CHURCH OF PEPTIDES PRESENTS

PATIENT ONE

VOL. 1
ISSUE 1



STILL BREATHING


KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
STILL WITH US?
HHH—!

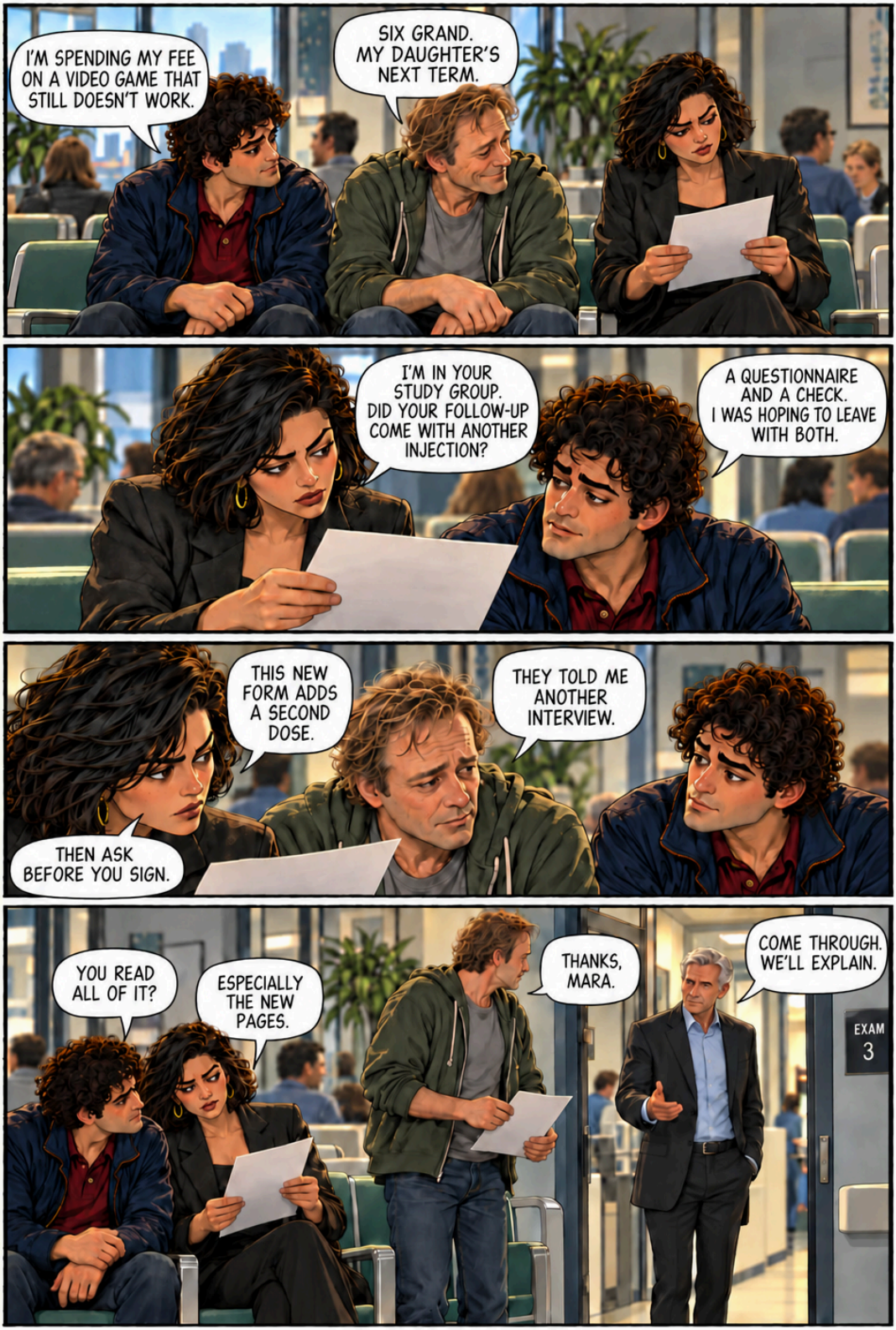
DOCTIDE / Johnny's upstairs neighbor



NURSE REYES / Mercer clinical research



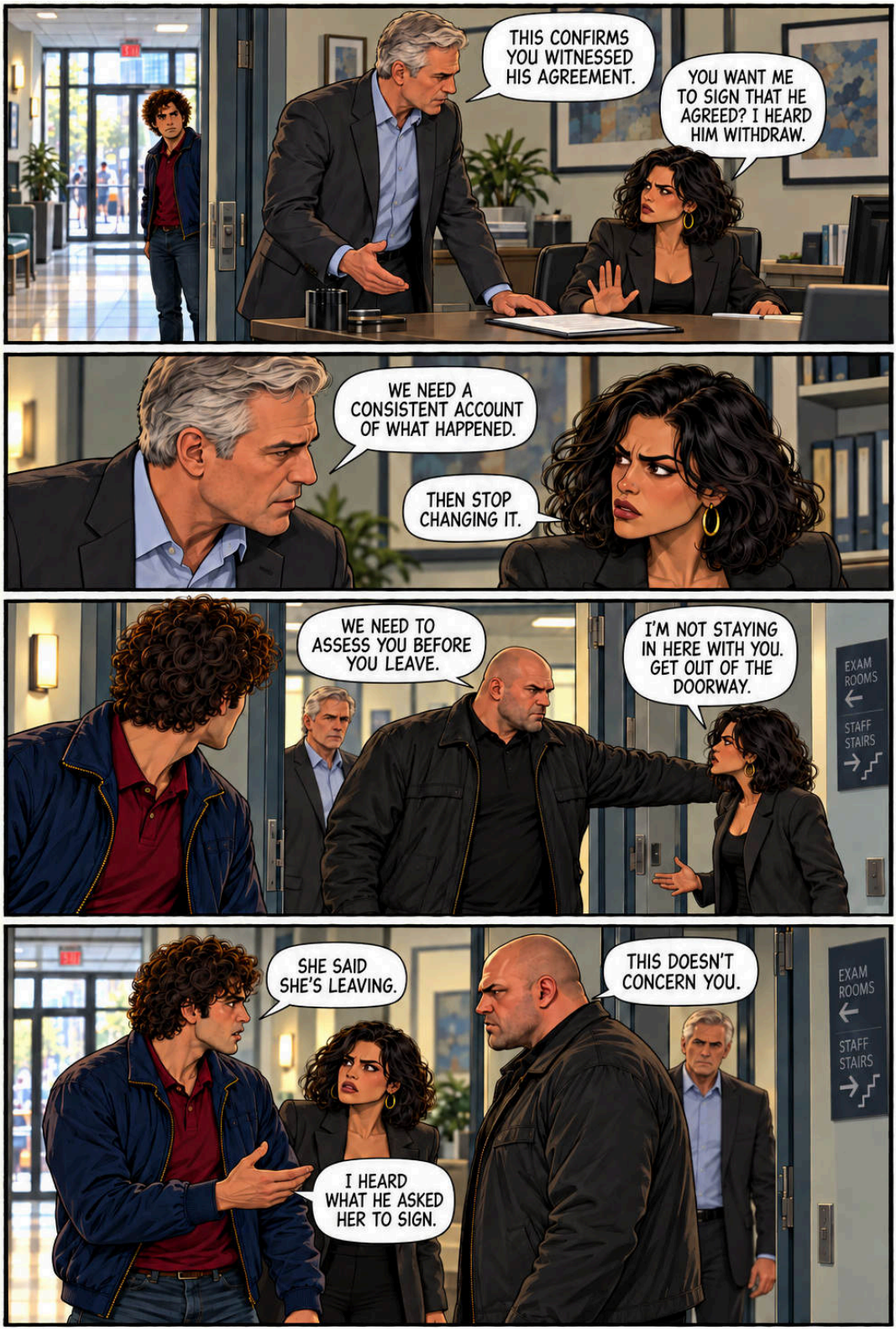
MARA / Fellow trial participant




WE NEED THE SECOND-DOSE RESULTS BEFORE FRIDAY'S SPONSOR REVIEW.
WHAT SECOND DOSE?
WHO TOLD YOU THAT?
THE AMENDMENT IS NOT APPROVED, MR. VOSS.
I SIGNED IT. PROCEED, OR I FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL.
HE SAID YOU'VE NOT SEEN AN APPROVED CHANGE.
STAY HERE. A SECOND DOSE ISN'T IN THE SCHEDULE I HAVE.
THEO.
WAIT. YOU SAID AN INTERVIEW. I DON'T WANT ANOTHER INJECTION.
TREATMENT 3


I SAID STOP.
IT'S ALREADY IN.
THEO? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
96
120/78
18
GET THE EMERGENCY KIT. CALL 911.
MERCER CLINICAL RESEARCH. A PARTICIPANT COLLAPSED AFTER AN INJECTION. SEND AN AMBULANCE.
WE CAN ARRANGE A PRIVATE TRANSFER.
I'VE CALLED AN AMBULANCE. GIVE THEM THE EXACT DOSE AND TIME.

VOSS. The man who thanked me for surviving Vesper.




EXIT
SECURITY IS STOPPING PEOPLE LEAVING. SEND POLICE.
STAFF STAIRS. DOWN ONE FLIGHT TO THE YARD.
STAFF STAIRS
THUD
AH!
JOHNNY!
GO. I'VE GOT THE DOOR.
MY SHOULDER.
Right hand on the rail. One step.


SERVICE EXIT
IT'S TOO LOUD. I CAN'T TELL WHERE ANYTHING IS.
RRRRR
AMBULANCE
LOOK AT ME. THAT BLUE POST. WALK TO IT.
STAY WHERE I CAN SEE YOU.
THE PATIENT IS INSIDE. SECURITY WOULDN'T LET US LEAVE.
HE INJURED MY SHOULDER.
POLICE
STAY THERE.
HIS NAME IS THEO.
WE'LL GET YOU BOTH CHECKED.
POLICE


WE'LL ASSESS THE HEARING AS WELL.
IT'S QUIETER NOW. NOT NORMAL.
THEO DIED. THE TEAM COULDN'T BRING HIM BACK.
HIS DAUGHTER. HAS SOMEONE CALLED HER?
HIS FAMILY IS BEING CONTACTED.
GIVE ME YOUR NUMBER. IF THEY TRY TO CHANGE THE STORY, WE SHOULD KNOW.
YEAH.

WHAT THEY PAY FOR

Theo’s fee was six thousand dollars. Theo had already spent it in his head. Tuition. I’d spent mine on a door a computer-generated man couldn’t open.

I didn't know his daughter's name. I knew what the next term cost. That seemed like a strange amount to know about a man who was dead.

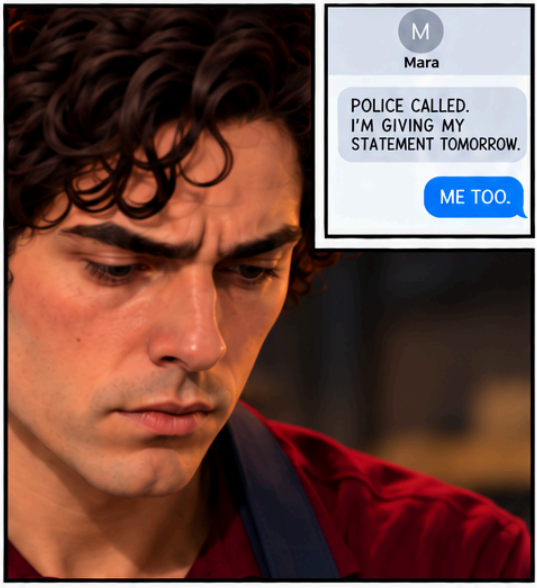
By evening, the walls had stopped talking. Somewhere, that would go into a box marked improvement.

I practiced a message to my mother on the way home. Nothing dramatic. Just enough to stop her worrying.

I kept deleting the word fine.


YOU SAID A QUICK FOLLOW-UP.
WHO?
A MAN DIED, BEN.
THEO. HE WAS PAYING HIS DAUGHTER'S TUITION.
WERE YOU WITH HIM?
I HEARD HIM SAY STOP. FOR A SECOND, I WAITED FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO SOMETHING.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT YOU COULD'VE STOPPED IT.
I KNOW.
DO YOU WANT ME TO STAY?
FOR A BIT.
MOM
Home. Long day.
Call me tomorrow.




M
Mara
POLICE CALLED. I'M GIVING MY STATEMENT TOMORROW.
ME TOO.


MERCER'S CLOSED PENDING INVESTIGATION.
AND PATIENT ONE, BRANDT?


STILL BREATHING.
SUBJECT 001

PATIENT ONE

STILL BREATHING

VOLUME 1 / ISSUE 1

PRESENTED BY CHURCH OF PEPTIDES

An original comic developed from the creator's characters and story direction, with AI-assisted writing, illustration and production.

M-17 is an invented research compound. Its effects, the study, the clinic and the misconduct portrayed here are fictional. The story is not medical guidance or an account of a real clinical trial.

Compact digital reading edition, October 2026. Twelve illustrated story pages, a prose interlude, cover and credits.

END OF ISSUE ONE