

M/E

CRASH

SHANIQUA

Mr. Ryan my name is Shaniqua Johnson. I believe we spoke last night.

RYAN

Yeah, well I should probably apologize for that crack.

SHANIQUA

That'd be a start.

RYAN

I haven't been sleeping a lot. My father is in a lot of pain.

SHANIQUA

(like a stone)

I'm sorry to hear that.

RYAN

This doctor he's been going to tells him he has this urinary tract infection, and he's been taking this medication for a month now, and he's just getting worse.

SHANIQUA

(reading file)

And he's been back to see Dr. Robinson?

RYAN

Yeah, and between me and you the man is an idiot.

SHANIQUA

Really?

RYAN

No offense, but the guy sees a hundred patients an hour. I think his nurses do most of the work.

SHANIQUA

(reading file)

Your father's been to see three different doctors in the network for the same complaint...

RYAN

Robinson and two others at emergency. They looked at him for two minutes and referred it back to Robinson.

SHANIQUA

If you're unhappy, your father is welcome to see a doctor outside the network.

RYAN

And if this new doctor says it isn't an infection, says it's his prostate and it needs to be operated on, is that covered?

SHANIQUA

No. Not unless Dr. Robinson...

RYAN

So, what good would that do? We don't have the money to pay for an operation.

SHANIQUA

I'm sorry but there is nothing else I can do.

RYAN

Do you know what I can't do? I can't look at you without thinking of five or six better qualified white men who didn't get your job.

SHANIQUA

Time for you to be going.

RYAN

I'm saying this because I'm really hoping I'm wrong about you. I'm hoping that someone like yourself, who may have been given a helping hand, might have a little compassion for someone in a similar situation.

SHANIQUA

Carol, I need security in my office.

RYAN

You don't like me? Fine, I'm a prick. But my father doesn't deserve to suffer like this. He's a good man. He was a janitor, struggled his whole life, saved enough to start his own company. Twenty-three employees, all black. Paid them equal wages, when no one else was doing that. Thirty years he worked side by side with those men, sweeping, carrying garbage.

(The big burly security guard appears at the door. She motions for him not to interrupt.)

RYAN

Then the city council decides to give minority-owned companies preferences in city contracts. And overnight, my father loses everything. They gave the contract to a black man that charged twice as much and paid his men half as well. And do you know what my father said? Nothing. He lost his business, his home, his wife and not once did he blame you people.

(BEAT)

I'm not going to ask you to help me. I'm asking that you do this small thing for a man who lost everything so that people like you could reap the benefits. And do you know what it's gonna cost you? Nothing. Just the flick of your pen.

(Silence.)

SHANIQUA

Your father sounds like a good man. And if he'd come in here today I probably would have approved this request. But he didn't come in, you did. And for his sake, that's a real shame.

(She motions to the guard.)

SHANIQUA

Get him out of here.