

JUANELL'S CHAIR

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. LAKE STREET AND CHICAGO AVENUE - NIGHT

1

MAY 2020

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA...

(in complete silence)

Through the eyes of our PROTESTER T, (27) we see swirling pockets of smoke engulfing scores of GEORGE FLOYD demonstrators. Rows of police fully equipped in riot gear violently disperse the political activists. Established storefronts are smashed, burning cars and the remains of looted remnants litter Lake Street. Protester T is suddenly hit with a slow-motion rubber bullet, that drops our eye view of the conflict slowly to the ground.

(dark silence)

We see scrambling feet running in all directions. Turning to the side, we see black clad formations of police advancing, drawing closer to Protester T.

Lake Street is on fire. Power lines drip molten rubber on those below. Flares and flash grenades clear the way for the advancing armored vehicles pushing the fleeing protesters down Chicago Avenue.

Fighting through tear gassed eyes, Protester T staggers to stand and is pulled up into the retreating crowd of black and white protesters. Arms, legs and many mixed bodies scramble through the smoke as OUR gaze focuses behind the tanks and riot police. We see protesters of various classes and color left bleeding, handcuffed, beaten, arrested all because BLACK LIVES MATTER. The night is just beginning...

FADE TO:

2 INT. A. BLOCK BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

2

News coverage of a Nation on fire blares from the wall mounted TV in the small upstairs bedroom. JUANELL WASHINGTON (92), homeowner of 65 years sits covered in her favorite chair. Her son, CHILDS WASHINGTON, (62) retired postal worker, sits in her guest chair next to the bedroom door. He shakes his head at the disturbing TV images of social unrest flooding the airwaves. Juanell, a tiny framed, cocoa skinned, silver haired matriarch, mutes the volume, calming the room. She's about to speak when we hear commotion coming from downstairs.

(loud rumbling)

JUANELL

(startled)

What on earth was that?

She sits up, turning her head and straining to hear. She slides her bottom nightstand drawer open where we see a loaded chrome .38 revolver under several faded letters. She leans closer to the door listening for anything familiar coming up the stairs.

(downstairs door roughly
opens and closes)
(in distinctive noises)

CHILDS

(standing -loudly)

Who's there?

Childs has removed his concealed 9MM. He steps into the hallway armed, only to see PASTOR FLO, (77) struggling to help the wounded Protester T up the stairs. Childs rushes to help both of them into a startled Juanell's bedroom.

JUANELL

(shaken)

What happened child?

They help Protester T gently down as she collapses on top of the bedspread. Pastor Flo removes her smoke drenched, foul smelling jacket. She opens Protester T's shirt, exposing her badly bruised shoulder.

PASTOR FLO
(calmly)
She was shot.
(protester T groans)

JUANELL
(standing over the bed)
Shot! Where's she bleeding?

PROTESTER T
(in pain)
With a rubber bullet MEEMAW.
(she groans again)

PASTOR FLO
(calmly)
Any higher, it would have been worse.

Pastor Flo, a retired nurse and close friend of Juanell, smoothly instructs Childs to gather some basics from downstairs.

JUANELL
(back in THE CHAIR)
What happened TYLISHA?

Pressing the ice pack on her badly bruised wound, TYLISHA, (27) drinks some of the water from Childs, handing the glass back to him before she talks.

TYLISHA
(angrily)
US. Us Meemaw, representing...
(moans)

Juanell reaches over and grabs Tylisha's hand and squeezes.

JUANELL
(coolly)
You feeling better?

Another gentle hand squeeze as Tylisha smiles at her heritage, this 92-year-old treasure supporting her, understanding her...

TYLISHA

(relaxing)
I am...

Pastor Flo and Juanell's eyes connect, a wily smile creeping over Juanell's face.

JUANELL
(playfully)
Good - Cuz your ass ain't staying
in my bed all night. You ain't 7
anymore.

The mood in the room lightens. Tylisha and Juanell's hands are still connected. Pastor Flo hands her some pain relief, which she accepts.

TYLISHA
(to Pastor Flo)
Thank you.

CHILDS
The first bedroom is open Tylisha,
why don't you rest in there awhile?

TYLISHA
(rising)
I think I will...

Pastor Flo and Childs settle Tylisha into the bedroom down the hall. They return to Juanell sitting in THE CHAIR.

CUT TO:

3 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

3

Pastor Flo sits next to Juanell in the guest recliner, Childs drops back into his chair next to the door out of breath.

CHILDS
(winded)
Wow. My black ass is out of shape.

JUANELL
(snickering)
And old.

Childs smiles at her wit, at his mother's razor sharp remembrance and potent sarcasm.

PASTOR FLO
(relaxing)
We're not as young as you Nell.

JUANELL

Young? I'm old enough to remember
so much more than fires and
protests, girl.

CHILDS

DADDY'S stories? They were real?

PASTOR FLO

What are you two talking about?

Juanell unfurls from under her light cover reaching into her
nightstand, she pulls out a couple of old letters.

JUANELL

David Earl, or LIL' DAVID to his
friends and THE NETWORK.

Childs sticks his head out into the hallway. The door to
Tylisha's room is cracked, the glow of a light flickering. He
turns back to his mother and Pastor Flo.

PASTOR FLO

The Network? What on earth are you
talking about, Nell?

JUANELL

Well, it all began with RANDY, the
money part that is.

CHILDS

RANDY HART? I hear his name in my
head from daddy. Wasn't he cut in
half?

Juanell stiffens in her chair, Randy's death bringing back
memories she's tried to forget.

PASTOR FLO

(pressing)

Cut in half? Randy Hart? The
Network? Stop playing girl.

Juanell looks at her son Childs and holds up a faded and worn
business sized letter. She hands it to Pastor Flo who takes
it gently from her friend.

JUANELL

What year did you move here?

Focused on the strange letter in her hand, Pastor Flo barely
hears the question. We see that the letter is addressed to:

DAVID WASHINGTON 1441 IGLEHART AVENUE - SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
55104.

Postmarked 1960 the .3 cents 1907 ARROWS TO ATOMS 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF OKLAHOMA STATEHOOD stamp has a return address
of:

ARCHIBALD AUTOMOTIVE - 1000 HOLLYWOOD WAY - OKLAHOMA CITY,
OKLAHOMA 73084.

JUANELL
(louder)
Did you hear me, Flo?

Juanell's voice pierces the room, gaining Pastor Flo's
attention.

PASTOR FLO
(startled)
Yes. Well, no.
(a. beat)
This letter is over 60 years old.

JUANELL
Read it.

Pastor Flo gently takes out the one pager, carefully
unfolding the two creases. She scans the letter, her mouth
dropping at its contents. Pastor Flo looks up at Juanell,
then back to the letter.

PASTOR FLO
(stunned)
This is dated for this year, 2020.
What's going on...?

JUANELL
Now you know my memory ain't what
it used to be, what with me being
over ninety and all. I remember
about fifty percent of things these
days, the rest, too painful and
best forgotten.

PASTOR FLO
Tell us what you do remember.

Childs leans back and closes his eyes, listening to the
voice, the story. Its Black history as his mother settles
back into THE CHAIR.

JUANELL
(pausing)

Child, "LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT
WAS..."

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

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