all shoot him a look. Steve flips through the wallet and comes up with something a PARKING LOT TICKET.

STEVE

That's odd. According to this ticket, Talisker parked in a lot at Westgate and Santa Monica 45 minutes before the bus crash.

MARK

Why would he take the bus if he had
a car?

AMANDA

Maybe it broke down?

Steve pockets the ticket and car keys and heads to the door.

STEVE

There's one way to find out.

MARK

And look at the bright side you can
listen to the end of the game on the
radio while you head over to the
garage.

Steve shoots Mark a tight smile.

STEVE

Thanks, Dad. I hadn't thought of
that.

(then:)

Fax everything you have on Talisker
and the other passengers to the
station. If there are any other
homicide detectives in Los Angeles
on duty tonight, I'll have one of
them check'em out.

Mark winces at the dig as Steve leaves.

MARK

I think he understood.

Jesse and Amanda smile reassuringly.

INT. ER - NIGHT

as Steve leaves, he stops at the nurses' station in time to
hear:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...crowd is going crazy. When was
the last time this Forum saw double-
overtime?

Steve scowls and stalks out as Roy and Tanya come in with
BILL, 30s, an average looking fellow. Tanya is applying
pressure with a GAUZE to Bill's hand. Jesse and a NURSE meet
them.

JESSE

What happened to you?

Bill looks away, embarrassed. Tanya answers for him.

ROY
Mr. Cluverius was having a little
late-night snack.

Jesse looks at the hand.

JESSE
Bagel?

TANYA
Frozen.

Jesse smiles at Bill.

JESSE
Two words of medical advice always
defrost your bagels before you slice
them. And never cut towards your
hand.
(to nurse:)
Irrigate his wound. I'll be right in
to suture it.

A NURSE takes over for Tanya and leads Bill away. Roy heads
for the nurse's station to file his report. Jesse turns to
Tanya.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Been studying?

TANYA
Between breakfast food emergencies.
Try me.

JESSE
What's the maximum amount of potassium
chloride you can inject into a vein?

She grins. That's an easy one.

TANYA
Two grams.

JESSE
How much anti-convulsant can you mix
in a bicarb IV solution?

TANYA
20 mille-equivalents.

JESSE
What is the usual dosage of dopamine
to increase blood pressure?

TANYA
Two-to-three grams per minute. Come
one, give me a hard one.

JESSE
What's the leading cause of failure
on the MCATs?

TANYA
What?

JESSE
Cockiness.
(off her look)
You missed one.

TANYA
I did not. Did I?
(then:)
Which one?

Jesse STARTS TO ANSWER when Mark steps up behind them, having
overheard the exchange:

MARK
If he tells you all the answers, how
will you learn anything?

TANYA
You're cruel. Both of you.

MARK
You think we're bad, wait until you
get into medical school.

Jesse grabs a chart and leaves. Mark turns to the two EMTs.

MARK (CONT'D)
Listen, could you two do me a favor?

ROY
Sure, Dr. Sloan. What do you need?

MARK
I'd appreciate it if you could draw
me a seating chart of the bus, showing
me exactly where you found each
victim.

TANYA
No problem, we'll get it to you right
away.

That's when they hear a CRASH, turn and see THE HOMELESS MAN
staggering down the corridor towards them, Nurse Reed chasing
after him. He POINTS AT THEM and SCREAMS:

HOMELESS MAN
Medic! Medic!

Then he collapses into VIOLENT SIEZURES, still ranting. Mark
and the two EMTs rush over to him.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Medic! Medic!

MARK

Relax, you're in a hospital, we're going to help you.

(to Nurse Reed:)

What happened?

REED

I don't know. He tore out his IV and went nuts.

Tanya and Roy lift the Homeless Man to his feet and into the arms of TWO ORDERLIES, who put him on a GURNEY.

MARK

(to Reed:)

Keep him on the sodium bicarb drip, give him 100 mg of dilantin IV, and strap him down.

REED

Yes, doctor.

She starts to go, when Mark stops her, concerned.

MARK

Don't take this personally, Nancy, but you look exhausted.

She smiles good-naturedly.

REED

As opposed to the radiant beauty I generally exude ten hours into an 18 hour shift?

MARK

Maybe you ought to take a break.

REED

Maybe I ought to take a week in Hawaii.

She walks off after the orderlies. Mark turns back to Tanya, who looks a little troubled.

TANYA

Is he going to be all right?

MARK

The trauma to his head and abdomen are too great. His kidneys are shutting down. I'd be surprised if he makes it through the night.

TANYA

There's nothing you can do for him?

MARK

The dilantin will stop his seizures.
Aside from that, all we can do is
try to make him comfortable.

(then:)

Sometimes being a doctor isn't a lot
of fun.

Tanya nods, taking it in, then:

TANYA

You don't think I'm too cocky, do
you?

MARK

Let's see, when did we first meet?

TANYA

You know it was when I was a patient
here.

MARK

A lot of people would have given up
after a brutal mugging like that.
You decided to become a paramedic
like the ones who saved you.

TANYA

It looked like an interesting job.

Mark smiles at her refusal to admit she's pretty impressive.

MARK

And now you're applying to med school?
Yeah, I think you're cocky.

(then, admiringly:)

If I was half as cocky as you, I'd
be president by now.

She flashes him a grin and leaves to join Roy.

INT. ER - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse comes in to see BUD, the bus driver, who is lying in
bed. He's got a CHEST TUBE leading to a vacuum device, and
an IV in his arm. Bud is a big, stocky, good-natured man,
who speaks with a raspy voice, due to his injury. He's also
got a few cuts and bruises that have been treated.

JESSE

Mr. Flanek, I'm Dr. Travis. How are
you feeling?

BUD

Nauseous, but I think it's looking at that tube in my chest that's making me sick.

JESSE

Nausea is a common after what your body has been through. I can give you some medication for it.

BUD

Taking out that tube would probably do it.

Jesse smiles.

JESSE

When you hit the steering wheel, you broke a couple ribs. One of them perforated a lung, causing it to collapse and fill your chest with air. We have to drain the air out and relieve the pressure so your lung will expand again.

BUD

Sounds like I'm lucky to be alive...and nauseous.

(then:)

How are the other passengers?

JESSE

One dead, one in critical condition, the rest came through with minor injuries.

(then:)

Did you know any of them?

BUD

Not by name, but you drive the same line every night, you get to know faces.

(then:)

Except for Lou, of course.

JESSE

Lou?

BUD

Homeless guy, sleeps on my bus every night. Guess that makes my bus home, doesn't it?

(then:)

Between you and me, I don't even make him pay. The guy was in 'Nam, he deserves at least that much... and a whole lot more. Did he come out okay?

JESSE

I'm afraid not he's the one in
critical condition.

Bud swallows hard, then motions across the room to Sara,
who's leg is splintered and elevated. She's talking on the
PHONE.

BUD

I pick her up every night at 8 p.m.
at Barrington. Sweet girl. I think
she lives up at the university.

Jesse motions to Melora, who is reading a magazine.

JESSE

What about her?

BUD

She was on the bus?

JESSE

Sitting in the first row.

Bud shakes his head.

BUD

I don't remember her getting on the
bus at all.

(then, worried:)

Does that mean I have brain damage?

JESSE

No, no, your head is fine.

(then:)

Do you remember a guy in his 30s,
wearing a sweat suit?

Bud nods, relieved that he can remember.

BUD

Yeah, sure I do, he got on at
Barrington. I remember because I'd
stopped to pick up that college girl,
and he ran up just as I was closing
the doors.

JESSE

Ever seen him before?

BUD

Nope. How's he?

JESSE

Dead.

(then:)

I was hoping you might have seen how
it happened.

BUD

The last thing I saw was a car running the red light. Everything after that is a blank.

Jesse jots something down in Bud's chart.

JESSE

I'm going to give you 5 mg of Compazine for the nausea and I'll be back to check up on you later.

Jesse walks away. Bud's eyes immediately fall on his CHEST TUBE, and then he abruptly looks away. And we GO:

ACROSS THE EXAM ROOM

where Sara is talking angrily on the phone.

SARA

(into phone)

The hospital, Larry. It's where they take you after a bus crash.

(then:)

That's right, I made up the accident, even planted fake news footage on every channel, just to get out of work for a sorority party.

Amanda approaches the bed with an X-ray. Sara motions her to come over.

SARA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

You don't believe me? Talk to the doctor.

(to Amanda)

Talk to my boss. Please.

Amanda takes the phone as Sara mouths his name for her.

AMANDA

(into phone)

Hello, Larry? This is Doctor Amanda Livingston at Community General --

(then:)

No, it isn't "Buffy" and there's no party.

(then:)

Kappa Alpha what?

Even Sara can hear the CLICK on the other end. Amanda hands the phone back to Sara apologetically.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Nice guy.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(then:)

I could write him a note, if it would help.

SARA

I never liked waitressing, anyway.

AMANDA

Good. Because I'm afraid your leg is going to be in a cast for the next few months.

SARA

Oh, no.

AMANDA

We can get a cast on it and have you out of here in a couple of hours.

Sara sighs.

SARA

Yeah, but who's going to get me up and down all those hills at UCLA for the next few months?

(then:)

I guess I shouldn't complain. One of the nurses said that guy behind me died.

AMANDA

I'm afraid so. Did you know him?

SARA

It's funny, I'm sure I know him from somewhere, but I can't figure out who he is.

AMANDA

Was he in a class? Or maybe you've seen him on the bus before?

SARA

I've only been taking the bus for a few days. I used to walk everywhere, but my boyfriend made me stop after a couple of girls were raped on campus.

(then:)

He said the bus would be much safer.

AMANDA

Then this is all his fault. Make him carry you up and down those hills.

(off Sara's dubious look)

Or at least come get you tonight.

Sara smiles, then picks up the phone and dials.

SARA
I'll let you tell him.

She hands Amanda the phone.

AMANDA
What's his name?

SARA
Larry.

Amanda is surprised. Sara nods. Same guy. And on Amanda's look:

INT. ER - NIGHT

Jesse approaches the nurse's station, where Nurse Reed is working busily.

JESSE
It's finally slowing down.

REED
Three hours to go and I'm out of here. I may sleep for days.

JESSE
What's the status on Mr. Woods?

REED
He just got out of surgery they had to do an emergency splenectomy.

JESSE
He's not going to be happy to hear that. You have the details?

REED
They haven't come down yet.

JESSE
But they're probably already logged in the system because, as Mr. Woods would be the first to tell you, hospitals don't wait to bill you.

Jesse swings around the computer MONITOR and picks up the keyboard. He hits a few keys.

REED
Yeah, he's a real charmer. Called me a money-sucking leech as he was being wheeled to the O.R.

Jesse reacts to what he sees on screen. Whatever it is, it's a revelation.

JESSE

And now I know why.

(then:)

This isn't the first time Mr. Woods has been at Community General.

REED

If he was a patient here before, I'd remember.

JESSE

He wasn't the patient it was his wife. And she didn't make it.

And on his look, we CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Mark, Jesse and Amanda are gathered in front of an ERASABLE INK BOARD, on which Mark has drawn the BUS SEATING CHART.

MARK

According to the paramedics, and what we've learned from the patients, this is where everyone was sitting on the bus.

Mark points out each person's position as he discusses them.

MARK (CONT'D)

Fred Talisker was on the right side, sixth row. Dustin Woods was two seats behind him. Lou Kupfer, the homeless man, was lying on the seat directly across the aisle from Talisker. Sara was on the left side, two rows behind the driver.

AMANDA

Where was Melora Jackson?

MARK

The first row, right side, the seat closest to the door.

AMANDA

So you'd think the bus driver would remember her.

MARK

Actually, no one on the bus remembers her. I got this from the paramedics.

As Amanda digests that, Steve comes in with two BROWN BAGS and sets them on the table near Amanda.

STEVE

I have some information.

AMANDA

Your information smells good.

Steve glances at Mark.

STEVE

I also have the dinner you owe me.

JESSE

Dinner? In all the excitement, I forgot to eat. I also forgot that I'm starving.

AMANDA

So am I.

As Amanda and Jesse dig into the bag, pulling out CARTONS OF CHINESE FOOD and beginning to eat, Mark turns to Steve.

MARK

What have you learned?

STEVE

Yang Chow fried rice is only a buck more than regular fried rice at the place across the street. And Fred Talisker was murdered.

JESSE

We knew all that.

STEVE

Well, now I do. There was a take-out menu on my windshield. And we found a brick with Talisker's blood on it -- but no prints.

MARK

Did you find out anything about Talisker?

STEVE

He's an insurance salesman.

JESSE

There's a motive for murder right there.

STEVE

He must be doing pretty good for First Fidelity Casualty, because he was driving a Porsche, which we found in a parking lot at Westgate and Santa Monica.

JESSE

I've heard of that insurance company somewhere before.

STEVE

Working in a hospital, you've probably heard of them all.

Even so, Jesse is still thinking about it as he eats.

AMANDA

Find anything interesting in the car?

STEVE

No leads there, just a first aid kit, a couple extra bottles of antiseptic, a trash bag, and a change of clothes.

MARK

Does the car run?

STEVE

It purrs.

(then, to Mark:)

You know, I have a birthday coming up.

MARK

If the car was running, I wonder why Talisker was taking the bus?

STEVE

(to Amanda & Jesse:)

Notice the way he dodged my suggestion?

JESSE

Maybe he wanted to save a few bucks.

STEVE

A Porsche is a steal at \$100,000.

JESSE

I meant Talisker. Parking on campus is steep.

STEVE

The lot on Westgate costs twice as much as campus parking.

AMANDA

Isn't there a Captain Cluck's on Westgate?

STEVE

Sorry, I was in the mood for Chinese. Speaking of which, pass the Moo Goo Gai Pan.

She thunks the carton down in front of him and gives him a look.

AMANDA

Sara Gilbey, the college student with the broken leg, is a waitress there.

Suddenly, Mark ears perk up.

MARK

That's right...

(to Amanda:)

She was taking the bus home, wasn't she?

AMANDA

To her sorority. She used to walk home, but felt more comfortable taking the bus because of the campus rapes.

MARK

Didn't she tell you she knew Talisker?

AMANDA

She's seen him around, but she can't remember where.

Mark studies the bus seating chart, working something out in his mind.

MARK

She'd seen him around...

(thinks, then:)

Steve, tell me again what you found in his trunk.

STEVE

First aid kit, extra bottles of antiseptic, a trash bag, and a change of clothes. Something clicking for you?

Mark thinks a moment, then turns to face the others.

MARK

I don't know who killed Fred Talisker, but I think I know what he was doing on that bus.

(then:)

Sara was his next victim.

And on the others, shocked by his deduction, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWOACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Steve escorts a CRYING YOUNG WOMAN, 20s, from the PATHOLOGY LAB, leads her to a POLICE OFFICER, then goes to Mark and Amanda, who are down the hall.

STEVE

That's the fourth woman to positively identify Talisker as her rapist.

(then:)

Congratulations, Dad. You caught a guy campus police have been chasing for a years.

AMANDA

How did you know it was him, Mark?

MARK

I considered all the questions we had about Talisker then looked at what he had on him and in his car for the answers.

(then:)

Why was he taking a bus to campus when he could drive? Why was there a change of clothes in his trunk? Why did he need extra antiseptic and a trash bag?

Now Amanda sees the complete picture, too.

AMANDA

He wore the sweat suit for the rape then changed into the fresh clothes afterwards. The trash bag was for ditching the sweats.

STEVE

And the antiseptic was for any cuts or scrapes he might have gotten in the attack.

MARK

Sara couldn't remember where she'd seen him before because she only caught glimpses of him while he was stalking her.

Another possibility occurs to Steve.

STEVE

Or she knew all along who he was and killed him. I think I'll check if any of her sorority friends were among Talisker's victims.

MARK

Good idea.

(then:)

Did you get anything on the other passengers?

STEVE

Only one of them has a record. Lou Kupfer was arrested a couple times for public drunkenness. He's been in and out of mental hospitals since Vietnam...

MARK

That explains why he was calling for a medic when he was having his seizure.

Jesse rushes up, holding a file.

JESSE

I got big news. Dustin Woods' wife used to be a patient here.

STEVE

So?

JESSE

Stick with me for a sec. Mrs. Woods had a terminal case of cancer. Her doctors believed the only hope of saving her was a complete bone marrow transplant.

MARK

That's a very dangerous operation no one is sure yet that it's worth the risk.

JESSE

I guess that's why the insurance company called it an "experimental procedure" and refused to pay for it. Guess which company.

AMANDA

First Fidelity Casualty.

(then:)

That's where you heard of them before.

JESSE

Maybe Dustin Woods blames the insurance company for his wife's death...and made Talisker pay for it.

STEVE

Looks like we have no shortage of suspects.

MARK

And not much time to unmask the killer
I can only keep these people here
for observation a few more hours
before they get suspicious.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - WOODS' ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse comes in to find Woods in bed, alert, an IV in his arm, and a TUBE in his NOSTRILS.

JESSE

Good-evening, Mr. Woods. I'd ask you how you're feeling, but I'm afraid of the answer.

Jesse smiles, perhaps hoping it will buy him some good will. He guessed wrong.

WOODS

You should be.

Jesse drops the smile and takes a deep breath.

JESSE

Yes, well, I'm afraid your injury was worse than we thought.

WOODS

Oh, what a surprise.

JESSE

We had to remove your spleen. But the operation was a complete success, and you should be out of here in three or four days with no lasting complications.

WOODS

Except for the thirty grand I'm gonna owe this hospital and the damn insurance company for the rest of my life.

(MORE)

WOODS (CONT'D)

(then:)

Well, the joke is on you. I don't have a dime left. Why do you think I was on the bus in the first place?

JESSE

Because Fred Talisker was.

WOODS

Who the hell is he?

JESSE

A salesman for First Fidelity Casualty. You were two seats behind him.

WOODS

He's lucky I didn't know who he was or would have wrung his neck.

JESSE

Too late he's already dead.

Woods regards Jesse.

WOODS

And it must not have been an accident, and the fact you're playing games with me means you know about my wife, and think I got even.

Jesse shrugs.

WOODS (CONT'D)

What I said before was a figure of speech. I didn't even know him.

JESSE

But if you did, and you were following him, the crash was a wonderful opportunity. Everyone was hurt. His death could be blamed on the accident. Who'd know the difference?

WOODS

I would.

(then:)

Because if I murdered that guy I'd be as bad as the insurance company that killed my wife. Unlike doctors and insurance companies, I have a conscience.

And on Jesse's look, we CUT TO:

INT. DOCTORS' LOUNGE - NIGHT

Tanya is at a table, studying an MCAT prep guide. Roy empties the last dregs from a coffee pot into his cup as Amanda comes in.

AMANDA

Tell me that's not the end of the pot.

Roy holds up the empty carafe.

ROY

I'd offer to make a new one, but it's like driving friends to the airport. Do it once, and it's your job for life.

AMANDA

Tell me about it.

She starts to make a new pot. Tanya looks up from her book.

TANYA

Don't mind Roy. He was put on Earth to reassure single women there are worse things than being without a man.

AMANDA

Yeah, they could be with Fred Talisker.

TANYA

What about him?

Amanda motions them closer.

AMANDA

Don't spread this around, but he was a rapist.

(off her shocked look)

We have positive identification from four women that he was the man who attacked them.

Tanya looks sick.

TANYA

Four?

ROY

(to Tanya)

Guess you can stop feeling so bad about losing him now.

TANYA

Yeah, now I can feel bad for trying to save his miserable life in the first place.

And with that, she leaves. Roy shoots Amanda an apologetic look.

ROY

She's been working real hard lately...and you struck a nerve. They never caught the guy who attacked her.

AMANDA

You don't have to apologize for Tanya -- part of me agrees with her.

ROY

Yeah, but you and me, we know you don't choose your patients.
(then, grins:)
Wish I could. I would have gone for the little whiplash case.

AMANDA

Melora Jackson?

ROY

That's her. Can't believe I didn't even see her when I first got on that bus.

Amanda's interest perks up.

AMANDA

You didn't?

ROY

Tanya and I were the first EMTs in after they pried open the doors, but I must have gone right past her.

AMANDA

When did you see Melora?

ROY

While Tanya was working on Talisker, I went up to help the driver. There she was, under a seat.

That's the missing piece Amanda's been looking for. Her face tightens with anger.

AMANDA

Thanks.

ROY
 (for what?)
 Anytime.

She heads for the door. He waits until she's gone, then pulls out a THERMOS CARAFE and empties the newly-filled coffee pot into it, then heads for the door.

INT. ER - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Amanda comes in to find Melora lying in bed in her hospital gown. She puts on a sympathetic, concerned look as she approaches the bed.

AMANDA
 How are you feeling?

MELORA
 Not too bad. As long as I don't move around much.

AMANDA
 That's good. I'm glad you're... comfortable.

Melora catches the tone in Amanda's voice. Something's wrong.

MELORA
 What is it?

Amanda takes her hand and squeezes it gently.

AMANDA
 Melora, I need you to be very, very brave.

MELORA
 Why?

AMANDA
 We got your tests back. It's... It's your spine.

MELORA
What's my spine?

AMANDA
 You've suffered serious trauma to the second and third vertebrae. If we don't operate immediately, the slightest movement could sever the spinal cord.

Melora is shocked.

MELORA
 This can't be happening.

AMANDA

I know how frightening it sounds.
But surgical techniques have improved
tremendously in the last few years.
There's more than a thirty percent
chance you'll only suffer partial
paralysis after the operation.

Amanda takes out an ENORMOUS HYPODERMIC. Melora stares at it.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

This is just to calm you down. The
orderly will be along in a minute to
take you to the OR.

MELORA

Get that needle away from me!

AMANDA

I understand you're afraid. But the
damage is degenerative. Every minute
we wait --

MELORA

There's nothing wrong with me!

AMANDA

That's the tricky thing about spinal
cord damage often, there is no pain.

Amanda comes after her with the needle. Melora leaps out of bed.

MELORA

Look! There is no pain because there
is no damage! I'm fine!

Amanda smiles.

AMANDA

Of course you are... because you
weren't on the bus when it crashed.
That's why none of the other
passengers remember seeing you.

Melora stops, realizing she's been tricked. She fixes Amanda with a cold stare.

MELORA

The paramedics found me there.

AMANDA

But not when they first got on. You
followed them in and lay down under
the seat.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(then:)

City bus company. Soft tissue damage.
Pain and suffering... That's got to
be worth, what, half a million?

Melora gives up. She knows she's caught.

MELORA

Easily.

AMANDA

Don't look so disappointed. You may
have lost a fortune, but you might
have proved yourself innocent of
murder.

Amanda turns and walks out. Melora looks after her, baffled.
DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. HOSPITAL - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

Things have slowed down. In fact, outside the ER, it's
practically deserted, as these various shots illustrate.

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - HOMELESS MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lou lies in bed, an IV in EACH ARM, gently struggling against
his restraints, not hearing the FOOTSTEPS approaching him.
Until his eyes flash open suddenly.

HOMELESS MAN

Medic! Medic!

But no one answers his call except the unseen person who's
about to stop them forever. A hand, in a SURGICAL GLOVE,
goes to one of the IVs and INSERTS A SYRINGE into the line,
injecting something QUICKLY.

INT. ER - NIGHT

Steve, Amanda and Jesse are walking together.

JESSE

You mean she saw the accident, and
instead of trying to help the victims,
she waited for the paramedics to
break into the bus so she could pull
off a scam?

STEVE

You'd be surprised how often that
kind of thing happens. But what she
did was fraud, and I can make sure
she doesn't get away with it.

JESSE

And instead she gets away with murder.
 (off their looks:)
 Maybe she's being very clever and
 the real scam is the one she's playing
 on us. What if she was one of
 Talisker's victims?

AMANDA

She went on the bus to help,
 recognized Talisker, and killed him.

STEVE

We buy her scam story and clear her
 as a suspect.
 (impressed, to Jesse:)
 You're becoming as cynical as my
 father.

Jesse smiles, flattered.

JESSE

Thank you, Steve.

That's when ORDERLIES and a NURSE come charging down the
 hall, ROLLING a CRASH CART.

NURSE

Code 3!

Jesse, Amanda and Steve rush after them into:

INT. HOMELESS MAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

They enter to find Lou Kupfer lying still on the bed, his
 beside monitor shows ventricular fibrulation with an
 INCESSANT, HIGH-PITCHED RING. Nurse Reed is performing CPR.

REED

He's full cardiopulmonary arrest.
 Monitor show ventricular fibrulation.

JESSE

Ventilate, give me the paddles. 200
 Joules.

Amanda takes over the CPR while Nurse Reed goes to
 defibrillator. ANOTHER NURSE puts the mask on Kupfer and
 compresses the bag. Reed hands Jesse the paddles, who holds
 them over Lou.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Clear!

Everyone steps back, Jesse applies the paddles, JOLTING Lou,
 but there is no change in his EKG.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Again. Let go up to 300.

He glances at Nurse Reed, sees the charge has reached 300, and prepares to apply the paddles again.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Clear!

He JOLTS Lou again. No change. Jesse sighs and sets the paddles down.

REED

Nothing, Doctor. Flatline.

Jesse takes over the CPR from Amanda. Jesse turns to Reed.

JESSE

One millegram of atropine, 100 mg of lidocaine, one amp of bicarb.

Reed gives the injection to Kupfer, but nothing happens.

AMANDA

He's not breathing, monitor still show flatline.

JESSE

One amp calcium.

Reed gives the injection. Jesse continues the CPR, shooting glances at the monitor. No change.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Intercardiac injection, ephinephine.

Reed hands him a syringe with a HUGE NEEDLE, which Jesse plunges into Kupfer's chest. But there is no change.

AMANDA

He's not responding, Jesse.

Amanda examines Kupfer's eyes.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Pupils are fixed and dilated.

JESSE

(to Reed:)

How long since the initial arrest?

REED

Fifteen minutes.

JESSE

We lost him.

Jesse shares a look with Amanda and Steve.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Time of death, 11:42 pm.

And on their grim looks, we FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Amanda catches up with Mark as he walks wearily down the hall.

AMANDA
I've finished my autopsy of Lou Kupfur.

MARK
Let me guess -- he died of renal failure from acute tubular necrosis, the result of severe bodily trauma sustained in a bus accident.

AMANDA
He probably would have, if the overdose of dilantin didn't kill him first.

MARK
Dilantin?

Mark looks sick. Amanda nods.

AMANDA
I've got to pass this along to the hospital's oversight board for a formal investigation.

MARK
I was the attending physician, so I'm blame for any failure in his care.

AMANDA
But you didn't administer the anti-convulsant.
(then:)
Mark, everyone knows how dangerous dilantin can be if not administered perfectly. I'm sure the board will take that into account when reviewing a nurse's actions.

MARK

It doesn't matter. He was my patient,
my responsibility.

Mark marches off, Amanda alongside.

INT. DOCTORS' LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nurse Reed stares down at a coffee cup she's too tired to
lift. Mark and Amanda stand over her.

REED

It's not possible.

MARK

Nancy, you told me how tired you
were.

(then, urging her on:)

You don't need to worry about
reprisals -- no matter what mistakes
were made, I'm taking responsibility
for it.

REED

I've got five kids, Mark. I'm used
to being tired. I'm not going to OD
a patient just because I've had a
long shift.

Amanda and Mark share a look.

AMANDA

Even with the prescribed dosage,
dilantin can be fatal if it's simply
injected too fast.

She looks up angrily.

REED

Don't you think I know that?

MARK

Nancy, no one's trying to blame you.

REED

I am. I keep going over those
procedures in my head a hundred times,
trying to figure out what I did wrong.
And there isn't anything.

AMANDA

How can you be sure?

REED

I checked his IV and gave him two
grams of dilantin at 11:25. He was
stable when I left.

She looks at Mark, confused.

AMANDA

But Lou didn't go code blue until
11:40... almost twenty minutes later.

MARK

And a dilantin OD would be fatal
almost immediately.

REED

I'm telling you, he was fine when I
left his room.

MARK

(to Amanda)

Can you hold off on that report for
a few hours?

AMANDA

Sure.

MARK

(to Nurse Reed:)

I want a look at Kupfer's IV.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

Melora, back in her street clothes, comes down the hall,
checking around to make sure she isn't being watched. She
heads straight for the elevator and presses the button several
times. Finally, it dings. She smiles, knowing she's free.
Until the doors slide open, revealing Steve.

STEVE

Don't tell me you're leaving so soon,
Ms. Jackson.

MELORA

What's it to you?

STEVE

You know who has to cover your
hospital bills if you skip out without
paying? The taxpayers.

MELORA

Write your congressman.

She heads into the elevator. He blocks her way.

STEVE

Frankly, I can think of many better
uses for those tax dollars. Like
paying my salary.

He flashes HIS BADGE. She blanches.

MELORA
I haven't done anything.

STEVE
I bet I could come up with a couple
of charges if I put my mind to it.

MELORA
Fine with me. False arrest is almost
as lucrative as pain and suffering.

STEVE
But real arrest can be a major pain
in the butt. And I have a feeling
you'd rather not go through that
after your traumatic experience on
the bus.

SHE THINKS IT THROUGH, THEN:

MELORA
What do you want?

STEVE
Just to know what you saw before you
were so grievously injured.

MELORA
You mean the crash?

STEVE
After that.

MELORA
I looked in a window. Most of the
people were lying on the floor. They
looked pretty badly hurt.

STEVE
Did you see the homeless man?

MELORA
Yeah, he was really out of it. I
remember because he had fallen on
top of this guy in a sweat suit.

Steve, suddenly very interested, pulls out a picture of
Talisker.

STEVE
Is this him?

MELORA
Yeah. Sweat suit was struggling hard
to sit up, but he was having trouble
(MORE)

MELORA (CONT'D)
getting out from under the homeless
guy.

STEVE
What then?

MELORA
Ambulance showed up, so I hid until
the paramedics broke the glass with
a rock and opened the door. Once
they were inside, I slipped in and
hid under the first seat.

STEVE
What did you see after that?

MELORA
The back of my eyelids. I was under
a seat with my eyes closed.

The elevator arrives. He blocks her way again.

MELORA (CONT'D)
I thought we had a deal, I tell you
what you want to know, you don't
arrest me.

STEVE
We do.

Steve motions to the hallway.

STEVE (CONT'D)
The accounting office is down the
hall. After you settle up with them,
you're free to go.
(then:)
Though you may need hospitalization
when you see how expensive an MRI
can be.

She glares at him and marches down the hall. And on Steve
watching after her, we CUT TO:

INT. PATHOLOGY - NIGHT

Mark peers at a section of the IV tube under the MICROSCOPE.

MARK
This is the line from Kupfer's bicarb
IV.

AMANDA
What are you looking for?

MARK
That.

Mark leans back and offers Amanda the scope. She peers into it.

AMANDA
Crystallization.
(then, stunned:)
Someone injected the dilantin into
the sodium bicarb IV.

MARK
And because the two substances are
totally incompatible, it caused
crystallization.

AMANDA
I can't believe that someone as
experienced with anti-convulsants as
Nancy Reed would make a mistake like
that, no matter how tired she was.

MARK
Neither do I -- which means that Lou
Kupfer was murdered.

INT. ER - NIGHT

Mark, Amanda and Jesse are gathered at a nurse's station as
Steve rushes up to them.

STEVE
I was able to catch Melora Jackson
before she left the building - again.
Bud Flanek, Dustin Woods, and Sara
Gilbey are all under guard.

AMANDA
I can understand why one of them
wanted Fred Talisker dead, but why
murder Lou Kupfer?

MARK
We know from Melora that Lou was
beside Talisker after the crash. My
guess is, when the killer murdered
Talisker, he assumed Lou was dead.
When it turned out Lou wasn't, the
killer couldn't take the chance he
might make an ID.

JESSE
But Lou was dying and delirious --
when he wasn't out cold, he was having
'Nam flashbacks, screaming for a
medic. He wasn't a threat to any of
them.

Mark turns and looks at Jesse.

MARK

You're right. He wasn't.

JESSE

Huh?

Something is dawning on Mark as the ER doors open, and Tanya and Roy wheel in a WOMAN, 50s, wearing a HOUSE DRESS, her FOOT WRAPPED IN GAUZE. Jesse and a nurse go to greet them.

JESSE (CONT'D)

What happened to her foot?

ROY

Her dog was blocking the TV and wouldn't move. So she kicked him. Fido didn't appreciate it.

Jesse takes the woman's arm from Tanya and glances at Roy.

JESSE

Give me a hand, we'll take her to exam room two.

As they go off, Tanya turns to Mark.

TANYA

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the end of another shift. At least it ended a lot easier than it started.

MARK

Now you're going home to get a good night's sleep.

TANYA

I wish I could, but I've got to hit the books and get some studying in.

MARK

So you haven't had a chance to figure out which of Jesse's three questions you got wrong?

TANYA

With everything that's been going on tonight, I haven't had a free moment.

MARK

That's a shame, because you got it wrong again.

Tanya looks at him, confused.

TANYA

I don't understand.

MARK

How much anti-convulsant can mix in
an can you mix in a bicarb IV
solution?

TANYA

20 mille-equivalents.

MARK

The correct answer is none they are
incompatible. If you'd studied up,
maybe you wouldn't have made the
same mistake when you murdered Lou
Kupfer.

Tanya looks over at Amanda and Steve, who are staring at
her.

TANYA

Who's Lou Kupfer?

STEVE

He's the homeless man who saw you
murder Fred Talisker.

MARK

Lou wasn't calling for a medic --
he was pointing to the killer. The
paramedic. You.

TANYA

I tried to save Talisker, you saw
me.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

That's what had me fooled.

(then:)

The passengers were locked inside
the bus, so I figured the murder had
to happen in the five minutes before
you arrived. A crime of opportunity.

(then:)

What I never considered was that the
murder might have happened after you
arrived that the opportunity was
yours.

TANYA

This is crazy I didn't even know
him.

MARK

But you'd seen him before, when you
were mugged, beaten... and raped.

AMANDA

The man who did that to you was never caught...

MARK

Until tonight, until you saw his face again, on that bus.

Tears starts to stream down her cheeks. Jesse and Roy come out of the exam room, shocked, having heard enough to know what's happening here...

TANYA

I still had the brick in my hand... the one I used to break the glass on the bus door. And when I saw him...it all came back to me, every second of it.

(then:)

He didn't deserve to live... not after what he did to me... to all those other women.

AMANDA

What about Lou Kupfer? What did he ever do to you? To anyone?

TANYA

He was going to die any way... what I did, it didn't really make a difference, did it?

(to Mark, pleading:)

Tell her.

Mark looks away.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Please...

Steve steps forward and gently takes her arm.

STEVE

You have the right to remain silent.

TANYA

Dr. Sloan, please, tell her I didn't really kill him...

STEVE

Anything you say can and will be held against you in a court of law...

Steve leads her away. And on Mark, the weight of this sad victory heavy on his soul, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ER - DAY

Compared to the events of the last evening, the ER is calm. Amanda is at the desk when DEL HARRIS, coach of the LAKERS, comes in.

DEL

Excuse me, I'd like to see Dr. Sloan.

AMANDA

Can I tell him what this is regarding?

Del holds up an envelope.

DEL

Yeah, I'm Del Harris. A friend of mine told me how Dr. Sloan missed the Laker game last night. I came by to offer him some tickets to the next game.

AMANDA

I'm sure he's not interested in your "offer." Good day.

DEL

Two tickets, right on the floor. Best seats in the house.

She gives him a cold look.

AMANDA

I'm sure they are.

(then:)

This is a hospital emergency room, Mr. Harris, not the stadium parking lot. Scalp your tickets somewhere else.

DEL

No, you've got it all wrong. I'm giving them away.

AMANDA

Really? Well, in that case...

She snatches the envelope from him and tears it in half, and then in half again, letting the pieces fall on the floor.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I guess there will be no charge, will there?

Del shakes his head and leaves. That's when Mark and Steve come up behind her.

STEVE

(to Mark:)

Did you see him?

AMANDA

Unbelievable, isn't it?

MARK

(to Steve:)

What was he doing here?

AMANDA

That's what I said.

STEVE

Imagine the coach of the Lakers was right here in Community General.

MARK

Think we could have gotten a couple tickets from him?

STEVE

Dream on, Dad.

And as Mark and Steve continue on their way, Amanda dives down and picks up the torn pieces...and as she starts taping them back together, we FADE OUT.

THE END