

A Time to Kill by

[John Grisham](#) & [Akiva Goldman](#)

Jake Tyler Brigance: I had a great summation all worked out, full of some sharp lawyering. But I'm not going to read it.

I'm here to apologize.

I am young and I am inexperienced.

But you cannot hold Carl Lee Hailey responsible for my shortcomings.

You see, in all this legal maneuvering something has gotten lost, and that something is the truth.

Now, it is incumbent upon us lawyers not to just talk about the truth, but to actually seek it, to find it, to live it. My teacher taught me that. Let's take Dr. Bass, for example. Now, obviously I would have never knowingly put a convicted felon on the stand -- I hope you can believe that. But what is the truth? That he is a disgraced liar? And what if I told you that the woman he was accused of raping was 17, he was 23, that she later became his wife, bore his child and is still married to the man today. Does that make his testimony more or less true?

What is it in us that seeks the truth? Is it our minds or is it our hearts?

I set out to prove a black man could receive a fair trial in the south, that we are all equal in the eyes of the law. That's not the truth,

because the eyes of the law are human eyes -- yours and mine -- and until we can see each other as equals, justice is never going to be evenhanded. It will remain nothing more than a reflection of our own prejudices, so until that day we have a duty under God to seek the truth, not with our eyes and not with our minds where fear and hate turn commonality into prejudice, but with our hearts -- where we don't know better.

Now I wanna tell you a story. I'm gonna ask ya'all to close your eyes while I tell you this story. I want you to listen to me. I want you to listen to yourselves.

This is a story about a little girl walking home from the grocery store one sunny afternoon. I want you to picture this little girl.

Suddenly a truck races up. Two men jump out and grab her. They drag her into a nearby field and they tie her up, and they rip her clothes from her body. Now they climb on, first one then the other, raping her, shattering everything innocent and pure -- vicious thrusts -- in a fog of drunken breath and sweat. And when they're done, after they killed her tiny womb, murdered any chance for her to bear children, to have life beyond her own, they decide to use her for target practice. So they start throwing full beer cans at her. They throw 'em so hard that it tears the flesh all the way to her bones -- and they urinate on her.

Now comes the hanging. They have a rope; they tie a noose. Imagine the noose pulling tight around her neck and a sudden blinding jerk. She's pulled into the air and her feet and legs go kicking and they don't find the ground. The hanging branch isn't strong enough. It snaps and she falls back to the earth. So they pick her up, throw her in the back of the truck, and drive out to

Foggy Creek Bridge and pitch her over the edge. And she drops some 30 feet down to the creek bottom below.

Can you see her? Her raped, beaten, broken body, soaked in their urine, soaked in their semen, soaked in her blood -- left to die.

Can you see her? I want you to picture that little girl.

Now imagine she's white.

The defense rests your honor.