

INT. WAREHOUSE - BOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

DÉANDRE JOHNSON, 25, an African-American forklift operator with a tired face and a disciplined work ethic, steps into the office with a time-off request in hand. His boss, MR. THOMPSON, late 20's, white, polished in a way that does not match the warehouse floor, looks up from a stack of production reports.

DÉANDRE

Hey, Mr. Thompson. I just wanted to hand in my request to take off on the 4th for my birthday.

He hands over the slip.

MR. THOMPSON

Birthday coming up, huh?

He glances at the form, then marks the date on his calendar.

MR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Well, happy early birthday. I'll make sure I don't forget.

As Thompson turns, DéAndre quietly pulls out his phone and snaps a quick picture of the calendar

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

November 4th circled in black ink.

BACK TO SCENE

Thompson turns back and catches DéAndre still standing there.

MR. THOMPSON

Actually, there is something else we should talk about.

DéAndre tenses.

DÉANDRE

About what?

MR. THOMPSON

Relax. There's a management spot about to open up, and your name keeps coming up.

DéAndre blinks, caught off guard.

DÉANDRE

You serious?

MR. THOMPSON

Dead serious. You show up, you work, and people notice. I don't want you missing an opportunity just because you're used to keeping your head down.

DéAndre does not answer right away. A smile starts to creep onto his face before he can stop it. He has always seen himself as the one doing the work, never the one giving the orders.

MR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Think on it and let me know where your head's at. In the mean time, your day is set. Make sure you enjoy it.

DÉANDRE

I appreciate that, for real.

They exchange a nod, and DéAndre heads out.

INT. WAREHOUSE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

It's the lunch rush as every microwave in the break room hums. Chairs scrape, as everybody is moving fast, because the bosses want everybody back on the floor on time.

DéAndre drops into his usual seat with three co-workers: SMOKE, loud and always ready to joke; SWIFT, quick with a jab; and GOOG, older, slower, and always complaining.

SMOKE

You good, bro? You look like somebody just told you rent went up.

DÉANDRE

I'm straight.

SWIFT

Stop gassing us up. You look like you just found out your girl is your cousin. What happened? They denied your day off?

DÉANDRE

(chuckling)

Naw, I got the day.

SWIFT

Then what? You giving weird vibes.