

Derek: All right. How's it going, Lue Ann? I haven't seen you in forever.

Lue Ann: I know. It's going okay here. There's a lot of stuff been going on since you were on vacation.

Derek: I know. It was definitely a well-needed break, let me tell you. I got a lot of time spent with my family. We got to relax a lot. It'll probably be my last vacation for a little while, but I did want to thank you for taking over my caseload while I was gone. It was a really big help, and I'm sure that the guys got all the things that they needed.

Lue Ann: Well, no problem, no problem. It's good that you got rested on that vacation, because a lot of stuff's been going on.

Derek: I'm sure. I'm sure.

Lue Ann: Yeah.

Derek: Yeah, so we can get into that. Just wanted to talk to you about a new person I got first, and then I definitely want to hear about what's going on with your couple there while I've been gone. I just got this new case today I wanted to talk to you about from our supervisor. Her name is Michela. I'm looking at her chart here. She's 38 year old, single woman, and she's Hispanic. She's got a very interesting history that I kind of wanted to talk to somebody about. I haven't actually spoken to her yet. Just kind of get some thoughts on.

She was born here. Her parents are from El Salvador. They had come and immigrated to the US. Unfortunately, her father apparently lost his life when she was young. It was an accident. It was actually a mining accident. They were out in central PA. It looks like her mother won some kind of legal settlement against the company because they were at fault with the father's death. That's been able to help them live for quite a number of years. From what I was told from the social worker, Michela grew up kind of good. She had a lot of good support. Despite losing her father, her mother was really supportive and her family. She was really involved in her Catholic church. The people around her were kind of a surrogate family in the absence of her extended family who was still in El Salvador. She was a good student. Everything seemed great.

She went away to college and had actually a scholarship. Unfortunately, things began to unravel at school. It's kind of a sad story. You know as a lot of kids, and maybe you experienced this too, you go away to school. You go away to college, or even if you're living at home, and you start to meet new people. If you meet new people and sometimes they're into different things, and sometimes there's some bad consequences. She got involved with the wrong crowd. She started using drugs and alcohol. I think a lot of people just experiment in the beginning, but I think that it had a bit of a more effect on her because she was also experiencing a lot of ... starting to experience mental health problems as well.

It started out not so bad according to the social worker. The mother said the grades slipped from A's to B's, and she was a little concerned, but not too much. Michela assured her everything's fine. That was the first year. Then she went away for her sophomore year, and things really got bad. She got more heavily into drugs. She got into harder drugs as well, unfortunately, stuff like ecstasy and cocaine. I see a history here of abusing pain medication. That caught up with her in terms of her academic issues, started cropping up. You know how that could be, Lue Ann, Fs on assignments, skipping classes. She had been on a sports scholarship. She lost that because she wasn't attending practices.

Then the really horrific thing happened. It was in the fall semester of her sophomore year. She was really intoxicated, woke up the next morning, and found out she had been raped. She did go to the police, and they were able to apprehend her assailant. It was a horrific experience from what I've heard. You may have even seen it in the newspapers. It was one of the local schools, maybe about 10 years ago. She had to testify before the person in court, and really had a lot of judgment against her from her peers and her classmates, because the guy, the awful person that raped her, was apparently a pretty popular, like a jock on campus. They took his side. Ugh, horrible.

Lue Ann: Yeah.

Derek: He got sentenced to 10 years in prison apparently. She has been just completely unable to heal. She has a diagnosis of PTSD, I believe, looking here, but shortly after the trial and everything, she dropped out of school. She had been a nursing major, I think. It doesn't say here. It's a little incomplete, but I think she was a nursing major. She dropped out. She's now living in her mom's house. It's been the last seven years, so it's been seven years since the guy went to prison and everything. It's been a pretty bad seven years.

She stopped mid-semester that year. I think she's got like 40-something credits for school, but she's got a full-blown alcohol disease. I don't know about drugs at this point. Again, I haven't spoken to her yet. It looks like her mom supports her. She doesn't have any benefits here. She has a boyfriend that apparently supports her a little bit, but no job, no insurance, doesn't look like she's on medication, doesn't look like she has a psychiatrist. She had been in the hospital for something, in the psych hospital, and was referred to us.

I haven't had any contact with Michela, but I've had a message from ... I had a message on my voicemail when I came back from the mom, I guess, is Maria I believe is her name. I don't have a release yet, so I can't talk to her, but the message just said, "You need to help my daughter. She can't live here anymore. You need to find her housing." Everything was about getting her an apartment or a housing. I think, after I maybe talk to Michela or find out more if I have a release, maybe the hospital may have sent one along, we can make a connection. I just want to explain, I think, to the mom initially that we're not specifically a housing agency, that we are a case management organization, that we practice the goals, values, and principles of psych rehab, and that we can definitely assist her and link her with different housing agencies, but we are ourselves not a housing agency, and kind of maybe start the process there. What do you think?

Lue Ann: No, that sounds good. That sounds good, first of all so that the family, they can both understand what you can and can't do for her. It sounds horrible. As you were talking, I was thinking about that person who went to prison for 10 years, and it's already been seven years. He's probably going to get out sooner. You know how they get out before the whole 10 years is up? Yeah, so I'm just thinking that-

Derek: Ugh, I don't even want to think about it.

Lue Ann: Yeah, but I mean, I'm scared it's going to really shake her stability. She'll probably be even more fragile.

Derek: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, the PTSD diagnosis, it's not surprising to me having gone through that. I'm sure that the alcoholism is not helping matters one bit. I'm really looking forward to getting involved in helping this woman, because it definitely sounds like she needs it right now.

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah. Wow.

Derek: Yeah. What's going on with your people while I've been gone?

Lue Ann: Well, you know that I'm working with Mick and Bianca.

Derek: Yes. Yes. Refresh me now. It's been a while since we talked about them. What was their story?

Lue Ann: They've been married a couple of years. They're living in that place where they're getting Section 8. It's not one of the supported housing units we normally work with, but it was a regular apartment that took their Section 8 voucher. Things are not going so great in a couple of ways, because while you were gone, Bianca was hospitalized.

Derek: Oh no.

Lue Ann: Yeah. She was doing badly. Her depression and anxiety seemed to be getting kind of worse, but then she was ... It was more with her psychotic symptoms. She was screaming in the apartment building. She was screaming outside. She was sleeping on the fire escape for a couple of days, and she was scared to go back into the apartment. It was really a lot of stuff that was going on. It took Mick and one of his friends to finally convince her to go get screened. She was hospitalized, I think it's like ... Now it's about a week. She was hospitalized at the Gill Center for Hope and Recovery. While she's in the hospital, it's really been impacting Mick's stability too, like yeah-

Derek: Wait a second. She stayed on the fire escape and wouldn't come back in the fire escape?

Lue Ann: Yeah. She wouldn't come into the apartment. She actually spent part of the evening, overnight, on the fire escape a couple of nights and didn't come in. Mick didn't know what to do.

Derek: Oh my goodness.

Lue Ann: Yeah. Then another time, she was in the house, not doing well. She seemed like she was screaming and fearful. Then finally, he called up one of his buddies who actually knows her too. They just tried to talk to her and convince her to go into ... to get screened, really, because she hadn't been seeing anybody. Her diagnosis is ... Let me see. She's had so many, but right now, it is bipolar disorder with the psychotic features.

Derek: Okay. Yeah.

Lue Ann: I guess, yeah, I guess the psychotic symptoms have been appearing. It really has impacted Mick, because he's got the major depression and anxiety. He's really worried about how she's doing, but he's also kind of questioning, how can I even continue to be the provider for my wife? He feels bad about a number of things. You know how at the end of the month, the two of them only eat like every other day, because when they're running out of money, and she's not working. She hasn't worked in a long time, and he hasn't been able to find such great jobs. He's at that part-time position at the grocery store. He's delivering the groceries, but-

Derek: Not enough. Not enough to make [crosstalk 00:12:29].

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah. The grocery store, remember a while back the grocery store was ... Instead of throwing out some things that was expired, they were-

Derek: Yeah, they were like-

Lue Ann: ... letting him take it home.

Derek: Yeah, that was really awesome of them.

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah. That was cool, but it was apparently being done by a couple of regular register people, line staff. Then the supervisor found out and put a stop to it for some reason. Mick's really worried about how she's eating, how she's doing physically. Now there's this psychiatric thing happening. I don't know. He's even worried about their marriage, their marriage. I said they've been married a couple of years, but there is a 12 year difference in their ages. I don't know. Maybe he just feels like he can't connect to her anymore.

Derek: Yeah. Well, that's got to be really stressful on him. So she's in the hospital right now still?

Lue Ann: Yeah.

Derek: She hasn't been sent back? Okay. Yeah, so-

Lue Ann: No, yeah, she's still in the hospital. I don't know what the after-care plan is going to be, because like I was telling you, because of her symptoms and all of those difficulties, the

apartment, the landlord was getting annoyed at the situation. The neighbors were complaining. The landlord, I don't think he gave a formal written eviction or anything like that, but he was kind of threatening that. He was kind of talking that.

Derek: Oh no. Are we going to have to find these people a new place to live?

Lue Ann: Oh my God. It was such a cool apartment. Remember they took the vouchers for a couple of other folks that we had served in the past?

Derek: I know. We've had a really good relationship with this guy. I'm hoping that-

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah.

Derek: That's what I was thinking as you were telling the story about Bianca on the fire escape. I'm just thinking it must have caused such a disturbance at their apartment complex, and just probably did not bring good attention to Mick or Bianca or possibly even our agency. That's really unfortunate, but I mean, well, it's nothing formal yet, you said, so hopefully, they have a little more time.

Lue Ann: Yeah. But on the other hand, even though the apartment complex has been pretty cool, I think the super or something in the management was changed. Maybe they're not going to be so great anymore.

Derek: No.

Lue Ann: Yeah, and like open or flexible to some of the folks. We're lucky we got a few units there. We got people placed at a few of the units, but I wonder if that place is just turning kind of uncool and inflexible with the folks we've been helping.

Derek: Yeah, I hadn't heard that about the change in the super, but that would be a logical reason why we might be seeing a change in people's attitudes.

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah. Bianca was already feeling kind of hopeless. As I said, her depression symptoms have kind of increased before the psychotic symptoms had emerged. Even both of them are pretty worried, because Mick, remember that time? It wasn't that long ago that he was using the van to deliver the groceries from the place, and he backed out. They had that small parking lot. You know, they're on that busy intersection, the grocery store. He was in the little parking lot, and he backed out. He hit those poles that they have in the lot so that you can't steal the carts. He hit them. He did a little bit of damage, but he also hasn't been feeling so great physically. He's got some pain in his knees and his shins, I guess from when he slammed on the brakes or something like that.

He's been to some doctors, and he doesn't really know what's going on. The doctors are like, "Oh, well, maybe you're having pain because of your age and arthritis anyway," or something. Yeah, so he's worried about that. The grocery store, I don't know if you remember, they never even filed an accident report with the insurance company or

anything. I don't know. They're kind of giving him the brush-off too about trying to take care of their employee and make sure that he's okay physically. That's kind of a drag.

Derek: Yeah. I guess you got some work to do there, yeah, as well.

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah.

Derek: All right. Well, seems like a lot going on since I was gone. Jeez.

Lue Ann: Yeah. I know you've got some other things that have been going on with your people, but I'm hoping that I could tap your brain or a couple other folks on the team to kind of strategize about what I'm going to do-

Derek: Definitely.

Lue Ann: ... for both of them, for both of them really.

Derek: Definitely. We all go to the same community events together. I know I don't work with Bianca and Mick, but I definitely know them and they know me. I've helped them out with a couple of things and stuff. The feel of the agency is really ... It's kind of like an extension of family, so I'm happy to help you out in any way I can.

Lue Ann: Yeah, thank goodness. I really think our team is so helpful and so good to the folks we work with, but I really need your help too.

Derek: Yeah. Yeah. Then we have one more actually. George, I know you know George, but I just kind of wanted to have some other coworkers hear. I just want to bring them up to speed. I've been having a little bit of trouble with him, so I'm wondering how it's been since I've been away. You know George has been with the agency forever. He, I think, started with us back in 2000, so what's that been, like 16 years he's been with us?

Lue Ann: Oh God, yeah.

Derek: Most of it was actually really great. He had a job, and he definitely had his issues in the beginning with relapsing and spending all those years in the hospital. Then kind of the first few years with us were a lot of stabilizing, but he did really well for the last pretty much 15 years, going to the self-help center. He had his apartment. He had his friends in the apartment. It sounds like he was great. Unfortunately, I never got to see that George, so the time that I've been working with him, he's been kind of a completely different person unfortunately. You know the tragedy that happened with George last year. Yeah, he had had a child apparently and-

Lue Ann: Oh, that's right. Oh.

Derek: Yeah. That was right when he started with the agency, so that was back in 2000. He had a kid and didn't have any contact with the child. I think it was a daughter. The mother had moved away. I think she had mental illness herself, so she kind of cut George out of

their lives completely despite ... He was trying to reach out in the beginning, and then kind of just lost the drive and didn't know where they were. I can't blame him. He was dealing with his own stuff. He's got schizophrenia as you know.

It was about, I think now going on nine months, that he came into contact with a family member that he hadn't seen in many years. She unfortunately told him that the daughter had passed away just in the last few months, 15 years old. She was in a car accident. It was really awful. George, as you might imagine, he didn't take it well. He ended up going back in the hospital, was in there for seven months, and now is back out. He's been with us now again, thankfully.

Unfortunately, we couldn't keep his apartment all those months he was hospitalized, so he lost his apartment there, but because he had such a good longevity with the agency, when he was able to be discharged from the hospital, he came back to us. Unfortunately now though, he's working with me. His other counselor he had worked with for a number of years retired. He's in a new apartment now that is in a really kind of bad part of town. That apartment he had in the past was awesome from what I heard. That area has just been built up so much that he just wasn't able to go back to the area. It's just too expensive now for him.

Losing that apartment was a big deal. Now he's in kind of the ghetto, and it's sort of unsafe. All his friends are across town, and he just feels very isolated, I think. The symptoms though are really hindering us from working together in a really good therapeutic way. He just seems very guarded with me. He doesn't know me well, and I can't blame him, but he won't really kind of talk to me and tell me what's really going on. That's been a barrier. I hope I can kind of tap-

Lue Ann: Yeah, that, yeah.

Derek: ... tap you and also our coworkers out there for tips on maybe how to engage this guy, because I know he's struggling with his meds. He's taking his meds. He's got the injectable now. He's on Risperdal, the shot, every two weeks. He hates it. He curses up and down when he talks about it. I like to stand back a little like, "Oh, okay, George. I know you don't like that shot." He took Risperdal as a pill for many years when he was stable and did fine. When he went off his meds when he found out about his daughter, I think the doctors are just really hesitant still to trust him to go back on to just taking pills, but I really think it would go a long way to helping him feel better, because he's really angry about that shot every two weeks.

You could tell. He gets anxious and starts getting a little bit more ... has more delusions, it seems, when he gets closer to the time. Then he gets the shot, and it's usually better for a while. I think it's the anxiety in him building. It's going to be tough. I think that the history he has with us is definitely a strength. We've seen him be stable in the community and have a really good support network, both with the staff here and some of his friends in the community. I have faith. It's just hard in that initial phase when other people know him better than you and he just won't give you the time of day, you know?

Lue Ann: Yeah. Yeah, I was thinking when you were talking about all those losses he had, including now not living near his friends, if he's been kind of like guarded or distant with you or us professionals, I wonder if he's still been going to the self-help center. You know, he used-

Derek: No, he hasn't. I've tried. I was actually at his apartment right before I left for vacation actually, and it was one of the days I knew he used to go. I was going to that area of town. I was like, "You know, I could drop you off if you want. I'm actually going to be over there. If you want, I'll give you a ride later." He just, you know, "No, no, I'm fine." He gave me something about having to do something. I don't know. You're right though. I should keep trying with that, so yeah.

Lue Ann: Yeah, maybe he would just be more open to that kind of support. You know how he is, especially because you were saying he was getting kind of like extra annoyed lately with the medication and getting a little fed up with the [crosstalk 00:24:51] providers. Wow. Okay. All right. What are you doing today? Are you going out into the field? Which vehicle are you taking?

Derek: I am not sure yet. I probably will be in the office much of the morning, just kind of checking in with everybody. I got to call back, find out about Michela's mom, and kind of plan out my week. I don't think I'll need a vehicle. You're free to take whatever you want.

Lue Ann: Okay, cool.

Derek: Maybe we can touch base in a couple of days and see where-

Lue Ann: Yes.

Derek: ... we're at with our people?

Lue Ann: Yeah, that would be good, because I'm going to go over to the Gill Center today to visit Bianca. I know that Mick said he was going to give me a call in a day or so, so I really want to see how they've been doing.

Derek: Yeah.

Lue Ann: Yeah.

Derek: Okay.

Lue Ann: Okay, cool, cool. Thank you so much.

Derek: No problem. It was good to catch up.

Lue Ann: Welcome back.



Derek: Yes, for sure. We'll be in touch.

Lue Ann: Okay, great. Thanks.

Derek: Take care.