

A TIME TO KILL

JAIL CELL - Jake comes to see Carl Lee in jail.

CARL LEE
Didn't think I'd do it, did you?

JAKE
How you hold'n up?

CARL LEE
I ain't had nothing against them boys till they messed with my baby. And I feel sorry for their mamas and daddies, but... I ain't sorry for what I done. (Pause) How's Looney?

JAKE
You blew his knee right off his leg. Doctors are still with him.

CARL LEE
What's gonna happen to me now?

JAKE
There's gonna be a preliminary hearing. Probably tomorrow. After that Buckley will push for a fast trial.

CARL LEE
Who's Buckley?

JAKE
Rufus Buckley... the district attorney. He's mean, he's ambitious, and he's gonna eat this up for the publicity.

CARL LEE
But you done beat him before, ain't ya?

JAKE
Yeah. But not in a murder case.

CARL LEE
Think I can win?

JAKE
All depends on the jury, Carl Lee. Pick the right jury and you'll walk. DA picks the jury... you get the gas.

CARL LEE
Not a... lot of white lawyers would've took my brother, Lester's case. You did and got him off. I figure there's a lot of people out there... tired of all the raping and killing and... they'd be sympathetic to a man who took the law into his own hands... even if he is black.

CARL LEE CONT.
You said you'd help out if I was in a jam, Jake. Well I'm in one now. What do you say?

(Carl Lee hands Jake a wad of money. Jake counts it.)

JAKE
There's \$900 here, Carl Lee. We said \$1000 down.

CARL LEE
My kids gotta eat, Jake.

JAKE
Humph... mine too. When do I get the rest?

CARL LEE
Them folks at the bank... they won't lend me no money on my house.

JAKE
Why not? Your house is almost paid for. You borrowed on it before for Lester's trial.

CARL LEE
'said I wasn't in jail before. Said to Gwen, how I'm gonna pay if I'm sittin' on death row. And I lost my job at the mill... they called Gwen. Worked 20 years, I'm out 5 days and they fire me.

JAKE
Carl Lee... I can't try a capital murder case for \$900 Carl Lee, I need to live.

CARL LEE
Me too, Jake. I need to live too.

JAKE
We're gonna lose this case, Carl Lee. There'll be no points of law to argue here. We should cop a plea, maybe Buckley'll give us a second degree murder and we can get you life in prison.

CARL LEE
Jake... I can't do no life in prison. You gotta get me off... now if it were you on trial...

JAKE
It's not me!!! We're not the same Carl Lee. The jury has to identify with the defendant. They see you, they see a yard worker. They see me... they see an attorney. I live in town, you live on the hill...

CARL LEE
You white and I'm black! I got it. See, Jake? You think just like them. That's why I picked you. You one of them, don't you see? Oh, you think you ain't cause you eat at Claude's and and... and you're out there tryin to get me on TV talking about black and white. The fact is... you're just like all the rest of them. When you look at me, you don't see a man. You see a black man.

JAKE
Carl Lee... I am your friend...

CARL LEE

We ain't no friends, Jake! We're on different sides of the line. I ain't never seen you in my part of town. I bet you don't even know where I live. Our daughters... the ain't never gonna play together...

JAKE

What are you talk'n about...

CARL LEE

America... is a war... and you on the other side. How a black man ever gonna get a fair trial with the enemy on the bench and the jury box? My life in white hands. You... Jake. That's how. You my secret weapon, cause you one of the bad guys. You don't mean to be, but you are. It's how you're raised. Nigga, Negro, Black, African-American; no matter how you see me... you see me as different. You see me like that jury see me. You are them. Now, throw out your points of law, Jake. If you... was on the jury... what would it take to convince you... to set me free. Figure that out. That's how you save my black ass. That's how you save us both.