

everything for that boy, and what happened? When he was nine he ran away from a fight. I saw him. I was so ashamed I almost threw up. So I told him right out. "I'm gonna make a man outa you or I'm gonna bust you in half trying." Well, I made a man outa him all right. When he was sixteen we had a battle. He hit me in the face. He's big, y'know. I haven't seen him in two years. Rotten kid. You work your heart out . . . [*He breaks off. He has said more than he intended. He is embarrassed.*] All right. Let's get on with it.

4TH JUROR [*rising*]: I think we're missing the point here. This boy, let's say he's a product of a filthy neighborhood and a broken home. We can't help that. We're here to decide whether he's guilty or innocent of murder, not to go into reasons why he grew up this way. He was born in a slum. Slums are breeding grounds for criminals. I know it. So do you. It's no secret. Children from slum backgrounds are potential menaces to society. Now I think—

10TH JUROR [*interrupting*]: Brother, you can say that again. The kids who crawl outa those places are real trash. I don't want any part of them, I'm telling you.

5TH JUROR [*rising*]: I've lived in a slum all my life. I nurse that trash in Harlem Hospital six nights a week.

10TH JUROR: Oh, now wait a second . . .

5TH JUROR: I used to play in a backyard that was filled with garbage. Maybe it still smells on me.

10TH JUROR [*his anger rising*]: Now listen, buddy.

FOREMAN [*to the 5TH JUROR*]: Now, let's be reasonable. There's nothing personal . . .

5TH JUROR [*loudly*]: There is something personal!

*The 3RD JUROR moves to the 5TH JUROR and pats him on the shoulder. The 5TH JUROR does not look up.*

3RD JUROR: Come on, now. He didn't mean you, feller. Let's not be so sensitive.

11TH JUROR: This sensitivity I understand.

FOREMAN: All right, let's stop all this arguing. We're wasting time here. [*He points to the 8TH JUROR.*] It's your turn. Let's go.

8TH JUROR: Well, I didn't expect a turn. I thought you were all supposed to be convincing me. Wasn't that the idea?

FOREMAN: Check. I forgot that.

10TH JUROR: Well, what's the difference? He's the one who's keeping us here. Let's hear what he's got to say.

FOREMAN: Now just a second. We decided to do it a certain way. Let's stick to what we said:

10TH JUROR [*disgusted*]: Ah, stop bein' a kid, will you?

FOREMAN: A kid! Listen, what d'you mean by that?

10TH JUROR: What d'ya think I mean? K-I-D, kid!

FOREMAN: What, just because I'm trying to keep this thing organized? Listen. [*He rises.*] You want to do it? Here. You sit here. You take the responsibility. I'll just shut up, that's all.

10TH JUROR: Listen, what are you gettin' so hot about? Calm down, will ya?

FOREMAN: Don't tell me to calm down. Here! Here's the chair. You keep it goin' smooth and everything. What d'ya think, it's a snap? Come on, Mr. Foreman. Let's see how great you'd run the show.

10TH JUROR [*to the 11TH JUROR*]: Did y'ever see such a thing?

FOREMAN: You think it's funny or something?

12TH JUROR: Take it easy. The whole thing's unimportant.

FOREMAN: Unimportant? You want to try it?

12TH JUROR: No. Listen, you're doing a beautiful job. Nobody wants to change.

7TH JUROR: Yeah, you're doing great. Hang in there and pitch.

10TH JUROR: All right. Let's hear from somebody.

*There is a pause.*

8TH JUROR: Well, if you want me to tell you how I feel about it right now, it's all right with me.

FOREMAN [*softly*]: I don't care what you do.

8TH JUROR [*after a pause*]: All right. I haven't got anything brilliant. I only know as much as you do. According to the testimony the boy looks guilty. Maybe he is. I sat there in court for three days listening while the evidence built up. Everybody sounded so positive that I started to get a peculiar feeling about this trial. I mean, nothing is that positive. I had questions I would have liked to ask. Maybe they wouldn't

have meant anything. I don't know. But I started to feel that the defense counsel wasn't doing his job. He let too many things go. Little things.

~~10TH JUROR: What little things? Listen, when these guys don't ask questions, that's because they know the answers already and they figure they'll be hurt.~~

8TH JUROR: Maybe. It's also possible for a lawyer to be just plain stupid, isn't it?

~~6TH JUROR: You sound like you've met my brother-in-law. A few of the JURORS laugh.~~

8TH JUROR [*smiling*]: I kept putting myself in the boy's place. I would have asked for another lawyer, I think. I mean, if I was on trial for my life I'd want my lawyer to tear the prosecution witnesses to shreds, or at least to try. Look, there was one alleged eyewitness to this killing. Someone else claims he heard the killing and then saw the boy running out afterward. There was a lot of circumstantial evidence, but actually those two witnesses were the entire case for the prosecution. Supposing they were wrong?

12TH JUROR: What do you mean, "Supposing they were wrong?" What's the point of having witnesses at all?

8TH JUROR: Could they be wrong?

12TH JUROR: They sat on the stand under oath. What are you trying to say?

8TH JUROR: They're only people. People make mistakes. Could they be wrong?

12TH JUROR: I . . . No! I don't think so.

8TH JUROR: Do you know so?

12TH JUROR: Well, now, listen. Nobody can know a thing like that. This isn't an exact science.

8TH JUROR: That's right. It isn't.

3RD JUROR [*rising angrily*]: All right. [*To the 8TH JUROR.*] Let's try to get to the point here. What about the switch knife they found in the father's chest?

2ND JUROR: Well, wait a minute. I think we oughta . . . There are some people who haven't talked yet. Shouldn't we . . . ?

3RD JUROR: Look, they can talk whenever they like. Now just be quiet a second, will you? [*He turns to the 8TH JUROR.*]

OK, what about the knife? You know, the one that fine, upright boy admitted buying on the night of the murder. Let's talk about that.

8TH JUROR: All right, let's talk about it. Let's get it in here and look at it. I'd like to see it again. [*He turns to the FOREMAN.*] Mr. Foreman?

*The FOREMAN rises and crosses to the door.*

3RD JUROR: We all know what it looks like.

*The FOREMAN knocks on the door.*

*The GUARD unlocks the door and enters.*

*The FOREMAN whispers to him.*

*The GUARD nods and exits, locking the door.*

What are we gonna get out of seeing it again?

5TH JUROR: You brought it up.

4TH JUROR: The gentleman has a right to see exhibits in evidence. [*To the 8TH JUROR.*] The knife, and the way it was bought, is pretty strong evidence. Don't you think so?

8TH JUROR: I do.

4TH JUROR: Good. Now suppose we take these facts one at a time. One. The boy admitted going out of his house at eight o'clock on the night of the murder after being punched several times by his father.

8TH JUROR: He didn't say "punched." He said "hit." There's a difference between a slap and a punch.

4TH JUROR: After being hit several times by his father. Two. The boy went directly to a neighborhood junk shop where he bought a . . . What do you call these things—

3RD JUROR } Switch knives.

4TH JUROR } [together]: —a switchblade knife. [*To the 3RD JUROR.*] Thank you.

4TH JUROR: Three. This wasn't what you'd call an ordinary knife. It had a very unusual carved handle. Four. The storekeeper who sold it to him identified the knife in court and said it was the only one of its kind he had ever had in stock. Five. At, oh, about eight forty-five the boy ran into three friends of his in front of a diner. Am I correct so far?

8TH JUROR: Yes, you are.