

RED-MANNING:

I am sorry you had to do time for me. I can't imagine what life must have been like the past twenty-five years. I'm prepared to give you a residential property, twenty-five acres of undeveloped land in a business zone, plus twenty-five hundred dollars in cash.

(RED-MANNING goes over to the armoire and unlocks a drawer and pulls out a contract.)

SIR:

(Amused.)

Twenty-five, twenty-five and twenty-five for the twenty-five years I did.

RED-MANNING:

You can say that.

SIR:

What about the twenty-five years. How you going to pay that back?

(RED-MANNING does not respond.)

You think the best I could have done in twenty-five years is a house, fifty acres and some cash in my pocket. You don't think in twenty-five years I couldn't have done any better than that. If that's what you think, you really don't know me.

RED-MANNING:

I don't know you.

SIR:

I could have done at least that without my daddy's help.

RED-MANNING:

(RED-MANNING ignores SIR's comment.)

It's more than what a lot of Colored folks got.

SIR:

So you're paying me based on what a lot of Colored folks ain't got. And I'm supposed to be happy having more than most Colored folk?

RED-MANNING:

Look. You seem like a pretty smart fella. But I don't know what you could have done in twenty-five years. You might have done more, but you might have done a lot less. Life has a funny way of deciding who gets what.

SIR:

You are right about that. Now that's a saying that I'll keep: "Life has a funny way of deciding who gets what." But it seems like right now you want to decide. You want to tell me how much it's worth to do twenty-five years for you. Let me ask you this, where would you be right now if you had done your own twenty-five years? You think you'd have this house, those properties, that business. You think you'd have Lucile if you did your own time?

RED-MANNING:

I got up this morning wanting to do right by you. You didn't do me no favors. You didn't volunteer to do

(RED-MANNING goes over to SIR and
puts the contract on the table.)

I believe this is more than fair. I'll be glad to advise you, help you further anyway I know how. But those are my terms. It's a fair offer. I hope you take it.

SIR:

What about the girl. The girl you killed. She's dead. Caldwell is dead. I did time. You pay me off. That will set your conscious right. But how you going to make it right for her.

RED-MANNING:

I couldn't save her. I've made my peace with it.

SIR:

Did you? Then I'd have to say you're a cold hearted man. Not many men can make peace with that. And you can write me out a check and make it all go away. Well I didn't borrow money from you. I didn't take land from you. Pay me what you owe me!

RED-MANNING:

Well I can't dog-gonit! I can pay you what I got.

SIR:

I don't want what you got!

RED-MANNING:

What do you want!

SIR:

My dreams! I want my dreams back! Pay me back my dreams!

TUCKER:

Why were you there?

SIR:

Stay out of this, Tucker!

TUCKER:

Why were you out that night?

(A silent pause comes over the
room.)

You said you were out that night. Why?

SIR:

I told you to stay out of this.

TUCKER:

I'm just asking you a question.

SIR:

Because I lived there.

TUCKER:

You lived in the house?

SIR:

Don't be ridiculous. I worked for Caldwell, just like the
others. We had our own dwelling.

TUCKER:

Next to the house?

SIR:

It was across the field. What does it matter?

TUCKER:

You said you were out. I just wonder why you were close
enough to the house at that time of night to get a good look
at Red-Manning.

(SIR searches for an answer.)