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OVERTURE FADES OUT.

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

CHORUS OFFSTAGE, SINGS, "PHAROAH'S ARMY GOT DROWNED".

LOUDSPEAKER

THE LIVING NEWSPAPER PRESENTS: "KING COTTON".

(FRONT CURTAINS OPEN AND THE PROJECTION FLIES 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. OH 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 ABJECT 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.)

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\* The Loudspeaker later becomes the voice of Mr. Blackboard, known as "Bee 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.

\*\*\*\* \* 15th census of the U.S., 1930, 11, 2: 2,612,086 farm operators in the 19 principal cotton states. The average number of workers in a southern family is conservatively estimated at 5.

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Federal Theatre Project Records  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

SCENE ONE

TITLE: A SENATE COMMITTEE MEETING. \*

(THE PROJECTION HAS BEEN RAISED OUT OF THE WAY AND LIGHTS COME UP ON THE PLATFORM 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 MC NARY. 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 GROUCH 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 Forestry, 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.

(HE 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 \*  
ENTERS FROM UP LEFT ON STAGE LEVEL. THE PRO-  
JECTION 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

(TESTILY)

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. INDEED, 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 ALLEGE 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 GREEN  
EYE SHADE. LAMP BURNS ON HIS DESK AND NEXT  
TO IT IS AN OILCAN LABELLED "MIDNIGHT".  
HUGE COFFEE POT 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 POUND 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.

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\* 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 SPOT 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 BORDER 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

CARTOONS, SEVEN BLACK AND THREE WHITE OF  
IDENTICAL ILLITERATES.)

TEN OUT OF EVERY HUNDRED ARE ILLITERATE AMONG THE SUBJECTS OF KING COTTON.

(BLACKBOARD OUT.)

BRITT

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

MC RARY 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 HAPPILY AT BLACKBOARD.)

IT WORKED!

(TO BRITT)

DIDN'T I WRITE

I KNOW THE SOUTH IS BAD OFF. ~~I WROTE~~ 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 BENE-  
FACTOR. 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!

(ON BLACKBOARD IS PROJECTED;  
9 BALES TIMES 40 EQUALS ~~\$360~~ \$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?

\*

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Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

BRITT

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

MR. EXPERT

FURNISHING-----?

BRITT

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. DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD.

BRITT

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?

BRITT

YOU BET YOUR LIFE. ME AN' 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?

BRITT

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 DOWN 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. \*\*

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\* Norman 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? XX \*

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 TELLS Y'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 BOLES OF COTTON CLINGING TO BLEAK STALKS. A CLUMP OF PERSIMMON SPROUTS MASKS THE UPSTAGE ENTRANCE.

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

BRITT

PRETTY HOT, ON THE ~~RAIN~~ 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~~ YEH. 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.

(FAUSE)

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.

BRITT  
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CLIMATE DOWN HERE?

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\* Articles and pictures in LIFE magazine. Issue p.

\*\* From letter in LIFE magazine. Issue p.

\*\*\* Statistics



MR. EXPERT

VERY MILD 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, WELL! 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.

(ENTER 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 CAIN'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 Paul Green

\*\*\* Flotious Character

4 "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  $\frac{1}{4}$  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, 095, 708)

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!

MR. BLACKBOARD

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  
981. 761 IN ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO.  
732, 923 IN SOUTHEAST.  
248, 838 )

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  
PERSIMMONS. 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 GETTIN' 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 EXEUNT DOWN RIGHT. JOHN CROSSES  
TO HER AND EMBRACES HER TENDERLY. SHE  
STARTS TO RESPOND AND THEN DRAWS AWAY  
IN DISTASTE.)

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

HELEN

YES, BUT-----

\* Local Citation  
\*\* Local citation

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Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

JOHN

(SHEEPLY 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 PAW 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 SHARECROP.

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  
LEASTWAYS 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 PAW.

JOHN

I AIN'T AIMIN' TO DO LIKE PAW. I'M GOIN' TO MAKE A THING 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 CAIN'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

(BITTERLY)

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 FIXIN' TO TAKE UP WITH BILL GIBSON?

HELEN

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

JOHN

BUT HE'S NO 'COUNT, HELEN.

HELEN

WATCHN 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. B. Alexander, Farm  
Security Administrator, Raleigh News and Observer 1-13-38.

\*\*\* Interview with R. C. Hamer who states ~~37~~ 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, NINE IDENTICAL 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.

---

\* From a study of Alabama croppers. Harold Hoffsommer, The AAA and the Cropper. Social Forces Xlll p. 494.

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)

GRAMPS BRITT IS AN INDEPENDENT OLD BASTARD AND HE'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. \*\*

(AS 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, DOWNSTAGE, HAS BEEN BLOWN AWAY.\*\*\* THE ROOM IS CLUTTERED WITH A STOVE AND CRATES AND BOXES. IN THE YARD LIE THE RUSTY REMAINS OF AN OLD CAR. GRAMPS 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 INUNCTION AS A SPITTOON. GRAMPS SPITS INTO IT FROM TIME TO TIME WITH REASONABLE ACCURACY.)

BRITT

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

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

GRAMPS

EVENIN', HUBERT. \*\*\*\*\*

BRITT

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

GRAMPS

EVENIN' SIR.

t

\* Title taken from caption under picture in "You have seen their Faces"

\*\* 15th Census of the U.S. Agriculture IV, 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)

AIN'T SHE PURTY? 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 NIGGER 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.



(NOTICING JUNKED AUTO IN YARD.)

YOU HAD A CAR ONCE?

GRAMPs

BACK BEFORE 1927 SOME'ERE 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 WOMERN-----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 GRAMPs MOVED HERE, HE BORROWED MULES TO TOTE IT ALONG AND THERE IT SET IN THE YARD AND FINALLY ROTTED AWAY. \*\*

GRAMPs

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

(SPITS)

BRITT

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

GRAMPs

*a little*  
HE PESTERIN' 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' PAST NOON. THE OLD WOMERN'LL BE WAITIN' ON US TO DISH 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  
(ANGRILY)

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

MR. EXPERT

BUT YOU SEEM AN INTELLIGENT SORT OF PERSON AND---

GRAMPS  
(PROUDLY)

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

MR. EXPERT

(SHOCKED)

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

GRAMPS

I WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. BUT I WAS READIN' IN A PAPER I FOUND  
THAT HOEY WON'T BE SATISFIED TILL THE FOLKS IN THIS STATE ARE AS  
DUMB AS THE FOLKS IN OTHER STATES. AN' WE GOT TILL ~~1940~~ 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 HOEY SET AS A ~~REAL~~  
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 GRITS\*\* 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, 1938.

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

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

GRAMPs

GUESS I'LL GO ALONG WITH YOU. AIN'T VISTED 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 ~~EXXX~~ 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 EXEUNT AS BLACKOUT.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

THAT WAS GRAMPs, FOLKS. HE GETS ALONG ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.  
NOW LET ME GIVE YOU THE FIGURES GOVERNOR HOEY 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~~ 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.)

---

\* Greensboro Daily News. March 17, 1938.

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 WHITEWASHED 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 IRON 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 NGE 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 UPENDED 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. LINNIE LEE, 43 15, PRETTY WITH DARK HAIR AND WHITE SKIN, IS STIRRING THE GRITS. SHE WEARS A SKIRT, OLD SWEATER AND RAGGED SNEAKERS. NO STOCKINGS. RUTH BRITT, 18, STRONG, CAPABLE AND INTELLIGENT LOOKING IS SITTING ON THE BED MENDING STEVE'S SHIRT. HE 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 13, 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 HIS 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 BRAVE. 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 STRAGETIC 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

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 NOHOW.

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

DAVE

AIN'T IT TIME FOR GRAMP, 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 MAW, ~~IF~~ DIDN'T WANT IT CUT NOHOW. AIN'T YOU 'BOUT FINISHED?

LALLY

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

DAVE

TWO MORE SNIPS, 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.

(STEVE JUMPS UP AND STARTS RUMMAGING  
IN BATTERED CHEST OF DRAWERS.)

WHAR'S THE JULY ~~1935~~ 1936 NUMBER?

(EXAMINES PAPER PASTED ON WALL.)

HERE IT IS. I KNOWED 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 BILLED.

(GIVING UP THE SEARCH AND SITTING DOWN.)

AND HE USED THAT UP THE WINTER THE SEARS ROEBUCK CATALOGUE  
DIDN'T COME.

LALLY

OF 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' <sup>ON</sup> 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  
TO ORANGE CRATE.)

LINNIE LEE

OH THE BABY! HE WANTS HIS SUGAR TEAT.

(DIPS A PIECE OF WADDED CLOTH INTO A  
CAN OF MOLASSES AND POPS IT INTO THE  
BABY'S MOUTH.)

AW, HE'S SO DARLIN'!

(COOS OVER THE ORANGE CRATE.)

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

(CROSSES 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 PAW COULD HAVE GOT A FARM OF YOUR OWN.

(GRIMLY)

WELL, YOU WON'T KETCH ME MARRYIN' NO SHARECROPPER. IF I CAIN'T GET  
ME A MAN WITH SOME MONEY AND A HOME OF HIS OWN, 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, MAW.

(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.

LALLY

"WE GET ALONG." \*

(ENTER GRAMP<sup>5</sup>)

STEVE

HEY-O, \*\* GRAMP<sup>5</sup> MUST BE GETTIN' WET DOWN TO YOUR SHACK. IT  
CAIN'T BE THAT YOU JUST GOT LONESOME FOR WE-UNS?

GRAMP<sup>5</sup>

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

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

NOBODY GIVES ME NO MIND. RIVER COULD WASH ME AWAY AND YOU WOULDN'T  
THINK TO LOOK FOR ME UNTIL COTTON CHOPPIN' TIME COME AROUND.

(HE REACTS 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 O' SEEN HIDE NOR  
HAIR OF ME IF THE WIND HADN'T GONE AND BLOWED UP FROM THE WEST.

(HE 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 TRAIGHT 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 ~~KITCHEN~~ CUTLERY.)

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 BHACK COME NEXT FLOOD.

RUTH

(BREAKING 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

YOU BEEN IN ENOUGH TROUBLE ALREADY ON ACCOUNT <sup>OF</sup> ~~FO~~ THAT TOM LEUBBEN. NOW YOU STAY SHET 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 WOMERN FOLKS TO DO FOR ME.

---

\* Fictitious name.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

(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<sup>s</sup>.

GRAMP<sup>s</sup>

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<sup>s</sup>. I BETCHA YOU AIN'T DONE A LICK  
O' WORK IN FORTY YEARS.

LALLY

DAVIE!

- - DAVE

(PROUDLY)

I'M A-GONNA BE JUS' LIKE GRAMP<sup>s</sup> WHEN I GROW UP. I'M GONNA GET ME A  
SHACK AND JUS' SIT THERE AND MAYBE DO A LITTLE FISHIN' AND HUNTIN'  
AND NOT GIVE A DAMN FOR NOBODY, EH GRAMP<sup>s</sup>.

(HE LAUGHS. GRAMP<sup>s</sup> CACKLES.)

LALLY

I HEAR YOUR PAW A-COMIN'. YOU'RE RIGHT LUCKY HE DIDN'T HEAR YOU  
A-TALKIN' THAT WAY. HE'D ~~TAN~~ 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.

HOWDY.

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 CROSSES TO LOOK INTO CRIB.  
EACH MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGES THE INTRODUCTION  
IN CHARACTER.)

JOHN GET HERE YET?

LALLY

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

(LINNIE LEE LADLES 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 VERY 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 PLANTIN' TIME.

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. MAW AND ME AND THE BABY AND THE GALS SLEEP IN THERE. STEVE, DAVE AND JOHN HAVE THIS WHOLE BED TO THEMSELVES 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?

GRAMP

HE WOULDN'T DARE ASK HIM. LANDLORD WOULD THINK HE WAS GETTIN' TOO UPPITY 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' WON'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.

\*\*

THERE AIN'T ROOM. YOU EAT LATER WITH LINNIE LEE AND ME. YOU SIT HERE, MR. EXPERT. COME ON, GRAMP<sup>^</sup>---RUTH---HUBERT. NO, NOT THERE, GRAMP<sup>^</sup>. THAT'S JOHN'S PLACE.

GRAMPS

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 BETTERN' 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.

GRAMPS

(EATING WITH RELISH.)

YEH. I KNOW A FELLER LIVIN' OVER ALONG THE SEABOARD-GUMBERRY HIGHWAY ALWAYS CHAWS 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 HELPING.)

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 VEGETABLE 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

NOT TENANT FARMERS. LANDLORD AIN'T INTEREST<sup>ed</sup> IN A GARDEN. WANTS COTTON PLANTED UP TO THE FRONT DOORS<sup>TEPS</sup>. 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 CAN'T 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!

GRAMP

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. MAW 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

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

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

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 FINE 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 MAW. 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 ~~\$100.00~~ \$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...NEWER. IT AIN'T PAINTED, THOUGH. \*

JOHN

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

LALLY

YES. THERE'S A POW'FUL LOT OF THINGS MISSIN'. IF WE ONLY HAD SOME SCREENS TO THE WINDOWS, I WOULDN'T ASK FOR ANYTHIN' ELSE. THE FLIES ARE SOMETHIN' TERRIBLE 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 CHEESCLOTH 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? \*\*\*

CHORES

OH NO!

MR. EXPERT

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

LALLY

(IN ASTONISHMENT)

OUTDOOR ONE?

BRITT

WE AIN'T EVEN GOT AN OUTDOOR TOILET.

MR. EXPERT

What HAVE YOU GOT, THEN?

GRAMP

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, HE'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 MAW DON'T GET TO HER CHURCH NO MORE BECAUSE SHE AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' TO WEAR. \*\*\*\*

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\* WFA "Landlord and Tenant" p. 101

\*\* Ibid. p. 101

\*\*\* Ibid. p. 101

\*\*\*\* Ibid. p. 101

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. GRAMP, AND I KNOW THAT.

MR. EXPERT

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

DAVE

I SURE WOULD 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 COCOANUT, SUCK IT AND GO TO SLEEP WITH THE SUN ON MY BELLYFUL." \*

(GATS, 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.

(BITTLERLY)

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 FARM. 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----L-----FEEL LIKE I'D RATHER GIVE UP FARMIN' THAN LOSE HER. BUT THEN AGAIN----FARMIN' IS SOMETHIN' 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 KARM 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 SOMEWHERE SHARECROPPIN' THEN I THINK, PAW STARTED OUT LIKE ME ONCE WITH THE SAME IDEAS. MAW 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. 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 1938, YOU KNOW. SUCH THINGS DO NOT EXIST IN OUR COUNTRY.

MR. BLACKBOARD

QUOTE;

(PROJECTION ON BLACKBOARD: "Quotation is  
from the WPA 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

(QUIETLY)

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

BLACKOUT.

SCENE THREE (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOME.

(A) OF MEN, MACHINES AND BANANAS

(LIGHTS PICK UP MR. EXPERT, BRITT AND  
JOHN STANDING AT 11 RIGHT. 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.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

(BLACKOUT ON 111. SPOT PICKS UP  
OSCAR CODPER ENTERING DOWN  
RIGHT WITH A SACK OF BANANAS. HE  
MUNCHES AS HE SINGS "I'm gonna take  
a airplane ride with the Lord.") \*

BRITT

WHAT YOU TOTIN' OSCAR?

OSCAR

SACK FULL OF BANANERS.

MR. EXPERT

Like bananas?

OSCAR

ALWAYS LIKE BANANERS. TODAY I SETTLES WITH MR. POWERS AND AFTER ALL  
THE WHITE FOLK'S FIGGERIN', I HAD TWO DOLLARS LEF' FROM LAS' YEARS  
WUHK. THAT WON'T KEEP ME FO' DEEX' YEAR SO I GOT MY OLD WOMERN SOME  
SNUFF AND SPEND ALL THE RES' ON BANANERS. WHOLE DOLLAR AN' A HALF  
WUTH PLUS FI' CENTS SALES TAX. \*\*

BRITT

..HAT'S DOIN' IN TOWN OSCAR?

OSCAR

BIG DOIN'S. LANDLORD'S SETTLIN' UP THIS WEEK. SOME FOLKS IS  
GOT CASH MO'AY TO SPEN' 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'.

BRITT

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.

OSCAR

MAYBE THEY CAN GIT ON THE RELIEF.

JOHN

LET'S GET INTO TOWN. GUESS YOU'D LIKE TO INTERVIEW THOSE INVENT'ORS,  
EH, MR. EXPERT?

MR. EXPERT

I SURELY WOULD.

BRITT

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.



(LIGHTS 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 CROONING, "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 ~~EX~~ RIVER JUS' A-MOVIN' ON BY.

1ST NEGRO

WONDER HOW THEY COMIN' WITH OL' LEVEE BUILDIN'

3RD NEGRO

YEH.

2ND NEGRO

GO NOTHIN' TO DO WITH USL THEM FOLKS WUHKIN' MIGHTY HARD, THOUGH.

3RD NEGRO

LIFE GETTIN' KINDA NO GOOD LATELY.

1ST NEGRO

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

NEGRO

2ND ~~FOLKS~~

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 picture captioned "Sitting in the sun watching the Mississippi go by in Brskine 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

JUS' 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 FURS' 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 WE GETS ALONG FINE. AIN'T MARRIED AND EATIN' REG'LAR.

BLACKOUT

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

SCENE THREE (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOME.

(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 "RUST 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

<sup>dat</sup>  
[dat] (dat) COTTON/MACHINE GRABBED 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.  
\*\* Rust Bros invented rust Cotton picker, Patent 2,023, 491.  
\*\*\* Statement in Literary Digest, Sept. 6, 1936.  
\*\*\*\* Newsweek, Sept. 5th, 1936.

TAKEN TEN HAND PICKERS A FULL DAY TO PICK. \*

MR. EXPERT

GOSH!

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 GOT A BALE OF COTTON BUT A NEWS REEL CAMERA. NIGHTY 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 ACCLAIM. \*\*\*\*

MR. BLACKBOARD

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

BROTHER JOHN IS DOING ALLRIGHT. "NINE THOUSAND MILES AWAY UNDER AN ANGRY RUSSIAN-TURKESTAN SUN, BROTHER JOHN WATCHED TWO OF HIS PICKERS WHIRR DOWN A COLLECTIVIZED COTTON FIELD. MODESTLY HE GRINNED,

(PROJECTION CHANGES TO CLOSEUP OF TWO HEAVY HANDS, ONE A WORKER'S CHARLED 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 FIELDS LACKED HAND LABOR, NEEDED MACHINES. THEY BOUGHT TWO MACHINES OUTRE HT."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* "Newsweek" Sept. 5, 1936

\*\* Actual test in Stoneville, 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, 1938.

(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 SNIP THE GREEN COTTON ALONG WITH THE RIFE 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 SPINDLES, THE RODS PASSING FIRST THROUGH A MOISTENING DEVICE, THEN RUBBING THROUGH THE COTTON BOLLS LIKE A COMB. THE MATURED COTTON WINDS ITSELF AROUND THE SPINDLES, 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 MARKET 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 BARRED CHILD LABOR. CLOSEST TO THEIR HEARTS NOW, HOWEVER, ARE PLANS TO ENDOW 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 SOMEDAY 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, 1938

\*\* 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 WAS 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

WHO?

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 STANDING TALKING TO MR. EXPERT.)

DR. BUTLER

THERE WILL BE NO SIGAL 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 ~~ARRANGE~~ 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-

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

\*\* Ibid.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

OWNED 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 ~~MAK~~ 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  
WHITE 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 ~~EXCEL~~ FARMS. IT WOULD GIVE THE TENANTS AN OPPORTU-  
NITY 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 SMALL  
BOY FOLLOWED BY HIS IRATE MOTHER  
BRANDISHING 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 ~~EX~~ 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 HECKLER.

(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  
STEVEDORE'S CHANT RISES TO A  
MIGHTY VOLUME. THERE ARE LAUGHTER,  
APPLAUSE AND BRONX CHEERS FROM  
THE AUDIENCE AS THE WHOLE SCENE  
BLACKSOUT.)

BLACKOUT



SCENE THREE (C)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER OUTSIDE THE HOME.

(C) THE LANDLORD'S STORE.

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

JOHN

PAW SAYS YOU WERE ANXIOUS TO HAVE A LOOK AT A LANDLORD'S STORE.  
WAIT TILL YOU SEE MR. POWERS.

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 ~~THAT~~ THERE'S SO MUCH OF TRAGEDY. SOMETIMES I  
THINK THAT IN LATER YEARS, I SHALL FIND IT EASIER TO RECALL THE  
LOVLINESS 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.  
LET THEM THINK YOU'RE DOWN HERE LOOKIN' OVER SOME PROPERTY. COURSE,  
MR. POWERS A BETTER LANDLORD THAN ANYBODY ELSE BUT LIKE MOST SOUTHERNERS  
OR LIKE MOST PEOPLE ANYWHERE, IN FACT, HE DON'T LIKE NO OUTSIDERS  
STICKIN' THEIR NOSE IN HIS BUSINESS.

MR. EXPERT

I'LL BE TACTFUL.

(EXEUNT RIGHT. LIGHTS COME UP ON 111.  
THE PROJECTION IS A CROSSROADS' STORE.\*  
A COUNTER STANDS 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 representativelandlords; JIM WHITE and CHARLIE  
MASSENGILL, Lufkin, Texas and R.C. HAMER, Eastover, South Carolina.

JOE HERREN \* LOCAL POLITICIAN STANDS WITH ONE  
FOOT PROPTED ON A SOAP BOX. BILL CARNEY \*\*  
ANOTHER LANDOWNER, SITS CENTER ON THE CRACKER  
BARREL. ZEKE JOHNSON \*\*\* A TENANT FARMER SITS  
UPSTAGE NEAR THE DOOR. DUDE HIBBARD \*\*\*\*, A  
YOUNG TENANT FARMER STANDS NEAR HIM LOOKING OUT  
THE DOOR. JESSE GILPIN \*\*\*\*\* A DRIP-NOSE LAD  
OF EIGHTEEN WAITS ON THE TRADE.)

POWERS

IT'S GITTIN' 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 THES 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 KNOW, 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  
NORHERNERS 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 Nerren, 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

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

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

JOHN

HOWDY.

POWERS

HOWDY, JOHN.

JOHN

(INDICATING MR. EXPERT.)

FRIEND OF PAW'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 SIREE-----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 RECKON. 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

YEH! YEH!  
YEH. I SHOULD GO GET RELIGION AND MAYBE LET THE PREACHER STEAL MY WIFE WHILE 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 BAPTISIN' HER. THE BASTARD KNEW SHE WAS GOIN' TO HAVE A BABY AN' 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

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

POWERS

BETTER WATCH YOURSELF, JOHN, OR YOU'LL BE GETTIN' 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 SOMETIME, JESSE. \*

JESSE

BROTHER POLLY CONDENS 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

NOW 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.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

JOHN

I CAN REMEMBER WHEN YOU WASN'T THATAWAY, JESSE, FORE YOU WENT OFF TO BIBLE SCHOOL.

JESSE

I HADN'T SEEN THE LIGHT THEN.

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

DUDE HIBBARD

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

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING.)

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 COULD 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 Plight of the Sharecropper" p. 21  
\*\* Fictitious character inspired by observation of local negro sharecroppers.

OSCAR WITH A LIMP TOSACK OVER HIS ARM.)

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 GOT?

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 LIT TLE 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. Humer, ~~Eastover~~ Eastover, Sout 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 FURNISHINS?

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 POW'FUL MISERY IN IT.

POWERS

TOO MANY BANANAS.

OSCAR

IF I GIVE YOU BACK WHAT'S LEFT OF THE BANANERS WILL YOU GIVE ME SOME THING 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 LIGHTS COME UP ON THE BRITT HOME. ALL ARE PRESENT, EXCEPTING LINNIE 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

(ENTERING)

HOWDY ALL.

RUTH

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 GOIN' 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 WHAT WE GOT COMIN'. WE GOT TO TAKE WHAT HE GIVES US OR MOVE AND WE CANN'T MOVE NOW WITH ANOTHER YOUNG'UN ABOUT DUE.

STEVE

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT NO ARGUMENT MAW. MR. POWERS ALWAYS WINS OUT. WOULDN'T RIGHTLY 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 SOME WHERE?

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 IN 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 CLOER 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 AWHILE.

(JOHN, BRITT AND MR. EXPERT EXEUNT.)

LALLY

(CALLING OFF TO BRITT.)

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU TALK TO MR. POWERS, 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 DONE 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 BEDLOW MARRIED US. HE STOPPED PLOWIN' AND TOOK HIS BOOK OUT  
OF HIS POCKET AND MARRIED US IN THE FIELDS.

LALLY

BUT YOU'RE ONLY <sup>FOURTEEN!</sup>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 WILLTEND TO HIM.

LINNIE LEE

BUT MAW. FRANKIE AND ME'S BEEN TOGETHER.

---

\* Based on accounts of child marriages among the sharecroppers.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

(LALLY STARTS TO CRY.)

AW MAW, 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 UNKEMPT. ABOUT 21.)

I WANT MY WOMERN.

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 TEARDUL 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 MAW.

(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 WANTS 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 BALES 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. CONSULTS THE LEDGER.)

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

---

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 'GREETMENT WAS I WAS TO FURNISH MYSELF AND GIT HALF OF WHAT I MADE. \*

OVERSEER

YOU'RE GETTIN' TWO-THIRDS. WHAT YOU BELLY-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 ~~GOEMANED~~ GOD DAMNED FOOL.

(NEGRO LEAVES DEJECTEDLY PASSING  
BRITT, JOHN AND MR. EXPERT WHO  
ARE JUST ENTERING. RUSSEL, 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 ~~th~~ THINK WE BETTER KEEP L. . . .  
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 ~~DIEING~~ KINDA  
TOOK THE SPUNK OUT OF THE REST OF THEM TOO. ~~DIE~~

POWERS

<sup>CAN</sup>  
YOU RECKON YOU ~~CAN~~ WORK HARDER NEXT YEAR?

RUSSELL

<sup>CAN</sup>  
YESISR, YESSIR. I KNOW WE CAN. MY OLD LADY WAS KINDA PUNY A LOT  
LAST SPRING BUT SHE'S GETTIN' ALONG ALL RIGHT NOW.

OVERSEER

YOU SAID ALL THAT LAST YEAR, RUSSELL. YOU SAW THAT NIGGER WHILE  
AGO THAT SAID HE WANTED 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 HUNGRIER THAN EVER BEFORE IF  
YOU MAKE US-----

OVERSEER

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, STOP WHIMPERING.

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, ~~REENTER~~  
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.

(EXITS.)

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 FIGGERED THIS OUT THE ~~IN~~ OTHER NIGHT AND WE BOTH  
THOUGHT THERE'D BE A GOOD BIT ~~EXE~~ 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 BY 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

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

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

POWERS

I DON'T GIVE CONTRAETS, 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 ON MY LAND AGAIN.

BRITT

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 UNLESS YOU PUT EVERYTHIN' DOWN IN WRITIN'.

POWERS

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 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 KETIH

I GOT A FAMILY OF TEN CHILDREN. THEY AIN'T HD 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 A\*COMIN' 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 COUPLA 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 SEE 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 111. PROJECTION OF  
INTERIOR OF POWERS DECADENT PLANTA-  
TION 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 ~~SAIDE~~  
SIDE OF IT. HAVE A CHAIR, MR-----

MR. EXPERT

EXPERT. ELBERT Q. EXPERT.

POWERS

ODD NAME.

(CALLS OFF)

OCEOLA?

MR. EXPERT

LOVELY HOUSE.

POWERS

YES, IT WAS ONCE.

OCEOLA

(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 GOING?

POWERS

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

EXPERT

IF THAT'S THE PLIGHT 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, 75th 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

PPI  
MISSISSI/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 A 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

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 STRAPPLIN' 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 OFFACT, 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. CONE IN, BOY. MR. EXPERT, MY SON. MR. BLACKBOARD.

TOM

(SHAKING HANDS)

RIGHT GLAD TO MEET YOU.

POWERS

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

TOM

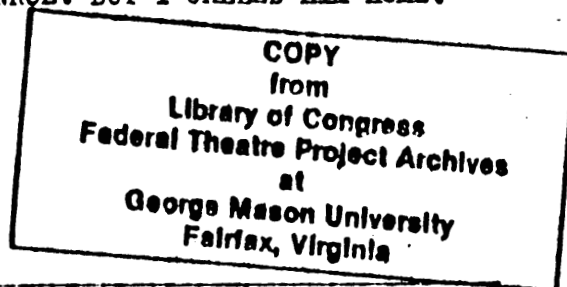
WHAT FOR, PAW.

POWERS

WANT YOU TO CHANGE SCHOOLS.

\* Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee of Agriculture and Forestry, United States Senate, 75th Congress, 2nd Session Part 27, p. 1031

\*\* 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 THERE'S NEED FOR PLANNING. IF IT PLANNED THE WHOLE THING OUT, SAID HOW MUCH WAS NEEDED AND HOW MUCH EACH MAN COULD RAISE----

POWERS

THERE 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 DESIGNATED 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.

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 FEONAGE 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 THE 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

SCENE FIVE (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND CRIME

(A) THE CRIMINOLOGIST

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 111. 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 EVEL LIES IN THE UNSUPERINTENDED 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. DOWNSTAGE 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 SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN STANDS AT THE ROADSIDE WATCHING THE PRISONERS. ONE OF THE NEGROES BEGINS SINGING "Look down, look down, that lonesome road." THE OTHERS JOIN IN AND WORK TOGETHER TO THE TEMPO OF THE SONG. ONE OF THE NEGROES LOOKS UP, SEES SOMEONE COMING, SPEAKS WARNINGLY TO THE OTHERS.)

1ST NEGRO

HEAH 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.

(ANNALS 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 GRIN.)

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 CLOSELY, 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

(ROUGHLY. 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.)

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

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 SMOTHER.

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)

<sup>SURE</sup> SURE IS. YOU BET. YOU <sup>SURE</sup> 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  
WITH 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

(FEELING FOR A HEARTBEAT.)

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

2ND GUARD

(DEFIANTLY)

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 ESCAPE.

2ND GUARD

COME ON, SWARINGEN! GRAB HOLD.

BACKOUT  
BLACKOUT

---

\* Actual statement made by Swaringen.

\*\* Facts in this and \* came out in personal inquiry by William Jones  
Charlotte N.C. News reporter. Published in the Charlotte News  
and later fully established before states investigating commission.  
From data obtained from Nation 11/13/35

(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 SHROPSHIRE. THESE NEGRO PRISONERS WERE CON-  
FINED IN THE HIGHWAY CONVICT CAMP OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY. THEY WERE  
PUNISHED FOR REPUTED INSOLENCE 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 RNX BISCUIT WHITTLED 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 ICY 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. 11/13/35

\*\* 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 FREENSBORO 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 NEGGER.

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

(STEPPING 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 PUTS HIS HAND TO HIS HOLSTER.)

MEN

THAT'S RIGHT, HOLLIS  
GETTIN' SO IT AIN'T SAFE FOR A LADY TO GO OUT.  
WE WANT THAT NIGGER!  
CASTRATE 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 RAPE 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 STEPS WHEN ROBERT GREENE RUNS IN.)

GREENE

HEY WAIT! WAIT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

(HE LEAPS ON PLATFORM AND STANDS BESIDE HOLLIS.)

YOU GOT TO LISTEN, MEN.

MEN

*Lady's*  
IT'S THE 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

WE GOT TO KEEP THE NIGGERS IN THEIR PLACES

NO HE'S RIGHT.  
LET HIM FINISH.  
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 DEFEAT THE ANTI-LYNCHING 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 GOT TO 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 OM.

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

(AS THEY GO.)

I WISH YOU COULD TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HERE.

HOLLIS

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

(THEY GO OFF.)

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia



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 DAWFUL 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 1 BEHIND SCRIM. MAN  
WEARING ELLENDER MASK IS STANDING IN  
SPOTLIGHT.)

ELLENDER MASK

NIGGERS JUST WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL THEY RUB ELBOWS WITH THE  
WHITES. DOWN SOUTH ~~SOUTH~~ WHITE PEOPLE WOULDN'T ASSOCIATE WITH COLORED  
PEOPLE LIKE YOU DO HERE. WHEN YOU MIX WITH THEM FOR AWHILE, 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 ~~XX~~ FOR 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 SWOOPED 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 COME DOWN TO NORTH CAROLINA AND 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 WON'T 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 SHAKES A FINGER OF WARNING.)

----AND THE ~~XAMT~~ 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~~X~~ 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.

---

\* A.P. article. Durham Morning Herald, Jan. 13, 1938.

RIGHT AFTER INTERMISSION

"OUR SOUTH" \*

(LIGHTS UP ON THE BIG BARE EMPTY STAGE, RADIATOR PIPES SHOWING, IF POSSIBLE. HOUSE LIGHTS ARE STILL ON. MR. BLACKBOARD, A SCRIPT IN ONE HAND, A PIPE IN THE OTHER AND HIS HAT ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, WALKS OUT AND LOOKS OVER THE AUDIENCE. HE PUTS THE PIPE IN HIS MOUTH AND THE SCRIPT ON THE TABLE AND SETS TWO CHAIRS IN PLACE. THEN HE LOOKS AT AUDIENCE, LOOKS AT HIS WATCH AND EXITS. HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN. MR. BLACKBOARD ~~EN~~ ENTERS, SMOKING HIS PIPE. HE PUTS HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS AND LEANS AGAINST THE PROSCENIUM ARCH, SMOKING. WHEN THE HOUSE QUIETS DOWN, HE SHOVES HIS HAT ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, REMOVES HIS PIPE AND STARTS TALKING.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

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

(PAUSE)

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 SEDUCTIONS. 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 ~~NEGRO~~ 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.

MRS. BRITT HAD ANOTHER CHILD

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

(LOOKING OUT AT AUDIENCE.)

NEVER MIND 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 DESCENT 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 GETTIN' 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<sup>V</sup> AND MA<sup>W</sup> 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 ~~HER~~ 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 ~~MEN~~ HE HAD TO COME MEANT 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 Thornton Wilder

SCENE SIX (A)

Choose between this  
and scene B one  
should be omitted.

TITLE: THE TALENTED LADY AND RELIGION

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

(THE PROJECTION IS OF WOODS BY NIGHT. VERY TALL TREES HUNG 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? \*\*

(MRS. BRITT IS PLAYING THE ORGAN, SOFTLY AND AGKWARDLY. 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 BILL 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. LINDIE LEE COMES ON, WALKING BEHIND HER ~~MOM~~ HUSBAND, FRANKIE. LALLY BRITT PLAYS SOME FALSE NOTES ON THE ORGAN. ABOUT HALF A DOZEN FATHERS AND THEIR WIVES STRAGGLE ON. THERE IS A SPRINKLING OF LISTLESS CHILDREN. MR. BRITT, MR. EMMETT 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

EVERETT REVEREND.

PREACHER

(DENIGHLY)

EVERETT, BROTHER HUBERT.

FRANKIE

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

GRAM'S

(ENTERING)

YEH, YEH. IT'S GETTIN' SO NOWADAYS FOLKS DON'T ASK HOW GOOD OLE PREACHER IS AT PREACHIN'. THEY WANT TO KNOW HOW GOOD HE IS AT PAINTIN' SIGNS.  
(SPITS)

\* Words from an old hymn or song.

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

PREACHER

(AUTOMATICALLY)

ARE YOU SAVED, BROTHER?

(GRAMP SPITS)

(BECKONING HIS FLOCK CLOSER)

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

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

LET US BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

(SOME DO. GRAMP SPITS)

OH LORD, WE'RE GATHERED HERE TONIGHT TO SAVE SOME OF US POOR SINNERS  
FROM ETERNAL HELL FIRE. WE'RE HERE TO BRING SOME POOR LOST SHEEP 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!

PREACHER

SOME OF US BEGIN COMPLAIN' A LITTLE, LORD.

GRAMPS

AMEN!

PREACHER

FO'GIVE US, CAUSE WE KEEP FORGITTIN' WHAT WE GOT COMIN' IN THE LIFE TO COME.

GRAMPS

WHUT?

(SPITS. PREACHER GIVES HIM A POISONOUS LOOK.)

PREACHER

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

CROWD

AMEN!

PREACHER

(GATHERING HIMSELF FOR THE ONSLAUGHT)

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

"NOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IT'S TIME TO REPENT. IT'S TIME TO COME TO THE LORD GOD AND BE TAKIN' INTO HIS LOVIN' ARMS. IT SAYS RIGHT HERE IN THE GOOD BOOK THAT YOU'LL BE SOLELY REGRETFUL ON JUDGEMENT DAY IF YOU DON'T SHOW YOURSELF ON THE SIDE OF THE LORD." \*

CROWD

AMEN! AMEN!

(CROWD BEGINS TO WORK UP A HYSTERIA WITH EJACULATIONS AND MOANS. SOME THROW THEMSELVES ON THE ~~ground~~ AND SOME WAVE THEIR ARMS IN THE AIR.)

PREACHER

"hurry, folks, HURRY. GETTIN' RELIGION IS LIKE PUTTIN' MONEY IN THE BANK." \*\*

CROWD

yah YEH, YEH. AMEN! AMEN!

GRAM'S

BEARS INTEREST, I SUPPOSE.

PREACHER

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

WOMAN

AIN'T IT THE TRUTH?

CROWD

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

SOME OF THEM JUMP UP AND DOWN. ORGAN PLAYS LOUDLY. PEOPLE BEGIN TO CHANT IN A KIND OF ECSTASY UNDER THE PREACHING. IN THE ~~ENERGIC~~ GENERAL EMOTIONALISM, GIBSON PUTS HIS HAND ON HELEN'S BREAST. \*\*\*\* JOHN, WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING, TURNS BLINDLY AND LEAVES.)

PREACHER

COME UP HERE AND CAST YO'SELVES ON THE GROUND AND PRAY TO THE GOOD MEN ABOVE TO FO'GIVE YOU. PRAY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS. PRAY TO HI TO FO'GIVE YOU.

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

\*\* Ibid

\*\*\* Ibid

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



(CROWD SURGES FORWARD. ALL EXCEPTING 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 THROW THEIR HANDS UP TO HEAVEN AND MUMBLE PRAYERS. PREACHER EXHORTS THEM IN PANTOMIME AND AD LIBS ENCOURAGEMENT ~~EX~~ TO COME FORWARD. GRAMP'S LAUGHS OUT LOUD.)

PREACHER

BROTHER BRITT, AIN'T YOU FEELIN' NOTHIN'

GRAMP'S

COME TO THINK OF IT, I AM!

PREACHER

GLORY BE!

LALLY

HALLLELUJIAH!

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

YEH, I FEEL, ALL RIGHT.

PREACHER

TELL US HOW YOU FEEL.

BRITT

WELL, I FEEL JUST LIKE A FROG. KER-UMPH! KER-UMPH!

(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.

RUTH

Everytime GRAM'S GETS RELIGION, HE THINKS HE'S A FROG.

(THERE IS A LOUD SPLASH)

BRITT

THE DAMNED FOOL JUMPED 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. \*

(HE EXITS. PREACHER SWAYS MORE VIOLENTLY.  
MUSIC IS LOUDER.)

PREACHER

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

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

CROWD

HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!

PREACHER

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

PASS AMONG THE WORSHIPERS, CHILDREN! <sup>BROTHERS</sup> BROTHERS AND SISTERS, NOW IS  
YOUR CHANCE TO BE KEER FO' GIVEN. 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 STAGGERS IN WITH A BIBLE IN ONE HAND AND A  
HALF-FILLED BOTTLE OF GIN IN THE OTHER.)

HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH! I MADE IT! I'M WASHED WHITER'N SNOW. I'VE  
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'VE COME TO BE TAKEN INTO DE WHITE  
WHITE FOLD. HERE I AM, LORD. HERE'S DIS PORE SINKER.

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

MR. EXPERT

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

---

\* From "This Body, The Earth" by Paul Green.

\*\* From Caldwell's book, "You Have Seen Their Faces."

(MUSIC STOPS. DEAD ~~SILENCE~~ SILENCE FALLS  
OVER THE CROWD.) \*

FRANKIE

WHY THE FORE NIGGER'LL BE DAMNED FOREVER GOIN' TO HIS DEATH WITH  
A BOTTLE OF GIN IN HIS HAND.

PREACHER

(JUDIOUSLY)

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 (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND RELIGION

(A) "JUST AS I AM." \*

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 11. 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 SIT FACING HIM ON RISE RUDELY-MADE BENCHES. HE HOLDS A HALF-FILLED WHISKEY BOTTLE IN ONE HAND AND A BIBLE IN THE OTHER. BEFORE HIM ON A TRELLIS, 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 GONNER DO WITH IT?

(ACROSS THE AISLE TO TO MR. EXPERT AND RUTH)

I HE'ERD TELL THEY HAD A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR OVER HERE THAT THEY JUST HATED TO HAVE AROUND. SO I FIGGERED\*\*\*\*\*

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.O. Eller, Hatoeka, W. VA. From clipping in Southwest Virginia Enterprise, March 3, 1938.

3 Different preacher than in previous scene. More high class.

*mm* WITH HIS FAMILY ABOUT HIM, WHEN THE ASSASIN ENTERED AND LEFT HIM DEAD. A BETTER AND MORE INNOCENT MAN NEVER LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY.

CONGREGATION

AY-----MEN  
BLESSED BE HIS HOLY NAME.

PRAACHER  
MINISTER

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

GRAMPS

(RISING)

DET IT WAS BOOTLEG. LET'S SEE IT.

CONGREGATION

S-H-H-H-HIIII

(TWO ELDERS GO TO GRAMPS AND ESCORT HIM  
OUT WHILE THE MINISTER CONTINUES.)

MINISTER

THE LIQUOR CROWD TOLD YOU ~~YES~~ THAT TO PUT THE SEAL OF THE STATE ON A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR WOULD TURN IT INTO A SUNDAY SCHOOL. BUT THERE BEFORE YOU LIES THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT IT WILL DO.

(POINTS ACCUSING FINGER AT CONGREGATION AND  
THEN AT THE COFFIN.)

CONGREGATION

AY-----MEN, PREACHER.  
YOU TELL 'EM, JAKE.

MINISTER

(PLEASED BY THEIR WORDS AND ACKNOWLEDGING  
THEIR TRIBUTE.)

YOU MAY ADD TO THE STATE SEAL ON THIS BOTTLE, THE SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES, THE PICTURE OF JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF AND HEAVEN AND THE SUN AND MOON AND STARS----AND IT STILL HOLDS THE VERY DREGS OF HELL FIRE IN ITS HELLISH CONTENTS.

CONGREGATION

PREACH IT, BROTHER JACOB.  
GLORY BE!  
BLESSED BE TO JESUS!  
BLESS HIS HOLY NAME.

OH LADDIE!

SENATE  
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---men, 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

YEH, WHERE?  
YOU TELL US, BROTHER JACOB.

MINISTER

THEY GOT IT FROM THE HUNGRY MOUTHS OF SHIVERING CHILDREN AND WIVES OF MEN WHO WENT TO JAIL 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---MEN!  
GLORY BE TO JESUS SAVIOUR MILD.

(WITHOUT WARNING, A HOLY ROLLER NEAR 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 SATISFACTION. THE CONGREGATION BEGINS TO MILL AROUND AND GROW EXCITED. THE MINISTER CALMS THEM DOWN.)

MINISTER

WHILE SISTER ELLIE HERE FINISHES HER JERKS, THE ELDERS WILL PASS AMONG YOU TO RECEIVE A COLLECTION FOR THE DEFUNCT'S WIDOW AND CHILDREN.

(HE CONTINUES TO WATCH ELLIE'S JERKS WHILE THE TWO ELDERS PASS AMONG THE CROWD WITH THEIR HATS IN THEIR HAND.)

RUTH

(AS SHE AND MR. EXPERT RISE TO LEAVE.)

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF IT?

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

MR. EXPERT

I'M NOT SUPPOSED 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 <sup>NEGROES</sup> ~~NIGGERS~~ GET SOMETHING VERY BEAUTIFUL IN ~~THEIR~~ THEIR RELIGION AT TIMES. I'LL TAKE YOU TO A NEGRO 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 SOUTHERN. THANK YOU EACH AND EVERY ONE. AND NOW LET US JOIN IN SINGING, "WHEN THEY RING THEM GOLDEN BELLS FOR YOU AND ME."

(CONGREGATION SINGS LUSTILY AS RUTH AND  
MR. EXPERT, LOOKING BACK ONCE, LEAVE DOWN LEFT.)

BLACKOUT

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\* 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 (8)

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 LAWD! OH LAWD!, SEND DE RAIN ON ME.  
OH LAWD! OH LAWD!. 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 LAWD, OH LAWD, 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 CEREMONEY.)

BROTHER DALTON

LOOK DOWN, LOOK DOWN, LOOK DOWN ON ME, OH LAWD.  
LOOK DOWN, LOOK DOWN, LOOK DOWN ON ME, OH LAWD.  
SEE DE MISERY, OH LAWD, DAT BESETS OUR FEETS,  
SEE DE TROUBLE, OH LAWD, DAT DE SINER HAS TO MEETS.

MOURNERS

OH LAWD, OH LAWD, 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 LAWD, 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 PUNY BOLL,  
DE WARMS 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 FEETS CAN'T WALK.

MOURNERS

HEAD

MY HEART AM HEAVY, MY ~~FEET~~ AM TIRED, MY FEETS 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 PUNY PIECE O' CLOUD A-HANGIN' IN DE EAST,  
BROTHER DALTON, BUT I CAIN'T SMELL A RAIN.

BROTHER DALTON

DEN, BRETHERN 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 LAWD, YEAH LAWD, YESSUH O LAWD.

BROTHER DALTON

(FASTER AND MORE INTENSIFIED)

IF YO' LISTENIN' LAWD, IS YO' PAYIN' ANY HEED?  
CHORUS

(PICKING IT UP.)

IS YO' LISTENIN' LAWD, 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, veterinary at Lufkin, Texas.

BROTHER DALTON

(HIGHER AND LOUDER)

LET IT RAIN, OH LAWD, LET IT POUR ON DOWN,  
LET IT RAIN , OH LAWD, TILL ~~TO~~ SOAK DE GROUND

CHORUS

(STILL FASTER)

LET IT RAIN, LET IT RAIN.

BROTHER DALTON

DE CORN BREAD DONE GONE IN A PALE GREY SMOKE,  
LAWD, WHAT YOU GONNA DO FOR DE COLORED FOLK?

MOURNERS

(ON VERGE OF BREAKING INTO SONG.)

YEAH LAWD, YEAH LAWD.

BROTHER DALTON

(REACHING HIGHER)

LET IT RAIN, OH LAWD, DON'T YOU LET IT PIDDLE,  
LET DE WATER FLOW DOWN THRU DE COTTON MIDDLE.

CHORUS

YEAH LAWD, YEAH LAWD.

BROTHER DALTON

CLOUD UP YO' FACE AN' LET 'ER SPOUT,  
WASH DE GULLIES JEST A LITTLE FURDER OUT.

CHORUS

(SWAYING TOGETHER)

YEAH LAWD, YEAH LAWD.

BROTHER DALTON

(AS IF THROWING HIMSELF TOWARDS GOD.)

LET 'ER POUR, LET 'ER FALL, LET 'ER FLOW, LET 'ER SPEW.  
MAKE NOAH'S LITTLE FLOOD LIKE A SPRING MORNIN' DEW.

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, <sup>the</sup>  
FROM DAT LITTLE BLACK CLOUD DAT'S A-FLOATIN' TOWARDS ~~THE~~ HOUSE.

BROTHER DALTON

(MUCH MORE CALMLY AS HE LIFTS HIS FACE  
IN SUPPLICATION.)

LAWD, 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 LAWD, LET 'ER FLY, LET 'ER FLY,  
WID DE RAIN A-GUSHIN' FROM DE TOP O' DE SKY.

BROTHER DALTON

(MORE PASSIONATELY COMMANDING.)

LOOK a-HERE, LAWD.-----

(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 TEEGE

(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!

(THEY GROW RADIANT, THEN BURST INTO  
ONE LONG ROAR OF BLACK LAUGHTER.)

BROTHER TEEGE

(YELLING ABOVE THE ROAR.)

I WANTS 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) "Oh BRIGHT COLLEGE YEARS" \*\*

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 11. THE PROJECTION IS A DRAB 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 PRINTED SLIP HE HAS IN HIS HAND.)

PARDON ME, 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 WAITIN' OVER AN HOUR.

MR. EXPERT

IS THIS A TYPICAL SOUTHERN COLLEGE?

INSTRUCTOR

THIS IS ONE, ALL 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 Peery who taught at Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, N.C. This college is typical of the small college of the south.

\*\* From an old sentimental song book.

MR. EXPERT

THE FACILITIES DO 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 RENEW THE CONTRACTS FOR NEXT YEAR AND MY JOB DEPENDS ON HOW I ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

MR. EXPERT

WHY DON'T YOU COMPLAIN TO THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS. THEY FIGHT U FAIR-----

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 IMMERSED 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 IDEA 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 Foery by President Howard S. Hilley of Atlantic Christian College.

\*\* Ibid.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

INSTRUCTOR

OH NO, IT'S M ITED, SEET NOTHING UNITER GOES.

JOHN

YOU MUST HAVE A HARD TIME KNOWING WHAT TO ANSWER.

INSTRUCTOR

NO, THE NEXT QUESTION GIVES YOU THE ANSWER.

(READS)

~~XX~~  
"DO YOU CONDONE THE SUPPORT OF THIS APOSTATE ORGANIZATION?" \*

(HE LAUGHS. MR. EXPERT SHAKES HIS HEAD.)

"DO YOU VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE DENOMINATIONALISM IN ALL YOUR CLASSES?" \*\*

MR. EXPERT

DO YOU?

INSTRUCTOR

WELL, NOT WHEN I'M TEACHING KEAT'S ODES.

(READS)

"DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE BOOK OF JONAH IS A TRUSTWORTHY ACCOUNT OF ACTUAL MIRACLES HISTORY? DO YOU BELIEVE IN WITHHOLDING SUPPORT FROM EVERY COLLEGE AND TEACHER TINCTURED WITH MODERNISM?" \*\*\*

(JUMPS TO HIS FEET, FLINGING PAPER ON THE DESK.)

NO, BY GOD, I DON'T AND I'M GOING IN THERE AND <sup>TELL</sup> 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 HERITAGE, SQUEEZING FROM PARENTS' SUPPORT FOR A WATERED EDUCATIONAL MILK.

\* Actual question from questionnaire distributed by President Hilley of Atlantic Christian College to the instructors.

\*\* Ibid

\*\*\* Ibid

4 Actual name of the College

MR. EXPERT

THE OTHER HAS TO COMPROMISE.

INSTRUCTOR

NOT TO THIS EXTENT. I'LL GET OUT OF TEACHING. 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

(ADMIRINGLY)

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 CANNED 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 GOIN' 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 MIND TELLIN' YOU. I AIN'T GOIN' TO TAKE HIS OLD EXAM TOMORROW.

-----  
\* A student of William Poory from Bethel, North Carolina.

MR. EXPERT

OH.

JAKE

IN FACT, I'M NOT TAKIN' NONE O' MY EXAMS.

MR. EXPERT

COCKY, A REN'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 START 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

<sup>from</sup>  
~~WHAT~~ WHAT I'VE BEEN HEARING ALL OVER, IT WON'T BRING YOU MUCH.

JAKE

HAY, BUT I'LL LIVE HOME WITH THE OLD MAN----IT WON'T COST ME NOTHIN'



I'LL GO DOWN TO THE STORE COME WINTER, AND PUT MY FEET UP ON THE STOVE LIKE THE BIG KIDNERS. DRINK LICKER. COME SPRING, IF I'M SOBERE UP YET, I'LL TELL THE BIGGEST TO PLANT ME A CRAP. I WON'T NEED NO BETTER FOR ANYTHING I'M GOIN' 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 DANTE AND SHAKESPEARE AND GUYS LIKE THAT.

(HE GRINS SHAMEFACEDLY.)

WELL, I'VE LEARNED 'EM, AIN'T I?

PRESIDENT

(ENTERS. HE WEARS A FROCK COAT AND CARRIES A BIBLE UNDER HIS ARM.)

MR. GOOD MORNING, MR. EXPERT. SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING SO LONG. WHAT DID YOU WISH TO SEE ME ABOUT?

MR. EXPERT

(TAKING JOHN'S ARM AND LEADING HIM TOWARDS THE DOOR.)

WHY\*\*\*\*\* WHY-----WHY ABOUT----NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL.

(THEY RUSH TO EXIT AS-----)

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND EDUCATION

(B) WHERE TO?

(LIGHTS COME UP ON IV 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  
KENNEDY BAPTIST

SAY SAM, HOW FAR IS IT TO THE ORPHANAGE?

SAM

HOW COME YO' 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

~~YASSUH~~ 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 NOW 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)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND EDUCATION

(C) THE "SANCTIFIED THIRD DEGREE". \*

( A POOL OF LIGHT REVEALS MILDRED WESTER \*\*  
A SIXTEEN-YEAR OLD GIRL STANDING WITH BOWED  
HEAD BEFORE MR. J. C. HOUGH. \*\*THE GIRL IS  
BAREFOOTED AND BARE-LEGGED.)

HOUGH

WILL YOU CONFESS?

MILDRED

I DIDN'T DO IT.

HOUGH

I SHALL BE FORCED TO USE THE LASH ON YOU. YOU ARE AN ORPHAN,  
MOTHERLESS, ENTRUSTED TO OUR CARE FOR YOUR EDUCATION. YOU HAVE  
BEEN A TROUBLE CHILD TO US. WE FIND DIFFICULTY IN EDUCATING YOU.  
YOU HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND MUST BE WHIPPED UNLESS  
YOU CONFESS 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." \*\*\* \*

(HE 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!

(H. HITS HER HARDER.)

I'M SORRY! PLEASE STOP!

(HE HITS HER A THIRD TIME. SHE SCREAMS.)

DON'T HIT ME ANYMORE. I'LL TELL. I DID IT.

(SHE GOBS)

HOUGH

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

\* Libretto 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

WHO WERE YOUR ACCOMPLICES?

MILDRED

I CAN'T TELL ON THEM.

HOUGH

WE'LL SEE.

(HE LASHES HER SEVERELY. MILDRED GRITS  
HER TEETH BUT REMAINS SILENCE.)

WE'LL TRY IT AGAIN.

(HITS HER AGAIN. SHE MOANS.)

THERE'S LUCK IN THREES MAYBE.

(HITS A TERRIFIC BLOW. MILDRED SCREAMS.)

DOES THAT REFRESH YOUR MEMORY ANY?

(HE 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.

HOUGH

(EYES TO HEAVEN.)

LORD, I THANK THEE.

(TO MILDRED AS HE TAKES PAD AND PENCIL  
FROM POCKET.)

NOW GIVE ME THE NAMES.

### BLACKOUT

NOTE: IN ALL, THE GIRL WAS LASHED SIX TIMES.

THIS IS A DRAMATIZATION OF A WHIPPING THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE KENNEDY  
BAPTIST ORPHAN HOME. THE GIRL, MILDRED HESTER, HAD COMMITTED AN OFFENCE.

SCENE SEVEN (D)

TITLE: THE TENANT 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. BERNARD W. SPILMAN \*\*\*\*.  
THE WHIP LIES ON THE TABLE BEFORE THEM. THE  
GIRL'S FATHER, MR. HESTER, A POOR-LOOKING  
SHAMECROPPER 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. ~~3~~ 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 WHIPPED AS THOUGH SHE WERE A CRIMINAL ON A CHAIN  
GANG? I DEMAND THAT "MASTER HOUGH" \*\*\*\*\* BE MADE TO DEFEND HIS  
ACTION IN THIS CASE.

WOMEN

(ANGRILY)

AYE.

FIRST WOMAN

WE WANT 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 women 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, eminent Baptist of Watauga and trustee of the home.

\*\*\*\*Another Baptist and trustee

\*\*\*\*\* Dramatization of the actual hearing as reported in the  
Greensboro News.

\*\*\*\*\* Newspapers of North Carolina referred to him as "Master Hough"

GOOD CHRISTIANS AND BAPTISTS RUNNER A BENEVOLENT HOME FOR POOR CHILDREN.  
NOT A CHURCH OF HOLY ORS.

CHAIRMAN

(CLEARING HIS THROAT)

UH....LADIES....GENTLEMEN.....THERE SEEMS TO BE AN UNFORTUNATE  
SITUATION HERE. I AM SURE IT IS ALL DUE TO A MISUNDERSTANDING.  
MISUNDERSTANDING. WE FEEL THAT "ANY FURTHER STIR ABOUT THE LASHING  
SHOULD BE KEPT FROM THE PUBLIC." \* LET US HEAR FROM DOCTOR HOUGH.

HOUGH

I...UH...."RATE HIGH ALL OVER NORTH CAROLINA." \*\* I AM A GOOD CHRISTIAN.  
THE GIRL WAS THE LEADER IN OFFENDING AND WHEN CAUGHT SHE WOULD NOT  
TELL WHO HER ASSOCIATES WERE. I ONLY STRUCK HER SIX LICKS. I PRAYED  
FIRST AND RECEIVE DIVINE GUIDANCE.

(SECOND WOMAN SHORTS INDIGNANTLY)

FIRST, I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL THE GIRL'S FATHER, MR. HESTER.

(MR. HESTER ENES COMES FORWARD)

1ST WOMAN

WHEE IS THE GIRL'S MOTHER?

MR. HESTER

GONE. DEAD THIS GOOD WHILE.

HOUGH

MR. HESTER, DO YOU OBJECT TO MY WHIPPING YOUR DAUGHTER?

MR. HESTER

HEH. "I LIKE THE LASH FOR HER. YOUR USE OF IT SAVED ME THE WORK." \*\*\*

HOUGH

YOU SEE, LADIES? THAT'S ALL, MR. HESTER.

(MR. HESTER RETIRES.)

CHAIRMAN

WE HAVE HAD A DOCTOR EXAMINE THE GIRL. ~~He has~~

(DOCTOR COMES OUT OF THE SHADOWS.)

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

Ho-o-o-o-o. "THE USE OF THE LEATHER ON THE LEGS OF YOUNG MISS  
BOSTER WAS WITHOUT SEVERITY, IT APPEARED, ONLY THE REDDENED CUTICLE  
SHOWING FOR THE GIRL'S REBELLION." \*

CHAIRMAN

THANK YOU.

(DOCTOR FADES AWAY)

HOUGH

" I ONLY STRUCK HER SIX LICKS." \*\*

1ST WOMAN

"AND THOSE SIX HAD THE TRUE ARÆE APOSTOLIC RING," I SUPPOSE. "THEY  
WERE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLOPPING THE FEAR OF GOD INTO THE RECALCI-  
TRANT GIRL. ONE LICK FAILED, TWO LICKS LIKEWISE." I UNDERSTAND, "THAT  
THREE GOT RESULTS. THE GIRL CONFESSED AND THREE MORE MADE HER TELL ON HER  
"ACCOMPLICES." \*\*\* NICE WORK, MASTER HOUGH.

2ND WOMAN

AM YES, A TRUE APOSTLE OF GOD, MR. HOUGH. YOU ACTUALLY THINK YOUR  
CONDUCT WAS JUSTIFIED?

HOUGH

CERTAINLY.

1ST WOMAN

I THINK WE <sup>ARE</sup> ALL AGREED.

(OTHER WOMEN NOD THEIR HEADS.)

WE INSIST ON A DEFINITE STATEMENT FROM YOU, MR. GREER, AS SUPERINTENDENT  
AND TRUSTEE OF THE ORPHANAGE AND FROM YOU, DOCTOR SPILMAN AS TO WHETHER  
HEADMASTER HOUGH SHALL BE PERMITTED TO GET AWAY WITH THIS BRUTALITY.

SPILMAN

"WE FIND NO FAULT IN HOUGH". \*\*\*\*

GREER

"WE FIND DOCTOR HOUGH INNOCENT 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

\*\*\* Quoted from news item of the hearing, Greensboro Daily News 12.21-37

\*\*\*\* Statement by Spilman and Greer in exonerating Hough

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid



SPILMAN

RESOLUTELY.

1ST WOMAN

(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 RIGHTEOUS IN YOUR ATTITUDE, YOU CAN HAVE NO OBJECTION IF MR. EXPERT PUBLISHES THE RESULT OF THIS HEARING IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

(MR. EXPERT RISES. THERE IS CONSTERNATION AMONG THE TRUSTEES. THERE ARE HURRIED WHISPERED CONSULTATIONS AND WORRIED GLANCES AT MR. EXPERT.)

GREER

HOLD ON A MOMENT. "I AM NO BELIEVER IN THE WHIP," MYSELF. DO NOT QUOTE ME AS SAYING I BELIEVE IT IT. "I DISAPPROVE AS A MATTER OF ORPHANAGE POLICY, THE USE OF THE WHIP." \*

SPILMAN

I AM SURE MR. EXPERT, THAT I HAVE "CONVINCED (YOU) AND "THE COMPLAINING WOMEN OF LENOIR COUNTY THAT THE WHIPPING WAS JUSTIFIED." \*

MR. EXPERT

I'D NEVER BE CONVINCED OF ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

SPILMAN

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.

SPILMAN

MR. EXPERT, YOU MAY NOW SAY THIS IN YOUR NEWSPAPERS: "WE EXONERATE MR. HOUGH. BUT! WE 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 condoning the whipping were published, the trustees did an entire about face and insisted that they never condoned the whipping of the girl. Both items are at hand.

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN (E)

TITLE: THE TALENTED FARMER AND EDUCATION

(E) THE TIEUP.<sup>1</sup>

(FOOT OF LIGHT SHOWS A PRISON OFFICIAL  
SITTING AT HIS DESK. MR. EXPERT STANDS  
BEFORE HIM. THERE IS A LARGE BARRED WINDOW.)

OFFICIAL

ARE YOU CLEAR IN YOUR OWN MIND JUST WHAT YOU CAME DOWN SOUTH TO  
FIND OUT?

MR. EXPERT

ABOUT COTTON; THE EFFECT, ECONOMIC AND SPIRITUAL AND MORAL AND EDUCATIONAL  
THAT IT HAS ON THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE.

OFFICIAL

AND HOW YOU ARE LOOKING ON THE EDUCATIONAL ANGLE?

MR. EXPERT

YES!

OFFICIAL

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ~~XXX~~ <sup>?</sup> SEE ME, A PRISON OFFICIAL ABOUT.  
I THOUGHT YOU WORKED THE ~~KKK~~ PRISON STUFF AWHILE BACK. YOU WROTE  
UP A LOT OF EMOTIONAL SENTIMENTAL STUFF ABOUT THE CHAIN GANG. YOU  
KNEW THE SPIRITUAL-SINGING PRISONERS AND THAT SORT OF JUNK? HOW  
HOW DO YOU TIE IT UP WITH EDUCATION.

MR. EXPERT

JUST THIS WAY. I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR REACTIONS TO THE WHIPPING OF  
THAT GIRL AT THE ORPHANAGE.

OFFICIAL

(LAUGHS)

I MIGHT TELL YOU THIS: THAT "STATE PRISON AUTHORITIES PICKED UP  
BLUCK TODAY \* WHEN THEY READ THE PROCEEDINGS LAST NIGHT IN WHICH  
SUPERINTENDENT J. C. HOUGH OF THE BAPTIST KENNEDY HOME NEAR KINSTON  
HAD BEEN EXCULPATED IN PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM FOR LASHING SIXTEEN\*  
YEAR OLD CHILDREN NESTER, PROBLEM GIRL OF THE ORPHANAGE." \*\*

\* December 19, 1937

\*\* Direct quotation from Greensboro Daily News, 12-19-37

MR. EXPERT

Why should the whipping of a girl

WHY SHOULD THE WHIPPING OF A HALF-GROWN GIRL GIVE YOU SUCH AN  
ALMIGHTY LOT OF GUTS?

OFFICIAL

"WE DECLARE AND SIGHTLY, THAT IF THE VERY ELECT OF THE LORD CAN APPLY  
THE LEATHER TO THE LEGS OF A MISS IN HER TEENS, SURELY THE STATE CANNOT  
BE WHOLLY UNSANCTIFIED WHEN IT DRAGS AGNES NIGRA-----" \*

MR. EXPERT

WHO?

OFFICIAL

BLACK ANGIE, THE HIP. "-----WHEN IT DRAGS AGNES NIGRA FROM HER LONG-  
TIME HIDING AND USES HER TO SAVE SOULS. \*

BLACKOUT

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

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\* Quotation from news item in North Carolina papers of December 19, 1937.  
Direct quotation from Greensboro Daily News 12-19-37

SCENE SEVEN (F)

TITLE: THE TIRENT FARMER AND EDUCATION

(F) 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 SUNDRY SCRAWLS OF PAPER, OLD ENVELOPES, PAPER SACKS, A RIPPED CUFF WITH WRITING ON IT AND SO ON. HE GLANCES OVER HIS NOTES WITH THE BEWILDERED AIR OF A MAN IN A DILEMMA.)

MR. EXPERT

(READING FROM NOTES ON AN OLD MENU)

DIET VERY BAD.

(READS FROM NOTES WRITTEN ON MARGIN OF PAGE TORN FROM MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE.)

SEWITNEY FACILITIES ABSOLUTELY TERRIFYING.

(SHIFTS DUST OUT OF AN ENVELOPE BEFORE READING THE NOTES PENCILLED ON IT.)

SOIL EROSION.

(READS SCRAWL ON PAPER LABEL OF TIN OF SNUFF)

HIGH RATIO OF ILLITERACY. AND THEN THERE ARE THE NOTES ON CRIME, BELIEVER I PUT THEM.

(THINKS HARD)

LET'S SEE NOW. IF WE SEND ALL THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL, THAT WILL LOWER THE ILLITERACY. BUT WHO WILL HELP PICK THE COTTON? THEY MAKE LITTLE BROODER NOW WITH ALL THE CHILDREN STAYING HOME FROM SCHOOL TO WORK.

(NOISE OF AIRPLANE IS HEARD OVER HEAD. HE LOOKS UP.)

THAT REMINDS ME, SUGGESTING THEY DO GET THE BEST COTTON PICKER IN THE TOWNS. THAT WILL PUT THEM ALL OUT OF WORK. STILL DOCTOR FRANK CAMERON, HE LIVES RIGHT ACROSS THE WAY FROM ME, FOLKS, \* HAS BEEN WORKING FOR EIGHT YEARS ON SOMETHING.

(PULLS CLIPPING FROM HIS PILE OF NOTES.)

THIS IS AN ASSOCIATED PRESS ARTICLE, DATED JUNE SOMETHING 1938. HERE IT SAYS, "INSTEAD OF USING A PICKER, DOCTOR CAMERON COULD CUT DOWN THE COTTON STALK AND HARVEST IT STALK AND ALL. INSTEAD OF NEARLY SELLING

\* Doctor Cameron of the chemistry department of the U of N.C. lives next door to the editor.

ALL COTTON BE LIKE THE USUAL WAY, HE WOULD UTILIZE THE MOLD PLANT FOR CEREALIZATION." I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, THAT SOUNDS MIGHTY FINE. HE SAYS WITH HIS FIFTEEN DOLLARS AN ACRE INSTEAD OF TEN FOR HIS COTTON. BUT LESS OFFERS WOULD BE NEEDED TO CHOP IT DOWN. A MACHINE COULD DO THAT. THEN WHAT WILL THE WORKERS DO?

(SUDDENLY HE THROWS ALL THE NOTES AWAY *his* AND THROWS UP HIS HANDS IN DEFEAT.)

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!!!!

~~EXIT~~  
(STARTS TO WALK OFF STAGE.)

BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP)

HEY ELBERT! WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

VOICE FROM A DISTANCE

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 YEAH YOU THINK IT'S TOUGH ON ME DISHING OUT THE FIGURES?

MR. EXPERT

SURE. BUT ALL YOU GOT TO DO IS DISH 'EM OUT. I GOT TO FIGURE 'EM OUT!

BLACKBOARD

SISSY!

MR. EXPERT

WHO'S A SISSY?

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.

SENATE COMMITTEE FLASH

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 MEN WHO HAD BEEN WEARING THEM ARE ALL ASLEEP  
WITH THEIR HEADS IN THEIR ARMS ON THE TABLE.)

BANKHEAD MASK

WHY 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 ~~COOLIES~~ ~~COOLIES~~  
COOLIES, THE RUSSIAN SLAVES, THE MEXICAN ~~SEAVES~~ PEONS. FOR GOD'S SAKE,  
IF OUR PEOPLE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE ANY WORSE  
THAN THEY HAVE GONE WITH IT, MERELY TO MAINTAIN VOLUME BUSINESS FOR EX-  
PORTERS, IF THEY HAVE TO GO DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, WITH THEIR PRICES TO DRIVE  
THAT TYPE OF FOREIGNER 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 CAPITA INCOME  
OF ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE IN AMERICA. AH, MR. CHAIRMAN, ~~RATHER~~ 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 ~~RISE~~ DRIVE 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 ~~PEOPLE~~ 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?

(HE WAITS FOR AN ANSWER. THERE IS A LARGE CONCERTED  
SHOUT FROM THE DOZING LAWMEN.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE EIGHT (A)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND MARKETING COTTON

(A) WHAT DO I GET FOR IT?

(A TRAVELLING SPOT FOLLOWS JOHN BRITT, RUPERT 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

NOW YOU'LL SEE HOW IT'S DONE AND WHAT PRICE WE GET FOR OUR COTTON.

MR. EXPERT

THEN YOU'LL BE AT HAND TO KNOW HOW MUCH A BALE SELLS FOR AND YOU CAN ASK FOR YOUR HALF.

BRITT

IT AIN'T AS SIMPLE AS THAT. THE FIGGERIN' AIN'T EQEK DONE HERE, IT'S DONE DOWN TO THE STORE.

(UNEASILY)

SAY WHO IS THAT FOLLOWIN' US ALL THE TIME. LOOKS LIKE AN UNDERTAKER TO ME.

MR. EXPERT

DON'T HIND 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 PROJECTION SCENE OF COTTON SELLING MARKET. MR. BLACKBOARD DOES NOT FOLLOW. THE SCENE IS SET ON 11. HUGE PAIR OF COTTON WEIGHING SCALES AT RIGHT WITH A BALE SUSPENDED. OTHER BALES OF COTTON ARE SUGGESTED UPSTAGE. THIS IS ONE END OF THE COTTON YARDS. ANOTHER BALE IS WAITING LEFT OF THE SCALES TO BE WEIGHED. MR. POWERS THE LANDLORD AND HIS OVERSEER ARE ON THE SET. OVERSEER IS FRANK WILSON. JOE MENESEE JOE JACKSON \* A COTTON BUYER HAS CHARGE OF THINGS. GRAY'S SITS AGAINST A BALE CONTENTEDLY WHITTLING.

\* This character based on actual person called Joe Menefee, a cotton buyer with headquarters at Glenn's Hardware Store, Lufkin, Texas.

A GROUP OF NEGROES ARE LOUNGING ABOUT AWAY FROM THE GROUP OF WHITES. THEY ARE IN ATTENDED 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

IT COME TO BE A TELL OF A LOT MORE THEN THAT CONSIDERIN' WE HAD TO FIGHT THE BOLL WEEVILS, THE FLOODS AND THE DROUTHS AND GOD KNOWS WHAT ELSE TO GET IT.

MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH UP IS TWO POINTS?

JOHN

TWO TENTHS OF ONE CENT PER POUND.

GRIMPS

IF YOU HADENED TO HAVE TWO BALES TO SELL, MR. EXPERT, THEN TWO POINTS EXTRA WOULD PRET' NEAR BUY YOU A PAIR OF THEM BUCK BRAND OVERSHOES FRANK WILSON SELLS DOWN TO THE STORE. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, FRANK?

WILSON

JUST ABOUT.

RUSSELL

(COMING FORWARD)

WHAT'S SHE GOIN' AT, JOE?

(HERE BLACKBOARD LIGHTS UP WITH A PROJECTION OF YESTERDAY'S NEW ORLEANS QUOTATION. XXX \*)

JACKSON

GOOD KIDDEIN' WITH SEVEN EIGHTS INCH STAPLE IS-----

(HE GIVES FIGURES ON BLACKBOARD)

SMALL LAND OWNER

AIN'T THAT THE YELLOW SHUCKS FOR YOU THOUGH?

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.



THE FELLOW DOWN.

JIMMIE LAND OWNER

WELL, TOO, POWERS.

BRITT

WHAT TIME DOES THE GOVERNMENT REPORT COME IN?

JACKSON

TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY, I WAS PAYING \$4 FORTY TWO CENTS A POUND FOR COTTON. \*

WILSON

WHAT TIME DOES THE GOVERNMENT REPORT COME IN?

BRITT

TODAY'S THE DAY, AIN'T IT?

JACKSON

(LOOKING AT HIS WATCH)

LET'S SEE. TODAY'S THE EIGHTH, AIN'T IT? ABOUT TWO HOURS YET.

POWERS

AIN'T NO USE FOR US TO WAIT, FRANK, THAT REPORT AIN'T GOIN' TO MAKE NO DIFFERENCE.

JOHN

IT MAY GO UP A NOTCH OR TWO.

GRAMPS

AND IT MAY GO DOWN THREE OR FOUR.

MR. EXPERT

BUT I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL THE GROWERS PLANTED LESS COTTON THIS YEAR. THAT OUGHT TO MAKE THE PRICE GO UP.

POWERS

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. \*\*

FARMER

THAT'S RIGHT.

POWERS

BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, MR. EXPERT, WHEN WE HAD WORLD MARKETS AND COTTON WAS A RAW MATERIAL, ITS PRICE WAS FIXED BY THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND LAWS. \*\*\*

\* Figures taken from your book for 1919. Department of Agriculture.

\*\* "Problems of Cotton Economy" surpluses Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council. P. 48

\*\*\* "King Cotton Is Sick" Murchison. p. 164

GRAM'S

(FILLS HIS CORNCOB PIPE AND GLANCES  
ACRILY AT POWERS)

IT COULDN'T BE THAT YOU HAD ANYTHIN' TO DO WITH THE PRICE OF COTTON,  
COULD IT, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

YOU AIN'T BEHIN' THAT LIKE IT SOUNDS, ARE YOU GRAM'S?

GRAM'S

IT JUST SORTA STRUCK ME FUNNY THAT YOU GOT A HAND IN MOST  
EVERYTHIN' BUT SETTIN' THE PRICE OF COTTON.

RUSSELL

LOOKS LIKE NOBODY AIN'T GOT A SAY-SO THERE.

SMALL LAND OWNER

YOU DASH! RIGHT THEY HAVE.

GRAM'S

LESSEN IT'S GOD.

BRITT

YOU CAN BE DAMN SURE IT AIN'T NOBODY TILT RAISES COTTON.

WILSON

DO WE SELL THESE TWO, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

YEAH AND ALL THE OTHERS. I SWORE SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT I'D NEVER HOLD  
ANOTHER PALE OF COTTON MORE THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER IT'S GINNED. I  
USED TO MAKE MONEY HOLDIN' 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 DALES BUT I'M  
GOIN' TO HOLD MINE TILL THAT GOVERNMENT REPORT ON COTTON PRODUCTION COMES  
IN. IT'S GOT ABOUT AS GOOD A CHANCE ONE WAY AS IT HAS ANOTHER.

WILSON

THERE'S LAYS A HAND HEAD AROUND.

JOHN

WELL NOW IT MIGHT GO UP. YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

POWERS

YEAH, IT MIGHT WORK TILT A-SAY FOR THEM SPECULATORS DOWN THERE AT NEW  
ORLEANS OR UP AT NEW YORK. BUT WHEN A MAN LIKE ME AND YOU STARTS  
GUESSING AND GAMBLING, HE DON'T GET VERY FAR MOST TIMES.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

IRVING

HOW COME YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO?

POWERS

I HEARD TELL.

JACKSON

(WHO HAS BEEN FIGURING AND WHO WROTE OUT  
A CHECK WHEN POWERS SAID HE'D SELL.)

HERE'S YOUR CHECK FOR THE WHOLE TWENTY THOUSAND BALES, POWERS.

POWERS

(READS AMOUNT) \*

-----DOLLARS. YOU KNOW, JOE, I JUST ABOUT DECIDED I'M GOIN'  
TO 'QUIT FARMIN' AND JUST REST MYSELF ALL THE TIME THE WAY GRAMPS DOES.

JACKSON

GRAMPS IS GOT MORE SENSE THAN ALL THE REST OF US PUT TOGETHER.

A  
(LAUGHTER)

POWERS

THEY'VE GOT A DAMN THING TO ALL THIS HARD WORK IS THERE, GRAMPS?

GRAMPS

NOT A THING. EVEN DUCKIN' 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 HERE TO TALK TO MR. EXPERT.)

POWERS

YOU EVER BEEN DOWN TO THE NEW ORLEANS COTTON EXCHANGE, MR. EXPERT?

MR. EXPERT

NO. BUT I'D LIKE TO SEE HOW IT WORKS.

POWERS

I'M DRIVIN' DOWN NEXT WEEK. BE MIGHTY GLAD TO HAVE YOU COME ALONG.  
YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND A THING ABOUT IT. IT THE DAMNDEST 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 EIGHT (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER MARKETING COTTON

(B) THIS LITTLE FIGGIE WENT 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 SALES ARE MADE, GIVING THE TIME OF THE TRANSACTIONS, SALES, PRICE, NUMBER OF CONTRACTS OF ~~LESS~~ 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 WITH 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)

SILENCE 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.

NOTE: FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SCENE ADDRESS CLEMON WHITE, LUFKIN, TEXAS.

two  
SIXTY TWO FOR MARCH.

UNIFORMED MESSENGER

(RELAYING MESSAGE TO ROSTRUM)

MC CANN TO BRANCH, SIXTY FOR TWO MARCH

(SALE IS PHONED TO GALLERY. MAN AT PHONE  
IN ROOM WHERE MAN AT PHONE REPRESENTS GALLERY  
BLACKBOARD REPRESENTS GALLERIES. THE BID  
AND SALE ARE RECORDED AS FOLLOWS 8:00 BRANCH.  
2 o.c. 11:40 A.M. SEVERAL MORE SALES MAY  
BE MADE IN THIS WAY TO SET THE RHYTHM.)

THIRD MAN

(THIS IS CONTINUATION OF ABOVE)

(SIGNIFIES HE IS BUYING BY PALM FACING OUT,  
TWO FINGERS UPRaised)

SIXTY FOR TWO MARCH.

MESSENGER

MC CANN TO HILL, SIXTY FOR TWO MARCH.

(SAME PROCEDURE AS ABOVE. THIS CONTINUES  
SEVERAL TIMES.)

FIRST MAN

(SIGNIFYING MARCH SALES ARE CLOSED BY  
OFFERING MAY FUTURES.)

SEVENTY FOR MAY 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

MC CANN TO CLAYTON SIXTY EIGHT FOR MAY.

(NO ONE SEEMS INTERESTED)

FIFTH MAN

(PALM FACING HIMSELF CONNOTING HE IS SELLING)

---

\* Palm out is buying. Palm in is selling

SIXTY FOR DECEMBER.

(NO RESPONSE)

FIFTY EIGHT FOR DECEMBER.

( NO RESPONSE)

FIFTY SIX FOR DECEMBER.

(SOME OF THE MEN WALK AWAY.)

FIFTY FOUR FOR DECEMBER.

SIXTH MAN

(BUYING)

FIFTY FOUR ~~XX~~ FOR ~~DECEMBER~~ TWO DECEMBER.

MESSENGER

SOUTHERN TO ANDERSON FIFTY FOUR FOR TWO DECEMBER.

(THERE IS ~~EXT~~ EVIDENCE OF DISINTEREST  
EVERYWHERE. LIGHTS FADE OUT ON THE  
SCENE. SPOT ~~REHEX~~ FOCUSES ON MR. EXPERT  
AND MR. POWERS.)

POWERS

THOSE MEN YOU SAY CAN DON'T RAISE COTTON. IN FACT MOST OF THEM  
NEVER SAW A BALL OF COTTON IN HIS LIFE. THEY DON'T MANUFACTURE  
NOTHING 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  
LIVIN' \* LIKE MEN AT A HORSE RACE.

MR. BALCKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP)

PROFITS IN COTTON COME NOT FROM THE CREATION OF VALUES BUT FROM SHREWD  
TRADING BETWEEN THE CONCOMITANT PARTS OF THE INDUSTRY. \*\*

(~~REARX~~ BLACKS OUT)

MR. EXPERT

LOOKS TO ME THAT WHAT IS MISSING IS MORE DIRECT DEALINGS BETWEEN THE  
COTTON PATCH AND THE DRY GOODS CLOTH COUNTER. \*\*\*

(BLACKOUT ON THEM. LIGHTS COME UP ON  
ORCHESTRA PIT. MR. EXPERT AND MR POWERS  
DROP DOWN TO STAGE APRON AND WATCH SCENE BELOW.)

---

\* From "King Cotton Is Sick" by Claudius T. Murchison, p, 183

\*\* Ibid

\*\*\* Ibid, p. 184

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE, MR. POWERS?

POWERS

THE STATISTICAL AND INFORMATIONAL MACHINERY OF THE ~~NEW~~ ~~REMARKABLE~~ 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

(BEGIN FROM LEFT)

PRICES STEADY.

SECOND MAN

SPOT QUOTATIONS IN NEW ORLEANS. (-----) \*

FLOOR WALKERS

(MEETING 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

## SIXTH MAN

( IN COUNTER TELFO )

AND CONSIDERABLY LESS IN ~~HEALTHY~~ PODUNK.

## FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

**CHECK!**

**MEH**

( 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 TWO MILLION, NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND.

FOURTH MAN

### EXPORTS LOAN A MILLION BALES.

FIFTH MAN

**UNITED STATES PRODUCTION ESTIMATE FIFTEEN MILLION BALES.**

## SIXTH MAN

(IN COUNTER TEMPO)

AND IT'S ALL A GUESS.

## FLOOR WALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

**CHUCK**

(METHODICALLY, RECEIVERS ARE REPLACED IN UNISON. MEN PICK UP TAPE IN UNISON. READ IT.)

## POWERS

NOW AIN'T THAT THE DAMNDEST THING YOU EVER DID SEE?

FIRST MAN

(TURNS HIS HEAD WITH A QUICK JERKY MOVEMENT



TO SECOND MAN. SLAPS A SHEET OF PAPER IN  
FRONT OF HIM.)

SEND A LETTER.

(GESTURES 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

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 COUNTER TIME)

SEND A BOY ON A BICYCLE.

FIRST MAN

(RISES. STANDS STIFFLY. SPEAKS CRISP AND  
RAPIDLY) (REST FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE AS THEIR TIME COME TO SPEAK)

JANUARY FUTURES 2.34 \*

SECOND MAN

MARCH FUTURES 9.96 \*\*

THIRD MAN

MAY FUTURES 8.75.

FOURTH MAN

JULY FUTURES 8.73

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

\* 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 8.82

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 TEAR 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! SPOTS! FUTURES!

FLOOR WALKERS

(SAME BUSINESS AS BEFORE, ONLY RUNNING)

CHECK!

MEN

BOUGHT! SOLD! STORED! SHIPPED!

FLOORWALKERS

(AS BEFORE)

CHECK!

MEN

8.50, 8.40, 8.30, 8.20, 8.10, 8.00

FLOOR WALKERS

CHECK!

( A WHISTLE BLOWN SHRIILLY)

MESSANGER

(AT DOOR)

TWELVE O'CLOCK NOON. QUOTATIONS CLOSE UNTIL MONDAY AT NINE O'CLOCK.

(THEY GROW VERY QUIET. THEY TAKE THEIR PLACE  
IN AN ORDERLY LINE AND FILE OUT SILENTLY AS  
LIGHTS GO DOWN ON THE SCENE, LEAVING A SPOT  
ON MR. EXPERT AND MR. POWERS)

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

MR. POWERS

SOMEBODY THAT NEVER SAW A COTTON BOLL MAKES A GUESS AS TO HOW MUCH  
COTTON WILL SELL FOR IN JULY. THE GUESS COMES HERE AND THEY GAMBLE ON  
WHETHER IT WAS A GOOD GUESS OR A BAD GUESS. AND THAT'S HOW THEY SET  
THE PRICES OF COTTON FUTURES. \*

BLACKOUT

---

LURCHELSON Cp. cit., p. 104

SENATE COMMITTEE FLASH \*

SCENE 1. SCENE 2. SCENE 3. (B)

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 1 BEHIND SCRM.)

(A. D. WEARING MC HARY MASK IS SPEAKING)

MC HARY 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 MASK

(RISING)

I THINK THAT THE SENATOR RECOGNIZES THAT OUR INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE. I AM NOT GOING INTO THE CAUSE, FOR I THINK IT WOULD CERTAINLY LEAD DIRECTLY INTO POLITICS. I HAVE MY VIEW ON THE SUBJECT AND THE SENATOR HAS HIS VIEWS AND WE ARE ENTITLED TO THEM. AS LONG AS WE REMAIN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, WE WILL MAINTAIN THEM.

MC HARY MASK

I HAVE NO POLITICS IN INTERNATIONAL MATTERS.

BANKHEAD MASK

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 PRICE TO THE MINIMUM. GOVERNMENT CURTAILMENT IS NOT THE CAUSE OF THE FOREIGN INCREASE; WHEN WE HAD THIRTEEN MILLION BALES 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 UPON OUR FARMER.

(ALL STRETCH THEIR ARMS AS IF YAWNING. THEY PROCEED TO TAKE THEIR MASKS OFF AND GO BACK TO SLEEP AS\*-----)

BLACKOUT

---

\* Entire ~~flash~~ flash is an abridged transcription of the Senate debate on S. Res. 158, Congressional Record, Nov. 29, 1937, pp 656f

SCENE NINE (A)

TITLE:

THE TENANT FARMER AND THE MILL

(A) A PURELY PERSONAL MATTER.

(BACKGROUND OF 11 IS FILLED WITH A ROW OF WIDE WINDOWS FROM WHICH COME A BLUE LIGHT. THERE IS A LOW STEADY WH-R-R-R. MR. EXPERT IS TALKING TO BILL GIBSON, JOHN BRITT'S RIVAL. THE SCENE IS A MILL STREET. SHADOWS MOVE RHYTHMICALLY ACROSS THE WINDOWS. THESE ARE THE GIRLS TENDING THE MACHINES.)

GIBSON

LOOK, MR. EXPERT----YOU SAID THAT WAS YOUR NAME?

MR. EXPERT

YES.

GIBSON

NOW 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 CLEANED OUT SEWERS. SHE'D GO ALONG 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

(THOUGHTLESSLY)

WHAT FOR?

(QUICKLY)

I DON'T----NOT JUST YET. YOU SEE-----

MR. EXPERT

YER, I'M AFRAID I CAN 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 WON'T STOP WHEN YOU DIE. GIRLS HAVE MARRIED MEN THEY HADN'T OUGHT TO AND MEN HAVE BEEN BASTARDS ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS. THERE'S BEEN STARVATION AND LOW WAGES AND A LOT OF THINGS SINCE TIME STARTED. SO THE BEST THING A FELLOW 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 SEE? BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT. MOST PEOPLE AIN'T GOT THINGS FIGURED OUT AS CLEAR AS I HAVE AND THEY GET PRETTY MUCH MIXED UP ABOUT THINGS.

MR. EXPERT

BUT JOHN BRITT'S SUCH A FINE FELLOW.

GIBSON

I GOT FRIENDS THAT SAY THE SAME ABOUT ME. BUT SKIP IT. NOW JUST WHAT DID YOU EX ~~ME~~ COME TO THIS HERE MILL TOWN FOR?

MR. EXPERT

WHY TO---er---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 BOSSES HIRED THAT RECREATIONAL LEADER TO KEEP 'EM DOING SOMETHING AND FORGETTING THEIR TROUBLES. COME ALONG.

BLACKOUT

SCENE NINE (B)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE MILL

(B) KEY THEY LOVE THEIR WORK.

(THE 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

ANY MORE. SOME OF THE GALS LIKE THEIR MACHINES BETTER THEN THEY LIKE THEIR MEN. \* BESIDES MOST OF 'EM'S A LOT BETTER OFF THEN THEY WOULD BE BACK PICKIN' COTTON.

(THEY COME TO HELEN.)

DID YOU KNOW THAT HELLEN<sup>E. RILEY</sup> WORKED HERE NOW?  
n n

MR. EXPERT

(A LITTLE EMBARRASSED)

WELL NO---or---I HAD HEARD THAT---

GIBSON

HELEN, A FRIEND OF JOHN BRITT'S, MR. EXPERT

HELEN

(EAGERLY)

OH MR. EXPERT, IS HE ALL RIGHT?

MR. EXPERT

FINE. HE HAD THOUGHT A LITTLE ABOUT GOING TO COLLEGE BUT---  
WELL, FARMING'S IN HIS BLOOD, I GUESS.

HELEN

I WISH---OH I WISH IT WASN'T SO HARD TO MAKE A LIVING ON A FARM.  
I WISH---

(SUDDENLY SHE STARTS TO CRY.)

MR. EXPERT

(TO BILL GIBSON)

\* Stated in "Uncle America" by Sherwood Anderson

I GUESS YOU DON'T SEE THINGS AS CLEAR AS YOU THOUGHT YOU DID.

GIBSON

TAKE IT EASY, HELEN. HERE COME THAT RECREATIONAL DIRECTOR.

HELEN

I'M ALL RIGHT, BILL.

GIBSON

HOW ABOUT THE FIRST SHOW TOMORROW NIGHT?

HELEN

(BEAMING)

SWELL!

GIBSON

THAT'S SOMETHIN' 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 MRS. COTRELL. MR. EXPERT.

SOCIAL WORKER

HOW DO YOU DO?

(TO BILL)

YOU'RE OFF NOW, AIN'T YOU?

GIBSON

YES'UH.

SOCIAL WORKER

WHY DON'T YOU GO OVER 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 HARRY ABE. NOW GET ALONG WITH YOU.

(SHE GIVES HIM AN ARCH SLAP ON THE REAR  
AND HE EXITS JOYFULLY. SHE IS A MASCULINE WOMAN.)

\* This is a real character called Marjorie A. Potwin. She was a worker in the Saxon Mills and is the author of a book called "Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont." Many of the following speeches are quoted verbatim from her book.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia



COULD YOU TELL ANYTHING SPECIAL YOU WANTED TO KNOW, MR. EXPERT?

MR. EXPERT

COULD YOU TELL ME 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. THEY KNOW WHAT REFORM IS PRACTICAL AND HOW BEST TO BRING IT ABOUT. IF IMPATIENT REFORMERS CAN RESTRAIN FROM UNDUE MEDDLING AND SUPERIMPOSING, THE MILL PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED TO WORK OUT THEIR OWN PROBLEMS." \*\*

MR. EXPERT

WHERE DO MOST OF THE MILL PEOPLE COME FROM?

SOCIAL WORKER

"STREET ST EAMS OF POPULATION-ELEMENTS HAVE MERGED IN THE MILL PEOPLE: TENANT FARMERS, AND MOUNTAINERS AND PEOPLE DRIFTING IN FROM OTHER MILLS. \*\*\*

MR. EXPERT

DO YOU HONESTLY THINK THESE PEOPLE GET A SQUARE DEAL HERE?

SOCIAL WORKER

"THEY'RE BETTER OFF THAN ON THE FARMS. A FARMING FAMILY OF FIVE WORKERS WOULDN'T MAKE MORE THAN TWO OR THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS A YEAR AS 2 SHARECROPPERS. IN THE MILLS, A SAME FAMILY CAN MAKE AT LEAST FIFTEEN HUNDRED. \*\*\*\*

MR. EXPERT

BUT MY GOD, ON A FARM THEY HAVE AIR, SUNLIGHT AND FREEDOM.

SOCIAL WORKER

"HEALTH MEASURES OF TENANT FARMS SELDOM IF EVER, MEASURE UP TO THOSE IN A MILL VILLAGE. \*\*\*\*\*

\* From "Cotton Mill People Of The Piedmont" By Marjorie A Potwin p. 154

\*\* Ibid p. 45

\*\*\* Ibid p. 43

\*\*\*\* Local citation

\*\*\*\*\*Cf. Cit. p. 75

MR. EXPERT

"The inside of"  
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY ONE OF THESE HOUSES YET. BUT I PASSED A STREET  
ON IT AND THEY DID LOOK awfully crowded together.

SOCIAL WORKER

"THE PROXIMITY OF THE HOUSES CREATES A BARRIER AGAINST MORAL LAXITY. \*  
MAKES FOR CLEAN LIVING."

MR. EXPERT

IN SHORT, YOU LIVE IN ONE OF THEM YOURSELF?

SOCIAL WORKER

WELL,-----no. "PUT SOME HOUSEWIVES OBSERVE SUCH NICETIES AS  
TABLECLOTHS AND SILVERWARE. SOME HOUSES ARE CLEAN AND TIDY AND  
ATTRACTIVELY FURNISHED. \*\*\*"

MR. EXPERT

I'D GLAD TO KNOW THAT. NOW ABOUT NEGROES. I'VE BEEN VERY  
LATE AROUND THIS MILL.

SOCIAL WORKER

"THE WHITE CLASS HAS TAKEN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AS ITS HERITAGE.  
AS EMPLOY A FEW COLORED MEN AS DAY LABORERS, ASSIGNED TO SUCH JOBS  
AS SCRUBBING, FILING THE BOILERS OR DRIVING THE MULES. \*\*\*"

MR. EXPERT

A NEGRO THEN, COULD NEVER HOPE TO RISE TO THE POSITION OF STEINER,  
CANDLER OR FOREMAN?

SOCIAL WORKER

"IN THE SOUTH, THE CUSTOM OF RELEGATING THE LOWEST FORMS OF WORK TO "  
THE NEGRO IS ALMOST AS INFLEXIBLE AS THE COLOR DISTINCTION ITSELF. \*\*\*\*"

MR. EXPERT

YOU HAVE THE RACE PROBLEM ALL FIXED UP THEN?

SOCIAL WORKER

SOMETIMES THERE'S A LOT OF TROUBLE. RECENTLY, "THE ROLLY ELEMENT TOOK  
FOR ONE OF THEIR DIVERSIONS "ROCKING" \*\*\*\*\* THE NEGRO CHILDREN SENT BY THEIR  
MOTHERS TO GET LAUNDRY.....RARE SPORT, WELL-NIGH IRRESISTIBLE TO HAVE  
A FRIGHTENED LITTLE NIGGER 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. 49

\*\*\*\* Ibid p. 52

\*\*\*\*\* Throwing rocks. Occasionally seen on mill town streets

\*\*\*\*\* Ep From "The Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont pp. 59 f.

IS IT TRUE ID OF RACIAL COOPERATION?

SOCIAL CATER

"  
IN HIS TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH RACES INVOLVED, HE HAS  
BROUGHT ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FACTIONS TO BECOME ASSOCIATED ON A  
MORE WHOLESOME AND HAPPY BASIS. FOR EXAMPLE, AMONG THE NEGROES WAS  
BLACK 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. NOW, BETWEEN WHITES AND NEGROES ARE BONDS OF MUTUAL  
AFFECTION." \*

MR. EXPERT

PARDON 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)

AND THAT SHE 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

(LAMELY)

CHARLEY MC CARTHY, I THINK.

SOCIAL WORKER

OH!

MR. EXPERT

YOU THINK, THEN, YOUR EMPLOYER IS A FINE MAN?

SOCIAL WORKER

"

HIS INTEREST AND HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE MILL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MY INSPIRATION  
WHILE HIS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HOW PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER COM-  
BINED 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 C. FIGURE)

DON'T YOU BOTHER WITH HER, ELBERT, SHE DEDICATED HER BOOK TO HIM AND HIS KIND.

(PROJECTION CHARGES THE FOLLOWING DEDICATION:

TO THE PIONEERS OF THE INDUSTRY OF PIEDMONT.  
THEY ARE THE BUILDERS OF A NEW STATE.) \*

OF COURSE HE PAYS HER SALARY.

SOCIAL WORKER

WELL OF ALL THINGS!

~~THAT WILL DO HER~~  
MR. EXPERT

THAT WILL DO HER. THIS LADY IS GIVING ME SOME ASTONISHING  
DEDICATION 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. SPOT FOLLOWS THEM TO STREET  
WHERE THEY STAND IN FRONT OF THE COMPANY STORE.)

SOCIAL WORKER

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO KNOW?

MR. EXPERT

YES, PLEASE; DON'T THE WORKERS WANT MORE MONEY FOR THE BETTER THINGS  
OF LIFE?

SOCIAL WORKER

" HERE THE CLOSE PRESENCE OF THE COUNTRY TENDS TO PROMOTE SATISFACTION  
AND SIMPLE STANDARDS OF LIVING. \*\* OUR PEOPLE DO NOT ENVY THOSE WITH  
GELLEN.\*\*\* BUT WITH HERE COMES MRS. FARMELL \*\*\*\* SHE'LL BEAR ME OUT.

MRS. FARMELL

(COMES ON THE SET WITH HER BABY IN HER ARMS.)

OH HOW DO.

SOCIAL WORKER

MRS. FARMELL, TELL THIS GENTLEMAN: ARE YOU HAPPY HERE AT THE MILL  
WITH YOUR HUSBAND, YOUR BABY AND YOUR HOUSE ON HONEYMOON LANE?

MRS. FARMELL

L. Y. S.

\* Preface to book "Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont by Marjorie A. Potvin

\*\* Ibid p. 18

\*\*\* Ibid p. 16

\*\*\*\* Fictional name of an actual character

\*\*\*\*\*

MR. EXPERT

YOU LEAVE NO ONE ALONE COULD NOT WANT TO HAVE BETTER THINGS?

MRS FARWELL

OH NO, SIR. NO. ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS I GO TO THE HOLLYWOOD MOVIES AND  
SEES RICH FOLKS. WELL, IF I COME HOME JUST SURE I'D RATHER HAVE LITTLE  
(AS I HAVE) AND THE BABIES AND SO AND SO, THEN TO BE RICH. \*

(SHE GOES OFF WITH HER BABY.)

MR. EXPERT

IT'S AMAZING. POSITIVELY AMAZING.

SOCIAL WORKER

MY JEROME WORK IS. "WHERE IS HUMAN NATURE MORE REFRESHING THAN AT THE  
COTTON MILL? WHERE IS THERE MORE GENUINE COURTESY OR MORE SINCERE  
ATTENTION OF LEADERSHIP? \*\* "WHERE IS THERE MORE DEMOCRACY? FOR  
A MAN MAY BE ONE'S BOSS, 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  
(OUT ~~E~~/AUDIENCE)

ARE YOU BY CHANCE 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

(OUT TO AUDIENCE)

ISN'T HE A NUT?

BLACKOUT

---

\* Ibid p. 92

\*\* Ibid p. 162

\*\*\* Ibid p. 150

SCENE FIVE (C)

TITLE: AT THE MILL ENTER AND THE MILL

(C) THE COMPANY STORE \*

(THE SETTING IS THE MILL STORE  
THERE IS A COUNTER AND A RADIO  
IS DRONING AWAY. A FEW IDLE MILL  
HANDS STANDING AROUND LISTENING TO  
THE RADIO. THIS STORE SELLS EVERYTHING;  
WORK PANTS, FOOD, CANDY, NEWSPAPERS 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 WORK AT THE MILL, I'LL GIVE CREDIT FOR IT. THAT IS IF YOU GOT A COUPON  
BOOK ISSUED BY THE COMPANY.

MR. EXPERT

*This Radio*  
BUT ~~IT~~ ISN'T MARKED.

MANAGER

NOTHIN' IS MARKED \*

MR. EXPERT

AN INDEPENDENT STORE IN TOWN TOLD ME THEY'RE SELLING BUTTER AT <sup>THIRTY</sup> ~~THIRTY-FIVE~~  
CENTS A POUND. WHAT ARE YOU CHARGING?

MANAGER

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

MR. EXPERT

ONE OF THE CHAIN STORE PEOPLE TOLD ME THAT YOU "THE COMPANY STORES CHARGE  
WHAT THEY WANT." \*\*\*IS THAT TRUE?

MANAGER

"TRYIN' TO FIND OUT SOMETHING, HEY? WELL WE DON'T HAVE TO SELL NOTHIN' TO  
NOBODY....SPECIALLY SPIES. SCRAM!" \*\*\*

\* Entire scene a dramatization of article entitled "All Work and No Pay"  
by Walter Davenport in *Colliers*, Nov. 13, 1937

\*\* The practice in company stores is not to mark anything

\*\*\* Statement from article "All Work and No Pay". Alleged to be actual  
statement by store manager in the Greenville-Spartanburg textile center, S.C.

MR. EXPERT

HOW I'M GOING TO JOIN HERE. HOW DO YOU KNOW? DO YOU ONLY SELL TO PEOPLE WITH COUPON 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 WHEN IT IS TAKEN OUT OF THEIR PAY ENVELOPE. THEN WE TAKE OUT WHAT THEY OWE AND GIVE THEM THE BALANCE.

MR. EXPERT

ARE YOU THE COMPANY?

MANAGER

EVERYTHING'S THE COMPANY. STORE, HOUSES, SCHOOL, NEWSPAPERS AND THE PLANT. EVERYTHING'S THE COMPANY AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

STEVE

(ENTERING. HE IS FOLLOWED BY A MAN NAMED LARRY, A FINANCIER IN A SMALL WAY.)

HEY, I GOTTA HAVE SOME MONEY. EARN CASH!

MR. EXPERT

HEY ZEELO HELLLO, STEVE.

STEVE

(A LITTLE EMBARRASSED)

HEY-O, MR. EXPERT. I'M IN A MIGHTY HURRY.

(TO MANAGER)

SELL ME A COUPON BOOK AND PUT ME DOWN FOR IT.

MANAGER

(HANDS 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 WHEN I GOT AIN'T NEVER GOT A CREDIT IN MY ENVELOPE AFTER THE FIRST WEEK I WORKED HERE. IT ALL GOES FOR THE CLOUTS.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

MANAGER

IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, GO SIT YOUR TAIL. HUNDREDS MORE WAITIN'  
FOR YOUR JOB.

STEVE

KNEE YOUR SHIRT ON. THIS IS AMERICA, AIN'T IT? FELLOW'S GOT A  
RIGHT TO LET OFF A LITTLE STEAM.

(TO LAHEY)

HERE'S YOUR FIVE DOLLAR BOOK, MR. JUDAS. HAND OVER THE CASH.

LAHEY

(COUNTING BILLS INTO STEVE'S HAND)

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR. THERE YOU ARE. FOUR DOLLARS.

STEVE

(POCKETING MONEY)

THANKS, MR. BLOODSUCKER. SEE YOU AGAIN, MR. EXPERT.

(HE EXITS. MR. EXPERT FOLLOWS)

LAHEY

(GOES TO COUNTER, TOSSES BOOK ON IT.  
MANAGER PICKS IT UP AND PUTS IT IN DRAWER.  
TAKES OUT MONEY. COUNTS IT INTO LAHEY'S  
HAND.)

MANAGER

HERE YOU ARE. FOUR FIFTY. PRETTY GOOD, HALF A DOLLAR FOR HALF A  
MINUTES OKK.

LAHEY

WHAT ARE YOU GEEFING ABOUT. DIDN'T YOU JUST MAKE HALF A DOLLAR ON  
THAT TRANSACTION? THAT MAKES FIFTEEN BOOKS BOUGHT AND SOLD TODAY.  
THAT 'MOUNTS UP TO, LET'S SEE.

MANAGER

SH-H-H-H-HI NOT SO LOUD. DO YOU WANT THE COMPANY TO KNOW EVERYTHING?

BLACKOUT



SCENE FIVE (D)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE HILL

(D) ALL WORK AND NO PAY \*

(IT IS OUTSIDE THE STORE. SPOT PICKS  
UP STEVE AND MR. EXPERT)

MR. EXPERT

STEVE!

STEVE

(STOPS)

*YES?*  
~~STEVE~~

MR. EXPERT

I JUST SAW YOUR LITTLE TRANSACTION AT THE STORE. DOESN'T THE  
COMPANY PAY YOU CASH?

STEVE

YES. I WORK FOR WHAT I USE AND I USE MORE THAN I MAKE.

(BITTERLY)

SEE, LIND. I HAVEN'T GOT NO FAMILY TO SUPPORT BUT I GUESS AS MUCH  
AS MY NAME WITH YOUR KIDS.

*LES*  
(~~SCHEIDT~~ STROLLS ON)

*LES* YOU ASK ~~SCHEIDT~~ *LES* HERE ABOUT THE PAY OFF SYSTEM. ~~SCHEIDT~~, THIS IS  
MY FRIEND, MR. EXPERT. I LIVE AT *LES*' HOUSE.

(INTRODUCTIONS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED)

LOOK, I GOTTA BUNT IT. BUT COME AROUND TO THE ROOM SOMETIME. I  
WON'D BE *LES* THERE. IN ONE OF THE COMPANY HOUSES. I WANT TO  
BE AROUND. THE GENTS AND RUTH, DAVE AND LINDA LEE. AND....

(HIS VOICE BREAKS A LITTLE)

AND GOTTA BUNT *LES* *Best young'un.*

(HE EXITS, COUGHING)

*LES*  
~~SCHEIDT~~

(SHAKING HIS HEAD SADLY.)

THE LINDA'S A KID? LONGER OUT OF HIM.

(MR. EXPERT MAKES AN INVOLUNTARY MOVE AFTER STEVE.)  
\* TITLE taken from article called "All Work and No Pay".

~~SCHMIDT~~  
LES

(DETAINING HIM)

WHAT DID HE WANT ME TO TELL YOU?

MR. EXPERT

ABOUT HOW YOU ARE BEING PAID. DID YOU EVER RECEIVE A CENT IN CASH?

~~SCHMIDT~~  
LES

WDR. HERE IS MY PAY ENVELOPE WITH EVERYTHING MARKED ON IT. IT SAYS I OWE TWENTY EIGHT HOURS. ALL RIGHT. GROSS WAGES \$11.40. THEN THEY TAKE OUT FOR INSURANCE AND CHRISTMAS SAVINGS. THAT LEAVES ME \$10.45. BUT THE COMPANY STORE GETS \$6.90. THAT MAKES A BALANCE OF \$3.25.

MR. EXPERT

WITH YOU ONLY GET \$3.25 FOR A WEEK'S WORK?

~~SCHMIDT~~  
LES

I DIDN'T GET THAT. 'SEE? HERE IS SAYS "INCIDENTALS \$3.25". THAT LEAVES ZERO. THEY EVEN PUT DOWN TWO ZEROS FOR ME.

MR. EXPERT

(QUIETLY)

and just what are incidentals?  
\* HE JUST PUT IN THE "INCIDENTALS" THAT TOTAL THE BALANCE SO COINCIDENTALLY?

~~SCHMIDT~~  
LES

PAID OF FINE AND TWO PENCILS FOR MY BOY IN SCHOOL, A BOX OF CANDY FOR MY WIFE'S BIRTHDAY, A HICKY HOUSE BOOK FOR THE LITTLE ONE AND A BLACKING-BRUSH FOR THE STOVE. \*

BLACKOUT

---

\* Actual case history with authentic figures taken from the article, "All Work and No Pay."



SCENE FIVE (E)

FIGURE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE MILL

(E) "THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME. THANK GOD!"

(LIGHTS COME UP ON A MEAGRELY FURNISHED ROOM IN A COMPANY HOUSE. IT IS DARK AND HAS A SMALL WINDOW. IT HAS A COT, A SMALL TABLE AND TWO UPRIGHT CHAIRS. A DIM BULB IS SUSPENDED BY A CORD FROM THE CEILING. STEVE IS LYING ON THE COT WITH A BLANKET THROWN OVER HIM. HE COUGHS FROM TIME TO TIME.)  
BILL GIBSON SITS IN THE OTHER CHAIR.)

MR. EXPERT

I'M SURPRISED TO SEE YOU, STEVE. HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

STEVE

OH, A LITTLE TROUBLE NOW AND THEN. BUT I GOT A PLACE TO LIVE ANYHOW.  
A LARGE ROOM TO MYSELF.

(MR. EXPERT LOOKS AROUND AND SHUDDERS)

BITCH

HE DON'T SEEM SO GOOD, MR. EXPERT. DOC SAYS IT'S HIS LUNGS.  
GOT HIMSELF TOO MUCH LINT IN 'EM.

STEVE

THAT'S RIGHT.

MR. EXPERT

WON'T YOU GO BACK TO THE OLD PLACE, STEVE. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT  
LUELL AND YOUR LOTTER WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.

STEVE

AYES I WILL.

(LAUGH)

YOU ARE ALL THE JOKE, MR. EXPERT? IT'S BEEN NEARLY A YEAR SINCE I  
LEFT AND YOU SORTA DIDN'T WANT TO ME TO GO IN THE FIRST PLACE AND  
STAY AROUND HERE AT ALL AND I DON'T SEEM TO HEAR ABOUT THEM.

MR. EXPERT

LITTLE LUELL'S GOT A BABY.

GIBSON

AND FOR HER!

THEY'RE IN OLD VANDERBILT Joke.

MR. EXPERT

AND THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS, LOOKS.

STEVE

(CHUCKLES)

GOOD OLD LINNIE LEE.

<sup>ed</sup>  
(SISTER/SISTER COMES FROM DOWNSTAIRS.)

MR. EXPERT

WHAT WAS THAT?

STEVE

<sup>LEE'S WIFE</sup>  
~~MY BROTHER'S~~ LIVING A POOR. SHE'S BEEN ROLLERIN' ON AND OFF  
FOR THE PAST FEW HOURS NOW. IT'S TIME SHE CAME THROUGH.

MR. EXPERT

DO I WANT HER TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

STEVE

OH WHAT? ASK ME WHY I DON'T GO AWAY? GO AHEAD.

MR. EXPERT

DO I WANT YOU TO GO HOME, STEVE?

STEVE

YOU KNOW WHY, MR. EXPERT. I LEFT THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE  
THERE WASN'T ENOUGH ROOM FOR ALL OF US. WELL, THERE'S A PLACE FOR  
ME HERE ALL RIGHT BUT GOD KNOWS IT ~~AIN'T~~ DOING ME MUCH GOOD. I MET  
A GIRL, A SPINNER. LIKED HER FINE. WANTED TO GET MARRIED. BUT THIS  
HOUSE, HERE, WHO COULD WANT TO BRING A WIFE HERE? FEMALE HOUSES STUCK  
CLOSE TOGETHER JUST A BLOCK FROM THE CENTER OF TOWN. THEY'RE CROWDED,  
FILTHY, NOT FIT TO LIVE IN. IF ONE OF 'EM CAUGHT FIRE, THE WHOLE BLOCK  
WOULD GO UP LIKE A BOX OF MATCHES. A LOT OF US WOULD DIE.

(SISTER FROM DOWNSTAIRS.)

GOD DAMN IT, IY I GOT HER GET IT OVER WITH. MAKING ME....

MR. EXPERT

OF COURSE, STEVE?

STEVE

NO MORE.

GIBSON

GO AHEAD AND SPILL IT, POY. MIGHT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER. YOU SEE.....

STEVE

IT'S THE WAY. IY AND ELIA WIFE...THAT'S THE GIRL.....

WELL, WE LIVED TOGETHER FOR TWO YEARS. ONLY YOU'RE DEAD AND WE DIDN'T  
GET NO MONEY WE COULD GET A BREAD. SO, WE LIVED AS LONG AS WE LIVED  
BREAD OTHER'S MONEY AND WOULD GET IN DEBT IF WE COULD WHY..... THEN  
THE FIRST TIME YOU KNEW, THE LAST IT TROUBLE AND SHE LOST HER JOB  
AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO AND I GOT CASH FOR A COUPLE OF BOOYS AND  
BILL HERE DID THE SAME AND I TOOK HER TO A MIDWIFE AND...SHE HOLLERED  
JUST LIKE THAT OMAM DOWNSTAIRS. AND A FEW DAYS LATER SHE DIED AND....

(HE STARTS TO SOB)

AND I ALWAYS KNOW THINKING THEY'LL COME AND GET ME AND PUT ME IN JAIL.

GIBSON

NOBODY CARES. SHE WAS JUST A MILL GIRL AND YOU'RE JUST A WORKER.  
MANY MORE WHERE YOU FOLKS COME FROM. ONE MORE OR LESS...

STEVE

WE LOVE ME! WE LIVE EACH OTHER....

GIBSON

ONE THING. FOR NONE THIS COULDN'T HAPPEN.

(HKE PAUSE)

BECAUSE TENENT FARMERS AIN'T EVER ABLE TO GET TEN OR FIFTEEN  
DOLLARS TOGETHER FOR A THING LIKE THAT.

(TAP ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS. ENTER LES,  
A MILL WORKER.)

LES

(DEJECTEDLY)

HELLO HELLO BOYS. WELL, IT'S ALL OVER. ANOTHER GIRL. THE FIFTH.

MR. EXPERT

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

(HE LOOKS SURPRISED, LES DOES.)

GIBSON

*He means it in a good way.*  
~~HE MEANS IT.~~

LES

THIRTY SIX.

MR. EXPERT

AND FIVE CHILDREN! GOOD LORD!

LES

AND ONLY EARTH! ABOUT ELEVEN A WEEK....WHEN I GET IT.

(PAUSE. LES SITS ON THE BED.

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

SHOULD BE I BRING OUT CIGARS, I GUESS. BUT THE COMPANY STORE  
WOULDN'T GIVE ME NO MORE CREDIT TILL I CATCH UP. YOU HAVEN'T GOT  
ONE, YOU COULD OFFER A FELLOW HAVE YOU?

STEVE

SORRY, LES.

MR. EXPERT

(TAKING OUT A PACKAGE)

CIGARETTE HELP?

STEVE

YOU BET!

(TAKES ONE.)

MR. EXPERT

HERE FOR GOD'S SAKE TAKE THE WHOLE PACKAGE. YOU GOT IT COMING TO YOU.

LES

BABY NUMBER FIVE! WHERE WE'RE GOIN' TO PUT 'EM ALL, I DON'T KNOW.  
WE MOVED TO TOWN SO'S I COULD EARN ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THE FOUR WE  
ALREADY HAD. 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.

(STEVE BURIES HIS HEAD IN HIS ARMS AND SOBS.  
SOMETIMES, HE COUGHS.)

I TELL YOU TH' TRAVELIN' WITH THE SOUTH IS TOO DAMNED MANY KIDS. IF THERE  
WEREN'T SO DAMNED MANY OF US, THERE'D BE MORE TO GO AROUND FOR THE BEST  
OF US.

BLACKOUT.

BLACKBOARD

"ONE HUNDRED OR THEREBY PEOPLE LIVE IN FOUR HOUSES."  
IN GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA. THIS IS A MILL TOWN. "MANY OF THEM  
IN DIREST POVERTY AND UNSANITARY CONDITIONS. SHOULD A FIRE BREAK  
OUT IN ONE OF THESE HOUSES AT NIGHT, ALL FOUR WOULD GO UP LIKE KINDER  
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."

THAT TALK, WAS A QUOTATION FROM AN EDITORIAL IN THE RALEIGH, NORTH  
CAROLINA NEWS AND OBSERVER, JANUARY SIXTEENTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND  
THIRTY EIGHT. IT APPEARED FIRST AS A NEWS ITEM IN THE GASTONIA GAZETTE.

AND LISTEN TO THIS. THE RALEIGH NEWS AND OBSERVER GOES ON TO SAY:  
"URBAN AND RURAL HOUSING IN THE SOUTH IS IN TOO MANY PLACES AND PARTICU-  
LARS OF A DANGEROUSLY, EVEN SCANDALOUSLY, LOW STANDARD. IT NEEDS THE  
OTHER-EYED ATTENTION OF SOUTHERN PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO FACE THE CON-  
DITIONS AND DEAL WITH THEM UNFRIGHTENED BY ANY WHO MAY THINK THEY ARE  
PROHIBITED BY POVERTY OR THAT THEY AND THE SOUTH CAN GROW RICH AND GREAT  
BY BEING SO SCANDALOUSLY LOW STANDARDS."

HECKLER

(FROM AUDIENCE. HAS A BROAD SOUTHERN ACCENT)

SAY, THOSE ARE ONLY LOCAL PAPERS. HOW DO YOU KNOW BUT THAT THERE  
MIGHT BE AN ELECTION UP OR SOMETHING AND ALL THAT STUFF IS JUST  
POLITICS.

BLACKBOARD

ALL RIGHT, MY FRIEND. I KNOW YOU WERE FROM THE SOUTH AND I WAS TRYING  
TO LET YOU SOUTHERNERS DOWN EASY. BUT HERE IS SOMETHING FROM THE  
NINE-WEEK OF APRIL TENTH, NINETEEN THIRTY SEVEN.

"THERE ARE MORE THAN 450,000 TEXTILE WORKERS IN THE SOUTH."

(SOMEONE IN AUDIENCE IS RESTLESS AND COUGHS  
AND SCRAPES HIS FEET.)

HEY, THIS IS BORING. FIGURES USUALLY ARE. ALL RIGHT, YOU CAN GO  
OUT FOR A STORK IF YOU WANT TO. YOU HAD ALL THIS IN THE SCENE BEFORE.  
BUT HERE COME FOR THOSE THAT WANT FIGURES AND FACTS:

"MANY OF THEM LEFT THE STILE PARTER BE HOME OF A SCRAGGLY UN- AND PAIR  
OF A GITCH PATCH DOWN FELLOW TO STAND AT A SPINDLE AND ENJOY THE PRIGHT  
GOD OF OF MONEY..... MY SUCCUMB TO TUBERCULOSIS, DUST AND ACID-CHARGED  
AIR IN MANY MIL- / SPINNING MILLS BE THEY THEIR LIVES. OFTEN THE WHOLE  
FAMILY, FATHER, MOTHER, SONS AND DAUGHTERS... ORK IN THE MILLS FROM TEN TO  
FIFTEEN HOURS DAILY IN NIGHTLY. IN MODEL COMPANY VILLAGE, THEY LIVE IN  
A LITTLE HOUSE OR TWO, SQUARE-ROOMED AND WITH A BIT OF A GARDEN, USUALLY  
LEADING TO THEM IN CONDITION THAT ALL ABLE-BODIED MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY  
REMAIN AT THE MILL." WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT, MY FINE FEATHERED FRIEND?

HECKLER

LOOKING BETTER, THAT LITTLE GARDEN PATCH IDEA.

BLACKBOARD

I GIVE UP.

BLACKOUT



SENATE COL. IT-EE FL. SH

(A FOLLOW-UP TO RITE B)

(LIGHTS COME UP ON 1 BEHIND SCRM.  
MAN WEARING SMITH MASK HAS THE FLOOR.  
OTHER SENATORS, DIMLY LIT ARE DROWSING  
HERE AND THERE. ONE IS SPRAYED ON THE  
TABLE, ANOTHER IN TWO CHAIRS AND THE REST  
ARE UNDER THE TABLE.)

SMITH MASK

SO FAR WE HAVE SETTLED NOTHING OF IMPORTANCE. THE PUBLIC & 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 STRUGGLING WITH THE MOST INCOMPREHENSIBLE FARM BILL THAT  
HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE CONGRESS. THE FARM BILL TODAY IS A MESS. \*

(A SENATOR BELCHES)

BLACKOUT

SCENE TEN (A)

TITLE: THE MILL, THE PEOPLE, LABOR AND CAPITAL

(A) "THE MORALE IS FINE." \*

"STREET OUTSIDE THE MILL. EMPTY. THE WHISTLE  
BLOWS FROM THE LEFT, COMES A LINE OF TIRED  
PEOPLE, OLD MEN AND OLD WOMEN AND YOUNG GIRLS.  
THEY ARE GOING OFF WORK. FROM THE RIGHT  
COMES A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN, STEVE, LES AND  
GI FOR HEADING THEM. THESE ARE THE NIGHT  
SHIFT.)

WOMEN

(PASSING LES)

BOY: I'VE TOLD YOU

LES

WOMEN

I'D STOP BY AND LOOK HER OVER.

LES

BOY: I'VE TOLD YOU I'VE BEEN WITH THE YOUNG'UNS AND STILL IN BED.

HELEN

(PASSING STEVE)

DO YOU HEAR FROM JOHN LATELY?

STEVE

IC.

GIRL

(TO HELEN)

LET'S GO OUT AND SEE IF SOMETHING, STEVE?

(LAUGHTER)

GIBSON

BOY-O HELEN.

(SHE DOESN'T ANSWER.)

A YOUNG MAN CALLS ACROSS TO A GIRL AND MAKES  
A DATE FOR NEXT SUNDAY. BOYS OF FOURTEEN RUN

\* From "Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont" by Marjorie A. Polvin

THROUGH THE CROWD, TROUING AND CATCHING  
A BALL. TO THE BULLETIN BOARD UP RIGHT,  
JOES A NEARLY UNIFORMED GUIDE WHO POSTS  
THEIR A DECLARATION, THEN HURRIES OFF. SOME  
SCATTERS RUN AHEAD AND GATHER AROUND THE BOARD,  
TRYING TO READ. MR. EXPERT STANDS AT EDGE  
OF CROWD JUMPING UP AND DOWN TRYING TO GET  
A GLIMPSE OF WHAT IT SAYS.)

JOE: R3

(READING ANGRILY)

THEY'RE PERMIT REQUESTS.....  
EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE INDUSTRY.....

GIBSON

IT TELLS THEY CAN'T DO IT.

MR. EXPERT

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? CAN'T THEY DO IT?

BL. CKBOARD

FIGHT HERE.

MR. EXPERT

WHY DOES THE SIGN SAY?

BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTS UP WITH A PROJECTION OF THE NOTICE.)

THE BOARD HERE REGRETS THAT EXISTING CONDITIONS  
IN THE INDUSTRY DO NOT PERMIT GRANTING ANY POR-  
TION OF YOUR PETITION RELATING TO WAGES, HOURS  
OR WORKING CONDITIONS. EMPLOYEES ARE HEREBY  
WARNED THAT THEIR ACTION IN FILING A PETITION IS  
FICTITIOUS WITH THE METHODS OF ORGANIZED LABOR WHICH  
THE MANAGEMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE.

(BLACKS OUT)

(THE WORKERS HAVE BECOME VERY ANGRY.  
THEY MURDER AN AMONG THEMSELVES. GIBSON  
HURRIES A BOX OR SOME STEPS.)

GIBSON

IT'S SHOCKING. IF THEY WON'T BE REASONABLE, BY GOD, WE'LL STRIKE!

(CHIEFS)

BLACKOUT

SENATE COMMITTEE

TO FOLLOW SCENE PER (A)

THE SENATORS HAVE GONE BUT  
(ALL THE MASKS ARE PILED ON THE TABLE  
EXCEPTING THE BARKLEY ONE. A SPOT PICKS  
UP THE MAN WEARING 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 HELP THE SOUTH DEPOSE KING COTTON OR TO CURE HIM?

BARKLEY MASK

IT IS ALWAYS HAZARDOUS TO PREDICT WHAT CONGRESS MAY OR MAY NOT DO.\*

BLACKOUT

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\* Congressional Record, Nov. 22, 1937. Reprint of a radio address.

SCENE TEN (B)

THREE: TALKED BY MASTER, LABOR AND CAPITAL

(F) "OLD LABOR PROPLES. COME SOUTH  
FLEETY OF AMERICAN LABOR CHEAP." \*

(THE SETTING IS OUTSIDE THE MILL. THE  
TIME IS NEXT MORNING. STEVE, LES AND  
GIBSON ARE STILL IN THE CROWD. THERE  
ARE WORKERS PICKETING TO PREVENT THE  
DAY SHIFT FROM GOING ON. MR. EXPERT  
STANDS OFF WATCHING. THE MEN STAND AT  
STAGE LEFT. THE SHERIFF AND HIS DEPUTIES  
WITH ONE OR TWO OF THE FACTORY OFFICIALS  
STAND OVER TO RIGHT.) \*\*

FIRST WORKER

(BUNCHBOX ON HAND, COMES ON SCENE AND  
PREPARES TO ENTER FACTORY.)

SECOND WORKER

LOOK THERE, FELLA. YOU DON'T WANT TO GO IN THERE.

FIRST W.

WHY DON'T I?

THIRD W.

THAT'S ALL DONE. WENT OUT. THE NIGHT SHIFT STUCK ONE HUNDRED  
A SHIRT. IF THE DAY SHIFT STAYS OUT, WE GOT 'EM LICKED.

FIRST W.

OK, BOYS. I'LL STICK WITH YOU.

WORKERS

(CHEER)

IN THE FACTORY, ALL, ATT BOY! ETC!

(THE WORKERS ARE NOT ARMED. THE OFFICIALS  
ARE, SHERIFF, ETC. CARRY SHORT CLUBS.)

GIBSON

HE GOES HOME

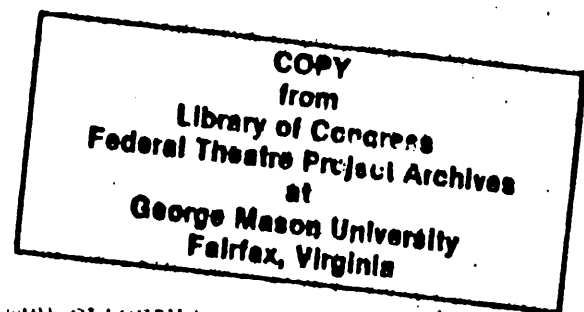
(SEVERAL DAY WORKERS ENTER CARRYING THEIR PAILS)

STEVE

STICKS ON, BOYS.

\* From ads in trade journals.

\*\* This scene is a dramatization of the strike at the Marion Mfg. Plant.  
Material is taken from Sinclair Lewis' article on "North Carolina's  
Labor War. Literary Digest Nov. 9, 1929



FIRST WORKER

TO THE BOSS.

FOURTH W.

(ONE OF THE NEWLY-ARRIVED WORKERS)

WELL IT'S ABOUT TIME.

SIXTH W.

I'M NOT CRAXIN' TO STICK. I GOT TO HAVE THE MONEY. I'M WAY  
IN DEBT NOW AND I'LL LOSE MY JOB IF I STAY OUT OF THE MILL TOD Y.

LEB

WHO CARES? WHAT GOOD IS A JOB THAT JUST GETS YOU IN DEBT AND RUINS  
YOUR BELLY AND JUST DON'T DO YOU NO GOOD ALL AROUND?

(SIXTH MAN TRIES TO GET IN. OTHER  
WORKERS HOLD HIM BACK.)

SHERIFF

HEY YOU, HEY! LET THAT MAN ALONE. IF HE WANTS TO WORK, THAT'S  
HIS BUSINESS.

SIXTH W.

I...I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. I'LL STICK.

MR. EXPERT

STEVE, YOU LOOK MIGHTY SICK. WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME AND LET THE  
BOYS HANDLE IT?

STEVE

NO I'LL STAY. I AIN'T NEVER HAD NOTHIN'; NEVER EXPECT TO HAVE NOTHIN'.  
SO WHAT'VE I GOT TO LOSE? WELL WITH BEIN' SICK. A FELLER'S BETTER  
OFF DEAD THAN LIVIN' THIS WAY.

SHERIFF

LISTEN, YOU MEN. I AIN'T GOIN' TO STAND FOR NO INTERFERENCE FROM YOU  
GORNERS. IF A MAN WANTS TO WORK, HE'S GOT A RIGHT TO DO IT. THIS IS  
A FREE COUNTRY.

(CATCALLS AND JEERS FROM THE STRIKERS.)

SUPERINTENDENT

NEVER MIND THEM, SHERIFF. THEY'LL ALL COME BACK HERE WITH THEIR TAILS  
BETWEEN THEIR LEGS PEGGIN' FOR THEIR JOBS BACK IN ANOTHER DAY OR SO.

(WORKERS HOOT AT THIS SPEECH, OBVIOUSLY MEANT TO  
GOAD THEM.) \*\*

\* Speech by Sheriff Askins of Marion, North Carolina.

\*\* Based on attitude of Superintendent Hunt of the Mariona Mfg. Co.

SHUT UP!

(JEERS ARE LOUDER)

STEVE

LOOK AT OLE MR. LEW THERE! DON'T HE LOOK FINE WITH THAT THERE  
STAR ON HIS FRONT? MR. BIG HIMSELF.

(LAUGHTER AND JEERS FROM THE FORKERS)

SHUT UP, GOD DAMN IT!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(SOME NEW DAY WORKERS ENTER AND  
START TO WALK UP TO THE FACTORY WHERE THEY  
ARE STOPPED BY THE STRIKERS.)

SHERIFF

ALL RIGHT MEN. COME RIGHT IN AND GO TO WORK IF YOU WANT TO.  
IS THAT THE MATTER? ARE YOU AFRAID OF THEM YELLOW PICKETS. COME  
ON IN. THERE'S WORK WAITIN' FOR YOU. DON'T LET THEM TALK YOU  
OUT OF YOUR JOBS. JOBS ARE HARD TO FIND THESE DAYS.

MEN

WHO SAID WE WANT TO COME IN.

WORKERS

WORKERS

SHERIFF

(YELLING AT TOP OF HIS LUNGS)

LISTEN! LISTEN TO ME!

(MORE JEERS AND LAUGHTER)

ALL RIGHT MEN, I'VE A MIND FOR IT. GIVE 'EM THE TEAR GAS. \*  
KICK 'EM OFF THEIR FEET. GET 'EM OUT OF HERE.

(SHERIFF AND HIS MEN CHARGE THE STRIKERS.  
TEAR BOMBS ARE THROWN, CLUBS FALL, SHOTS  
ARE FIRED. STEVE IS SEEN TO FALL UNDER  
THE CLUB OF ONE OF THE DEPUTIES. MR. EXPERT  
TRIES TO GET TO HIM. SOME WOMEN RUSH ON  
SHOUTING AND TRY TO PEACH 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 LES. TWO OTHERS  
SCUPPED, ARE WRITHING IN PAIN. MR. EXPERT IS  
TRYING TO GET STEVE TO SPEAK TO HIM.)

\* "Tear gas was thrown by Sheriff Atkins and his men. Then the shooting  
stopped." From "The Air Lewis on North Carolina's Labor Day."

SHERIFF

(AS HE AND HIS MEN SURVEY THE FALLEN STRIKERS  
AND LOOK OFF AFTER THE OTHERS FLEEING. SHERIFF  
AND HIS MEN ARE FAINTING AND BLEEDING FROM THE FIGHT.)

FOR EASY DOWN?

FOREMAN

YOUR LOT OUT FOR THEM AND HERE'S TWO MORE KICKIN' AROUND LIKE  
THEY DON'T BELONG TO THE FIGHT FOR QUITE A WHILE TO COME. THE BEST ALL  
BUT IT.

MR. EXPERT

STEVE?

(STEVE'S HEAD HANGS LIMP. MR. EXPERT  
LETS IT DOWN GENTLY ON THE GROUND. HE  
TAKES HIS HAT OFF.)

WOMAN

(COMES ON. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO STROKE  
TO LEE BEFORE.)

WHERE'S LEE?

MR. EXPERT

(INDICATES LEE ON THE GROUND)

WOMAN.

WOMAN

OH MY GOD! HIS LIFE DIED JUST <sup>AN</sup> HOUR AGO AND THOSE FIVE  
LITTLE CHILDREN ARE LEFT ALONE NOW. AND ONE OF THEM ONLY TWO  
DAYS OLD!

(STARTS TO WEEP VIOLENTLY)

PL. CROUT

---



SCENE TEN (C)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND LABOUR AND CAPITAL

(C) 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 WEEPING 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 SOBBING INTERMITTENTLY.)

BRITT

STEVE WAS A GOOD FOY. I WAS ALWAYS HOPIN' HE'D COME BACK TO THE LAND.

JOHN

HE'S COMIN' BACK,

RUTH

IN THE WAY WE'LL ALL COME BACK TO IT IN TIME.

MR. EXPERT

(WHELPLESSLY)

IS THERE NO RETURN I CAN DO.....

BRITT

(CONTEMPTUOUSLY)

WHAT COULD YOU DO? YOU THE SMART ALECK WHO WAS GOIN' TO TELL THE GOVERNMENT WHAT-LL TO DO FOR US FOLKS.

(SHOUTING)

WELL, HAVE YOU FOUND OUT YET WHAT'S WRONG WITH US? HAVE YOU FOUND OUT WHAT TO DO?

RUTH

PLEASE LAW.

(WHILE 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 THAT A-WAY, MR. BRITT. HE STAYED WITH STEVE AS LONG AS HE COULD AND TRIED TO HELP.....IT WASN'T MUCH USE. STEVE COULD'VE LIVED IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS HYNOT FROM THE LUNG SICKNESS.

JOHN

STEVE WAS A GOOD LOST SORT OF A FELLOW. HE WOULDN'T WANT TO DIE  
HE JUST WAY IN BED. HE'D WANT TO DIE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT.

BRITT

(APOLOGETICALLY TO MR. EXPERT)

HE SAYS A LOT OF THINGS.

MR. EXPERT

I UNDERSTAND. I LIKE STEVE A LOT.

HELEN

(BURSTING INTO THE ROOM)

OH JOHN!

(SHE RUNS INTO HIS ARMS.)

THEY TOLD ME.....POOR STEVE!

(SHE SOBS)

JOHN

(PATS HER SHOULDER)

HELEN!

HELEN

I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE FARM. I'LL WORK. I'LL CHOP COTTON, I'LL....

BILL

HELEN, THIS IS A FUNNY PLACE TO SAY IT, BUT IF YOU'LL MARRY ME,  
WE'LL TRY TO GET ALONG SOMEHOW. I'LL GET ANOTHER JOB IN ANOTHER MILL.....

HELEN

OH BILL. I COULD NEVER LIVE IN TOWN AGAIN.

JOHN

HELEN, I THINK I CAN GET THE SHIP'S PLACE..... IF YOU CAN STAND....

HELEN

WHAT COULD BE WORSE?

(DEPARTS AWAY)

GET YOU AND THE TIME DOESN'T LIKE ME. AND YOUR MOTHER.....

PRITT

NO

I AIN'T GOT IT IN MY HEART TO FIGHT AGAINST NOBODY. THERE IS TOO MUCH  
TO FIGHT AGAINST....THE DEATHS, THE DUST, THE FLOODS AND THE  
OLD DEVIL. THERE IS TOO MUCH, THE LANDLORD, THE MILL, SICKNESS.  
I AIN'T GOT IT IN MY HEART TO FIGHT AGAINST THE GIRL MY BOY WANTS.

GIBSON

FIGHT BOY, MR. PRITT, ABOUT STEVE. SORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING. GOODBYE.

MR. EXPERT

WHERE YOU GOING, BILL?

GIBSON

I'M GOIN' BACK TO MY ROOM AND GET A FEW THINGS TOGETHER. THEN  
I'M GOIN' TO TRY TO FIND MY WAY NORTH. I HEAR TELL THEY GIVE GOOD  
SALTS UP THERE.

(HE EXITS AS

BLACKOUT

SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM  
SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM

COPY  
from  
Library of Congress  
Federal Theatre Project Archives  
at  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

TO FOLLOW SCENE TEN (C)

(LIGHTS UP ON SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM  
ONLY NOW THE PROJECTION IS THE INTERIOR  
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. AT RIGHT  
IS A PLATFORM ON WHICH ARE SEATED SOME  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE. SPOT PICKS UP REPRESENTATIVE  
JONES.)

BLACKBOARD

WE'VE BEEN PUTTING AROUND THE SENATE LONG ENOUGH. LET'S SEE  
WHAT WE CAN GET OVER HERE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.  
THE GENTLEMAN FROM TEXAS IS SPEAKING.

JONES

WHEN WE CAN HAVE 12,500,000 BALES OF COTTON IN THE CARRY-OVER AND IN  
THE PRODUCTION 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 OVERWHELMING AND WILL CAUSE A  
COMPLETE PRICE COLLAPSE UNLESS THERE IS SOME MACHINERY SET UP TO  
CUSHION IT. THEY TALK ABOUT TURNING THE FARMER LOOSE. I HAVE SEEN  
THE DAY WHEN HE WAS LOOSE. I HAVE SEEN WOMEN GO INTO THE COTTON  
FIELDS WHEN THEY WERE ONLY A FEW MONTHS OLD AND LEFT THE BABY TIED  
TO A BUSH. I HAVE SEEN GIRLS TEN AND TWELVE YEARS OLD PICKING IN THE FIELDS  
INSTEAD OF GOING TO SCHOOL, NOT BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO OR  
BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS WANTED THEM TO BUT BECAUSE IN THE LAST DESPERATE  
EXTREMITY, MEN AND WOMEN WILL DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO GET FOOD FOR  
THEIR MOUTHS AND CLOTHING FOR THEIR BODIES. YOU MAY WANT TO GO BACK TO  
THAT SORT OF SITUATION, BUT I DO NOT. \*

(LIGHTS OUT ON JONES AND UP ON PIERCE)

BLACKBOARD

REPRESENTATIVE PIERCE.

PIERCE

THIS IS NOT AN IDEAL BILL. I DO NOT THINK AN IDEAL BILL CAN BE DRAFTED.  
IF THE FARMER WOULD BE AND FACING A MOST SERIOUS SITUATION. NOBODY IS  
TO BLAME FOR IT. OUR FOREIGN MARKETS HAVE FAILED. WALLS HAVE BEEN RAISED  
AGAINST OUR WHEAT THAT USED TO GO OVER THE OCEANS; WALLS RAISED AGAINST  
OUR COTTON; FOREIGN COTTONS PLACED. ARE WE GOING TO CONTINUE TO RAISE THESE  
SURPLUS PRODUCTS? ARE WE GOING TO TRY TO FORCE THEM ON THE FOREIGN AND  
DOMESTIC MARKETS? THAT MEANS CHAOS. OUR FRIENDS TALK ABOUT  
CONTROL. WHY CONTROL? THERE IS NOTHING ELSE IN STORE FOR US. WHY NOT FACE IT?  
MR. SPEAKER, I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE CONFERENCE REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED. \*\*

(LIGHTS OUT ON HIM AND UP ON REPRESENTATIVE CASE)

\* COTTON FARMER PLACED Feb. 9, 1938, p. 2131

\*\* Ibid 2136

BLACKBOARD

REPRESENTATIVE  
HICKINER

CASE

MR. SPEAKER FEW PEOPLE ON THIS FLOOR REALLY BELIEVE THAT WE ARE GETTING A PERMANENT SOLUTION OF THE FARM PROBLEM IN THIS BILL. CERTAINLY I DO NOT, ALTHOUGH I SHALL VOTE FOR IT UNDER THE PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION WE HAVE. THERE IS NO CHANCE TO AMEND. WE MUST TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT. \*

(LIGHTS OUT ON HIM AND UP ON HICKINER)

BLACKBOARD

REPRESENTATIVE HICKINER

HICKINER

THE MEN WHO STAND ON THE FLOOR TODAY ADVOCATING THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL WILL BEFORE TWO YEARS HAVE ELAPSED BE IN THE WELL OF THIS HOUSE PLEADING FOR US TO REPEAL THIS HEFARIOUS THING, BECAUSE IT IS GOING TO GO DOWN TO DESTROY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND BRING THE REPUBLICANS BACK INTO POWER 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.)

BLACKBOARD

WELL FOLKS, LET'S LIVE IN ON THE MAILAGE THE FARMER IS NOT GETTING FIRST CLASS. IT'S QUITE AS DULL AS THIS LAW MAKING STUFF.

BLACKOUT

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\* OP. CIT. p. 2264, Congressional Record Feb. 9, 1938

\*\* Ibid p. 2146

SCENE TEN (D)

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....WHO STRUCK THE FIRST BLOW? \* THE SHERIFF AND HIS MEN CLAIMED;

(LIGHTS UP ON SHERIFF ADKINS)

ADKINS

THE STRIKERS WERE ARMED. THEY STARTED THE SHOOTING. \*\*

(LIGHTS DOWN ON ADKINS. UP ON  
SCENE OF STRIKERS STARTING TO GATHER.)

STRIKER

NONE OF US THAT WAS STRIKING 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. \*\*\*

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

MR. BLACKBOARD

NOW LET US HEAR FROM A STRIKE LEADER NAMED ROCHESTER. HE LIVES IN GREENVILLE SOUTH CAROLINA.

(LIGHTS UP 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.

(H. WEISS ENTERS.)

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 MAKING OVER NINETEEN DOLLARS A WEEK. NOW I CAN MAKE SEVENTEEN DOLLARS AND SEVENTY CENTS. I AIN'T A-BRAGGING. I'M AN EXPERIENCED WEAVER. I MAKE ONE HUNDRED PERCENT, 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, NINETEEN 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 Harpers 11-29 entitled "Gastonia" by Mary Hooton Vorse

\*\* Ibid. ~~same~~ quotation from.

\*\*\* Ibid.

SCENE TEN (E)

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER, LABOR AND CAPITAL

(E) THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY. \*

(THE SETTING IS MR. BASCOM'S OFFICE.) \*\*

MR. BASCOM

(ENTER SECRETARY)

ASK HIM TO COME IN.

(ENTER MR. EXPERT)

HOW DO YOU DO, MR. EXPERT.

(THEY SHAKE HANDS)

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.....?

MR. BASCOM

MISS.....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 dashes 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 ~~WORK~~ DO SOMETHING FOR THEM.

MR. BASCOM

BECAUSE....WELL, IT'S A LONG STORY. BEFORE JUDGING US OWNERS TOO HARSHLY, 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 MADE TWENTY 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 RESENT SCABS JUST AS THE STRIKERS DO. THEY HAVE THEIR MILLS IN THE SOUTH BECAUSE OF THAT FAMOUS SUPPLY OF CHEAP AND SATISFIED LABOR AND THEY DO NOT DESIRE TO HAVE ANY OF THEIR MEMBERS BECOMING EXTENSIVE 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 very 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 Gastonia Trial.

\*\*\* From article by Sinclair Lewis copyrighted by Scripps Howard

\*\*\*\* Ibid

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid



farmer'S HANDS, THE PRICE BEGINS TO RISE. THE FARMERS OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SAY WHAT THE PRICE IS, NOT ASK THE PURCHASERS.

(LOUD CROWD FROD AUDIENCE. POPE  
TAKES HIS NEXT TONGUES 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  
(MURDER INTRODUCING WALL. AS HE SITS, THERE  
IS APLAUSE. AS WALL RISES, APLAUSE BEGINS.)

WALL

BOYS, I HAD A WONDERFUL SPEECH ALL PREPARED AND READY TO MAKE.

(TAKES. HE IS THE TYPICAL SHILLBIDING FARMER SPEAKER)

BUT SENATOR POPE MADE IT.

(LOUD LAUGHTER, TERRIFIC APLAUSE. WALL  
TAKES A BOG LIKE AN ACTOR.)

I'M ONE OF YOU.

(MURDER A THIS STARTLING FACT)

I'M A FORTY ACRE FARMER MYSELF.

(APPLAUSE)

SO I CAN TALK STRAIGHT TO YOU AND YOU KNOW I'M TALKING TO MYSELF, TOO.

(LAUGHTER. ALL THIS MUST BE DIRECTED)

NOW THIS NEW FARM BILL....IT AIN'T PERFECT, BUT LET'S NOT QUIBBLE.  
IT'S A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN NOTHIN'.

(MURDER APLAUSE WHICH IS QUICKLY SUPPRESSED)

OF COURSE, THERE'LL ALWAYS BE SOME OF US THAT'LL HANG BACK, BUT  
NOT ALL OF US.

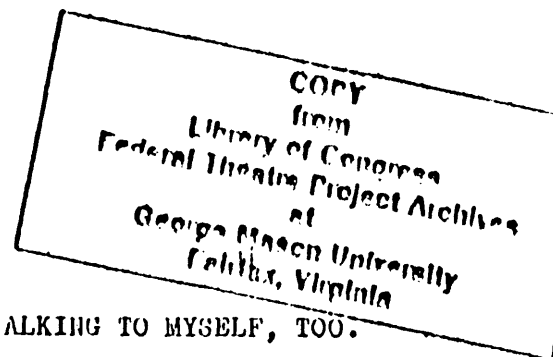
(MURDER IN AUDIENCE CRIES)

DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO '32? I DON'T!

(MURDER FROM AUDIENCE)

WHY THE ONLY REASON WALL STREET DIDN'T TAKE MY FARM WAS THEY COULDN'T MOVE IT.

(MURDER LAUGHTER FROM AUDIENCE)



SCENE ELEVEN

TITLE: THE TENANT FARMER AND THE FUTURE

(B) THE MAN ON THE STREET \*

(A STREET IN A FARMING TOWN. ANNOUNCER  
AT A PORTABLE MICROPHONE. CROWD OF  
FARMERS AROUND)

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 HERE, SIR. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

GRIFFIN

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.

THOMPSON

MY NAME IS THOMPSON AND I'M FROM HAMLET, NORTH CAROLINA. WHY SHOULD OUR  
FARMERS, THE MOST INDUSTRIOUS PEOPLE IN THE WORLD EVEN CONSIDER SELLING THEIR  
GOD GIVEN FREEDOM FOR A SMALL MESS OF POLITICAL POTAGE.\*\*

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.

(CLAP, CRIES, AND SHOUTS AS WE LEAVE  
THE SCENE.)

### BLACKOUT

NOTE: This entire scene is a condensation of the meeting of 4000  
farmers who gathered in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh, North  
Carolina on Feb. 18, 1938. Speeches are direct quotations.

J. B. Huston is assistant AAA administrator. James P. Pope is the  
senator from Idaho and Mr. Wall is a farmer.

ANNOUNCER

NOW IF YOU TURN YOU OVER TO OUR ANNOUNCER IN MISSOURI WHO IS CONDUCTING A SIMILAR MAN IN THE STREET PROGRAM BROADCAST.

SECOND ANNOUNCER

HERE WE ARE FOLKS, RIGHT ON THE MAIN STREET OF A LITTLE MISSOURI VILLAGE. YOU....YOU OVER THERE. COME OVER HERE....

(A VOICE 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 LET STRICTLY ALONE. \*

SECOND ANNOUNCER

AND DARBY AND JOAN. STEP 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 NOE BE TO THE SHOOPLER WHO TRIES TO DICTATE TO ME. \*

SECOND ANNOUNCER

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 ANNOUNCER

NOW HERE WE HAVE A VERY CHEERFUL AND... DO YOU MIND IF I SAY, FAT, FARMER?

FAT FARMER

NOPE.

SECOND ANNOUNCER

NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT THE PRESIDNET TO DO FOR YOU?

FAT FARMER

I SUGGEST THAT F. D. R. 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 ANNOUNCER

THANK YOU AND YOU WIN 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.

(1A USE)

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

(C) "ERSTWHILE DURHAM TENANT SUCCEEDS" \*

LIGHTS UP ON SMALL EDITORIAL OFFICE.  
MR. EXPERT IS TALKING WITH DR. CLARENCE  
FOE. ) \*\*

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. FOE

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. FOE

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 WOULD BE EVEN LOWER. WE OUGHT TO ENLARGE OUR DAIRYING AS WE ARE DOING. WITH OUR GRASS, 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. FOE

CERTAINLY. QUITE A FEW CASES. NOW YOU GO OVER AND TALK TO MR. J.C. THOMAS.

BLACKOUT

(SCENE ON MR. EXPERT TALKING TO MR. THOMAS.)

THOMAS

I USED TO BE A TENANT OVER IN NELSON, NORTH CAROLINA. I DON'T THINK ANY TENANT WHO'LL APPLY 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. Foe was interviewed by Mr. Peery, one of the authors and the statements above come from Dr. Foe.



OF MY OWN. THE GOVERNMENT'S MADE IT EASIER NOW WITH THE MONEY IT'LL GIVE A FELLOW 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

SIXTEEN HUNDRED POUNDS OF TOBACCO BROUGHT ME OVER FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS. THE COTTON SOLD FOR SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS AND THE SEED. THE TRUCKSTUFF BROUGHT ABOUT ANOTHER HUNDRED. THE WHEAT MADE MORE THAN ENOUGH FLOUR FOR US AND THE GARDEN GAVE US GREENS. YEAH, I DID ALL RIGHT.

MR. EXPERT

HOW MUCH OF A FAMILY HAVE YOU?

THOMAS

WIFE 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 WHIPPED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT AND BECAUSE SHE WOULDN'T TELL ON SOME OTHER GIRLS.

BLACKOUT

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 RAINY DAY IN EARLY FEBRUARY AND THE  
FAMILY ARE OUT IN THE YARD ENJOYING THE SUN.  
GRAMPS IS LEANING ON HIS BACK, HIS LEGS CROSSED  
AND LOOKING AT THE SKY. DAVE IS NEXT TO  
HIM TRYING HIM IN POSITION AND TENSEMENT.  
LINNIE LEE AND FRANKIE ARE STANDING WITH THEIR  
HANDS ABOUT EACH OTHER. LALLY BRITT AND HUBERT  
BRITT ARE SITTING SIDE BY SIDE ON A BENCH. THEY  
HAVE AGED MORE THAN A YEAR IN LOOKS.)

BRITT

~~TOMORROW~~ TOMORROW, DAVE AND I START BREAKING THE GROUND AGAIN,  
EH, YOUNG'UN?

(NO ANSWER FROM DAVE.)

GRAMPS

SO SPRING'S HERE AGAIN. PLANTIN' TIME ONCE MORE. I NEVER COULD UNDER-  
STAND 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, GRAMPS. 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

FLOW 'ER DEEF AND WAIT UNTIL PICKIN' TIME. THAT'S IT, AIN'T IT, MR. BRITT?

BRITT

THAT'S RIGHT, FRANKIE.

FRANKIE

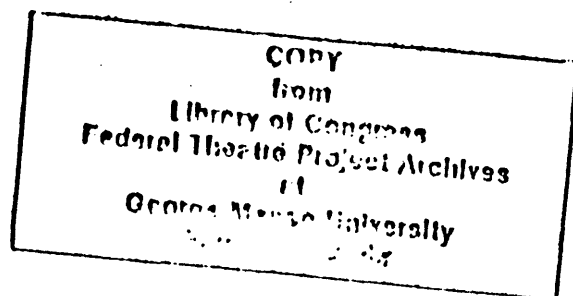
COME PLANTIN' TIME AGAIN, LINNIE LEE AND ME'LL HAVE ANOTHER FIELD-HAND,  
WON'T WE HONEY.

(BOTH SMILE AT EACH OTHER)

LALLY

(HUBERT)

WHY YOU NEVER TOLD ME!



LINNIE LEE

NA, THERE'LL BE A LOT OF 'EM. I'LL GET SO USED TO 'EM THAT I'LL BE FORGETTIN' TO COME RUSSHIN' OVER TO TELL YOU. YOU JUST SORT OF GOT TO WATCH OUT FOR 'EM FROM NOW ON.

FRANKIE

I HOPE THEY KEEP ON COMIN' BOYS SO I CAN HAVE ME A MESS OF FIELD HANDS WHEN I GET MY OWN FARM.

GRAMPS

GUESS A MAN'S BORN A FARMER, HE CAIN'T HELP IT NOWH. NOW, ME, I'M DIFFERENT. I COULDN'T FARM FOR NO 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

(COLLING OVER TO LOOK AT GRAMPS)

THAT'S 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 GOIN' TO BE THE YEAR. BET WE GET A BIG CROP WITH HIGH PRICES. 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?

(CASUALTY, SHE PUTS HER ARM ABOUT HIS SHOULDER)

LALLY

IT'S GOIN' TO RAIN TOMORROW. WE COULD STAND SOME RAIN.

(CONTINUING)

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

(ENTER)

HOWDY, FOLKS.

LALLY

EVENIN', SON.

MR. EXPERT

(continued on next page.)

WHAT? HOW? WHY? WHO SAID.....

**LINNIE LEE**

WANTING  
SHE'S BEEN READY FOR THE LAST HOUR.

**RUTH**

(SHE IS A  
MILKMAID ON THE FARM AND CARRIES A PAIL  
ON HER HEAD. SHE WEARS A BROWN DRESS.)

I WAS NOT. HELLO ELBERT.

MR. EXPERT

MY, YOU LOOK PRETTY.

**RUTH**

THIS IS THE FIRST STORE HAT I EVER HAD.

MR. EXPERT

(UNCOMFORTABLY AFTER A SILENCE)

WELL THE CAR IS WAITING DOWN THE ROAD.

MR. & MRS. RUFERT  
RUTH

HOW CAN I SAY GOODBYE TO THEM? I'VE NEVER BEEN AWAY FROM HOME BEFORE.

BRIT Y

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.

## GRAMPS

WELL, THAT 'S ABOUT THE ONLY WAY THE SOUTH WILL GET ON ITS FEET AGAIN.  
I ALWAYS SAID IT. WE GOTTA MARRY YANKEE MONEY.

RUTH

HOW GRAMPS.

MR. EXPERT

DON'T YOU THINK HE SORT OF OUGHT TO START? I'D LIKE TO MAKE RICHMOND TONIGHT.

GRAMPS

AND RUTHIE, DON'T BE COMIN' BACK HERE WITH NO DAMNEDYANKEE ACCENT.

RUTH

GOODBYE, MA. LINNIE LEE.

(GIBBS AND LEE)

KISS THE BABY FOR ME. GOODBYE, GRAMP'S, PA, DAVE. GOODBYE.

(STARTS TO RUN OFF)

LALLY

RUTH

RUTH

WHAT?

LALLY

YOU WON'T BE FORGET TO GET MARRIED WHEN YOU GET TO WASHINGTON, WILL YOU?

MR. EXPERT

I'LL REMIND HER OF IT.

(THEY EXIT, RUNNING INTO JOHN AND HELEN AND ARE GREETED. MORE GOODBYES AND SHOUTS.)

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.

(*JOHN*  
*(Pleased and embarrassed)*)

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.

GRAM'S

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

(SINGING)

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.

GRAM'S

THAT'S WHAT YOUR PA, SAID TO ME, SON. HE WAS SMARTER THAN ME AND YOU'RE SMARTER THAN HE BE. THAT MAKES ME THE DUMBEST OF THE LOT. BUT IF YOU ASK ME, I SWEAR I GOT MORE SENSE....LIVIN' WITHOUT WORKIN'...THAN THE WHOLE FASSEL OF YOU.

JOHN

JUST AS LONG AS HELEN XSM AND I CAN BE TOGETHER, WE DON'T CARE HOW HARD WE WORK.

HELEN

JUST SO'S WE CAN BE TOGETHER ALWAYS.

LALLY

(WITH A SIGH)

YES. WELL, I'LL PIECE YOU A QUILT COME WINTER.

HELEN

(LALLY)

WHY THANK YOU, MOTHER.

LINNIE LEE

(SUDDENLY)

I KNOW WHAT I'LL CALL HIM FRANKIE, IF THE NEXT ONE IS A BOY, LET'S  
CALL HIM ELBERT EXPERT.

(LALLY LAUGH)

LALLY

(GETS TO HER FEET.)

WELL, IT'S HIGH ON TO DINNER TIME. STEVE.....

(LALLY STOPS SUDDENLY AND SIGHS PAINFULLY.  
THE OTHERS LOOK DOWN ON THE GROUND)

I MEAN...DAVE....GET ME SOME KINDLING FOR THE FIRE.

DAVE

(RELUCTANTLY GETTING TO HIS FEET.)

AW MA....GEE, MAW. CAIN'T WE EAT SOMETHIN' COLD?

BLACKOUT

THE ENDING

(THE SOUTH IS THE SET AS SCENE 1. THE  
MEMBERS OF THE SENATORIAL HEARS ARE IN  
THE SET AS 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 TALKS TO MILL HANDS, MILL  
OWNERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS. YES, I TELL YOU KING COTTON IS SICK AND  
CANNOT BE CURED BY STATISTICS. THERE 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 FARM TENANTRY AND SHARE-  
CROPPING, TO INSURE THAT THE LABORER RECEIVES HIS HIRE. THE PRESENCE OF  
TEN 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 MASK

(GREETING)

ON BEHALF OF THIS COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE WHICH WE RE-  
PRESENT, 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

(GIVES A VERY SOUTHERN DRINK)

WHY DON'T YO' ALL STOP TALKIN' AND DO SOMETHING FO' THE SOUTH?

(HE STARTS TO LEAVE)

CLERK

HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



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MR. EXPERT

I JUST REMEMBERED! I'VE GOT A HOME MOON TO GO ON.

(SINGS)

SMITH MASK

(SINGS)

GENTLEMEN, WHAT ARE YOUR WISHES?

POPE MASK

(SINGS)

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 MOTION.

SMITH MASK

ALL IN FAVOR, SAY "AYE".

BANKHEAD & ELLENDER MASKS

AYE!

SMITH MASK

OPPOSED?

THE REMAINING SENATORS

NO!!!!!!

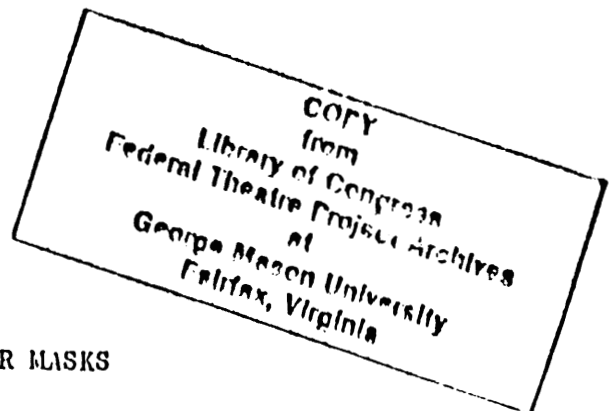
SMITH MASK

SO WE WILL WRITE THE BILL ANYHOW. THIS COMMITTEE WILL REMAIN IN SESSION UNTIL WE HAVE A BILL READY TO RETURN TO CONGRESS.

(SENATORS FEAR OF THEIR MASKS, THROW THEM ON THE FLOOR AND TRAMPLE ON THEM WITH MANY CURSES AND SCENES. THEN THEY REMOVE THEIR COATS, ROLL UP THEIR COAT SLEEVES AND SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE TO WORK AS.....)

THE END

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MR. BLACKBOARD

(LIGHTING UP)

THAT'S ALL FOLKS.

(ORCHESTRA BEGINS TO PLAY POPULAR SOUTHERN  
MELODIES AS.....)

CURTAIN