

JUST CAUSE

Bobby Earl

Sweet Jesus. The old girl said you was gonna be coming up in here, but I said no. No, granma, he too busy to a man be coming all the way from Harvard to see me and give me his time. Praise God. And here you is.

Paul

Please.

Bobby Earl

Now, if I really talked with that kind of verbal buck and shuffle, be a free man today.

Paul

What's your game?

Bobby Earl

Sir, it's no game. Funny thing about small town Florida people, professor. We're like crabs in a bucket, black or white, one tries to climb out and the others always hop on his back and pull him right back down again.

Paul

"The Souls of Black Folk", DuBois. I've read it, alright.

Bobby Earl

I'm impressed.

Paul

Good.

Bobby Earl

Well, I've always been that climb-out crab. You see, my mother OD's on heroin when I was up in Newark, you know. It was grandma who came up and got me and brought me down here. I was high school valedictorian, got a full scholarship to Cornell University, but they never treated me like nothing but an outsider. So, how you like grandma? She's something else, coming up on that bus like that?

Paul

Yes, she's a very determined lady, but why did you send her up to see me?

Bobby Earl

Because, Mr. Armstrong, you're from a small town, like me. Mulvane, Kansas. First in your family to attend a university. Magna from Cambridge, Columbia Law,

Bobby Earl (CON'T)

Youngest assistant DA 1960 to 69. Joined Jackson, Bolls, Mannheim 1970. 1980 to the present, Harvard professor of law. Author of "Process and Law", and 6 books since.

Paul

OK, OK.

Bobby Earl

All of which I've read.

Paul

Enough. Let's start.

Bobby Earl

Joanie Shriver.

Paul

The victim.

Bobby Earl

11 years old. White girl. Snatched from the front of the Ochopee Elementary School, March 4th, 1986. Found a day later raped and cut up in the 'glades. A teacher ID'd the car that picked her up as looking somewhat like mine. And Officer Tanny Brown come and locked me up.

Paul

I read the transcript.

Bobby Earl

Well, let me tell you this. Down here, if the chief headbanger takes a dislike to you, your ass is his. See, Tanny Brown is on of those niggers who likes being a big fish in a small pond.

Paul

He's black?

Bobby Earl

Oh yes. Yes, sir, see this is the new South. Now they've got black cops to come and torment your black ass. It's called affirmative action.

Paul

Well . . . Tell me about your confession.

Bobby Earl

My confession? I was slapped, I was punched, beaten with a phone book, made to piss myself, kicked. Then Officer Tanny Brown walked in. (paraphrase insert scene) They had me in there at least 22 hours. No food, no water, no sleep, no bathroom. (paraphrase insert scene) I would confess to anything and then they just spoon-fed me to the row.

Paul

It's your word against their's.

Bobby Earl

I didn't do it.