

Call Me Mule

TV Screenplay

Pilot Episode Excerpt

By Alan Pietsch

Ulysses is main character - INT - DAY - HOSPITAL
ENTRANCE

Ulysses rushes through the front door of a hospital emergency room. He hurriedly walks down the hallway into the Intensive Care Unit to a cluster of doctors and three other people who notice him and watch him approach. They are standing outside a patient's room

ULYSSES

I got here as fast as I could.
What's so pressing?

DIRECTOR

This is Dr. Campbell, he is the head of their cardio-pulmonary unit.

DR. CAMPBELL

Sorry to bring you here on such short notice, but I thought it was important for you to see this for yourself. It is your study after all.

He pauses.

DR. CAMPBELL

Four of the patients in your clinical study have come in in the past 24 hours with acute multiple organ failure. They're in intensive care right now, but it's not looking good. Their vitals are dropping rapidly and we can't seem to stabilize them. It seems that their immune systems have gone haywire - something called a "cytokine storm" where the body's immune system basically goes into

overdrive and starts attacking
good cells in the body.

ULYSSES

Is there a way to stop it?

DR. CAMPBELL

This is a fairly recent
discovery. We don't really have
a good understanding of it yet.
The long and the short is...we
don't know how to stop it.

Pause.

DR. CAMPBELL

And there is the fact that for
all four of these patients, this
is the second day since their
third injection.

Researchers all look at each other. No one speaks.

NURSE

Dr. Campbell, we need you in
here.

Dr. Campbell pushes through the group and enters the
room. He glances at the patient monitor with a grim
expression.

NURSE

His heart rate has been dropping
more rapidly in the past 20
minutes. We injected some
adrenaline, but there was no
response.

Ulysses, the Director (Laura) and the rest of the group
stand in the doorway watching the monitor. The tiny
blips on the screen get further and further apart and
slow down. Then they flatline. The doctor straightens
up and turns to the group.

DR. CAMPBELL

I'm sorry. We did everything we
could. I need to check on the
other three. Excuse me.

Ulysses stands staring at the dead body. Laura turns and starts talking to the other two colleagues.

DIRECTOR

Get back to the office and get the PR people working on a press release. There's been an unexpected development in our clinical trials. The situation is highly fluid right now. We are monitoring it closely. We will be holding a news conference tomorrow morning at our offices in Bothell. Stand by for further updates. Tell them to get it out to all the major outlets as soon as possible. We've got to get out in front of this before it gets away from us.

They nod and hurry off. Laura glances over and sees Ulysses stumble backwards, a tear rolling down his cheek. He puts his head in his hands.

DIRECTOR

Ulysses

She grabs his arm. He looks at her.

DIRECTOR

Look, nobody meant this to happen. We always knew...

ULYSSES

What? That we were going to kill somebody?

DIRECTOR

We talked about this, remember? This was a team effort. A team decision.

ULYSSES

Yeah. And I was the head of the team. I chose this platform.

DIRECTOR

We all discussed the pros and cons...

ULYSSES

And I convinced everyone that
this was the way to go.

He leans forward and points to himself.

ULYSSES

I did

DIRECTOR

Look. I know this has hit you
really hard. We don't know for
sure. I think you need to take
a deep breath. A man just died.
We're all in shock. But, let's
not rush to judgment.

ULYSSES

Like we had a hand in that man
dying? Seems pretty clear to
me.

DIRECTOR

All I'm saying is try to get a
little perspective.

Ulysses looks her in the eye, then turns and looks at
the dead body. He turns back to her.

ULYSSES

I just did. It doesn't look too
good.

He walks past her on his way out of the hospital. She watches him
go.