**INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT**

DAKOTA, 30, visibly Indigenous, dressed in comfortable clothing, sits in the emergency department. He steadies himself, wincing as he stands from his chair. His face is pale and his forehead gleams with sweat. He slowly approaches the NURSE, 50s, a Caucasian man with tired eyes, engrossed in the computer screen at the front desk.

DAKOTA

Excuse me. Do you know how long

it’ll be to see a doctor?

The nurse glances up, surveying Dakota before turning back to the computer screen.

NURSE

I can’t give you an estimate right

now. You’ll have to take a seat.

Dakota winces before heading back to his chair. He watches as a patient, EILEEN, 40s, a stern-looking Caucasian woman with no visible signs of pain or illness approaches the nurse.

EILEEN

(impatient)

Hi I’ve been here for over thirty

minutes now and I was told that I

would get in right away. How much

longer will I need to wait?

The nurse looks up and reaches for a CLIPBOARD.

NURSE

What’s the last name?

EILEEN

Richards. First name, Eileen.

NURSE

Ah yes, Mrs. Richards. It looks

like you’ll be in next to see the

doctor. Shouldn’t be longer than,

let’s say...ten more minutes?

EILEEN

(sighing)

Alright. Thanks.

Dakota watches as Eileen walks back to her seat. His eyes drift back to the nurse. He stands and approaches the front desk again.

2.

2.

DAKOTA

I’ve been waiting here for nearly

three hours. If you could please

get me some help. It’s urgent --

(wincing)

I’m in a lot of pain and --

NURSE

Look, I already told you that I

can’t give you an estimate right

now. There are a lot of patients

waiting to see the doctor so you’ll

have to wait your turn.

DAKOTA

But I just saw you tell that woman

how long --

NURSE

(raising voice)

Sir, you need to calm down.

A SECURITY GUARD nearby overhears the commotion. They lock eyes with the nurse who beckons them over.

SECURITY GUARD

Everything okay over here?

NURSE

(to the security guard)

I told this guy that he needs to

wait his turn and he’s getting

aggressive. He might just need to

sleep it off, I don’t know, but I

can’t be dealing with this right

now.

The security guard ushers Dakota away from the desk.

SECURITY GUARD

Please take a seat, sir. If you

continue to harass the nurses then

I’m going to have to escort you off

the premises.

Off Dakota, embarrassed, with no choice but to return to his seat.

3.

3.

**INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT**

DAKOTA, 30, visibly Indigenous, dressed in comfortable clothing, sits in the emergency department.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

I’ve been here for almost three

hours. How much longer is this

going to take?

(wincing)

And the pain is getting worse.

He steadies himself, wincing as he stands from his chair. His face is pale and his forehead gleams with sweat. He slowly approaches the NURSE, 50s, a Caucasian man with tired eyes, engrossed in the computer screen at the front desk.

DAKOTA

Excuse me. Do you know how long

it’ll be to see a doctor?

The nurse glances up, surveying Dakota before turning back to the computer screen.

NURSE (V.O.)

Ugh, this guy is still here. C’mon

buddy this is a hospital for sick

patients, not some shelter where

you can sleep off your latest

bender.

NURSE

I can’t give you as estimate right

now. You’ll have to take a seat.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

I don’t even know why I even

bother. My mother was right when

she said the people here wouldn’t

be helpful. No one else seems to

have to wait this long.

Dakota winces before heading back to his chair. He watches as a patient, EILEEN, 40s, a stern-looking Caucasian woman with no visible signs of pain or illness approaches the nurse.

EILEEN

(impatient)

Hi I’ve been here for over thirty

minutes now and I was told that I

would get in right away. How much

longer will I need to wait?

The nurses looks up and reaches for a CLIPBOARD.

4.

4.

NURSE

What’s the last name?

EILEEN

Richards. First name, Eileen.

NURSE

Ah yes, Mrs. Richards. It looks

like you’ll be in next to see the

doctor. Shouldn’t be longer than,

let’s say...ten more minutes?

EILEEN

(sighing)

Alright. Thanks.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

Seriously? He gave that rude lady

an estimate but he won’t even give

me the time of day. She doesn’t

even look sick. Maybe I should

mention how bad the pain is...

Dakota watches as Eileen walks back to her seat. His eyes drift back to the nurse. He stands and approaches the front desk again.

DAKOTA

I’ve been waiting here for nearly

three hours. If you could please

get me some help. It’s urgent --

(wincing)

I’m in a lot of pain and --

NURSE

Look, I already told you that I

can’t give you an estimate right

now. There are a lot of patients

waiting to see the doctor so you’ll

have to wait your turn.

DAKOTA

But I just saw you tell that woman

how long --

NURSE

(raising voice)

Sir, you need to calm down.

A SECURITY GUARD nearby overhears the commotion. They lock eyes with the nurse who beckons them over.

SECURITY GUARD

Everything okay over here?

5.

5.

NURSE

(to the security guard)

I told this guy that he needs to

wait his turn and he’s getting

aggressive. He might just need to

sleep it off, I don’t know, but I

can’t be dealing with this right

now.

The security guard ushers Dakota away from the desk.

SECURITY GUARD

Please take a seat, sir. If you

continue to harass the nurses then

I’m going to have to escort you off

the premises.

Off Dakota, embarrassed, with no choice but to return to his seat.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

Harass the nurses? Are you kidding

me? I was just asking for help.

The other patients in the waiting room stare. Eileen scrunches her nose in disapproval.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

And I can’t believe he implied that

I was drunk. Just because I’m

native? This is humiliating, and

everyone is staring...

(wincing)

I don’t know what to do. I’m

worried that I have appendicitis,

but even if I stay, I don’t think

they’re going to take me seriously.

And for all I know, the doctor

could be more racist than this

nurse. I don’t feel safe here. Now

I understand why Mom will never

come to the hospital. Maybe I

should just go...

6.

6.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR WARD - DAY**

DAKOTA, 30, visibly Indigenous, enters. He hastily steers a WHEELCHAIR holding LYDIA, 28, visibly Indigenous, who clutches her pregnant belly in pain. She takes slow, deep breaths.

Dakota stops in front of the check-in counter and speaks with a NURSE, a woman in her late thirties.

DAKOTA

(slightly frantic)

Hi! We’ve just come from the

emergency room. They sent us here --

My partner is in labour.

(calmly)

NURSE

I can see that. What’s the last

name?

DAKOTA

Tekanatoken.

NURSE

Uhh okay. Lydia?

LYDIA

(breathing deeply)

That’s me.

NURSE

Great. If you’ll follow me, I can

help you get settled.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR ROOM - DAY**

The nurse walks in with Dakota and Lydia trailing closely behind.

NURSE

You’ll be in this room.

The nurse gestures to a folded GOWN on the hospital bed.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Put this on and lay on the bed.

I’ll be back in a minute.

The nurse exits.

7.

7.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR ROOM - LATER**

Lydia, now dressed in a hospital gown, groans from the hospital bed. On the bed next to her is an ABALONE SHELL with dried SAGE inside, a CEDAR BOUGH and a steaming THERMOS.

Dakota sits in a chair beside her, holding her hand. He gently releases her hand to reach for the sage, a LIGHTER in his other hand.

The nurses enters.

NURSE

What are you -- Sir, this is

hospital. You can’t be using a

lighter in here. It will set off

the alarms and --

(noticing the thermos)

What do you have there? In the

thermos?

DAKOTA

It’s a traditional tea that my

grandmother harvested. It’ll help

Lydia with the pain and shorten --

The nurse takes a few steps closer, eyeing the thermos.

NURSE

Absolutely not. There are no

outside drinks allowed. You’ll have

to dump it.

DAKOTA

Is there any way that you can make

an exception? These medicines and

practices... they’re important to

us, to our family. We want to

welcome our child in a good way.

NURSE

Sorry. We can’t risk you consuming

something from the outside. We

don’t know how it might interact

with our medicine.

(beat)

I’ll give you a moment to clean

this up before I bring in the

obstetrician.

8.

8.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR WARD - DAY**

DAKOTA, 30, visibly Indigenous, enters. He hastily steers a WHEELCHAIR holding LYDIA, 28, visibly Indigenous, who clutches her pregnant belly in pain. She takes slow, deep breaths.

Dakota stops in front of the check-in counter and speaks with a NURSE, a woman in her late thirties.

DAKOTA

(slightly frantic)

Hi! We’ve just come from the

emergency room. They sent us here --

My partner is in labour.

NURSE (V.O.)

Oh gosh, here we go...

(calmly)

NURSE

I can see that. What’s the last

name?

DAKOTA

Tekanatoken.

NURSE

Uhh okay. Lydia?

LYDIA

(breathing deeply)

That’s me.

NURSE

Great. If you’ll follow me, I can

help you get settled.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR ROOM - DAY**

The nurse walks in with Dakota and Lydia trailing closely behind.

NURSE

You’ll be in this room.

The nurse gestures to a folded GOWN on the hospital bed.

9.

9.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Put this on and lay on the bed.

I’ll be back in a minute.

The nurse exits.

**INT. HOSPITAL - LABOUR ROOM - LATER**

Lydia, now dressed in a hospital gown, groans from the hospital bed. On the bed next to her is an ABALONE SHELL with dried SAGE inside, a CEDAR BOUGH and a steaming THERMOS.

Dakota sits in a chair beside her, holding her hand. He gently releases her hand to reach for the sage, a LIGHTER in his other hand.

The nurses enters.

NURSE

What are you -- Sir, this is

hospital. You can’t be using a

lighter in here. It will set off

the alarms and --

(noticing the thermos)

What do you have there? In the

thermos?

DAKOTA (V.O.)

Would she be talking to us this way

if we weren’t native? I don’t see

why they can’t just open the

window. Smudging won’t set off a

fire alarm. And as for the thermos,

it’s just raspberry leaf and black

cohosh.

DAKOTA

It’s a traditional tea that my

mother harvested. It’ll help Lydia

with the pain and shorten --

NURSE (V.O.)

*Traditional tea*. How am I supposed

to know what they’ve put in there?

The nurse takes a few steps closer, eyeing the thermos.

NURSE

Absolutely not. There are no

outside drinks allowed. You’ll have

to dump it.

10.

10.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

Since when is bringing tea into a

hospital a crime? I’m tempted to

call this nurse out for being

racist but Lydia is in a lot of

pain. I don’t want to cause any

stress for her and the baby. Maybe

if I explain the significance...

DAKOTA

Is there any way that you can make

an exception? These medicines and

practices... they’re important to

us, to our family. We want to

welcome our child in a good way.

NURSE (V.O.)

An exception? I’ve had it with

these people. Why should they get

special treatment?

NURSE

Sorry. We can’t risk you consuming

something from the outside. We

don’t know how it might interact

with conventional medicine.

(beat)

I’ll give you a moment to clean

this up before I bring in the

obstetrician.

Dakota and Lydia exchange a look, defeated.

Dakota reaches for the thermos and closes the lid. He tucks it away.

DAKOTA (V.O.)

My grandmother made this tea for my

mother to drink the day that she

gave birth to me. It was harvested

in our community. She told me that

it helped, not only with the pain,

but to reconnect her to the land

despite being so far away from

home. I was looking forward to

honouring them -- sharing part of

our traditions with Lydia and our

child. If we decide to have another

baby, maybe we should consider a

home birth next time.

Lydia grimaces in pain again. Dakota reaches for her hand and squeezes it sadly.

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