OPENING

OVERTURE FADES OUT.

A PROJECTION APPEARS ON THE FRONT CURTAIN. "KING COTTON", SUPERIMPOSED OVER SHOTS OF COTTON PICKERS IN A FIELD, SINGING.

CHORUS OF SINGERS, SINGS, "PHARAOH'S ARMY GOT DROWNED".

LOUDSPEAKER

THE LIVING NEWSPAPER PRESENTS: "KING COTTON".

(FRONT CURTAINS OPEN AND THE PROJECTION FLIPS BACK TO A SCREEN UPSTAGE CENTER. THE TITLE WORDS GROW SMALLER AND FADE OUT, LEAVING FULL SCREEN TO SHOTS OF COTTON PICKERS.)

OVER A VAST REALM FROM VIRGINIA TO THE GULF OF MEXICO, FROM THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, COTTON IS KING! IN ONE YEAR HE HAS STORED IN HIS COFFERS MORE THAN TWO BILLION ** DOLLARS OR ALMOST HALF THE TOTAL AMOUNT *** OF MONEY NOW IN CIRCULATION IN THE UNITED STATES IN THAT YEAR. KING COTTON EMPLOYS THIRTEEN MILLION **** PERSONS TO TILL HIS FIELDS AND TO CARE FOR THOSE WHO TILL THEM. HE HAS ***** LABORING IN HIS MILLS. OR YES INDEED! COTTON IS KING IN THE SOUTH!

(PROJECTION DISSOLVES TO GIRLS WORKING AT SPINNERS IN A COTTON MILL.)

BUT OF LATE THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE KING IS SICK; THAT HE HAS BECOME A SENILE OLD TYRANT; THAT HIS ***** SUBJECTS LIVE IN ABYSSAL SLAVERY UNDER HIS RULE. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT HIM. LET US GO DOWN TO WASHINGTON AND SEE FOR OURSELVES.

(PROJECTION FADES OUT.)

* The Loudspeaker later becomes the voice of Mr. Blackboard, known as "Boo Bee" who is used as a character throughout the play.

** Figure for 1919. Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Statistics for 1937. p. 89.

*** Figure for 1919. World Almanac.

**** 16th census of the U.S., 1930, 1: 2,612,006 farm operators in the 19 principal cotton states. The average number of workers in a southern family is conservatively estimated at 5.

*****

******
SCENE ONE

TITLE: A SENATE COMMITTEE MEETING. *

(The projection has been raised out of the way and lights come up on the flat form upstage center, 1, where the clerk and six men dressed in conventional stage senator's costumes are seated about a long table above which hangs a blackboard. The senators are large and impressive. They wear wing collars and puffed-up black satin cravats, cutaway coats and striped trousers. Each wears a mask, half again as large as life-size. The masks are caricatures of senators Smith, Thomas, Bankhead, Pope, Ellender and McNary. Each senator speaks with an accent indicative of the section of the country which he represents.)

SMITH MASK

(RISING)

Let's get down to cases. What I am driving at as Chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the United States Senate is not to have this annual grouching every year, but to establish a permanent program, a permanent law of equity and justice and fairness to the farmer so that he can go home and not be scared to death that God will be good to him. We have got into the most infernal paradox in the world. The farmers pray God for droughts and disasters in order to be prosperous, and everytime there comes a good season, they all go to the poorhouse. That is a hell of a note, isn't it? **

MC NARY MASK

It is, Senator Smith. But what would you have us do?

* The long committee meeting implied by the structure of this play is fictional. Almost all of the speeches, however, and all that deal with agricultural policies are documented on following pages.

** Hearings before a Sub-Committee of the Committee on Agriculture and Forrestry, Pursuant to S. Res. 158, Part 7, p. 831
SMITH MASK

I WOULD FIRST HAVE US ALL BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE PROBLEM, SENATOR MC NARY. THAT IS WHY I HAVE CALLED IN THE AID OF A RESEARCH EXPERT. HE HAS MADE A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH AND IF THERE IS NO OBJECTION, WE WILL HEAR HIM NOW.

(WH LOOKS ABOUT FOR AN OBJECTION.)

THERE BEING NONE, CLERK, WILL YOU CALL MR. ELBERT Q. EXPERT IN?

(CLERK RISES AND EXITS UP LEFT, RETURNING ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

LIGHTS COME UP ON 111 AS MR. ELBERT Q. EXPERT ENVERS FROM UP LEFT ON STAGE LEVEL. THE PROJECTION ON 111 IS A COMMITTEE ROOM.)

WELL, MR. EXPERT, WE ARE READY TO HEAR THE RESULTS OF YOUR STUDY.

MR. EXPERT

WONDERFUL WEATHER WE'RE HAVING LATELY.

MC NARY MASK

(TESTLY)

YES, YES.

MR. EXPERT

I SEE NO SMALL TALK, NO AMENITIES. GET RIGHT DOWN TO FIGURES.

SMITH MASK

EXACTLY.

MR. EXPERT

VERY WELL, GENTLEMEN. I HAVE MADE AN EXTENSIVE STUDY OF THE SOUTH FROM READING AND RESEARCH. I PRESENTED A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ON EDUCATION IN THAT REGION. IF YOU ASK ME TO STATE MY CONCLUSIONS BRIEFLY-----

(SPATTER OF APPLAUSE FROM THE SENATORS AT THE WORD, "BRIEFLY").

I SHOULD ALLEGGE THAT THE CHIEF THING WRONG WITH THE SOUTH IS ITS LACK OF PROPER EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

(SMITH SPREADS HIS TWO HANDS OVER HIS MASK IN A GESTURE OF WEARINESS. OTHER SENATORS WAG THEIR HEADS FROM SIDE TO SIDE IN A RHYTHMIC GESTURE OF WEARINESS.)

IF WE COULD EDUCATE THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH'S STANDARD OF LIVING, WE WOULD HAVE SOLVED THE PROBLEM. FOR ONCE HAVING SEEN A BETTER

* Fictional character.*
WAY, THE SOUTHERNER WOULD NOT BE CONTENT WITH A POORER.

SMITH MASK
(SORROWFULLY)

I'M AFRAID IT IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT, SIR.

(MR. EXPERT SMILES WITH SUPERIORITY.)

MC NARY MASK
(SOTTO VOCE)

I DO NOT LIKE HIS SMIRK OF ACADEMIC SUPERIORITY.

MR. EXPERT

IT IS SIMPLE, SENATOR. IF I HAD A BLACKBOARD, I THINK I COULD DEMONSTRATE---------

(BLACKBOARD LIGHTS UP WITH A PROJECTION OF A CARICATURE OF A BOOKWORM AT HIS DESK. HE IS IN SHIRT SLEEVES AND WEARS A CHEEKY SHADE. LAMP BURNS ON HIS DESK AND NEXT TO IT IS AN OILCAN LABELLED "MIDNIGHT." HUGE COFFEE POTT IS ON DESK NEXT TO A PAPER BAG OF SANDWICHES. BOOKS ARE EVERYWHERE; IN PILES ON THE DESK, ON THE FLOOR, IN HIS LAMP AND HE IS EVEN SITTING ON SOME. A VOICE IS HEARD VIA THE LOUDSPEAKER BEHIND THE BLACKBOARD.)

MR. BLACKBOARD *

(TESTILY)

SPEAK UP! ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT. DON'T SAY "IF" AND "AND". HOLLER FOR A BLACKBOARD AND FOUND YOUR FIST ON THE TABLE AND YOU'LL GET IT. JUST HOLLER FOR THINGS. WE GOT LOTS OF PEOPLE ON THE PROJECT. GET YOU ANYTHING YOU NEED. I'M MR. BLACKBOARD.

CLERK

A WHILE AGO, YOU WERE THE LOUDSPEAKER. I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF CALLING YOU MR. BLACKBOARD NOW.

MR. BLACKBOARD

IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN CALL ME BEE BEE FOR SHORT.

SMITH MASK

MR. BLACKBOARD IS INCLINED TO LOOK DOWN ON OUR MEETINGS A LITTLE, BUT HE'S WILLING TO STRAIGHTEN US OUT SOMETIMES ON THE FACTS.

* Fictional Character.
MR. BLACKBOARD

THANK YOU.

(BLACKBOARD LIGHT GOES OUT. MR. EXPERT STEPS TOWARDS THE PLATFORM AND CONTINUES.)

MR. EXPERT

LET US LOOK AT LIBRARY FIGURES.

SENATORS

FIGURES?

(THEY GROAN)

MR. EXPERT

IN TEN COTTON STATES THERE ARE 347 LIBRARIES; IN THE WHOLE UNITED STATES, 6235 *.

(PAUSE)

Come on, MR. BLACKBOARD-----I MEAN BEE BEE. DO YOUR STUFF.

(BLACKBOARD LIGHTS WITH A PROJECTION SHOWING A SMALL LIBRARY BUILDING LABELLED "COTTON STATES" AND 347; A PROPORTIONATELY LARGER BUILDING, LABELLED "UNITED STATES" AND 6235."

MR. BLACKBOARD

THERE ARE YOUR FIGURES, MR. EXPERT. HEY SENATORS! HOW DO YOU LIKE IT THIS WAY?

(PROJECTION ON BLACKBOARD CHANGES TO THREE AND TWO-THIRDS LARGE BOOKS, LABELLED "UNITED STATES" AND ONE AND ONE-TENTH BOOK LABELLED "COTTON STATES").

THE AVERAGE PERSON IN THE UNITED STATES BORROWS 3.67 BOOKS PER YEAR FROM HIS LIBRARY. THE AVERAGE PERSON IN THE SOUTH BORROWS ONLY 1.1 BOOKS PER YEAR. **

(BLACKBOARD BLACKS OUT.)

MR. EXPERT

THE FIGURES CLEARLY SHOW-----

MR. BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP.)

SAY! HOW AM I DOIN', ELBERT?

* World Almanac

** World Almanac, circulation figures of the American Library Association for 1935 divided by the 1930 census figures.
MR. EXPERT

FINE, BEE BEE. FINE!

(BLACKBOARD BLACKS OUT.)

THESE FIGURES CLEARLY SHOW, GENTLEMEN, THAT THE SOUTH IS NOT WELL-INFORMED. NOW THE AVERAGE SHARECROPPER------

(THERE IS A SMALL DISTURBANCE AT RIGHT, 11, A SHOT PICKS UP HUBERT BRITT, A GRIZZLED AND MIDDLE-AGED FARMER. HE IS HARD-PRESSED AND DESPERATE AND INCLINED TO BE RESENTFUL. HE IS VERY LIKEABLE HOWEVER. HE HURRIES IN ANGRILY.)

BRITT

JUST A MINUTE!

MR. EXPERT

(TO THE SENATORS)

PARDON ME. THIS IS SOMETHING I DID NOT FORSEE.

(SYMPATHETICALLY TO BRITT.)

WHAT IS THE TROUBLE, SIR?

BRITT

I HEARD WHAT THAT BLACKBOARD SAID AND WE AIN'T A-GOIN' TO LET YOU SPREAD LIES ABOUT US FOLKS DOWN IN DIXIE. IF YOU WANT TO TELL THESE POLITICIANS ABOUT US, TELL 'EM THE TRUTH.

MR. EXPERT

EXACTLY.

(TO SENATORS)

AS I WAS SAYING, THE SOUTH IS BACKWARD. IN THE UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE---

(PROJECTED ON BLACKBOARD: IN A BORD. R MADE BY THE OUTLINES OF A MAP OF THE U.S. ARE FOUR CARTOONS OF ILLITERATE-LOOKING MEN HOLDING BOOKS UPSIDE DOWN ON THEIR LAPS AND CLEANING THEIR FINGER NAILS WITH PEN POINTS. ONE MAN IS BLACK, THREE WHITE.)

---ONLY FOUR PEOPLE OUT OF EVERY HUNDRED ARE ILLITERATE. ** BUT IN THE SOUTH

MR. BLACKBOARD

FOUR OUT-OF-EVERY HUNDRED, HERE YOU ARE.

(PROJECTION CHANGES TO MAP OF U.S. WITH ALL BUT THE TEN COTTON STATES BLACKED OUT. IN THEM, 10

* Fictional Character

** World Almanac, figures for 1930
TEN OUT OF EVERY HUNDRED ARE ILLITERATE AMONG THE SUBJECTS OF KING COTTON.

(BLACKBOARD OUT.)

BRITT

COTTON IS KING ALL RIGHT. LIKE THEM OLD-TIMERS IN EGYPT WHO MADE MEN CARRY BIG STONES FOR YEARS AND YEARS SO THEY COULD HAVE A TOMB BUILT WHERE------

MC MARY MASK

(RISING)

MR. CHAIRMAN, I MOVE THAT THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BE DIRECTED TO EJECT THIS DISTURBANCE.

SMITH MASK

ONE MOMENT, IF THE GENTLEMAN FROM OREGON PLEASE.

(OTHER SENATORS LEAN FORWARD IN ATTITUDE OF DEBATE. A MONOTONOUS ORATORICAL SOUND ARISES.)

MR. EXPERT

(POUNDS THE TABLE AND SHOUTS)

SILENCE!

(SENATORS LEAN BACK AND RIGID SILENCE ENVELOPES THEM. MR. EXPERT LOOKS AT HIS FIST, SMILES HAPPLY AT BLACKBOARD.)

IT WORKED!

(TO BRITT) D'N'T I WRITE

I KNOW THE SOUTH IS BAD OFF. I WRITE A HUNDRED PAGE THESIS ON THE SUBJECT, BUT YOU, AS A FARMER, SHOULD NOT SPEAK SO HARSHLY OF THE GREATEST CROP OF THE SOUTH; COTTON. COTTON IS YOUR BENEFAC'TOR. WITHOUT COTTON, THE SOUTH WOULD STARVE.

BRITT

I HITCH-HIKED ALL THE WAY UP HERE TO TELL YOU STUFF-SHIRTS AND BLOATED FACES, THAT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE A-DOIN'. STARVIN'!

(TO MR. EXPERT.)

AN' IF YOU DIDN'T KEEP YOUR NOSE POKED IN BOOKS ALL THE TIME, YOU'D KNOW WE'RE STARVIN'!

MR. EXPERT

WHO ARE YOU?
BRITT

I'M HUBERT BRITT. I'M ONE OF TEN MILLION THAT CHOP COTTON.
SINCE YOU KNOW SO MUCH, YOU UP AND TELL THE SENATORS HOW MUCH
I MAKE FOR WORKIN' ALL YEAR FROM SUN-UP TO FIRST DARK. JUST TELL 'EM.

EXPERT

WHY----I-----DON'T KNOW. HOW MUCH DO YOU MAKE?

BRITT

LAST YEAR I GOT EIGHT CENTS A POUND. * I MADE NINE BALES.

MR. EXPERT

AH! HOW MANY POUNDS IN A BALE?

BRITT

(DISGUSTED)

FIVE HUNDRED. **

MR. EXPERT

LET'S SEE: FIVE HUNDRED TIMES EIGHT CENTS, THAT'S FORTY DOLLARS.
NINE BALES------HEY BEE BEE!

(OH BLACKBOARD IS PROJECTED;
9 BALES TIMES 40 EQUALS $360)

MR BLACKBOARD

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DOLLARS, ELBERT. ***

MR. EXPERT

YOU MEAN THAT'S ALL YOU GOT FOR A YEAR'S WORK?

MR. BRITT

DIDN'T GET THAT MUCH. DIDN'T GET BUT HALF OF THAT. I SHARECROP.

MR. EXPERT

YOU MEAN YOU SHARE YOUR CROP?

MR. BRITT

YEH. GOT TO GIVE MY LANDLORD HALF OF EVERYTHIN' I GROW.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT FOR?

---
BIUTT

FOR LETTIN' ME USE HIS LAND AND FURNISHIN' ME.

MR. EXPERT

FURNISHING--?

BIUTT

SAY YOU ARE DUMB, ALL YOU KNOW IS WHAT YOU READ IN BOOKS.
FURNISHIN' MEANS THAT HE GIVES ME SEED, A MULE AND GIVES
ME CREDIT WHEN I HAVE TO BUY FOOD.

MR. EXPERT

THEN I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAD FREE SEED, A MULE AND SUPPLIES, A HOUSE
AND ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY DOLLARS CLEAR AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

BIUTT

I HAD TO BUY MY STUFF AT THE LANDLORD'S STORE. HE GAVE ME CREDIT.
I HAD TO SETTLE UP OUT OF MY HALF; OUT OF MY ONE HUNDRED AND
EIGHTY DOLLARS. WHEN I PAID UP, ALL I HAD LEFT WAS SIXTY-FIVE DOLLARS.

MR. EXPERT

SURELY YOUR CASE ISN'T TYPICAL. COTTON BRINGS MORE THAN EIGHT
CENTS A POUND SOME YEARS. I KNOW THAT.

MR. BLACKBOARD

(THE FIGURE $210.00 IS PROJECTED ON BOARD)

AT 9.4 CENTS PER POUND, COTTON BROUGHT THE AVERAGE SHARECROPPER
$210, FOR A WHOLE YEAR'S WORK. THIS WAS NOT PAY FOR ONE MAN'S
WORK BUT OF THE ENTIRE SHARECROPPER'S FAMILY. **

MR. EXPERT

DO THE WIVES AND CHILDREN HAVE TO WORK TOO?

BIUTT

YOU BET YOUR LIFE. ME AND LALLY AND ALL FIVE OF OUR KIDS GOT TO
CHOP COTTON OR OLD MAN POWERS WOULD PUT US OFF HIS PLACE.

SMITH MASK

SO THAT YOUR YEARLY PER CAPITA WAGE AFTER YOU SETTLED WITH YOUR
LANDLORD AND THE COMMISSARY WAS $65 DIVIDED BY SEVEN OR ABOUT $9
EACH FOR THE WHOLE YEAR?

BIUTT

YEH! YEH, NOT ENOUGH TO PAY THE DOCTOR FOR THE MALARIA OUR YOUNGEST

* Curtis A. Betts, St Louis Post Despatch, March 11th, 1934.

**
Died with.

Mr. Expert

I hardly think it is as bad as you say. You said, and I believe I read somewhere that the landlord usually gives your people your homes, doesn't he?

Britt

If you can call them homes, trouble with you is you got all you know out o' books. Why don't you come along with me an' let me show you what they call a sharecroppers' house do:in where I come from. Before you talk so much why don't you find out what in hell you're talkin' about?

Mr. Expert

I'd like to go, but the Senate committee expects me to——

Smith Mask

Tut! Tut! That's a very good idea, Britt. You take him home with you. We'll wait.

Bankhead Mask

We've been sitting up here talking about doing something for the cotton farmer for thirty years now. * We won't have finished I'm sure, before our witness returns.

Thomas Mask

One moment, are you able to make a living? **

Britt

I ain't done it. **

Thomas Mask

Well, you do live. **

Britt

By goin' in debt. **

Thomas Mask

Would you be able to make a living if you could rent more land? **

Britt

I ain't able. **

* N. yeun Thomas. The Plight of the Sharecropper, p. 47
** From the testimony of Mr. Burks, a tenant farmer, Hearings op. cit., Part 7 pp. 951-3
THOMAS MASK

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT MOVING TO SOME OTHER TERRITORY WHERE YOU MIGHT BE ABLE? *

BRITT

IT TAKES MONEY TO MOVE. *

THOMAS MASK

YOU DON'T SEE MUCH FUTURE AS A FARMER, THEN? *

BRITT

I DON'T SEE NONE. * AND YOU WON'T NEITHER WHEN THIS FELLER COMES BACK AND TELLY'ALL WHAT HE'S SEEN. COME ON, MISTER. (THE SPOT FOLLOWS THEM OUT, UP RIGHT, THEN DIMS.)

SMITH MASK

WELL! NOW MAYBE, WE ARE GETTING SOMEWHERE.

BLACKOUT.
SCENE TWO (A)

TITLE: LIFE AMONG THE TENANT FARMERS.

(A) AN ERODED FIELD

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 11. THE PROJECTION SHOWS A BADLY ERODED HILLSIDE, A FEW HOLES OF COTTON CLINGING TO BLEAK STALKS. A CLUMP OF PERSIMION SPROUTS MASKS THE UPTAGE ENTRANCE.

AS THE LIGHTS COME UP, HUBERT BRITT AND MR. EXPERT ENTER FROM BEHIND THE PERSIMMONS.)

BRITT

PRETTY HOT, ON THE TRAIN DOWN FROM WASHINGTON.

MR. EXPERT

BUT THE TRAIN WAS NICE AND AIR-COOLED EXCEPT THAT SECTION WHERE THEY MADE THE NEGROES SIT * AFTER THE TRAIN LEFT WASHINGTON.

BRITT

OH YEAH, THE JIM CROW CAR.

MR. EXPERT

BUT THIS IS AMERICA. IF NEGROES PAY THE SAME FARE WHY DON'T THEY HAVE THE SAME PRIVILEGES?

BRITT

YOU LET THE SOUTH HANDLE THE NEGRO PROBLEM.** I GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THERE ARE MILLIONS OF NEGROES TO EVERY MILLIONS OF WHITES DOWN HERE. *** IF WE LET THEM GET THE UPPER HAND THEY'LL RUN US OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

(PAUSE)

TAKE MY ADVICE, YOUNG FELLER AND DON'T GO BUTTIN' IN THE RACE PROBLEM DOWN HERE. THAT'S SOMETHING THAT ONLY THE SOUTH UNDERSTANDS AND ONLY THE SOUTH CAN HANDLE.

MR. EXPERT

UP NORTH WE SEE THESE THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CLIMATE DOWN HERE?

* Articles and pictures in LIFE magazine. Issue p.

** From letter in LIFE magazine. Issue p.

*** Statistics
MR. EXPERT

VERY WILD FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR.

BRITT

WE GENERALLY HAVE OPEN WINTERS. NO SNOW AT ALL THIS WINTER IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY. *

MR. EXPERT

THIS COULD BE MADE INTO A FINE DAIRYING REGION. **

BRITT

HUH? WHAT? OH COWS! YEH, WELI! BUT WE ALWAYS GROW COTTON HERE IN THE SOUTH. EXCEPT WHERE WE GROW TOBACCO.

GUESS NO ONE WOULD THINK OF DOIN' ANY OTHER WAY.

WELL, HERE'S THE LAND WE SHARECROP ON. RAIN LAST NIGHT WASHED THIS FIELD ALL TO HELL.

(WRITER JOHN BRITT, A SOMEWHAT HANDSOME AND SENSITIVE-LOOKING BOY ABOUT 21. HE CARRIES A SHOVEL ON HIS SHOULDER.)

WHAT YOU FIXIN' TO DO, SON?

JOHN ***

COME OVER TO SEE IF I COULD STOP SOME OF THIS WASHIN'.

IF WE DON'T, WE CAN'T PLANT THIS FIELD NEXT YEAR. THERE'LL BE GULLIES IN IT BIG ENOUGH TO PUT A HOUSE IN.

BRITT

THIS IS JOHN, MY ELDEST. DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT HIM.

MR. EXPERT

(SHAKING HANDS WITH JOHN.)

GLAD TO MEET YOU, JOHN.

BRITT

JOHN'S MIGHTY CUT UP ABOUT THE WAY THE LAND'S WASHIN' AWAY.

THIS FARM HAS JUST ABOUT MOVED OFF THE PLACE.

JOHN

I RECKON ALL THE GOOD SOIL HAS FLOATED INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO BY NOW.

MR. EXPERT

IT DOES LOOK BAD. ARE THERE MANY FARMS IN THIS CONDITION?

* No snow in central North Carolina winter, 1937-8
** Statement by Saul Green
*** Fictitious Character
" FROM THE FILM "THE RIVER"
BRITT
I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW MANY MORE. BUT YOU CAN SEE WHAT A HELL OF A FIX MINE IS IN.

MR. EXPERT
I OUGHT TO KNOW THE FIGURES ON EROSION.
(BLACKBOARD IS LIT UP WITH PROJECTIONS SHOWING FIGURES 10, 900, 000.)

MR. BLACKBOARD
EVERYBODY OUGHT TO KNOW THEM. NEARLY ELEVEN MILLION ACRES * OF FARM LAND IN THE SOUTHEAST HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY EROSION.
(MR. EXPERT RECORDS THE FIGURES IN HIS NOTEBOOK.)

MR. EXPERT
THANK YOU, BEE BEE. DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOU.

MR. BLACKBOARD
NEITHER DO I, ELBERT Q. EXPERT.

JOHN
I HEAR TELL THE GOVERNMENT'S TRYIN' TO DO SOMETHING.
(BLACKBOARD PROJECTION CHANGES TO FIGURES 5, 247, 934.)

MR. BLACKBOARD
5 AND A ½ MILLION FEET OF EROSION DITCHES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DUG IN THE SOUTHEASTERN STATES. **

BRITT
YEH, BUT-----

MR. BLACKBOARD
NOW OF COURSE I'LL ADMIT
(PROJECTION CHANGES TO 26, 096, 709)

THAT MORE THAN 26 MILLION FEET HAVE BEEN DUG IN THE SINGLE STATE OF COLORADO ALONE. ***

MR. EXPERT
BUT THAT'S FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AS ALL THE SOUTHEAST PUT TOGETHER!

BRIGHT BOY!

---

* Landlord and Tenant p. 44
** Agricultural Statistics for 1937, table 537 p. 445
*** Local Citation.
BRITT

JUST HOW MANY OF THEM ELEVEN MILLION WASHED OUT ACRES HAVE BEEN FIXED UP?

MR. EXPERT

HOW MANY RECLAIMED, BEE BEE?

(PROJECTION CHANGES TO 737, 923. *)

MR. BLACKBOARD

SOMETHING UNDER THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION, I'M SORRY TO SAY, ELBERT.

(PROJECTION CHANGES TO 901, 761 IN ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO.
732, 923 IN SOUTHEAST.
248, 638)

OR A QUARTER MILLION FEWER ACRES RECLAIMED IN THE WHOLE SOUTHEAST THAN WERE RECLAIMED IN ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO ALONE. **

MR. EXPERT

CAN'T SAY AS THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MUCH FOR THE SOUTH.

(HELEN FARRELL APPEARS BY THE CLUMP OF JERSYLIMONS. SHE IS BLOND, TALL AND PRETTY.
JOHN IS IN LOVE WITH HER. JOHN SEES HER IMMEDIATELY. BRITT DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE HER PRESENCE.)

BRITT

(LOOKING UP AT THE SUN.)

WELL, IT'S GETIN' ON TO DINNER TIME. COME ALONG, MR. EXPERT AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW POOR FOLKS EAT.

(POINTEDLY TO JOHN AS THEY START TO GO.)

WHAT YOU WAITIN' ON, BOY?

JOHN

I'LL BE ON IN A SECOND.

THEY EXUIT FROM RIGHT. JOHN CROSSES TO HER AND EMBRACES HER TENDERLY. SHE STARTS TO RESNOW AND THEN DRAWS AWAY IN DIISTASTE.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, HONEY? DON'T YOU LOVE ME NO MORE?

HELEN

YES, BUT-----

* Local Citation
** Local citation
JOHN

(TURFLOOY AS HE LOOKS DOWN ON HIS CLOTHES)

GUESS I AM A LITTLE DIRTY. AIN'T NO BATH TUBS UP TO OUR PLACE BUT COME SATURDAY THE RAIN BARREL MIGHT HOLD ENOUGH SO I CAN GET ME A BATH.

HELEN

JOHN DO YOU LOVE ME?

JOHN

CAIN'T THINK OF NOTHIN' ELSE BUT YOU ALL THE TIME, HONEY.

HELEN

THEN WHY DON'T YOU GO WITH MY BROTHER BERT AND LET HIM HELP YOU GET A JOB IN THE MILL IN TOWN?

JOHN

AIN'T SET ON WORKIN' IN NO MILL LIKIN' TO FARM THE WAY I DO.

HELEN

BUT HONEY, DON'T YOU SEE IF WE GET MARRIED, I'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH YOUR FOLKS AND YOUR PAP DON'T FANCY ME NONE, BESIDES THERE AIN'T BUT TWO ROOMS DOWN TO YOUR PLACE AND THERE ARE EIGHT OF YOU 'UNS ALREADY LIVIN' THERE.

JOHN

MAYBE I CAN GET ME A PLACE OF MY OWN TO SHAECROP.

HELEN

AIN'T NOBODY GONNA TAKE YOU WITHOUT A FORCE-----A BROOD OF CHILDREN TO HELP MAKE A CROP. DON'T YOU SEE, JOHN WE'LL END UP LIKE YOUR FOLKS AND MINE. WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT. WE GOT A LITTLE SCHOOLIN', MAYBE YOU WON'T MAKE MORE AT THE MILL, BUT LEASAINS WE'LL BE IN TOWN WHERE SOMETHIN' IS GOIN' ON ALL THE TIME. WE CAN LIVE IN A ROOM WITH A BATHROOM IN THE HALL MAYBE. YOU DON'T WANT TO DO LIKE YOUR PAP.

JOHN

I AIN'T AIMIN' TO DO LIKE PAP. I'M GOIN' TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR HIM----FOR ALL OF US. I'M GOIN' TO ASK MR. POWERS FOR A CONTRACT THIS EVENIN' SO WE KNOW WHERE WE STAND.

HELEN

HE WON'T GIVE YOU NONE.

JOHN

I THINK HE WILL. THEN WE'LL GET MARRIED. ONE OF THESE YEARS, WE'RE BOUND TO MAKE A GOOD CROP THEN WE CAN BUY OUR OWN PLACE.
HELEN

WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT'S EVER MADE ENOUGH SHARECROPPIN' TO BUY ANY LAND?

JOHN

I CAN'T THINK OF NONE RIGHT OFF BUT I KNOW THERE'S BEEN SOME.

HELEN

I HEARD OF ONE AND IT WAS SO ASTONISHIN' THAT THEY PUT HIS PICTURE IN ALL THE PAPERS.*

JOHN

HELEN, WE WERE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER.

HELEN

(BITTIERLY)

I WAS MEANT TO HAVE A MESS OF CHILDREN SO THAT THE SONS OF OUR LANDLORDS CAN HAVE CHEAP LABOR LATER ON. SOMEBODY PUT IT IN THE PAPER THAT THE SOUTH WILL POPULATE THE NATION. **

JOHN

DON'T TALK SO BITTER, HONEY.

HELEN

I LOVE YOU JOHN.

(WITH FINALITY)

BUT IF YOU COUNT ON FOLLOWIN' OLD MAN POWERS' MULE ALL YOUR LIFE OR ANY LANDLORD'S MULE, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET SOMEONE ELSE TO COOK YOUR CORNBREAD AND BEANS. I AIN'T AIMIN' TO DO IT.

JOHN

YOU AIN'T FLAIN' TO TAKE UP WITH BILL GIBSON?

HELEN

HE MAKE3 SIXTEEN DOLLARS A WEEK DOWN TO THE MILL, SOMETIMES.

JOHN

BUT HE'S NO 'COUNT, HELEN.

HELEN

WATCH'N OUT WHO YOU CALLIN' NO 'COUNT, JOHN BRITT. YOU DON'T MAKE BUT SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS A DAY WHEN YOU HIRE YOURSELF OUT. AND YOU

* Article in North Carolina Newspaper

** Article based on interview with Dr. W. E. Alexander, Farm Security Administrator, Raleigh News and Observer 1-13-38.

*** Interview with R. C. Hamer who states $1.75 cents per day is average.
DON'T GET TO DO THAT OFTEN. LEASTWAYS, BILL ALWAYS HAS SOME MONEY ON SATURDAY NIGHTS.

JOHN

YOU'RE PLUMB OUT OF YOUR HEAD, HELEN.

HELEN

MAYBE SO. BUT I'LL GET TO SEE SOMETHIN' ANYWAY. I'LL GET SOMETHIN' TO WEAR AND TO EAT. I AIN'T AIMIN' TO KILL MYSELF RAISIN' BABIES AND BOLL WEEVILS.

(SHE EXITS ANGRILY)

JOHN

HELEN, COME BACK!

(BLACKOUT ON SET. LIGHT COMES UP ON BLACKBOARD.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

WELL, FOLKS, I DIDN'T WANT TO BUTT IN ON THEM WITH MY FIGURES, BUT THE GIRL'S RIGHT. A LITTLE TOO MUCH OF AN OPPORTUNIST FOR MY TASTES----BUT DEAD RIGHT.

(PROJECTION COMES ON BLACKBOARD TO LEFT, HINTING IDENTITY FIGURES OF MEN IN OVERALLS; AT RIGHT, ONE MAN IN A SUIT.)

ONLY ONE SHARECROPPER OUT OF TEN EVER BECOMES A LANDOWNER, HOWEVER SMALL. *

(BOARD BLACKS OUT.)

DON'T GO 'WAY, FOLKS. WE GOING TO SEE GRAMPS. WHAT A MAN!

BLACKOUT.

SCENE TWO (B)

TITLE: LIFE AMONG THE TENANT FARMERS.

(B) "WE GET ALONG". *

(BLACKBOARD LIGHTS UP.)
MR. BLACKBOARD

FOLKS I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU THE FIGURES ON THIS SCENE BEFORE WE GET INTO IT.

(AFFECTIONATELY)

GRAMP-BRITT IS AN INDEPENDENT OLD BASTARD AND WE'D KICK ME AND MY FIGURES OUT IF WE CAME SNOOPING AROUND HIS PLACE. NOW!

(PROJECTION OF THREE HOUSES APPEARS ON BLACKBOARD DRAWN TO SCALE OF THE FIGURES PRINTED IN EACH ONE: $380. $245. $2,218.)

THE AVERAGE VALUE OF THE TENANT FARM DWELLINGS IN SEVEN COTTON STATES IN 1930, FOR WHITES, $380. FOR NEGROES, $245. THE AVERAGE VALUE OF HOMES IN NEW ENGLAND IN 1930: $2,218—NEARLY SEVEN TIMES AS GREAT AS THAT OF THE WHITE COTTON TENANTS. **

(ASS BOARD BLACKS OUT.)

GOODBYE!

(LIGHTS COME UP ON SMALL ONE ROOM SHACK ON STAGE IV. THE ROOF AND THREE WALLS ARE THERE.
THE FOURTH WALL, DOWNSTAIRS, HAS BEEN BLOWN AWAY.***
THE ROOM IS CLUTTERED WITH A STOVE AND CRATES AND BOXES. IN THE YARD LIE THE UNTidy REMAINS OF AN OLD CAR. GRAMP'S BRITT***LIES ON THE FLOOR, SMOKING AND BASKING IN THE HEAT OF NOONDAY. NEARBY IS THE GASOLINE TANK FROM THE CAR, A PART OF ITS TOP HAVING BEEN CUT OFF TO FIT IT FOR ITS PRESENT FUNCTION AS A SPITTOON. GRAMP'S SPITS INTO IT FROM TIME TO TIME WITH REASONABLE ACCURACY.)

BRITT

(AS HE AND MR. EXPERT WALK IN ON THE SCENE.)

THOUGHT WE'D STOP IN ON THE WAY TO MY PLACE AND SEE Pan. THE OLD MAN IS RIGHT PROUD OF HIS PLACE.

GRAMP

EVENIN', HUBERT. *****

BRITT

GRAMP, WANT YOU TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE, MR. ELBERT Q. EXPERT.

GRAMP

EVENIN' SIR.

* Title taken from caption under picture in "You have seen their Faces"
** 16th Census of the U.S. Agriculture 1V, Table 30, 11 County Table 1.
*** Setting taken from photo in "You have seen Their Faces". Erskine Caldwell.
**** Fictitious character.
***** Local custom. Anytime after noon, the salutation is 'Evenin'"
(GRAMP GETS TO HIS FEET.)

GRAMP, USED TO LIVE WITH US, BUT—

GRAMP,

BUT THAT BARN HIS LANDLORD LANDLORD GIVES HIM TO LIVE IN WAS TOO CROWDED FOR ME AND THE ROOF LEAKS LIKE A SIEVE WHEN IT RAINS. I'M NOT TOO FANCY A MAN BUT I SURE LIKE TO LIVE NICE.

BRITT

HE FIXED HIM THIS HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE LAND I FARM.

GRAMP

(Proudly)

AINT SHE LURTY? SPENT ALL LAST WINTER "CATCHIN' PLANKS DRIFTIN' DOWN THE RIVER TO BUILD THIS HOUSE AND THEN THE FLOOD COME ALONG AND WASHED THE SIDE OF IT OFF. DOGGONE IF I DON'T LIKE IT BETTER THE WAY IT IS NOW. *

MR. EXPERT

IT'S CERTAINLY AIRY ENOUGH.

(Coughs)

AND DUSTY. COULD I HAVE A DRINK OF WATER?

GRAMP,

BUCKET'S EMPTY. I'LL HAVE TO GO FOR SOME.

BRITT

(LAUGHS HARSHLY.)

GRAMP, USES THE WELL AT THE NIGGERS CABIN HALF A MILE UP YONDER.

MR. EXPERT

GUESS I'M NOT THIRSTY AFTER ALL. ANYHOW, I CAN WAIT.

---

* Quotation taken from under photograph in "You Have Seen Their Faces". by Erskine Caldwell. p.
YOU HAD A CAR ONCE?

GRAMPS

BACK BEFORE 1927 SOMEWHERE WE HAD A GOOD YEAR. MADE THREE BALES OF MY OWN AND GOT $300. HAD A HUNDRED LEFT WHEN I SETTLED UP. ME AND THE OLD WOMAN--SHE'S DEAD, NOW FIGGERED IT WOULDN'T TAKE THAT MUCH TO GET US THROUGH THE WINTER SO I UPPED AND BOUGHT ME THAT SECOND HAND CAR. SURE USED TO BE A FINE THING TO RIDE AROUND IT. IT WAS A LONG TIME BACK, BUT IT HAPPENED.*

BRITT

COME SPRING, HE HAD NO MONEY FOR GAS. THE OLD CAR JUST SET THERE. ONE DAY THE FRONT FENDER FELL OFF. NEXT WAS A HEAD LIGHT. WHEN GRAMP MOVED HERE, HE BORROWED MULES TO TOTE IT ALONG AND THERE IT SET IN THE YARD AND FINALLY ROTTED AWAY. **

GRAMPS

NOW SON, IT WOULDN'T BE NO TEETOTAL LOSS. YOU DID CUT SOME SHOE SOLES OUT OF THE TIMES, YEARS BACK, AND THAT OLE GAS TANK MAKES THE FIRST BIG ENOUGH SPITTOON I EVER DID HAVE.

(SPIUTS)

BRITT

YOU SEE WHAT COTTON DOES. HOW IT CAN BREAK A MAN SO THAT----

GRAMPS

HE FESTERIN' YOU WITH THAT SOCIALISTIC TALK, MISTER? DON'T PAY HIM NO MIND. HIS LIVER'S OUT OF KILTER OR SOMETHIN'. WE GET ALONG FINE. I WORK. A SURE! EVERYBODY'S GOT TO WORK. GOT A PLACE TO SLEEP AND SOMETHIN' TO EAT---MOST OF THE TIME. AS LONG AS I CAN GET A CAN OF SNUFF ONCE IN AWHILE TO KEEP MY OLD TEETH FROM ACHIN'----***

BRITT

IT'S GETTIN' FAST NOON. THE OLD WOMAN'LL BE WAITIN' ON US TO DASH UP.

GRAMPS

MIGHTY PROUD TO HAVE YOU EAT WITH ME, MR. EXPERT. GOT CORN BREAD. SORRY I AIN'T GOT NO FAT BACK TO GO LONG WITH IT. ****

MR. EXPERT

(PASSIONATELY)

HOW CAN YOU BE SATISFIED LIVING UNDER THESE CONDITIONS. HOW CAN YOU----

---

* Local Incident.
** A common sight in the fields.
***
**** A staple article of food among the poor whites and negroes. Fat Back is great slabs of salted hog fat. Sells as low as five cents a pound in local A and P stores.
GRAMPS

(ANGRI

NOW MISTER, I AIN'T NEVER COME UP NORTH AND MESS WITH YOUR LIFE.
DON'T YOU BE MESSIN' AROUND WITH MINE.

MR. EXPERT

BUT YOU SEEM AN INTELLIGENT SORT OF PERSON AND--

GRAMPS

(PRIDE)

AIN'T HAD BUT MORE'N THREE YEARS OF SCHOOLIN' IN ALL MY LIFE.

MR. EXPERT

(SHOCKED)

WHY, AIN'T THERE LAWS THAT PROVIDE FOR EDUCATION? I UNDERSTAND THAT
GOVERNOR HOBY IS WORRIED ABOUT THE ADULT ILLITERACY.

GRAMPS

I WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. BUT I WAS READIN' IN A PAPER I FOUND
THAT HOBY WON'T BE SATISFIED TILL THE FOLKS IN THIS STATE ARE AS
DUMB AS THE FOLKS IN OTHER STATES. AN' WE GOT TILL APRIL 1940
TO DO IT IN.

MR. EXPERT

YOU MISREAD THE INTERVIEW. I HAVE THAT CLIPPING.

(TAKES LARGE SHEAF OF CLIPPINGS FROM
POCKET. READS FROM ONE OF THEM.)

"AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HERE, GOVERNOR HOBY SET AS A
GOAL THE PRACTICAL BANISHMENT OF ILLITERACY BY 1940, OR AT LEAST
BRINGING NORTH CAROLINA IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE." *

BRITT

"IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE." IF THAT DON'T MEAN AS DUMB
AS THE REST------ WE BETTER GET GOIN', MR. EXPERT.

GRAMPS

(CRAFTILY)

IF LALLY'S 'SPECTIN' COMPANY ALONG FOR DINNER, MAYBE SHE'LL HAVE
SOME GRRITS** ALONG WITH HER CORNBREAD.**

BRITT

WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME NONE. LALLY'S RIGHT PERT AT MANAGIN'.

* Quotation from article in Greensboro, N.C. Daily News. March 17, 1939.

** Common article of food among the poor folks in the south. Grits
Cornmeal and grits sell under five cents a pound in
local A and P stores.
GRAMPS

GUESS I'LL GO ALONG WITH YOU. AIN'T VISITED YOU ALL FOR QUITE A SPELL.

BRITT

YOU GO ON AHEAD. I WANT TO TAKE MR. EXPERT BY THAT FIELD THAT I'D LIKE TO PLANT TO TOBACCO IF I COULD GET ME. POWERS TO FURNISH ME.

GRAMPS

(FISHING RAGGED COAT FROM PILE OF JUNK ON THE FLOOR AND PUTTING IT ON.)

LOOKS LIKE A SPELL OF RAIN. GUESS I'LL WEAR MY COAT OVER. MAYBE ONE OF THE MAKERS GALS GOT TIME TO PUT A STITCH IN IT.

(ONE SLEEVE HANGS BY A THREAD.)

BRITT

TELL LALLY WE'LL BE RIGHT ALONG.

(THE THREE EXIT AS BLACKOUT.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

THAT WAS GRAMPS' FOLKS. HE GETS ALONG ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. NOW LET ME GIVE YOU THE FIGURES GOVERNOR HOBY GAVE THE STATE ADULT EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD AT THE CONFERENCE IN MARCH. "IN 1930, THE GOVERNOR SAID, "43 OUT OF EVERY 1000 PERSONS MORE THAN TEN YEARS OLD IN THE COUNTRY COULD NOT READ OR WRITE; 100 OUT OF EVERY 1000 NORTH CAROLINIANS COULD NOT READ AND WRITE." PRETTY TERRIBLE. BUT I GUESS THEY'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THEY LAUNCHED A TWO YEAR PROGRAM AT THAT MEETING TO BANISH ILLITERACY. WELL, I HOPE THEY CAN BANISH IT BY 1940." SO LONG, FOLKS. SEE YOU AT HUBERT BRITT'S HOUSE.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE TWO (C)

TITLE: LIFE AMONG THE TENANT FARMERS.

(c) "HERE IS OUR COUNTRY, HERE OUR HOME." *

 LIGHTS COME UP ON STAGE V. A SMALL CLUTTERED ROOM IS SEEN. FLATS ARE PAINTED TO REPRESENT WHITENASHED BOARD. THERE IS A TABLE CENTER, COVERED WITH AN OILCLOTH COVER, MUCH CROCKLED. THE WINDOWS ARE OPENED AND THE ROOM IS FULL OF FLIES. (INDICATED BY THE INHABITANT'S SWATTING AT THEM FROM TIME TO TIME.) THERE IS A RICKETY ION BED UP RIGHT COVERED WITH A TATTERED PATCHWORK QUILT. THERE IS A BROKEN-DOWN LOOKING KITCHEN RANGE ON WHICH IS AN IRON POT IN WHICH GritS ARE COOKING. THERE IS AN OR ROE CRATE STANDING ON A BACKLESS CHAIR. THIS IS THE BABY'S CRIB. THERE ARE TWO CHAIRS, A STOOL AND SEVERAL BOXES FOR FOLKS TO SIT ON. LARGE LARD BUCKET AND IRON SKILLET HANGS FROM NAILS IN WALL. A RAGGED BROOM IS UPRIGHT NEAR STOVE. NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN PASTED OVER THE CRACKS IN THE BOARDS IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP OUT THE WIND. **

 LIGHTS COME UP ON A PORTION OF THE BRITT FAMILY. LUNNIE LEE, 14; PRETTY WITH DARK HAIR AND WHITE SKIN, IS STIRRING THE GritS. SHE WEARS A SKIRT, OLD SWEATER AND RAGGED SNEAKERS. NO STOCKINGS. RUTH BRITT, 10, STRONG, CAPABLE AND INTELLIGENT LOOKING IS SITTING ON THE BED MENDING STEVE'S SHIRT. SHE SITS NEXT TO HER ON THE BED READING FROM A TATTERED MAGAZINE COPY OF GANGSTER STORIES. HE IS THIN, AND WEAK-LOOKING BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MORALLY. OBVIOUSLY UNDERNOURISHED. HE IS BAREFOOTED AND WEARS OVERALLS. *About 17. NO SHIRT. DAVE IS, A HEALTHY HAPPY-GO-LUCKY SORT OF BOY, DRESSED IN RAGGED PANTS AND BARE FEET AND A TORN DIRTY SHIRT, IS SITTING ON A STOOL WITH A BOWL OVER HIS HEAD WHILE HIS MOTHER, LALLY, ATTEMPTS TO CUT HIS HAIR. HE IS PLAYING ON A HARMONICA OR MOUTH ORGAN AND DRIVES HIS MOTHER TO DESPERATION BY SWOOPING HER HEAD DOWN AT INTERVALS TO GET A TREMULO EFFECT ON THE MARMONICA. LALLY BRITT THE MOTHER IS A STRONG AND CAPABLE LOOKING WOMAN OF MIDDLE AGE. HER MANNER IS PATIENT AND HUMBLE. SHE IS DRESSED IN A FADED AND SHAPELESS OLD HOUSE DRESS HER LEGS ARE BARE AND SHE WEARS RAGGED FELT SLIPPERS.

 IT IS RAINING OUTDOORS AND THE ROOF IS LEAKING. SIX CONTAINERS, POTS, KETTLES, BASINS, ETC, HAVE BEEN PLACED ON THE FLOOR IN STRADDIC POSITIONS TO CATCH THE LEAKS. DAVE IS PLAYING A FEW CHORDS FROM THE SONG, "The Trouble I've Seen" AS THE LIGHTS COME UP.

STEVE

(HOLDS OUT HIS HAND, LOOKS AT CEILING.)

SHORE IS POURIN' IN HERE, BETTER MOVE THIS PAN OVER HERE, I GUESS.

* Quotation from Virgil. Aeneid Bk VII.122.1.197. (Conington trans.)

** Setting inspired by photograph captioned "Sharecropper's Kitchen" in magazine KEN. April 1938 issue. page 57

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RUTH

GO AHEAD. DO IT.

STEVE

(REACHES OUT HIS ARM AS FAR AS HE CAN. PAN ON FLOOR IS TWO INCHES AWAY FROM HIS GRASP. AFTER SEVERAL FUTILE TRIES TO REACH THE PAN WITHOUT GETTING UP, HE GIVES UP.)

IT'LL JUS' HAVE TO LEAK IN, I GUESS. CAN'T REACH THAT PAN NOWOH.

(RUTH GIVES HIM A PATIENT LOOK AS HE GOES BACK TO HIS MAGAZINE.)

DAVE

AIN'T IT TIME FOR CRAMP TO SHOW UP? MUST BE MIGHTY DAMP IN THAT SHACK OF HIS.

(STARTS TO PLAY "Lonesome Road", SWAYS OVER TO GIVE FULL JUSTICE TO A MINOR CHORD.)

LALLY

HOL' STILL, BOY. OR YOU'LL LOSE AN EYE.

(DAVE SWAYS THE OTHER WAY TO GET THE NEXT PHRASE.)

NOW YOU QUIT THAT PLAYIN', DAVE.

DAVE

(STOPS)

AW MAN, I'D DIDN'T WANT IT CUT NOHOW. AIN'T YOU 'BOUT FINISHED?

LALLY

PURTY NIGH. A SHIP OR TWO MORE----

DAVE

TWO MORE SHIPS, I'LL BE BALD-HEADED. I'M GETTIN' TO BE A MAN. THAT BOWL'S TOO SMALL NOW. SETS TOO HIGH UP ON MY HAID. IT DON'T SAVE ME ENOUGH HAIR TO GET THROUGH THE WINTER.

STEVE

HEY Lissen to this:

(READS)

You yellow-bellied rat! We got a way of handling rats like you. You'll never squeal on Dutch Malone again, you rat. Take that, you rat! Bang Bang Bang. Yes, it was the code of the underworld. Would Killer Sonponi escape the unwritten law of the underworld or would he meet the same fate as Knifer Goresky? Continued in our next issue.

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(Steve jumps up and starts rummaging in battered chest of drawers.)

What's the July 1936 number?

(examining paper pasted on wall.)

Here it is. I knew Mr. Powers gave me that one. What you have to go and use it for wallpaper for?

(He tries to read the sheet on the wall.)

Lally

You hadn't ought to be readin' such truck, Steve.

Steve

What else can I read? There ain't never been nothin' to read in this house since Gramp bought that second-hand copy of Chesterfield's letters to his son, once when he was bailed.

(Giving up the search and sitting down.)

And he used that up the winter the Sears Roebuck catalogue didn't come.

Lally

Oh all my young'uns, you worry me the most, boy.

(Pause)

How's dinner comin' Linnie Lee?

Linnie Lee

Done what there is of it. I'm waitin' and Paw and that man from Washington he's bringin' home.

Steve

(bitterly)

Another bastard comin' down here to take our pictures in our old clothes----

Ruth

(pointedly)

What old clothes?

Steve

And put it in one of those picture magazines with a sign under it sayin' "Waiting for nothing." * Nuts!

* Caption under photograph of Sharecropper in "Ken" Magazine, April 1938, p.62
LALLY

HUSH, BOY.

(BABY WHIMPERS. LINNIE LEE CROSSES "O ORANGE CRATE.")

LINNIE LEE

OH THE BABY! HE WANTS HIS SUGAR TEAT.

(BALL'S A PIECE OF WADED CLOTH INTO A CAN OF MOLASSES AND POFS IT INTO THE BABY'S MOUTH.)

AW, HE'S SO DARLIN'!

(CROSSES OVER THE ORANGE CRATE.)

TOMMY-TOMMY-TOMMY! OH I'LL BE SO GLAD WHEN I'M OLD ENOUGH TO GET MARRIED AND HAVE BABIES.

(CHASES BACK TO STOVE.)

RUTH

YOU OUGHT TO BE GLAD YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE 'EM, YET. ONE EVERY YEAR TO FURNISH "HANDS" FOR THE LANDLORD'S FIELDS. *

LALLY

THINGS IS THAT WAY, RUTH, AND THEY CAIN'T BE ANY OTHER WAY.

RUTH

THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW THAT PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO HAVE 'EM UNLESS THEY CAN PROVIDE FOR 'EM PROPER. IF IT WASN'T FOR ALL OF US YOUNG'UNS, MAYBE YOU AND PAY COULD HAVE GOT A FARM OF YOUR OWN.

(ORUMLY)

WELL, YOU 'SAINT KETCH ME MARRYIN' NO SHARECROPPER. IF I CAIN'T GET ME A MAN WITH SOME MONEY AND A HOME OF HIS OWN, 'WHY-'WHY-'WHY-'WHY-'WHY-I'M JUST A-GONNA LAY FALLOW TILL I DO.

LALLY

YOU'LL MARRY WHEN THE TIME COMES, RUTH. I HAD IDEAS LIKE YOURS ONCE.

RUTH

I DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE YOU, MAN.

(LALLY LOOKS STEADILY AT HER.)

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN SLAVIN' AWAY ALL YOUR LIFE FOR NOTHIN' A-TALL.

* "A landlord will often inquire of a prospective tenant, 'How much of a force have you got?' If the tenant has a lot of children, he will be chosen over a man with a smaller family, because the more children there are, the more "hands" to help make a crop for the landlord." Statement by Fred Howard, author of the play "SHARECROPPER", produced by University of North Carolina, 1938.

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LALLY

"WE GET ALONG." *

(ENTER GRAMP)

STEVE

HEY-O, ** GRAMP: MUST BE GETTIN' WET DOWN TO YOUR SHACK. IT
CAIN'T BE THAT YOU JUST GOT LONESOME FOR WE-UNS?

GRAMP:

IT'S A CRYIN' SHAME. A FORE OLE MAN LIKE ME!

(LOOKS AROUND TO SEE IF HE IS GETTING
ANY SYMPATHY.)

NoblEy GIVES ME NO MIND. RIVER COULD WASH ME AWAY AND YOU WOULDN'T
THINK TO LOOK FOR ME UNTIL COTTON CHOPPIN' TIME COME AROUND.

(HIY REACT'S AS A DROP OF WATER FALLS ON
HIS HEAD. LALLY HANDS HIM THE BOWL FROM
DAVES' HEAD. GRAMP SETS IT UNDER THE LEAK. )

I KNOW WHERE I'M NOT WANTED AND YOU WOULDN'T OF SEEN HIDE NOR
HAIR OF ME IF THE WIND HADN'T GONE AND BLOWED UP FROM THE WEST.

(HIY TURNS HIS HEAD TOWARDS THE STOVE AND
SHIFTS THE FOOD COOKING.)

DAVE

(AS LALLY SHOOS HIM OFF THE STOVE.)

NOW WHAT YOU BLAMIN' THE WEST WIND FOR?

GRAMP

THE RIVER WASHED AWAY ONE SIDE OF MY SHACK. IT'S FINE AND WEATHER-
PROOF WHEN IT RAINS: STRAIGHT DOWN OR FROM THE EAST. BUT WHEN SHE
BLOWS IN FROM THE WEST---THE OPEN SIDE, WHY THE GOD-DAMNED PLACE IS
WETTER'N TOMMY'S CRIB.

LALLY

I RECKON WE CAN GIVE YOU SOMETHIN' TO EAT, ANYHOW. SET OUT THE
PLATES, Linnie Lee.

(SHE SETS OUT SOME ILL-ASSORTED PLATES ON
THE TABLE AND SOME CRUDE UTENSILS.)

GRAMP

(PLEASED AND SPEAKING HYPOCRITICALLY.)

THE LORD GIVETH AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY.

* Caption under photograph in "You Have Seen Their Faces." Erskine Caldwell.
** Local salutation.
STEVE
STICK AROUND. MAYBE HE'LL SEND YOU SOME MORE BOARDS FROM SOME
OTHER FELLER'S SHACK COME NEXT FLOOD.

RUTH
(DREAMING IN.)
HERE'S YOUR SHIRT, STEVE.

STEVE
(Putting it on.)
MIGHT COME IN HANDY HAVIN' A SHIRT. THINK I CAN GET ME A JOB
NOW, MAYBE I GOT ONE ALREADY.

RUTH
(EAGERLY)
HONEST?

(ALL LISTEN EAGERLY.)

STEVE
YEH. TOM LEUBBEN SAID HE COULD GET ME ONE.

LALLY
IF HE TOLD YOU ABOUT IT, LEAVE IT BE, HEAR ME BOY?

STEVE
(Sullenly)
I ONLY SAID MAYBE.

LALLY
OF
YOU BEEN IN ENOUGH TROUBLE ALREADY ON ACCOUNT FO THAT TOM LEUBBEN.
NOW YOU STAY SHIT OF HIM.

RUTH
(ANXIOUS TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT.)

NOW WHAT ARE YOU A-DOIN' TO YOURSELF, GRAMP?

GRAMP
(HAS TAKEN THE NEEDLE AND THREAD THAT RUTH
SET ASIDE AND IS SEATED ON THE BED TRYING TO
SEW A RIP IN THE SHOULDER OF HIS COAT WITHOUT
REMOVING THE COAT. HE IS STRAINING TO REACH IT.)

JUST A-TRYIN' TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF SEEIN' I AIN'T GOT NO WOMEN
FOLKS TO DO FOR ME.

* Fictitious name.
(He strains harder to reach the rip. There is a tearing sound. He looks at other sleeve.)

GOD DAMN IT OTHER SLEEVE'S A-rippin' now.

RUTH

NEVER MIND. I'LL FIX IT FOR YOU GRAMP.

GRAMP

HELL WITH IT. IT WON'T BE COLD LONG. RAIN WILL BE A-stoppin' PRETTY SOON AN' THE SUN WILL SHINE AGAIN.

(DROPS COAT TO THE FLOOR AND KICKS IT ASIDE.)

DAVE

YOU GOT THE RIGHT IDEA, GRAMP. I BETCHA YOU AIN'T DONE A LICK O' WORK IN FORTY YEARS.

LALLY

DAVIE!

DAVE

(PROUDLY)

I'M A-GONNA BE JUST LIKE GRAMP WHEN I GROW UP. I'M GONNA GET ME A SHACK AND JUST SIT THERE AND MAYBE DO A LITTLE FISHIN' AND HUNTIN' AND NOT GIVE A DAMN FOR NOBODY, EH GRAMP?

(HE LAUGHS. GRAMP CACKLES.)

LALLY

I HEAR YOUR PAW A-COMIN'. YOU'RE RIGHT LUCKY HE DIDN'T HEAR YOU A-TALKIN' THAT WAY. HE'D MAM WHUP YOU PROPER. YOUR PAW'S A HARD-WORKIN' MAN AND HE DON'T HOLD WITH SUCH TALKIN'.

BRITT

(ENTERS WITH MR. EXPERT.)

THIS IS THE FELLER I BROUGHT BACK WITH ME FROM WASHINGTON. YOU DON'T NEED TO PUT ON SAME'S HE WAS COMPANY. HE WANTS TO SEE THINGS LIKE THEY ALWAYS ARE.

LALLY

I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'D PUT ON WITH.

BRITT

THIS IS MY HOME AND THIS IS MY FAMILY. THIS IS MY WIFE, LALLY.

MR. EXPERT

GLAD TO KNOW YOU.

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LALLY

BRITT

THIS IS MY ELDEST DAUGHTER, RUTH, AND THE LITTLE ONE IS LINNIE LEE. MY BOYS, STEVE AND DAVE AND THE YOUNGEST IS TOMMY.

(BRITT GRORES TO LOOK INTO CRIBE. EACH EMERGER ACKNOWLEDGES THE INTRODUCTION IN CHARACTER.)

JOHN GET HERE YET?

LALLY

HE'LL BE BY. DISH UP, LINNIE LEE.

(LINNIE LEE LAUGHS OUT FOOD.)

BRITT

YOU'VE SEEN THE OUTSIDE OF THE PLACE, MR. EXPERT AND NOW YOU SEE THE INSIDE. SIT DOWN.

(AS MR. EXPERT IS ABOUT TO SIT.)

NOT THERE. THAT'S THE WORST LEAK IN THE PLACE.

(MR. EXPERT LOOKS AT CEILING AND CHANGES HIS SEAT.)

MR. EXPERT

YOU SHOULD GET THAT ROOF FIXED, MR. BRITT. IT'S VERE BAD FOR THE YOUNGSTERS, ESPECIALLY THE BABY.

BRITT

SURE BE GLAD TO FIX IT IF ANYONE WOULD BUY THE SHINGLES FOR IT.

I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY TO BUY 'EM.

MR. EXPERT

BUT COULDN'T YOU NAIL SOMETHING OVER THE HOLES?

BRITT

MIGHT BE ABLE TO SCRAPE UP ENOUGH GALVANIZED TIN TO NAIL OVER 'EM.

MR. EXPERT

WHY DON'T YOU?

BRITT

THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN JUST DOIN' IT. SUPPOSIN' I DON'T MAKE OUT HERE THIS YEAR AND MR. POWERS GETS A NEW TENANT COME NEXT
MR. EXPERT
THEN HE'D REPAY YOU FOR THE WORK AND THE MATERIALS.

BRITT
NOT A CHANCE. HE CAN ALWAYS GET SOMEONE ELSE GLAD TO HAVE
THE PLACE WITHOUT ANY FIXIN' UP. THAT'S THE WAY IT IS. ALL
IMPROVEMENTS BELONG TO THE LANDLORD WHEN THE TENANT LEAVES THE PLACE.

MR. EXPERT
YOU SAY THIS HOUSE HAS ONLY TWO ROOMS?

BRITT
THE OTHER ROOM'S IN THERE. MAN AND ME AND THE BABY AND THE GALS
SLEEP IN THERE. STEVE, DAVE AND JOHN HAVE THIS WHOLE BED TO THEM-
SELVES OUT HERE.

LALLY
WE COULD DO WITH MORE COVER, TOO. NIGHTS GET MIGHTY COLD DOWN
HERE SOMETIMES. COURSE, MRS. POWERS' BEEN POW'FUL GOOD TO LET
US HAVE THE USE OF THESE. BUT WE NEED MORE.

MR. EXPERT
HAS YOUR LANDLORD ACTUALLY REFUSED TO BUILD YOU ANOTHER ROOM?

CRAMP
HE WOULDN'T DARE ASK HIM. LANDLORD WOULD THINK HE WAS GETTIN'
TOO UP'PITY AND MAKE HIM LEAVE.

BRITT...

YES, IT WOULD BE CHEAPER FOR HIM TO PUT US OFF THE PLACE AND GET
ANOTHER TENANT WHO WASN'T SO PARTICULAR.

MR. EXPERT
BUT WOULDN'T THE OTHER TENANT MOVE OFF TOO, WHEN THINGS GOT TOO BAD?

STEVE
SO WHAT! PLENTY MORE SHARECROPPERS WAITIN' TO MOVE IN. PLACE
DON'T SUIT THE WHITE TENANTS, THERE'S ALWAYS SOME NIGGER GLAD TO
MOVE IN. LANDLORD WOULD SOONER TAKE A NIGGER TENANT ANYWAYS. THEY
WORK AS HARD AND DON'T ASK FOR AS MUCH AS WHITE FOLKS DO. **

LALLY
TALKIN' WOULDN'T FIX THE ROOF NOR CHANGE THE LANDLORD. LET'S EAT.

(SLAPS DAVE AWAY FROM THE TABLE.)

* Statement from "How The Other Half is Housed." by Rupert Vance p.*

**
LALLY SURE DOES FAVOR JOHN A LOT.

MR. EXPERT

I DON'T BLAME HER. JOHN IS A FINE YOUNG MAN, A SON TO BE
PROUD OF.

(LALLY BEAMS. Linnie lee HAS SERVED
THE FOOD. ALL SIT. THE BABY WHIMPERS.)

LALLY

HE'S A-HUNGRY AGAIN. GIVE HIM THAT PIECE OF FAT BACK, Linnie
LEE THAT I SAVED OVER FOR HIM. *

(Linnie lee GIVES BABY A SLAB OF SOLID FAT.
MR. EXPERT IS SHOCKED.)

MR. EXPERT

SURELY-------EXCUSE ME-------BUT YOU DON'T LET THAT LITTLE BABY
EAT THAT SALTED FAT?

LALLY

AIN'T THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD FOR HIM BUT IT'S BETTER' NOthin'.
WHERE WOULD WE GET MILK AND ORANGES FOR HIM? COMMISSARY DON'T SELL
THOSE THINGS ON CREDIT.

BRITT

(WITH PRIDE)

THERE'S WORSE WAYS OF FEEDIN' YOUNG'UNS.

GRAMP'S

(EATING WITH RELISH.)

YEH. I KNOW A FELLER LIVIN' OVER ALONG THE SEABOARD-GUMBERRY
HIGHWAY ALWAYS CHANS UP THE FOOD IN HIS OWN MOUTH BEFORE HE
POPS IT IN THE BABY'S MOUTH.**

(PAUSE. MR. EXPERT SHUDDERS.)

TAIN'T SUCH A GOOD SYSTEM, THOUGH. ALL THE YOUNGUNS DIE OFF FROM
THE SAME SICKNESS LUNG SICKNESS THIS FELLER HAS. **

MR. EXPERT

(PUSHING HIS PLATE ASIDE.)

Common local practice.

* Incident taken from produced one-act play entitled "OPEN HOUSE"
  by Bernice Kelly Harris, native of Seaboard. Incident
  in play is based on actual case.
I'M NOT VERY HUNGRY.

GRAMP

(CACKLING)

DON'T BLAME YOU. TAKES TIME TO GET USED TO MAKIN' A MEAL OFF CORN BREAD AND GRITS. I LIKE IT FINE BUT I'M GETTIN' A LITTLE TIRED OF IT AFTER LIVIN' ON IT FOR NIGH ONTO SIXTY YEARS.

(HOLDING OUT HIS PLATE.)

GOT A MITE MORE GRITS, LALLY?

(SHE GIVES HIM ANOTHER HELPFUL.)

BRITT

IT REALLY AIN'T SO BAD, MR. EXPERT. SOMETIMES WE HAVE SOME FAT BACK ALONG WITH IT. WE GET A MESS OF BLACK-EYED PEAS, TOO. *

LALLY

BUT FRESH MILK AND FRESH VEGETABLES WOULD SURE BE FINE FOR THE YOUNG'UNS.

DAVE

SURE MUST BE FINE TO HAVE A GARDEN. THINGS TO EAT A-GROWIN' IN IT.

MR. EXPERT

YOU DON'T HAVE A GARDEN? ALL THIS LAND AROUND? I THOUGHT ALL FARMERS HAD A LITTLE GARDEN PLOT.

BRITT

HOT TENANT FARMERS. LANDLORD AIN'T INTERESTED IN A GARDEN. WANTS COTTON PLANTED UP TO THE FRONT DOORS, TEPS. A VEGETABLE GARDEN DON'T BRING HIM IN NO MONEY AND THAT'S SO MUCH LESS FOOD HE CAN SELL AT HIS STORE. THE MORE DEBT YOU GO INTO TO HIM, THE LESS CASH HE HAS TO GIVE YOU SETTLIN' UP TIME. HE DON'T WANT YOU TO USE HIS MULE TO PLOW UP GROUND FOR YOUR OWN USE, AND WHERE ARE YOU GOIN' TO GET THE MONEY FOR SEED AND FERTILIZER? LANDLORD WON'T FURNISH IT TO YOU. **

MR. EXPERT

I WAS REARED IN A CITY. I ALWAYS ASSOCIATED FARMS WITH FRESH VEGETABLES, COWS, FRUIT, GOOD COOKING.

STEVE

(BITTERLY)

WISHED I KNEW WHERE THOSE FARMS WERE.

BRITT

* Often called cow-peas and the most common garden vegetable in the south
** Statements used from WPA "Landlord and Tenant" p.102.
WE CANT BUY SEEDS AND THINGS OURSELVES. I BEEN FIGURING THE LAST FEW YEARS WHAT WENT OUT AND WHAT COME IN. BY ALL OF US WORKIN' TOGETHER, EVEN THE LITTLE ONES, WE MAKE ABOUT THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS A YEAR.

** MR. EXPERT **

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS A MONTH FOR THIS LARGE FAMILY!

CRAMP

COURSE THAT'S IN A GOOD YEAR. MOST FOLKS HEARABOUTS LIVE ON $13 dollars a MONTH THAT THE LANDLORD ADVANCES THEM AGAINST COTTON SELLIN' TIME. **

MR. EXPERT

My GOD.

BRITT

LAST PLACE WE LIVED AT, THE LANDLORD LET US HAVE A LITTLE GARDEN. MARI AND THE GIRLS ATTENDED TO IT. WE GREW CORN AND GAVE UP HALF TO PAY FOR GRINDIN' THE HALF WE USED FOR MEAL. WE GREW SOME CANE AND THAT WAS GROUND ON SHARES FOR SYRUP. WE HAD SWEET POTATOES AND COW *** PEAS ONE YEAR. LANDLORD GOT HALF OF THAT, BUT HE COULDN'T USE IT AND COULDN'T SELL IT FOR NO PRICE HARDLY SO NEXT YEAR HE SAID WE COULDN'T HAVE NO GARDEN.

RUTH

IT WAS SURE NICE WHILE IT LASTED, THOUGH.

LALLY

GRITS, CORNBREAD, CANE SYRUP, YAMS AND FIELD PEAS. TAIN'T GOOD FOR YOUNG'UNS TO EAT ALL THAT STUFF ALL THE TIME----EVEN IF WE DID HAVE IT ALL THE TIME.

(JOHN ENTERS.)

YOUR DINNER'S WAITIN', BOY.

JOHN

(SITS DOWN. SEEMS DISTRAUGHT.)

DID YOU GET A CHANCE TO LOOK OVER THE PLACE, MR. EXPERT?

MR. EXPERT

YES, I DID, JOHN.

JOHN

SURE IS LOTS OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. LOTS OF THE YOUNGER PEOPLE ARE GETTIN' MIGHTY DISCOURAGED ABOUT FARMIN'. MORE AND MORE MOVE INTO THE CITIES EACH YEAR TO WORK IN THE MILLS OR GO ON RELIEF.

* BASED ON STATEMENT IN BOOK, Farmers Without Land. Rupert Vance. ** Figures from WPA "Landlord and Tenant" P. 101. *** Ibid, p. 102

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Mr. Expert

John are you thinking of going to the city?

Britt

That gal he's got ain't got no hankerin' for farm life.

John

Do you blame her?

Lally

Son!

Steve

Ain't nobody gonna keep me here when I get a chance to go.

Mr. Expert

Do you think you could better your condition, John, in the mills?

John

I don't know. I have noticed, though, that most of the folks that go to the city come back to farmin'. Farmin' ain't somethin' you can put out of your mind so easy.

(He looks at his hands.)

I never get tired of workin' in the fields and watchin' things grow. That is real work for a man, plantin', plowin' and reapin'. You're under the sun all day----not cooped up in some factory. You get to understand about things----about the weather----and why things grow. It's hard work but it satisfies somethin' in a man. When you plant a little seed and tend it and later on it grows into somethin' big and finds why it makes you feel like God----a little.

Lally

If Helen was the right kind of girl she'd be glad to be where you want to be. She'd be glad to have a house like this to live in.

John

(Gently)

No man. Nobody ought to be glad to have a house like this to live in.

Gramp

It was right purty when it was new.

Britt

It cost about $192, $400, when it was new.

Steve

* "How The Other Half is Housed". Rupert Vance.

WPA "Landlord and Tenant" p. 94
MR. EXPERT

SURELY THE LANDLORD COULD AFFORD MORE THAN THAT.

BRITT

I HARDLY THINK SO. HIS OWN HOUSE AIN'T WORTH MORE THAN EIGHT OR NINE HUNDRED. COURSE IT'S...NEVER. IT AIN'T PAINTED, THOUGH. *

JOHN

ALL WE HAVE ARE THE FOUR WALLS AND CEILING AND DOORS AND WINDOWS.

LALLY

YES, THERES A FON'TFUL LOT OF THINGS MISSIN'. IF WE ONLY HAD SOME SCREENS TO THE WINDOWS, I WOULDN'T ASK FOR ANYTHIN' ELSE. THE FLIES ARE SOMETHIN' TERIBLE AND THE MOSQUITOES LIKE TO EAT THE KIDS UP IN SUMMER. **

MR. EXPERT

YOU MEAN SCREENS ARE TOO MUCH TO EXPECT FROM YOUR LANDLORD?

LALLY

MR. POWERS AIN'T GOT BUT CHEESECLOTH NETTIN' ON HIS OWN WINDOWS FOR SCREENS. IF ANY WAS TO BE GOT, HE'D GET 'EM FOR HIMSELF.

MR. EXPERT

NATURALLY THEN, YOU HAVEN'T A BATHROOM IN THE HOUSE? ***

CHORUS

OH NO!

MR. EXPERT

I SUPPOSE AN OUTDOOR TOILET IS INCONVENIENT ON RAINY DAYS, BUT----

LALLY

(IN ASTONISHMENT)

OUTDOOR ONEW

BRITT

WE AIN'T EVEN GOT AN OUTDOOR TOILET.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT, THEN?

CHORUS

THEY GOT THE WHOLE OUTDOORS.

* "How The Other Half Is Housed" Rupert Vance
** WPA "Landlord and Tenant" p. 98
*** WPA, "Landlord and Tenant" p. 98
Mr. Expert

How do you manage to clothe yourself?

Ruth

We don't very well. We all need clothes all the time.

Lally

Ruth is always a-mendin' and a-fixin' what we do have. She likes things nice. She's always a-makin' shirts for the boys out of our cast-off dresses.

Mr. Expert

But shoes-----

Britt

We buy shoes and overalls at settlin' up time, once a year.*

John

If there is any money left over. **

Mr. Expert

The landlord sells you these?

Britt

Yes, but only if we made a profit on the crop. Sometimes, we'll advance you money for next year's clothes when you ain't made enough. But that way a man gets in debt so deep that by and by he's workin' to pay back money borrowed five years ago.

Mr. Expert

Are you able to get all the clothes you need that way?

Britt

No. Just overalls and heavy cheap shoes and cotton good for the gals to make into dresses. We do without socks, underwear and hats.---

Gramp's

Those things ain't strictly necessary. Never wore a pair of socks in my life. Ain't never had a corn on my foot.

John

I don't mind. A farmer don't need no more than a shirt, a pair of overalls and a pair of shoes. But the kids don't get to school much. We can't afford shoes for them anytime. The gals are at the age now when a purty dress would make them mighty happy and man don't get to her church no more because she ain't got nothin' to wear. ****

--- WFA "Landlord and Tenant" p. 101
--- Ibid. p. 101
--- Ibid. p. 101
--- Ibid. p. 101

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MR. EXPERT

(TO DAVE.)

SON, YOU'VE BEEN SITTING HERE LISTENING. YOU LOOK LIKE A SMART YOUNGSTER. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY ABOUT THE WAY YOU LIVE?

DAVE

AW PAW AND JOHN WORRY TOO MUCH, MR. EXPERT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT. ALL A FELLER NEEDS IS RIGHT HERE. GRANNY AND I KNOW THAT.

MR. EXPERT

BUT ISN'T THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT? ANYTHING AT ALL?

DAVE

I SURE WOULDN'T LIKE TO HAVE A DIME.

MR. EXPERT

(HANDING HIM A DIME.)

ALL RIGHT, I'LL GIVE YOU ONE IF YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT IT FOR.

DAVE

I WANT TO BUY ME A COCONUT. SUN'S COMIN' OUT. IT'S GONNA BE A HOT AFTERNOON. "I'LL GET ME A COCONUT, SUCK IT AND GO TO SLEEP WITH THE SUN ON MY BELLYFUL." *

(EXITS, LAUGHING, WITH DIME.)

JOHN

DON'T PAY HIM NO MIND, MR. EXPERT. HE'S TOO FRESH. I THINK HE'LL COME OUT ALL RIGHT THOUGH. I SURE HOPE SO.

LALLY

RUN AFTER HIM, RUTH AND GET THAT DIME BACK.

(EXITS RUTH)

MR. EXPERT

TELL ME JOHN. YOU'RE TYPICAL, I GUESS, OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF SHARECROPPERS; DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STICK TO FARMING ON SHARES?

JOHN

I WANT TO FARM. I SURE ENOUGH DO. BUT I DON'T WANT TO FARM ON SHARES. I WANT A LITTLE PLACE OF MY OWN. I BEEN GOIN' STEADY WITH A GIRL.

(BITTERTLY)

I SUPPOSE PAW TOLD YOU ALL ABOUT HER. HE DON'T LIKE HER. WELL, SHE WON'T MARRY ME IF I'M A SHARECROPPER, I DON'T BLAME HER

* Statement made by Russell Huffman of Hickory, North Carolina in spring, 1924. Russell was aged 13 at the time.

On a hot afternoon, "What y'all want to go walkin' for? I'm goin' to cut me a pine bough and go to sleep. If I had a dime, I'd get me a cocoanut, suck it, and go to sleep with the sun on my bellyful."
MUCH. A FELLER WITH A JOB IN THE MILL IS AFTER HER. SHE'LL TAKE HIM JUST TO GET AWAY FROM THE FAIR. SHE'D MARRY ME IF I'D GO TO THE CITY AND GET A JOB. SHE LIKES ME BUT SHE'S AFRAID TO BE A SHARECROPPER'S WIFE. SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I'D RATHER GIVE UP FARMIN' THAN LOSE HER. BUT THEN AGAIN—FARMIN' IS SOMETHING THAT IS ME. I WOULDN'T BE ANY GOOD LIVIN' ANY OTHER WAY.

(PASSIONATELY)

IT SEEMS RIGHT THAT A MAN WORK WITH THE SOIL. WHY DO THEY MAKE IT SO HARD FOR A FARM SHARECROPPER TO LIVE, THEN? I DON'T WANT MUCH. JUST A PLACE TO LIVE IN AND ENOUGH TO EAT AND TO DO THE KIND OF WORK I'M MEANT TO DO. I WANT TO LIVE AND WORK AND MARRY THE GIRL I LOVE AND BRING UP CHILDREN. THAT SHOULDN'T BE SO MUCH TO WANT. I'M WILLIN' TO WORK NIGHT AND DAY. SOMETIMES I HAVE A LOT OF HOPE AND THINK IF I WORK HARD, I'LL GET SOMEBODY SHARECROPPIN' THEN I THINK, PAM STARTED OUT LIKE ME ONCE WITH THE SAME IDEAS. MAN WAS LIKE HELEN ONCE. THEN I LOOK AT THEM AND SEE WHAT THE SHARECROPPIN' SYSTEM DID TO THEM AND—I DON'T KNOW, MR. EXPERT. I DON'T KNOW.

BLACKOUT.
SCENE TWO (D)

TITLE: LIFE AMONG THE TENANT FARMERS

(D) BLACKBOARD INTERLUDE.

(LIGHTS COME UP ON BLACKBOARD.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

HELLO FOLKS. I DIDN'T GIVE YOU ANY FIGURES ON THAT SCENE. I THOUGHT I'D LET YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF HOW THINGS WERE. BUT WE LIKE TO BE VERY TECHNICAL AROUND HERE AND WE HAVE ALL OUR WORK DOCUMENTED. SO HERE ARE THE FIGURES. YOU CAN GO OUT FOR A SMOKE IF YOU LIKE, BUT IT WOULD BE KIND OF NICE IF YOU STUCK AROUND. THAT WAS A TYPICAL SHARECROPPERS' HOME YOU JUST SAW. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?

HECKLER

(FROM AUDIENCE.)

IF THINGS ARE AS BAD AS THAT, WHY DON'T THEY MOVE AWAY?

MR. BLACKBOARD

OH BUT THEY DO! QUOTE:

(FOLLOWING IS PROJECTED ON BLACKBOARD: "From the book, "FARMERS WITHOUT LAND" by William Vance.")

IN THE SPRING OF 1935, IT WAS FOUND THAT 34% OF THE NATION'S TENANT FAMILIES HAD OCCUPIED THEIR PRESENT FARMS FOR ONLY ONE YEAR. UNQUOTE. YOU SEE THEY DO MOVE BUT THE NEW PLACES AREN'T ANY BETTER.

CITIZEN

(FROM AUDIENCE)

HAVEN'T YOU EXAGGERATED THE LACK OF SANITARY FACILITIES? THIS IS 1930, YOU KNOW. SUCH THINGS DO NOT EXIST IN OUR COUNTRY.

MR. BLACKBOARD

QUOTE:

(PROJECTION ON BLACKBOARD: "Quotation is from the WFA Survey entitled 'Landlord and Tenant' page 98.")

ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF TENANT FARMER HOMES HAVE ADEQUATE SANITARY FACILITIES.

YIDDISH WOMAN

(FROM AUDIENCE)

BY GOD I WOULD USE THE OWNER'S FACILITY THEN.
MR. BLACKBOARD

ONLY TEN PERCENT OF THE OWNERS HAVE ADEQUATE SANITARY FACILITIES.

SENTIMENTAL LADY

(FROM AUDIENCE)

BUT EVEN IF THEY DON'T HAVE SCREENS------

MR. BLACKBOARD

ONLY THIRTY PERCENT OF TENANTS HOUSES ARE SCREENED.

SENTIMENTAL LADY

I SAID EVEN IF THEY DON'T HAVE SCREENS, THINK OF THE LOVELY SOUTHERN ACCENTS THEY HAVE. AND THE SMELL OF HONEYSUCKLE ON MOONLIGHT NIGHTS DOWN SOUTH IS POSITIVELY DIVINE.

MR. BLACKBOARD

(QUICKLY)

THAT'S ALL FOLKS. I'M PRETTY DRY. I'M GOING OUT FOR A SHORT BEER.

BLACKOUT.
SCENE THREE (A)

TITLES: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOME.
(A) OF MEN, MACHINES AND BANANAS

(LIGHTS PICK UP MR. EXPERT, BRITT AND JOHN STANDING AT 11 O'CLOCK. THE PROJECTION IS A DEPLETED FIELD.)

BRITT

AS YOU CAN SEE, SOIL'S SO WORN OUT THAT NOTHIN' WILL GROW UNLESS PLENTY OF FERTILIZER IS MIXED WITH IT. THIS FIELD HERE IS PRETTY BAD BUT AT THAT, IT'S BETTERN THE REST.

MR. EXPERT

CROP ROTATION MIGHT HELP. WHY DON'T YOU PLANT SOMETHING BESIDES COTTON?

JOHN

COTTON'S THE ONLY CROP WE RAISE. WE'VE ALWAYS RAISED IT AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE ALWAYS WILL. EVEN IF THE PRICE IS ALL SHOT TO HELL, IT'S STILL THE BEST CASH CROP!

MR. EXPERT

THEN YOU DEPEND ENTIRELY ON THE PRODUCTION OF COTTON?

BRITT

WHY YES.

MR. BLACKBOARD

YES, MOST FARMERS IN THE COTTON STATES DEPEND ENTIRELY ON COTTON.
What you totin' Oscar?

Sack full of bananas.

Like bananas?

Always like bananas. Today I settles with Mr. Powers and after all the white folk's figurein', I had two dollars left from last year's Wurk. That wouldn't keep me fo' nex' year so I got my old woman some snuff and spent all the rest on bananas. Whole dollar an' a half wuth plus fi' cents sales tax. **

What's doin' in town Oscar?

Big doin's. Landlord's settlin' up this week. Some folks is got cash money to spend and there's two men there makin' a cotton pickin' machine. Boy when 'at gets done I won't have to break my ole back no mo'.

I heard of that machine. If they can do it, it will be another curse. Couple million sharecroppin' families will be thrown out of work.

Maybe they can git on the relief.

Let's get into town. Guess you'd like to interview those inventors, eh, Mr. Expert?

I surely would.

Let's take the River Road. It's pleasanter.

* From interview with Oscar Cooper, Negro.

** Sales tax is three percent in N. C. and applies to foodstuffs. Few states have sales tax on food.
LIGIITS UP ON 111. THE PROJECTION IS A RIVER BANK. THREE NEGROES RECLINING ON THE BANK, WATCHING THE RIVER GO BY. ONE OF THEM IS PLAYING A BANJO AND CROOKING, "I'M GOIN' TO LOUISIANA."

1ST NEGRO

OL RIVER DON' MOVE SO FAST DON' SHE.

2ND NEGRO

SHE LIKE ME. SHE GOT BRAINS. ONLY SHE AIN'T GOT NO HAT TO KEEP OL' SUN OUT'N HER EYES.

3RD NEGRO

OL' MISSISSIPPI RIVER JUS' A-MOVIN' ON BY.

1ST NEGRO

WONDER HOW THEY COMIN' WITH OL' LEVEE BUILDIN'

3RD NEGRO

YEH.

2ND NEGRO

GO NUTHIN' TO DO WITH US. THEM FOLKS WUKIN' MIGHTY HARD, THOUGH.

3RD NEGRO

LIFE GETTIN' KINDA NO GOOD LATELY.

1ST NEGRO

"ISH I HAD SOME DRINKINS. GOV'MINT OUGHTA FURNISH POOR FOLKS WITH DRINKINS."

3RD NEGRO

GOV'MINT SAY IT AIN'T FOOD.

1ST NEGRO

"ISH I HAD SOME DRINKINS. GOV'MINT OUGHTA FURNISH POOR FOLKS WITH DRINKINS."

2ND NEGRO

GOV'MINT SAY IT AIN'T FOOD.

3RD NEGRO

DINNER, SUPPER, BREKFUS' FOR ME. SOME FOLKS IS STINGY, SPECILLY GOV'MINT.

2ND NEGRO

I KNOW WHERE AT'S A STILL. AIN' NOBODY WATCHIN' IT COME NIGHT TIME.

1ST NEGRO

WHERE AT?

2ND NEGRO

COME DARK, I SHOW YOU.

* Scene suggested by pictures captioned "Sittin' in the sun watching the Mississippi go by in Brekine Caldwell's book "You Have Seen Their Faces."
(ENTER MR. EXPERT, BRITT AND OSCAR, AND JOHN.)

Mr. Expert

How's fishing?

1st Negro

Don' know.

2nd Negro

We ain't fishin'.

3rd Negro

Just waitin'.

Mr. Expert

What for?

3rd Negro

Suppah time.

(Negroes laugh.)

Mr. Expert

Construction camp up the river looking for men. Want a job?

1st Negro

What fo'?

Mr. Expert

To get something to eat.

1st Negro

Come winter, I'm goin' to the jail. There I eats fine. Doggone food so good in jail, I can't stay out. They says a common nuisance gets ninety days in jail. Come purs' col' spell, I be common nuisance an' eat my head off fo' ninety days in the jail house. **

Mr. Expert

Don't you boys want to work?

2nd Negro

Nossuh i' we gets along fine. Ain't married and eatin' regular.

Blackout

* Based on news item in Durham Morning Herald, January 13, 1938. 

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SCENE THREE (B)

TITLES: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOLE.

(B) THE COTTON Picker MACHINE

(SETTING ON PLATFORM CONSISTS OF
ONE OR TWO FLATS WITH BLUE PRINTS
TACKED ON THEM. LARGE DRAWING OF
MACHINE ON WALL, LABELLED "RUFT BROTHERS
COTTON PICKER. PROF. W. E. AYERS *, AND
MR. RUST** ARE TALKING AT A DESK. JOHN,
BRITT, MR. EXPERT ARE STANDING OFF TO ONE
SIDE. OSCAR COOPER IS BEHIND THEM STILL
MUNCHING HIS BANANAS.)

PROF. AYERS

YOU SEEM TO HAVE IT AT LAST, MR. RUST. THAT TEST THIS AFTERNOON
CONVINCED ME THAT THIS MACHINE IS THE FIRST PRACTICAL COTTON PICKER
THAT ACTUALLY WORKS. ***

(FIGURING ON PAPER)

MY ANALYSIS OF THE TEST SHOWS THAT THE PICKER GATHERED 80 % OF
THE YIELD OF THE COTTON PLANTS. ****

JOHN

THE COTTON HAD A LOT OF LEAVES IN IT, THOUGH. ****

BRITT

NOT SO MANY.

MR. BLACKBOARD

"IT CONTAINED ENOUGH LEAVES NOT REMOVABLE BY GINNING TO REDUCE
ITS GRADE TO TWO CENTS A POUND." ****

OSCAR

Det

DAM (AND MACHINE WANTED LOOKED CLEAN ENOUGH TO ME.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT ARE THE ACTUAL FIGURES ON THE TEST, PROFESSOR AYERS?

PROF. AYERS

THE MACHINE GATHERED A BALE IN 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES. THAT WOULD HAVE

* Prof. W. E. AYERS, Delta Experiment Station Chief.
*** Statement in Literary Digest, Sept. 6, 1935.
**** Newsweek, Sept. 5th, 1936.
TAKEN TEN HAND PICKERS A FULL DAY TO PICK.

MR. EXPERT

OSHI

MR. RUST

OF COURSE THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF OTHER COTTON PICKING MACHINES BEFORE WE PATENTED OURS. JUST ABOUT FOURTEEN HUNDRED OF THEM HAD BEEN PATENTED BEFORE. TO TELL THE TRUTH.

MR. EXPERT

BUT THEY NEVER WORKED.

PROF. AYERS

THIS ONE DOES. COTTON PICKING HASN'T CHANGED ITS METHODS IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS. AND WHY? BECAUSE NO ONE COULD THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO DO IT EXCEPT BY HAND.

MR. EXPERT

YOU SHOWED US A VERY EXCITING TEST. THAT MACHINE WENT THROUGH THAT FIELD OF COTTON LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING. ** IT NOT ONLY COTTON BUT A BALE OF COTTON BUT A NEWS REEL CAMERA. NIGHTLY NEAR GOT THE CAMERAMAN TOO. ***

MR. RUST

I'M SORRY MY BROTHER JOHN WHO INVENTED THE MACHINE WAS NOT AT HAND TODAY TO SHARE THE ACOCLAIM. ****

MR. BLACKBOARD

(PROJECTION SHOWS STYLIZED RUSSIAN COTTON FIELD WITH RUSSIAN WORKERS WATCHING 2 MACHINES. PHOTO IS TAKEN AT MODERNISTIC ANGLE.)

BROTHER JOHN IS DOING ALL RIGHT. "HUNDRED MILES AWAY UNDER AN ANGRY RUSSIAN-TURKISH SUN, BROTHER JOHN WATCHED TWO OF HIS PICKERS WHIRL DOWN A COLLECTIVIZED COTTON FIELD. MODESTLY WE GRINNED.

(PROJECTION CHANGES TO CLOSEUP OF TWO HEAVY HANDS, ONE A WORKER'S CHARRED HAND, THE OTHER A HEAVY BUT SMOOTH HAND, CLASPED.)

AS SOVIET AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS, EYES WET WITH SLAVIC EMOTION, SHOOK HIS HEAVY WORKER'S HAND. RUSSIA'S COTTON FARMS LACKED HAND LABOR, NEEDED MACHINES. THEY BOUGHT TWO MACHINES OUTRIGHT."*****

* "Newsweek" Sept. 5th, 1936
** Actual test in Stonewall, Mississippi. Mack Rust operated the machine. Factual material and statements from "Newsweek" Sept. 5th, 1936.
*** Actual occurrence. Reported by "Newsweek" Sept. 5th, 1936.
**** Statement by Mack Rust taken from "Literary Digest" Sept. 5th, 1936.
***** Quotation taken verbatim from "Literary Digest" Sept. 5th, 1936.

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(PROJECTION FADES OUT.)

MR. EXPERT

HOW DOES IT WORK?

MR. RUST

IT WORKS ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT COTTON STICKS TO MOIST METAL. MOST MECHANICAL PICKERS FAIL BECAUSE THEY SHIP THE GREEN COTTON ALONG WITH THE Ripe COTTON FIBER AND SEVERELY INJURE THE PLANT. ON ONE SIDE OF THE MACHINE THERE'S A TUNNEL-LIKE OPENING INTO WHICH ARE PROJECTED A SERIES OF SMALL, SLOWLY-TURNING SPIINDLES. THE BOGS PASSING FIRST THROUGH A MOISTENING DEVICE, THEN RUNNING THROUGH THE COTTON BOLLS LIKE A COMB. THE MATURED COTTON WINDS ITSELF AROUND THE SPIINDLES, THEN GETS SUCKED INTO THE HOPPER. *

MR. EXPERT

IT LOOKS LIKE THE REAL GOODS, MR. RUST.

JOHN

THINK OF THE MILLIONS OF SHARECROPPERS, POOR ENOUGH NOW, WHO WILL BE EVEN WORSE-OFF WHEN THEIR WORK IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM.

MR. RUST

MY BROTHER JOHN, AND I HAVE TURNED DOWN OFFERS FROM IMPLEMENT MANUFACTURERS WHICH WOULD HAVE HASTENED LARGE SCALE PRODUCTIONS, BECAUSE WE WILL NOT RENT OUR PICKER BEFORE A PLAN FOR REHABILITATING DISPLACED WORKERS IS WORKED OUT. **

MR. BLACKBOARD

WELL SAID, MACK. FOLKS, "THE RUST BROTHERS: PROFESSED SOCIALISTS APPEALED TO THE GOVERNMENT TO WORK OUT A PROGRAM. FOR A TIME, THEY CHERISHED A PLAN FOR LEASING THEIR MACHINES ONLY TO GROWERS WHO GRANTED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO FARM HANDS AND WHO DROOK CHILD LABOR. CLOSEST TO THEIR HEARTS NOW, HOWEVER, ARE PLANS TO ENDON A FOUNDATION WITH PROFITS OF THE COTTON PICKER. THIS FOUNDATION WOULD ASSIST JOBLESS SHARECROPPERS TO UNITE IN CO-OPERATIVE COTTON FARMING GROUPS. AS BOYS, JOHN AND MACK RUST GOT DOWN ON THEIR KNEES IN STEPHENS COUNTY, TEXAS, AND PICKED COTTON UNTIL THEY THOUGHT THEIR BACKS WOULD BREAK. THEY VOWED SOMEWAY TO BUILD A MACHINE TO END THIS SORT OF TOIL."***

MR. RUST

WE WANT TO DO SOME GOOD WITH THIS MACHINE. WE WON'T DO ANY HARM TO

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* Description taken from "Literary Digest" Sept. 5th, 1936
** Information obtained from "Literary Digest" Sept. 5th, 1936
*** Actual quotation from article in "Literary Digest" Sept. 5th, 1936
TO ANY MAN WITH IT.

(A GIRL COMES OUT FROM RIGHT AND ANOTHER FROM LEFT. THEY CARRY HUGE CARDS ON WHICH IS PRINTED THE WORD "APPLAUSE". THESE CARDS ARE HELD UP FOR THE AUDIENCE TO SEE. AUDIENCE APPLAUDS. BLACKOUT ON SCENE.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

FROM TESTS ON THIS MACHINE IT HAS ASCERTAINED THAT IT COULD DO THESE THINGS: FIRST PICK AN ACRE OF COTTON IN AN HOUR. IN SEVEN AND ONE HALF HOURS IT COULD STRIP AS MUCH COTTON AS A NEGRO FIELD HAND COULD PICK IN AN ENTIRE ELEVEN WEEK SEASON. SECOND: UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS A TWO ROW MACHINE COULD PICK A HALF BALE FROM TWO ACRES IN AN HOUR AT A COST OF ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS. SOME PEOPLE WHO VERY OUTSPokenLY AGAINST IT.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT?

MR. BLACKBOARD

A CERTAIN COUNTRY EDITOR.

(FLASH TO DESK OF A COUNTRY PAPER EDITOR. HE IS SPEAKING TO MR. EXPERT WHO IS TAKING DOWN HIS STATEMENTS IN A NOTEBOOK.)

EVENTUALLY THIS MACHINE MIGHT REDUCE COTTON TO FIVE CENTS A POUND, HELP THE UNITED STATES REGAIN ITS EXPORT MARKET BUT DISRUPT THE ECONOMY OF THE SOUTH AS DID ELI WHITNEY'S COTTON GIN, DESTROY THE SHARE-CROPPER SYSTEM, RENDER IDLE NEARLY A MILLION NEGRO AND WHITE PICKERS. **

(FLASH BACK TO BLACKBOARD)

MR. BLACKBOARD

OTHERS HOWEVER, WERE NOT SO ALARMED. HERE IS WHAT DR. TAIT BUTLER, ONE OF THE SOUTH'S LEADING FARM EDITORS HAS TO SAY.

(FLASH TO DR. TAIT BUTLER TALKING TO MR. EXPERT.)

DR. BUTLER

THERE WILL BE NO SICAL REVOLUTION. THE PICKER WILL BE INTRODUCED OVER A PERIOD OF TEN TO TWENTY YEARS EVEN IF IT WORKS, ONLY THE BIG FARMS WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD A PICKER. THE ONLY WAY SMALL FARMS CAN USE THEM IS ON A SHARE SYSTEM AND SOUTHERN FARMERS ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE PRACTICE OF SMALL GRAIN FARMERS WHO GIVE THE THresher OWNER PART OF THEIR CROP FOR HIS SERVICES. A COLLECTIVELY-

* Statement from Literary Digest Sept. 5th, 1936.
** Ibid.

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O.K. PICKER WOULD NOT WORK BECAUSE THE FARMERS WOULD NEVER AGREE AS TO WHO WOULD USE IT FIRST. *

MR. EXPERT

THANK YOU.

(BLACKOUT)

HEY BEE BEE! I'M IN THE DARK.

MR. BLACKBOARD

(FROM DARKNESS)

YEAH! YOU AND A MILLION OTHERS. WELL LET'S SEE WHAT MR. DABNEY CRUMP ONE OF MEMPHIS' LARGEST COTTON BUYERS HAS TO SAY. MR. CRUMP FORSEES NO ECONOMIC OR SOCIOLOGICAL UPHEAVAL.

(FLASH TO MR. DABNEY CRUMP. HE WEARS A SUITE SUIT AND STANDS AT THE WINDOW OF HIS OFFICE. OUTSIDE THE WINDOW ARE SOUNDS OF NEGRO STEVEDORES CHANTING AT THEIR WORK AS THEY LOAD UP THE BALES OF COTTON. MR. EXPERT ASSIDUOUSLY TAKES NOTES)

MR. CRUMP

EVEN IF IT WORKS, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT COMMON LABOR WILL DISAPPEAR FROM THE COTTON PLANTATIONS. IT WOULD GIVE THE TENANTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AND HARVEST MORE FEED CROPS. **

(TWO GIRLS COME OUT AS BEFORE CARRYING SIGNS. NOW THE SIGNS READ LAUGHTER.)

AUDIENCE

(LAUGHS: HALF HEARTEDLY. A SMILE FOLLOWED BY HIS IRATE MOTHER HANDHELDING A BROOMSTICK, RUNS ACROSS STAGE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT CARRYING A SIGN WHICH READS BRONX CHEER, A FEW BRONX CHEERS FROM AUDIENCE. MORE LAUGHTER. THE STEVEDORE'S CHANT WHICH HAS NOT DIED DOWN GROWS A LITTLE LOUDER.)

HECKLER

(FROM AUDIENCE)

IF THEY COULD GROW AND HARVEST MORE FEED CROPS WHEN COTTON PICKING IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM WHY DON'T THOSE NOT MAKING ANY MONEY COTTON PICKING NOW TURN TO GROWING AND HARVESTING FEED CROPS?

** Statement from "Forum" April 1937, page 229

** Ibid
MR. BLACKBOARD

YOU'RE A VERY SMART FELLOW FOR A BICKLER.

(FOUR GIRLS CARRYING THE CARDS READING APPLAUSE AND LAUGHTER ENTER FROM RIGHT AND LEFT. BOY WITH CARD READING BRONX CHEER STANDS IN THE MIDDLE. THE STEVENDON'S CHANT RISES TO A MIGHTY VOLUME. THERE ARE LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE AND BRONX CHEERS FROM THE AUDIENCE AS THE WHOLE SCENE BLACKOUT.)

BLACKOUT
SCENE THREE (C)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOME.

(C) THE LANDLORD'S STORE.

(SHOOT PICKS UP JOHN, RUTH AND MR. EXPERT ENTERING FROM STAGE LEFT. THEY WALK ACROSS STAGE TO EXIT, RIGHT, THE SPOT FOLLOWING THEM.)

JOHN

PARDON ME, I'M NOT TALKING AT ALL LIKE AN EXPERT.

RUTH

IT'S QUITE A WALK BUT WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

MR. EXPERT

I DON'T MIND IT. IT'S SUCH A FINE NIGHT. WHAT IS THAT WONDERFUL SMELL?

RUTH

WILD HONEYSUCKLE. IT GROWS RANK LIKE A WEED.

MR. EXPERT

IT'S SUCH A LOVELY DREAMY COUNTRY YOU HAVE DOWN HERE. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT BENEATH THIS SOFTNESS AND THE FINE OLD TREES AND THE LUSH FLOWERS THERE'S SO MUCH OF TRAGEDY. SOMETIMES I THINK THAT IN LATER YEARS, I SHALL FIND IT EASIER TO RECALL THE LOVELINESS OF THE HONEY-SUCKLE SCENTED NIGHT THAN——-

(A SIGH)

PARDON ME. I'M NOT TALKING AT ALL LIKE AN EXPERT.

JOHN

WHEN WE GET TO MR. POWERS' STORE DON'T LET ON YOU'RE FROM WASHINGTON.

MR. EXPERT

I'LL BE TACTFUL.

(Exeunt Right. Lights come up on Ill.

The Projection is a Crossroads' Store.

A country stand in the center and there is a heater down left. POWERS sits in can bottom chair besides the heater.

* The equivalent of this scene may be witnessed by anyone dropping in at ORAN HUBBARD'S store in Lufkin, Texas.

** POWERS is a composite character whose views are typical of landlords in his class and are documented by interviews with actual representative landlords; JIM WHITE and CHARLIE MASSENGILL, Lufkin, Texas and R.C. HAMER, Eastover, South Carolina.

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JOE HERREN • LOCAL POLITICIAN STANDS WITH ONE OUTFIRED ON A SOAP BOX. BILL CARNEY ** ANOTHER LANDOWNER, SITS CENTER ON THE CRACKER BARREL. ZEKE JOHNSON ••• A TENANT FARMER SITS UNTIL NEAR THE DOOR. DUDE HIBBARD ****, A YOUNG TENANT FARMER STANDS NEAR HIM LOOKING OUT THE DOOR. JESSE GILPIN ***** A DRIFING LAD OF EIGHTEEN WAITS ON THE TRADE.)

POWERS

IT'S GIT'TIN' MOST TOO COOL FOR YOU POLITICIANS, AIN'T IT JACK?

BILL CARNEY

IT DON'T NEVER GIT TOO COOL FOR JOE HERREN TO 'LECTIONEER.

(JOE HERREN SPITS IN THIS TOVE.)

ZEKE JOHNSON

I'M ALLUS GLAD FOR WINTER TO COME, THE POLITICIANS AND PREACHERS KINDA LET UP THEN.

DUDE HIBBARD

YEH. MOST OF 'EM.

ZEKE JOHNSON

YOU KNO, THE COUNTRY WOULD BE A LOT BETTER OFF IF WE HAD A LOT LESS OF BOTH OF 'EM. *****

POWERS

WELL, THEY DON'T BOTHER ME NONE. WHAT DOES BOTHER ME IS THESE NORTHERNERS THAT COME AROUND HERE EVER SO OFTEN.

BILL CARNEY

YEH, YEH. IT'S THE NORTH THAT'S WRONG WITH THE SOUTH. *****

* Character based on actual man named Jack Herren, who is county tax collector, Angelina County, Texas.
** Based on man named Will Barnes who is a land-poor landlord, Trinity Co., Texas
*** Based on a tenant on Charlie Massengill's farm named Zeke Thompson
**** Character based on Dudley Hubbard who is nephew to Oran Hubbard.
***** Character based on J.R. Gibson, a young preacher boy, Zavalla, Texas.
****** Statement obtained from Fred Atkinson, Shreveport, La.
******* Interview with "Southern Gentlemen on bus in Georgia." by Clemon White.
POWERS

YEAH. WHEN THE GOVERNMENT GITS READY TO MAKE A FARM BILL, WHO DO THEY MAKE IT FOR? THEY MAKE IT TO SUIT THE DAMN YANKIES.

(ENTER JOHN, RUTH AND MR. EXPERT. ALL LOOK SUSPICIOUSLY AT MR. EXPERT.)

JOHN

HOWDY.

POWERS

HOWDY, JOHN.

JOHN

(INdicating Mr. Expert.)

FRIEND OF PAN'S.

Mr. Expert

(Trying to imitate their accent.)

HOWDY, ALL.

RUTH

(Slipping her hand through Mr. Expert's arm.)

AND OF MINE.

(Mr. Expert smiles at her gratefully.)

FRED ATKINS *

(A Canned Meat Salesman, enters.)

HOWDY GENTLEMEN.

BILL CARNEY

HOWDY, ATKINS, STILL SELLIN' THAT ENGLISH MEAT?

ATKINS

YES SIRREE-----ANYWHERE I CAN PLACE IT.

ZEKE JOHNSON

HELL OF A NOTE THAT WE HAVE TO SEND TO ENGLAND TO GIT OUT CANNED MEAT.

ATKINS

WHERE'S THE BOSS?

JESSE

HE'S OUT CHECKIN' UP ON TENANTS AND TRYIN' TO COLLECT BILLS.

* based on character of Fred Atkinson, canned meat salesman of Shreveport, La.
MR. ATKINS. HE'LL BE BACK SOON, I HECKON. MR. POWERS IS HERE.

POWERS

VAL HIBBARD'S RUNNIN' THIS STORE FOR ME. DO BUSINESS WITH HIM WHEN HE GETS BACK.

BILL CARNEY

HE LEFT JESSE HERE TO CONVERT ALL THE CUSTOMERS; GIVE 'EM RELIGION SO'S THEY'LL PAY THEIR BILLS.

JESSE

IT'D DO YOU A LOT OF GOOD, MR. CARNEY, IF YOU'D GO LISTEN TO THE WORD OF THE LORD. YOU MIGHT FIND SALVATION FOR YOUR SOUL. GOD IS GOOD.

BILL CARNEY

YEAH! YEAH! I SHOULD GO GET RELIGION AND MAYBE LET THE PREACHER STEAL MY WIFE. MILES I WAS AT THE MOURNER'S BENCH LIKE BROTHER POLLY DONE DUDE HIBBARD HERE.

DUDE HIBBARD

(TENSE WITH HATE.)

AND HE KILLED HER TOO, WHEN HE WAS BAPTIZING HER. THE BASTARD KNEW SHE WAS GOIN' TO HAVE A BABY AND HE KNEW I WOULDN'T CLAIM IT. *

ATKINS

PEOPLE WOULDN'T FOLLOW THAT BACKWOOD RELIGIOUS STUFF IF THEY WERE BETTER EDUCATED.

POWERS

WE DON'T NEED NO BETTER EDUCATION, THEM THAT RUN OFF TO SCHOOL COME BACK HERE LIKE THAT RYAN KID AND'S TART IN TEACHIN' EVOLUTION.

DUDE HIBBARD

EVOLUTION AIN'T AS BAD AS BROTHER POLLY.

ZEKE JOHNSON

THE HELL IT AINT!

JESSE

MR. RYAN WAS BAD. HE EVEN TAUGHT THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS A MONKEY AND HUNG BY HIS TAIL.

JOE HERREN

THE LAW OUGHT TO KEEP FROM LETTIN' SUCH AS HIM COME IN HERE.

* Incident happening near Lufkin, Texas.
POWERS

HE GOT WHAT WAS COMIN' TO HIM, WHEN YOU RIDE 'EM OUT ON A POLE LIKE WE DONE RYAN * THEY DON'T COME BACK.

ATKINS

RYAN TAUGHT BRITT'S BOY, DIDN'T HE?

JOHN

MR. RYAN? YES HE DID. BEST TEACHER I EVER HAD.

ZEKE JOHNSON

YEAH. WE ALL NOTICE YOU GOT A LOT OF HIS IDEAS.

POWERS

BETTER WATCH YOURSELF, JOHN, OR YOU'LL BE GETTING TOO BIG FOR YOUR BREECHES.

(John is about to say something. Ruth puts her hand on his arm.)

JOHN

(TURNING HIS BACK ON POWERS.)

JESSE, YOU GOT ANY DOMINOES?

JESSE

NO. WE DON'T HAVE NONE.

JOHN

I WISH VAL WOULD REMEMBER TO GET SOME. I LIKE TO PLAY FORTY-TWO IN THE WINTER TIME. REMIND HIM SOMETIMES, JESSE. *

JESSE

BROTHER POLLY CONDEMNED FORTY-TWO PLAYIN'. IT BELONGS TO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD AND GOD AIN'T GOT NO MERCY FOR SIN AND THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.

BILL CARNEY

HOW HE'S WARMIN' UP FOR A SERMON. TALKS BOUT AS SMOOTH AS POLLY, DON'T HE?

ZEKE JOHNSON

HE DON'T JUMP HIGH ENOUGH FOR BROTHER POLLY.

(THEY LAUGH AT JESSE.)

* A popular game in the south.
JOHN

I CAN REMEMBER WHEN YOU WASN'T THAT AWAY, JESSE, FOR YOU WENT OFF TO BIBLE SCHOOL.

JESSE

I HAVEN'T SEEN THE LIGHT THEN.

(SOME OF THE MEN LAUGH. DUDE AND OTHERS SCOUR.)

DUDE HIBBARD

IF I LAY MY HANDS ON THAT SON OF A BITCH OF A BROTHER POLLY----

RUTH

(INTEERRUPTING.)

DON'T FORGET THE FLOUR AND GREASE, JOHN.

JOHN

WHAT'S GREASE SELLIN' FOR?

JESSE

DOLLAR THIRTY CENTS A BUCKET.

JOHN

THAT'S TOO HIGH. CHAIN STORES OVER TO GREENVILLE'S SELLIN' IT FOR SIXTY FIVE CENTS. *

POWERS

GOT THE MONEY TO GET IT OVER TO THE CHAIN STORE.

JOHN

NO.

POWERS

WHAT DO YOU CARE WHAT THEY SELL IT AT IF YOU CAIN'T PAY FOR IT.

JOHN

I COULDN'T IF YOU GAVE US A CONTRACT; IF WE WEREN'T FORCED TO BUY ON CREDIT AT YOUR STORE.

POWERS

IF IT WASN'T THAT I LIKED YOUR PAW, I'D PUT A NIGGER ON YOUR PLACE NEXT YEAR.

(ENTER A TALL THIN NEGRO **FOLLOWED BY

* Comparative prices taken from Thomas, "The Pliight of the Sharecropper" p. 21
** Fictitious character inspired by observation of local negro sharecroppers.

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BILL
SPEAKIN' OF ANGELS, AIN'T THIS ONE OF YOUR NEW NIGGERS, POWERS?
Powers
WHAT DO YOU WANT, COON?
NEgro
I WANTS TO GET A HAIR STRAIGHTENER AND A SLAB OF SOW BELLY.
Jesse
VAL SAID NOT TO LET YOU HAVE NOTHIN'. YOU OWE ON THE LAST CROP.
NEgro
WE IS ALL HUNGRY.
BILL
I THREW HIM OFF MY PLACE BECAUSE HE WAS SO DEEP IN DEBT HE'D NEVER WORK IT OUT.
NEgro
YOU MADE ME GIT, MR. BILL, CAUSE THE OTHER NIGGER WHAT COME HAD MORE CHILLUN 'AN I GOT. *
Mr. Expert
HOW MANY YOU GOTT?
Powers
HE AIN'T GOT ENOUGH BUT I TOOK HIM BECAUSE I COULDN'T GET ANYONE ELSE TO TAKE THAT WILL TUCKER HOUSE.
NEgro
I GOT SEVEN LITTLE UNS.
Powers
THAT'S JUST A SMALL MESS OF A FAMILY.
NEgro
THAT'S NUFF.
BILL
WATCH WHAT YOU'RE SAYIN' NIGGER.

* "A common practice among the landlords is to choose tenants by the number of children they have." Statement by R.C. Humor, Eastover, South Carolina.
NEGRO

THAT'S ALL I GOT AN' I AIN'T GONNA HAVE NO MORE FOR WHITE LANDLORDS.

POWERS

HELL YOU'RE AN UPPITY NIGGER, AIN'T YOU

BILL

GIT OUT OF HERE, YOU GOD DAMN BUR-HEAD.

NEGRO

AIN'T YOU GONNA STAND ME NO FURNISHINGS?

JESSE

HELL NO, GIT OUT OF HERE.

(NEGRO EXITS HURRIEDLY)

POWERS

(TO OSCAR.)

AND WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

OSCAR

IT'S ON MY STOMACH. I GOT A MOST POWERFUL MISERY IN IT.

POWERS

TOO MANY BANANAS.

OSCAR

IF I GIVE YOU BACK WHAT'S LEFT OF THE BANANAS WILL YOU GIVE ME SOMETHING FOR MY STOMACH? GOT MOST A DOZEN LEFT.

POWERS

TAKE THE BANANAS BACK JESSE AND GIVE THE FOOL A BOX OF BICARBONATE OF SODA.

(JESSE DOES SO AS———

BLACKOUT.
SCENE FOUR (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND ECONOMICS

(A) THEY MARRY YOUNG.

(THE LIGHT'S COME UP ON THE BRITT HOME. ALL ARE PRESENT, EXCEPTING LURIGE LEE. BRITT AND JOHN ARE GETTING READY TO GO OUT.)

BRITT

NO I AIN'T DRESSIN' UP JUST TO SEE MR. POWERS. IT'S ONLY THAT SETTLIN' TIME COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR AND I FEEL LIKE IT'S A HOLIDAY.

MR. EXPERT

(HETERING)

HOWDY ALL.

RUIN

HELLO.

BRITT

WHAT ALL DID YOU FIND OUT?

MR. EXPERT

I SAW AND HEARD AN AWFUL LOT ABOUT WHAT IS WRONG AND HOW TO MAKE IT RIGHT.

BRITT

SEEMS LIKE EVERYBODY IN THE SOUTH HAS GOT SOME PET IDEA ABOUT FIXIN' THINGS UP. IT'S NEVER MORE THAN TALK, THOUGH. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO GO WITH US TO SETTLE UP. WE'RE GON' TO SEE MR. POWERS AND GET WHAT'S COMIN' TO US FOR THE CROP THIS YEAR. I HOPE WE'VE GOT MONEY COMIN'. I SURE DO.

JOHN

FAT CHANCE, PAW.

LALLY

NOW JOHN DON'T YOU AND YOUR FATHER START ANY TROUBLE WITH MR. POWERS OVER THAT WE GOT COMIN'. WE GOT TO TAKE WHAT HE GIVES US OR MOVE AND WE CAN'T MOVE NO. WITH ANOTHER YOUNG'UN ABOUT DUE.

STEVE

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT NO ARGUMENT NOW. MR. POWERS ALWAYS WINS OUT. WOULDN'T RIGHrLY CALL IT AN ARGUMENT.

LALLY

I DON'T THINK MR. POWERS CHEATS US AS MUCH AS SOME LANDLORDS WOULD.
MR. EXPERT

MR. BRITT DON'T YOU HAVE ANY RECORD OF WHAT'S COMING? DON'T YOU HAVE IT DOWN IN BLACK AND WHITE SOMWHERE?

BRITT

THE LANDLORD KEEPS ALL THE RECORDS; OF WHAT HE'S FURNISHED US. THEN HE HAS THE SELLIN' OF THE CROP AND KEEPS THE RECORD ON HOW MUCH IT BROUGHT. WE GOT TO TAKE HIS WORD.

MR. EXPERT

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT HE FURNISHED YOU?

BRITT

ABOUT WHAT'S AN USUAL. THE LAND, THIS HOUSE, WOOD, TOOLS, A MULE AND HALF THE FERTILIZER. WE FURNISH THE LABOR AND HALF THE FERTILIZER.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DO YOU OWE HIM FOR?

BRITT

THE CLOTHES WE BOUGHT ON CREDIT AND THE FOOD WE GOT DOWN TO HIS STORE.

MR. EXPERT

YOU'VE GOT A SIGNED CONTRACT, OF COURSE TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING'S ON THE LEVEL ON BOTH SIDES?

BRITT

NO. VERY FEW TENANTS HAVE. THE LANDLORD CONTROLS THE WHOLE THING. IF A TENANT DON'T LIKE IT, HE CAN MOVE.

(WORRIED)

IF POWERS DON'T COME OUT WELL AHEAD TONIGHT AT SETTLIN' UP TIME, MAYBE WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE. ALTHOUGH I HATE TO.

LALLY

TELL HIM YOU WON'T CONSIDER MOVIN'.

BRITT

MAYBE WE WON'T HAVE TO EVEN CONSIDER IT. MAYBE WE ARE IN DEBT SO MUCH TO POWERS THAT OUR HALF THE CROP WON'T COVER IT AND WE HAVE TO STAY TO WORK IT OFF. I HOPE NOT, THOUGH.

RUTH

PAW, DON'T LET HIM PUT ANYTHIN' OVER ON YOU. STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS. MR. EXPERT WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE.
JOHN

WELL, I'M GOIN' TO SPEAK UP IF THERE'S ANYTHIN' WRONG ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT, ANYHOW. I'M NOT GOIN' TO LET IT PASS UNNOTICED. I'VE SORT OF KEPT A CLOSER EYE ON THINGS THAN PAW HAS.

(LINNIE LEE COMES IN.)

LALLY

(WORRIED)

WHY YOU BEEN?

LINNIE LEE

JUST OUT, MAN. DON'T WORRY. I AIN'T BEEN UP TO ANYTHIN'.

MR. EXPERT

GOODBYE.

RUTH

FOR A WHILE.

(JOHN, BRITT AND MR. EXPERT EXSUNT.)

LALLY

(CALLING OFF TO BRITT.)

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU TALK TO MR. FOWERS, PAW. WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO MOVE.

(TO LINNIE LEE)

WELL CHILD, WHAT YOU SO HAPPY ABOUT?

RUTH

DON'T TELL US YOU HAVE A BOY FRIEND, LINNIE LEE?

DAVE

(STARTS TO SING)

"OH FRANKIE AND LINNIE WERE LOVERS
AND OH, HOW THOSE TWO COULD LOVE."

LALLY

(SHOUTING)

SHUT UP, DAVE.

(HER INTENSITY FRIGHTENS HIM. HE FALLS SILENT. RUTH AND DAVE LOOK AT EACH OTHER.)

LINNIE LEE, LOOK AT ME!
(THE CHILD, TREMBLING, TRIES TO MEET HER EYE.)

YOU AIN'T DOIN' NOTHIN', I TOLD YOU NOT TO DO?
NOTHIN' YOU'RE ASHAMED OF?

LINNIE LEE

WHY SHOULD I BE ASHAMED OF IT?

LALLY

LINNIE LEE!

LINNIE LEE

LEVELLY

FRANKIE AND ME GOT MARRIED FIRST.

LALLY

OH MY GOD! THAT'S NOT TRUE! NOBODY WOULD MARRY A BABY LIKE YOU.

LINNIE LEE

FLOYD BELOW MARRIED US. HE STOPPED FLOWIN' AND TOOK HIS BOOK OUT
OF HIS POCKET AND MARRIED US IN THE FIELDS.

LALLY

BUT YOU'RE ONLY FOURTEEN!

LINNIE LEE

I SAID I WAS NINETEEN.

LALLY

FLOYD KNOWS BETTER.

LINNIE LEE

THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME TO SAY WHEN HE ASKED.

LALLY

WHY DID HE DO IT?

LINNIE LEE

FRANKIE GAVE HIM A DOLLAR.

LALLY

THAT'S NO MARRIAGE. IF FRANKIE COMES AROUND HERE AFTER YOU, PAW
AND THE BOYS WILL END TO HIM.

LINNIE LEE

BUT MAW. FRANKIE AND ME'S BEEN TOGETHER.

* Based on accounts of child marriages among the sharecroppers.

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(LALLY STARTS TO CRY.)

AW MAN, DON'T TAKE ON SO. I DID IT TO HELP YOU ALL. FRANKIE CAN LOOK AFTER ME AND YOU'LL HAVE ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED. IF IT WASN'T SO HARD HERE WITH SO MANY YOUNG'UNS, I WOULD HAVE WAITED A FEW MORE YEARS. BUT FRANKIE'S SHARECROPPIN' ON HIS OWN AND-----

(LINNIE LEE STARTS TO CRY. LALLY TAKES HER IN HER ARMS AND THEY CRY TOGETHER.)

FRANKIE

(DOOR OPENS AND FRANKIE ENTERS. HE IS A GAWKY STUPID-LOOKING BOY IN OVERALLS, RAGGED AND UNKEPT. ABOUT 21.)

I WANT MY WOMEN.

LINNIE LEE

COME IN, FRANKIE. IT'S ALL RIGHT. I TOLD THEM.

FRANKIE

EVENIN', FOLKS.

(NO ANSWER. LINNIE LEE LOOKS FROM ONE TO THE OTHER.)

LINNIE LEE

JUST A SECOND, FRANKIE, I'LL GET MY STUFF. IT'S ALL TOGETHER HERE.

(SHE GETS A NEWSPAPER WRAPPED BUNDLE FROM UNDER THE BED.)

GOODBYE, RUTH.

(SHE KISSES HER SISTER.)

DAVE.

(HE TURNS HIS HEAD, SHE KISSES HIS CHEEK. FRANKIE STANDS BY GRINNING LIKE AN IDIOT.)

TELL PAW AND JOHN.

(LALLY AND LINNIE LEE EMBRACE.
LINNIE LEE Follows FRANKIE OUT AFTER A LAST TEARFUL LOOK AT HER FAMILY.)

LALLY

(SITS AT THE TABLE WEEPING.)

SHE WAS SUCH A SWEET YOUNG'UN, ALWAYS DOIN' FOR EVERYONE ELSE. ONLY YESTERDAY SHE WAS A BABY. AND NOW---TO START SO EARLY TO
WORK AND SUFFER.

RUTH

(LEVELLY)

SHE'S BEEN WORKIN' SINCE SHE WAS SIX.

(LALLY BURSTS INTO VIOLENT SOBS.)

DON'T MAA.

(SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HER AND THE TWO WOMEN SOB TOGETHER.)

DAVE

(LOOKS FROM ONE TO THE OTHER; EMBARRASSED AND UNEASY. FINALLY, IN AN ATTEMPT TO HELP, SOMEHOW, HE TAKES HIS HARMONICA FROM HIS POCKET AND VERY SOFTLY STARTS TO PLAY: "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen.")

BLACKOUT.
SCENE FOUR (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND ECONOMICS

(B) SETTLIN' UP TIME.

(LIGHTS UP ON 111. PROJECTED IS THE FRONT
AND COLUMNS OF A DELAPIDATED PLANTATION
MANSION. OVERSEER SITS BEHIND TABLE: WITH
A CIGAR BOX CONTAINING MONEY IN FRONT OF
HIM. POWERS SITS NEXT TO OVERSEER. THERE
IS A LARGE LEDGER, OPENED, ON THE TABLE
BEFORE THE MEN. POWERS AND THE OVERSEER
ARE SETTLING UP ACCOUNTS WITH THE WHITE
AND NEGRO TENANTS.)

FIRST NEGRO

I WANT TO LEAVE, MR. POWERS.

OVERSEER

(RISING IN ANGER.)

NO USE TO APPEAL TO MR. POWERS. I'M THE OVERSEER HERE AND
HE BACKS ME UP. YOU OWE FIVE DOLLARS AND YOU'LL WORK HERE
TIL YOU MAKE IT UP. *

FIRST NEGRO

(DEFIANTLY)

I MADE TEN BALE OF COTTON. DIDN'T GET CREDIT FOR THAT MUCH AT
THE STORE. HOW COME YOU SAYS I OWES?

OVERSEER

SHUT UP, YOU BLACK BASTARD. YOU'LL STAY HERE AND WORK OUT THAT
FIVE DOLLARS AND KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

FIRST NEGRO

(BEATEN)

YASSUH.

(WALKS AWAY DEJECTEDLY.)

OVERSEER

(LOOKS UP AND RECOGNIZED THE
SECOND NEGRO APPROACHING. CON-
SULTS THE LEDGER.)

LET'S SEE, LONNIE. YOU PAID AS YOU WENT ALONG FOR MOST THINGS.

-76-
But by the time we took out for fertilizer and hauling, there wasn't enough to pay for that mule you bought. So you owe us——

Second Negro

(squirming)

Yassuh, but the 'creement was I was to furnish myself and git half of what I made.*

Overseer

You're gettin' two-thirds. What you bell-achin' about?

Second Negro

But, Mistah Wilson, I is due mo'en that. I'se due one half.

Powers

(removing his cigar.)

You're gettin' more'n half now. You're gettin' two-thirds.

Second Negro

Nossuh, y'all foolin' with me. A half am more than two-thirds.

Overseer

Get out of here, you rumpshaker! God damned fool.

(Negro leaves dejectedly passing Brit, John and Mr. Expert who are just entering. Russell, a white farmer is the next in line.)

All right, Russell. Let's see. 'Cordin' to the books, you're another hundred dollars in debt this year.

Russell

Yessir. Most of it was for burial expenses though.

Overseer

That was too bad. But it's still a debt.

Powers

How many children you got left, Russell? **

Russell

I ain't got but three now, Mr. Powers.
OVERSEER

AND ONE OF THEM'S UNDER TWELVE, AIN'T SHE?

RUSSELL

YESSIR. BUT SHE'S A HARD WORKER FOR A YOUNG'UN.

OVERSEER

MR. POWERS, I DON'T THINK WE BETTER KEEP IT. RUSSELL. HE'S A LIABILITY. I DON'T THINK HE'LL EVER WORK OUT OF IT.

RUSSELL

MR. POWERS, IF HAL DIDN'T DIE, WE'D A DONE A LOT BETTER. HE WAS BETTER TO WORK THAN THE OTHER YOUNG'UNS. HIM DIPING KINDA TOOK THE SPUNK OUT OF THE REST OF THEM TOO.

POWERS

YOU RECKON YOU CAN WORK HARDER NEXT YEAR?

RUSSELL

(YAWNING)

YESSIR, YESSIR. I KNOW WE CAN. MY OLD LADY WAS KINDA PUNY A LOT LAST SPRING BUT SHE'S GETTING ALONG ALL RIGHT NOW.

OVERSEER

YOU SAID ALL THAT LAST YEAR, RUSSELL. YOU SAW THAT NIGGER WHILE AGO THAT SAID HE WANT TO LEAVE? WELL, WE CAN MAKE HIM WORK HARD ENOUGH TO GET OUT OF DEBT BUT IT'S DIFFERENT WITH A WHITE MAN. IT AIN'T EASY TO GET A WHITE MAN TO WORK FOR BACK DEBTS. I THINK, MYSELF, THAT YOU BETTER FIND ANOTHER PLACE.

RUSSELL

(DESPERATELY)

BUT HAL DIED BECAUSE HE DIDN'T GET ENOUGH TO EAT. HE CRIED ALL THE TIME CAUSE HE WAS HUNGRY. WE'LL BE HUNGERThan EVER BEFORE IF YOU MAKE US------

OVERSEER

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, STOP WHISPERING.

POWERS

LET'S TRY HIM ANOTHER YEAR, FRANK.

OVERSEER

ALL RIGHT IF YOU SAY SO.
RUSSELL

(GRATEFULLY)

THANK YOU, MR. POWERS. MUCH OBLIGED TO YOU.

POWERS

SEE IF YOU CAN'T COME OUT BETTER NEXT YEAR, RUSSELL. I MAY NOT BE DOIN' THE RIGHT THING BY KEEPIN' YOU ON HERE, BUT A LANDLORD HAS TO TAKE CARE OF HIS OWN, EVEN IF HE DOES GO IN THE HOLE. YOU'VE BEEN WITH US A LONG TIME, TOO. *

RUSSELL

THANK YOU. THANK YOU.

(EXIT.)

OVERSEER.

(TO THE THIRD NEGRO WHO IS NEXT IN LINE.)

WAIT A MINUTE, NIGGER.

(NEGRO STEPS ASIDE.)

WHAT DO YOU WANT, BRITT?

BRITT

I WANT TO SETTLE UP WHEN IT COMES MY TURN. JOHN HERE, WANTS TO TALK TO YOU, TOO.

OVERSEER

I'LL TAKE YOU NOW, BRITT.

(CONSULTS BOOK.)

LET'S SEE. YOU GOT NINETY-FIVE DOLLARS COMIN' TO YOU FROM THE YEAR'S WORK.

JOHN

IT'S MORE THAN THAT, MR. WILSON.

OVERSEER

ME AND YOUR PAW WILL SETTLE THIS, JOHN.

BRITT

ME AND JOHN FIGGARED THIS OUT THE Other NIGHT AND WE BOTH THOUGHT THERE'D BE A GOOD BIT MORE OVER ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

*
OVERSEER

REMEMBER WE HAD TO HIRE EXTRA COTTON PICKERS TO GET YOURS OUT.

JOHN

THAT'S PROOF THAT THE CROP WAS LARGE.

POWERS

BRITT, I PASSED ALONG THE ROAD YESTERDAY AND I NOTICED YOU KEEP THE FENCE ROWS AND BRANCHES CLEAN. I LIKE THAT.

BRITT

YESSIR. I ALWAYS TREAT ANOTHER MAN'S LAND LIKE IT WAS MY OWN. EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I'LL NOT GET A DAMNED THING FOR IT.

OVERSEER

BRITT'S THE BEST MAN THAT WE GOT, MR. POWERS BUT HE'S PRETTY HARD TO GET ALONG WITH, SOME OF THE FELLERS SAY. HE DOES A SMART LOT OF TALKIN' AND HE HAS A LOT OF SNOOPIN' FRIENDS.

(HE GLARES AT MR. EXPERT.)

BRITT

I WORK HARD, TRY TO PAY MY DEBTS. I SAY AND THINK WHAT I PLEASE AND DON'T MAKE NO BONES ABOUT IT. THAT'S THE ONLY LUXURY I HAVE.

OVERSEER

WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR NINETY-FIVE DOLLARS ON THE BOOKS. OUR BOOKS SAY THAT'S DUE YOU AND NO MORE.

BRITT

IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, I'LL TAKE THE CASH FOR THE FULL AMOUNT.

POWERS

LET'S GIVE HIM THE CASH, FRANK.

OVERSEER

ALL RIGHT.

JOHN

(AS THE OVERSEER COUNTS OUT THE MONEY TO HIS FATHER.)

MR. POWERS, WE'VE TALKED IT OVER AND PAW THINKS I OUGHT TO START OFF ON MY OWN. I WANT TO TRY TO GET MARRIED---

(GUFFAW FROM MEN.)

POWERS

YOU DON'T TRY TO GET MARRIED. IT'S LIKE JUMPIN' IN THE LAKE. YOU DO IT

-80-
OR YOU DON'T DO IT.

JOHN

WOULD YOU----WELL, I'D LIKE TO TAKE THE SIM'S PLACE LIKE YOU SAID.

POWERS

THAT'S FINE, JOHN. YOU'RE A HARD WORKER, I KNOW. I'LL TURN IT OVER TO YOU.

JOHN

I'D LIKE FOR YOU TO GIVE ME A CONTRACT, MR. POWERS. JUST SO THERE

POWERS

DON'T BE NO FUSSIN' ABOUT HELP AND FERTILIZER AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

I DON'T GIVE CONTRACTS, BOY. *

JOHN

I'LL HAVE TO HAVE ONE IF I TAKE THE PLACE.

POWERS

(ANGRY)

YOU MEAN YOU DON'T THINK I'M HONEST?

JOHN

I DIDN'T SAY THAT. BUT AS A MATTER OF BUSINESS----

POWERS

BY GOD YOU'RE THINKIN' IT. GET OFF MY PLACE AND DON'T SET FOOT

BRITT

ON MY LAND AGAIN.

WAIT A MINUTE, MR. POWERS. JOHN DIDN'T MEAN THAT LIKE IT SOUNDED.

JOHN

I WON'T TAKE THE PLACE AND I WON'T WORK ON PAW'S PLACE

POWERS

UNLESS YOU PUT EVERYTHIN' DON IN WRITIN'.

GIT THEN.

JOHN

ALL RIGHT.

(TURNS TO LEAVE.)

--- Incident furnished by Fred Howard, author of three-act play produced by University of North Carolina entitled "Sharecropper."
BRITT
DON'T GET TOO HASTY, JOHN.

JOHN
I'M STICKIN' BY WHAT I SAID.

POWERS
GIT! AND DON'T COME BACK TILL YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.

JOHN
I WON'T CHANGE IT TILL HELL FREEZES OVER. YOU COMIN' WITH ME, PAW?

BRITT
WAIT A MINUTE, SON. CAN'T YOU TRY HIM ON A CONTRACT FOR ONE YEAR, MR. POWERS? HE'S RIGHT BENT ON HAVIN' ONE.

JOHN
NO, BY GOD. NO TENANT OF MINE'S GOIN' TO DICTATE TO ME. GET OUT IF YOU WANT TO.

(PAUSE)
ALTHOUGH YOU COULD MAYBE MAKE A GOOD CROP ON THE SIM'S PLACE. YOU WON'T GET NO CONTRACT NOWHERE AND I'M A BETTER LANDLORD THAN MOST. AIN'T THAT SO, BRITT.

BRITT
YES, MR. POWERS.

POWERS
I MIGHT TAKE YOU BACK, JOHN, IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.

JOHN
IF I DO, IT'LL BE BECAUSE I LIKE TO FARM.

MRS. VAN KEITH *

(RUNS IN WITH A SHOTGUN WHICH SHE POINTS AT POWERS.)

YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME BEFORE BUT YOU GOT TO LISTEN NOW.

POWERS
GRAB THAT GUN, WESLEY.

THIRD NEGRO

MAYBE IT SHOOTS, CAP'N.

* Actual case reported by Durham Sun, December 12, 21, 1937. The woman, Mrs. Van Keith is a Durham county white woman.
MRS. VAN KEITH

I AIN'T GOIN' TO HURT YOU NONE, LANDLORD. I JUST WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO MY COMPLAINTS. MY BOYS WORKED YOUR LAND AND MADE A GOOD CROP FOR YOU AND NOW YOU WON'T PAY THEM NOTHIN' YOU SAY THEY OWE YOU.

OVERSEER

WE FURNISHED YOU-----

MRS. VAN KEITH

A

I GOT A FAMILY OF TEN CHILDREN. THEY AIN'T GD ENOUGH TO EAT ALL YEAR. WE'RE TENANTS OF YOURS MR. POWERS. THERE'S A RULE YOU GOT TO FURNISH US AND GIVE US ENOUGH CREDIT FOR FOOD. NOW YOU GONNA PAY MY BOYS WHAT'S ACOMIN' TO THEM OR YOU AIN'T GONNA BE ABLE TO CHEAT ANY MORE PEOPLE.

OVERSEER

(SUDDENLY THROWS OUT HIS ARM AND GUN JUMPS IN THE AIR AND FALLS TO THE GROUND. HE GRABS THE WOMAN'S ARMS.)

WESLY, YOU AND SLUMBER HELP ME TAKE HER TO JAIL *

(THE TWO NEGROS HELP LEAD HER AWAY.)

POWERS

BY GOD, I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THOSE RUST BROTHERS BEGIN SELLIN' THEM MACHINES. I'LL BUY ME A COUP LA AND GET RID OF THE WHOLE THEIVIN' BUNCH OF TENANTS, WHITE AND BLACK ALIKE.

(TO MR. EXPERT.)

I'M GLAD YOU HAPPENED TO COME SNOOPIN' AROUND TODAY. NOW YOU SE WHAT I'M UP AGAINST. YOU TELL 'EM UP IN WASHINGTON WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY AND ASK THEM IF THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHIN' FOR US LANDLORDS. WE'RE GETTIN' MIGHTY TIRED OF THE WHOLE THING.

BLACKOUT.

* Mrs. Van Keith was arrested and thrown into jail. On December 12th, 1938, the court of Durham County granted her a continuation of prayer for judgement.
SCENE FOUR (c)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND ECONOMICS

(c) THE UPPER CRUST

(LIGHTS UP ON I11. PROJECTION OF INTERIOR OF POWERS DECADENT PLANTATION HOUSE. POWERS AND MR. EXPERT ENTER.)

POWERS

I ASKED YOU TO COME IN HERE, SIR, SO I COULD HAVE A TALK WITH YOU. YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS. WOMAN JUST TRIED TO SHOOT ME BECAUSE I REFUSED HER CHARITY. LIKE YOU TO SEE MY MAIN SIDE OF IT. HAVE A CHAIR, MR------

MR. EXPERT

EXPERT. ELBERT Q. EXPERT.

POWERS

ODD NAME.

(CALLS OFF)

OSCEOLA?

MR. EXPERT

LOVELY HOUSE.

POWERS

YES, IT WAS ONCE.

OSCEOLA

(NEGRO SERVANT IN DIRTY WHITE COAT ENTERS.)

YASSUH, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

MINT JULEPS, OSCEOLA.

(OSCEOLA EXITS. POWERS NODS IN HIS DIRECTION.)

I PAY HIM TWO DOLLARS A WEEK AND KEEP. HE'S TEN TIMES BETTER OFF THAN ANY NIGGER IN THE FIELDS. NOW IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ASK?
POWERS
MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH LAND DO YOU OWN, MR. POWERS?

POWERS
NEARLY A THOUSAND ACRES. NINE HUNDRED IN CULTIVATION.

MR. EXPERT

HOW ARE MOST OF THE LANDLORDS IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY GETTING ALONG?

POWERS
I REPRESENT THE AVERAGE LANDLORD. MAYBE A LITTLE MORE LAND THAN SOME. I'M FARMIN' TO MAKE A LIVIN' LIKE THE OTHERS. BUT WE'RE NOT MAKIN' A LIVIN'. WE'RE JUST EXISTIN'. *

(ENTER OCEOLA WITH MINT JULEPS. HE SERVES THEM AND EXITS.)

MR. EXPERT

ARE YOU BREAKING EVEN?

POWERS

HARDLY. **

MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RAISE A POUND OF COTTON?

POWERS

AT LEAST TWELVE CENTS. I'VE BEEN GETTIN' EIGHT. ***

MR. EXPERT

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO KEEP GOIN'?

POWERS

BY LETTIN' OUR HOUSES ROT DOWN, OUR BARNES GO UNPAINTED, OUR TOOLS WEAR OUT AND BY WEARIN' OLD CLOTHES.

EXPERT

IF THAT'S THE PLAGUE OF THE LANDLORD, WHAT CHANCE HAS A TENANT FARMER OF RISING?

POWERS

RISING TO WHAT?

MR. EXPERT

TO BE A LAND OWNER.

* Hearings before a subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry, United States Senate, 76th Congress, Second session, part 9
** Ibid
*** Ibid
POWERS
AS MUCH CHANCE AS A SNOWBALL IN HELL.

MR. EXPERT
I UNDERSTAND THAT NEARLY 70% OF THE FARMERS IN THIS SECTION ARE TENANTS.

MR. BLACKBOARD
MISSISSIPPI TOPS THE LIST----

POWERS
WHO'S THAT?

MR. EXPERT
FELLOW THAT WORKS WITH ME.

POWERS
ASK HIM IN.

MR. EXPERT
COME IN, BEE BEE.

(ENTER MR. BLACKBOARD A HANDSOME SCHOLARLY MAN WITH CHALK DUST ON HIS DARK CLOTHES.)

MR. POWERS. MR. BEE BEE BLACKBOARD.

POWERS
ODD NAME.

(CALLING OFF)

ANOTHER JULEP, OCEOLA. SIT DOWN SIR.

(AS BEE BEE SITS.)

YOU WERE SAYIN'?

MR. BLACKBOARD
MISSISSIPPI TOPS THE LIST WITH 70% OF ITS FARMERS BEING TENANTS. * AND THE FEDERAL LAND BANK HAS 85% OF THE FARMS UNDER MORTGAGE. **

POWERS
SO THAT MAKES MOST OF US LANDLORDS TENANTS, TOO.

MR. EXPERT
WHAT DO YOU THINK OUGHT TO BE DONE TO HELP THE LANDLORDS AND TENANTS OUT?

* Hearings before a Subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry, United States Senate, 75th Congress, 2nd Session. Part 9, p. 1383
** Ibid p. 1385

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POWERS

BETWEEN YOU AND ME, I DON'T KNOW. I THOUGHT WE'D WORK OUT OF THIS DEPRESSION. I THOUGHT COTTON WOULD GO UP AND WE'D BE ON OUR FEET AGAIN. IT'S GOT ME WONDERIN' NOW.

(OCEOLA ENTERS, SERVES MR. BLACKBOARD WITH JULEP AND EXITS.)

MR. EXPERT

GOVERNMENT HELP YOU ANY?

POWERS

GOVERNMENT HELPS MY TENANTS—TO BE TRIFLIN' AND LAZY. PAYS ME TO PLANT COTTON, PAYS THEM NOT TO. YOUR FRIEND, HUBERT BRITT WORKS FORTY ACRES IN COTTON. GOVERNMENT TOLD HIM HE COULDN'T RAISE BUT TEN. HE WORKED HARD AND GOT OUT TWELVE. ANOTHER ONE OF MY TENANTS WAS LAZY AND HIM AND HIS STRAPLIN' BOYS SET ON THEIR FANNIES FOR A WHOLE YEAR. GOVERNMENT TOLD THEM THEY COULD RAISE TEN. THEY RAISED EIGHT. IN ORDER TO SELL HIS, BRITT HAD TO GIVE UP FIFTY DOLLARS TO THAT FELLOW FOR HIS COTTON TAGS, THAT FELLOW GET FIFTY DOLLARS FOR NOTHIN'!

MR. EXPERT

DO MOST OF YOUR TENANTS FARM ON HALVES?

POWERS

THEY'RE SPOSED TO GET HALF. MATTER OF FACT, THEY GET ALL OF IT AND MORE TOO. I WISH GOVERNMENT WOULD PASS A LAW SAYIN' ALL OF IT IS ALL THEY GET. THEN AFTER THEY GET THE CROP, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE MAKIN' DONATIONS OUT OF MY OWN POCKET. •

(ENTER TOM POWERS)

OH MY SON, TOM. COME IN, BOY. MR. EXPERT, MY SON. MR. BLACKBOARD.

TOM

(SHAKING HANDS)

RIGHT GLAD TO MEET YOU.

POWERS

TOM'S BEEN ATTIENDIN' AGRINORA A & M AT MONROE, BUT I CALLED HIM HOME.

TOM

WHAT FOR, PAP.

POWERS

WANT YOU TO CHANGE SCHOOLS.

* Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee of Agriculture and
  Forestry, United States Senate, 76th Congress, 2nd Session Part 27, p. 1051
** Ibid p. 984
TOM

WHY?

POWERS

I WANT YOU TO BE SOMETHIN' BETTER THAN A FARMER. I WANT YOU TO STUDY SOMETHIN' YOU CAN GET SOMEWHERE WITH.

TOM

BUT I LIKE SCIENTIFIC FARMING AND I WANT TO GO ON.

POWERS

I'D RATHER SHOOT YOU THAN LET YOU BE A FARMER. * FARMIN'S NOT A GENTLEMEN'S BUSINESS ANYMORE. GOT SO A MAN AIN'T FREE TO FARM LIKE HE WANTS TO.

TOM

THE GOVERNMENT'S BEGINNING TO REALIZE THAT THESE'S NEED FOR PLANNING. IF IT PLANNED THE WHOLE THING OUT, SAID HOW MUCH WAS NEEDED AND HOW MUCH EACH MAN COULD RAISE----

POWERS

THESE YOU GO SPOUTIN' OFF AT THE MOUTH. YOU AND MR. ROOSEVELT ARE HOT-HEADED BUDDIES.

TOM

YOU ADMIT YOURSELF YOU'RE IN A TIGHT FIX.

POWERS

SURE WE ARE. "MR. ROOSEVELT AND THE DAMNED YANKEES ARE SENDIN' THIS COUNTRY TO HELL." *

TOM

IF THE GOVERNMENT OR SOME DESIGNATE:D AGENCY PLANNED THE SOUTH'S; THE WHOLE NATION'S FARMING PROGRAM, WE'D HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY.

POWERS

(STANDING)

MY DADDY PLOWED OUT THERE MANY A DAY WITH THE MUD SQUASHING BETWEEN HIS TOES ** AND THE SUN BLISTERING HIS BACK. WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I USED TO WORK IN THE FIELDS WITH MY TENANTS. YOU THINK THE GOVERNMENT REMEMBERS ALL THAT?

TOM

THE DAY OF THE PIONEER IS WELL LONG PAST. SO IS THE DAY OF SOUTHERN

* Statement made by anonymous southern gentleman on bus from Columbus to Macon Georgia.
** Op. Cit. Part 9 p. 1383
* From interview with Landlord Hamer of South Carolina.

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GENTILITY. YOU CAME HERE FROM ENGLAND, BROKE THE WILDERNESS, MADE YOURSELF FINE HOMES AND RAPED THE EARTH. THEN ALL OF YOU FELL FIGHTING AMONG YOURSELVES. YOU BUILT UP A PEONAGE SYSTEM OF LABOR FOR YOUR OWN CONVENIENCE AND NOW YOU'RE STUCK WITH IT. I'M FOR PLANNED ECONOMY AND A NEW SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION.

POWERS

YOU'D GIVE THIS FAIRM TO THE GOVERNMENT, WOULDN'T YOU?

TOM

BE GLAD TO GIVE IT TO THE GOVERNMENT IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE ME A JOB WORKING ON IT. AND THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHERS LIKE ME. THE GREATEST GOOD TO THE GREATEST NUMBER IS THIS NEW GOSPEL. TIME FOR YOU TO WAKE UP.

POWERS

(SPUTTERING)

I WON'T HAVE YOU IN MY HOUSE TALKIN' LIKE A DAMNED YANKEE. GET OUT!

TOM

JUST AS YOU SAY.

(AS HE EXITS.)

You'RE SCARED BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT.

POWERS

MIGHTY SORRY TO HAVE THIS FUSS BETWEEN TOM AND ME WHILE YOU WERE HERE, GENTLEMEN. MIGHTY SORRY. BUT THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS GETTIN' OUT OF HAND. INFLUENCE OF NORTHERN TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS.

BLACKOUT

-89-
SCENE FIVE (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND CRIME

(A) THE CRIMINOLOGIST

(LIGHTS COME UP ON IL}. THE PROJECTION IS AN OFFICE INTERIOR IN THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE PENITENTIARY. DR. G. K. BROWN, CRIMINOLOGIST SITS AT DESK. MR. EXPERT IS INTERVIEWING HIM.)

MR. EXPERT

DOCTOR BROWN, I AM MAKING A STUDY OF CONDITIONS IN THE COTTON SOUTH. I SAW MRS. VAN KEITH HOLD HER LANDLORD UP AT THE POINT OF A SHOTGUN WHILE SHE MADE HER COMPLAINTS. AS CRIMINOLOGIST OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE PENITENTIARY, WILL YOU GIVE ME SOME INFORMATION ON THE RELATION BETWEEN TENANCY AND CRIME?

DR. BROWN

"THAT THE SON OF A TENANT IS COMMONLY LED INTO CRIME BY HIS POVERTY IS A FALLACY OF FICTION. SOUTHERN CRIME IS BASED ON IGNORANCE RATHER THAN ON POVERTY. FOR EXAMPLE, MOST OF OUR CRIMES ARE CRIMES OF PASSION, NOT CRIMES WHICH LEAD TO ECONOMIC GAINS. ROBBERY IS LIKELY TO BE URBAN, RAPE AND CRIMES AGAINST NATURE, RURAL."

MR. EXPERT

IS THERE ANY HOPE OF DECREASING THE CRIME RATE IN THE SOUTH?

DR. BROWN

"ONLY THE LONG-RANGE HOPE OF EDUCATION. AS IT IS, THE TENANTS SEEM TO BE PRETTY HAPPY BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW ANY BETTER. THEY DO NOT GREATLY WANT A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING--THE SORT OF THING THAT WOULD LEAD THEM INTO CRIME--BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER KNOWN WHAT IT WAS TO HAVE ONE. THEIR DEFICIENT CULTURE DOESN'T PERMIT THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGE TO THEM OF CRIME FOR ECONOMIC GAIN."

MR. EXPERT

YOU'RE SAYING THAT WITH MORE EDUCATION THE CRIME RATE WOULD RISE?

DR. BROWN

"YES, I ADMIT THAT IT PROBABLY WOULD. BUT ENOUGH EDUCATION WOULD PROBABLY DECREASE IT."

MR. EXPERT

YOU HAVE A VERY GOOD PRISON HERE. CONDITIONS SEEM EXCELLENT.

DR. BROWN

"WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE IT A MODEL. OF COURSE, MOST SOUTHERN STATES"

* The entire scene is quoted from an actual interview with Doctor Brown by William Peery.
HAVE DEPLORABLE SYSTEMS. AND WITHIN THE SYSTEM, THE REAL EVIL LIES IN THE UNSUPERINTEHDED PRISON CAMP OR CHAIN GANG. IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE, YOU SHOULD CERTAINLY VISIT ONE."

MR. EXPERT

I CERTAINLY SHALL. I SUPPOSE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR AN OUTSIDER TO SEE CONDITIONS AS THEY REALLY ARE. I HEARD THAT THEY DON'T WELCOME VISITORS.

(RISING TO GO)

I'LL HAVE TO GET LETTERS FROM INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE.

(HOLDS OUT HIS HAND.)

THANK YOU FOR THE INTERVIEW, DOCTOR BROWN.

BLACKOUT
SCENE FIVE (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND CRIME

(B) "LOOK DOWN, LOOK DOWN." *

(PROJECTION OF ROADWAY UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
GROUND ROWS OF DITCH. DOWNSIDE LEFT MAY BE
SEEN A CORNER OF THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE
PRISONERS ARE CONFINED.)

(THey ARE PRESPIRING AT THEIR WORK. THEY
WEAR DIRTY STRIPED SUITS. A GUARD WITH A
SAVED-OFF SHOTGUN STANDS AT THE ROADSIDE
WATCHING THE PRISONERS. ONE OF THE NEGROES
BEGINNS SINGING "Look down, look down, that
lonesome road." THE OTHERS JOIN IN AND
WORK TOGETHER TO THE EMBO OF THE SONG. ONE
OF THE NEGROES LOOKS UP, SEES SOMEONE COMING,
SPEAKS WARNingly TO THE OTHERS.)

1ST NEGRO

HEAR COMES THE CAPT'N.

(OTHERS DO NOT LOOK UP, THEY CONTINUE
SINGING BUT MORE QUIETLY. IT GOES INTO
A HUM AS THE CAPTAIN ENTERS WITH MR. EXPERT.)

CAPTAIN

WE DON'T LIKE VISITORS. TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT THE CAMP. NO
PICTURES AND THEN BE ON YOUR WAY.  **

MR. EXPERT

(LOOKING AROUND.)

THE PRISON IS A PUBLIC STATE INSTITUTION, WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY
STAYING AROUND A LITTLE WHILE AND SEEING HOW THE CHAIN GANG
SYSTEM OPERATES?

CAPTAIN

NOTHIN' WRONG WITH IT. WE JUST DON'T LIKE IT, THAT'S ALL.

MR. EXPERT

MAYBE YOU'LL LIKE IT A LITTLE BETTER WHEN YOU READ THIS LETTER.

(AHMAD'S HANDS HIM LETTER.)

CAPTAIN

(GLANCING AT IT.)

OH! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE?

* Lines from a spiritual.

** This attitude described in an article with photographs in
"You Have Seen Their Faces" by Erskine Caldwell.
MR. EXPERT

THEN I CAN STAY AROUND AWHILE?

CAPTAIN

YEH, YOU CAN. BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE IT.

1ST NEGRO

(RECOGNIZED MR. EXPERT EXPLAINS TO OTHER PRISONERS.)

YASSUH, THAT HE. THAT'S THE GEM'MUN TOLE US TO GO DOWN AND GET A JOB ON THE LEVEE.

(OTHER NEGROES LOOK AT MR. EXPERT AND WRIN.)

2ND NEGRO

THAT HE ALL RIGHT.

MR. EXPERT

I REMEMBER YOU BOYS. DIDN'T I SEE YOU FISHING UP ON THE RIVER?

1ST NEGRO

YASSUH, YOU SEE US. BUT WE WARN'T FISHIN'.

(HE WATCHES CAPTAIN CLOSOELY, EXPECTING TO BE SILENCED.)

WELL SUH, I DONE MADE GOOD.

(CHUCKLES)

I GOT THE JOB ALL RIGHT. BUT IT BE THE WRONG JOB. I WANTED TO GIT IN THE OLE COUNTY JAIL WHERE THE EATIN'S SO GOOD BUT THE JUDGE MAN PUT ME TO WORK ON THE ROADS.

2ND & 3RD NEGROES

HEE! HEE!

1ST NEGRO

AIN'T COMPLAININ', THOUGH. ALL MY FRIENDS IS HERE.

MR. EXPERT

YOU SURE HAD TOUGH LUCK. HOW DO YOU LIKE IT HERE? HOW DO THEY FEED YOU?

1ST NEGRO

WELL, SUH, YOU SEE----

CAPTAIN

(ROUGLY. MOVING AWAY AND CALLING THE PRISONERS TO WHERE HE STANDS.)
THAT ENOUGH STALLIN', BOYS. NOW GIT ON OVER HERE AND FILL IN THIS HOLE.

(THEY MOVE OVER AND WORK. CAPTAIN CROSSES BACK TO MR. EXPERT.)

SURE WE FEED 'EM GOOD. YOU ET WITH A SHARECROPPER'S FAMILY. THESE PRISONERS AIN'T MUCH WORSE OFF. FACT, THEY'RE A WHOLE LOT BETTER OFF HERE THAN THEY'D BE RUNNIN' AROUND LOOSE, BELIEVE ME.

MR. EXPERT

(DRILY)

I CAN IMAGINE.

(CAPTAIN GLARES AT HIM, THEN DECIDES TO LET REMARK PASS.)

I IMAGINE THEY'RE SO MUCH BETTER OFF THAT THEY NEVER TRY TO RUN AWAY?

CAPTAIN

YEH, THEY DO THAT SOMETIMES.

(SPITS)

WE GOT THREE OR FOUR BURIED ROUND HERE THAT TRIED IT.

GUARD

(HAS BEEN LOOKING IN SWEATBOX. NOW CALLS OUT INVOLUNTARILY.)

CAP'N!

CAPTAIN

(WALKING OVER.)

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE, DAN.

GUARD

HE DONE PASSED OUT!

MR. EXPERT

(LOOKING IN OVER THE CAPTAIN'S SHOULDER.)

MY GOD! NO WONDER! IN THAT HOT SWEAT BOX AND THE THERMOMETER 110 IN THE SHADE.

CAPTAIN

(PICKS UP NEARBY BUCKET OF WATER AND THROWS IT ON THE PRISONER IN THE BOX.)

THERE! THAT'LL COOL 'EM OFF. COME ON! STAND UP IN THERE!

(JERKS THE CONCEALED PRISONER TO HIS FEET. SLAMS THE DOOR.)
MR. EXPERT

HOW CAN THE POOR DEVIL BREATHE IN THERE?

CAPTAIN

HE'S GOT LOTS OF AIR. "HOLE IN THE TOP OF THAT BOX ABOUT THE SIZE OF A SILVER DOLLAR. 'COURSE THAT IRON PLATE HE'S STANDIN' ON MAKES IT A MITE UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN WE PUT THE BOX IN THE HOT SUN LIKE THIS." BUT HE'S GOT IT COMIN' TO HIM.

MR. EXPERT

BUT HE'LL SUFFOCATE.

CAPTAIN

NO HE WON'T. HE'LL COME PRETTY CLOSE TO IT THOUGH.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DID HE DO?

CAPTAIN

TALKED BACK TO DAN, HERE. **

GUARD

I DIDN'T MEAN TO HAVE YOU PUT HIM IN THE SWEAT BOX FOR IT.

CAPTAIN

COURSE YOU DIDN'T. WE AIN'T INHUMAN. BUT I GOT A REPUTATION FOR STRICT DISCIPLINE IN MY CAMP AND I WANT TO KEEP IT.

(VICIOUSLY)

AIN'T----THAT----RIGHT, DAN?

GUARD

(HURRIEDLY)

SURE IS. YOU BET. YOU SURE CAN HANDLE 'EM, CAP'N.

BLACKOUT

* Description of sweat box from "Nation" Nov. 13, 1935.
** Most common reasons for sweat box punishment are the blanket charges of "not Working" or Talking back to the Guard. from "Nation" Nov. 13, 1935.
(LIGHTS COME UP ON SAME SCENE BUT
DIFFERENT CHARACTERS ON STAGE.
THE 2ND GUARD HAS BEEN FLOGGING A
NEGRO PRISONER WITH A CAT OF NINE TAILS.
The prisoner has collapsed. 2ND GUARD
STANDS WHIP IN HAND. 3RD GUARD STANDS
BY, FRIGHTENED. SWARINGEN, A WHITE
PRISONER STANDS BY WATCHING.)

3RD GUARD

(HEARING FOR A HEARTBEAT.)

HIS HEART'S NOT BEATIN'. LOOKS LIKE WE DONE GIVE HIM ONE
TOO MANY.

2ND GUARD

(DEFANTLY)

HE HAD IT COMIN' TO HIM.

SWARINGEN

" I SAW YOU FLOG CARTER TO DEATH." *

2ND GUARD

YOU SAW NOTHIN'.

3RD GUARD

LET'S GET HIM IN THESE BUSHES. WE CAN BURY HIM TOMORROW WHERE
NOBODY CAN FIND HIM.

(TO SWARINGEN.)

COME ON. HELP US GET RID OF HIM AND DON'T OPEN YOUR TRAP OR YOU'LL
BE SHOT. **

SWARINGEN

FOR WHAT?

3RD GUARD

"WE'LL CALL IT----- TRYIN' TO EXCEPE.

2ND GUARD

COME ON, SWARINGEN! GRAB HOLD.

BLACKOUT
BLACKOUT

* Actual statement made by Swaringen.
** Facts in this and * come out in personal inquiry by William Jones
Charlotte N.C. News reporter. Published in the Charlotte News
and later fully established before state's investigating commission.
From data obtained from Nation 11/13/36
(LIGHTS UP ON THE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING NORTH CAROLINA CHAIN GANG CONDITIONS. SWARINGEN HAS BEEN TESTIFYING AND IS SEATED WITH WILLIAM JONES * STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM IN THE ROLE OF QUESTIONER.)

WILLIAM JONES

AND THAT IS HOW THEY FLOGGED HIM AND DISCOVERED HE WAS DEAD?

SWARINGEN

YESSIR. I HAD TO HELP DISPOSE OF THE BODY. THINGS WAS PRETTY BAD IN THAT ROAD CAMP.

WILLIAM JONES

THAT'S ALL. YOU MAY STEP DOWN NOW, MR. SWARINGEN

(HE DOES SO.)

WILLIAM JONES

"GENTLEMEN, IN THE INQUIRY I CONDUCTED INTO NORTH CAROLINA'S CHAIN GANG SYSTEM FOR THE CHARLOTTE NEWS, I CAME ACROSS THE STORY OF JAMES BARNES AND WOODROW WILSON SHOPIGHIRE. THESE NEGRO PRISONERS WERE CONFINED IN THE HIGHWAY CONVICT CAMP OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY. THEY WERE PUNISHED FOR REPEATED INSOLUTION TO A GUARD BY BEING CHAINED EIGHT DAYS AND NIGHTS TO THE IRON DOOR OF THEIR CELL. THEY WERE DENIED ALL FOOD EXCEPT A HALF MAX BISCUIT WHITTLLED OUT ON THE INSIDE AND A LITTLE WATER. ALTHOUGH IT WAS JANUARY AND SUB-ZERO WEATHER, THERE WAS NO HEAT IN THE CELL. THEIR FEET CHAINED TO THE IGY FLOOR, GRADUALLY FROZE. FINALLY GANGRENE SET IN. FOR EIGHTEEN DAYS, THE MEN RECEIVED NO REAL MEDICAL ATTENTION. WHEN THEY WERE REMOVED AT LAST TO CENTRAL PRISON HOSPITAL, THEIR CONDITION WAS SO SERIOUS THAT BOTH FEET OF EACH MAN HAD TO BE AMPUTATED.

BLACKOUT

* William Jones was a reporter on the Charlotte News at the time.
** Actual testimony of William Jones before States Investigating Commission.
MR. BLACKBOARD

WOULD YOU FOLKS LIKE TO KNOW WHAT GOVERNOR TALMADGE OF GEORGIA SPEAKING BEFORE THE CONGRESS OF THE AMERICAN PRISON ASSOCIATION IN ATLANTA HAS TO SAY ABOUT CHAIN GANGS?

AUDIENCE

YES!

(LIGHTS UP ON GOVERNOR TALMADGE MAKING A SPEECH.)

TALMADGE

"THE PRISON CAMP OR CHAIN GANG IS THE MOST HUMANE WAY TO KEEP PRISONERS. *"

(BLACKOUT)

MR. BLACKBOARD

LET'S DROP IN AT THE TEXAS OFFICE OF TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOHN E. SHELTON.

(LIGHTS UP ON SHELTON WHO IS SEATED AT HIS DESK.)

JOHN E. SHELTON

"YOU CAN'T GET A MAN TO GET OUT AND DO THE WORK THAT THESE PRISONERS ON THE CHAIN GANG DO. YOU KNOW HOW A MULE IS. GET A WAGON AND HITCH HIM TO IT AND THEN HIT HIM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES. HE'LL PULL. **"

(BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP ON THE ROAD GANG AGAIN. CAPTAIN IS TALKING TO MR. EXPERT.)

CAPTAIN

"WHY MISTER, THESE MEN IN THIS GANG ARE BAD. THEY'RE BAD ALL THE WAY THROUGH. THAT'S WHY THEY'RE HERE. THAT MAN IN THE SWEAT BOX IS ON THE ROAD FOR RAPE. WHAT WE DO TO HIM IS NOTHIN' AT ALL COMPARED TO WHAT A LYNCH MOB 'UD DO TO HIM. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, YOU OUGHT TO HIKE DOWN TO ALABAMA. THERE'S WHERE YOU SEE THE REAL STUFF WHEN IT COMES TO PUNISHMENT."

(BLANDLY)

"WHY THIS MAN'S AS LUCKY AS HELL."

BLACKOUT

* From statement made by Governor Talmadge and published in Nation Magazine. 11/13/36

** Ibid.
SCENE FIVE (C)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND CRIME

(c) THIS IS PROGRESS

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 111. THE PROJECTION IS THE EXTERIOR OF THE JAIL AT FREESBORO MISSISSIPPI. SHERIFF HOLLIS AND THREE DEPUTIES ARE HOLDING BACK A CROWD OF ANGRY MEN WHO WANT TO GET INSIDE TO LYNCH LEE JONES WHOSE CRIES CAN BE HEARD FROM OFF LEFT. MR. EXPERT STANDS DOWN LEFT, LOOKING ON.)

HOLLIS

NOW GET BACK, BOYS. WE AIN'T A-GOIN' TO LET YOU LYNCH THIS NIGGER.

MEN

RUSH HIM!
BURN THE NIGGER BASTARD!
TEACH THE SON OF A BITCH A LESSON!
THE UPPITY COON!

(An EDITOR ENTERS DOWN LEFT AND JOINS MR. EXPERT. THE MEN ADVANCE ON HOLLIS AND THE DEPUTIES. THE LATTER WANT TO USE THEIR GUNS BUT HOLLIS NODS DISAPPROVAL.)

MAN

(STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD.)

GIVE US THAT NIGGER, CALVIN HOLLIS OR WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE HIM.

HOLLIS

(CONFIDENTLY)

KEEP BACK ALL OF YOU. ME AN' MY BOYS'D HATE TO START ANY SHOOTIN'

MAN

(STANDING BEFORE HOLLIS)

YOU MAY'S WELL TURN HIM OVER. WE'RE GONNA GET HIM.

(HOLLIS PUSHS HIS HAND TO HIS HOLSTER.)

MEN

THAT'S RIGHT, HOLLIS
GETTN' SO IT AIN'T SAFE FOR A LADY TO GO OUT.
WE WANT THAT NIGGER!
GASTRATE THE DAMNED BURR-HEAD.

* Entire scene a dramatization of the case of LEE JONES. Durham Morning Herald, Jan. 12, 1938
HOLLIS

STAND BACK, I SAID. BOYS, YOU GOT THE WRONG TACTICS. THIS NIGGER DIDN'T HAVE MRS. GREEN—HE ONLY JUMPED ON HER CAR AND PUT HIS HANDS OVER HER MOUTH TO KEEP HER FROM SCREAMING. WE GOT A CLEAR CASE AGAINST HIM, AND YOU ALL KNOW WHAT HE'LL GET. GO ON HOME QUIET, NOW. WE DON'T WANT NO TROUBLE HERE.

MAN

ALL RIGHT, BOYS, RUSH HIM.

(MEN START TO SURGE FORWARD. THEY ARE AT STANDS WHEN ROBERT GREENE RUNS IN.)

GREENE

HEY WAIT! WAIT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

(HE LEAPS ON PLANT OF MURDER AND STANDS BEHIND HOLLIS.)

YOU GOT TO LISTEN, MEN.

MEN

IT'S THIS LADY'S HUSBAND. IF HE WAS A MAN HE'D BE ON OUR SIDE.

HOLLIS

HERE'S THE MAN THE NIGGER WRONGED. HE Wants TO TALK TO YOU.

(CROWD QUIETS A LITTLE.)

MAN

THIS AIN'T NO TIME FOR MAKIN' SPEECHES.

GREENE

LET'S BE SATISFIED BEFORE WE DO ANYTHING.

(MEN GROW QUIET. HOLLIS AND THE DEPUTIES ARE RELIEVED.)

Y'ALL KNOW IT WAS MY WIFE THE NIGGER ATTACKED. IT WAS HER FAIR THROAT HIS BLACK BASTARD'S HANDS TRIED TO CHOKE.

MAN

BOIL THE DAMN NIGGER IN OIL! CHOKIN'S TOO GOOD FOR HIM!

GREENE

NO, I'M THE AGGRIEVED PERSON, BOYS, AND I THINK I OUGHT TO HAVE THE FINAL SAY.

MEN

'HE GOT TO KEEP THE NIGGERS IN THEIR PLACES
WE COME TO LYNCH THAT NIGGER AND BY GOD WE'RE GOIN' TO.

GREENE

WAIT. LET ME REMIND YOU OF SOMETHING. WE MUST NOT LET OUR RIGHTFUL SENSE OF INJURY MAKE US LOSE OUR HEADS. UP IN WASHINGTON OUR SOUTHERN STATESMEN HAVE BEEN FIGHTING DAY AFTER DAY TO DEFEND THE ANTI-LYCHING BILL, WHICH THE NORTH IS TRYING TO FORCE ON US. WE DON'T WANT THE NORTH TELLING US WHAT TO DO; THAT BILL IS AN INSULT TO STATE'S RIGHTS. NOW WE'VE GON'T SHOW THE COUNTRY WE CAN SETTLE OUR OWN NIGGER PROBLEMS. ANY VIOLENCE RIGHT NOW WOULD HAMPER OUR MEN IN THEIR SPLENDID BATTLE FOR OUR FREE ON.

HOLLIS

HE'S RIGHT, BOYS, GO ON HOME, PEACEABLE.

MEN

HE'S GOT SOMETHIN' THERE.
ANY JURY'LL GIVE THE COON THE LIMIT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S A LOT SIMPLER TO HAVE IT OVER WITH.
BUT IT MIGHT CAUSE THAT BILL TO BE PASSED.
LET THE LAW TAKE ITS COURSE.

GREENE

IT WILL. AND I'M GOING TO AID SHERIFF HOLLIS IN CONTINUING HIS INVESTIGATION.

MAN

WE DON'T NEED NO INVESTIGATION. THAT COON'S GUILTY AS HELL.

(DEPUTIES HERE DESCEND THE PLATFORM TO DISPERSE THE CROWD.)

HOLLIS

ALL RIGHT, FOLKS. CLEAR OUT. WE GOT HIM, AND WE'LL GIVE HIM WHAT'S COMIN' TO HIM.

(CROWD MOVES OFF SULKING. HOLLIS AND GREENE LEAVE UP LEFT.)

GREENE

(ASS THEY GO.)
I WISH YOU COULD TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HERE.

HOLLIS

I'LL RUN THE BASTARD HEREEVA OVER TO SELMA FOR SAFE KEEPING.

(THEY GO OFF.)
EDITOR *

(TO MR. EXPERT.)

WELL, WE'VE SURELY SEEN SOMETHING TODAY.

MR. EXPERT

SOMETHING I'D RATHER NOT SEE.

EDITOR

YES, IF GREENE HADN'T TALKED UP. I'M A NEWSPAPER EDITOR AND I STUDY EVENTS LIKE THIS. LET ME TELL YOU, BOB GREENE SPOKE PROGRESS A MOMENT AGO—PROGRESS FOR LAW AND ORDER IN THE SOUTH.

MR. EXPERT

I DON'T THINK IT IS VERY DANGEROUS FOR HIM TO CLAIM THE FINAL SAY EVEN IF HE DID SAY THE RIGHT THING.

EDITOR

NO, BUT THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER. A YEAR AGO WHEN THE ANTI-LYNCHING BILL WAS UNDER DISCUSSION, MISSISSIPPIANS CELEBRATED THE OCCASION BY LYNCHING TWO NEGROES WITH BLOW TORCHES.

MR. EXPERT

SORRY I CAN'T SHARE YOUR BELIEF. I'M MAKING A STUDY OF CONDITIONS AND I THINK VIOLENCE IN THE DEEP SOUTH IS A BLOT ON AMERICA'S REPUTATION AS A NATION. THOSE MEN WERE LIKE TIGERS AFTER A RABBIT.

EDITOR

THEY'RE AS BAD ALL OVER THE SOUTH. SAY IF YOU'RE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN VIOLENCE—-

MR. EXPERT

I'M NOT. I STARTED OUT TO STUDY COTTON FARMING. BUT I COME DOWN HERE AND SOON SEE THE SOUTH'S PROBLEMS ARE ALL MIXED UP TOGETHER. IT'S EDUCATION AND RELIGION AND HOUSING AND SHARECROPPING AND VIOLENCE AND CRIME AND EROSION AND SOIL DEPLETION—-

EDITOR

(SMILING)

THAT'S WHY THE PROBLEMS HAVE NEVER BEEN SOLVED MAYBE. AS TO THE VIOLENCE, I STILL THINK YOU OUGHT TO GO UP IN THE CAROLINA COAST COUNTRY. THAT'S WHERE YOU CAN SEE MOB RULE.

(HOLLIS RETURNS WITH LEE JONES A CRINGING NEGRO, HANDCUFFED AND RUSHES HIM OFF RIGHT.)

BLACKOUT

* Comments of the editor are based on an editorial in the Raleigh News and Observer January 13, 1938.
SENATE COMMITTEE FLASH

(TO FOLLOW SCENE FIVE (D)

(LIGHTS UP ON MAN BEHIND SCRIM. MAN WEARING ELLENDER MASK IS STANDING IN SPOTLIGHT.)

ELLENDER MASK

NIGGERS JUST WONT BE SATISFIED UNTIL THEY RUB ELBOWS WITH THE WHITES. DOWN SOUTH SOME WHITE PEOPLE WOULDNT ASSOCIATE WITH COLORED PEOPLE LIKE YOU DO HERE. WHEN YOU MIX WITH THEM FOR WHILE, THE COLORED PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE EQUAL TO THE WHITES AND CAN DO THE SAME THINGS THE WHITE RACE CAN DO—THAT'S WHEN THEY GET IN TROUBLE UP HERE, *

SMITH MASK

THE SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA, JOSIAH BAILEY—

BAILEY MASK

(COMING IN FROM UP LEFT.)

THE DAY THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY STARTS CATERING TO THE NIGGERS, THERE'LL BE NO QUESTION OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN DOWN SOUTH. WE'LL NOT YIELD. WE'LL NOT LET ANYBODY TAKE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AWAY FROM US. WHEN WE WON THE VICTORY OF 1932, WE WON IT AS A DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THEN A GROUP OF SOCIALISTS SNOOPED DOWN ON THE PARTY. THEY HAVE NOT LEFT. YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU PLEASE ABOUT NIGGERS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND THE OTHER STATES, BUT WHEN YOU CATCH A LONE NORTHERN SENATOR TRY TO IMPOSE YOUR WILL ON US—-IN THAT HOUR SO HELP ME GOD! YOU'LL LEARN A LESSON YOU'LL NEVER FORGET.

(SHOUTING)

NOW WITH THIS ANTI-LYNCHING BILL A PARTY IS BEING MADE TO CATER TO THE NEGRO VOTE. I GIVE YOU WARNING THAT NO NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION CAN SURVIVE SUCH A STEP. YOU SAY THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH WONT BE AROUSED. YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT. THEY WILL RESPOND AS THEY'VE ALWAYS RESPONDED. YOU GO AHEAD WITH YOUR CATERING TO THE NEGRO VOTE IN THE NORTH—-

(HE SHARES A FINGER OF WARNING.)

—-AND THE SAME THING WILL HAPPEN IN THE NORTH THAT HAPPENED IN THE SOUTH.

DIETRICH MASK

(COMING IN FROM LEFT.)

MR. CHAIRMAN—-

SMITH MASK

DOES THE SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA YIELD TO THE SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS?

* A.P. article, Raleigh News and Observer, Jan. 16, 1938.
BAILEY MASK

I YIELD FOR THE PURPOSE OF A REPLY.

SMITH MASK

VERY WELL, SENATOR DIETRICH.

DIETRICH MASK

IN THE SENATOR'S REFERENCE TO THE CIVIL WAR HE HAS BEEN RAISING THE BLOODY SHIRT. THE TROUBLE IS YOU SOUTHERNERS ARE AFRAID YOU'LL LOSE YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO KILL COLORED PEOPLE. *

BLACKOUT

INTERMISSION

"OUR SOUTH" *

(RIGHT AFTER INTERMISSION)

WELL FOLKS, NEARLY A YEAR HAS PASSED IN OUR SOUTH. PEOPLE ATE NEARLY A THOUSAND MEALS.

(FADE)

THOSE THAT HAD THE FOOD. THE OTHERS GOT ALONG AS BEST THEY GOOD.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED IN OUR SOUTH.
THE SOIL GOT ERODED A LITTLE MORE AND THE PRICE OF COTTON WENT DOWN.
THERE WAS A HEAVY FLOOD IN THE SPRING AND A SEVERE DROUGHT IN THE SUMMER.
BOLL WEEVILS WERE MIGHTY PERT THIS HERE YEAR AND COTTON
DIDN'T DO SO GOOD. QUITE A FEW THINGS HAPPENED IN OUR SOUTH.
A LOT OF BABIES WERE BORN. YES, QUITE A LOT. AND THERE WERE QUITE
A FEW THAT WEREN'T BORN.... IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. THERE WERE
THE USUAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS, LYNCHINGS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS.
BUT CHANGES COME SLOW IN OUR SOUTH. SAME NUMBER OF CHAIN GANGS ON
THE ROAD. SYPHILLIS IS ON THE INCREASE AMONG THE NIGGER NEGROES....
AND THE WHITES, TOO. POLITICIANS STILL TALK AND HOLLY ROLLERS STILL
ROLL AND DIRTY LOOKING MEDICINE MEN SELL THEIR BLOOD CURES AT THE TOBACCO AUCTIONS. BUT IT'S OUR SOUTH. AND WE LIKE IT.

NOW ABOUT THE BRITTS, LINNIE LEE, YOU REMEMBER THE LITTLE GIRL THAT
WENT MARRIED SO CASUALLY. SHE HAD A BABY.

(LOOKING OUT AT AUDIENCE.)

NEVER HIND COUNTING ON YOUR FINGERS, MADAM. THEY WERE MARRIED
TEN MONTHS BEFORE IT CAME. AND FRANKIE... THAT'S HER HUSBAND.
THE BRITTS DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF HIM BUT SAY... HE TURNED OUT RIGHT
FINE, HARD WORKER AND FAIRLY DECENT FELLOW AFTER ALL. WHICH GOES
TO SHOW THAT YOU CAN NEVER TELL ABOUT FOLKS. AND JOHN BRITT....
WELL HE NEVER GOT OVER HIS LIKIN' FOR HELEN RILEY. HE SORT OF MOONED
AROUND ALL YEAR. NOW HE'S GOING TO TRY TO GET INTO SOME SORT OF
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE. BUT THAT WON'T WORK OUT. YOU'LL SEE. HELEN
RILEY WENT TO MARION, NORTH CAROLINA TO WORK IN THE MILL. HER BOY
FRIEND, BILL GIBSON WORKS THERE. BUT HE'S BY WAY OF BEING WHAT THEY
CALL A LABOR AGITATOR. AND WE DON'T LIKE FOLKS LIKE THAT IN OUR SOUTH. STEVE WENT TO WORK IN THE MILL TOO. BUT THE BOY AIN'T SO PERT. THE LINT'S GETTING IN HIS LUNGS AND IT AIN'T DOIN' HIM NO GOOD. AND THOSE YEARS BACK OF HIM WHERE HE GREW UP ON GRITS AND FAT BACK AIN'T COMIN' TO HIS HELP NOW, NEITHER. PA' AND MA' BRITT GET UP EVERY MORNING AND WORK LIKE HELL AS USUAL. BOTH OF THEM GOT MIGHTY OLD IN THE LAST YEAR. DAVE AND GRAMPS ARE STILL FIGURING OUT WAYS TO DUCK WORK AND RUTH BRITT IS IN LOVE WITH MR. EXPERT. AND HE WITH HER, OF COURSE. NOW MY FRIEND, ELBERT, WAS HELD UP A LITTLE IN HIS WORK. YOU SEE HE GOT TRANSFERRED FROM PROJECT E 5439 Y TO PROJECT X000576 AND THAT MEANT HE HAD TO COME BACK TO WASHINGTON AND GET A NEW CARD AND THAT TOOK NEARLY THREE MONTHS. SO WHEN HE CAME BACK TO OUR SOUTH AGAIN, HE HAD TO DO A LOT OF CATCHIN' UP IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. MR. POWERS AND ELBERT GOT TO BE FRIENDS. POWERS IS THE BRITT'S LANDLORD. I GUESS THAT'S ALL FOLKS. THINGS GO ALONG PRETTY EVENLY IN OUR SOUTH. WE AIN'T FOLKS TO DO MUCH CHANGIN'.

BLACKOUT

* Entire scene is a paraphrase on "Our Town" by Thorton Wilder
SCENE SIX (A)

TITLE: THE TALL TREES AND RELIGION

(A) "COME, COME, COME TO THE CHURCH IN THE WILDMOOD."

THE PROJECTION IS OF GOODS BY NIGHT. VERY TALL TREES HANG WITH MOSS, HANG OVER A CRUDE PLATFORM WHERE THE PREACHER IS HOLDING FORTH. THE MOON SHINES THROUGH THE FOLIAGE, MOTIVATING THE LIGHTING WHICH FOCUSES ON A LARGE, CRUDELY-LETTERED SIGN. SIGN READS:

THE LORD JESUS IS COMING.
PERHAPS TODAY.
ARE YOU READY? **

(WEARY, BRITT IS PLAYING THE ORGAN, SOFTLY AND KEENLY. IT IS A VERY SHABBY ORGAN AND STANDS ON THE PLATFORM NEXT TO THE PREACHER. JOHN BRITT WALKS ON ALONE AND STANDS AT LEFT. HELEN ENTERS, HAND IN HAND WITH WILL GIBSON. THEY STAND AT RIGHT. JOHN MAKES AN INSTINCTIVE MOVE TO GO TO HER. SHE TURNS AWAY. GIBSON PLACES HIS ARM ABOUT HELEN'S SHOULDERS. SHE LEANS AGAINST HIM. JOHN TURNS AWAY. LONNIE LEE COMES ON, WALKING BEHIND HER HUSBAND, FRANKIE. LALLY BRITT PLAYS SOME FAKE NOTES ON THE ORGAN. ABOUT HALF A DOZEN FATHERS AND THEIR WIVES STRAGGLE ON. THERE IS A SHRINKLING OF LISTLESS CHILDREN. MR. BRITT, MR. E. B. AND RUTH ENTER LAST AND STAND NEAR JOHN. GRAM'S ENTERS AFTER THE PREACHING STARTS AND STANDS ON THE EDGE OF THE CROWD MAKING CYNICAL GESTURES AND CHEWING TOBACCO.)

BRITT

EVER'N' REV. HUBERT.

PREACHER

(LOWLY)

EVER'N', BROTHER HUBERT.

FRANKIE

LOOK AT THAT SIGN. AIN'T SHE A BEAUTY?

GRAM'S

(ENTERING)

YEAH, YEAH. IT'S GETTIN' SO NOWADAYS FOLKS DON'T ASK HOW GOOD OL' PREACHER IS AT PRAISING. THEY WANT TO KNOW HOW GOOD HE IS AT PAIN'TIN'. SIGNS.

(SNIPS)

** This sign taken from Caldwell's book, "You Have Seen Their Faces."
PENITENTIARY

(AUTOMATICALLY)

ARE YOU SAVED, BROTHER?

(GRUMP SPITS)

(RECEIVING HIS FLOCK CLOSER)

COME DEAR, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, LET US WORSHIP THE LORD, GOD.

(THEY SHUFFLE A LITTLE CLOSER. ORGAN PLAYS UNDER HIS EXHORTATIONS. LOUDER NOW.)

LET US Bow OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

(SOME DO. GRUMP SPITS)

OH LORD, WE'RE GATHERED HERE TONIGHT TO SAVE SOME OF US FROM SELFISHNESS AND LUST. WE'RE HERE TO BRING SOME PEOPLE LOST AND NEOPTED INTO THE FOLD. WE'RE ALL TIRED, YEH, LORD, AND HUNGRY. BUT WE KNOW WHEN THE GLORIOUS DAY COMES, LORD, WE'LL ALL HAVE A PLENTY TO EAT.

(ORGAN PLAYS LOUDER. MOANS AND EJACULATIONS BEGIN TO COME FROM THE WORSHIPPERS.)

WOMEN

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

PRESERVERS

SOME OF US BEGIN TO COMPLAIN. A LITTLE LORD.

GRUMPS

AMEN!

PRESERVERS

FORGIVE US, CAUSE WE KEEP FORGOTTIN' WHAT WE GOT COMIN' IN THE LIFE TO COME.

GRUMPS

AMEN!

(PRESERVERS GIVES HIM A POISONOUS LOOK.)

PRESERVERS

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US. AMEN.

CROWD

AMEN!

PRESERVERS

(GATHERING HIMSELF FOR THE OBLAUGHT)

-10G-
"Now hear this and listen, it's time to repent. It's time to come to the Lord God and be takin' into His lovely arms. It says right here in the good book that you'll be solely regretful on judgment day if you don't show yourself on the side of the Lord." *

CROWD

عاري عاري

*(CROWD BEGINS TO WORK UP A HYSERIA WITH EJACULATIONS AND MOANS. SOME THROW THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND AND SOME WAVE THEIR ARMS IN THE AIR.)*

PRESIDENT

"HURRY, FOLKS! HURRY. GETTIN' RELIGION IS LIKE PUTTIN' MONEY IN THE BANK. **

CROWD

yeah yeah, yeah! amen! amen!

GRAMIS

HACK INTEREST, I SUPPOSE.

PRESIDENT

"WE'VE GOT A FIRST CLASS GOD." ***

WOMAN

AIN'T IT THE TRUTH?

CROWD

عاري عاري

SOME OF THEM JUMP UP AND DOWN. ORGAN PLAYS LOUDLY. PEOPLE BEGIN TO CHANT IN A KIND OF ECSTASY UNDER THE PREACHING. IN THE EMERGE

SING EMOTIONALISM, GIBSON PUTS HIS HAND ON WOMAN'S BREAST. **** JOHN, WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING, TURNS BLINDLY AND LEAVES."

PRESIDENT

COME UP HERE AND CAST YOURSELVES ON THE GROUND AND PRAY TO THE GOOD LORD ABOVE TO GIVE YOU. PRAY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS. PRAY TO HIM TO FORGIVE YOU.

** Quotation from caption under picture in Goldwell's book, "You Have Seen Their Faces."

*** Ibid

**** Ibid

Based on incident in "This Body The Earth" by Paul Green.

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(CROWD SURGES FORWARD. ALL EXCEPT THE BRITTS AND THEIR FRIENDS, SUCH AS MR. EXPERT AND FRANKIE THROW THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND. SOME ROLL OVER. A MAN GRABS A WOMAN AND SHE STRAINS HIM TO HER WHILE THEY ARE LYING ON THE GROUND. ORGAN PLAYS MORE WILDLY. OLDER PEOPLE THRO' THEIR HANDS UP TO HEAVEN AND MUMBLE PRAYERS. PREACHER EXHORTS THEM IN PANTOMIME AND AD LING ENCOURAGEMENT TO COME FORWARD. GRAMPS LAUGHS OUT LOUD.)

PREACHER

BROTHER BRITT, AIN'T YOU FEELIN' NOTHIN'

GRAMPS

COME TO THINK OF IT, I AM!

PREACHER

GLORY BHI

LALLY

Hallelujah!

PREACHER

TELL US WHAT YOU FEEL, BROTHER.

BRITT

I DUNNO...

(ALL STARE AT HIM.)

PREACHER

COME, COME, BROTHER BRITT. YOU FEEL THE DIVINE GLORY OF GOD.

BRITT

YEAH, I FEEL, ALL RIGHT.

PREACHER

TELL US HOW YOU FEEL.

BRITT

HELL, I FEEL JUST LIKE A FROG. KER-U-MPH! KER-U-MPH!

(While the surprised folks watch him, he gets into a leaf-frog position and hops out of the scene, croaking.)

--- Incident taken from "This Body the Earth" by Paul Green.
EVELYN GRANNIS GETS RELIGION, HE THINKS HE'S A FROG.
(THERE IS A LOUD SPLASH)

BRITT

THE DAMNED FOOL JUMPS INTO THE POND. HE CAN'T SWIM.
(FROM OFF, COMES A FRANTIC KER-UMPH)

I'LL HAVE TO HAUL HIM OUT AND I GOT MY BEST PANTS ON, TOO.*
(RE EXITS. PREACHER SWAYS MORE VIOLENTLY.
MUSIC IS LOUDER.)

PREACHER

(AS A WOMAN WRITHES ON THE GROUND IN A SORT
OFF DISMAL ECSTASY. CROWD GIVES HER SPACE.)

THERE'S SISTER MILDRED! SISTER MILDRED'S COMIN' THROUGH!

CROWD

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

PREACHER

(TO THE LITTLE GIRLS WHO HOLD LARGE
BASINS FOR THE COLLECTION.)

FALL AMONG THE WORSHIPPERS, CHILDREN! BOYS AND SISTERS, HOW IS
YOUR CHANCE TO BE XERX FORGIVEN. PRAY TO THE LORD GOD AND GIVE GENEROUSLY
TO HIS CAUSE! THE GOOD MAN ABOVE SHORE DO LISTEN TO THE PRAYERS OF
CONTRIBUTIN' PEOPLE. **

NEGRO

(A THE GIRLS BEGIN TO MOVE AMONG THE CROWD, A
NEGRO STACKERS IN WITH A BIBLE IN ONE HAND AND A
HALF-FILLED BOTTLE OF WHISKEY IN THE OTHER.)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I made it! I'm warned whiter'n snow. I'8
white man no. in the sight of the Lord God. Come to white man's church
now. I hear de voice of de Lord and I'8 come to be taken into de white
white's fold. Here I am, Lord. Here's my fore singer.

(FALLS TO GROUND. MR. EXPERT BENDS OVER HIM)

MR. EXPERT

MY HE'S DEAD! HE WAS RUN OVER BY A CAR. HE'S GOT TIME MARKS ALL OVER HIM!

* From "This Body, the Earth" by Paul Green.
** From Cohlwell's book, "You Have Seen Their Faces."
(MUSIC STOPS. DEAD SILENCE FALLS OVER THE CROWD.) *

FRANKIE

WHY THE FARE BURRELL'LL BE DAMMED FOREVER GOIN' TO HIS DEATH WITH A BOTTLE OF/gin in his hand.

PREACHER

(JUDICIOUSLY)

BUT HE'S GOT A BIBLE IN HIS HAND TOO. I THINK THAT WILL DO THE TRICK. THAT WILL GET HIM IN.

BLACKOUT

* This whole incident of the Negro is taken from an actual case. Caption over a news item in a recent issue of the Durham Sun reads: "Armed with rum and Bible, Negro meets his death."
SCENE SIX (D)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND RELIGION

(A) "JUST AS I AM." *

(LIGHTS COME UP. THIS IS THE HOLY ROLLER MEETING. IT IS LATE AFTERNOON. THE MEETING IS HELD IN A PLAIN BOARD SHACK. THE MINISTER IS UPSTAGE ON A SMALL PLATFORM. HIS CONGREGATION SITS FACING HIM ON RUDELY-MADE BENCHES. HE HOLDS A HALF-FILLED WHISKEY BOTTLE IN ONE HAND AND A BIBLE IN THE OTHER. BEFORE HIM ON A TRELIS, LIES A COFFIN BANKED WITH GARDEN AND FIELD FLOWERS. GRAMPS IS SITTING IN THE LAST ROW. MR. EXPERT AND RUTH BRITT SLIP INTO THE ROOM AND TAKE SEATS IN THE LAST ROW BUT ACROSS THE AISLE FROM GRAMPS.)

MINISTER

A WEEK AGO A NEGRO WAS KILLED DOWN TOWARDS DURHAM WAY WITH A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR IN ONE HAND AND A BIBLE IN THE OTHER. HE WAS RUN OVER. SOME SAY, SERVED HIM RIGHT. BUT I SAY IT WASN'T HIS FAULT.

(PAUSE)

A FEW DAYS AGO, A MEMBER OF OUR CONGREGATION WAS KILLED IN A SIMILAR WAY. HE LIES BEFORE US NOW.

(HAVING THE BOTTLE)

And "I HOLD IN MY HAND, THE BOTTLE, HALF-FULL, FROM WHICH OUR DEAR BROTHER DRANK THE DAMNABLE LIQUOR BOUGHT FROM A LICENSED LIQUOR STORE WHICH SENT HIM TO HIS DOOM." **

GRAMPS

(LICKING HIS LIPS)

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?

(Across the aisle to to Mr. Expert and Ruth)

I HEARD TELL THEY HAD A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR OVER HERE THAT THEY JUST HATED TO HAVE AROUND. SO I FIGURED****

CONGREGATION

SH-H-H-H

PREACHER

LAST NIGHT, THIS GOOD MAN STOOD HERE IN THE EVENING GLOW OF LIFE

* First line of a Roman Catholic Communion Hymn
** This funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. R.G. Eller, Botetourt, Va. From clipping in Southwest Virginia Enterprise, March 3, 1938.

3 Different Easter than in previous scene. More light than.
BUT WITH HIS FAMILY ABOUT HIM, WHILE THE ASSASSIN ENTERED AND LEFT HIM DEAD. A BETTER AND MORE INNOCENT MAN NEVER LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY.

CONGREGATION

AY----HEN
BLESS ED BE HIS HOLY NAME.

PRESBYTERO
MINISTER

HE HAD HARMED NO ONE, HIS LIFE WAS TAKEN FROM HIM AS THE DIRECT RESULT OF STATE-MADE, STATE-SOLD AND STATE-SEALED 100 PROOF LIQUOR.

CHAMP'S

(RISING)

BET IT WAS BOILING. LET'S SEE IT.

CONGREGATION

S-H-I-I-I-I-I-I

(TWO ELDERS GO TO CHAMP'S AND ESCORT HIM OUT WHILE THE MINISTER CONTINUES.)

MINISTER

THE LIQUOR CROWD TOLD YOU THAT TO PUT THE SEAL OF THE STATE ON A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR WOULD TURN IT INTO A SUNDAY SCHOOL, BUT THERE BEFORE YOU LISS THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT IT WILL DO.

(POINTS ACCUSING FINGER AT CONGREGATION AND THEN AT THE COFFIN.)

CONGREGATION

AY----HEN, PRESBYTERO.
YOU TELL 'EM, JAKE.

MINISTER

(PLEAS ED BY THEIR WORDS AND ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR TRIBUTE.)


CONGREGATION

PREACH IT, BROTHER JACOB.
GLORY BE!
BLESS ED BE TO JESUS!
BLESS HIS HOLY NAME.

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MINISTER

YOU CAN NO MORE CHANGE THE CONTENTS OF A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR BY THE
SEAL ON IT THAN YOU CAN CHANGE HELL BY HANGING THE PICTURE OF
JESUS CHRIST ON THE FRONT GATE.

CONGREGATION

AY---HAH! BROTHER.
GLORY BE TO JESUS!
BLESS HIS HOLY NAME!

MINISTER

OUR STATE HAS JUST MADE A HALF MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE SALE OF THE
STUFF THAT KILLED OUR GOOD BROTHER HERE. WHERE, I ASK YOU, DID THE STATE
GET THIS MONEY?

CONGREGATION

YEAH, WHERE?
YOU TELL US, BROTHER JACOB.

MINISTER

THEY GOT IT FROM THE HUNGRY MOUTHS OF SHIVERING CHILDREN AND
WIVES OR MOTHERS WAIT TO J.H.I. FOR THE USE OF IT; THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF
THOSE WHO, BECAUSE THEY USED LEGAL LIQUOR HAVE ALREADY SPECKLED THE HILLS
OF OUR STATE WITH THEIR GAPING GRAVES.

CONGREGATION

AY---HAH!
GLORY BE TO JESUS SAVIOUR MILD.

(WITHOUT WARNING, A HOLY ROLLER HEAR THE PLATFORM
JUMPS UP AND STARTS TO SPEAK IN THE UNKNOWN TONGUES.
THEN SHE GOES INTO AN EXTREME CASE OF WHAT THEY CALL
JERKS. THE CONGREGATION RISES AND SPREADS OUT TO
WATCH HER. HER MOVEMENTS ARE FRENZIED AND SEXUALLY
SUGGESTIVE. THE MINISTER NODS WITH SENSUOUS SATISFA-
CTION. THE CONGREGATION BREAKS TO MILL AROUND AND GROW
Excited. THE MINISTER CALMS THEM DOWN.)

MINISTER

WHILE SISTER ELLIE HERE FINISHES HER JERKS, THE ELDEST WILL PASS AMONG
YOU TO RECEIVE A COLLECTION FOR THE D.J.E.CI.T.S WIDOW AND CHILDREN.

(HE CONTINUES TO WATCH ELLIE'S JERKS WHILE THE TWO
ELDEST PASS AMONG THE THE CROWD WITH THEIR HATS IN
THEIR HAND.)

RUTH

(AS SHE AND MR. EXPERT RISE TO LEAVE.)

JUST DID YOU THINK OF IT?
MR. EXPERT

I'M NOT FORMED TO HAVE ANY PERSONAL FEELING WHILE I'M ON THE JOB, BUT FRANKLY I BELIEVE THESE PEOPLE ARE AS BAD AS THE NEGROES AS FAR AS RELIGION IS CONCERNED.

RUTH

YOU'RE A FOREIGNER OR YOU WOULDN'T SAY THAT. THE NEGROES GET SOMETHING VERY BEAUTIFUL IN AXING THEIR RELIGION AT TIMES. I'LL TAKE YOU TO A NEGRO CHURCH AND YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN.

MR. EXPERT

I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE A NEGRO SERVICE.

(The elders, having finished collecting, empty their hats into the hat of the minister.)

MINISTER

THANK YOU, MY GOOD CONGREGATION. THANK YOU EACH AND EVERY ONE. AND NOW LET US JOIN IN SINGING, "WHEN THEY RING THEIR GOLDEN BELLS FOR YOU AND ME."

(Congregation sings lustily as Ruth and Mr. Expert, looking back once, leave down left.)

BLACKOUT

* In many of the southern communities, any person outside the life of the community, a person of a higher station or a vacationer or someone from the north is referred to as a foreigner.
Scene Six (6)

Title: The Tenant Farmer and His Religion.

(D) "Send de rain."

(Lights come up on V, revealing the barren interior of a Negro church. The center wall has a painted window. Platform at stage left, facing stage right, an improvised pulpit on platform. Brother Dalton leans an elbow on the pulpit and lifts his eyes to heaven as he prays. Mourners are in various poses at the mourners' bench at the edge of the platform. Several small spots criss-cross rays to light up the Negro congregation.)

Brother Dalton *

Oh land! Oh land! send de rain on me.
Oh land! Oh land! send de rain on me.
Send de cool, sweet rain to wash my face,
Send de cool, sweet rain on de chosen race.

Chorus of Mourners

Oh land, oh land, lend yo' ears dis way.

(Mr. Expert and Ruth enter hand in hand, unnoticed by the Negroes. They stand in rear of church reverently watching the ceremony.)

Brother Dalton

Look down, look down, look down on me, oh land.
Look down, look down, look down on me, oh land.
See de misery, oh land, dat besets our feet,
See de trouble, oh land, dat de sinner has to meets.

Mourners

Oh land, oh land, turn yo' eyes dis way.

Brother Dalton

(Lifting his arms.)

Our fields is parched and our throats is dry,
Our chillun is hungry and beginnin' to cry.
De winds am come and tuk de earth away,
De bugs am crawlin' in de fields to play.

Mourners

Yeah land, de bugs am crawlin' in de fields to play.

* This scene was inspired by the sermons of J.W. Dalton, a negro minister in Apex, North Carolina.
BROTHER DALTON

(DELIBERATE AND LOW)

DE DUST AM STRANGLIN' DE RUSTY BUD AND DE FUNY BOLL,
DE WARS AM EATIN' ON DE BLIGHTED LEAF AND DE WILTED STALK,
DE HOT SUN AM SCORCHIN' DE WITH'RIN ROOTS AND DE ACHIN' SOUL,
MY HEART AM HEAVY, MY HEAD AM TIRED, MY FEET CAN'T WALK.

MOURNERS

HEAD

MY HEART AM HEAVY, MY FEET AM TIRED, MY FEET CAN'T WALK.

BROTHER DALTON

(WAITS AWHILE. SEVERAL MOURNERS GET UP.)

LOOK OUT, BROTHER TEEGE, * AND FIND IF IT'S RAININ'
OR SPRINKLIN' OR COMIN' UP A CLOUD.

BROTHER TEEGE

(AT THE WINDOW.)

DEY'S A FUNY PIECE O' CLOUD A-HANGIN' IN DE EAST,
BROTHER DALTON, BUT I CAIN'T SMELL A RAIN.

BROTHER DALTON

DEN, BROTHER AND SISTERN, GIT BACK ON YO' KNEES:
WE ALL GONNA PRAY AND WE AIN'T A GONNA FIZ,
WE GONNA HEAR DE SWEET NOISE O' THUNDER A-STRIKIN' IN DE NIGHT,
WE GONNA SMELL DE CLEAN BREATH O' RAIN FO' DE DAY GITS LIGHT.

MOURNERS

YEAH LAND, YEAH LAND, YESSUH O LAND.

BROTHER DALTON

(FASTER AND MORE INTENSIFIED)

IF YO' LISTENIN' LAND, IS YO' PAYIN' ANY HEED?

CHORUS

(PICKING IT UP.)

IS YO' LISTENIN' LAND, IS YO' PAYIN' ANY HEED?

BROTHER DALTON

IS YO' LISTENIN' TO DE CRY OF DE SINNER IN NEED?

CHORUS

IS YO' LISTENIN' TO DE CRY OF DE SINNER IN NEED?

* Brother Teege is a negro hired hand in Texas who lived in a shack provided for him by Burt Simms, veterinarian at Lufkin, Texas.
BROTHER DALTON

(HIGHER AND LOUDER)

LET IT RAIN, OH LAW'D, LET IT FOUR OH DOWN,
LET IT RAIN, OH LAW'D, TILL ED SOAK DE GROUND.

CHORUS

(STILL FASTER)

LET IT RAIN, LET IT RAIN.

BROTHER DALTON

DE CORN BREAD DONE GONE IN A PALE GREY SMOKE,
LAW'D, WHAT YOU GONNA DO FOR DE COLORED FOLK?

MOURNERS

(ON VERGE OF BREAKING INTO SONG.)

YEAH LAW'D, YEAH LAW'D.

BROTHER DALTON

(REACHING HIGHER)

LET IT RAIN, OH LAW'D, DON'T YOU LET IT PIDDLE,
LET DE WATER FLOW DOWN THRU DE COTTON MIDDLE.

CHORUS

YEAH LAW'D, YEAH LAW'D.

BROTHER DALTON

CLOUD UP YO' FACE AN' LET 'ER SPOUT,
WASH DE GULLIES JEST A LITTLE FURDER OUT.

CHORUS

(SWAYING TOGETHER)

YEAH LAW'D, YEAH LAW'D.

BROTHER DALTON

(AS IF THROWING HIMSELF TOWARDS GOD.)

LET 'ER FOUR, LET 'ER FALL, LET 'ER FLOW, LET 'ER SPEW,
MAKE NOAH'S LITTLE FLOOD LIKE A SPRING MORNIN' DAWN.

BROTHER TEEGE

(STILL AT THE WINDOW)

WAIT, BROTHER DALTON.

(BROTHER DALTON JERKS HIMSELF TOGETHER
AND THE ALL LOOK AT TEEGE.)
ASK DE LAWD, BROTHER DALTON, IF HE CAN'T MAKE A SOUSE, FROM DAT LITTLE BLACK CLOUD DAT'S A-FLOATIN' TOWARDS THE HOUSE.

BROTHER DALTON

(MUCH MORE CALMLY AS HE LIFTS HIS FACE IN SUPPLICATION.)

LAND, IF YOU EVER LOOSED A MIRACLE, WON'T YOU LET ONE FLY? LET DE RAIN COME A-BUSTIN' FROM DE TOP O' DE SKY.

MOURNERS

YEAH LAND, LET 'ER FLY, LET 'ER FLY, WIU DE RAIN A-GUSHIN' FROM DE TOP O' DE SKY.

BROTHER DALTON

(MORE PASSIONATELY COMMANDING.)

LOOK a-HERE, LAND—-----

(HE STOPS SUDDENLY. THE MOURNERS STOP, HOLDING THEIR PLEADING GESTURES. THERE IS COMPLETE SILENCE. IN THE SILENCE, MAY BE HEARD THE SOUND OF RAIN DROPS ON THE TIN ROOF. A SLIGHT, HALF BELIEVING SMILES APPEAR ON THEIR FACES.)

BROTHER TEBBE

(YELLING)

BLESS DE LAWD, HE DID IT! DONE IT!

(A GUST OF WIND COMES THROUGH THE WINDOW. THE RAIN COMES LOUDER, FINALLY BURSTING INTO A ROAR.)

MOURNERS

DE LAWD, HE DONE IT!

(HEY GROW RADIANT, THEN BURST INTO ONE LONG ROAR OF BLACK LAUGHTER.)

BROTHER TEBBE

(YELLING ABOVE THE ROAR.)

I WANT DatS RAIN TO FALL ON MY FACE.

(HE DASHES OUT THE DOOR, FOLLOWED BY THE OTHERS. BROTHER DALTON WALKS TO THE WINDOW AS

BLACKOUT.)
Scene Seven (1)

Title: The Tenant Farmer and Education *

(a) "On Bright College Years" **

(Lights come up on I. The projection is a dead college office. There is a desk and a chair behind it. Across from desk is a row of five or six chairs. Mr. Expert and John are sitting there waiting, their hats in their hand. The instructor enters and crosses to desk.)

Instructor

The President will see you in a moment.

Mr. Expert

Thank you.

(Instructor sits behind desk. He seems distraught and greatly agitated. Fingers a painter slip he has in his hand.)

Instructor

I am Mr., but my friend, John Britt is a farmer but I understand this college takes in sons of tenant farmers at a very low tuition and I was wondering—

Instructor

You'll have to see the President.

John

We've been waiting over an hour.

Mr. Expert

Is this a typical southern college?

Instructor

This is one hell of a right.

Mr. Expert

Are you a professor here?

Instructor

Yes. I came here from Princeton. My God!

* This entire scene is based on actual experience of one of the authors, William Poory who taught at Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, N.C. This college is typical of the small colleges of the south.
** From an old sentimental song book.
MR. EXPERT

THE FACILITIES TO SEEM BAD HERE. BUT HOW ABOUT ACADEMIC FREEDOM?

INSTRUCTOR

ACADEMIC FREEDOM! I WAS JUST HANDED THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY THE PRESIDENT.

MR. EXPERT

WHY?

INSTRUCTOR

IT'S TIME TO REWRITE THE CONTRACTS FOR NEXT YEAR AND MY JOB DEPENDS ON HOW I ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

MR. EXPERT


INSTRUCTOR

IT WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD. THERE'S NOT A SINGLE A.A.U. MAN ON THE FACULTY. SO A BOYCOTT WOULDN'T DO THIS SCHOOL ANY HARM.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT, FOR INSTANCE, IS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

INSTRUCTOR

LISTEN!

(READS)

"DO YOU BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT A PERSON MUST BE IN DRINKED IN WATER IN ORDER TO BE SAVED? DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNITY CHURCH?"

MR. EXPERT

THE COMMUNITY CHURCH? THAT SEEMS PRETTY SAFE. I'D SAY YES, TO THAT ONE.

INSTRUCTOR

OH, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T. NOTHING CO-OPERATIVE WILL GO HERE. WE ARE A PART OF THE DISCIPLES' CHURCH AND THE IDEOLOGY IS THAT EVERYBODY ELSE IS HEATHEN.

(READS)

"DO YOU SUPPORT THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY?"

MR. EXPERT

WELL, I COULD IF MY JOB DEPENDED ON IT.

* Actual question from questionnaire given to William Poore by President Howard S. Hilley of Atlantic Christian College.

** Ibid.
INSTRUCTOR

OH NO, IT'S A LIE, SAYS NOTHING WITNER GOES.

JOIN

YOU MUST HAVE A HARD TIME KNOWING WHAT TO ANSWER.

INSTRUCTOR

NO, THE NEXT QUESTION GIVES YOU THE ANSWER.

(READS)

INSTRUCTOR

"DO YOU CONDONE THE SUPPORT OF THIS APOTHEG TO ORGANIZATION?"

(HE LAUGHS. MR. EXPERT SHAKES HIS HEAD.)

"DO YOU VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE SEPARATIONIST IN ALL YOUR CLASSES?"

MR. EXPERT

DO YOU?

INSTRUCTOR

WELL, NOT WHEN I'M TEACHING KEL'S ODES.

(READS)

"DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE BOOK OF JONAH IS A TRUSTWORTHY ACCOUNT OF ACTUAL NAZI HISTORY? DO YOU BELIEVE IN WITHHOLDING SUPPORT FROM EVERY COLLEGE AND TEACHER TUNED WITH MODERNISM?"

(JUMPS TO HIS FEET, FLINGING PAPER ON THE DESK.)

NO, BY GOD, I DON'T AND I'M GOING IN THERE AND TELLING THE PRESIDENT I DON'T!

MR. EXPERT

WAIT! DON'T THROW YOUR JOB AWAY.

INSTRUCTOR

THIS MAKES ME SO DAMNED MAD. IT ISN'T ONLY ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN COLLEGE,
THERE ARE COLLEGES LIKE THIS ALL OVER THE SOUTH.

MR. EXPERT

TAKE IT EASY, BOY.

INSTRUCTOR

YEAR AFTER YEAR, THEY GO ON ROBBING THEIR STUDENTS OF THEIR RIGHTFUL HEIRAGE, SQUEEZING FROM THEIR SUPPORT FOR A WASTED EDUCATIONAL MILK.

* Actual question from questionnaire distributed by Tresidder Willey of Atlantic Christian College to the instructors.

** Ibid

*** Ibid

4 Actual name of the College

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MR. EXPERT

THE CHECK HAS TO BE PROMPT.

INSTRUCTOR

NOT TO THIS EXTENT. I'LL GET OUT OF TEACHIN'. HERE, I FEEL LIKE A PROSTITUTE. WELL, NO. SHE ONLY SELLS HER BODY.

JOHN

AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT MARRIED, YOU CAN THROW UP YOUR JOB, I SUPPOSE.

INSTRUCTOR

IT HAPPENS THAT I HAVE A WIFE TO SUPPORT. BUT I REFUSE TO DO IT BY BEING AN INTELLECTUAL WHORE.\*

(ENTER JAKE TAYLOR*)

JAKE

(AMIRINGLY)

WAS THAT POETRY?

(INSTRUCTOR HURRIES OUT.)

"WHERE WAS XXXX STRETCH GOIN'?"

MR. EXPERT

TO SEE THE PRESIDENT, I GUESS.

JAKE

OH OLD BULLDOG'S GOT HIS NUMBER. HE'S GOIN' TO GET CARNED ALL RIGHT.

JOHN

YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT.

JAKE

I'M PRESIDENT OF THE SENIOR CLASS. I KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON.

(GRINS)

BUT WHEN'S HE COMIN' BACK? DO YOU KNOW? I GOT TO SEE HIM.

MR. EXPERT

NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS, BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM ABOUT?

JAKE

I DON'T KIND TELLIN' YOU. I AIN'T GOIN' TO TAKE HIS OLD EXAM TOMORROW.

* A student of William Pooley from Bethel, North Carolina.

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Mr. Expert

Oh.

Jake

In fact, I'm not takin' none of my exams.

Mr. Expert

Cocky, aren't you. Mighty independent.

Jake

That's what I come to college for: to learn how to be independent.

Mr. Expert

You'd never get a degree up north that way.

Jake

Don't reckon I will here, neither, but I don't care.

Mr. Expert

You say you're a senior?

Jake

That's right. I would have graduated next week.

John

Why don't you take your exams and finish up, then?

Jake

Ain't no use in finishin'.

Mr. Expert

But you spent four years—

Jake

Learned enough, yes sir.

(Spits tobacco)

I'm a college man now. Tomorrow, I'm goin' home and look over the cotton the old man planted for me. I'll sell it come fall and git me somethin'.

Mr. Expert

Well, what I've been hearing all over, it won't bring you much.

Jake

Huh, but I'll live home with the old man—-it don't cost me nothin'.
I'LL GO DOWN TO THE STORE AND COME BACK, AND PUT MY FEET UP ON THE STOVE LIKE I DO THE REST. I'M A DRUNK LICKER. SOMEBODY, IF I'M HERE OR NOT, I'LL TELL THE HOGGERS TO PUT ME IN A GRAP. I DON'T NEED NO NOTER FOR ANYTHING I'M GOING TO DO.

MR. EXPERT

THEN WHY IN GOD'S NAME DID YOU COME HERE?

JAKE

OH I DON'T KNOW. I WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT PLATO, AND DAVE'S AND SHAKESPEARE AND GUYS LIKE THAT.

(HE GOES SHEEPISHLY.)

WELL, I'VE LEARNED 'EM, AIN'T I?

PRESIDENT

(ENTERS. HE WEARS A BLOKK COAT AND CARRIES A BIBLE UNDER HIS ARM.)

MR. GOOD MORNING, MR. EXPERT. SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING SO LONG. WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME ABOUT?

MR. EXPERT

(TAKING JOHN'S ARM AND LEADING HIM TOWARDS THE DOOR.)

GIVE----- GIVE------GIVE ABOUT------NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL.

(HEY RUSH TO EXIT AS----

BLACKOUT
Scene Seven (B)

Title: The Tenant Farmer and Education

(B) Where to?

Lights come up on an intersection of two country roads. Upstage, is a sign reading "Middleton 5 mi." Sam—a Negro with a bundle on his back stands stupidly gaping at the sign. Mr. Expert and Ruth enter from left.

Ruth

I think we're on the wrong road. Ask him, Elbert.

Mr. Expert

Say Sam, how far is it to the orphanage?

Sam

How come you know my name? I ain't never been here before.

Mr. Expert

Oh I just guessed it.

Sam

Den' why don' yo' guess how fur it is to everywhere yo' goin'?

Mr. Expert

(Slightly taken back.)

I didn't really guess your name. I just call all Negroes I don't know, Sam, and all white men I don't know, John.

Sam

Xamem Yassuh, maybe dis here sign over here say somethin'. I been tryin' to read it myself.

Mr. Expert

Middleton, five miles.

Sam

Dat what it say? Das rat where I' se headin'?

Mr. Expert

Can't you read any?

* From the Saturday Evening Post, January 8th, 1938, p. 13
SAM

YASSUH. I CAN READ HOW FUR, BUT I CAN'T READ WHERE TO. *

MR. EXPERT

DID YOU EVER GO TO SCHOOL?

SAM

YASSUH 'BOUT A MONTH ONE TIME.

BLACKOUT

* From Saturday Evening Post, January 8, 1938 p. 13
SCENE SEVEN (C)

TIME: THE TENEMENT FARMER AND EDUCATION

(c) THE "SANCTIFIED THIRD DEGREE".*

(A POOL OF LIGHT REVEALS MILDRED HESTER **) 
A SIXTEEN-YEAR OLD GIRL STANDING WITH BOUND
HEAD BEFORE MR. J. C. HOUGH.** THE GIRL IS
SHOE-FOOTED AND BARE-LEGGED.)

HOUGH

WILL YOU CONFESSION?

MILDRED

I DIDN'T DO IT.

HOUGH

I SHALL BE FORCED TO USE THE LASH ON YOU. YOU ARE AN ORPHAN,
HOMELESS, ENTRUSTED TO OUR CARE FOR YOUR EDUCATION. YOU HAVE
BEEN A PROBLEM CHILD TO US. WE FIND DIFFICULTY IN EDUCATING YOU.
YOU HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND MUST BE WHIPPED UNLESS
YOU CONFESSION AND NAME YOUR CONFEDERATES.

MILDRED

I DON'T TELL.

HOUGH

I SHALL WHIP YOU UNTIL YOU DO. BUT FIRST "I SHALL PRAY OVER MY TASK." ***

(HIS KNEELS AND PRAYS BRIEFLY. THE GIRL STANDS IN
THE POOL OF LIGHT AND WATCHES HIM FEARFULLY. HE
GETS TO HIS FEET, TAKES A WHIP FROM THE TABLE
AND LASHES HER ACROSS THE LEGS.)

MILDRED

I DIDN'T DO IT!

(HIS HITS HER HARDER.)

I'M SORRY! PLEASE STOP!

(HIS HITS HER A THIRD TIME. SHE SCREAMS.)

DON'T HIT ME ANYMORE. I'LL TELL. I DID IT.

(SHE SPRINTS)

HOUGH

* Three describing whipping from Greensboro News 12-21-37
** Sixteen-year old girl inmate of The Kennedy Baptist Orphan Home
near Kinston, N.C.
*** Superintendent of the home
**** Mr. Hough testified that he prayed before whipping girl -127-
WHO WERE YOUR ACCOMPLICES?

MILDRED

I CAN'T TELL ON THEM.

ROUGH

WE'LL SEE.

(HE LASHES HER SEVERELY. MILDRED GRITS HER TEETH BUT REMAINS SILENT.)

WE'LL TRY IT AGAIN.

(HITS HER AGAIN. SHE MOANS.)

THERE'S LUCK IN THREES MAYBE.

(HITS A TERRIFIC BLOW. MILDRED SCREAMS.)

DOES THAT HELP YOUR MEMORY ANY?

(HIS IS ABOUT TO HIT HER AGAIN WHEN SHE SCREAMS AND FALLS TO HER KNEES.)

MILDRED

DON'T HIT ME AGAIN. DON'T HIT ME. I'LL TELL! I'LL TELL WHO WERE IN ON IT WITH ME.

ROUGH

(EYES TO HEAVEN.)

LORD, I THANK THEE.

(TO MILDRED AS HE TAKES PAD AND PENCIL FROM POCKET.)

NOW GIVE ME THE PAPERS.

BLACKOUT

NOTE: IN ALL, THE GIRL WAS LASHED SIX TIMES.

THIS IS A ECM REENACTMENT OF A WHIPPING THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE KENNEBURY BAPTIST ORPHAN HOME. THE GIRL, MILDRED HESTER, HAD COMMITTED AN OFFENSE.
Scene Seven

Title: The Tar Heel Farmer and Education

(d) Higher Education

(Lights come up on a large bare room.

A committee of about eight women sit in chairs in a semi-circle facing a large bare table in back of which sit J.C. Hough **
I.C. Greer *** and Rev. Dr. Bertrand W. Spillman ****.

The Whit lies on the table before them. The girl's father, Mr. Hester, a poor-looking sharecropper stands in the middle of the room. With his hat in his hand, Mrs. Britt and Ruth and Mr. Expert sit a little detached from the rest. (A fictional chairman has charge of the meeting.)

First Woman

We, the women of the Lenoir North Carolina neighborhood have caused this case to be brought to Raleigh. ******

Second Woman

What sort of orphan asylum is this when a defenseless child, a girl of sixteen can be shipped as though she were a criminal on a chain gang? I believe that "Master Hough" ****** be had to do with his action in this case.

Women

(Angrily)

Aye.

First Woman

It is to know the exact circumstances of this atrocious brutality.

Hough

(Starts to rise to speak. Is pulled down by his companions.)

I wish to state-----

Second Woman

This is the twentieth century, not the middle ages. We are supposedly

* The version of the Lenoir county neighborhood brought Mr. Hough to Raleigh to answer charges of beating an orphan entrusted to his care.

From Greensboro News 12-21-27

** Superintendent of the Baptist Kennedy Home

*** I.C. Greer, colonel Baptist of Hotspur and trustee of the home.

**** Another Baptist and trustee.

***** Deposition of the actual hearing as reported in the

Newspapers of North Carolina referred to him as "Master Hough".

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GOOD CHRISTIAN AND I ATTEND TO A BENEFICENT HOME FOR POOR CHILDREN.
I AM A CANDIDATE FOR HONORS.

CHALIFAN

(CLARING HIS THROAT)

MR. HUGHES, THE CANDIDATE FOR HONORS, SAID IT IS ALL DUE TO A MISUNDERSTANDING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE SEEMS TO BE AN UNFORTUNATE SITUATION HERE.
I'M SURE IT IS ALL DUE TO A MISUNDERSTANDING.

DISUNDERSTANDING, WE FEEL THAT "ANY FURTHER STIR ABOUT THE LASHING

SHOULD BE KILLED AT THE SOURCE." I LET US HEAR FROM DOCTOR HUGHES.

HUGHES

I... "RAGE HIGH ALL OVER NORTH CAROLINA." ** I AM A GOOD CHRISTIAN,
\nES GIRL WAS THE LEADER IN OFFENDING AND WHEN CAUGHT SHE COULD NOT
\nTELL WHO HER ASSOCIATES WERE. I ONLY STRUCK HER SIX TIMES. I PRAYED
\nFIRST AND RECEIVE DIVINE GUIDANCE.

(SECOND WOMAN SHORTS ININDIANTLY

FIRST, I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL THE GIRL’S FATHER, MR. HESTER.

(MR. HESTER STEPS FORWARD)

1ST WOMAN

MR. HESTER, THE GIRL'S MOTHER?

MR. HESTER

GENTLEMEN, THIS GOOD WHILE.

HUGHES

MR. HESTER, DO YOU OBJECT TO MY WHIPPING YOUR DAUGHTER?

MR. HESTER

MR. HESTER, DO YOU OBJECT TO MY WHIPPING YOUR DAUGHTER?

MR. HESTER

'NO. I LIKE THE LASH FOR HER. YOUR USE OF IT SAVED ME THE WORK." ***

HUGHES

YOU SEE, LADIES? THAT’S ALL, MR. HESTER.

(MR. HESTER RETIRES)

CHAIRMAN

WE HAVE HAD A DOCTOR EXAMINE THE GIRL.

(DOCTOR COMES OUT OF THE SHADOW.)

DOCTOR DID YOU FIND THE GIRL HAD BEEN DONE ANY SERIOUS INJURY?

* Statement from Dr. Spilman regarding the case.
** Mr. Hough’s statement at the hearing
*** Statement made by the girl’s father
****
DOCTOR

No-o-o-o-o-u. "THE USE OF THE LEATHER ON THE LEGS OF YOUNG MISS
ELIZABETH'S. ABOUT SEVERITY, IT SHOULD, ONLY THE REPRIZED VIOLATION
SHOULD FOR THE GIRL'S REBELLION."

CHAIRMAN

THANK YOU.

(DOCTOR FADES AWAY)

HOUGH

"I ONLY STRUCK HER SIX LICKS." **

1ST WOMAN

"AND THOSE SIX HIT THE TRUE AROE APOTOLIC HING." I SUPPOSE. "THEY
WERE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF HAVING THE FEAR OF GO TO THE RECALCI-
TRANT GIRL. ONE LICK FAILED, THE LICKS LIKEME." I UNDERSTAND, "THAT
MIGHT NOT PROVE. THE GIRL CONFESSIONED AND THOSE MORE MADE HER TELL ON HER
CO-MITTEE." *** NICE WORK, MASTER HOUGH.

2ND WOMAN

"AH YES, A TRUE APOTOLIC OF GOD, MR. HOUGH. YOU ACTUALLY THINK YOUR
CONDUCT WAS JUSTIFIED?

HOUGH

CERTAINLY.

1ST WOMAN

I THINK WE ARE ALL AGREED.

(OTHER WOMEN ROLL THEIR HEADS.)

WE INSIST ON A DEFINITE STATEMENT FROM YOU, MR. GREER, AS SUPERINTENDENT
AND TRUSTEE OF THE ORPHANAGE AND FROM YOU, DOCTOR SPIWIN, AS TO WHETHER
HEADMASTER HOUGH SHALL BE PERMITTED TO GET AWAY WITH THIS BRUTALITY.

SPIWIN

"WE FIND NO FAULT IN HOUGH." ****

GREER

"WE FIND DOCTOR HOUGH IMPASSIBLE OF ANY WRONG." *****

2ND WOMAN

THAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE?

** From testimony at hearing, Greensboro Daily News 12-21-37
*** Statement by Superintendent Hough at the hearing in Raleigh
***** Statement by Spilman and Greer in exonerating Hough
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SPILLMAN

VIOLENTLY.

1ST COM.

(RISING)

VERY WELL. WE HAVE WITH US AT THIS MEETING, A GENTLEMAN FROM
WASHINGTON, MR. EXPERT. HE IS STUDYING CONDITIONS IN THE COTTON
SOUTH. HE HAS JUST HEARD YOU CONDONE THE BRUTAL WHIPPING OF A
SIXTEEN YEAR OLD CHILD. SINCE YOU ARE SO RIGID IN YOUR ATTITUDE,
YOU CAN HAVE NO OBJECTION IF MR. EXPERT PUBLISHES THE RESULT OF THIS
INQUIRY IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

(MR. EXPERT RISES. THERE IS CONSTERNATION AMONG
THE TRUSTEES. THEY ARE HORRIFIED. WHISPERED CON-
SULTATIONS AND HORRIFIED GLANCES AT MR. EXPERT.)

GREER

 echt on a com. "I AM NO BELIEVER IN THE WHIP," MYSELF. DO NOT
QUOTE ME AS SAYING I BELIEVE IT. "I DISAPPROVE AS A MATTER OF
CHURCH POLICY, THE USE OF THE WHIP," *

SPILLMAN

I AM SURE MR. EXPERT, THAT I HAVE "CONVINCED (YOU) AND "THE COMPLAINING
JEWISH OF LEFEBVRE COUNTY THAT THE WHIPPING WAS JUSTIFIED." *

MR. EXPERT

I'D NEVER BE CONVINCED OF ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

SPILLMAN

I BELIEVE "THAT ANY FURTHER STIR ABOUT THE LASHING SHOULD BE KEPT FROM
THE PUBLIC." *

CHAIRMAN

NO POINT IN WASHING DIRTY LINEN IN PUBLIC, HA, HA.

SPILLMAN

MR. EXPERT, YOU MAY SAY THIS IN YOUR NEWSPAPERS; "WE EXONERATE
MR. BOUGH. BUT I NEVER AGREED THAT THE GIRL SHOULD HAVE BEEN WHIPPED." *

* From statements made at the hearing in Raleigh.

Note: After the first publicity in the newspapers regarding the whipping;
after the first news items condemning the whipping were published, the
trustees did an entire about face and insisted that they never
condemned the whipping of the girl. Both items are at hand.

BLACKOUT

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SCENE SEVEN (E)

TITLE: THE TALENT FARMER AND EDUCATION

(E) THE TALENT

(FOOL OF LIGHT SHOWS A PRISON OFFICIAL SITTING AT HIS DESK. MR. EXPERT STANDS BEHIND HIM. THERE IS A LARGE BANDED WINDOW.)

OFFICIAL

ARE YOU CLEAR IN YOUR OWN MIND JUST WHAT YOU CAME DOWN SOUTH TO FIND OUT?

MR. EXPERT

YOUR COTTON: THE ECONOMIC AND SPIRITUAL AND MORAL AND EDUCATIONAL THAT IT HAS ON THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLES.

OFFICIAL

AND HOW ARE YOU WORKING ON THE EDUCATIONAL ANGLE?

MR. EXPERT

YES!

OFFICIAL

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT TO XXX SEE ME, A PRISON OFFICIAL ABOUT. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD THE XXX PRISON STUFF DRAWS BACK. YOU WROTE IN A LOT OF PATHETIC SENTIMENTAL STUFF ABOUT THE CHAIN GANG. YOU KNOW, THE SINGING-SONG PRISONERS AND THAT SORT OF JUNK? HOW DO YOU THE NEXT 4TH EDUCATION.

MR. EXPERT

JUST THIS WAY. I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR REACTIONS TO THE SINGING OF COMEDY AT THE ORPHANAGE.

OFFICIAL

(LAUGHS)

I JUST TELL YOU THIS: THAT "STATE PRISON AUTHORITIES PICKED UP BLUES TODAY. THEY READ THE PROCEEDINGS LAST NIGHT IN WHICH SUPERINTENDENT J. C. ROUGHR OF THE BAPTIST KENNEDY HOME NEAR KINGSTON WAS BEEN EXECUTED IN PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM FOR LASHING SIXTEEN-YEAR OLD HILDEG HESTER, PROBLEM GIRL OF THE ORPHANAGE." **

* December 19, 1937
** Direct quotation from Greensboro Daily News, 12-19-37

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MR. EXPERT

why should the whipping of a half-grow girl give you such an
almighty lot of guts?

OFFICIAL

"I DECLARE AND SWEAR, THAT IF THE VERY ELEPHANT OF THE LORD CAN APPEAL
THE LEGS OF THE LEGS OF A MISS IN HER TEARS, SURELY THE STATE CANNOT
BE SHOOLY ABAINTIFIED WHEN IT DRESS AGRES HIGRA----" *

MR. EXPERT

WHAT

OFFICIAL

I. CH LADIE, THE HIP. "----WHEN IT DRESS AGRES BIGRA FROM HER LONG-
FLESHEMING AND USES HER TO SAVE SOULS. *

BLACKOUT

* Quotation from news item in North Carolina papers of December 19, 1937.
  Direct quotation from Greensboro Daily News 12-19-37
TIRED OF IT ALL.

(LIGHTS UP ON MR. EXPERT. HE STANDS WITH HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS A MOMENT, LOOKING DOWN ON THE GROUND, DISCOURAGED. SUDDENLY HE STARTS FUMBLING IN HIS POCKETS. HE PULLS OUT A COTTON BOLL, A STALK OF TOBACCO LEAF, A CAN OF SNUFF, A WITHERED BRANCH OF HONEYSUCKLE, SEVERAL SMALL NOTEBOOKS AND SUNDARY SCRAPS OF PAPER, OLD ENVELOPES, PAPER SACKS, A RIPPLED CUFF WITH WRITING ON IT AND SO ON. HE GLANCES OVER HIS NOTES WITH THE REMINDED AIR OF A MAN IN A DILEMMA.)

MR. EXPERT

(READING FROM NOTES ON AN OLD PENCIL)

DIET VERY BAD.

(READS FROM NOTES WRITTEN ON MARGIN OF PAGE TORN FROM MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE.)

SOLT BY FACILITIES ABSOLUTELY TERRIFYING.

(SIFTS DUST OUT OF AN ENVELOPE BEFORE READING THE NOTES PENCILLED ON IT.)

SOIL EROSION.

(READS SCRIBBL ON PAPER LABEL OF TIN OF SNUFF)

HIGH RATIO OF ILLITERACY. AND THEN THERE ARE THE NOTES ON CRIME, NICE TO MEET YOU.

(THINKS HARD)

LET'S SEE NOW. IF WE SEND ALL THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL, THAT WILL LOWE THE ILLITERACY. BUT WHO WILL HELP PICK THE COTTON? THEY MAKE LITTLE MONEY NOW. ALL THE CHILDREN STAYING HOME TO WORK.

(AIR OF AIRPLANE IS HEARD OVE HEAD. HE LOOKS UP.)

THAT WILL NOT BE EASY. AFTER ALL THEY DO GET THE RULR COTTON PICKER IN THE HILLS. THAT WILL PUT THEM ALL OUT OF WORK. STILL DOCTOR FRANK CAMERON, LIE LIVES RIGHT ACROSS THE RY FROM US, POLKYS, HAS BEEN WORKING FOR SE COMPANY OR SOMETHING.

(PULLS CLIPPING FROM HIS PILE OF NOTES.)

THIS IS AN ASSOCIATED PRESS ARTICLE, DATED JULY SOMETHING LYSJ 1932.

HERE IT SAYS, "INSTEAD OF USING A PICKER, DOCTOR CAMERON COULD CUT DOWN THE COTTON STALK AND HARVEST IT STALK AND ALL. INSTEAD OF NECK AND SELLING

* Fiskar professor of the chemistry department of the U of U. Lives next door to the editor.
OH I GIVE UP. IT'S GOT ME LICKED. I CAN'T SEE MY WAY OUT. IT'S TOO MUCH OF A PUZZLE FOR ME. I QUIT!!!!!

(Assia starts to walk off stage.)

BLACKBOARD

(Lighting up)

Hey Expert! Where do you think you're going?

Voice from a piece:

Hello.

BLACKBOARD

Hello, yourself. Elbert!!!

Mr. Expert

I'm quitting!

BLACKBOARD

You can't! Say! You don't see me quitting, do you? Don't you think it's tough on me doing out the figures?

Mr. Expert

Sure, but all you got to do is dig 'em out. I got to figure 'em out.

BLACKBOARD

Sissey!

Mr. Expert

Who's Sissey?

BLACKBOARD

You are......if you quit.

Mr. Expert

(Resignedly)

Well, I'll stick if you're going to, but it's killing me off, and my feet hurt too.

BLACKBOARD

Give my regards to Ruth Britt.
TO FOLLOW SCENE SEVEN (F)

(LIGHTS UP ON 1 BEHIND SCRIM. MAN WEARING BANKHEAD MASK IS STANDING IN SPOT-LIGHT. ALL THE OTHER MASKS ARE REMOVED AND THROWN INTO A HEAP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE. THE MEXICAN PEONS ARE ALL ASLEEP WITH THEIR HEADS IN THEIR ARMS ON THE TABLE.)

BANKHEAD MASK

MR. CHAIRMAN, THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY, SOME OF THEM EVEN IN THE SOUTH, WHO WANT TO PUT THE COTTON PRODUCERS DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, ON A LIVING STANDARD THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO STARVE OUT THE CHINESE COLISEUMS, THE RUSSIAN SLAVES, THE MEXICAN PEONS. FOR GOD'S SAKE, IF OUR PEOPLE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT HONORABLE EXPERIENCE ANY WORSE THAN THEY HAVE GONE WITH IT, MERELY TO MAINTAIN VOLUME BUSINESS FOR EXPORTERS; IF THEY HAVE TO GO DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, WITH THEIR PRICES TO DRIVE THAT TYPE OF PROFESSION OUT OF THE COTTON FIELDS, WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO OUR FOUR COTTON FARMERS WHO FOR ALL THESE YEARS HAVE BORNE THE BURDEN OF PROHIBITIVE TARIFFS, WHO HAVE PAID THE TARIFF TAX ON NEARLY EVERYTHING THEY CONSUME, WHO HAVE HAD NOTHING THAT THEY SELL PROTECTED; WHOSE INCOME HAS GONE DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, UNTIL IT IS THE LOWEST, SMALLEST PER CAUSA INCOME OF ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE IN AMERICA. AH, MR. CHAIRMAN, RATHER THAN DRIVE OUR COTTON FARMERS DOWN TO THAT LOW LEVEL IN ORDER TO REDUCE DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, THE PRICE OF COTTON SO AS TO FORCE FOREIGN MARKETS COUNTRIES OUT OF THE MARKET, I WOULD SAY LET US LOSE SIGHT OF FOREIGN MARKETS. IF WE HAVE TO REDUCE OUR FARMERS AND ALL THE FOREIGN PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH TO A STATE OF FINANCIAL RUIN AND BANKRUPTCY BY SELLING COTTON TO FOREIGN MARKETS FAR BELOW THE COST OF PRODUCTION, THEN, IN THE NAME OF COMMON SENSE AND FAIRNESS AND DECENCY, WHY SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO PILE UP COTTON NO ONE CAN BUY?

(Waits for an answer. There is a large concerted noise from the dozing lawmakers.)

BLACKOUT.

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SCENE LIGHT (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND MARKETING COTTON
(A) WHAT DO I GET FOR IT?

(A TRAVELLING SPOT FOLLOWS JOHN BRITT, HUBERT BRITT AND MR. BEE BEE BLACKBOARD WHO ARE ON THEIR WAY TO A COTTON MARKET. MR. BLACKBOARD, HIS CLOTHES FULL OF CHALK DUST AS USUAL WALKS THREE FEET BEHIND THE MEN.)

BRITT

NO: YOU'LL SEE NOW IT'S DONE AND WHAT PRICE WE GET FOR OUR COTTON.

MR. EXPERT

THEN YOU'RE AT HAND TO KNOW HOW MUCH A BALE SELLS FOR AND YOU CAN ASK FOR YOUR PAY.

BRITT

IT AIN'T SO SIMPLE AS THAT. THE FIGURIN' AIN'T DONE DONE HERE, IT'S DONE DOWN TO THE STORE.

(UNEASILY)

SAY WHO IS THAT FOLLOWING US ALL THE TIME? LOOKS LIKE AN UNDERSTUDY TO ME.

MR. EXPERT

DON'T MIND HIM. HE'S A FRIEND OF MINE. COULDN'T DO WITHOUT HIM.

MR. BLACKBOARD

(IN A SCHOLARLY VOICE)

ARE YOU TELLING ME?

(THEY WALK OFFSTAGE AND WALK ON TO PRODUCTION SCENE OF COTTON SELLING MARKET. MR. BLACKBOARD DOES NOT FOLLOW. THE SCENE IS SET ON 11. LARGE PAIR OF COTTON WEIGHING SCALES AT RIGHT WITH A BALE SUSPENDED. OTHER BALES OF COTTON ARE SUGGESTED VoSTAGE. THIS IS ONE END OF THE COTTON YARDS. ANOTHER BALE IS WAITING LIST OF THE SCALES TO BE WEIGHED. MR. TOWERS, THE LANDLORD AND HIS OVERSEER ARE ON THE SET. OVERSEER IS FRANK WILSON. JOB: UNDERNEE JOE JACKSON A COTTON BUYER HAS CHARGE OF THINGS. GREAT'S SITS AGAINST A BALE CONTENTLY WHISTLING.

*This character based on actual person called Joe Menefee, a cotton buyer with headquarters at Glenn's Hardware Store, Luskin, Texas.
A group of negroes are lounging about away from the group of whites. They are in threadbare clothes and watch the proceedings solemnly. Mr. Russell is there and Frankie (who is Linnie Lee's husband. There are one or two other farmers around.)

JACKSON

Don't know what your kickin' about. That's two points higher than it was this time yesterday.

POWERS

I'm going to be a hell of a lot more than that considerin' we had to fight the roll devils, the floods and the drouths and God knows what else to get it.

MR. EXPERT

How much up is the cotton?

JOHN

Two tenths of one cent per pound.

GRAPES

If you happened to have two bales to sell, Mr. Expert, then two points extra would help. Hear buy you a pair of them buck brand overalls Frank Wilson sells down to the store. Ain't that right, Frank?

WILSON

Just about.

RUSSELL

(Coming forward)

What's all goin' at, Joe?

(Here blackboard lights up with a projection of yesterday's New Orleans quotation. XXX *)

JACKSON

Good ridin'. With seven eight inch staple is----

(He gives figures on blackboard)

SMALL LAND OWNER

Ain't that the yellow shucks for you thought?

POWERS

If I had been offered that for my cotton ten years ago, I'd-a knocked *

* This quotation to be taken from any authoritative newspaper.
JACKSON

THIRTY YEARS AGO TODAY, I WAS PAYING 90 CENTS A POUND FOR COTTON. *

MR. EXPERT

BUT I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL THE GROWERS PLANTED LESS COTTON THIS YEAR. THAT OUGHT TO MAKE THE PRICE GO UP.

FOWERS

THAT USED TO BE SO, BUT IT AIN'T ANYMORE. IF WE JUST MADE HALF AS MUCH THIS YEAR AS WE PRODUCED LAST YEAR, THE PRICE STILL WOULDN'T GO UP. **

FOWERS

THAT'S RIGHT.

FOWERS

BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, MR. EXPERT, WHEN WE HAD WORLD MARKETS AND COTTON WAS A RICH MATERIALL, ITS PRICE WAS FIXED BY THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND LAWS. ***

* Figures taken from your book for 1815, Department of Agriculture.


GRANTS

HILL: HIS COMMON LIPS AND GLANCES
ANGERYLY AT POWERS)

IT COULDN'T BE THAT YOU HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PRICE OF COTTON,
COULD IT, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

YOU AIN'T ENRAGED THAT LIKE IT SOUNDS, ARE YOU GRAM'S?

GRAM'S

IT JUST SOFTLY STRUCK ME I WOULDN'T THAT YOU GOT A HAND IN MOST
EVERYTHING BUT SETTING THE PRICE OF COTTON.

PULSELL

LOOKS LIKE PONOPY SHOULDN'T GET A SAY-TO THERE.

SMALL LAND OWNER

YOU DARE RIGHT THEY HAVE...

GRAM'S

LESSON IT'S GOD.

SHITT

YOU CAN'T BE SURE IT AIN'T NOBODY THAT RAISES COTTON.

WILSON

DO WE SELL THESE TOO, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

YEAR AND ALL THE OTHERS, I SPOKE SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT I'D NEVER HOLD
ANOTHER BALE OR COTTON MORE THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER IT'S HEMMED. I
USED TO HATE MONEY HOLDING OUT TILL SPRING BUT THERE'S NO SENSE IN IT NOW.

SMALL LAND OWNER

I ONLY OWN A SMALL PIECE OF LAND AND I ONLY MADE FIVE BALES BUT I'M
GOING TO HOLD THEM TILL THAT GOVERNMENT REPORT ON COTTON PRODUCTION COMES
IN. IT'S GOT ABOUT AS GOOD A CHANCE ONE WAY AS IT HAS ANOTHER.

WILSON

THESE'S LOADS A HEAD AROUND.

JOHN

WELL NOW IT MIGHT GO UP. YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

POWERS

YEAR, IF I JUST LOOK THAT AWAY FOR THEM SPECULATORS DOWN THERE, AT NEW
ORLEANS OR UP AT N.Y. CITY, OR ANYWHERE, THE DAY YOU STARTS
PRESSING AND GAMBLING, YOU DON'T GET VERY FAR MOST TIMES.
I don't care if you know what they got

I heard tell.

Jackson

And who has been figuring and who wrote out
A check when Powers said he'd sell.

Bill's your check for the whole twenty equal bales, Powers.

Powers

(Reads amount)

------------

Bill: Powers, you know, Joe, I just about decided I'm goin'
to quit plakin' and just rest myself all the time the way Street does.

Jackson

Gramps is got more sense than all the rest of us put together.

(laughter)

Powers

Well, isn't it some things to all this hard work is there, Gramps?

Gramps

Not at all. Even buckin' work is a lot of trouble. I been thinkin' for
the last month or so that I'd retire from even makin' any excuses about
not workin'.

(all laugh and move off left. Mr. Powers
stops to talk to Mr. Expert.)

Powers

You still been goin' to the New Orleans Cotton Exchange, Mr. Expert?

Mr. Expert

No. But I'd like to see no. It .oks.

Powers

I'll tell ye! Finn best week. Be mighty glad to have you come along.
You don't understand a thing about it. It the damnest piece of machinery
I ever laid my eyes on. But it's a nice ride now to New Orleans.

Mr. Expert

I'll be glad to go.

Blackout

* Compute this amount from figure shown on blackboard.
SCENE LIGHT (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER MARKETING COTTON

(B) THIS LITTLE FOLK IS SENT TO MARKET.

(This is an ambitious scene. The lights come up on three playing areas: area 11, a raised platform six feet above and upstage of playing center and the orchestra pit. Very strong light on 11. Area 11 has a foot high circular step at center mounting to a raised platform called "The Ring". Business men mill around on it and uniformed employees of the exchange stand among them. The center is the focus of attention. Here one man is presenting the offers. Slightly to the right, is the "rostrum" where a telephone operator relays messages to the platform above. On the platform are several uniformed men who write on the several blackboards where the offers are made, giving the title of the transaction, sales, price, number of contracts of 100 square bales each and the name of the firm buying. The blackboards extend off into the darkness at the left. One has written above it "New York future quotations" another "New Orleans future quotations", another "Liverpool future quotations" etc. *

The orchestra has a raised platform running across it. The tables on the platform. Six men are seated behind the tables. The men are made up to look alike and the tables are similar. There is a telephone and a buzzer at each desk. Floor walkers pace to and fro in front of, behind and at the ends of the tables. There are piles of ticker tape in front of each man. One man sits off to the right operating an adding machine. This man and machine represents the statistical and informational department of the New Orleans stock exchange. The stage set represents the trading room. During the first part of the scene, the people in the pit move quietly, slowly and mechanically in rhythm. Mr. Expert and Mr. Powers are standing well off and isolated, watching.)

CALLER

Exchange opened for bids.

FIRST MAN

(Raising his hand with palm facing himself)

Silly for March.

SECOND MAN

(Raising his hand with palm facing out, two fingers raised.)

* It is suggested that Federal Theatre obtain actual photograph of cotton exchange at New Orleans.

For further information on this scene address Clinton White, Lufkin, Texas.

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SIXTY FOR T'HO MARCH.

MESSENGER

HE CASH TO BRANCH, SIXTY FOR T'HO MARCH.

(SAME PROCEDE AS ABOVE. THIS CONTINUES SEVERAL TIMES.)

FIRST MAN

(SIGNIFYING MARCH SALES ARE CLOSED BY OFFERING MAY FUTURES.)

SIXTY FOR AXX MAY.

(NO ONE SEEMS INTERESTED)

SIXTY EIGHT FOR MAY.

FOURTH MAN

(SAME PALM BUSINESS AS ABOVE TO SIGNIFY THAT HE IS BUYING)

SIXTY EIGHT FOR MAY.

MESSENGER

HE CASH TO CLAYTON SIXTY EIGHT FOR MAY.

(NO ONE SEEMS INTERESTED)

FIFTH MAN

(PALM FACING HIMSELF SIGNIFYING HE IS SELLING)

* Palm out is buying. Palm in is selling.
CUT TO BLACKBOARD.

(NO RESPONSE)

FIFTY LIGHT FOR DECEMBER.

(NO RESPONSE)

FIFTY SIX FOR DECEMBER.

(SOME OF THE MEN WALK AWAY.)

FIFTY FOUR FOR DECEMBER.

SIXTH MAN

(BUYING)

FIFTY FOUR TO THE EXEXERX TWO DECEMBER.

MESSENGER

SOUTHERN TO ANDERSON FIFTY FOUR FOR TWO DECEMBER.

(THREE TIMES YOU SAY YOU DON'T RAISE COTTON, IN FACT MOST OF THEM NEVER SEE A PILE OF COTTON IN HIS LIFE. THEY DON'T MANUFACTURE FRENCH OUT OF COTTON AND THEY DON'T HARDLY USE COTTON PRODUCTS IN THEIR DAILY LIFE, BUT THEY LIVE OFF IT. THEY GAMBLE ON IT FOR A LIVING LIKE MEN AT A HORSE RACE.)

MR. BALKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP)

PROFITS IN COTTON COME NOT FROM THE CREATION OF VALUES BUT FROM SHRED TIDINGS BETWEEN THE COMPONENT PARTS OF THE INDUSTRY. **

(KALASKA BLACKS OUT)

MR. EXPERT

LOOKS TO RING THAT WHAT IS HAPPEN IS MORE DIRECT DEALINGS BETWEEN THE COTTON PATCH AND THE DRY GOODS CLOTH COUNTER. **

(BLACKOUT ON THEM, LIGHTS COME UP ON THE CROSSES FIT. MR. EXPERT AND MR. ROGERS DROP DOWN TO STAGE ACTION AND WATCH SCENE BELOW.)

* From "King Cotton Is Sick" by Clavius T. Burchison, p. 103
** Ibid
*** Ibid, p. 164
MR. EXPERT

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

THE STATISTICAL AND INFORMATIONAL MACHINERY OF THE NEW ORLEANS COTTON EXCHANGE.

(SIX TELEPHONES RING SIMULTANEOUSLY. SIX MEN REACT IN CONCERT, SIX RIGHT ARMS REACH FOR THE RECEIVER AND SIX VOICES SPEAK.)

SIX

NEW ORLEANS COTTON EXCHANGE.

FIRST MAN

(PRICE FROM LEFT)

PRICES STEADY.

SECOND MAN

SPOT QUOTATIONS IN NEW ORLEANS. (-- (-- --))

FLOOR WALKERS

(HEATING IN PAIRS AT OPPOSITE CORNERS)

CHECK!

(THEY SPEAK IN UNISON)

THIRD MAN

(-- (-- --)) ** IN NEW YORK.

FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

FOURTH MAN

(-- (-- --)) *** IN LIVERPOOL.

FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

FIFTH MAN

(-- (-- --)) **** IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.

* Use quotation from today's paper for New Orleans Spot Cotton Quotations.
** Ditto for New York
*** Ditto for Liverpool
**** Ditto for Houston, Texas

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SIXTH MAN

(IN COUNTER TEMPO)

AND CONSIDERABLY LESS IN "THE DUMB FUDG.

FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

MEN

(IN UNISON)

NEW ORLEANS EXCHANGE CLOSING IN THREE MINUTES.

FIRST MAN

THE TIME IS 11:57.

SECOND MAN

SPOTS STEADY, FUTURES CLOSING.

THIRD MAN

BALES ON HAND TOTAL ONE MILLION, NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND.

FOURTH MAN

EXPORTS TO NA MILLION BALES.

FIFTH MAN

UNITED STATES PRODUCTION ESTIMATE EIGHTEEN MILLION BALES.

SIXTH MAN

(IN COUNTER TEMPO)

AND IT'S ALL A GUESS.

FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

(METHODICALLY, RECEIVERS ARE REPLACED IN UNISON, MEN PICK UP TAPE IN UNISON. READ IT.)

POWERS

NOW AIN'T THAT THE DARKEST THING YOU EVER DID SEE?

FIRST MAN

(TURNS HIS HEAD WITH A QUICK JERKY MOVEMENT

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TO SECOND MAN. SLAPS A SHEET OF PAPER IN FRONT OF HIM.

SEND A LETTER.

(SENTRYS ARE SPEEDED UP. WOOD WALKERS MOVE FASTER, ADDING MACHINE CLICKS FASTER.)

SECOND MAN

(SAME BUSINESS AS ABOVE AS HE TAKES SHEET OF PAPER AND SLAPS IT DOWN BEFORE THIRD MAN)

TELEPHONE IT.

THIRD MAN

(SAME BUSINESS AS ABOVE TO FOURTH MAN)

SEND A CABLE. TELEGRAPH IT.

FOURTH MAN

(SAME BUSINESS AS ABOVE TO FIFTH MAN)

SEND A CABLE.

FIFTH MAN

(AS ABOVE TO SIXTH MAN)

broadcast it by short wave.

SIXTH MAN

(IN COUNTING TIME)

SEND A BOY ON A BICYCLE.

FIRST MAN

(RISES. STANDS STRAIGHT. WALKS CRISPLY AND RAPIDLY. REST FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE AS THEIR TIME COME TO SPEAK)

JANUARY FUTURES 6.34 *

SECOND MAN

MARCH FUTURES 6.56 **

THIRD MAN

JULY FUTURES 6.76.

FOURTH MAN

JULY FUTURES 6.76

* This particular quotation was taken from "The Charlotte Observer" Friday April 1st, 1938 Sec. 2 p. 14. It is assumed that quotation from the daily papers will be used in production.

** Add two points or three to whatever was first figure quoted from paper.
FIFTH MAN

OCTOBER FUTURES 6.52

SIXTH MAN

(IN COUNTER TEMPO)

WHICH MEANS, FOLKS, THAT THE FUTURE OF COTTON IS ALL SHOT TO HELL.

FLOOR WALKERS

(BUSINESS AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

MEN

(NOW MOVE IN RHYTHM. THEY PICK UP TICKER TAPE AND 
LEARN IT INTO BITS AND THROW THEM UP INTO THE AIR 
AND BEGIN TO TALK FASTER AND FASTER. FLOOR WALKERS 
MOVE FASTER AND FASTER. THE WHOLE THING IS SPEEDED 
UP TO A FRENZY.)

DEBIT! CREDIT! SHORT! FUTURES!

FLOOR WALKERS

(SAME BUSINESS AS BEFORE, ONLY RUMMY)

CHECK!

MEN

BOUGHT! SOLD! STORED! SHIPPED!

FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

MEN

8.60, 8.40, 8.30, 8.20, 8.10, 8.00

FLOOR WALKERS

CHECK!

(A WHISTLE BLOWS SHRIKILY)

MESSENGER

(AT DOOR)

T.T.LV. O'CLOCK ROOM. QUOTATIONS CLOSE UNTIL MONDAY AT NINE O'CLOCK.

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(It is grown very quiet. They take their place
in an orderly line and file out silently as
lights go down on the scene, leaving a shot
on Mr. Expert and Mr. Powers)

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DOES IT WANT

MR. POWERS

SO WHAT THAT NERD SAID A COTTON BOLL MAKES A GUESS AS TO HOW MUCH
COTTON WILL SELL FOR IN JULY. THE GUESS COMES HERE AND THEY GAMBLE ON
JUSTICE. IT WAS A GOOD GUESS OR A BAD GUESS, AND THAT'S HOW THEY SET
THE PRICES OF COTTON FUTURES. *

BLACKOUT

Lunchison Cl. Cl., p. 104
(LIGHTS COME UP ON 1 BEHIND SCRM.)

(A. M. WEARING HIS MARY MASK IS SPEAKING)

HC MARY MASK

(STANDING)

IF WE CARRY THESE FIGURES WHICH ARE VERY IMPRESSIVE DOWN TO THE LOGICAL POINT, THEY LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WE SHALL SOON LOSE OUR EXPORT MARKET FOR COTTON.

BANKHEAD M.S.K

(RISING)

I THINK THAT THE SENATOR RECOGNIZES THAT OUR INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE. I AM NOT GOING INTO THIS CAUSE, FOR I THINK IT WOULD CERTAINLY LEAD DIRECTLY INTO POLITICS. I HAVE MY VIEW ON THE SUBJECT AND THE SENATOR HAS HIS VIEW AND WE ARE ENTITLED TO THEM. AS LONG AS WE REMAIN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, WE WILL MAINTAIN THEM.

HC MARY MASK

I HAVE NO IXAPOLITICS IN INTERNATIONAL MATTERS.

BANKHEAD M.S.K

BUT THE LOSS OF AMERICAN EXPORTS IN COTTON IS DUE, AS I THINK EVERY ECONOMIST IN THE COUNTRY WILL AGREE, TO THE DIFFICULTY OF SECURING AMERICAN EXCHANGE. WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET BACK COMPLETELY OUR FOREIGN MARKETS FOR COTTON UNTIL IT IS MADE EASIER TO MEET THE COMPETITION OF OTHER NATIONS, AND WE CANNOT STOP COTTON PRODUCTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES BY REDUCING OUR PRICES TO THE MINIMUM. GOVERNMENT CURTAILMENT IS NOT THE CAUSE OF THE FOREIGN INCREASE; WHEN WE HAD THIRTEEN BILLION BURLAS FOR SALE AT FIVE CENTS A POUND, FOREIGNERS CONTINUED TO INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTION. THERE IS NO WAY TO STOP IT. IT HAS NOT BEEN STOPPED OVER A PERIOD OF FIFTY YEARS WITH THE LOWEST SORT OF PRICES. WE ARE POWERLESS TO LEGISLATE AGAINST ANOTHER NATION'S PRODUCING ALL IT LIKES, NO MATTER WHAT POVERTY THEIR PRODUCTION BRINGS UP TO OUR FATHER.

(ALL STRETCH THEIR ARMS AS IF YAWNING. THEY ARE ASLEEP TO TAKE THEIR MANS OR AND GO BACK TO SLEEP AS---)

BLACKOUT

* Entire transcript is an abridged transcription of the Senate debate on S. Res. 150, Congressional Record, Nov. 29, 1937, pp 666f
SCENE NINE (A)

TITLE
THE TENANT FARMER AND THE MILL

(A) A PURELY PERSONAL MATTER.

(BACKGROUND OF 11 IS FILLED WITH A ROW
OF NINE WINDOWS FROM WHICH COME A BLUE
LIGHT. THERE IS A LOW STEADY WHIR-RR-RR.
MR. EXPERT IS TALKING TO BILL GIBSON,
JOHN BRITT'S RIVAL. THE SCENE IS A MILL
STREET. SHADOWS MOVE RHYTHMICALLY ACROSS
THE WINDOW... THESE ARE THE GIRLS TENDING
THE MACHINES.)

GIBSON

LOOK, MR. EXPERT----YOU SAID THAT WAS YOUR NAME?

MR. EXPERT

YES.

GIBSON

NO; SUPPOSE YOU HAD A GIRL UP NORTH AND I COME UP THERE BUTTIN'
IN AND TELL YOU TO LET ANOTHER FELLOW HAVE HER BECAUSE HE'S DUMB
ENOUGH TO BE A FARMER OR SOMETHING. WHAT WOULD YOU TELL ME?

MR. EXPERT

WELL-----

GIBSON

LOOK! IF SHE LIKED HIM SHE WOULDN'T CARE IF HE CLEANELED OUT
SISTERS, SHE'D GO LONG ON THE JOB AND HELP HIM. IF SHE DIDN'T
LIKE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HE DID SHE WOULDN'T BE SATISFIED.

MR. EXPERT

YOU'RE SAYING SHE LIKES YOU BETTER?

GIBSON

FOR THE TIME BEING, YES.

MR. EXPERT

YOU GOING TO MARRY HER?

GIBSON

(THUGHTLESSLY)

WHAT FOR?

(QUICKLY)

I MEAN------NOT JUST YET. YOU SEE------

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MR. EXPERT

YEAH, I TOLD YOU SO SEE—

GIBSON

DON'T GET HOT UNDER THE COLLAR. IT'S AN OLD WORLD, MISTER. THINGS HAVE BEEN GOING ON SINCE BEFORE YOU WERE BORN AND DON'T STOP WHEN YOU DIE. GIRLS HAVE MARRIED MEN THEY HADN'T OUGHT TO AND MEN HAVE BEEN REAPING A LOT OF THINGS. THERE'S BEEN STARVATION AND LOW WAGES AND A LOT OF THINGS SINCE TIME STARTED. SO THE BEST THING A MAN CAN DO IS TO GET THE BEST HE CAN OUT OF WHEREVER HE HAPPENS TO BE. AND THAT'S ME, BUDDY.

MR. EXPERT

I SEE.

GIBSON

IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY? BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT. MOST PEOPLE AIN'T GOT NEITHER THINGS TOURED OUT AS CLEAR AS I HAVE AND THEY GET PRETTY MUCH MISERABLE ABOUT THINGS.

MR. EXPERT

BUT JOHN BRYCE'S SUCH A FINE FELLOW.

GIBSON

I GOT THINKING THAT MAY BE ABOUT HIM, BUT SKIP IT. NOW JUST WHAT DID YOU SAY WENT COME TO THIS HERE MILL TOOK FOR?

MR. EXPERT

WENT TO---OR---SEE YOU AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND AT CONDITIONS AND----

GIBSON

WELL, YOU'VE SEEN ME. NOW LET'S LOOK THE MILL OVER.

MR. EXPERT

IT'S SO QUIET ON THE STREETS. I THOUGHT THERE'D BE PEOPLE AROUND AND----

GIBSON

AIN'T HAD MUCH LABOR TROUBLE IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. NOT SINCE THE BOYS NEEDED THAT PRECIOUS LEADER TO KEEP 'EM DOING SOMETHING AND FORGETTING 'THEIR TROUBLES. COLES ALONG.

BLACKOUT
SCENE III: (B)

THE SHARP SAWMILL AND THE MILL

(B) EYE THEY LOV.: THEIR WORK.

(HE SCENE IS THE INSIDE OF THE MILL. THERE IS A ROW OF LOOM-LIKE MACHINES AND BEFORE THEM STAND YOUNG GIRLS WITH BENT HEADS AND FLYING FINGERS; TYING BROKEN THREADS, ETC. HELEN IS AT THE LAST MACHINE.)

MR. EXPERT

YOU THINK THAT THEY'RE REALLY CONTENT TO WORK HERE?

GIBSON

AYE SURE. SOME OF THE GALS LIKE THEIR MACHINES BETTER THEN THEY LIKE THEIR MEN. * POSSIBLY MOST OF 'EM'S A LOT BETTER OFF THEN THEY WOULD BE BACK PICKIN' COTTON.

(THEY COME TO HELEN.)

HELEN

DID YOU KNOW THAT HELEN WORKED HERE NOW?

MR. EXPERT

(A LITTLE EMBARRASSED)

HELEN

YOU--OH I'D HEARD THAT--

GIBSON

HELEN, A FRIEND OF JOHN BRITT; MR. EXPERT

HELEN

(EAGERLY)

OH MR. EXPERT, IS HE ALL RIGHT?

MR. EXPERT

FIZE. HE HAD THOUGHT A LITTLE 'BOUT GOING TO COLLEGE BUT--

HELEN

WELL, FIZZING'S IN HIS BLOOD, I GUES.

HELEN

I WISH--OH I WISH IT WASN'T SO HARD TO MAKE A LIVING ON A FARM.

MR. EXPERT

(SUDDENLY SHE STARTS TO CRY.)

MR. EXPERT

(TO BILL GIBSON)

* DRAWN IN "TUFTED AMERICAN" BY SHERRIDER ANDERSON

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I GUESS YOU DON'T SEE THINGS AS CLEAR AS YOU THOUGHT YOU DID.

GIBSON

LET IT EASY, HELEN. HERE COME THAT RECREATIONAL DIRECTOR.

HELEN

I'M ALL RIGHT, BILL.

GIBSON

NO, ABOUT THE FIRST SHOW TOMORROW NIGHT?

HELEN

(BEAMING)

SHERI

GIBSON

THAT'S SOMETHING THEY AIN'T GOT ON THE FARM---MOVIES. A PERSON CAN PUT UP WITH A LOT OF HARD WORK IF HE CAN HAVE A LITTLE FUN AFTER HE'S THROUGH.

(ENTER THE SOCIAL WORKER)

THIS HERE IS LENS. GORELL, THE EXPERT.

SOCIAL WORKER

HOW DO YOU DO?

(TO BILL)

YOU'RE OFF HOW ABOUT IT, YOU?

GIBSON

Y'ALL.

SOCIAL WORKER

YOU AIN'T GOING TO THE RECREATIONAL HALL? THEY'RE CASTING FOR THE NEXT COMPANY PRODUCTION.

GIBSON

I AIN'T GOING TO PLAY ONE OF THEM FAIRIES AGAIN, I CAN TELL YOU.

SOCIAL WORKER

I PUT YOU DOWN FOR THE FAIRY ALLE, HOW GET ALONG WITH YOU.

(SHE GIVES HIM AN ANGRY SLAP ON THE CHEST, AND HE WAITS JOYFULLY. SHE IS A MASCUINE WOMAN.)

1 This is a real character called Lorjorlo A. Potwin. She was a worker in the Socony Mills and is the author of a book called "Cotton Mill Shops of the Fashion." Many of the following speeches are quoted verbatim from her book.
COULD YOU TELL US JUST WHAT IS THE MILL’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIZED LABOR?

SOCIAL WORKER

"OUR COMPANY, LIKE MOST OF THE MILLS OF THE SOUTH, HAS HAD NO EXPERIENCE WITH IT."

MR. EXPERT

HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

SOCIAL WORKER

"THE ATTITUDE OF THE MILL PEOPLE TOWARDS ORGANIZED LABOR IS PRINCIPALLY DETERMINED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE COMPANY. IF THE COMPANY FEELS THAT THE MILL PEOPLE ARE BEING OVERWORKED, THEY WILL SEEK TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS.

MR. EXPERT

WHERE DO MOST OF THE MILL PEOPLE COME FROM?

SOCIAL WORKER

"THE MILL PEOPLE COME FROM VARIOUS PLACES. MANY COME FROM OTHER MILLS, SOME FROM FARMING, AND SOME FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES."

MR. EXPERT

DO YOU HONESTLY THINK THESE PEOPLE GET A SQUARE DEAL HERE?

SOCIAL WORKER

"THEY ARE BETTER OFF THAN ON THE FARM. A FARMING FAMILY OF FIVE WORKERS WOULD MAKE MORE THAN TWO OR THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS A YEAR AS SHAREHOLDERS. BUT IN THE MILL, A FAMILY CAN MAKE AT LEAST FIFTEEN HUNDRED CASH."

MR. EXPERT

BUT BY GOD, ON A FARM THEY HAVE AIR, SUNLIGHT AND FREEDOM.

SOCIAL WORKER

"HEALTH REGULATIONS OF TIGHT MILLS SOMETIMES LIMIT THE FREEDOM OF THE MILL VILLAGE."

---

*From "Cotton Mill People Of The South:" by H. Arjorie A. Totwin, p. 154
** Ibid. p. 45
*** Ibid. p. 46
**** Local citation
***** Chi. Cit. p. 75

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MR. EXPERT

The inside of
I have not seen my house yet, but I passed a street
on the way and they did look so fully crowded together.

SOCIAL WORKER

"THE PROXIMITY OF THE HOUSES CREATES A BARRIER AGAINST MORAL LAXITY."

SOCIAL WORKER

WELL--YES, "BUT SOME HOUSEWIVES OBTAIN SUCH NICEITIES AS
TABLECLOTHS AND SILVERWARE. SOME HOUSES ARE CLEAN AND TIDY AND
ATTRACTIVELY DECORATED."

MR. EXPERT

I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT. HOW ABOUT HOUSING? I'VE SEEN VERY
BAD AROUND THIS MILL.

SOCIAL WORKER

THE HIGHER CLASS HAS TAKEN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AS ITS HERITAGE.
THEY EMPLOY A FEW COLORED MEN AS DAY LABORERS, ASSIGNED TO SUCH JOBS
AS SCRAPING, ILL USE THE BOILERS OR DRIVING THE MULES.

MR. EXPERT

I DREAD THAT. HOW ABOUT HOUSING?

SOCIAL WORKER

"IN THE SOUTH, THE CUSTOM OF RELEGATING THE LOWEST FORMS OF WORK TO
THE NEGRO IS AS INHIBITING AS THE COLOR DISTINCTION ITSELF."

MR. EXPERT

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PROBLEM ALL FIXED UP THERE.

SOCIAL WORKER

SOMETIMES THERE'S A LOT OF TROUBLE. ACCORDINGLY, "THE WHITE ELEMENT TOOK
ONE OF THEIR DIVERSIONS "ROCKING" THIS WEEK CHILDREN SENT BY THEIR
LUTHERANS TO THE LAUNDRY ......."RARE SPORT, WELL-HEALTH INRESISTIBLE TO HAVE
A PRETTY LITTLE HICHER FOR A MOVING TARGET.

MR. EXPERT

I CAN WELL IMAGINE. TELL ME WHAT THE MILL PRESIDENT THINKS OF THAT?

***

** From: "The Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont", P. 108
*** Ibid. p. 66
**** Ibid. p. 13
***** Ibid. p. 86
****** Truth rocks. Occasionally seen on mill town streets
******* By Proc: "Th. Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont pp. 60 f."
IS IT THE JOB OF SOCIAL WORKER?

SOCIAL WORKER

I INSIST UPON UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH RACES INVOLVED, OR HE WOULD NOT HAVE Brought about opportunities for the factions to become associated on a more wholesome and happy basis. In example, among the Negroes was Jack who could pick a banjo and sing, and Luther who could dance. These and others were taken along on the mill picnics to provide part of the entertainment. I.E., BETTY WHITES AND NEGROES ARE BONDS OF MUTUAL AFFECTION.

MR. EXPERT

FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO BUT YOU SOUND AS IF YOU'D MEMORIZED YOUR ANSWERS RIGHT OUT OF A BOOK.

MR. BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTS UP WITH A CARICATURE OF HIMSELF)

SAY THAT, AND I DID. SHE WROTE A BOOK ABOUT THIS MILL, AND SHE'S BEEN QUOTING HER ANSWERS FROM IT.

SOCIAL WORKER

(LOOKING AROUND. BLACKBOARD GOES OUT)

WHAT WAS THAT?

MR. EXPERT

(LAUGHING)

CHARLEY DE CARTHY, I THINK.

SOCIAL WORKER

OH

MR. EXPERT

YOU THINK, THEN, YOUR EMPLOYER IS A FINE MAN?

SOCIAL WORKER

HE'S INTEREST AND HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE MILL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MY INSPIRATION. WHILE HIS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HOW PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER COMBINED WITH HIS HIGH IDEALS FOR THEM HAVE BEEN CHART AND COMPASS TO MY ENDEAVORS.

MR. EXPERT

(DUMBFOUNDED)

WHEN?

BLACKBOARD

---

* Ibid p. 60
** Ibid Preface
(LIGHTING UP AS A CARTOON)

DON'T YOU DARE WITH HER, ELBERT, SHE DEDICATED HER BOOK TO HIM AND HER LORD.

(PROJECTION CHANGES THE FOLLOWING DEDICATION; TO THE PIONEERS OF THE INDUSTRY OF FREEDOM. THEY ARE THE BUILDERS OF A NEW STATE.) *

OF COURSE HE PAYS HER SALARY.

SOCIAL WORKER

SILL OF ALL THINGS!

THAT WILL DO HIM NOW. THIS LADY IS GIVING ME SOME ASTONISHING INFORMATION AND I'LL NOT HAVE YOU BUTTING IN. SCRAM!

(BLACKOUT FOR BLACKBOARD)

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

(SOCIAL WORKER AND MR. EXPERT WALK OFF SET. SHOT FOLLOWS THEM TO STREET WHERE THEY STAND IN FRONT OF THE COMPANY STORE.)

SOCIAL WORKER

IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE YOU WANT TO KNOW?

MR. EXPERT

YES, I GUESS; DON'T THE WORKERS WANT MORE MONEY FOR THE BETTER THINGS OF LIFE?

SOCIAL WORKER

HERE THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE COUNTRY TENDS TO PROMOTE SATISFACTION AMONG SIMPLE STANDARDS OF LIVING. ** OUR PEOPLE DO NOT WANT THOSE WITH SELLEH. *** BUT W H E R E C O M E M L S. F A R C E L L E L L E R A Y E R A T E U.

MRS. FARELL

(COMES ON THE SET WITH HER BABY IN HER ARMS.)

OH HOW DO.

SOCIAL WORKER

MRS. FARELL, TELL THIS GENTLEMAN; ARE YOU HAPPY HERE AT THE MILL WITH YOUR HUSBAND, YOUR BABY AND YOUR HOUSE ON HONEYMOON LANE?

MR. FARELL

1. Y.S.
2. Preface to book "North of Hill Town" of the Piedmont by Harvey A. Pekin
3. Ibid. p. 10
4. Ibid. p. 16
5. Fictional name of an actual character
6. ****
IT EXPERT

YOU MIGHT GO ON OR, WOULD YOU WANT TO HAVE BETTER THINGS?

WHS FAREWELL

OH NO, SIR. NO. ON SUNDAY NIGHTS I GO TO THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIES AND SEE RICH FOLKS. WELL, IF I COULD JUST SURE I'D RATHER HAVE LITTLE (AS I HAVE) AND THE NAMES AND SO AND SO, THEN TO BE RICH.

(SHE GOES OFF WITH HER BABY.)

IT'S EXPERT

IT'S AMAZING. POSSIBLY AMAZING.

SOCIAL WORKER

BUT A REAL WORK IS "WHERE IS MANKIND MORE REFRESHING THAN AT THE COTTON MILL? WHERE IS THERE MORE GENUINE COURTESY OR MORE SINCERE AFFILIATION OF LEADERSHIP? WHERE IS THERE MORE DEMOCRACY? FOR A MAN MAY BE ONE'S BROTHER, FRATERNAL BROTHER, BACK-DOOR NEIGHBOR, SUNDAY SCHOOL PUPIL, FELLOW MUSICIAN, ALL IN ONE. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACTS CARRY ACROSS AND RELATIONS IN THE MILL ARE INTENSELY HUMAN. THE MORALE IS FINE. ***

MR. EXPERT

TO

(OFF M/AUDIENCE)

MR. YOU BY CHOICE HEARING THE SAME THINGS I'M HEARING? I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HEARING STRAIGHT.

(PASSES HIS HAND ACROSS HIS FACE)

I THINK I MUST HAVE A TOUCH OF THE SUN.

(HE FALLS IN A DEAD FAINT.)

SOCIAL WORKER

(OFF TO AUDIENCE)

ISN'T HE A NUT?

BLACKOUT

* Iblad p. 32
** Iblad p. 167
*** Iblad p. 150
SCENE ELEVEN (C)

THE MARKET AND THE MILL

(C) THE COMPANY STORE

(The setting is the mill store.
There is a counter and a radio
is playing away. A few tole mill
hands standing around listening to
the radio. This store sells everything:
lock parts, food, candy, registers etc.
Mr. Expert is standing at the counter)

MR. EXPERT

QUITE A STORE YOU GOT HERE.

MANAGER

WE LIKE IT.

MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH IS THIS RADIO?

MANAGER

IF YOU LOOK AT THE BILL, I'LL GIVE CREDIT FOR IT. THAT IS IF YOU GOT A COUPON
IT WAS ISSUED BY THE COMPANY.

This radio
it's not marked.

MANAGER

NOTHING MARKED

MR. EXPERT

AN INDEPENDENT STORE IN TOWN TOLD ME THEY'RE SELLING BUTTER AT THIRTY-FIVE
CENTS A POUND. WHAT ARE YOU CHARGING?

MANAGER

PARTS OF YOUR BUSINESS.

MR. EXPERT

ONE OF THE OTHER STORES I SPOKE TO TOLD ME THAT YOU "THE COMPANY STORES CHARGE
JUST LIKE US." *NO!* IS THAT TRUE?

MANAGER

"TRYIN' TO FIND OUT SOMETHING, HEY? WEL! WE DON'T HAVE TO SELL NOOTHIN' TO
NOBODY...SPECIALY SPIES. SCRAM!" ***

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* Entire scene a dramatization of article entitled "All Work and No Pay."
** The practice in company stores is not to work nothing.
*** Statement from article "All Work and No Pay." Alleged to be actual
statement by store manager in the Greenville-Spartanburg textile center, S.C.
E. EXPERT

YOU'LL GONNA BE CALL HERE. NOW DO YOU KNOW? DO YOU ONLY SELL TO PEOPLE WITH GROCERY BOOKS?

MANAGER

ONLY TO COMPANY EMPLOYEES. IF THEY AIN'T GOT A COUPON BOOK WE CHARGE IT TO 'EM. THE COMPANY HOLDS BACK THAT MUCH PAY.

MR. EXPERT

YOU EVER TELL THEM HOW MUCH YOU CHARGE FOR THINGS?

MANAGER

THEY FIND OUT HOW IT IS TAKEN OUT OF THEIR PAY ENVELOPE. THEN WE TAKE OUT WHAT THEY OWE AND GIVE THEM THE BALANCE.

MR. EXPERT

HE? ARE YOU THE COMPANY?

MANAGER

EVERYTHING'S THE COMPANY. STORE, HOUSES, SCHOOL, NEWSPAPER AND THE PLANT. EVERYTHING'S THE COMPANY AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

STEVE

(LISTENS, HE IS FOLLOWED BY A MAN NAMED LARRY, A CHARACTER IN A SMALL WAY.)

BUT, I GOTTA HAVE SOME MONEY. MAKE CASH!

MR. EXPERT

GOO ZEKE, HELLO, STEVE.

STEVE

(A LITTLE EMBARRASSED)

(TRY-O, MR. EXPERT. I'M IN A MIGHTY HURRY.

(TO MANAGER)

CALL ME A COUPON BOOK AND PUT ME DOWN FOR IT.

MANAGER

(LOOKS HIM BOOK AND WRITES IN A LEDGER.)

OKAY. THAT'S FIVE DOLLARS MORE YOU OWE THE COMPANY. THINK YOU CAN WORK IT OFF?

STEVE

HOW DO I KNOW I AIN'T WORKED IT OFF YET? NEVER GOT A CENT IN MY ENVELOPE AFTER THE FIRST WEEK I WORKED HERE. IT ALL GOES BACK TO THE COURTS.

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IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, GO SIT YOUR TUNG. HUNDREDS MORE HAITIN' FOR YOUR JOB.

STEVE

KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON. THIS IS AMERICA, MINT IT? FELLOW'S GOT A RIGHT TO LET OFF A LITTLE STEAM.

(TO Lissy)

PERHAPS YOUR FIVE DOLLAR BOOK, MR. JUDAS. HAND OVER THE CASH.

Lissy

(COUNTING BILLS INTO STEVE'S HAND)

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR. THERE YOU ARE. YOUR DOLLARS.

STEVE

(POCKETING MONEY)

THANKS, MR. BlockBUSTER. SEE YOU AGAIN, MR. EXPERT.

(HE EXITS. MR. EXPERT FOLLOWS)

Lissy

(GOES TO COUNTER, THROWS BOOK ON IT.

STEVE PICKS IT UP AND PUTS IT IN DRAWER.

COUNTS OUT MONEY. COUNTS IT INTO Lissy's POCKET.)

Manager

PERHAPS YOU ARE. YOUR FIFTY. PRETTY GOOD, HALF A DOLLAR FOR HALF A HOURS' WORK.

Lissy

WHAT THE HECK YOU TALKING 'BOUT. DIDN'T YOU JUST MAKE HALF A DOLLAR ON THAT TRANSACTION? THAT MAKES FIFTY DOLLARS BOUGHT AND SOLD TODAY.

STEVE ANSWERS, UP TO, LET'S SEE.

Manager

N-foolish. NOT SO LOUD. DO YOU WANT THE COMPANY TO KNOW EVERYTHING?

Blockout

-103-
TITLE: THE TELLING PAPER AND THE HILL

(D) ALL WORK AND NO PAY

(IT L. OUTSIDE THE STORE. SPOT PICKS WITH LR. EXERT)

FR. IALERT

STEVE

(STRS)

YEAH?

MR. EALERT

I JOKE ON YOUR LITTLE TRANSACTION AT THE STORE. DOESN'T THE COMPANY PAY YOU CASH?

STEVE

N.A. I WORK FOR WHAT I USE AND I USE MORE THAN I MAKE.

(RIT. KALY)

S'LL LIKEN. I ALB'T GOT NO FAMILY TO SUPPORT BUT I OWE AS MUCH TO MY KIDS.

LES

(OFF STAGE)

YOU ASK ME MORE ABOUT THE PAY-OFF SYSTEM. I APPRINT, THIS IS MY LAND, I P. IALERT. I LIVE AT LES' HOUSE.

(INTRODUCTIONS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED)

LOOK, I CAN'T P. IT. BUT COME AROUND TO THE POOL COMING, I TELL IT STIL IN ONE OF THE COUNTRY HOUSES. I WANT TO BE A GOOD MAN. BE HJPS AND RUTH. DAF HIS HEAD ED. AND....

(HIS VOICE BREAKS A LITTLE)

I DON'T HAV IT. BUT YOUNG.

(HE EXITS, CRYING)

LES

(SHAKING HIS HEAD SADLY)

THE LIHT'S K. KIN'. LARGER OUT OF HIM.

(LES. EALERT MAKES AN INVOLUNTARY MOVE AFTER STEVE.)

---

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MR. EXPERT

ABOUT HOW YOU ARE PAID. DID YOU EVER RECEIVE A CENT IN CASH?

LES

AFTER ALL, HERE IS MY PAY ENVELOPE WITH EVERYTHING MARKED ON IT. I WORK 48 HOURS PER WEEK, EIGHT HOURS A DAY. CROSSING OFF $3.00. THEN THEY TAKE OUT FOR INSURANCE AND CHRISTMAS SAVINGS, THAT LEAVES ME $10.40. BUT THE COMPANY STORE GETS $5.50. THAT MAKES A BALANCE OF $4.85.

MR. EXPERT

DO YOU ONLY GET $2.25 FOR A WEEK'S WORK?

LES

I DIDN'T GET THAT. HERE IT SAYS "INCIDENTALS $3.25". THAT LEAVES ZERO. THEY EVEN PUT DOWN TWO ZEROS FOR 35.

MR. EXPERT

(QUIETLY)

“Incidentals" isn't what you paid.

LES

SOMETHING LIKE "INCIDENTALS" THAT TOOK THE BALANCE SO CONSIDERABLY?

MR. EXPERT

I PAID FOR A DOLLAR AND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY-CENT FOR MY ROY IN SCHOOL. A BOX OF CARDS FOR MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY, A HICKY HOUSE BOOK FOR THE LITTLE ONE AND A BLOCKING CRUSH FOR THE STOVE.

BLACKOUT

* Adapted with figures taken from the article, "All Work and No Pay."
(BLACKOUT)

FULL BAND


ENTIRE COMPANY ON STAGE SINGING LUSTILY. PERHAPS THE AUDIENCE WILL JOIN IN?)

BLACKOUT

* Statement from "The March" 4-10-37
** Collier's 11-17-37
*** Ibid
**** Ibid
THE TENANT FARMER AND THE MILL

"THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME. THANK GOD!"

STEVE

I'M SUGGLING TO SEE YOU, STEVE. HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

STEVE

OH... LITTLE TRIPLE DOG AND THEN... BUT I GOT A PLACE TO LIVE ANYHOW.

(MRS. EXPERT LOOKS AROUND AND SHUDDERS)

MRS. EXPERT

I DON'T THINK SO GOOD, MR. EXPERT. DOG SAYS IT'S HIS LURE.

MR. EXPERT

I'TH TOOK YOU TO BACK TO THE OLD PLACE, STEVE. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT LAMP AND YOUR LONER WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.

MR. EXPERT

I WILL.

(MRS. EXPERT LAUGH)

I DON'T THINK THEY MIND, MR. EXPERT. IT'S BEEN HURRY A YEAR SINCE I COME AND MRS. SAMPLE HADN'T WANT TO ME TO GO OFF THE FIRST PLACE AND THEY ANY CHILуницип' I DON'T SEEM TO BE SO ABOUT THEM.

MR. EXPERT

LITTLE LIES ON THE FARM.

GIBSON
(CHUCKLES)

GOOD OLD LINCOLN LLC.

(SCRATCH/SNICKER COMES FROM DOWNSTAIRS.)

MR. EXPERT

OH, OH, OH...

STEVE

STEVE'S WIFE

LIE HADN'T LATCHED ON A BABY. SHE'S BEEN HOLLERING ON AND OFF FOR AN HOUR OR MORE. IT'S TIME SHE CAME THROUGH.

MR. EXPERT

WASN'T SHE IN OR THE HOSPITAL?

STEVE

OH WHAT? ASK ME WHY I DON'T GO AWAY? GO AHEAD.

MR. EXPERT

WY DON'T YOU GO HOME, STEVE?

STEVE

YOU KNEW I'D GO, MR. EXPERT. I LEFT THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE THERE WASN'T ROOM FOR ALL OF US. WELL, THERE'S A PLACE FOR THE WIFE ALL RIGHT, BUT GOD KNOWS IT MAY NOT DO MUCH GOOD. IT MIGHT DO SOMETHING. I LIKED THE FIRE. LIKED THE FIRE. WANTED TO GET HARDIER, BUT THIS HOUSE, STEVE, I FEEL WOULD HAVE TO BE A HOME. I FEEL WOULD HAVE TO BE A HOME. A MAN LIKE A MAN WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A WIFE, A HOME. A FAMILY. IF ONE OF 'EM CATCH FIRE, THE WHOLE BLOCK WOULD GO UP LIKE A POX OF HATCHES, A LOT OF US WOULD DIE.

(SCRATCH FROM DOWNSTAIRS.)

GOOD JOB IT, ANYBODY SHEET IF EVER WITH, WASHING WE...

MR. EXPERT

OH, OH, STEVE

STEVE

OH, OH...

JESUS

THAT'S NOT IT, BOY. MIGHT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER. YOU SEE....

STEVE

LET'S TRY. ...I'M NOT ELLA W....THAT'S THE GIRL....
(HE STARTS TO SOB)

AND I ALWAYS KEPT THINKING THEY'LL COME AND GET ME AND PUT ME IN JAIL.

GIBSON

NOBODY CARES. SHE JUST A MILL GIRL AND YOU'RE JUST A WORKER.

MANY MORE HOUSES YOU FOLKS COME FROM. ONE MORE OR LESS...

STEVE

TO TELL ME! WE LIKE EACH OTHER....

GIBSON

ONE THING PICK HOME THIS WOULDN'T HAPPEN.

(BRIEF PAUSE)

BECAUSE THESE FARMERS AIN'T EVER GONNA GET TEN OR FIFTY BUCKS TOGETHER FOR A THING LIKE THAT.

(TAIL ON DOOR, DOOR OPENS, ENTER LES, A MILL WORKER)

LES

(DISTRESSFULLY)

Rahm hello boys, well it's all over, another girl, the fifth.

MR. EXPERT

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

(HE LOOKS SURPRISED, LES DOES.)

He means it in a good way.

LES

THAT SIX.

MR. EXPERT

AND FIVE CHILDREN, LORD!

LES

I ONLY MAKE A THOUSAND A WEEK... WHEN I GET IT.

(LAUGH, LES SITS ON THE BED.)
S'F, EVE. YOU RILLS'FL. IT WOULDN'T DO TO PLANT NICE CABINS," TILL I CATCH UP. YOU HAVEN'T GOT CIGARS, I GUESS. BUT THE COMPANY STORE DON'T GIVE ANY MORE CIGARS TILL I CATCH UP. YOU HAVEN'T GOT ANY. YOU COULD OFFER A BUCK HAVE YOU?

STEVE

SORRY, LES.

MR. EXPERT

(TAKING OUT A PACKAGE)

CIGARETTE HELP?

STEVE

YOU BET!

(TAKES ONE.)

MR. EXPERT

HERES FOR GOD'S SAKE TAKE THE WHOLE PACKAGE. YOU GOT IT COMING TO YOU.

LES

BABY NUMBER FIVE WHERE WE'RE GOING TO PUT 'EM ALL, I DON'T KNOW. SHE MOVED TO TOWN SO'S I COULD EARN ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THE FOUR WE ALREADY LAD, BUT THERE AIN'T EVEN ANY PLACE HERE I CAN AFFORD THAT'S GOT ROOM ENOUGH FOR ALL OF 'EM.

MR. EXPERT

BUT THIS LOOK......

LES

WE GOTTA RENT IT OUT AND THE ONE ACROSS THE HALL ELSE WE CAN'T PAY THE RENT.

(SAYING DURING HIS HEAD IN HIS ARMS AND SING.
SOMETIMES, HE COWS.)

I TELL YOU IT. THEY'RE ALL THE SOUTH IS TOO DANGEROUS. IF THERE WERENT NO DAMNED RAINY DAYS, THERE'D BE LONG TO GO AROUND FOR THE REST OF US.

BLACKOUT.
"ONE OF MODERN I. P. M. EXIST IN YOUR HOUSE."

In cotton, North Carolina, this is a mill town. "One of them in direct poverty and militancy conditions. Should a fire break out in one of these houses at night, all "our" would go up like tinder and the loss of life would be heavy. Many children would be caught like rats in a trap. Something ought to be done and that right soon."

This quote is a quotation from an editorial in the Raleigh, North Carolina News and Observer, January Sixteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Forty-Eight. It appears first as a help item in the Gastonia Gazette.

Silence To This. The Raleigh News and Observer Goes On To Say:

"Though we know the housing in the South is in too many places and particulars of a dangerously, even scandalously, low standard. It needs the one-eyed attention of Southern people who are willing to face the conditions and deal with them unflinchingly by any and all means. They are realizing on necessity of that they and the South can grow high and great only by haltingly low standards."

HECKLER

(from audience: has a broad southern accent)

"Say, those are only local papers. How do you know that these are put up on something and all that stuff is just politics."

"Blackboard"

I am typing this. I know you are from the South and I was trying to let you sooth them down easy. But here is something from the black book of civil rights, Nineteen Thirty Seven.

"There are more than 500,000 textile workers in the South."

(someone in audience is restless and coughs and scratches his feet.)

In the last few months, figures usually cite. All right, you can go out for a smoke if you want to. And all that in the sound below. Not here does or does that want hiccups and fits?

"Most of them left the little parlor in homes of a socially unknown farm of a social pasture from paper to student's single and enjoy the quiet society of family ... by anguish to tuberculosis and acute acrimonious ill. In clay hills - until the hills are gay their luck. Often the single family, young, old, and children ... one in the hills from ten to twelve hours is only a question. In small company villages, they live in little houses of the three rooms-paned and with a bit of a garden, usually leading to this condition that all able-bodied members of the family worked at the mills. What do you think of that, my fine feathered friend?"

HECKLER

"Sounds swell, that little garden patch idea."

BLACKBOARD

I'll say, BLACKOUT
LIT 6265

SCHULZ CO. IT IS # 43

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 1 BEHIND SCRAM. A MAN WEARING A MASTIC MASK HAS THE FLOOR. OTHER SENATORS, DAILY LIT ARE DROPPED HERE AND THERE. ONE IS SITTING ON THE TABLE, ANOTHER IN TWO CHAIRS AND THE REST ARE UNDER THE TABLE.

SCHULZ 335K

SO FAR WE HAVE SETLED NOTHING OF IMPORTANCE. THE PUBILIC MIGHT AS WELL KNOW THAT THE TWO BILLS SENT US SEPARATELY BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE ARE ILL DIGESTED... THAT THEY WERE NOT THOUGHT OUT IN ALL PARTICULARS. IT IS ONLY FAIR TO TELL THE WHOLE COUNTRY THAT THE COMMITTEE IS WORKING ON THE MOST IN COMPREHENSIBLE FORM BILL THAT IT EVER HAD TO CONSIDER. THE FORM BILL TODAY IS A MESS.

(A SENATOR DELICATES)

BLACKOUT
"THE END."

(1) "THE END." *

STREET OUTSIDE THE HILL. EMPTY. THE WHISTLE HASTENED FROM THE LEFT, COMES A LINE OF THOUSAND OLD WOMEN AND OLD BOYS AND YOUNG GIRLS, GATHERED TO LEAVE OFF-SHIFT. FROM THE RIGHT COMES A GROUP OF YOUNG BOYS, SISTERS, LADS AND SEEN HEADED THEM. THESE ARE THE RIGHT-SHIFT.)

JOHN

(PASSING LAD)

(FADE OUT)

I'm sure you don't think I'm still in bed.

HELEN

(PASSING STEVE)

Did you hear from John lately?

STEVE

No.

GILL

(FADE IN)

Do you go out and see the children, Steve?

(LAUGHTER)

THOMAS

(FADE OUT)

(She doesn't answer.)

A young girl calls across to a girl and makes

A DATE FOR NEXT SUNDAY. BOYS OF FOURTEEN RUN

* From "Golden Hill Folks of the Piedmont" by Verjilio E. Fournet
(ICIL)

1. ORIG.

(READS ANGRILY)

IT IS A FACT THAT CONDITIONS IN THE INDUSTRY ARE SIMPLY INCRIMINATING.

MR. EXPERT.

I SAY NO PERSON SHOULD BE YOUNG!

MR. EXPERT.

WHAT DO YOUR SIGN SAY?

MR. EXPERT.

(LIGHTS UP WITH A PROJECTION OF THE NOTICE)

THE FACT THAT CONDITIONS THAT EXIST IN THE INDUSTRY DO NOT PERMIT GRANTING ANY INCREASE TO WAGES, HOURS OR WORKING CONDITIONS. EMPLOYEES ARE NECESSITATED TO TAKE ACTION IN FILING A PETITION WHICH THE MANAGEMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE.

(BLACKOUT)

(THE AUDIENCE HAVE BECOME VERY ANGRY. THEY BURST IN ANGRILY. GIBSON KNOCKS A BOX OR SOMETHING.)

GIBSON.

IT'S SHAMEFUL. IF THEY WON'T BE REASONABLE, BY GOD, WE'LL STRIKE.

(GEHRING)

BLACKOUT

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THE SENATORS HAVE GONE BUT
(ALL THE MASKS ARE FILED ON THE TABLE
EXCEPT THE BARKLEY ONE. A SPOT PICKS
UP THE HAT CLEARING THE BARKLEY MASK AS
HE IS WALKING INTO THE ROOM.)

BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP)

WELL, FOLKS, HERE COMES SENATOR BARKLEY. MAYBE HE CAN TELL US
SOMETHING. SENATOR, YOU'RE ON THE INSIDE. WILL CONGRESS PASS
LEGISLATION TO PLAY THE SOUTH BEFORE KIND COTTON OR TO CURE HIM?

BARKLEY SAYS

IT IS ALWAYS HAZARDOUS TO PREDICT WHAT CONGRESS MAY OR MAY NOT DO.

BLACKOUT

* Congressional Record, Nov. 27, 1937. Printout of a radio address.
FIRST WORKER

(LOUDLY ON HAND, COMES ON SCEME AND PREPARES TO ENTER FACTORY.)

SECOND WORKER

AND THERE, FELLAS, YOU DON'T WANT TO GO IN THERE.

FIRST M.

YOU DON'T?

THIRD M.

AND IF THEY GO IN, THE NIGHT SHIFT STUCK OUT HUNDRED MILES! IF THEY WANT TO STAYS OUT, WE GOT 'EM LICKED.

FIRST M.

O.K., BOYS. I'LL STICK WITH YOU.

WORKERS

(CHEER)

THE FIGHT, ALL OF BOY! ETC.

(THE WORKERS ARE NOT ARMED. THE CHIEF, SHERIFF, ETC., CARRY SHORT CLUBS.)

GIBSON

YEAH, BOYS, ETC.

(SEVERAL DAY WORKERS ENTER CARRYING THEIR PAILS)

STEVE

STRIKES OUT, TOYS.

* First line in trade journals.

** This was the dramatization of the strike at the Marion High Plant, literal quote from Sinclair Lewis' article on "North Carolina's Labor War. Literary Digest Nov. 2, 1929.
FIRST DRUM

TO THE TUNE.

FOURTH.

(ONE OF THE HEAVY-ARIVED WORKERS)

WELL IT'S ABOUT TIME.

SIXTH.

I'LL NOT CHARGE YOU QUICK. I GOT TO HAVE THE MONEY. I'M SAY
IN GENT ERR Y AND I'LL LOSE MY JOB IF I STAY OUT ON THE MILL TODAY.

LEG

WHO CARES? WHAT GOOD IS A JOB THAT JUST GETS YOU IN DEBT AND RUINS
YOUR HEALTH AND JUST DON'T DO YOU NO GOOD ALL AROUND?

(SIXTH HILL HILLS TO GET IN. OTHER
WORKERS HOLD HIM BACK.)

SHERIFF

HEY YOU, DUN'T LET THAT MAN ALONE. IF HE WANTS TO WORK, THAT'S
HIS BUSINESS.

SIXTH.

I...I'LL CHANGE MY MIND. I'LL STICK.

MR. EXPERT

STEVE, YOU LOOK HIGHTY SICK. WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME AND LET THE
DOC BADLIT IT?

STEVE

SO I'LL STAY. I HAIN'T NEVER HAD NOTHIN'; NEVER EXPECT TO HAVE NOTHIN'.
SO JUST 'CAUSE I HAV'T HAD NOE SICK. I'M HIGHTY SICK. A FELLER'S BETTER
OF DEED THAN LIVIN' THIS WAY.

SHERIFF

LIEGH, YOU MEND. I HAIN'T GOIN' TO STAND FOR NO INTERFERENCE FROM YOU
SUCKERS. IF A MAN WANTS TO WORK, HE'S GOT A RIGHT TO DO IT. THIS IS
A OLD COUNTRY.

(CAPCALLS AND JEERS FROM THE STRIKERS.)

SUPERINTENDENT

NEVER MIND WHAT SHERIFF. THEY'LL ALL COME BACK HERE WITH THEIR TAILS
BEING THEIR LEGS PESSIN' FOR THEIR JOBS BACK IN ANOTHER DAY OR SO.

(WORKERShoot AT THIS SPEECH, OBVIOUSLY MEANT TO
GOOD THEM.)

* Speech by Sheriff Atkins of Marion, North Carolina
** Based on attitude of Superintendent Hunt of the Marlowe Mfg. Co.
(JANG AND LOUDER)

STEVE

LOOK AT OLD MR. LAM THERE! DON' HE LOOK FINE WITH THAT THERE STAR ON HIS FRONT? MR. LAM HIMSELF.

(LAUGHTER AND JEERS FROM THE WORKERS)

SHUT UP, GOD DAMN IT!

(AS THE WORKERS ENTER AND START TO WALK UP TO THE FACTORY WHERE THEY ARE STOPPED BY THE STRIKERS)

SHERIFF

ALL RIGHT MEN. GET RIGHT IN AND GO TO WORK IF YOU WANT TO. AS THE LATTER OF YOUR FIELD OF THE ENGLISH PICKETS. SOME OF MR. MUNN'S MEN WAITING FOR YOU. DON'T LET THEM TALK YOU OUT OF YOUR JOBS. DON'T GET HARD TO FIND THESE DAYS.

MEN

AND I, IN AS HARD TO COME IN.

ACCESS

PORTER

SHERIFF

(YELLING AT TOP OF HIS LUNGS)

LISTEN! LISTEN TO ME!

(TORE JEEPS AND LAUGHTER)

ALL RIGHT MEN, IT'S ALL FOR IT. GIVE EM THE TEAR G.O.'S. GET 'EM OFF THEIR FEET. GET 'EM OUT OF HERE.

(SHERIFF AND HIS MEN CHASE THE STRIKERS. TEAR BOMBS ARE THROWN. CLUBS FALL. SHOTS ARE FIRED. THE SHERIFF IS SEEN TO FALL UNDER THE CLUBS OF ONE OF THE DEFENDING MEN. EXPERT CALLS TO GET TO HIM. SOME MOUNTAIN RUSH ON AND SEEK AND TRY TO REACH THEIR MEN. CLUBS FLY. MEN FALL)

BLACKOUT

(LIGHTS UP AGAIN ON THE SAME SCENE. BUT NOW IT IS VERY QUIET. FOUR MEN ARE LYING DEAD ON THE GROUND. AMONG THEM STEVE AND LEE. THE OTHERS ARE SEEN TO BE WOUNDED. EXPERT IS TRYING TO GET STEVE TO SPEAK TO HIM.)

*This passage was excerpted by Sheriff Akers and his men. They were attempting to prevent further violence. From "Samuel Lewis on North Carolina: Labor Days."
SHERIFF

(As he and his men slowly pick up the fallen strikers and look off after the others fleeing. Sheriff and his men are panting and drooping from the fight.)

FOR ANY ONE THERE?

FOREMAN

YOU ALL OUT FOR KICKS AND HERE'S TWO MORE KICKIN' AROUND LIKE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR FUTURE'S GOIN' TO COME. THE BEST WILL PULL IT.

MR. EXPERT

STEVE?

(STEVE'S HEAD HANGS LIMP. MR. EXPERT LETS IT DROP GENTLY ON THE GROUND. HE TAKES HIS HAT OFF.)

WOMAN

(COMES ON. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO SPEAK TO LEE BEFORE.)

WHERE'S LEE?

MR. EXPERT

(INDIcATES LEE ON THE GROUND)

SILENCE.

WOMAN

OH MY GOD! HIS WIFE DIED JUST FOUR HOURS AGO AND THOSE FIVE LITTLE CHILDREN ARE LEFT ALONE NO. AND ONE OF THEM ONLY TWO YEARS OLD!

(STARTS TO WEEP VIOLENTLY)

PL. GENTLE.
I. THE TENANT FARMER AND LACK JUDICARY

BACK TO THE LAND

(THE SCENE IS STEVE'S BEDROOM. STEVE IS LYING DEAD ON THE BED. HUBERT BRITT, JOHN BRITT, AND RUTH ARE STANDING AT THE HEAD OF THE BED. RUTH IS SLEEPING SOFTLY. MR. EXPERT IS STANDING AT THE FOOT OF THE BED. BILL GIBSON, HIS ARM IN A SLING, IS STANDING NEAR THE DOOR. FROM DOWNSTAIRS, COMES THE SOUND OF LITTLE CHILDREN SORROWING INTERMITTENTLY.)

BRITT

STILL AS A GOOD FARMER, I WAS ALWAYS HOPING HE'D COME BACK TO THE LAND.

JOHN

WILL COMIN' BACK.

RUTH

IN THE DAY WE'LL ALL COME BACK TO IT IN TIME.

MR. EXPERT

(HUMOROUSLY)

I'M A FARMER; WHAT I CAN DO.......

BRITT

(CONTUMACIOUSLY)

WHAT COULD YOU DO? YOU THE SMART ACRE WHO WAS GOING TO TELL THE GOVERNMENT WHAT IT SHOULD DO FOR US FOLKS.

(SHOUTING)

WELL, HAVE YOU FOUND OUT YET WHAT'S WRONG WITH US? HAVE YOU FOUND OUT WHAT TO DO?

RUTH

I HAD NO SAY.

(GULP OF A TWO-DAY OLD BABY IS HEARD FROM DOWNSTAIRS. IT IS QUICKLY HUSHED BY A WOMAN'S VOICE CROONING TO IT.)

GIBSON

I COULDN'T TALK IT A-DAY, MR. BRITT. I'S STAYED WITH STEVE AS LONG AS HE COME, AND TELL TO HELP......IT WOULDN'T BE USE

STEVE DIED TWO MONTHS AGO; A COUPLE OF MONTHS DIED FROM THE LUNG SICKNESS.

*176*
JONI

SHE WAS A LOVELY SORT OF A LADY. SHE COULDN'T WAIT TO DIE
BUT JUST SIT IN BED, SHE'D WANT TO DIE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT.

BRITT

(APologetically TO Mr. EXPERT)

AND SAYS A LOT OF THINGS.

Mr. EXPERT

I UNDERSTAND. I LIKE STEVE A LOT.

HELEN

(FLOTTING INTO THE ROOM)

OR JOHN

(SHE RUNS INTO HIS ARMS.)

THEY TOLD ME.....POOR STEVE!

(SHE Sobs)

JOHN

(PATS HER SHOULDER)

FEBRUARY

HELEN

I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE FARM. I'LL WORK. I'LL CHOP COTTON, I'LL....

BILL

HELEN, THIS IS A HURRY PLACE TO SAY IT, BUT IF YOU'LL HANG ME,
WE'LL TRY TO GET ALONG SOMEHOW. I'LL GET ANOTHER JOB IN ANOTHER MILL.....

HELEN

FEBRUARY. I OUGHT NEVER LIVE IN THIS AGAIN.

JOHN

HELEN, I THINK I CAN GET THE SPIRIT'S PLACE..... IF YOU CAN STAND....

HELEN

SHE COULDN'T BE COOPERATE.

(DRAGS AWAY)

GET YOUR THUGS BEHOLD. I AND YOUR MOTHER.......

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GIBSON

RIGHT, SORRY, MR. FRITT, ABOUT STEVE. SORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING. GOODBYE.

MR. EXPERT

HERE YOU GO, BILL?

GIBSON

I'LL GO IN BACK TO MY ROOM AND GET A FEW THINGS TOGETHER, THEN I'LL COME TO TRY TO PUT MY WAY NORTH. I HEAR TELL THEY GIVE GOOD SAVINGS TO THOSE.

(HE EXITS AS

- BLOCKOUT

-179-
TO FOLLOW SCENE TEN (C)

(LIGHTS UP ON SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM ONLY NOW THE PROJECTION IS THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. AT NIGHT IS A PLATFORM ON WHICH ARE SEATED SOME MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE. SPOT PICKS UP REPEA TIVE JONES.)

BLACKBOARD

WE’VE BEEN FUMBLING AROUND THE SENATE LONG ENOUGH. LET’S SEE IF WE CAN GET OVER HERE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JONES

WE CAN HAVE 15,000,000 Bales of Cotton in the carry-over and in the projection of that year, I want to tell you, there is not a man living under the American flag who has studied the question for ten minutes who does not know that it is overbuilding and will cause a complete farm collapse unless there is some machinery set up to sustain it. They talk about turning the Farmers Loose. I have seen the farmers go into the cotton fields with the baby, only a few months old and left the baby tied to the cotton. I have heard a ten-year-old picking in the fields and been told to go to school, not because they wanted to go to school but because in the last desperate extremity for the children to do work for their families and clothing for their bodies. You may want to go to this sort of situation but I do not.

(LIGHTS OUT ON JONES UP ON PICTURES)

BLACKBOARD

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

PICTURE

THIS IS NOT AN IDEAL BILL. I DO NOT THINK AN IDEAL BILL CAN BE DRAINED IN THE FUTURE. THE COTTON OF THE FIELDS AND FECUNDATING A PROSTATE SITUATION. REPORT IS $2,000 FOR IT. OUR FOREIGN MARKETS HAVEN'T FAILED. WALLETS HAVE BEEN RAISED A MILLION, WHEAT TO AMERICAN BARS OF SUGARS; WOLL'S RAISED AGAINST OUR COTTON. A MILLION Dollars is placed. THE UN GOING TO CONTINUE TO RAISE THESE THINGS HIGHEST. THE UN GOING TO TRY TO FORCE THEM ON THE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC MARKETS. THAT MEANS MEANS MEANS CHAOS. OUR FRIENDS TALK ABOUT CONTROL. THIS IS NOTHING ELSE IN STORE FOR US. WHY NOT FACE IT? MR. SPEAKER, I GENTLY HOPED THAT THE CONFERENCE REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED.

(LIGHTS OUT ON HIM AND UP ON REPRESENTATIVE CASE)

[Note: The document contains formatting and typographical errors, including missing words and lines.]

[Footer: Copy from Library of Congress, Federal Theatre Project Archives at George Mason University, Virginia]
MR. SPEAKER: My friends of this floor really believe that we are getting a permanent solution of the farm problem in this bill. Certainly I do not, although I will vote for it under the pendulum by situation we have. There is no chance to amend. We must take it or leave it.

(Lights out on him and up on Hickiner.)

HICKINDER

The men who stand on the floor today advocating the passage of this bill will declare two years have elapsed on the bill of this house; incumbent now to repeal this haphazard thing, because it is going to do less to destroy the Democratic Party under the Republicans than anything else that could happen under the face of the shining sun and this is the only comforting thing in the whole mess.

(Lights out on him.)

HICKINDER

Well, I wish I was in on the allocation the bargain the country first seeing, as quite as dull as this law making stuff.

HICKINDER

* Of Cit. p. 2234, Congressional Record Feb. 9, 1930
** Ibid p. 2128
TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER, LABOR AND CAPITAL

(D) WHO IS TO BLAME?

BLACKBOARD

In this strike fight at the Marion Manufacturing Company plant at Marion, North Carolina, four men were killed on the spot, two others died shortly after, making a total of six dead and twenty wounded. All of the casualties were among the strikers. Sheriff Adkins and his men were charged with murder but later they were freed... and struck the first blow? * The sheriff and his men claimed:

(LETTER ON SHERIFF ADKINS)

ADKINS

The strikers were armed. They started the shooting. **

(LETTER ON SHERIFF ADKINS. WHICH COUP OF STRIKERS STARTED SHOOTING.)

STRIKER

None of us had guns. The sheriff's men did. All the shooting. That seems pretty clear because none of them was hurt except one deputy had a little scratch on his cheek. Six of us were killed and twenty wounded. ***

(LETTER ON SHERIFF ADKINS.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

Now let us hear from a strike leader named Rochester. He lives in Greenville South Carolina.

(LETTER ON ROCHESTER.)

Now Mr. Rochester, maybe you can give us some idea about the wages paid textile workers in the South. How old are you?

MR. ROCHESTER

Thirty seven years old.

(LETTER ON ROCHESTER.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

Occupation?

MR. ROCHESTER

Weaver.

* Sinclair Lewis on North Carolina's Labor War. Literary Digest 11-9-29
** Ibid
*** Ibid
MR. BLACKBOARD

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN A COTTON MILL? *

MR. ROCHESTER

TWENTY NINE YEARS. 'IT AMOUNTS TO THIS. THEY CUT MY WAGES AND INCREASED MY WORK. I USED TO TEND FORTY EIGHT LOOMS, WHILE UNDER THE STRETCH OUT, I HAVE TO TEND NINETY LOOMS, AND I COULDN'T DO IT. THREE YEARS AGO, I WAS EARNING OVER NINETOUGHT DOLLARS A WEEK. NOW I CAN MAKE SEVENTEEN DOLLARS AND SEVENTY CENTS. I AIN'T DRAGGING. I'M AN EXPERIENCED WEAVER. I MAKE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY, THE MOST WAGES ANY WEAVER CAN MAKE. **

MR. BLACKBOARD

THIS MAN STARTED TO WORK IN THE MILL IN 1900 WHEN HE WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD. HE DIDN'T MAKE A PENNY THE FIRST MONTH. NOW HE HOPES TO MAKE AGAIN, SEVENTEEN DOLLARS A WEEK, THE HIGHEST REWARD TO WHICH HE CAN RISE FOR A LIFETIME OF UNREMITTING WORK. ***

BLACKOUT

* This whole interview based on an article in Harper's 11-29 entitled "Georgia" by Mary Heaton Vorse

** Ibid. *same quotation from*

*** Ibid.
SCENE TEN (E)

THE TENANT FARMER, LABOR AND CAPITAL

(THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY.) *

(LATER--IN MR. BASCOM'S OFFICE.) **

MR. BASCOM

(As Secretaries)

ASK HIM TO COME IN.

(LATER--MR. EXPERT)

HOW DO YOU DO, MR. EXPERT?

(As Secretary)

Mr. Expert

HOW DO YOU DO? I'M GLAD THAT YOU'RE NOT VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE.

Mr. Bascom

NOT AT ALL. I'M GLAD TO HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS MILL STRIKE. JUST WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW?

Mr. Expert

WELL NOW, ABOUT THE OWNERSHIP OF THE MILL?

Mr. Bascom

I DON'T OWN IT. IT BELONGS TO MY COUSIN. ***

Mr. Expert

Mr. Bascom

MISS SALLY BASCOM. ****

Mr. Expert

DOES SHE LIVE NEAR THE MILL?

Mr. Bascom

SHE LIVES IN BALTIMORE.

Mr. Expert

BUT SHE KEEPS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THINGS? MAKES FREQUENT VISITS? * An old saying.

** His real name is R.W. Baldwin. He is president and general manager...."A small bewildered man who dances about" Description by Lewis Sinclair.

*** "Miss Sally Baldwin is an unmarried lady who lives in Baltimore. She owns most of the stock of the Marion Mfg. Co." Sinclair Lewis
MR. BASCOM

I'M AFRAID NOT. NO. SHE HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE MARION MANUFACTURING PLANT EXCEPT TO RECEIVE HER DIVIDEND CHECKS ON TIME.

MR. EXPERT

DO THE WORKERS KNOW HER?

MR. BASCOM

THEY KNOW OF HER. THEY CALL HER MISS SALLY. *

MR. EXPERT

DOESN'T SHE TAKE ANY INTEREST IN THE WORKERS' WELFARE?

MR. BASCOM

THAT IS MORE OR LESS UP TO ME, MR. EXPERT.

MR. EXPERT

THEN WHY IN HELL DON'T YOU SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING FOR THEM.

MR. BASCOM

BECAUSE... WELL, IT'S A LONG STORY. BEFORE JUDGING US OWNERS TOO HARSILY, YOU SHOULD KNOW OF SOME THINGS HOWEVER. "THE MILL OWNER IS FACED WITH A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. HIS BUSINESS, EQUIPPED WITH THE MOST MODERN MACHINERY IS STILL ON A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE NINETEENTH CENTURY BASIS OF INDIVIDUALISM. HE DOES NOT JOIN WITH HIS COMPETITORS TO STUDY INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS. THOUGH HE MAY BE A BIT MORE GENEROUS THAN HIS FELLOWS IF HE PAYS HIGH WAGES, HE IS LIKELY TO BE UNDERSOLD. AND IN ANY CASE, HIS BUSINESS IS A PRECARIOUS ONE, AT THE MERCY OF SHIFTING FASHIONS IN SKIRTS. ALSO YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THAT SOME OF THE LABOR IS INEFFICIENT. ONE GIRL, A STRIKER, MADE NINE DOLLARS A WEEK SPINNING. THE GIRL NEXT TO HER IN THE MILL WHO COULD WORK MORE MACHINES IN 20 TWO DOLLARS A WEEK." **

MR. BLACKBOARD

SAYS YOU?

MR. BASCOM

"THERE ARE THREE OF US MILL OWNERS HERE IN TOWN. *** THE OTHER TWO OWNERS AND MYSELF ARE PERFECTLY WILLING TO TAKE LESS DIVIDENDS AND HAVE MORE PEACE. **** BUT BEHIND ALL OF US INDIVIDUAL MANUFACTURERS, THERE IS A POWERFUL SOUTHERN TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION****. THEY RESPECT SCABS JUST AS THE STRIKERS DO. THEY HAVE THEIR MILLS IN THE SOUTH BECAUSE OF THAT FAMOUS SUITY OF CHEAP AND SATISFIED LABOR AND THEY DO NOT DESIRE TO HAVE ANY OF THEIR MEMBERS BECOMING INEXPENSIVE AND UNSATISFIED BY DEALING WITH THE UNION...IF THEY OR I WERE TO DEAL WITH THE UNION, THEY COULD HALT THE ENTIRE SALES OF OUR PLANTS. THEY COULD QUIETLY INFORM THE MIDDLEMAN TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR MILLS. *****

BLACKOUT

"Miss Sally is a name...famous in Marion. She has little to do with Marion except to receive her dividend checks on time." Sinclair Lewis

** From articles by Hickman Powell of the old N.Y. World who covered the Gauntner Trial.

*** From article by Sinclair Lewis copyrighted by Scripps Howard

**** Ibid

***** Ibid
SCENE ELEVEN

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE FUTURE

(A) THE NEW FARM BILL

THE SETTING IS A FARM PLATFORM FACADE ON A COTTON FARM IN OKLAHOMA. 

HUSTON IS SPEAKING.

SENATOR POPE IS TAKING NOTES, PULLING HIS LEATHER BRIEFCASE. 

CLAY, DRESSED IN A BLUE COAT, SITTING NEXT TO HUSTON. 

HUSTON

ON MARCH TENTH, WE WILL VOTE ON THE NEW FARM BILL. IN CONSIDERING YOUR VOTE REMEMBER THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT MARKETING SEASON, THERE WILL BE ABOUT 25,000,000 BALES OF COTTON HANGING OVER THE MARKET. LAST YEAR WAS A RECORD YEAR...18,000,000 BALES. WE ARE CONSUMING ONLY ABOUT 12,000,000 BALES A SEASON. THE COTTON ALLOTMENT UNDER THE NEW FARM BILL WILL BE A SMALL ONE, TO BRING OUTPUT TO ABOUT 11,000,000 BALES A YEAR. THE ECONOMIC EFFECT OF THE AUCTION. A TAX OF TWO CENTS A POLL WILL BE LEVIED ON EXCESS OVER YOUR MARKETING QUOTA. YOUR MARKETING QUOTA WILL BE FIXED BY YOUR ACREAGE ALLOTMENT. IF YOU PLANT MORE THAN YOUR ACREAGE ALLOTMENT, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR COTTON CROP ADJUSTMENT PAYMENT, ALSO YOU WILL LOSE YOUR SOIL CONSERVATION PAYMENT BECAUSE HAVING TO PAY THE TWO CENTS A POUND TAX.

(CHOIR OF SENATOR POPE)

SENATOR POPE FROM IDAHO.

(A LITTLE FROM AUDIENCE)

POPE

(LOOKING LONELY AND TENSELY)

I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE YOURS. WHAT WE WANT TO DO IS TO FIT AGRICULTURE INTO OUR SYSTEM. THE FARMERS ARE AGREEING IT IS TIME FOR FARMERS TO STOP GOING SHIP HUNTING WITH INDUSTRY...

(A LITTLE FORCER LANGUAGE FOR AN AUDIENCE)

...AND RUN FARMING ON A SOUNDCORE ECONOMIC BASIS. THE LOGICAL THING TO DO IS TO COORDINATE PRODUCTION WITH DEMAND. THE NEW FARM BILL SEEKS TO PERMIT FARMERS TO ADJUST PRODUCTION TO DEMAND. THE BILL IS CRITICIZED ON THE BASIS OF A "PHILOSOPHY OF SCARCITY" WHICH IS NOT TRUE, BECAUSE THE RESERVE IS LIKELY PROVIDED FOR. IN THE BILL WOULD FEED AND CLOTHES EVERY AMERICAN AND SUPPLY FOREIGN MARKETS. AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A SURPLUS OF COTTON, BUT THERE'S NO SURPLUS OF SHIRTS. BECAUSE THE TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS ARE INSE ENOUGH TO CONTROL THE OUTPUT.

(A LITTLE FORCER LANGUAGE FOR AN AUDIENCE)

THE FARMER HAS ALWAYS HAD TO SELL QUICK BECAUSE HE NEEDS THE MONEY.

(CHOIR OF AUDIENCE)

AS SOON AS THE SPECULATORS GET HOLD OF IT, AS SOON AS IT'S OUT OF THE
farmer's hands, the price begins to rise. the farmers ought to be able to say what the price is, not ask the purchasers.

(I say go for the farmer. iope goes his next lines heavily.)

I say the new farm bill does not go far enough, but it is worthy of passage for any one of these provisions:

1. a predictable and manageable farm production.
2. crop insurance for wheat, which should be extended to all crops.
3. orderly marketing to control prices.
4. promotion of new uses for farm crops.
5. surplus reserve loans to tide farmers over the glutted market seasons so they can hold their produce for better prices.

WALL
(WALL INTRODUCES WALL. AS HE SITS, THERE IS A LAUGH. AS WALL RISES, A LAUGH RESONATES.)

BOYS, I HAD A WONDERFUL SPEECH ALL PREPARED AND READY TO MAKE.

(I say, he is the typical southern farmer speaker.)

but senator iope made it.

(LOUD LAUGHTER, TERRIFIC APPLAUSE. WALL FACES A MAN LIKE AN ACTOR.)

I'M ONE OF YOU.

(COLLAPSE A TERRIFIC EIGHTY-EIGHT) I'M A FORTY ACRES FARMER MYSELF.

(LAUGH)

SO I CAN TALK STRAIGHT TO YOU AND YOU KNOW I'M TALKING TO MYSELF, TOO.

(I say, I say, all this neat by director.)

NOW THIS NEW FARM BILL....IT AIN'T PERFECTION, BUT LET'S NOT QIBBLE. IT'S A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN NOTHIN'.

(LOUD LAUGHTER WHICH IS QUICKLY SUPPLANTED)

OF COURSE, THERE'LL ALWAYS BE SOME OF US THAT'LL HANG BACK, BUT NOT ALL OF US.

(GENERAL UPLIFT AND CONVINCING GESTURES)

DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO '32? I DON'T!

(COLLAPSE AS AUDIENCE BUYS IT)

WHY THE ONLY REASON WALL STREET DIDN'T TAKE MY FARM WAS THEY COULDN'T MOVE IT.

(LOUD LAUGHTER, FLICKER)

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SCENE ELEVEN

TITLE: THE SOUTHERN FARMER AND THE FUTURE

(B) THE MAN ON THE STREET *

(AN ANNOUNCER IN A FARMING DOLL'S. AN ANNOUNCER AT A PORTABLE MICROPHONE. A CROWD OF FARMERS STAND)

ANNOUNCER

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE RADIO AUDIENCE. WE HAVE SET UP OUR MICROPHONE IN A LITTLE MISSOURI FARMING VILLAGE AND WE'LL NOW GIVE YOU SOME OPINIONS ON THE NEW FARM BILL. HERE IS A TYPICAL COTTON FARMER. COME OVER HEREBE, SIR. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

C. B. GRIFFIN.

ANNOUNCER

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

GRIFFIN

ROSE HILL, NORTH CAROLINA.

ANNOUNCER

ARE YOU AGAINST THE FARM BILL?

GRIFFIN

I AM. IF THIS CROP CONTROL BILL BECOMES A LAW, THE AMERICAN FARMER STANDS TO BE THE LOSER AND THE OLD COUNTRIES WILL PROFIT THEREBY, WHILE THE POLITICIANS ARE EXPERIMENTING IN AMERICA. *

ANNOUNCER

THANK YOU AND PLEASE ACCEPT THIS TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE WITH OUR COMPLIMENTS. NOW YOU.

THOMSON

MY NAME IS THOMSON AND I'M FROM JAMLET, NORTH CAROLINA. WHY SHOULD OUR FARMERS, THE MOST INDEMNIT PEOPLE IN THE WORLDEVEN CONSIDER SELLING THEIR GOD GIVEN FREEDOM FOR A SMALL MESS OF POLITICAL Pottage.

ANNOUNCER

THANK YOU AND HERE'S YOUR TOOTHPASTE. NEXT?

JONES

MY NAME IS VERBLE JONES. "THE NEW FARM BILL....IS JUST WHAT THE FARMERS NEED. " *

* Popular expression used in radio
** From letter written by C. B. Griffin printed in Raleigh News & Observer 3-8-38
*** Ibid. Letter written by S. F. Thompson
**** Ibid. Letter written by Verble Jones
ALL YOUR LIVES YOU SAID "THERE'S NOTHIN' I CAN DO ABOUT IT." WELL, I'M A SON OF A GUN IF THERE AIN'T SOMETHIN' YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW.

BLACKOUT

NOTE: This entire scene is a condensation of the meeting of 4000
the farmers who gathered in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh, North
Carolina on Feb. 10, 1939. Speeches are direct quotations.

J. B. Huston is assistant AAA administrator. James F. Pope is the
senator from Idaho and Mr. Wall is a farmer.
ANNOUNCER

HOW IF YOU TURN YOU OVER TO OUR ANNNOUNCER IN MISSOURI WHO IS
CONDUCTING A SIMILAR MAN IN THE SATE! AMERICAN BROADCAST.

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

HERE WE ARE, FOLKS, RIGHT ON THE MAIN STREET OF A LITTLE MISSOURI
VILLAGE. YOU...YOU OVER THERE. COME OVER HERE...

(FAKE COMES OVER THE RADIO)

YOU LOOK LIKE A TYPICAL FARMER. WHAT DO YOU WANT CONGRESS TO DO FOR YOU?

FIRST FARMER

I WANT TO BE LEFT STRICTLY ALONE. *

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

AH, DADY AND JOHN. SIT RIGHT UP TO THE MICROPHONE, SIR, WITH YOUR
WIFE. TELL THE VAST RADIO AUDIENCE WHAT YOU THINK OF CROP CONTROL.

OLD FARMER

MY WIFE AND I HAVE PUT IN SIXTY YEARS OF HARD WORK AND ECONOMY INTO OUR
OWN HOME AND FARM AND SELL ES TO THE SHOOPER WHO TRIES TO DICTATE TO ME. *

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

DO YOU SHARE HIS ATTITUDE, YOUNG FELLOW?

YOUNG FARMER

WE DON'T WANT TO LIVE UNDER A DICTATOR. WE'RE ABLE TO RUN OUR OWN
AFFAIRS WITHOUT THE AID OF A HITLER. *

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

NOW, HERE WE HAVE A VERY CHEERFUL AND... DO YOU MIND IF I SAY, FAT FARMER?

FAT FARMER

NOTE.

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT THE PRESIDENT TO DO FOR YOU?

FAT FARMER

I SUGGEST THAT FDR TAKE A LONG FISHING TRIP. IF ROOSEVELT WOULD TAKE
A SIX MONTHS VACATION TWICE A YEAR AND TAKE WALLACE WITH HIM, WE'D BE BETTER OFF.*

SECOND ANNNOUNCER

THANK YOU AND YOU IN THE PRIZE OF... ONE DOLLAR.

BLACKOUT

* These and similar attitudes were taken from questionnaire of the Springfield
Missouri New Leader and reprinted in the Congressional Record,
Feb. 8, 1938, p. 2146
MR. BLACKFOARD

ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, IN EVERY LITTLE VILLAGE, EVERY COUNTY SEAT, FARMERS
GATHERED TO LISTEN TO SPEECHES AND DISCUSS THE NEW FARM BILL. FINALLY
VOTING DAY CAME AND THE VOTE CAME IN. IN NORTH CAROLINA THEY CLOSED
THE LIQUOR STORES DURING THE VOTING PERIOD SO AS TO MAKE IT ON THE UP AND UP.

(laughter)

MORE THAN TWO MILLION FARMERS IN THE NATION'S FIFTEEN HUNDRED COTTON
COUNTIES WERE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. THE PLAN WAS APPROVED BY A RATIO OF
MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT.

BLACKOUT
SCENE ELEVEN

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE FUTURE

(0) "ERST-MILE DURHAM TENANT SUCCEEDS" *

MR. EXPERT IS TALKING WITH DR. CLARENCE POE.) **

MR. EXPERT

BEFORE FILING MY REPORT WITH THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH, I THOUGHT I WOULD TALK WITH YOU, AS EDITOR OF "THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER AND SOUTHERN RURALIST," YOU HAVE DOUBTLESS ARRIVED AT AN ANSWER TO THE COTTON PROBLEM?

DR. IOE

YES, I HAVE. I AM, AS I HAVE BEEN FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, A PREACHER OF DIVERSIFICATION. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SOUTH? IT IS THAT WE INSIST ON GROWING THE SINGLE CROP WHICH IS NO LONGER A PROFITABLE CROP AND WILL BECOME EVEN LESS SO.

MR. EXPERT

YOU MEAN THAT INCREASE IN FOREIGN PRODUCTION....

DR. IOE

THAT AND THE TRADE BARRIER AND THE DECREASING FERTILITY OF THE COTTON LANDS. THE NEED FOR DIVERSIFICATION IS APPARENT FROM THE FIGURES. TIME AND TIME AGAIN IT HAS BEEN SHOWN BY PROSPEROUS STATES THAT SUCCESSFUL FARMING REQUIRES A RATIO OF FIFTY-FIFTY BETWEEN CROP AND LIVESTOCK INCOME. LAST YEAR, THE RATIO IN NORTH CAROLINA WAS NINETY CROP TO TEN LIVESTOCK, AND IN THE COTTON BELT PROPER THE FIGURES COULD BE EVEN LOWER. WE OUGHT TO ENLARGE OUR DAIRYING AS WE ARE DOING. WITH OUR WEALTH, OUR MILD CLIMATE PERMITTING LIVESTOCK TO REMAIN OUT ALL YEAR, THE SOUTH COULD BECOME A GREAT DAIRY REGION.

MR. EXPERT

HAS THERE BEEN ANY ATTEMPT AT DIVERSIFICATION THAT SUCCEEDED?

DR. IOE

CERTAINLY. QUITE A FEW CASES. NOW YOU GO OVER AND TALK TO MR. J.C. THOMAS.

BLACKOUT

(* BLACKOUT ON MR. EXPERT TALKING TO MR. THOMAS.)

THOMAS

I USED TO BE A TENANT OVER IN HILTON, NORTH CAROLINA. I DON'T THINK ANY TENANT WHO'S APPLIED HIMSELF AND USE BUSINESS METHODS NEEDS TO BE A TENANT. I BORROWED ME ENOUGH FROM A LAND BANK TO START GETTIN' A PLACE

* Caption over article in Durham Sun, 38. ** Dr. Poe was interviewed by Mr. Poery, one of the authors and the statements above come from Dr. Poe.
OF MY O.H. THE GOVERNMENT'S MAD: IT EASIER HOW WITH THE MONEY IT'LL GIVE A FELLOE TO START ON. I FARM AS SCIENTIFIC AS I CAN, DOIN' WHAT THE COUNTY AGENT AND EXTENSION TELLS ME.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DO YOU RAISE?

THOMAS

LAST YEAR, I HAD ELEVEN ACRES OF CORN, TWO OF COTTON, FOUR OF TOBACCO, THREE OF TRUCK CROPS, ONE OF POTATOES AND SIX OF WHEAT.

MR. EXPERT

HOW DID YOU MAKE OUT?

THOMAS


MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH OF A FAMILY HAVE YOU?

THOMAS

"I FE AND TWO GIRLS. THE YOUNG'UNS ARE IN THE 4-H CLUB AT SCHOOL.

MR. EXPERT

YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO MEET THE PAYMENTS ON YOUR FARM?

THOMAS

EVERY TIME. I'M FORTY-TWO YEARS OLD AND THE FUTURE LOOKS MIGHTY GOOD TO ME. I'M HAPPY TO BE BUYIN' A HOME AND FARM WITHOUT WORKIN' ANY HARDER THAN IF I WAS WORKIN' FOR A LANDLORD SOMEWHERE.

BLACKOUT

BLACKBOARD

BUT HE'S ONE IN A MILLION; THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE. HIS CASE WAS SO SENSATIONAL THAT IT WAS WRITTEN UP WITH PICTURES AND PUBLISHED IN ALL THE SOUTHERN PAPERS AND RECEIVED NEARLY AS MUCH SPACE AS THE WOMAN WHO HELD UP HER LANDLORD AT THE POINT OF A GUN AND ASKED FOR FOOD FOR HER STARVING CHILDREN. IT GOT MORE SPACE THAN THE STORY OF THE ORPHAN GIRL WHO WAS WHITED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT AND BECAUSE SHE WOULDN'T TELL ON SOME OTHER GIRLS.

BLACKOUT

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SCENE ELEVEN

TITLE: IT'S SPRING AGAIN

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE FUTURE

(D) IT'S SPRING AGAIN

THE SCENE IS THE HOME OF THE BRITT FAMILY. IT IS A SUNNY DAY IN EARLY SPRING AND THE FAMILY ARE OUT IN THE YARD PLAYING THE SOFT GRAMMIES LIES ON HIS BACK, HIS LEGS CROSSED AND HIS HAND OF THE SET. DAVE LIES NEAR TO THE FEMALE MEMBERS IN POSITION AND THINKING. LILLIE LEE AND FRANKIE ARE STANDING WITH THEIR BACKS AGAINST EACH OTHER. LARRY BRITT AND HUBERT BRITT ARE SITTING SIDE BY SIDE ON A BENCH. THEY ARE AHEAD NOW, THAN A YEAR IN HUNGS.

BRITT

TONIGHT, TOMORROW, DAVE AND I START BREAKING THE GROUND AGAIN, EH, YOUNG'UN?

(D. ANSWER FROM DAVE.)

GRAMMIES

SO SPRING'S HERE AGAIN. PLANTIN' TIME ONCE MORE. I NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND HOW A MAN COULD DO PLANTIN' ALL HIS LIFE ON ONE PIECE OF GROUND AND LEAVE NOthin' TO SHOW FOR IT. THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH FARMIN'... THINGS GROW, ONLY TO DIE OFF WITH THE FIRST FROST. NOT FOR ME. BESIDES GROUND'S PLUMB WORE OUT.

BRITT

THE GROUND WORE OUT ALONG WITH ME, GRAMMIES. IT'S OLD AND GRAY TOO AND SPRING DON'T MEAN AS MUCH TO IT AND TO ME AS IT USED TO. STILL THERE'S A LITTLE LIFE IN BOTH OF US YET. COME AUGUST, OLE COTTON WILL BE BLOWIN' IN THE WIND SAME'S IT DONE WHEN I WAS A YOUNG'UN.

FRANKIE

FLO'ER DEEP AND WAIT UNTIL PICKIN' TIME. THAT'S IT, AIN'T IT, MR. BRITT?

BRITT

THAT'S RIGHT, FRANKIE.

FRANKIE

COME PLANTIN' TIME AGAIN, LILLIE LEE AND WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER FIELD-HAND, WON'T BE HONEY.

(HELL SMILE AT EACH OTHER)

LALLY

(D. END)

WHY YOU NEVER TOLD ME?
LINNIE LEE

HA, THERE'LL BE A LOT OF 'EM. I'LL GET SO USED TO 'EM THAT I'LL BE FORGETTIN' TO COME HURRYIN' OVER TO TELL YOU. YOU JUST SORT OF GOT TO WATCH OUT FOR 'EM FROM NO. ON.

FRANKIE

I HOPED THEY HELP ON COULN' BOYS SO I CAN HAVE ME A HESS OF FIELD HANDS WHEN I GET MY OWN FARM.

GRAMPS

I GUESSED BEEN A FARMER, HE CAN'T HELP IT NOHOW. NOW, ME, I'M DIFFERENT. I COULDN'T FARM FOR NO LIVIN' LIVIN'. I'D RATHER LIVE DOWN BY THE RIVER AND CATCH ME FISH FOR A LIVIN'. I DON'T HANKER MUCH AFTER FISH, EITHER. BUT ANYHOW, I DON'T HAVE TO GET THEM ON CREDIT.

DAVE

(RUNS OVER TO LOOK AT GRAMPS)

THAT THE IDEA, GRAMPS. I'M WITH YOU ON THAT. I'M JUST WAITING FOR ANOTHER FLOOD TO COME 'LONG AND I'LL PICK UP BOARDS AND BUILD ME A SHACK.

LALLY

YOU'LL HELP YOUR FA LIKE YOU WAS MEANT TO DO.

BRITT

I GOT A FEELIN' THIS IS GON'T BE THE YEAR. BUT WE GET A BIG CROP WITH HIGH RAINES. I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES. THEN WE CAN GET A FEW THINGS THAT WE NEED, SETTLE UP OUR DEBTS AND NEXT YEAR WE'LL MOVE ON TO A NEW PLACE. WE'LL GET US SOME NEVER GROUND, SOME THAT AIN'T BEEN PLANTED TO COTTON TOO LONG. MAYBE WE CAN GET TO HAVE A GARDEN, EH, MA?

(EASILY, SHE PITS HER ARM ABOUT HIS SHOULDER)

LALLY

IT'S GON'T TO RAIN TOMORROW. WE COULD STAND SOME RAIN.

(TELLING)

YES, FA, I'D LIKE A GARDEN. I'D LIKE TO GET ME SOME FLOWER SEEDS. FOLKS USED TO SAY I HAD A RIGHT GROWING HAND WITH FLOWERS WHEN I WAS YOUNG.

MR. EXPERT

(TUFTS)

HOWDY, FOLKS.

LALLY

EVENIN', SIR.

MR. EXPERT

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WHOA! NOW? WHY? WHO SAID......

LINNIE LEE

WAITING.

SHE'S BEEN READY FOR THE LAST HOUR.

RUTH

(A TOW-TOOK. SHE HAS A

FAKE FACE. SHE WOUL A LOOKING MILES.)

I WAS NOT. HELLO ELBERT.

MR. EXPERT

MY, YOU LOOK PRETTY.

RUTH

THIS IS THE FIRST STORE HAT I EVER HAD.

MR. EXPERT

COLDLY AFTER A SILENCE

WELL, THE CAR IS WAITING DOWN THE ROAD.

MR. EXPERT

RUTH

HOW CAN I SAY GOODBYE TO THEM? I'VE NEVER BEEN AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE.

BRITT

DON'T SAY IT, GAL. JUST GO.

FRANKIE

SHE'LL BE BACK COME COTTON CHOPPIN' TIME, I KNOW.

RUTH

OH ELBERT, IS IT TERRIBLY COLD UP NORTH?

MR. EXPERT

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT.

GRAND'S

WELL, THAT'S ABOUT THE ONLY WAY THE SOUTH WILL GET ON ITS FEET AGAIN.

I ALWAYS SAID IT. WE Gotta HARRY YANKEE MONEY.

RUTH

GOOD GRAND'S.

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MR. EXPERT

DON'T YOU THINK WE SORT OF OUGHT TO START? I'D LIKE TO MAKE
RICHMOND TONIGHT.

GRAMPS

AND RUTHIE, DON'T BE COMIN' BACK HERE WITH NO DAMNEDYANKIE ACCENT.

RUTH

GOODBYE, MA. LINNIE LEE.

(KISSING THE BABY)

KISS THE BABY FOR ME. GOODBYE, GRAMPS, PA, DAVE. GOODBYE.

(GRAVING TO RUN OFF)

LALLY

RUTH!

RUTH

WHAT?

LALLY

YOU DON'T SO FORGET TO GET MARRIED WHEN YOU GET TO WASHINGTON, WILL YOU?

MR. EXPERT

I'LL REMIND HER OF IT.

(FULL EXIT, RUNNING INTO JOHN AND HELEN

AND ARE SITTING. MORE GOODBYES ARE SHOUTED.)

JOHN

SO THEY'RE OFF AT LAST. I LIKE HIM. HE'S A FINE FELLOW.

LALLY

SON, IF YOU HAD THE EDUCATION AND ADVANTAGES HE HAD, WHY HE COULDN'T

HOLD A CANDLE TO YOU.

(Raises and lowers arms)

NOW MA.

BRITT

WHAT DID MR. POWERS SAY?

JOHN

YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT IN A HUNDRED YEARS! BUT MR. POWERS GAVE ME A

CONTRACT TO RUN THE SIM'S PLACE.
BRITT
I CAIN' HARDLY BELIEVE IT. IT'S THE FIRST CONTRACT HE EVER GIVE OUT.

GRAMPS
WHAT GOOD'S A CONTRACT? LAND'S NO GOOD OVER TO THE SIM'S PLACE.

JOHN
HE'S GOING TO LET ME TRY TOBACCO.

BRITT

(Narhus)
NO MATTER WHAT YOU PLANT, SON, YOU CAIN'T COME OUT AHEAD SHARECROPPIN'.

JOHN
I WON'T ALWAYS BE A SHARECROPPER.

BRITT
THAT'S WHAT I SAID.

HELEN
WE'LL BE DIFFERENT.

LALLY
THAT'S WHAT I SAID.

JOHN
BUT WE'RE STARTIN' IN KNOWIN' A LITTLE MORE THAN YOU DID, PA.

GRAMPS
THAT'S WHAT YOUR PA SAID TO ME, SON. HE WAS SMARTER THAN ME AND YOU'RE SMARTER THAN ME HE, THAT MAKES ME THE DUMBEST OF THE LOT. BUT IF YOU ASK ME, I S'AR I GOT MORE SENSE...LIVIN' WITHOUT WORKIN'...THAN THE WHOLE FASSEL OF YOU.

JOHN
JUST AS LONG AS HELEN XSH AND I CAN BE TOGETHER, WE DON'T CARE HOW HARD WE WORK.

HELEN
JUST SO'S WE CAN BE TOGETHER ALWAYS.

LALLY

(JUH A SIGH)

YEH, YEH. WELF, I'LL PIECE YOU A QUILT COME WINTER.

HELEN
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LINCOLN LEE

(SUDDENLY)

I KNOW WHAT I'LL CALL HIM FRANKIE. IF THE NEXT ONE IS A BOY, LET'S CALL HIM ELBERT EXPERT.

(LULLY)

LALLY

(SITTING ON HER FEET.)

WELL, IT'S HIGH ON TO DINNER TIME. STEVE.....

(SITTING SNUBBLY AND SIGNS PAINTERLY. THE OTHERS LOOK DOWN ON THE GROUP.)

I MEAN...DAVE....GET ME SOME KINDLING FOR THE FIRE.

DAVE

(SUCUMBANTLY GETTING TO HIS FEET.)

AW HAA...GEE, MAN. CAN'T WE EAT SOMETHIN' COLD?

BLACKOUT
THE ENDING

[Scene is the same as Scene 1. The
flashlights and shadows on the
scene are the same as in Scene 1. Mr. Expert
is talking.)

Mr. Expert

And so I went all over the cotton South. I talked to plantation owners,
tenants, sharecroppers and small owners. I talked to mill hands, mill
operators and social workers. Yes, I tell you king cotton is sick and
cannot be cured by statistics. Here are some of the things I found out.

As long as the South lives by cotton, the price must be kept up to a
level at which there is a living in it. This means controlled production,
and the cotton grower wants control....control with teeth in it.

Diversification of crops is needed. The South can no longer depend
on cotton alone. Each year, the cotton lands get less and less productive,
the cost of production rises and foreign countries working virgin soil
can undersell us.

Some steps must be taken to correct the evils of family tenantry and share-
cropping, to insure that the laborer receives his hire. The presence of
20 million people whose family income is about two hundred dollars a
year is a blot on our country's name and a menace to our ideals of democracy.

Legislation should be adopted insuring proper wages, hours and working
conditions in the South in the textile industry. And not legislation
alone; the Southern laborer, whether industrial or rural needs education
towards desiring a higher standard of living.

These suggestions do not begin to cover all the needs of the South,
but these are the paramount needs. The remainder of my findings are
in a report which I leave with your secretary.

(He gives a large notebook to the Clerk)

Smith's Mask

(Cries)

On behalf of this committee of the United States Senate which we rep-
resent, I want to thank Mr. Expert for the distinguished service he
has rendered his country. When the morning of this century shall have
turned into noon, yea, even into twilight, he will be remembered.....

Mr. Expert

(Leaves the stage)

Why don't you all stop talking and do something for the South?

(Clerk is leaving)

Clerk

Hey! Where are you going?
MR. EXPERT

I JUST REMEMBERED! I'VE GOT A HONEymoon TO GO ON.

( . . . )

SMITH MASK

(CLAIM) 

GENTLEMEN, WHAT ARE YOUR WISHES?

YORE MASK

(CALLING)

MR. CHAIRMAN, I MOVE THAT WE NOW SIT DOWN AND WRITE A BILL THAT WILL CORRECT THESE EVILS, AND THAT WE BE NOT ADJOURNED UNTIL IT IS FINISHED.

(ALL RISE IN ALARM)

ALL

THAT'LL BE A MIGHTY LONG TIME.

HAVE A HEART.

I HAVE TO GET HOME BY SUMMER. GOT SOME CAMPAIGNING TO DO.

SMITH MASK

IS THERE A SECOND?

BANKHEAD MASK

I SECOND THE NATION.

SMITH MASK

ALL IN FAVOR, SAY "AYE".

BANKHEAD & ELLENDER MASKS

AYE!

SMITH MASK

OPPOSED?

THE REMAINING SENATORS

NOOOOOO

SMITH MASK

SO WE WILL WRITE THE BILL ANYHOW. THIS COMMITTEE WILL REMAIN IN SESSION UNTIL WE HAVE A BILL READY TO RETURN TO CONGRESS.

(SENATORS PULL OFF THEIR MASKS, THROW THEM ON THE FLOOR AND WRAP THEM WITH MANY CLOTHES AND CLOTHES. THEN THEY REMOVE THEIR COATS, ROLL UP THEIR COAT SLEEVES AND SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE TO WORK AS........)

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MR. BLACKBOARD

THAT'S ALL FOLKS.

(ORCHESTRA STARTS TO PLAY POPULAR SOUTHERN SONGS....)

CURTAIN