

## Part 1 -Gimme 3 Steps

Biloxi, Mississippi

Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1983

Thirty-four-year-old Joe Morrison lived with his mother, who despite his continued protests, continued to call him Joey. He spent his days toiling at Carmichael and Sons Accounting Services, in a small back room office loaded with thick binders of reports.

Growing up in Biloxi, Joe was the only son of Mildred and Denis Morrison. His resume included four unspectacular years at Biloxi High School, and then another two at Jefferson Davis local community college. Joe didn't marry his high school sweetheart, mainly because he didn't have one. People said he was awkward. Joe heard the whispers behind his back and tried wearing more fashionable clothes. He grew his hair longer, but whatever image he was trying to portray couldn't outweigh the tape holding the bridge of his glasses together or the plastic pen holder he wore in his shirt pocket.

Joe had gotten the job at Carmichael's seven years ago. He was realistic about his advancement potential, knowing that the really top jobs would go to the twins, Billy or Bobby Carmichael. The best he could ever hope to achieve was to become a supervisor and make a few extra dollars each month. That was why he was sitting in front of Bobby, 'The Quarterback,' Carmichael.

Bobby came around from behind the desk facing Joe and sat on the edge of it. "Buddy, I like you. I really do. But I'm not sure everyone fully understands you. I think that the next supervisor we hire needs to be someone that people look up to. Someone inspirational. It was like when I was quarterback. You remember that don't you?"

Joe nodded. He knew his role. He had heard this all before.

"There was that game against Gulfport back in 1966. That was before the coloreds. We were down by two touchdowns, and there were less than ten minutes left on the clock. The coach

was as useful as a steering wheel on a mule, so Buddy, I gathered the team around me, and I told them. Bobby paused to take a sip of his coffee before continuing. “If they ever wanted to amount to anything in life they needed balls. That’s right, balls,” Bobby said emphatically. “So, I told them that in the next 10 minutes, they were going to show the world that their pricks were hard,” he reached down and grasped his genitals. “I asked them point blank, ‘Did they have the balls to kick Gulfport’s ass?’” Bobby’s voice was rising along with his excitement as evidenced by the bulge in his trousers.

Joe carefully maintained eye contact, not letting his gaze drop.

“I made it clear that I wouldn’t stand for any limp dick teammates. So, if their cocks were going to shrivel up into their ball sack like a cowering puppy, they could leave. Well, you remember what happened? Don’t you Buddy? Don’t cha? I took hold of that team and put them on my shoulders. I inspired them to greatness,” Bobby declared proudly.

Bobby’s voice dropped a couple of octaves as he resumed his seat behind his desk, “We might have lost that game, but by only one touchdown,” he said punctuating his claim by pointing a finger at Joe.

“About that supervisor job, Bobby...?” Joe asked.

“Two words buddy...two words...affirmative action. Know what that means?”

Bobby had the habit of calling every man in the office buddy. Most likely he was so self-absorbed to remember anyone else’s name. He and his twin brother Billy wore identical outfits every day like they were still in kindergarten.

“Something about hiring more black people?”

“Yep, that’s what the po-li-ti-co’s want. They want the coloreds to run the country.”

Joe nodded, although he couldn’t think of one black employee in the company. “So, who’s going to get the supervisor job?”

Bobby leaned back in his chair and stretched his legs up on the desk. He stared at Joe while shifting his dick from the right to the left side of his trousers. “Why **you** are Joe, you are. I don’t give a hoot about no affirmative action.”

Joe was dumbfounded by the decision. He stayed and listened to Bobby rant, rave and declare that George Wallace was going to save the country. That is if he could ever get elected President.

\*\*\*\*\*

Joe had figured Bobby would take him out to lunch to celebrate, but once again, as he always did, Joe ended up brown-bagging it by himself. He found his usual park bench where he could enjoy the fall scenery and eat his lunch. It was a great day, a perfect blend of cool fall air and an aroma of someone burning leaves off in the distance. He could even smell the salt water of the Gulf. The ground was littered with acorns, escapees from their oak trees. He congratulated himself on the promotion but was left with a lot of unanswered questions. *When’s Bobby going to announce my promotion? Should I go around and tell everyone myself? What kind of reaction will I get when I tell people that they now report to me? How much of a raise will I get?*

A woman he had seen around the office was crossing the street heading towards him. His first thought was that Bobby had sent her because he had changed his mind. Maybe his promotion was just a big joke. As the woman approached Joe, her sad eyes flickered past him. He took in her appearance, a long red skirt with a white blouse with her brown hair done up in a beehive hairdo. She had a long oblong face with angular cheekbones. Not ugly by any means...*Mom would likely say, “A little skinny.”* Joe had overheard a couple of guys in the washroom talking about her. They said her name was Bucky. At least that’s what they were calling her. Then they’d left making a bunch of horse noises.

Joe noticed her carrying a brown bag and watched as she sat down at the other end of the bench. He guessed that she was in her mid-twenties. His mother had been coaching him about girls, and he picked up that she wasn’t wearing a wedding ring. Sensing his stare, the woman turned to him and gave him a nod before opening her lunch bag and extracting a sandwich. It looked like tuna.

“My name’s Joe,” he mumbled without making eye contact. “You work at Carmichael’s, don’t you?” His promotion had emboldened him.

That earned him another nod and a small grin. She took an enormous bite out of her tuna sandwich. He knew it was tuna, as some of the sandwich escaped and fell into her lap. Joe handed her a napkin from his lunch bag. He got a bit of a thrill seeing that Mom had made his favorite P&J sandwiches, cut diagonally with the crusts cut off.

“Kathy,” the girl said after she had finished swallowing. They both nodded.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kathy was just about to ask him about the rumor, when all of a sudden Joe slumped over, his face in his P&J sandwich. At first, she thought it was just a weird way of eating. Everyone said he was an oddball. But then she saw the blood pouring out from the 3-inch hole in the back of his head. That’s when Kathy Scrivens started to scream.