

Rob Reiner

GHOSTS OF MISSISSIPPI

Lewis Colick

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A FREDERICK ZOLLO PRODUCTION A ROB REINER FILM ALEC BALDWIN WHOOP! GOLDBERG JAMES WOODS
"GHOSTS OF MISSISSIPPI" CRAIG T. NELSON CASTING BY JANE JENKINS, C.S.A. AND JANET HIRSHENSON, C.S.A. MUSIC BY MARC SHAIMAN
EDITOR ROBERT LEIGHTON PRODUCTION DESIGNER LILLY KILVERT DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN SEALE, A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHARLES NEWIRTH, JEFFREY STOTT WRITTEN BY LEWIS COLICK
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ROB REINER PRODUCERS FREDERICK ZOLLO, NICHOLAS PAELOGOS AND ANDREW SCHEINMAN
CASTLE ROCK COLUMBIA PICTURES

FADE IN:

1 OPENING CREDITS 1

Through a MONTAGE of drawings, still photographs, and documentary footage, we trace the history of the black man in America, and the civil rights movement, from his arrival in slave ships, to June of 1963. The last image in the montage is a still photograph of Senator Theodore Bilbo delivering a speech in a rural town square. The photo comes to life.

2 EXT. DECATUR, MISSISSIPPI, 1934 - DAY 2

ONSCREEN TITLE: DECATUR, MISSISSIPPI, 1934

A crowd has turned out to hear SENATOR BILBO, perhaps the most virulent racist ever to sit in the U.S. Senate.

BILBO
...educating the Negro or even
associating with the Negro in any way
whatsoever is a dangerous enterprise,
ladies and gentlemen, make no mistake
about it...

The only two blacks present here today are two kids, twelve-year-old CHARLES EVERS and his ten-year-old brother MEDGAR. They sit off by themselves on the grass. As he warms to his theme, BILBO notices the two kids.

BILBO
(continuing)
...if we fail to hold high the wall
of separation between the races, we
will live to see the day when those
two little nigger boys right there
will be asking for everything that is
ours by right.

The crowd turns to look at the children. Ten-year-old MEDGAR doesn't flinch. BILBO continues his speech.

BILBO
(continuing)
Ladies and gentlemen, let us never
forget that this is a white man's
country. A white man's country and...

Young MEDGAR EVERS jumps to his feet and picks up a rock.

BILBO
(continuing)
It is absolutely essential to the
perpetuation of our Anglo-Saxon
civilization that White Supremacy in
America be maintained.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. MISSISSIPPI DELTA - DUSK

3

ONSCREEN TITLE: MISSISSIPPI DELTA - JUNE 11, 1963

The Delta in all its splendor and flatness as far as the eye
can see. A white Plymouth Valiant with a long whip-like
antenna comes into view. As the car passes,

CUT TO:

4 INT. CAR - DUSK

4

PAN OFF an INSERT of a sword and cross SHRINERS EMBLEM,
dangling from the rear-view mirror, to the driver,

BYRON DE LA BECKWITH, a smallish man with sharp, pointed
features in his early forties. As he drives, we hear
President John F. Kennedy, delivering his landmark address to
the nation on the issue of civil rights.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
(on radio)
The heart of the question is whether
all Americans are to be afforded
equal rights and equal opportunities,
whether we are going to treat our
fellow Americans as we want to be
treated.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. NAACP HEADQUARTERS - JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI - JUNE 11, 1963 - DUSK

5

Thirty-seven-year-old MEDGAR EVERS, the tall, strong, civil
rights leader, exits the office and walks toward his 1962
blue Oldsmobile. He is intercepted by another BLACK MAN.

BLACK MAN #1
Mr. Evers? Mr. Evers?

MEDGAR
Please, call me Medgar.

MEDGAR loads some files into the back seat of his car.

BLACK MAN #1

Thank you. Mr. Evers, see this hat?
I bought it in Kennington's just this
morning. Lord knows I never thought
I'd see the day when a colored man
would be allowed to try on a hat in
a white man's store. I want to thank
you for all you've been doing.

MEDGAR

Until you can freely wear that hat to
the polling booth, we haven't done
anything.

BLACK MAN #1

Well, you have a good night, sir.

MEDGAR

Thank you.

As MEDGAR walks back to the office, we HEAR...

KENNEDY (V.O.)

If an American, because his skin is
dark, cannot eat lunch in a
restaurant open to the public, if he
cannot send his children to the best
public school available, if he cannot
vote for the public officials who
represent him...

CUT TO:

6 EXT. A MODEST JACKSON SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

6

The houses are tiny but well kept. Mostly school teachers
own these homes; but the one near the corner at 2332 Guynes
Street belongs to Medgar Evers.

KENNEDY (V.O.)

...if, in short, he cannot enjoy the
full and free life which all of us
want...

CUT TO:

7 INT. EVERS BEDROOM - DUSK

7

MYRLIE EVERS and her three children, DARRELL, 9, REENA, 8,
and little VAN, aged 3, are watching Kennedy on T.V. They
watch silently, hopefully, and nobody even notices how damned
hot it is in here.

KENNEDY
(on T.V.)
...then who among us would be content
to have the color of his skin changed
and stand in his place? Who among us
would then be content with the
counsels of patience and delay?
One hundred years of delay have
passed since President Lincoln freed
the slaves. Yet their heirs, their
grandsons, are not fully free.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. DELTA DRIVE - NIGHT

8

The main drag in this neighborhood. It's dotted with drive-
ins and juke joints. The white Plymouth Valiant pulls into
the parking lot of JOE'S DRIVE-IN, a hamburger joint just up
the road from the Evers house.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
They are not yet free from the bonds
of injustice. They are not yet freed
from social and economic oppression.
And this nation, for all its hopes
and all its boasts, will not be fully
free until all its citizens are free.
We face then a moral crisis as a
country and as a people. It cannot be
met by repressive police action. It
cannot be left to increased
demonstrations in the streets.

A FEW TEENAGERS are hanging around, talking with the pretty
CARHOPS. They've got their RADIO turned not to the
President's speech but to THE FOUR SEASONS SINGING "SHERRY"
on the local rock and roll station. One of the GIRLS,
BARBARA HOLDER, notices the long antenna on Beckwith's car.

GIRL
Looks like a police car.

CUT TO:

8A EXT. NAACP HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

8A

MEDGAR gets in his car and drives off.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
It cannot be quieted by token moves
or talk.
(more)

KENNEDY (cont'd; V.O.)
It is a time to act in the Congress,
in your state and local legislative
body, and, above all, in all of our
daily lives.

CUT TO:

8B EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

8B

BECKWITH gets out of his car and stretches. Nobody's paying any attention to him. Then he opens the trunk of his car. Inside we see an old rifle. When he's sure nobody's looking, BECKWITH removes it from the trunk, leaves the parking lot, and crosses to the vacant lot that's right across the street from Medgar Evers' house.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
It is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say this is the problem of one section of the country or another. Or deplore the facts that we face.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 EXT. MEDGAR'S CAR - NIGHT

9

MEDGAR'S blue Oldsmobile drives past JOE'S, revealing BECKWITH'S white Valiant still parked in the lot.

10 EXT. DELTA DRIVE - NIGHT

10

Medgar pulls into the Evers' carport behind the family station wagon. In his white shirt, soaked through with sweat, MEDGAR EVERS, an easy target, gets out of his car.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation...

CUT TO:

11 EXT. VACANT LOT ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT

11

Beneath a sweetgum tree, concealed behind a thicket of honeysuckle, we find BYRON DE LA BECKWITH. As he raises his 30.06 Enfield rifle and sights MEDGAR EVERS through his Golden Hawk scope, BECKWITH's heart quickens.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
...is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all.

MEDGAR EVERS. He's heading toward his front door, carrying something in his arms. It is a pile of white T-shirts with red lettering that reads: Jim Crow Must Go. He's got his house keys in his right hand.

KENNEDY (V.O.)
(continuing)
Those who do nothing are inviting
shame as well as violence.

BECKWITH. Evers' back is in his sights, and when he squeezes the trigger...

KENNEDY (V.O.)
(continuing)
Those who act boldly are recognizing
right as well as reality.

...the single GUNSHOT is as loud as cannon fire. As is the WOMAN'S SHRIEK of "Oh, my God!" that comes from inside Evers' house.

CUT TO:

12 INT. EVERS BEDROOM - NIGHT

12

DARRELL and REENA hit the floor, grab VAN, and scream for their mother to get down as MYRLIE rushes to the front door.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. EVERS HOUSE - NIGHT

13

MEDGAR EVERS falls as the 30-caliber bullet tears through his back. He drops the bundle he was carrying but not his house keys. Those remain clutched in his hand as he drags himself up the driveway toward his door, weighed down by the blood that spreads across his back like great dark wings.

Everything's happening fast now as...

In the vacant lot, BECKWITH is quickly and carefully hiding his rifle in the honeysuckle thicket. Then he heads back up the hill to his car.

MYRLIE EVERS bursts out of her house. Blood is everywhere, and her husband lies dying face down in it. She SHOUTS his name. The CHILDREN rush out; they kneel by their father.

MYRLIE is holding MEDGAR as the children scream in anguish, "Please, Daddy, please get up." But MEDGAR EVERS does not move.

As we push in on MEDGAR:

MEDGAR

Turn me loose, turn me loose...

MEDGAR EVERS lies dying. In his mind's eye, he recalls a scene from his youth.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 FLASHBACK - DECATUR TOWN SQUARE

14

Ten-year-old MEDGAR's got that rock in his hand, and he's about to throw it at the odious SENATOR BILBO, when his brother CHARLES grabs him from behind. MEDGAR struggles.

CHARLES

Give me that, Lope. You gonna get us killed.

YOUNG MEDGAR

Come on, Charlie, turn me loose...turn me loose...

BACK TO THE PRESENT

MEDGAR

Turn me loose...turn me loose.

15 OMITTED

15

DISSOLVE TO:

16 EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

16

Medgar Evers' graveside service. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS and a horde of PRESS PEOPLE are present. NAACP Executive Director ROY WILKINS eulogizes Medgar Evers.

WILKINS

Medgar Evers believed in his country.
It now remains to be seen whether his
country believed in him.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

17

A white granite art deco building of the 1930's.

18 INT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

18

On the first floor of this building that promises justice for all, bronze-colored FRIEZE relief panels show a purported history of the South: Big-lipped, head-scratching slaves push cotton toward a steamboat, followed by Confederate soldiers and white men, whose work leads to the innovations of planes, skyscrapers and race cars. The whole area is flooded with MEDIA PEOPLE and SECURITY GUARDS. MEN are walking in and out of the toilet with the sign that says: White Men.

BECKWITH, who's got a semicircular scar over his right eye from the recoil of the rifle scope, is being escorted through the lobby by a DEPUTY and a man in a business suit, BOB PATTERSON. BECKWITH is upbeat--hell, he's downright chipper. Everybody is fawning over him, and BECKWITH loves it.

He carries a NEWSPAPER, which he holds up to the MEDIA.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE - FBI NABS GREENWOOD MAN IN EVERS CASE

BECKWITH
Nice likeness.

PATTERSON
The Citizens Council's already raised thousands for your defense. Money's pouring in from all over the South.

A SECURITY GUARD
Hello, Mr. Beckwith. Glad to see you.

BECKWITH
Mighty glad to be here.

SHORT SCENES - THE BECKWITH TRIAL - JANUARY, 1964

In the following short scenes, we soon realize that BYRON DE LA BECKWITH, "Delay" to his friends, is anything but the rough, uneducated redneck we might at first have imagined. Fancying himself a true descendant of a long-ago Southern aristocracy, BECKWITH appears to be the personification of Old South gentility. In the courtroom he wears a dark suit with a handkerchief in the pocket, a monogrammed shirt with a Shriner's stick pin; flowing French cuffs peek out through the sleeves. Red socks offset a red tie. BECKWITH is so cocky, so confident through these proceedings that it's hard to believe he's on trial for his life.

19 INT. COURTROOM -DAY

19

The courtroom's packed. Plenty of PRESS PEOPLE and GRIM-LOOKING BLACKS. The jury consists of TWELVE WHITE MEN. MYRLIE EVERS is on the stand being questioned by BECKWITH lawyer, HARDY LOTT. BECKWITH sits, enjoying himself.

LOTT

Isn't it true that your husband was the first to attempt to integrate the University of Mississippi?

MYRLIE

Yes.

LOTT

And at the time of his death he was involved in a lawsuit to integrate the public schools, wasn't he?

MYRLIE

Yes.

LOTT

Your husband must have had quite a few enemies, would you agree?

MYRLIE

Yes, he did.

LOTT

Your eldest boy, his name is Kenyatta, isn't it?

MYRLIE

Darrell Kenyatta Evers.

LOTT

Kenyatta's a Mau Mau name, isn't it?

WALLER

Objection.

JUDGE HENDRICK

Sustained.

But LOTT has made his point with the shocked white jurors. MYRLIE EVERS glares at the smug BECKWITH, the man who killed her husband.

As LOTT continues his cross, a WELL-DRESSED MAN enters the court and shakes hands with BECKWITH. This is not lost on MYRLIE. The spectators whisper, "That's Ross Barnett." TWO YANKEE REPORTERS watch, stunned.

LOTT
Isn't it true that over one
hundred people were arrested
during a demonstration your
husband organized to boycott
a department store in
downtown Jackson known as
Kennington's?

MYRLIE
All picketing and
demonstrations were
completely lawful and
nonviolent.

REPORTER ONE
Well, you don't see that
every day--a former
governor shaking hands with
an accused assassin right
in front of a jury.

REPORTER TWO
There's not a court in
America that would stand
for this.

REPORTER ONE
Whats America got to do
with anything? This is
Mississippi.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

20

BECKWITH is on the witness stand. His lawyer, HARDY LOTT,
asks the questions.

BECKWITH
Byron De La Beckwith.

LOTT
And you live in Greenwood,
Mississippi?

BECKWITH
Yes, suh. My mother was a Yerger,
and her mother was Susan Yerger, a
close personal friend of Mrs.
Jefferson Davis.

LOTT
Mr. Beckwith, did you shoot Medgar
Evers?

BECKWITH
No, suh.

BECKWITH claps his hands to emphasize the point. LOTT picks
up the Enfield rifle from the evidence table. He hands it to
BECKWITH.

LOTT
Is this your rifle?

BECKWITH raises the rifle to his shoulder and brings the scope up to his still-scarred right eye.

BECKWITH
It bears similarity...
(lowers rifle)
But I couldn't say for certain. I
don't record the serial numbers of my
weapons, and my gun was stolen from
my home a few days before this whole
business.

DISSOLVE TO:

21	OMITTED	21
22	SERIES OF NEWSPAPERS SHOWING:	22
	-The jury not being able to reach a verdict--a mistrial.	
	-A second trial being called for.	
	-And again a mistrial.	

CUT TO:

23	EXT. STREETS OF GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI - DAY	23
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A long MOTORCADE rolls through the Delta town of Greenwood. The streets are lined with happy PEOPLE, balloons are everywhere. So are banners that say WELCOME HOME, DELAY. BECKWITH's in the lead car, waving to his fans. A REPORTER runs alongside.

REPORTER THREE
How do you feel, Delay?

BECKWITH
I've got tears in my eyes.

CUT TO:

24	EXT. EVERS HOUSE - DAY	24
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MYRLIE EVERS, who's also got tears in her eyes. As we pan down we see she's on her hands and knees scrubbing the driveway where the stubborn red stain of her husband's blood won't be washed away.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

25	EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY	25
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ONSCREEN TITLE: October, 1989

26 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

26

A young district attorney, BOBBY DeLAUGHTER, is making a closing argument to the jury.

BOBBY

In summation, not only did the the surveillance cameras provide us with a visual record of the crime being committed, but four eyewitnesses observed the defendant removing his mask upon exiting the convenience store. Short of you ladies and gentlemen of the jury attending the actual event, we don't feel the people could have a stronger case. Thank you.

BOBBY moves to sit.

JUDGE

(to DEFENSE LAWYER)

Counsel?

As the defense attorney rises.

CUT TO:

27 INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES - DAY

27

Crime in Jackson is soaring these days, so this place is always busy. BOBBY runs into CYNTHIA SPEETGENS, an intelligent-looking, 35-year-old assistant D.A.

CYNTHIA

How'd it go?

BOBBY

Well, through a combination of superior lawyering and a less-than-stellar performance by our criminal, I was able to secure a conviction.

CYNTHIA

Congratulations. Listen, I got a rape victim who's reluctant to testify. Can you handle the Harrison motion this afternoon?

BOBBY

You got it.

He continues toward his office, passing the office manager, CLARA MAYFIELD.

There's a sign over Clara's desk that says, "Do You Want To Talk To the Man In Charge Or the Woman Who Knows Everything?", and next to that, one that reads, "Sexual Harassment Will Not Only Be Tolerated, It Will Be Graded."

CLARA

DeLaughter, your wife just called.

BOBBY

(emotionless)

What did she want?

CLARA

She said to remind you you're having lunch with her mother and your parents at one o'clock at the club.

BOBBY

(this is torture)

How could I forget.

As BOBBY walks into the office that says BOBBY DeLAUGHTER, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY. He is intercepted by his boss, D.A. ED PETERS. PETERS is in his fifties; he's been D.A. here for nearly twenty years.

28 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

28

This is a small, cluttered cubbyhole of an office. BOBBY takes his jacket off.

ED

Did you see this?

And he drops a newspaper on Bobby's desk. The headline reads: SOVEREIGNTY COMMISSION REVEALS STATE CHECKED POSSIBLE JURORS IN MEDGAR EVERS SLAYING. SECRET FILES UNCOVERED. The byline: Jerry Mitchell.

BOBBY

Yeah.

ED

Evers' widow Myrlie is calling for a re prosecution of Byron De La Beckwith.

BOBBY

(irritated)

Come on, Ed, this guy got killed over twenty-five years ago.

ED
Just dig up whatever you can on
Medgar Evers and be in my office at
three o'clock.

BOBBY
This is ridiculous.

ED
Sure it is, but if we try to bury
this, Myrlie Evers is gonna have
every black politician in Jackson
climbing all over me.

BOBBY
Ed--

ED
(briskly)
My office. Three o'clock.

*

And ED is out the door. BOBBY BUZZES CLARA. INTERCUT the
following:

BOBBY
(into intercom)
Say, Clara, you ever seen any files
around here on Medgar Evers?

CLARA
Who?

BOBBY
Medgar Evers. He was some civil
rights leader. Got himself shot in
the early '60's.

CLARA
Oh, yeah, I just saw that file. It
was sitting right next to the one on
the Lindbergh baby.

BOBBY
Clara, just bring me what we have.

BOBBY is annoyed at the afternoon that lies ahead.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. JACKSON COUNTRY CLUB - DAY - 1:00PM 29

BOBBY, in a Chevy Blazer, drives up to the entrance of the clubhouse. It is a beautiful old plantation-style mansion. A BLACK ATTENDANT takes his car. BOBBY enters the clubhouse.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. CLUBHOUSE PATIO - DAY - 1:00PM 30

BOBBY approaches a table at which are seated his wife, DIXIE, his mother-in-law, CAROLINE MOORE, his mother, BILLIE DELAUGHTER, and his father, BARNEY DELAUGHTER. Things are not good between BOBBY and DIXIE, but BOBBY manages to put up a front as he perfunctorily kisses DIXIE. Greetings are exchanged all around.

BARNEY
(to BOBBY)
Did you make Hinds County any safer today, son?

BOBBY
You know how it is with criminals. It's like finding a gray hair. You pull one out, two pop up to take its place.

DIXIE
Billie, I just love those earrings of yours. Have you worn them before?

BILLIE
I've had them for quite some time, but I rarely put them on during the day.

BARNEY
Did any of y'all see this nonsense about the Sovereignty Commission in the paper this morning?

CAROLINE
Yeah, isn't that awful?

BARNEY
It's that fool Rea Hederman. Ever since he took over that paper, those dang liberals like Jerry Mitchell have been trying to rewrite history. The Sovereignty Commission was a fine organization that did a lot of good for this state.

BILLIE
Dixie, can you pass the butter, please?

DIXIE

Why do they have to go digging up
things that happened twenty-five
years ago anyway?

BOBBY

Medgar Evers' widow wants to reopen
the case.

DIXIE

You can't be serious?

BOBBY

Ed asked me to look into it.

DIXIE

Well, you just tell him
no-thank-you.

There is an icy look between BOBBY and DIXIE.

BARNEY

When are these people gonna get it
into their heads the sixties are
over. The eighteen-sixties and the
nineteen-sixties.

BILLIE

I thought that Beckwith fella was
found not guilty.

CAROLINE

Well, actually there were two hung
juries.

They all look at her.

CAROLINE

(continuing)

The reason I know is 'cause my
husband, Judge Moore, was a spectator
at both those trials. He never
missed a day. And he told me that
Beckwith would never get convicted,
no matter how many trials they held.

BOBBY

The truth is it's just a political
thing. I don't think anything's
going to come of it.

BARNEY

Son, for your sake it had better not.
You wanna be a judge someday.
You persecute a seventy-year-old man,
guilty or not, over some nigger, and
you'll have everybody in the state of
Mississippi lining up against you.

A BLACK WAITER approaches the table.

BARNEY

(continuing; to
waiter)

Hey, Howard, you got any of that fish
chowder today?

WAITER

Yes, sir.

BARNEY

How many for fish chowder?

BOBBY looks at DIXIE who turns away from him.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

31

MYRLIE EVERS, in her late fifties now, a beautiful woman as
self-possessed as ever, still radiating the inner strength
that has enabled her to keep going, is walking towards the
building with MORRIS DEES, a white, liberal lawyer. They are
approached by a young red-haired reporter, JERRY MITCHELL.

MITCHELL

Mrs. Evers, I'm Jerry Mitchell from
the Clarion-Ledger. I broke the
story on the jury tampering in your
husband's case.

MYRLIE

I know. And I want to thank you for
your good hard work. I can't tell
you how much it's appreciated.

MITCHELL

Just doing my job, ma'am. What do
you think your chances are of getting
the D.A. to reopen the case?

MYRLIE
I've passed this way before. Let's
just say I've adopted an attitude of
tempered optimism.

CUT TO:

32 INT. D.A.'S OFFICES - DAY

32

The CLOCK on the wall says three o'clock. BOBBY's walking
toward ED PETERS' office with an exceedingly slim file. It
says, "State v. Byron De La Beckwith, 1964" on it's faded,
yellow cover. As he passes CLARA's desk, she says: *

CLARA
Hey, DeLaughter, you hear the news?
President Lincoln just got shot.
Some guy named Booth did it.

CUT TO:

33 INT. ED'S OFFICE - DAY

33

It is a much more spacious office than Bobby's. ED is
meeting with MYRLIE and MORRIS DEES.

DEES
(angry)
The Sovereignty Commission, a state
agency actively worked against the
D.A.'s office to insure the jury was
stacked with enough Beckwith
sympathizers to keep him out of jail.
If that isn't grounds for a new
trial, then--

ED
With all due respect, those old
Sovereignty Commission files have
been leaking out for years. All they
did was run some background checks
which, while certainly unethical, was
not illegal. We can't prove jury
tampering.

BOBBY pokes his head in.

ED
(continuing)
Bobby, come on in. Mrs. Evers, I'd
like you to meet Bobby DeLaughter.

MYRLIE
How do you do.

BOBBY
How do you do, ma'am.

ED loathes liberals like DEES, but he is trying to be as diplomatic as possible.

ED
And this is Mr. Morris Dees from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

DEES
How you doing?

BOBBY
Hello.

ED
I was just explaining to Mr. Dees that, in order to pursue this, we're gonna need more than an article in a newspaper. We're gonna need new evidence.

DEES
In '64 there was a mountain of evidence. You could retry Beckwith on the basis of that alone and get an easy conviction.

Ed takes the meager file from Bobby's hand.

ED
As you can see, Mr. Dees, the mountain has crumbled a bit.

He hands the file to Dees.

DEES
What's this?

BOBBY
I'm afraid that's all that's left of the State's case against Byron De La Beckwith.

Although MYRLIE'S not surprised, DEES is somewhat stunned.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Just a few pages of the old police report.

DEES
But where's the gun? Where's the--

*
*
*
*
*

ED
Where's the bullet? Where's the
original trial transcript? Where are
the files? Beats the hell out of me.

DEES
Are you telling us that it's lost?

ED
I'm telling you we don't have it.

As DEES looks over the old police report, ED speaks to MYRLIE.

ED
(continuing)
Mrs. Evers, even if we had the
evidence, old and new, we'd still
never get around the Sixth Amendment
right to a speedy trial. I'm sure
that Mr. Dees would agree that twenty-
five years isn't exactly what you'd
call speedy.

DEES hands the police report back to Bobby. He looks
disgusted.

DEES
This is...extraordinary...

MYRLIE
May I?

BOBBY
Mrs. Evers, it's pretty strong stuff.

*

MYRLIE
I'd like to see it.

BOBBY reluctantly hands it to her. As she looks it over,
BOBBY and DEES exchange looks. Then MYRLIE EVERS reads aloud.

MYRLIE
(continuing; reading)
"June 13, 1963. To the Jackson
Police Department: When you catch
whoever killed the nigger, you be
sure to pin a medal on him 'cause he
just did the State of Mississippi one
hell of a favor."

MYRLIE pauses. The men are silent. DEES seems sickened.

MYRLIE
(continuing)
"June 14, 1963. A female who refused
to identify herself stated that she
had heard a rumor that Medgar Evers'
wife had gotten jealous of Lena
Horne, who'd appeared with Evers at
a rally, and might have gotten her
brother-in-law to kill Evers."

There is silence as she hands BOBBY back the file. Then MYRLIE does something quite unexpected. She laughs.

MYRLIE
(continuing)
Well, who wouldn't be jealous of Lena Horne? God, what a beautiful woman.

BOBBY has to smile at MYRLIE's good humor and dignity.

BOBBY
Yes, ma'am.

DEES
The only reason those cops even wrote that garbage down was because they actually took it seriously.

ED
Mr. Dees...

DEES
Do you think the police in Washington, D.C., would have written it up if some nitwit had told them that Jackie Kennedy might have had a hand in J.F.K.'s death because her husband was running around with Marilyn Monroe?

ED
What is your point?

DEES
My point, Mr. Peters, is that the murder of Medgar Evers was a race crime, a political crime--

ED
Mr. Dees...

DEES
An assassination. And Byron De La Beckwith is free today, thanks to a racist police force, a racist jury and a racist D.A.'s office.

ED
Twenty-five years ago Bill Waller and this office went after Beckwith not once, but twice. Now I don't need to sit here and listen to your--

MYRLIE stands up.

MYRLIE

Mr. Peters, twenty-five years ago, I sat on the witness stand and watched as the former governor of this state shook hands with the man who murdered my husband. While I was on the stand, Mr. Peters. Now I don't expect you to understand the pain and suffering my family and I have been through, but I did come here thinking that this office might be interested in seeing justice finally served.

ED

Mrs. Evers...

MYRLIE

You've told me all the reasons you can't pursue this. Maybe you can find one reason you can. Good day, gentlemen.

*

MYRLIE leaves the office with DEES, leaving BOBBY and ED.

34 INT. D.A.'S OFFICES - DAY

34

The meeting is over. MYRLIE and DEES head towards the elevator. BOBBY runs to catch up.

BOBBY

Mrs. Evers, Ed Peters is a good man, but there's nothing he can do. You've been living with this for a long time. Maybe it's time to let it go.

MYRLIE

I can understand why you'd think that, Mr. DeLaughter. For years I said the same thing to Medgar--"Let it go, move out of Mississippi." And do you know what he said? He said, "I don't know if I'm going to heaven or to hell, but I'm going from Jackson."

MYRLIE and MORRIS enter the elevator.

MYRLIE

(continuing)

Have a nice day, Mr. DeLaughter.

And the elevator door closes. MYRLIE has left a bit of her soul with BOBBY.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT

35

Bobby's Chevy Blazer pulls into the driveway of this modest house on a pretty street. BOBBY gets out of his car, grabs a bag of groceries, walks to the back kitchen door, heaves a heavy SIGH, and enters.

36 INT. DELAUGHTER KITCHEN - NIGHT 36

As BOBBY puts the groceries down...

BOBBY
(calling out)
I'm home.

BOBBY crosses into...

37 INT. DELAUGHTER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 37

...and sees his eleven-year-old son BURT, who is finishing his homework, listening to a Sony Walkman, watching T.V., and having a snack.

BOBBY
Hey, tiger.

BURT is not aware of BOBBY's presence. BOBBY walks over to BURT and stands right over him. After a few beats, BURT becomes aware of his father.

BURT
(not looking up from
his work)
Hi, Dad.

BOBBY
Are you sure you have enough
distractions? 'Cause if you want, I
can run into your room and get your
Gameboy.

BURT
Dad.

At that moment, CLAIRE, six, and DREW, five, come into the room. They have just gotten out of the bath.

DIXIE follows behind. She proceeds to pick up toys and games that have been left out. *

DREW
(excited)
Hi, Daddy!

CLAIRE
(not as enthusiastic)
Hi, Dad.

BOBBY kneels and gives them both a hug and a kiss.

DREW
Did you bring me a lollipop?

BOBBY
I did. And one for Claire, too.

BOBBY takes out two lollipops. DREW opens his right up.
CLAIRE perfunctorily puts hers in her pocket.

CLAIRE
Thanks, Daddy.

BOBBY
How was school today, sweetie?

CLAIRE
Okay.

BOBBY
Did Mrs. Collins like the bracelet
you made for her?

CLAIRE
Uh-huh.

DREW
Daddy, tell us a story.

BOBBY
(noticing CLAIRE's
somewhat lifeless
attitude)
Uh, okay.

DREW
A real scary one.

BOBBY moves to the couch. DREW follows. CLAIRE doesn't.

BOBBY
Claire, you want to hear a story?

CLAIRE
(going along)
Okay, but not too scary.

BOBBY
Okay. Why don't we go into mommy and
daddy's room so we don't disturb
Burt.

*
*

As BOBBY ushers the kids out of the living room...

*

DIXIE
(there's a coolness)
Are you gonna want something to eat?

BOBBY
No, I grabbed something at the office.

DIXIE
Thanks for letting me know.

With that, DIXIE and BOBBY go their separate ways. *

38 INT. DELAUGHTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

38

BOBBY and DIXIE are alone in bed together. Each in their own world, BOBBY works on a brief, DIXIE reads for a beat, then puts down her book. After a beat...

DIXIE
How much longer are you gonna be?

BOBBY
I'm almost done.

DIXIE turns her light off. There's a silence. DIXIE waits for BOBBY to turn his off. Finally he finishes and turns his light off. DIXIE lies staring into space. As BOBBY rolls away from her, CLAIRE appears in the doorway.

DIXIE
Claire, honey, what are you doing up?

CLAIRE
I can't sleep. The ghost is back.

BOBBY
(to Dixie)
I'll go.

BOBBY jumps up, takes CLAIRE's hand and walks her back to her room.

39 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

39

BOBBY
The ghost is back? Where is he this time?

BOBBY jumps up, takes CLAIRE's hand and walks her back to her room.

39 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT 39

BOBBY
The ghost is back? Where is he this time?

CLAIRE
In my bed.

BOBBY
Really? Well, we'll have to see
about that.

They walk into...

40 INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

40

BOBBY smiles and goes to the bed.

BOBBY
Look, you were right. He's sitting
right there on the bed.

CLAIRE
No, Daddy. Now he's over by the
window.

BOBBY
Oh, right. Thought your bottle tree
was supposed to keep him away.

Through the window we see the bottle tree. It's simply a
tall plant with some bottles strung up from some leaves.

CLAIRE
Maybe I don't have the right kind of
bottles.

BOBBY
You know, when we lived in Natchez,
there was this ghost who lived right
next door in the remains of this old
house that got burned in the war.
And sometimes he'd come over and get
right in my closet.

CLAIRE
How'd you make him go away?

BOBBY
Your granny would come in and sing a
special song, and before you knew it,
he was gone.

CLAIRE
What did she sing?

BOBBY
The song that every ghost from
Mississippi loves.

CLAIRE
Sing it, Daddy.

BOBBY picks up his daughter. He carries her to the bed and tucks her in as he sings:

BOBBY
"Oh, I wish I was in the land of
cotton,
Old times there are not forgotten,
Look away. Look away. Look away,
Dixieland..."

As BOBBY continues to sing to CLAIRE, the CAMERA PUSHES PAST them to the window,

BOBBY
(continuing)
"In Dixieland where I was born,
Early on one frosty morn,
Look away, look away, look away,
Dixieland..."

We end on:

THE BOTTLE TREE

gently blowing in the wind.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 41

BOBBY is approaching the entrance of the building. He is intercepted by JERRY MITCHELL, who follows BOBBY into...

42 INT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 42

JERRY
Bobby!

BOBBY
Jerry. I'd ask what's new, but I'm
afraid you'd tell me.

JERRY
You're what's new. My readers are on
the edge of their collective seat:
Will Mr. DeLaughter or will he not go
after Byron De La Beckwith?

BOBBY
The district attorney's office has
every intention of thoroughly
investigating the possibility of
reopening the case.

JERRY
I didn't go to law school, but that
sounds an awful lot like bullshit to
me.

BOBBY walks towards the elevator.

BOBBY
Nice talking to you, Jerry.

As BOBBY walks away...

CUT TO:

43 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

43

BOBBY is working at his desk. CYNTHIA SPEETGENS pokes her
head in.

CYNTHIA
I just wanted to thank you for the
help on the Harrison case. We got
the conviction this morning.

BOBBY
Great.

CYNTHIA
How did it go with Mrs. Evers and
Dees yesterday?

BOBBY
I don't think they heard what they
wanted to hear.

CYNTHIA
Well they can't expect us to make a
case up out of whole cloth.

BOBBY
You wouldn't think so.

CYNTHIA
Listen, if you don't have lunch
today, I'll buy.

BOBBY
Sounds good.

CYNTHIA exits. BOBBY goes back to his work. After a beat he glances over at the old police report. He spots the names of investigators LEWIS SKINNER and FRED SANDERS. He pushes his intercom. *

BOBBY
(continuing)
Clara, can you find out how I can get a hold of either Lewis Skinner or Fred Sanders? *

CLARA (V.O.)
Well, if you want Lewis Skinner you're gonna need a big shovel and about six hours of digging time. *

BOBBY
What about Fred Sanders?

CLARA
As far as I know he's still above ground.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. THE EVERS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

44

BOBBY and FRED SANDERS, who was one of the detectives at the murder scene, are walking through Medgar Evers' old neighborhood.

SANDERS

Chamblee and me were out there eight minutes after the call came in. The way Mrs. Evers was hollering at us, you'd think we was the ones who done it. There's what used to be Joe's Drive-In.

SANDERS points to the decrepit shack on the side of the highway that was once Joe's Drive-In.

45 EXT. A RANCH HOUSE - DAY

45

BOBBY and FRED SANDERS stand across the street from Medgar Evers' boarded-up house.

SANDERS

Back in '63 this here was a vacant lot. This is where they found the gun. Hidden in some honeysuckle vines.

BOBBY

Got any ideas about where that gun could be?

SANDERS

Hell, no. Could be anywhere. In those days evidence had a way of disappearing after trials.

SANDERS smiles slightly as he nods across the street.

SANDERS

(continuing)

Look at that. Hell, my grandmother coulda picked off Evers from over here.

They walk across the street.

SANDERS

(continuing)

That's where he was hit. Right over there.

BOBBY walks into the carport. He's standing where Medgar Evers stood on that fateful night.

SANDERS

(continuing)

There was more blood than I ever seen.
(more)

SANDERS (cont'd)
All over the driveway, all over the
car. It was like somebody butchered
a hog. But this Evers, he musta been
one hell of a strong man, 'cause
somehow he managed to drag himself
all the way up to his door.

BOBBY retraces Evers' route to the front door.

SANDERS
(continuing)
After that bullet tore through Evers'
back, it slammed through that window,
crashed through a wall, ricocheted
off the refrigerator and busted a
coffee pot. We found it on the
kitchen counter lying next to a
watermelon.

BOBBY
You're kidding.

SANDERS
No, sir.

BOBBY just stares at the spot where Medgar lay dying in front
of his family.

BOBBY
Did he have any kids?

SANDERS
If memory serves, I think there were
three little ones there that night.

BOBBY
What kind of a man shoots another man
in the back in front of his family?

DISSOLVE TO:

46 OMITTED

46

TIGHT SHOT OF MEDGAR EVERS

delivering a speech at a church rally. We are looking at an
old black and white film that has been transferred to
videotape. As we get caught up in the passion of the speech,
we PULL BACK TO REVEAL...

47 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT 47

BOBBY, sitting in a small cluttered den, studying the tape.
He barely notices DIXIE, who has entered in the background in
her nightgown.

DIXIE
Who's that?

BOBBY
Medgar Evers.

DIXIE
Why you looking at that?

BOBBY
Just trying to get an idea of who he
was.

DIXIE
Yeah, well I'd like to get an idea of
who you are.

BOBBY
What's that supposed to mean?

DIXIE
(beat) *
Bobby, I was more than happy to go
down the road with you when you got
out of law school and did all that
pro bono work. I didn't complain *
when you went to work for that Jew
lawyer who ran you ragged. Now maybe
I minded a little when you passed up
the wonderful offer my daddy had
lined up, just so you could be an
assistant D.A. at one-fourth the
salary.
But I'll be damned if I spent the
last ten years supporting your every
career decision just so you could
humiliate me.

BOBBY
Dixie, I--

DIXIE
You're gonna pursue this thing,
aren't you?
(more)

DIXIE (cont'd)
You're gonna pursue this thing, and
you're going to humiliate me in front
of my friends, my family, and the
entire state of Mississippi.

BOBBY
I'm just looking at a couple of tapes.

DIXIE
Fine. You look at your tapes. But
that's all you had better do.

She walks out.

BOBBY sits for a moment. After a few beats, he picks up
another tape labeled "EVERS CRIME SCENE." He puts it in the
VCR and pushes "Play."

SOME OLD NEWS FOOTAGE OF THE NIGHT OF MEDGAR EVERS' MURDER

Everything is chaos (POLICE, NEIGHBORS); there's Evers' car
in the carport; the T-shirts he dropped can be made out lying
on the ground. The footage is bad, MEDGAR is being carried
away on a mattress and put into a neighbors pick-up truck.
MYRLIE, hysterically screaming for MEDGAR, is being held back
by a group of neighbors. And then there's..

*
*
*
*

THE THREE EVERS CHILDREN

huddled together. The image of these little kids who have
just seen their father lose his life is a powerful one, and
BOBBY can't take his eyes off their faces.

CUT TO:

48

INT. MAYFLOWER CAFE - DAY

48

ED PETERS and BOBBY are finishing their lunch. A WAITER
walks by placing a check on the table.

BOBBY
Why not?

ED
Because we can't win.

BOBBY
Who says?

ED
The Sixth Amendment says.

BOBBY
Suppose I could get around the Sixth
Amendment.

ED
Jesus, Bobby, it's one thing for the
grieving widow to carry on, but...

*

BOBBY
Suppose an argument could be made
that the Sixth Amendment simply
doesn't apply. Like in the MacDonald
case. What if--

ED
You want to retry Beckwith? Fine.
All you have to do is dig up twenty-
six-year-old physical evidence which
is probably no longer in existence;
then you will have to not only
identify but locate the key
witnesses, who, even if you do find
them, are probably dead or senile or
both.

ED gets up, leaves a tip, and heads towards the cashier.
BOBBY follows.

BOBBY
Their testimony could be read into
the record from the trial transcript.

ED
If we could find a certified
transcript--and we haven't seen one
of those for over twenty-five years.

BOBBY
But if we could find one--

ED
Bobby, even if by some miracle you
found a transcript and got an
indictment...

ED walks out of the cafe, and BOBBY follows him to his car.

49 EXT. MAYFLOWER CAFE - DAY

49

ED
(continuing)
...and if by some even greater
miracle the circuit court, the state
supreme court, and the U.S. Supreme
Court didn't throw it out and you
actually got to trial...what if you
lose?

BOBBY
Ed, that's always--

ED
This whole state, which is supposed
to have changed so much over the past
twenty-five years, will be looking at
the worst damned public relations
disaster since that little black kid
Emmett Till bobbed up outa the
Tallahatchie.

ED unlocks his car door. They both get in. After a beat...

BOBBY
Are you telling me I can't go after
this?

ED
I'm telling you you are dealing with
the past. And in the state of
Mississippi, that's not a place you
want to be.

ED takes off.

CUT TO:

50 INT. MYRLIE EVERS' HOUSE (BEND, OREGON) - EVENING

50

MYRLIE and her husband of the past 15 years, WALTER WILLIAMS,
are having a family dinner with MYRLIE's three now-grown
children. REENA's two youngest CHILDREN are fighting to sit
on MYRLIE's lap.

DARRELL
Jerry Mitchell is fine, Mom, but we
need the national press.

*

REENA

Darrell, CNN is not gonna run a major story on how the D.A.'s office of Hinds County is refusing to re-prosecute a case that's a quarter of a century old.

(to the children)

Stop annoying your grandmama.

WALTER

Reena, don't you know the greatest joy your mother has in life is being annoyed by her grandchildren?

MYRLIE

Next to being annoyed by you, Walter.

VAN

They would run a story if we could find some hard evidence. Maybe we can find someone who was on that jury who would be willing to talk now.

The TELEPHONE RINGS from another room.

WALTER

I'll get it.

MYRLIE

(to WALTER)

I'm not home, no matter who it is.

(to VAN)

Van, even if I had the resources to conduct a full-scale investigation, the last people on earth any one of those jurors would be willing to talk to are sitting at this table.

*

51 INT. MYRLIE'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

51

In the den, there are pictures of Medgar Evers on the wall, also pictures of his children, and the grandchildren he didn't live to see. We also see an array of awards and honors given to Myrlie Evers for her work over the years with the NAACP and other civil rights organizations. There are also numerous awards with Walter's name on them, given to him for his work with his labor union. WALTER picks up the phone.

WALTER

(into phone)

Hello.

(beat)

Who?... Just a moment.

*

DINING ROOM

Walter sticks his head in.

WALTER
(continuing)
It's long distance from Jackson. Man
by the name of DeLaughter. You want
me to take it?

*

MYRLIE is surprised.

MYRLIE
No, I'll take it.

She walks out and picks up the phone.

MYRLIE
(continuing; into
phone)
Hello.

52 INT. DELAUGHTER DEN - NIGHT

52

BOBBY's alone on the phone. INTERCUT the following.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Hello, Mrs. Evers. I know you
probably left here feeling pretty
discouraged the other day, but I hope
you understand that Mr. Peters was
just being realistic.

MYRLIE
(into phone;
sarcastic)
I understand perfectly.

BOBBY
(into phone)
But I also wanted you to know, ma'am,
that we are going to be keeping this
case open.
(silence on the other
end)
Mrs. Evers?

MYRLIE
(into phone)
Tell me something, Mr. DeLaughter.
Did it suddenly occur to Mr. Peters
that he'd better start making nice to
the black community before November?

BOBBY
(into phone)
Mrs. Evers--

MYRLIE
(into phone)
Mr. Peters made it abundantly clear
that in addition to having no
evidence and no witnesses, he also
had no interest.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Actually, Mrs. Evers, lookin' into
this wasn't Mr. Peters' idea so much
as it was mine.

*
*

MYRLIE
(into phone)
Yours?

BOBBY
(into phone)
Yes, ma'am.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
Mr. DeLaughter, Judge Russel Moore
was perhaps the most racist judge
Mississippi has ever known. Why
should his son-in-law care about this
case?

During the following, DIXIE walks in.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Mrs. Evers, I'm thirty-seven years
old, just like Medgar was. And I've
got three kids like he did. I was
eleven years old when your husband
was killed, and I hardly remember him
at all, but I went by your house the
other day, and I could see him there.
Watering his lawn, working on his
roof...playing with his children. No
man has the right to take another man
away from his children.

MYRLIE is still guarded.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
I appreciate the call, Mr. Delaughter.

BOBBY
I'll keep in touch, Mrs. Evers.

BOBBY hangs up and turns to see DIXIE standing there, dressed to go out.

DIXIE
Did you plan on telling me, or was I
just gonna read about it in the
papers?

BOBBY can't answer this.

DIXIE
(continuing)
We're supposed to be at the Walkers'
house for dinner in fifteen minutes.

BOBBY
I've got too much work to do.

DIXIE
Suit yourself.

She walks out, leaving BOBBY alone.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. STATE ARCHIVES BUILDING - DAY

53

BOBBY is walking with investigator CHARLIE CRISCO towards the Archives Building.

CRISCO
Nobody gives a good goddam 'bout what
Byron De La Beckwith did to some
Medgar Evers twenty-six years ago.
Hell, Larry Smith got shot down in
his own damned driveway just last
week. And it wasn't for civil
rights, neither. It was for whatever
spare change he had in his pocket.

They enter the building.

BOBBY
Crisko, I could have had any
investigator working on this, but I
asked for you.

CRISCO

Am I meant to be flattered by that?
We're supposed to be trying to nail
Larry Williams for splitting Wendell
Washington's head open with a pick
axe, and that guy Pierson for
emptying his rifle into Donny Brown's
chest.

BOBBY

You're right. And that's why we're
only going to work on this case in
our spare time.

CUT TO:

54 INT. STATE ARCHIVES BUILDING - DAY

54

A behemoth of a building. Seems like acres of file cabinets,
and desks with microfilm projectors. BOBBY and CRISCO sit at
separate desks, looking at magnified microfilm projected on
the small screens. BOBBY is reading from a Clarion-Ledger
dated February 5, 1964.

The headline reads, "Car Hop Saw Beckwith Car Near Murder
Scene." Bobby writes the name "Barbara Holder" down on a pad
that already contains the names "Robert Pittman" and "Betty
Jean Coley." Then he presses the copy button on the
projector. He adds the copy to a growing stack.

We see some other old headlines like, "Beckwith Fingerprint
On Murder Gun Sight," "Cabbies Say Beckwith Asked Evers'
Address," "Greenwood Cops Alibi Beckwith," etc. Then from
the next desk Crisco shouts:

CRISCO

Holy shit, will you look at this...

BOBBY rushes over. CRISCO's looking at an ad in the old
paper.

CRISCO

(continuing)

You could buy a whole damn General
Electric refrigerator for one hundred
and eighty-five dollars. Talk about
your good old days...

CUT TO:

55 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

55

BOBBY sits at his desk, looking at an evidence card containing a PHOTO OF BYRON DE LA BECKWITH'S FINGERPRINT, lifted from the rifle scope nearly thirty years ago by Capt. Ralph Hargrove, whose name appears on the corner of the card.

Then BOBBY reaches into an old box and removes several old BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS, also with Hargrove's name on them. One is of Beckwith's white, dusty PLYMOUTH VALIANT with the long snake-like antenna, another is of TWO POLICE DETECTIVES at the scene of the crime. One man stands by the honeysuckle thicket, holding up Beckwith's Enfield rifle.

VOICE (O.S.)

That's my daddy.

BENNY BENNETT, dressed in motorcycle garb, has come in unnoticed. He points to the man in the picture.

BOBBY

Hey, Benny. I didn't know your dad was on the force, too.

BENNY

Sure--Detective L.C. Bennett. He told me he was there when they found Beckwith's rifle, but I sure ain't never seen this.

BOBBY hands BENNY the picture so he can get a better look.

BOBBY

Detective Adams found this stuff while he was cleaning out a closet over in evidence.

CRISCO rushes in. He's in a bad mood. He waves a list around.

CRISCO

John Goza is dead, Herbert Speight is dead, B.L. Pittman is dead--

BOBBY

Is anybody alive?

CRISCO

This is pointless.

The INTERCOM BUZZES.

CLARA (O.S.)
(on intercom)
It's Jerry Mitchell.

BOBBY picks up the phone.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Jerry. No, Jerry, I don't have the
gun yet. I don't have anything yet.
If I find the gun, you'll be the
first to know.
(hangs up)
Pain in the ass...

BOBBY picks up a photocopy of the old Clarion-Ledger article,
"Two Greenwood Cops Alibi Beckwith."

BENNY
(still looking at the
picture of his daddy)
It's funny...I just came in here to
see if you could use some help on the
case, and here you are with a picture
of my daddy.

CRISCO
We sure could use some help with this
thing, Benny. How are you at
bringing people back from the dead?

BOBBY
You're joking, but that's exactly
what we have to do. This case is one
big resurrection. We're gonna have
to make the past start living again.
I want you guys to go through every
piece of literature from every
organization Beckwith was a part of--
the White Citizens Council, the Sons
of the American Revolution, the KKK--
all of them.

CRISCO
Good, I always liked homework.

*

BOBBY
(holding up the
newspaper photocopy)
...Right now we're gonna start by
paying these boys a visit.

BENNY
Who's that?

BOBBY
Two cops said they saw Beckwith
ninety miles away at the time of the
murder.

CRISCO
You think you're gonna get Holley and
Cresswell to admit they lied under
oath?

BOBBY
Time has a way of cleaning up
people's memories.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. MISSISSIPPI DELTA - DAY

56

BOBBY's Blazer cruises down a long stretch of highway. He's
accompanied by CRISCO and BENNY.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I love the Delta. It's the best
place on earth.

CRISCO (V.O.)
Yeah, if you're a mosquito.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

57

CRISCO's eating a moon pie, BENNY's smoking a cigarette, and
BOBBY's just standing there daring to feel hopeful as they
watch JAMES HOLLEY chatting amicably with a MIDDLE-AGED BLACK
MAN. HOLLEY's in his early sixties; he's got a buzz-cut crew
cut and a pot belly. HOLLEY and the black man seem to be
pals.

HOLLEY and the BLACK MAN end their conversation with a hearty
handshake.

Then the BLACK MAN walks off, and HOLLY approaches BOBBY,
CRISCO, and BENNY. He's friendly.

HOLLEY
Sometimes you just can't win for
losing. Here I ask you boys to meet
me here so as to avoid running into
any of my constituents...

BOBBY
(smiles)
How long have you been an alderman up here, Mr. Holley?

HOLLEY
Oh, hell, must be going on five years.
(laughs)
I'll tell you this: If it ever gets out that I testified on behalf of Byron De La Beckwith... I suppose, in a way, your boss and me's got the same problem.

BOBBY
Sir?

HOLLEY
(laughs)
If we want to keep our jobs, we both gotta kiss and awful lot of black behind.

BOBBY forces a smile.

BOBBY
Mr. Holley, Medgar Evers was killed shortly after midnight, ninety miles away in Jackson. There's no way the man who killed him could have been up here in Greenwood at one a.m., pumping gas.

HOLLEY
No, sir. That'd be impossible.

BOBBY
I know it was a long while ago, but I'd like you to think back if you would and tell me...are you still sure about the time you say you saw Mr. Beckwith at that gas station?

HOLLEY
Well, sir, this old memory just gets worse and worse with each passing year, but two things I'm pretty sure about: It was approximately 1:03 in the morning, and Old Delay was gassing up that Valiant of his.

CUT TO:

58 INT. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

58

After a beat, BOBBY pounds the dash.

BOBBY
Lyin' son of a bitch...

CRISCO
You honestly thought you were gonna
hear something different?

BENNY
Maybe we'll have better luck with his
partner.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. CRESSWELL'S HOUSE - DAY

59

BOBBY, CRISCO, and BENNY stand at the door with HOLLIS
CRESSWELL, a seventy-five-year-old man with an unfiltered
cigarette dangling from his mouth.

CRESSWELL
Y'all want to subpoena me? You go
right ahead and do it, but if I see
you, Byron Delay Beckwith, or the
blackest nigger in the country
putting gas in his car around the
time of a murder, then that's what
I'm gonna say.

CRISCO
(looking at BENNY)
I'd say he's in our camp.

CRESSWELL goes back inside and closes the door on the trio.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. GAS STATION OFF THE HIGHWAY - DAY

60

Bobby's Blazer pulls into a gas station and up to a pump.

BOBBY (V.O.)
I was hoping I'd have some good news
for her today.

BENNY (V.O.)
Who's that?

BOBBY (V.O.)
Mrs. Evers. I call her every Friday
and tell her how the case is
progressing.

CRISCO (V.O.)
I got a flash for you, Bobby. This
case ain't progressing.

BOBBY, CRISCO, and BENNY get out to stretch and gas up.

BOBBY
I think about her keeping this thing
alive all this time. Imagine a woman
loving a man so much.

CRISCO
Hell, I can't get even get a woman to
love me while I'm still alive. You
know what I did after my last
divorce? I took up golf. Man needs
a hobby to occupy his mind.
Otherwise you wind up doing crazy
things like drinking too much or
chasing twenty-six-year-old murder
cases across the Mississippi Delta.

BOBBY starts towards a nearby phone booth.

CUT TO:

61 INT. MYRLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

61

The phone is RINGING. MYRLIE picks it up.

MYRLIE
Hello.

INTERCUT the following with BOBBY on the phone at the gas
station.

BOBBY
Mrs. Evers?

MYRLIE
Mr. DeLaughter.

BOBBY
I told you I'd call you every Friday,
and, well, this is Friday, Mrs.
Evers, so...I'm calling.

MYRLIE

Mr. DeLaughter, this really isn't necessary.

BOBBY

No, it's important to me that you know I'm doing what I can. I wish I had better news for you today, but the truth is we still haven't been able to locate the autopsy report, most of the physical evidence is still missing, a number of witnesses have died, which really hurts us, since so far we've had no luck finding the original trial transcript, and I just met with Holley and Cresswell, who are both sticking to their stories.

MYRLIE

(sarcastically)

Mr. DeLaughter, I'm sure as the assistant district attorney of Hinds County, you're doing everything in your power to see that justice is done.

BOBBY

(starting to defend himself)

Mrs. Evers...

MYRLIE

Yes, Mr. DeLaughter.

BOBBY

(backs off)

I'll call you next Friday.

MYRLIE

I'll be on pins and needles till then.

BOBBY hangs up.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. MISSISSIPPI DELTA - DUSK

62

Bobby's Blazer heads back towards Jackson.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT 63

Bobby's Blazer pulls into the driveway. BOBBY gets out and heads for the kitchen door entrance.

CUT TO:

64 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT 64

BOBBY enters the darkened

KITCHEN

He goes to the fridge, gets a Coke, takes a slug, and goes into the

LIVING ROOM

The house is dark and silent. He heads

DOWN THE HALL

He pokes his head into

THE KIDS' ROOMS

Everyone is sleeping. He heads towards his bedroom. He enters the

BEDROOM

to find DIXIE sitting on the edge of the bed, her packed bags at her feet. BOBBY is stopped.

DIXIE

I waited for you to come home. I'm not taking the children with me. I need to be on my own for a while.

DIXIE emotionlessly picks up her bags and walks to the door.

DIXIE

(continuing)

I was just wondering when we stopped loving each other?

*

BOBBY

I don't know. When we were nineteen, we couldn't get enough of each other. All those summer nights we'd steal a bottle of your daddy's bourbon and sneak off to the reservoir.

DIXIE
What happened, Bobby?

BOBBY
People change.

DIXIE
You're saying I've changed.

BOBBY
I'm saying you haven't.

DIXIE walks out the door, leaving BOBBY alone.

FADE TO BLACK

BYRON DE LA BECKWITH ON A T.V. SCREEN

BECKWITH is much older now, but you'd know him anywhere. We catch glimpses of his wife THELMA, a funny little lady with a crooked wig. ED BRYSON'S VOICE is heard.

BRYSON (O.S.)
(on T.V.)
This is certainly a beautiful area.

BECKWITH
(on T.V.)
It's heaven on earth. Of course, like everywhere else, we do get the occasional stray nigger moving in, but their houses always seem to burn down.
(chuckles)
You know how careless niggers are with their cigarettes.

We PULL BACK TO REVEAL BOBBY sitting with CRISCO and BENNY in...

65 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

65

They are watching a tape. This is the first time they've seen Byron De La Beckwith.

BENNY
Real beauty, ain't he?

BOBBY
Where did you get this?

BENNY
Ed Bryson over at Channel Three. They're running a piece on Beckwith this weekend.

A production assistant is heard saying to Bryson:

P.A.
(on T.V.)
We're ready, Mr. Bryson.

As THELMA moves out of frame, BECKWITH straightens his tie and clears his throat.

BRYSON (O.S.)
Tell me, Mr. Beckwith, do you think
it's a crime for a white man to kill
a black man?

It's obvious to BOBBY that Beckwith is enjoying the attention and the opportunity to tell the world the way things are.

BECKWITH
God put the white man here to rule
over all the dusky races. It says so
in the Bible.

BRYSON
Do you think there's a chance you
will ever be indicted again for the
murder of Medgar Evers?

*
*
*

BECKWITH
Hell, why would I be indicted
again..? Do you know of any new
evidence?

BRYSON
Well, no.

BECKWITH
Are you a Jew?

*

BRYSON
Im Catholic.

*
*

BECKWITH
Cause I told you I wont talk to no
Jews. Anybody knows anything about
these niggers and Jews knows that
these Jews put the niggers up to all
this foolishness.. CORE and SNICK,
and NAACP.

*
*

BRYSON
But if you were indicted again...

*

BECKWITH
I'm just gonna tend to my business
like I always have.
(more)

*

BECKWITH (cont'd)
I'm gonna look out for my God, my
family and the whole State of
Christ's church.
Now that don't encompass or include
anybody but white Christians. All
these other races, colors and creeds,
sissies... they're anti-Christ.
Many of 'em believe in human
sacrifices and voodoo and such. And
the Jews are what God made 'em.
Children of the devil. And anybody
who says Jesus was a Jew is a damned
fool, and they're gonna suffer in
hell.

BOBBY just sits there; he can, but he can't, believe he's
hearing this.

BRYSON (O.S.)
Mr. Beckwith, according to your way
of thinking, how can justice be done
in the Medgar Evers murder case?

BECKWITH
Well, you first...first they gotta
find out who killed the nigger.

BRYSON (O.S.)
Then what?

BECKWITH smiles the mocking smile of a man who has gotten
away with murder.

BECKWITH
Well, just do whatever the law says
that you can do if you're big enough
to do it.

BENNY
He's daring us to get him.

CRISCO
That don't change the fact that we
still ain't got nothing.

BECKWITH
I know what you're going to say, did
I kill Medgar Evers?

BRYSON
Did you?

BECKWITH
Hell, no. I did not kill Medgar
Evers.

(laughs)
But he sure is dead.
(laughs again)
And he ain't coming back.

BRYSON
What did you think when you heard
Medgar Evers had been killed?

BECKWITH
I did not shed a tear. No sir, it
didn't make any difference to me.
But I knew that the NAACP was dealt
a severe blow.
(more)

BECKWITH (cont'd)
And so did everybody in Mississippi
who owned property, who tried to keep
their children in white schools, who
had to spend hundreds of thousands of
dollars of their money building
schools to keep these niggers out and
keep this trash out of Mississippi.
After all, the negra was brought over
here against his own will and after
he got here he enjoyed it ever since.

CRISCO and BENNY sit there with their jaws hanging open.
BOBBY shuts off the video.

BOBBY
Yeah, it's been one big picnic.

CLARA enters with a huge stack of literature. She dumps it
on BOBBY's desk.

CLARA
Here you go. The latest literary
efforts from Hate-Group-of-the-Month
Club.

BENNY
For people who only got one thing on
their minds, they sure got a whole
lot of ways to tell you about it.

BOBBY leans back in his chair and spots a PICTURE of Russel
Moore and Bobby posing with a tuna they caught.

BOBBY
I wonder what old Judge Moore would
be thinking about all this.

*
*

CRISCO
Dixie still living with her mom?

BOBBY

Oh, shit. I'm late.

As BOBBY starts picking up his stuff, ED PETERS walks in.

ED

Hot off the presses.

(hands BOBBY a file)

Armed robbery. A guy named Spratlin
help up Crechelle's and got away with
\$3,800 and an order of onion rings.

BOBBY

Thanks, Ed. I'll take care of it.

ED

Where are you going?

BOBBY

Dixie's with the kids. I told her
I'd be home by six.

ED

What about the Owens case?

BOBBY

The assault with the baseball bat.
I'm totally prepared.

ED

No, the carjacking.

BOBBY

Right, carjacking. I'm on top of it.

ED

Look, I know you want to make this
Evers thing your life's work, but we
do have a case or two that occurred
in this decade.

BOBBY

Ed, I promise--

ED

This office is not going to keep
covering for you with the judges.
You'd best be in court tomorrow
morning.

BOBBY

Ed, relax. I'll be there.

BOBBY exits, leaving ED, CRISCO, and BENNY standing there.

66 OMITTED

66

67 INT. DELAUGHTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

67

DREW is just out of the tub, and BOBBY is drying him off.
BURT pokes his head in.

BURT
Dad, something is wrong with the
computer.

BOBBY
What?

BURT
I'm in DOS, trying to copy from the
hard disk to a floppy, and it keeps
coming up, "Zero files copied."

BOBBY
Did you try hitting it?

BURT
I bet Mom could fix it.

BOBBY
I'm sure she could.

BURT walks out, disappointed. CLAIRE walks in.

CLAIRE
I can't find my pink nightgown.

BOBBY
It's in the wash.

CLAIRE
You said that last night.

BOBBY
I'm sorry, sweetie. You'll have it
for tomorrow night.

CLAIRE
You said that last night.

BOBBY
Claire, please, pumpkin. Find
something else for tonight, okay?

CLAIRE exits. She is also disappointed.

BOBBY is now putting Drew's pajamas on him. After a
silence...

DREW
Daddy, how come Grandpa Russel would
be mad at you?

BOBBY
What?

DREW
Mommy said Grandpa Russel would be
mad at you.

BOBBY
Great. What else did Mommy say?

DREW
She said you're doing something that
Grandpa wouldn't like.

BOBBY
Yeah, well...

DREW
What are you doing?

BOBBY
You know, Drew, your Grandpa Russel
and I didn't always agree on things.

DREW
What things?

BOBBY
How do I explain this?

After a beat,

DREW
Explain it.

BOBBY
Right. You know how people can just
sometimes be different?

DREW
Like how?

BOBBY
Well, let's see, Grandpa used to like
to eat pigs' knuckles.

DREW
Eeeww!

BOBBY

That's how I feel. See? We're different. Also, Grandpa used to like to build things. I can't build anything, but I like working in the garden. Grandpa always had a lot of guns around the house. We don't have any.

DREW

I have a gun.

BOBBY

Yeah, right, but yours is a nuclear-powered laser gun. I was talking about handguns and rifles.

A thought hits BOBBY.

BOBBY

(continuing)

Holy shit.

(calling out)

Claire, watch Drew.

He starts out of the bathroom.

DREW

Holy shit.

BOBBY

Don't say that. It's a bad word.

BOBBY goes down...

68 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

68

...to his bedroom, passing Claire.

CLAIRE

I don't want to watch him.

BOBBY

Sweetie, just do it. I'll owe you one.

CLAIRE

You already owe me six.

69 INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

69

BOBBY picks up the phone in his bedroom and dials. INTERCUT BENNY in his house.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Benny.

BENNY
(into phone)
Hey, Bobby.

BOBBY
(into phone)
When Fred Sanders was showing me the
crime scene, he said something about
evidence disappearing after trials.
Do you know anything about that?

BENNY
(into phone)
My daddy told me that kind of thing
happened all the time. People used
to take stuff as souvenirs. Lawyers,
bailiffs, clerks.

BOBBY
(into phone)
How about judges?

CUT TO:

70 INT. MOORE HOUSE - NIGHT

70

This spacious, two-story house is the home of CAROLINE MOORE,
widow of Judge Russel Moore. CAROLINE is sitting in the
living room, playing bridge with THREE OF HER FRIENDS.

BRIDGE LADY #1
I'm afraid I can't play next Tuesday.
We have a round robin at the club,
and I promised Lou Ann.

The DOORBELL RINGS, and CAROLINE gets up.

CAROLINE
That's all right. I'll call Charlene
tonight. If she can't make it, I'll
try Louise. Play the jack of clubs
for me.

CAROLINE opens the door to reveal BOBBY standing there with
his KIDS in tow. The KIDS all chime in...

BURT/DREW/CLAIRE
Hi, Grandma.

CAROLINE
Bobby, what are you doing? Dixie's
not here.

BOBBY
I thought maybe you'd enjoy a visit
from your grandkids.

CAROLINE
This is my bridge night.

BOBBY
We can only stay a minute. Remember
that old rifle that Judge Moore used
to have holding open the door to his
study? Have you seen it around?

And with that, BOBBY and the KIDS push past her into the
house.

CAROLINE
Bobby...

BOBBY barges into the living room, where three well-heeled
ladies are sitting around a card table.

CAROLINE
(continuing)
Ladies, y'all know Bobby.

BOBBY
Hello, ladies.

BOBBY starts up the stairs.

BRIDGE LADY #2
What does he want here, Caroline?

CAROLINE
He's looking for a gun.

CAROLINE follows him up the stairs.

BRIDGE LADY #3
My, my, Burt. Pretty soon you're
going to be as big as your Daddy.

BRIDGE LADY #1
Hopefully not as bullheaded.

71 INT. RUSSEL MOORE'S DEN - NIGHT

71 *

BOBBY enters the den of Judge Russel Moore, one of the most
notorious segregationist judges from the Civil Rights era.

The room is like a time capsule, filled with awards to Moore from the Citizens' Council, the Sovereignty Commission, the Sons of the American Revolution, etc.

CAROLINE

Bobby, please, I'm gonna have to ask you to leave.

BOBBY

I spent many a happy hour up here arguing the fine points of the law with your husband.

CAROLINE

If he knew what you were up to with this Evers nonsense, he'd be turning over in his grave.

BOBBY

I said that myself, just this morning.

BOBBY opens the closet. It's a huge walk-in. He steps inside and starts poking around. It's filled mostly with old clothes, old fishing rods and golf clubs, you name it.

CAROLINE

Dixie always said you were a damned fool...

BOBBY

Maybe she had a point.

CAROLINE stands in front of a huge trunk beneath the window. BOBBY notes this and moves over to her.

CAROLINE

I knew from the start that you and Dixie just weren't right. She's much better off with a man like Ralph, who's got--

BOBBY

(indicating for her to move)

Ms. Moore, could you...

CAROLINE moves out of the way; BOBBY opens the trunk.

CAROLINE

Bobby, I've got to get back to my bridge game, and--

There are about a dozen old guns inside. BOBBY starts sorting through them.

BOBBY
You go on. I'll be right down.

CAROLINE
Bobby, I'd really prefer it if you'd
come on down with me now.

BOBBY pulls out an old rifle. It's an Enfield. Exactly like
the one in the photograph. He holds it up.

CAROLINE
(continuing)
Careful with that thing. It's not
loaded, is it? What are you--

BOBBY thrusts the gun into CAROLINE's hands as he pulls out
a piece of paper from his pocket.

BOBBY
I just want to check the serial
number.

BOBBY grabs the rifle back out of CAROLINE's hands. He
compares the serial number on the gun barrel to the number on
the slip of paper.

CAROLINE
Now, Bobby, you know I love my
grandchildren dearly, but it's
entirely inappropriate for you to
just barge in here unannounced and
expect me to--

The numbers are matching.

BOBBY
(building)
Yes...yes...yes, yes!

BOBBY grabs CAROLINE.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Caroline, I love you.

He plants a big kiss on her cheek and rushes out.

CUT TO:

72 INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

72

BOBBY is smiling like the cat who ate the canary as he walks
towards his office, followed by CRISCO.

CRISCO
You're full of shit...

BOBBY
Go check the evidence locker. I just
logged it in.

CYNTHIA walks by.

CYNTHIA
Logged what in?

BOBBY
The gun that killed Medgar Evers.

CYNTHIA
You're full of shit...

BENNY wanders by.

BENNY
Who's full of shit?

CYNTHIA
Bobby says he found the gun that
killed Medgar Evers.

BOBBY comes out of his office, carrying his briefcase.

BENNY
(to BOBBY)
You're full of shit...

BOBBY heads to the elevator. CRISCO follows.

CRISCO
Well, you finally got something to
tell Mrs. Evers.

BOBBY
I'm not going to tell her.

CRISCO
Bobby, for months you've been making
those Friday calls just so you could
get her to trust you. If you don't
tell her, and she finds out...

BOBBY
That's just the point. I can't have
her find out.

They enter the elevator.

*

72A INT. COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR - DAY

72A

BOBBY
This can't leave the office.
It's great we have the gun, but the
only chance we have for a new
indictment is if we can find
something they didn't have twenty-
seven years ago.

72B INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY

72B

They exit the elevator and walks towards the entrance of the
building.

BOBBY
And the way I see it, that something
is gonna come from Beckwith.

*

CRISCO
Beckwith?

*

*

BOBBY
Yes. Right now he's up there on his
mountaintop, shooting his mouth off
to anyone who'll listen. No telling
what incriminating thing's liable to
come out of that old man. But if he
knows we have something like this,
he'll know we're taking this
investigation seriously and he'll
just clam right up.

*

*

*

*

CRISCO
Bobby, I doubt that Beckwith and
Myrlie Evers speak all that often.

*

BOBBY
No, but Myrlie Evers does speak to
Jerry Mitchell, and Jerry Mitchell
speaks to the world.

They arrive at Bobby's car, the windshield of which is bashed
in and is painted with a huge swastika. CRISCO picks a note
off the hood.

CRISCO
(reading)
"You had better stop wasting the
taxpayers' money. Enjoy your drive
home."

BOBBY
It's nice to know Jackson still has
some concerned citizens.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP CHICKEN AND RIBS BEING GRILLED ON A BARBECUE

BARNEY (O.S.)
Well, heck, son, what did you expect?

73 EXT. A SMALL CABIN BY A LAKE - DAY

73

BURT, CLAIRE, and DREW are swimming. BARNEY is tending to the barbecue. BILLIE is setting a picnic table. BOBBY's having a beer.

BOBBY

I expect people to act like decent, law-abiding citizens. This is 1990, for cryin' out loud.

BARNEY

Of course it is. And we got blacks and whites playing ball together, on the police force, in the government, on T.V. We are a fully evolved society, aren't we, son? Let me tell you something: This country may be legally integrated, but emotionally we will always be segregated.

BOBBY

I don't know that I accept that.

BARNEY

Of course not. You're Bobby DeLaughter, Mississippi's self-appointed new civil rights leader.

BILLIE

Barney, do we have to talk about all this?

BARNEY

No, we do not.
(calling out to the kids)
Who all wants some of your grandpa's famous baby backs?

The KIDS scream, "I do" and jump out of the lake and towards the picnic area.

BARNEY

(continuing)

Bobby, you're my son. I don't want to see you get hurt.

CUT TO:

74 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

74 *

BOBBY's on the phone with MYRLIE. BENNY's off in a corner checking out documentary news footage from Eyes On the Prize.

ROY WILKINS is delivering a speech. BOBBY is making a call. *

BOBBY
(into phone)
Hello, Mrs. Evers. It's Bobby *
Delaughter. Thank you, they're fine. *
Nothing really earth-shattering.

BOBBY
(continuing)
We've located just about all the
witnesses who are still with us, but
without the original trial
transcript, it's been tough piecing *
the case together.

CRISCO rushes into the room, holding a softcover BOOK.

CRISCO
Bobby!

He notices BOBBY's on the phone. He can't contain his
enthusiasm.

As BOBBY continues talking, CRISCO gestures for BOBBY to hang
up.

BOBBY
(into phone)
No, ma'am, that's about it. I
understand.
I wish I had something more to
report. No, I understand. Hopefully
next Friday I'll have something a
little more exciting to tell you.
You, too. I'll call you next Friday,
Mrs. Evers. Thank you. Good-bye.
(hangs up; to CRISCO)
What's going on?

CRISCO
Would a confession by Mr. Beckwith
himself qualify as exciting?

BOBBY
Whaddya got?

CRISCO
You know Jack Ables?

BENNY
The lawyer?

CRISCO
Yeah. I heard he was representing a movie studio in a defamation of character suit that was brought by a couple of Klansmen who didn't like the way they were portrayed in a certain motion picture. Anyway, I told him if he came across anything he thought might help our case, to give us a call.

CRISCO hands BOBBY the BOOK he's holding, the cover of which has a burning cross on it. BOBBY reads the title.

BOBBY
"Klandestine?"

CRISCO
It was written twenty years ago about this Klan-titan-turned-FBI-informant, name of Delmar Dennis. On page eighty-nine, he talks about attending a Klan rally back in August of 1965.
Guess who was a motivational speaker at that particular rally?

BOBBY
No.

CRISCO
Yup.

BENNY
Beckwith?

CRISCO
Our buddy.

CRISCO opens the book and turns to a marked page.

CRISCO
(continuing)
Listen to this--and I quote:
(reads)
"Killing that nigger gave me no more
inner discomfit than our wives endure
when they give birth to our children."

BENNY
Sounds like a confession to me.

BOBBY
Let's run down this Delmar Dennis
fella. I think we need to have a
chat with him.

CUT TO:

A PHONE SLAMMING DOWN ON ITS CRADLE

CRISCO (O.S.)
Nothing.

75 INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - THAT NIGHT

75

BOBBY, CRISCO and BENNY are the only ones left in the office.
Tempers are short.

BENNY
It's like the man fell off the planet.

CRISCO
He's probably living under an assumed
name somewhere.

BENNY
We could go to the Feds.

BOBBY
It takes five years for the Feds to
scratch their balls...we just have to
try harder.

BENNY

We've checked phone books, voter
registration cards, D.M.V.
records...nobody knows him and
nobody's seen him. I'm telling you
we ain't never gonna find Delmar
Dennis.

*

VOICE (O.S.)

I know Delmar.

Everybody turns to see JERRY MITCHELL standing in the door.

MITCHELL

I interviewed him for a story I did
about the Neshoba County murders.
He's in Louisiana now, outside Baton
Rouge. What do you want with Delmar?

JERRY surreptitiously puts his hands in his jacket pocket
and turns on his tape recorder.

*

*

BOBBY

We just want to talk to him.

MITCHELL

About the Beckwith case?

MITCHELL

(continuing)

Have you found the gun yet?

BOBBY reaches into JERRY'S pocket and takes his recorder out.
He speaks right into it.

*

*

BOBBY

This isn't a negotiation, Jerry.

(JERRY smiles)

We don't have the gun. We don't have
anything yet.

BOBBY puts the recorder back in JERRY'S pocket.

*

BOBBY

(continuing)

Now let me have that number for
Delmar Dennis.

*

*

JERRY punches buttons on his watch with the built-in Rolodex.

MITCHELL

You know, Myrlie Evers and a lot of
people in the black community are
starting to wonder if y'all are
really serious about this thing, oh,
lookie here...here it is, Delmar
Dennis.

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*

JERRY deliberately places his hands in his pockets. BENNY
crosses over to him and menacingly stares him down. JERRY,
scared of the consequences of his refusal to co-operate,
takes his hand out of his pocket and shows everyone the
number. As BOBBY writes it down.

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CUT TO:

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CUT TO:

76 THRU 78	OMITTED	76 THRU 78
78A	EXT. DRIVING SHOT - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON) Bobby's Blazer barrels down a rural two lane highway.	78A
79	INT. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY CRISCO and BENNY ride with BOBBY. Their dispositions are grim.	79

CRISCO
I got a hundred bucks says old Delmar
chickens out on us.

BENNY
He's probably hiding in the woods and
shitting in his drawers.

CUT TO:

80 OMITTED
AND
81

80
AND
81

81A EXT. DRIVING SHOT - LATE AFTERNOON

81A

The Blazer is now winding through a back road.

CUT TO:

81B EXT. DRIVING SHOT - LATER

81B

The Blazer continues deeper into the woods.

82 INT./EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

82

BOBBY
Where the hell is this place?

BENNY
This guy informed on the Klan. He
coulda made some deal with 'em to
save his butt by delivering us.

CRISCO
That's a happy thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

83 EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - DUSK

83

The Blazer goes even deeper into the woods.

CUT TO:

83A EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - DUSK

83A

The car pulls up to a clearing site on which stands the RUINS
of an old plantation mansion.

BOBBY and the guys are ready for anything as they step out of
the car and head towards the ruins.

A NOISE IS HEARD. There's somebody behind them. BOBBY,
CRISCO, and BENNY wheel around.

They see a bunch of CROWS flapping out from behind some
columns.

They walk further into the ruins, and out from a shadow steps
DELMAR DENNIS.

DENNIS
One of you Bobby DeLaughter?

BOBBY
Yes, sir. And this is Charlie Crisco
and Benny Bennett.

DENNIS
I like to come out here sometimes and
think. It's a good place to talk.

BOBBY
It's not wanting for privacy. Mr.
Dennis, I understand you're a
minister now.

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*

DENNIS
Yes, I joined the Church of Latter
Day Saints in '71.

As they move over to a place to sit down...

DISSOLVE TO:

84 EXT. RUINS - A SHORT TIME LATER - NIGHT

84

DELMAR DENNIS is telling his story to BOBBY, CRISCO and BENNY.

DENNIS
Holding rallies and burning crosses
was one thing, but, when they killed
those three kids up in Neshoba, those
freedom riders--

BOBBY
Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner?

DENNIS
Yeah. That made a lot of people come
to their senses.
Anyway, that's when I decided to go
undercover for the FBI.

BOBBY

Mr. Dennis...I need to ask you if what you say in that book happened, the part about Beckwith's speech at that Klan rally. Was that or was that not a fact?

DENNIS

It's a fact. I was shocked when he said it, and I remember thinking how stupid he was to go out there and shoot his mouth off like that in front of a hundred men.

BOBBY

Did you report the incident to the FBI?

DENNIS

Sure I did, but Beckwith was a white man accused of killing a black. The FBI wasn't going to blow my cover on a case they knew they couldn't win. They were saving me for the Neshoba trial because--

BOBBY

(it's obvious)

Two of the victims were white.

DENNIS nods. BOBBY wants to get to the reason he's here. He knows he's got to approach it delicately.

BOBBY

(continuing)

Mr. Dennis, if I can't build a case, I give you my word that we never had this conversation. But if I can, will you testify?

BOBBY can see that DENNIS is clearly troubled.

DENNIS

Byron De La Beckwith is the craziest, most dangerous sonavabitch that I ever came across. He was so crazy even the Klan was afraid of him.

BENNY

He's just an old man now.

DENNIS

That "old man"'s probably more dangerous today than he was thirty years ago. There's not a hate group in this country that he ain't associated with. From the Aryan Brotherhood to the Christian Identity Movement.

CRISCO

Who are they?

DENNIS

Just the most fanatical bunch of lunatics in the country. They hate the federal government, and they're storing up arms for a holy war against the blacks and Jews. Beckwith's an ordained minister.

BOBBY

Mr. Dennis, we need your help.

DENNIS

I can't make any promises.

BOBBY

You know something, Mr. Dennis? In the six months I've been working this case, a lot of people have told me to give it up as a lost cause. "It's twenty-seven years old. Let sleeping dogs lie." But, you see, I'm having a hard time doing that because I just don't see what difference it makes if a man got bushwhacked yesterday, today, or twenty-seven damned years ago.

DENNIS

Listen--

BOBBY

Murder is murder, and it's still my job to bring the sonavabitch who did it to justice. It's still your job to help me.

DENNIS

(raising his voice)

I did my job. I testified against the Klan. They shot out my windows and blew up my car.

(more)

DENNIS (cont'd)
They hunted and harassed me for
twenty-five years. Don't that get me
even for the wrong I've done?

BOBBY
We never get even for the wrong we've
done.

DENNIS is thrown by this answer. BOBBY and the others start
to leave.

DENNIS
If I do this thing...you gotta
promise me protection.

CUT TO:

A FIST LANDING A PUNCH ON SOMEBODY'S NOSE, WHICH BECOMES
BLOODIED.

CUT TO:

85 INT./EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

85

BOBBY is returning from his trip, and he approaches his
house. BURT and another boy are throwing punches at each
other. BURT's nose is dripping blood.

BOBBY rushes out of his car and gets between them.

BOBBY
Hey, hey, what's going on?

BURT
He said you're a nigger lover.

KID
My daddy says y'all are going after
an innocent man for something that
isn't even a crime.

BOBBY looks at the kid. He smiles sadly.

BOBBY
Son, I know you love your daddy and
you listen to what he says, but in
this case, he's just plain wrong.
You go on home now.

As the KIDS leaves, BOBBY puts his arm around BURT.

CUT TO:

86 INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

86

BOBBY is pacing around. DREW and CLAIRE sit quietly, coloring. BILLIE is quietly fuming.

BILLIE
Name calling, fighting. Is that what
you want Bobby? To drag your
children into this?

BOBBY
What would you have me do Mama, let
a murderer go free?

BILLIE
Honey, calm down. You know I'd never
tell you your business. I'm just
thinking about the children.

BOBBY
I don't know why every decent person
in this state isn't sickened by what
happened here twenty-seven years ago.

BILLIE
(trying to calm him)
Bobby, honey...

BOBBY
You're not, are you, Mama?

BILLIE
Not in front of the children.

BOBBY
Why not? I was just a kid when
Medgar Evers was killed, but I can
still remember hearing you and your
friends discussing it in the kitchen.
I recollect somebody saying..."That
nigger needed to be shot."

BILLIE
(outraged)
I would never...never have said a
hateful thing like that.

BOBBY
But you didn't cry for him?

BILLIE
I can't say that I shed any tears
over him, but that doesn't mean--

BOBBY
If it had been our beloved governor,
Ross Barnett, who got shot in his
driveway, you'd have been bawling
your eyes out. Medgar Evers left
behind a young widow and three little
kids. Why didn't you cry for him?

BILLIE
I don't want to discuss this now.

BOBBY
Why, Mama?

BILLIE
(blurts it out)
'Cause he was trying to destroy our
way of life.

BOBBY is stunned. The KIDS look up from their coloring.

BILLIE
(continuing)
And I'll tell you something else, my
darling boy. He succeeded all too
well. This whole state's gone to hell
in a hand basket on account of
integration, and that's a fact. And
if you think they appreciate one damn
thing we gave 'em, you're crazy,
because--

*
*

BILLIE is interrupted as the doors of the emergency room
open, and BURT appears, all bandaged up. A pretty nurse
named PEGGY LLOYD accompanies him. BOBBY goes to hug BURT.

BOBBY
Hey, tiger, how are you feeling?

BURT
I'm okay.

PEGGY
Your son has one tough nose.

BOBBY
It's not broken?

PEGGY
No, the doctor says it'll be tender
for a couple of days. Then it'll be
good as new.

BOBBY
Thank you so much.

PEGGY
You're welcome.

As BOBBY starts to walk away...

PEGGY
(continuing)
Mr. DeLaughter?

BOBBY
Yes?

PEGGY
Are you the one involved in this
Medgar Evers thing?

BOBBY
(fearing the worst)
Yeah.

PEGGY
I just want to tell you I think what
you're trying to do is very important.

BOBBY
(shocked and pleased)
Thanks.

As BOBBY and PEGGY exchange looks, we

CUT TO:

87 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING 87

CUT TO:

88 INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 88

All three KIDS are in their pajamas, sitting on the bed,
listening to BOBBY.

BOBBY
I don't want to see you kids getting
into any more fights.

BURT

But, Daddy, he called you--

BOBBY

I don't care what he called me. It doesn't bother me what he called me. You've got to try and not let it bother you. There's a whole lot of people around here who don't like what your daddy's doing right now.

DREW

What are you doing, Daddy?

BOBBY

I'm trying to put a bad man in jail.

CLAIRE

Mommy says what you're doing is wrong.

DREW

Grandma said Edgar Mevers is ruining our life.

BOBBY

Medgar Evers was a good guy who tried to help people.

DREW

Did he try to beat the bad guys?

BOBBY

Well, yes, he did. He fought for black people to be able to eat at the same restaurants, swim in the same pools, shop in the same stores, and go to the same schools as white people.

*
*
*

BURT

What's wrong with that?

BOBBY

Nothing. But you guys may hear people saying all kinds of bad things about what Daddy's doing. They may tease you or try to pick fights. But no matter what they do, I just want you to walk away.

DREW

What if they say something really mean?

BOBBY
They're only words. And they can't
hurt you if you don't let them.

DREW
Is this about sticks and stones?

BOBBY
That's exactly what this is about.
Now, you all understand what I'm
saying to you?

The three KIDS chime in, "Yes."

BOBBY
(continuing)
All right. You all get on to bed now.

BOBBY kisses the three KIDS, and they file out. BOBBY starts
to take his shirt off and the phone rings. He picks it up.
INTERCUT the following:

BECKWITH
I heard you had a little visit with
my friend Delmar.

BOBBY
Mr. Beckwith -

BECKWITH
Next time you see him you tell him
for me there are a lot of dark, windy
roads between the backwoods of
Louisiana and Jackson, Mississippi.
A person could get lost.

BECKWITH hangs up. BOBBY just sits there, stunned. After a
beat, he turns and sees CLAIRE standing in the doorway.

CLAIRE
Daddy.

BOBBY
Claire, sweetie, what's the matter?

CLAIRE
The ghost is in my room again.

BOBBY
Oh, well, let's see what we can do.

They walk into...

89 INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

89

BOBBY
Where is he?

CLAIRE
(pointing to a chair)
He's sitting right there.

BOBBY
Oh, right.

CLAIRE
Sing "Dixie."

BOBBY
Okay, hop in bed.

BOBBY tucks CLAIRE in bed. He thinks about singing "Dixie."

CLAIRE
Daddy, sing.

BOBBY
You know, sweetie, maybe "Dixie"'s
not the right song. Maybe that's why
this ghost keeps coming back.

CLAIRE
But you said--

BOBBY
I know. But I'm not sure all ghosts
like "Dixie."

CLAIRE
Well, how do we know what this ghost
likes?

BOBBY
Well, since this is your special
ghost, he probably likes your
favorite song.

CLAIRE
"Old MacDonald"?

BOBBY
Yeah. Should we try it?

CLAIRE
Okay.

BOBBY
(he sings)
"Old MacDonald had a farm,
Ee-eye-ee-eye-oh.
And on this farm he had a..."
(to CLAIRE)
what?

CLAIRE
A ghost.

BOBBY
(singing)
"And on this farm he had a ghost.
Ee-eye-ee-eye-oh.
With a boo boo here,
And a boo boo there..."

CUT TO:

90 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 90

With the BOTTLE TREE in the foreground, we see BOBBY and CLARE in the upstairs window. As the song continues...

BOBBY
Here a boo,
There a boo,
Everywhere a boo boo..."

DISSOLVE TO:

91 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY 91

BOBBY is sitting at his desk, studying another videotape of Medgar Evers giving a speech. CLARA enters and dumps a pile of mail onto Bobby's desk.

CLARA
Here you go, Mr. Popularity.

BOBBY
It can't all be hate mail.

CLARA
Even the junk mail is addressed
"Dear Satan Worshipper."

CLARA exits. BOBBY looks at the pile of mail, then looks up at the videotape. After a pensive beat...

CUT TO:

A TIGHT SHOT OF A CAFETERIA TRAY

holding a salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, and a portion of lime Jello.

WE PULL BACK TO SEE BOBBY and PEGGY moving towards a table with their food. They are in the...

92 INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY 92

BOBBY and PEGGY sit down.

PEGGY
So you wanted to have lunch to talk
about Burt's nose.

BOBBY
Actually, no...I, uh...

PEGGY
I didn't think so.

After a beat.

PEGGY
(continuing)
So then this is a date?

BOBBY
Apparently.

PEGGY
In the hospital cafeteria.

BOBBY
I was taking a chance. I thought it
would either be stupid or charming.
What do you think?

PEGGY
Is there a third choice?

BOBBY
Extremely charming?

PEGGY
Yeah, that's the one.

After they eat for a beat.

BOBBY
So how'd you get into all this?

PEGGY
You called and asked me to lunch.

BOBBY
No, I mean nursing.

PEGGY
I like the hours. I work one week on
and one week off.

BOBBY
Can't beat that.

PEGGY
You just have to be careful not to do
too much shopping in that one week
off. That one week off can kill you.
What about you?

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BOBBY

I wanted to be a lawyer ever since I
was a little kid. I used to watch
Perry Mason all the time. I
identified with him.

PEGGY

But he was a defense attorney.

BOBBY

I know. When I got older, I realized the only way he ever won a case was by someone jumping up in court and saying, "I did it!" Since I didn't see that happening too much in real life, I decided to switch to the other side.

PEGGY

I think it's a good thing you did.

BOBBY

Well, you're in the minority these days.

PEGGY

There're a lot more people on your side than you think.

BOBBY

You're not just saying that 'cause I bought you Jello?

PEGGY

Well, it is the way to a woman's heart. But if you could pull this off, I think it could do the state of Mississippi a whole lot of good.

BOBBY

And if I don't?

PEGGY

I'll pretend I never met you.

As they smile at each other...

CUT TO:

93 INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

93

BOBBY breezes in from his lunch with Peggy. He spots CLARA giving TOMMY MAYFIELD a grab.

BOBBY

I see this, and it gives me renewed faith in the institution of marriage.

The PHONE RINGS.

TOMMY
Not now, Clara May.

CLARA
I just can't get enough of my little
hunk of burnin' love.
(answering the phone)
Hello. Yes.
(to BOBBY)
It's Jerry Mitchell.

BOBBY
(entering his office)
All right. I'll take it.

94 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

94

BOBBY picks up the phone.

MITCHELL (O.S.)
(through phone)
I know you have the gun.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Jerry, we've been over this.

95 INT. JERRY MITCHELL'S OFFICE - DAY

95

INTERCUT the following with BOBBY in his office.

MITCHELL
(into phone)
And I know you found it in Russel
Moore's den.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Oh, shit.

MITCHELL
(into phone)
Now. There'll be a story tomorrow
about how the D.A.'s office has been
lying to the people of Jackson and
how Bobby DeLaughter has been lying
to Mrs. Myrlie Evers, and I'm just
calling to see if you'd care to
comment.

CUT TO:

96 INT. MYRLIE EVERS' HOUSE - EVENING

96

MYRLIE's on the phone. She's upset. WALTER stands by.
INTERCUT the following with BOBBY in his den.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
You explained why you lied to the
press. You still haven't explained
why you lied to me.

BOBBY
(into phone)
I told you. Jerry Mitchell is a
loose cannon. This case is so
delicate I didn't want to take any
chances.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
I'd be the last person on earth to
jeopardize this investigation, and
you know that. There's something
you're not telling me.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Mrs. Evers, I swear to God there is
no cover-up.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
And you have every intention of
seeking an indictment and a new trial
and--

BOBBY
(into phone)
Isn't that what we've been working
toward?

MYRLIE
(into phone)
I thought so, Mr. DeLaughter. I
thought so.

BOBBY realizes she's hung up. He feels like two cents.

97 INT. MYRLIE'S DEN - NIGHT

97

MYRLIE and WALTER sit in the darkness.

MYRLIE
I don't know what to think.

WALTER
How do you feel?

MYRLIE
Like it's 1963.

WALTER puts his arm around his wife.

CUT TO:

98

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Councilman LOUIS ARMSTRONG and Supervisor BENNIE THOMPSON hold a well attended and very noisy PRESS CONFERENCE.

98

ARMSTRONG
This latest revelation only proves what we've suspected all along: Ed Peters and Bobby DeLaughter have just been putting on a show for the black voters. As far as I'm concerned, they're nothing but a pair of lying racists, who never--I repeat, never--had any real intention of prosecuting this case.

THOMPSON
We've already sent a letter to the U.S. Attorney General, requesting a federal investigation of the district attorney's office. Hopefully, they will get to the bottom of what is certainly a despicable cover-up.

99

INT. ED PETERS' OFFICE - DAY

BOBBY enters.

99

BOBBY
You wanted to see me?

ED
Sit down Bobby.

BOBBY
You sure you want to be seen in the same room with a lyin' racist?

ED
Well if you don't mind, I don't. You know Pat Bennett?

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BOBBY
Sure, she's one of the best lawyers
in the state. Why are we talkin'
about her?

ED
I thought she might be able to give
you some help on the case.

BOBBY
I don't need help. I've got
everything under control.

ED
Do you have your share of the ninety-
three capitol murder cases we have
waiting for trial under control?
What new excuse would you suggest I
tell the families of the victims as
to why the people who killed their
loved ones have yet to see the inside
of a courtroom?

BOBBY
I'm just curious, Ed. The fact that
Pat Bennett is black wouldn't have
anything to do with this would it?

ED
I'm not gonna even dignify that.
Whatever you may think, this is not
the Bobby Delaughter case. This is
a case against the peace and dignity
of Mississippi. Monday morning I'm
making a change.

CUT TO:

100 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

100

BOBBY and PEGGY are watching Presumed Innocent. A courtroom
scene is in progress. PEGGY is totally engrossed. BOBBY is
totally distracted.

PEGGY
(leaning towards
BOBBY)
Can he do that?

BOBBY doesn't respond.

PEGGY
(continuing)
Bobby?

BOBBY
It's my case, goddammit.

PEGGY
What?

BOBBY
How dare they say I'm putting on a
show for the voters.

PEGGY
Bobby, shh.

BOBBY
If anyone's putting on a show, they
are. All they're doing is trying to
stir up emotions and position
themselves as the saviors of the
black community.

PEOPLE around them start to "shh!" and complain.

BOBBY
(continuing)
There're only two people who really
care about this case, and I'm one of
them.

BOBBY gets up.

PEGGY
Bobby, where...?

BOBBY walks up the aisle, leaving PEGGY alone. WE FOLLOW HIM
into the...

101 INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT 101

BOBBY heads straight for a phone booth and dials. MYRLIE
picks up the phone on the other end.

MYRLIE (O.S.)
Hello.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Mrs. Evers, this is Bobby DeLaughter.
I hope I didn't disturb you.

102 INT. MYRLIE EVERS' HOUSE - NIGHT 102

INTERCUT the following with BOBBY at pay phone.

MYRLIE
(into phone)
No.

BOBBY
(into phone)
This won't take but a minute. Mrs.
Evers, when I started out, I had
nothing but a couple of pages of an
old police report.
(more)

BOBBY (cont'd)
 I've spent the better part of a year
 bumping up against dead witnesses and
 tracking down live ones. My car's
 been vandalized, my son's been in a
 fight, I've been called every ugly
 name you could think by every racist
 in the state of Mississippi--and now,
 just when there's a possibility of a
 new indictment, I gotta fight every
 black politician as well. Now, I am
 truly sorry that I lied to you about
 the gun, but, ma'am, I've made a
 commitment to this case. And I'll be
 goddamned--pardon me--if I'm going to
 give this up to some special
 prosecutor. I don't care if he's
 black, green, orange, or navy blue.
 I've made a commitment to this case,
 and now I'm asking you to make a
 commitment to me. If you do, I
 promise you I will ride this to the
 finish line or collapse heading in
 that direction.

*

MYRLIE
 (after a pause; into
 phone)
 Thank you for your call, Mr.
 DeLaughter.

HOLD ON BOBBY. He doesn't know what to think.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. JACKSON STREET - NIGHT

103

BOBBY and PEGGY are walking down the street outside the
 movie theater. BOBBY is fit to be tied.

BOBBY
 The hell with her! She's just like
 the rest of them.

PEGGY
 Bobby, the white world has not
 exactly gone out of its way to make
 Mrs. Evers particularly trusting.

BOBBY

When does it start? What do I have to do? We had a chance here. We had a real chance to send a message to this country that the state of Mississippi is not just a bunch of redneck racists. My mother is right.

*

PEGGY

She's not right.

BOBBY

We should all just separate, go back to the way things were, and let the South rise again.

PEGGY

You don't believe that.

BOBBY

Why not? Myrlie Evers doesn't want my help. I'm just another white man trying to keep her in her place. She can't see the difference between me and Byron De La Beckwith.

PEGGY

Bobby, you didn't tell her about the gun.

BOBBY

That's right, I didn't tell her about the gun. And if I had to do it over again, I still wouldn't tell her about the gun. The decision to keep the discovery of the murder weapon a secret was a good strategy, and it wouldn't have bothered her a lick if I were black. I would have just been a smart lawyer.

PEGGY

You can't have it both ways.

BOBBY

What are you talking about?

PEGGY

You told me the reason you didn't tell Mrs. Evers was that you were afraid she would leak the story. You can't very well expect her to trust you if you don't trust her.

This stops BOBBY.

*

103A EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE DAY - IT'S RAINING

103A*

CUT TO:

*

104 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY 104

BOBBY sits at his desk, half-heartedly glancing over a deposition. He puts it down then stares off into space. His reverie is interrupted by ED PETERS' entrance.

ED
This afternoon I want you to meet
with Pat Bennett. I want you to
bring her up to speed.

*

BOBBY
Fine.

ED
(after a beat)
Bobby, this is for the best.

BOBBY
If you say so.

After a moment of awkward silence, ED leaves. BOBBY tries to go back to his deposition, but he can't. He throws it down and heads out of his office. As he passes CLARA...

BOBBY
(continuing)
I'm going out for a bit. You want
anything.

CLARA
Yeah, I'd like a Mercedes
convertible, but I'll settle for a
Dr. Pepper.

BOBBY crosses to the elevator, waits, then enters.

CUT TO:

105 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 105

BOBBY rides to the entrance hallway by himself. As the doors open, he is met by MYRLIE EVERS. She is holding three large documents.

MYRLIE

Mr. DeLaughter, there are four important things in my life: Medgar, Walter, my children, and this: The original court-certified transcript. I've kept this for twenty-seven years and three district attorneys. Once I give this up, I know it may be gone forever.

She hands BOBBY the transcript.

MYRLIE

(continuing)

I don't believe you'll find any more opposition to your continuing to handle this case.

BOBBY

Thank you, ma'am. It's truly appreciated.

MYRLIE

Let's get the son of a bitch.

BOBBY

My pleasure.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

that will span a three-and-a-half-year period from just before the indictment in 1990 to just prior to the trial in 1994. OVER THESE SHOTS, we HEAR overlapping NEWS REPORTS.

106 THE FIRST SERIES OF SHOTS SHOW THE D.A.'S OFFICE AND 106
INVESTIGATORS IN ACTION.

We see BARBARA HOLDER being questioned by BOBBY. Shots of *
CRISCO and BENNY on phones being answered, phones being hung *
up. We also see reams of depositions being sifted through, *
and BOBBY and MYRLIE going over the transcript together. *

REPORTER FOUR (V.O.)

The decision by the district attorney's office of Hinds County to reopen the twenty-seven-year-old murder case of Byron De La Beckwith continues to cause controversy.
(more)

REPORTER FOUR (cont'd; V.O.)
 Citizens of Jackson and other parts
 of the state are concerned that
 taxpayers' money is being used to dig
 up the past and persecute an old man
 in bad health. After a lengthy
 investigation, however, an indictment
 is being sought for the 1963 murder
 of civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

Over a SHOT OF BOBBY AND ED PRESENTING THEIR CASE to the
 grand jury, MYRLIE is on the stand. We HEAR:

*

REPORTER FIVE (V.O.)
 Today, the grand jury handed down an
 indictment of Byron De La Beckwith in
 the murder of civil rights leader
 Megar Evers.

SHOT OF MYRLIE AND BOBBY HUGGING

REPORTER SIX (V.O.)
 Extradition in the Beckwith case is
 seen as a potential stumbling block
 for the district attorney's office.

SHOT OF BECKWITH

outside his home in Signal Mountain with THELMA.

*

BECKWITH
 (to a REPORTER)
 I plan to fight repossession,
 uh..what's the word?

*

*

THELMA
 Extradition.

*

*

BECKWITH
 Extradition tooth, nail, and claw.

*

Over a SERIES OF SHOTS OF A CASKET being lifted out of the
 ground, placed in hearse, being opened in a lab setting to
 reveal a perfectly preserved 37-year-old MEDGAR EVERS.
 BOBBY, VAN, and DR. BADEN are present. VAN has a moment of
 communion with the father he barely knew.

REPORTER SEVEN (V.O.)

In an attempt to replace a lost
autopsy report, the district
attorney's office of Hinds County
today received permission by the
Evers family to exhume the body of
her late husband, slain civil rights
leader Medgar Evers. The body,
buried in Arlington National Cemetery
in 1963, was found in remarkably near-
perfect condition. Coroner Dr.
Michael Baden attributed this to...

*
*

A SERIES OF SHOTS of BOBBY AND PEGGY'S WEDDING:

- CLAIRE, the flower girl, throwing flowers on the path to the altar.
- PEGGY coming down the aisle.
- BOBBY and PEGGY exchanging rings.
- BOBBY and PEGGY kissing.

REPORTER EIGHT (V.O.)
 After eighteen months, extradition was finally granted in the case of Byron De La Beckwith, the man accused of slaying civil rights leader Medgar Evers. Beckwith will face murder charges thirty years after the initial two trials for the same offense ended in hung juries.

Over a SERIES OF SHOTS of the exterior and interior of the MISSISSIPPI STATE SUPREME COURT, with BOBBY arguing, we HEAR:

JIM HUGHES (V.O.)
 After a four-and-a-half-year struggle to reopen the case against accused murderer Byron De La Beckwith, the final hurdle was cleared as a bitterly divided Mississippi Supreme Court ruled in favor of the prosecution in the Sixth Amendment speedy trial issue. A trial date has been set. This is Jim Hughes, CNN, Jackson.

*-

*-

We end the montage with a SERIES OF THREE SHOTS of:

- BOBBY and PEGGY with the KIDS, hugging inside the courthouse.
- MYRLIE and WALTER hugging as they get the news.
- BECKWITH being led out of a police car outside the Hinds County courthouse.

*-

CUT TO:

107 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

107

It's the classic veritable beehive of activity. BOBBY's office looks like a war room, with charts and graphs and maps, etc., strewn all over the place.

TOMMY MAYFIELD is questioning BENNY, who is reading from a copy of the trial transcript.

He is playing the part of one of the dead witnesses, Detective Luke. BENNY couldn't be a worse actor. BOBBY looks on.

BENNY
(reading, as Luke)
"I first received the call at 9:42 p.m. on the night of June 12, 1963. My partner and I responded and proceeded to the crime scene, located at 2332 Guynes Street."

BOBBY
Okay, that's pretty good, Benny. But just because you're reading the part of one of the dead witnesses, doesn't mean you have to act like you're actually dead.

BENNY
I'm doing my best, Bobby.

BOBBY
I know you are, Benny.

CLARA approaches with a manila envelope. As she hands it to BOBBY,

CLARA
Medgar Evers' autopsy report just came in. You're not gonna believe this. He's still dead.

BOBBY
Thank you, Clara.

As BOBBY opens it up, CRISCO approaches.

CRISCO
I just got off the phone with Charles Evers. He says he's not coming to the trial.

BOBBY
Did he say why?

CRISCO
He wouldn't say.

BOBBY
Get me the address of his radio station.

The PHONE starts RINGING.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Look at this. They found a fragment
of the bullet still in his body.
It's consistent with a 30.06 Enfield.

*

BOBBY
(continuing)

BOBBY picks up the phone.

BOBBY
(continuing; into
phone)
DeLaughter.

VOICE
(on phone, filtered)
You're gonna be sorry, DeLaughter.
What happened to that nigger's gonna
happen to you.

BOBBY hangs up. CRISCO can read his expression.

CRISCO
Another one?

BOBBY nods.

CLARA
The closer we get to trial, the more
nutjobs are gonna crawl out of the
woodwork.

CRISCO
You better hang onto this.

CRISCO produces a pistol from his shoulder holster and hands
it to BOBBY, who looks it over.

CUT TO:

108 INT. MYRLIE EVERS' HOUSE - NIGHT

108

MYRLIE and WALTER, both strangely subdued, are having a quiet
dinner. After a silence.

MYRLIE

It's possible that I'll have to spend
quite a bit of time in Jackson over
the next couple of months. But,
Walter, if you need me...

*
*
*
*
*

WALTER
Myrlie, it's okay. You go to Jackson
and you see this thing through. You
keep your promise to Medgar.

WALTER
(continuing)
I'm just wondering what it's going to
be like...

MYRLIE
What's that?

WALTER
It's always been the three of us.
You and me and Medgar. I'm just
wondering what's it's going to be
like to have you all to myself.

MYRLIE smiles, but there are tears in her eyes. She takes
WALTER's hand.

CUT TO:

108A	EXT. RADIO STATION - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING	108A
109	INT. RADIO STATION - NIGHT	109

CHARLES EVERS owns this tiny radio station. His office is a
shrine to better days, featuring pictures of Charles with
Bobby Kennedy, among others. Above the desk there's a huge
painting of his brother, Medgar Evers. CHARLES is in the
middle of doing his late-night blues show.

CHARLES
Of course, that was Muddy Waters
doing his thing for y'all. Now I'm
gonna play a little something that
goes way back--the great Robert
Johnson.

CHARLES puts on something by blues great Robert Johnson.
Then he notices BOBBY standing by the door.

BOBBY
Hello, Mr. Evers, I'm--

CHARLES
Bobby DeLaughter.

CHARLES pours a glass of bourbon and refills his own. He
raises his glass to BOBBY.

CHARLES
(continuing)
May your soul rise up to heaven 'fo'
the devil knows you're dead.

CHARLES and BOBBY raise their glasses and drink. CHARLES
nods toward the Robert Johnson record that's playing.

CHARLES
(continuing)
They say Robert Johnson sold his soul
to the devil so's he could play the
guitar like that.

BOBBY
Think he did?

CHARLES
All I know's if the devil wanted my
soul, it'd cost him a lot more than
some guitar lessons.

BOBBY smiles. They drink. Then CHARLES turns pensive.

CHARLES
(continuing)
You know something, Mr. DeLaughter?
I believe when this trial's over,
Mississippi will come through this
time.

BOBBY
That's why I came here to talk to
you, Mr. Evers. I'm wondering if you
wouldn't change your mind and agree
to come to the trial. Your presence
there would mean a great deal.

*

CHARLES
Let me tell you something, Mr.
DeLaughter. Medgar was my baby
brother. And there ain't nothing I
wouldn't do for him. When we were
little kids, we used to sleep in the
same bed. And on cold nights, I'd
climb in first just so's I could warm
up the sheets for him.
(after a pause)
I didn't go to the first two trials.
Myrlie...a lot of people...they
criticized me over that.
(more)

CHARLES (cont'd)
 But I'll tell you, I won't go to no third trial neither and for the exact same reason: I know that if I ever got into the same room with Byron De La Beckwith...as God is my witness, I would wrap my hands around that chicken neck of his and I would snap it clean in half. And nobody would be able to stop me.

BOBBY
 I wouldn't blame you.

CHARLES
 Hardly nobody even remembers Medgar anymore, whites or blacks, and that's a goddamned shame, because whatever rights the black man's got around here now, he's got because of something called the Civil Rights movement. And for a long time here in the state of Mississippi, back before the television and the newspapers, back before the fancy speeches, my brother, Medgar, he was the Civil Rights movement.

When he realizes the record he's been playing has come to an end, CHARLES grabs hold of the mike.

CHARLES
 (continuing)
 I'm sitting here tonight, talking to my friend and your friend, assistant district attorney Bobby DeLaughter. Bobby and me, we're talking about my brother Medgar Evers, and we're gonna play the blues for Medgar all night long.

BOBBY gets up to go as CHARLES throws on another record.

CHARLES
 (continuing)
 Bobby DeLaughter? You and my sister-in-law, you get justice for my brother.

BOBBY
 (by way of parting)
 Mr. Evers--

CHARLES

Devil, if you're listening, I won't
sell my soul for no guitar lessons,
but I'll sell my soul for that.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

110

The beaming BECKWITH has just been released on bail, posted
by his benefactor, white supremacist MARTIN SCOTT, who's
speaking to JERRY MITCHELL and other members of the press.
Flanking SCOTT and BECKWITH is a gathering of tattooed
SKINHEADS.

MITCHELL

Are you surprised that bail was
granted so quickly?

SCOTT

Mr. Beckwith was being held as a
political prisoner. He hasn't been
found guilty of anything, so why
should he be held in jail?

MITCHELL

You're an officer of an organization
called the Nationalist Movement,
isn't that correct, Mr. Scott? Is
that where the money came from to
secure Mr. Beckwith's bond?

SCOTT

Let me just say that Mr. Beckwith has
got a lot of friends here who'll do
whatever it takes.

CUT TO:

111 EXT. JACKSON AIRPORT - DAY

111

BOBBY is helping MYRLIE with her bags. As they walk towards
BOBBY's car...

MYRLIE

Suppose he doesn't show up for trial?
Suppose he leaves the country?

BOBBY

If he runs, we'll find him.

MYRLIE's ragged nerves are really getting the better of her
now, and she barks:

MYRLIE

And how long will that take? Another five years? Another ten? I've already devoted a lifetime to this. That oughta be enough.

BOBBY

Yes, ma'am. It sure ought to be.

They get in the car and drive off.

MYRLIE (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Bobby.

BOBBY

That's okay, Mrs. Evers.

CUT TO:

112 INT. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

112

MYRLIE

I met Medgar the first hour of my first day at Alcorn. He was... I was nineteen years old, and I thought we'd be together for a hundred years. But by June of 1963, we knew in our hearts that our time together was running out. I told him that I didn't want to be a young widow. That I would rather be deprived of some of the things that he was fighting for because I'd never be able to stand the pain of losing him. Medgar said, "Don't be afraid of death, honey. I know it's hard not to be, but..."

*

BOBBY is just looking at her. She smiles sadly.

MYRLIE

(continuing)

Last week, my husband Walter...he said those exact same words. He's dying, Bobby.

BOBBY

Mrs. Evers...I'm so sorry.

MYRLIE
I want to be there for him. Comfort
him. But I have to keep my promise
to Medgar. *

BOBBY
I'll help you keep that promise. *

As the car continues on, we...

CUT TO:

113 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT 113

PEGGY, in her nightgown, is poking her head in the children's
rooms to make sure everyone is sleeping. She walks...

DOWN THE HALL

and enters...

114 INT. BOBBY AND PEGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 114

BOBBY's in bed with a mess of papers strewn about.

BOBBY
How's Jared doing?

PEGGY
Fine. He and Burt seem like they've
been brothers all their lives.

BOBBY
(without looking up)
Are they all sleeping?

PEGGY
Yes, and that's what you should be
doing.

BOBBY
I just want the opening statement to
be great.

PEGGY
It was great when you read it to me
three nights ago. It was great last
night, and, unless you snuck in
something about Beckwith deserving
the Nobel Peace Prize, I'm sure it
will be great tomorrow morning.

BOBBY
See? That's why I look to you.
(writing as he talks)
Eliminate Nobel Peace Prize
reference. Good.

The PHONE RINGS. BOBBY picks it up.

BOBBY
(continuing; into
phone)
Hello.

VOICE
(on phone, filtered)
Mr. DeLaughter, I left a little gift
for you in appreciation of everything
you're doing to ruin civilized
society.

BOBBY
(into phone)
What the hell is--

VOICE
(on phone, filtered)
It's scheduled to go off at
10:00 p.m. Have a nice night.

The line goes dead. BOBBY hangs up and glances at the clock.
Two minutes to ten.

BOBBY
It's a bomb.

*
*

115 INT. BURT AND DREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

115

BOBBY bolts into the room.

BOBBY
C'mon boys. Let's get up. Everybody
up.

BOBBY picks up DREW. BURT's climbing out of bed.

BURT
What's going on?

BOBBY
(sharply)
Nothing. Nothing. Just a little
drill. C'mon, Burt, outside. Right
now.

They rush out of the room.

INSERT CLOCK

One minute to ten.

PEGGY rushes out of the other bedroom with CLAIRE and JARED.
They meet up with BOBBY and race out the front door.

JARED
Where we going?

BURT
It's a drill.

116 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT 116

BOBBY bursts out of the house holding DREW. PEGGY, BURT,
JARED and CLAIRE rush out. They race across the street.

117 INT. DELAUGHTER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 117

The CLOCK on the wall strikes ten.

118 EXT. ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE HOUSE - NIGHT 118

BOBBY, who's still holding DREW, checks his watch. It's ten
o'clock. BOBBY, PEGGY and the KIDS stand together, watching,
waiting. Nobody breathes. Then...nothing. They all
exchange looks.

DREW
Is this still the drill?

DISSOLVE TO:

119 EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 119

There's an enormous amount of activity here now, and dozens
of NEIGHBORS have emerged from their homes to check it out.
On the scene are TWO FIRE TRUCKS, THREE POLICE CARS, and a
whole host of people from the BOMB SQUAD. PEGGY and the KIDS
are piling into Bobby's car. BOBBY's putting a suitcase in
the back.

DREW
Where we going, Dad?

BURT
He told you. We're going to the
Holiday Inn.

DREW
Is that where we're going, Dad--the
Holiday Inn?

BOMB SQUAD MAN
Mr. DeLaughter, we haven't found
anything, but just to be safe, we're
gonna go through it one more time.

BOBBY
I appreciate it.

As BOBBY drives off...

CUT TO:

120 INT. HOLIDAY INN BEDROOM - NIGHT

120

BURT, CLAIRE, JARED and DREW are asleep in one of two
adjoining rooms. BOBBY and PEGGY are in the other.

BOBBY
I told them if anything happened, all
they had to do was walk away. How
are they supposed to walk away from
a bomb?

PEGGY
There wasn't a bomb.

BOBBY
This time.

PEGGY
Bobby, if you want to give this thing
up, I understand. No one could fault
you. But the world is not going to
be any safer.

BOBBY
I don't give a shit about the world.
These are my children.

PEGGY
Yes, they are, and someday they're
going to be able to tell their
children that it was their daddy who
put away the man who killed Medgar
Evers.

BOBBY
Medgar Evers was a fool. My father's
right. It doesn't matter how many
civil rights laws we pass. We're
never gonna be able to legislate how
people think.

PEGGY

Bobby, there are always going to be
a few misguided--

BOBBY

I'm not talking about a few people.
I'm talking about everybody. I'm
talking about us. Do we have one
single black friend? No. We don't
have dinner with black people. We
don't have black people over to our
house. We don't even sit with black
people in church. You think this one
trial is going to magically change
all this?

PEGGY

No, I don't. It's a step. That's
all anyone can do, is take a step.

BOBBY

Why? Why do I have to take a step?
So some sick son-of-a-bitch can
murder my wife and children? Excuse
me if I'm not interested in taking
that step.

*

He starts to leave.

PEGGY

Where are you going?

BOBBY

For a drive.

He exits.

CUT TO:

120A EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT

120A

The car cruises along the highway.

121 INT. BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT 121

BOBBY drives along, lost in thought. He looks up and sees what used to be JOE'S DRIVE IN.

121A EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT 121A

The car turns onto Guynes Street and comes to a stop in front of the Evers house.

121B INT. BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT 121B

BOBBY sits and just stares at the house.

IN HIS MIND'S EYE he sees MEDGAR pulling up to the house in his blue Oldsmobile. It is June, 1963, and BOBBY is experiencing that horrible night. It is all happening in SLOW MOTION.

MEDGAR brings the car to a stop in the driveway, gets out of the driver's side, holding his packages and his keys. As he starts towards the house, a SHOT rings out, and MEDGAR falls to the ground.

Now things SPEED UP as a SHRIEK is heard from inside the house, and as Medgar tries to crawl to the door, MYRLIE bursts out, followed by the THREE CHILDREN. The plaintive CRIES of the children--"Daddy, please get up"--echo eerily in BOBBY's head.

As he stares at the scene, his eyes start to well up with tears. We hold on his pained heart...

CUT TO:

122 INT. HOLIDAY INN BEDROOM - NIGHT 122

PEGGY is sitting in the darkness, half-asleep. We hear the sound of the DOOR BEING UNLOCKED.

PEGGY

Bobby?

After a few beats, BOBBY appears in the doorway of the bedroom. He looks at PEGGY. After a moment...

BOBBY

I don't know whether I'm going to heaven or hell, but I'm going from Jackson.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

123 EXT. HINDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 123

VARIOUS ANGLES around the courthouse reveal the massive security measures: surrounding streets are blocked off with BARRICADES and POLICE CARS; a battalion of DEPUTIES stand guard inside the courthouse and out, some with gas masks, shields and riot gear; PEOPLE entering the courthouse pass through METAL DETECTORS.

It's very early, but already the place is swarming with CAMERA CREWS, REPORTERS, etc. We notice many BLACKS among their number, and they seem particularly pleased to be here.

ED BRYSON
With opening arguments scheduled
today in the trial of white
supremacist Byron de la Beckwith,
reactions amongst Mississippians are
decidedly mixed.

*
*
*
*
*
*

VARIOUS SHOTS of REPORTERS interviewing PEOPLE on the street. *

WHITE WOMAN
(disgusted)
It's just a political smoke screen to
get people's minds offa all the
things that are really wrong in this
state.

BLACK MAN #2
Ole man beat it in '64, he'll beat it
in '94. More things change, the more
they stay the same.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SHERIFF MALCOLM McMILLIN is being interviewed
by JERRY MITCHELL near a battery of squad cars.

MITCHELL
Some people have predicted that if
Beckwith isn't convicted, riots will
break out like the ones in Los
Angeles a few years ago. Do you
think that's a possibility?

McMILLIN
(he does)
I would hope that there won't be any
problems, but...

MORE INTERVIEWS

WHITE MAN
An old racist is no better than an
old Nazi. We gotta hunt 'em all down
and exterminate 'em like the bugs
that they are.

2ND WHITE MAN

Byron De La Beckwith stands for everything that's good and decent about the South. It's a travesty that a man of his age should be persecuted this way.

BLACK WOMAN (AGED 50)

I was 23 years old when Medgar Evers was killed, and I remember it hitting us hard. I'd like to see justice finally served.

YOUNG BLACK WOMAN (AGED 22)

Who's Medgar Evers?

REPORTER

People gathered here are awaiting the arrival of Myrlie Evers and Byron de la Beckwith. Wait, I believe that's Mr. Beckwith right now.

*
*
*
*
*

All of sudden BECKWITH arrives with his entourage of THELMA, his attorneys, JIM KITCHENS and MERRIDA COXWELL, and WHITE SUPREMACIST SUPPORTERS. All the REPORTERS turn to him: "Mr. Beckwith...Mr. Beckwith."

REPORTER NINE

How do you feel today?

BECKWITH

I feel like an Indian let loose in a brewery.

REPORTER TEN

Mr. Beckwith, is that a Confederate flag you're wearing on your lapel?

BECKWITH

If you don't know a Confederate flag when you see one, you'll go to hell in Africa.

REPORTER ELEVEN

Do you think you can get a fair trial?

BOBBY arrives with MYRLIE, DARRELL and REENA, behind the REPORTERS.

BECKWITH

Son, I love Mississippi. And I believe Mississippi loves me.

As BECKWITH heads into the courthouse, the REPORTERS turn to BOBBY and MYRLIE, who proceed up the stairs amidst a barrage of questions. JERRY MITCHELL forces his way in.

MITCHELL

Mrs. Evers, do you think there's a chance for a conviction this time?

MYRLIE

I certainly hope so. My husband also loved Mississippi. And the Mississippi Medgar loved has no room for people like Byron De La Beckwith.

*

REPORTER TWELVE

Mr. DeLaughter, what do you think of your chances?

BOBBY

If it's all the same, folks, I prefer to try this case inside the courtroom.

As BOBBY ushers MYRLIE into the courthouse, they run into ED PETERS coming down the stairs.

123A INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

123A

ED

Good morning, Mrs. Evers.

MYRLIE

Mr. Peters.

ED

Mrs. Evers, I must admit when you first came to see us, I didn't put out much hope for this. But now that we're here, I'll be damned if I'm going to see Byron De La Backwith walk out of here a third time.

MYRLIE

I appreciate your enthusiasm, Mr. Peters. It's been a long time waiting.

*

*

CUT TO:

124 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

124

Court is in session. The JURY is present and so is JUDGE HILBURN, who's in his late forties with a beard. He looks like a Confederate General. The upper balcony is packed with PRESS PEOPLE, and the lower level is divided into two halves.

Behind the defense table are all the BECKWITH SUPPORTERS, and behind Bobby's table are all of Medgar's supporters. PEGGY and all four KIDS are also here.

HILBURN

We're on record in the matter of the State of Mississippi versus Byron De La Beckwith. Is the prosecution prepared with its opening statement?

BOBBY

We are, Your Honor.

BOBBY approaches the jury, which is made up of EIGHT BLACKS and FOUR WHITES.

BECKWITH

(to his attorneys)

Looking at that jury is like looking into a cave. All I see is black.

BOBBY

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a very simple case. It's about a man whose life was snuffed out on June the 12th of 1963 by a bullet that tore through his body. A bullet that was aimed out of prejudice, propelled by hatred, and fired by a back-shooting coward from ambush at night. The evidence will overwhelmingly show that Byron De La Beckwith, a self-proclaimed "rabid racist" on a lifelong mission to purge society of anyone and anything that was for integration, is the man who fired that bullet. The evidence will show how, when he thought he had beaten the system, he began to brag about what he'd done...bragged about how he'd gotten away with murder. The evidence is going to show that the person who pulled the trigger and ended the life of Medgar Evers is this defendant, Byron De La Beckwith.

HILBURN

Mr. Coxwell.

COXWELL

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Merrida Coxwell, this is James Kitchens, and we're representing Mr. Beckwith.
(more)

*

*

COXWELL (cont'd)

Mr. DeLaughter started his opening statement by saying this is a very simple case. And I agree with him; for what Mr. DeLaughter is going to rely on is for you to convict Mr. Beckwith simply because of his opinions. That's because Mr. DeLaughter knows that the State cannot prove to you beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed this crime. By the time this trial is over, you will have seen that it was physically impossible for Mr. Byron De La Beckwith to have killed Medgar Evers. Mr. Beckwith is not guilty, and that is what the proof will show. Thank you.

Coxwell sits.

HILBURN

You may call your first witness.

BOBBY

The state calls Myrlie Evers.

The doors are opened, and in walks MYRLIE EVERS. As ever, her head is held high, but even as she is sworn in by the BAILIFF, she can't quite bring herself to seek out Beckwith's face. Then:

HILBURN

You may be seated.

*
*

BOBBY

Would you tell us your name, please.

MYRLIE

My name is Myrlie Evers.

BOBBY

Going back to the year 1963, were you married at that time?

MYRLIE

Yes, I was.

BOBBY

And to whom were you married?

Now MYRLIE EVERS summons the will to seek out Byron De La Beckwith.

She looks right at him and speaks her husband's name like an incantation to break an evil spell.

MYRLIE
Medgar Wylie Evers.

BECKWITH glares at MYRLIE, but BOBBY can sense the change in her.

BOBBY
What type of work was your husband doing in 1963?

MYRLIE
He was the first field secretary for the NAACP in the State of Mississippi.

BOBBY
Could you tell us about the days leading up to the murder?

This is difficult for MYRLIE, and BOBBY knows it.

MYRLIE
The spring of 1963 had an eeriness about it. Jackson, Mississippi, was about to explode. The Clarion-Ledger, or the "Klan Ledger" as we called it in those days, was printing editorials with a black band around them, saying that blood was going to flow in the streets. Everybody knew it was my husband's blood they were talking about.

The JURY and SPECTATORS listen with rapt attention. BOBBY can see how difficult this is for MYRLIE, but he needs for her to keep going.

BOBBY
When was the last time that you saw your husband alive?

MYRLIE
June the 11th, 1963. I'd fallen behind in my housework, so I got up early that morning to iron shirts for Medgar. By the time he woke up, I already had ten freshly ironed shirts neatly hung on hangers. Medgar said, "I thank you for ironing all the shirts, but I'm not going to need them." When he left home that morning to go to work, he kissed us all good-bye and left, but then he came back.

(more)

MYRLIE (cont'd)
He took me aside and said, "If anything happens to me, I want you to promise me you'll take care of my babies.
I told him of course I would. They were my babies, too. Then he kissed us all again, and walked out the door.

*

BOBBY
Could you tell the jury what you remember seeing and hearing when your husband returned home that night.

*

MYRLIE
It was just after midnight when he came home. We heard the car, and the children said, "There's Daddy." And then this horrible blast.
The children fell to the floor, as my husband had taught them to do. I bolted up and ran to the front door. Medgar was lying on the steps with his keys in his hand. His blood was...everywhere. The children ran out shortly after I did, and they screamed, "Daddy, Daddy, get up. Daddy, please get up." But I knew he would never get up again.

*

By now, PEOPLE IN THE COURTROOM are openly weeping.

*

BOBBY
Nothing further, Your Honor.

DISSOLVE TO:

124A	OMITTED	124A
125	OMITTED	125
126	INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER	126

BOBBY's got fifty-six-year-old THORN McINTYRE on the stand.
BECKWITH pays particular attention to this man.

BOBBY
Mr. McIntyre, have you ever owned a 1917 Enfield .30-06 rifle?

*

McINTYRE
Yes, I have.

*

BOBBY
Did you still own that rifle in 1963?

*

McINTYRE
No. Sometime, I believe in 1960, I
traded it to Mr. Beckwith. We had a
common interest in firearms.

*

BECKWITH makes a show of turning off his hearing aid. BOBBY
picks up the RIFLE, which had been underneath the defense
table. A HUSH falls over the courtroom. BOBBY hands the gun
to McINTYRE.

BOBBY
Mr. McIntyre, I want to show you this
firearm and ask you if you would read
the serial number on the barrel,
please.

McINTYRE
(looks over gun and
reads number)
1052682.

He hands the gun back to BOBBY, who leans it against the
evidence table, then he picks up a previously introduced
INVOICE and hands that to McINTYRE.

BOBBY
Going back to Exhibit 35, Mr.
McIntyre, would you read the serial
number on the invoice of the gun that
you had purchased and later traded to
Mr. Beckwith?

McINTYRE
(reading)
1052682.

BOBBY
The numbers correspond, do they not?

McINTYRE
They do, yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

127 OMITTED 127
128 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - (ANOTHER DAY) 128

ED's got BARBARA HOLDER on the stand. She's early fifties, with grey hair and dark glasses. Her voice is deep.

ED

Ms. Holder, were you at Joe's Drive-In on the night of June 11, 1963?

HOLDER

Yes, sir. I wasn't working that night, but I was there hanging out with my friends.

(sad smile)

I was twenty-two.

*

ED

Would you tell the jury whether or not there came a time that your attention was directed to any particular automobile?

HOLDER

Well, yes, sir. Being a car hop, you notice cars, and this one had a long antenna on the side of it. We thought at first that it was a patrol car. It was white, and it had a lot of mud on it. It was a Plymouth Valiant.

ED

I'm going to show you some photographs, Ms. Holder.

ED produces two photographs from the evidence table. We can see Hargrove's photos of Beckwith's car. One is a close shot of the rear view mirror with the shriners emblem.

ED

(continuing)

Is this the car you saw on the night of the 11th?

HOLDER

Yes, sir.

ED
If it please the Court, let the record reflect that the car this witness identified belonged to the defendant, Byron De La Beckwith.

DISSOLVE TO:

128A

OMITTED

128A

129

INT. COURTROOM - DAY - (ANOTHER DAY)

129

BOBBY addresses the court.

BOBBY
At this time, the State would like to introduce the testimony of the deceased cab driver, Herbert Speight. In his absence, we call Mr. Tommy Mayfield.

TOMMY, in a very businesslike way, takes the witness stand.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Mr. Speight, please tell the court what happened the Saturday night before the murder.

TOMMY/SPEIGHT
I was sitting in my cab, which was parked outside the bus station. Mr. Beckwith walked up to the side of the cab, and he asked me if I knew where the Negro Medgar Evers lived. I told him I did not.

*
*
*

BOBBY
Did you go to the police station any time later in reference to this matter?

TOMMY/SPEIGHT
Yes, sir. Shortly after they made the arrest, they took me to a line up and asked me if I could identify the man I talked to at the bus station.

*
*

BOBBY
And whom did you pick out?

TOMMY/SPEIGHT
Mr. Byron De La Beckwith.

DISSOLVE TO:

130 OMITTED

130

131 INT. COURTROOM - DAY (ANOTHER DAY)

131

HARGROVE cups his hand to his ear to help him hear better.

BOBBY
Mr. Hargrove, were you employed by
the Jackson Police Department in June
of 1963?

*

HARGROVE
Yes. I was. In charge of the
Identification Division for 42 years.

*

BOBBY shows HARGROVE a PHOTO OF A FINGERPRINT.

BOBBY
Mr. Hargrove, did you reach a
conclusion as to whose fingerprint
was on the telescopic sight of the
gun that was recovered in your
presence on June the 12th of 1963?

HARGROVE
Yes, sir, I did. With fourteen
points of identification, there's
more than enough to identify the
fingerprint of Mr. Byron De La
Beckwith.

BECKWITH yawns mightily.

CUT TO:

131A OMITTED

131A

131B INT. WLBT NEWSROOM - NIGHT

131B

Behind the anchor's desk is newscaster MAGGIE WADE.

MAGGIE WADE

After four days of testimony in the
trial of white supremacist Byron De
La Beckwith, the prosecution thus far
has presented essentially the same
case as was offered up in the two
original trials.

*

*

MAGGIE WADE (V.O.)

However, this time there are two

significant differences.

*

*

CUT TO:

131C	OMITTED	131C*
131D	OMITTED	131D*
131E	OMITTED	131E*

131F OMITTED 131F
131G ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - THE TWELVE WHITE MALE JURORS WALKING TO COURT. 131G

MAGGIE WADE (V.O.)
First, the makeup of the jury. In 1964, Beckwith faced two all-male all white juries. Today... *

131H ARTIST'S RENDERING - THE CURRENT JURY 131H

MAGGIE WADE
....he faces a jury made up of eight blacks and four whites.

CUT TO:

131J OMITTED 131J
131K OMITTED 131K
131L INT. WLBT NEWSROOM - NIGHT 131L

MAGGIE WADE
And tomorrow the prosecution is expected to introduce three new witnesses who did not testify in the first two trials. The nature of their testimony will presumably focus in on the defendant's ...

CUT TO:

132 OMITTED 132
AND AND
133 133
134 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 134

Over a high angle of the courtroom, we see DELMAR DENNIS on the stand. BOBBY is about to start his examination.

BOBBY
State your name for the record, please.

DENNIS
Delmar Dennis.

BOBBY

Mr. Dennis, in March of 1964 were you
an active member of an organization
known as the White Knights of the Ku
Klux Klan?

DENNIS

I was.

BOBBY

In September of that same year, did you become a paid informant for the FBI?

DENNIS

I did.

BOBBY

In your capacity as informant, did you ever encounter the defendant, Byron De La Beckwith?

DENNIS

I did.

BOBBY

What were the circumstances of that encounter?

DENNIS

On August 8, 1965, I met Mr. Beckwith at a Klan meeting in Byram, Mississippi. He was the featured speaker that night.

BOBBY

And during that talk would you tell the jury what, if anything, he said concerning the murder, or shooting death, of Medgar Evers?

*

DENNIS

He said, "Killing that nigger gave me no more inner discomfit than our wives endure when they give birth to our children. We have to get in there and kill those enemies, including the President, from the top down."

BOBBY

Did he say anything else?

DENNIS

Yes, sir. He said, "You're going to get away with it like I did."

BOBBY
Thank you, Mr. Dennis.
(to KITCHENS)
Your witness.

KITCHENS
Mr. Dennis, you have seen some FBI
reports about your activities as a
paid informant, haven't you?

DENNIS
Mr. DeLaughter's office furnished me
with copies.

KITCHENS
There are pages and pages of dialogue
that you reported to the FBI of
things that various people said over
lunch, over dinner, riding in cars,
at meetings, isn't that right?

DENNIS
Yes.

KITCHENS
Yet nowhere in all those reports does
the quotation that you attributed to
Mr. Beckwith appear, does it?

DENNIS
Maybe the pages were lost over the
years.

KITCHENS
And maybe they never existed.

BOBBY
Objection.

HILBURN
Sustained.

KITCHENS
Mr. Dennis, did Byron De La Beckwith
ever specifically say that he killed
Medgar Evers?

DENNIS
He never said, "I killed Medgar
Evers," that's true, but--

KITCHENS
No further--

DENNIS
But it was clear to everyone there
that that's what he meant.

KITCHENS
Your Honor, we ask that the witness'
unsolicited opinion be stricken from
the record and that the jury be
instructed to disregard it.

HILBURN
The jury will disregard Mr. Dennis'
last statement.

DISSOLVE TO:

135 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

135

Another witness, DAN PRINCE, 49 years old.

PRINCE
...well, I was standing in the front
yard, and he said something about
having been tried twice in
Mississippi for killing that nigger.

BOBBY
And what did he say about that?

PRINCE
He said, "I had a job to do, and I
did it".

*

BECKWITH has his eyes closed, but he hears every last word.

BOBBY
Thank you, Mr. Prince. Nothing
further.

COXWELL CROSS-EXAMINES

COXWELL
Mr. Prince, back in 1986 when Mr.
Beckwith allegedly made this
statement to you, of course, you went
straight to the authorities, didn't
you?

PRINCE
No.

COXWELL

Well, you must have at least told
some of your buddies about it?

PRINCE

No.

COXWELL

You didn't tell anybody that you were
renting a house from a man who
admitted to you that he'd killed
somebody?

PRINCE

I didn't at that time, no.

COXWELL

Mr. and Mrs. Beckwith had you thrown
out of the house you were renting
from them because you had a drinking
problem, isn't that true?

PRINCE

I had a drinking problem, but that is
not why they threw me out.

COXWELL

You don't particularly like Mr.
Beckwith for throwing you out, do you?

BECKWITH is grinning. BOBBY and ED PETERS are not.

DISSOLVE TO:

136 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

136

PEGGY MORGAN's on the stand. She's a skinny, nervous-looking
little lady with big dark glasses and frosted hair.

Her voice is shaking as she testifies.

BOBBY

Mrs. Morgan, when you were living in
Greenwood, Mississippi, back in the
early 1970's did you and your husband
give the defendant a ride up to
Parchman Prison?

PEGGY MORGAN

Yes, sir. Me and my husband Lloyd
was going to see Lloyd's brother,
Jimmy Dale Morgan, and Mr. Beckwith
was going to see some friend of his,
whose name he wouldn't tell us.

BOBBY
Did the defendant make any statements
to you concerning the murder of
Medgar Evers?

PEGGY MORGAN looks at BECKWITH, who's staring right at her.

PEGGY MORGAN
Yes, sir. He said that he had killed
Medgar Evers, a nigger, and he said
we'd better not say anything about us
driving him up to Parchman, 'cause he
wasn't scared to kill again.

BOBBY
Thank you, Mrs. Morgan.

KITCHENS CROSS-EXAMINES

KITCHENS knows this quivering witness is vulnerable, and he's
going to do his best to destroy her.

KITCHENS
Mrs. Morgan, you have had some very
traumatic things happen to you in
your life, haven't you?

PEGGY MORGAN
Most definitely.

KITCHENS

Your estranged husband, Lloyd Morgan,
was very abusive to you, is that
correct?

PEGGY MORGAN

Yes, sir.

BOBBY

Objection. Irrelevant.

HILBURN

Where are you going with this, Mr.
Kitchens?

KITCHENS

Your Honor, if you'll allow me, this
line of questioning speaks directly
to this witness' credibility.

HILBURN

Overruled.

KITCHENS

Mrs. Morgan, your husband, you told
us, carried on an incestuous
relationship with one of his children.

PEGGY MORGAN

Yes, sir, he did.

KITCHENS

And your father was abusive to you
when you were a child.

PEGGY MORGAN

Yes, sir.

KITCHENS

As a result of all this, you have
been diagnosed as having an anxiety
disorder by psychiatrists.

PEGGY MORGAN

Yes, sir, I have.

BECKWITH practically chortles as he shakes his head.

KITCHENS

I have nothing further.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

137

The place is buzzing after the day's activities. The grinning BECKWITH is talking to the PRESS.

BECKWITH
Well, if this here jury wants to believe a lying drunk, a paid informant, and a loony bird, then I reckon I might be in a bit of trouble, but not as much trouble as our beloved justice system. You know that Prince fella, he still owes me sixty-four dollars worth of rent.

BECKWITH starts towards his van with THELMA. They are chased by reporters.

ED BRYSON
How do you account for the matching serial numbers on the gun?

*

BECKWITH
My rifle was stolen out of my house a couple of days before the nigra turned up dead.

CUT TO:

138 INT. MYRLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

138

MYRLIE, DARRELL, and REENA are watching the news of the day. We see BECKWITH being interviewed from earlier in the day.

DARRELL
Mom, how can you stand
watching this guy?

MYRLIE
When your daddy died, I
carried around such hatred
for this man that I actually
made inquiries about having
him killed, but, in time, I
was able to let the anger go.

REENA
I don't know how.

MYRLIE
I remembered something your
daddy once said to me. He
said, "Myrlie, when you hate,
the only one who suffers is
you. Because most of the
people you hate don't know
it, and the others don't
care."

BECKWITH
(to CAMERAMAN)
Turn those lights off ---
they're hurting my wife's
eyes.

REPORTER THIRTEEN
Will you testify on your
own behalf as you did in
the first two trials?

BECKWITH
Well, now, my lawyers have
advised me not to comment
on that. But I will tell
you whether I do or not
don't change fact that I
was no where near Jackson
at the time of the murder.
As a matter of fact I never
even met or laid eyes on
the nigra Medgar Evers. I
never even knew what he
looked like until I saw his
picture in the paper the
next day.

DARRELL puts his arms around his mother. BECKWITH and THELMA
escape the REPORTERS and enter their van.

NEWSCASTER ED BRYSON
(on T.V. outside the
courthouse)

So now it's the defense's turn, whose
key witness will be retired Greenwood
police officer James Holley, who, as
in the first two trials, is expected
to provide Beckwith with an alibi.
It remains to be seen whether Mr.
Beckwith himself will take the stand.
This is Ed Bryson, WLBT - News,
Jackson.

CUT TO:

A HELICOPTER SHOT OF A VERY CROWDED COURTHOUSE STEPS.

139 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY 139

News HELICOPTERS fly over the mobbed courthouse. STUDENTS
from schools all over the area are out in force. This is
history in the making. BOBBY and ED are walking up the steps.

ED
Everybody wants to see the Byron
De La Beckwith show.

BOBBY
What if they decide putting him on is
too risky?

CUT TO:

140 INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY 140

BOBBY and ED are walking towards the courtroom.

ED
Are you kidding? He's the only one
who can get up there and tell that
cock-and-bull story about his gun
being stolen two days before the
murder. Besides, this is Byron De La
Beckwith we're talking about.
Summoned down from his mountaintop by
God Almighty to give us The Word
According to Delay.
(smiling)
He'll testify.

BOBBY starts into the men's room.

ED
(continuing)
I'll see you inside.

141 INT. COURTHOUSE MEN'S ROOM - DAY

141

BOBBY is washing his face. When he looks up in the mirror, he sees another reflection next to his own. It's BECKWITH, straightening his tie.

BECKWITH
Mr. DeLaughter?

BOBBY takes a breath. Then he turns to face BECKWITH.

BECKWITH
(continuing)
Something happen to you in your
boyhood, Mr. DeLaughter, make you
mean-spirited enough to turn on your
own? Why ain't you out doing what
the good Lord and the State of
Mississippi got a right to expect you
to be doing?

BOBBY
Which is?

BECKWITH
Putting niggers away for killing
white people instead of the other way
around. You and Mr. Peters, y'all
oughta be run out of this state for
perpetuating this foolishness, and
you probably will be.

BOBBY
Maybe so, Mr. Beckwith. But not
before we see you spend the rest of
your life where you belong.

*

BECKWITH
Sir?

BOBBY
This wasn't some deer you brought
down. This was a human being.

BECKWITH
(feigns outrage)
Mr. DeLaughter, a deer's a beautiful
animal, one of God's creatures. I
would never kill a deer. A nigger,
on the other hand, well, that's
another matter entirely.

BOBBY
You're standing here, and you're
telling me that you actually...

*

BECKWITH
(laughs)
Killed Medgar Evers? What if I did?
It ain't like you can do anything
about it.

BOBBY
We'll see about that.

BECKWITH
(very cocky)
Oh, that we will. That we will. It
only takes but one of 'em, which one
is it gonna be? You know-- maybe it's
gonna be that chubby little white gal
who ain't never gonna let one of her
own kind get put away for this, no
matter what she tole y'all when she
got on that jury. Or it could even
be that ol' nigger minister, who
won't want sending a sick old man to
prison on his conscience.
Point is, you ain't never gonna get
twelve people to convict me of
killing a nigger in the State of
Mississippi. Hell, I don't even have
to take the stand.

*

*

Now BOBBY is really rocked. He tries not to show it.

BECKWITH
(continuing)
In a couple more days, I'll be
heading on back to Signal Mountain,
Tennessee where I'm gonna sit on my
porch and live out my days in peace
and prosperity. What are you gonna
do, Mr. DeLaughter?

*

*

*

BOBBY is shaken, and BECKWITH can see it. He gingerly slips
a cigar into BOBBY's jacket pocket, then he saunters out of
the room, SINGING free at last, free at last, thank God
Almighty I'm free at last. BOBBY just stands there.

*
*

142 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

142

The place is absolutely packed. Not one empty seat. MYRLIE sits behind BOBBY and ED with DARRELL and REENA. BOBBY is white as a ghost as he and ED watch BECKWITH.

ED
(smiles)
Relax. He's needling you, that's all.

BOBBY
But, Ed--

ED
He'll testify, believe me.

COXWELL
The defense calls James Holley.

143 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - SHORT TIME LATER

143

JAMES HOLLEY enters the courtroom and takes the witness stand. He's sworn in by the BAILIFF.

BAILIFF
Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God.

HOLLEY
I do.

BAILIFF
Be seated.

COXWELL
Mr. Holley, did you have any sort of a personal relationship with the defendant?

HOLLEY
No, sir. None whatsoever. I just kinda knew who he was.

COXWELL
Mr. Holley, in the early morning of June 12th in 1963, did you have occasion to see Mr. Byron De La Beckwith?

HOLLEY
Yes, sir. He was standing outside at a Shell station while the attendant was putting gas in his car.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

COXWELL
Can you tell the jury what time you
saw Mr. Beckwith?

HOLLEY
At approximately 1:03 in the morning.

COXWELL

About how many miles is it from
Greenwood to Jackson, would you say?

HOLLEY

Must be around ninety, ninety-five
miles

COXWELL

So you're saying you saw the
defendant, less than an hour after
the murder, calmly standing by his
car ninety-five miles away from the
scene of the crime.

HOLLEY

Yes, sir.

COXWELL

I have nothing further.

BOBBY stands up. He approaches HOLLEY slowly. His manner is
easygoing at first. That will change.

BOBBY

The night that you say you saw Byron
De La Beckwith in Greenwood...Delay
as you call him, I believe, is that
right?

HOLLEY

De La Beckwith, yes, sir.

BOBBY

Why do you call him Delay? Are y'all
first-name buddies?

HOLLEY

No, sir. I call him Mr. Beckwith
most of the time.

BOBBY grabs up some notes from the table. He reads.

BOBBY

"And we just noted Delay's car, and Delay and the attendant were at the station." Isn't that exactly what you told me and my investigators when we came up to Greenwood and asked you what you were doing that night? Delay. Your buddy.

HOLLEY

My friend.

BOBBY

How long has he been your friend?

HOLLEY

Well, since shortly after World War II.

BOBBY

So when you said you had no personal relationship with him, that wasn't entirely true. You've known him for a long time and been friends for a long time, isn't that so?

HOLLEY's good-ole-boy smile is fading.

HOLLEY

Well, sure, we're friends. Just like I hope you and I are friends.

BOBBY

Pardon?

HOLLEY

I said just like I would hope that you and I are friends.

BOBBY

I'm flattered. Let me ask you this, Mr. Holley: Back around the time that the defendant was arrested, there were a whole lot of law enforcement people up there in Greenwood, trying to get information, weren't there? FBI, Jackson Police--do you remember that?

HOLLEY

Yes, sir.

BOBBY

Did you ever talk to Detective Sanders, one of the investigators in charge of this case?

HOLLEY

I might have spoken a word with him.

BOBBY

Then you told him that you saw Byron De La Beckwith in Greenwood gassing up his car on the night of the killing, right?

HOLLEY

I did not.

BOBBY

Why not?

HOLLEY

I had no reason to tell him unless he asked me.

BOBBY plays his astonishment for the jury.

BOBBY

You wouldn't have had any reason, as a sworn police officer, to tell an investigator on an important murder case that you knew that the suspect in that case was ninety miles away at the time of the murder.

HOLLEY

I would have been butting into his investigation, unless he asked me.

BOBBY

You would have been butting into his investigation...by telling him an alibi?

HOLLEY

Right.

HOLLEY is flustered and pathetic. BOBBY shakes his head.

BOBBY

Did you ever go to the District Attorney's office and tell them what was going on?

HOLLEY

No, sir.

BOBBY

Did you ever go to the FBI and tell
them what was going on?

HOLLEY

No.

The PRESS PEOPLE, the SPECTATORS, the JURY, they're all just
shaking their heads in disbelief.

BOBBY

Isn't it a fact that the only person
you spoke to about this was Hardy
Lott, Mr. Beckwith's defense attorney?

HOLLEY

When he called me--

BOBBY

And how long was the defendant
sitting in jail by then? A couple of
weeks?

HOLLEY

(weakly)
I don't know exactly.

BOBBY

Well, let me help you out. It was
over eight months. Eight months!
You let your buddy stay in jail all
that time and never once told a
single person, "You've got the wrong
guy." Is that what you're asking
this jury to believe?

HOLLEY

Yes, sir...

HOLLEY is crushed, broken, defeated and humiliated. But
BOBBY's not finished.

BOBBY

Mr. Holley, I believe earlier in this
testimony you said that we're
friends, is that right?

HOLLEY

(reeling)
Said what?

BOBBY
That we're friends, you and I are
friends.

HOLLEY
Yes, sir.

BOBBY smiles wickedly as he says:

BOBBY
You still think we're friends?

HOLLEY looks like he's afraid to give the wrong answer.

HOLLEY
Sure...

BOBBY
Well, as my friend, if I ever get put
in jail for murder, will you promise
not to leave me there for eight
months if you know where I was when
the murder took place?

COXWELL leaps up to object.

COXWELL
Objection.

The JUDGE sustains it, but the point sure has been made.

BOBBY
Nothing further, Your Honor.

BOBBY walks back to the table. He smiles at MYRLIE EVERS,
who smiles and nods.

MYRLIE	COXWELL	
That was a thing of beauty.	Your Honor, Mr.	
	Delaughter's remarks were	*
	made solely for the purpose	*
	of prejudicing the jury.	*
	I move for a mistrial.	*

HILBURN	
(to defense)	
Denied. Would you like to	*
redirect.	*

COXWELL
Thank you, Your Honor.

COXWELL approaches the beaten HOLLEY.

COXWELL
(continuing)
Would you lie for Mr. Beckwith?

HOLLEY
No, sir.

COXWELL
Did he ask you to?

HOLLEY
No, sir.

COXWELL
As a former police officer, you know
that perjury is a serious crime.

HOLLEY
Oh, yes, sir.

COXWELL
Mr. Holley, I'm going to ask you this
one last time. On the night that
Medgar Evers was killed, did you or
did you not see Byron De La Beckwith
some ninety miles away from where the
murder had just taken place?

HOLLEY
I saw him.

COXWELL
As God is your judge?

HOLLEY
As God is my judge.

BOBBY looks at the JURORS' faces. He gets a sinking feeling
as he realizes that they seem to be buying this.

COXWELL
Thank you, Mr. Holley.
(to HILBURN)
We have nothing further.

HILBURN
Mr. DeLaughter?

BOBBY
No further questions.

HOLLEY climbs down from the witness stand. He can't wait to
get the hell out of this courtroom.

HILBURN
(to defense)
Are you ready to call your next
witness?

The courtroom grows still. Here comes the moment they've all
been waiting for. BECKWITH just sits there smugly.

KITCHENS

Your Honor, the defense rests.

The whole courtroom lets out a GASP. BOBBY and ED are stunned. People start SHOUTING and BOOING. The JUDGE has to BANG HIS GAVEL and CALL FOR ORDER. BECKWITH just sits there with a sly little grin. MYRLIE EVERS glances at BECKWITH as she says to BOBBY.

MYRLIE

A coward to the end.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

144 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

144

JIM KITCHENS is delivering his closing statement.

KITCHENS

To my knowledge, this jury is being asked to look further into the past than any jury in the history of American jurisprudence. This places you at a considerable disadvantage. Evidence has been lost. They don't have the bullet. They don't have the spent cartridge case that was found in the gun. They don't have the live ammunition that was found in the gun. Where is it? Nobody knows. Does that create reasonable doubt? Of course it does.

You have heard a number of witnesses testify that, years after the crime, Mr. Beckwith said this, or Mr. Beckwith said that, but the defense has presented you with an eyewitness, a sworn officer of the law, who has testified under oath that he saw the defendant, Byron De La Beckwith, in Greenwood, Mississippi, over ninety miles from Jackson, less than an hour after the murder. Does this raise reasonable doubt? You bet it does. And reasonable doubt means one thing and one thing only: By law, you must render a not-guilty verdict. Forget that it's Byron De La Beckwith. Forget that you may not like him, that you may not agree with him.

(more)

KITCHENS (cont'd)
 Judge the evidence and judge it
 fairly. Because if the system
 doesn't work for Byron De La
 Beckwith, it doesn't work for anyone.
 I ask you to let the system work and,
 once and for all, find the defendant,
 Byron De La Beckwith, not guilty.
 Thank you.

HILBURN
 Mr. Delaughter.

*
 *

Now it's BOBBY's turn. He walks out in front of the JURY.

BOBBY
 An unarmed man, arrives home in the
 late hours of the night--home to his
 family, his wife and three small
 children--gets out of his car, and,
 with his back turned, is gunned down
 by a coward. That coward is Byron De
 La Backwith.

BOBBY looks at BECKWITH, who is pretending he's not listening.

BOBBY
 (continuing)
 His gun. His scope, His
 fingerprint. His car. And lastly,
 but certainly not least, his mouth.
 When he thought he had beaten the
 system, he couldn't keep his mouth
 shut with people he wanted to
 impress. And now his venom has come
 back to do him in because, ladies and
 gentlemen, there is no statute of
 limitations on murder.
 The law doesn't say that if you
 killed a man ten years ago, twenty
 years ago, or even thirty years ago,
 that you don't have to pay the price.
 And the law doesn't say that if you
 are fifty years old, or sixty years
 old or seventy years old that you
 don't have to pay the price. No man
 is above the law. And for what
 reason was Medgar Evers' life taken?
 For wanting some degree of equality
 for himself, his family, and his
 fellow man.

(more)

BOBBY (cont'd)
Ladies and gentlemen, when that kind
of murder happens, no matter who the
victim, no matter what his race,
there is a gaping wound laid open on
society as a whole.
(more)

BOBBY (cont'd)

Justice has sometimes been referred to as the soothing balm to be applied to the wounds inflicted on society. But when there is no justice, those wounds can never be cleansed; those wounds can never be healed. When I addressed you in my opening statement, I said this was a simple case. I was right, and I was wrong. The evidence is simple, and the conclusion is more than obvious. But the reason we are all sitting in this courtroom so many years after this disgraceful assassination took place is anything but simple. President John F. Kennedy, in his landmark civil rights speech to the nation, delivered the very night Medgar Evers was murdered, said, "We face a moral crisis as a country and as a people. Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality." Today, thirty years later, on behalf of the State of Mississippi, I'm asking you twelve ladies and gentlemen to act boldly. To hold this defendant accountable and find him guilty, simply because it is right, it is just, and, Lord knows, it is time. Is it ever too late to do the right thing? For the sake of justice and the hope for us as a civilized society, I sincerely pray that it's not. Thank you.

As BOBBY DELAUGHTER takes in the face of each JUROR, he sincerely hopes that they do, too.

CUT TO:

145 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

145

BOBBY's at his desk, sifting through the mountain of unopened mail that's been piling up. He notices one neatly wrapped package with a ribbon around it. He starts to open it.

VOICE (O.S.)

That's not going to blow up, is it?

BOBBY looks up to see MYRLIE EVERS, who's just walked in.

BOBBY
(smiles)
Maybe you'd better stand back a bit.

BOBBY opens the package and removes a tie clasp that's got a painted Confederate flag on it. The accompanying letter says, "Long Live Dixie."

MYRLIE
One of your many admirers?

BOBBY
(looking at the flag)
My first wife and I, we'd go to Ole Miss games, and we'd wave the Rebel flag and yell the Rebel Yell, sing "Dixie"--I never thought anything of it. We were just having fun.

BOBBY looks at the tie clasp, then tosses it in the trash.
MYRLIE looks around the office.

MYRLIE
We sure made a lot of trouble out of this little place.

BOBBY
Yes, ma'am, I guess we did.

MYRLIE
How long do you think they'll be out?

BOBBY
All I know is a short time's good, and a long time is...not so good.

MYRLIE
Well then, I'm gonna pray for a short time.
(smiles)
This place reminds me of Medgar's office over on Lynch Street. You know, I used to be Medgar's secretary.

BOBBY
You were?

MYRLIE
Medgar insisted that we behave in the office strictly as employer and employee. He'd call me Mrs. Evers, and I'd have to call him Mr. Evers.

BOBBY
(laughs)
No.

MYRLIE
Everybody thought he was crazy. But
he was just so determined to do a
good job.
(beat)
You remind me of Medgar.

BOBBY
(touched)
Thank you, ma'am.

He gets up.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Can I get you some coffee or
something?

MYRLIE
No thanks.

BOBBY
As many trials as I've been through,
I can never take the waiting. You
want to go for a walk?

MYRLIE
No, you go ahead. I've gotten pretty
good at waiting.

CUT TO:

146 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

146

BECKWITH is jovial as he sips coffee with KITCHENS and
COXWELL.

COXWELL
It's already been four hours.

KITCHENS
When the jury's out this long, it's
almost always a mistrial.

BECKWITH
(supremely confident)
Only takes but one, Mr. Kitchens.
The American justice system is the
greatest in the world.

KITCHENS
(half heartedly)
Yeah.

A black assistant delivers some papers to KITCHENS. As she
leaves.

BECKWITH
I see you still got that nigger
secretary working for you. I thought
I told you...

KITCHENS
Mr. Beckwith, the only reason to hope
for an acquittal is so I won't have
to spend one minute more than I have
to listening to your horseshit.

CUT TO:

147 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE JURY ROOM - CONTINUOUS 147
Inside, JURORS can be heard SHOUTING at each other. BOBBY is
out here listening with CRISCO and BENNY. They all exchange
looks that can only mean one thing: "We're dead."

CUT TO:

A GAVEL BEING BANGED

148 INT COURTROOM - EVENING 148
Court is in session. Everybody in the courtroom has their
eyes on the jury entrance. BECKWITH hasn't got a care in the
world. After a few beats, the jury still hasn't entered.

HILBURN
Counsel, the jury foreman has
informed me they are unable to reach
a verdict at this time. I have
instructed them to continue their
deliberations at nine o'clock
tomorrow morning. Until then, court
is adjourned.

HILBURN BANGS his GAVEL.

CUT TO:

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING

accompanied by a huge CRACK OF THUNDER.

149 EXT. DOWNTOWN JACKSON - NIGHT

149

A colossal Mississippi thunderstorm is driving through Jackson. The WIND is SHRIEKING, the THUNDER is CRASHING, the thick RAIN is sweeping through the streets.

The Hinds County courthouse is lit up by LIGHTNING.

And inside the courthouse THE MURAL depicting the history of Mississippi is illuminated as if by the Devil's own fire.
And so is:

THE SIGN ABOVE THE MEN'S ROOM DOOR. Through the paint, we can just about make out the faint outline of a word painted over decades ago, and we are reminded that the sign above the rest room door used to say WHITE MEN. And:

AS THE COURTROOM ITSELF IS LIT, WE SEE illuminated the wood-carved eagles on the ceiling, the empty jury box, the judge's bench. And at...

149A EXT. MEDGAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT 149A

The now empty house stands as a memory.

149B INT. BECKWITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 149B

BECKWITH is watching television, drinking a beer from a bottle. THELMA looks out at the raging storm.

THELMA
Delay, honey. I don't ever remember
such a storm.

BECKWITH
I always say the darker the storm,
the brighter the day that follows.
And sugar, since I met you I've known
nothing but bright days.

THELMA
Oh, Delay.

BECKWITH
But, tomorrow will be our brightest.

He holds up his beer bottle to toast.

BECKWITH
(continuing)
To our brightest day.

Off a close shot of the beer bottle, we:

CUT TO:

A bottle from CLAIRE'S tree smashing against another bottle.

150 EXT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT 150

CLAIRE'S BOTTLE TREE rattles furiously in the WIND. Another bottle SMASHES. Then ANOTHER. Then the whole tree is uprooted and blown away.

CUT TO:

151 INT. DELAUGHTER HOUSE - NIGHT

151

BOBBY sits alone in the darkened den, staring out the back door at the storm. After a few beats, PEGGY enters. *

PEGGY

Bobby, honey, come back to bed.
You're not gonna get the jury to
render a guilty verdict by staying up
all night.

BOBBY

If we lose all I will have done is
put Mississippi's sins in a big fat
spotlight.

PEGGY

Mississippi will survive.

BOBBY

What about Myrlie?

CUT TO:

151A INT. MYRLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

151A

MYRLIE, REENA and DARRELL are holding on to each other.
There is nothing left to do but pray.

MYRLIE

Dear God, we have gone as far as we
can go, it's in your hands now.

REENA

We loved our father. And we know the
pain will never go away. All we want
now is justice.

DARRELL

Dear God, please give us justice.

As MYRLIE, DARRELL, and REENA echo each other's amens, we

DISSOLVE TO:

152 EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING 152

A bright, still morning. The MEDIA is out in force and so
are the PEOPLE, who want to be present when the verdict comes
down.

153 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY 153

The CLOCK on the wall says 9:00 a.m. BOBBY's here with PEGGY
and the KIDS. He's handing BURT some money. BURT is pissed.

BOBBY

Can you remember all that or--

BURT

(annoyed)

Four Egg McMuffins, two orders of
toast, and--Daddy, I haven't missed
one day of this trial, and if I'm not
here when that verdict comes in, I
swear--

BOBBY

I promise you you're not gonna miss
a thing. That jury's gonna be in
there for a long time.

CUT TO:

154 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 154

Some SPECTATORS are milling about, the PRESS PEOPLE are
sitting around doing crossword puzzles.

BECKWITH relaxes in the back of the courtroom with THELMA,
MARTIN SCOTT, and some SUPPORTERS.

SCOTT

That Judge Hilburn, he don't have a lot of patience. If those jurors ain't back with a verdict in a few hours, he'll declare a mistrial.

BECKWITH

I'm not sure I got that. Would you mind repeating that, please?

They all chuckle.

155 INT. BOBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

155

CLAIRE and DREW are coloring, JARED's playing a Gameboy, and PEGGY is massaging BOBBY's shoulders as he stares out the window. Then the TELEPHONE RINGS. Everybody jumps but BOBBY, who points to the clock. It's 9:30 a.m.

BOBBY

Will y'all just relax? No way they reached a verdict in just half an hour.

(picks up phone)

Yeah?

BOBBY loses all color. He hangs up the phone.

BOBBY

(continuing)

They reached a verdict...

156 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

156

It's PANDEMONIUM down here as all the REPORTERS and SPECTATORS jam into the courtroom to get seats. SECURITY is having a hard time dealing with the overflow, and hundreds of people find themselves locked out of the courtroom.

156A INT. MYRLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - DAY

156A

MYRLIE, DARRELL, and REENA are rushing around in a panic trying to get dressed.

MYRLIE

Where's my other earring? Has anyone seen my other earring.

REENA

It's in your hand, mother.

MYRLIE

What's it doing there?

As they continue to hurriedly get ready.

CUT TO:

157 INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - DAY 157

BOBBY is rushing along with his family.

CLAIRE
Daddy, Burt ain't back from
McDonald's yet.

BOBBY
Oh, damn...he's gonna kill me flat-
ass dead.

CUT TO:

158 EXT. MYRLIE'S HOTEL - DAY 158

MYRLIE, REENA, and DARRELL are rushing out of the hotel and quickly piling into their car.

CUT TO:

159 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY 159

BURT is near tears as he tries to get through the CROWD into the courthouse. He's holding a couple of McDonald's bags. Finally one of the security men spots him. It's BENNY. He reaches through the crowd and lifts BURT high up into the air. BURT's McDonald's bags go flying.

160 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 160

We see MYRLIE and HER CHILDREN rushing to their seats. Everybody's present, including BURT, who's sitting with PEGGY, CLAIRE, JARED and DREW.

DEPUTY
All rise.

JUDGE HILBURN enters. All stand and as the JUDGE sits, so does everyone in the packed courtroom.

HILBURN
When the verdict is read, there'll be
no demonstrations of any type or
emotional outbursts. I don't want to
hear one sound.

The BAILIFF escorts the JURORS into the courtroom.

HILBURN
(continuing)
Mr. Foreman, has the jury reached a verdict?

MINISTER
It has, Your Honor.

HILBURN
Bailiff, if you'll hand me the verdict, please.

The MINISTER hands the paper to the BAILIFF, who hands it to the JUDGE. The JUDGE looks it over, hands it back to the BAILIFF, who hands it back to the MINISTER.

HILBURN
(continuing)
I'm going to ask the jurors at this time to please stand before the bench and face the defendant.

The JURORS do as they're told. BECKWITH is almost smiling at them as if he were their neighbor.

HILBURN
(continuing)
The jury foreman will read the verdict.

BOBBY holds his breath. It all comes down to this.

MYRLIE EVERS braces herself. Thirty years ago her whole life was transformed by one moment. And so shall it be again.

MINISTER
We, the jury, find the defendant, Byron De La Beckwith, guilty as charged.

The verdict is met with a restrained reaction.

BYRON DE LA BECKWITH is absolutely stunned. The smile is gone from his face. It will never return.

COXWELL and KITCHEN'S jaws drop simultaneously.

MYRLIE EVERS closes her eyes. So this is what it feels like to be free.

DARRELL throws his fists in the air, REENA reacts joyfully.

BOBBY gets a pat on the back from ED PETERS. BOBBY is exhilarated.

Not just because he's won, but because the state he loves has defied the odds.

Mississippi has finally come through.

As the reaction dies down....

ONE OF THE DEPUTIES whispers into his walkie-talkie.

DEPUTY
Guilty.

161 OMITTED 161

From inside the courtroom we hear the muffled jubilation coming from the corridor outside the courtroom.

CUT TO:

161A INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - DAY 161A

The response is DEAFENING as the news travels down the corridor, into the lobby and out into the street, where:

161B EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY 161B

A HUGE CROWD of blacks and whites alike are CHEERING, whooping, screaming embracing. The Beckwith SUPPORTERS scowl and shake their heads, but they certainly seem to be in the minority.

CHARLES EVERS. He's standing across the street alone, unnoticed. He smiles. Nods. Walks away.

162 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 162

In stark contrast to the ruckus outside, it's still quiet in this courtroom. BECKWITH stands before the judge.

HILBURN
Mr. Beckwith, by mandate of the laws of the State of Mississippi, it is required by the Court that I sentence you to life imprisonment. Mr. Sheriff, if you'll take custody of the prisoner.

The SHERIFF nods to TWO BLACK DEPUTIES, who are only too happy to put the cuffs on BECKWITH.

CUT TO:

163 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

163

The courtroom doors open, and out steps a grinning ED PETERS. The PRESS crowd around. Now out steps MYRLIE EVERS with HER CHILDREN. The CROWD CHEERS. MYRLIE smiles at ED PETERS. She extends her hand. PETERS gladly shakes it.

MYRLIE

Thank you, Mr. Peters.

The CROWD APPLAUDS, and the PRESS takes pictures. BOBBY isn't even noticed as he emerges from the courthouse with HIS FAMILY. They just kind of hang in the back by the doors, watching MYRLIE EVERS shake hands with ED. Then JERRY MITCHELL gets right in front of MYRLIE.

MITCHELL

Mrs. Evers, how did you feel when the verdict came in?

Everybody's clamoring for MYRLIE to make a statement. Then from the corner of her eye, she spots BOBBY standing there. She reaches out her hand for him. BOBBY smiles and takes it. Then MYRLIE EVERS and BOBBY DELAUGHTER share a warm and happy embrace. We did it!

Then MYRLIE EVERS walks up to the bank of microphones. Her CHILDREN are beside her. She looks out over the sea of smiling faces. She is nearly overcome with emotion.

MYRLIE

I remember a day a long time ago when Medgar and I were both still at Alcorn. He called me at home, and he said, "Myrlie, I've been thinking about us, and I think we should bring this thing to an end. May I come over?" I could feel little waves of shock going through me. I saw my whole life disappearing. It was almost an hour before Medgar arrived, and in that hour my heart broke a hundred times. He said, "Myrlie, I don't want you to make a mistake. I think it would be best if you started dating other people and saw more of the world before you settled down." I just sat there. I couldn't move.
(more)

MYRLIE (cont'd)

Finally I got up, and I told him that I had already found all the qualities I wanted in a husband in him, and if he was using my youth as an excuse to break it off with me, well, that was cowardice. And I started to run out of the room before I burst into tears. But then Medgar caught me by the shoulders, turned me around and without a word, placed a tiny box in my hand. When he saw that I was too stunned to open it myself, he did it for me. Inside was an engagement ring.

The CROWD has tears in its eyes. MYRLIE is becoming overcome with emotion as she continues.

MYRLIE
(continuing)

It's been...it's been a long journey...and Medgar...?

She's having a hard time continuing. A BLACK WOMAN standing nearby whispers:

WOMAN
Let it go.

MYRLIE
I've gone the last mile of the way.
I've gone the last mile of the way,
and...

Now MYRLIE EVERS raises her head up to heaven. The tears of joy are streaming down her face. She clenches her fists and shouts out joyfully:

MYRLIE
(continuing)
...all I want to say is...yea,
Medgar. Yea!

The words, the spirit behind them is pure jubilation. The CROWD SHOUTS and APPLAUDS. MYRLIE puts her arms around HER CHILDREN. BOBBY puts his arm around PEGGY. HIS CHILDREN are at his side.

DISSOLVE TO:

A shovel breaking the dirt, digging a hole. We're in:

164 EXT. BOBBY'S BACK YARD - DAY

164

Now BOBBY places a small oak sapling in the ground, replacing the bottle tree that got uprooted in the storm. CLAIRE rushes over with a box filled with multicolored bottles. She notices how small the tree is.

CLAIRE

There's no place for the bottles.

BOBBY

Honey, we're not gonna need the bottles anymore.

CLAIRE

But what about the ghosts?

BOBBY

I don't think they'll be coming back.
Do you like this tree?

CLAIRE

Yeah, but it's awfully small.

BOBBY

That's the whole idea. You two can grow up together.

The two of them begin filling in the dirt. As we pull back, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN TITLES:

1. Byron De La Beckwith remains in the Hinds County prison, serving a life sentence. His case is on appeal.

2. In February of 1995, in Washington, D.C., one year after the verdict, Myrlie Evers was elected chairman of the NAACP.

Ten hours after her return home from Washington, her husband, Walter Williams, died in her arms.

3. In November of 1994, Bobby DeLaughter ran for judge of the Mississippi Court of Appeals. He lost by a landslide. He remains with the Hinds County District Attorney's office.

FADE OUT: