

IN APATHY

EXT. DEPARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

A beat up peugeot car slows to a halt in the parking lot of what looks like a university building and a MAN(36) comes out of the car, with a phone to his ear. He is wearing a cheap suit and is in a hurry even though he has a slight limp.

JIMI

Yes sir. I have the documents here. Yes, i am at the office, i am about to see the head of accounting now. Yes sir.

(pause)

No Simon is yet to forward this quarters reports for auditing. I'm sure its just- I'm sure its just a minor setback, Sir. Alright i will pay Simon a visit.

The line cuts and JIMI sighs resignedly, he doesn't break his stride however and walks into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A round MAN(57) sits at the only desk at a well furnished office, going through wads and wads of paper. He barely notices JIMI when he walks in.

JIMI

Mr Arase? Excuse me sir?

The MAN looks up from his documents, and smiles when he recognizes JIMI

ARASE

Jimi! My boy. I didn't hear you come in.

JIMI

I knocked, sir...

ARASE

Of course you did... How's my daughter?

JIMI

She's fine sir. She asked me to pass her regards.

ARASE

I can see she's taking good care of you.

JIMI

Marriage does have its benefits, sir.

ARASE

Good, good. What brings you to my office today?

JIMI

Oh, yes sir. That reminds me,

JIMI opens his suitcase and goes through it. He brings out a leaf of stapled together documents.

JIMI (CONT'D)

The ratified requisition orders for last quarters procurements, we will need your signature for final approval.

ARASE

Of course... Where is my pen...

JIMI opens the leaves to the page where Mr ARASEs signature will be required and places it in front of him. Mr ARASE finds a pen and glances through the document, after which he signs at the required page After Which he smiles and looks up at JIMI

ARASE (CONT'D)

I think that should cover it.

JIMI

That's perfect sir, just wonderful.

ARASE

Good then, my son. I hope we will see you on Saturday.

JIMI stands up wearing a big grin and Mr ARASE follows suit, offering his open hand. JIMI takes it in his own hand and shakes him

JIMI

Of course sir. My regards to mummy.

ARASE

She'll soon be here, why don't you stick around and see if you'll meet her yourself?

JIMI

I'm sorry sir, i have to go get the quarterly expenditure reports from Simon.

ARASE

Fair enough, I will pass the message across.
Have a nice day. Please ask Sandra to bring me the quarter two expenditure reports when you are outside

ARASE returns to his seat and JIMI nods at the request, turning around and limping back towards the door to the...

INT. RECEPTION - DAY

JIMI comes out of the Office to see a lady (early forties) sitting in front of a computer with a serious expression on her face.

JIMI

Miss Sandra?

The woman looks up from her computer for a second and then returns to it.

SANDRA

Ah Mr. Jimi. I didn't see you pass by. How can I help you?

JIMI

HOA just asked for expenditure reports on last years Q2.

SANDRA nods reflectively and stands up. She carelessly picks up a bundle of papers and proceeds into the office with them. She is barely into the office when

JIMI goes over to the computer and turns it so that he can see the screen fully. He chuckles when he sees that on the screen is a game of solitaire in full swing. A bundle of documents catches his eye.

On it is: Q4 Report - Simon E.O

JIMI (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Isn't this Simons report?

He sees that the envelope has not been sealed yet and he picks it up and goes through the report casually.

JIMI (CONT'D)

Why is the HOA asking for the original copy...

Hm.

He then puts it back in the envelope and limps out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A different parking lot, but still in a university setting. The same old beat up peugeot parks in the parking lot.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

This office is scantily furnished but littered with files in half opened cabinets. A MAN (38) sits at the table typing furiously as papers pour out of the printing machine beside him. JIMI walks in and knocks on the door to get the mans attention.

SIMON

Mr. Jimi, good afternoon.

JIMI

Mr. Simon.

JIMI walks over to Simon and shakes his hand.

SIMON

I take it you are here for this quarter's
Expenditure report.

JIMI

You know me.

SIMON grins and rifles through his drawers till he brings out an envelope which is sealed this time. JIMI notes this as he turns it around in his grasp, puzzled. Then he smiles at SIMON and walks out his office.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

An even scantier office with two desks in it, Both are empty but there is a half finished plate of takeaway rice on one of them along with a bottle of water. SIMON walks into the office and drops his suitcase on the table without the food on it. He sits down and brings out the Manila envelope. He then goes through the pages one by one... Until he pauses at one page.

JIMI

Hm...

JIMI brings out his phone and makes a phone call.

JIMI (CONT'D)

Yes... Yes sir, i have it... sir, i need to see you
in person. Okay sir.

He cuts the call and reclines on his seat, deep in thought.

EXT. EMPTY CAR PARK - DAY

A MAN(52) stands under a tree, visibly uncomfortable. He looks at his watch and looks around, this time he sees JIMI walking towards him with a folder under his arm. He waits until JIMI is within earshot.

ADE

Jimi, i had to cancel two meetings to meet you
here.

JIMI

I'm sorry sir, i just didn't want anyone to see
me entering your premises this close to the
audit.

ADE

What's new?

JIMI stands beside ADE, handing him the folder with him. ADE looks at JIMI with a puzzled expression on his face and then brings out some documents in the folder which he then goes through.

JIMI

You might not notice it at first, but...

ADE

I can't see anything here, Jimi.

JIMI

That's the point, sir. There is too much of nothing in this particular report.

ADE

You've lost me.

JIMI

When i went to see the Head of Accounting today i stumbled on an earlier copy of this report.

ADE

An earlier copy? That's not possible.

JIMI

I saw it with my own eyes, Sir. And it was completely different from this.

Ade considers this.

ADE

This is a serious accusation you're about to levy, Jimi.

JIMI

But you have to wonder...

ADE

If the head of Accounting is ratifying duplicate reports behind our back...

JIMI

Then that means its a different report that is submitted to the senate every quarter.

ADE

A Padded report... I don't believe it.

JIMI

That means someone in auditing is also working with the people responsible for this. Which is why i didn't want to risk being seen reporting to you so close to the quarterly audit.

ADE goes through the documents one more time.

ADE

So if they are sending inflated quarterly reports back to the treasurer, that means they get to pocket the overhead.

JIMI

Which could run into millions of naira.

ADE returns the documents to the folder and is deep in thought.

ADE

This is insidious. But we do not have any concrete evidence, we need that fabricated report.

JIMI

I know I'm never going to be able to see it again, it's probably on its way to the senate committee as we speak.

ADE nods, deep in thought once again. Then he stands up and hands the documents back to JIMI.

ADE

These are very risky waters you are treading on. Be careful you are not discovered before your case is complete.

JIMI

It is why I needed to see you immediately.

ADE

Keep me informed, and send me written reports of your activities. I cannot openly support you yet but I need the documentation.

JIMI

Of course, Sir.

ADE shakes JIMI's hand

ADE

Good luck, Jimi.

ADE (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir.

ADE walks away, and JIMI stands looking into space, lost in thought.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

This is a modest bedroom of a modest house, Jimi is taking off his shirt and a WOMAN(30) goes to help him take off his tie. JIMI is very distraught and is in visible physical pain.

OSAS

you don't look so well

JIMI

My leg... it's acting up again.

JIMI brings out a sachet of medication from his trouser pocket but his hands are trembling and it falls out of his hands. OSAS Helps him pick it up and feeds him a tablet along with a glass of water. She strokes his face lovingly and looks into his eyes. She has a wedding ring on her finger.

OSAS

I'm sure it'll all be alright.

OSAS turns away from him and goes to tie up her weave. JIMI closes his eyes for a moment and reclines on the wall behind him.

JIMI

Osas...

OSAS

Yes babe...

JIMI

Your dad...

OSAS

Mm hmm? He mentioned he saw you at the university today; that you were looking well.

JIMI smiles as he unbuckles his trousers and takes it off. He begins wearing a pair of shorts.

JIMI

Well, that's all you.

OSAS smiles as she finalizes the bun.

OSAS

I know.

JIMI sits on the edge of the bed and then lies down on it.

JIMI

I did the numbers today, Osas. Your father is in a lot of trouble.

OSAS wears a hair net over her head and looks over at JIMI.

OSAS

What trouble? What do you mean?

JIMI

You father along with some other heads of department are defrauding the university of almost thirty million naira every quarter. Sometimes the numbers scale up to even sixty million.

OSAS is about to start wiping her face when she pauses for a second. Then she continues.

OSAS

Who told you this?

JIMI

Nobody... i found out while i was auditing the accounts.

OSAS sighs and dabs he face even more.

OSAS

And what do you intend to do about it?

JIMI

I dont know, babe... You don't seem surprised.

OSAS crumples the wipe and keeps it in a nylon bad beside the bed.

OSAS

Of course i'm not surprised, Jim. This house, our wedding, how did you think we afforded it?

JIMI

The head of accounting job pays really well for-

OSAS chuckles and looks back at him.

OSAS

Be serious, Jim.

JIMI sighs resignedly and stares at the ceiling

JIMI

So this auditing job...

OSAS

Well he never intended for you to commit any crime... But isn't it better that it is you, not some other person who has discovered this... misdemeanor?

JIMI keeps staring at the ceiling, lost deep in thought. OSAS tucks herself in beside him.

OSAS (CONT'D)

You don't have to do anything, babe. Just let it go...

OSAS turns away from him.

OSAS (CONT'D)

Good night

JIMI

(softly)

Good Night.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

JIMI is at his office again, he is in a deep reverie when ARASE walks in and then knocks on the open door. JIMI is startled but then begins to stand up to welcome him once he recognizes it is ARASE.

ARASE

No, no. Sit down, my son.

JIMI sits back down while ARASE takes one of the chairs that are laying around and places it opposite JIMI's table, sitting on it.

ARASE (CONT'D)

Your wife spoke to me this morning.

JIMI does not say anything, he only stares at ARASE.

ARASE (CONT'D)

And she gave me some news regarding a discovery you think you made.

JIMI

Its not a discovery i think i made sir, its one i have already made. You are responsible for millions of naira in embezzlement and fraud being perpetrated here every three months. You have your hands all over illegal money, *sir*.

ARASE

Watch your tone with me, young man.

JIMI snorts and looks away.

JIMI

Oh, the nerve.

ARASE

Do not sit there and pass judgement on me like some ungrateful little worm. your life, your comfort, it has all been provided for by money i handed out to you you and your wife. This *illegal* money you are talking about. You are not absolved of this too.

JIMI nods slowly.

JIMI

This is ridiculous.

ARASE stands up.

ARASE

I will not sit down here and be insulted by the likes of you. You must cancel your investigation at once or you will not have a job, a wife or a home any longer. You cannot bite the hand that feeds you, boy. Else you will be put down like a rabid dog.

JIMI nods

JIMI

I understand you, sir.

ARASE

Who else have you told about this?

JIMI stares at ARASE for an entire beat; his eyes somewhere between hostility and pity. He then breaks the silence.

JIMI

Nobody else, sir.

ARASE

Good. Keep it that way.

ARASE starts for the door and then pauses.

ARASE (CONT'D)

Make the right decisions boy, and you might just have a promotion coming your way next month.

JIMI does not smile

JIMI

Thank you sir.

ARASE exits and JIMI exhales nervously. He brings out his phone which was recording the conversation and then presses the stop button. His hands are shaking violently.

INT. CAR - DAY

JIMI sits in his car, visibly distraught. He brings out his phone and looks at a picture of he and his wife for a few moments, then he goes to another picture which is a screen shot of a news article, with headline: 30 CHILDREN DEAD; UNIVERSITY STAFF SURVIVES GHASTLY MOTOR ACCIDENT. As he stares, he unconsciously rubs his right leg.

He closes his eyes and when he opens them they are visibly moist. He opens his glove compartment and brings out a sachet gin, he downs it in one gulp.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A university park. ADE sits on a bench and JIMI goes over to meet him, ADE stands up.

ADE

Walk with me.

Ade begins walking and JIMI falls into step with him, limping.

ADE (CONT'D)

You smell of alcohol, Jimi. Have you been drinking?

JIMI looks at ADE and ADE looks at him, then looks away.

ADE (CONT'D)

Of course you have... Do you have anything new.

JIMI

This crusade we are on... Do we really need to carry on?

ADE

This isn't a crusade, Jimi. It's our Job. Hell, it's our responsibility.

JIMI

That's it! That's my problem... Why is it OUR responsibility? Why do we have to do this at all.

ADE sighs and stops, They are beside a CLASSROOM. ADE points into the classroom and JIMI follows his finger.

ADE

This is a class supposed to hold fifty students... How many chairs do you see there...

JIMI looks through the window but does not say a word.

ADE (CONT'D)

How many chairs do you *see* in the classroom, Jimi?

JIMI

There are eleven chairs in there, Sir.

ADE

That's right. Eleven chairs, all the fans don't work except one, and the one that does only had one blade still attached to it.

ADE sticks his hand through the window and waves it within the empty space.

ADE (CONT'D)

No windows for the classrooms anymore, meaning they might as well be outside, my friend. You ask me why this is our responsibility? Well I'll tell you why. Last year three scholarship students were forced to drop out after their entire scholarship fund went missing; three months ago a bus with twenty students and four staff members on board somersaulted on the highway because it was running on substandard tyres... Only one person survived.

(beat)

You know who this person is, don't you?

ADE walks close to JIMI

ADE (CONT'D)

how else will you honor the children, the men
and women who were with you in the bus that
day? How *else*?

JIMI exhales and lets out a whimper, he rests on the open window and
hyperventilates. His eyes are red rimmed. He brings out a memory card from his
pocket

JIMI

It's all in there. The paper trail and even a
confession by the head of accounting himself.

ADE takes the memory card, hen places an arm on JIMIs shoulder.

ADE

You are doing the right thing, friend. Evil is only
allowed to run free when good men do nothing.

JIMI

What makes us any better than them? What
gives us the right?

ADE

I never said we were better than they are, but
they cause pain and grief to other people, and
we can stop them and we shall. That is the
definition of good, and we are the men in God's
favor.

JIMI snorts.

ADE

I understand what you must be going through.
But education... Accountability. We must not
compromise on these, and the men who
perpetrate these injustices... They must not be
allowed permission to continue.

JIMI

You think i dont know all this?

ADE

Then you understand what i have to do.

JIMI stares at ADE for a few seconds and then nods.

ADE (CONT'D)

Good...

ADE turns to leave and then pauses.

ADE (CONT'D)

You should prepare yourself. Once i give these
documents to the vice chancellor you are going
to have a really tough set of days ahead. For
starters you should move out of the house.

JIMI nods at this.

ADE (CONT'D)

Good luck, friend.

And ADE walks away. Out on Ade grieved.

EXT. CITY - LAGOS

Establishment.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

CLOSE on Jimi with facial hair.

Camera pulls out and we see him standing outside the door to the courtroom, arms folded in despair. ADE comes out to meet him.

ADE

Finally. It's all over, the judge is pronouncing a sentence. Your testimony closed this case shut. Do you want to stick around?

JIMI

I just want to go home. Who am I kidding? I no longer have a home.

Ade pats him on the shoulder.

ADE

How's your leg?

JIMI

It feels much better

ADE nods and turns to start heading back towards the courtroom but then stops and turns back t JIMI.

ADE

You know the VC is thinking of naming the new
accounting lecture theatre after you?

JIMI is about to respond, but people start pouring out from the courtroom. He
watches the procession come out until he sees OSAS.

Their eyes catch - hers stony; his, remorseful. Her wedding ring is visibly gone.
JIMI waves to her but she only turns and walks away. Aade notices this.

ADE (CONT'D)

One life for many others, Jimi. That's what
heroes do. They lose some but save many.

JIMI

I'm no hero, sir. But I'm glad I did what had to
be done.

ADE

That's the thing about great men, they are
unaware of their greatness even until the very
end. Maybe that's what even makes them so
great.

JIMI smiles and shakes his head.

ADE (CONT'D)

Congratulations again on the new job, Mr.
Head of Accounting. You deserve it.

Ade smiles at him and goes back to the courtroom. Jimi stares after his receding
wife, then walks away in the opposite direction to his brand new car.

END