

Backup

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BACKUP

INT. MEEKER INSTITUTE EAST WING WARD -- NIGHT

An aging yet imposing physician, DR. ALBERT SAMUALS, strides purposely through a stark hospital ward with a half dozen beds. Each bed contains a SLEEPING BOY, about twelve years old. He pauses at the second bed.

This boy tosses in his bed, but his eyes remain tightly closed. Dr. Samuals looks into a camera mounted in the ceiling.

DR. SAMUALS

Fix it.

An attendant, HAL, appears and restrains the boy while administering an injection. Dr. Samuals nods and continues down the row. He pauses for a moment at each bed and stares pensively at the unconscious boys, one after another.

As he nears the last bed, the door opens at the end of the room as another attendant, CARL, wheels in another YOUNG BOY. The boy jerks in uncontrolled spasms.

Dr. Samuals continues his measured pace, but his eyes remain firmly affixed on the boy. The boy's eyes open for one moment and lock on those of Dr. Samuals. The boy struggles to rise up on one elbow.

YOUNG BOY

Help us.

The boy freezes and then goes limp. Hal runs past Dr. Samuals and towards the boy as Carl checks his pulse.

CARL

Nothing.

Carl starts to perform CPR but Dr. Samuals grabs his arm to stop him.

DR. SAMUALS

Remove him.

Carl looks at Dr. Samuals in horror.

CARL

He's not dead.

DR. SAMUALS

He was dead the moment his head hit the bottom of that swimming pool. It was a mistake to put him in this program.

CARL
You're calling them mistakes?

Dr. Samuals maneuvers around Carl and doesn't even look up.

DR. SAMUALS
Jell-O, Velcro, Post-it notes. All
mistakes at one time.

INT. DR. PACKARD'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

A frail, elderly physician, DR. PACKARD taps rather briskly at a touch screen computer monitor. Dr. Samuals comes into the office without knocking and plops down in the chair across from Dr. Packard.

DR. SAMUALS
We're running out of time.

Dr. Packard finishes typing and then turns to face Dr. Samuals. Dr. Samuals pushes a file folder over to Dr. Packard.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)
Read.

Dr. Packard flips through some test results.

DR. PACKARD
Start radiation again. Buy yourself
six more months.

Dr. Samuals shakes his head.

DR. SAMUALS
We need a better receptor. Those
boys have too much damage for the
DMT.

Dr. Packard pushes the file back to Dr. Samuals.

DR. PACKARD
You're using the Beckman backup?

DR. SAMUALS
It's not the input, it's these damaged
kids.

Dr. Packard lifts up a pitcher of water and fills a glass. He doesn't stop, even after the glass is full.

Dr. Packard sets the pitcher down and pulls a few tissues from the box and hands them to Dr. Samuals who obediently wipes up the water.

DR. PACKARD
 We're a hospital, not a grocery store.
 Get the DMT to work on them, or do
 your shopping somewhere else.

Dr. Samuals slowly gets up and tosses the tissue towards the wastebasket and misses. Ignoring the trash, he turns towards the door and is momentarily dizzy. He steadies himself and continues out the door.

INT. TOWN CAR -- NIGHT

NICOLE FRY, startles awake at the CRACKLING of her radio. With more makeup and sleep, she could pass for twenty-something. Unfortunately the black uniform and tired eyes disclose all of her thirty-four years.

BIG BERTHA
 (from the radio)
 Got room for Jell-O, Sue-O?

Nicole fumbles with the radio, but manages to get it switched to speaker phone. She pats the side of her face to wake-up.

NICOLE
 Time?

Nicole rubs her eyes and squints at the tiny digital clock on the dashboard.

BIG BERTHA
 (o.s.)
 Almost noon in France.

Nicole finally zones in on the digital numbers on the clock.

NICOLE
 I have to get home. Give it to Sam.

BIG BERTHA
 (o.s.)
 Weird guy doesn't like Sam.

Nicole starts the car.

NICOLE
 You owe me -- Big Bertha.

BIG BERTHA
 (o.s. singing)
 I owe, I owe, so it's off to work I
 go...

Nicole clicks off the radio before she endures any more of the off-key, painful song.

EXT. MEDICAL INSTITUTE EAST WING -- NIGHT

Dr. Samuals pulls open the town car door before Nicole has brought the car to a stop.

INT. TOWN CAR -- NIGHT

Nicole clicks on the light and hands a clipboard back to Dr. Samuals.

NICOLE

Rough day in the sandbox, Doc?

Dr. Samuals GROANS as he scribbles on the clipboard and tosses it back on the seat next to Nicole. He flicks off the light.

DR. SAMUALS

Drive.

Dr. Samuals leans back, takes two gold balls out of his pocket and starts rolling them around in one hand.

INT. NICOLE'S FRONT ROOM -- NIGHT

Nicole tiptoes into a room that is dark except for the glow of the computer screen that reflects a soft light on the face of MATTHEW FRY, about ten years old. He is asleep on the keyboard.

Nicole glances over at RITA NELSON, who could be anyone's grandmother, asleep in a big stuffed chair. She wears a worn cotton dress that looks as comfortable as the old chair.

Nicole goes over to Matthew stares down at him for a few moments. She reaches down, scoops him into her arms, and tries to pick him up. He's too heavy.

She shakes his shoulders.

NICOLE

Time for bed, Tiger.

Matthew MOANS, but lets Nicole guide him to the stairs where he pulls himself up step-by-step.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Nicole shuffles into the kitchen and SIGHS when she spots the mess -- an empty cake mix box, a frosting bowl and dirty dishes in the sink.

She opens the refrigerator and the look of exhaustion switches to relief when she spots the birthday cake with a perfectly scripted "Happy Birthday Matthew."

She sneaks a tiny bit of icing with her finger.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM -- DAY

This is the bedroom of a young boy in transition towards manhood. On the desk there is a computer, but toy soldiers stage a battle across the keyboard. Atop a tower of Legos is a CD of the popular heavy metal band, Terror Waves.

Suddenly, the computer comes alive. A streaming video starts to play a scene from a Sumo wrestling match. The larger Sumo wrestler gallantly pushes his smaller opponent out of the ring and presses a pudgy finger into his chest.

WRESTLER #1
 (from the computer)
 Time to wake up Matthew. Time to
 wake up Matthew. Time to wake up...

Matthew stirs under a mass of NFL sheets, still in his clothes from last night. Daylight peeks through the room-darkening shades.

WRESTLER #2
 (from the computer)
 Time to wake up Matthew. Time to
 wake up Matthew. Time...

Matthew tosses a nerf football deftly at the keyboard and the screen goes blank. He ducks under the covers and turns towards the wall. All is quiet again until we hear a slight SNIFF.

The mound of covers opens again and Matthew sits up. He SNIFFS the air again. He looks under the bed. Nothing. He crawls to the end of the bed. Nothing. With one quick motion he hoists himself halfway up the ladder to the top bunk.

Nicole holds out a tray with a mound of pancakes for Matthew to see.

MATTHEW
 Birthday rules?

NICOLE
 Banana pancakes with macadamia nut
 syrup.

MATTHEW
 Whipped creme too?

NICOLE
 Whipped creme it is.

Nicole brings out a can of whipped creme from behind her back and crowns the mountain of pancakes. She pauses for a moment and dots the end of Matthew's nose.

Matthew wrestles the can away from her in a surprising demonstration of strength.

MATTHEW
Birthday rules, right?

Nicole covers her face in preparation for the worst. The phone RINGS. Nicole makes a quick leap down from the top bunk.

NICOLE
Saved by the...

INT. NICOLE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Nicole runs into her bedroom and grabs the phone.

NICOLE
(into the phone)
Not today, Big Bertha -- birthday
rules.

Nicole looks into the mirror and tries to smooth down a bad hair day.

EXT. OUTSIDE VIDEO ARCADE -- DAY

A steady procession of cars pull up to the outside of a neighborhood video arcade. As each one stops, the doors open and a few KIDS get out and dash into the arcade as the cars pull away.

Nicole maneuvers her long town car around the procession and pulls into one of the empty parking spaces.

INT. NICOLE'S CAR -- DAY

Nicole pulls out some cash from her wallet and hands it to Matthew.

NICOLE
That should hold you.

Matthew opens his car door.

MATTHEW
I'll be right out front in one hour.

Nicole shakes her head.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

You're going to wait outside in this stupid car the whole time?

NICOLE

This stupid car is what buys those tokens.

Nicole opens her door and starts to get out.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

You might be a year older, but nothing changes in one day. I'll be in my usual seat in the snack bar.

MATTHEW

Mom.

NICOLE

Mom, mother. Verb, noun and pronoun all wrapped up in one package.

MATTHEW

As in, "my mom mothers me too much?"

NICOLE

It's worked so far. You're alive. Go in there and kill some aliens, and maybe I won't make you wear a life jacket at the beach this afternoon.

EXT. CALIFORNIA BEACH -- DAY

Nicole sits in a short lawn chair on the sand reading a novel. She removes her glasses, looks up and watches Matthew throwing a Frisbee to a COCKER SPANIEL, TAGS. She smiles and waves at Matthew.

She replaces the glasses and returns to reading until a Frisbee lands on her book.

Matthew comes closer, squints against the sun and looks at Nicole's pager on the blanket. He snatches it up and holds it accusingly at Nicole.

MATTHEW

A serious infraction of birthday rules.

NICOLE

Only way Big Bertha let me off. Emergencies only.

Matthew tosses it back onto the blanket.

MATTHEW

Yeah, right.

The dog jumps into the blanket trying to get the Frisbee, causing the pager to dump onto the sand. Nicole is sprayed with wet dog drops and sand.

Nicole turns angry until she notices Matthew's face which is a mirror of her own. She grabs the pager, shakes off the sand, and then clips it onto her shorts.

NICOLE

"Yeah, right" is a double positive.

She wrestles the Frisbee from the dog, sprints away from the blanket, then tosses it high into the air back to Matthew.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'd rather be a double positive than a single negative.

MATTHEW

I'd rather be a single negative than a triple inversed superlative.

NICOLE

I'd rather be a triple inversed...

Her pager VIBRATES. She glances down at it.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Damn.

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT -- DAY

Nicole stuffs the beach bag into the trunk as a sullen Matthew stands by the driver's side.

NICOLE

It's unlocked.

MATTHEW

Birthday rules are more of a guideline now?

NICOLE

This will take fifteen minutes.

MATTHEW

Thousands of taxi's out there and this guy has to have you.

Nicole shakes her head.

NICOLE

Don't know why, he's never said more than ten words to me.

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

Dr. Samuals studies some printouts as Matthew studies him from the front seat.

MATTHEW

What are you working on?

NICOLE

Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS

(flipping a page)

Nothing you'd understand.

MATTHEW

I understand how airplanes fly, supertankers float, and even how a microwave oven works.

Dr. Samuals looks sternly at Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS

I doubt that.

MATTHEW

Radar waves set at the exact frequency that excites the water molecules...

Dr. Samual's face relaxes as he holds out his hand to Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS

Dr. Samuals -- and you are?

Matthew grabs the hand and gives him a firm handshake.

MATTHEW

Exceptional, but you can call me Matthew.

Nicole studies Dr. Samuals in the rear view mirror. Was that a smile she saw?

DR. SAMUALS

I work with head trauma victims. These are their brain waves. I'm searching for any potential of recovery.

He reaches into his briefcase and pulls out a CD and hands it to Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)
Your brain is like a computer.

Matthew grabs the CD and studies it.

MATTHEW
You're right. Our brain stores data
in an electromagnetic manner similar
to a computer -- or like light does
on this CD.

DR. SAMUALS
Exactly. I have developed a method
to transfer information from the
brain to that.

Matthew puts the CD on his finger and spins it around.

MATTHEW
Too cool.

NICOLE
Careful with that.

The CD gets away and flies towards the back seat, but Dr.
Samuals catches it.

DR. SAMUALS
Don't worry, this one is blank, but
if I were to perform a backup
procedure on you, we'd have everything
that is Matthew, on one of these.

MATTHEW
Cool.

Dr. Samuals looks back at his printouts.

DR. SAMUALS
It's too late for these kids.
Motorcycles, skateboards, swimming
pools -- the ground always wins in a
war with the head.

NICOLE
This backup, thing -- is it risky?

Dr. Samuals shakes his head.

DR. SAMUALS
No more risky than a dental x-ray.
Just expensive.

Matthew shakes his head.

MATTHEW

Count us out. We don't even have
the money for a motorcycle, skateboard
or swimming pool.

The car pulls up to a townhouse and Dr. Samuals is out of
the car before it fully stops. He hands a card to Nicole.

DR. SAMUALS

I'm giving you the biggest tip you'll
ever get.

Nicole studies the card, flips it over. It's blank.

NICOLE

I'm okay with the twenty percentage
the service adds.

DR. SAMUALS

A free backup for Matthew.

Matthew grabs the card from Nicole.

MATTHEW

No way.

Dr. Samuals smiles fondly at the boy.

DR. SAMUALS

Yes, way. Call my office to set up
an appointment.

He turns and walks away before Nicole can protest any further.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Nicole peeks in the partially open door to watch Matthew
trying on a helmet and knee pads. A shiny razor scooter
leans up against the bed.

NICOLE

Like it?

MATTHEW

Best birthday present ever.

Matthew hugs his mom, but catches himself and pulls away
awkwardly. He picks up a helmet.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I'd like it better if I didn't have
to wear this stuff. I'm going to
look stupid.

NICOLE

Looking stupid is better than being
that way forever from brain damage.

MATTHEW

If you're so concerned about my brain --
why don't you let Dr. Samuals to do
that backup thing?

NICOLE

I know how a helmet works.

Matthew holds up the elbow pads.

MATTHEW

I don't think I'll be a vegetable
for life if I scrape my elbows?

Nicole shakes her head no, as she kisses him on the top of
his head.

NICOLE

Forget it, tough guy.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole sits on the porch with her mother as Matthew and
another boy about his age, SPENCER, ride off on razor
scooters. Matthew makes a jump over the curb and Nicole
GASPS and covers her eyes.

NICOLE

I can't watch.

Rita pats her daughter's arm.

RITA

If you're going to close your eyes,
you should go in and lay down. You
got home so late.

NICOLE

Sorry to keep you up. I wanted that
extra shift to pay for the razor.

RITA

Don't mind me, I can watch Matthew
in my sleep. It's you I worry about.
If that good for nothing...

Nicole holds up her hand.

NICOLE

I booted him out, Mom.

RITA

Only 'cuz he was a lying stinking
pile of....

Again the hand.

NICOLE

He's Matthew's dad.

Rita MUTTERS to herself.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SKATEBOARD PARK -- DAY

Matthew and Spencer arrive at the local skateboard park on their scooters. Some older BOYS flip over the jumps on their scooters while others do tricks on skateboards.

SPENCER

Wicked.

Matthew tugs at his helmet. Spencer isn't wearing one.

MATTHEW

I'm sweating like a pig.

SPENCER

Lose it.

Matthew looks over at the older boys. None of them are wearing helmets. He takes it off and clips it onto a branch of a nearby tree.

They both ride into the skateboard park.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole sleeps in the rocker while her mother has her head buried in a romance novel.

Spencer races up the hill towards the house SHOUTING. Nicole jumps off the porch and runs into the street.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- DAY

Nicole paces back and forth as Matthew flips through a women's magazine. Nicole pauses and notices Matthew turning around an underwear advertisement as he holds an ice pack to his head.

Nicole puts an arm around Matthew causing the magazine to drop to the floor.

NICOLE

Rotten way to spend your birthday.

MATTHEW

I've had worse.

Nicole releases Matthew. She drops her head.

NICOLE

He forgot last year, but he sent the
money for your scooter...

A door opens and a nurse gestures for Matthew and Nicole to
come inside.

MATTHEW

Yeah, right.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM -- DAY

The door opens and DR. TALBOT, a young doctor in his mid-
thirties, enters. He could be extremely handsome after thirty
or forty hours of much needed sleep.

He holds out his hand.

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Talbot.

Nicole gives him a firm handshake that takes him by surprise.
She squints at him. Dr. Talbot looks seriously at Matthew.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Razor scooter, eh?

He flashes a penlight into Matthew's eyes and makes some
notes.

NICOLE

He took his helmet off. He probably
has a concussion.

Nicole moves over and reads the chart over his shoulder. He
maneuvers the chart away from her line of sight and studies
her with interest.

DR. TALBOT

How about we run some tests before
you make an expert diagnosis?

Dr. Talbot steers Matthew towards the inner door.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

I'll send him out when we're done.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- DAY

Nicole stares blankly at a nature show on the television as Rita comes barging in carrying two large bags.

RITA

Where is he? I bet he's starved.

AS if on cue, Matthew comes into the waiting room -- dressed in his street clothes again. He digs into the bags of food. Nicole grabs his arm.

NICOLE

Are you okay? Where's your ice pack?
What did Dr. Talbot say?

MATTHEW

Slow down before you crack your head
open too.

NICOLE

That's not funny. What did Dr. Talbot
say?

MATTHEW

He wants to talk to you. He'll be
here in a second.

Matthew breaks away and tunes into the nature program on TV as he stuffs as many snacks as he can into his mouth.

Dr. Talbot stands at the door and frowns at Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

I said a small snack.

Matthew holds up his hand.

MATTHEW

Wait. This is my favorite part.

Dr. Talbot looks at the nature show. There is a large mother bear standing at the river's edge with two bear cubs close to her.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Look at what's pissing that mother
bear off.

The camera pans over to the other side of the stream where a male bear rears up on his hind legs. The mother bear does the same and ROARS.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

She's half the size of that male,
but does that matter?

The male drops down to all fours but doesn't move from his spot on the other side. The mother bear ROARS again.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

This is the best part.

The male still doesn't move -- rather he pretends she's not there and paws at the water. The mother bear charges across the stream and attacks the much larger male bear. The male retreats into the forest.

Matthew looks up at Dr. Talbot.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Why don't you go have that talk with
my mom now?

Matthew winks.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I wouldn't piss her off if I were
you.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Dr. Talbot sits behind a desk that is heaped with files, research books, and fast food containers. Nicole strains to look over the mound. Dr. Talbot holds an x-ray up to the light.

DR. TALBOT

It's tiny fracture. I wouldn't be
too concerned.

NICOLE

Then why do you want to keep him
overnight?

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Samuals told me about the free
backup. That's quite some tip.

NICOLE

I didn't accept it.

DR. TALBOT

You should. Best insurance you can
buy if the next time Matthew isn't
so lucky.

NICOLE

I don't even know what it is. All that techno talk -- I only get half of it and Matthew has to explain that to me. I'm road kill on the electronic highway.

He ushers her out of the office.

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Samuals is waiting. He'll explain everything.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

The office is ultra modern -- all chrome and black lacquer. Dr. Samuals studies a computer monitor that is built into the desktop. The wall to his left is all windows looking out to the ocean.

The wall behind him is completely composed of video monitors alternately displaying scenes of patients in hospital beds, graphs, and MRI's of human brains. One of the video monitors behind him BEEPS and Amy appears.

AMY

(on the computer monitor)

Dr. Samuals, Nicole Fry is...

Dr. Samuals clicks Amy off before she can finish her announcement.

The door to his office opens and Nicole enters and offers her hand to Dr. Samuals.

DR. SAMUALS

(Ignoring her hand)

I was able to fit Matthew in for that free backup. Couldn't have been better timing after that accident.

NICOLE

I never agreed to this. How come I've never heard of this backup.

Dr. Samuals holds up a hand to interrupt as he spins around and CLICKS the remote. The wall of monitors change to show a computer flow chart on the left and a diagram of the brain on the right.

DR. SAMUALS

Over ten years ago, while other researchers were mapping DNA, we were mapping the human brain. We discovered in monkeys that we could teach one a complex video game, and then capture the brain transmissions to a special computer -- we call it a DMT.

He almost seems to go into a robotlike trance.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

After causing serious brain damage to the same monkey, we then restored the data and the monkey could play the game again.

NICOLE

I don't see how this applies to Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS

I don't mean to alarm you, but all our test to this point have been on kids that already have brain damage. If we can do a backup now on someone like Matthew -- someone with a perfect mind -- and if he then had brain damage...

Dr. Samuals opens up a drawer and pulls out a CD.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

...I know that we'd be able to find a healthy portion of the brain to restore his backup.

NICOLE

Brain damage? I thought it was a small fracture.

DR. SAMUALS

Exactly, but Matthew has already demonstrated that he's a risk taker, prone to accidents...

Nicole gets up.

NICOLE

He's not a risk taker and neither am I. Thanks but no thanks.

Nicole abruptly leaves the room. Dr. Samuals picks up the CD and throw it across the room in anger.

It shatters into small pieces.

INT. RECEPTION AREA OF DR. SAMUALS OFFICE -- DAY

Amy sits at her desk while Nicole stands holding a stack of papers. Dr. Talbot and Matthew enter the reception area.

DR. TALBOT
When is he scheduled?

AMY
She doesn't want it done.

Amy takes the stack of papers back from Nicole. She loudly drops them into the trash can.

AMY (CONT'D)
I filled these out for nothing.

Dr. Talbot reaches over and takes the stack of papers out of the trash can. He touches Nicole gently on the arm.

DR. TALBOT
Let's go to my office.

NICOLE
It's Matthew's birthday. Is he okay to go or not?

DR. TALBOT
Like I told you, it's a tiny fracture. I thought we'd keep him overnight and do the backup just to be safe.

Nicole takes the papers from Dr. Talbot's hand and ushers Matthew away.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
I could call tomorrow...

Matthew turns around and makes a cutting motion across his throat and shakes his head.

INT. MEDICAL INSTITUTE EAST WING -- DAY

Dr. Samuals storms into the ward. He stops at the first bed and picks up a chart. He flips it open and then tosses it to the ground.

He repeats the process down the next three beds, but the next chart gets his interest as Hal comes into the ward.

HAL
I thought you'd be pleased.

Dr. Samuals frantically flips through the pages of information.

DR. SAMUALS

Releases?

Hal smiles.

HAL

In triplicate. His folks are desperate -- they don't care how experimental it is.

Dr. Samuals examines the young BOY, a teenager.

HAL (CONT'D)

Trying to take down a goal post after the "U"'s victory last month. Landed on the concrete footings. Concrete won.

DR. SAMUALS

How long?

HAL

A few hours ago. The dad seem relieved when they took him off the respirator. The mom just cried and cried until he took that first breath on his own. They both gasped.

DR. SAMUALS

Devastated when they die, devastated when they live. Get him hooked up. I'll be back in an hour.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Matthew throws a Frisbee to the cocker spaniel, Tags. Nicole comes quietly out of the door and hides behind a tree. She watches carefully for a moment, then intercepts a throw between the two.

MATTHEW

Not, fair. You didn't catch it with your teeth.

Nicole puts the Frisbee in her mouth for a moment, then figures out who had it in its mouth last. She rubs her tongue on her sleeve in disgust.

NICOLE

Now I've got dog germs.

MATTHEW

Actually, a dog's mouth is fourteen times...

Nicole holds up her hands in surrender and sits down on the porch steps. She pats a seat next to her. Matthew takes the hint and joins her.

NICOLE

What do you think about this backup thing?

MATTHEW

From the statistical analysis that Dr. Talbot gave me...

NICOLE

I meant in theory.

MATTHEW

A little weird. I'm at an age where I have secrets. Don't know if I want them written out on CD.

NICOLE

What kind of secrets?

Matthew takes the Frisbee from her and studies it.

MATTHEW

You know, guy secrets.

Nicole pulls him close to her. She gives him a kiss on the top of his head.

NICOLE

We'll see what we can do to protect those secrets. In the meantime, be good for your grandma while I go try to dig us out of poverty.

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

Nicole sits parked in front of a tall modern office building. She catches a short nap as JEREMY, a twenty-something that could pass for a teenager, quietly opens the door and slips into her car.

Nicole wakes with a start and turns around and faces the smiling face.

NICOLE

You know I hate it when you do that.

JEREMY

Didn't want to wake you.

She hands the clipboard to him.

NICOLE

Until you get your license back,
I'll need to be awake to drive you
home.

Jeremy signs the clipboard and tosses it on the seat next to
Nicole as she starts to drive.

JEREMY

How come you got a case of the
snoozies today?

NICOLE

For a millionaire, you've got the
vocabulary of a three year old.

JEREMY

Don't I wish. The company is paying
for the car. We are in the middle
of a big programming overhaul and I
am a critical component. Once the
job's complete it's back to the buses.

Jeremy gestures to the building fading away.

NICOLE

Bet you were like Matthew when you
were little. He's my reason for
lost sleep.

JEREMY

Wait until he's a teenager, you'll
learn to sleep like my mom -- upright
in the front room with one eye open.

NICOLE

He's a joy now, but I've got this
medical decision to make and I'm a
quart low on the brains I need.

JEREMY

Doesn't take brains to make decisions,
just information -- and you've come
to the right place for that. In
front of a computer, I'm the source
of all knowledge.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

This is not like the operating rooms that you see on TV -- instead of stark white walls and carts of instruments, there is a single table surrounded by computers and monitors.

The young boy wears a odd helmet that has hundred of wires feeding into various computers. Dr. Samuals stands about two feet away staring fondly at the boy -- almost in a trance.

Hal sits in front of one of the computers as it spits out a CD. Hal stares at it, flips it over.

HAL
What the heck?

Dr. Samuals comes out of the trance and spots Hal with the CD.

DR. SAMUALS
Give it to me.

HAL
This isn't the right CD. I put the Beckman kid in there. Almost the same age, similar demographics, even the same damn religion. A perfect match.

The computers come alive and the young boy goes into spasms. A few seconds pass before the boy makes one final jerk, then is still. The pulse monitor goes flat.

Hal looks at the blank CD.

HAL (CONT'D)
He's going to be real pissed about this. I don't want to tell him.

Dr. Samuals slowly walks over to Hal, takes the CD from his hand, breaks it in two and tosses it in the trash before leaving.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole pulls up in her town car and slams on the brakes to avoid hitting the two razor scooters left in the middle of the driveway.

She leaves the car halfway in the street as she gets out and moves the scooters. Matthew and Spencer come bolting out of the house, eating ice cream cones.

NICOLE
You're using up your luck, Tiger.

The two look guilty for a moment and then grab their scooters with their free hands and take off.

MATTHEW

Later.

Nicole is shocked.

NICOLE

Freeze.

Matthew stops and spins the scooter around.

MATTHEW

What?

NICOLE

Where is your helmet?

MATTHEW

I left it down at the park. I'll go get it.

As Matthew and Spencer ride off, Nicole starts to call after them, but then looks at her open car door and the half parked car.

She sits back down in the driver's seat and rests her head on the steering wheel in frustration. Her BEEPER goes off.

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

Jeremy is waiting as Nicole pulls up. He hops into the front seat and starts filling out the clipboard. Nicole has given up and lets him. He hands the clipboard back to her as he opens a file folder.

JEREMY

I did a little hacking for you and found out a some information about your Dr. Samuals.

NICOLE

I didn't want you to hack. Isn't hacking a crime and unethical?

JEREMY

Define unethical. Such a gray area.

Jeremy gives her a wicked smile.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Plus, hacking is only illegal if you get caught. I didn't get that...

Jeremy gestures towards the office building.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 ...um, job, without a little hacking.

Jeremy looks down at the file.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 Ethics aside, this backup thing looks cool.

NICOLE
 So you'd do it?

JEREMY
 Like I said, it's way too cool.
 Think this guy will let me have it done?

NICOLE
 The risks to Matthew?

JEREMY
 I can't find any fatalities, and they have one documented successful restore. What a quirk that someone with brain damage just so happened to have had that backup done first. According to the very confidential, very top secret, very secure, test files - it's perfectly safe.

NICOLE
 Let's hope safer than their very safe computer files that you hacked into.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole and Matthew sit across from Dr. Talbot as he studies the forms in his hands.

DR. TALBOT
 It all looks in order. You made the right decision.

NICOLE
 I wish I understood it more. It's so futuristic.

DR. TALBOT
 Sometimes you've got to trust us.

NICOLE

My momma taught me to "trust
everybody, but cut the cards"

DR. TALBOT

You better leave the dealing to the
professionals this time.

Dr. Talbot turns and starts to enter information on the
computer screen.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Let's assign you a room, Matt.

MATTHEW

Mom, did I tell you that Dr. Talbot
is a former pro baseball player?

NICOLE

Matthew's a regular Vin Scully when
it comes to baseball stats.

DR. TALBOT

He's got quite a remarkable mind.

Dr. Talbot pulls out a baseball cap from his pocket.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Found this last night.

He tosses it to Matthew.

MATTHEW

A Marlins hat. Thanks.

Matthew turns to his mother.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

He told me that he batted three twenty
one. Not too bad for a lefty pitcher.

DR. TALBOT

We lefties use both sides of our
brain, right?

MATTHEW

Historically lefties have about a
ten percent reduction in averages
over righties - except that
exceptional year that Tony Gwynn
batted .386 in 1992. That brought
the lefties up to within three percent
of right-handed batting averages.

DR. TALBOT

Remarkable.

MATTHEW

Not actually. Three other right-handed batters had higher averages that year, but Tony's average was close to twenty percent higher...

DR. TALBOT

I meant that it's remarkable how you remember all this stuff.

MATTHEW

It's us lefties.

Matthew puts the hat on backwards.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

At least I'm not a total geek. I play baseball.

Dr. Talbot laughs and continues typing on the computer.

DR. TALBOT

You must think I'm a total geek for choosing medicine over baseball.

NICOLE

Let's just hope that you're Mr. October when it comes to treating my son.

INT. MODERN HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

NURSE #1 is busy adjusting the equipment to the left of the bed. Matthew is sitting up in the bed with an IV in his right arm.

Matthew is reading "A Brief History of Time" by Stephen Hawking. To the right of the bed, Nicole sits in a chair flipping through a magazine.

MATTHEW

What's the difference between illegal and unlawful?

NICOLE

Let's see -- illegal would be a violation of a code or legislation that was passed whereas unlawful would not only be unethical but...

MATTHEW

Unlawful is against the law and
illegal is just a sick bird. Get
it? Ill -- eagle?

Nicole reaches out and takes away his book.

NICOLE

What are you reading now?

MATTHEW

Dr. Samuals gave it to me this
morning, it's his favorite. So what
was in that file about him?

Nicole gives him a stern look.

NICOLE

You found that?

MATTHEW

The upper left desk drawer is not
best hiding places for your Snickers
or snooping files.

Her stone face cracks a little, but she pulls out a file and
flips through it.

NICOLE

Chief Brain Surgeon, Boston General
nineteen seventy-three through eighty-
five.

Matthew reaches for the papers. He studies them for a moment.

MATTHEW

Author of "Brain Damage and the
Shattered Mind."

NICOLE

Other than that, pretty sparse info.

MATTHEW

Did your rich geek patrol look in
Infomed's database?

NICOLE

What is that?

MATTHEW

It's new, but quite comprehensive
and has great illustrations.

NICOLE

What kind of illustrations, Matt?

Matthew turns a little red and takes back his book from his mother.

MATTHEW

Did you find out anything about Dr. Talbot?

NICOLE

I can tell when you're changing the subject young man.

Matthew starts to flip through the book. Nicole starts to look through her papers and pauses.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I never said I was interested in Dr. Talbot.

Matthew just gives her a wink and looks at the door. Dr. Talbot stands there smiling.

DR. TALBOT

I'm going to start the meds now, Matthew.

He turns towards Nicole.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

They'll come for him in a few minutes. After that he won't be awake for at least six or seven hours.

NICOLE

I'm having a rollaway bed brought in for me.

DR. TALBOT

No need. He'll probably only wake up for a moment and then sleep through the night.

NICOLE

I have a bad case of over-protectiveness.

DR. TALBOT

Then go home, get some dinner if you're staying tonight.

NICOLE

I'll probably just grab something in the cafeteria.

Dr. Talbot shakes his head.

DR. TALBOT
Can't have both of you down sick.

Nicole gives Matthew a kiss on the forehead.

NICOLE
I'll go home, check on your Grams
and then be right back.

Nicole heads for the door, pauses, turns slightly towards Matthew and stares for a moment at him. She then leaves the room. Dr. Talbot pokes his head out and watches her leave.

MATTHEW
I told you she was fantastic.

DR. TALBOT
You said the same thing about Tony
Gwynn.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Dr. Samuals is alone in the room, talking into a microphone.

DR. SAMUALS
The receptor is an eleven year old
male. Ninety three pounds. Four
feet, ten inches tall.

Hal enters the room and comes over to the computer monitor that displays the image of a brain. He taps on it.

HAL
Room for more Jell-O, Dr. Samuals?
I didn't see this one get checked
in.

DR. SAMUALS
Transfer in this morning.
Skateboarding accident.

HAL
Beckman again?

Dr. Samuals hands Hal a CD.

DR. SAMUALS
I made a new copy.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The counter is covered from one end to the other with food containers. Nicole looks at the pots on the stove. Rita comes in carrying two more jars of food.

NICOLE

How long did you think we were going to be there? You've got enough food for twenty hunters trapped in a cabin for a month.

RITA

Can't trust that hospital food. How can you eat something made in that germ factory? I think that nice Dr. Talbot could use some fattening up. I'll tell him you made it all.

NICOLE

Mom.

RITA

Guy like that could be good for you. Matthew likes him.

The phone RINGS.

NICOLE

(into the phone)

Yes it is -- I'll be there as fast as I can.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

Matthew lies on his back in bed with monitoring devices connected to his chest and head. The IV is still in his right arm. Dr. Talbot studies one of the monitors. Nicole rushes in to Matthew's side.

NICOLE

My God, what happened?

Dr. Talbot tries to pat her arm, but she pulls away and focuses on Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

A problem arose during the final stages of the backup procedure.

Dr. Talbot pulls out a chair for Nicole which she ignores.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

A reversal in the DMT caused an overload to the brain that resulted in the coma.

NICOLE

In English?

DR. TALBOT

The backup was successful. Matthew's in a coma, but it doesn't appear serious.

NICOLE

Not serious? A coma? Are you crazy?

DR. TALBOT

It takes twelve hours before we can perform a restore of the backup. The documentation on the procedure shows that this has happened before and everything turned out fine.

The computer screen at the end of the bed BEEPS and then is illuminated with the image of Dr. Samuals.

NICOLE

Before?

DR. SAMUALS

(on the computer screen)

Talbot, I need the calibration ratios for Matthew's neural-transmitters and his chart.

Dr. Talbot presses a key on the screen.

DR. TALBOT

(to the computer)

I'm still with Mrs. Fry.

DR. SAMUALS

(on the computer screen)

Now.

Dr. Talbot sets down the paperwork he is holding at the foot of the bed and starts typing on the keyboard. Some of the paperwork slips off onto the floor. Nicole picks them up and glances through them as she is straightening them.

One page catches her eye. She pushes it under the bed. Dr. Talbot is distracted by the sound and turns towards Nicole.

Nicole finally takes a seat in the chair that Dr. Talbot has been offering.

NICOLE

When will we know for sure that Matthew is okay?

DR. TALBOT

Tomorrow this time.

(MORE)

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

You should go home and get some rest.
I doubt if Matthew will wake tonight.

Dr. Talbot gets up but leaves his hand for a lingering moment on her shoulder.

NICOLE

I'm sleeping here.

After he leaves, Nicole reaches under Matthew's bed and retrieves the page that fell earlier from Dr. Talbot's file.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- NIGHT

Dr. Samuals works intently at a computer terminal as Dr. Talbot enters.

DR. TALBOT

How does it look?

DR. SAMUALS

Splendid. We'll start the restore in the morning.

DR. TALBOT

What caused the reversal?

DR. SAMUALS

We're not concerned with that now.

Dr. Talbot looks around and spots Hal standing in the shadows.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Do you have his updated chart?

Dr. Talbot nods and hands a file to Dr. Samuals. Dr. Samuals removes the rubber band from the file and puts the rubber band in his mouth. He begins to chew it absently while reading the chart.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Splendid. We won't be needing you in here any more tonight, Daniel.

Dr. Talbot pauses with a puzzled look on his face.

DR. TALBOT

(hesitantly)

I'll check in on Matthew during the night and see you tomorrow morning at six.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Nicole steps out of Matthew's room into the hallway with the letter while dialing her cell phone.

NICOLE
 (into the phone)
 Up for a little hacking?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - NICOLE AND JEREMY

NICOLE (CONT'D)
 Search on Infinite Project.

JEREMY
 Infinite. It's searching. I've got
 a reference to grants, Meeker.

NICOLE
 Click on that. I'm looking for a
 grant that requires selecting
 candidates.

Nicole looks up as two nurses come around the corner. She ducks into a doorway.

JEREMY
 So how's the little guy doing?

NICOLE
 He's in coma, but stable for now.

JEREMY
 There's a lot stuff here. Looks
 like a big money research project.
 Want me to keep digging and download
 this stuff for you?

NICOLE
 Don't worry about how deep you have
 to go.

JEREMY
 Will do, hacking is my middle name.

Nicole snaps the cell phone closed.

NICOLE
 (to herself)
 I guess ethics and rules be damned.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

Matthew lays in one of six hospital beds hooked up to monitors.

Nicole sits in a chair next to Matthew's bed with her head on his bed, asleep. Dr. Talbot walks in and comes along side Matthew.

He pulls out a small penlight and checks Matthew's eyes. The light slightly illuminates Nicole's tranquil face. Dr. Talbot stares at Nicole for a moment and smiles. He removes the medical chart.

Nicole wakes up startled.

NICOLE

Any change?

He shakes his head.

DR. TALBOT

I didn't expect any. Physically he's fine. We'll know more after the restore tomorrow.

NICOLE

What time tomorrow?

DR. TALBOT

Six. They'll come get him at five-thirty. It should take a few hours.

He rests a hand on her shoulder.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

I probably won't see you again until after the restore, but I'll come get you in the waiting room as soon as I can.

He gives her shoulder a comforting squeeze.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

You okay?

NICOLE

That depends on tomorrow.

Dr. Talbot leaves the room. Nicole puts her head back on the bed and closes her eyes. She quietly SOBS as she grasps Matthew's hand.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Dr. Talbot briskly walks down the corridor of the hospital carrying a briefcase. He pauses at the nurses station and checks a schedule taped to the counter.

Amy sits at one of the desks and two NURSES are chatting behind her while drinking coffee.

DR. TALBOT

This schedule says that Matthew Fry is scheduled for five A.M. in OR number six. My schedule says six A.M. in OR number five.

Amy looks up alarmed.

AMY

Dr. Talbot. Where have you been? Matthew was taken into the operating an hour ago.

Amy jumps up from the desk and crosses over to the counter.

AMY (CONT'D)

Dr. Samuals asked where you were. I paged you and called your home.

DR. TALBOT

I didn't get a page or call. Who's assisting?

AMY

Hal.

DR. TALBOT

An attendant? This is madness.

Dr. Talbot tosses his briefcase over to Amy and runs towards the operating room.

INT. OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Matthew is on the operating table surrounded by Hal and Dr. Samuals. Dr. Samuals pauses and looks up as Dr. Talbot enters.

DR. SAMUALS

Nice of you to finally join us, Daniel.

DR. TALBOT

I thought it was at six. He's my patient, I wanted to be here.

DR. SAMUALS

We keep to the schedule, in spite of our doctors' whims.

Dr. Samuals removes the helmet gently from Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

The restore is complete.

Dr. Samuals turns his back on Dr. Talbot and starts typing on a computer keyboard next to the monitoring equipment.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Assist Hal in moving Matthew and give me hourly updates on his condition.

Dr. Samuals looks for an extended moment at Matthew and then leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- DAY

Nicole paces back and forth in the room. Dr. Talbot enters the room dressed in operating room greens.

DR. TALBOT

Matthew is fine.

Nicole hugs Dr. Talbot and then awkwardly backs away.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Early signs show that he has complete brain functions.

NICOLE

When can I see him?

DR. TALBOT

He's in recovery right now. In about a half an hour you can sit with him while he's waking up.

NICOLE

I don't know how to thank...

They both stare at the floor.

DR. TALBOT

Actually, I didn't...

Nicole gently touches his arm.

NICOLE

I'll just save the thank you for a better time.

His BEEPER goes off.

DR. TALBOT

Please, no thanks. I'll explain everything later.

Dr. Talbot beats her out of the door, but glances back at Nicole for moment. Nicole, already gathering up her things, turns around in time to meet his stare. She gives him a warm smile.

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM -- DAY

Matthew lays fast asleep in a hospital bed. Nicole sits at his side in a stiff hospital chair. She holds his hand and watches him.

Dr. Talbot walks in and picks up the chart. He makes a few notes, then replaces it. He checks Matthew's eyes with a penlight, then checks the monitors hooked to Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

I'll be back in an hour to check on him again.

Matthew stirs, and MOANS softly. He opens his eyes and sees his mother.

MATTHEW

(groggily)

Hi Mom.

Nicole stands up and grabs Matthew's other hand.

NICOLE

You're awake.

Dr. Talbot leans closer to Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

How are you feeling partner?

MATTHEW

My head hurts and I'm thirsty.

DR. TALBOT

The nurses will take care of both of those things. Can you tell me your birthday?

MATTHEW

April 7th.

DR. TALBOT

The year?

MATTHEW

Adding the year would be my "birth date" - you asked for my birthday...

Dr. Talbot smiles and moves Matthew's arm, then his leg.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

So what's your diagnosis?

DR. TALBOT

It's still too early to be one hundred percent sure, but my guess is that you'll soon be starting my technical education again.

Dr. Talbot pats Matthew's arm gently.

MATTHEW

When can I have breakfast?

DR. TALBOT

No solids for twenty-four hours.

MATTHEW

Then how about just a candy bar? They have Snickers in the machine down the hall.

NICOLE

Are you listening, Matthew? You're going to do whatever Dr. Talbot says. I'm not going to lose you again.

MATTHEW

Lose?

NICOLE

I mean...

Nicole looks to Dr. Talbot for some help.

DR. TALBOT

Backup is all done.

MATTHEW

That's great. Can I go home?

DR. TALBOT

Hold on sport. Those were a lot of meds you had. Let's talk about getting you up and moving around before we go too far here. You need rest today, but tomorrow we'll start you on some short walks.

MATTHEW

I'm not doing any walking without some food first.

NICOLE

You'll do exactly what the doctor says.

DR. TALBOT

Don't worry, we won't let you starve.

MATTHEW

Just splendid. I guess I can't fight both of you.

Dr. Talbot and Nicole walk out of the intensive care unit. He places a gentle hand on her back.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Dr. Talbot and Nicole stand close together outside Matthew's door.

NICOLE

He's completely okay?

DR. TALBOT

Complete recovery.

NICOLE

Maybe there was never a reversal? Did you really do a restore?

DR. TALBOT

I'd like to explain something about restore procedure to you, if you have time for dinner tonight.

Nicole grabs his arm, alarmed.

NICOLE

Did you find something else?

Dr. Talbot pats the hand that has a firm grip on his arm.

DR. TALBOT

I didn't mean to frighten you, it's just something I'd like to clear up.

NICOLE

About Matthew?

DR. TALBOT

About me.

Nicole removes his hand.

NICOLE

I'm only concerned about Matthew
right now.

She abruptly pivots to return to Matthew's room. Dr. Talbot hugs himself as a gesture of it being cold in the corridor.

INT. DR. SAMUALS' OFFICE -- NIGHT

Dr. Samuals sits at his desk and taps on his computer terminal. He chews what appears to be gum and frowning at the screen. There is a KNOCK on the slightly open door and Dr. Talbot enters.

Dr. Samuals looks up and waves Dr. Talbot to the chair across the desk.

DR. SAMUALS

Daniel, look at the statistics on
this boy. I can't believe what a
splendid specimen he is.

Dr. Talbot sits in the chair. Dr. Samuals swivels in his chair and CLICKS the remote. The monitors display X-rays, charts, and a monitor of Matthew (apparently a live camera) in his hospital bed.

DR. TALBOT

Specimen? You mean Matthew Fry?

DR. SAMUALS

Just a splendid brain, the tissue is
so healthy. This child will live to
be a hundred and twenty.

DR. TALBOT

He is certainly exceptional. I wanted
to ask you some questions about the
restore.

Dr. Samuals CLICKS the monitors off.

DR. SAMUALS

Nothing to discuss. It was routine.

DR. TALBOT

Routine? With a coma first?

DR. SAMUALS

We're not even sure it was a coma.
The important thing is that the kid
has a perfectly good backup and
whatever the restore did brought him
out of the coma.

He starts to chew intently.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Think of it. I thought this procedure would cure serious brain damage. What if it could help coma victims too?

He then pauses and removes a rubber band from his mouth.

DR. TALBOT

Are you still chewing those? Latex can be toxic.

DR. SAMUALS

It's obviously not going to be what kills me.

DR. TALBOT

Sorry.

DR. SAMUALS

Don't be. My research here has been a form of immortality. My backup technology will live on for generations.

Dr. Samuals pulls out a CD and starts spinning it on his desk.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

And after the success of the backup and restore done on Matthew Fry, my work will be eternal.

DR. TALBOT

What do you mean?

DR. SAMUALS

I was able to prove that a brain completely devoid of activity could be restored to original functionality.

DR. TALBOT

Matthew was brain dead? I thought it was a coma?

DR. SAMUALS

In a purely technical sense.

Dr. Samuals points to his head. He gets up and starts to pace excitedly.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

I can now take life and put it here.

Dr. Samuals picks up the spinning CD and shows it to Dr. Talbot.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Or even here.

Dr. Samuals comes behind Dr. Talbot and places his hands on the sides of Dr. Talbot's head. Dr. Talbot pulls his head away and stands up. He turns and confronts Dr. Samuals.

DR. TALBOT

For a price.

DR. SAMUALS

Everything has a cost. The best part is that someday, everyone will get a backup, just for insurance.

DR. TALBOT

You'll be rich.

Dr. Samuals walks over and stares at the computer monitors.

DR. SAMUALS

My heirs will be rich.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Matthew sits up in his hospital bed and carelessly flips the pages of a book. Nicole sits in one of the side chairs reading some documents. Dr. Talbot enters the room. Matthew puts down the book.

DR. TALBOT

How are you feeling, young man?

MATTHEW

Splendid. I took a short walk this morning, but I got weak after a few rounds of this floor.

DR. TALBOT

Well that's a lot more than I expected. I had just hoped for a few trips to the nurses station and back. Any dizziness?

Matthew shakes his head no.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

How's the head feel?

Dr. Talbot is starting to examine Matthew, checking his eyes, rotating his head, feeling along his neck.

MATTHEW

A possible reaction to the meds. I was thinking maybe we should prescribe something for that.

Dr. Talbot gets out his prescription pad and smiles.

DR. TALBOT

Take two Snickers and call me in the morning, Dr. Matthew?

Nicole crosses over to Matthew's bed.

NICOLE

Should he walk again today?

Dr. Talbot takes an "up and down" look at Nicole. She's freshly showered and dressed stylishly.

DR. TALBOT

At least twice. You certainly look much better today...

Dr. Talbot looks uncomfortably down at his feet.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Not that you didn't look okay last night... It's just that you...

NICOLE

I understand.

Nicole is amused by Dr. Talbot's blushing. He recovers and continues examining Matthew. Nicole reaches into a large bag. It's a bottle of wine.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I got this for you. Amy says it's your favorite label.

Dr. Talbot WHISTLE as he admires the bottle.

DR. TALBOT

My favorite year too. Maybe this weekend we can crack this open. Matthew should be ready to go home by the end of the week.

NICOLE

A week? What happened to one night?

Dr. Talbot catches her eye and gives her a serious look before he looks down at the chart.

DR. TALBOT

We'll then have him back each day for a checkup and some additional therapy.

NICOLE

Every day?

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Samuals wants us to see Matthew regularly for the next month at least.

NICOLE

That's a lot of visits. With my work and Matthew's school...

Dr. Talbot lays the chart down on the side table then turns his attention to Nicole.

DR. TALBOT

Matthew's backup procedure and recovery are quite exceptional. We need to monitor his progress.

Dr. Talbot notices the rustling of papers and turns to see Matthew flipping through his own chart.

MATTHEW

I am exceptional.

Dr. Talbot frowns and gently removes the chart from Matthew's hand.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Nicole and Matthew saunter down the corridor and although Nicole has a cautionary hand on his arm, he walks unassisted.

MATTHEW

I don't want you to hold me.

Nicole pulls back her hand, but keeps a sharp eye on him. At the end of the hall, the double glass doors to the outside open and Jeremy comes through them at a brisk pace.

NICOLE

What are you doing here?

JEREMY

We've got to talk.

Nicole looks over at Matthew. He gestures for her to go away.

NICOLE

Step in here.

There is a small chapel to the side. Matthew continues down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL CHAPEL -- DAY

Jeremy goes up the small pulpit and puts a hand on each side of it.

JEREMY

I need to thank the Lord that I survived the taxi with vinyl seats on the ride down here because my regular town car driver doesn't love me any more.

Nicole collapses into one of the chairs.

NICOLE

I'm too tired for games and I'm not driving you home.

Jeremy comes around the pulpit and takes a chair next her. He leans in closely.

JEREMY

These could be bad guys taking care of your son.

NICOLE

Bad guys? What the heck are you talking about?

JEREMY

Since my driver wasn't around to take me home, I stayed all night at work and dug deeper into the Infinite Project. I found out where the money comes from.

NICOLE

Do I want to know?

JEREMY

I would think so. The Infinite Project is funded by the estate of Dr. Samuals. Your son's doctor is a dead man.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Nicole looks up and down the corridor and Matthew is nowhere to be seen. Suddenly she stops at an open door.

She spots Matthew sitting at a desk in Dr. Samuals' office. He is looking out of the window.

INT. DR. SAMUALS OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole steps inside the doorway.

NICOLE

Matthew.

Matthew turns around.

MATTHEW

What do you need?

NICOLE

What are you doing in here?

Matthew waves her in and gestures to a chair across from the desk.

MATTHEW

Have a seat.

Nicole ignores the chair and comes around to Matthew's side of the desk. She gently grasps his arm.

NICOLE

Let's get out of here.

Matthew lets her help him up. As he gets up, two gold balls drop out of his hand and onto the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Nicole tosses books into her bag as Matthew ties his shoes. Dr. Talbot comes into the room and takes a shocked look at the two of them.

DR. TALBOT

What are you doing?

Nicole grabs Matthew by the arm and pulls him towards the door.

NICOLE

I'm taking him to another hospital.

Dr. Talbot blocks the door.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Get out of my way or I'm calling the police.

Dr. Talbot gets out of the way and Nicole goes out the door with Matthew.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

As she starts down the hall, Matthew collapses. Nicole SCREAMS.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

Matthew sits on an examining table while Dr. Samuals shines a flashlight into Matthew's eyes. Nicole stands with her arms crossed.

DR. SAMUALS

That still doesn't explain why you tried to remove him from my hospital.

NICOLE

Your hospital?

Dr. Samuals puts on his sweetest smile.

DR. SAMUALS

The "my" comes from a fondness not possessiveness, although my father's bequest makes it almost mine.

NICOLE

Your father?

DR. SAMUALS

The senior Dr. Samuals. He left his whole estate to this institution.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Nicole sits next to Matthew's bed while he reads. Dr. Talbot comes into the room and picks up the book that Matthew has been reading.

DR. TALBOT

This might be the reason for that seizure.

He closes it and places it on the table next to Matthew's table. Matthew frowns and crosses his arms.

MATTHEW

What am I supposed to do for the next few days?

DR. TALBOT

Watch TV. It's a mindless task and quite enjoyable. Ever try it?

MATTHEW

Mom doesn't like me to watch it much.

NICOLE

I guess I can't fight doctor's orders, especially after that mixup about Dr. Samuals. I feel like such a fool.

DR. TALBOT

Who would have thought that Dr. Samuals was a junior? Pretty impressive research, but I'd say doctor's orders are for you to start trusting the doctors, especially if it includes dinner tonight?

NICOLE

I don't want to go very far away from Matthew after what happened...

DR. TALBOT

No problem. I know a little pizza place just a few blocks from here. They have a fantastic seafood pizza.

NICOLE

How did you know I like seafood pizza?

Dr. Talbot smiles and winks at Matthew. He starts for the door.

DR. TALBOT

I can do research too. I'll see you here at eight?

MATTHEW

Remember the deal. You bring me back some of the pizza.

DR. TALBOT

One of the best deals I've ever made.

NICOLE

(laughing)

I think I've been set up.

Nicole watches him leave and smiles at Matthew shaking her head.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I hope you're not playing matchmaker, young man.

Matthew leans in close and whispers.

MATTHEW

I think we should keep him close.
Find out what he knows.

NICOLE

What?

Matthew picks up the remote control.

MATTHEW

See what TV has done to me?

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The dimly lit pizza parlor is small and cozy. Only the flickering candlelight illuminates Dr. Talbot and Nicole's faces. Most of a pizza remains untouched on the tray between them.

DR. TALBOT

After I finished my residency, she decided that she really didn't want to be married to a pink elephant with green dots.

Nicole nods sympathetically.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Then she ran off with two circus clowns on a space shuttle to Mars.

NICOLE

Did you say Mars?

DR. TALBOT

Mars, elephants, clowns... I don't think we're traveling in the same universe tonight. Is it Matthew?

Dr. Talbot takes her hand in his.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Your concern for Matthew is what attracted me to you.

NICOLE

How disappointing. I thought it was for my incredible good looks and sense of humor.

DR. TALBOT

I'll admit that I did notice those items also -- but you're a smart mother.

Nicole blushes and pulls her hand out to give him a playful slap on the wrist.

NICOLE

Stop it. I was kidding. I've never considered my brains to be my long suit.

DR. TALBOT

Don't cut yourself short. I'm also serious when I say that you really are an attractive woman. And I mean the whole package.

Nicole feels her cheeks. They are flushed. She does a southern belle fan wave with her hands towards her face.

NICOLE

I'm not used to this dating thing. I've been focused on Matthew since his dad left and not too many guys out there are what you'd call a role model.

DR. TALBOT

The protective mother again. Now you've gotta find a good father for Matthew.

Nicole tosses her napkin on the table.

NICOLE

That's ridiculous. What makes you think every single mother is shopping for a father for her son?

DR. TALBOT

I thought the comment about not having a role model...

Nicole holds up a hand.

NICOLE

Let's drop it.

INT. HOSPITAL NURSES' STATION -- NIGHT

Matthew sits inside the nurses' station surrounded by THREE NURSES who are LAUGHING.

MATTHEW

Wait, wait, got one more. What do you get when you cross a...

Dr. Samuals comes around the corner and sees Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS
Are we feeling better?

The nurses freeze, then start grabbing charts, typing on the computer, and picking up phones - basically trying to look busy.

MATTHEW
I'm feeling splendid.

He looks around at his lost audience.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
At least until you interrupted.

Dr. Samuals comes up to him and helps him up. He puts his arm around him.

DR. SAMUALS
My apologies.

The nurses stare at Dr. Samuals. They are shocked.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The meal has been cleared away and the pizza has been boxed for take home. Dr. Talbot reaches for Nicole's hand, but instead she reaches into her purse for a pen and paper. She leans forward.

NICOLE
Remember when I asked you about the form in Matthew's file?

DR. TALBOT
I can see that protective thing again.

NICOLE
I can barely watch a parenting show on TV without taking notes.

DR. TALBOT
Let's try following the doctor's orders and relax a bit.

He takes the pen and paper out of her hands and replaces it with her wine glass.

NICOLE
Have you ever heard of the Infinite Project?

Dr. Talbot shakes his head.

DR. TALBOT

We're a research hospital. I get hundreds of requests for medical histories a month for various projects.

NICOLE

It doesn't sound familiar? Infinite?

DR. TALBOT

I just fill out the forms. I don't care about the study unless it involves one of my patients.

NICOLE

You certainly do seem devoted to your patients. You are my new hero.

DR. TALBOT

I've been wanting to explain something, I didn't actually perform Matthew's restore. Dr. Samuals did.

NICOLE

Why didn't you say something earlier?

DR. TALBOT

I was a little embarrassed. There seemed to be a schedule mixup although I'm trying to figure out what happened.

Nicole looks at her watch. She picks up the pizza box.

NICOLE

I think we should call it a night.

DR. TALBOT

Are you sure that you're not upset about me missing the restore?

NICOLE

Not upset -- disappointed.

Nicole heads towards the door a few steps ahead him. Dr. Talbot frowns slightly and tries to keep up.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Nicole tiptoes into Matthew's room with the pizza. Matthew is fast asleep. She sits down next to the bed and opens the box. She takes out a slice of pizza and starts to eat it. Matthew stirs and opens one eye.

MATTHEW
Isn't that mine?

NICOLE
I thought you were asleep.

MATTHEW
Never too tired for pizza.

He reaches and takes a slice that Nicole has offered to him.
He takes a bite.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Real food. Where's Dr. Talbot?

NICOLE
It was just dinner.

MATTHEW
Another one bites the dust?

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

Nicole pulls up to an apartment building and turns around to
Jeremy who is playing a game on his laptop.

NICOLE
Same time tomorrow?

Jeremy closes the laptop.

JEREMY
You're speaking to me again?

NICOLE
Big Bertha says that you won't let
anybody else drive you.

JEREMY
Big, big Bertha. Ever seen her?

Nicole shakes her head, no.

NICOLE
I've heard she leaves tire tracks
over anyone who messes with her --
which is what I feel like doing to
you.

JEREMY
I was only trying to help.

NICOLE

You're the reason why hacking is illegal. I hurt Matthew by trusting your information.

JEREMY

I'll make it up to you -- how about a new computer for Matthew?

NICOLE

With Matthew coming home today, I'm done with technology for now. I don't want to hear another thing about brain waves, backups, or even bratwurst.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Dr. Talbot leans back in his chair staring at his computer terminal twirling a pencil around in his hand when Nicole walks in. He quickly minimizes the computer screen before turning towards her.

DR. TALBOT

Here to pick up Matthew?

Nicole nods and hands him some papers.

NICOLE

They say I need your signature on these to take Matthew home.

Dr. Talbot takes the papers and starts signing and making some notes.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Did you find out how the mix up in the schedules happened?

DR. TALBOT

Not exactly.

NICOLE

Exactly? What do you mean?

Dr. Talbot pretends to straighten up some papers on his desk. He is avoiding her eyes.

DR. TALBOT

It's just some internal company politics.

Nicole turns to leave.

NICOLE

I'd would think that where your patients' safety is concerned, politics wouldn't be an issue.

After she walks out, Dr. Talbot hugs himself again.

DR. TALBOT

Neither would I.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole and Matthew get out of their car and head towards the door. As she opens it, Tags comes bounding out of the door towards Matthew.

NICOLE

Look who's here.

Tags gets about six feet away then stops, growls, and backs up.

Matthew walks briskly past Tags and starts into the house. Tags comes closer again and Matthew pushes the little dog away. It WHIMPERS.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Matthew.

MATTHEW

What?

Matthew shakes his head.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I've got work to do.

NICOLE

Work?

MATTHEW

I mean, I want to get my things put away and rest alone in my room for a while. I need to be alone.

Matthew continues into the house.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

The attendants, Carl and Hal, wheel a YOUNG BOY PATIENT past an absorbed Dr. Talbot who is making notes in a chart. As the patient goes by, Dr. Talbot looks up.

DR. TALBOT

Wait.

The two freeze and Dr. Talbot approaches the bed.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
This is my patient.

HAL
Dr. Samuals wants him brought to the
east wing.

Dr. Talbot starts to examine the boy when Dr. Samuals comes
from around the corner.

DR. TALBOT
This is my patient. He's supposed
to be in post op.

DR. SAMUALS
There were some complications.

Dr. Talbot looks down at the chart he's holding.

DR. TALBOT
It was routine.

DR. SAMUALS
The patient has been reassigned.

Dr. Samuals takes the chart from Dr. Talbot's hand.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)
Your case load is obviously taking a
toll on you. Take the evening off,
get some rest, before you leave.

DR. TALBOT
Leave?

DR. SAMUALS
Check with Amy for your new schedule.

Dr. Samuals doesn't wait for an answer and motions for the
attendants to continue down the corridor. He leaves a stunned
Dr. Talbot.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Rita is busy setting the table while Nicole is making
sandwiches at the kitchen counter.

NICOLE
I've never known Matthew to hole up
in his room for so long.

RITA

Maybe he's concerned about you dating that doctor.

NICOLE

We just went out that one night for pizza.

RITA

Kids are perceptive to things even adults don't notice. Maybe you're more attracted than you'd like to admit.

NICOLE

I thought maybe I'd take a chance on him, but now the good doctor is acting kind of weird. Very distracted.

RITA

That's not being weird, that's just being normal for a man. It's just been too long since you've been around them.

Rita starts chopping some lettuce for the sandwiches.

RITA (CONT'D)

You need someone in your life.

NICOLE

I have Matthew.

RITA

That's not enough.

NICOLE

Define "enough", and if all men are weird, why would I want one as an example for Matthew? I'd just like them to think things are back to normal without any...

The door bell RINGS.

INT. NICOLE'S FOYER -- NIGHT

Nicole goes into the foyer and answers the door. Dr. Talbot stands there with one red rose in his hand. Nicole frowns.

DR. TALBOT

They were passing out free roses at the grocery store.

Nicole maintains her frown.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

You were upset at the hospital.

NICOLE

You let Dr. Samuals work on Matthew and took the credit.

DR. TALBOT

To make up for it, I'm going to ask you out and have Dr. Samuals show up for the date.

Nicole holds up her hands in surrender.

NICOLE

Anything but that.

He reaches over and takes down her hands. He places the rose in one.

DR. TALBOT

Maybe just take my rose and deep apology for not being your hero?

NICOLE

We were just going to have a light dinner. Can you join us?

DR. TALBOT

Matthew mentioned something about your cooking...

Nicole puts her arm around Dr. Talbot and guides him towards the kitchen.

NICOLE

You're safe. My mom is here.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

Dr. Talbot and Nicole enter just as Rita is putting the sandwiches at the table.

RITA

Hey, Dr. Talbot.

DR. TALBOT

Please call me Daniel.

RITA

Danny it is. I'm just going to run some of these up to Matthew.

Rita heads upstairs with a plate of sandwiches, turns and winks at Nicole.

RITA (CONT'D)

I might even just have mine up there with Matthew. Spend some quality time alone with him, you know.

Nicole frowns and shakes her head. She pulls out a chair for Dr. Talbot and places a sandwich and glass of water in front of him. Dr. Talbot takes a bite of the sandwich.

DR. TALBOT

This is good.

NICOLE

Are you sure you're not just saying that as another apology offering?

Dr. Talbot puts down his sandwich and grabs her hand.

DR. TALBOT

Can I see you again?

Nicole pulls away slightly and frowns.

NICOLE

It appears that you have neatly engineered that, with our daily checkups for Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

I have some tickets to a Padres game this weekend. I thought you and Matthew would like to join me.

Nicole starts to protest and pauses.

NICOLE

I guess Matthew would probably like that. You can ask him tomorrow.

DR. TALBOT

Tomorrow?

NICOLE

Remember, you are seeing Matthew everyday for the first month or so?

DR. TALBOT

Unfortunately, Dr. Samuals will be seeing Matthew starting tomorrow. He has me scheduled for seminars for the next week. That's another reason why I wanted to see you today. Do you think Matthew will mind?

NICOLE

Dr. Samuals doesn't seem to bother him like he does me, but I didn't realize that you would be gone all week.

Dr. Talbot smiles and takes her hand back - a little more firmly this time.

DR. TALBOT

Is that regret that I hear? Could I talk you into going out for a drink tonight? A little send off to a soldier going off to battle?

NICOLE

I don't think seminars are the same as battles - unless they are in North Hollywood.

DR. TALBOT

Actually, it's worse. Bakersfield. Does that qualify?

NICOLE

Half of those who travel to Bakersfield never come back.

Dr. Talbot fakes an alarmed look. He reaches for a napkin and the napkin holder tips over. Some letters and two tickets fall out. He gathers the stack together and attempts to return them to the holder.

He studies the tickets for a second.

DR. TALBOT

Theater tickets? Odd napkin choice. Rather expensive isn't it?

NICOLE

They're tickets to Miss Saigon tomorrow night and I figured with all that has happened, I'd just cancel.

DR. TALBOT

Two tickets? Who was the original date?

NICOLE

Jealous?

DR. TALBOT

Jealous and curious.

Dr. Talbot rubs his chin with a pensive look.

NICOLE

It was Matthew. But I already asked him if he wanted to go and he said that he didn't have the time. Can you believe that? He said that he had way too much catching up to do.

DR. TALBOT

I'll have to agree that he is a serious guy about his homework. I bet he'll graduate from college at sixteen.

NICOLE

Fourteen at this rate.

DR. TALBOT

What time should I pick you up?

NICOLE

I think you misunderstood me. I'm not going.

DR. TALBOT

How about six and dinner? I love the theater. Let's see if your mom would mind staying with Matthew so you'll be able to enjoy the show.

Nicole smiles.

NICOLE

Did you sell cars in a past life?

As if on cue, Rita comes around the corner.

RITA

Did I hear my name?

INT. DR. TALBOT'S CAR -- NIGHT

Nicole and Dr. Talbot drive home after the theater.

NICOLE

I don't think I've ever cried so much. That was such a sad story. I didn't expect her to die.

DR. TALBOT

It really drives home your theory of the mother's natural instinct.

NICOLE

I'd do anything for Matthew including
killing myself or anyone who tried
to harm him.

Dr. Talbot leans over and kisses Nicole lightly on the lips.
She instinctively pulls back. The front porch light comes
on. Nicole grabs the door of the car.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Busted. Looks like my mom is watching
both Matthew and me tonight.

DR. TALBOT

I feel like a high school kid. Please
tell your mom good night while I
sneak out of here.

Nicole leans over and gives him a light peck on the cheek.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Nicole peaks into the bedroom at a sleeping Matthew. On the
desk next to the door is the book that Matthew had been
reading at the hospital.

She brings the book into the hall light and opens it to where
a scrap of paper is being used as a book mark.

After studying the scrap for a moment, she replaces it with
a sheet from a note pad on Matthew's desk and takes the scrap
with her.

EXT. ANGEL STADIUM -- DAY

Nicole, Dr. Talbot, and Matthew sit about twenty rows up
behind home plate. Nicole and Dr. Talbot munch on hot dogs
and occasionally lean into each other to make a comment.

Matthew studies the score sheet in the program and furiously
makes notes in the book. He has a rolled up newspaper on
his lap. Nicole leans over and holds out a hot dog for
Matthew.

NICOLE

You sure that you don't want one?

MATTHEW

I said no.

Dr. Talbot holds his hot dog up.

DR. TALBOT

They are guaranteed to be completely
meat free and delicious.

MATTHEW

I'm busy.

Matthew takes the newspaper and removes the rubber band. He pops the rubber band into his mouth and starts discarding sections until he comes to the sports page. He quickly folds it open and starts circling statistics.

NICOLE

You don't seem to be enjoying the game much.

MATTHEW

(impatiently)

I'm trying to get some work done.

Nicole looks at Dr. Talbot and shrugs. They go back to watching the game. Matthew pulls the rubber band out of his mouth, stretches it, then pops it back in.

DR. TALBOT

Those aren't meant to be chewed on.

Matthew glances at Dr. Talbot for a moment, then back at his newspaper.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Rubber bands. They're rather toxic in quantity.

MATTHEW

I'll try not to eat mass quantities of them.

DR. TALBOT

The latex isn't very good for you. Try some gum instead.

Matthew looks up from his paper and stares coldly at Dr. Talbot. He removes the rubber band and shoots it high into the air.

MATTHEW

Happy?

Dr. Talbot nods his approval.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(Angrily)

Splendid.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Nicole and Dr. Talbot sit at the kitchen table having a cup of coffee.

NICOLE

I just wish Matthew had enjoyed himself more.

DR. TALBOT

He wasn't the friendliest person in the world.

NICOLE

He almost seemed to resent us, or maybe you, being there.

DR. TALBOT

Especially about the rubber bands.

NICOLE

That's not like him. I think I'll take him to my family doctor next week for a closer look.

DR. TALBOT

Do you think he's bothered that I'm seeing you?

NICOLE

I haven't had many good relationships. He might be getting protective.

DR. TALBOT

It's odd, because he's the one who set us up. Talking to me about how lonely his mom was and what a good cook you were.

(laughing)

Boy, that was a lie.

NICOLE

I hope you meant that part about being lonely was a lie.

DR. TALBOT

Certainly, since we all know it's true that you're a wonderful cook, or at least great at ordering pizza.

Dr. Talbot takes her hand and squeezes it. Nicole pulls it away awkwardly and pretends to be sweeping away some crumbs on the table.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Speaking of pizza, how about we order one and watch a movie?

Nicole shakes her head, no and ushers him towards the door.

NICOLE

Until Matthew starts seeming more like himself, I need to be around for him.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Matthew takes a CD out of his backpack and puts it into his computer. He starts reading the directories to see what's on the disk and makes notes on a pad next to the computer.

He double clicks on a file and a video comes up on his screen revealing Dr. Samuals.

DR. SAMUALS

(onscreen)

Hello Matthew.

Matthew pushes away from the computer screen.

MATTHEW

Wow.

DR. SAMUALS

(onscreen)

Hopefully, it's you - my Matthew watching this.

Matthew moves to the right and left. Dr. Samuals still stares straight ahead.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

(onscreen)

If you are having problems melding our memories, Dr. Talbot can help you.

MATTHEW

Dr. Talbot?

DR. SAMUALS

(onscreen)

He's one of us. There's just one more matter to attend to.

INT. DR. PACKARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Dr. Packard stares at Matthew while Dr. Samuals smugly watches from the corner.

DR. PACKARD

This is absurd!

DR. SAMUALS

The teacher is jealous of his pupil?

DR. PACKARD
 What I did was different. This was
 a perfectly normal boy.

Dr. Packard pulls himself up and confronts Dr. Samuals.

DR. PACKARD (CONT'D)
 Messing around with those boys in
 the east wing is nothing like what
 you've done to him.

Dr. Packard comes back and looks at Matthew. He slumps into
 a chair and puts a frail hand on Matthew's arm.

DR. PACKARD (CONT'D)
 Please forgive me.

Dr. Packard points at Dr. Samuals.

DR. PACKARD (CONT'D)
 Forgive us.

He drops his head into his hands and SOBS.

DR. PACKARD (CONT'D)
 Forgive us, forgive us.

Dr. Samuals pulls Matthew up.

DR. SAMUALS
 Let's go. Dr. Packard knows what he
 has to do.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Rita makes sandwiches while Nicole studies a book.

RITA
 You look like you've seen a ghost --
 what are you reading?

Nicole holds it up, it's "RAISING BRIGHTNESS".

RITA (CONT'D)
 Another one of the gobble garble
 psycho head trip books written by a
 loser whose own kids hate him?

NICOLE
 I'm lost. It's like in one day he
 went from being my sweet child to
 this hostile angry boy. It's like
 an alien is inside him.

RITA

It's called a teenager. I went
through the same thing with you.

Nicole tosses the book aside and picks up the newspaper.
She flips it open and GASPS.

NICOLE

Dr. Packard, the head of the institute
died yesterday. He's the one who
developed that whole backup thing
with Dr. Samuals.

RITA

How?

NICOLE

Says here, natural causes. My god,
he was eighty-nine.

RITA

That's not natural causes -- that's
just dust to dust.

Rita hands Nicole a plate.

RITA (CONT'D)

Go feed your alien.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Matthew sits at his desk and scribbles notes on a yellow
legal pad. The room is in complete disarray. There are
books, magazines, and clothes strewn everywhere.

Trash overflows out of the trash can in the corner. Matthew
is still in his pajamas and his hair is disheveled.

Nicole TAPS gently on the partially open door and enters.
She is carrying a tray with a sandwich and a glass of milk.

NICOLE

Lunch is served.

MATTHEW

Not hungry.

Matthew continues to scribble on the note pad, then pauses.
He turns around and looks at his mother.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

What do you have there?

NICOLE
Tuna salad sandwich with chips and
milk.

Nicole places the tray on Matthew's desk and sits on the
bed.

MATTHEW
I hate tuna.

NICOLE
It's your favorite.

Matthew sniffs the tuna and crinkles his nose. He starts to
eat the chips and drink the milk.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
What are you working on?

Nicole gets up and starts to pick up the books on Matthew's
desk.

MATTHEW
Science for school.

Matthew takes the books away from his mother and places them
on the floor.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
I'm busy.

NICOLE
Maybe you should think about taking
a shower.

Nicole tousles Matthew's hair.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
And tomorrow, we better get you a
haircut.

Matthew is obviously annoyed and pulls back.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
How about taking Tags for a walk?
You could use some fresh air.

MATTHEW
Whatever. Can I get back to work
now?

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING ROOM -- DAY

Matthew sits very erect on an examination table wearing a
hospital gown.

Dr. Talbot checks Matthew's eyes, ears, and throat. Nicole sits in a chair next to the door.

DR. TALBOT
What about the headaches?

MATTHEW
All gone. I feel splendid.

NICOLE
How does he look, Daniel? Dr. Samuals wasn't very good about telling me anything this past week. He wouldn't even let me stay with Matthew.

DR. TALBOT
One hundred percent. A complete recovery. We'll do a few blood tests again today.

He pulls out a few papers from the chart.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
Matthew, go next door, get dressed and then scoot on down to the lab.

MATTHEW
I'd rather skip the lab. Dr. Samuals felt a weekly blood test is sufficient.

DR. TALBOT
You're my patient.

Matthew hops off the table and heads for the interconnecting door.

MATTHEW
Yeah, right.

Matthew leaves the room. Dr. Talbot pulls up a chair next to Nicole.

DR. TALBOT
You look concerned.

NICOLE
He's irritable, anti-social, and has completely changed his eating habits.

DR. TALBOT
Normal for a preteen.

NICOLE
Matthew has never been normal.

DR. TALBOT
Does he show any signs of disorientation, dizziness, nausea or ringing in his ears?

NICOLE
Aren't you listening to me? It's nothing clinical.

DR. TALBOT
Do you think that Matthew might be experiencing emotional difficulties? I happen to know a great therapist that specializes in adolescent psychiatry.

NICOLE
A psychiatrist? For Matthew? It's not that kind of problem.

DR. TALBOT
I'm suggesting that you have Matthew evaluated -- a consultation to put your mind at ease.

NICOLE
Are you suggesting that I'm imagining Matthew's changes?

DR. TALBOT
Is it possible that you're imagining things due to the stress you're under?

NICOLE
I didn't expect to be patronized by you.

He reaches over for her hand.

DR. TALBOT
You just need to relax a little. Maybe I could help in that area? Dinner?

Nicole gets up from her chair, obviously getting angry. She faces Dr. Talbot.

NICOLE
I'm busy.

DR. TALBOT
The brush off, eh?

NICOLE

You must just be imagining things,
due to the stress you're under.

His pager BUZZES. He looks down at it and frowns.

DR. TALBOT

Touche'. I guess we'll have to make
it another time.

Dr. Talbot leaves the room. Nicole picks up the chart and starts reading as she reaches in her purse for something. Dr. Samuals appears at the door.

DR. SAMUALS

Where's Matthew?

Nicole apparently startled, places the chart back on the side table and gets up.

NICOLE

In the lab.

Dr. Samuals reaches past Nicole and picks up the file on the table.

DR. SAMUALS

Send him down to my office when he
returns.

NICOLE

Actually, I'd like to run him back
to school, unless there is a problem?

DR. SAMUALS

Just a few questions.

Dr. Samuals keeps the file and heads for the door.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Dr. Samuals bumps into Matthew a few steps out of the door.

DR. SAMUALS

How are you feeling?

MATTHEW

I don't like them taking blood.

DR. SAMUALS

An annoying necessity to monitor the
levels of neo-transmitters.

Dr. Talbot comes around a corner and pauses behind Dr. Samuals, out of the vision of Matthew.

MATTHEW

I'm concerned about my level of glycoproteins, they seem excessive.

DR. SAMUALS

That's due to the introduction of acetylcholine during the final stages of your restore. The levels will even out when the receptors are completely healed.

MATTHEW

That explains a lot.

Matthew continues back to the examining room, going past Dr. Samuals and Dr. Talbot.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Hello Daniel.

Nicole comes out of the examining room and stands in the doorway. Matthew goes past her into the room. Dr. Samuals turns and faces Dr. Talbot. He holds up Matthew's file.

DR. SAMUALS

What was this doing left in the examining room with Mrs. Fry?

DR. TALBOT

I was late to get to my next patient. Here, I'll return it to the desk now.

DR. SAMUALS

That won't be necessary. I want to review it.

DR. TALBOT

I'm sure she didn't see anything.

DR. SAMUALS

I'd like to ascertain that myself.

Nicole steps back unnoticed into the examining room.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING ROOM -- DAY

Matthew gets dressed behind a curtain. Nicole sits back down in the chair.

NICOLE

You okay?

MATTHEW

Splendid.

NICOLE
What were you talking to Dr. Samuals
about?

MATTHEW
It's technical.

NICOLE
Indulge me.

MATTHEW
Why don't you just read my chart
again?

Matthew steps out from behind the curtain.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Maybe this time, something will sink
in that stupid taxi driving head of
yours.

Nicole GASPS and grabs Matthew by the arm.

NICOLE
What did you say to me?

MATTHEW
Forget it, I'm busy. Let's get out
of here.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole and Matthew get out of the car. Spencer plays catch
with Tags in the front yard. His scooter rests on the
sidewalk. Matthew walks right past him, towards the front
door.

SPENCER
Hey.

Matthew looks down at Spencer.

MATTHEW
What?

SPENCER
It's Tuesday.

MATTHEW
Brilliant observation.

SPENCER
The Extreme Team? Skateboard park?
Free T-shirts?

Matthew shrugs his shoulders and continues into the house.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Nicole picks up the phone and dials.

NICOLE
 (into the phone)
 How about that dinner -- eight o'clock
 it is -- I'll meet you in your office.

Nicole hangs up the phone and dials another number. She
 digs out the note she took from Matthew's room.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
 (into the phone)
 What does twelve period seven period
 two period one seventy six mean?

PHONE CONVERSION BETWEEN JEREMY AND NICOLE - INTERCUT AS
 NECESSARY.

JEREMY
 It's an IP address.

NICOLE
 Eye what?

JEREMY
 Internet Protocol. I'm pinging it
 right now -- nothing. Got to be an
 internal address. It identifies a
 computer on an internal network.
 Who does it belong to?

NICOLE
 Don't know, but I'm going to find
 out.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Nicole rummages through Dr. Talbot's his file cabinets, but
 every few seconds turns around to make sure no one sees her.

Dr. Samuals walks by, stops at the door then quickly turns
 around and heads in the direction he just came in. Nicole
 pulls out a file and looks through it as Dr. Talbot enters.

DR. TALBOT
 You're early.

Startled, Nicole turns around with a file still in her hand.

NICOLE

I'm was looking for information about Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

Don't you trust me?

NICOLE

I overheard you talking to Dr. Samuals about me seeing Matthew's file.

DR. TALBOT

Let's go and I'll try to explain.

Dr. Talbot takes the file from her and replaces it in the file cabinet.

NICOLE

I'm tired of you trying to explain.

DR. TALBOT

Give me one more chance, but we need to get out of here right now.

He looks cautiously down the hallway, then escorts Nicole out of his office.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Dr. Talbot guides Nicole to his car. He looks over his shoulder back towards the hospital. Nicole is getting more and more distressed. She stops and confronts him.

NICOLE

Talk to me now.

DR. TALBOT

In the car.

Dr. Talbot unlocks and opens the door to his car and ushers Nicole in. He closes the door and gets in on the driver's side.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S CAR -- NIGHT

Dr. Talbot turns towards Nicole and tries to take her hand, but she pulls it back and crosses her arms.

DR. TALBOT

You've got to understand, our institute has the patent on this backup procedure.

NICOLE

Do you think that I am trying to steal information?

DR. TALBOT

Corporate spying is big money. I could see where a taxi driver might get offered some dough for listening in on conversations. You've been driving Dr. Samuals for a few years, right?

NICOLE

You just don't get it, do you? It's about Matthew.

DR. TALBOT

It's just that Dr. Samuals doesn't like your attitude and he's upset about you snooping around. I can't tell you how difficult he can make things for me. I'm at this institute because of him. One word from him and I'm gone tomorrow.

NICOLE

Don't you have any concern about Matthew?

DR. TALBOT

Right now your concerns are completely unsubstantiated. Maybe Dr. Samuals is right - we're too involved.

NICOLE

Too involved?

Nicole reaches for the car door.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Don't bother with dinner. And don't bother with me or Matthew.

Nicole gets out of the car, slams the door and heads towards her car. Dr. Talbot jumps out and heads back to hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

As Dr. Talbot nears the entrance, he notices Dr. Samuals standing in the shadows.

DR. SAMUALS

Is Mrs. Fry upset?

DR. TALBOT
Understandably so.

DR. SAMUALS
I doubt her integrity when I find
her going through our files.

DR. TALBOT
She's just concerned about her son.

DR. SAMUALS
Concerned in what way?

DR. TALBOT
Matthew has displayed some noticeably
different behavior. She's taking
him to her own doctor.

DR. SAMUALS
That's absurd. Get her to cancel.
Hospitalize him if necessary.

DR. TALBOT
Seeing her own doctor would relieve
her worries. He's still my patient.

Dr. Talbot leaves Dr. Samuals alone and enters the hospital.

INT. DR. SAMUALS OFFICE -- NIGHT

Dr. Samuals picks his phone and dials.

DR. SAMUALS
(into the phone)
Security -- I want Dr. Talbot found
immediately. Contain him and call
me directly.

He slams the phone down.

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Nicole enters the front door. She is still visibly upset
from her encounter with Dr. Talbot earlier. She ignores the
excited dog and puts her purse and keys on a table to the
right of the front door.

She quickly goes upstairs to Matthew's room. As she
approaches his room, she freezes when she hears his voice.

MATTHEW
There is no way I'm going to let
some half-educated family quack
examine me... Okay, tomorrow... I
think I heard her car...

Matthew hangs up the phone and starts making quick notes on his yellow legal pad. He scratches his head and opens a few books, looking frantically at passages then tossing them to the floor. Nicole is shocked.

INT. NICOLE'S KITCHEN -- DAY

She looks tired as she picks up the phone and dials.

NICOLE
 (into the phone)
 Ella, it's Nicole Fry... We'll be there at two... That's what I was calling about... I don't know. I requested Matthew's charts be sent over to you days ago...

INT. NURSES'S STATION -- DAY

Amy sits at a desk making some notes in a file. Amy looks up and sees Nicole. She gets up quickly to help Nicole.

NICOLE
 Dr. Talbot is not in his office.

AMY
 Wonderful news. He's been transferred to our Boston facility. Quite a promotion.

Amy gently touches Nicole's arm.

AMY (CONT'D)
 I'm sure he tried to call you.

NICOLE
 I doubt it.

Nicole sadly shakes her head.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
 I want Matthew's charts.

AMY
 Charts?

NICOLE
 He has an appointment with my personal physician. They've had some difficulty getting his file sent over.

AMY
 I'll check on that for you.

NICOLE
Who will be Matthew's new doctor?

AMY
Dr. Samuals. In fact, he'd like to see Matthew today or tomorrow.

NICOLE
That won't be possible. I'll call you after my doctor has seen him.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole stands impatiently at the receptionist counter as a bored Matthew sits flipping through an outdoor magazine.

NICOLE
I made this appointment with Ella.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry Mrs. Fry, but it's not in the computer.

NICOLE
And his chart?

The receptionist grows impatient.

RECEPTIONIST
We don't even request a chart unless you make an appointment.

NICOLE
We have an appointment. Just let me talk to Dr. Cray.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, Mrs. Fry but he's off today. I could fit you in with Dr. Smith at three.

Nicole gathers her purse and briefcase. She motions for Matthew to get up.

NICOLE
Forget it.

INT. NICOLE'S CAR -- DAY

Nicole's hands are firmly attached to the steering wheel as Matthew buckles his seatbelt. She bangs her head on the steering wheel in frustration.

MATTHEW
Mom?

Nicole lifts her head and reaches for her cell phone.

NICOLE

I need to make some calls.

Matthew studies her face as she starts to dial then reaches into his backpack.

MATTHEW

I forgot to give you this.

He holds out an envelope.

NICOLE

What's that?

MATTHEW

A letter.

Nicole tears open the envelope.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

It's from Dr. Talbot. He wanted to say good-bye.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Dr. Talbot is on the operating table. There are restraints holding his arms down. His eyes are closed. The DMT equipment is at his head. Dr. Samuals is next to the table, with two security officers in the background.

Dr. Samuals turns to the security officers.

DR. SAMUALS

He won't be going anywhere for a while.

The guards leave.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Will we?

Dr. Talbot MOANS. He struggles to open his eyes.

DR. TALBOT

Why?

DR. SAMUALS

I'm a sentimental old fool. I thought Dr. Samuals would like this nice young body of yours.

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Samuals? You're Dr. Samuals.

Dr. Samuals picks up the DMT receptors and starts to affix them to Dr. Talbot's head.

DR. SAMUALS

Why does the man who I gave a brilliant brain to betray me? You were a stupid jock when you came here -- doomed to a mediocre career. Dr. Samuals used to play ball, so after his accident I thought -- what the heck -- let's have some fun with it and experiment at the same time.

Dr. Talbot tries to jerk away, but he's getting drowsy.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

The mistake was that we struggled for years in that frail old body and then this ugly one gets a brain tumor that gets bigger with each passing day. I should have put myself in you instead of Dr. Samuals.

Dr. Talbot MOANS.

DR. TALBOT

Dr. Packard?

DR. SAMUALS

Yes, I'm a little bit of this and a little bit of that -- but now we almost have that remarkable kid. Problem is that it will be years before he can take over our work. In the meantime, your brain is just right and I miss talking to myself.

He presses the DMT helmet down firmly on Dr. Talbot's head.

INT. NICOLE'S CAR -- DAY

Nicole turns to the second page of the letter and is obviously shaken by it's contents. Matthew studies her reaction.

MATTHEW

Good news?

Nicole looks over at Matthew and back at the letter. She puts on a forced happy face.

NICOLE

Surprisingly good news. He turned down the Boston job to stay here.

MATTHEW

Great. Then let's go see Dr. Talbot instead.

NICOLE

I still need to do a few things first. I'll drop you off at school and pick you up later.

MATTHEW

And what about your big need for me to see a doctor?

NICOLE

You have an appointment with Dr. Samuals tomorrow.

Matthew stares out the window impatiently as they pull in front of the school.

MATTHEW

Whatever -- what a waste.

NICOLE

What do you mean?

MATTHEW

This school is a waste of my time.

NICOLE

Do you want me to talk to the counselors about changing your classes?

Matthew turns towards her, his face fully of fury.

MATTHEW

Don't you get it you stupid, bitch? It's a waste. Take me home now.

Nicole grabs his arm.

NICOLE

Stop it! I know it's not you and I'm going to prove it.

Matthew face softens.

MATTHEW

What are you talking about Mom? Of course it's me.

Her BEEPER goes off. Nicole is conflicted. Matthew waves her off.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Go, go, go. I'm late for school.

Matthew jumps out of the car. Nicole watches him go until the BEEPER goes again.

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

Jeremy sits in the front seat. The car is not moving.

NICOLE

I have to drive you somewhere.

She hands the clipboard to him. He ignores it and pulls out a laptop.

JEREMY

You haven't heard a word I've said.

Nicole shakes her head.

NICOLE

I can't think about that creep right now, I'm too worried about Matthew.

JEREMY

This is about Matthew. There is no Dr. Albert Samuals Senior. The trust was set up by Dr. Albert Samuals -- your Dr. Samuals. The trust goes to the Infinite Project, but income distributions go to Valley Park Retirement home.

Nicole drops her head onto the steering wheel.

NICOLE

My head is going to explode. It's too much. I'm just a driver. Give me an address and I'll take you there.

Jeremy grabs her by the arm.

JEREMY

Wrong. You are smarter than that.

He grabs the clipboard and writes an address before he gets out.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Drive there. Drive to that address and find out for yourself.

INT. VALLEY PARK RETIREMENT HOME -- DAY

Nicole stands with her clipboard at a reception desk. She confronts a serious gate keeper, MAGGIE, who shakes her head.

MAGGIE

I would have known if someone called for a town car.

Nicole turns the clipboard to the stern woman.

NICOLE

Right there in black and white. Valley Park to Meeker Institute.

MAGGIE

Meeker? You didn't say Meeker. That's got to be Harriet.

NICOLE

Harriet?

MAGGIE

Mrs. Samuals. Room twenty-seven. Her son is a big shot doctor over at Meeker.

Maggie sits down and starts to organize files.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We take her over there twice a year. Don't know why he'd send a fancy car for her -- we do a fine job of getting her over there. He could have called first, we have a schedule to keep to here. Don't know why he doesn't think we can...

Nicole turns and heads down the hall, looking at each door number.

INT. TOWN ROOM IN VALLEY PARK -- DAY

Nicole sits across from a frail woman, HARRIET SAMUALS. The woman rocks in her chair while Nicole flips through a photo album.

NICOLE

I'd hardly recognize him. He looks so happy.

HARRIET

A sweet and loving boy.
(MORE)

HARRIET (CONT'D)

He loved baseball, might have gone pro if he hadn't hurt his shoulder. They said he was the best left handed pitcher in the farm league.

Nicole traces around the photo.

NICOLE

You must be proud, though. A famous brain surgeon.

HARRIET

I was. After he put me here, he came here twice a week -- Tuesdays and Thursdays until the accident.

NICOLE

Accident?

HARRIET

Skiing. I told him that everyone wore a helmet now -- but not my Albert. He love to ski and ski fast.

Harriet starts to SOB.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

No parent should have to bury a child.

Nicole jumps up and runs out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY VALLEY PARK RETIREMENT HOME -- DAY

Nicole almost collides with a nurse. The nurse holds Nicole to prevent her from falling.

NURSE

You're a little young to need assisted living.

NICOLE

Mrs. Samuals, her son...

The nurse glances into the room. Harriet is still crying.

NURSE

Don't worry, she gets this way a few times a day. If only her worthless son would visit her. It's so painful for her that she tells everyone that he's dead.

NICOLE

Dr. Samuals.

The nurse nods.

NURSE

What kind of heartless bastard doesn't visit his own mother? He's got time to publish in all the medical journals, but can't spend a few minutes to swing by and see his mother. If it wasn't for that nice Dr. Talbot coming by a few times a week...

Nicole runs towards the exit.

INT. DR. SAMUALS OFFICE -- DAY

Dr. Samuals sits at his desk as Dr. Talbot enters.

DR. SAMUALS

You look splendid.

Daniel rubs his head and takes a seat.

DR. TALBOT

I don't feel splendid. I've got a monstrous headache.

DR. SAMUALS

You took quite a fall earlier today.

Dr. Talbot gets up but is a little dizzy and sits down again.

DR. TALBOT

I don't know why I can't remember it.

Dr. Samuals reaches into his drawer.

DR. SAMUALS

Take a couple of these for the headache, then take a couple of hours off.

Dr. Samuals hands him some pills and pours him a glass of water from a pitcher on his credenza. Dr. Talbot swallows the pills.

DR. TALBOT

The afternoon off? I've got rounds.

DR. SAMUALS

All taken care of after your fall. In fact, I have some of your messages here...

He pulls out a slip of paper from his jacket.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

It's from Mrs. Fry. She's concerned about Matthew.

He hands Dr. Talbot a file.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

Find a way to convince her that her son is fine. We're in this together now.

Dr. Samuals ushers him out of the office.

INT. JEREMY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole storms into Jeremy's office.

NICOLE

You knew. Why didn't you tell me?

JEREMY

It wasn't important for both of us to know I was right. I told you two weeks ago that your son's doctor was a dead man. You trusted the good and handsome Dr. Talbot -- or should I call him Dr. Samuals? He might even be Dr. Packard. It's very confusing and like the Stepford doctors over there.

Jeremy gets up from his computer, but pats it on the side.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

When are you going to start trusting technology, start trusting me?

NICOLE

Doctor's orders, do what the doctor says, medical studies show...

Nicole collapses into a chair.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

We're trained to trust the medical profession.

JEREMY

Not your fault. "Do no harm," they say. The problem is that these guys are not the medical profession, they are the bad guys and you've got to do something about it.

Jeremy points at his computer.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I've been trying to hack into their computers to get the goods on them and I can't get in. It's going to be up to you.

Nicole shakes her head.

NICOLE

Me? I can't even get my email.

JEREMY

You can get into that institute. I'll tell you exactly what to do. Here's that IP address you found. I've studied their security systems, and file structures, but their firewall won't let me work from out here, and I can't just walk into one of those offices without landing up in jail. You on the other hand are not a threat. You're an over protective mother who drives a car for a living. Who'd be afraid of you?

Nicole stands up, puffing up slightly.

NICOLE

They better start being afraid.

INT. RITA'S CAR -- DAY

Rita drives Matthew in her car. Matthew leans against the window with his eyes closed.

RITA

I wish I could have called your mom.

MATTHEW

No time. Get me to the institute, now.

RITA

It's just so sudden, one minute you're fine and the next...

Matthew grabs his head feigning pain.

MATTHEW

Shut up. Idiots all around me.

RITA
(whispering)
Sure, sure honey. We're almost there.

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole taps on the door and is shocked to notice that the office is immaculate. Dr. Talbot stares blankly at his computer screen.

NICOLE
Got a sec?

Dr. Talbot jumps slightly and then recovers.

DR. TALBOT
For you, a lifetime. I was just thinking about you.

Dr. Talbot opens one of the file cabinet drawers and pulls out a bottle of wine.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
Thinking about you and this bottle of wine we were supposed to share when Matthew got better.

NICOLE
Your office is a shock. When did you clean it?

DR. TALBOT
It finally got to me.

Dr. Talbot opens a gym bag and stuffs the wine into it.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
It's a beautiful day. I need to check some of the equipment in the operating room and then you and me, this bottle of wine and a quiet picnic lunch.

NICOLE
I was just going to ask for a tour. You know I never got to see the -- what do you call it -- DMT?

DR. TALBOT
It's a splendid piece of equipment. I'm surprised you remembered the name from when I explained the procedure.

NICOLE
You never explained it to me - Dr.
Samuals did.

DR. TALBOT
Right as usual.

His beeper BUZZES. He frowns when he reads the display.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
Nothing ever gets past you. Can you
wait here for a few minutes?

NICOLE
I've got to call my mom to check on
Matthew anyway.

Nicole reaches into her purse and pulls out a piece of
crumpled paper. She tosses it to Dr. Talbot.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Could you toss this into the trash?

Dr. Talbot tries to catch it with his left hand and misses.
He slowly picks it up, straightens it out and places it
carefully in the trash before walking out the door.

Nicole waits for him to leave and then rushes over to the
other side of the desk. She types on the computer.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
I don't who the heck you are now,
but you used to be left-handed.

INT. JEREMY'S CUBICLE -- DAY

Jeremy stares at his computer screen.

JEREMY
Come on Power Momma, you can do it.

The phone RINGS.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Speak --- God Nicole, where have you
been?

He swivels around in his chair and starts typing on another
terminal.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
You've got a lockout going on over
there. Someone is deleting files
and cutting all access.

Jeremy continues typing. He GASPS.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Security has issued an alert for
you. I'm trying to backup data and
link to the institute before it's
all gone. You have to get out.

A CD pops out of his computer.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Get out -- get out now!

INT. DR. TALBOT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Nicole doesn't move, she types furiously on the keyboard and
then freezes.

NICOLE
Oh my God, Matthew!

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Nicole runs away from Dr. Talbot's office and enters a
corridor.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

As Nicole runs down the corridor until she hears a door open
behind her. When she reaches the end, she tries to open the
door labeled "East Wing", but it has a security pad.

She enters some codes - they don't work. She spots a large
glass door behind her, leading out to the parking lot. She
runs out the door.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- DAY

Nicole runs to her car and opens the door. She jumps in.

INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

The radio comes alive as Nicole starts the engine.

BIG BERTHA
 (on the radio)
 I'm on my way, Power Momma. Geek
 boy called me.

Nicole clicks on the radio.

NICOLE
 No time, Big Bertha. I'll apologize
 in advance for the damage I'm going
 to do to your car.

A big black HUMMER pulls up next to Nicole and BIG BERTHA,
 all of five feet and ninety seven pounds, jumps out and knocks
 on Nicole's window.

BIG BERTHA
 Hop in. Let's go do some real damage
 to this place.

Big Bertha is already back into her SUV. Nicole turns off
 the car and gets out.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- DAY

Nicole runs around and opens the passenger door. Big Bertha
 reaches over and pulls Nicole into the SUV.

BIG BERTHA
 Geek boy called me with a list of
 security codes for you to try, but
 we don't need no damn security codes --
 do we?

Big Bertha floors the truck and crashes it into the glass
 door leading back into the east wing. She pulls back and
 Nicole leaps from the cab and into the institute.

INT. MEDICAL INSTITUTE EAST WING -- DAY

The beds are occupied by unconscious boys. Nicole runs up
 to each one, looking into their faces. The boy in the last
 bed has the covers pulled up over his face. The bottle of
 wine from Dr. Talbot's office sits on the stand.

DR. TALBOT
 Looking for someone?

Nicole turns around and is shocked to find Dr. Talbot standing
 closely behind her. She backs up closer to the boy. Dr.
 Talbot looks at the bed.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)
 Another mistake, I'm afraid. He's
 dead.

She moves a little closer to the stand and feels for the wine bottle. Dr. Talbot looks over at the other bed.

Her fingers find the bottle and she gets a firm grip around it. Dr. Talbot strokes the edge of the sheet.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

I knew you'd hack into our computer, and if I listed Matthew as the occupant of this bed, you'd come running up here to check. Ever the protective mother. You should be a proud mother. Matthew is ready.

NICOLE

Ready for what?

DR. TALBOT

You're dying to know, aren't you?
Is this Matthew?

He takes firm grip of sheet.

DR. TALBOT (CONT'D)

Allow me.

As he pulls back the sheet, Nicole cracks the bottle of wine on his head. The red wine covers the white sheet, his white coat. She turns and runs without looking at the boy.

INT. DR. SAMUALS' OFFICE -- DAY

Matthew sits across from Dr. Samuals who stares out at the ocean.

MATTHEW

... and the neo-transmitters will accept a second restore?

DR. SAMUALS

You'll be brighter and everything will be clearer.

Matthew gets up and sees his reflection in the glass.

MATTHEW

This kid will be gone?

DR. SAMUALS

As long as you don't let anyone stand in our way.

MATTHEW

She's trying to control my life and I can't stand the intrusion.

DR. SAMUALS

We've always been very private...

Dr. Samuals opens his desk drawer and extracts a syringe. He picks up the remote and clicks on a screen that displays Nicole running down the corridor. He pushes the syringe across the desk to Matthew.

MATTHEW

She's here.

DR. SAMUALS

She knows everything. Nothing can stand in our way.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Nicole runs towards Dr. Samuals office, but spots two security guards coming her way. She ducks into a supply room until they pass.

She stays close to the opposite wall and slows down as she approaches Dr. Samuals' office. His door is slightly ajar. Nicole freezes when she hears Matthew CLEAR HIS THROAT.

INT. DR. SAMUALS' OFFICE -- DAY

Dr. Samuals stands behind the door holding a bookend.

MATTHEW

I understand.

Matthew takes the syringe from the desk as Nicole bursts into the room.

NICOLE

Matthew!

Dr. Samuals hits Nicole on the back of her head and she falls to the ground. Matthew grabs the syringe, quickly crosses to Nicole and holds it against her neck.

MATTHEW

I won't let you destroy us.

NICOLE

You can't do this, Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS

Your Matthew no longer exists.

Nicole is able to turn her head and look at Matthew.

NICOLE

It can't be...

DR. SAMUALS

He's a brilliant combination of my mind and his young healthy brain. I erased Matthew's mind and replaced it with ours. I will live forever in your young Matthew.

NICOLE

No! Matthew, look at me.

Matthew stares at Nicole and back at Dr. Samuals.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

There is a part of you still there. A part ruled by instinct not intellect. Look at me.

He looks again at Nicole.

DR. SAMUALS

She's right, instinct doesn't allow us to kill our own.

Dr. Samuals comes around the other side of Matthew.

DR. SAMUALS (CONT'D)

There's another solution. The database has been purged. Matthew's backup is gone. There is no going back -- only forward.

Matthew is obviously confused and looks back at Dr. Samuals.

MATTHEW

Think, Matthew -- a logical conclusion. We can live forever.

Matthew hands the syringe to Dr. Samuals. Dr. Samuals starts towards Nicole but instead plunges the syringe into his own neck and injects the contents. Dr. Samuals slumps peacefully down to the floor.

Matthew kneels down next him and holds his hand.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Forever.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Nicole drags Matthew down the hallway towards the operating room. She talks into her cell phone.

NICOLE

(into the cell phone)
Do you have the instructions or not?

Matthew reaches up and closes her cell phone.

MATTHEW
I know how it works.

Nicole studies Matthew's face.

NICOLE
Is it you?

Matthew nods.

MATTHEW
Sometimes.

NICOLE
Let's hope you're "you" long enough
to do this.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Matthew sits at the DMT as Nicole frantically runs around the room moving equipment to block the door. Matthew pushes back from the DMT terminal and sits on the bed.

MATTHEW
It's time.

NICOLE
I want to call Jeremy to make sure.

Matthew shakes his head as he puts the DMT helmet on.

MATTHEW
No time. When Dr. Talbot wakes up
he'll come storming down here.

Nicole grabs her cell phone out of her purse.

NICOLE
Are you sure you loaded the right
backup? How can I trust you? You
could still be Dr. Samuals or Dr.
Packard.

MATTHEW
Yeah, right. I'm going to choose to
be some old farts over an
exceptionally bright, loved and adored
eleven year old. Get over there and
start entering those routines into
the DMT.

Nicole pauses, and then tosses the cell phone down and sits in front of the DMT.

NICOLE

If you trust me to do this, you've
got to be my Matthew.

The computers start humming and Nicole anxiously looks back and forth at the monitors. Her cell phone RINGS. As she starts to open it, Dr. Talbot rushes into the room.

DR. TALBOT

What are you doing to me?

Dr. Talbot backhands Nicole and she falls, hitting her head on the edge of the computer stand. She's a little fuzzy and is confused by a LOUD ENGINE sound, CRASHING and SCREAMING, coming from the corridor.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Big Bertha, in her Hummer, pulls forward and backward slamming into walls, and anything else in her way, as she negotiates around a corner down the corridor. She comes accelerating down the corridor.

As the Hummer moves closer to the door of the operating room, Dr. Talbot sticks his head out to see what is going on. Big Bertha sees him on her left and slams on the brakes.

As the Hummer comes even with Dr. Talbot she throws open her door. The extreme deceleration throws the door violently against Dr. Talbot's head and knocks him out cold.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Big Bertha jumps out of her Hummer into the room and runs over to Nicole.

BIG BERTHA

Honey, you know how pissed I get
when people pick up my phone call
and don't speak.

NICOLE

I do now.

Nicole looks around Big Bertha at the Hummer.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Sorry about Little Bertha --do you
think we could get a lift home?

Big Bertha nods as she inspects some of the equipment in the room.

BIG BERTHA

Get used to it because I have a
feeling that someday you're going to
be the one driven around.

INT. JEREMY'S CUBICLE -- DAY

Nicole opens a package as Jeremy smiles from across the desk.
She pulls out a tiny laptop.

JEREMY

I wrote a combination WiFi
communication program with a terrain
mapping that will increase your
driving efficiency by fifty percent.

Nicole flips it over in her hands.

NICOLE

I can't even figure out how to turn
the damn thing on.

Jeremy smiles as he leans back in his chair.

JEREMY

Better start trusting technology.
If I hadn't gotten those files out,
you'd be raising an evil little Dr.
Samuals slash Packard.

NICOLE

You got the backup of the original
Dr. Talbot out too.

JEREMY

So the handsome doctor wins?

Nicole shakes her head.

NICOLE

I don't have time for the handsome
doctor and I hardly know the guy.
Remember I was dating Dr. Samuals --
I mean Dr. Packard. Yuck -- it's
all so gross.

JEREMY

Now you're talking. Got time for
your lovable geek?

Nicole comes over and tousles his hair.

NICOLE

Maybe after you and Matthew grow up.

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Nicole sits on the porch with a laptop. Her mother comes out with an iced tea and a newspaper.

RITA

I haven't decided if that thing is a gift or a curse.

Nicole smiles as she ejects a CD.

NICOLE

Jeremy has written this new game, "Power Momma" -- a Hummer driving maniac who kills drug dealers. I'm his new tester.

Rita opens up the newspaper.

RITA

I've read this article ten times and I can't figure it all out -- Dr. Packard was Dr. Samuals, but Dr. Samuals was Dr. Talbot?

Nicole taps on the computer and brings up the article and reads it.

NICOLE

The original Dr. Packard and Dr. Samuals developed the backup procedure as a way to help head trauma victims. Dr. Samuals did a backup of himself before the skiing accident that pretty much destroyed his brain -- or so Dr. Packard thought. That's where it all went wrong.

RITA

Wrong is a bad answer on Jeopardy. This was a nightmare.

Nicole nods.

NICOLE

Dr. Packard thought that if he put his own backup into Dr. Samuals, he'd be able to work twice as fast in perfecting the procedure. What he created was a monster -- enough of Dr. Samuals' greed and ambition left that mixed with the backup from Dr. Packard.

RITA

Weird, weird, weird.

NICOLE

Exactly. That monster, the new Dr. Samuals slash Packard missed the old parts of himself, so he restored himself onto Dr. Talbot when he had a backup done. We won't know for a while what the real Dr. Talbot is like.

RITA

Thank goodness there was enough of the good parts of Matthew left.

Matthew and Spencer ride up to the house on razor scooters. Spencer waves good-bye as Matthew makes a jump over the curb. He pulls off his helmet.

MATTHEW

I don't want to wear this.

NICOLE

I let the elbow and knee pads go, but the helmet stays.

Matthew drags the razor up to the porch and drops it. Nicole stares at the CD from her laptop.

MATTHEW

Anybody we know?

Nicole smiles as she spins the CD on her finger. It spins off flying into the yard as Tags comes around the corner. The dog catches the CD in her mouth like a Frisbee.

FADE OUT: