

Mr. GRAY—Male, 20=50 Any Accent. Human Interaction Expert for United Health Services. Efficient, professionally sympathetic, but reserved. Not cold or uncaring, but businesslike.

GRAY: As I said, Mr. Thicket, the board has reviewed your request for the Pfizer drug. Unfortunately, they have determined that you don't qualify for the trial study. Mr. Thicket, as you know, this drug is experimental and it is extremely expensive. Given your present age and the fact that the treatment might only prolong your life, for say six months, we have determined that the costs simply outweigh the possible benefits.

GRAY: We utilize certain formulae in our calculations: which we call "quality adjusted" life years or QALY for short. We compare the present value of a patient's QALY with or without treatment, or relative to some other therapy. That gives us a net relative health benefit. Then we combine the relative cost of this treatment with our available resources and this creates what we call an Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio or ICER. As a general guideline we view interventions as cost effective whose ICER is less than twenty thousand dollars per QALY.

*(Thicket makes an overdramatic gesture)*

GRAY: Sir, I think you're being a bit overdramatic. After all, you're free to seek alternative therapies.