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The Chamber

By William Goldman

I think I'm gonna die.
You wanted a birthday party.
What's that old expression?
- "Never mix bourbon with champagne"?
- No.
"Jews can't drink."
Honey, how about I take the boys to school?
Bless you.
Where we goin'?
To Daddy's office!
- Who wants Daddy's briefcase?
- Me, me, me!
Run to the car. Run to the car.
Oh, watch yourself.
- Bye, Mommy, I love you!
- Say bye to Mommy.
- Bye, Mommy!
- Bye. Be good, boys.
- Love you.
- I love you too.
OK, let's go to work.
Get in there!
Get in that car!
Get in that car! You get in that car!
OK, sit down, boys.
- Here we go.
- Daddy's office!
Bye. See you when we come back today!
Hey, Mr Kramer.
Daddy's office! Daddy's office!
Everybody out.
Close that door. That a boy.
OK, everybody in.
- Do we have to go in there?
- You gotta go all the way.
All the way in.
Hey, big stinky earplug!
Hey, big stinky man!
Who is it?
So far, all that's been recovered
are the bodies of two children,
their identity unknown.
Amen. The service is now completed.
God damn you!

You're murderers!
You're filthy murderers! And you know it!
You're murderers, all of you!
Can you tell us why you did it?
You killed my boys!
You killed my boys!
You murderer! You filthy murderer!
You killed my boys, Cayhall!
- Have you lost your mind?
- No, I'm very serious.
I want the Cayhall case.
What do you know
about the death penalty?
I've read everything there is.
Then you know nothing.
I know you took Sam Cayhall pro bono
and kept him alive all these years.
I also know that he just won
the right to fire you.
Do you mind telling me how you know that?
I made it my business.
And do you know the reason
why he fired me?
He hates lawyers.
Then why in the world would he hire you?
Go back to your office, Mr Hall.
We both have better things to do.
Sam Cayhall's my grandfather.
You have a relationship with Williams
and Cook in Jackson. I could work there.
You have great contacts at Parchman
Prison. A word there would help too.
I take it Hall is not your real name?
My parents changed it from Cayhall
after the murders.
- You still have family down there?
- An aunt in Jackson.
I told her I might be down on business.
Does she know what this business is?
I'll tell her when I get there.
You Cayhalls are big on secrets.
- Did you ever meet your grandfather?
- No.
- Did they even tell you he existed?

- I found out at my dad's funeral in 1980.
- Same year Sam was sentenced to die.
- Yes, sir.
- Your father must have died young.
- 35 years, four months, six days.

Perhaps I shouldn't have asked.

It's not a big deal.

I was 52 years old

the first time I handled a death row case.

I didn't sleep for a week afterwards.

I don't sleep as it is.

You'll open up passions

no one wants uncovered.

For a brief moment, Sam Cayhall will be
the most talked-about man in the nation.

I've been living with this case my whole life.

- To do so officially might be a relief.

- The odds of winning are a joke.

You don't have a chance in hell.

I'm going, Mr Goodman,

with or without your help.

Call me from Jackson. Don't thank me.

I have not done you a favour.

Did he do it?

Oh, he did it.

There's no question that he did it.

The Mississippi Scenic Cruiser

for downtown Jackson

is now boarding in the blue zone.

Good afternoon, sir. Good to see you.

You look like a mendicant Indian.

Jessie, help Mr Hall with his...

Actually, I'm going to stay

at a hotel near the courts.

I'll be up all night working long hours.

Honey, whatever you like.

I love you, you hear?

Go freshen up and hurry down -

I have the mothers of the only

12 remaining virgins in all of Jackson,

just panting to meet you.

I won't have too much time

for socialising.

You must regale us all

with tales of what brings you here.
I'm guessing it's to use
your lawyerly charms
to separate our local fat cats
from their ill-gotten fortunes.
You should start
with my cranky old husband.
He deserves a good comeuppance.
- Lee...
- Yes?
I'm here to defend your father.
- Look, I understand that...
- You understand nothing.
Don't you utter one word to anyone.
- Lee...
- Not one word.
You hear?
Good night.
- Call me tomorrow.
- I will.
See you. Bye.
- Lovely party, dear.
- Oh, thank you.
Don't forget
we have the museum on Thursday.
- Good night, Adam.
- Good night.
Good luck.
Phelps lives in town.
Oh, it's OK. We have
a very active romantic life.
Just not with each other.
Then why stay married?
Good for a banker to have someone
acceptable for social occasions.
And it's good for you to have a banker?
I've done pretty well
for poor white trash.
Don't you think?
Not bad. Not bad at all.
How acceptable I'm gonna be
when the world finds out
I'm Hitler's daughter is another question.
It's all right. It's under control.

Nobody knows?
I was speaking of my drinking.
But no, no one knows.
I left home when I was 18,
changed my name, met Phelps, eloped.
We told his family my father was dead.
Soon, that won't be a lie.
You talk about Sam
like he means nothing to you.
Occasionally, if I'm having a good day
and the sun is shining...
I might think of him and remember some
pleasant moment from my earliest days -
the way he'd call me "sweet baby girl".
But mostly I remember
how he destroyed absolutely everyone
who made the mistake
of getting close to him.
He'll do it to you too, you know.
Be very careful dredging the past, Adam.
You might not like what comes up.
I'm here to see Sam Cayhall.
Briefcase.
Spread your legs, please.
- Sergeant Packer.
- Adam Hall.
This way, please.
Not a good day to see Sam.
- Why's that?
- Prison attorney just called.
Judge ruled - he dies in 28 days.
I'll get Sam.
This way.
Catch up.
I'm going to lock this door.
Sam will be in in a minute.
Thanks.
Move on.
Get out!
- Who the hell are you?
- Adam Hall.
I'm a lawyer
with Kravitz and Bane, Chicago.
You Jew-boys never quit, do you?

I'm not Jewish.

How can you work for Kravitz and Bane?

- We're an equal opportunity employer.

- Really?

I know you've got

about 150 partners up there.

How many of them are women?

I don't really know, maybe a dozen.

Oh, so you've got less than 10% women.

How many nigger partners you got?

- We've four African-American partners.

- Oh, that's nice.

How many Jewish-American

partners you got? About 80%?

- It makes no difference to me.

- It makes a big difference to me.

I was always embarrassed

to be represented by such blatant bigots.

Well, I think a lot of people

would probably find it appropriate.

- Why are you so nervous?

- I'm not.

You afraid I'm gonna

come through that screen and get you?

How many death penalty cases

have you handled?

- This is my first.

- Oh, great.

That Jew bastard

sent a greenhorn to save me.

I killed some of their people

and now they want to kill me.

I always expected it.

You admit you killed the Kramer kids?

Now, who the hell are you

to ask me a question like that?

The jury said I did it.

The appeals court said the jury was right.

That's all that matters.

How old are you there, Mr Hall?

26. I'd like to go over

your legal position...

- Born in '69?

- That's correct.

- Your legal position...
- Where?
- In Memphis. I'd prefer to stick to...
- Grew up there, did you?
I grew up in a lot of places,
mainly southern California.
Your family still there?
Mom's remarried, she lives in Portland.
And your sister?
I believe her name would be Carmen.
College. Berkeley.
How did you know?
The voice.
You sound just like your daddy.
Why did you come here?
He sent me.
I don't have a choice.
But I am going to save you.
- Save me?
- Yeah.
This from the son of a man
that blew his own brains out?
Go to hell, you little piece of shit.
You know who you're talking to?
Save me?
You don't look like you could save
a turkey from Thanksgiving.
Go on, get the hell out of here.
Try to save your own sorry ass.
I am the only person on earth
who cares if you live or die.
You will sign this and agree to be
my client or you will be dead in 28 days.
We're all a bit taken aback at how huge
this case has suddenly become.
What's so huge about it?
I know the Clarion-Ledger
is not the Chicago Tribune,
but in our small pond, it's everything.
I'm lost.
Certainly you've seen today's paper?
Thanks very much,
this will be just fine.
Let us know if we can do

anything more for you.

Why do you want the right to end
my representation without a fight?

It took me a long time to fire
those Jew bastards last time.

I don't want to go through that again.

- That's reasonable.

- I don't care if you think so or not.

It's in the agreement
and it's non-negotiable.

Moving right along.

"No clemency" is ridiculous.

If the appeal fails, we'll have to go to
Governor McAllister as a last resort.

To preclude clemency would be suicidal.

If I could take David McAllister
into the chamber with me,
I'd die with a smile.

I was tried, I was retried,
I got a hung jury both times.

I was a free man for 12 years.

And then that sleazy
son of a bitch McAllister
used me to get hisself elected.

No deals with the governor.

Fine.

All right.

Why did you become a Klansman?

- Because my daddy was in the Klan.

- Why did he become a Klansman?

- His daddy was in the Klan.

- Great. Three generations?

No, four. Colonel Jacob Cayhall fought
with Nathan Bedford Forrest in the war.

And family legend has it that he was
one of the first members of the Klan.

So, let me see. I guess that makes him
your great-great-great-granddaddy.

- Do you expect me to feel proud about it?

- I don't give a damn.

I'm just telling you who you are.

Isn't that why you're here?

The Kramer twins was the fifth bombing.

What about the Jackson real estate office?

I lost my virginity on that one.
It was crude - just some sticks and a fuse.
- The newspaper office?
- Real fireball.
- The Hirsch Temple?
- Best one yet.
The Kramer office?
It was a good bomb.
- But I never meant to kill anybody.
- Really?
You bombed the Pinder house at 4 a.m.,
with six people there.
But nobody got hurt
because I put the bomb in the garage.
I don't make fancy bombs.
They're simple little things.
But I know where to put them.
I never meant to kill anybody.
And the twins?
- Casualties of war.
- The father losing his legs?
- Killing himself?
- I don't want to talk about this.
Are you hiding something from me?
- I wouldn't advise it.
- I got nothing to hide.
I did what I had to do.
The Klan was at war.
We would've won,
but we started bombing the Jews
and with all their money
they got the FBI and they beat us.
We should've just stayed
whipping up on the niggers.
World would've been a different place.
You can pretend
you're all offended by this.
But, deep down inside, we both know
there's a part of you that agrees with me.
That's bullshit.
Why are you getting so touchy?
- What are you hiding?
- I'm not hiding a thing.
Like hell you're not.

You're driving your car
and some drunk jungle bunny cuts you off,
his ghetto music blastin',
what do you think?
"Well, you darned African-American!"
No. You think, "Nigger."
If you had any guts, you'd say so.
I'm gonna come back tomorrow.
I hurt your little feelings, have I?
What did you expect to find here?
Old Grandpa Do-Good?
Expect me to go all blubbery,
kiss your behind
and sing psalms of forgiveness?
I don't know what I expected.
Sure you did... grandson.
Hi. I'm Nora Stark, Attorney Hall.
I kind of clean up
after Governor McAllister.
- Adam, please.
- Adam it shall be.
I'm very curious.
You know the same points raised in
the pending ineffective counsel petition
were turned down by Texas just last month?
Actually, I do know. But it's my opinion
that Texas is miles ahead of Mississippi
in many things, including stupidity.
I'm optimistic.
- Morning, Counsel.
- Morning, Your Honour.
This is a serious business.
Ultimate, irreversible punishment
of a fellow human.
Time is the purest gold.
When do you plan to file an appeal?
Oddly, I had planned on waiting
for the court to issue a ruling
before appealing it,
Your Honour.
However, if, as expected... Thursday?
- And the State's response?
- We agree.
Assuming you'll not be introducing

additional issues on this appeal...

Obviously not.

...Friday morning.

You'll have my decision Friday.

Can the court expect additional filings?

Are you asking me

my legal strategy, Your Honour?

Not at all, sir.

But I'm thrilled to know you have one.

Y'all are dismissed. Now.

Carl, Irene, how are you?

Adam!

Clemency?

Contractually bound not to ask.

You haven't, but you will.

You see, the governor's

a very open-minded man.

He's not precluding anything.

You becoming a lawyer

must have made Sam proud.

You should be familiar

with his view of the profession.

I'd just as soon keep this discussion

on the issue and off the record.

I believe you're reconsidering

the state-sanctioned murder of my client.

- Adam, would you mind?

- No, sir.

I am obviously extremely proud

to have won a conviction

where two previous prosecutors have failed.

While I have no doubt

Sam Cayhall is guilty as charged,

I've always doubted he acted alone

and as you know, he's never been inclined

to help himself in that regard.

What exactly are you saying?

- Is there something specific you know?

- No, certainly not.

I just wanna make sure justice is served.

I see.

So, if I should somehow learn...

Adam, I take my power to decide

whether a fellow human

should live or die very seriously.

If I could somehow be convinced
your client felt the same way...

I'm sorry to rush. Nora,
help out Mr Hall in every way we can.

- It was lovely to meet you.

- Nice to meet you.

Let me guess.

You're not convinced he's sincere.

- Allow me a touch of healthy scepticism.

- Of course.

However, off the record and on the issue,
you're being given the opportunity
to provide the governor with cover.

- I love politics.

- If he stays the execution for no reason,
to the left he's a friend of the old guard,
and to the right he's soft on crime.

And as it was he who won the conviction,
he looks to the world like a flip-flop.

But if I come up with something,
he can follow his conscience.

Let's just say it expands his options.

So you've been assigned
my new best friend.

Something like that.

- I'll win this in the courts.

- Even better.

- It's not getting to the governor.

- Now you're talking.

If you need any help,
that's home, that's office.

Call me.

I found this in my motel room last night.

"Welcome to Dixie. Please try
and leave everything as you found it."

- Sounds like good manners to me.

- It was attached to a fake bomb.

What?

- What do you think I should do about it?

- I don't give a damn.

I'm thinking about how
that gas I'll be forced to sniff
makes your lungs explode

and come flying out your mouth.
What motions are you planning to file?
We're going to pursue cruel and unusual.
Three years at Michigan Law
and that's the best you got?
In 1984, Mississippi passed a law
changing executions
from gas chamber to lethal injection.
That law applies to folks sentenced
after nineteen hundred and eighty-four.
I was sent up here
in nineteen hundred and eighty.
- Now, what's your point?
- You're up on the law, aren't you?
I read all the decisions
of all the dead judges. Same as you.
I write some writs for guys on the row.
You got any stays yet?
Then keep your matchbook
law school advice to yourself.
By changing to lethal injection
the state admitted de facto
that the gas chamber is a cruel execution.
May I remind Counsel,
speaking as the gasee,
I'll be just as dead one way as the other.
Sooner or later, yeah,
but I'll take later as a win.
Well, I've been losing
better appeals than this for 16 years.
I feel like those white guys that always lose
to the nigger Globetrotters.
Why didn't my dad
get infected with this crap?
We're having our Eddie talk,
is that it? Be careful.
You destroyed him, you must like that.
I destroyed nothing.
He never tried to understand the Klan.
- We were right.
- You still think so?
Look what you got now -
AIDS, drugs, bastard children.
- Killer bees.

- Well, they come from Africa!
- South America. Close enough?
- Why are you doing this?
Cos my life would be a lot easier
if I could just hate you.
But you can't, can you? I'm just too lovable.
Well, I'm working on it. Your father kills
himself in front of you when you're ten,
then at the funeral you find out
Grandpa's still alive - great!
Except he's a racist scumbag baby-killer.
Why is that not comforting?
Oh, stop, you're breaking my heart.
It was your hate
that drove him away, wasn't it?
Eddie was weak.
I never laid a hand on him.
Never got after him.
Never cared who his friends were.
Not even Quince.
Who?
Quince Lincoln,
a nigger kid Eddie used to play with.
- I've heard that name before.
- It's nothing.
No, he used to mention that name,
he'd have these spells...
- Sergeant Packer!
- ...he'd mumble some story...
It don't mean nothing. Shut up about it.
- Who's Quince?
- It don't mean nothing! Shut up about it!
Let's go, Sam.
Come on.
- Yep?
- Were you asleep?
No, I'm up.
The court's going to reject
ineffective counsel.
Yeah, I expected that.
I'll be ready to file the appeal in
New Orleans when the court here rules.
I'll expect your first draft
in the morning. Good night.

- Hello?

- Nora?

Hi.

Does the offer to help still stand?

Sure.

I need to track down the FBI agent
who was in charge of Sam's case.

Sam was of no concern to us,
you understand?

He wasn't active in the really nasty stuff
so we didn't track him.

When did that change?

When the civil rights workers disappeared,
Hoover sent us in.

We spread money all over the place.

Those people were basically
ignorant rednecks, you know?

Didn't have a dime, so we preyed on
their craving for money.

Go on.

There's things I can talk about
and things I can't talk about.

And some things I won't talk about
cos I don't like you lawyers twisting the truth,
getting killers off
on some legal technicality.

That's bullshit.

Besides, it's too late
for new information, kid.

Courts won't hear it, you know that.

Courts don't have
the final say in this case.

You said he wasn't involved
in the really nasty stuff.

- He didn't mean to kill.

- Of course he meant to kill.

Marvin Kramer was a creature of habit.

He was in that office every morning
before eight o'clock.

The bomb went off straight up at eight.

The timer was set for eight.

- That was never introduced to trial.

- I can't help that, it was in our report.

- I'd like to see that report.

- I can't help you, pal.
I'm just a fisherman now...
who'd just as soon see him gassed.
I've been around those violent assholes
all my life.
Let them taste the other end of violence.
See how brave they are without their hoods.
You know what I'm talking about.
Why would our FBI friend not wanna
tell us about a 30-year-old case?
Cos you're in Mississippi now,
land of secrets.
There are bodies buried everywhere.
But no one's hiding anything -
they don't have to, Sam did it.
They just don't want you looking because
they're not sure what might turn up.

- Who is "they"?

- Everyone.

- No one. What's the difference?

- Well, maybe a lot.

Take you, for instance,
are you really here to help me?
Or did they assign you to spy on me?
You ever heard of
the Sovereignty Commission?

- Vaguely.

- It doesn't exist any more.
It started in the '50s.
It was an official state agency
dedicated to states' rights,
i.e. Fighting civil rights.
Some people think it coordinated
the White Citizens' Councils.

- What were those?

- Every town had one.
A local group of respectable white people.
Professional types.
Pillars of their community...
who told the Klan what to do.
So somebody like Sam
wasn't making decisions?
Like our FBI friend said,
they were poor, uneducated bigots

who couldn't find their butts with a map.

The Citizens' Councils used them

to do their dirty work.

- And the Sovereignty Commission?

- Kept the records.

- Please sign this.

- I ain't signing nothing.

The files are sealed by the state legislature.

As a defendant, only you can apply

to have your files opened.

You're set to die in 20 days,

this might help.

- Help him maybe, not me.

- Help who?

The governor, you dumbass.

Can't you see it?

He can't open the files so he gets you

to do it for him. To help me?

No, he put me here.

No, he's just fishing

for political dirt on his enemies.

What's in those files, Sam?

Nothing for you. Stuff they'd twist around

and use to hurt my people.

I'm your people. Don't you get it? I am.

You ain't my real people,

you ain't never met my real people.

I don't know how they got the story.

It's only a matter of time

before they get around to me.

I am sorry, but listen,

I think I might be onto something.

- Some leads from way back.

- Adam, leave it alone.

Lee, I really think I can save him.

Ever occur to you

he might not be worth saving?

You can't mean that.

All right, Adam,

you wanna know about the past?

I'll tell you about the past.

This was my tree.

My own laurel tree.

I was up there.

Your father was there...
with Quince.
They were eight, maybe nine.
And they were best friends.
They were fighting, and they made
so much noise Daddy heard
and come out to see
what all the ruckus was.
Go on, go on! Get away home!
Quince's father did day work for Daddy.
His name was Joe.
Daddy never was very handy
at mechanical things
so Joe fixed things for us, made things.
He was here, all the time.
So then Quince came back with his father.
My boy says you been beatin' on him.
They fought so hard, like animals.
At one point Daddy grabbed the rake...
and things got out of hand.
He knocked Joe over, Joe fell to the ground,
and he yelled for Quince to get his shotgun.
- Quince, get my shotgun!
- Sam told Eddie to get his. Eddie froze.
But Daddy made him go.
Joe was here.
Daddy was there.
Get in the house.
- Joe waited for his gun.
- Get!
He kept looking around.
Sam had his.
And then my dear, sweet father...
This was Mississippi...
in the early '50s.
Daddy said self-defence.
He was never even so much as arrested.
What were my dad and Quince
fighting about?
A toy soldier.
Eddie thought Quince had stolen it.
And that night he found it under his bed.
He took the weight of the world
on his shoulders.

And then he said
I had killed Joe Lincoln too.
Said if I had cried out for Daddy to stop...
no way would he have fired.
Not with his sweet baby girl watching.
Course, he was right.
It was my fault too.
Get away home.
Daddy never was very handy
at mechanical things...
Jesus.
The superintendent asked
if you'd thought about your last meal.
Special requests can take time.
Yeah, I want a bowl of Eskimo Pies
and French Market coffee.
It shall be done.
There's been five executions here -
you know of any problems with them?
Come on. They all died within 50 feet of me.
Everybody on the row knows
about every killing.
Tell me about Teddy Meeks, then.
Every detail.
They didn't know what they were doing.
Everything went wrong.
- Have you seen the chamber?
- Not yet.
There's a little room
where the executioner goes
to mix up his solution of sulphuric acid.
With Meeks, the executioner was drunk.
- Come on.
- He was drunk.
Anyway...
his first batch of brew didn't work.
Meeks held his breath
for as long as he could,
then he inhaled and nothing happened.
So they waited.
Meeks waited, the witnesses waited.
Slowly they turned toward
the executioner - who's waiting.
And cussing.

He finally goes back
and he mixes up another batch.
He pulls the lever and the acid drops down
where it's supposed to.
He pulls the second lever
that drops in the cyanide pellets.
Sure enough this gas
starts drifting upward...
to where old Teddy
is holding his breath again.
Then he finally...
He sucks in a whole noseful of it
and starts shaking and jerking.
There's a metal pole that runs from
the top of the chamber down to the bottom
and it's directly behind the chair.
And...
And just about the time Meeks got real still
and everybody thought he was dead
his head starts banging
back and forth against that pole.
Just beating the hell out of it, like that.
His eyes were rolled up in his head,
and his lips opened up real wide
and he was foaming at the mouth.
And there he was...
just banging the back of his head
against that pole.
It was sick.
How long did it take them to kill him?
According to the prison doctor,
death was instant and painless.
Packer told me it was the longest
five minutes of his life.
The guy convulsed and heaved
and pounded his skull for so long
that pieces of his brain
was flying out the top of his head.
How does this lever they pull
activate the cyanide canister?
- What?
- The lever! Is it hinges? Springs?
- I don't know.
- Is it just gravity?

How the hell would I know that?
Just thought you had an aptitude for this.
Well, sue me.
- I'm not mechanical.
- That's what Lee said.
But you were handy enough to build
a bomb to kill the Kramers.
Son of a bitch. Is that what this is all about?
You must have stayed up
all night thinking of this one.
Sorry, bubba.
Hate to disappoint you
but bombs ain't that complicated.
It can't be that easy - I couldn't do it.
That's because you're not motivated.
By the time I did Kramer
I had it down real simple.
So just because you're an anti-Semite
you can build a bomb,
place it on the second floor,
light a fuse and get out with no risk?
Plenty of risk. Not much glory.
It was the first floor.
Bomb went off below 'em.
- Check the FBI report.
- I did.
- What did it say?
- Bomb went off below 'em.
Thank you.
Anything else I can help you with?
- How long was the fuse?
- For Pete's sake...
It happened a long time ago,
I'm an old man.
Get off my back here, will you?
I'm sure you can remember
killing two children.
Long enough for me
to get the hell out of there, OK?
Except for one thing - the bomb
didn't have a fuse, it had a timer.
- What are you saying?
- You weren't alone.
There's not a chance

you could have built a timing device.
The FBI searched your house, your garage,
and didn't find a single trace
of explosives anywhere.
Maybe they're stupid.
Maybe I was real careful
and didn't leave a trail.
Maybe someone else planted the bomb.
You have no idea what you're doing.
Just hear me out.
Sam couldn't construct a timer.
His bombs were crude,
they had fuses. This was different.
It was complex for back then,
it was timed to kill.
- OK, wait a minute...
- Sam did not plant that bomb.
Wait!
The Sovereignty Commission file on
Sam might say who made the decisions.
Adam, just stop this, OK?
Those files are sealed.
If your client won't sign,
you cannot move the court to unseal them.
- I bet you could get a peek at them.
- No.
- You wanted to help me.
- I am helping you.
- Maybe you need to do more.
- Well, maybe I can't!
If there's others
and you're involved in protecting them...
Are you threatening me?
I am pursuing the truth
by any means necessary.
Which includes politely asking for your help.
In addition to appealing cruel and unusual,
- I want to file a new motion.
- About time you focused on the law, bubba.
I never stopped, bubba.
But there is nothing I will not pursue
in order to get a stay,
including proving you're insane.
- I'm insane?

- That's right.

As a product of three generations
of Klan mentality
your indoctrination
into a world of hate born of irrational fear
resulted in diminished mental capacity
to determine right from wrong.

You're gonna argue I'm insane
because I held different political beliefs
than you and your father
and his naive, nigger-loving,
bleeding heart bullshit?

I probably won't use
those exact words in my brief.
I'll wait for the psychiatrist's report.

So I'm gonna see a psychiatrist?

- That's right.

- That's insane.

Killing children whose father was working
for civil rights is insane.

I never meant to kill those kids.

That's fine but you're scheduled
to be executed for it in 14 days.

OK.

Good.

I need to go over more family background.

I got some from Lee

but there's a lot of holes in it.

She's going through a tough time right now.

I tried to call her when I saw this

but she didn't answer.

I think she's drinking again.

Did you know she's an alcoholic?

Have you ever felt feelings of remorse
for any of your crimes?

No.

Have you ever apologised

to your victims' family?

No, what would be the point?

What do you think would be the point?

No point.

Packer.

I want you to know that

when I talk about your people I...

Well...

I hear you, Sam.

In your professional opinion,
does Sam Cayhall have a conscience?

I found no evidence of one.

Dr Biddows,
is Sam Cayhall in touch with reality?

No, he is not.

Thank you, Dr Biddows.

No further questions, Your Honour.

What sayeth the state?

The state calls Sergeant Clyde Packer.

Sergeant, inform us how long you have
held your present position, please.

Been running the row for 15 years, sir.

Sam's been with me the whole time.

During this time have you ever observed

Mr Cayhall demonstrate

he might have a conscience

or care about other people's feelings?

Oh, yes, sir. Everybody knows

Sam has a real bad attitude

toward black folk.

But the other night he told me,

when he says stuff like that...

Let's just say he tried to apologise,

and he didn't even get it all out.

And it sure don't make him no saint

but for Sam that's a big deal.

He most certainly do

has a conscience, yes, sir.

And during all this time that

you've been observing him so closely

would you say he knows

what's going on around him?

Would you say he's out of touch with reality?

Two nights back I was walking past

and he said, "Clyde."

He never called me that before

so I knew it was important.

Could I help? "With what, Sam?"

And he said, "I wanna die alone.

And I wanna die in decent clothes.

And I wanna eat an Eskimo Pie.

And could I see a sunrise?"

I said, "Last one's on me, Sam."

So I snuck him out, gave him an hour alone.

I watched from inside, I thought he might lose it once the sun came.

See, it's been 15-16 years since Sam last saw dawn break but he held together just fine.

In your opinion, based on your observations, is Sam Cayhall in touch with reality? Sam?

- You betcha.

- Thank you, Sergeant Packer.

Thank you.

Tender the witness, Your Honour.

- What's happening in the Fifth Circuit?

- Thumbs down on insanity.

Hi. There you are.

- What's Mr Hall been up to?

- No change.

Try again. What has he been working on?

- He's looking for new information.

- What kind of information?

- Nora?

- Sir?

You're not sleeping with him?

No!

Then what kind of information?

Anything, everything. He's desperate.

Where is he looking?

- I don't know.

- Find out.

Desperate people are dangerous.

Maybe you ought to be sleeping with him.

Hey.

- Can we talk?

- Sure.

Tammy?

The Sovereignty Commission files the originals under lock and key in the Hall of Records.

Why can't zoning reports wait for tomorrow?

You ask the governor. I like my job.

Nora...
Nora, Nora. It's you that I'm scared of.
Bing, please -
I've got to get this done tonight.
I'll lock up for you.
Our little secret.
You and me. Have a good evening!
This way.
Sovereignty Commissions.
White Citizens' Council, Indianola.
Go back.
- "MK situation should be followed."
- Marvin Kramer.
Or Martin King.
"Law Office, March 18th." Marvin Kramer.
When was the bombing?
April 28th.
"Action agreed September 2nd."
You said it was in April.
That's not a date, that's nine to two -
they took a vote.
- Oh, my God.
- "The Commission assigned SC."
Sam Cayhall. What's RW?
You mean, who's RW?
Thanks.
Truth time, Sam. Five days.
We're firing everything
up to the Supreme Court but...
I need to know who RW is.
Sam, I saw the Commission's files,
you were with someone named RW.
You were assigned to bomb the office
by people who took no responsibility
for the death of those kids
and are gonna take
no responsibility for yours.
I believe you call these people cowards?
Why you feel compelled to protect them
is beyond me.
First of all...
you snivelling little son of a bitch,
you speak to me like this again,
I'll rip your heart out

and shove it up your butt.
Second, if you spent half as much time
learning to be a lawyer
instead of playing Dick Tracy...
I might stand a chance
of not being dead in five days.
As it stands right now
everything you've tried has failed.
You've failed.
Now I have to pay the price.
You're a failure,
just like your pathetic father was!
That son of a bitch
didn't have the balls to live.
He was a loser and a quitter,
and he just gave his life away.
How dare he?
What right did he have to do that?
It wasn't his to give!
I gave it to him! His momma gave it to him!
It was God's! He had no right!
He just gave it away, goddamn it!
He gave it away!
Dammit, he gave it away!
- Why'd he do that?
- Come on.
He gave it away!
- Is she home?
- Miss Lee's resting,
she can't see you now...
Lee?
Where are you, Lee?
Lee?
Lee?
Lee?
Oh, Jesus.
My lucky little nephew.
Did I ever show you...
my favourite old family picture?
Come on. Come in.
I never kept an actual photo album.
Mostly because I never kept
any actual photos.
Here. Come here.

Here. Now, there.
See? He was a cute little thing. Wasn't he?
Problem is...
he was raised to be a monster.
Trained from birth.
We come from a long line of hate, Adam.
That's why I drink.
Make it all go away.
Now you're here
and it won't go away any more.
Go home!
I've got three things to say to you.
One, I'm your lawyer until you fire me.
I'm not quitting.
Two, when you killed Joe Lincoln
your seven-year-old daughter
was in the laurel tree.
She watched her daddy murder a man
in cold blood.
And three, Quince Lincoln
never stole a thing.
My father found that toy soldier
but he was too terrified to tell you.
He had to live with that
for the rest of his sad life.
Maybe you didn't have the balls
to put a stop to this but I do.
It ends with me. We've got four days left,
this is our last appeal
and it's called mitigating circumstances.
Talk to me.
Talk to me, Sam!
I'm tired of talking.
I'm tired of waking up every morning
knowing I'm one day closer to dying.
Tired of living in a cage,
tired of these crappy cigarettes.
I'm just praying I'll die of cancer
before they gas me.
But mostly I'm just tired of waiting.
Just let me rest.
I'm really touched you can share
your feelings with me, Sam,
but at the moment I don't give a damn.

I'm too busy trying to win my case.
Now, start talking!
Here are some synonyms for mitigating -
glossing over,
sugar-coating,
prettifying.
There's nothing pretty
about twin boys being blown to bits,
no glossing over the suicide of their father,
and there's no sugar-coating this fact -
my client is guilty
and he deserves to be punished.
Mens rea. To do the thing.
Sam Cayhall did the thing
but he does not deserve to be murdered
because he was taught from birth
that he had to do the thing.
That is what this court must understand.
He never knew he had any other recourse
but hatred and bigotry and violence.
His uncles and brothers were Klansmen,
his father was a Klansman,
even his grandfather.
His great-grandfather was one
of the co-founders of that hateful group.
I recently saw a photograph of him
at a lynching.
He was ten and it was his third.
Of course, this is awful, it's evil...
but blood and death
were served with Sunday breakfast.
His father was murdered at a funeral.
My client saw it.
As the court is no doubt aware,
my client is also my grandfather.
I'd like now to tell you some warm
and wonderful stories about our family.
Except I don't know any.
In fact, I don't find my grandfather
even remotely wonderful.
But I know this - the very things
that make him so monstrous
are the reasons that mitigate
against this state murdering him.

He was raised by his family and by this state
to become the man that he became.
By the time he was old enough
to choose he didn't have a choice.
This is the tragedy of Sam Cayhall.
It's a tragedy that has destroyed
three lives already.
In the name of mercy...
let it not murder what little is left of his life.
Thank you for seeing me like this.
Why are you here?
I'm hoping you'll ask the governor
to show some mercy.
Tell him you don't want my client to die.
I don't want him to die.
I don't want him to...
but I feel he must.
See, that's not true, it isn't, it...
Your word would carry a lot of weight,
and no one knows more than you
that there's been enough suffering
and it could all end right here, right now.
I didn't take them to nursery school
that morning because I was sick,
so I waved goodbye
from my bedroom window
and watched them
leapfrog off to their death.
Bye, Mommy, I love you!
You see, the whole thing was my fault.
Be good!
- Adam?
- Ma'am?
Why are you really here?
One day I found my father on the floor
in my bedroom with a gun in his hand.
And I remember wondering,
"What are all those towels doing there?"
And then I realised that
he had arranged the towels in a circle...
and very carefully laid down in the centre
so he wouldn't make a mess.
In his note he said that he loved me
and he was sorry and...

he hoped that one day I'd understand.
He told me to take care
of my mom and my sister.
And there was a plastic garbage bag
on the floor.
I was to put the towels in the bag,
clean up the mess and call the police.
"Don't touch the gun," he said.
"Hurry up before the girls get home."
He had picked a day when he knew
I'd be the first one home.
I was ten.
I would dearly love to help you, Adam.
Please know this.
Sam Cayhall destroyed both our families.
Mine just died first.
And I'm sorry but he has to die.
Why?
He has to die because I had champagne
at my birthday party.
He has to die because
a story needs an ending.
He has to die because
I don't care if he had no choice...
he chose to bomb that building...
and my family died.
You know, they were your age then.
And they would have been your age now.
Haven't given up, have you?
Sometimes I just like to see
if I still have what it takes.
Jesus. What are you doing here?
I've been watching you, kid.
You deserve the facts.
Back in '67 I found an old drunk,
he was a dishwasher.
He claimed the night before the bombing
he saw Sam in a diner with another guy.
I need a name.
The description matched a guy
that we always suspected but...
RW.
Rollie Wedge.
A real hater, but smart.

We could never tie him to anything.
Where is he now?
They've gathered - sort of like a reunion -
the night before the big execution
and all that.
I figure if he's here, he's there.
...slapped the hell out of him,
he took a lickin', didn't he?
Looking forward to...
Outside! Come on.
Get away from that boy.
Get.
Thank you. Oh, God.
Thank you. I appreciate it.
You do?
Rollie Wedge.
One of the many names
that I've been called.
What do you think you're doing here?
You planted the bomb that killed those kids.
Were you planning a citizen's arrest?
I just want to hear you admit it.
Delusion, Mr Hall.
You're looking for a clean "yes"
so you can identify,
quantify, organise a concept of evil.
If I did it then I'm the evil
and I can be culled from the flock,
removed, separated, destroyed.
Evil can be destroyed
and all you good people can feel safe
in the cocoon of your denial.
- Sam says you're his people.
- We are one.
Is this how you treat your people?
Let 'em take a fall for you?
What about loyalty?
What about the truth?
The truth, based on your laws, Attorney Hall,
is that Sam Cayhall is guilty
and has been sentenced to death.
Perhaps it's time for you
to show some loyalty
and let justice be served.

And after it is...

always look behind you.

Always.

- He's probably still there.

- And?

If Sam were tried as an accomplice,
the most he'd get is 20 years.

You said you wanted new information.

With all due respect, this is hardly
compelling evidence of anything.

Grant a stay, give me more time.

All right, men, listen up.

0800 hours, I hereby activate
the Emergency Operations Centre.

This institution is on lockdown status.

I expect each of you
to discharge your duty accordingly.

No second-guessing, no improvising.

This execution will take place in 16 hours.

What you did to those babies...

no one could ever forgive you for.

What you did to me...

and Eddie...

I've got to.

Not for you, old man...

for me.

Eddie said...

you'd never have shot Joe Lincoln...

if I'd have cried out for you not to.

Is that why you came here?

No.

Would you still have shot him?

Yeah, yeah.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals
denied Sam Cayhall's last appeal.

The US Supreme Court
will rule later today on his fate.

If they deny, Governor David McAllister
will be his last chance.

The execution is set

for 12:

Stephanie Bell Flynt, WLBT News.

Got a light, yeah?

Sam?
Met some of your real people last night.
Real interesting group, your real people.
Especially Rollie Wedge.
Rollie Wedge.
He was real interesting.
I have to talk to the guards.
Rack up Sam.
You look a lot like your brother.
I came to pay my respects, Sam.
Say goodbye.
Make sure you're still strong.
I saw those two little kids.
They was in the window.
That was a mistake.
We kept two little Jews
from growing up into big Jews.
When their nigger-loving father
killed hisself
it was like dropping
a little hook-nosed pebble in a pond.
The ripples went out with a message
for all the world to see -
the Jew is weak.
How do you figure that for a mistake?
Weren't supposed to be no killing.
Don't go soft, Sam.
The day is coming.
I wish you could stick around to see it,
buddy, it's coming.
Every day, more people open their eyes
and see the only thing wrong
with this country
is we've gone against the laws of nature,
God's law.
Only the strong have a right to survive.
And now, finally...
those not worthy -
the Jew, the African,
he who lies with another man -
they're all digging their own graves
and when we pile them in there
I'll drink a toast to you, Sam,
and I'll piss it out on their dead faces.

No.
You've been a good and loyal soldier, Sam.
Go with the dignity that is yours,
don't be confused by that little boy
who's got his daddy's weak blood in him.
He ain't pure, he ain't us.
No, you son of a bitch. You son of a bitch.
I ain't you. I ain't you!
You touch him, I kill you.
I'll rip your head off.
I'll kill you, you son of a bitch.
- You know who this is?
- Your brother.
No, he ain't my brother.
You ain't my brother!
- Get out of here.
- I'll be praying for you.
You go to hell, you son of a bitch.
- Go to hell!
- I'll be praying for you.
Rack Sam.
No word from the courts.
I'd like you to mail this for me.
If you would.
I don't have the addresses.
Don't give up, Sam.
There is one other thing.
Take that.
Rack Sam.
It's the Supreme Court.
The coffee's French Market,
just like you asked.
Thank you.
Rack back.
Adam Hall.
No. OK.
It ain't over, Sam.
It ain't over.
The United States Supreme Court
has denied a flurry of last-minute appeals
on behalf of Sam Cayhall.
Gas his ass! Gas his ass!
Hurry. Let's go.
Go.

Cayhall signed the request.
Goodman's in court now asking to open up
the Sovereignty Commission files.
What should we do?
I don't recall being asked to do anything.
Let's see what's in there.
It suggests an accomplice
to the Kramer bombing, for one.
Some far-right crazy named Rollie Wedge.
How the hell do you know that?
We'll discuss it later.
Now, if you'll excuse us?
- You were saying?
- I don't think it'll work.
There are other names. Some familiar.
Knowing in advance might be very useful.
It's the Governor, sir.
Hello, Governor.
Senator, Sam Cayhall's attorneys are trying
to get some Sovereignty files released
that you and your colleagues
might not appreciate.
I got a proposition for y'all
but you have to act fast.
Can't go home if you're going by the mill
Cos the bridge washed out
at the bottom of the hill
Big Creek's up and the Little Creek's level
Plough my corn with a double shovel...
These are for you, Cayhall.
I can offer you a sedative if you'd like.
All right.
Then you'd best start changing.
I'll be back in 30 minutes.
Don't be late.
Pull off your coat, throw it in the corner
Don't see why you don't stay a little longer
Old mule and the grasshopper
eating ice cream...
Gas his ass, gas his ass!
Rack up Cayhall.
It's all right.
Appeal's on the 28th, now don't forget.
I left your papers with Barry

in the law library.

Thanks, Sam.

Ladies and gentlemen,

the governor of the state of Mississippi,

the Honourable David Allen McAllister.

Tonight...

the Supreme Court of the United States

rejected all appeals

filed on behalf of Sam Cayhall.

So, at this moment of truth

I must face the terrible burden

of this office

that is mine and mine alone.

The question for me tonight is,

who is David Allen McAllister

to imagine in his finest hour...

- See you, JB.

- See you soon, Sam.

- ...wiser than the jury and the 47 judges...

- Spit in their eye, Sam.

...who have reviewed this case

over the last 16 years?

- Sam. Remember the Lord is with you.

- The answer's clear.

In the matter of life and death,

none among us are more knowing

than our system of justice.

Tonight, however,

information has come to us suggesting

Mr Cayhall may not have acted alone

in this heinous crime.

Now if these allegations prove to be true,

rest assured, anyone found to be involved

will be prosecuted

to the fullest extent of the law.

However,

no matter how many additional people

may be implicated in the future,

it does not change a fundamental fact -

Sam Cayhall is guilty as charged

and Sam Cayhall must pay the price.

So it...

It is with the greatest humility

that I bow in deference

to that great lady, Justice.
At one minute past midnight,
Sam Cayhall will meet his maker.
The final judgment will truly be His.
To the family of the victims...
we say nothing can replace
your great and terrible loss.
Revenge will never lessen
the unfillable void
left by those now gone.
And we pray with you...
that God may grant us
the strength and the courage
to prevent crimes like this
from ever again darkening our soul
with the blood of the innocent.
Good night and God bless America.
Kid, don't.
Don't try to save me any more.
I know someplace inside you,
you're trying to stir up some miracle.
We can't forget who Sam Cayhall is
or the kind of thinking that he represents.
I'm sure you haven't.
- And the other names?
- Useful information.
It'll help us effect
some real change next session.
Isn't that why we're doing this job?
All progress is a negotiation, Nora.
Of all the people and things
I hated my whole life,
the one I hated most was me.
I was given free entry into this world
to make of it whatever I could.
I've been sitting here for 16 years.
I was thinking, I...
I never did anybody any good.
Till you came down.
See, if I'm gonna be proud of you,
I got to be proud of your daddy.
He wasn't a weak guy, he was strong.
Strong enough to get away...
strong enough to give you

whatever it is that you got.
If he was able to give that to you,
I reckon this old man must have passed on
something good to him.
And I didn't know that.
I'm ready.
You come on in, we been waiting for you.
Do you know where you're going?
Moving right along.
What the fuck is going on, man?
Sam, this is your death warrant.
You know I'm required by law
to read it to you.
"We, the jury, find unanimously
and beyond a reasonable doubt
the following aggravating circumstances.
The capital murder
was committed during a felony.
The capital murder was especially heinous,
atrocious and cruel.
We, the jury, find unanimously
and beyond a reasonable doubt
the defendant Sam Cayhall
should be put to death by lethal gas
at the Mississippi State Penitentiary.
The 13th day of April, 1996."
Come on!
And no stays.
Is there any reason why
this execution should not proceed?
No.
Any final words, Mr Cayhall?
Maybe the ghosts are gone, Lee.
Maybe.
Thank you, Adam.