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# The Great Turkey-Stealing Case of Watermelon County



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THE GREAT TURKEY-STEALING  
CASE OF WATERMELON COUNTY

*NEGRO MOCK TRIAL*

*By* V. O. GRAHAM

Principal of the High School, New Holland, Ohio



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## CHARACTERS

*(Named in Order of Appearance)*

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON WISEMAN.....*The Judge*  
JOHN ABRAHAM CÆSAR LINCOLN....*Attorney for the Plaintiff*  
CICERO NAPOLEON B. SMITH.....*Attorney for the Defendant*  
GEORGE JONATHAN WASHINGTON.....*Clerk of the Court*  
WILLIAM J. SIDEBURNS HARRIS.....*The Sheriff*  
ERIAS THOMAS JEFFERSON WATERS.....*The Defendant*  
WIDOW MARIA MIRANDA JOHNSON.....*The Plaintiff*

### WITNESSES FOR THE PLAINTIFF

JOSIAH CUNNINGHAM TURNIPSEED....*The widow's hired man*  
SUSIE CYNTHIA LONGERBONE.....*The widow's hired girl*

### WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENDANT

MRS. ERIAS THOMAS JEFFERSON WATERS..*The defendant's wife*  
MARY ANNE BROWN.....*A restaurant mistress*

### JURORS

NEBUCHADNEZZAR JONES	JAMES MONROE QUINCY
LUCAS SAINT LUKE	STEPHEN A. JUDSON
JOHN JAMES JONES	MOSES KILGORE GREEN
T. JACKSON JOHNSON	PATRICK HENRY WHITE
ZACHARY T. AUGERHANDLE	SOLOMON ADAMS
NOAH WEBSTER WISEACRE	GIBSON GIBBS

TIME OF PLAYING: *Forty-five minutes*

NOTE: The number of jurors may, if desired, be limited to six.



## COSTUMES

**JUDGE:** Swallow-tailed coat and baggy trousers showing much wear. Powdered hair or white wig. Large square-rimmed spectacles.

**ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF:** Tuxedo coat and well-pressed trousers. High collar and large green bow tie.

**ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENDANT:** Costume much like the preceding. Pink bow and loud colored shirt.

**DEFENDANT:** Ragged clothes and generally thriftless appearance.

**SHERIFF:** Any official-looking uniform obtainable which allows room for padding to make the officer appear large. Mace and large star badge.

Costumes of others to be appropriate to their parts.

## PROPERTIES

Three small tables for Attorneys and Clerk of Court and desk on raised platform for Judge.

Chairs for Judge, Attorneys, Clerk of Court, Sheriff, Plaintiff, Defendant, and Jurors. Chair placed in prominent position to serve as witness stand.

Many reference books.

Box with chicken feet protruding from slatted top, to represent stolen turkey.

# The Great Turkey-Stealing Case of Watermelon County

SCENE: *A Courtroom*

*Discovered in their respective places:* JUDGE; ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF; ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT; CLERK OF COURT; SHERIFF; PLAINTIFF; AND JURY.

JUDGE [*rapping on desk*]. De Co't will now come to awduh! [*To ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT*] Mistuh Smith, is you ready?

ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT [*rising*]. Yassuh. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE [*to ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF*]. Mistuh Lincum, is you ready?

ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF [*rising*]. Yassuh. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE [*to CLERK OF COURT*]. Mistuh Wash'nton, state de case.

CLERK OF COURT [*rising and reading in loud voice*]. De case ub de State ub Loosiana, Watermillion County, Possum Township, aginst Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs, defendant, fuh de stealin' ub one tuckey fum Widduh Maria Mirandy Johnsing, plaintiff; de said tuckey in question bein' now in de possession ub de Co't. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE. She'iff, pro-juce de prisnuh. [*SHERIFF goes out and returns with DEFENDANT, whom he places in chair.*] Ah now awduhs de zamination ub de witnesses fuh de plaintiff.

ATTY. FOR P. [*rising and addressing JUDGE*]. Yo' honuh, mah fust witness is Widduh Maria Mirandy Johnsing.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Widduh Maria Mirandy Johnsing, fust witness fuh de plaintiff. [*SHERIFF produces WIDOW JOHNSON and CLERK OF COURT, holding a book out to her, swears her in thus*] Put yo' lef' han' on de Bible an' yo' right han' in de aiah an' repeat whut Ah says. [*WIDOW JOHNSON places right hand on book and raises left hand.*] Ah do solumly sweah to tell de trufe—

WIDOW J. Ah do solumly sweah to tell de trufe—

C. OF C.—de whole trufe—

WIDOW J.—de whole' trufe—

C. OF C.—an' nutt'n but de trufe—

WIDOW J.—an' nutt'n but de trufe—

C. OF C.—unduh penalty ub mah honuh.

WIDOW J.—unduh penalty ub mah honuh.

C. OF C. Take de witness stan'.

WIDOW J. Take de witness stan'.

C. OF C. [*indignantly*]. Hush up, 'oman! You ain't got to say dem wuds! [*JURORS laugh.*] Take de witness stan'.

[*WIDOW J. hastily takes chair.*]

ATTY. FOR P. [*to WIDOW JOHNSON*]. Whut yo' name, ma'am?

WIDOW J. Widduh Maria Mirandy Johnsing.

ATTY. FOR P. Whut am yo' c'rect age?

WIDOW J. [*hesitating, then addressing JUDGE*]. Jedge, is Ah got to ansuh dat-ah question?

JUDGE [*after pause*]. Sorry, ma'am, but Ah reckons yuh is.

WIDOW J. [*to ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF*]. Well [*pause*], ef Ah libs to de twenty-fibt ub nex' mont' Ah'll be jess twenty-fibe yeahs ol'.



ATTY. FOR P. Widduh Johnsing, does you beliebe dis-heah Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs, defendant, done stole yo' tuckey?

WIDOW J. Yassuh, Ah sudd'nly does!

ATTY. FOR P. Whut groun's is yuh got fuh beliebin' hit?

WIDOW J. [*becoming greatly excited*]. Yo' honuh, Ah done see dat nigguh climb ober de fence, sneak up along it like a po' whipped dawg, climb up on de tree, an' grab mah fine fat tuckey befo' dat fowl kin say a wud. Dat-ah low-down nigguh—

ATTY. FOR D. [*jumping up and addressing JUDGE*]. Yo' honuh, Ah protess aginst dat kin' ub langwidge in de Co't!

JUDGE [*opening large book on desk and, holding it upside-down, pretending to consult it*]. Any langwidge goes in de Co't 'cep'n takin' de name ub de Lawd in vain [CLERK OF COURT takes book from JUDGE, turns it right-side up and returns it] aw any sland'rous talk. [*Closes book noisily.*] Objection obuh-ruled. [ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT takes seat.]

ATTY. FOR P. [*to WIDOW JOHNSON*]. Is you sho dat-ah man wah Mistuh Watuhs?

WIDOW J. Ah *sho* is sho!

ATTY. FOR P. How come yuh wuz able to distingwitch 'im?

WIDOW J. Wy, de moon wah shinin' bright, an' Ah done know dat-ah Watuhs fuh fawty yeahs.

ATTY. FOR D. [*rising*]. Yo' honuh, kin Ah ax de widduh a question?

JUDGE. Ah reckons yuh kin.

ATTY. FOR D. [*to WIDOW JOHNSON*]. How ol' is you done say you is?

WIDOW J. Ah's jess twenty-fibe yeahs ol'.

ATTY. FOR D. An' yuh's knowed Mistuh Watuhs fuh fawty yeahs? [*Takes seat.*]

ATTY. FOR P. [*hastily*]. Witness exchahged! [WIDOW JOHNSON *withdraws.*] Mah nex' witness is Miss Susie Cynthia Longabone.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce de witness. [MISS LONGERBONE *sworn in as was preceding witness and seated in witness chair.*]

ATTY. FOR P. Whut yo' name?

MISS LONGERBONE. Mah name am Miss Susie Cynthia Longabone.

ATTY. FOR P. Whut am yo' occypation?

MISS L. Ah is de widduh's hiah'd gal.

ATTY. FOR P. Miss Longabone, does you beliebe dat dis-heah man [*pointing to DEFENDANT*] done stole de said tuckey in question?

MISS L. Yassuh, Ah is pos'tib ub it.

ATTY. FOR P. Whut am yo' reason fuh beliebin' de same?

MISS L. Wy, de nex' day Ah wah gwine up-town an' Ah done meet dat-ah nigguh an' he hab tuckey fedduhs all obuh 'is clo'es.

MR. WATERS. Dat am a lie!

JUDGE [*rapping on desk*]. Awduh in de Co't!

ATTY. FOR P. Witness exchahged. [MISS LONGERBONE *withdraws.*] Mah nex' witness am Mistuh Josiah Cun'ham Tunnipseed.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Josiah Cun'ham Tunnipseed. [*Witness sworn in and placed in chair.*]

ATTY. FOR P. [*to MR. TURNIPSEED*]. Whut yo' name?

MR. TURNIPSEED. Mah name am Josiah Cun'ham Tunnipseed.

ATTY. FOR P. Whut does yuh do fuh a libin'?

MR. T. Ah is de widduh's hiah'd man.

ATTY. FOR P. Mr. Tunnipseed, whut does you know 'bout dis-heah tuckey-stealin'?

MR. T. Ah done take keah dem tuckeys an' Ah knows all 'bout dat-ah fowl.

ATTY. FOR P. How ol' wah de said tuckey in question?

MR. T. How ol' wah dat-ah tuckey? Hit wah seben yeahs, eighteen mont's, an' thutty-fibe days ol', suh.

ATTY. FOR P. Some ol' bud, dat!—Witness discused. [*To JUDGE, as witness withdraws*] Yo' honuh, dis-heah completes de zamination ub de witnesses. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE. Ah now awduhs de zamination ub de witnesses fuh de defendant.

ATTY. FOR D. [*rising*]. Ah wishes to zamine Miz Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Miz Watuhs. [*Witness sworn in and placed in chair.*]

ATTY. FOR D. [*to MRS. WATERS*]. Whut yo' name, ma'am?

MRS. WATERS. Miz Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs.

ATTY. FOR D. Am Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs yo' husban'?

MRS. W. Yassuh, he am, yo' honuh.

ATTY. FOR D. Miz Watuhs, whut am de cha'actuh ub yo' husban'?

MRS. W. Wy, dat-ah man am de bes' man in Watermillion County, bless him ol' haht!

ATTY. FOR D. Does yo' ol' man like tuckey?

MRS. W. He sho do, yo' honuh!

ATTY. FOR D. Would yo' husban' steal to sat'sfy his hunguh?

MRS. W. No, suh, yo' honuh, dat-ah man am too good a nigguh fuh dat!



ATTY. FOR D. Witness exchahged! [MRS. WATERS *with-  
draws.*] Now, Ah wishes to zamine Miss Mary Anne  
Brown. [*Witness sworn in.*]

ATTY. FOR D. Miss Brown, wuz you in yo' rest-rant on de said  
night in question?

MISS BROWN. Yassuh, yo' honuh, Ah wah.

ATTY. FOR D. Wah Mistuh Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs in  
yo' place ub business on de said night in question?

MISS BROWN. Yassuh, yo' honuh, he wah.

ATTY. FOR D. Witness discused. [*To JUDGE, as MISS BROWN  
withdraws*] Yo' honuh, dis-heah completes mah zamina-  
tion ub witnesses.

JUDGE. Ah now awdahs de cross an' zamination ub de wit-  
nesses.

ATTY. FOR D. Ah would fust like to cross an' zamine de fust  
witness fuh de plaintiff.

C. OF C. Widduh Johnsing, take de witness stan'. [*WIDOW  
JOHNSON takes chair.*]

ATTY. FOR D. Miz Johnsing, whut sawt ub a tuckey wah de  
said fowl in question?

WIDOW J. Hit wah a fine young tuckey, one ub de best tuckeys  
Ah got.

ATTY. FOR D. How many tuckeys is yuh got?

WIDOW J. [*mournfully*]. Ah jess had one fine young tuckey  
Ah been keepin' fuh fibe yeahs till Ah could git 'nough  
money to buy some crambe'ies to eat wid hit. An' den  
dat-ah low-down nigguh done come and tuck—

JUDGE [*rapping for order*]. All you needs to do is to ansuh  
questions!

ATTY. FOR D. [*to WIDOW JOHNSON*]. How ol' wah yo' tuckey?

WIDOW J. Dat-ah tuckey wah eighteen mont's ol', suh.

ATTY. FOR D. An' yuh been keepin' him fibe yeahs!—Witness



discused. [*Addressing JUDGE, as WIDOW JOHNSON withdraws*] Yo' honuh, Ah requests dat de ebi-dence be zamined as regahds de age ub de said fowl in question.

JUDGE [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, zamine de ebi-dence as regahds de age ub de said fowl in question.

SHERIFF. How Ah gwine do dat?

ATTY. FOR D. How is yuh? Wy, look at 'is teef, ub co'se!  
[*To JUDGE*] Yo' honuh, Ah would nex' like to cross an' zamine Miss Susie Cynthia Longabone.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Miss Susie Cynthia Longabone. [*MISS LONGERBONE placed in witness chair.*]

ATTY. FOR D. Miss Longabone, whut sawt ub night wah de said night in question?

MISS L. Dat-ah night wah one ub de mos' beautifullest nights Ah ebbuh seed.

ATTY. FOR D. [*after examining almanac*]. Miss Longabone, de Doctuh Kilem's Almanac shows distineckly dat de said night in question wah a berry dahk night an' dat de moon wah completely hid. [*Witness shows surprise.*] Does you beliebe dat Mistuh Watuhs done stole dat-ah tuckey?

MISS L. Ah sutt'nly does, yo' honuh!

ATTY. FOR D. Why does yuh?

MISS L. Wy, de nex' day Ah done see dat-ah Watuhs an' he hab tuckey fedduhs all obuh 'is clo'es.

ATTY. FOR D. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, is you done completed yo' zamination?

SHERIFF [*looking puzzled*]. Dis-heah tuckey ain't got no teef!

ATTY. FOR D. [*surprised*]. How dat? A tuckey ain't got no teef! [*Scratching head thoughtfully*] Say, whah you done look for dem teef?

SHERIFF. Wy, in 'is mouf, ub co'se!

ATTY. FOR D. [*indignantly*]. Wy, you po' simple nigguh, you, a tuckey's teef is in 'is feet!

SHERIFF [*examining turkey's feet*]. Yo' honuh, he got fo' good teef on each foot—one toof on one laig an' two teef on de udduh laig.

ATTY. FOR D. Well, less see—dat make ten teef, don' it? A tuckey wid ten teef am considuh'd ruthuh ol'. [*To witness*] Miss Longabone, how ol' wah de said fowl in question?

MISS L. Yo' honuh, dat-ah fowl wah seben yeahs, eighteen mont's, an' thutty days ol', suh.

ATTY. FOR D. Dat's jess whut de widduh's hiah'd man done say. An' yuh says dey wuz tuckey fedduhs all obuh Mistuh Watuhs de nex' day?

MISS L. Yassuh, dey wuz.

ATTY. FOR D. Witness exchahged. [*To SHERIFF, as MISS LONGERBONE withdraws*] Mistuh Ha'is, did yuh notice any tuckey fedduhs missin'?

ATTY. FOR P. [*jumping up and addressing JUDGE*]. Heah, yo' honuh, Ah hol's dat-ah am a trick question!

JUDGE [*to ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT*]. State de question a little mo' def'nite.

ATTY. FOR D. [*to SHERIFF*]. Did you fin' any fedduhs missin' fum de tuckey?

SHERIFF. No, suh, yo' honuh.

ATTY. FOR D. Yo' honuh, Ah requests dat de ebi-dence be pass roun' to de Ju'y, dat dey may assuhtain de trufe ub dese-heah state-ments.

JUDGE [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pass de ebi-dence to de Ju'y fuh dey inspection. [*SHERIFF passes turkey about among JURORS.*]

ATTY. FOR D. Yo honuh, Ah nex' wants to cross an' zamine Mistuh Josiah Cun'ham Tunnipseed.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Mistuh Josiah Cun'ham Tunnipseed. [*MR. TURNIPSEED led to witness chair by SHERIFF.*]

ATTY. FOR D. Mistuh Tunnipseed, wuz you home on de said night in question?

MR. T. Yassuh, yo' honuh.

ATTY. FOR D. Did yuh heah any racket in de chicken yahd on de said night in question?

MR. T. No, suh, yo' honuh.

ATTY. FOR D. Mistuh Tunnipseed, is Widduh Johnsing in putty po' succumstances?

ATTY FOR P. [*jumping up and addressing JUDGE*]. Yo' honuh, Ah objects to dat kind a question on de groun's dat hit ain't got nutt'n to do wid de case.

JUDGE [*looking into book before used*]. De law allows hit. Objection obuh-ruled.

ATTY. FOR D. Mistuh Tunnipseed, is de Widduh Johnsing in putty po' succumstances finanshly?

MR. T. No, suh, Ah beliebes de widduh am putty well fixed, but she try to conceal de same.

ATTY. FOR D. Whut am de cha'actuh ub de widduh? [*WIDOW JOHNSON rolls eyes at ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT.*]

MR. T. Well, Ah don' like to say nutt'n aginst de widduh, suh, but Ah has to say dat ef she see a chance to make a nickel dishonestly, she'll do it, suh.

WIDOW J. [*jumping up and shaking fist at witness*]. You low-down nigguh! You'llt lose yo' job fuh dat!

JUDGE [*rapping on desk*]. Awduh in de Co't! [*WIDOW JOHNSON sinks back in seat.*]



ATTY. FOR D. One mo' question. [*To witness.*] Whut am de age ub Mistuh Watuhs an' whut am his cha'actuh?

MR. T. Dat-ah man am thutty-eight yeahs ol', suh. Ah's knowed 'im a mighty long time an' dat am his c'rect age. Ah beliebes he am a good man.

ATTY. FOR D. Witness exchahged. [*To JUDGE, as MR. TURNIPSEED withdraws*] Yo' honuh, dis-heah completes mah cross an' zamination. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE. Ah now awduhs de cross an' zamination ub de witnesses fuh de defendant.

ATTY. FOR P. [*rising and addressing JUDGE*]. Yo' hcnuh, Ah would fust like to cross an' zamine Mistuh Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, pro-juce Mistuh Watuhs to take de oat'. [*SHERIFF produces DEFENDANT.*] Repeat aftuh me whut Ah says: "Ah do solumly sweah"—  
[*DEFENDANT takes oath.*]

ATTY. FOR P. Mistuh Watuhs, wheah wuz you on de said night in question?

MR. W. Ah wah home, suh.

ATTY. FOR P. Is yuh sho?

MR. W. Sho as dat Ah is a prisnuh, suh! Dat wah de night mah ol' 'oman crack mah haid wid a rollin' pin.—Say, dat ol' 'oman sho am handy wid a rollin' pin!

ATTY. FOR P. [*hastily*]. We don' keah nutt'n 'bout dat!—An' you says you didn' steal dat-ah tuckey?

MR. W. No, suh!

ATTY. FOR P. But we got de ebi-dence heah [*pointing to turkey*]. Whut yuh got to say 'bout dat?

MR. W. Dat am mah tuckey, suh.

ATTY. FOR P. How kin yuh proobe dat?



MR. W. Wy, look at 'is teef, an' see ef yuh don' fin' one ub 'em broke off.

ATTY. FOR P. Witness exchanged! [*To JUDGE, as DEFENDANT withdraws*] Yo' honuh, Ah would like nex' to cross an' zamine Miz Watuhs.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, place Miz Watuhs on de witness stan'. [*Witness takes chair.*]

ATTY. FOR P. [*to witness*]. Wah Mistuh Watuhs home on de said night in question?

MRS. W. No, suh.

ATTY. FOR P. But Mistuh Watuhs done say he wah home dat night.

MRS. W. Dat ol' man pow'ful fuhgitful! Ebbuh sence he done hab dat-ah stroke ub applefexy he haid ain't been jess right.

ATTY. FOR P. Ah done notice dat!—Witness discused. [*To JUDGE, as witness withdraws*] Yo' honuh, Ah would nex' like to 'cross an' zamine Miss Mary Anne Brown.

C. OF C. [*to SHERIFF*]. Mistuh Ha'is, place Miss Brown on de witness stan'. [*Witness takes chair.*]

ATTY. FOR P. [*to witness*]. Wah Mistuh Watuhs in yo' place ub business on de said night in question?

MISS B. Yassuh, he wah.

ATTY. FOR P. How long he done stay deah?

MISS B. Well, he us'ally stay till 'bout ten-thutty, but dis time Ah done make 'im go at ten.

ATTY. FOR P. Witness discused. [*To JUDGE, as MISS BROWN withdraws*] Yo' honuh, dis-heah completes de cross an' zamination ub de witnesses. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE [*to ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF*]. Ah now awduhs yo' plea, Mistuh Lincum.

ATTY. FOR P. [*rising and addressing* JUDGE]. Yo' honuh, Ah, John Abraham Cæsuh Lincum, Attunny fuh de plaintiff, Widduh Maria Mirandy Johnsing, now wishes to draw yo' 'tention to a few facks. Would you like to spen' many days takin' keah ub a tuckey an' den hab some low-down dahkey come 'long an' steal hit? Widduh Johnsing am a hahd-wucking 'oman an' de loss ub dis-heah tuckey mean a mighty lot to huh. Fum de appea'ance ub de widduh yuh would t'ink she got plenty money, but don' yuh be mislaid by dis, for appea'ances ain't a good t'ing to jedge by. Widduh Johnsing am a neat, beautiful an' elephant 'oman an' she done affirm her pocketbook am berry low—

ATTY. FOR D. [*in loud aside*]. Yes, Lawd, an' it'll be a heap sight lowuh when you gits thu wid it! [JURORS *laugh and* JUDGE *raps for order.*]

ATTY. FOR P. Futhuh-mo', less look into de Bible, in de twentiet' chaptuh ub Exidox, de fifteent' vuss, an' we shall read [*with dramatically warning gesture*]: "Thou shalt not steal!" Ah's done prooben Mistuh Watuhs guilty ub stealin' dis-heah tuckey, deafo' dis-heah alone am enough to convick Mistuh Watuhs.—Now, consunnin' de cha'actuh ub Mistuh Tunnipseed: Ain't he done git up an' testify 'ginst de widduh, who tuck 'im in when he wah a dirty, homeless waif an' gib 'im a home an' tenduh keah? [*Addressing the* JURY] Now, Mistuh Ju-uhs, look into de co'thouse recawds an' you-all 'll fin' hit 's gittin' to be kin' ub a habit wid Mistuh Tunnipseed to be in jail 'bout once a yeah fuh stealin' hawgs. Deahfo', Mistuh Ju'uhs, you-all caint reply upon dis-heah nigguh's testification.—As regahds de ebi-dence ub Miss Mary Anne Brown, well we kin tell by de looks ub huh dat she

am a dishonest pusson. But ain't she done say Mistuh Watuhs wah in huh place ub business till ten o'clock dat night? Well, Ah kin see as dat don't mean nutt'n, for dey is plenty ub time aftuh ten o'clock to steal tuckeys. Ah knows 'cause Ah done stole 'em mysef. [JUDGE shows astonishment.] Mistuh Ju'uhs, you-all is gwine gib yo' decision in favuh ub de plaintiff, fuh Ah kin tell by de look ub yuh dat yuh wants to go to hebben when yuh dies, an' you-all knows dat in awduh to git deah, yuh mus' obey de wud ub de Lawd.—Is yuh ebbuh notice how de attunny fuh de defendant puts up a pitiful mout' to de ju'y? Ah'll bet mah las' dolluh dat's whut he gwine do dis time, an' don' you-all let 'im 'rouse yo' sym'thies in favuh ub de prisnuh!—Now fuh de proof Ah's got. Didn' de widduh git up an' test'fy dat she done see Watuhs steal huh tuckey? Ain't dat enough? Also, hit seem mighty strange dat Mistuh Tunnipseed an' Miss Longabone could bofe test'fy to de age ub de said tuckey in question, to de berry yeah, mont' an' day. How dey done know dey gwine be ax dat question? Why dey done figguh out de age ub dat-ah tuckey so accu'ately?—Hon'able Ju'uhs, you-all knows dat de widduh am a po' hahd-wuckin' 'oman an' dat dat-ah tuckey meant a mighty lot to huh. Jess considuh dis-heah case fum de stan'point ub de widduh. As Ah done said befo', how would you-all like to spen' a lot ub time an' money raisin' a nice young tuckey, on'y to hab some low-down nigguh steal hit aftuh yuh been plannin' to eat hit yo'sef? Ah jess ax yuh dat. [Dramatic gesture.] Ah jess ax yuh! Hon'able jedges, Ah claims dat dis-heah ebidence done been made up in Mistuh Smith's office. Yasuh, Ah knows hit am! Wy, hit's a te-uhble t'ing to fix



up a scheme to steal a tuckey fum a po' widduh!—An' so now, Hon'able Jedge [*bowing low to JUDGE*] an' Mistuh Ju'uh's [*turning back to JURY*], Ah done prooben dat Mistuh Watuhs stole dat-ah tuckey, 'cause de widduh done see 'im an' Miss Longabone done see tuckey fed-duhs all obuh 'im nex' day. So, hon'able jedges, please t'ink ub dese-heah facks when you-all renduhs yo' decision, an' also put yo'sefs in de position ub de widduh an' considuh how you-all would feel toahd Mistuh Watuhs. Now, hon'able jedges, dis-heah completes mah plea an' once mo' Ah ax you-all to treat de widduh as yuh would yo'sefs. [*Takes seat, mopping brow.*]

JUDGE. Ah now awduhs de plea ub de Attunny fuh de Defendant.

ATTY. FOR D. [*bowing to JUDGE, JURY and courtroom*]. Yo' honuh, gemmen ub de Ju'y, ladies an' gemmen, habin' brung dis-heah case to a close, Ah's pos-tib dat Mistuh Watuhs [*indicating DEFENDANT by dramatic gesture*] am entiahly innuh-cent ub dis chahge brung aginst 'im by de Widduh Johnsing, State ub Loosiana, Watermillion County, Possum Township. Ah's convinced dat dat po' 'cused prisnuh [*dramatic gesture*] am de victim ub a grabe conspi'acy. Ah's convinced 'cause ub mah own knowledge an' dat which Ah done secu'ed fum de testification ub de witnesses. Now, gemmen ub de Ju'y, ef you-all's done yo' juty like Ah hopes yuh is, an' followed dis-heah case keahf'ly, dey ain't nutt'n else to it but dat you-all 'll declaah Mistuh Watuhs innuh-cent. Wy, gemmen, hit's beyon' mah powuhs ub comperhension to eben t'ink ub Mistuh Watuhs bein' guilty, aftuh whut all dese-heah witnesses done say. Now, gemmen ub de Ju'y, jess lemme tell you-all a few t'ings dat tuck place in dese-



heah testification perceedin's. [*One of the jurors falls asleep and remains so throughout remainder of plea.*] Dat-ah widduh [*pointing scornfully at WIDOW JOHNSON*] done say dat de night ub de stealin' ub de said tuckey in question wah a moonlight night. Well, de Doctuh Kilem's Almanac say distinckly dat de said night in question wah a berry *dahk* night an' de moon wah entiahly absent. Ef dat 'oman could distingwitch one nigguh out-uh a million on a berry dahk night, she mus' a had a pe'iscope. An' den dat-ah widduh try to tell you-all dat de said fowl in question wah a young tuckey! Well, now, you-all knows dat Miss Longabone, hui hiah'd gal, done say dat-ah fowl wah perzackly seben yeahs, eighteen mont's, and thutty-fibe days ol'. An' hui hiah'd man, Mistuh Tunnipseed, done say de same t'ing, but de widduh say [*imitating WIDOW'S voice and manner*] "De fowl am eighteen mont's ol'." Mebbe he wah eighteen mont's ol' once, but dat time ain't now, lemme tell yuh!—Well, den Miss Longabone say she knowed Mistuh Watuhs wah de man dat stole dat tuckey, 'cause he hab tuckey fedduhs all obuh 'is clo'es nex' day. Well, Mistuh Ha'is, he say—an' de Lawd know Mistuh Ha'is am a hones' man!—he say dey wahn't no fedduhs missin'. Gemmen ub de Ju'y, you-all knows de trufe ub dem state-ments.—Futhuh-mo', Mistuh Tunnipseed done test'fy to de condition ub de widduh, bot' finanshly an' mo'ally. He say 'as consuns money de widduh am berry well fixed an' don' need de tuckey an' she ain' gwine be out anyt'ing by de loss ub de tuckey. An' Mistuh Tunnipseed done test'fy dat de widduh wouldn' be above fixin' up a false chahge on Mistuh Watuhs. An' futhuh-mo' [*pausing impressively*] Miss Brown, she done proobe a ally-by fuh Mistuh

Watuhs. She done state dat Mistuh Watuhs wah in huh rest-rant on de said night in question. Dat alone proobe Mistuh Watuhs innuh-cent ub de chahge against 'im. —But to t'ink ub a stingy ol' widduh tryin' to sen' a po' man to prison by tellin' a pitiful tale ub povuhty is entiahly beyon' mah powuh ub comperhension. Wy, t'ink ub it! Dat-ah widduh done try to 'rouse sym'thy wid de Ju'y by sayin' she'd been a-keepin' dat-ah tuckey fuh *fibe yeahs* waitin' to kill it till she could git de money to buy some crambe'ies to eat wid it. Dat sho wah a mistake, 'cause she done test'fy dat de tuckey wah on'y eigh-teen mont's ol' an' de jedge hushed huh up. [*Addressing the JUDGE*] Yo' honuh, Ah sho am grateful to yuh fuh dat!—But [*growing very mournful*] to t'ink ub dat po' excused prisnuh goin' to prison [*taking out large bandana and beginning to weep*] an' wucking 'is po' life away [*sob*] tryin' to pay fuh a [*sob*] tough ol' tuckey he didn' steal! [*Dries tears and puts bandana into pocket.*] Dat am somep'n Ah nebbuh does—Ah nebbuh tries to rouse symp'thy wid de Ju'y. Now, gemmen ub de Ju'y, you-all-is ruthuh fond ub tuckey an' ef you seed one loose you'd hab 'im. Jess beah dat in min' when yuh makes yo' decision. Ef you-all's done follow dis-heah case keahf'ly Ah's postib yuh'll decide dat Mistuh Watuhs is entiahly innuh-cent ub dis-heah grabe chahge. [*Takes seat.*]

JUDGE [*rising*]. Gemmen ub de Ju'y, you-all's done heah de ahgymentations ub dese-heah attunneys an' de testifica-tions ub dese-heah witnesses an' yuh's zamined de ebi-dence. Now, de Co't wants you-all to weigh dese-heah mattuhs berry keahf'ly in yo' min's an' tell whedduh yuh t'inks dis-heah Erias Thomas Jeff'son Watuhs am guilty aw not guilty. You-all's done heah dis-heah case an' Ah

axes yuh to be speedy an' faah in yo' decision. Does you-all *relize* dat yuh gotta hab a perpondence ub ebidence to conviek dis-heah man? Ef dis-heah man am declaahed guilty, he faces a prison tum uf fum six mont's to six yeahs—so say de thutty-thud section ub de law ub Loosiana. So you-all sees, gemmen, why Ah axes yuh to be keahful in yo' decision les' yuh sen's a po' innuh-cent man to prison aw tuns a tuckey-t'ief loose. Ef you-all t'inks Mistuh Watuhs am guilty, Ah axes yuh not to hab no hesintation to sen' 'im to prison, faw ef he am a tuckey-t'ief, we don' wan' 'im roun', 'cause we wants all our tuckeys oursefs. Now, gemmen ub de Ju'y, Ah jess axes you-all to put yo'sefs in de place ub bofe Widduh Johnsing an' Mistuh Watuhs an' considuh how you would feel in sech a position an' act accawdin'ly. Ah axes you-all to do dis 'cause Ah t'inks dat am de o'ny way to *decide* right. De good book say, "Do unto udduhs like you would hab udduhs do unto you." Now, gemmen ub de Ju'y, jess considuh how a nice fat tuckey would tas'e, roasted *real* brown an' floatin' in coon gravy. [JURORS *look longingly at turkey and one or two smack lips.*] Ef you-all seed a tuckey handy, yuh might be temped to git 'im yo'sefs. But, on de udduh han', ef you done had a tuckey stole, yuh'd want de dahkey whut stole it to be punished. So now Ah dismisses you-all to make yo' decision.

[JURORS *retire, with exception of sleeping member, who continues to sleep till one of the others returns to courtroom, wakens him, and takes him out, stretching and yawning.*]

*Enter* JUROR.

JUROR. Yo' honuh, de Ju'y wishes de tuckey fuh a few mo-



ments, to zamine hit, in awduh to detummin de trufe ub de testifications.

ATTY. FOR D. [*rising*]. Yo' honuh, Ah requests dat Mistuh Ha'is accomp'ny de tuckey in awduh to—ah—well, you unduhstan's.

JUDGE [*nodding knowingly*]. Yeh-ah, yeh-ah, Ah unduhstan's. [*To SHERIFF.*] Mistuh Ha'is, Ah reckon yuh bettuh go 'long wid dat-ah tuckey.

SHERIFF. Yassuh. [*Takes turkey and retires with JUROR.*]

*Enter JURY, taking seats.*

JUDGE. Mistuh Jones, you kin repo't de vuddick.

MR. JONES [*rising*]. Yo' honuh, aftuh many ahgymentations, delibuh-ations, and meditations, we done decide dat Mistuh Watuhs am unaminously, irregahdlessly, an' widout any restrictions, what-so-ebbuh, entiahly innuh-cent.

[ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT *shows extreme joy, patting DEFENDANT on back and grinning.* ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF *appears much disgusted.* PLAINTIFF and DEFENDANT *look puzzled.*]

JUDGE. Mistuh Watuhs, you is heah-by unaminously, irregahdlessly, an' widout any restrictions whut-so-ebbuh duly exquitted.

MR. W. [*looking frightened*]. Whut—wh—whut dat mean?

JUDGE. Wy, you po' innuh-cent nigguh, you, dat mean yuh ain't guilty, dat yuh didn' steal de tuckey, dat yuh is free!

MR. W. Den Ah ain't gotta gib de tuckey back? [JUDGE *throws up hands, while JURY shows great amusement. Curtain may be dropped or actors may group themselves on stage and sing appropriate song.*]

CURTAIN

















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