



James Mehling/DN

My Final Approval

Note: This is part four of a four-part fiction story

The red lights in front of me signaled that I was no longer on the highway, but I was within two blocks of the clinic, according to the directions that I had received when I made my appointment.

With two blocks left to go before I was at the clinic, my quest for solutions and answers became stronger and stronger. Now was the time to back down — now was the time to make a U-turn and head back home.

I was so caught up in my thoughts that I didn't hear my mother tell me to turn into what was the abortion clinic's parking lot. So I went around the block. And this gave me additional time to come up with a final decision.

But I still had not arrived at a final decision when I drove into the parking lot searching for a place to park my car. The security guard gave me directions and protected me from a protester yelling out, "Don't kill your kid." And soon, more protesters gathered together. For those few seconds I could see the commercials, and I could see the billboards against abortion racing through my mind.

My conscience was constantly asking me questions — What am I doing here? I dropped my head in shame and entered the clinic doors with my bag of items that the nurses told me to bring.

Once inside the building, I had to proceed down a few stairs. At the bottom, a door appeared. This door led me into a waiting room. But in order to get into the waiting room, I had to read a sign that was located on the wall. Next, I had to state my name over an intercom. I didn't state my name, though. I just followed the lady in front of me. But when I got through the door, the receptionist asked me to state my name so that she could verify that I was a patient and not someone looking to write a story or a protester trying to cause trouble.

After I stated my name, I sat down and waited to be called upon. I was upset at the fact that everyone now knew who I was, and I felt as

if my privacy had been violated. Then I thought about my unborn child; his or her right to live was about to be violated — by me, the mother. I then realized that I hadn't really made up my mind and was still confused as to what I should do.

"Shanequa Grant?" That's me, I thought. I quickly got up and went to the front desk. Before the lady could ask me how I was going to pay for the surgery, I quickly laid my credit card on the counter. With my head bowed in shame, I answered the questions as rapidly as I could so that I could hurry back to my seat.

I sat back down and continuously questioned my reasons for being at the abortion clinic. I asked myself, What am I doing here with these people? My mother was constantly trying to talk to me and I became frustrated with her — I just wanted her to be quiet. I didn't feel like this was the place to hold a deep conversation. And besides, I was still going over my situation in my head, still wondering whether or not I should go with my decision and have the abortion. I still had time. As long as I wasn't on the table, I could get my money back in full.

My mother was trying to talk to me about the number of people in the clinic. I just wanted to turn to her and tell her to please shut up. "Can't you see I am going through a difficult time in my life right now, and I am about to make a decision that will mark me forever?" I wanted to ask her. But I didn't say anything. I only answered her questions and bowed my head back down, reading the literature provided to me, in an effort to connote that I didn't really care to talk at that time.

There were just a few people in the clinic when we first arrived. But then they started to pour in. Eventually I counted 20 people coming for abortions, before stopping as my eyes started to swell up in non-stop tears. Twenty lives were about to be prevented from being born — and I would be among those statistics. No. I can't go through with it,

I said to myself.

I found myself standing up — but only to walk to the back of the clinic because they had called my name over the intercom. As my feet led me to the back of the clinic, I kept telling myself not to go through with it — I just couldn't go through with it.

I still had a chance to back down. As I walked to the back, I analyzed the thought of raising a child, or giving him or her up for adoption. As I sat in the second waiting room, the room that would be my last stop before going into the abortion room, there again I saw them like a spirit haunting me — the billboards, the commercials about abortions that flashed endlessly through my mind.

I sat in the room listening to girls laughing and giggling. I wondered what they had to be so joyous about. Here we were, sitting there, about to prevent lives from forming, and they found humor in it all. I was so upset that I wanted to tell them to shut the hell up and think about the life that they were about to kill, and how that little person wouldn't be able to have the chance to laugh.

And then it hit me. THEY knew what THEY wanted. They were sure of their decisions, and it wasn't to raise a child at that time. I, on the other hand, didn't have a clue and was still deciding on whether I was going to have the child or not.

Finally I said, "Shanequa, get a hold of yourself. What are you going to do? Are you going to go through with it or not?"

But just as those thoughts entered my mind, I was headed to this room to get some counseling. After that, my counselor gave me some pills to sedate me.

I guess my decision was made. I guess I finally made my decision, because there I was lying on the operation table with a man taking from me something that God had given me. And the man was doing so with my final approval.

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