



A Scarlet Leter in Alabama
A One Act play by James M. Kemp

A SCARLET LETTER IN ALABAMA – A ONE ACT PLAY BY JAMES M. KEMP

Setting -

Dimly lit cell of a prison in Alabama in the near future.

Characters -

Charles Beckley – is an inmate of the Alabama Department of Correcons/ Embryo Abuse Department.

Rachel Meadows – is a reporter for a “Christian” television station WBAM domiciled in Alabama.

Lights up –

Charles in prison orange is seated on a lower bunk. Rachel stands in front of a camcorder on a tripod placed to capture both characters in one shot. Rachel holds a handheld microphone.

Rachel -

This is Rachel Meadows of station WBAM. I am here at the state Chrsian Nationalist Reform Unit interviewing Charles Beckley who was convicted of abusing his own wife and her one-month-old embryo named Joshua.

Charles, when was the first me you accepted Jesus Christ as your lord and Savior?

Charles –

Gestational Diabetes.

Rachel –

No, Charles. I asked when you first accepted Jesus.

Charles –

I accepted God’s will for me when I discovered my deceased wife Martha had Gestational Diabetes during our pregnancy with Joshua.

Rachel –

So, Charles (pause) Was this in a Christian Church?

Charles –

No church at all. Just me and Martha and God.

Rachel –

And Joshua of course.

Charles –

No. We hadn't named our embryo yet. We were going to use Sarah if it... (pause) If our embryo turned out to be female.

Rachel –

I see. But you didn't find out the sex of your embryo unl the state of Alabama had arrested you. Right?

Charles –

I didn't find out the sex of our baby unl the State of Alabama placed Martha in a coma.

Rachel –

Now Charles, let's be clear. My understanding is that the state placed Martha in a coma when they found her in your home unconscious after you had tried to buy those French abortion pills.

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Charles –

Like my attorney told the court, they weren't "abortion" pills at all. They were morning after pills.

Rachel –

If Martha had taken them, she would have aborted Joshua. Right?

Charles –

I don't know. I was never allowed to order the pills in the first place.

Rachel –

PRAISE JESUS! Thank God almighty for intervening in your sinfulness...in your lawlessness.

Charles –

Sure. If you believe God is the state of Alabama.

Rachel –

So tell me, Charles, did you and Martha conceive Joshua in a Godly manner?

Charles –

I believe we tried to. We went to a Southern Baptist Convent Clinic and paid for a license to have intercourse. Missionary position only. Male on top.

Rachel –

And you were both virgins at the time?

Charles –

Alabama law had not yet required citizens to be virgins before Intercourse licenses could be issued.

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Rachel –

So, Charles, you did everything legally and yet, Satan convinced you to break Alabama law by trying to order those abortion pills through Amazon?

Charles –

I have never talked with Satan. I told that to the jury.

Rachel –

Then some other demon must have led you on.

Charles –

The demon was named Science. The demon told me that Martha was experiencing Gestational Diabetes early in her pregnancy.

Rachel –

Well then, what medical interventions did you seek for Martha? Prayer?

Charles –

No clinic would even accept us. No medical personnel would even talk to us.

Rachel –

As you told the jury, I recall.

Charles –

I did. By then, Martha had gone into shock, was placed on life support after she was pronounced dead.

Rachel –

Of course, the state of Alabama later harvested Joshua at full term. PRAISE JESUS! Isn't the Lord wonderful when we accept His will and pray His will be done?

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Charles –

So, am I supposed to believe that almighty God authorized the state of Alabama to keep Martha alive on a ventilator for nine months until Joshua could be...harvested, as you put it.

Rachel –

As Alabama Divine Statute rules. As Alabama Divine Statute dictates!

Charles –

Well Alabama Revised Statute used to allow a grieving spouse to at least visit the corpse of a pregnant spouse being kept alive on a ventilator.

Rachel –

But Charles, you were one of the first to be prosecuted under Alabama Divine Law. You were already incarcerated by that time.

Charles –

Tried, convicted and jailed.

Rachel –

And justly so. Wouldn't you agree?

Charles –

That was before the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled on cruel and unusual punishment in Alabama Divine Statute.

Rachel –

Ah yes! Back when those left-wing justices appointed by that liberal Donald Trump ruled the bench.

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Charles –

Trump's second term. Right after his eighth bankruptcy. Anyway, The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that preventing an inmate from having access to his natural children was cruel and unusual punishment.

Rachel –

Unfortunately, that ruling even applied to attempted murderers like you.

Charles –

Like me who simply tried unsuccessfully to buy morning after pills?

Rachel –

Like you who attempted to buy a substance that would end the life of a human being.

Charles –

If you accept the idea that a fertilized egg could be a human being.

Rachel –

Alabama Divine Statute, Charles. A.D.S.! PRAISE JESUS!

Charles –

Please explain to me how the teachings of Jesus apply to fertilized eggs? How would Jesus even know about fertilized eggs?

Rachel –

The "Book of Phillip" says all scripture is Divine.

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Charles –

Let's see now, did Phillip write that book or was Phillip just well-known to the early Christian community which was being harassed by the Roman Empire?

Rachel –

Charles, Charles, Charles. You know that God Almighty wrote that book. Phillip just held the pencil for God while God dictated His will.

Charles –

And where in scripture does it say that.

Rachel –

Basic Fundamentalist Doctrine. God's word contains no errors. Alabama Divine Law was based on those Southern Baptist Convention Doctrines.

Charles –

And what if you don't agree?

Rachel –

Well, you can always move out of Dodge.

Charles –

Well, I can't move anywhere. My case was decided before that liberal Trump court decided about cruel and unusual punishment. Trump might have pardoned himself, but he ain't pardoned me.

Rachel –

Your case is up for appeal.

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Charles –

Yes. And while it's being appealed my natural born son Joshua is being held captive in the Chrisan Home for Abortionist Victims where his little brain is being molded to accept the idea that God almighty dictated the entire Bible.

Rachel –

But he did, Charles. He did. You just can't yield to God's will for you.

Charles –

And I suppose God's will for Charles is that I have to wear this little item on my forehead for the rest of my fucking life?

(Charles removes his stocking cap to reveal his bald head. On his forehead is a large, capital letter "A" which has been branded there with a hot poker.)

Rachel –

That was the law back when you did your crime. Don't do the me...

Charles –

Branding another human being for whatever they did, is cruel and unusual punishment in the book that I intend to write.

(Rachel has turned off her microphone and has begun to pack up her recording equipment and lights and moves toward the jail cell door.)

Rachel –

Now Charles. You seem to be geng agitated. I didn't put that thing on your forehead. GUARD!

(Charles moves closer to Rachel as she backs away.)

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Charles -

Yes. You did, Rachel. I listened to your religious diatribe being broadcast on the Chrisan Morality Network for years before Amazon even stopped delivering in this cursed state. You may as well have held the hot poker.

(Rachel rattles the door until it slowly opens on its own. Rachel exits and talks to Charles through the jailhouse bars.)

Rachel –

Charles, you are delusional. Charles, Alabama is the future for this entire country. PRAISE JESUS!

Charles –

Rachel, I sure as hell hope not. There will sll be places in this country where people are not required to be members of any church or religion.

Rachel –

Not for long, Charles.

Charles –

Maybe not. But while there are such places, and as soon as I can “harvest” my son from that Fundamentalist play/reform school, I am leaving Alabama forever.

(Rachel has now successfully left the cell and has closed the door. She stands outside the cell now and moves toward offstage.)

Rachel –

Oh yeah, Charles! Now where in the name of the Lord Almighty could that place seem to be?

Charles *(yells)* –

Oregon, Rachel! Oregon. My son and I will move to Oregon.

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Rachel (*as she walks offstage*) –

Alrighty then. I shall inform the warden first. I will find out who your parole office will be, and I shall inform that person of your intent to violate said parole. Thanks for the interview, Charles. Rub some Vaseline on that thing.

(*Lights fade as Charles dejectedly seats himself on his bunk.*)

The end.