

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE HER

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INT. LARGE CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

GAIL WASHINGTON, (39), at her desk on her laptop typing fast. She's attractive and dressed in corporate attire. One last tap for punctuation, a quick scan, then: CHIME. E-mail sent.

She yawns, checks her watch, sighs shaking her head. She powers off her laptop, closes the lid, rises...

STARTLES.

Across the room, a FIGURE stands in shadow.

GAIL
Char... Charlie?

The figure emerges from the darkness pushing a cleaning cart. A man, (35), in uniform. His name patch reads: "SAM".

SAM
Charlie's in Florida.

Gail exhales, collects herself.

GAIL
Vacation right?

SAM
Uh, actually--

GAIL
Wonderful.

She hurriedly places the laptop into its leather case, quickly starts for the exit, then HALTS. She thinks a moment, then unzips the side pocket of the case and rummages her fingers searching with frustration.

SAM
Lose something?

GAIL
No.

Her back turned away from him, she scrounges other pockets.

SAM
Maybe check your desk?

She stops, turns to him triumphantly to reveal: CAR KEYS. And she turns her back on him and storms out of the office.

Beat.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's Sam by the way.

He brushes it off with a smile and a nod and returns to his cart. He slaps on cleaning gloves, retrieves furniture polish, sprays the desk, starts wiping... then:
BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT, BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT... A CELL PHONE VIBRATES.

He looks about the desk. He walks around the desk. He ducks underneath the desk...

Gail storms back in. Halts. No Sam. Then: BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT... She focuses her glare, folds her arms.

GAIL
Uh... lose something?

An immediate SCUFFLE from underneath and then: **THUMP!**

SAM (O.S.)
Ow.

Sam emerges wincing, rubbing the top of his head. He swings around to see: GAIL. Standing impatiently, palm out.

GAIL
(Off Sam's questioning
look)
My lifeline?

He nods understandingly, bends under the desk, then after a moment emerges holding: THE WASTE BASKET. Gail's grin fades.

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT, BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT...

He extends it to her. She glares at it, then back at him.

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT, BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZT... a moment here, then:

She SNATCHES the basket from his grip, digs her hand in, and retrieves her cell phone. She gives him a look.

SAM
In your rush, you probably knocked--

She shoves the waste basket to him, then anxiously swipes and taps her phone to view the missed call.

SAM (CONT'D)
Wow. Wretched.

She stops, turns to him.

GAIL
Excuse me?

SAM
Your dirty phone. Let me wipe--

GAIL
WHAT, gives you the gall, to describe me with that impudent term.

SAM
Uh... impude... what?

GAIL
You called me a hot mess. A woman with no sense. That how you see me?
(re; his name patch)
"Sam"? A hot mess?

Sam looks off puzzled, scratches his head, then:

SAM
Wait. You're thinking of "RATCHET"--

GAIL
It's pejorative!
(beat)
You do know who I am right? The title on the door?

SAM
Uh... Chief Exec? Boss woman in charge? It reads; C.E.O.
(then)
'Course I know you, Miss Washington. Of course. You, however, don't know me.

Sam dumps the garbage, moves off to spritz the office plants.

GAIL
Well... because I just met you. Now Charlie? He and I talk every night.

SAM
Really.

GAIL
Yes. And Charlie shows respect.

SAM

Look, it's late. I got plants, and you got the person on the other end of that... lifeline.

GAIL

That call was a dentist appointment reminder message. I live alone.

SAM

(sotto)

Why am I not surprised.

And Sam starts rolling off...

GAIL

No you didn't.

She grabs his cart. He stops, drops his head.

GAIL (CONT'D)

I live alone, because I choose to live alone. I live alone, because men like you, are intimidated by powerful women, like me.

He looks up excitedly.

SAM

Wait, so you're saying if I'm not intimidated by your success, I actually got a chance with you?
(off her puzzled
indecisive look)
Cool 'cause I think women in power are damn sexy.

She throws up her hands.

SAM (CONT'D)

What? What did I say now?

GAIL

So it's about sex? Not merit? Not accomplishment? Sex?

SAM

No. Sexy.
(off her eye roll)
Oh. So now I'm a sexist pig, right? You're a hot mess. I'm a pig.

She stifles a chuckle, leans against her desk, shakes head.

GAIL

I graduated top of my class. Summa cum laude. Yet here I am. Educated, single, in the office on a Friday night hanging with Sam the janitor.

SAM

Custodian.

GAIL

Oh. "Custodian". Sorry.

SAM

Don't be. I love my job. Bought my first house with this job.

GAIL

First house?

SAM

Like I said. You don't know me.

She nods, surveys her large office.

GAIL

Look. Sorry I snapped at you, Sam. Guess Charlie isn't the only one that needs a Florida vacation.

SAM

Uh... Ol' Charlie's not vacationing in Florida. He's buried there.

(off her look)

Yea six months ago? Natural causes.

Gail lowers her head regrettably.

GAIL

Guess I should've showed Charlie more respect.

SAM

Don't sweat it. Charlie liked you.

GAIL

Really?

SAM

Yea. He thought you were ratchet.

Gail throws up her hands, both laugh as she exits with a wave. He waves back, then resumes to spritz the plants.

FADE OUT.