

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC, LOBBY - DAY

Sitting at reception is MONIQUE (late 20's), reading a book behind the desk.

GABRIEL (late 30's, Hispanic), a very disheveled sickly man walks in.

MONIQUE

Ew! Hey! You can't squat here. The park is down the road! Shew!

GABRIEL

I'm here for some medical help.

Monique looks annoyed and quickly gets on the office phone.

MONIQUE

Sorry to bother you doctor Johnston, but another stray just walked in and he's smelling up the place.

Monique hangs up the phone.

DR. JOHNSTON (35-40) walks out to the front desk area. He is a very serious doctor who often has a terrible bedside manner.

DR. JOHNSTON (CONDESCENDING)

No free drugs or needles here. Do you understand what I am saying, vagrant? Or do you need a translator?

Gabriel brutally coughs as if his lungs are going to come up out of his mouth.

MONIQUE

Ewe, we can't help you here! Go infect someone else!

GABRIEL

Please. This cough has kept me up for weeks, if I could just see someone.

DR. JOHNSTON

Not without an appointment and insurance. And you clearly don't have either.

Dr. Johnston dismisses him without looking up.

DR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

I'm taking a siesta. Nurse Jenkins can deal with him when she arrives. He can be her guinea pig.

MONIQUE

That's like two hours from now.

DR. JOHNSTON

If we're lucky, he'll leave before that.

Doctor Johnston makes his way to his office.

His breathing is unbearably abnormal and looks like he's going to pass out.

Monique looks grossed out and quickly gives him a blank patient form on a clipboard.

MONIQUE

Just take this and sit.. way over there guy.

GABRIEL

My name is Gabriel.

Gabriel sits down.

Doctor Johnston stops walking for a minute looking perplexed at the man's name as if he's remembering something. He shakes it off and goes into his office.

MONIQUE

Write it down.

GABRIEL

Do you have a pen?

Gabriel is about to stand up but is stopped by Monique chucking the pen toward him on the ground as if to say "don't go near me and stay sitting down."

Just then, SIMONEE HUGHES (50-60) enters the clinic. She is the exact opposite of Gabriel in every way- white, clean, stylish.

SIMONE

Oh my goodness. Even my mink can't withstand this horrendous weather.

Monique gives SIMONE a fake smile.

MONIQUE

Mrs. Hughes! To what do we owe the pleasure of this visit?

SIMONE

Evelyn bit me if you can imagine.

MONIQUE

Your... daughter?

SIMONEE

My dog, you half-wit. She thought my newly manicured hand was a glittery chew toy! She broke the skin.

MONIQUE

Did you want to make an appointment with him?

Simone laughs.

SIMONE

Well that would be silly. I'm already here! I just need a quick prescription to take the edge off. Where is he?

Simone turns toward Gabriel and shrieks.

SIMONEE

Oh you startled me! (to Monique)
Is Dr. Johnston accepting immigrant patients now?

MONIQUE

Oh don't worry about him. Nurse Jenkins will be here and she can deal with him.

SIMONE

I told Dr. Johnston his practice is way too close to that shelter.

Gabriel continues to cough violently.

MONIQUE

Ew. I really don't wanna deal with a dead body.

SIMONE

Is there someplace else I can wait?
I just don't feel comfortable
breathing the same air as a Mexican
drug addict.

Gabriel cannot ignore this conversation any longer. He gets up toward the desk and puts the clipboard on the reception desk as Simone keeps at a distance.

GABRIEL

I'm sick, not deaf. And I'm not a
drug addict!

INT. CLINIC, DR. JOHNSTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Johnston pokes his head out of his door and looks at Gabriel.

SIMONE

Don't raise your voice at me! I
wasn't even talking to you! You
shouldn't even be allowed to be in
here. I am a member of society. Do
you know what that means? It's a
person who pays taxes, and pays for
insurance. You are just a big stain
on a sidewalk. The bane of
existence. All your kind does is
take take take. You don't deserve
to be sitting here, you deserve to
be dead, you sick freeloader!

Dr. Johnston barges out of his office.

DR. JOHNSTON

Mrs. Hughes! I thought I heard your
voice. What an unexpected but
lovely surprise.

SIMONE

There you are! I was beginning to
think you turned your practice into
a methadone clinic and fled the
country.

Dr. Johnston glances at Gabriels filled out document at his name specifically.

DR. JOHNSTON

I would leave without saying
goodbye to **you**, Mrs. Hughes.

Simons takes Dr. Johnston's arm to move into his office.

SIMONE

Look, I don't have all day and I don't know what this person could have contracted or where this person has been.

Dr. Johnston and Gabriel look at each other.

Gabriel looks heartbroken at all of the horrible things being said about him. He gets up and starts walking toward the door.

DR. JOHNSTON

Hey, wait!

Dr. Johnston slyly gets out of Simone's grasp and walks toward the front door.

SIMONE

Where are you going?

GABRIEL

I don't want any trouble.

DR. JOHNSTON

Let's get you checked out.

GABRIEL

Really?

SIMON

How dare you dismiss me! You are seriously going to... **treat** him? And before me? Is this a hidden camera thing?

Gabriel looks even more pale and coughs again.

Dr. Johnston walks up to Simone.

We can tell Gabriel is listening.

DR. JOHNSTON (WHISPERS)

Don't you wanna know if he's deadly contagious and that you may need more than a quick prescription?

Simone looks scared and backs off.

Monique quickly puts hand sanitizer on her hands.

SIMONE
I'll take a seat.

DR. JOHNSTON
Good idea.

They walk to the exam room.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC, EXAM ROOM/OFFICE - DAY

DR. JOHNSTON examines Gabriel's throat with a tongue
compressor.

DR. JOHNSTON
Does it hurt when you swallow?

GABRIEL
Yeah. Like daggers.

DR. JOHNSTON listens to his breathing with a stethoscope on
Gabriels back.

DR. JOHNSTON
Long breath in. Hold. And out.

Gabriel does and coughs a little.

GABRIEL
I didn't think you'd recognize me.

DR. JOHNSTON
Any nausea, diarrhea?

Dr. Johnston feels his neck glands.

GABRIEL
You wouldn't have given me the time
of day if I was just a stranger.

DR. JOHNSTON
We run a very lucrative private
practice. This is not an emergency
room where you can just walk in and
say I'm Gabriel Hernandez and I
need immediate treatment for free.

GABRIEL
I knew you recognized me.

DR. JOHNSTON

What happened to you Gabe? You were the smartest most dignified kid in school. President of the debate team. Student voted most likely -

GABRIEL

To be president. I know. Tall order for a **vagrant** like me, right?

Dr. Johnston sighs. Gabriel forgives him without an apology by moving on.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I had a good job, for a while. Then I got laid off and lost all my benefits. Lost everything. I live in a hostel that's very far away from a laundry mat so I have to ride my bike for miles in this freezing cold slush just to get my clothes cleaned.

DR. JOHNSTON tries not to look like he has pity for Gabriel and stays neutrally professional.

DR. JOHNSTON

That might explain this cough. It doesn't explain the tightening in the chest and loss of appetite.

Gabriel has a cough attack. Dr. Johnston quickly gets him some water but continues to breath abnormally.

GABRIEL

I ask you something?

DR. JOHNSTON

What?

GABRIEL

When you did figure out who I was, why didn't you say you knew me out there?

DR. JOHNSTON

Look, I treat my patients like royalty. I make them feel safe. If they thought I had friends on the streets, it looks like I can't be trusted and it takes away that VIP experience.

GABRIEL

Wow, I guess my eyes did deceive me.

DR. JOHNSTON

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

At fourteen, you got the whole school to sign a petition demanding the cafeteria give all the extra food to the homeless at the end of every day. I don't recognize **this** person at all.

DR. JOHNSTON

How dare you come into my establishment, beg for free healthcare and insult me!

GABRIEL

Please just think to yourself for a second, who are you really mad at right now?

DR. JOHNSTON

I think we're done here.

Dr. Johnston gets up in a huff.

Gabriel looks scared.

GABRIEL

Brian?

Dr. Johnston looks at Gabriel.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

My other symptoms... I think it also might be... asbestos exposure. The hostel. It's ..

Gabriel starts to tear up. This is all very embarrassing to Gabriel to say these things out loud. Dr. Johnston fells that.

DR. JOHNSTON

It's okay, Gabe.

GABRIEL

...there's traces of... mould everywhere and..

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I'm really trying to get my life together. I had a life before all this.

DR. JOHNSTON

I'm sorry, Gabe.

DR. JOHNSTON puts a hand on his shoulder.

Just then, Simone barges in and sees Dr. Johnston in contact with Gabriel.

SIMONE

Are you crazy??? You are touching this creature?

Monique steps in.

MONIQUE

I'm sorry, Dr. Johnston. She wouldn't wait.

SIMONE

How much longer with this Mexican freeloader? Is it a disease? Should I isolate immediately? I deserve to know right now!

DR. JOHNSTON

This is Gabriel Hernandez, one of the smartest most determined people I have ever known.

SIMONE

I don't care! I might be dying! I need my prescription!

Dr. Johnston looks at her hand.

DR. JOHNSTON

I prescribe an over the counter triple antibiotic ointment. There's a drugstore on the corner.

SIMONE

What about my prescription?

DR. JOHNSTON

You really don't need any pain meds today, Mrs. Hughes. You are as healthy as a horse and this is a minor scratch.

Mrs. Hughes looks like someone just burned her mansion down.

SIMONE

If you cut me off, you'll be sorry!
I know most of your patients and
they wouldn't be too happy to hear
you've been giving away freebies to
addicts.

Monique looks at Dr. Johnston as if she was watching a
dramatic soap opera.

DR. JOHNSTON

There is also a pet store next to
the drugstore if you need a muzzle.

Monique gasps.

SIMONE

You are going to regret this.

Simone leaves with Monique.

DR. JOHNSTON

I'm going to set you up with an
ultrasound for tomorrow morning if
you can swing that? For now, I will
give you a script for a low dose
medication that will help you
sleep. I'm sure you'll be back on
your feet and out of that place in
no time.

GABRIEL

I'm already in a lot of debt, I
really can't afford -

DR. JOHNSTON

Once you're better, i'm sure you
will find a job that deserves you
and you can pay me back.

GABRIEL

Oh no I -

DR. JOHNSTON

This isn't pity Gabriel. We are
going to need you to be right as
rain if you are going to be the
next President.

Gabriel smiles. They shake hands.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC, LOBBY - DAY

Monique print out something and tapes it to the window that reads: WE DO NOT TOLERATE ANY DISCRIMINATION IN THIS ESTABLISHMENT.

(or something more official).

OUT.