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HOUSE

"The C-Word"

EPISODE #8019

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Script # 819

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TEASER

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a FRISBEE flying over a carpet of grass. A DOG leaps up and snatches it from the air. PULL BACK to reveal...

1 EXT. CITY PARK -- DAY (DAY 1) 1

It's a beautiful day. The park is full of people. Footballs are tossed around; smoke from BBQ grills fill the air; various birthday parties are underway.

The playground is swarming with children. One of the kids amongst the fray is EMILY LAWSON, 6. Her father, SIMON LAWSON, 30s, holds her on his lap and she squeals as they slide down a slide...

SIMON

What do you want to do next? Swings?

(Emily shakes her head)

Crawl tube?

(wrong again)

I think we're running out of options.

Emily grabs her father's hand. She yanks him toward the carousel directly behind them.

EMILY

I want to go on the merry-go-round.

SIMON

Again?

EMILY

But this time all by myself.

SIMON

(not sure)

I don't know, jelly bean.

EMILY

I'm six. I'm not a baby anymore.

(hands clasped, pleading)

Please?

Emily looks up at Simon with those puppy dog eyes. He melts. How can he refuse her? She's daddy's little girl.

SIMON

You promise you won't tell Mom?
She'll kick my butt if she finds
out.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

EMILY

Pinky swear.

Father and daughter complete the solemn "pinky swear" ritual.

Simon hands the CAROUSEL OPERATOR a few dollars as Emily races over to the ride.

The carousel has clearly seen better days. The intricately carved wooden horses are cracked with age and layers of flaking paint. It's mostly empty except for a HALF DOZEN CHILDREN and a FEW PARENTS. Emily climbs up on her favorite mount and waves to her father.

SIMON

Remember to hang on tight.

EMILY

I will!

The carousel lurches to life as an ancient Stinson Band Organ croaks out CALLIOPE MUSIC. Emily is beaming as she moves forward. The speed increases until the horses are whirling by at full gallop. Simon raises a camcorder to capture this historic event.

VIDEO CAMERA POV

We see Emily as she whirls past, laughing. The lens zooms in tighter for the next pass... but this time Emily's not laughing. She's wiping at a trickle of blood running from her nose.

RESUME SCENE

Simon lowers the camera, a look of concern on his face. Emily's horse passes by again. It's riderless now, she's completely vanished from view.

SIMON

Stop the ride! My daughter fell off!

Simon races towards the still spinning carousel and leaps onto the moving platform. He lands with a crash as his video camera flies off and bounces across the pavement. He gets up, his wrist in obvious pain, and makes his way back towards Emily's horse.

MOVING WITH SIMON as he weaves between the horses. Their carved faces and expressions seem ominous now... almost Lovecraftian. Their mouths open with silent screams. Their dead black eyes wide with what could be perceived as horror.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

SIMON (CONT'D)

Emily! Where are you! Em!

Simon frantically searches and finally finds his daughter lying in the center of the carousel. She's unconscious. Blood flows from her nose and soaks the front of her shirt.

SIMON (CONT'D)

...Oh my God. Baby...

Simon picks up his daughter as the ride finally grinds to a shuddering halt. He yells to the BYSTANDERS starting to collect along the fence.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Someone call nine-one-one! I don't think she's breathing!

Simon looks down at his daughter cradled in his arms, his face reflecting every parent's worst nightmare.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 INT. UPSCALE HEALTH CARE CENTER - KONDO'S OFFICE -- DAY 2
(DAY 2)

CLOSE ON a PET SCAN OF A THYMOMA. The stamp on the bottom reads: Wilson, James, Stage II Thymoma. PULL BACK to reveal WILSON staring at the image on a light box as he strips down to his t-shirt.

He stands in a large, expensively decorated doctor's office. Diplomas and awards adorn the walls, the windows boast a stunning view of Manhattan.

HOUSE (O.S.)
Is that our precious little bundle
of tumor?

Wilson turns around and sees HOUSE entering the room with his backpack. Wilson's shocked he's there.

HOUSE (CONT'D)
(re: tumor)
They grow up so fast, don't they.

Wilson turns the light box off.

WILSON
(anticipating how he knew)
Foreman?

HOUSE
(should have thought of that)
Would have been easier.
(off Wilson)
I followed you.

WILSON
(annoyed)
Didn't occur to you that that might
mean... I don't want you involved in
my cancer treatment.

HOUSE
I'm not here as a doctor, but as a
towering pillar of strength.

WILSON
Be a pillar in the parking lot.

Wilson starts to escort House toward the door but House shakes free.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

HOUSE

No.

(off Wilson)

How many times have I told you to
leave me alone and you still made
yourself a pain in the ass.

(off Wilson, a friend)

I owe you.

Wilson knows House is trying to do the right thing...

HOUSE (CONT'D)

(sincere)

My word, not a medical word.

WILSON

...Realizing I'm most likely going
to regret this: Alright, you can
stay.

House reaches into his backpack and removes a "pocket bar".
He starts making a tropical style drink.

HOUSE

(off Wilson's look)

My best friend has cancer. Cut me
some slack.

House adds a tiny cocktail umbrella to his drink.

HOUSE (CONT'D)

Plus it's spring break; I'm on
vacation.

(off Wilson's physique)

Of course looking at you now, I can
tell the wet t-shirt contest is
probably going to suck.

Off Wilson, already regretting letting House stay...

3 INT. HOUSE'S OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

3

CLOSE ON a stack of case files. PULL BACK to reveal CHASE,
TAUB, ADAMS and PARK sitting at the table, each holding a
different file in their hands, searching for their next case.

TAUB

House taking time off is a bad sign.

ADAMS

A bad sign? You think the apocalypse
is coming because House wants to be
there for Wilson?

(CONTINUED)

TAUB

Yeah.
 (off Adams)
 You're new.

CHASE

House needs the constant stimulation
 of solving medical mysteries to keep
 from self-destructing.

Adams considers, sees his point.

FOREMAN enters with a case folder and a FEMALE DOCTOR,
 ELIZABETH LAWSON, 30's. She's wearing a lab coat and carrying
 a cardboard box packed with medical files and a laptop.

FOREMAN

You've got a case. Six-year-old
 with a nose bleed and breathing
 problems. She was born with a rare
 mutation of A-T.

ELIZABETH

Emily has a unique variant in both
 of her ATM genes. Her disorder mimics
 A-T, but not all of the symptoms.

Foreman hands out copies of the case file.

FOREMAN

Doctor Lawson is a developmental
 geneticist attached to JHU and an
 expert on the girl's condition.

Chase notices on the file...

CHASE

Dr. Elizabeth Lawson.
 (then re: file)
 Emily Lawson...

The team reacts.

ELIZABETH

(understands their concern)
 I'm here as a doctor; not a mother.

A beat, the team seems to accept this with some trepidation.
 They look over the patient file for a beat, then...

TAUB

Nose bleeds and breathing problems
 are common symptoms of Ataxia
 telangiectasia.

(CONTINUED)

PARK

We could just be seeing the natural progression of--

ELIZABETH

(forceful, abrupt)

It's not. A-T patients have a life expectancy in their twenties. Emily is only six. It's something else.

Elizabeth opens up her medical files and pulls out a chart.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(proving it)

I examined her lungs two days ago. They were functioning normally.

ADAMS

(off file)

It says she fell off a carousel. Head trauma could--

ELIZABETH

If the diagnosis was simple I wouldn't need you people.

The team reacts, a bit put out...

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(a beat, softer)

I'm here because according to Eric, you're the best.

PARK

We are. Have you considered Wegener's granulomatosis?

The team reacts, it's an excellent theory.

ELIZABETH

(considers, then)

...It's a good fit. But she can't have x-rays. A-T makes her hypersensitive to ionizing radiation. I'll get her prepped for an MRI.

Elizabeth exits the room. All eyes go to Foreman.

CHASE

Did we make that decision or did she?

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

FOREMAN

(was expecting this)
She knows more about her daughter's
genetic condition than any of you;
she'll be an asset.

CHASE

(pointed)
Or she won't; Eric...

FOREMAN

...This isn't a request. Use her.

Foreman exits. Off the team...

4 INT. UPSCALE HEALTH CARE CENTER - KONDO'S OFFICE -- DAY

4

Wilson is buttoning up his shirt. House sits over in the corner, sipping his cocktail. DOCTOR MICHAEL KONDO, Asian, 40's, shoots House an uncomfortable look and finishes writing in Wilson's file.

KONDO

The tumor's spread into the
surrounding tissue. We need to shrink
it before we can remove it surgically.

WILSON

I'm more interested in exactly how
you plan to do that, Mike.

KONDO

We start conservative. Daily
radiation treatment for three weeks.
If it still hasn't shrunk enough
after that, we add chemo to the--

WILSON

And if it still hasn't shrunk enough
after that, I'm dead.

KONDO

You've got over a seventy five percent
chance the radiation alone will be
enough.

(off Wilson)

Relax. We've caught this in time.

WILSON

Catching it in time would have been
before it invaded the tissue around
my thymus. I want the radiation and
chemo concurrently.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

Wilson looks over at House for a reaction. House is true to his word. He remains stone faced and silent.

KONDO

(bit surprised)

Why stress out your immune system unnecessarily? Lets go with my plan. Radiation first and--

WILSON

(rising)

I'm gonna get a second opinion.

House perks up; as does Kondo--

KONDO

You're serious? I've seen you recommend this exact same treatment dozens of times.

WILSON

We're done here. I'll find a doctor with some actual balls.

Kondo looks shocked. Wilson exits.

House gets up to follow. Kondo stops him.

KONDO

You need to talk to your friend.

(off House's look)

He's embarrassing himself. A doctor should be able to handle his own illness with a little more dignity.

HOUSE

I agree with Wilson.

KONDO

My recommended treatment is sound.

HOUSE

I was talking about the ball-less part. Explains the office.

House exits. Off Kondo, fuming, as he stands in his opulent office.

5 INT. EMILY'S PATIENT ROOM -- DAY

5

Emily's in bed asleep, her arms wrapped around her favorite old stuffed teddy bear. Elizabeth and Simon are quietly fighting on the other side of the room.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

SIMON

It was a merry-go-round. She's a kid, Liz. We were having fun. You should try it sometime.

ELIZABETH

Fun? She's six; not you. You know she has balance issues--

Taub CLEARS HIS THROAT. The couple turn to see Taub and Adams who have just entered.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

This is... Emily's father, Simon. He was with her when the symptoms occurred.

SIMON

(defensive)

I had her all week; she was fine--

TAUB

We could come back...

ELIZABETH

No need. Patient's ready for transport.

Taub and Adams, share a look: "patient"? Elizabeth walks over to Emily and gently wakes her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Wake up, sleepy head.

As Emily rubs her eyes, waking up, Elizabeth reaches in her lab coat pocket and pulls out a PLUSH PENGUIN.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I saw it in the gift shop. I know how much you like them.

Emily looks down at the stuffed penguin, and smiles awkwardly.

EMILY

Thanks.

ELIZABETH

They're going to take you for an MRI now.

ADAMS

(to Emily)

It means Magic Really cool Images.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

EMILY

I thought it stood for magnetic resonance imaging?

SIMON

(off Adams)

...We've spent a lot of time in hospitals.

Off Taub and Adams, feeling for the little girl...

6 INT. DOCTORS' LOUNGE -- DAY

6

CLOSE ON a wooden, super-sized Battle Ship type game board. Red and white pegs designate a series of hits and misses. We can't see the playing field yet...

HOUSE (O.S.)

B. Nine.

PULL BACK to reveal House and Wilson sitting across a table from each other playing "Battle Shooters." It's just like the game Battle Ship, but much larger and the ships are filled with shot glasses. If you get hit, you drink.

WILSON

Hit. And I hate you.
(takes a shot, then)
I'm done.

HOUSE

I sunk your battle ship?

WILSON

No. I think I'm going to puke.

Wilson closes his Battle Shooters case. They both notice NURSE JEFFREY sitting on the lounge couch. He's glaring at them from over the top of his magazine.

HOUSE

You never saw two guys on spring break playing Battle Shooters before?

NURSE JEFFERY

Just wondering what Doctor Foreman would say if he knew you were drinking in the hospital.

HOUSE

The same thing he'd say if he knew a nurse was hiding in the doctors' lounge.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

NURSE JEFFERY
 (excellent point)
 Fair enough.

Nurse Jeffrey returns to reading his magazine.

HOUSE
 Now that you're sufficiently buzzed...
 (off Wilson's look - what?)
 What's the real reason you freaked
 out on Kondo? You scared, in denial?
 What are the stages of irrationality
 in cancer patients--?

WILSON
 I know you get confused when people
 think you might be wrong but it's
 not considered freaking out when a
 patient asks for a second opinion.

HOUSE
 Here it is. Kondo's right. You
 should be in radiology right now.

WILSON
 Well done. You almost kept your
 word for a full two hours.

HOUSE
 Every day you wait, our pal Toomie's
 growing larger in your chest. You
 want to live, stop screwing around
 and do something about it.

Wilson stands.

WILSON
 Good idea. I think I'll start with
 spending spring break on my own.

Wilson exits. Off House, watching him go...

7 INT. RADIOLOGY - MRI & CONTROL ROOM -- DAY

7

Taub and Adams sit in front of the controls. Emily's face
 is on the monitor.

TAUB
 I thought it stood for Magic Really
 cool Images too.

Adams shoots him a look, then turns on the speaker.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

ADAMS

How you feeling in there, Emily?

EMILY

Good. I guess.

ADAMS

Something wrong?

EMILY

I was only pretending to be asleep.

Taub and Adams react, Emily heard her parents arguing.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You think that's dishonest?

ADAMS

...That's, um, that's...

Adams looks at Taub, how the hell do you answer that? Taub takes the microphone.

TAUB

My daughters do that too, but they know that sometimes when it seems like Mommy and Daddy are fighting, it's really only because they're worried about you.

Emily nods, content with the answer.

TAUB (CONT'D)

(pleased with himself)

I've got a mug; says 'world's best dad'.

EMILY

...And does your wife ever want a divorce?

Adams gives Taub a look. Then he speaks into the mic again.

TAUB

No. Everything's fine at home. Hold still now. No more talking.

Adams shoots him a look.

ADAMS

(waits a beat, then)

What do you think of her mother?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

TAUB

She's saved us a bunch of time we
would have wasted testing for things
the kid doesn't have.

Taub types on the keyboard. Imagery of Emily's lungs starts
to appear on screen.

ADAMS

(this is weird)
And she called her daughter "the
patient".

TAUB

She called her "the patient" to us.
And she has to be emotionally detached
to stay objective.

ADAMS

Do you think that's possible?

He glances at that little face looking a little uncomfortable
on the monitor...

TAUB

If my kids were born with an
expiration date...
(genuine)
I don't have a clue how I'd react...

Emily lets out a CRY OF PAIN inside the MRI.

EMILY

(over the speaker)
It hurts so much!

Taub and Adams rush into the room.

8 INT. RADIOLOGY - MRI ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

8

Taub and Adams move over to the MRI and extract the tray.
Emily slides out of the machine with tears in her eyes.

TAUB

Where does it hurt?

EMILY

I want my daddy! Where's my daddy!

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED:

8

They remove the sheet from Emily to reveal her fingers and toes are dark blue. There's no oxygen flowing into them. OFF Taub and Adams sharing a look, what the hell is going on?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE