

BLACK FLIES

by

Ryan King

Based on the novel by Shannon Burke

United Talent Agency
9336 Civic Center Drive
Beverly Hills, CA, 90210
(310)273-6700

Manager: Benjamin Blake
Heroes and Villains Entertainment
(323)850-2990

Two & Two Pictures
lucan@twoandtwo.com
www.twoandtwo.com

AZA Films
christopherkopp16@gmail.com
www.azafilms.com

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INT. AMBULANCE - HARLEM, NEW YORK, 1993 - NIGHT

1

Sirens. The back of a speeding ambulance. A metal stretcher rattles.

Paramedic OLLIE CROSS, 22, white, closely cropped hair, sits, bracing himself against the speed.

He stares at the ground, trying to steady his breath.

The ambulance turns, hard. Cross reaches out a hand to balance himself.

He looks out the back window. The sirens seem to get louder.

Then everything goes silent. Cross stares out the window, watching the city pass by - cars, buildings, people. Cars, buildings, people.

Finally, the ambulance slows and comes to a stop. Cross braces himself.

The back doors swing open and street light pours in.

Suddenly, a barrage of sounds - sirens, screams, radios crackling.

Paramedic GENE RUTOVSKY, 40's, crew cut, military bearing, stands outside, motioning, hollering.

RUTOVSKY

Come on, come on!

Cross rises.

2

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

2

Cross runs down the street, lugging a trauma bag over his shoulder. He frantically looks into doorways and peers into cars. Emergency vehicles speed by.

At an approaching corner, a middle aged woman stands, hysterically crying, grocery bags at her feet. Two neighbors try to calm her.

RUTOVSKY'S VOICE (O.C.)

Victims on 119th!

Rutovsky sprints alongside Cross, huffing for breath, radio held high.

Up ahead, a bloody gunshot victim writhes in the middle of the street, groaning. A paramedic rushes up and starts treating. A police car speeds by, headed down the block.

Rutovsky motions and they angle down the side street after the police car. Another medic is running just behind them, shouting into his radio.

At the end of the block - police cars, flashing lights. Screaming from several locations, louder.

Cross, still running, sees a crowd huddled in the doorway of a large brown apartment building. An older man calls out and motions to Cross.

Cross squeezes between two parked cars as Rutovsky and the other medic rush ahead.

Cross pushes through the crowd.

A 13-YEAR-OLD KID lies on the stoop, very still, eyes open. His head rests on a colorful backpack.

Cross crouches and the bystanders lurch forward.

CROSS
Step back! Step back!

They step back. Cross sets down his bag.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(to victim)
What's wrong?

13-YEAR-OLD VICTIM
I'm shot.

The kid points. Cross looks down to see -

A hole in the kid's white shoes, blood on the laces.

Cross reaches into his bag to start treating the victim. The crowd suddenly lurches.

LAFONTAINE, 40's, a thick-necked, mustached paramedic with huge biceps, pushes through the crowd.

LAFONTAINE
What's wrong with him?

CROSS
(hesitates)
Shot in the foot.

LAFONTAINE

The foot?! I've got critical patients! Listen to your fuckin' radio and leave the hand-holding to the techs!

He pushes back out through the crowd. Cross grabs his bag, rises, hesitates, turns back to the victim.

CROSS

Don't worry. You'll get a cast.

A BYSTANDER shoves him.

BYSTANDER

Do something, man! He's 13!

The onlookers start to get angry. Someone else shoves him from behind. He lurches forward, losing his balance, then manages to push his way out of the crowd.

Cross runs down the center of the street. More sirens approaching.

A paramedic treats a gunshot victim sprawled across a car's hood. A police officer holds the victim down with his nightstick, arresting him at the same time.

Children line the sidewalk, watching, scared.

Several bloody bodies are spread out in the street up ahead. Paramedics are treating.

Police try to keep onlookers away. Cross runs up to a victim -

It's a teenager. He's been shot several times and blood soaks his shirt and jacket.

He's stares at Cross, desperately trying to speak. Blood seeps out of his mouth.

Cross drops down beside him and starts rifling around in his bag, but his hands are shaking.

An ambulance screeches to a halt. PHELPS, a young paramedic, hops out of the cab, slamming a longboard onto the ground next to the victim.

He starts to collar the victim.

PHELPS

What the fuck are you doing, man?!
Give me a hand!

Cross leans back in and helps to ease the victim onto the board.

A young mother with a crying baby strapped to her stands in the middle of the street, wailing, deep and low. She hasn't been shot but she's covered in blood.

Cross and Phelps load the victim into the back of the ambulance.

The wailing gets deeper. Surreal. A sound like that shouldn't come from this body.

Cross stares at her.

The baby's cries merge with the mother's. The wailing gets louder until it's the only thing we hear.

Cross climbs into the back of the ambulance. Shuts the doors.

3 EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT 3

Later. A bay in the garage. Cross, shaken, slowly cleans the ambulance:

He wipes down the steering wheel and radio in the front cab.

He scrubs out the back compartment, plunging a sponge into a bucket of bloody water.

He wipes down the cables and face of the monitor in the back.

He changes the sheets on the cot.

4 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 4

An exhausted Cross opens the door to his tiny one bedroom apartment. He tosses his keys on the side table.

Cross stands in a hot shower, scrubbing himself. He tilts his head back and lets the water pour over his face.

He eases open the door to his small bedroom and peeks in. His girlfriend, CLARA BURKE, 23, is asleep in bed.

Cross steps in and slips into bed, careful not to wake her. He looks at her, then lies back and stares at the ceiling.

5 EXT. STATION HOUSE - DAY 5

Station 18. 136th between Lenox and Fifth Avenue.

Leaning against the brick wall of the building - bloodstained longboards lined up in a row.

Medical debris blows against the chain link fence.

REGGIE VERDIS, 40's, African American, digs with a shovel in a tiny makeshift garden alongside the building. He calls out and waves as Cross walks by. Cross waves back.

6

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

6

CHIEF BURROUGHS, 50's, African American, dreadlocks pulled back into a ponytail, sits at a desk. His top collar is buttoned. He wears a tie and ten bars over his badge. A radio behind him quietly plays the Manhattan North frequency.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

I hear you're going to medical school.

Cross stands on the other side, hands behind his back.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)

I've seen your MCAT book.

CROSS

I want to. My girlfriend's in at Columbia. I didn't get in on the first round. Or the second. I was told to raise my scores and get some experience and then reapply.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

So you came here?

CROSS

Yes, sir. I requested it.

Chief Burroughs looks at him steadily.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I wanted to come to Harlem. Do good things as a medic.

The chief nods.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

Well, you'll get your experience here. Just do your job. Show up to work. That's all we ask.

CROSS

I will, sir.

The chief leans back.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
How's it being paired with
Rutovsky?

CROSS
Good, so far, sir.

The chief laughs.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
That's good to hear. We'll see what
you say in a few months. You have
any problems, you come to me. My
door's always open.

CROSS
Thanks, sir.

The chief sits there, studying him.

Cross doesn't know what's going on. He shifts his weight,
unnerved. Finally -

CHIEF BURROUGHS
Good. Now get into service.

Cross lets himself out and shuts the door.

7 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY 7

Cross and Rutovsky get dressed in the medics' locker room.
Cross buttons his uniform. Rutovsky takes an expensive
stethoscope out of his locker and puts it in his bag.

8 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - DAY 8

The ambulance speeds down a Manhattan street, sirens blaring.
Rutovsky drives. Cross sits in the passenger street. They
both stare straight ahead.

9 EXT. PARK - DAY 9

A public park just under the George Washington Bridge. A
lighthouse nearby.

A DOMINICAN MAN, 50's, lies on a picnic bench, gasping for
breath, his legs hanging over the edge. His wife, a DOMINICAN
WOMAN, holds his head. Their daughter watches nearby, crying.

Cross and Rutovsky run across a grassy hill toward the victim, trauma bags in hand.

DOMINICAN WOMAN
(noticing them)
Ayudame! Ayudame!

Cross and Rutovsky approach. Cross goes to the victim. The wife goes to stand with her daughter.

Rutovsky notices an asthma nebulizer in the grass.

RUTOVSKY
(to woman)
Asthmatica?

She nods, crying.

Cross touches the man, upsetting his balance. The man slides off the table, landing as a lump in the grass. The wife and daughter call out. Cross crouches down next to him.

His chest heaves once and then he's still. Eyes glazed.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
Showtime.

Rutovsky tosses over his tube kit.

CROSS
Not on this guy. He's dying.

RUTOVSKY
Gotta learn sometime, Cross.

Rutovsky crouches and works a bag-valve mask over the man's face.

Cross starts to set up the laryngoscope, his hands shaking.

Rutovsky steps away from the body.

Cross moves around, positioning himself at the head. He crouches and goes into the man's mouth with the laryngoscope.

He misses the first time.

He tries again and gets it successfully in the second time. He roots around, looking, then -

CROSS
(starting to panic)
I can't see the cords.

RUTOVSKY

Look again.

CROSS

He'll die.

RUTOVSKY

He'll definitely die if you sit
there not doin' nothin'.

The beeping of the heartbeat monitor is slowing. Cross looks up.

The wife and daughter watch, crying, clinging to each other. The daughter wipes her eyes with a pair of strangely bright white mittens.

Cross grips the scope and goes back in, searching. Rutovsky watches.

Cross roots around, desperate. He finally finds them.

CROSS

They're shut. That's why I couldn't
see them.

Cross looks up. Rutovsky stares at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I can't do it, Rut! He'll die. The
cords are spasmed shut.

Rutovsky doesn't move. The beeping of the monitor slows down further.

The wife and daughter start screaming, begging the medics to do something.

Finally, Rutovsky drops down and pushes Cross aside. He snatches the scope and slides it into the man's mouth.

He repositions himself, careful, alert, calm.

RUTOVSKY

Come here. I want you to see this.

Rutovsky hands him the tube with one hand and holds the scope in place with the other. Cross leans in and looks.

On the screen, two white lines, barely visible.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Those are the cords. The two white lines. Remember what they look like. Remember how to find them.

CROSS

They're clamped shut.

RUTOVSKY

Just wait.

They wait. And wait.

The mother and daughter are wailing.

Wait.

The guy's chest heaves up.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Now!

Cross stabs the tube downward. After a moment...

The beeping of the monitor slowly picks up speed.

The man's skin flushes. Cross rocks back on his heels, relieved.

CROSS

Thanks, Rut.

Rutovsky ignores him, listening with his stethoscope.

The wife and daughter rush to his side, in tears, and thank them.

Cross stares at the victim slowly coming to.

10

EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

10

The ambulance slows as it approaches a recently crashed motorcycle, roped off from the rest of the road with orange cones and police tape. Smashed cycle parts are scattered across the road. An officer motions and Rutovsky drives around.

The rider is a full block away - a lump, not moving. A small group of cops keep bystanders away.

The ambulance stops and Cross and Rutovsky jump out.

Cross grabs a longboard out of the back.

They duck under the police line and rush to the body - a Jamaican kid, legs twisted at impossible angles. His mouth opens and closes mechanically. His chest is not moving.

Cross and Rutovsky ease the victim onto the board. Cross puts the collar on.

They lift the victim, maneuver back out through the crowd and police line, and head for the ambulance.

Another ambulance drives up and Verdis jumps out of the passenger seat.

Cross and Rutovsky load the victim into their ambulance. Verdis climbs into the back just as they finish loading. Cross shuts the doors.

Inside. Cross starts breathing for the victim with the bag valve mask. Verdis and Rutovsky both go to the victim's arms, ready to set up an IV bag.

Rutovsky and Verdis glance up at each other. It's race time.

Verdis quickly takes out a fourteen-gauge angiocath (metal tube) and kneels on the bag to run it through.

Rutovsky doesn't run a line. He wraps a stretchy band around the victim's arm, tightens it, and finds a vein. Then he holds the fluid bag high in the air while starting the IV with the other. He finishes before Verdis even gets started.

Verdis looks up, impressed.

VERDIS
Beautiful.

11 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - LATER

11

A bit later. The siren blares. The ambulance speeds back to the station.

Cross sits with the victim in the back as they drive. The monitor beeps steadily.

The young victim on the stretcher stares up at Cross. Cross stares back. A long moment as they look at each other.

CROSS
(quietly)
You're gonna make it.

Something shifts in the victim's eyes. They go empty.

The life drains out of him. The monitor flatlines.

Cross stares at the victim and shakes his head. He grabs the defibrillator paddles and turns them on.

He places them onto the victim and waits as they charge. Waits.

He presses the button. The body convulses with the shock.

The monitor flatlines again. Cross BANGS his hand against the ceiling of the ambulance.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(calling out)
He's flatlined! He's flatlined!

He shocks the body again.

12 EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT 12

Cross and Rutovsky roll the victim out of the ambulance, now covered by a white sheet.

13 INT. MEDIC'S LOUNGE - NIGHT 13

The tiled floor lounge area. Verdis enthusiastically tells a story to the surrounding medics. LaFontaine stands in the doorway. Cross sits in the corner, listening.

VERDIS
(laughing)
Motherfucker ran a line with one
hand and set the angiocath with the
other. And with his left fucking
hand!

The medics laugh. Rutovsky doesn't react.

Cross shakes his head and looks away, distracted. Verdis goes on with his story, but we can't make out the words.

14 INT. APARTMENT - DAY 14

The small living room of Cross and Clara's apartment. Exposed pipes. Cross sits at a small desk - a calculator, timer, three sharpened pencils sit lined up in a row. He's taking a test, but having trouble concentrating. He stares at the sheet.

The sound of keys in the lock, then the door opens. Clara comes in carrying a book bag. She sees Cross at the desk.

CLARA
(surprised)
You're awake.

Cross doesn't answer. He makes a mark on the test. Clara goes into the bedroom.

Cross shuts his eyes, opens them, and tries to refocus. The timer dings. He looks down at the test. He didn't even come close to finishing.

He turns the page and starts checking his answers as Clara comes back in. She crosses over to him and puts her arms around him from behind.

CLARA (CONT'D)
How'd you do?

CROSS
Better. How was school?

CLARA
Good. We got to see the bodies today. That guy from California totally passed out.

She tries to look at the test. He flips it over and turns in his seat to look at her.

CLARA (CONT'D)
I feel like I haven't seen you.

CROSS
You haven't.

He smiles. He kisses her, picks up a mug from off the desk, and goes into the kitchen.

CLARA
Kind of shitty, isn't it? Is this your shift for good?

CROSS (O.C.)
I mean, it's not a grocery store. You don't get to pick and choose.

CLARA
I know. I just miss you. I didn't think we'd be apart this much until our residencies.

He comes back in with coffee and leans in the doorway.

CROSS
It's just for a year.

She looks at him.

15 EXT. RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

15

Cross and Rutovsky stand in front of the parked ambulance.

RUTOVSKY
Cross, meet Lance. You'll be seeing
a lot of him.

An older HOMELESS MAN sits in front of the door of the restaurant with a forty ounce beer, a stuffed orange backpack by his side.

HOMELESS MAN
What'd I do now?!

RUTOVSKY
You're unconscious.

HOMELESS MAN
Aw fuck that, I mighta closed my
eyes - but I didn't pass out. They
just don't like me sittin' here, so
they call it in.

Cross notices the manager watching them.

RUTOVSKY
Look, you can come with us to the
ER - or find some other place to
sit. Those are your choices.

HOMELESS MAN
Fuck that. Free country.

He makes a toast with his forty and drinks.

RUTOVSKY
Option 3. I call P.D. My buddy on
the force shows up and they tool
you up in the back of the squad car
- you spend three days in
processing.

Cross steps forward.

CROSS

Sir, it's easier if you walk away.

Rutovsky looks at Cross. The homeless man laughs.

HOMELESS MAN

Aw, thanks for spelling it out for me. Look at that uniform - it's still got the creases in it. Jesus. Welcome to Harlem, mothafucker.

Rutovsky almost laughs. The homeless man takes a long swig, wedges the bottle into his backpack, shoulders it, and stands. He salutes the medics and wanders off.

RUTOVSKY

Another successful medical intervention.

The manager comes barreling out.

MANAGER

You just let him walk away?!

Rutovsky walks around the ambulance to the driver's side.

CROSS

(to manager)

We look like cops?

MANAGER

He'll just come back - then I gotta call again!

Rutovsky opens his door, sets his equipment in the side compartment, climbs in, and -

RUTOVSKY

(to manager)

He left. What do you care?

- shuts his door. Cross climbs into the ambulance.

16

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

16

He shuts the door. Rutovsky is already reading his *Daily News*. Cross pulls his MCAT textbook off the dash and notices something out the front windshield.

The homeless guy crosses in front of the ambulance and comes around the side, holding his beer. Cross watches him.

The homeless guy peers through the driver's side window, hard. Rutovsky ignores him.

HOMELESS MAN

Assholes!

He spits beer all over the window. It runs down the glass.

Cross waits to see what Rutovsky will do.

Rutovsky sits very still for a moment. Then he switches on the radio and turns a page of the newspaper. The homeless man wanders away, yelling at someone else.

Cross glances down at Rutovsky's uniform. Rutovsky eventually senses him staring.

RUTOVSKY

What?

CROSS

What's that one for?

Rutovsky looks at him, then down - a single black bar over his badge.

RUTOVSKY

It's the thing I'm most proud of.

CROSS

What is it?

RUTOVSKY

(not looking at him)

From when I was in the war. It's a kill bar. For a confirmed kill.

Rutovsky goes back to reading.

17

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

17

Cross and Rutovsky walk across the lot of Station 18. Discarded dirty longboards and medical debris everywhere.

LaFontaine hurries the other direction, lugging a large plastic bag with something heavy inside.

RUTOVSKY

What've you got?

LAFONTAINE

You don't know and you don't wanna know.

(MORE)

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
 (to Cross)
 And you definitely don't wanna
 know.

LaFontaine passes them. Cross glances back at him.

18 INT. MEDICS' LOUNGE - NIGHT

18

Cross and Rutovsky walk into the medics' lounge and set down their bags.

In the corner of the room, Verdis argues with MARMOL, 30's, another paramedic on his shift. Verdis shakes a hand in his face and walks away.

Cross glances towards the chief's office.

Through the window - Phelps stands in front of the chief's desk, staring at the ground, while Chief Burroughs speaks to him gently but firmly.

CROSS
 (to Rutovsky)
 What's going on?

LaFontaine busts into the lounge, wiping his hands with a rag.

LAFONTAINE
 Put a fork in'm, he's done!

He tosses the rag in the trash.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
 (to everyone)
 I told you that fucker wouldn't
 make it, didn't I say that? We had
 on MVA on the Triboro. He didn't do
 nothin' - just fucking sat there,
 not doin' shit. Kept saying, "Head
 like a crushed melon." Didn't even
 help with the patients.

VERDIS
 You could be cool about it. We've
 all been there.

LaFontaine crosses over and laughs in his face.

LAFONTAINE
 Speak for yourself. I ain't never
 been there. It's time for that boy
 to transfer the fuck out of here.

LaFontaine notices Cross looking at him.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
 You want us to give you one, too?
 Make it a little two for one?

Cross looks down.

Another medic sits in the corner, reading a magazine, ignoring the whole thing. Rutovsky stands in a doorway.

RUTOVSKY
 (to LaFontaine)
 He'll go out tonight, get loaded,
 fuck his wife, come back tomorrow
 and it's another day. He's a tough
 kid.

LAFONTAINE
 Twenty bucks.

They slap hands - it's on.

Phelps comes out of the chief's office, glassy-eyed, shell-shocked.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
 (clapping his hands
 together)
 Here he comes, folks! New York's
 finest!

Everyone watches Phelps. He wanders slowly into the lounge and then stands still, dazed.

LaFontaine grins at Rutovsky - "What did I tell you?"

Phelps turns and looks around the room, studying the watching faces. He looks at LaFontaine.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
 You can't hack it, I don't have
 time for you.

PHELPS
 I'm not transferring.

LAFONTAINE
 Mmm hmm. We'll see.

Phelps stares at him. A face-off. Verdis steps forward to get between them.

Phelps suddenly turns to Cross.

PHELPS
What're you looking at, rookie?!

Cross just stares at him.

Phelps turns and walks out. Verdis quickly follows.

LAFONTAINE
(calling to Verdis)
What're you, his mother? Let'm work
it out himself.

Cross follows Verdis out. LaFontaine laughs and turns to the others.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
No fucking way that guy's showing
up tomorrow.

Rutovsky shakes his head.

19 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

19

Two kids in t-shirts hang out a window of a brownstone across the street. They toss two paper airplanes that spiral down in the dim light.

Cross and Verdis are just behind Phelps as he strides across the parking lot. They try to calm him down.

VERDIS/CROSS
Come on, man, come back inside -

Phelps tears open the door to his car. He looks inside, sees something, and immediately slams it shut.

Cross and Verdis freeze.

Phelps KICKS the car, hard, repeatedly.

Once he's done, he rests his head on the door and covers his eyes.

PHELPS
(breaking down, barely
audible)
I can't - fuck this, fuck this
shit, just...

He starts crying. A long moment.

Cross steps forward, carefully.

As he nears - the sunroof of the car has been smashed in, glass everywhere. Something appears to be sitting in the driver's seat.

Cross angles closer to get a better look. He freezes.

A bloated dead dog is propped up in the driver's seat. Wires are wrapped around the paws, attaching them to the steering wheel. It looks like it's driving.

The other medics all stand at the edge of the parking lot watching.

Phelps stands there with his head on the car, hysterically crying. His back shakes violently.

Maggots swarm across the dog and front seat. Cross has to look away.

Everyone is still, silently watching.

Finally, Phelps pushes away from the car and walks back into the station, head down.

He brushes past Cross and the medics, not looking at them.

As he nears the station, LaFontaine comes out, laughing. He watches Phelps go back inside.

Then he gets right up in Cross's face.

LAFONTAINE

Pay attention. You're next.

LaFontaine stays close, daring him. Everyone watches.

CROSS

Not happening. I'm not transferring.

LaFontaine smiles and looks to Rutovsky.

RUTOVSKY

We'll see.

Everyone except Cross starts to walk back inside.

Rutovsky approaches LaFontaine and hands him a crumpled twenty dollar bill.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Where'd you get that fucking dog?

LaFontaine laughs. They disappear back into the station.

Cross stands alone in the parking lot. After a moment, he turns and walks away in the opposite direction.

20 INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT 20

Cross purchases a pint-sized bottle of vodka at a liquor store. The clerk gives him his change from behind a bullet-proof partition.

21 INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT 21

Cross rides the subway home. He takes out the bottle hidden in a brown paper bag and takes a long swig.

22 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 22

Cross drunkenly takes out his keys as he walks up to the apartment. He tries to unlock the door, but his hands are shaking. He tries again, but drops the keys on the ground. He stares at them.

23 INT. MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY 23

Cross leans on a counter at a visitor's desk. A receptionist hands him a guest pass.

Cross walks down a hallway. Two students wearing medical scrubs pass him, headed the other direction.

24 INT. MEDICAL LAB - DAY 24

A high shelf lined with medical jars - floating hearts, brains, kidneys, fetuses. Medical students dissect bodies on steel tables.

A half-dissected cadaver lays on a steel table, the interior cavity of the body open, organs visible. Grey formaldehyde pools in the plastic wrapping around the body.

Clara, in lab gear, her long straight hair folded tight under a blue cap, stands over the body, prodding the organs with forceps. Cross stands at the foot of the cadaver and watches.

CLARA

Well, fuck him. Don't let them get to you.

CROSS
 (sarcastic)
 Yeah, okay.

CLARA
 Everyone has to be new at some
 point.

Cross is silent.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 You'll be here next year anyway.

CROSS
 If I get in.

CLARA
 Don't say if. Say when.

CROSS
 I'll say "when" when it happens.

Clara picks up a scalpel and makes a cut inside the body.

CLARA
 This is what happens to you. People
 think you're a nice guy - so they
 mess with you. Test you. They want
 to see if you'll quit.

She looks up at him.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 You have to make a choice. Either
 walk away. Or fit in. Convince them
 you can survive.

CROSS
 How?

She puts down the scalpel.

CLARA
 Make them think you're one of them.

25 EXT. STREET - DAY

25

Screaming. A Rottweiler with a bloody mouth pads up and down the street, snapping at pedestrians.

A street outside the medics' station. A ten-year-old boy with a raw, gnawed arm SCREAMS, blood dripping down his arm and all over the sidewalk.

Cross and Rutovsky pull up in the ambulance. They hop out.

A crowd of kids has formed. They taunt the dog and jump back when he lunges at them.

Cross and Rutovsky rush up to join a group of medics nearby.

The dog turns the corner and walks into the fenced-in parking lot of the station just as LaFontaine walks by. He slams the chain link gate shut and locks the dog in.

LAFONTAINE

You're welcome! You guys need me to solve any other problems, just let me know.

Verdis bandages the young victim from a small tech bag.

The crowd runs up to the fence and bangs on it. They shout at the dog and throw empty bottles over the fence.

The dog barks and dodges the bottles. Glass shatters around him.

A TEENAGE BOY in the crowd pulls a small pistol out of a backpack and aims it at the dog.

TEENAGE BOY

He bites my friend, I cap him. That's it.

Cross looks back to the ambulance, thinking.

Rutovsky puts a call over his radio, asking for a rush on the police. LaFontaine waves him off.

LAFONTAINE

Forget the cops. Dog bites him, they shoot the dog. Long as he doesn't hit my car, that's justice.

Sirens approach. Cross rushes to the cab of the ambulance.

He rifles around in his backpack and pulls out a little brown bag.

The teenage boy is aiming. The dog runs back and forth among the cars, desperately trying to find a way out.

Cross runs to the gate and opens it. The crowd lurches back. The dog wheels around and barks and growls at Cross.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)

Look at this fuckin' genius.

(calling to Cross)

What're you gonna do?! Shut the fuckin' gate!

CROSS

Give me a minute!

LAFONTAINE

He's got no brains, and soon he'll have no balls!

The crowd laughs. Cross eases the gate shut behind him and approaches the dog. He reaches into the brown bag and pulls out a pastrami sandwich.

CROSS

Hey pup. Hey pup.

Someone in the crowd - "If that's a pup, I'd hate to see his mother." Rutovsky watches, silently.

Cross inches forward, tears off a piece of meat from the sandwich, and tosses it on the ground.

The dog lunges at him, just missing. The crowd reacts. Cross jumps back. He regains his balance.

The dog growls at Cross. Cross tosses more meat.

The dog looks at the meat. Then back to Cross. Cross waits.

The dog approaches the meat. He sniffs and snatches it up.

Rutovsky watches, nodding to himself. Sirens getting closer.

Cross tosses more. The dog eats that too.

Cross tosses the rest of the sandwich and the dog eats it up.

Cross eases over and reaches for the dog's collar. The dog suddenly SNAPS at him. Cross jumps back.

Someone from the crowd - "Motherfucker should've brought a bigger sandwich." Laughter. Cross freezes for a moment, eyes locked on the dog.

He inches forward and reaches out a hand. The dog growls, watching. He moves the hand slowly - closer, closer, closer, finally -

The dog pads forward and sniffs his hand.

Cross carefully takes the dog by the collar.

The police cars arrive. Rutovsky opens the gate for Cross as he guides the dog out.

Cross hands the dog over to the cops, who put it in the back of a squad car.

Officers start to break up the crowd.

A MUSCLE-BOUND GUY in a tank top and a black fez rushes up, holding a leash.

MUSCLE-BOUND GUY IN A FEZ

Where's my dog? Who the fuck's got
my dog?!

A kid nearby lifts his shirt and reveals a machete in his waistband.

MACHETE KID

That dog bit my brother. So I'm
gonna get that dog.

MUSCLE-BOUND GUY IN A FEZ

You hurt that dog, I hurt you.

The crowd gets agitated. Cross steps up to the guy.

CROSS

See that kid with the bandage? Your
dog bit him.

The muscle-bound guy considers him.

LAFONTAINE

(to muscle bound guy)
Yeah, you might apologize. Rather
than being an asshole bout it.

The muscle-bound guy breaks away.

MUSCLE-BOUND GUY

Where the fuck's my dog?!

Verdis steps in and guides him away.

VERDIS

Come this way - talk to the
officers...

Once they're gone -

LAFONTAINE

(to Cross)

You see that?! You saved that gorilla's dog. Did he thank you for it?

CROSS

Yeah, where's my fucking gift basket?

Rutovsky laughs. LaFontaine hesitates, then laughs, too.

LAFONTAINE

Shit. I'm starting to like this guy.

Rutovsky taps Cross's shoulder.

RUTOVSKY

You ready, Cross? They want us in service.

They walk away.

26

EXT. STREET - DAY

26

A fireman cuts a man's North Face jacket and rips it off. He throws it aside.

The man lies on the pavement in a pool of blood, hoodie still on, white feathers stuck to his face and chest.

A fireman starts doing CPR - "Let's go, let's go, he's not breathing!" Cross rushes up and tosses his equipment down.

CROSS

Board and collar, let's get going. Everything else en route.

Rutovsky stands behind Cross.

RUTOVSKY

Look at him closely, Cross. You sure you wanna work him?

CROSS

Definitely. This guy just coded.

Rutovsky shakes his head and looks away.

Cross eases the body onto the longboard. Blood soaks the victim's hood at the back of his head.

27 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

27

Later. Three doctors walk out of an emergency room - one shakes his head, one laughs. The third DOCTOR notices Cross and Rutovsky standing down the hall. He marches over to them.

DOCTOR
Who brought him in?

Rutovsky smiles and slaps Cross on the back.

Inside the room. The victim from earlier lies flat on a stretcher. Cross stands over him, Rutovsky just behind.

The doctor reaches over and tilts the victim's head to the side. Cross looks away.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(right at Cross)
As far as I know - patients without
a brain cannot be resuscitated.

He lets go of the victim's head.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Be more careful next time - don't
waste our time.

The doctor exits. Rutovsky looks at Cross, who looks away.

28 EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM GARAGE - DAY

28

Cross leans against the ambulance in the garage bay. Rutovsky smokes.

CROSS
I got excited. I made a mistake.

RUTOVSKY
You're a rookie. You're supposed to
want to treat everyone. Long as you
don't get on your high horse no one
gives a fuck. You learned
something. We can't be treating
every unsalvageable patient. Keep
your eyes open, stay calm...

Rutovsky tosses away the cigarette.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
And always check the back.

He opens the driver's side door.

29

INT. BAR - NIGHT

29

Cedar Tavern. Eighties music and bottles clinking. A waitress clears away empty pint glasses. Clara makes a toast - "To midterms being done!" - everyone cheers.

A tipsy Cross argues with a MALE CLASSMATE of Clara's. They struggle to be heard above the noise. Clara takes a seat next to Cross.

CROSS

I'd have given him Dopamine, but
Rutovsky -

MALE CLASSMATE

Wait, who's Rutovsky?

CROSS/CLARA

My partner./His partner.

CROSS

Right, my partner, he pinched her
skin. It tented. She was
dehydrated. He said we should try a
fluid bolus.

MALE CLASSMATE

You don't give fluid to someone
with pulmonary edema. That's
obvious, right?

CLARA

That's what I said.

CROSS

It's under the discriminatory
cardiogenic shock treatments.

Clara puts a hand on Cross's arm and squeezes, trying to get him to ease up.

MALE CLASSMATE

It's risky.

CROSS

It worked.

MALE CLASSMATE

Yeah, but it's not recommended,
though, right?

CROSS

(sharp)
It *is* recommended.
(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)
It's in the fucking discriminatory options. And it worked. How can you argue against it?

MALE CLASSMATE
(taken aback)
I didn't realize I was arguing.

Clara leans over.

CLARA
You weren't.

She gives Cross a look. Cross looks back to the classmate, who takes a drink.

30 INT. CAB - NIGHT

30

Cross and Clara in a cab on the way home. Clara is looking away, out the window. Silence. Then -

CROSS
Come on, that fucking guy is acting like he knows something about it. He's a student. He's probably never treated a real patient before.

Clara looks at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I mean, what the fuck?

Cross waits for her to say something. She looks away back out the window.

31 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

31

LaFontaine drives. Cross sits in the passenger seat.

LAFONTAINE
Homeless fucks don't get outta the way. They want you to hit 'em. They think they'll make money off it.

LaFontaine points and Cross looks. A homeless man crosses slowly in front, looking straight at them.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
You seen Rut whack anyone with the ambulance yet?

CROSS

No.

LAFONTAINE

I've done it twice - but not on purpose. And haven't killed anyone yet, but, hey, three's a charm.

LaFontaine swerves around him and speeds up.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)

You're lucky Rut called in sick. We can finally train you right.

(beat)

Guess what day I'm on?

CROSS

What?

LAFONTAINE

Seventeen. Seventeen days without anyone thanking me. Almost broke my streak yesterday. Puerto Rican girl. Asthmatic. Good looking - had a fucking rack. I give her the point four sub q. She starts feeling better. I mean - a minute before she's not moving air, now she's breathing twelve times a minute. I think the least she's gonna do is thank me. So she leans in. Guess what she says?

CROSS

She wants Verdis's number?

LAFONTAINE

Fuck off. She says, "You know, you got really bushy eyebrows." Just like that. In her Spanish accent - "You got really bushy eyebrows." And they expect me to be polite.

(out windshield)

Look at this genius.

A man in a suit, holding coffee, steps off the sidewalk into the street.

LaFontaine angles the wheel toward the curb.

32 EXT. STREET - DAY 32

The sideview mirror of the ambulance SMACKS the coffee out of the guy's hand as it speeds past.

33 EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING 33

Metallica blares out of LaFontaine's car as he holds court in the lot, medics surrounding him. LaFontaine shows Cross the heavy flashlight on his utility belt.

LAFONTAINE

See - this one's good, because it looks like just a flashlight - but if someone fucks with you...BAM!

He mimes hitting someone with the flashlight. Medics laugh. From a window across the street - "Turn the music down!"

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

I'm sorry! Are we keeping you up?!

He reaches into the car and cranks the music up.

34 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 34

The next day. A trail of blood leads up a staircase, pooling in places. Cross and Rutovsky follow it up.

RUTOVSKY

He couldn't just lie down? He just had to run up to the highest floor possible, didn't he?

Cross laughs. They reach the next landing and keep climbing. A few floors up, they come upon -

An ASIAN MAN, mid-20's, perched on the steps. His hand is pressed hard against the side of his face. Blood seeps between his fingers and soaks his shirt.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

What happened?

ASIAN MAN

I'm shot is what happened.

RUTOVSKY

Where?

The man removes his hand. An inch in front of his left ear - a small entrance wound. Looks like a cigarette burn. Cross sets down and opens his bag to start treating.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
Only one shot?

ASIAN MAN
I didn't wait around for a second.

Rutovsky looks at the other side of the man's head.

The bloody exit wound is directly in his right ear.

RUTOVSKY
(almost to himself)
Bullet went straight through.

CROSS
(to kid)
How do you feel?

ASIAN MAN
I have a headache.

Cross looks to Rutovsky, then back to the guy.

CROSS
Normally I think our patients are complainers. But in your case, you say you got a headache - I don't blame you.

Rutovsky bursts out laughing. The patient doesn't react. Cross looks back.

Rutovsky can't stop laughing. He pulls away and walks a little down the hall, trying to contain himself.

35 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

35

Rutovsky stops the ambulance in front of a shabby apartment building. He puts it in park and grabs his bag.

RUTOVSKY
Come on.

Cross looks at him.

CROSS
You're actually gonna let me in this time?

RUTOVSKY
Don't get used to it.

He opens his door.

36 INT. RUTOVSKY'S PLACE - DAY

36

Rutovsky tosses his keys onto a side table.

RUTOVSKY
This place sucks, I know. My kid
gets all my money.

He walks into the kitchen, which is separated from the living room by a counter. He takes some bills out of a jar and starts counting them.

Cross stands in the doorway and looks around. It's neat, efficient. A tiny TV rests on a grey fold-out chair. Cross gestures to the single metal-barred window.

CROSS
I've been meaning to get one of
those.

Rutovsky smiles, paper clips the money, and puts it in his pocket. He starts making a pot of coffee.

Cross steps further in and looks into the other room. A metal cot against a wall, medical textbooks packed onto a low shelf.

Rutovsky comes back in and tosses something on the couch.

RUTOVSKY
Almost forgot. Here.

Cross looks - it's an expensive Littmann Cardiac stethoscope.

CROSS
Rut, I can't take that.

RUTOVSKY
Why not? You see that dust on it?
Ten years of dust. I got one.

Cross hesitates. Rutovsky walks over to him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
You're my partner. We aren't down
at fucking Bellevue. We're Station
18. Take it.

Cross takes it, tentative. He puts the earpieces in and taps the bell, smiles.

CROSS
A Littman Cardiac! Thanks, Rut.

Rutovsky doesn't respond. He turns away, goes back into the kitchen, and takes a travel mug out of the cupboard.

37 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

37

Cross and Rutovsky walk across the parking lot at the station, talking. Rutovsky notices something and motions.

RUTOVSKY
(low)
Nan. That's Nancy.

Cross looks. NANCY, 30's, lanky and athletic, chats with Verdis as he digs in his makeshift garden along the side of the building. She sees Rutovsky.

NANCY
(calling out)
You got it?

Rutovsky pulls the paper-clipped wad of bills out of his pocket and holds it in the air. She walks over to him.

RUTOVSKY
Nice to see you, too.

He tosses it to her. She counts it.

Rutovsky looks around and sees a blue station wagon parked up on the sidewalk across the street.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
Where's Sylvia?

NANCY
I sent her inside. Didn't want you seeing her until you paid.

Rutovsky almost says something, but walks past Cross back into the station. Nancy eyes Cross, suspicious.

NANCY (CONT'D)
You the new partner?

CROSS
Yep. I'm Cross.

NANCY

I'm the most recent wife. The
mother of his child.

CROSS

How many wives has he had?

NANCY

Four.

She smiles, noting Cross's surprise.

NANCY (CONT'D)

We've been separated six months.
We have a house in Sommerville.
He's been thinking he'll come back.
He won't.

They look over and see Rutovsky coming back out, smiling,
with six-year-old Sylvia sitting on his shoulders.

NANCY (CONT'D)

He loves his daughter, though.
I'll give him that.

Rutovsky and his daughter approach.

SYLVIA

(to Cross)

You the rookie?

Everyone laughs.

CROSS

I'm the lifesaver.

RUTOVSKY

(to Nancy)

I told you. She hears everything.

38

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

38

Cross watches through the windshield as Rutovsky and family
stand at the back of the station wagon. Nancy stands close to
Rutovsky and puts a hand on his arm.

Rutovsky opens the back of the station wagon and takes out a
kite. He threads a string through the eyelet, ties it off.

Rutovsky starts to fly the kite right there on the sidewalk.

He passes the kite to his daughter.

His daughter holds the kite and guides it further up.

The kite flies up above the abandoned buildings of 136th Street.

39 EXT. BROWNSTONE APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

39

A rundown brownstone. Black flies buzz against the window next to the front door.

LAFONTAINE (O.C.)

Aw, man, I can smell him from here.

Rutovsky, Cross, and LaFontaine stand on the landing. Marmol, off to the side, talks to an old man who leans out of a second-story window next door.

OLD MAN

It's been like that for a few days now.

MARMOL

Then why'd you wait to call it in?

The old man shuts the window. Marmol shakes his head.

RUTOVSKY

Who wants to make sure he's dead?

LAFONTAINE

The guy with the least seniority always does it.

They all turn to Cross.

CROSS

Which one of us is that?

They all laugh.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I don't care. I want to go. I want to see it.

LAFONTAINE

Look at this. This little guy comes creepin' in those first weeks. Mister MCAT. Now look at him. He *wants* to go in, he *wants* to see it. You're a trip, Cross.

CROSS

Thanks, Laf. I feel like my first priority as medic is to impress you.

More laughter. Cross reaches for the door.

RUTOVSKY

Hang on, cowboy.

Rutovsky pulls out a container of Vicks, wipes some under Cross's nose, and puts a mask over his face.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Make sure he's dead.

Cross puts his hand on the knob.

40 INT. BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS 40

The front doors swing open. Everyone except Cross pulls away and groans, the smell is so awful.

Cross steps into a long, wood-floored hallway.

Marmol kicks the front doors closed -

- and they slam shut behind Cross. It's suddenly very dim, quiet. A muffled laugh from the guys outside.

Cross steps down a hallway packed with framed family photos hanging on the wall.

He heads toward the yellow light of a dirty window with frayed curtains at the end of the hallway. A used towel lies in the doorway of a bathroom. Cross peeks around a corner.

A plate of moldy food and a coffee cup are still resting on the dining room table. Cross glances around, then walks up the long wooden staircase to the second floor.

At the top of the steps - it's quieter. A few black flies swirl around the bedroom door. Cross pushes it open.

41 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 41

The bedroom is very dim, brown paper taped over the windows. He steps into the doorway and lets his eyes adjust.

There's a mass lying on the bed against the wall, hard to see.

Cross steps forward to get a better look and freezes.

Sprawled across the bed - the massive form of a naked, obese man, discolored, bloating, rotting, eyes bulged wide.

Cross stares at him, in shock.

Flies buzz and maggots crawl over the body. A brown fluid leaks out of his mouth.

Cross looks away.

A rotting container of takeout sits on the floor next to the bed.

Porno mags spread across the floor. Worms squirm across the covers.

A black and white television in the corner plays a cartoon, the sound turned off.

Cross looks back to the body. Then turns.

Hundreds of black flies crawl over the bare white wall behind the bed. We can hear them quietly buzz.

Cross stares at the flies. The buzzing gets louder.

42

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

42

Clara sits on the couch, studying. Cross comes in. She looks up and smiles. He shuts the door a bit too hard.

CLARA

Another exciting day of saving
lives?

He sits down heavily on the couch, puts his head in his hands, and rubs his eyes. She reaches over and touches his face. He pulls away, gently.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Ollie, what happened?

He's silent.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Whatever you tell me has got to be
more exciting than my A and P
textbook.

Cross looks at her.

CROSS

(sharp)

Well, I found the fat, rotting,
naked body of some guy who died
alone in a shitty apartment. It was
fucking great. How was your day?

Clara is taken aback.

CROSS (CONT'D)

What do you want me to say?

Clara shakes her head, stands, and walks away. Silence.

43 INT. MEDICS' LOUNGE - DAY

43

A medics' potluck dinner. The long table is covered in
casserole dishes and aluminum pans. Medics and EMT's are all
spread around the room, legs stretched out and paper plates
of food in their laps. Radios are set on tables, volume low.

Cross enters, pulls a chicken wrapped in tinfoil out of his
backpack, and sets it on the table. The medics cheer.

Later. Things are rowdier. LaFontaine tells a story. Everyone
laughs.

Verdis and Marmol get a call and have to rush out. More
laughter.

Cross sits next to LaFontaine, eating a piece of pie. He
glances over.

Rutovsky sits on the windowsill, apart from the group. He
stares out, silent.

44 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

44

A shabby apartment building. Kids skip rope on the sidewalk
out front.

Cross and Rutovsky approach and look around. They notice a
small trail of blood on the steps.

CROSS

(to Rutovsky)

I thought they said he'd be
outside.

A group of nicely dressed older ladies sit on folding chairs
in front of the stoop.

OLD LADY 1
 (calling out)
 He left. He didn't want no doctor.
 I told them not to call.

RUTOVSKY
 (to Cross)
 Let's check the lobby.

Rutovsky and Cross bound up the stairs.

ANOTHER OLD LADY
 Go get him, Gene!

The other ladies laugh. Cross and Rutovsky go inside.

45 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 45
 A beautiful marble lobby with nice fixtures. They look around, then to each other. Cross shrugs and raises his radio to cancel the call, but Rutovsky motions to stop.

Rutovsky crosses to the stairwell and opens the door.

46 INT. STAIRWELL - DAY 46
 Cross walks behind Rutovsky up the stairs.

CROSS
 Hey, how'd she know your name?

RUTOVSKY
 I used to live here.

At the top of the steps - an emergency exit. Rutovsky pushes it open, no alarm, and steps onto -

47 EXT. ROOF - DAY 47
 The tar-covered roof. Orange light and white noise from the city. Rutovsky walks to the edge.

RUTOVSKY
 Come here.

Cross joins him.

An amazing view of Harlem. Tar roofs, water towers, clothes lines. The Hudson and the GW Bridge to the west. In the other direction, 141st Street stretches on and on.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

This used to be a great neighborhood. But it went to shit like everything else.

Cross looks around. The sun is just going down behind some buildings.

CROSS

I don't mind it.

RUTOVSKY

You like it as a novelty. You have no idea, Cross. When I was growing up - it used to be a nice place.

CROSS

Maybe it'll get better again.

RUTOVSKY

I won't be around to see it.

Cross turns and looks at him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Ain't happenin' tomorrow. I won't be around to see it.

Rutovsky stares out into the distance. After a moment, he turns to Cross -

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

You ready?

CROSS

I'm always ready.

RUTOVSKY

Right.

He lifts his radio to get put back into service.

48 EXT. POLO GROUNDS PROJECTS - DAY

48

Cross hurries a stretcher across a sidewalk. Rutovsky rushes just behind.

Near the base of a tower, a crowd has formed. People jostle each other and point toward the roof.

Cross leaves the stretcher on the ground and pushes into the group.

The mangled body of a girl has cracked the pavement, indenting it - one leg is bent backward beneath her body, the head twisted at a crazy angle.

Rutovsky stands above her and studies the body. He looks up.

The 30 stories of the tower loom over them.

Cross stands, confused, holding a curved piece of flesh the size of a hockey puck.

CROSS

What the fuck is this?

RUTOVSKY

Hard palate. Knocked it out when she hit.

Cross winces. Rutovsky crouches and feels her neck and the back of her skull. He lifts her shirt to examine her torso.

Carved into her belly in scraggly, red letters: "Life Sucks."

Cross quietly breathes in, taken aback. Rutovsky, without changing expression, stares at the body. Stands.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

(checking watch)

Six forty-three.

The crowd groans, angry the medics aren't doing more. A cop behind them notes the time on a pad.

The VICTIM'S MOTHER, 40's, nearby, starts to wail and scream.

VICTIM'S MOTHER

My daughter is dead and they ain't doing shit!

Cross notices her and turns to Rutovsky.

CROSS

Maybe we should...

Rutovsky pulls a white sheet off the nearby stretcher, tosses it to Cross, and walks away.

Cross turns to the mother and tries to comfort her.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Ma'am, there's nothing we could've done.

The mother wails louder.

Cross spreads the sheet over the body, carefully tucking in the edges so it won't blow away. He pushes back through the crowd and tries to catch up with Rutovsky.

49

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY

49

On the dashboard of the ambulance - a small takeout container of sesame chicken steams the glass.

Rutovsky gets back in the front seat and shuts the door. He grabs the container, picks up a plastic fork, and starts eating.

Cross gets in the passenger seat and shuts the door. He watches Rutovsky eat, then notices something out the driver's side window.

The victim's mother runs toward the ambulance. She comes up to Rutovsky's side and stares through the window at him, hard. A young girl who's crying rushes to her side.

VICTIM'S MOTHER

Look at him! He'd rather eat than
save my daughter.

Rutovsky turns and considers her. He places his food back on the dashboard and starts the engine.

He blares the horn once. The woman steps back.

Rutovsky lets his foot off the brake.

The ambulance starts to roll backward down the block. The woman steps forward and screams in the window -

VICTIM'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

My daughter's dead! He's eating
sesame fucking chicken!

Rutovsky carefully maneuvers the wheel, angling them down the block. Cross watches him.

Near the bottom of the hill, the ambulance turns onto another street and rolls to a stop alongside the curb.

Rutovsky puts the ambulance into park, grabs the fork and container, and starts eating again. Cross stares at him.

CROSS

She just wanted us to work her up -
I mean, so she knew nothing else
could've been done.

Rutovsky lowers his fork and looks at Cross.

RUTOVSKY

Like I was going to try to save
her. I was eating my dinner.

He starts eating again.

50

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

50

Streetlight comes in through the blinds of a window. Cross and Clara are in bed, kissing. They're having trouble getting started. Cross hesitates. He's exhausted and would rather go to bed.

Clara pulls him on top of her and kisses him harder.

Cross kisses her and puts his hands in her hair, pulling, not exactly gentle.

She moans. They look at each other and smile. They're into it.

Clara pushes him off and rolls on top of him. She puts him inside of her and they start having sex.

It's slow, gentle. Cross has trouble getting into it. Clara leans down, kisses him, then puts her hands on his sternum and presses herself down into him. She digs her nails into his skin, hard.

This excites Cross. He grasps onto her hips, pulls her down, close, and presses her body into his.

He flips her over, climbs on top, and puts himself back inside of her. Clara is surprised but presses into him. Cross breathes heavy.

Cross takes Clara's arms and pins them above her head. Clara closes her eyes and starts to moan. She's into it.

Cross starts to move faster, harder. He pins her arms tighter.

Clara tries to move her arms. She can't.

She opens her eyes.

Cross puts his hand in her hair and starts to move faster. He's breathing hard. It a little scary, like an animal.

CLARA

Stop.

Cross starts to pull her hair, hard. He's moving so fast her head hits the headboard.

She struggles to get away from him but can't.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Ollie, stop!

He stops suddenly. Looks at her. She looks him in the eye.

He doesn't say anything. She pushes him away.

CLARA (CONT'D)
What the fuck is wrong with you?

She rolls off the bed and goes into the bathroom.

51 INT./EXT. TAXI - MORNING

51

The next morning. Clara and Cross sit in the back of a taxi as it pulls over to the curb. Clara notices something out the window.

Rutovsky leans against the wall with his work bag, waiting.

She frowns. Cross leans over and looks.

Rutovsky strides over, swinging his arms carelessly. He steps up to Clara's side window. She rolls it down.

CLARA
(quietly)
Hello.

RUTOVSKY
You must be Clara.

CLARA
I am. And you're Rutovsky.

He leans in a little closer and eyes her - nice blue print top, pearls, fancy shoes. He notices the expensive briefcase sitting on her lap. He looks up at Cross.

RUTOVSKY
They're holding jobs, Cross. You might wanna pick it up.

CLARA
Nice meeting you.

He stands back up straight, smiles, and walks away.

CLARA (CONT'D)
That was rude.

CROSS
You judged him.

CLARA
It was him judging me.

CROSS
You judged each other.

CLARA
I was being nice. And why are you
defending him?

He looks at her.

CROSS
He's my partner.

CLARA
I'm your girlfriend.

Cross pauses, then gets out of the cab.

He shuts the door, leans down to talk to her through the
window, but the cab drives away.

52 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

52

Cross and Rutovsky get dressed for work.

RUTOVSKY
So that was Clara.

CROSS
That's her.

RUTOVSKY
Well, have fun while you can.

Cross looks at him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
She's soft. She's not one of us.

CROSS
We'll see.

RUTOVSKY

You seen LaFontaine's new girl?
She's a beast. A cop in the three-
two, brought up twice for abusing
prisoners. She's worse than him,
probably kick my ass.

Cross smiles.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

That's the sort of girl for people
like us. Some skel-beating beast.

CROSS

What about Verdis? His wife -

RUTOVSKY

We're not Verdis.

Cross looks away.

53

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

53

Chief Burroughs sits at his desk. Cross stands on the other
side, holding an envelope and a green bar with gold lining.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

The attendance and punctuality bar.

Cross stares at it.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)

You haven't missed a day or been
late for more than six months. That
shows dedication. Professionalism.

Chief Burroughs waits.

CROSS

Thanks, Chief.

He puts the bar back into the envelope.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

The next will be a save bar. Keep
up the good work.

CROSS

Thanks, Chief. Anything else?

Chief Burroughs leans back in the chair and tries to act
casual.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
How's it out there with Rutovsky?

CROSS
He's a good partner.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
And a great medic. But no one can
do it forever.

Cross stays silent. Chief Burroughs leans forward.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)
People's lives are in our hands. If
you have any problems with him,
come to me. You understand why I
say this?

CROSS
I do.

Chief Burroughs stares at Cross for a long moment. Cross
looks back and meets his eyes.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
Good. I'm glad to hear it.
(beat)
Alright. Go. Get into service.

Cross nods and exits.

He walks down the hallway and tosses the envelope with the
green bar into the trash.

54 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

54

Cross and Rutovsky walk across the lot to the ambulance,
joking with each other.

MARMOL (O.C.)
(strange puppet voice)
Hello, medics!

Cross and Rutovsky slow up.

CROSS
Oh man, he finally lost it.

Sitting on the back of the ambulance is Marmol - he has a
sock puppet with yellow hair over one hand.

MARMOL
 (puppet voice)
 Verdis called in sick. Can we ride
 with you?

Cross and Rutovsky look at each other and grin.

55 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

55

Through the ambulance window, Cross watches the summer
 heatwave -

Shirtless kids play in the spray of an uncapped fire hydrant.

An old woman sits on her stoop, drinking iced tea. Her
 grandchildren shoot water guns on the sidewalk.

A handful of shirtless men hang out in front of a colorful
 mural. One of them freestyle raps and another serves as his
 hype man, interjecting lyrics.

Women get their hair done, reading magazines, chatting.

56 EXT. PARK - DAY

56

An older MAN IN A HAT sits at a large stone chessboard in a
 park, his face slick with sweat. He presses a fist to his
 chest. Marmol runs up and thrusts the puppet out.

MARMOL
 (puppet voice)
 Hi! I'm Papi the puppet! Are you
 having chest pain? Papi's going to
 give you nitro.

Cross puts a pill in the puppet's mouth and the puppet drops
 it on the old man's tongue. Rutovsky watches nearby.

CROSS
 I think I'm going to borrow Papi to
 talk to my girlfriend.

Everyone starts laughing. The man in the hat laughs, then
 coughs. He puts his fist back against his chest.

MAN IN THE HAT
 Oh, Lord, you guys are killin' me.

They all laugh louder.

57 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - EARLY EVENING

57

The sun's going down. A group of young men run along the sidewalk, catcalling at something in the street.

Rutovsky drives. As they approach -

RUTOVSKY

(in awe)

That's the thing about this job.
You think you've seen everything,
then something like this happens.

Through the window - a naked woman walks down the center of the street, away from them. Cross just stares. He can't believe it.

The ambulance pulls alongside the woman, who just keeps walking. Papi the puppet pokes out the window and starts speaking to her.

MARMOL

(puppet voice)

Are you on drugs? Do you have a
psychiatric history? Have you taken
your medications?

Cross and Rutovsky crack up in the ambulance.

The ambulance follows slowly alongside the woman as she walks down the street. Cross gets out and covers her gently with a blanket as she walks.

58 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

58

Cross sleeps, alone, sprawled across his bed. The phone rings. He doesn't move. It rings again. He slowly comes to. He's exhausted and it takes him a moment to reach over and pick up the phone.

CROSS

Hello?

RUTOVSKY (O.C.)

(on phone)

Hey man, what are you doing today?

CROSS

Who is this?

59 EXT./INT. SUBWAY - DAY

59

The A train comes out from underground into sunlight, headed further into Brooklyn.

Cross and Rutovsky sit across from one another, dressed for the beach, a small cooler at Rutovsky's feet.

60 EXT. ROCKAWAY BEACH - DAY

60

An emptyish stretch of Rockaway Beach. Cross and Rutovsky walk over the dunes toward the ocean.

Later. They're shirtless and spread out on towels. Cross has his MCAT book open on his lap. He looks at Rutovsky, noticing a thin purple scar that runs from his foot to his knee.

Rutovsky sees Cross looking and raises his leg.

RUTOVSKY

During the war. It was a bad break. They weren't sure I'd be able to run again. I did my medic training in a cast. Crazy.

CROSS

I bet you were a good soldier.

RUTOVSKY

You kidding? I sucked.

Cross smiles. Rutovsky takes something from his shoe and tosses it on Cross's towel. Cross picks it up.

It's a chain he wears around his neck - his dog tags. Hanging alongside the tags, a Silver Star Medal.

CROSS

Jesus.

(beat)

How long did you work as a marine medic?

RUTOVSKY

Two years.

CROSS

And then you came back and got a job with the city?

RUTOVSKY

I know. Glutton for punishment.

CROSS
You regret it?

RUTOVSKY
Nah. I'm a lifer.

Cross nods.

CROSS
I think I might be too.

Rutovsky looks at him.

RUTOVSKY
You'll get your experience and get out.

CROSS
If I ever get into medical school.

Rutovsky sits up.

RUTOVSKY
You'll get in. And if you don't - don't stay here. I mean, you can see what it's like. Marmol with his puppet. LaFontaine. Verdis and his garden. Me. This place...

CROSS
I like it.

RUTOVSKY
Well stop liking it, Cross. Liking is how you get sucked in. Get your experience. And get out.

Cross looks at him, waiting. Rutovsky brushes the sand off his hands, stands, and walks away toward the ocean.

Cross gets up and follows him. He dives into a wave and disappears under the water.

61 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

61

Cross unlocks his front door, opens it, and walks in.

In the middle of the floor lies his MCAT textbook.

He picks it up and notices a note stuck inside, like a bookmark. He opens it and reads. After a moment, he shakes his head.

He opens the closet in the bedroom. Half of it is empty. Clara has taken her clothes.

62 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

62

The ambulance is stuck in heavy traffic, sirens blaring. Honking, shouting.

Rutovsky driving. Cross shotgun.

RUTOVSKY

She broke up with you in a letter?

CROSS

Yeah, instead of staying here for the break, she's going home. Then I guess she'll find another place.

RUTOVSKY

Very efficient. I hate to say I told you so, but...
(calling out window)
Come on!

Rutovsky blares the horn, frustrated. After a beat -

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Nancy's getting remarried.

Cross looks at him.

CROSS

When?

RUTOVSKY

Already left. Moved to the West Coast. Took Sylvia with her. I used to get her every weekend. Now it'll be summers. Alternate holidays.

Rutovsky is as close to crying as he gets. He shakes it off.

Traffic finally starts moving, slowly. Rutovsky maneuvers them through.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Probably better if she doesn't see me. She'll have a better life.

CROSS

That's a shitty way to think.

RUTOVSKY

This is what happens if you stay in
the job. Dirtbag medic for life.
Fucked up by all the shit we see.
What else was gonna happen?

He waits for Cross to say otherwise, then looks away.

63

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

63

The filthy kitchen of a tiny apartment. Cross and Rutovsky stand with their hands raised, trying to calm someone. Behind them, a seventy-year-old woman slumps against the cabinets, having a stroke and flapping around with her one good arm.

The woman's SON, 50, tears running down his cheeks, waves a huge curved carving knife at them.

SON

That's my mother. I know you all
don't give a fuck, but if she dies,
you die.

RUTOVSKY

She won't die.

SON

That's right, she won't.

The son gestures with the knife.

Cross kicks away some debris, grabs a pillow, and eases the woman down onto the ground.

Rutovsky stares at the son, then kneels and starts breathing for the mother with the bag-valve mask. Cross starts a line.

The son hovers in the doorway with the knife raised threateningly. He wipes away tears with his wrist.

The woman stops seizing. Rutovsky starts to intubate, so Cross takes over the bag-valve mask. Once he's done, Rutovsky stands and steps carefully toward the hall.

SON (CONT'D)

(gesturing with knife)
Where you going?

RUTOVSKY

For equipment.

The son considers him, then steps to the side.

Rutovsky disappears into the hallway.

SON
Don't take too fucking long!

The son turns back to Cross, who's still breathing for her. A long moment.

The son turns back to the hallway, getting nervous.

SON (CONT'D)
What're you doing out there?!
You're taking too long!

After a beat, Rutovsky comes back, putting his radio away as he steps in.

RUTOVSKY
(to son)
Get her pill bottles.

The son doesn't move. Rutovsky turns to him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
You wanna help your mother, get her
pill bottles!

The son hesitates, then goes into the bathroom.

Cross and Rutovsky ease the mother onto the stretcher, strap her in, and lift her.

They carry the mother out into the hallway. Four housing cops arrive in the doorway just as they pass through.

The son steps out of the bathroom, his hands filled with medication bottles.

One of the cops steps up and swings his nightstick.

WHACK. Medicine bottles go flying everywhere.

64

EXT. STREET - DAY

64

A few police cars line the block outside the apartment. Cross treats the mother in the back of the ambulance. Rutovsky sits in the cab with the door open.

The cops drag the son out of the building. He's handcuffed, a puffy purple hematoma ballooning on his forehead.

They shove him into the back of a squad car and slam the door shut.

Rutovsky suddenly jumps out of the ambulance and dashes at the car. He flings open the back door and comes at the son.

He throws himself on the man and starts to strangle him.

The cops grab Rutovsky from behind. He's screaming, arms flailing, desperately trying to get at the son.

The cops pull him away from the vehicle. Rutovsky shakes loose and SHOVES one of the officers onto the ground, hard.

Another officer grabs him from behind and YANKS him away.

Cross watches from the back of the ambulance, adjusting the drip rate on the mother's IV.

65 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

65

Later. Cross and Rutovsky sit silently in the ambulance, both staring straight ahead.

CROSS
(careful)
That fucking skel, pulling a knife
on us. Fuck him.

Rutovsky doesn't react.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I wanted to kick his ass too. But
shit, Rut...

Nothing.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I mean, Jesus. Maybe you should
take the rest of the week off or
something.

Rutovsky stares forward blankly, like he isn't going to react.

But then he slowly turns and looks at Cross, hard.

RUTOVSKY
What do you know about it? Shut the
fuck up.

Rutovsky stares at him, a challenge. Cross stares back.

66 INT. MEDICS' LOUNGE - DAY 66

Chief Burroughs's door is closed, but the medics can still hear him yelling at Rutovsky. Cross sits on the windowsill, waiting.

The door flings open. Rutovsky steps out and grabs one of the lounge chairs, flips it over, and storms out. The chief steps into the doorway and looks at Cross.

CHIEF BURROUGHS
Stop staring and pick up that chair.

67 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 67

Cross steps out of the building just in time to see Rutovsky storm out of the parking lot and away down 136th Street.

68 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY 68

Verdis drives. Cross sits in the passenger seat, reading his textbook.

VERDIS
How's Rut doing?

Cross smiles.

VERDIS (CONT'D)
What?

CROSS
You and the chief, man. Always asking about Rut.

Verdis looks at him, waiting.

CROSS (CONT'D)
He's a great teacher.

VERDIS
He's been quiet lately.

CROSS
He's always quiet.

Verdis looks away.

VERDIS
But it's different now, don't you think? Three days off?

CROSS

He missed a few days. Big deal. The guy's a fucking rock. He's fine.

Verdis shakes his head.

VERDIS

I've known Rut for fifteen years. I wouldn't have gotten through without him. If someone needs help, we gotta get together and give it.

Verdis looks at him.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

You gotta watch out for your partner, Cross.

A moment between them. Verdis looks forward again. So does Cross.

CROSS

Rut would hate to think we were talking about him behind his back.

VERDIS

You got that right.

69 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

69

An apartment full of dusty, ancient wooden furniture. Framed pictures of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and John F. Kennedy line the walls. Verdis kneels before A LARGE WOMAN IN A NIGHTGOWN sitting in a kitchen chair.

LARGE WOMAN IN A NIGHTGOWN

Arthritis, bursitis, conjunctivitis. I got all kind of aches and pains.

Cross, Marmol, and LaFontaine lean against a wall and watch.

LARGE WOMAN IN A NIGHTGOWN (CONT'D)

I talked to my neighbor. She's got something called diverticulitis. Maybe I got that too.

MARMOL

Why don't you tell us what you don't got? I mean, damn, lady, this is an emergency service.

Marmol walks out. LaFontaine glances at Cross. Cross smiles. Verdis goes on with his examination.

VERDIS

What else? What other complaints?

LaFontaine leans over to Cross.

LAFONTAINE

You better get Rut back on the job. Otherwise, this is what you have to look forward to. Every patient gets the whole fucking physical exam. The Verdis Special.

Cross watches Verdis giving the exam. Then -

CROSS

Enough with the questions, Verdis. Nothing wrong with her.

Verdis turns and looks at Cross.

VERDIS

I'm doing my physical exam. What are you doing?

LaFontaine laughs.

70

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

70

Cross approaches Rutovsky at his open locker. He's getting ready.

CROSS

Hey, Rut.

Rutovsky turns and looks at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)

How you feeling?

Rutovsky nods.

RUTOVSKY

Better.

They stand there, each waiting for the other to say something.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Let's get into service.

He shuts his locker door.

71 INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

71

Cross and Rutovsky climb the final stairs into a dimly lit hallway.

At the other end of the hall a few neighbors congregate. Rutovsky rushes over to them. Cross follows, but freezes at a door.

Blood slowly spills out from underneath.

Rutovsky questions a YOUNG NEIGHBOR, 30's.

RUTOVSKY

What happened?

YOUNG NEIGHBOR

Don't know. Heard screaming about ten minutes ago. So we called.

Cross waves Rutovsky over. Rutovsky notices the blood. Cross checks the door but it's locked.

CROSS

Should we wait?

Rutovsky tries to kick in the door.

The wood SPLINTERS around the lock.

He kicks again.

72 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

72

The door swings open onto a tiny apartment. Cross and Rutovsky step into a living room and assess the scene.

The wooden floor is slick with blood. A newborn baby, not moving, is curled on its side next to a bloody placenta.

The DRUGGY MOTHER is up on one arm trying to cut the twisted umbilical cord with the jagged end of a broken crack pipe.

Cross has to look away. Rutovsky shakes his head.

He steps in and SLAPS the crack pipe out of her hand.

He kneels, clamps the umbilical cord shut, cuts it, wraps the baby in a blanket, and carries it down a hallway toward the bathroom.

RUTOVSKY
(over his shoulder)
Treat the fucking mother.

Cross kneels and checks her pulse.

CROSS
How do you feel?

DRUGGY MOTHER
I'm all fine. Baby's dead.

CROSS
How do you know?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Wasn't breathing is how.

He takes her blood pressure.

CROSS
How long wasn't it breathing?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Whole time.

CROSS
How long was it out before we came
in? In minutes.

DRUGGY MOTHER
Ten maybe. I don't know.

CROSS
(calling to Rutovsky)
Out ten minutes!

Cross starts a line. The mother's arms are sinewy, scarred.
She fidgets and her eyes dart around in her head.

CROSS (CONT'D)
How many weeks were you?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Thirty-two.

CROSS
Are you on drugs?

DRUGGY MOTHER
What?! No!

He looks over at the crack pipe.

CROSS
When'd you last smoke?

DRUGGY MOTHER
(matter of fact)
'Bout an hour ago.

Cross can't find a vein. He switches arms.

CROSS
You were smoking while you were in
labor?

DRUGGY MOTHER
I needed something for the pain.

CROSS
Did you do anything else?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Methadone.

CROSS
How'd you get it when you're
pregnant?

DRUGGY MOTHER
My friend Jimmy's in two programs.
He gets it for free.

Cross looks down and notices blood pooling toward his feet.

He twists back and pushes the placenta against the wall with
his boot. It leaves a purplish streak on the wood.

CROSS
Have you been tested for HIV?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Yeah. I got it.

Cross notices blood all over his gloves, boots, and blood
pressure cuff. He gets dizzy for a moment but shakes it off.

CROSS
Did you take the pills so your baby
wouldn't get the virus?

DRUGGY MOTHER
Aw, those don't work.

Cross rocks back on his heels, furious.

CROSS

You should've at least taken the
meds for the baby.

She looks right at him, seemingly sober for a moment.

DRUGGY MOTHER

What's it matter? Baby's dead.

Cross stares at her, stifling his anger.

Footsteps in the stairwell. Two police officers appear in the doorway. They glance at Cross, scan the room, and rush down the hallway toward the bathroom.

Cross looks back. He smacks the mother's arm, trying to find a vein.

The officers come back. One exits quickly back out the front door while the other stands guard in the doorway.

CROSS

(to officer)

How's the baby?

DRUGGY MOTHER

The baby's dead.

CROSS

I'm asking him.

POLICE OFFICER 1

I thought I saw it breathe.

DRUGGY MOTHER

I know babies. And that baby's
dead.

The mother lies back, eyes darting around.

73

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

73

Cross steps into the doorway of the bathroom down the hallway. Rutovsky stands with his back to him, writing his report.

CROSS

Patient is HIV positive and hasn't
taken her meds. Baby's probably
positive, but she says it doesn't
matter because it was stillborn.

He waits for a response. Silence.

CROSS (CONT'D)
How's the baby?

Rutovsky turns.

Cross can now see the baby resting on the toilet seat, wrapped in a towel, tiny.

RUTOVSKY
Dead. Stillbirth.

Cross stares at the lump beneath the towel. Is it breathing?

Cross doesn't move. Rutovsky looks at him.

They stare at each other. A moment between them. Finally -

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
Treat the mother.

He shuts the door in Cross's face.

74 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

74

A bit later. Cross has managed to get a line. He sets a longboard alongside the patient

Heavy footsteps in the stairwell again. Two bright-faced LENOX HILL MEDICS burst in, out of breath.

They rush through the room and out toward the bathroom.

Cross starts to ease the mother onto the longboard, but leans away so he can see what's happening down the hall.

LENOX HILL MEDIC 1 (O.C.)
Where's the baby?

RUTOVSKY (O.C.)
Calm down. She's a crackhead. It was stillborn.

LENOX HILL MEDIC 1 (O.C.)
Where is it?!

Beat. Then the first medic swoops back through the living room, cradling the baby. He rushes it out the door. From the bathroom -

LENOX HILL MEDIC 2 (O.C.)
Always treat a newborn.

RUTOVSKY (O.C.)
 You read that in your protocol
 book?

The other medic crosses back through the room and leaves.
 Rutovsky comes back in and watches him leave.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)
 The fucking calvary.

Cross looks down and notices Rutovsky's hand is shaking.

Rutovsky looks at the mother, who's still, her eyes shut
 again. He stares at her.

75 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - EARLY EVENING 75

The ambulance drives back to the hospital, lights flashing.

Cross drives. Rutovsky sits in the passenger seat and stares
 out the window. Cross can't look at him.

76 INT./EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - EARLY EVENING 76

Cross and Rutovsky roll the mother into the ER, handing off
 the stretcher to an awaiting nurse.

Cross and Rutovsky walk out of the hospital.

The two cops from earlier and an EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT stand
 next to the ambulance.

As Cross and Rutovsky approach, the EMS lieutenant steps
 forward.

EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT
 Sorry, Rut. I have to ask for your
 badge.

RUTOVSKY
 What the fuck did I do now?

EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT
 You know the dead baby you covered
 with the towel?

RUTOVSKY
 Yeah.

EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT
 Well, that dead baby is breathing.

Rutovsky just stares at him. Cross looks down.

77 INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

77

Cross and Rutovsky ride in the backseat of a police car.

The EMS lieutenant drives them back to the station. He pulls over and stops in front of a bodega.

EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT
You two aren't supposed to talk to
each other.

He turns around to look at them.

EMS PATROL LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
But I gotta get some cigarettes.

Rutovsky looks at him and gives a subtle nod. The EMS lieutenant gets out and shuts the door.

RUTOVSKY
Don't tell them anything.

CROSS
What can I tell them? I was in the
other room.

RUTOVSKY
Good. Keep saying that.

CROSS
I was treating the mother.

RUTOVSKY
That's right. You were treating the
mother. I'll deal with them.

The patrol lieutenant gets back in and shuts the door. He spins around and offers Rutovsky a cigarette. Rutovsky takes it and the lieutenant lights it.

The lieutenant glances at Cross, then turns back around without offering him one.

78 INT. STATION 18 - NIGHT

78

A small room in Station 18. Cross sits in a chair, facing front. Anatomy posters line the wall behind him.

Behind a long desk in front of him - CAPTAIN RUSSELL, an intense-looking police captain with thick glasses.

Medical control physician DOCTOR TOWERS, a slender man in civilian clothes, sits to his right. Chief Burroughs, in uniform, sits further off to his left. They all stare at Cross.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Your partner just fucked himself.

DOCTOR TOWERS
He's civil service. He'll be reassigned. He won't even lose his job.

The captain turns sharply to the doctor.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
You sound like you want him to lose his job. Twenty years of service and he has one fuckup. As if it doesn't happen all the time in the hospital.

DOCTOR TOWERS
We have different problems inside.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Paid three times as much and have half the responsibility and risk. That's the problem.

Captain Russell slams his notebook down and turns back to Cross.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL (CONT'D)
What happened?

Cross looks at them and waits, then -

CROSS
I was with the mother. She was my patient.

The captain shakes his head and smiles.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Right. And you never saw the baby.

CROSS
I did for a moment. When I came in.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
And?

CROSS
I saw the mother cutting the cord
with a crack pipe.

The doctor and captain both take a note. The chief just sits
back, silent, eyeing Cross calmly.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Did you see the baby breathe?

CROSS
No.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Did you look closely?

CROSS
It wasn't my patient.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
You ask the mother about the baby?

CROSS
Yes.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
What did she say?

CROSS
That it was dead.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Did you ask anyone else?

CROSS
I asked Rutovsky.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
What'd he say?

CROSS
He said it was dead, too.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
When did you ask Rutovsky about the
baby?

CROSS
I went to get a trauma dressing.
The bag was in the bathroom.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL
Why in there?

Cross looks at him steadily.

CROSS

There was blood on the floor in her room and she's HIV positive. We didn't want to decon our equipment.

The doctor and captain scribble notes. Cross glances over at the chief, still sitting there, watching him.

DOCTOR TOWERS

When you asked about the baby, did you not look yourself?

Cross hesitates.

CROSS

Rut's the senior medic. I'm a rookie.

DOCTOR TOWERS

So you let him do whatever he wanted?

CROSS

I let him treat the most critical patient. I thought he ought to know whether a baby is breathing or not.

The captain frowns. Chief Burroughs finally speaks -

CHIEF BURROUGHS

Did you know I'd talked to Rutovsky about putting him into an administrative position, and that he was very - resistant to the idea?

CROSS

No, sir. He didn't tell me that.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

At the job today, did you hear Rutovsky say anything about the baby's chances for survival? About its chances of a decent life?

CROSS

There wasn't much discussion going on.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

Did you know that the baby's almost certainly brain damaged from the mother's drug habits? Or that after lying in that pool of HIV-infected blood that baby's most likely infected himself?

CROSS

I didn't think of that.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

Do you think it's possible that Mr. Rutovsky, with his greater experience - would've known these things?

CROSS

Yes.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

And knowing this - isn't it possible he thought he might as well end his career with an act of - misguided euthanasia?

The captain looks up from his pages. Cross is silent.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)

I'm only going to ask this one time. Tell the truth now or your case goes before the board.

The chief leans forward.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)

Did Rutovsky intentionally withhold treatment?

CROSS

I don't know.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

Give us an answer. Yes or no.

Cross stares at him.

CROSS

No. He made a mistake.

The chief looks at him, then away.

The captain turns his notebook over and pushes Cross's badge across the desk.

79 INT. CROSS'S APARTMENT - DAY 79

Lonely weekend -

Cross sits at the edge of the bed, staring into space.

Cross on the phone. No answer. He hesitates, then -

CROSS

(on phone)

Hey, it's Ollie.

(beat)

I'm good, it's good. I was just...

(beat)

Yeah, I was actually wondering if you might have her new number?

(beat)

Okay, yeah. I understand. Could you just - will you tell her I called?

Thanks.

He hangs up. After a moment, he unplugs it from the wall.

Cross sits in a chair and listens to a Yankees game, distracted.

He unlocks his front door.

80 EXT. DELI - NIGHT 80

It's cooler out. People dressed in sweaters and hoodies. Cross orders a sandwich at a Harlem deli.

Cross eats his sandwich at a stand-up counter by the window, studying his textbook. He's having trouble concentrating.

81 EXT./INT. RIVERSIDE PROJECTS - DAY 81

The towering Riverside Projects.

The basement. Longboards are propped against a wall. Bandages and medical tape all lined up, ready.

Cross, Verdis, Marmol, and LaFontaine wait down the hall. LaFontaine and Marmol smoke.

LAFONTAINE

Tell us the truth, Cross. You were there. He knew what he was doing, right?

CROSS

No. The baby was dark blue. It looked stillborn.

A loud SQUAWK down the hall. Several firemen try to pry open an elevator with a long metal wedge.

LAFONTAINE

Bullshit. You might've been fooled. But not Rut. He was doing the right thing.

A teenage girl with a laundry basket is on the phone nearby.

TEENAGE GIRL

(on phone)

Probably ten people dead inside and I'm gonna have to walk to the twenty-fifth floor with all my clothes.

LaFontaine turns to Marmol.

LAFONTAINE

Rut didn't show up for his administrative job. He hired a lawyer, gonna try to work the streets again.

MARMOL

I love the guy, but no way they'll let him back.

CROSS

He made one mistake.

The firemen jam the wedge in further.

An older woman down the hall peeks out her door, watching.

Marmol flicks his cigarette at LaFontaine.

MARMOL

Smothering a baby ain't the right thing.

LAFONTAINE

Depends on the baby.

Cross looks at Verdis, who's shaking his head.

VERDIS

Rut was freakin'. But he didn't try to kill no baby.

Another loud SQUAWK. The medics all jump up and turn.

The doors are pried open. A flash inside - tangled limbs, tossed grocery bags, blood and eggs cover the bodies.

Cross is the first to the door. He bends over and reaches for a patient's bloody hand.

82 EXT. RUTOVSKY'S PLACE - DAY 82

Cross knocks at Rutovsky's front door.

CROSS

Rut! Rut! Hey, come on, open up!

Cross waits. After a moment, the door unlocks and opens.

83 INT. RUTOVSKY'S PLACE - DAY 83

The apartment is a mess, clothes everywhere, half-eaten food on the floor.

Rutovsky sits on bed. Cross sits on a crate in the corner.

RUTOVSKY

I mean, can you imagine me behind a desk?

CROSS

I can imagine it.

RUTOVSKY

Well, I can't. I'm a medic. I gotta get back on the streets.

CROSS

I thought you hated it.

RUTOVSKY

I do. But I hate everything else more.

Cross laughs.

CROSS

If you get reinstated, I'll transfer to be your partner.

Rutovsky looks at him, pleased, but waves it off, hiding it.

RUTOVSKY

Who they got you with now?

CROSS

Verdis.

RUTOVSKY

Ah, he's a good medic.

CROSS

He's fucking slow.

RUTOVSKY

Comin' from you, that's sayin' something.

(beat)

Do they talk about me?

CROSS

All the time.

RUTOVSKY

I'm sure they say I deserve what happened.

CROSS

They say you were a great medic. And that they fucked you for one mistake.

Rutovsky looks at him.

RUTOVSKY

They really say that?

Cross nods. Rutovsky smiles.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

What'd they do to you?

CROSS

Chief said I was unobservant.

Rutovsky leans back and laughs.

RUTOVSKY

Look who's talking. When the chief was a street medic, he was worse than Verdis. Tried to do everything by the book and freaked out on real jobs. Now he's spending his life trying to figure out why he failed.

Rutovsky looks at the floor, suddenly dark.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Fuck the chief. Fuck all of them.

Cross watches him closely.

CROSS
It was fucked up.

RUTOVSKY
Totally fucked up.

CROSS
Anyone could've made a mistake like that.

Rutovsky looks at him. A long moment between them.

84 EXT. RUTOVSKY'S PLACE - DAY 84

Cross walks down the stairs and onto the sidewalk in front of Rutovsky's place. He looks up.

Rutovsky stands in the window, watching him.

Cross lifts a hand to say goodbye.

Rutovsky shuts the curtains.

85 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 85

The NICU unit. Quiet. Babies in incubators. The beeping of a heart monitor. Cross stands behind a window, looking at one baby in particular.

He's tiny, but pink and healthy now. He has needles and tubes going into his head and the veins on the top of his feet. His arms and legs make small movements.

Cross looks at him for a long moment.

He watches the baby's tiny belly ballooning with each breath.

86 INT. CAFFE REGGIO - DAY 86

Cross and Clara sit across from each other in a busy cafe. Clara's tan. Cross is skinnier, circles under his eyes. He fiddles with a salt shaker, having trouble looking at her.

CLARA
You don't fit in up there, and it's mixed you up. You've been mistaking callousness for strength.

CROSS

I'm not mistaking anything for anything. It's just an attitude. It's what happens if you work in an environment like we do.

CLARA

Okay.

CROSS

I'm not...

(beat)

I'm working my ass off. Trying to be a good medic. And part of that is having a certain attitude. People have to listen to you and obey. You can't waste time being polite.

CLARA

I'm just saying, that new attitude has brought out other changes that - aren't helpful.

Cross looks at her. A waitress comes over and takes away a plate. "Anything else?" Clara looks at Cross.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Ollie.

CROSS

What?

She motions. Cross realizes the waitress just spoke to him.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Oh, no. Thank you. I'm good.

The waitress leaves. An awkward silence. Clara grips her coffee mug with both hands. Cross notices and waits.

CLARA

I wanted to apologize - about how I left. I didn't like what was happening, but I shouldn't have...

Cross lifts a hand - "stop". She looks at him.

CLARA (CONT'D)

You always wanted to help people. That's a good quality. That's what I always liked about you. But now - your good qualities aren't being used.

Cross looks at her, starts to say something, but stops. Then -

CROSS
Well, if I lose those good
qualities, maybe others will take
their place.

CLARA
Exactly.

They look at each other.

87 EXT. RUTOVSKY'S PLACE - DAY 87

Cross is at Rutovsky's door, waiting. He knocks again.

CROSS
Come on, man. Let me in.

After a moment, through the closed door -

RUTOVSKY (O.C.)
Wait on the stoop.

Cross looks at the door.

Later. Cross waits on the stoop in front of Rutovsky's place. Rutovsky comes down the steps unshaven, wearing old jeans and a dirty sweater. He looks like shit. Cross looks at him.

88 EXT. DELI - DAY 88

Rutovsky buys a pack of cigarettes at a deli. He gets his change, comes out, and joins Cross. They walk down the street.

CROSS
I saw the kid the other day in the
NICU.

Rutovsky looks at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)
He's alive. There's nothing wrong
with him.

For a moment, Rutovsky's face lights up, but then he shakes his head and looks away. He starts packing the cigarettes.

RUTOVSKY

Just gonna make it worse later on. He'll end up an orphan, maybe brain-damaged, definitely HIV-positive. The state'll spend a million dollars on him - and for what kind of life?

CROSS

I don't know.

(beat)

I thought I'd go see him again. And you could come with me.

Rutovsky stops.

RUTOVSKY

Why should I care what happens to that fucking baby? No one else gives a fuck. The newspapers don't report anything above 125th Street. The city doesn't spend any money up here. The place goes to shit, nobody notices. And they definitely don't give a fuck about us or anyone in EMS. We grind ourselves down, trying to make it a little better until we can't do it anymore - and then we get kicked out with a shitty pension that we can't even live on.

Rutovsky looks away.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

(quieter)

That's the reality. We all know it. So I see some woman cutting the cord with a crack pipe, some kid set up to have miserable fucking life. I think, what chance does this kid have?

Rutovsky turns and looks at him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

So, I said fuck it. I was in a position to help him. I chose not to treat.

Cross stares at him.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

And don't think I'm claiming to be some do-gooder. I didn't do it to save the kid his miserable fucking life. I did it cause I was sick of it. I'd had enough.

Cross is still staring, something shifting.

RUTOVSKY (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck, Ollie. Don't look at me like that. It doesn't take long to figure out what the fucking deal is. No one cares. And we have to wade through all the miserable shit. That's our job.

Cross shakes his head.

CROSS

I mean, yeah, I'm sick of it, too. But I had no idea what you were doing with the baby. And I'm glad he's okay.

Rutovsky laughs.

RUTOVSKY

You're a coward.

Cross steps forward.

CROSS

What are you then?

Rutovsky steps up to him and gets in his face. They stare at each down.

Something goes dark in Cross's eyes, then -

CROSS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Murderer.

Rutovsky takes this in, his jaw tightening. Finally, he turns and starts to walk away.

He stops and suddenly comes back.

RUTOVSKY

You came out to try to help me. I get it.

He sticks out his hand to shake.

Cross looks at his outstretched hand. He doesn't shake it.

Rutovsky draws his hand back and turns abruptly to leave, unwrapping his cigarettes as he walks away.

89 INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - EARLY EVENING

89

Cross reads his textbook in the passenger seat of the ambulance.

He glances out the window and watches Verdis walk into a deli, then he goes back to reading.

The passenger door suddenly flies open. A MAN IN A SKI MASK grabs Cross from behind and puts a gun to his head. He drags him out of the ambulance.

The man flings Cross down onto the ground, hard, then starts to head around to the other side of the vehicle.

Cross leaps to his feet and comes at the guy.

The guy swings around and points the gun in his face.

Cross freezes. He stares at the barrel of the gun.

The man tightens his grip on the trigger.

MAN IN A SKI MASK
Get the fuck back down.

Cross slowly gets down on the pavement.

The man hops in the ambulance and speeds away.

Verdis comes barrelling back outside, pissed. He slams his hand against the ambulance as it drives off.

VERDIS
Stupid motherfucker!
(to Cross)
Won't even get two blocks in that
thing.

Verdis grasps Cross's hand and helps him up.

90 EXT. STREET - EARLY EVENING

90

A few blocks down. Several police cars are parked at crazy angles along a street, lights flashing.

The stolen ambulance has run up on a curb. The hijacker from earlier is handcuffed in the back, now with bloody bandages wrapped around his face, his nose poking out.

Marmol stops another ambulance down the block and Verdis jumps out.

VERDIS

Where the fuck is he? Just tell me
where he is!

He storms away up the street. Cross, Marmol, and LaFontaine get out of the ambulance as well.

The bandaged man looks up and sees Cross.

Verdis talks to the cops guarding the ambulance up the street. The cops nod and walk away.

Verdis climbs into the back of the ambulance and screams in the perp's face.

LAFONTAINE

Gotta love it. He's supposed to be
the good one.

Verdis is now strangling the perp, whose arms flail wildly.

MARMOL

Someone should do something.

They all look at each other. Cross runs up the block.

The cops are in the back of the ambulance. Cross hops in and they all yank Verdis out.

LAFONTAINE

(disappointed)

Think of what that would've done to
Verdis. If *he* killed someone. I
mean, God, it would've been
beautiful.

Verdis storms away.

91 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

91

The next day. The ambulance is parked alongside a playground.

Verdis and Cross sit inside.

VERDIS

Sorry you had to see that yesterday.

CROSS

You kidding? I loved it.

Verdis doesn't laugh.

VERDIS

So I was in a seminary high school, getting ready to be a priest.

Cross turns to look at him - "where's this going?"

VERDIS (CONT'D)

My mom was religious. She always dressed me in this little black suit with a clip-on bow tie. I got all kinds of shit in the neighborhood. So then I'm seventeen and I'm getting ready to go to a seminary college, but they don't give the SATs at the seminary high school, so I had to go to a regular school to take them. I met a girl that day after the tests. That night there was a Sadie Hawkins dance. And, oh Lord, she asked me to go with her, and that was it. I decided I wasn't going to be a priest no more.

Cross smiles.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

Within the year, I was drafted. My mama had always made sure we enunciated clearly, so they made me a radio operator. I was just a kid and suddenly I'm sending these orders that killed hundreds of people. I'm not exaggerating. Hundreds of people died because of those orders. And I knew it. Thought the best thing I could do was to kill my sergeant.

Cross isn't smiling anymore.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

If I was brave, that's what I'd have done. I loaded my gun. Came up behind him.

(MORE)

VERDIS (CONT'D)

Raised the gun to his head.

(beat)

But I couldn't do it. I put the gun to my own head, couldn't do that either. So I just went on, relaying the orders. For two years. When I got back to New York, I started in on drinking, drugs. Lost a few years. But my people looked out. Neighbors. My family. People at church...

Verdis turns to look at him.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

I was responsible for hundreds of deaths. I'll never make up for that. Never. But you can sit around and worry about all the bad things you've done - or you can look forward to what you can do now. I love this job. I hope I never have to do anything else.

He turns away and looks out the windshield.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

So when someone interferes with us, tries to keep me from treating...I freak out.

Cross stares at him.

92

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

92

Cross runs across a park toward a group of police officers surrounding a body in the grass.

CROSS

How's he doing?!

POLICE OFFICER

He ain't makin' it. Half his face is shot off.

Cross pushes through the group and kneels. Verdis rushes in just behind, carrying a longboard. Cross quickly checks the body.

CROSS

He's still breathing. Let's go.

Cross cuts the clothes off the body and rips off the shirt. He looks down and freezes.

Rutovsky's dog tags hang around the victim's neck.

Cross and Verdis look at each other, realizing.

Half of Rutovsky's face is obscured in the blood soaked grass.

Verdis slams down the longboard. Cross and Verdis desperately start working on the body.

Ten feet away - a police officer finds the gun and places it into a plastic bag.

93 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT 93

The ambulance speeds to the hospital, sirens blaring.

Cross desperately does chest compressions on Rutovsky in the back of the ambulance.

CROSS

Come on, Rut! Come on, Rut!

Blood is getting everywhere. Cross slams his fist against the ceiling.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Fucking drive faster!

He slams back down on Rutovsky's chest and keeps doing compressions, crying and screaming.

94 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT 94

Nurses rush Rutovsky down a hallway. Cross and Verdis run just behind them.

They push into the trauma room and four doctors immediately surround the patient. A flurry of activity. Cross and Verdis watch from the corner of the room.

95 INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT 95

Cross sits in a chair in the lobby, staring at the ground. Verdis walks up and hands him a cup of coffee. He sits down and they wait.

Later. Marmol and a few other medics have joined them. They all sit, waiting. LaFontaine is visible through a glass window, smoking outside.

A DOCTOR, 50's, enters the lobby and notices them.

Cross and the medics stand. LaFontaine comes back in.

The doctor approaches and stops in front of them. He hesitates.

DOCTOR
I'm very sorry.

A cry rings out from the crowd. LaFontaine slams his hand against a wall.

Cross stands very still. Processing. Not ready to accept this yet.

96

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

96

Cross sits, in shock, in a quiet office. Verdis sits next to him.

CROSS
That was my area. He knew I was on.
He was making a point.

VERDIS
Rutovsky wouldn't have done that.

CROSS
Maybe even a joke.

VERDIS
I don't think he'd joke about that.

Beat.

CROSS
He could joke about anything.

They sit.

97

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

97

Rutovsky's funeral. An American flag is draped over the coffin. A picture of a younger Rutovsky in his uniform sits on top.

A pastor speaks at a podium.

All the medics from Station 18 stand in a huddle, in uniform, many crying. LaFontaine stares at the ground, angry. Verdis stands with his wife and three kids.

Nancy and Rutovsky's daughter Sylvia are dressed in black, in tears. Sylvia clasps a stuffed bunny.

Cross stands off by himself, not crying. Strangely empty.

98 INT. SUBWAY - DAY

98

Rush hour at Penn Station. Cross waits at the end of the platform for the train. He looks down the dark hole of the tunnel. A light approaches.

He looks back down the crowded platform. People jostle each other, irritated.

A little girl in a red jacket with a hood stands at the edge of the platform and waves her hand to warn a rat near the rails. She's pulled away by her parent.

Cross inches toward the edge of the platform.

The light of the train approaches.

Cross steps over the wrong side of the yellow danger line.

The train is so close now he can see the conductor in the window.

It looks like Cross is stepping off the platform.

The conductor sounds the horn.

99 INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

99

Cross stands in front of the chief's desk.

CROSS

I got two weeks off. I know that. I don't want it. I want to work.

Chief Burroughs sits at the desk, considering him.

CHIEF BURROUGHS

I shouldn't let you, but you know the deal. We need medics.

He holds out a set of keys. Cross reaches out, but the chief pulls them away. He eyes Cross closely.

CHIEF BURROUGHS (CONT'D)
Don't be doin' anything stupid.

CROSS
I'm not. Other than coming back to work.

Cross grabs the keys.

100 EXT. STREET - DAY

100

A large group of bystanders grudgingly step aside to reveal a teenager sprawled on the pavement. Blood seeps from his head and nose. Cross runs up -

YOUNG BYSTANDER 1
Ten minutes it took you to get here!

CROSS
We just got out of the hospital. There aren't enough ambulances.

YOUNG BYSTANDER 1
Don't be talking to me. Do your job, motherfucker.

Cross stops and looks the guy right in the face.

He SHOVES the guy to the ground, hard.

The bystander jumps up and comes at Cross, but Verdis steps between them and pushes them apart.

VERDIS
Come on, Cross. Treat the patient.
(to bystander)
Get back! He's treating the patient. Step back!

YOUNG BYSTANDER 1
Doesn't look like he's doing shit.

Cross kneels and quickly assesses the victim. He puts a cervical collar around the kid's neck and an oral airway in his mouth.

The crowd presses in.

Cross gives two breaths with the bag-valve mask and notices blood pulsing from a shot just behind the victim's ear.

He checks for a pulse and cuts the kid's shirt off. He finds another gunshot on the kid's elbow.

Verdis comes back with the stretcher and tosses a longboard to the ground.

Sirens approach in the distance. Murmuring from the crowd. They're getting angry - "Took them long enough!", "These guys don't give a fuck!", etc.

Cross and Verdis ease the victim onto the longboard.

A police car and another ambulance pull up and SCREECH to a stop.

YOUNG BYSTANDER 2

Hurry up! Why don't you hurry?

CROSS

We're doing our job! Trying to save his fucking life! What're you fucking doing?

VERDIS

Easy. Forget them.

LaFontaine and Marmol jump out of the ambulance.

Cross and Verdis lift the victim onto the stretcher. Cross gives another two breaths.

YOUNG BYSTANDER 3

Look how slow he's going.

He SHOVES Cross from behind, almost knocking him down.

Cross spins around, but the kid darts away. Cross starts after him, but LaFontaine barrels into the crowd, waving his radio like a weapon.

LAFONTAINE

Get the fuck back! I'll kick your fucking asses!

CROSS

That kid pushed me!

The kid that shoved Cross stops at a distance, gives him the finger, and runs away.

VERDIS

Cross! Let it go. Focus.

Verdis and Cross load the stretcher into the back. Verdis tosses his keys to Marmol, who jumps into the front to drive. Verdis hops in the back.

Cross starts to step into the back of the ambulance, but someone grabs him from behind.

 OLDER BYSTANDER
That's my cousin. I wanna ride
with.

 CROSS
Go up front.

 OLDER BYSTANDER
I wanna go in the back with him.

 CROSS
Not with a critical patient. You
have to ride up front.

Cross tries to step up, but the guy grabs him again, gripping harder.

 OLDER BYSTANDER
Please. He's my -

Cross pushes his hand away. The guy backs up, hands raised.

Cross comes at him and shoves him, hard, knocking him back into the crowd.

 CROSS
Get away! Get the fuck away!

Everyone freezes, surprised. Even LaFontaine.

Cross jumps into the ambulance and slams the door shut.

101 INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

101

Verdis bangs the roof.

 VERDIS
 (yelling up front)
Let's go!

The ambulance lurches into gear.

Out the back window - a police officer grabs the guy's cousin by the shirtfront and throws him down.

CROSS
Fucking asshole tried to grab me!

Verdis looks at him, steady.

VERDIS
The patient. Forget all that. Treat
the patient.

Cross turns and stares at the patient.

Then he starts to cut off the rest of his clothes.

102 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

102

LaFontaine leans against his car in the parking lot, drinking a bottle of bourbon. Cross exits the station, headed home.

LAFONTAINE
Hey, Cross! Get over here!

Cross considers, then walks over. LaFontaine lifts the bottle to him as he nears.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
Saw you kick some ass today.

Cross grabs the bottle, takes a long swig, and wipes his mouth.

CROSS
He was bugging me.

LAFONTAINE
(laughing)
Well, that's a start.

Cross takes another swig and passes the bottle back.

LaFontaine takes a drink and considers Cross for a moment.

He glances over and notices a young kid in a baseball cap walking outside the fence.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
Hey! Get over here!

The kid in the cap stops walking and freezes.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
Get the fuck over here! I ain't
gonna do nothin'!

The kid hesitates, then walks over warily. LaFontaine smiles.
The kid stops five feet away from them.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
(to kid)
See? Told you I wouldn't do
nothin'.

He suddenly reaches over and grabs the kid by the hair. He
wrestles him into a lock by the arms.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
(to Cross)
Take a shot at him.

KID IN THE CAP
Get the fuck off me!

Cross looks at the kid, who's struggling to get away.

CROSS
He didn't do anything.

LAFONTAINE
Your partner is fucking dead.
Doesn't that mean anything to you?
This is the skel tax. It's what he
gets for being out here. Hit him.

Cross hesitates. He puts down the bottle and cocks his fist.

He rears back to punch the kid -

The kid flinches.

- but Cross slaps him instead, not hard.

The kid looks at him, confused.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
That's a start. Coming attractions.

LaFontaine heaves the kid up and pushes him away roughly.

LAFONTAINE (CONT'D)
(to kid)
Stay outta trouble.

The kid stumbles away quickly, glancing over his shoulder.

Cross picks up the bottle and takes a long drink. LaFontaine
watches him, pleased.

103 INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT 103

A police officer rudely wakes up a wasted Cross on a subway car at the end of the line.

104 EXT. HARLEM STREET - NIGHT 104

Cross, wasted, can barely walk down the street. He stumbles up to a group of homeless men camped out on a side street and sits down with them. He leans against a wall and closes his eyes.

The group of men stare at him.

105 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY 105

The next day. Cross and LaFontaine load a victim into the back of the ambulance and climb in.

LaFontaine cuts the clothes off a twenty-year-old man. Heroin baggies line his waistband and fill a holster inside his shirt.

LAFONTAINE

This motherfucker hit a girl, eight years old, in the fucking knee. She'll never jump rope again. And we're treating him. Bullshit.

He reaches over and turns off one IV. Then the other.

Cross looks down at the patient. His skin is already turning grey and slick with sweat.

LaFontaine looks at Cross, a challenge. He pulls out the keys, hops out the back, and slams the door shut behind him.

106 EXT./INT. - AMBULANCE - LATER 106

The ambulance speeds to the hospital.

In the back, Cross watches the kid, slowly turning greyer and greyer, lips moving silently.

Cross looks up at the IV. It's still turned off.

The ambulance pulls into the ER bay. Verdis and Marmol are waiting to help with transport.

The ambulance slows to a stop.

Cross suddenly reaches over and starts one of the IV's.

Cross gets the second IV started again just as the doors open. Verdis notices and glances over at Cross.

Verdis and Marmol pull the stretcher out. LaFontaine comes around and looks into the back, noticing the IV's are turned back on.

LAFONTAINE

Way to go, Cross. Now he can go on
to kill someone else.

Cross watches Verdis and Marmol through the glass doors as they rush the victim into the ER.

107 EXT./INT. CHURCH - MORNING 107

A gospel choir sings. The towering spire of a Harlem church.

Sun pours through an impressive stained-glass mural behind the altar. A gospel choir sings, swinging and clapping in unison.

The preacher at the podium smiles at his congregation. Everyone in the pews sings along, some with their eyes closed, feeling the spirit.

Verdis and his wife and kids sit in a row together. They clap and sing. Cross sits beside them.

108 EXT. CHURCH - DAY 108

Later, the congregation files out of the church after the service. The preacher thanks people as they exit.

Verdis kisses his wife and kids and says goodbye. He takes Cross and they walk down the block.

109 EXT. STREET - DAY 109

Cross and Verdis walking.

VERDIS

You've had crazy trouble this fall.
Don't be making it worse by jumping
on the ambulance with LaFontaine.
He can be a good medic when he
wants to be. But there's something
totally fucked up with him.

CROSS
 (laughing)
 He's all right.

Verdis stops.

VERDIS
 There's two kind of medics out here, Cross. The ones that want to help people. That's most of us. And then there are the few bad medics who like being around sick people. Who like the power it gives them.

Cross looks away.

VERDIS (CONT'D)
 It's easy to get on the wrong path. I've seen it happen with guys like you. Look at LaFontaine. What do you think he was like when he first came out? But you start working with the wrong guy. You do a few things you regret. That can change who you are.

Cross looks at him.

CROSS
 I know who I am.

VERDIS
 Do you? You're right on the edge of something. We all see it. Who do you really wanna be, Cross?

Cross stares at him, then looks away.

110 EXT. HARLEM RIVER PROJECTS - DAY

110

Verdis rushes a stretcher carrying an older woman down a sidewalk. Cross leans against the ambulance.

Verdis pushes the stretcher up, expecting Cross to help load, but he doesn't. Verdis looks down, frustrated. He tosses the keys to Cross.

VERDIS
 Go on, Cross. I got her. Drive.

111 INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY 111

Cross drives back to the hospital, slowly. His face calm.

The ambulance pulls into a parking spot at the hospital crookedly. Cross stops, reverses, pulls back out, then pulls back in, perfectly between the two white lines.

Cross gets out and walks around to the back of the ambulance and opens the doors.

It's messy with blood. Verdis huffs and puffs, desperately doing CPR on the patient.

Bloody hundred dollar bills are all over the floor.

112 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY 112

Two bloody wheel tracks run all the way down a white tile hallway in the emergency room. At the end - Cross and Verdis hand off the stretcher to the nurses.

113 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY 113

Cross waits in the driver's seat. Verdis approaches the window, wiping sweat from his forehead.

VERDIS
Esophageal varices.

CROSS
(not looking at him)
Dead?

Verdis nods.

VERDIS
You did a good job, Cross. Most guys drive like maniacs. You can't even do CPR. You have a nice slow steady ride so I could do everything I wanted. Good work.

Cross turns and looks at him coldly. Verdis goes around to the back of the ambulance.

114 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - LATER 114

Verdis stuffs the bloody dollars into a biohazard bag.

VERDIS

(calling up to Cross)

She had the money around her neck
in a pouch. When I cut her clothes
off I got the pouch. Must be twenty-
five hundred dollars there.

He shuts the doors and heads back inside.

Cross gets out, comes around to the back, and opens the
doors.

Blood is everywhere, on the cabinets, the stretcher. There's
one bloody bill off to the side that Verdis missed. He takes
it and shuts the door.

A bit later. Cross sits in the driver's seat. He rolls up the
window and leans his head back.

Cross looks down at the stethoscope around his neck, the one
Rutovsky gave him. He puts the earpieces in and holds the
bell against his own chest.

He takes a deep breath. Then lets it out slowly.

We hear his breathing. In. Out.

Then louder. In. Out. In -

A sudden knock on his window. Cross takes out the earpieces,
but doesn't turn.

A 70-year-old man with a parka thrown over his bathrobe
stands by driver's side window, looking in.

He knocks again, harder. Cross finally rolls down the window.
The man has been crying.

CROSS

What?

MAN IN A BATHROBE

My wife. She's dead.

CROSS

Yeah?

MAN IN A BATHROBE

You were the ambulance for her. She
had our rent money. If it doesn't
go in today, they'll evict me.

CROSS

My partner took the money to the cops. They hold it for next of kin.

MAN IN A BATHROBE

When can I get it?

CROSS

I don't know. A few weeks.

MAN IN A BATHROBE

I'll be evicted if I don't get it now. It's why she died. Gettin' that money together. It killed her.

CROSS

Talk to the cops.

He rolls the window up and turns away. After a moment, he looks back. The man is still standing there.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(yelling through the glass)

Talk to the cops!

The man stares at him, then walks inside.

Cross looks down at the crumpled hundred dollar bill in his hand. He pockets it.

He looks through the sliding glass doors of the ER and sees Verdis talking with the guy. Verdis nods. He takes out his wallet and gives the guy money. Cross shakes his head.

Verdis gives the guy a hug and comes back out. He glances toward the back of the ambulance.

VERDIS

You planning to wash out the back?

Cross doesn't answer.

115 INT. GARAGE - DAY

115

The ambulance bay. Verdis washes out the back of the ambulance, while Cross waits in the driver's seat.

116 EXT./INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

116

Later. The ambulance is parked along the edge of the Harlem River.

Cross in the driver seat, Verdis in the passenger seat. They stare out at the river. Verdis takes off his jacket. Cross notices.

CROSS
I'm cold.

He reaches over and turns up the heat. Verdis looks at him.

VERDIS
Yeah, no problem.

The sound of the heater on low. Verdis leans back.

VERDIS (CONT'D)
That guy didn't even have money for food.

Cross doesn't respond.

VERDIS (CONT'D)
I'd have given him more, but my wife would kill me.

Verdis smiles. Cross shakes his head.

Verdis waits. Sweat starts to come down his cheeks.

Cross leans back, too. After a moment -

VERDIS (CONT'D)
You still cold?

CROSS
Yeah.

VERDIS
Okay.

Verdis reaches over and turns it up higher. He waits.

Cross is sweating now too.

VERDIS (CONT'D)
Are you still cold?

CROSS
Yes.

VERDIS
You must have a fever or something.

He cranks the heat up even higher. It's louder now. Cross just stares straight ahead, sweating.

Sweat soaks Verdis's shirt and streams down his face.

Cross waits, his jaw tight. He reaches over and turns it up as high as it will go.

Verdis wipes his face. He smiles and shakes his head.

It's really blasting. The sound rattles the whole vehicle.

Cross presses back into his seat, waiting. He turns.

Suddenly, Verdis isn't smiling anymore. He turns and stares into Cross's eyes. A deep and penetrating gaze.

Cross falters, waits.

Finally -

VERDIS (CONT'D)
Think about it, Cross.

A moment between them.

Something shifts and softens in Cross's eyes. He has to turn away.

Verdis studies him, then leans back in his seat.

No one speaks. Just the sound of the heater blaring.

Cross reaches over and turns it off. Silence.

He stares out the window and watches the rocking grey water.

117 EXT. HARLEM RIVER PROJECTS - NIGHT 117

The man in the robe from earlier sits on his stoop, staring at the ground.

Cross walks up and stands before him. The old man looks up. Cross uncrumples the bloody bill from earlier and hands it to him.

Cross walks away, back down the block.

118 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 118

Verdis's garden on the edge of the parking lot. Verdis, his wife, and their three kids pull weeds during a quiet moment between calls. Verdis's radio is wedged upright in the dirt.

Cross sits in the ambulance, his textbook open on his lap. He watches the family.

Verdis's wife digs in the dirt with a handheld spade. Verdis leans over to his kids and shows them the difference between what's dead and what's alive.

119 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 119

Cross sits in a classroom, with several other students, taking his MCAT. He's focused and calm.

120 EXT./INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT 120

A raging fire in a multi-story apartment complex. Firefighters fight the blaze, hoses spraying water into windows.

The basement. Dim light and a deafening roar of fire hoses. Water pours down a linoleum staircase into the basement and lights flash, illuminating the street-level windows.

Cross and Verdis splash down the steps and disappear down separate hallways.

Cross turns into a laundry room with flickering lights.

A twelve-year-old girl lies in a pool of water. Her skin is pale. Her mouth is open and her eyes stare blankly, a sodden pile of laundry next to her.

CROSS
(calling out)
Verdis! I found someone!

No response, just the roar of the hoses. Cross turns back and reaches for her, but stops.

He notices wires in the corner of the room. They're touching the wet floor.

Cross looks around, deciding what to do. He grabs a wet shirt from the pile and drapes it onto her, letting an arm of the shirt touch her. He touches it. No current.

He reaches down and grabs her.

Cross pulls her down the hallway, splashing in the inches-deep water, until he reaches a dry spot. He lays her down carefully, grabs his flashlight, and sets it pointing up, reflecting light off the ceiling.

He cuts off her shirt and puts the four monitor leads on her gray skin. The green light of her heart bounces and quivers like crazy.

He charges the paddles, puts them on her bare chest, waits, and presses the button.

Her arms and legs flap with the shock. Then her rhythm goes flat.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Verdis!

He charges the paddles again, holds them to her chest, and tries again.

She contracts, arms flapping. On the monitor, her rhythm goes flat again for an even longer time.

Cross watches it and waits.

Then the green light bounces up with a heartbeat. Then another. Another.

Cross checks for a pulse with one hand, grabs the flashlight with the other, and shines it on her face.

Things seem to slow down for a moment. Her grey face slowly flushes over with life.

There's a sudden heaving in her chest, a rattling sound in her throat.

Cross watches closely as death leaves her.

Her pupils contract and chest heaves again. She gasps for breath.

Verdis bounds in, splashing in the water. He bends to the girl and looks at the strip of the monitor.

VERDIS
Fuckin' A, Cross, looks like you
got your save.

Cross pulls out the tube kit and starts to put the scope into her mouth.

121 EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 121

The flames are under control now. A few firemen spray down the still smoldering building. Verdis sits in the ambulance and radios in Cross's save.

Cross walks out of the building hauling his bag. LaFontaine rushes up and pats him on the back. Marmol smiles wide.

Families huddle together on the sidewalk, under blankets, watching the smoke clear.

122 EXT./INT. MACOMB'S PROJECTS - DAY 122

A four-story dirty brick building in the shape of an open square.

Benches and scraggly trees are scattered around the courtyard. Some kids play on a jungle gym. An old man crumbles up stale bread for the birds.

Inside. Cross walks up the steps. He reaches the top floor, knocks on a door, and waits.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.C.)
(through the door)
Who is it?

CROSS
My name's Ollie Cross.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.C.)
Who?

CROSS
Ollie Cross. I'm a paramedic.

The door doesn't open. The sound of footsteps walking away.

A neighbor down the hall opens her door a crack and eyes him suspiciously.

The footsteps come back, a bit heavier.

GRANDMOTHER (O.C.)
Who is it?

CROSS
I'm a paramedic. I'm from the hospital.

GRANDMOTHER (O.C.)
We didn't call for an ambulance.

CROSS

It's about the baby. Open up.

A beat. Then the door opens. A GRANDMOTHER, 50, eyes him through the crack in the door. She wears a white button down shirt, bifocals hung around her neck with a wood beaded cord.

GRANDMOTHER

There a problem with the baby?

CROSS

No. I was one of the medics on the scene when he was born.

GRANDMOTHER

You from Lenox Hill?

CROSS

No. I'm from the city.

Her expression shifts.

GRANDMOTHER

The first ambulance crew?

CROSS

Yeah, that's me.

She stares at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

She hesitates.

123 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

123

A green refrigerator covered with a child's colorful pictures. The grandmother sits at a small kitchen table next to an open window with white curtains.

In the corner - a crib with low wooden rails. The baby lies on his back, much bigger. Eyes shut, arms flexed, hands open. Cross stands over him and watches. The baby is looking right at him.

CROSS

What's his name?

GRANDMOTHER

Lenox.

Cross nods.

CROSS
He looks healthy.

GRANDMOTHER.
He is healthy. And'll stay that way, too, God willing.

Cross turns and stands there, awkwardly.

The grandmother stares at him.

Cross walks over to the table and sits across from her.

CROSS
You know the story?

GRANDMOTHER
You left him to die on the bare floor. 'Cause he's black.

CROSS
It wasn't because of that.

GRANDMOTHER
Don't you lie.

CROSS
I wouldn't be here if I wanted to lie.

GRANDMOTHER
Maybe you wanted to bust in here and finish him off.

Cross hesitates, hard to go on.

CROSS
I wanted to come and tell you about it.

GRANDMOTHER
I know everything 'bout it already. You and your partner. And now you want forgiveness?

Cross is silent. She looks at him steadily.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)
Because I don't know if I can give it.

CROSS

I wanted to - I just wanted to tell you what happened, so you didn't misunderstand, think it was something else. I wanted to see if it would help in some way.

GRANDMOTHER

Where's the other one? I heard there were two. He didn't wanna come and see the bad thing he'd almost done?

CROSS

No. He's...

Cross stops and looks down, holding back tears. He breathes in deep, lifts his head, and looks her straight in the eyes.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(matter of fact)

No. He's dead. He killed himself.

The grandmother waits.

Cross keeps looking at her, tears forming.

The grandmother gently shakes her head.

Cross looks down and starts to cry.

The grandmother looks at him, studying him. After a moment -

GRANDMOTHER

(calling out)

Myla!

She eases herself up on the chair, sitting up straight.

Her 8-year-old granddaughter comes into the room, waiting on the threshold, shy. The grandmother waves her over. The granddaughter walks over and stands with her.

GRANDMOTHER

Myla, I want you to meet this man.
He drives an ambulance.

Myla stares at Cross. Cross looks up, trying to stop crying.

GRANDMOTHER

Maybe someday he'll come back here
to help us.

Myla steps forward and sticks out her hand.

Cross looks at her hand for a moment.

He reaches out and grasps it. They shake. The grandmother watches.

Through the open living room window - the Harlem River.

124 INT. MEDICS' LOUNGE - DAY

124

Cross walks through the medics' lounge to the locker room. Suddenly, everyone pours in from the hallway to congratulate him.

It's rowdy. Verdis shakes Cross's hand, Chief Burroughs slaps him on the back, Marmol presents him with a framed picture of the EKG strip from his save.

VERDIS

(to Cross)

You may be leaving us next month, doctor, but at least you'll be leaving with a save bar. Took you long enough.

Laughter. Cross smiles, hesitates.

VERDIS (CONT'D)

Aw, he's doubting. Sign him up for another year of this shit!

MARMOL

Fuck medical school!

Everyone laughs. The celebration continues. Cross looks over.

LaFontaine stands off to the side, less enthusiastic. Cross turns away.

125 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

125

Cross walks down the hallway away from the emergency room, stripping off a pair of bloody latex gloves. The stethoscope that Rutovsky gave him hangs around his neck. He throws the gloves away.

He slows, then stops, thinking. He turns and looks back down the hallway.

126 INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

126

The girl that Cross saved sits up in a hospital bed, looking at the IV in her arm.

Cross stands just outside the doorway, watching.

CROSS
Feeling better?

She turns and sees him.

SAVED GIRL
I feel fine now. Thanks.

He nods.

SAVED GIRL (CONT'D)
I think they're letting me go home later today.

CROSS
That's good.

They look at each other for a long moment. Cross turns to go.

SAVED GIRL
Are you the guy that found me?

Cross turns back around.

CROSS
Yeah.

She smiles.

SAVED GIRL
Thanks. Thanks for saving my life.

Cross hesitates, smiles, and walks away. She watches him go.

As he's leaving, a nurse brushes by him and heads into the room.

He stops. From outside the door, he watches - she's touching the IV in her arm, tenderly. The nurse checks the lines. The girl turns away to speak to her.

Cross watches for a long moment. The steady beep of a monitor keeps time. Then - it goes quiet.

END OF FILM