

Up-Close Look At Real Life In Trauma Unit

(0:00 - 0:13)

In the world of emergency medicine and trauma, there is often a thin line between life and death. And the people who walk that line every day are some of the unsung heroes of our medical world. A special report tonight from Doug Dunbar.

(0:14 - 0:33)

Kaylee, tonight we get rare access inside one of the busiest trauma departments in the entire country. It's JPS in Fort Worth. Who are these people? How do they cope when they often deal with the worst that the world has to offer an average of 312 times a day? The only way to find out is to go inside.

(0:34 - 0:41)

Hey guys, we need in here. She was released from the ICU three days ago. It's just afternoon and a badly injured woman has come through the doors at JPS.

(0:42 - 0:49)

Now, what do we do? Make it a level one. Somebody get me some bags of normal saline. She is losing blood fast.

(0:50 - 0:58)

In an instant, the trauma bay fills with team members. It looks and it does feel chaotic. But this is well choreographed.

(0:58 - 1:18)

Eight-year veteran trauma nurse Hunter Langley is point person for communication in the room and with the patient herself. In those first few critical seconds, a primary RN will find access points for IVs and blood. There's a respiratory specialist inside, technicians, radiology, residents, trauma medical director Raj Gandhi is overseeing the big picture.

(1:18 - 1:32)

I got a 20 in her left ankle. The faces behind those masks in this room are those of moms and dads, sisters and brothers. But those are sensitivities that they all agree must be left outside the doors of trauma to do what they do inside.

(1:32 - 1:44)

You experience stuff here with co-workers that your family has no idea about. They don't fully

realise, I think, the things that you go through, the things that you see. Two minutes since the patient was brought in, they still can't stop the bleeding.

(1:44 - 1:52)

Give me a tonic, please. She is in and out of consciousness. You're in the right place, okay? Exactly four minutes in, Dr. Gandhi reaches for the black phone.

(1:53 - 1:57)

That's the direct link to the OR. Hey, it's Gandhi. We have a level one that needs to go.

(1:58 - 2:13)

In seconds, the team is briefed. We're going to be taking her straight to the operating room, OR 9. Less than seven minutes since she came through the doors, the patient is now on the way to the OR and she is not out of the woods. She's lost quite a bit of blood already.

(2:13 - 2:30)

Dr. Gandhi, a husband and a father of two, embraces the work of saving lives here, especially at a place where they will never be turned away. You have patients that have been to every other place and they've been told no. And they come here and we take care of them.

(2:32 - 2:46)

Inflamed, right? So this is acute cholecystitis. That same passion exists for trauma surgeon Therese Duane, wife, mother of four. She tries not to take her work home, but admits there are times when she can't avoid seeing home here at work.

(2:47 - 2:58)

Have I cried on a partner's shoulder? Absolutely. Have they done that for me? Yes. Why? We've had people who are close to us that we've known who we couldn't save, yes.

(3:00 - 3:10)

In the OR, they've slowed the blood loss. A quiet intensity has now settled into the room. If things don't end well, it then becomes one of the toughest parts of a surgeon's job.

(3:10 - 3:30)

How many times in your career have you told a family member that you couldn't save them? In the last week, I've told three families. But not today. That life that hung in the balance 20 minutes ago is finally stable, thanks to the quick and caring hands.

(3:30 - 3:40)

Another day in the life. For this shift at JPS Trauma, it is the first win of the day. And if it's an average day, it's one down, 311 cases to go.

(3:41 - 3:57)

Inside JPS Trauma, Doug Dunbar, CBS 11 News. Pretty powerful, right? Doug also tells us from the outside, surgeons may often get the glory, but JPS puts great emphasis on a team approach. Every role is critical when seconds count, and a life hangs in the balance.