



Emmett Draft

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Emmett"

M I crooked letter crooked letter I

Crooked letter crooked letter I

Hump back hump back I Mississippi

[He hums and sings this song intermittently while he hauls in, then rummages through, the trunk. From it he extracts a visor which he puts on his head, a huge watch which he straps to his wrist, an old typewriter, paper and other paraphernalia suggestive both of 'magic show' theater props and an ^{executioner's} ~~artist's~~ tools. He arranges the typewriter and kneels in front of it, preparing to type.]

"Emmett" cont'd.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation. August 24. August 26? Shit.
August, 1955. Sunflower County. Mississippi. U.S.A.

[He stands and blocks the scene with his hands]

~~A~~ ^{Greyhound} ^{Chicago.}
~~The~~ bus station. Crowded. Hot (wipes under his chin). Here's me bopping on in (bops around). Got my suitcase. Money in my wallet. (To clerk) Hey, baby. (tosses the money) Yeah, you ain't deaf. ~~heard me.~~ Mississippi. Huh? No way! Round trip, baby. This is definitely a round trip. Sheeee, two weeks and I'm back in Chicago! where I belong. Same to you! Then. Then. I stroll over to the newsstand. Buy me ^{a Plastic Man comic and} a pack of Lucky Strike. Couple of Butternut candy bars. Some Wrigley. Spearmint. (unwraps the gum) Mmmmmmm. (chewing with deep pleasure) Gotta get me a Co Cola (drinks it; tosses bottle. Looks at watch) Right on time. Hey, buddy! I'm first. Ticket right here, sir. Sit myself down. (Pointedly) Up front. No, not up front. This is gonna be a long trip and I need room, man, Room. Go to the back; spread myself out. (does so; looks out window) Ma. Ma. Here I am. (waves) What? I can't hear. What? Stay out of ^{what?} ~~trouble?~~ Oh. Yeah, sure. Yeah. Bye! Mmmmmmmmmmm (Imitating sound of motor; rocking a little in his seat) I light me up a cig. (smokes and

gazes out of window) 'S green. Wow. One mile outside the city
and it's green. Lawns. Look at those trees! Oh, man! (Yawns)

Sun's going down. (closes his eyes; snores; wakes; looks out of
window) ~~Jesus!~~ ^{Ha Ha. Oh man} Don't tell me that's cotton! Ha ha. I thought

it was gonna be big. Big bushes of it. Like snowballs. Like,
like cotton. This is jive. Where the houses? Oops, there's
one. Damn. ~~They look like~~ shoe boxes. Wee little shoe boxes

From Thom McAn. Hey, Mississippi, ain't you got no towns? No
magnolia? Lord have mercy. Look at that. Hey! Hey! (waving)

Where your shoes, nigger? (laughs). (TK?)

(opens window; pokes his head out) Mmmmm. ^{What is it? (sniffing, sniffing, inhaling)} Smell that. Something,
something, sweet like honeysuckle, leaves, moss. And (his voice
alters) mud. Smells like mud. And water.

[Suddenly agitated; he slams window]

Cut! Cut, cut, cut!

[Returns to typewriter and types a bit]

Way-off-in-the-cotton-field-down-by-the Tallahatchee-River

[Pauses, stands, looks around] is a, a barn. ^{Over there. See?} ~~I can see it from~~

~~here.~~ It looks like a barn, but it's not. ~~xxx~~ It's a...a...

(pleased with himself) a cotton mill.

[Lights go up on what he is imagining: a structure suggesting
a cotton mill]

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Solid. Oh this is gonna be good. Oh, get down!

Oh, man this is good!

[Pleased and excited he returns to the typewriter and types. While
he types, below him, in an area not in his "Set", five actors ~~xx~~
enter. They have no makeup on. They all sit before "mirrors"
and put on make up, after which they place on their heads "faces"
each according to his race and sex, but huge and all about fifty
years old. They are quiet as they dress, and although they do
not hear "Emmett" above, their movements are synchronized with
his descriptions of each. Each "face" is ~~xxxx~~ radically unlike
what "Emmett" is picturing]

"Emmett"

Okay. Now I need.

One white girl. Twenty, twenty-five. Red hair fixed in a-0
what you call it?--kind of a fluffy page boy. Slanty green eyes.
Hoo! A ~~RR~~ fox in Mississippi. A dog in Chicago. Tits? (shapes
them). Yeah, tits. One of those little strap dresses. Wooooo.
Sunback. Yeah. Sunback dress. High heel shoes. Hee hee. Her
stockings, the run is a little crooked. Hee, hee. And a red
red mouth. Which I will get to later. ^{And} One white boy. Not much
older than me. Black hair, oily. Sideburns. Big Mississippi
cracker grin. Litty bitty piss-colored eyes. And a red, red
neck. Which I will also get to later. Okay now. One, big,
go-for-bad white dude. John Wayne of the swamps. Yeah. Jive
mustache. Crew cut. Military type dude. Wear his balls on his
shoulders. Where they might do him some good.
Now, my buddies. Let me see now. Eustice, you sixteen. Got a
buck tooth, too. Left-handed. Shaves a part in his head.. And
George, you 'bout fifteen. Thinks that mess up under his ~~xxxx~~
chin is a goatee. Ha ha ha. I seen more hair on a egg. Don't
never wear shoes and don't even own no socks.

^{finished now}
[The actors are ~~frozen~~, waiting for directions]

"Emmett"

Yo! White Girl. Pretty white girlllll. On stage, woman!

[White woman rises and enters his domain]

"Emmett"

Who ~~the hell~~ ^{Hey,} are you? I know what you look like. You trying to
fool me? Me? Fat chance! Red hair, green eyes. Twenties, I
said! Get on out of here!

[He returns to his typewriter. Notices the woman has not moved]

Didn't you hear what I said? Get out till I call you and next
time I call you you better come out looking right.

[The woman retrusn to her place]

"Emmett"

Who she think I am? After thirty years she still trying to pull something.[?] You don't scare me and you can't fool me. This time I'm running it. Hear me? You not gonna mess this vacation up. This is my summer vacation. (chuckling) Revised! Way it's 'sposed to be. Way it would have been if I had my boys with me. Sheeeeee. Wow, Oh man, if those cats could see me now. [seriously, commanding] If those cats could see me now! Eustace! Yo!, Eustace Spottswood.

[Eustace enters]

what is this? "Emmett"

Hey man, no! ^A You sixteen. Two years older lthan me. It's gotta be like it was then. You had ~~axxxxxxxgoatee~~ ^{two buck teeth}, remember? Come on Eustace, you wasn't even shaving yet, except the part in your head. [Gives him another face--a mask that is the ^{happy} innocent face of a young ^{Black} colored boy]

"Emmett"

There, that's it. WE buddies. You aint no old man. Now where's your friend; my ace boon coon. George. George Harvey. [George enters]

"Emmett"

Aw, look at you man, Who would have thought it? Shoot. I have to do everything myself. [Adjusts old face to the new one: a young pleasant Black boy with a tiny goatee] "Emmett" steps back, turns away from them while eyeing them over his shoulder. George and Eustace spring into action, recognizing each other, slapping hands etc. "Emmett" turns around toward them--all smiles]

"Emmett"

George! Eustace! How you all doing? Been a long time. ^{Hey, Come on!} ₁ You remember me, don't you?

George

Gee, you do look familiar.

Eustace

Yeah. You favor somebody.

"Emmett"

Oh, man, how could you forget?

[sings]

"Many a tear has to fall ,

But it's all in the game

Do wah wah wah"

[He waits expectantly. George and Eustace look at one another]

"Emmett"

[louder and a little wild]

"Many a tear has to fall

But it's all in the game.

When's the first time you heard that? You know the words, right?

Eustace (singing softly)

"Many a tear..." (laughs) I ain't heard that since--ooo a long time.

"Emmett"

Sitting by the well? 1955? August? You never heard it before then. I taught it to you as a favor ~~xxx~~ because Mississippi boys don't get no Chicago music.

Eustace

August. 1955. August, 1955.

"Emmett"

The Sweetheart Cafe? I taught you how to do the twist, man!

(dances for him)

Eustace

Emmett? Emmet Till?

George

Good God, Is that you?

"Emmett"

Is pig pussy pork?

George and Eustace

I be damn.

[They are thrilled, excited. All greet each ~~other~~ him with

~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ warm enthusiasm. "Emmett" lapping it up]

"Emmett"

Okay. That's enough. Quit!

[George and Eustace freeze. "Emmett returns to his platform and typewriter. Makes a note and notices the frozen men]

"Emmett"

Hey. Not like that. Loosen up. This ain't a morgue. Ha ha ha. That's it.

["Emmett" humming "Many a tear" selects ~~xx~~ items from his trunk: guns, whips, rope, etc.]

George

Say, ah, waht you doing back here?

"Emmett"

Making a movie.

["Emmett" examines a hanging rope--noose tied]

George and Eustace

A movie?

"Emmett"

Yeah. Called How I Spent My summer Vacation. And both you all in in it.

Eustace

I thought--

"Emmett"

Yeah. You thought what?

Eustace

They killed Emmett Till. You dead. Ain't you dead?

"Emmett"

Welll, yes. But not forgotten. Not forgotten, am I? But you know what? It aint like what they said. You know: sleep, rest, rest in peace (laughs) I don't even ~~sleep~~ ^{doze}. I dream, but I don't sleep. I been awake for thirty years.

Eustace

You don't get no rest?

"Emmett"

When you aint' got a body, there's nothing to rest.

George

You must be wore out.

"Emmett"

I am. Oh, I am. Wore out. Tired, man. Dead tired. (brightly)
That's why I'm making this movie. (serious) ^{Because} If I make this movie,
I mean really make it --Then I can ~~just~~ watch ~~the~~ movie when I
want to, I don't have to ~~dream~~ keep dreaming it. ^{making it up.} ~~over~~
and over..So I got to make it right, this time. (cheerful) Hey,
it's my movie. And what good is making a movie if you can't put your
best friends in it.

Eustace (observing rope)

What's that for?

"Emmett"

This? Aw, no, man. Not you. You my main man. You both got
parts, though. See, it starts out with me getting on the bus.
Sharp, you know. I got a brand new wallet, some Lucky Strike^s
I get on this here bus. Like I'm gonna have me a good time. Know ~~me~~
what I mean? Take a trip, raise some hell. It's summer time,
right? Gonna have a me a good time. ^{We had a good time, didn't we?} ~~We did, too. Right?~~

George and Eustace

Right. Right

"Emmett"

All of us, boy. Riding round in that jalopy. Memeber the girls?
Hee hee.

[They all laugh and roughhouse each other]

"Emmett"

See I want you all for background music, You know, like we used
to do on the porch and down by the well. So we got to practice
before the other^s get here. (singing) "If I din't care...
Come on."

[George and Eustace join him in this Ink Spot song]

"Emmett"

(To Eustace) You need a lot of practice man. You had a voice like
a angel. What happen? You still smoking them Phillip Morris?

Eustace

(his voice altering) I don't smoke; never did.

~~George~~

George

(altering also) They don't make Phillip Morris anymore.

Eustace

Drink neither.

"Emmett"

(consulting his watch; sensitive the the slight change in time)

Drink neither? (laughing shrilly) What was in that bottle we hung down in the well? Kool Aid? It made you holler. That's the first time I ever saw a running drunk. I used to hear people say "he was running drunk." I didn't know what they meant till that day. You was hollering and running all round the yard. Uncle Drew threw a hammer at your head. Remember? Missed you. Right, George?

George (Agreeable; back in his face)

Right. Right

"Emmett"

That what made you stop drinking, Eus? ^{Cause} Somebody tried to ~~kill~~ ^{hunt} you ~~but~~? You never was one for rough stuff. [playing with his weapons] Oh Uncle Drew. He could throw a hammer all right, but he couldn't stop two crackers from snatching me out of his house. Here I am sleep. Night's so hot you want to call the fire department. We all in the bed together, trying not to touch cause the person next to you is hotter than you are. Crickets driving me crazy, but ^{SOON AS} ~~then~~ I fall sleep ~~anyway~~. ~~When~~ I wake up, somebody's touching me. Right here. Calling me.

Flashlight. I can't see who it is. But I start to get dressed.

^{White men. I smell white men.}

"You don't need no socks!" Red neck, what he know about socks?

I tell him "I don't wear no shoes without socks, turkey!" And make em wait. Uncle Drew, he's whispering. ^{But} NOT to me--to ~~him~~ ^{them - the white men,}
"He just a kid and he ain't from round here. From up North. He don't understand. He don't understand." He was right, I don't understand. Throw a hammer at a kid having fun, but can't throw nothing at two crackers dragging his own nephew out the house.

Eustace

That aint right waht you saying, and it aint fair. Uncle Drew took care of us; ~~you~~ you too. Fed you; gave you the best peice of the chicken, like you was a ^{guest} ~~just~~ or something. WE showed you a good time--

"Emmett"

Somebody told on me, Eustace. Who told on me? Who told that cracker what I did. Three days passed since I went in that jive ass little store. Three days!

Eustace (to George)

He aint making no movie. What he want with us?

George

I can't figure it.

Eustace

I didn't do nothing to you. Neither one of us did nothing ~~xxxx~~.

"Emmett"

You got that right. YOu didn't do nothing.

[He adjusts Geroge's appearance]

You looking good ~~Geroge~~, real good. Put on a little weight though. Not, good, Geroge. Gotta stay fit.

[Shadow boxes and then punches Geroge, playfully, but with an edge in it.]

Come on, Come on, man.

[George reacts to this play like an older man. The exertion makes him "lose" his face]

George

Hey. I ain't no kid nomore. I'm forty-four.

"Emmett"

[Suddenly curious] How's it feel, forty four?

George

Well, it ain't twenty-four

"Emmett"

There's a difference?

I wouldn't know. I got stopped. No forty-four. No thirty-four.

No twenty-four. NOT even fifteen. That's all I know George. Four-teen. So you all got to tell me about the rest. Tell me when ^{you} ~~you~~ get to be twenty do you cool down? Are the women different? Is that when you get a car? You make any money? Yeah. I bet you got some kids. Eustace?

Eustace (taking off his face)

Five.

"Emmett"

No kidding. How old?

Eustace

Got a girl twenty. Noth~~er~~ one eighteen. One is...

"Emmett"

Older than me. Older than me! My best friend got kids older than me. What do they do for fun Eustace? Go to dances and stuff?

[Dance music is heard] As "Emmett" continues Eustace and George both , caught up in his words, put~~h~~ their young faces back on]

"Emmett"

Put a blue light bulb in the socket and dance close? Smell like Posner hair oil and Cashmere Bouquet? Sweat. Sweat. Jesus I wish I could sweat. Or taste. Do they eat smoked pork on Saturday, chicken on Sunday? Big old biscuits with jalapeno jelly and Kool Aid. Sit on the porch and look at lightening bugs? Drink well water out a gourd? Taste like moss (earnestly) Does the water still taste like moss? Is it cold? It used to be cold. Real, real cold. Maybe it was the heat that made it seem so cold. I never liked ~~eggs~~ before. ^{In Mississippi} ~~Down there~~ they tasted different. Yolks so dark. Orange-colored. Almost bloody. My mother used to try to get me to eat eggs. But I didn't like--they looked so-- She said "Eggs is like meat to the body. Same as meat." I hated em. But I liked her pan bread. Cooked in a skillet on top of the stove. Burnt a little bit around the edges. She always burnt it --just a little around the edges. Ma. Ma. MA enters. She has no painted ^{face} ~~fast~~--she is herself.

Ma

Oh baby, did I burn your bread?

"Emmett"

Ma! Aw, Ma. Aw no. You was a tall woman. Stand up straight, Ma. Come on now. Here...

[She tries to hug him. He won't let her]

"Emmett"

Stand up Ma. Stand tall. For once in your life would you stand tall? Little more, little more, just a

[Ma struggles away from his hands; ^{she is} petulant like a child]

"Emmett"

I'm doing this Ma. YOU have to do what I want you to!

Ma (partly to "Emmett" partly to
George and Eustace)

YOU can't get that nice crust less the flame is high.

"Emmett"

What you need those for? (reaches for her glasses; she eludes him)

Ma

That's how oome it burns. Gives it a nice flavor I always thought. I don't know why he always fussed so.

"Emmett"

Your teeth. You got differet teeth, Ma.

Ma

(laughing) I'm not going to eat you. Would you feel better if I took them out?.

"Emmett"

No!

[Unsettled and a litte frightened, "Emmett" leaps away from her. ^{she disappears} Addresses himself to his paraphenalia and the ordered ^{ing} of his "set." He is agitated and fearing the loss of control. ^{Ma} ~~is talking and gesturing happily with George and Eustace who are acting gracious~~

"Emmett" (bellowing)

All right. Here we go! Gimme the White Girl. Carolyn!

(teasing voice) Carolyn.

[Actress Carolyn enters with young, pretty face. Sees "Emmett" and the other and, as if on cue, backs away in exaggerated fear.]

"Emmett"

Uh uh. White lady. This is my movie. You ain't going nowhere.

"Carolyn"

You better let me out of here. Don't you come near me.

Stay away from me!

["Carolyn" runs downstage; bumps into a "wall. Searches it.

No exit. Emmett and the others watch her while she feels the invisible "wall, touching it's base, pounding on it, jabbing at it. Finally she turns back toward the others, her back edging along the "Wall."]

Ma (to "Emmett")

What you dong? What you doing?

"Emmett"

It's all right Ma. Just sit down. All in good time. All in good time. (to Carolyn) You like a good time, Carolyn?

[He wiggles his pelvis at her. Wolf-whistles etc. Then laughs]

J.W. Get in here!

["J.W." enters, His face is old, tired and harmless]

"Emmett"

Carolyn. Here's your husband. What the hell is this? Cut it out!

[Tries to give him young, smiling malevolent face. "J.W." resists while "Emmett" goads him and finally succeeds.

"Emmett"

Look a here, man. You the Lone Ranger. ^{you'll} ~~Kill any~~ Indians ^{and bad m.} ~~today?~~ Or you still specialzing in niggers? Nigger boys that is. Where's Tonto? Hey Roy! Get in here!

["Roy enters, putting his young face over his old as he comes]

"Emmett"

Right. Riight. (To Gerge and Eustace) Member them? Had a little country store smakc dab in the cotton field. Full of Kerosene and Red Seal snuff. Indian Head cornmeal and all the Dr. Pepper you could ever want. Green lunch meat and Super Suds And rock candy and matches and (turning to "Carolyn") other things.

George

Just a store. ~~Just~~ a country store. People can't ride twenty miles every time they want tobacco

Ma

Did you go in these people store? I told you to stay out

of trouble, didn't I?

"Emmett"

*

These two faggots killed a certain Emmett Till. Me. Me!

Pistol whipped him, ~~shook him~~ made him take off his clothes, shot him, ^{g had a motor on his neck the jury said} threw him in the water. But ~~they were found~~ not guilty."

["J.W." and "Roy" lower their smiling heads]

"Emmett"

~~What's the matter.~~ I said not guilty, didn't I? Not guilty.

YYou ain't guilty, but you are evil and now you in danger.

[He turns his back to them. "J.W." pulls knife and swishes it toward

"Emmett"'s back, just missing. "Emmett" turns toward "J.W."

who sticks the knife ~~dee~~ deep into "Emmett's" stomach. Others

goran. "Emmett" dies all over the place. Then gets up and

brushes himself carefully]

"Emmett"

^{Want} ~~What~~ to try that again? Slower this time.

[They repeat the action, but this time "Emmett" pushes the two

men before the second stabbing. They bump into the wall. Search

it, then back away.]

"Emmett"

Look like somebody kidnapped your ass. Ain't that a hoot?

["Emmett" moves to "Carolyn" and begins to sing "In the Dark in the dark, I get such a thrill, when you press your sweet lips to mine," etc. Dances with her as close as possible--a kind of slow drag. Carolyn writhes with rage.]

Ma

^{Stat} (at large) Everything's going to be all right.

"Emmett"

(to Carolyn) Did you think I was serious? (to "J.W." Did you think I was serious? I was fourteen. Fourteen! In the ninth grade.

Two weeks after you killed me I would have been in high school. I

couldn't wait to go to high school. (sighs) Hey, did you ever

meet my Mom? Carolyn, my mother (the women react) What about a

little curtsy, Miss Ann? (Carolyn curtsies) YYou need practice.

Practice, I said. Keep practicing till you get it right.

Ma
you doing
it wrong
all
wrong.

MA

I don't want that. I don't need that.

EMMETT

(Shouting) I want it. I need it! (To J.W., cordially) J.W.? You and Roy every meet my Mom? Mom, this is J.W., skilled mechanic, killer, farmer, husband, jack-of-all-trades, murderer, and this is his brother.

(Slapping him on the back) Roy, ditto, except for skill. He can't even shoot. J.W. here's the marksman. "Shoot the head off a turtle at fifty yards," right? Right! (shaking his finger at Carolyn who has stopped curtsying) Practice. Practice makes perfect.

Ma: This won't work, baby

[She continues, frequently stumbling, but is forced by Emmett's attention to keep it up, until, puppet-like, she establishes a rhythm. Ma is discomfited. Eustace soothes her. George approaches Emmett.]

(crying)

a somewhat
Lights come up on an altered set. Tamar is still rearranging
As action proceeds other re-arrange. It. So it is others.
it. ~~Now it is~~ a locus "Emmett" is not familiar with. He is
related to the space in the same way the five actors were in
they were
the beginning: outside the sphere of "Emmett's" conscious;
now he is outside their sphere of consciousness. Just as
he dreamed "Emmett", now they begin to. Unmasked (i.e. in
crumpled or mixed faces in the last piece of action) they now
wear their actor make up. Although the surreal elements of the
play have been reduced or eliminated or changed, and the acting
style becomes natural and representational, the situation is,
in fact, even more unreal (in terms of everyday obfuscation,
self-deceit, indifference etc.) [They refused to confront
"Emmett's" situation only their own interests; they distort and
subvert "facts"; they are preoccupied with the kite without
knowing what it is or means; they 'forget' him while in his
presence; their point of reference--the camera nobody ever sees--
is an expression of this false reality. In other words, they too
are 'dreaming "Emmett."'] When and if "Emmett" calls to them or
gestures to them (as with the shooting) it is from "another place."
and has no effect. His Presence is restored only after and when
Ma remembers him,* and it is this remembrance that makes it possible
for him to come into existence as who he really is: a slain Black
boy disguised as Emmett Till. When, finally, he is revealed,
stripped of his "Emmett" armor the change moves ^{him} toward his own
epiphany. Unbeknownst to the makers of the "kite", the "kite"
becomes the artistic memorial (not the play--which is destroyed
at the end). Thus what remains is the work of art in memoriam
and his fierce imagination.

Aut. Notes
* although it is her son - NOT Till - whom
she is recalling.

"Roy"

Where'd she come from?

Ma

Thank God for God

Carolyn

(to Black Girl) Where'd you come from?

Black Girl

Out there. The Audience. ~~(to Eustace) Help me with this?~~

Eustace.

Audience? We on TV?

Carolyn"

Oh no. My Lord. J.W!

Eudstace

Hah! George, we on TV

Carolyn

You hear that?

George

You lying.

"J.W."

Where's the camera at?

Roy

Is it live?

Carolyn

Give me ;your comb, quick.

Black Girl (to Ma)

Hi. ~~How you doing?~~ You all right?

Eustace

No I ain't. Look over there.

Ma

Oh,m I'll make it. That's a nice dress.

Carolyn"

(to "J.W') Button your shirt.

Black Girl (to Ma)

Thank you.

"J.W."

Leave off. They want me, they got to take me the way I come.

"Emmett"

Ahhhhhhh!

Black Girl

I had a lot of trouble with the placket.

~~Emmett~~ "Roy"

I don't see nothing. (trying to get a piece of the kite on screen)

Carolyn

Is it anybody out there?

"J.W."

I kind^a felt something all along.

"Carolyn"

You felt something and you let ~~me~~ me come out here looking like this?

"J.W."

Don't agitate yourself. If it is a picture show^u remember who's making it. Whatever it is, it's backwards.

"Roy"

^{you} You. Doomed. If coons is doing it, it's doomed for sure. Where'd that crospeice get to?

"Carolyn"

I know it's a camera out there.

"Roy"

He can't make a kite, let alone a movie. You see that piece a wood "J.W."?

Ma

Hard to find good material anymore. Everything is some kind of lon. Nylon. Banlon.

Black Girl

I know. Even the zippers are fake. You wouldn't have a safety pin, would you?

Ma

Let me look. I remember when a zipper actually zipped. Stayed shut, too.

"Carolyn"

He's not making it; they are.

*Bangs - waves
is lost - can't get through*

"J.W."

They who?

Carolyn"

The camera people. Over there. Or there! It's like those nature shows

George

Good evening. My name's Harvey. Geroge Harvey.

"J.W."

What nature shows?

"Carolyn"

You know. When you can see the little bugs dancing and feeding in their little nests, but the bugs don't know you watching them.

'Cause the camera's hidden!

Black Girl

Hello Mr. Harvey. (to Ma) Thanks this should hold it.

"Roy"

Is that it? Right yonder?

George

Call me Geroge. And this here's Eustace

Black Girl

I know. I've been sitting out there watching you.)

"Carolyn"

Wait'll the kids see this!

["Roy" mugs for the camera]

"J.W." (to "Roy")

Go somewhere and sit down. Quit acting the fool.

"Carolyn"

Just be yourself, that's all. Natural like.

George

How'm I doing?

Black Girl

NOT bad.

"Emmett" (cont'd.)

he didn't go to high school. Wasn't in the yearbook. So what?
His eye fell out. Four little teeth got jammed up his nose. What
kind of year book picture would that make? You know, my mother
ironed my underwear. She doesn't just wash them, and hang them
on the line.

Ma

Emmett, listen. That's the way.

"Emmett"

She irons my shorts. So white and clean. You know how dirty my
underwear.

[cross-rubbing his fingers: sing-song]

Shame, shame on you-on. Shame, shame on you-on. Cause you put me
in the river and I wasn't dead yet. My teeth were in my nose
so I couldn't hold my breath. And the place where my eye used to
be (ouch, ouch, ouch!) was empty. I was hurt.

Ma

He thinks I'll still forgive him. I'll not forgive.

"Emmett"

You won't die, Mama. I did.

Ma

I forgive you.

CERTIFICATE BOND

"Carolyn"

You're calling us trash? He's calling us trash!

Eustace

Lady, you sew the seed--you tell me how it grow.

[They all begin an agitated bickering]

"Emmett"

That's enough. Quit it. I'm up to date now.

George (to Eustace)

Ask him. Go head. Ask him.

Eustace

You ask him. Looks vicious to me.

George

He say he just wants us to sing. For his movie.

Eustace

Then where is the camera? I don't see no camera.

Geroge

Ask him. This is a two way street.

Eustace

"Scuse me, but ah, what's it like."

"Emmett"

What's what like?

Eustace

You know. Being dead and all.

"Emmett"

I'd avoid it if I was you.

Eustace

See any angels? Who you see? Is it pretty?

George (to Eustace)

What makes you think any angels is where he is?

Eustace

Well whatever.

"Emmett"

Shut up, you two.

"J.W."

Keep shut!

"Carolyn"

Keep shut yourself! You ^{heard what he said and you} letting a nigger boy make you wet your pants.

Ma

Listen to me. This one time.

"Roy"

Listen to your mammy.

"Emmett"

You listen! Next time, next time you find an Emmett and you want to get rid of him, when he--bothers you, gets too close, looks you in the eyes, makes--contact. When he says something besides yessir. Next time, let me tell you what to do,
[He begins collecting their young faces. Piling them up and then begins to "dismantle" them: "J.W.", "Carolyn", "Roy", Eustace and Geroge.]

"Emmett" continued

When you feel him next to your skin, and have to get ride of him. When you know in your heart that his heart is beating too. That he is life and you can't stand it. When you see him see you and you and him both know you do. Next time you come across an Emmett, ~~xxxxxx~~ take my advice: Be careful of his face. Don't smash it too much.. (crumples the masks?) I know that's hard. But my advice is not to, because that's the face that watches you. That floats next to you at the supper table, the same one you see in passing cars. Don't smash his face. And if you have to stab him or cut his throat, make sure you also cut his feet off. If you don't--after he'd dead, his feet will walk behind you. They'll touch yours under the blanket at night. And next time, make ~~su~~ sure you cut off his hands because the hands never die. They can pat you on the shoulder anytime. Do it right next time. When you feel his--power--and have to shoot him in the back, don't turn and run afterwards, because as soon as you turn your back to him he'll jump on it, throw his arms around you. When you take a shower, you can't scrub him off. When You kneel down to pray, he's kneeling too--right behind you. (To Geroge and Eustace) And if he needs your help, and you can't give him any, then you better tell the undertaker to put sand in his mouth. Otherwise he'll just keep whispering your name from bushes, from the trees in your yard. I am telling you what I know. I live there. I been doing it.

it for thirty years. And like Mr. "J.W." says, I wasn't the first or the last Emmett Till.

["Emmett" pulls out a beautiful light blue suit, snap brim hat, and white wing-tipped shoes. The he drags out what appears to be a bloated and decaying corpse and throws it down among them.

"Emmett"

Number six! Proper burial in a proper suit by the proper murderers!

(Bellowing) Move!

[Ma screams and weeps. ^{They} the ~~xxxx~~ others rush for their crumpled faces, scrambling, putting on wrong masks, confused and trying to hide. When they finally begin^g the dressing and shrouding, while "Emmett" sings and dances to a powerful R.and B. song, he is interrupted by a figure running from the audience. A young Black Girl climbs up on the stage screaming.]

Black Girl

Stop it! Stop it!

[She kicks the corpse out of their hands and continues to kick it until it is out of sight.]

Black Girl

I don't want to ^{hear} ~~her~~ any more! ~~Who the hell you think you are?~~

"Emmett"

Get out of here. YOU can't come ⁱⁿ here. I'm making a movie ^{here}, ~~and you aint in it.~~

Black Girl

~~well~~ I don't like your movie!

"Emmett"

I'm dreaming this, girl. You aint in my dream.

Black Girl

^{Maybe}
That's the trouble with it. I'm not in it.

Black Out