

**INT. THE IRVINGS' HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The house is furnished with little money, but lots of care. Erin's on a plaid couch, in a sea of needlepoint pillows. Out back, two GIRLS, ages 9 and 11, are playing in a pool.

**ERIN**

This is a real nice place you got here.

**DONNA (O.S.)**

Well it oughta be, with all the work I put into it.

She comes out from the kitchen with a tray of iced tea.

**DONNA**

I added air conditioning, put in the pool, made all those pillows by hand ...

**ERIN**

Yeah? I should learn to do stuff like that. They make the place feel real homey.

Donna corrects the positioning on a couple of pillows.

**DONNA**

Thank you. I think so too. That's why I'm being such a stickler on this house price thing. I don't mean to be a pain in PG&E's backside, especially after all they've done for Hinkley, but I look around here and I think, if they want this place, they're gonna have to pay for it. And I don't just mean pay for the house; I'd like them to pay me for the trouble of starting over.

**ERIN**

Right.

**DONNA**

Cause first you gotta move, then there's decorating, and if the windows aren't the same size, you know -- you're making all new curtains. Honest to God, I don't know if I have the energy. You know, I've been sick. Me and Peter both have.

**ERIN**

Yeah, I'm real glad you brought that up. I was going through your file here, and I ran into these medical records. They kinda surprised me --

This would be the perfect opportunity for many to get self-pitying. But not Donna. Life's handed her a shitload of lemons, and darned if she hasn't made a shitload of lemonade.

**DONNA**

I know. They're more than a bit unusual. See, two years ago, Pete got Hodgkin's disease. That's a kind of cancer --

**ERIN**

Yeah, I'm real sorry to hear that.

**DONNA**

Thank you. It's in remission now, thank the Lord, but you never know. And then while that's going on, I end up having to have a hysterectomy. Plus a whole mess of lumps removed from my breasts. All benign so far, but still, no matter how positive you stay, an operation can still take it out of you.

**ERIN**

I'll say. Holy moley.

**DONNA**

So the whole idea of selling the house -- don't get me wrong, I'd be glad to move to

some better place, but if they aren't gonna pay us properly, I just don't see the point.

**ERIN**

Yeah, I can see that.

(beat)

I guess the only thing that confused me is -  
- not that your medical problems aren't important, but -- how come the files about them are in with all the real estate stuff?

Donna tops off their iced teas.

**DONNA**

Are you kidding? With how our lives are, if I start subdividing files, I'll be sunk. I just kept all PG&E correspondence in one place.

**ERIN**

Right, but -- I'm sorry, I don't see why you were corresponding with PG&E about it in the first place.

**DONNA**

Well, they paid for the doctor's visit.

**ERIN**

They did?

**DONNA**

You bet. Paid for a check-up for the whole family. And not like with insurance where you pay, then wait a year to be reimbursed, either. They just took care of it. Just like that. We never even saw a bill.

**ERIN**

Wow. Why would they do that?

**DONNA**

Cause of the chromium.

**ERIN**

The what?

**DONNA**

The chromium. Well, that's what kicked this whole thing off.

**INT. IRVING HOUSE, GARAGE - DAY**

CLOSE ON A BOX, with "CHROM INFO" scrawled on it.

**DONNA (O.S.)**

PG&E came around a few years ago, told us they put chromium in our well by mistake. And since we shouldn't have to drink it if we don't want to, they gave us free spring water and offered to buy our house.

WIDEN to see Donna pulling the box down into the room.

**ERIN**

What's chromium?

**DONNA**

It's a chemical they used over at that compressor station up the road there.

**ERIN**

Well, hell, maybe that's why you all have been so sick --

**DONNA**

I thought the same thing, right off the bat. That's why we went to see the doctor. But hunh-uh. Turns out one's got nothing to do with the other.

She rifles through the box.

**DONNA**

This is the info they gave us. You'll see if you look through it, chromium's good for you. When I saw what they charged for it at the health-food stores, I about fainted.

She hands Erin a printed fact sheet. Erin scans it.

**ERIN**

Seems like an awful big coincidence -- your water being messed with and you being so sick.

**DONNA**

Not around here. This is a rough part of the world. Hard times, not a lot of money, not a lot of luck.

(beat)

It's a challenge, staying healthy in a town like this. Heck, even our dogs up and die.

**INT. ERIN'S CAR - NIGHT**

Erin's driving away from Donna's house. A street lamp throws light on the box of chromium documents in the passenger seat.

She gets to an intersection and looks across the street at the massive COMPRESSOR STATION. Six stories high, lit up like a Christmas tree, with all sizes of PIPES criss-crossing the outside and GIANT COOLING TOWERS sticking up out of it. Far more massive than anything else in town, it looms over the horizon like the Capitol in D.C. or St. Peter's in Rome.

Erin takes a long look at the compressor station, then turns onto Community Boulevard and drives away.

**INT. ERIN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**