

BREAKING BAD

"Kafkaesque"

Episode #309

Written by

Peter Gould

&

George Mastras

Directed by

Michael Slovis

As Broadcast

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BREAKING BAD
"Kafkaesque"

Cast List

WALT
SKYLER
JESSE
WALTER, JR.
HANK
MARIE

BADGER
SKINNY PETE
SAUL GOODMAN
GUS
GOMEZ
TED BENEKE
GROUP LEADER
DR. NOCERA
HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR
NURSE
VICTOR

BREAKING BAD
"Kafkaesque"

Set List

Interiors:

WHITE HOUSE
 KITCHEN
 LIVING ROOM
SUPERLAB
HOSPITAL
 HANK'S ROOM
 WAITING ROOM
FACTORY FARM
 WAREHOUSE
 OFFICE TRAILER
NAIL SALON
RESTAURANT
MEETING ROOM
WALT'S AZTEK

Exteriors:

HOSPITAL
 PARKING LOT
FACTORY FARM
 LOADING DOCKS
 HILLTOP
LONESOME HIGHWAY
MEXICAN VILLAGE

TEASER

Spanish-style Flamenco guitar serenades us, as we open on:

EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE - DAY

A soaring LANDSCAPE of a rural Mexican village tucked between lush foothills bathed in sunlight. The sawtoothed peaks of the Sierra Madre loom majestically on the horizon.

We're in the Mexican heartland. Not parched and squalid, like we've seen in our border-town scenes. But verdant and serene -- a picture of pastoral charm.

We'll use STOCK FOOTAGE for this, but in the best-case scenario, we'll see quaint peasant dwellings clustered around the stone bell tower of a Catholic church, *campesinos* towing donkeys or prodding goats down cobbled alleys, smiling children playing in abundant fields of maize or grain.

And lots of happy CHICKENS foraging freely in the fields and among the abodes. Maybe we hear a rooster crow.

Over these images, we hear an avuncular, Spanish-accented narrator (think the late Ricardo Montalban):

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the little village where I was born, life moved at a slower pace... yet felt all the richer for it. There, my two uncles were known far and wide for their delicious cooking.

We cut to an antique sepia PHOTO of two proud mustachioed brothers in traditional peasant garb and sombreros.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They seasoned their zesty chicken using only the freshest herbs and spices. People called them "Los Pollos Hermanos" -- the Chicken Brothers.

By now we know we are watching a commercial for Gus' restaurant chain, Los Pollos Hermanos -- one that evokes nostalgia for a better time and a feeling of old-fashioned, organic freshness. (Cynics will note that Gus' food is fried to hell, and not particularly Mexican, but that's part of the fun here.)

(CONTINUED)

Off the antique photo of the Brothers, we cut to...

... CHICKEN PARTS -- breasts and wings and thighs fried to a crispy golden brown and artistically backlit -- falling and tumbling through the air in slow-motion. Mmmm! We'd practically kill for a fix of that chicken.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Today, we carry on their tradition
in a manner that would make my
uncles proud.

Falling chicken DISSOLVES into a matching shot of...

... falling CRYSTALS OF BLUE METH! Sparkling and beautiful -- like so many shards of glittering blue-tinted glass -- raining down in slow motion. In effect, exposing the "real" business behind Gus's chicken empire. The camera follows the blizzard of blue as it snows into a RUBBERMAID container.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The finest ingredients are brought
together with loving care, then
slow-cooked to perfection. Yes,
the old ways are still best at Los
Pollos Hermanos. But don't take my
word for it. One taste and you'll
know.

A short and tasteful LOS POLLOS JINGLE (sung off-camera) wraps up our little commercial as we now continue on with an artfully flowing visual tour of meth distribution 101.

Production Note: where exactly the narration ends is not crucial. Most likely, this will be a discovery made in the editing room. Visually, the point to make here is that big business merges effortlessly with Scarface-level drug crime.

WIDER. Now we realize we are...

INT. SUPERLAB - DAY

WALT, dressed in his Tyvek and rubber gloves, is hard at work filling the Rubbermaid and sealing it shut. He slides it to JESSE, identically attired and working the DIGITAL SCALE at the weigh station. Jesse weighs it -- then onto a handtruck goes this last of FIVE IDENTICAL, FULL RUBBERMAIDS. And now Walt and Jesse's part of the process is finished.

Reveal VICTOR, ready to take it from here. Stone-faced as always, he wheels the two hundred pounds of product on its handtruck. In some nice MATCH-CUT to the next scene...

INT. FACTORY FARM - WAREHOUSE - DAY

... Victor pushes the handtruck into the WAREHOUSE at the chicken-processing facility we first saw in Episode 303.

Inside, EIGHT OR TEN WORKERS, all dressed in similar Tyvek suits, stand and work at various stations in a kind of assembly line. We follow the Rubbermaid of meth from station to station, glimpsing brief images of Gus' workers as they:

-- divide the meth into smaller portions and carefully pack it into plastic baggies.

-- submerge the bags of meth into large plastic jugs of THICK FRY BATTER. The workers then mark the jugs by scratching the lids with jackknives (the marks are tiny, you wouldn't notice them if you weren't looking).

-- intersperse the marked jugs containing meth among many other identical jugs (not containing meth), all of them lined up on shelves and ready for loading. The shelves are labeled by destination: Amarillo, Dallas, Las Vegas, Phoenix, etc.

-- then wheel loads of the jugs on handtrucks outside, to...

EXT. FACTORY FARM - LOADING DOCKS - DAY

The loading area. The workers wheel the jugs onto a loading dock and into a Los Pollos Hermanos REFRIGERATED TRUCK.

We pull back WIDE to reveal not just this one truck, but two..? four..? six..? many Pollos Hermanos trucks. This is one major operation. And a well-oiled machine.

The workers finish packing and shut the tailgates. The trucks trundle away, exiting the factory farm in a long line like elephants on parade. And watching them go...

... We reveal GUS, the man who makes it all happen. He stands on his loading dock, impassively watching.

Out on the main road, our trucks split and fork off -- headed in every conceivable direction. America, here we come.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. SUPERLAB - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON a digital SCALE READOUT. "160.2" it says in bright blue letters, which then go dark. Now, as a full Rubbermaid gets loaded aboard its empty scaletop...

... Up comes a new and updated readout: "201.6."

Reveal Jesse, dressed in Tyvek. Yet another cook is finished (not the same one depicted in the Teaser). Like all that occurs in Walt's lab, the weighing of the yield is an exacting procedure.

Jesse's job, which we are witnessing, is the task of working the scale and calling out the measurement. (The scale has a memory and automatically adds up the five containers of meth per each cook, subtracting the containers' tare weights. There are FIVE CONTAINERS present, by the way -- the one they're on now is the last of the bunch to be weighed.)

JESSE

Two-oh-one point six.
(mildly annoyed)
Jesus. Seriously?

Reveal Walt standing by, recording the amount on a clipboard (where he is, the readout happens NOT to be visible to him).

WALT

Better over than under.

JESSE

Over by a pound and a half? I
thought you were all, like,
"precise."
(pops open the Rubbermaid)
Whatever. I'll just save it out
till next week.

Quickly overriding Jesse, Walt re-seals the container.

WALT

We ship it as-is.

JESSE

What are we, running a charity?!
C'mon man, we're gonna take it out!

WALT

Leave it. One batch, one ship.
Stop complicating things.

(CONTINUED)

Jesse finally gives up, bewildered -- but mostly pissed-off.

Walt ignores him, returns his attention to his clipboard.
Jesse frowns. Reads Walt -- *is this extra amount by design?*

JESSE
(outraged now)
Why are you purposely giving him
free meth?! These bitches are
bleeding us enough already!

WALT
You are paid extraordinarily well,
why can't you just appreciate
that...

Distracted Walt files away his clipboard and crosses the lab
to the lockers (or wherever our changing area happens to be).
Jesse is on his ass the whole way.

JESSE
Yeah, yeah... hey. Hey, I been
crunching numbers, alright?!

WALT
(*ah, wonderful*)
Oh, you've been "crunching
numbers."

JESSE
Yeah, I've been crunching numbers,
and I don't gotta be a
mathematician to figure out this
deal you made is bullshit.

Walt, changing out of his cook gear and into his street
clothes, pauses to argue -- but Jesse cuts him off.

WALT
We both earn...

JESSE
Yeah, yeah, yeah -- million and a
half each, whoop-de-doo. What's he
getting? Huh?!
(*wait, I'll tell you!*)
Say he's wholesaling at forty large
a pound --

WALT
-- That's probably high.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE

High? What, for our stuff?!
That's what I was getting! Okay,
look, say he's getting forty a
pound, alright, two hundred pounds
a week for three months...

(off on a short tangent)

... And like, what happens at the
end of three months?

(before Walt can speak)

Look, what-whatever -- two hundred
pounds a week for three months --
that's twenty-four hundred pounds.
2400 times 40,000 is -- and I swear
to God I double-checked this like,
ten times --

WALT

(without emotion)

-- Ninety-six million dollars.

Jesse blinks, staring at him intently -- *you already fucking
KNEW that?!* A short, perfect beat, then:

JESSE

Ninety-six million dollars!
Alright, ninety-six! Million!
Ninety-six to our three!

(points accusingly)

That is messed up, yo. That is so
messed up, fairness-wise, I can't
even...

If this financial division bothers Walt (and it may indeed),
it's hard to tell. Currently he's in no mood to argue.

WALT

Jesse, you are now a millionaire.
And you're complaining? What world
do you live in?

JESSE

One where the dudes who're actually
doin' all the work ain't gettin'
fisted!

(quieter now; means it)

What is going on with you lately?
What's happened to you..?

Walt finishes dressing and climbs the spiral staircase.

JESSE

Hang on, can't you just -- we gotta
hash this out! Hey!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESSE (CONT'D)
(Walt isn't stopping)
What's more important than MONEY?!

Up on the catwalk, Walt exits the lab door without a look back. As if in answer to Jesse's question, we CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HANK'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

TIGHT ON HANK, asleep in bed. He's hooked to an IV and a couple of monitors. His torso is bandaged and there's catheter bags and tubes in evidence (as always, all this is dressed as per the expert advice of our MED TECH).

This is the first really good, long look at Hank we've gotten since the shoot-out in 307. He's pale and wan. Except for his faintly rising chest, we'd barely guess he's alive.

In his room, cards, flowers and gift baskets abound. We reveal MARIE, SKYLER, WALTER, JR... and Walt, who has come straight from his lab. It's maybe an hour later.

Some sit, some stand. Grim faces all around. Especially Walt, who is wallowing in guilt, ruminating on exactly what, if anything, he had to do with Hank being here. A question he's been chewing on since the legless Cousin vaulted off the hospital bed and crawled after him last episode.

Marie gently fluffs the pillow under Hank's head, careful not to wake him. Softly:

MARIE
These things they laughingly call pillows... I would not give them to prison inmates.

SKYLER
You want me to go ask for another?

MARIE
No. Just remind me to bring his from home.
(apropos of nothing)
They're not moving his legs enough.

There's a soft KNOCK on the half-open door. Walter, Jr. is quickest to see...

GOMEZ cautiously pokes his head in. He carries a large shopping bag (we'll find out what it contains in a minute).

GOMEZ
Hey, everybody.

(CONTINUED)

Walt and Skyler manage faint smiles and nod hello.

Gomez smiles back, looking a bit anxiously at Marie (who, last episode, we recall was none too keen on the DEA).

GOMEZ

Hi, Marie. Is it... okay if I visit..?

Skyler shoots a glance to Marie -- *be nice*.

Marie isn't exactly overjoyed to see him. However, Gomez is hangdog-sheepish enough to be pitied... and besides, Marie has no energy left with which to nurse a grudge.

MARIE

Yeah.

She gives a nod, and Gomez quietly eases a step or two into the room, staring down at Hank with sad compassion. Wanting to fill the grim silence with something, anything...

GOMEZ

His, uh... color looks good.

Bullshit. Hank's a half-shade brighter than cadaver-gray. Still, the others give small nods of agreement.

Just then, Hank GROANS softly, painfully: "Uhhhhh..."

Gomez blanches. *Uh-oh!* -- Hank's a lot worse than Gomez thought. The others also look to Hank with concern.

Hank's eyes stay closed. Like a ninety-year-old stroke victim on his deathbed, his voice breathy, barely audible:

HANK

Gomie..? That you..?

Gomez's eyes widen. The others stir, everyone slowly gathering a bit closer to Hank's bed.

GOMEZ

Buddy, it's me.

HANK

(groggy whisper)
Thass you..? Gomie...

GOMEZ

Yeah, Hank. Right here.

(CONTINUED)

HANK
(seconds from death)
Come 'ere... closer.

Gomez shoots Marie a fearful look. He swallows hard, steps right up beside the bed and grips Hank's forearm.

GOMEZ
What is it?

HANK
Closer...

A beat. Gomez bends so low that his ear is mere inches from Hank's lips. Suddenly, in a (more or less) NORMAL VOICE:

HANK
Asshole.

Punked! It would hurt too much to laugh, but Hank breaks into a broad GRIN. Gomez realizes what just happened as Walter, Jr. busts out laughing. The others chuckle. Even Marie cracks a smile, loving this glimpse of the old Hank.

WALTER, JR.
Man, he got you good!

Gomez shakes his head -- *you sonofabitch* -- before he breaks into a grin himself, hugely relieved.

GOMEZ
Yeah, yeah...
(to Hank)
Glad to see you still have your
twisted sense of humor.

Hank lets out a short laugh -- which just as quickly turns into a bout of agonizing COUGHING. *Ahh CHRIST, does that HURT!!* Hank loses that sense of humor real fast, ready to sell his soul just to stop coughing. Marie puts a hand on him, trying to settle him down and comfort him.

Back to grim reality while Hank's pain very slowly subsides. Frat-boy humor notwithstanding, this guy is really hurting.

Finally, Hank nods -- *I'm good*. Gomez, hoping to lighten things up for his partner... or at least get the poor guy's mind off his troubles... reaches in his shopping bag (this should probably be one of those brown paper Macy's-type deals with the twine handles, just something he had lying around).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GOMEZ

Hey, check this out. I got something that'll make you feel better.

Gomez pulls out a MAP OF THE SOUTHWEST -- the one Hank used for tracking places blue meth has been reported. (Or perhaps we create an identical, yet slightly smaller version, and no one will be the wiser!) But here's the thing...

... It is now riddled with BLUE PUSH-PINS. There are lots more than we ever saw before -- and plenty inside New Mexico, and even ABQ, to boot. Gomez holds it up for Hank to see.

GOMEZ

I been keeping an eye on that blue meth of yours. Six, seven weeks -- nothing, then all of a sudden, boom -- it's popping up everywhere.

Hank stares through half-lidded eyes, barely interested. Walt, however, drinks in the map, alarmed and intrigued. It's his handiwork indicated by those many pins, after all.

He's got to keep his interest a secret from everyone present, however. That especially means Skyler, who is the only one here who shoots him a brief glance. He notes it out of the corner of his eye, yet doesn't return it. Glancing down at his shoes, Walt makes like Helen Keller.

GOMEZ

(to Hank; points them out)
Lookit the new locations. Texas, Nevada... up in Farmington. Even right here in town. I mean, a teener here and there, you know, strictly street-level amounts. But man, it's crazy.

When Hank speaks, it's softly (projecting in a normal tone of voice hurts too much).

HANK

How exactly that supposed to make me feel better?

Gomez expected more of a reaction, considering Hank was obsessed with the blue meth right until the day he was shot.

GOMEZ

'Cause... you were right. You're the only one who saw this coming.

(CONTINUED)

HANK

Well, three cheers for me.

Hank's attention drifts to a BUTTON placed within easy reach. Folks may recognize it as a button which releases PAIN MEDS via IV. Hank slowly fumbles for it, weak as a kitten. He presses it once, twice, three times.

HANK

This thing doesn't do a damned thing.

MARIE

It's probably still on lock-out.

HANK

It's been an hour, right? I'm hurting here. I could use some meds.

MARIE

I'll go find somebody.
(exiting; to Gomez)
No more shop-talk.

GOMEZ

Sorry.

Chastened, Gomez tucks away his map. Walt surreptitiously watches it go. Is this news going to put the DEA back on his trail? He'd like to dig around a little, see what Gomez knows... only he doesn't dare do this in front of Skyler.

Hank shifts a bit, trying to get comfortable -- or something simulating comfort. His eyes return to Gomez.

HANK

I didn't see it coming.

GOMEZ

What? Damn right you did.

HANK

Nah, I didn't see shit. Day late and a dollar short, as usual. Only reason I'm even breathing is I got a warning call.

A surprised beat. Walt, who had been staring at the floor, listening, suddenly looks up. Skyler and Junior frown.

SKYLER

A "warning call?" What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HANK

One minute before they attacked me, somebody called my cell and told me to expect it.

(to Gomez)

Voice scrambler. Coulda been anybody. Marie's got my phone somewhere if you wanna run the incomings -- not that you're gonna learn anything worth knowing.

Skyler looks to Walt, who is every bit as troubled and bewildered as she is (which takes him a bit off the hook, as she may be wondering if HE made that mystery call).

This call business is news to Gomez. And he's stumped by it.

GOMEZ

I don't get it. Cartel hit? Who woulda called to warn you?

HANK

I dunno.

(painful spasm)

Ah, Jesus...

Gomez considers. Walt does, too. Skyler once again briefly studies Walt's troubled face. Hank cringes, hit by another wave of pain. He CLICK-CLICKS his meds button.

Off Walt, worried about Hank, and perplexed by the revelation of this "warning call"...

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Ten minutes later? An hour? His visit over, Walt climbs into his Aztek. He shuts his door, breathes heavy. He stewes behind the wheel, trying to make sense of what he's heard.

Before he can start his engine, the passenger door opens. It's Skyler. She slides into the seat, leaving the door ajar -- her visit will be brief. As she opens her mouth, Walt speaks preemptively...

WALT

Skyler, I had nothing to do --

She stops him with a gesture, a small shake of her head. Giving no indication of whether she believes him or not, she simply doesn't want to hear it.

She looks Walt squarely in the eyes. Then, quietly:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKYLER

Are we safe?

WALT

(a beat)

Yes.

Skyler reads him. Seems somewhat comforted by the answer. She considers him briefly. Then, just as quietly:

SKYLER

Are you safe?

WALT

(a longer beat)

Absolutely.

And yet... we can tell Walt doesn't really believe his own answer. He is simply willing it to be true.

Off Walt's uncertainty, Skyler studying him...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Jesse, elbows on his knees, slumped low in a folding chair. He stares off at nothing in particular. He may not be miserable... but he certainly ain't happy. Maybe his lips silently move to the beat of a song which we can't hear or recognize. It's one which plays only inside Jesse's head.

A VOICE we might remember breaks his reverie.

GROUP LEADER

Jesse? Jesse, what about you?

Jesse's attention shifts. CUT WIDE to reveal...

... A CIRCLE of about twenty people sitting in a meeting space. We're not back at the luxury rehab, but the attendees at this recovery group are mostly younger and more upscale than the folks we saw last season at Narcotics Anonymous.

The GROUP LEADER (who we first met in ep 301) watches Jesse with interest. This is the first we're seeing of it, but Jesse's been a regular at these meetings since he left rehab.

Jesse's a paradox -- he might make a fortune cooking meth but he's absolutely committed to staying sober. This meeting is Jesse's safe haven; he and the Group Leader are building a slender thread of trust.

GROUP LEADER

Face looks better. How's it all going? Anything you wanna tell us about?

JESSE

What, like, my interesting life?
Uh... One day pretty much bleeds into the next.

(a beat; *what the hell?*)

I been working a lot. I got a job.

GROUP LEADER

Job is good.

Jesse considers. He decides to be honest -- up to a point.

JESSE

It's, um, it's in a... laundromat.
It's totally corporate.

The Group Leader frowns wryly. Not making fun, yet:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GROUP LEADER

A corporate laundromat.

JESSE

It's like rigid, all kinds of red tape. My boss is a dick. The owner? Super-dick. I'm not worthy or whatever to meet him but I guess everybody's scared of the dude. The place is full of dead-eyed douchebags, the hours suck and nobody knows what's going on, so...

Jesse is surrounded by sympathetic faces, as everyone here has suffered through a crappy job. But they're probably not picturing an underground superlab.

GROUP LEADER

Sounds kind of Kafkaesque.

Jesse turns over the unfamiliar word.

JESSE

Yeah. Totally Kafkaesque.
(nodding)
Majorly.

He has 1.5 million reasons to be happy, but somehow fat stacks don't make up for being a cog in the machine. Off Jesse, stymied and hating it:

INT. HOSPITAL - HANK'S ROOM - MORNING

RACKING to bleary-eyed Hank, propped up in his hospital bed. Marie's hoping to cheer him up by taking inventory of the flower arrangements, cards and gift baskets that litter the room. .

Although she has a lot on her mind, Skyler stays gently supportive as she hands Marie the items one by one. Marie's not in denial, but she's keeping it light as the sisters put on their version of the Home Shopping Network for Hank.

Skyler hands over a large and colorful flower arrangement in a Southwestern-style vase. Marie checks the card.

MARIE

Ooo... From the US Attorney in Santa Fe! Very nice!

SKYLER

You've got all these nice tulips there, and good baby's breath...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

... This is chrysanthemum It looks like chrysanthemum. Look at these, Hank, aren't they beautiful?

HANK

(*who gives a fuck?*)
Beautiful

Hank does his best play along, but he's hurting. Skyler reaches for the next item, hefting an impressive BASKET.

SKYLER

Wow, look at the size of this basket. It's got so many goodies in it! Look. Chocolate-covered pretzels and, uh, cheese sticks and some fancy designer olives...

MARIE

You had me at cheese sticks. You're gonna have to fight me for those, Hank!

She says this as she opens the basket's CARD. Reading aloud:

MARIE

"Get well and best wishes from Ted Beneke and all the folks at Beneke Fabricators!"

Skyler's smile freezes in place. In the middle of this crisis, Ted Beneke is the last person Skyler wants to think about. The affair seems positively beside the point.

MARIE

Wow. He gives you all this time off, and now this? Get me a job there.

SKYLER

No. He's great.

MARIE

Boss hall of fame. I don't see anything here from Kleinman -- they're gonna have to get on the stick.

Skyler's saved from having to discuss Ted by a gentle KNOCK. DR. NOCERA (*No-see-ra*), Hank's spinal surgeon enters.

DR. NOCERA

How's everybody doing today?

(CONTINUED)

Marie tenses a bit as soon as she sees him. It's nothing personal, but doctors mean news about Hank's condition. And news can be good... or bad.

MARIE

Good! We're good. How are you?

DR. NOCERA

I'm very good. Hi, Hank. We're just gonna do a quick peripheral response, alright, see where we're at...

Marie and Skyler get out of Dr. Nocera's way as he steps to Hank's bedside. The sisters exchange a glance. What's on their minds is what Hank now says out loud.

HANK

Moment of truth.

DR. NOCERA

Yeah, I wouldn't call it that. Alright, let's just take a look here. Uh... alright.

The doctor pulls back the bedclothes, revealing Hank's feet in clean hospital socks. He gently presses the tip of a pen against the sole of Hank's foot. (*All this as per MED TECH!*)

DR. NOCERA

Alright. I want you to tell me if you can feel this.

Hank just shakes his head. He's staring at the ceiling, trying to pretend that none of this is happening.

All of Marie's good humor is gone. Suddenly she looks like a scared kid. Nocera tests different parts of Hank's foot.

DR. NOCERA

How about this?

Hank shakes his head. The doctor peels back the sock on Hank's left foot. His skin looks pale, like it's lacking circulation. Again, he pokes.

DR. NOCERA

Okay. How bout now?

Hank's eyes narrow as he concentrates. Good news?

HANK

Try that one again, wouldja?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. NOCERA

Right there?

HANK

(the doctor complies)

Yeah. Yeah, I feel, uh, a...
tingle.

DR. NOCERA

Okay, on a scale of one to ten?
Ten being your normal level of
feeling and one being no feeling at
all?

HANK

I dunno, uh. Four?

Nocera changes his angle.

DR. NOCERA

Okay. Four. Okay... And how
about there.

HANK

Yeah. Yeah. Uh... a six?

DR. NOCERA

Okay. Good. And, uh... here?

HANK

Yeah. Still there... but less. A
three.

DR. NOCERA

Okay. Alright. Good. Thank you
very much, Hank. Did good.

Hank dares to feel a little hopeful. Also, he is now bushed.
The doctor pulls the covers back over his feet and turns to
Marie and Skyler.

MARIE

So this is good news, right?

DR. NOCERA

Oh, yeah, definitely. It looks
like some nerve function is
returning.

SKYLER

Thank God.

Marie's already racing ahead to the next logical step.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Alright. So when do we get him walking again?

But the answer to that question goes beyond medical science. Off Dr. Nocera glancing to Hank, hesitating to answer...

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - MORNING - MINUTES LATER

Marie and Skyler have spent literally days in this room, waiting for news about Hank. Now the two women sit across from Dr. Nocera and a solicitous HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR.

DR. NOCERA

Marie, it's important that we manage our expectations. We're talking about months of very hard work, and even then the odds... they're not great.

MARIE

But you can't know for sure.

Nocera is trying to avoid raising false hopes.

DR. NOCERA

No.

SKYLER

When does he start physical therapy?

The Hospital Administrator speaks up. She thinks she's delivering good news to Marie.

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR

We've sent the paperwork to your insurance. It's high priority, we should have pre-authorization in the next few days. Certainly by early next week.

MARIE

"Next week?" Uh, no. That's not gonna do it. I've looked into this, and the sooner physical therapy begins, the better his chances are, and...

(to Dr. Nocera)

He needs daily sessions -- isn't that right?

(CONTINUED)

DR. NOCERA

Well...

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR

(before he can answer)

Actually, your plan's treatment program covers four sessions a week.

SKYLER

Actually -- she asked the doctor.

Both sisters turn to the man, who tries to remain politic.

DR. NOCERA

Um, plan-wise, four treatments a week is fairly typical. And the therapists in your network are mostly fine.

MARIE

Mostly fine, okay... Well there's a ringing endorsement.

(low and intent)

Look. If-if Hank had more physical therapy, with better therapists, wouldn't it be more likely he would walk?

DR. NOCERA

(a beat)

It's very hard to say, Marie. Is the health plan's way medically justifiable? Sure. Is it absolutely optimal..?

He doesn't finish the thought. Thus, Marie has her answer.

MARIE

You know? Screw it. I'm gonna make sure he gets what he needs, they can just reimburse me later.

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Schrader, I get your frustration -- really, I do. But my best advice is to stay in the network. Don't go out-of-pocket. Physical therapy is just the beginning. We're talking nursing care, modifications to your home, occupational therapy, medical equipment... It could run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

(CONTINUED)

Truly, this administrator is no villain. It's not the woman's fault, but she's really getting on Skyler's nerves.

SKYLER

So what? We're just supposed to compromise on his care?

HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR

Well, if you don't follow the insurance company's procedures, they may never pay you back. I've seen patients and their families go bankrupt waiting to be reimbursed.

But Marie has no interest in doing it the insurance company's way. She turns to Dr. Nocera.

MARIE

Who is the best physical therapist that you know?

DR. NOCERA

I can give you some names. But they're not likely to be on your plan.

MARIE

To hell with the plan.

Marie quietly rises, headed for Hank's room without a look back. She sounds strong, but Skyler knows she's brittle to the point of breaking. Off Skyler, remaining behind, wishing there were some way she could help...

INT. NAIL SALON - DAY

CLOSE ON FEMALE HANDS expertly massaging clear fluid onto male feet. This has to be a procedure on Hank's extremities, right? Not exactly.

Seems we're in a NAIL SALON, and these... are SAUL GOODMAN'S tootsies. He's zoned out in a pedicure chair with his pant legs rolled up. A pair of ASIAN BEAUTICIANS exfoliate his feet. A couple OTHERS linger by the counter -- one reading a newspaper and the other idly texting on her cell.

DING! The front door opens and Jesse enters, glancing around the compact, clean salon. It's slow at the moment, as Saul is the ONLY customer (we can assume he arranged it this way).

SAUL

Hey... there he is! Finally! I went ahead and started without you.

(CONTINUED)

The look on Jesse's face clearly asks *Why the hell am I here?* Nevertheless, hands in his pockets, he slouches toward Saul.

SAUL
Ladies, this is Jesse-San. He's in
for the full treatment.
(to Jesse)
Hey, kick off your shoes, lay
back... exfoliate.

JESSE
Maybe later.

Saul glances past Jesse toward the door, looking for Walt.

SAUL
So, where's the maestro? He out
parking the mini-van?

The mention of Walt just annoys Jesse.

JESSE
What I look like, his shadow? Who
cares where he's at? What am I
doing here?

Saul glances at his watch and makes an executive decision.

SAUL
Hmm. I was gonna have you two flip
a coin. Since the genius can't be
bothered...
(screw it)
Today's your lucky day. Look
around, kiddo, it's all yours.

JESSE
What? This?

SAUL
Yeah. You are now owner of this
fine establishment.

JESSE
For free?

Saul pretends outrage. The manicurists barely react as they tuck spacers between Saul's toes. They either don't speak English or more likely, they've seen Saul's act before.

SAUL
"Free?" Oh ladies, cover your
ears!
(back to Jesse)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAUL (CONT'D)

No, not "free." Look, hey. This is a squeaky-clean, highly profitable... at least potentially... local institution, looked upon with favor by the Chamber of Commerce, the Better Business Bureau.

(then)

At three hundred and twelve thousand dollars, it's a steal.

JESSE

Three hundred and twelve thousand?!

Saul glances down at the manicurists and lowers his voice.

SAUL

Don't you get it? On the outside it's a nail salon, right -- on the inside it's the best money laundry a growing boy could ask for.

Jesse squints at the lawyer, shakes his head and snorts -- *ridiculous*. He turns and heads for the door.

SAUL

Wait, wait, wait! Hey! Ladies, thank you, good job. Come back here.

The women drift away, busying themselves elsewhere -- texting and what-not. Saul pulls out his toe spacers and dries off.

SAUL

Sit. Come on, come on. Humor me for a second. Now... you know you need to launder your money, right? (Jesse stubbornly stares) Do you understand the basics of it? Placement? Layering? Integration?

Jesse lingers impatiently, ready to leave at any second.

JESSE

I ain't buying no damn nail salon, so just forget it!

SAUL

You wanna stay out of jail, dontcha? You wanna keep your money and your freedom? Because I've got three little letters for you: *I--R--S*. If they can get Capone, they can get you.

(CONTINUED)

Jesse is listening -- though for how long is anyone's guess. Saul decides that visual aids are in order. He clears the manicure table and grabs a bottle of pink nail polish.

SAUL
Hey look. Here's you, right?
Pink, Pinkman -- get it?

Saul dumps cotton balls out of a clear plastic container to represent money. He's trying a little too hard to keep his explanation on Jesse's level.

SAUL
'Kay. Here's your cash. You're out on the town, yeah, you're "partying hearty," you're knockin' boots with the chicky babes. And -- uhh -- Who's this?

He hovers the open side of the plastic box threateningly over the pink nail polish and the cotton balls.

SAUL
It's the Tax Man. And he's looking at you. Now what does he see? He sees a young fella with a big fancy house, unlimited cash supply and no job. Now what is the conclusion the Tax Man makes?

JESSE
(grudgingly)
I'm a drug dealer.

SAUL
Bzzt! Wrong! Million times worse -
- you're a tax cheat! What do they do?

THUD! Saul slams the box down, trapping the cotton balls.

SAUL
They take every penny! And you go in the can for felony tax evasion!

He stomps open a pedal-style trash can and swipes the nail polish right into it. He lets the lid close with a CLANG.

SAUL
Ouch! What was your mistake? You didn't launder your money. Now, you give me your money -- that's called placement. Hand me that little thing...

(CONTINUED)

Jesse hands over a transparent cylinder filled with Q-Tips. Saul adds the cotton balls to the cylinder, puts his hand over the top and SHAKES it like a cocktail, mixing them.

SAUL

This is the nail salon, right? I take your dirty money and I slip it into this salon's nice, clean cash flow. That's called layering.

In spite of himself, Jesse grows interested. But that doesn't mean he's buying it.

SAUL

Final step: integration. The revenues from the salon go to the owner -- that's you.

Saul spills out Q-Tips mixed with cotton balls. With pride:

SAUL

Your filthy drug money has been transformed into nice clean, taxable income brought to you by a savvy investment in a thriving business.

Logically it makes sense, but playing by the rules -- even criminal rules -- rubs Jesse the wrong way.

JESSE

So, you want me to buy this place so I can pay taxes? I'm a criminal, yo.

SAUL

Yeah, and if you want to stay a criminal and not become -- say, a convict -- then maybe you should grow up and listen to your lawyer.

Now Jesse sees Saul's angle. This is all a sales job.

JESSE

Right. So you can get your five percent.

SAUL

No, that's seventeen percent.

JESSE

I heard you say five -- you said it right in front of me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SAUL

Yeah, that was for your partner.
Privileges of seniority and all --
but for you it's the usual
seventeen percent, and... that's a
bargain.

But as soon as Saul starts talking about Walt, Jesse's
already on his way out. Saul calls after Jesse.

SAUL

Hey, what? Hey... Listen to it!
Come on! I'm talking about your
future here! Listen to reason!

Off Jesse, out the door and gone...

EXT. AZTEK - HILLTOP - DAY

We open on an abstraction of sky and land. It's the world
thrown WAY OUT OF FOCUS. Into this frame drives...

... WALT, slowly rolling to a stop into his own, IN-FOCUS
CLOSEUP. He sits here behind the wheel of his idling car,
staring off into the distance.

He glances down at a scratch-sheet of his own HANDWRITTEN
DIRECTIONS. Yeah, this is the place. He tucks it away, goes
back to staring. He stares for a long time.

Walt has been a mystery to us this Act. He wasn't with
Skyler and Marie, he wasn't with Jesse and Saul. We haven't
seen him since Act One, when Sky asked him if all was safe.

Now, one look at Walt's preoccupied, haunted eyes, and we
know he is thinking of nothing else but his family's safety.

An o.s. RUMBLING approaches, getting louder. We finally see
what Walt is looking at.

EXT. FACTORY FARM - HILLTOP - CONTINUOUS

A POLLOS HERMANOS TRUCK rumbles past us. It WIPES our frame
revealing the long gray buildings of GUS' FACTORY FARM spread
out beneath us at the bottom of the hill.

EXT. AZTEK - HILLTOP - CONTINUOUS

Walt stares down at the factory farm with an intensity we
haven't seen in a while. There's a touch of Heisenberg in
his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

Here's why Walt's adrenaline is surging: he now knows how dangerous Gus is. And he's going to meet him in the heart of his empire.

Girding his loins, Walt puts the Aztek into gear and rolls on out of frame, headed down the hill.

EXT. FACTORY FARM - LOADING DOCKS - DAY

As in the Teaser, LABORERS load the Pollos Hermanos trucks. A guy in a DARK JACKET watches the work.

Looking out of place, the Aztek putters past (a deliberate pace, not rushing). The dark figure turns to coolly note Walt's arrival -- it's VICTOR. No matter how casual Walt's entry to this place may appear, everything is choreographed.

INT. AZTEK - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE THROUGH the windshield as the Aztek heads for the OFFICE TRAILER. We're in the back seat over Walt's shoulder as he pulls the Aztek to a stop near Gus' Volvo wagon.

Walt idles, the office trailer visible straight ahead of us. Its door opens and Gus appears at the top of the stairs, looking down upon us pleasantly. He gives us a nod hello.

RACK to Walt's eyes in the rearview mirror, gazing up at Gus. Off Walt, shutting off his engine and climbing out:

INT. FACTORY FARM - OFFICE TRAILER - DAY

Walt takes a seat across from Gus. It turns out Walt is in the very chair Bolsa once occupied.

GUS
How is your brother-in-law?

WALT
He'll live.

GUS
Good. I'm glad.
(off his silence)
Walter, you seem troubled. How can I help you?

Carefully controlling his voice, Walt gets down to business. He's meticulously planned every word. He speaks them softly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

I asked to see you in order to... clear the air. There are, uh, some issues that could cause a-a misunderstanding between us, and I think it's in our best interests to just lay cards on the table.

Okay... interesting. Gus responds, noncommittal.

GUS

Well, that's the best way to do business.

WALT

My brother-in-law, moments before he was attacked. Someone called to warn him.

Gus says nothing. Walt continues, calmly reviewing facts.

WALT

I believe that same person was protecting me. Those two men, the assassins... I believe I was their prime target. But that somehow, they were steered away from me to my brother-in-law.

(a beat)

Because of this intervention, I am alive. And yet I think that this person was playing a much deeper game.

A consummate poker player, Gus simply listens. However, he's wondering why Walt is doing this. Why risk being so open?

WALT

He made that phone call because he wanted a shoot-out, not a silent assassination. In one stroke, he bloodied both sides, set the American and Mexican governments against the cartel and cut off the supply of methamphetamine to the Southwest. If this man had his own source of product -- on this side of the border -- he would have the market to himself. The rewards would be... enormous.

Gus sees where this is headed, but says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALT

We're both adults. I can't pretend
I don't know that person is you.

Walt says it so plainly, it doesn't sound like an accusation.

WALT

I want there to be no confusion.
I know I owe you my life. And more
than that, I respect the strategy.

(then)

In your position, I would have done
the same.

Shocking! This is Hank's life he's talking about! How can
Walt be so bloodless? Gus remains impassive. And yet, is
Gus impressed? Yes, we're starting to sense that.

WALT

One issue which troubles me. I
don't know what happens when our
three month contract ends.

GUS

What would you like to happen?

WALT

You know why I do this. I want
security for my family.

By security he means not just financial security -- but sure
knowledge of their safety.

GUS

Then you have it.

But what does that mean, exactly?

GUS

Three million for three months,
that was our agreement. Extended
annually, twelve million a year.

(then)

Call it fifteen. Open-ended.
Would that be agreeable?

Once Walt would have jumped at it. Now, he simply nods yes.

Walt has his 30 pieces of silver. By extending, he assures
his continuing usefulness to Gus. But at what cost?

EXT. LONESOME HIGHWAY - DAY

LOW ANGLE on flat highway, inches above the blacktop. The double lines converge into infinity. WOOSH! The Aztek rattles past as Walt heads for home.

INT. AZTEK - MOVING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Out of Gus' presence, Walt slowly drops his mask of detachment. He hates himself, hates what he's done -- he's cemented a deal with the devil. He pretended that what happened to Hank didn't wound him to his core.

The money was unexpected -- and just makes it worse. Walt is profoundly, utterly compromised. And what has he gained? Has he really protected his family?

We linger on his face as he's consumed by regret and self-loathing. The moment is punctuated by the irregular THUP-THUP of vehicles passing in the other lane. One thing's for sure, this anguished, torn man is anything but cold-blooded.

Walt's foot presses on the gas. The Aztek whines and shimmies as it picks up speed.

WHOOM! WHOOM! Cars rush past faster.

And then... gradually, very deliberately, he FLOORS IT.

The speedometer needle quivers. 70... 75... 86...

Now, as if resigned to his inevitable fate...

WALT CLOSES HIS EYES.

95... 98... 100...

THA-WOOM! THA-WHOOM! Cars and trucks FLICK PAST.

STAYING on WALT. We barely glimpse the world blurring past as he literally drives blind. The head-on collision has got to be coming. Any second. The only question is how many innocent lives he's going to take.

A protesting car horn DOPPLERS past. Tires SCREECH.

The Aztek sounds like it's going to shake itself apart. It's rattling like a metal garbage can dragged over cobblestones.

For a strange moment Walt looks almost... serene.

Finally, self-preservation compels Walt to OPEN HIS EYES.

(CONTINUED)

Walt's POV from behind the wheel -- he's in the WRONG LANE.
A TRUCK is headed his way, AIRHORN blasting -- WAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

Walt's reflexes snap back to life. He JERKS the wheel.

EXT. LONESOME HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Aztek BURNS RUBBER and SWERVES across the blacktop onto the shoulder. The back end FISHTAILS on the dirt.

Nearly tipping over, the Aztek SHUDDERS to a stop.

INT. AZTEK - CONTINUOUS

A lazy cloud of DUST rises. As it drifts past him, Walt just sits here, getting his breathing under control. For some reason, today's not the day to die.

The surge of adrenaline has brought Walt back into the moment. Death will just have to wait.

And now he's back to being Walter White. Just like his Drivers' Ed instructor taught him decades ago, Walt turns on his blinkers. Hands on the wheel at ten and two, Walt checks his mirrors and pulls back on the highway.

EXT. LONESOME HIGHWAY - DAY

HIGH ANGLE. The Aztek drives away from us, growing tiny in the distance. Walt's crazy maneuver has left a swirl of twisting SKID MARKS on the asphalt. Off this...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse sits in another session as the Group Leader counsels. Some of the same folks from before are here (new wardrobe), but also there are several new faces.

GROUP LEADER

Part of the reason we talk about what gets us riled up in our daily lives is to help each other put a finger on what our relapse triggers might be. Head off our disease before it comes back.

(shrug)

So... Anyone? Free license to bitch and moan. How often d'you get that?

Timidity reigns. No takers.

GROUP LEADER

Jesse. Last time, you seemed pretty down about your job at the Laundromat.

Jesse's not in a big mood to talk. He shrugs -- *whatever*.

GROUP LEADER

Lemme ask you something. If you had the chance to do anything you wanted -- what would you do?

JESSE

(goes without saying)

Make more green, man. A lot more.

GROUP LEADER

Forget about money. Assume you have all you want.

Jesse glances around. Folks silently wait for him to answer. Caving to peer pressure, Jesse reconsiders.

JESSE

Um... I dunno.

(searching)

I-I guess I would... make something?

GROUP LEADER

Like what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Like meth is what we're thinking. But then again, Jesse seems to be seriously digging for an answer.

JESSE

Don't think it matters, but, uh...

(shrugs)

... Work with my hands. I guess.

GROUP LEADER

Building things? Like carpentry or bricklaying or something?

Jesse is remembering now.

JESSE

I took this, um, vo-tech class in high school. Woodworking. I took lots of vo-tech classes, 'cause it was just a big jerk-off. But this one time I had this teacher name of, ah... Mr., uh... Mr. Pike.

Hmm. Is Jesse really talking about Mr. White? Actually, no.

JESSE

I guess he was like a Marine or somethin', before he got old. He was hard of hearing. My, uh... my project for his class was to make this, um, wooden box. Like a small... um... just, like...

(searching)

... Like a box. You know, to put stuff in. So I w-wanted to get the thing done as fast as possible.

Um, I figured I could cut classes for the rest of the semester and he couldn't flunk me, so long as I, you know, made the thing. So, I finished it in a coupla days. It looked pretty lame, but it worked, you know, for putting stuff in and whatnot.

(beat)

So, when I, uh, showed it to Mr. Pike for my grade, ah... he looked at it and said "Is that the best you can do?" At first I thought to myself -- *Hell yeah, bitch, now give me a D and shut up so I can go blaze one with my boys.*

A couple of the guys chuckle. Jesse grins around at them, but then lets his smile fade. He keeps going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JESSE

I dunno. Maybe it was the way he said it. But... Like he wasn't exactly sayin' it sucked -- he was just askin' me honestly, *Is that all you got?* And... for some reason, I thought to myself *Yeah, man... I can do better.*

Jesse looks around at the circle. Folks are engaged by his story, which surprises him a bit... and keeps him going.

JESSE

So I started from scratch and made another. Then another. And by the end of the semester -- by, like, box number five? I had built this thing...

(picturing it; proud)

You shoulda seen it. It was insane! I built it outta Peruvian Walnut with inlaid Zebrawood. It was fitted with pegs -- no screws. I sanded it for days, until it was smooth as glass. Then I rubbed all the wood with tung oil, so it was all rich and dark. It even *smelled* good. You know, you'd put your nose in it and breathed in, it was... it was perfect.

Jesse trails off, just shaking his head -- unable to find words to describe how proud he felt. We PAN across the others, all of them inspired by his story. A beat.

GROUP LEADER

What happened to the box?

JESSE

(taken off-guard)

I, um... I gave it to my Mom.

The Group Leader gives a small nod of approval, then...

GROUP LEADER

Nice. You know what I'm gonna say, don't you? It's never too late. They have art co-ops that offer classes, an adult extension program at the University --

JESSE

(cuts him off)

I didn't give the box to my Mom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JESSE (CONT'D)

(then)

I traded it for an ounce of weed.

Ow. But no judgements here -- at least not from the group. Only from Jesse, who is hating himself. Off his sad and abrupt confession, Jesse staring down at the floor...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON MARIE as she takes a sip of white wine. She leans against the counter, standing across from Skyler. Exhausted, the sisters have cracked a cheap bottle, hoping to unwind after their long day of arguing with hospital people.

MARIE

He's a hero! You don't deny coverage to a hero!

SKYLER

They'll say they're not denying coverage.

(before Marie can argue)

No-no. I'm agreeing with you. But I went through all this with Walt. You'll burn through your savings, and then what?

MARIE

But you two managed, right? You said yourself that Elliot and Gretchen's money didn't cover everything.

Skyler isn't about to reveal Walt's unorthodox fundraising. Doesn't matter -- Marie is too distracted to dig deeper.

MARIE

Jesus. I gotta get back.

SKYLER

What? No! No-no-no, you should rest. Look. Why don't you go in and take a long bath? I put fresh sheets on the bed.

MARIE

I wanna be there in case he wakes up.

SKYLER

With all they're giving him, he'll sleep till morning.

(CONTINUED)

Marie knows Skyler is right. But before she can reply, the DOORBELL rings.

Skyler reacts -- *who's that?* She sets down her wine and moves to the door. Marie stays put.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Skyler opens the front door, revealing... TED BENEKE.

TED

Hey, Sky.

Ohhhh, crap. Ted has never visited Skyler at home before, and she's surprised. She's also dismayed, afraid that Marie will suspect their affair.

SKYLER

Hey! Wh... what are you doing here?

Not the warmest of receptions. Ted was already a bit nervous about trying this -- he's not shocked by her reaction. Still, onward and upward. Putting an innocent face on it:

TED

Well, I just thought I'd stop by to see how you're holding up. Is this a bad time, or..?

Skyler is about to answer "yes" when Marie, who now wanders out from the kitchen, steps into view behind her.

MARIE

Hi.

TED

Hi.

Ted glances past Skyler at Marie. He smiles, gives a nod, as Skyler turns to her sister, playing it cool.

SKYLER

Um, Marie, this is Ted. My boss.

MARIE

Oh, you're Ted! I've heard so much about you. Thank you for your gift basket. That was very thoughtful.

SKYLER

It was. It was really nice. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

Cheese sticks.

SKYLER

-- cheese sticks... very good.

Marie, nodding, gives a big thumbs-up. Ted probably doesn't follow this completely, but he plays along well.

TED

Well, you're welcome.

(forcing a smile)

You know, we care about Skyler so much that naturally, that extends to the whole family.

Marie smiles -- *that's so sweet!* She glances at Skyler.

MARIE

(to Ted; really to Sky)

Are you coming in?

SKYLER

(recovering)

Of yeah. You should. I'm sorry.
Come on in, Ted.

TED

Thanks. Okay...

Skyler steps aside for him, closing the door behind him. Skyler follows Marie and Ted into the living room.

MARIE

We were just having some wine.
Would you like a glass?

TED

No, no, thanks. I, um... I'm just on my way home. I just thought I'd, um...

Marie nods. Reads Skyler's subtle discomfort. Too tired to be nosy, she decides to excuse herself.

MARIE

You know what, I'm really beat. I think I'm gonna take that bath.

(then)

It was nice to meet you, Ted. And thank you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TED

Nice to meet you too, Marie.
Please give my best wishes to your
husband.

MARIE

I will.

Marie nods, smiles -- will do. With a last subtle glance at
Skyler, she disappears down the hall.

Skyler, no less nervous about having her sister elsewhere in
the house, just wants Ted to leave. She keeps her voice low.

SKYLER

Thanks for stopping by. But,
it's... actually, not the best time
for a visit. So...

TED

Can we just talk for a minute? I
know you need to be with your
family, but, uh, I haven't heard
from you in days. I left messages.

SKYLER

I'm so sorry, you gave me and that
time off and I really should have --

TED

-- That's not my point. I-I care
about you, that's all.

SKYLER

Ted, it's just... this whole thing
with Hank has been one non-stop
horror show, you know? So...

TED

(nods)

Well, I just want you to know that
I'm here for you.

SKYLER

Thank you.
(a pregnant pause; then)
But I really do need you to...

... *Leave. As in now.* Ted hesitates, not wanting to.
Furthermore, he doesn't get why he even needs to. Meanwhile,
Skyler steps a few feet over to glance down the hall and
check if Marie is eavesdropping (no sign of it). That rubs
Ted a little wrong, as well.

(CONTINUED)

TED

Okay...

SKYLER

Okay.

TED

Skyler, I gotta say, your sister
seeing me here... I mean...
(*hell, out with it!*)
So what? I'm divorced, you're
divorced. So what?

In fact, Skyler has not filed her divorce papers. But she
doesn't want to get into that with him.

SKYLER

Let's talk about this later, Ted,
okay?

TED

(a tad louder, but not
meaning to be)
Is there some need for secrecy I'm
not getting? 'Cause --

SKYLER

Later, Ted. Not now.

TED

Skyler. Just tell me...

SKYLER

(frustrated; snaps)
You really wanna do this now?
Are you really gonna make me do
this right now?

Ouch. Ted gets it. We do, too. She's talking about
breaking up with him. He's hurt. And Skyler deeply regrets
having let him know in this manner. But the damage is done.

TED

Wow. Yeah, you're right. Bad idea
to come here.

Ted turns, takes a step or two toward the door before Skyler
makes a mild attempt to mend fences.

SKYLER

Ted, I'm... I'll see you in a day
or two? Back at the office?

(CONTINUED)

TED

Take as much time as you want.

Ted exits, knowing it's the end of the affair. Off Skyler quietly shutting the door behind him, then standing here... wondering why everything in her life has to be so fucked-up and painful and difficult...

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Five or six CUSTOMERS. A UNIFORMED WORKER mans the cash register, TWO OTHERS assemble sandwiches. Off all this, we find... Jesse, BADGER, and SKINNY PETE. Our boys sit at a table, just now unwrapping their subs.

Bwah-hah! Skinny Pete laughs as he and Badger bump fists. Jesse, the "grown-up" of the group, finds this only mildly amusing. While the guys eat...

BADGER

Can't believe you had to crush the RV. Musta been like... depressing.

SKINNY PETE

For real. That's a stone loss.

JESSE

No one misses it more than me.

Jesse stares out the window, nostalgic for the good old days.

JESSE

Free to cook anytime, anywhere.
No quotas. No one to answer to.

As he keeps thinking about it, his mood darkens. He pauses eating, sets down his sub. With quiet frustration:

JESSE

What's the point of being an outlaw when you got responsibilities?

BADGER

Darth Vader had responsibilities. He was responsible for the Death Star.

SKINNY PETE

True that. Two of them bitches.

BADGER

(off Jesse's annoyed look)
Just saying. Devil's advocate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Idiots. Jesse continues on with his thought.

JESSE

I gotta pay taxes now? What the hell's up with that?! That's messed up, yo. That's Kafkaesque.

Badger and Skinny Pete don't know this word any better than Jesse does -- but damn, it sounds good. They both nod.

SKINNY PETE

Church.

BADGER

Right.

Jesse simmers a beat. Until finally -- *fuck it.*

JESSE

Let's kick it back into gear. Alright? Let's start slingin' again.

Skinny Pete and Badger study Jesse. Is he for real? Jesse just stares back at them. Dead serious. Badger and Skinny Pete share a sidelong glance. Then...

SKINNY PETE

Boo-yah, let's do it! Life's too short -- that's what I say!

BADGER

Hells yeah, bitches! We don't need no RV. Alls we need is a-a bicycle, some Drano, soda bottles --

JESSE

Nah, nah, nah... no shake 'n bake. Where's your self-respect? Come on.

SKINNY PETE

Yo, maybe it ain't top-shelf, but we could at least move it. Still kinda dry out there -- it'll sell on the street.

JESSE

Who says we sell on the street? Maybe I know a whole new market.
(then)
Maybe alls we need is the meth.

And maybe he knows just where to get it. Off scheming Jesse:

INT. SUPERLAB - DAY

TIGHT ON a hand clutching a BRIGHT BLUE CLOTH, scrubbing intently at one of the superlab's stainless steel surfaces.

The hand moves aside, revealing WALT'S REFLECTION. The field of steel is gleaming and spotless, except for a single, small stain of residue. Like a Hindu bindi, right between Walt's eyes. But black.

We hold on the reflection as Walt stares at the spot. But it's as if he's looking through it -- not seeing it for what it is. His mind is somewhere else. Until he looks over at:

JESSE. Wearing his iPod. The music is cranked, thinly audible through his headphones. He weighs the FOURTH of FIVE full and identical RUBBERMAIDS. Another cook is complete.

We HOLD on Walt as he studies Jesse. Worried. Guilty. Should he tell him what he now knows for certain -- that Gus is a murderous criminal, likely as dangerous as Tuco ever was? That Walt just upped their deal -- a move calculated to keep his own family secure, without regard to Jesse?

As Walt silently debates whether to spill his guts, Jesse hoists the FIFTH and FINAL RUBBERMAID onto the scale. All the while, bobbing his head to the beat.

Walt snaps out of it. Back to work. He grabs his clipboard.

WALT

What's the yield? Hey.

Jesse pulls the headphones out of his ears -- *huh?* Walt gestures at the scale.

WALT

The yield. Come on.

Jesse glances down at the DIGITAL READOUT (remember, as established in the Teaser, Walt does not see it from where he stands). Jesse's POV: "202.1."

JESSE

Two-oh-one point eight.

Hold up! Jesse is calling it one-third pound under the actual weight! Why would he do that? We think we know.

Off this revelation that smooth Jesse is planning to STEAL product from brilliant and scary GUS, we...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse is slouched in his usual seat, but tonight something's different about him. His eyes are alive and watchful, as if he's waiting for something. The meeting has just started and the Group Leader spots a few newcomers.

GROUP LEADER

I see a couple of new faces.
Anybody wanna introduce themselves?

A chair CREAK. A faint COUGH. Nobody wants to go first.

GROUP LEADER

Don't all speak at once.

In the shadows, a tentative hand rises. The Group Leader nods. A big, shaggy guy speaks up.

BADGER

So my name's Brandon?

Huh? What the hell is Badger doing in Jesse's sanctuary?

GROUP LEADER

Okay, Brandon. You want to tell us something about yourself?

Badger seems totally serious, sincere -- and tortured.

BADGER

Well, why I'm here... it's, uh,
it's just one thing. It's meth.
It's bad. I thought I had it
kicked a couple times, you know?
But then... Jesus. This... new...
version of it hit the streets, and
uh...

(eyes lowered)

Wow.

A new voice speaks from another part of the circle.

SKINNY PETE

Not that blue stuff?

Heads turn in his direction and Skinny Pete glances around, embarrassed. *Did I just say that out loud?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKINNY PETE

(raising it now)

Oh, sorry. I didn't raise my hand.

GROUP LEADER

No, go ahead. This is what we do.

Badger nods, addressing Skinny like he's never laid eyes on him in his life. By the way, for a couple of knuckleheads? These two are doing a sober, remorseful, excellent job.

Jesse's good, too. He listens with the same amount of polite interest that everyone else exhibits.

BADGER

Yeah, exactly -- the blue stuff.
You had it, too?

SKINNY PETE

Yeah, bro -- and I wish I never
even heard of it. It was like
lighting my whole head on fire.

Badger and Skinny Pete are more subdued than we've ever seen them before -- but we get it. Jesse has the guys pretending to be strangers to one other. They're playing the crowd like three-card monte scammers.

BADGER

Yeah, that stuff'll burn you down.
Only reason I have a hope in hell
is cause it's long gone.

SKINNY PETE

That's the shame of it.

Badger stares at Pete with real fear in his eyes.

BADGER

Nah, nah man. Don't tell me that.

SKINNY PETE

(cringing; *I'm so sorry!*)

I hear it's back in town. Stay
strong, brother. Stay strong.

Jesse casually scans the group. Jesse's POV -- PANNING the faces of recovering addicts. There are nods of sympathy and understanding, but also... *what's this?*

There's faint INTEREST on a few of these faces. The blue meth talk hits some of these folks where they live.

(CONTINUED)

Jesse notes his potential customers with lazy satisfaction. Rehab saved his life -- yet now he's here to sell meth to people struggling with addiction. Awful. Has Jesse truly become the "bad guy," like he once told us? Off him...

INT. HOSPITAL - HANK'S ROOM - DAY

Hank sleeps, deathly pale. His jagged breathing and the hum of monitors are our only sounds. ADJUST to reveal...

... Walt standing alone in b.g., watching his brother-in-law's troubled sleep with haunted eyes. Walt's been here for the better part of an hour, tormented by the knowledge that he's responsible for Hank being in this bed.

We linger on this sad tableau. Now Marie's voice PRELAPS:

MARIE (V.O.)
I swear to God, I'll do it. I will
go to the press.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

As Marie sits venting, Walt listens with concern. He may be weighed down by guilt and the impossibility of his situation, but right now he's truly just a worried brother-in-law.

Skyler sits at Marie's side, preoccupied. She leafs through a sheaf of Marie's hospital paperwork -- the latest insurance outrage, apparently (it's what currently upsets Marie).

MARIE
I will go to 48 Hours, I will go to Nightline -- I don't know if there is a Nightline anymore? It doesn't matter -- they will all take it and they will run with it. Because he's a hero. And he's not going to be in a wheelchair at 43.

SKYLER
Jesus.

WALT
I'm sorry, Marie -- I'm sure Skyler's already told you this -- but if there's ever anything you need... anything at all...

MARIE
It's good to have you here. Both of you.

(CONTINUED)

Marie shoots just a hint of a glance to Skyler. She knows something's up between Skyler and Ted. Marie doesn't have the bandwidth to get into a fight over it, but she believes one thing: Walt belongs in the family.

WALT

I just wish there was something more that we could do.

Marie smiles faintly, expecting nothing. Silence as they sit here together. What more can one say at times like these?

Skyler studies Walt closely a moment. She's been thinking long and hard. Chewing something over. And now:

Skyler has been considering this problem for days, trying to come up with another solution -- but no matter how she looks at it, she only sees the one option. Therefore, taking the risk of a lifetime...

SKYLER

Walt? We can always pay their bills.

Walt blinks, confused. Marie frowns, breaking a smile and lifting an eyebrow. It's unlike her sister to talk nonsense.

MARIE

Please. It's tens of thousands of dollars --

SKYLER

-- We have the money. More than enough.

(then)

Walt earned it.

Marie glances over at Walt, but he's blank with confusion -- and PANIC. *What is Skyler doing!?*

Suddenly Walt knows with terrible certainty where this is headed -- Skyler is about to tell Marie everything. Walt steps over to sit next to her, on her opposite side.

WALT

Skyler --

SKYLER

I think Marie should know the truth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALT

(a hand on her arm now)
Skyler, I really don't think this
is a good idea. I-I think that --

SKYLER

(to Marie; coolly, simply)
He earned it gambling.

Gambling? Now Walt's simply mystified. Marie glances from one to the other -- hooked and wanting to hear more.

SKYLER

Walt and I, uh, we've had our
problems lately. You know that.
And, uh... what it came down to,
really, was money. Pure and
simple.

Skyler glances at Walt with... is that a touch of empathy?

SKYLER

When Walt was diagnosed -- it, um,
it changed him. Looking back, I
don't think I ever really
understood what it was that he was
going through. It was more than
facing death. It was knowing that
he was going to leave behind...
nothing. And so that's how this
all started. For better or worse,
he wanted to provide.

(then)

And so he paid his medical bills
the only way he knew how.

Walt's stunned: *this is exactly how he would have explained
it himself.* Marie can't help asking the obvious question.

MARIE

I thought that Elliot and Gretchen
paid for your treatment.

SKYLER

Yeah, thought so, too. The truth
is, he never took their money --
not a dime. He was too proud to
take what he considered to be
charity.

(to Walt)

Isn't that right?

Walt manages a numb nod. However, Skyler isn't coming down
hard on him here -- she's simply telling a story.

(CONTINUED)

In fact, she seems through with anger. Can she have really made her peace with Walt? At the moment, it kinda looks like it.

SKYLER

So, he put his mind to it, and uh... well, you know how Walt is, he's—he's a problem solver. And he read books and he did a whole bunch of research... and he came up with this system.

MARIE

A system.

SKYLER

A system for counting cards in Blackjack.

MARIE

(a frowning beat)

Wha-wha-whaddya mean? Like Rain Man?

Walt doesn't meet Marie's questioning glance. Now he knows Skyler isn't going to reveal his meth business -- but where can she be going with this?

SKYLER

Well... no... I don't pretend to understand, you know, all the details, but he was convinced that if he put enough money into it, he'd have a, um... uh --

(to Walt)

God... What is it? A "statistical edge?"

Walt takes a second to catch up with her. Barely audible:

WALT

Yes. Statistical... um.

SKYLER

So he, every spare minute, Walt was at some card table somewhere. At first he went to casinos, but then he realized that...

VOICES approach nearby, a pair of NURSES. Skyler pauses. When they've passed by, she continues, her voice lower. Walt and Marie lean forward, they don't want to miss a word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SKYLER

...he realized that the casinos report your winnings to the IRS. And if it gets reported, your family might find out, and if you do not want your family to find out... then you find another place to gamble. Like an illegal, backroom game. You remember all those "long walks" that Walt used to take? All that time he used spend away from home?

(to Walt, ruefully)

I guess for a couple months there you were sort of leading a double life, weren't you?

Walt just nods, eyes slowly lowering in shame.

For Marie all the pieces of the puzzle are falling into place. This is what ruined Walt and Skyler's marriage. This is what Skyler hid from her for so long. And furthermore:

MARIE

Oh, my God.

(*it can't be!*)

Oh my God, your-your-your "fugue state?" Was that, some sort of cover..?

The very mention of the fugue state seems to exhaust Skyler. She continues in quiet tones of sadness, loss and -- *could it be?* -- forgiveness.

SKYLER

-- No, no he did not fake that, Marie. The night that Walt disappeared? He lost fourteen thousand dollars. It was his pension fund, our savings. Basically every last dime we had to our name. Gone.

Marie stares open-mouthed at Walt -- whose own mind is racing. He's astounded by the complexity, the inventiveness of Skyler's lie. But he's also trying to understand where the lie ends and the truth begins.

SKYLER

He couldn't live with it. He was suicidal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SKYLER (CONT'D)

But you have to understand -- that as soon as he got out of the hospital, he went right back to gambling. I mean, that's how deep this went.

MARIE

How could you do that to her, Walt?

Marie says this quietly, accusingly... but of course Walt has no answer for her. Right now Skyler is the one with all the answers, and Walt is simply along for the ride.

SKYLER

Anyway. This system of his -- he finally got it to work.

In the middle of this emotional roller coaster ride, Walt is beginning to nurse a faint flicker of hope. After all, Skyler's proposing to use his drug money for the family -- and that's a first step towards accepting what he's done.

SKYLER

So all this is to say... we have the money.

(a meaningful look to him)

No more gambling -- but we have the money.

MARIE

(can't help but ask)

How much money..?

SKYLER

Walt..?

WALT

Ah. Well, uh...

(considers; *fuck it*)

It's in the seven figures.

MARIE

MARIE

Holy Mary, mother of God.

WALT

(off both girls' surprise)

What can I say? I did very well.

And now Skyler gets back to the point of all this.

(CONTINUED)

SKYLER

Marie, you will take our money.
Use it to take care of Hank.

Marie is still trying to assimilate all that she's heard.
It's a gigantic shift in perception. Walt did this? Good
old reliable, cancer-saint Walt?

Hearing this story, she's got every reason to be angry at
him... *but hell, I guess he meant well, after all.*

Sky looks to Walt. Taking her cue, he makes an earnest plea.

WALT

Please, Marie. Let us help.

Suddenly Walt and Skyler are working together towards a
common goal. How long has it been since we've seen that?

TIME CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Marie, Walt, and Skyler stand... moments later.

MARIE

Does Walter, Jr. know about this?

SKYLER

Absolutely not, and I need to keep
it that way.

(then)

And Hank, okay? Hank's got enough
on his mind, right now. So, can we
just please keep this between us?

Walt can't help but stare at Skyler with admiration: *my God,
she's thought of everything!* Marie nods, agreeing with Sky.

MARIE

(overwhelmed)

Yeah. Yeah, I just -- I need to...

Skyler nods: *it's okay.* Marie's bound to have more
questions -- and Skyler will answer them all, in detail.
Whatever it takes to persuade Marie to accept the money.

SKYLER

Yeah, okay. We'll talk about it
later.

Marie exits, leaving Walt and Skyler by themselves. It takes
him a moment to even form the words, but finally:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALT

How... did you come up with that?
Whe-where... Where... did you
possibly..?

SKYLER

(staring at him; a beat)
I learned from the best.

She means Liar Walt, of course. Walt doesn't quite know how to take this. It doesn't exactly sound like a compliment.

Skyler leans in close and lowers her voice.

SKYLER

Somehow, something tells me that
Hank is here because of you. And
I'm not forgetting that.

Damn right they'll use the money for Hank's recovery. As far as Skyler's concerned, that's the only use for this blood money. She pierces him with a knowing glance and follows Marie without looking back.

Forgiveness and understanding are still distant hopes.

NEW ANGLE -- looking into the waiting room from up the hall. Walt is framed in the doorway, watching Skyler disappear. Quietly devastated.

END EPISODE