

Tragedy in a Temporary Town

BY REGINALD ROSE



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CHARACTERS

Pike
Anderson
Doran
Alec Beggs
Sankey
Dotty Fisher
Repulski
Mrs. Fisher
Matt Fisher
Mrs. Beggs
Harry Philips
John Philips
Inez Infante
Julio Infante
Raphael Infante
Mrs. Infante
Buddy Beggs
First Voice
Second Voice
Third Voice
Fourth Voice

ACT ONE

Fade in on a bare patch of ground in the Superba Trailer Camp. It is about 8:00 p.m. A group of men are sitting and standing around a huge tree trunk. There are several trailers around the area. In the group of men at the tree is Frank Doran, a man in his 30's. Also in the group are men whose last names are Anderson, Sankey, Repulski, and Beggs. They are temporary aircraft workers. Alec Beggs, 42, seems to be the most thoughtful one of the group. Pike, a man in his 40's, joins them.

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Pike: Hiya. *(They nod at him.)* So what happened in the plant today?

Anderson: We made a air-o-plane.

Pike *(annoyed):* Listen, I'm not kidding! Are they shutting down one of the shifts, or ain't they?

Doran: Sure they are.

Beggs: So far, it's just a rumor.

Doran: I'm telling you—the end of the week, one shift gets knocked off.

Pike: Which one?

Anderson *(grinning):* Yours, Pike.

Pike *(angry):* How would you like a belt?

Beggs: Fighting's not going to solve anybody's troubles.

(Cut to shot of a wooded area at the edge of the trailer clearing. It is dark. Walking through the area, toward the camp, is Dotty Fisher. She is 15, and plain-looking. Behind a small tree that she is passing, we see another figure. It is either a boy or a man. He is tying up a bundle of brushwood. He looks up at Dotty. She doesn't see him. He creeps out, and whispers "Hey." She turns, frightened. He throws his arms about her, and tries to kiss her. She screams. He steps back, then jumps into the brush. She screams again, louder. Then she starts toward the clearing, screaming and stumbling. Cut to the group of men at the tree. They are all on their feet, looking in the direction of the screams. The screams become louder and louder.)

Pike: What the heck is that?

Sankey: Hey, look at her!

Anderson: It's the Fisher kid.

(Dotty's screams become loud sobs as she reaches the group.)

Beggs *(to Dotty):* Hey, take it easy.

Anderson: What's the matter? You hurt or something?

Doran: She don't look hurt.

Beggs: We ought to make her sit down.

Pike: Listen, what happened to you?

(The sobs continue.)

Beggs: She's hysterical. *(Sharply to Dotty)* Hey, stop it now. Cut it out. *(He slaps her lightly.)*

Pike: Hey, you idiot! What did you do that for?

Beggs *(gently to Dotty):* Come on now. Sit down. *(Dotty's sobs become quieter, but she doesn't sit down. She looks from one to the other, frightened.)* Are you hurt? *(She shakes her head.)* Well, what happened to you?

Pike: Maybe she saw a snake.

Anderson: There are no snakes around here.

Pike: Oh, yeah? *(To Dotty)* Listen, what did you see, a snake?

(Dotty shakes her head again.)

Beggs: We better take her to her trailer.

Pike: Well, what happened to her?

Beggs *(to Dotty):* Are you all right?

Dotty: Somebody jumped on me.

Pike: What?

Dotty: All of a sudden.

Pike: What do you mean?

Dotty: He grabbed me.

Doran: Who was it?

(She shakes her head.)

Pike: What did he do?

Dotty *(low):* He kissed me.

Pike: And. . . .

Dotty: I was yelling.

Doran: So what did he do then?

Dotty: I don't know. He ran.

Beggs: Listen, let's take this kid back to her trailer.

Doran *(to Beggs):* Now wait a second! *(To Dotty.)* Who was it?

Dotty: I don't know.

Doran: What did he look like?

Beggs (*putting his arm around Dotty's shoulders*): Come on.

Doran (*shoving Beggs aside*): Was it some guy from here? (*She doesn't answer.*) Come on! How big was he? I mean, was he a tall guy, or not? (*Dotty begins to cry again.*) Well, what's the matter?

Beggs (*leading Dotty away*): I'm taking her back.

Doran: I'm asking her some questions here!

Beggs: Well, ask them later. The kid is crying.

Doran (*to Dotty*): Listen, did you hear his voice? (*Beggs, his arm around Dotty's shoulders, walks away.*) It was some guy from here.

Repulski: Maybe.

Doran: No maybes. We're 12 miles from town. Nobody comes snooping around here.

Pike: He's right. It was some guy from the camp.

Anderson: You don't know for sure.

Pike: Who else?

Doran: Jumping out of the bushes on a kid. We ought to saw him in half!

Pike: And how!

Doran: Let's find him.

Repulski: Listen, she didn't even see him.

Doran (*paying no attention*): We can organize this thing right now.

Pike: Where's her trailer?

Sankey: It's that green and white one over there.

Doran: Can you imagine! A 15-year-old kid.

Pike: Let's talk to her.

Doran: Oh, I'd like to belt him one. Come on. (*He starts to walk across the clearing. They follow.*) (*Cut to inside of the Fisher trailer. Mrs. Fisher is seated on the daybed, trying to comfort Dotty. Matt Fisher, Dotty's father, stands with Beggs.*)

Beggs: I don't think she's hurt or anything. She's just scared.

Mrs. Fisher: Matt, I can't stop her from crying.

Matt (*going over to Dotty*): What did he do to you, honey?
(*The girl keeps sobbing.*)

Mrs. Fisher: It's all right, baby. It's all over. There's nothing to cry about.

Matt: Maybe she ought to have a doctor or something. I never seen her like this. (*He strokes her hair.*) Dotty, I could go and get a doctor to sort of look you over. (*Dotty shakes her head.*) I wish you'd stop crying, honey. Because if you're not hurt, there's nothing to cry about. Did you see who it was? (*There is no answer. Matt goes back over to Beggs.*) I don't know. She's most of the time quiet.

Beggs: Soon as she calms down, she'll be all right. Maybe you ought to give her some hot milk.

Matt: I wonder who it was. Funny. It's not like she's real good-looking or anything. I mean, I'm the first one to say it.

Beggs (*embarrassed*): Well, I'll be going. (*He pauses.*) I was thinking... Maybe you ought to call the police.

Matt: You think so?

Beggs: Well, I mean, it's up to you. I probably would.

Doran (*from outside*): Mr. Fisher! (*Matt steps to the doorway.*) Hi, Mr. Fisher. How's your daughter?

Matt: Well, she's pretty scared.

Doran: We'd like to come in for a couple minutes. We want to have a meeting.

Matt: What for?

Doran: Can we come in?

Matt: Well—sure. (*He steps back. Doran enters the trailer, followed by the other men. Three new ones have joined them. Beggs decides to stay.*)

Doran (*to Matt*): I never met you. My name is Doran.

Matt: I'm Fisher. This is my wife.

Doran: This is a pretty rotten thing. (*Matt nods.*) We want to do something about it.

Matt: I was gonna get a doctor.

Doran: Yeah, well, we can't have this kind of thing going on here. I mean, 15-year-old kids being attacked. Right?

Matt: Well, sure. I'm the first one to say it.

Doran: We talked over a lot of stuff outside.

Pike: We want to get this guy—

Doran (to Pike): Take it slow now, boy. (*To Matt*) We talked over a lot of stuff outside. You know some of these boys. (*He nods toward his companions.*) Well, we're screaming mad, I want to tell you. Some of us here got kids like yours. We don't like this kind of stuff!

Anderson: You said it, boy.

Matt: I don't like it, either. I mean, this kind of thing is no good.

Doran: Listen, Fisher. The guy is in this camp somewhere, and we want him!

Beggs: Just a minute. She doesn't even know who it was. She didn't see him.

Doran (to Beggs): We want him, and we're going to get him. Nothing's going to stop us! (*Turns to Matt.*) You want to see justice done, don't you?

Matt: Well—sure I do, I suppose.

Doran: Look at your kid over there. She's lucky. Supposing she was too scared to scream?

Matt (quietly): Okay.

Doran: Okay, we got half a plan here. Number one. We throw some guards around the place. Nobody goes in or out until we're done. Number two. We get a list from each trailer here of every man in the place over 15 years old. Then we get up a committee and we question each guy. The committee is (*to Matt*) you, (*pointing to Dotty*) her, and two others. We'll find him within two hours.

Pike: We got some plans then, too.

Sankey: And how, boy!

Repulski: I'm gonna dig my hooks into him.

Doran: All right. That's enough. (*To Matt*) What about it?

Matt (worried): Well, I don't know if we can just, well, you know, go out and—

Doran: Who's going to stop us?

Beggs: I tell you, Doran, you ought to call the police. You can't run things like this.

Doran: Who can't?

Beggs: You can't. This stuff is dangerous. Taking over the law.

Doran: This stinking place ain't even got a phone. So you ride 12 miles into town and have a talk with the sergeant. Let him send one or two of his big brains down here. You know what they'll do? Nose around a little. Then tell him (*pointing at Matt*) his daughter's not hurt any, so forget about it. They'll find nothing, because they never do.

Beggs: It's none of your business what they find or don't find.

Anderson (angry): Listen to this guy!

Beggs: Who made the law around here?

Doran: We're our own law, boy. You think that town cares about us? All they want is we mind our business and not bother them. We're outsiders, man! Temporary workers! That's like garbage. There's nobody watching out for us. We got to protect our own! Now stop giving me a hard time, and get back to your trailer. We're coming around to get your list.

(*Beggs stares at Doran, then turns and walks out of the trailer. Pike, Doran, and Mr. Fisher go over to Dotty.*)

Doran: What's your name, honey?

Dotty (nervously): Dotty.

Doran: Now don't be scared, hear? Nobody's going to hurt you. *(She nods.)* You're calmed down, so I'm asking you again. Did you see who it was?

Dotty: No.

Doran: Did you see what he looked like, what he wore, anything about him?

Dotty: I don't know. I was so scared.

Doran: Did he say anything?

Dotty: He said "Hey."

Doran: How do you feel?

Dotty: All right. A little—nervous.

Doran: Okay. We're going into every trailer in the camp. We're going to find him. And we're going to punish him for you, Dotty.

Pike: We ought to lynch the dirty—

Doran: Let's go.

(Mrs. Fisher takes her daughter's hand. Dotty looks at her mother, and stands up.)

Mrs. Fisher: Matt, does she have to go along?

(Matt looks at Doran.)

Doran: Yes, she does, Mrs. Fisher. Don't worry about it. All right now, let's go. *(Doran, Pike, Matt, and Dotty exit.)*

(Cut to area outside the trailers. It is dark, empty, silent.)

(Cut to the doorway of a trailer. Matt, Dotty, Doran, and Pike stand outside.)

Doran: Here we go. *(He knocks on the door. It is opened by a frightened young woman. Behind her we see an old man and a young man.)* Philips? *(The woman nods.)* Two men. John Philips and Harry Philips. *(The woman nods. The committee enters the trailer. The door closes. Fade out.)*

ACT TWO

Fade in on the dark and empty trailer area. One of the guards, a wooden club in his hand, walks back and forth.

Cut to the open doorway of Alec Beggs' trailer. He stands in it, staring out. Behind him we hear a baby crying, being hushed by Mrs. Beggs. Then she joins Alec at the door. We catch a glimpse of their son, Buddy, reading in a chair.

Mrs. Beggs: Alec, what's the matter? Everything got so still all of a sudden.

Beggs *(gently):* Yeah.

Mrs. Beggs: Is there something wrong?

Beggs *(glancing at Buddy inside):* I'll tell you later.

Mrs. Beggs: Is it serious?

Beggs: I don't know. It has nothing to do with us.

(She nods and goes inside. Buddy gets up and goes behind the curtain. Then Anderson walks up, carrying scraps of paper. He holds out a paper and pencil to Beggs.)

Anderson *(softly):* Let's have your list.

Beggs: You know who lives here.

Anderson: Come on. Write them down. I'm in a hurry, boy.

Beggs: Get out of here.

Anderson *(putting one foot up on the trailer):* Give me the names.

Beggs *(low):* Don't put the other foot up.

(They look at each other. Then Anderson turns and walks off.)

(Cut to the inside of the Philips' trailer. Doran, Pike, Matt, and Dotty are there. They are talking to Mr. and Mrs. John Philips, a couple in their early 30's, and to Mr. Philips' father, Harry Philips. The older Mr. Philips is speaking, terror in his voice.)

Harry Philips (*softly*): Hey.

Doran: Say it again.

John Philips: I'm telling you, he was right here in the trailer.

Doran: Say it again.

Harry Philips: Hey.

Doran (*to Dotty*): That sound like it? (*She looks from one face to the other. She can't answer. Doran turns again to Harry Philips.*) Say it again.

Harry Philips: Hey.

Dotty (*after a long pause*): I don't think so.

John Philips: I told you. He was here the whole time. I heard the scream—

Pike: Nobody asked you.

Doran: Dotty, come here. (*She walks over to him.*) Look them over again. (*She does.*) Was it either one of them?

Dotty: No.

Doran: Okay. Let's go.

(The committee exits. Cut to Julio Infante's trailer. His wife is stirring something on the stove. Infante sits. His son, Raphael, 16, is writing in a notebook. His 10-year-old daughter, Inez, is humming and looking out the window.)

Inez: There's a man coming.

(There is a knock on the door. Infante opens the door. Anderson stands outside.)

Anderson: Infante?

Infante: Yes.

Anderson: I want the names of all the men in there over 15 years.

Infante: Who are you?

Anderson: Look, I don't want any arguments from you. Just give me the names. (*He holds paper and pencil toward Infante.*)

Infante: Why do you want them? I can't give them to you unless I know what it is for.

Anderson (*stepping up the step of the trailer*): Listen, Mr. Puerto Rico, I want your first name, and I want his (*pointing at Raphael*). And don't give me any of your lip.

Raphael (*standing up angrily*): Don't you talk like that to my father.

Infante (*sharply*): Raphael!

Anderson (*grinning*): Raphael is one name. (*To Infante*) What's yours?

Infante: Julio.

Anderson: Hoolio. Now there's a great little name for you. Here, write it down.

Infante: Write it yourself!

Anderson (*to himself*): Hoolio. (*He laughs.*) You're a long way from home, little brown brother. (*He backs out of the door and slams it. Raphael runs to the door and bangs on it.*)

Infante (*softly*): Don't do that.

Raphael: The dirty pig!

Infante: Listen, my son. There will always be men like that one. It is their own sickness which makes them this way. Not ours. (*Raphael walks away and slumps in his seat.*) Some day, Raphael, you will learn to pity the man who needs to hate more than he needs to love. (*He sits down. His wife goes over to him.*)

Inez (*to her father*): But he called you a name.

Infante: He called me "little brown brother." The "little" is true, the "brown" is true. And the "brother" he didn't mean. But there is nothing so wrong with brother. Is there, Inez?

Inez (*smiling*): No.

Mrs. Infante: Why do they want our names?

Infante: I don't know.

Mrs. Infante: Everything is so still. Something is happening.

Infante: It may only be some little thing. Something unimportant.

Mrs. Infante: No, it's not. Julio, I'm very scared.
Infante (*putting his arms around her*): It has nothing to do with us.
Mrs. Infante: We should never have come to this place.
Infante: Why?
Mrs. Infante (*low*): We should stay with our own people.
Infante: We are with our own people.
Mrs. Infante: Do they think so?
Infante: I don't know what they think. I only know what I know. We are also Americans.
Mrs. Infante: When we are with Puerto Ricans, no one insults us. Here, I can feel them hating.
Infante: They have to have time to get used to us.
Mrs. Infante: That man who came in. He hated us. He never even met us before.
Infante (*kissing her*): Now he has met us. (*He smiles.*) I will go find out why they want our names.
Mrs. Infante: It's almost time for supper, Julio. (*He nods and exits.*)
(*Cut to outside of trailer. Infante walks over to Alec Beggs' trailer. He knocks on the door. Beggs opens it.*)
Beggs: What do you want?
Infante: May I come in for a moment?
(*Beggs steps back. Infante enters.*)
(*Cut to inside. Buddy is asleep on the daybed. Mrs. Beggs enters. She is holding a baby's bottle. She smiles slightly at Infante.*)
Mrs. Beggs: Hello.
Infante (*to Mrs. Beggs*): I hope I don't disturb you.
Mrs. Beggs: No. I was just feeding the baby.
Beggs (*coldly*): Well, what do you want?
Infante: Just to ask you a question. Maybe you can tell me what is happening in the camp. A man came to my trailer for the names of my family. I don't know why.

Beggs: Somebody tried to attack a girl from this camp. They formed a committee to find out who it was.
Infante: Oh. Are there no police?
Beggs: I told you what was happening.
Infante (*softly*): Yes. Thank you. (*He turns to leave, but stops at the door.*) What will they do if they catch this man?
Beggs: They'll tear him apart.
Mrs. Beggs: Alec!
Infante: Thank you. (*He exits.*)
Mrs. Beggs: He's a very nice man, Alec.
Beggs: Yeah.
Mrs. Beggs: Why were you so cold with him?
Beggs: He asked me a question, and I answered it. What else am I supposed to do?
Mrs. Beggs: Is it because he's a Puerto Rican?
Beggs (*loud*): No! (*He looks at Buddy. Softly*) No!
Mrs. Beggs: Because you acted very—superior. You never do that.
Beggs: I don't know that man. That's all.
Mrs. Beggs: Nobody ever talks to him around here.
Beggs (*annoyed*): Well, why don't you talk to him then?
Mrs. Beggs: I was a little embarrassed.
Beggs: What do you want me to do, go over and apologize?
Mrs. Beggs: No. I was just asking.
Beggs: We got enough problems without worrying about him! Who told him to come up here in the first place? (*He realizes what he has said, and is ashamed. He walks to the window and looks out. Suddenly he slams his fist on his leg. Then he turns to Mrs. Beggs.*)
Beggs: I just saw the committee. They went into the Shaws' trailer. (*Pause.*) They're not coming in here!
Mrs. Beggs: What do you mean?

Beggs: I'm not going to let them in.

Mrs. Beggs: Not let them in? Alec, they'll tear this place apart.

Beggs: Maybe. Listen, I was just looking out the window, and I saw them going by. I thought they were coming here next. You know what? My heart started to bang. There's no reason for that.

Mrs. Beggs (frightened): What are you going to do?

Beggs: Whatever I have to do. Fight them.

Mrs. Beggs: You can't!

Beggs: Listen, Grace. No one has the right to do what they're doing. There are police and courts of law for this kind of stuff.

Mrs. Beggs: Please, Alec. I'm very frightened.

Beggs (loud): So am I. (*Buddy awakens, and stretches.*) But I've got rights. I don't have to let no one into my house no time unless I feel like it, or they got a warrant. Well, they got no warrant, and they're not coming in here! (*He goes to the closet, opens it, and takes out a softball bat.*)

Buddy (rubbing his eyes): Hey, Pop, what are you doing with my bat?

Mrs. Beggs: I'm begging you, Alec. They'll just ask a few questions. I know they're wrong, the way they're doing it. But they're too strong to fight. (*Alec walks to the window and looks out.*) Alec, what about the rest of us in here?

Buddy: What's the matter? What do you mean, fight?

Beggs (to Mrs. Beggs): You know what the committee is? Three stupid men and a hysterical kid. Do you know what they can do?

Buddy: Listen, Pop—

Beggs (to Buddy): Just a minute, boy. (*To Mrs. Beggs*) I asked them to get the police. They wouldn't. They want to be their own law. They've got guards around this place!

Buddy (standing up): Guards! What's going on?

Beggs (to Mrs. Beggs): Now I don't go for mobs and strongarm stuff. It goes against me! This is my home. What my family does or don't do is none of their business.

Mrs. Beggs: Please, Alec—

Buddy (to Mrs. Beggs): What's he talking about?

Beggs: Look at me! (*He holds up a trembling hand.*) I'm scared. They have no right to make me scared. I'm telling you, Grace, the first guy who tries to walk in here gets his head split open.

Buddy (loud): Pop! What's happening?

Beggs: Somebody made a pass at one of the kids around here a half hour ago. So she screamed bloody murder. They're trying to find out—(*Buddy is looking at him with horror.*) What's the matter with you?

Buddy (scared): What are they doing?

Beggs (slowly): The girl's name is Fisher. It was right over here in the woods.

Buddy (sitting down): Pop, what are they doing?

Beggs: They're looking for him.

Buddy (whispering): What'll they do if they find him? (*Beggs slowly shakes his head and stares at Buddy. There is silence. Then Buddy speaks very low.*) I was just kidding around. You know how sometimes you like to scare somebody? (*Pause.*) Pop? (*No answer.*) It's just fooling. I was collecting wood. Broken branches and stuff. For the laundry fire. Pop, I don't even like this girl. She's very nutty. (*Beggs just stares at him. Buddy lowers his head.*) So I saw her, and I snuck over, just fooling around. You know how kids fool. Crazy things all of a sudden just to make somebody laugh or something. So I gave her a kiss. So help me, that's all I did! One kiss! And she screamed! So I beat it. (*He looks at Beggs.*) I was just kidding around! Honest, Pop. I think she's ugly. I mean—

Beggs: Okay.

Mrs. Beggs: Buddy.

Buddy: I didn't mean nothing!

(Mrs. Beggs starts to cry.)

Beggs (to Buddy): Why didn't you say something?

Buddy: I don't know. I didn't think anybody would get all excited. Pop, please, don't look at me so funny. I didn't do anything so bad, Pop. *(He is near tears.)*

Mrs. Beggs: Alec, you can't fight them. They'll know! *(Beggs looks at the bat.)* Tell them. He's just a baby. Tell them—the way he told us. They won't do anything.

Beggs (slowly): They may lynch him.

Buddy: Pop!

Beggs (softly): Did she see you?

Buddy: I don't know.

Beggs: You'll say you were here—with your mother. I don't know. We'll try.

(Buddy slowly walks to him. Suddenly Beggs hugs Buddy. Then Beggs walks over to the closet and puts the bat inside. Then he sits on the daybed next to Buddy. Mrs. Beggs goes to the window and stands there. They wait in silence for what seems like a long time. Then Mrs. Beggs turns from the window and faces them. There is a sharp knock at the door. Mrs. Beggs opens it.)

Doran (from outside): Beggs? *(She nods.)* Two men. Father and son. *(She nods again. Alec rises. The committee begins to file in. Fade out.)*

ACT THREE

Fade in on the inside of the Beggs' trailer. The entire committee is there.

Doran (to Pike): Shut the door. *(He turns to Dotty.)* You want to sit down?

Dotty: No.

Doran: I don't want you to get tired. *(To Matt)* Tell her to sit down.

Matt: Dotty. *(Dotty remains standing. She looks about.)* You want something, honey?

Dotty: A glass of water. *(Mrs. Beggs gets a glass of water for her. Dotty drinks it and hands back the glass.)* Thanks.

Doran: Okay. Let's get started. *(He points at Beggs.)* We pass this one by. He was sitting over there with us when it happened. *(He turns to Buddy.)* What's your name?

Buddy (low): Buddy.

Doran: What are you so nervous about? *(To Beggs)* What's he so nervous about? He was right here in the trailer all along, wasn't he? *(Beggs doesn't answer.)* Right, boy?

Buddy (in a whisper): Right.

Doran: I can't hardly hear you.

Buddy: Right.

Doran (to Beggs): Has he got a cold or something?

Pike: Come on, Frank, will you?

Doran (to Pike): You want to handle this?

Pike: Nobody said that. It's getting late, that's all.

Doran: Let me do the worrying about what time it is.

Pike (shrugging): Okay.

Doran: We're almost done here, anyway. *(Pointing at Beggs)* This one was with us, and *(pointing at Buddy)* this one was right here asleep when it happened. Right?

Buddy: No. I was—I was sitting over there. I wasn't asleep. I was looking at—at a magazine.
Doran: Good for you. *(He turns to Dotty.)* You know him? *(Dotty nods. Doran turns back to Buddy.)* All right. Where were you?
Beggs: He said he was in the trailer.
Doran *(ignoring Beggs):* From 6:00 on.
Buddy: From 6:00 on?
Doran: That's what I said.
Buddy: Well, I don't have a watch.
Doran: From the time you left school.
Buddy *(after a pause):* I was here.
Doran: Where's here?
Buddy: In the trailer.
Doran: The whole time?
Buddy: That's right.
Doran: We was just in that gray and green trailer over there. Family name of McPartland. They have a boy, Donald—Ronald—something like that.
Buddy: I forgot about that. I was over there, too.
Doran: Doing what?
Buddy: He has a chemical set. We were fooling with it.
Doran: Then what?
Buddy: I came here.
Mrs. Beggs: He was here with me the whole time after that. It was about 5:45.
Doran: Never left the trailer?
Mrs. Beggs: Not once.
Buddy: I was reading.
Doran: Reading what?
Buddy: A magazine.
Mrs. Beggs *(crossing to pick up the magazine):* This one. He was right here the whole time. He fell asleep.
Doran: Yeah? Anybody else see him in here?
Mrs. Beggs: I don't know.
Doran: Well, who does know?

Mrs. Beggs: I—I don't think anyone saw him.
Doran *(to Buddy):* You ever go into the woods?
Buddy: No.
Doran: Never?
Buddy *(after a pause):* Well, sometimes.
Doran: So how come you said never?
Buddy: I don't know.
Doran: What do you go into the woods for?
Buddy: It's a shortcut. From where the school bus stops.
Doran: You're very big with the girls, right?
Buddy: No!
Doran: Why not?
Buddy: I don't know. I'm just not.
Doran *(thumbing at Dotty):* This one here appeal to you?
Buddy: No.
Doran: No? What's wrong with her?
Beggs: Come on!
Doran *(to Beggs):* What's the matter with you?
Beggs *(shouting):* Stop playing games! Ask him what you got to ask him, and get out of here!
Pike: Hey, shut up!
Doran *(softly):* What's the matter? Don't you want to see justice done?
(Beggs clenches his fist and moves toward Doran.)
Mrs. Beggs: Alec!
(Beggs lowers his hands.)
Pike *(to Beggs):* What are you so hot about, friend?
Doran *(to Buddy):* Why don't she appeal to you?
Buddy: I don't know.
Doran: Isn't she pretty?
Buddy *(slowly):* Yes.
Doran: Come here, Dotty. *(She steps over to him.)*
This boy says you don't appeal to him. Do you believe him? *(Dotty looks helplessly at her father.)*
Is he the one?

Dotty: I don't know.
Doran (to Buddy): Let's hear you say "hey."
Buddy (after a pause): Hey.
Doran: Again.
Buddy (louder): Hey.
Doran: Softer. Again.
Buddy: Hey.
Doran (turning to Dotty): Does that sound like it?
Dotty: I don't know. I can't tell any more.
Doran: Does it sound like it?
Dotty: Yes. *(Doran swings around to Buddy and grabs his arm.)* They all sound like it.
Doran (dropping Buddy's arm): Is this the guy, or isn't it?
Dotty: I don't know.
Doran: What do you mean you don't know! Come on!
Dotty (near tears): I want to go back. I don't want to do this any more. I'm tired.
Doran: Answer me. Is this the guy?
Dotty (whispering): No.
Doran: Let's go.
(The committee leaves. Mrs. Beggs sits down, dazed. Beggs turns and looks at Buddy.)
(Dissolve to outside of the Infante trailer. The committee stands in front of it.)
Doran (softly to Dotty): All right, you're tired. We did seven families already. Let's do a few more. Then you can nap for a couple hours. We'll start again when you're fresh.
Pike: Maybe we'll get him in the next few.
Doran: Listen, we got to get this guy! Now. tell her to come on!
Matt: Dotty? Listen, Dotty, just a couple more. Then we'll take a rest.
Doran: Maybe he'll be in here, Dot. Then you'll be finished. He ought to be strung up for what he did to you.

(Doran leads her to the door, and knocks. There is no answer. He flings the door open, and the committee enters. Cut to inside. The Infantes are eating. Julio Infante rises.)
Doran: Raphael and Julio Infante. Right?
Infante: We're having our dinner.
Doran (sharply): You'll have it later.
Infante (to wife): Take Inez in there.
Doran: Let's go. We ain't got all night here.
Infante (softly): Go, Inez. Don't be afraid.
(Mrs. Infante and Inez go behind a bamboo blind.)
Pike (to Raphael): Get up, lover! *(Raphael stands up angrily.)* Rudolph Valentino. Stand over here, lover.
Infante (trembling): You have no right to do this, breaking into our home.
Doran: Shut your mouth! Come here, Dotty. *(Slowly, she walks to him.)* They look familiar?
(Dotty pauses. Then she points at Infante.)
Dotty: It wasn't him. It was a bigger man.
Doran: You sure?
Dotty: Yes.
Doran: Sit over there, you.
(He pushes Infante aside.)
Raphael: Don't touch him!
Pike: Why are you getting so excited, Rudolph? *(To Doran)* He's a regular ball of fire. *(To Raphael)* Take it slow, lover. You'll live longer.
Doran: Okay. Let's hear it. The whole story. Where were you after 6:00?
Raphael: I was in my trailer.
Doran (to Pike): So far, not one guy said he was out there. *(To Raphael)* Tell it to me again. Where were you?
Infante: He said he was in the trailer.
Doran: Shut up! *(To Raphael)* All right, let's hear.
Raphael: I was in my trailer.
Doran: Doing what?

Raphael: I was writing a composition.

Doran: Do you know this girl?

Raphael: No.

Doran: I'll bet you hate girls, don't you? (*Raphael doesn't answer.*) You probably never even kissed one, right? (*Raphael doesn't answer.*) Right?

Raphael: No!

Pike: I bet \$20 he's the boy. Look at him with all that hair. They're all alike. Lover boys.

Raphael: You dirty slob!
(*Pike lunges for him.*)

Doran (shouting): Stop it!

Pike: Did you hear that?

Doran (to Pike): All right, shut up.

Pike: What he called me? (*To Raphael*) I'll get you for that, lover! I'll kick you right back to Puerto Rico!

Doran (loud): Cut it! All right, here's the story. Now listen to me, boy. You were out in those woods—

Raphael: No!

Doran: Don't say no! And this kid walks by.

Raphael: I wasn't there!

Doran: And you jumped on her.

Raphael: No! I didn't!

Doran: Come on! Tell the truth for once in your life. You're the one!

Raphael: No!

Infante (shouting at Doran and Pike): Get out!

Pike (shoving Infante aside): You open your mouth again, I'll skull you!

Doran (to Raphael): Now where were you when it happened?

Raphael: In here.

Doran: You're lying!

Raphael: No! I'm telling the truth!

Doran: What were you going to do with this girl?

Raphael: Nothing! I wasn't there! I was sitting in here—

Pike: Come on, lover, tell us the truth.

Raphael (raging): I am!

Pike: You're the type. A real girl-killer!

Doran: Okay. Let's snap this up. Dotty, come here. (*She steps to his side.*) Look at him now. (*To Raphael*) Let me hear you say "hey."

Raphael: What?

Doran: Hey.

Raphael: Why?

Doran: Say it!

Raphael (softly): Hey.

Doran (to Dotty): What about it?

Dotty: I don't know. Please—

Doran (to Raphael): Say it again.

Raphael: Hey.

Doran (looks at Dotty, who shakes her head): Dotty, close your eyes.

Dotty: Please—

Doran: Close them.

Matt (annoyed): Now listen—

Doran: Come on, Dotty. Close your eyes. (*She does. Doran stands Raphael next to Dotty and speaks to Raphael.*) Say it.

Raphael (after a long pause): Hey.

Doran: What about it, Dotty?

(*Slowly now she nods.*)

Infante (roaring): No!

(*Doran slaps Raphael. Then he grabs him by his shirt and pulls him toward the door.*)

Infante (screaming): Raphael!

Raphael: Poppa! Help me!

Infante: Raph—

(*Pike smashes him in the face. He goes over backwards, and lies there. Matt has taken Dotty out of the trailer. Doran is pulling Raphael out.*)

Raphael (screaming): No! No! (*He clings to the door for a minute, then is yanked out.*)

(Cut to outdoor area. Pike, Doran, and Raphael are there.)

Pike *(yelling)*: We got him! We got him!

(People run toward them from all directions, shouting.)

First Voice: Hey! Look at him!

Second Voice: What are we going to do with him?

Third Voice: We ought to beat your brains out!

Fourth Voice: Let's get him over to the tree.

Second Voice: Who is it?

First Voice: How do I know?

Third Voice: We ought to whip the dirty little louse!

Doran *(above the noise)*: All right! Stop the shoving!

We're taking him over to the tree!

(The crowd, larger now, moves in that direction.

Pike and Doran stand Raphael against the big tree.

A rock sails by and hits the tree. The crowd roars.)

Sankey *(shouting)*: Maybe this will learn you to keep your hands off our girls!

Fourth Voice: Let's get him!

Doran: Wait a minute here!

Third Voice: Come on! There's nothing to wait for!

Repulski: We'll learn you Puertos how to behave!

Doran *(roaring)*: Shut up! *(The shouts die down.)* Now

listen to me! Up to now, this thing has been or-

ganized. Right? Well, it's staying that way. Now

standing over here is the girl's father. He's the one

who's going to decide what we do with this punk.

He's the one did the suffering! *(To Matt)* What do

you say, Mr. Fisher?

(Matt puts his arm around Dotty.)

Repulski: Well, what about it?

Matt: Well, I don't know. *(He looks around.)* I'm not—

used to this. You fellows decide.

(Cut to the edge of the crowd. Infante arrives, carry-

ing a wooden club. Repulski sees him. He knocks

Infante down and takes the club.)

Doran *(off)*: Okay, Mr. Fisher is leaving it up to us.

Now here's what I say! There's a lot of guys here!

Most of us got wives, sisters, daughters. Whoever

ain't, lay off. Whoever has, gets one crack at him!

(Repulski flings the club over the crowd. It hits

the tree.)

Repulski *(shouting)*: Use that!

Infante *(trying to get up)*: Raphael! Raphael!

(Cut to tree. Doran gives club to Matt Fisher.)

Doran: You're first, Mr. Fisher. *(Matt looks at the club.)*

Come on! Give him a lick!

(Matt closes his eyes. He swings the club, hitting

Raphael across the back. Raphael yells. Matt drops

the club.)

Doran *(shouting)*: Next!

(Pike takes the club and deals a blow.)

Doran: Next! Let's go!

(Cut to Alec Beggs' trailer. Alec and Buddy are

standing at the window. Mrs. Beggs is staring at

them. We hear a roar from the crowd. Alec closes

his eyes. Buddy looks at him, frightened. We hear

another roar. Alec breaks from the window.)

Buddy *(terrified)*: Pop! What are you going to do?

Beggs: I don't know.

(We hear another roar. He opens the door and

rushes out.)

Mrs. Beggs *(screaming)*: Alec!

(Cut to outside. Beggs bursts through the crowd to

the tree. Raphael is on his knees, nearly uncon-

scious. Doran puts the club into Beggs' hand.)

Doran: You're next, boy! Take a shot! *(Raphael falls*

on his face. Beggs looks at Doran.) Well, what do

you say?

Beggs *(to the crowd)*: You pack of pigs!

(The crowd gasps.)

Doran: Hey, what are you saying?

Sankey: Come on, take your swat and get out of here!

Beggs: You dirty, stinking animals!

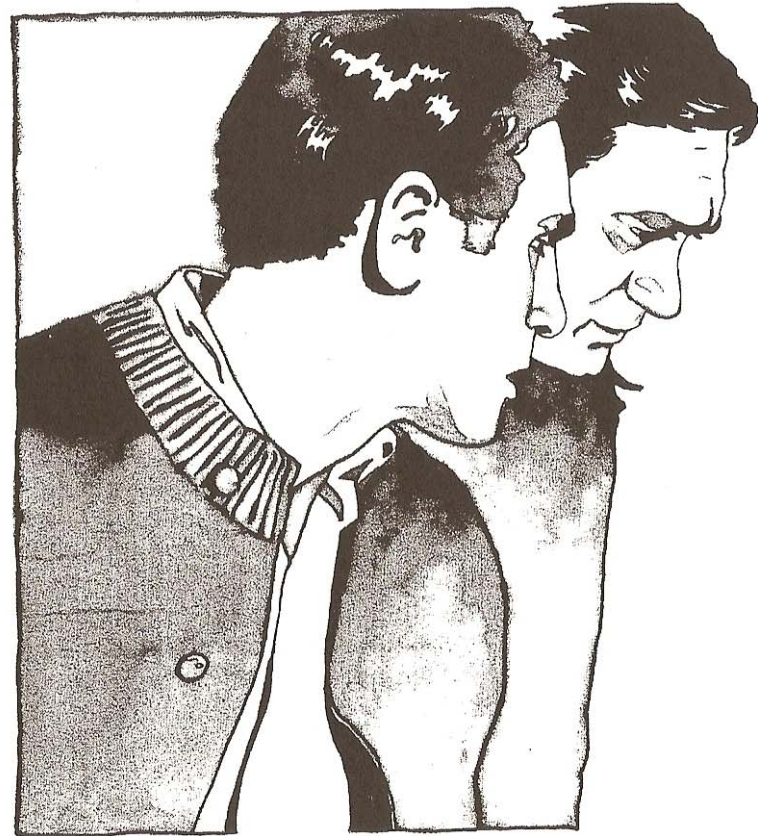
Anderson: What's going on? Let's get that guy!

Beggs: Come on and get me, pigs. *(He raises the club.)* First man up gets this across his face. *(The crowd quiets down.)* Well, what are you scared of? You weren't scared of beating up a kid. You scared of me? Come on, I'll throw the club away! *(He flings it into the crowd. They gasp, and move back. Beggs stares at them.)* What a sight you are!

Doran: Hey, listen—

Beggs *(to Doran):* Shut that mouth! If you open it again, I'll open up your head! *(Doran backs away. Beggs turns back to the crowd.)* Now hear me! I can't say much because looking at you is making me sick to my stomach! You know what you are? You're the garbage, the gutless wonders of the earth! You're a mob! And there never was a mob that didn't turn into a pack of screaming animals. Well, look at yourselves. Don't it make you creep with shame? A bunch of animals, and all of a sudden, you're the law! *(Infante comes slowly through the crowd. He makes his way to Raphael, who lies at the foot of the tree. Beggs keeps talking.)* Every time animals like you mob together to become your own law, you crawl one step closer to the cliff. And some day, over you'll go, flying into that big pile of bones on the bottom. Because what you did to him, someone will do to you. And it'll be your fault. You helped start it rolling. And when some other animals come for you sometime, it might not be because you did something wrong. It might be for no reason at all! This boy *(thumbing at Raphael)* didn't do anything! You wanted my son! Well, he's waiting for you! *(Pause.)* Well, come on. What is the matter with you?

(They all stare at him. He turns his back on them. Standing behind him is Buddy, frightened, but



standing there. He and Beggs look at each other. Shamefaced, silent, the mob moves away. Infante holds Raphael in his arms. Slowly, Raphael's eyes open. Beggs turns to Infante.)

Beggs: It was my son. I was afraid.

Infante: I understand.

(Raphael slowly stands up. Then he almost falls. Buddy reaches out and helps him walk across the area. Infante and Alec watch. Then, together, they walk across the empty area.)