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HOUSE

"Occam's Razor"

EPISODE #5501

Written by
David Shore

Directed by
Bryan Singer

Production Draft
Full Blue Revisions
July 6, 2004
July 12, 2004
HOUSE

Character List
Episode 5501 - Blue Revisions

Dr. Gregory House
Dr. James Wilson
Dr. Lisa Cuddy
Dr. Allison Cameron
Dr. Robert Chase
Dr. Eric Foreman

Brandon Merrick
Mindy Liebman
Robert Merrick
Becky Merrick
Shelly Lever
Lori Matthews
Peter Brown
Jerry Morris
Pharmacist
Suburban Pharmacist
HOUSEx

Location List
Episode 5501 - Blue Revisions

INTERIORS
Hospital
    Hallway
    Patient Waiting Area
House’s Office
    Outer Office
    Inner Office
Lab
Clinic
    Reception Area
    Exam Room #1
    Exam Room #2
Cuddy’s Office
Brandon’s Hospital Room
    Hallway, Outside of
Brandon’s “Clean” Hospital Room
    Vestibule
Graduate Student Apartment
Suburban Pharmacy

EXTeriORS

Princeton University
Suburban Pharmacy
FADE IN:

1 EXT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY -- MORNING -- ESTABLISHING (DAY 1)

Students coming, students going, students running, students playing. Generally, students going about their lives having absolutely no idea just how damn good they have it.

BRANDON (V.O.)
I don't feel so good.

2 INT. GRADUATE STUDENT APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Typical ivy league student housing, small but somehow very cool, reeks of history. REVEAL BRANDON MERRICK, 22, dressed just in underwear, a graduate student, nice guy, if anything a little too over-conscientious. But right now, he's on the phone, lying.

BRANDON
...A cough.

He looks across the room at his girlfriend, MINDY LIEBMAN, cute, funny, tough and cynical, 20, lying on the bed, wearing one of Brandon's shirts (which she slept in). She's just waking up, but she's alert enough to give him a look: "a cough? You're going to have to do better than that."

BRANDON (CONT'D)
My stomach's a little upset too and I think I'm running a fever. I'm just worried I might be contagious.

Mindy nods, much better.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Inventory tomorrow, I know, I'm sure I'll be feeling better by then. Thanks Mr. Innabe.

He hangs up and plops down in the bed beside an amused Mindy.

MINDY
(coy, teasing)
Why'd you call in sick?

BRANDON
(feels guilty)
I have a cough.

(CONTINUED)
MINDY
Oh, so you weren't lying?
(nibbling his neck, moving down)
You'd be curled up in bed with a bowl of chicken soup even if you didn't have a horny girlfriend in that bed?

He did call in because he wants to be with her. He's also finding himself feeling guilty.

BRANDON
(resistance weakening)
I really do have a cough.

MINDY
(kissing his hip, teasing)
You also have a little rast.

He pushes her away - but not hard enough to actually push her away.

BRANDON
I'm not sure we should be kissing--

MINDY
Because of the cough. Right.

She is now sitting up, straddling him.

MINDY (CONT'D)
Don't worry. I have almost no interest in kissing you.

She tosses his underpants on the floor and they begin to make love.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but it starts out as "making love" but as Brandon becomes more and more comfortable with his lie and how it led to this current situation, things transform from "making love" into "God I wish I was back in college monkey sex."

And after some JUMP CUTS and some very tasteful, yet erotic, FCC approved footage, they reach an amazing crescendo, climaxing together...

Brandon holds his place for a moment, above her, looking down on her. Is something wrong; or was it just that good?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

MINDY (CONT'D)

Wow.

Brandon doesn't respond. After a beat, he collapses beside her.

She exhales, spent, takes his hand. But it's lifeless. Mindy looks at him - she's had men fall asleep after sex, but not this quickly.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Brandon?...

(nudges him)

Brandon?

Still nothing.

EXT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY -- MORNING

And as we return to the zest of youth going about their carefree lives...

MINDY (V.O.)

(more concerned)

Brandon??

And we...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER
FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

House walks with Wilson, who carries a file that he doesn't actually need to look at.

WILSON
Twenty-two year old male, extremely unstable, presents with a cough, rash, severe abdominal pain, fever, low blood pressure--

HOUSE
--Another cousin?

WILSON
(considers, then:)
You won't believe me without blood tests, will you?

HOUSE
I wouldn't believe you with them. You're a doctor; you can fake blood tests. Why do you want me to treat this guy?

WILSON
The blood pressure's not responding to fluid--

HOUSE
No. I didn't ask how you were planning on conning me into treating him, I asked you why you want me to treat him.

Wilson looks at him like he's asked the most pathetic question in the world, which he has.

WILSON
He's sick; I care; I'm pathetic.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOUSE
There are about a billion sick people on the planet; why this one?

WILSON
Because this one is in our Emergency Room.

HOUSE
So it's a proximity issue. If somebody was sick on the third floor stairwell, that's who we'd be talking about.

WILSON
Yes. I also checked the roof. All clear.

HOUSE
Okay. Then the emergency room guy it is.

Wilson shoots him a look. House is reaching out for the file. That was easy.

WILSON
...Why so easy?

HOUSE
You know why.

Wilson realizes it's the reason he always knew it would be.

WILSON
...Blood pressure's not responding to fluid.

HOUSE
(means it)
Yeah. That's just weird.

Wilson hands House the file.

INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Brandon lies in bed, hooked up to an IV. He's weak, feverish, sweaty, a rash covers part of his face and he's in severe abdominal distress. Mindy holds his hand, trying to hide her worries.
INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

ON A WHITE BOARD as Cameron writes "Abdominal Pain". It's the last of a list of symptoms: cough, fever, rash, low blood pressure. They're not in any order, simply scattered across the board haphazardly.

House has assembled his team: Foreman, Cameron and Chase. As Cameron finishes writing:

HOUSE
Abdominal CT scan didn't show anything. Okay, people, differential diagnosis. What's wrong with her?

CAMERON
...Him.

HOUSE
Does it matter? Does someone think it's a testicular problem?
(no answer)
No. Then...

CHASE
...Yersinia infection.

FOREMAN
Wouldn't cause a rash or headache. What about arthritis? Accompanying vasculitis causes nerve damage that--

As they talk, House wanders over to his shelves and takes a large book down.

CAMERON
--Wouldn't cause the blood pressure problems. Allergy?

CHASE
No. The kid's got abdominal pain. Maybe carcinoid.

FOREMAN
But you wouldn't get the--

House drops the book in Foreman's lap. It's Harrison's, open to the first page.
CONTINUED:

HOUSE
(to all of them)
If you're going to list all the conditions it's not, it might be quicker to do it alphabetically. Absidia. Excellent; that doesn't account for any of the symptoms.
(to Foreman)
You go next.

Foreman simply closes the book.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(to all)
What say we turn our focus to the things this could be? Hmmm.

And that is met by a resounding silence. After a very long beat.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Okay, I was wrong. Your way works better.
(re: book)
Amblyopia. Patient isn't seeing double so--

CAMERON
--No condition accounts for all these symptoms.

HOUSE
: Good, because I thought maybe he was sick, but apparently he's not. Who wants to do up the discharge papers?

Still nothing because they're right. And unfortunately, House knows it.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Okay, unless we get the blood pressure under control, he's gonna start circling the drain before we figure out what's wrong with him.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Treat him for sepsis, broad spectrum
antibiotics; and I want a Cort-stim
test and an echocardiogram.

As Foreman gets up to leave he hands the massive book back
to House. But House doesn't take it.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(read it)
It's a fun read.

Foreman looks at House - is he serious, the thing's like
2000 pages long.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Volume two's in my office.

INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

SFX - A heart beats. We morph from the beating heart to a
2D black and white image of same. PULL BACK TO REVEAL the
image is on a monitor as Chase performs an echocardiogram.
Brandon's condition hasn't changed - still weak and in
discomfort. Mindy sits nervously nearby. Foreman is drawing
blood.

FOREMAN
The Cort-stim test will tell us if
your pituitary and adrenal glands
are working properly.

MINDY
His glands? What does that mean?

CHASE
We have a few theories we're working
on.

MINDY
(scared)
You don't know?

BRANDON
(weak...)
Mindy--

MINDY
I'm just saying if they knew, they
wouldn't be testing you, they'd be
treating you.

Brandon, scared, looks to Foreman. As Foreman packs up the
blood, he's reassuring:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FOREMAN
Yeah, that's the way it works. First we find out what it is; and then we get you better.

Foreman leaves while Chase finishes up.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

The place is full of the sick, the not-so-sick and their families. Cuddy is standing at the desk checking supplies against paperwork as House enters, carrying a Gameboy, and approaches.

CUDDY
You're half an hour late.

HOUSE
Good morning, Dr. Cuddy. How are we doing on cotton swabs today? If there's a critical shortage, I could run home...

CUDDY
(re: his leg)
No you couldn't.

HOUSE
Nice.

CUDDY
(still on his tardiness)
I assume you're much too busy with your caseload--

HOUSE
I've got a case.

CUDDY
A case is not a load.

HOUSE
Are we really going to keep doing this dance? You don't need me here--

CUDDY
--This "treating patients" dance? Yeah, I'm way out of line.

HOUSE
You know I don't like people; why should I start caring about them just because they're sick?

(CONTINUED)
CUDDY
Because it's the job description.

She goes back to her work. Beat, then House turns to the room.

HOUSE
Hello sick people and their loved ones. In the interests of doing my job as quickly and efficiently as possible, I want to introduce myself now so we don't have to waste valuable time later with idle chitchat. I'm Dr. Gregory House. You can call me Greg. I'm one of three doctors staffing this clinic this morning.

CUDDY
(to House, sotto)
I'm sure they're all fooled. Grab a file and--
(CONTINUED: (2))

HOUSE
(still to the room)
I am a board certified diagnosticians
with a double specialty of infectious
disease and nephrology.
(good so far)
I am also the only doctor currently
employed at this clinic who is forced
to be here against his will.
(to Cuddy)
That is true, isn't it?

She doesn't respond; just picks up a file.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(to room)
But, you don't need to worry because
for most of you, this job could be
done by a monkey with a bottle of
Motrin. Speaking of which, if you're
particularly annoying, you may see
me reach for this.
(pulls pill bottle
from pocket)
This is Vicodin. It's mine. You
can't have any. Not to worry, I do
not have a pain management problem.
I have a pain problem. But who knows,
maybe I'm wrong.
(with a smile, friendly)
Maybe I'm too stoned to tell. Okay,
who wants me?

No hands go up.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
And who would rather wait for one of
the other two guys?

All hands go up.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(to receptionist)
I'll be in Exam Room 1 if anyone
changes their mind.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

CUDDY
(file in hand, calling)
Lori Matthews?

A healthy looking 30 year old, LORI, raises her hand.

CUDDY (CONT'D)
Please accompany Dr. House to Exam Room 1.

Cuddy hands House the file as the patient reluctantly follows him.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Chase emerges from Brandon's room, armed with his test results. A moment later, Mindy emerges and hurries after him.

MINDY
Dr. Chase.

He slows down, then walks with her toward the lab.

CHASE
I'm not sure scaring your boyfriend is the best medicine for him right now.

MINDY
I know. I get stupid when I'm scared.

CHASE
Don't go rock climbing.

She doesn't react; she's preoccupied.

MINDY
I was wondering... Before this happened, we were... having sex...

CHASE
You're wondering if whatever he has, you might have gotten it? It's unlikely and we ran a complete STD panel--

MINDY
--No.
(emotional, guilt-ridden)
I'm wondering if maybe I did this to him.
(off Chase's look)
I was kinda rough.
INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM #1 -- DAY

House sits, serving time. On the examination table sits Lori, pushing her glasses back up the ridge of her nose.

LORI
It was yellow.

HOUSE
It was?

LORI
It's not anymore.

HOUSE
That's a shame.

LORI
I thought that'd be a problem. So I brought you this.

She smiles awkwardly (awkward but pretty), reaches into her pocket and hands House a yellow "paint chip" sample. He looks at it...

HOUSE
Your mucus was...
    (turns it over, reads)
'Pale Goldenrod'?

LORI
Last week, yes. Should I be worried?

HOUSE
Oh, yes. Very.

LORI
(worried)
Really? I thought I was okay now.

HOUSE
And yet here you are.
    (off her look)
What happened? It took a week for the paramedics to respond to your 9-1-1 call?

There's a stunned beat, then:

LORI
You're not a very nice doctor, are you?

(CONTINUED)
HOUSE
And you're very bad at whatever it is that you do.

LORI
(gets up to go)
You don't even know me.

HOUSE
I know you're gonna get fired.

She stops, looks to him - why would he say that?

HOUSE (CONT'D)
That's why you got the new glasses; it's why your teeth are so sparkly white. You're getting the most of your health insurance while you still can.

LORI
(beat, then:)
...I might be quitting.

House smiles - he won.

HOUSE
If you were quitting you'd have known it last week while your snot was still 'Pale Goldenrod'. You're getting fired.

She looks at him, busted.

LORI
...I just don't like being told what to do.

House nods, gets it.

HOUSE
...I could get you in for a full body scan later this week.

LORI
...Thanks.

INT. LAB -- DAY

Cameron runs blood samples through an integrated modular analyzer (IMA); Foreman prepares a blood smear on a slide and looks at it under the microscope.

(CONTINUED)
CHASE
Echocardiogram shows cardiomyopathy with global hypokinesis. Not good news but doesn't explain anything.

FOREMAN
It's got to be viral; we should start running gels and titers.

CHASE
Maybe we should look into the girlfriend's theory.
(off their looks)
She thinks she rode him to death.

Foreman laughs. Cameron doesn't - she's not put off, just more fascinated than amused. She's also busy looking at the LCD screen on the IMA.

FOREMAN
What did you tell her?

CHASE
I told her 22 year old men don't die of sex.

CAMERON
(to Chase)
What did you ask her?

CHASE
What do you mean?

CAMERON
I mean, I hope you got some specifics about exactly what they were doing. If this girl thinks it can kill you, it's worth knowing about.

Foreman once again is amused (doesn't laugh this time though - he's working, now looking at the printout of lab results from the IMA). Now it's Chase's turn to be more fascinated than amused.

CHASE
...Have you ever... "taken a life"?

(_CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

But before she can answer.

FOREMAN
We should stop the antibiotics.

CAMERON
It's too soon to say they're not having an effect.

FOREMAN
They're having an effect.

INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

VFX: Our POV goes from Brandon, to his IV line, where fluid drips down into the line, we go down into the blood stream; surfing through arteries. Ahead of us, a clear, thin membrane - the entrance to the kidney. We punch through and into a pool of yellow liquid.

FOREMAN (V.O.)
His kidneys are shutting down. Our treatment isn't making him better.

We hear Foreman's voice as the VFX continues. We see a maze of many small tubules ahead. We go into one tubule, and the walls slam shut; we back out to another, again the walls slam shut. Over and over. The kidney is shutting down.

FOREMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's killing him.

ON BRANDON - in pain, dying...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

His team with him, House adds the words 'kidney failure' to the list of symptoms on the white board.

HOUSE
So we had five symptoms that didn't add up to anything; now we've got six. Who's excited?

FOREMAN
I don't think it complicates things. The kidney failure was caused by the antibiotics.

HOUSE
Maybe.

FOREMAN
(been thinking)
Typically, low blood pressure and abdominal pain means an infection. Abdominal infection causes sepsis, causes low blood pressure.

CHASE
Except we checked for abdominal infections.

FOREMAN
I know. But what if it's the other way around. What if the low blood pressure is causing the abdominal pain.

CAMERON
(catching on)
Viral heart infection. Intestines aren't getting enough blood, so the result is belly pain.

As the conversation continues, Foreman heads for the board and grabs a marker.

FOREMAN
I know it's not the standard presentation.

CHASE
It's a ten million to one shot.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

FOREMAN
Thought that's what we dealt with here.
(checking them off)
It explains the cardiomyopathy, the pain, the low b.p., the fever.

HOUSE
(smiles)
You read the book.

Did House just praise one of his people?

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Impressive. It's a ridiculously long shot that explains every one of the symptoms.
(except it doesn't)
Except rash and cough. Should we just erase those?

FOREMAN
(shrugs, not worried)
Anything can cause a rash.

House picks up a marker.

HOUSE
Okay. Cardiac infection.

He draws a convoluted perimeter around the symptoms Foreman has checked off; leaving cough and rash on the outside.

He then picks up another color and looks to Cameron:

HOUSE (CONT'D)
You thought allergy.

He then circles rash, low blood pressure and fever, but not abdominal pain. Then picks up another color and glances to Chase.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Carcinoid.

He circles abdominal pain and rash. Now he's on a roll, picking up one color after another, circling differing symptoms.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(in orange)
Hypothyroidism...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
Parasite...

Sinus infection...
FOREMAN
If you're going to list all the things it can't be, you're going to need more colors.

HOUSE
Cameron was right. No condition explains all these symptoms. But... orange and green covers everything.

The team exchange looks - the concept of one sick patient with two unrelated illnesses is like fingers on a chalkboard to doctors.

CHASE
Orange and green?

FOREMAN
Occam's Razor. The simplest explanation is always the best.

HOUSE
And one is simpler than two?

CAMERON
Pretty sure it is, yeah.

HOUSE
Baby shows up - Cameron tells you two people exchanged fluids to create this being; I tell you one stork dropped the tyke off in a diaper - you gonna go with the two or the one?

FOREMAN
I think your argument is specious.

HOUSE
I think your tie is ugly. Why is one more complicated than two? It's lower; it's lonelier; is it simpler? Each of these conditions are about a one in a thousand shot; that means any two of them happening at the same time is a one in a million shot.

(to Foreman)
Chase says the cardiac infection is a one in ten million shot. Which makes my idea ten times better than yours.

Off their looks -- too shocked to respond.
HOUSE (CONT'D)
Fine, get a calculator, run the numbers. Then start the kid on Unasyn for the sinus infection and...
(thinks, thinks, looks at board, then:)
What was orange?

CUT TO:

INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

CAMERON
Hypothyroidism.

She's giving Brandon an injection. Brandon is still weak, still in pain, still feverish. Mindy, as always, sits nearby.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
Synthroid is an artificial thyroid medication that should take care of that. Also the nurses are going to start giving you Unasyn; it's a more targeted antibiotic.

MINDY
For the sinus infection?

CAMERON
Yes.

MINDY
And the other stuff is for something else entirely?

CAMERON
(doesn't believe it herself)
Bad luck, huh? Don't worry. He should be back to ditching work in no time.

She's interrupted as ROBERT and BECKY MERRICK enter. Mid 50s, they're Brandon's concerned parents.

MRS. MERRICK
Brandon?

She comes over and hugs him delicately. Mr. Merrick steps in, looks to Cameron:

(CONTINUED)
MR. MERRICK
(understandably not
into small talk)
We're his parents. How's he doing?
But before she can answer, Brandon speaks with difficulty...

BRANDON
Mom, Dad.
(coughs)
This is Mindy... I was going to
bring her for Christmas... We're
engaged.
Well this is certainly an awkward way to meet your son's
future wife. They look to her, then...

MRS. MERRICK
...Happy to meet you.
Mindy reacts - this is insane.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM -- LATER
Cameron emerges from the room. Foreman and Chase are waiting
at a nearby Nurses' Station. She approaches.

CHASE
Those the folks?

FOREMAN
(off her nod)
You tell them House's theory?

CAMERON
Told 'em and sold 'em. They're
wondering why they bothered to fly
in over something so trivial.

CHASE
You think he's right?

CAMERON
...He's a brilliant diagnostician
and this could--

FOREMAN
--Neither do we. Let's go.
And so they head off down the hall on a mission.
INT. LAB -- LATER

SCENE OPENS on a gel box -- a shoe box sized black box, open at the top, wires attached to each end. There's a clear jello-like square at the bottom. WE SEE a pipette release it's contents - a blue drop of liquid - into a well on the top of the gel. The electrical current goes on and the blue liquid quickly lines up with the current and runs through the gel.

A timer bell goes off and we REVEAL Foreman. He removes the gel, looks annoyed.

FOREMAN
Negative for Coxsachie B virus.

Chase stands beside him, waiting by the PCR cycler. But he's looking across the room at Cameron, running tests of her own (out of earshot).

CHASE
Seven down, about five thousand to go. You really think we're going to come up with your mystery virus just by running gels 'til we guess right?

FOREMAN
No. I think we're going to do it by standing around watching other people work.

CHASE
(indicates)
I'm waiting for the Epstein-Barr virus.

Foreman accepts this and goes back to work. Chase just continues to stare across the room. After a beat.

CHASE (CONT'D)
She's weird, isn't she?

Foreman knows what Chase is referring to without looking up.

FOREMAN
Bad idea.

CHASE
What?

FOREMAN
Bad idea. You work with her.

(CONTINUED)
CHASE
What did I say? Is 'weird' some new
ghetto euphemism for 'sexy'; like
'bad' is 'good' and 'fat' is 'good';
then what the hell does 'good' mean?

FOREMAN
(not nasty, wouldn't
stoop to that)
'Ghetto euphemism'?
(beat, then:)
That's right. I thought Richie Rich
was talking street. You don't think
she's hot?

CHASE
No.

FOREMAN
Well, then you're brilliant. And I
am using 'brilliant' as a euphemism.

CHASE
Obviously she's hot; you weren't asking
about her aesthetics; you were asking if
I wanted to jump her? I don't.

FOREMAN
Brilliant.

Chase looks at him - what the hell does that mean?

BING - Chase's machine is finished doing whatever it was
doing. After a beat.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)
Your Epstein-Barr is ready.

With one last look, Chase gets his stuff out and gets to
work. Foreman then finally looks across the room at
Cameron...

INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM #2 -- DAY (DAY 2)

House sits quietly in a corner, intensely playing his Gameboy.
After a beat, PULL BACK TO REVEAL he's not alone. A patient,
PETER BROWN, 38, sits on the exam table, wondering what's
going on.

BROWN
What are you doing?

HOUSE
Level 4.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BROWN
No, I mean--
And he clears his painful throat.

HOUSE
I know what you meant. We're waiting.

BROWN
My throat hurts.

HOUSE
So you said.

Another moment of silence. Then:

BROWN
How long are we going to be waiting?

HOUSE
Two minutes less than when you asked me two minutes ago.

Cuddy enters, she's busy, but she's a pro.

CUDDY
(to Brown, pleasant)
Hi, I'm Dr. Cuddy. Pleased to meet you.

HOUSE
Thanks for the consult. His throat seems to have some condition.

Cuddy takes out a tongue depressor and uses it for its intended purpose.

CUDDY
Say ah.

BROWN
Ahhhh.

Cuddy looks and quickly diagnoses. And she equally quickly diagnoses the situation. She looks to House.

CUDDY
He has a sore throat.

HOUSE
(foils realization)
Of course! He said it hurt. I should have realized that meant it was sore!

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

She turns to House. (The patient listens but doesn't fully comprehend.)

HOUSE (CONT'D)

(shrugs)
I needed a consult.

CUDDY
It's not going to work.

HOUSE
You once asked me why I think I'm always right. And I realized you're right. At least I think you're right. I don't really know now, do I?

CUDDY
You're not getting out of clinic duty.
(to patient)
Go buy a lozenge.

And she leaves.

OMITTED

INT. LAB -- DAY

Foreman, Chase and Cameron continue to PCR, run gels, and other tests. Only this time Foreman and Cameron are on one side of the room, near the door, out of earshot of Chase.

CAMERON
Negative on Parvovirus B19.

FOREMAN
I'm impressed.
CAMERON
Thank you. I was born to run gels.

FOREMAN
I meant about Chase.

CAMERON
What about Chase?

FOREMAN
The man has no physical interest in you, has a completely professional relationship with you, respects you as a colleague and a doctor and he can’t look at you without thinking of sex.

Cameron glances to Chase, who glances away.

CAMERON
...Because I asked about what kind of sex could kill you?

FOREMAN
You now have total control over your relationship with him.

CAMERON
(not flattered, annoyed)
So a woman can’t express interest in sex without it being some professional power play?

HOUSE (O.S.)
No.

They turn to see House in the doorway.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Either that or you're an idiot. Are you an idiot?

CAMERON
Apparently.

HOUSE
If you look like you do and you say what you said, you have to be aware of the effect it’s going to have on men.

CAMERON
Men should grow up.

(CONTINUED)
HOUSE
Yeah, and dogs should stop licking-themselves. It's not going to happen.

Chase wanders over.

CHASE
What's going on?

House looks to Cameron - care to explain?

CAMERON
(to House)
What are you doing here?

HOUSE
Looking for you guys.

FOREMAN
Why didn't you page us?

HOUSE
Because I knew you were here.

CHASE
Who told him--

HOUSE
--No one. I assume you're trying to prove my crazy two illness theory wrong. Obviously you're going to be in the lab.

(to Foreman)
You spin the urine?

FOREMAN
Not yet.

HOUSE
Talk to me when you have.

Foreman grabs the urine sample as a rather pleased House exits. Foreman gives the others a look - what is House up to?

Then he puts the sample in the centrifuge, it begins to spin.

INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - INNER OFFICE -- DAY

Foreman enters. House and Wilson are waiting, House is smug, already knows all the answers.

HOUSE
What did you find out?
FOREMAN
His kidney failure; it's Acute Interstitial Nephritis.

HOUSE
I wonder if that's significant...

Foreman hates being made to play the chastised little boy - but that's where he is.

FOREMAN
It means that the antibiotics did not cause the kidney failure. How did you know?

HOUSE
If you guys hadn't been so busy trying to prove me wrong you might have checked in on the poor kid.

FOREMAN
You visited a patient?

HOUSE
I was sitting by his bed all morning, just so he'd know someone was there for him.

WILSON
(the real reason)
I looked in on him; he's much better.

HOUSE
(to Foreman)
Ergo, the treatment's working; ergo, me right, you wrong.

FOREMAN
...I'm glad for the kid.

Just because he means that, doesn't mean he's not annoyed. Foreman exits.

WILSON
That smugness of yours is really an attractive quality.

HOUSE
Thank you. It was either that or get my hair hi-lited. Smugness is easier to maintain.
WILSON
I get that you're not a big believer in the catching flies with honey approach. But do you honestly think you can collect a jar-full by cleverly taunting them?

HOUSE
Flies, no; doctors, sure. If I told Foreman 'nice try, it was a great guess, but sorry, not this time' what do you think he'd be doing right now?

WILSON
I think he'd be going home not feeling like a piece of crap.

HOUSE
Exactly.

WILSON
You want him to feel like a piece of crap?

HOUSE
No. I don't want him going home.

INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Brandon is still on the IV but is in considerably less pain - he seems to be on the road to recovery. Foreman enters; indeed, he's not going home.

BRANDON
Dr. Foreman, thank you.

He coughs. Foreman looks less than thrilled as he checks the chart at the foot of the bed.

FOREMAN
You still have the cough?

BRANDON
I feel a lot better.

MRS. MERRICK
His fever is gone; his rash is going away.

FOREMAN (re: chart)
I see.
CONTINUED:

He writes some stuff down on the chart.

MINDY
Is everything okay?

FOREMAN
Just ordering some tests. Absolutely nothing to worry about.

And he exits, and in spite of his words, the Merricks and Mindy suddenly feel just a little less secure about the prognosis.

INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM #1 -- DAY

GAMEBOY SCREEN - game in progress - PULL OUT TO REVEAL House is the player. He is waiting patiently for Cuddy. A patient, SHELLEY LEVER, 44, waits on the table.

LEVER
How much longer?

House quickly checks his watch, not wanting to take his eyes off the game.

HOUSE
Nine-thirty; she was probably on the eighth hole when I paged her--

Then he suddenly can't talk, pressing buttons frantically, trying to save his game... But no -- the game makes that horrible 'you lose' music. Damn. House offers the game to Lever. :

HOUSE (CONT'D)
We've probably got another half an hour.

Beat. What else is she going to do? She takes the game and begins playing.

Then Foreman enters and without any introduction, addresses House.

FOREMAN
With viral infections one of two things always happen: the patient dies or the patient’s immune system fights off the invader. What we’re seeing here is the second option. (glances to patient in room)

Not you.

(Continued)
But Lever keeps playing.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

What's with her?

HOUSE

Her leg hurts after running six miles. Who knows? Could be anything.

FOREMAN

(back to Brandon)

It's not two illnesses; it can't be two illnesses.

HOUSE

(genuinely amused)

I am so glad you work here.

That causes Foreman to stop for a beat - is House serious? In fact, he is.

FOREMAN

If the patient does have a viral infection, the antibiotics you prescribed could box his kidneys and liver impeding his ability to fight it off.

HOUSE

Well that certainly would be a concern.

(beat)

Fifty dollars?

That makes Lever look up from her game.

HOUSE (CONT'D)

(warning her)

Don't look away; the space monkeys will be all over you.

She returns to the game.

FOREMAN

You want to bet on the patient's health?

HOUSE

You think that's bad luck? You think God will smite her because of our insensitivity?

(considers this)

If God does, you make a quick fifty.

(CONTINUED)
Surprised, Lever looks up again. This time for too long, the monkeys get her and we hear the sound of the game ending! House reaches out with an "I told you" look - it's his turn. As he begins to play:

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(to Foreman)
You don't have to wait for the kid to get sicker - check his white blood count; if he's fighting off a virus like you think, it'll be way up.

Foreman thinks about that, turns to go as Wilson enters.

WILSON
Hey. Cuddy said you needed a consult. What's up? I'm busy.

House looks up - crap. Beat and then we hear the now familiar sad sound of the game ending.

INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE -- DAY

While House listens to incredibly uncool pop music on headphones in his inner office, Chase and Cameron are in the outer office. Chase is making some coffee, but keeps glancing up at Cameron. Which is not a smart thing to do while pouring a hot liquid. Damn. Cameron, self-conscious, notices.

CAMERON
...I was just being glib.

CHASE
(cleaning up)
You haven't said anything.

CAMERON
Before. When I was talking about Brandon's girlfriend thinking sex might have killed him. I was just making a joke because I was uncomfortable.

CHASE
I don't even remember what you said.

Right. He pours milk in his coffee. But she knows he's lying.

CAMERON
I'm uncomfortable about sex.

CHASE
We don't have to talk about this.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Cameron

Sex could kill you. You know what the human body goes through during sex?

We CLOSE IN on Chase as she begins to describe this:

Cameron (CONT'D)
Pupils dilate.

His in fact are just that.

Cameron (CONT'D)
Arteries constrict. Core temperature rises; the heart races. Blood pressure skyrocket. Respiration becomes rapid and shallow.

His breathing does seem a little rapid.

Cameron (CONT'D)
The brain fires bursts of electrical impulses from nowhere to nowhere.

Is he starting to sweat?

Cameron (CONT'D)
Secretions spit out of every gland. Muscles tense and spasm like you're lifting three times your body weight.

His leg is starting to shake ever so subtly. We STAY ON Chase, closing in again on his eye, as...

Cameron (CONT'D)
It's violent, it's ugly and it's messy and if God hadn't made it unbelievably fun, the human race would've died off eons ago. Men are lucky; they can only have one orgasm. You know that women can have an hour long orgasm. Hey Foreman, what's up?

Rather abruptly, his pupils return to their regular size--
CONTINUED: (2)

REVEAL Foreman is in the doorway, carrying lab results. Chase is a little flushed, looking at Cameron. Cameron notices.

CHASE
...Hey, Foreman.

Seeing Foreman's arrival, House enters and immediately determines that Foreman does not look smug. House knows what that means - he smiles.

HOUSE
White cell count isn't up, is it?

FOREMAN
No.

House reaches out for his $50. But Foreman doesn't offer it. He's not angry; he's aggravated, but not at House.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)
(screw the money)
We were both wrong. The white cell count is down.

House pulls his hand back, suddenly concerned - this doesn't make any sense.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)
Way down. And dropping.

We can tell from their expressions, this is very bad news.

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM - VESTIBULE -- DAY

There's a double door system of entry. The first door enters into a vestibule room with sink, gowns, gloves. That's where we are now. Brandon looks worse than when we last saw him - his rash and other symptoms are returning. He's scared, but trying to be strong. He sits in a wheel chair as Chase scrubs up.

CHASE
Can you walk?

BRANDON
A little.

CHASE
We have to leave the chair out here.

Brandon awkwardly gets up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHASE (CONT'D)

And the robe.

Brandon takes his gown off - he's naked underneath; the rash is coming back. Chase puts on a sterile gown and mask and helps lead Brandon into...

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The patient room is anti-septic, no personal items at all, nothing but medical equipment. A bed with white sheets, an IV pole, a nightstand but there's nothing on it, tile floor.

Chase hands Brandon a sterile robe, helps him onto the bed and then checks equipment, makes sure everything is as it should be.

BRANDON

(putting on the robe)
You worried you're going to get whatever I have?

CHASE

No.

(the even scarier truth)
We're worried you'll get something I have.

Chase pulls open the blinds, revealing the family behind a thick glass window...

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Cameron and Foreman are with the family.

FOREMAN

Something's made him immuno-compromised.

CAMERON

His white blood cell count is down; which means his body can't fight off infections.

FOREMAN

(more blunt)
If he gets sick, he'll die.

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brandon has obviously just gotten the same news from Chase.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BRANDON
Sick? How sick?

CHASE
...If you get a cold, you'll die.

Off Brandon, looking to his parents on the other side of the glass barrier, having just learned the same news. They're just feet away but they can't do what needs to be done; they can't reach out and take his hand.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
FADE IN:

27A INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

On the white board. Cameron's hand writes yet another symptom: "low white blood count". This one is not enclosed within any of the existing colored circles - it doesn't fit any of their theories.

28 INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

The drapes are closed. Foreman prepares to do a bone marrow biopsy. Brandon lies on the bed on his stomach. He's covered only by a sheet over his legs and trunk. In between, his hips are exposed. Foreman works from a small metal tray with needed instruments at the bedside. He drapes Brandon with blue, sterile towels around a small square of skin on the iliac crest (upper part of butt). He injects the area with a small needle containing local anesthetic.

FOREMAN
I'm going to push a needle into your hip bone and take some of the marrow.

BRANDON
Doesn't feel too bad.

FOREMAN
That was just the anesthetic. The core biopsy needle is a bit bigger.

Foreman pulls out a large needle.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)
Take a deep breath. It's going to hurt. A lot.

Foreman grinds the needle into his bone. We hear a distinctive 'pop'.

BRANDON
Ahh. That kills.

FOREMAN
The marrow makes the blood cells. We take a peak at it under a microscope, maybe we see a viral infection, maybe we see some fibrosis, something to explain why your blood counts are so low.

Foreman twists the needle to gather the last needed cells.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BRANDON

Ahhh.

Foreman pulls out the needle.

FOREMAN

One step closer to an answer.
BRANDON
What if you don't find one? I can't stay here forever.

FOREMAN
(knows he can't answer that question)
What? You don't like the food?

Brandon allows himself a smile.

HOUSE (V.O.)
(wrap dialogue)
The patient could have died.

INT. CUDDY'S OFFICE -- DAY

House is arguing with Cuddy.

CUDDY
The one with the pulled muscle?

HOUSE
Those symptoms are consistent with a dozen other conditions; I'm entitled to consult--

CUDDY
You're not getting out of clinic duty.

HOUSE
There are a hundred idiot doctors in this building who get all warm and fuzzy every time they hold a hand or pull a toy car out of a nose. You don't need me here.

CUDDY
No, I don't. But working with people makes you a better doctor.

HOUSE
When did I sign up for that course?

CUDDY
When did I give you the impression I care what you want?

HOUSE
Well, working this clinic obviously instills a deep sense of compassion.

(MORE)

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(this conversation is
over)
I’ve got your home number, right?

He heads for the door.

CUDDY
It’s not going to work. You know
why? Because this is fun. You think
of something to make me miserable; I
think of something to make you
miserable. It’s a game; and I’m
going to win.
(smiles)
Because I’ve got a head start.

That stops him. She may be right.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

Wilson follows House, annoyed, over to the pharmacy desk:

WILSON
What’s with you and her?

HOUSE
(don’t go there)
No.

WILSON
You got a thing for her? Because
the only person who can rile you--

HOUSE
--No! There is not a thin line
between love and hate; there is in
fact a Great Wall of China with armed
sentries posted every twenty feet
between love and hate.
(to pharmacist)
36 Vicodin.

PHARMACIST
Who’s the patient?

HOUSE
I am.

PHARMACIST
You can’t--
Dr. Wilson is the prescribing physician.

Been here before, Wilson nods and the pharmacist walks off:

You will lie, cheat and steal to get what you want but you're incapable of kissing a little ass.

We all have our limitations.

He grabs a bottle from the counter and walks away.

...House.

He turns back. Wilson's standing there, holding up a different bottle.

Wrong bottle.

House thinks about this for a long beat, as:

Take a pill, wait five minutes for it to kick in, then go back in there and kiss some ass.

What was the kid's first symptom?

Wilson is thrown by the question for a beat.

You did the history. Of his eight hundred symptoms, which one hit him first?

...The cough.

And House leaves (after taking the correct bottle).

A montage of House:

- looking at the white board with the list of symptoms - it now sits on a chair in his office.
CONTINUED:

- leafing through the Physician's Desk Reference.
- looking through the patient's file.
- researching on the computer, running search programs.
- standing, a foot away from the wall, facing the wall, leaning his head against the wall with his eyes closed, just thinking.
- members of the team watching him from the outer office - what's going on? (But they know better than to bother him when he's in one of these states.)

Finally...

INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - OUTER OFFICE -- NIGHT

Finally, House emerges...

HOUSE
Gout.

He then turns and returns to his inner office, expecting the others to follow him. A little confused, they do.

INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - INNER OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

CHASE
Are we talking about Brandon?

House nods, opening the PDR.

FOREMAN
Gout? Uric acid crystals in the joints? Symptoms include pain, swelling, redness, and stiffness. Not one of which do I see on that board.

HOUSE
Because he doesn't have gout.

The others look at each other - these damn riddles - House enjoys the moment.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(to Foreman)
You were right. I was crazy to think two conditions would hit someone at the exact same time. One hit first.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
HOUSE (CONT'D)
(opens the file)
Two weeks ago, Brandon developed a cough. Being an idiot, he went to a doctor. In order to justify charging 200 dollars, that doctor felt he should actually do something. He wrote a prescription. Seven thousand people die each year from pharmacy screw ups. Not nearly as many as die from doctor screw ups but still not something they use in their promotional materials. The pharmacist gave him colchicine, a gout medicine instead of cough medicine.

FOREMAN
This is a guess?

HOUSE
It's a very good guess. Every day, cells die.

SFX. We are at a microscopic level. As House speaks, we ZOOM IN ON a single cell among many as it swells to twice normal size. CLOSER. Inside the cell, we see small tubes, anchored at opposite ends of the cell, align, grab onto each other and onto the contents of the cell -- chromosomes, mitochondria, vacuoles -- and pull them to one end or the other. PULL BACK TO REVEAL we now have two cells.

HOUSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We survive because the remaining cells divide to replace the losses. But gout medicine blocks mitosis; which stops cell division.

We see another cell swell to twice normal size. Inside the cells, we see small tubes but they are not able to grab onto each other or the contents of the cell. Stagnation. Not able to divide. Some swollen cells cluster in a group, with some dying off.

BACK IN THE ROOM
He's now at the white board, the PDR open beside him; he's crossing out symptoms.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Abdominal pain, the rash, the fever, the blood pressure, kidneys, and bone marrow.

Only one symptom remains un-crossed.

(CONTINUED)
HOUSE (CONT'D)
The only thing it wouldn't do... - (crosses out cough)
It would do absolutely nothing to relieve his cough.

He sits down, almost like he's expecting applause. Instead...

FOREMAN
So based on you picking up the wrong pills, you've deduced that the pharmacy also gave him the wrong medicine. And you've even figured out what wrong medicine. Imagine what you could do if you actually had some facts to work with.

HOUSE
(glib)
Give me another 24 hours, I'll figure out the manufacturer, the dosage and what he washed it down with.

CAMERON
No.

HOUSE
It fits. It explains everything.

CAMERON
Once he checked into this hospital, he was completely under our control. Our food, our pills, our everything. So, even if you're right, no more gout medicine. He'd either continue to deteriorate, or he'd have gotten better. But he got better, and then he got worse. It doesn't fit; it doesn't make sense.

...House thinks about this for a beat - it's a very good point. He then rises and exits...

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Brandon is getting worse. Even sedated, we can tell he's in discomfort, sweaty, the rash covers most of his face.

INT. PATIENT WAITING AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

The parents and Mindy wait nervously. House arrives with his team.

(CONTINUED)
MINDY
(to Chase)
He's sedated; he's--

HOUSE
(abrupt)
--Hi, I'm Dr. House. I'm your son's doctor.

MRS. MERRICK
You're the one we haven't met; we're--

MR. MERRICK
You're the one he hasn't met. How can you treat someone without meeting him?!

HOUSE
(simple)
It's easy if you don't give a crap about him.

Well, they weren't expecting that.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
It's a good thing. I'm sure your boy's a uniquely special young man who calls his mom on Mother's Day and her birthday and a couple other times every year and buys his girlfriend roses even when he hasn't been unfaithful. And if I got to know him I couldn't help but love him. But then I'd get stupid. Think about it: if emotions made you act rationally, they wouldn't be called emotions, right? So that's why we have this nice division of labor: you're the family, I'm the doctor. You hold his hand, I get him better. If I start tucking him in at night, well that's not fair to you guys. And if you start prescribing medicine, that's not fair to me. So what I want to know is: who stepped on my side of the net? Who cared enough to get stupid enough to give him his cough medicine?

MINDY
When we checked in, Dr. Foreman told us no--
HOUSE
--Tuesday, he was getting better.
Wednesday he's getting sick again.
Somebody gave him his cough medicine
Wednesday.

Beat.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Come on, nobody's going to be mad.
I just want to know who tried to
kill the kid.

FOREMAN
...Dr. House, maybe we should
reconsider other diagnoses...

Beat. House looks to Foreman; maybe he's right...

MRS. MERRICK
(a little ashamed)
...His throat was so sore. The poor
boy just wanted--

HOUSE
--Aren't you a dear. Where are the
pills?

MRS. MERRICK
...He took the last of them the day
before he was switched to this room.

CAMERON
They're gone?

MRS. MERRICK
It's just cough medicine.

HOUSE
No it's not. Where's the bottle?

She reaches into her purse and we:

CUT TO:
EXT. SUBURBAN PHARMACY -- NIGHT

Chase strides purposefully into the 24 hour pharmacy. Mindy and Mrs. Merrick are with him.

INT. SUBURBAN PHARMACY -- MOMENTS LATER

Chase walks along behind the pharmacy counter with the annoyed SUBURBAN PHARMACIST (obviously, not the same pharmacist as in the clinic).

CHASE
We need to know exactly what you put in this bottle. We think it was colchicine; a gout medication--

SUBURBAN PHARMACIST
--If the prescription says cough medicine, that's what I prescribed.

CHASE
The family is prepared to waive liability. We just need to know what it was, what the dosage was--

SUBURBAN PHARMACIST
--It was cough medicine.

Losing his patience, Chase hands him the prescription.

CHASE
Refill it.

INT. SUBURBAN PHARMACY -- DAY

On the other side of the counter, Mindy waits quietly beside Mrs. Merrick. Two women who barely know each other, but share something very huge in common.

MRS. MERRICK
He's going to be okay.

MINDY
(without looking up)
You don't know that.

Mrs. Merrick looks to Mindy, thinks, then:

MRS. MERRICK
Does Brandon like that quality in you?

Mindy looks up...
MRS. MERRICK (CONT'D)
(tactful)
You're a little negative.

MINDY
Things don't always work out for the best.

MRS. MERRICK
It doesn't hurt to hope they do.

MINDY
No. Not unless that makes you figure you can do whatever you want.
(looks back down)
Like give people cough medicine...

Mrs. Merrick felt guilty enough already. Chase and the Pharmacist emerge from behind the counter. Chase is opening a pill bottle as he walks, addressing Mrs. Merrick.

CHASE
These are Tessalon Pearls, a type of cough medication; it's what Brandon was supposed to get.

He takes out a pill to show them.

CHASE (CONT'D)
They're small round and yellow. Can you tell this man what the pills in your son's medicine bottle actually looked like?

MRS. MERRICK
(confused)
They were... small, round and yellow.

Chase is surprised - he hands her the pill. Mindy also takes a look.

MRS. MERRICK (CONT'D)
Exactly like this.

MINDY
...These are the pills Brandon was taking.

SUBURBAN PHARMACIST
(parting shot to Chase)
Hey, I'm just a pharmacist. But I know what cough medicine looks like, doctor.

And he walks away, leaving an even more distraught family in his wake...
INT. HOUSE'S OFFICE - INNER OFFICE -- NIGHT

House is with Wilson. House isn't himself. He's not used to being wrong. It throws off his world-view. He's quiet and un abrasive. House places the new bottle of pills on the table.

    HOUSE
    It was so perfect. It was beautiful.

    WILSON
    Beauty seduces us on the road to truth.

House looks to Wilson. Did you just say that?

    HOUSE
    And triteness kicks us in the nuts.

    WILSON
    So true.

    HOUSE
    ...I was wrong.

    WILSON
    Yeah, but we all must find a way to carry on.

    HOUSE
    You could try shutting up.

    WILSON
    You go first.

A long beat. Wilson has achieved his aim; House is once again thinking about the case.

    HOUSE
    The cough medicine must have done something; it must have aggravated the condition.
    (looks to board)
    Or conditions. It's all over the place. It must be in his blood.

Wilson looks at the board, thinks about this:

    WILSON
    What, if it is his blood?

    HOUSE
    ...Lymphoma?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WILSON
(shrugs)
Unless you got something better?

HOUSE
(facetious)
We foolishly ruled lymphoma out because his CT scan showed no adenopathy. His CBC showed a normal diff and smear. His bone marrow showed no--

WILSON
--So screw the tests - cut him open; find out what's really in there.

HOUSE
He has no blood pressure, no immune system, and no kidneys. Biopsy surgery will kill him.

WILSON
Yeah. Let's stick with the wrong pill theory.

And House knows he's right - he's got nothing else.

HOUSE
Schedule him for surgery.

And on that daunting thought, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY (DAY 4)

Gowned and masked, Foreman, Chase and Cameron are PREPPING Brandon for his upcoming surgery. His family watches from outside the window.

Foreman threads a Swan-Ganz catheter through a large IV under Brandon's clavicle (collar bone). Cameron is at his side. The catheter connects to a bedside monitor.

FOREMAN
Brandon, we're running this tube through your heart and into your lungs.

CAMERON
It has sensors that give us information we'll need during your biopsy surgery this afternoon.

Brandon nervously clenches and unclenches his fingers.

FOREMAN
Try not to move, okay?

BRANDON
(nervous, but aware)
My fingers are a little numb, sorry.

Cameron makes a mental note of this fact.

FOREMAN
(to Cameron)
I really don't need any help on this end.

He indicates across the room where Chase has plenty to do. This is Chase's world - he's the intensivist. He's working at a rolling, metal table on far side of room, gathering and assembling materials needed to place an arterial line in Brandon's wrist [for after Foreman is done - prep includes unfolding blue sterile towel and covering portion of table, opening packages of 4X4's and pouring out, connecting tubing.]

CAMERON
I know.

It's clear she's on this side of the room because she doesn't want to be on the other side of the room (dealing with Chase).

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FOREMAN
We're in the right atrium... trying
to catch the flow through the
tricuspid valve.
(them to Cameron, 
sotto)
You can't even talk to him?

CAMERON
I talk to him.

FOREMAN
Grow up.

Off Cameron, considering. Chase looks up at the monitor.

CHASE
I think the catheter is curling in
the atrium.

FOREMAN
Got it. We're in the RV now.

As Cameron wanders over and starts to help, Chase opens
suture, grabs needle with kelly clamp, and pulls out of
packing and into air.

CHASE
I don't want to jump you, you know.

CAMERON
Yes you do.

They keep their voices quiet enough so that Brandon can't
hear, while they continue to work.

CHASE
No, really--

CAMERON
House is right. We're animals. We
want to procreate, we want healthy
offspring, so we want to jump
beautiful people. You want to jump
me. I want to jump you.

CHASE
You do?

CAMERON
'(House is an idiot)
House is wrong. We're not animals.
(MORE)
CAMERON (CONT'D)
Just because we want something doesn't make it okay. I want to scratch your eyes out when you look at me like that, but I keep it to myself. We're capable of rising above our nature; capable of not spending all day jumping every beautiful thing we see.

CHASE
...You want to jump me?

CAMERON
It's not going to happen. So stop looking at me like that.

Suddenly an alarm sounds. Chase abruptly looks up to the monitor.

CHASE
Ectopy. You must have irritated the heart wall.

FOREMAN
It'll calm down.

Foreman stops working, but doesn't pull back. Chase rushes a crash cart to the bed side, anticipating the worst.

CHASE
He can't tolerate any cardiac arrhythmia. Pull back.

FOREMAN
We can't; he needs the surgery.

CHASE
He's gonna crash; pull out.

The alarm stops. Foreman looks to Chase - 'see?' Foreman starts threading the catheter through again.

BRANDON
I don't feel so...

The alarm starts again.

CAMERON
Pressure dropped.

CHASE
You still with us Brandon?
CONTINUED: (3)

No answer. Brandon is out. Chase pulls defibrillator paddle off code cart.

CHASE (CONT'D)
Charging. Clear.

Chase places paddles on Brandon's chest. Shocks him back to life. Outside the window, the family watches in horror.

CHASE (CONT'D)
Sinus rhythm.

CAMERON
Got a pulse.

FOREMAN
...But he's not getting any surgery.

As they realize the significance of that fact...

INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM #2 -- DAY

A patient, JERRY MORRIS, 18, rocker, tattoos, stands uncomfortably in the middle of the room as House enters.

HOUSE
How ya' doing?

MORRIS
Okay.

HOUSE
(beat, that's it?)
Great. I'm doing good too.

No he's not. And Morris still doesn't say anything.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Get to knock off an hour early today.
You ever do that?

It's true - but House isn't proud of it - actually, he's annoyed. He's also waiting for Morris to jump in and say something. But since he's not...

HOUSE (CONT'D)
I think she only said yes because she wants to reinforce that behavior. She wants me to kiss other people's ass + like she wants me to kiss yours.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOUSE (CONT'D)
What would you want: a doctor who holds your hand while you die or a doctor who ignores you while you get better? I suppose it would particularly suck to have a doctor ignore you while you die.

MORRIS
(finally)
I should go.

He starts to walk painfully for the door.

HOUSE
You think it's going to come out on its own?

Morris turns back. Huh?

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Are we talking bigger than a bread basket?
(still not much of a response)
Because actually, it will come out on its own. Which for small stuff's no problem, gets wrapped up in a nice soft package and plop. Big stuff, you're gonna rip something. And speaking medically, that's when the fun stops.

MORRIS
...How do you--?

HOUSE
You've been here half an hour; you haven't sat down; that tells me the location. You haven't told me what it is, that tells me it's humiliating. You've got a little birdy carved into your arm, that tells me you have a high tolerance for humiliation. So I figure it's not just hemorrhoids.

Still no response.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
I've been a doctor for 20 years, you're not going to surprise me.

And as if to rise to the challenge:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

MORRIS
...It's an MP3 player.

Ow - House stands corrected. A contemplative beat.

HOUSE
...Is it because of the size, the shape... or is it the pounding bass line?

No answer. House just sits there. After a beat:

MORRIS
What are we going to do?

HOUSE
I'm going to wait.

MORRIS
(a little nervous about that idea)
...For what?

House looks at his watch and we:

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

House is at the reception desk, speaking to a NURSE.

HOUSE
: It's three o'clock. I'm off. Can you tell Dr. Cuddy there's a patient in Exam Room 1 that needs her attention. And the RIAA wants her to check for illegal downloads.

The nurse reacts, confused. House turns to go and sees Cameron approaching.

CAMERON
Brandon's not ready for surgery.

HOUSE
Okay. We'll wait a couple weeks. He should be feeling better by then. Oh wait, which day does time go?

CAMERON
He crashed during prep.

Damn.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAMERON (CONT'D)
He's also experiencing pain in his fingers. I think some bug may have gotten into the clean room; we should double his GCSF dosage to temporarily bump his white blood--

But House hasn't heard anything since "pain in his fingers".

HOUSE
--Right.

And he hurries out. Confused, Cameron follows.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The Merricks sit nervously. Mindy paces. Through the glass window, we can see Chase and Foreman, gownned and masked, are doing an echocardiogram on Brandon, to see what damage has been done to his heart. He's conscious again, but obviously weak.

House, followed by Wilson and Cameron, hurries by.

HOUSE
How you all doing?

He blows by them and through the double doors, clearly marked:

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

And there he is - walking across the clean room, but not clean. No gown, no mask; he hasn't even washed his hands. Cameron and Wilson stop in the doorway to prevent the family from entering.

HOUSE
Interesting fact. Every seven years it's a whole new you - inspiring metaphor, huh?

CHASE
Dr. House, this is a clean room--

HOUSE
(not stopping)
Yeah, I read the sign. But cells of different organs reproduce at different rates.

House grabs Brandon's toes. Brandon screams in pain.

MR. MERRICK
(in doorway, behind Wilson)
Are you trying to kill him?

(CONTINUED)
HOUSE
So you've got a new kidney every three years; a new stomach lining every week.

House then yanks at the poor kid's hair. Another scream. (House is definitely back to his old abrasive self.)

HOUSE (CONT'D)
This is why colchicine poisoning causes all these symptoms; but not all at once.

MRS. MERRICK
But the cough medicine was cough medicine; it wasn't--

House ignores the interruption, taps on each body part as he goes...

HOUSE
--Colchicine does it's damage in a very specific order. First pain in the abdomen, rash, fever. Isn't that what you got first?

Brandon nods weekly.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Then the kidneys go; just like what happened to...

CAMERON
( answering)
...Brandon.

HOUSE
Right. Next, it screws up the bone marrow. And then...

He grabs the kid's toes again. Another little yelp.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
...Neuropathy. Painful tingling in the fingers and toes. Now what do you suppose comes after that?

They look to him, expectantly. House opens his hand, showing a handful of hair.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
...Hair loss.

They're duly impressed.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

HOUSE (CONT'D)
The bad news is: your special boy's doing drugs.

The parents react.

MINDY
No, he's --

HOUSE
Ecstasy?

MINDY
No.

BRANDON
Once.
(off her look)
Or twice. With the boys.

HOUSE
You know what they cut that stuff with?
(off their looks)
Apparently, colchicine.
(or:)
Or maybe you ingested the colchicine through your contact lens solution; or skin cream or some other drug you're lying about. I don't know how it happened; I don't care how it happened. But it happened. Start...

CAMERON
...Brandon.

HOUSE
Lovely name. Start Brandon on the FAB fragments.
(opens the door wide)
And let's get some air in here.

And he leaves with Wilson.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

As House and Wilson walk away:

WILSON
If you'd been wrong, you'd have just killed him.

HOUSE
If I'd been wrong, he was dead anyway.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Wilson nods; valid point.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Make a note. I should never doubt myself.

WILSON
I think you'll remember.
(another couple of steps)
You know, it wouldn't hurt for you to be wrong every now and again.

HOUSE
What? You don't care about these people?

And they walk away.

EXT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY -- DAY

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Cameron and Foreman, gowned and masked, are setting up an IV for Brandon. A number of monitors are monitoring his vital signs.

FOREMAN
FAB fragments. They're antibodies that target colchicine.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Chase is with the family and Mindy.
CONTINUED:

MRS. MERRICK
Can't we go in?

CHASE
We're going to keep up the precautions until we know we're right.

MRS. MERRICK
But if you're wrong, Dr. House went in there; that could--

CHASE
--In my experience, that means we're right.

Reassured, Mindy takes Mrs. Merrick's hand.

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Cameron is looking to the monitors. The BP monitor reads 80/50.

SFX. See heart weakly beating.

FOREMAN (V.O.)
The colchicine interferes with the ability of the heart muscle to contract, pumping blood, lowering your blood pressure.

As he speaks, FAST ZOOM IN to the microscopic level, to one cell, then inside the cell, swollen in size like we saw in the previous SFX - tubules inside the cell aren't able to align and grab onto each other.

FOREMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The antibodies we're giving you should neutralize the colchicine.

SFX: The tubules able to align. Grab onto each other. Anchor at opposite ends of muscle cell. They pull ends of cell together, shortening length of cell... Zoom out of cell, see heart beating stronger. BACK TO SCENE.

BRANDON
When will you know?

The BP monitor from the arterial line in his wrist reads 82/52. Then 85/52. Then 90/55. Heart rate slows down.

Cameron takes off her mask, smiles.

CAMERON
We know now.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She gestures to the window for them to come in.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE BRANDON'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Merrick hurries away from his wife and through the door. Mrs. Merrick follows, but is stopped by Mindy.

MINDY
...You were right.

Mrs. Merrick smiles, knows this is an apology, hugs Mindy.

MRS. MERRICK
So were you.

Mindy gratefully reciprocates.

INT. BRANDON'S 'CLEAN' HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Tears flow freely as Brandon and his father hug.

BP monitor now reads 120/76.

Then it's Mindy's turn to hug her fiance as Mrs. Merrick holds her husband.

Chase watches from outside as Foreman and Cameron head for the exit.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

OPEN CLOSE ON HOUSE, sitting on the floor, in a close space looking at bottle after bottle, box after box on a shelf - one shelf of many.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL he's on the floor of the little clinic pharmacy. Wilson walks up to the counter and watches for a beat.

WILSON
Big weekend?

House shoots him a droll look.

HOUSE
It's not for me. I'm fully stocked.

WILSON
Cuddy's got you doing inventory?

HOUSE
No. I'm solving that kid's case.

(CONTINUED)
WILSON
The gout medicine OD?

HOUSE
Yeah.

WILSON
The fact that I know it's a gout medicine OD would seem to indicate that the case is already solved.

HOUSE
(keeps exploring)
You'd be wrong.

WILSON
What about the fact that the kid is now, I believe the technical term is, 'not sick'?

HOUSE
You know how many forms of colchicine are on the market?

Wilson shakes his head - not in answer to the question but in response to the obsessiveness of his friend.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
Neither do I. But there's a lot. Pills, powders, liquids, IV fluids. Somehow, at a party, in his coffee, up his nose, in his ear, this kid had some.

WILSON
You're not happy with your ecstasy theory?

HOUSE
He said he'd only used it twice.

WILSON
People lie.

HOUSE
But if you're gonna lie, why not--

WILSON
--Not interested.

HOUSE
Not curious?

(CONTINUED)
52 CONTINUED: (2)

WILSON

Nope.
(turning to go)
Because I'm well adjusted.

HOUSE

Right.

And as Wilson walks away, and House continues his quest, we hear Brandon COUGH.

53 INT. BRANDON'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

He's back in his old (non-sterile) room.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

His family is around him. He's sitting up. He's still on the IV but his BP now reads 110/70. Cameron is checking him out. She pulls a thermometer out of his mouth.

CAMERON
Temperature's back down.

BRANDON
I want cousin Sharon there.

As they talk, Cameron and Chase check the patient out, BP, kidney function, pain in etc.

MRS. MERRICK
If we invite Sharon, we have to invite all the cousins.

MINDY
So what? So less chicken for everybody.

MRS. MERRICK
Good point.

Brandon laughs - and coughs.

BRANDON
I don't suppose I could have my cough pills? They're okay, right?

CAMERON
Sure; everything looks fine; you're doing great.

She pulls the new bottle out of her jacket pocket, gets a pill out and gives it to Brandon.

CHASE
(making a final notation on the chart)
Invite Dr. House.

MR. MERRICK
Will he come?

CHASE
No, but he'll send a gift.

CAMERON
I'll make sure it's a good one.

During this conversation, Brandon has dropped the pill, picked it back up, was about to put it in his mouth when he noticed...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

BRANDON
There are letters on the back of these pills.

Everybody looks to him. What?

CAMERON
Your old pills didn't have any letters on them?

BRANDON
No. Round and yellow, but no letters.

Cameron realizes the significance of this. She looks to Chase, smiles. He smiles back.

CHASE
That pharmacist did say he knew what the cough medicine looked like.

CAMERON
(to Brandon)
These are different. These will help your cough.

And as Chase and Cameron head for the door...

CHASE
You want to go get some--

CAMERON
--No.

Brandon takes the pill.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

House pops one of his own pills.

He continues searching for an answer he may never find. But then he opens a pill bottle. Colchicine. Small, round, yellow but no letters on them. He takes one of the cough pills from the pharmacy out of his pocket - looks at it, looks at the other pill - they're identical - except for the letters.

He smiles. All is right in the world. Or as right as it can be.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW