

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A BLACK SOUTHERN DOCTOR

Chapter One

ALPHA AND OMEGA

Have you seen the headlines from back home, Lyn? asked Robert Ford of his bride Carolyn Hanes.

No, I've had my hands full putting the Pacific Clipper story on paper. Lyn Hanes is a writer of great repute and she is working on the account of Captain Bob Ford's historic flight back to New York City at the very beginning of World War II.

Do you remember that doctor from Frenchtown, A.O. Campbell?

Oh my, yes! He is a sweet man, no one quite like him, for sure. Lyn was loosely involved in the death of A.O.'s mother-in-law in 1931, a witness to be exact.

Well anyhow, he is being indicted for manslaughter and abortion charges. The *Democrat* reports sources from police saying they have been watching his clinic for months.

Tallahassee has become a hotbed for bigotry and beside that, white and blacks have been jealous of him and his wife for decades.

It looks like they finally got him.

Lyn lets that statement roll around in her head for a while. She is known for supporting causes that are contrary to popular opinion or the administration of justice, i.e. abuse of.

I can see the gears grinding in that pretty little head of yours.

I am putting in a call into one of my contacts inside the police department. Joe Slater is chief of detectives.....I wonder what he knows? She is becoming suspicious. Joe would not hassle an old man.

Carolyn is on the phone in a minute, Have him call me at Westwood 54-1954.

What could she accomplish in 1956 Florida, where the difference between black & white, was complete different to that of right & wrong?

Time will tell.

But could she actually change history? We will see.

In the meantime, this is what we believed to have happened in 1958:

A solitary figure sits huddled against the back corner of a room whose corners are all too near to one another. The pungent light of a dwindling candle wavers forth and back, barely illuminating the tattered pages of an obviously well read black book. Once surgically skilled hands thumb painfully, yet knowingly to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, chapter 5, verse 4.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted, thus saith the Lord our God, by way of Alpha Omega Campbell, good and faithful servant. He goes to his knees to pray for the soul of his dearest Maggie Lou, who has gone from this Earth to a place where the pains of loneliness and bitterness melt away like the wax of her husband s flickering light.

So engrossed in his prayer time is he, that the looming footsteps of a prison guard go unnoticed.

I thought I smelled something down this way. Starke Prison Guard, Frank Lightfoot, whose six and a half foot frame makes it hard to live up to his surname, catches this harmless prisoner of the state of Florida in the act of breaking lights out order--once again. Are you making your own candles Old Man, or is your wife smuggling them in for you?

A.O. remains on his knees, the warm trail of saline sorrow reaching his dignified jaw.

By the way, I haven t seen your wife for a few days. Guard Lightfoot actually had taken a liking to this Negro couple, especially considering the rest of this cold institution s population consists of murderers, thieves, rapists and other assorted dregs.

The same could be said of Doc Campbell, who when dealing with Frank Lightfoot, felt as close to being human as one can under the circumstances. He even got the big man to get his own Bible, albeit from a desk drawer at a Jacksonville motel.....and read selected gold nugget passages that the doctor knows best, then applying it to what he knows of the guard s life.

My Maggie died this morning, Frank. Period.

Lightfoot's face turns a whiter shade of pale. Realization of another's mortality will shine the light on your own, producing humility and ultimately humanity.

I am truly sorry, Doc Campbell. I didn't mean to disrespect you. He meant what he said.

Maybe you could put in a good word for me, with Warden Hayes I mean. He denied me a pass to go to the wake.

This IS a maximum security prison, Frank states, then recants, regaining his new humanity. You're right, Doc. The warden should grant you a pass and I'll volunteer to take you to.....where are you folks from?

Tallahassee.

Oh yeah, how can I forget that, state capital and all.

To be rightly correct, we hail from Quincy, in Gadsen County. But we have a family plot in Frenchtown, not far from my hospital. The mention of his clinic floods him with emotion, accent on the guilt. My Maggie would still be alive if I had been there for her. She always needed me to guide and care for her. And where am I? I'd say I'ma wasting my retirement years, servin' time for a death which I didn't cause----and now my Maggie's gone and I have nothin' to live for.

You have daughters, don't ya? Three seems to me, cause I remember all of them coming the day you came here. It was February 3rd..... 57, the same as my wedding day anniversary.

What is today? the doctor inquires. It is hard to keep track of time, when daylight comes to your world but an hour a day.

Tuesday, is the response.

No--the date. Ain't it October?

21st, yeah, October. It says so on this new watch I got, shows the date.

623 without her and now I don't care about tomorrow or any other day.

Take me home, Lord, I want to see my Maggie!

I'll talk to Warden Hayes in the mornin'. Blow out that candle now. We'll get you home, Doc.

Getting Warden Hayes to change his mind will be no small task. Ten years ago, two former inmates, black and hopelessly unemployed, with too much time on their hands, kidnaped, raped, tortured and killed the warden's 11 year old daughter. Revenge was their motive, as it is now his, a stubborn rebuke of this 68 year old black Southern doctor.

Doctor Alpha Omega Campbell is by no way or definition, an imposing

man. Accounting for 66 inches of vertical space, balding to a flaw, of mixed race to the visual exclusion of all the others, other than negro, he is warmed by God's spirit and in no form or manner a threat to anyone except himself. And yet, here he is in Stake, Florida, closer to Gainesville than Tallahassee; seemingly nearer to hell than the Lord of grace.

If this diminutive groundbreaker could view the world of 1958, one that is lesser for his absence, it is a tranquil void, in an otherwise mischievous globe, would he see. The good doctor, had he charged for his services commensurate of effort, he should have raised his rates, as unemployment fuels postwar inflation. Nikita Khrushchev and Charles de Gaulle join Dwight Eisenhower, generals all, as world leaders. The Cold War is on.

The United States' first satellite orbits the earth, high above the tensions of state, or of race, perhaps to bounce off news of school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas; good news for those in the minority, but not as bad as it should be for those who hide behind white-hooded garments, disguising any real humanness.

Of greater relevance, gone are the carefree days in Tallahassee. On a slow summer's day, devoid of virus and trauma, a chauffeur-driven Cadillac sedan could be taking the Campbell family ensemble to watch tennis lessons, given to the youngest daughter, Zillah, who is preceded by Laura Bell and Alpha(Omega). They too have been tutored by Florida A&M's coach in a sport not known by many negroes.

More radical perhaps, are the cook and the gardener and the maids, in a grand house that is and was the envy of most folks in the Florida panhandle. It is that very jealousy, of means and possession, that precipitates the doctor's downfall. The fact that his mulattoed skin has the blue hue of a blue blood, will bar his efforts to be with his family.

You have a visitor, Doc Campbell. The voice of guard Lightfoot pierces the night, routing the man from a spasmodic sleep. It feels like he has been daydreaming with his eyes closed.

I ain't been killin' no white girl. Her baby was 5 days dead when she delivered, yells the doctor incongruously.

Standing before his 6x8 foot cell, is R. Worth Moore, the attorney who was unsuccessful in refuting the testimony of the dead girl's mother. Her daughter, in a deathbed revelation, tells her mother that it was a Tallahassee doctor who performed her abortion. Whether or not the privileged evidence is true, the six

white males on the jury believe so. Go ahead and disregard the known fact that her then family doctor was a Doctor Sapp, who practiced medicine 10 miles north, in Havana. He is white. Any questions?

Wake up, Old Man.....do you want out of here or not?
Freedom?

A.O.? I've come to take you to be with your Maggie. Attorney Moore looks more disheveled than normal, because of the early morning hour, but not too far from his typically crumpled appearance; being a widower, he does not have his suits pressed as much as he should.

What did you say? he mutters in a daze.

The Governor has granted you special dispensation. I'm here to take you home for the funeral. Alpha is waiting for us in my car.

Mr. Moore went over the warden's head, Doc, says the guard. Now get dressed before someone changes their mind.

Moore has brought the doctor's best fall suit with him. Prison cannot take away this proud man's dignity and the way a man dresses is the outward expression of that. Prisoner Campbell is suddenly transformed into his former self; the one who operates in the realm of the respectful and respected, as opposed to the regulars at Starke, molester, murderer and thief. How did his life's formulae ever link him with the lowest common denominator?

The metamorphosis is completed when a renewly proud man strides confidently through the open cell door. An emotional Attorney Moore snuffles in concert with his tears, much as he had done after his closing statement on February 2nd, 1956.

If they'll give me my bag back, Worth, I'll give you somethin' for that. Thinking of others before self. If one's life motto can be summed up in five words, write the previous sentence down in The Book of Life, alongside the quiet doctor's name.

Outside the tall barbed wire crowned concrete wall, past a solitary entry, turned exit, awaits an entourage worthy of the preeminent boxer of this day, Sugar Ray Robinson, replete with a long black limousine, armed guards and one important addition: family. R. Worth Moore has managed to assemble the three girls, two of their husbands and precious grandchildren. Throw in some Tallahassee tag-a-longs, friends and such, with card carrying members of the Southeastern Medical Society and you have a wheeled armada of caring proportions. The only thing missing from the fleet is the Frenchtown High School marching band. Their bus is in the shop.

Alpha Omega Campbell, M.D. passes under the restrictive threshold of his temporary home, amid cheers, tears and wardenly leers, the latter is on hand to remind the doctor that he is expected to return. This makeshift celebration does, after all, resemble a triumphant return to civilian life.

We miss you, Daddy! A.O.'s namesake is the first to express the most simple of salutations. The Mizzels had flown in from Fort Lauderdale. Her husband Vaughn, is also a doctor, as it goes for two out of the three daughters.

The McClouds, accounting for the #2 Campbell girl, Laura, is next to apply a warm stranglehold on her shorter father. Her uniquely fair skin begs the question, but her stunning beauty deflects the very same. Franklin McCloud is in real estate, unable to attend, a pressing land deal blocks his attendance.

Laura Bell, I swear you're still growing. He looks down at a young one. And you, little Laura, the day I see you stop growing is the day I meet my Maker.

Daughter #3, Zillah Shirley, last but not least in his heart, joins the love reunion. Youngest daughters will always be considered daddy's little girl and with Zillah farthest away, even at her closest, this special encounter magnifies the joy. Washington D.C. is a world much removed from the old South, but people get sick in Camelot, despite official decrees.

What bittersweet irony for this gathering. Death is a regrettable excuse to assemble a family, but when weddings and child dedications dry up, the mature tree stretch out its limb, to cover the ground below; grass may not flourish, yet rare Florida snow cannot complete its fall either.

Back to the west of Starke Prison and a little to the north, perhaps 140 miles as the flamingo flies, there is the beginning of a covert transaction under way. The underlying focus of this meeting is a juicy plot of Tallahassee, on the south side of Tennessee Street. A mere five blocks south of the Oakland Cemetery, where Maggie Lou Campbell will be buried, are the four acres of land most coveted by those expanding the capitol city.

Thousands of people, legislators and the like, rotate their stays here in Tallahassee and in their home districts. The two universities attract transient visitors as well, many of whom are monied, needing to tarry the next day and beyond.

Not all too surprisingly, one of the four men at this meeting, in the bowels of the Capitol Plaza Hotel, the sole world class facility in town, is the owner, Charles Wilson. Yes, there are quite a few motels scattered about, typically

family operations; one floor, no frills, no food. Are mom & pop ten roomers considered competition to the Plaza? The answer is no, because if they were, Charles Wilson would have his fingers in that pie. Shrewd to the d, while possessing the clout of an entrenched incumbent politician, Wilson will be a part of any hotel doings.

In the room as well, one constructed forty feet below the basement, a reaction to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is Samuel Goldblatt III. He represents the exploding Holiday Inn chain of hotels and motels, lodging for the masses that targets large cities and sites along newly organizing interstate highway systems connecting those cities. He is fashioned after the new breed of American businessman; a child of the Great Depression, determined never again to be poor, sometimes at any cost.

No mega-deal would get off the ground without financing. George Lewis, he of Lewis State Bank, fund-raiser for Wilson and mortgage maker for Franklin McCloud, completes the quadrangle. He seems to be the uneasiest member of the group, perhaps because of a rumored, but unsubstantiated connection to the Campbell family.

Neither he or McCloud should be comfortable in this bunker, taking into account the nature of their business, not to mention the fact that they are expected to be numbered at Maggie Lou s funeral.

Laura Bell Campbell McCloud s husband, whose job it is to attempt to pay the property taxes on what was once 150 parcels of land owned by A.O. and Maggie, has been a knowing, if not a slightly reluctant party to the progressive dismantling of a once advancing empire. Without the doctor s viable income stream, bits and pieces of property are liquidated, at his uninformed direction. It is done in a way as not to draw attention, thereby preserving the Campbell good named reputation.

The reason McCloud joins banker Lewis in a fit of guilt, centers around the Tennessee Street land and its precious location. The rest of Campbell holdings are secondary tracts, save for Campbell subdivision and the adjacent lake bearing their name, on the southern boundary of the city. These downtown acres however, had been designated to house a grand hospital; Doc Campbell s crowning achievement, replacing his black-only clinic two block north. Without divine intervention, a twelve story hotel will take its intended place.

I hope you know that this little deal of ours will blow a hole the size of the Everglades through our cover, Charles. How can I keep this a secret from Laura? McCloud asks them in a shameful tone of voice.

If you are going to save Campbell Pond, hell, even the house and clinic for that matter; you really have no choice.

It s Campbell Lake!

Whatever, states a cold Wilson. If you remember correctly, I was the one who told you, as a friend I might add, to be more up front about the families sad state of affairs. But you were determined to protect the family pride. Pride ain t worth a fiddy-dee to an old man who may die before he gets out of Starke.

Pride is not just about land, Wilson, although come to think of it, I believe it was your proud jealousy and lame vendetta that landed my father-in-law in the soup he s in now.

Are you tryin to slander my name, McLoud? He crippled my sister you know.

Not exactly and Esther was tottery before she took ill. Franklin chooses his words carefully. He is younger and less cagey than his accuser. I mean to say, that true and pure pride is about history; what people will look back on, with a dash of entitlement thrown in. If you take away a man s life, if he believes on the Lord, he has an eternity in Heaven to look forward to.

You take away a man s possessions and you steal away his earthly identification. In the case of Tennessee Street, stealing is the right word. It s worth millions to you, yet you ll get for pennies on the dollar.

Speaking of percentages, you ll be getting a good fee for your part, you know that, chimes in George Lewis, the handler of the title arrangements.

That is blood money to me, George and you best make sure that the Leon County Clerk will see you as the aggressor in this matter, he emplots.

You will take the money I bet?

No answer is his answer.

Let s get past the pettiness and get right to the meat, men. Samuel Goldblat does not linger on such trivial things as fragile human emotion. Ten thousand dollars an acre is the agreed on price, am I correct?

It is ten thousand, only if I am the managing partner in the hotel, Charles Wilson asserts. Fifty thousand per if I m not. Ironically, the latter would obviously be best for the Campbells. But this is not about their welfare, rather personal gain.

Why do we need you, Wilson? We could have leveraged our way into into your Plaza, you know.

We will never know, Sam, will we? I am the sole owner of the Capitol Plaza and the only one who can pull off the land deal you need to erect your

tower. Stated like someone with leverage of his own. And I cannot stand for competition, unless I have a stake in it as well.

Holiday Inns knows full well that if they are going to make inroads into certain markets, regional lords, the holders of their dominion, will have to be players. The word franchise is a recent addition to popular vernacular and corporations have instituted these units to bring limited partners into the larger company umbrella. Charles Wilson is an example of a franchisee.

Samuel Goldblatt the Third thought he might be able to sneak one past these Southern bumpkins. Fat chance.

Forty thousand for the lot, purchased by the Holiday Inn Corporation of America, with the Leon County Treasurer the payee, minus 5% real estate fees payable to McCloud Realty, George Lewis remunerates. Our attorneys will draw up the necessary papers, including the title search.

Franklin McCloud stays seated, hands covering his face, disgusted with himself, as the others disburse, each his own way. For \$2000 dollars, he has seriously jeopardized the once proud Campbell empire. It is said, every man has his price, some lower than others.

I'll see you at the funeral, Franklin. Try not to let this eat you alive. Leave that to the gators. Lewis' morose analogy disguises his true feelings. He now is proud owner of two huge secrets, to deal with in times now and those to come.

A solemn motorcade has assembled in front of Faith Resurrection Baptist Church. At the lead, is the same long black Lincoln that whisked A.O. Campbell to his temporary freedom. Trailing behind are the original prison contingent, are those less mobile, nevertheless devoted admirers of what Maggie Lou and her surviving husband mean to the community, who were conspicuously absent at Starke.

Without Doc Campbell, they suffer of body. Without Maggie, they are down one friend. Despite the incalculable disparity in the lifestyle the Campbells have enjoyed and that of, say Lilly Chevis, it can never be said said of Maggie, That woman is so uppity, livin' in that huge house and all. And can you imagine havin' black servants? How nervy can you get. Yes, Lilly Chevis helped out at Laura Bell Memorial Hospital, a two story edifice named after Maggie's mother, their shared kinship is the byproduct of most relationships that include the Campbells. Holidays, birthdays, baby dedications, church socials, graduations and sadly, funerals are shared experiences of the community family; each occasion warm and full to the brim.

The world, not fully revealed to Lilly: the university functions, cotillions, fund raising dinners for the politically given and all black ties affairs. None of these detract from the deep sense of neighborhood.

All of the above. These are what bring a throng of mourners to Faith Resurrection, the good reverend Pastor Bill Johnson gazing down at his assembling flock, from the top stair of his church entrance. Neither he or any of his parishoners can recall this house of God s capacity being so threatened. Although the Sunday after the soldiers arrived back from World War II was greatly packed with grateful souls.

Ushers Harwood Golden, husband to former Campbell nurse, Lettie and Dr. V.L. Perry, the president of Florida A&M, make the most of Faith s interior, including the little used balcony. For this service, there are extra honoring voices behind the pulpit, which is right behind the flower covered casket.

Attending the casket are six pallbearers and as well as members of the Strong and Jones Funeral Home, who try to blend in with the proceedings; innocently sticking out with businesslike insincerity, professional mourners, if you will.

Pastor Johnson, on the other hand, could not be more sincere if it were his blood sister, instead of sister in Christ, laying still and cold in front of him. He summons the word of God and the courage of David, to properly honor her memory.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered this day, a woefully sad day indeed, to raise a wonderful woman, wife, mother and human being to meet and be with our Lord and Savior, who sits at the right hand of God and reigns in heaven, until the day he comes to judge the living and the dead; the day we believers anxiously await, one our Maggie Lou has the privilege to experience first hand. She is surely a blessed addition to a heaven filled with cherubim and seraphim.

Amen, sweet Jesus! shouts one amongst the many. Pastor Johnson glorifies the Lord most effectively, if not exceedingly.

A man and amen to the maker and taker, Father to all, lover of man, Wonderful Counselor!!! Hands lifted to the heavens, hearts on fire, soaring past cathedral roof and the autumn clouds above.

Pastor adjusts the vest of his ivory three piece suit, runs his hands through his totally gray hair, corrects his wire rimmed glasses, thereby composing himself as best he can for the rest of the service. It is a memorial observance for the ages.

And even though there few dry eyes, the exception displayed mainly by those who attend because of obligation, guilt, or just to be seen, the sincere

majority is left with a genuine sense of comfort, verily unsurpassed joy. The past hour has been pure revelation.

The entire front right pew rises, there to pass in front of the open mahogany casket enveloping the unique blended beauty of Maggie Lou Ferrell Campbell; part Cherokee Indian, part black, part Scot, an Oster mix of unlikely combination. She is dressed in her favorite green satin dress, the very one A.O. has given her to wear on Easter Sunday, 1955.

Upon seeing his beloved, so real, so eternally quiet, he turns to his daughters and pulls out a bent picture from his coat saying, I keep this picture with me always. It says on the back:

Me and Mrs. Campbell-----Easter Day 1955
 The year our tribulations began. At the time,
 we had no thought of the gathering storm
 that broke loose in August; you see no
 apprehension in our faces. Thanks for looking.

Mamma s as beautiful as ever, the way I think of her always, adds Laura Campbell McLoud lovingly. She has been joined by her husband, a late arrivee, who actually did care for his mother-in-law.

And where have you been, Franklin McLoud? We waited and waited for you. Alpha and Vaughn brought us here and thank God she did, little Laura was crying for her grandpa.

What could be so important that you could be so late? Good question.
 No answer.

The funeral director had to take your end of the casket. Do you know how embarrassin that was? Laura is usually quiet, slow to anger. Had she known the real reason for his absence, the present anger may have turned violent.

He takes his place beside Laura, silently, dutifully and deceitfully.

We ll all bea missin her, Doc, just like we ve been missin you, offers Edwina Stephens, longtime Frenchtown resident and friend to the family. A warm embrace is given to all in the greeting line.

Second in sequence is J. Kenty Johnson, who along with A.O., was one of the first black doctors in the former Confederacy; numbered lower than 100 until relatively recently. You had the finest possible woman, specially for a doctor,

A.O. A single man like me can sure appreciate that.

Thank you, Johnnie. I know I couldn't have made it through those early years without her. She was a blessing to me.

To everyone, it is agreed.

The slow moving, single file line produces a surprise: Hosea Campbell. The wayward older brother of the doctor, who still looks like his vocation, a purveyor of prostitution. He saunters up respectfully.

I'm sorry that I ain't been around these years, Alfrey, speaking at his brother with a nickname only the Quincy Campbell use; Alfrey actually being A.O.'s given name. Reality is lost over the years.

How'd Jersey been treatin' you, Hosey? asks Alpha, not expecting what would be coming out of his mouth next.

Oh well, I'm doin' okay, Hosey says, changing to a whisper, but Angie is worried sick about you. Your letters stopped comin' over a year ago. She's thinkin' you forgot about her.

The doctor discretely responds in muted words, Tell Angela and her mother that I'll be contactin' them soon. I was fearin' the warden's been spyin' on my mail, don't need his knowin' about Camille.

Secrets are undisclosed facts. You would swear that these liberties with the truth would make a heck of a good story, if they did not make such painful truth. And it's not as though things got this complicated overnight. Years of careless planning have contributed to current circumstances. 1919 was one interesting year, in the deep dark past and the culprit in several indiscrete situations by multiple offenders.

Camille is married, you know? Hosey is updating the New Jersey news, as they shunt to an unoccupied corner.

It has caught the doctor off balance. Married? There is a slight trembling in his voice.

Yeah, an Italian policeman, Amelio is his last name. Nice guy, treats her real good too.

No Maggie and now no Camille, not that he ever laid claim to the latter, a comely woman of Porto Rican decent. She was a house cleaner when a much younger A.O. Campbell found his way into her third floor bedroom, with floor length red fringe doorways. The passion they shared was love, but quite different from the comfortable version he has in Tallahassee; Maggie owning land and buildings. Comfortable indeed.

Still and all, a life with Camille was always lurking in the forbidden

shadows of his life. But the shadows are now gone, thick clouds masking the suns of his life.

With respects paid and proper, the funeral of Maggie Lou Campbell has a grim black hearse to the front of the procession, curtained side windows concealing the wood box, that will occupy the freshly dug hole in the Oakland Cemetery. It is a scenic graveyard, for whatever that is worth, but the Campbell 16x16 plot is spartan, off by itself in a new section, flat and undistinguished. Compared to the grand statues, stones, monuments and vaults of some local families, this newest of holes is among tall grass, not easily to be found in the future, when people will come to pay their respects.

The four score mourners form a crescent ring around the grave, Pastor Johnson and the prolific arrangements of cut flowers thereabout. There is no moment so definitively sad as the lowering of the body into the ground. To some, those who choose not to believe in everlasting life, it is like a door that is permanently closed, never to be opened again. While pagans here are few, the rest feel that when the moist dirt hits the mahogany lid, it is a temporary goodbye. Yet that very finality weighs heavy on the grieving heart, eyes burning, immersed in salted tears.

On this cloudy cool day in October of 1958, the lone figure of George Lewis watches from the distance, black trench-coat and wide-brimmed hat cloaking his identity. Will the death of Maggie Lou seal his and her secret under five feet of dirt? He has no way of knowing who knows what. He prays a silent prayer.

Former States Attorney, now Governor of, Wilbert Dexter Hopkins clears his desk of the day s papers, just as his secretary did to his schedule, freeing this late afternoon for an important meeting. His duties in the Florida s highest office vary greatly from when he was a lead prosecutor. He now leads an entire state instead of star witnesses.

Today, however, the two elected positions become one. On the very same day he had granted special leave for Alpha Omega Campbell, he meets with the key players in the doctor s interment at Starke; he being the prosecutor who doggedly pursued the old man s conviction, disregarding the health of the defendant or compelling evidence to the contrary. But he was two years younger then and on the fast-track to political affluence. And at the age of 30, respect for your elders exist in a void....between pre-adolescent youth and middle age. Thus the quest for career wins out over decency; the word decent does not appear in

the *Lawyer s Handbook*.

Now, two years older chronologically, but ten years more humane and doubly decent, W.D. Hopkins has a change of heart. Curiously, he views A.O. as a victim of **J**obian proportions, losing vitality, family, treasures and health, nearly as fast as the biblical man of God in the Old Testament.

In his large office, at the confluence of Pensacola, Adams, Monroe Streets and Apalachee Parkway, in the state capitol complex, are five chairs. They will be filled by, from left to right: The new States Attorney, Jim Stack; Mrs. Addie Gray, Audrey Franich s mother; Sam Goldblatt III, he of Holiday Inns, invited at the insistence of banker Lewis; Warden Hayes; and an A.O. Campbell advocate, representing the Southeastern Medical Society, Dr. Henry Palmer.

This is not a formal hearing, i.e. recorded for posterity, though perhaps it should have, considering the ramifications.

The Governor presides, having arranged the meeting of probable interested parties. Let me begin by saying, as prosecuting attorney in the case: The State of Florida versus Dr. A.O. Campbell, I believe that under most circumstances the majority of a sentence should be served by a defendant. With that being said, as Governor I have the power to grant clemency, as I see fit, according to the laws of this state. Hopkins leans back in his high backed reclining leather chair, fingers massaging both eyes, aching for the lack of rest. In light of recent events, including the death of his wife, as well as a persisting heart condition, I regard Dr. Campbell as a prime candidate for the mercy of this state.

He is already in town for his wife s funeral, so before he is taken back to Starke Prison, I am compelled to grant him his freedom.

Amen and hallelujah! Dr. Palmer rejoices amid the stunned silence. He did not kill that girl. She died because she missed a day of packing. Infection killed that girl and she was told how important it was to keep the uterus clean!

No!!!!, objects Addie Gray. He delivered a breathin baby and he killed my Audrey too!

If the baby was alive, then why was he convicted of an abortion related manslaughter? This whole case is riddled with so many inconsistencies that it should have been dismissed before it ever went to trial! Palmer remembers the trial like it was yesterday.

Well----I mean he is a bad doctor---the baby died and so did my baby.

Why did your daughter travel to Tallahassee, when she was already being treated by Dr. Sapp at Havana? Florida, not Cuba.

Well--uh----Dr. Sapp was, uh, out---I mean of.....

Mrs. Gray is not the one in prison. She is only here to make sure justice is served, that the complete penalty of the sentence be executed, States Attorney Stack interjects.

Let us not turn this into a shouting match, people. I've made a simple humanitarian suggestion and want to make the right decision, pronounces Wilbert Hopkins calmly. He does not know what a can of worms has opened, thinking it only a can of corn. Now, if we have settled down, Warden Hayes, can you tell me what kind of prisoner Alpha Campbell has been?

The warden has a burr under his saddle, not at all happy with the absent Attorney Moore having gone over his head, to the Governor's mansion no less, to spring the doctor in the first place. Yet he cannot lie about the model prisoner in question. We hardly know he's there. He skips meals, for instance. He doesn't socialize.....not that socializing is a healthy thing in a maximum security prison, that is. And to tell you God's honest truth, he's forever reading that damned bible of his, especially after lights out and that aggravates us some.

And the last thing, the one bad thing is that he's not a very good worker. I mean we have a guy with one hand cut off who can make more licence plates than Campbell, with the other hand tied behind his back at that.

That somewhat concise assessment is about what Hopkins had expected to hear. Do you believe he is a candidate for release?

I do, but mostly because he is taking up good space----you know, for the hard criminals that should be at Starke.

That is hardly the best reason for release, let alone clemency, reasons Jim Stack.

What do think about parole release, Warden Hayes? asks the governor back.

Release, clemency, hell I would let him escape, I'm so sick of this case!

Either or, I want Alpha Campbell to be a free man, declares W.D. Hopkins.

The same silence that started the meeting, are the sounds now unheard. The lone visible dissenter in the room has been patiently so, until now. The had thought he knew Samuel Goldblatt from somewhere. His name had that visual familiarity, memory of the photographic ilk. Just how he knows that name will become readily apparent.

Governor----I have important, confidential information which is critical to this proceeding, Goldblatt asserts.

If you object to his release, please present it to the entire group.

It involves the F.B.I. His words strike fear in the hearts of men, all men, not just here in the Southern states. Remember that the South will never die, it has been said, but the J. Edgar Hoover led federal cops seem to be color blind, or at least that is how they appear on the outside.

W.D. Hopkins does not fear Goldblatt's invocation, merely respects it wisely. He ushers the czar of the Holiday Inns to an inner chamber. There appears to be an untethered determination in the gate of the visitor, yet W.D. cannot imagine the connection between confidence and consequence.

Goldblatt's absolute intentions are slightly twisted, as it applies to the governor's relative power.

When I told the rest that the F.B.I is involved, in the matter of former doctor A.O. Campbell's release-----they are, except it is in a more round about way. They may not object to his release per se, but I know they are greatly disturbed about how many abortions are being illegally performed in this state, which is under your direction, I might add.

We prosecute more doctors than some, he brags mildly.

No, Governor Hopkins, I believe you indict more quack butchers than you do medical doctors. The Bureau has provided me with some intriguing numbers.....accompanied by some interesting names.

Is Dr. Sapp on the list?

Yes, indeed, I believe you see my-----our point. Most every country doctor does abortions, especially for girls with greenbacks in their lily white hands. I suspect those doctors remember the days when the Dixie dollar dried up. They can't resist an easy buck, like those from families desperate to save the reputation of their dear sweet daughter.

Doc Campbell may have cleaned up after Dr. Sapp, but he was caught in counterfeit circumstances, just like folks who were holding Confederate paper, he deduces.

That is a loose interpretation of the law, insists Hopkins, who should be the expert in this twosome.

It wasn't loose when you were States Attorney, now was it? counters the antagonist.

Yes--but, are not relevant in the here and now.

I'll tell you what, W.D.I can call you that, can I not? He is sarcastic.

Our hotel will be completed in a year. That would be a right fine time for ol' Doc Campbell to be freed.

A \$1000 bill is stuffed into the breast pocket of his Italian-made suit. That is

where Wilbert Hopkins had seen the name of Samuel Goldblatt III before; on the contribution rolls of his gubernatorial campaign.

Money buys influence, not liberty.

Hopkins allows the money to stay in his pocket, but its filthy aura will benefit some charity, not him. He is ashamed to return to his office and the mixed reaction that awaits.

Wilbert Dexter Hopkins saves his own skin, at the expense of his conscience.