

THE SITUATION

A One Act Play

By

Terence E Jackson

CAST: Pandy – The Town Sheriff
Darney – The Town Deputy Sheriff
Cleotis – The Town Drunk
Aunt Pea – Pandy’s Middle Aged Relative

TIME: Not specified

SETTING: The Sheriff’s off in a small Midwest or Southern Town.

(Whistling theme music is heard. A recorded voice announces the name of the show.)

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to the Pandy Baylor Show

(Applause track is heard as the lights FADE UP. Pandy is sittled at his desk reading a newspaper while is Deputy is asleep with his feet om his desk and his cap over his eyes. A small empty jail cell can be seen in the background.)

PANDY

(Puts down newspaper. Looking towards Darney)

Well Darney, looks like another perfect day here in Clayberry.

DARNEY

(Waking Darney places his cap on his head and stretches in his seat)

Oh ah, Yep, yep! But I reckon it’s almost six o’clock. I wonder what them there producers have come up with for this week’s episode.

PANDY

Well, I’m guessin’ we’ll probably have another escaped convict come into town for us to catch.

DARNEY

Yep, yep! You’re probably right.

PANDY

...or maybe I'll have a problem with Moppy at school or with Aunt Pea.

DARNEY

Yep, yep!

(The phone rings)

PANDY

(Answers phone)

Sheriff Pandy Baylor speaking... Oh hey Hoover, Uh huh... A What!

(Darny jumps to attention)

DARNEY

What..! What..!

PANDY

Hoover are you sure you...

DARNEY

Pandy what's he saying?

PANDY

... course I know you wouldn't make a thing like that up. I was just asking are you sure you're sure?

DARNEY

Pandy... What he say? What did he say?

PANDY

Hoover? Hoo..?

(Looks into the receiver with a perplexed look on his face)

DARNEY

Pandy what's going on? What exactly did Hoover say?

PANDY

(Still holding the phone)

I don't rightfully know... Hoover put me on hold. *(Pauses)* Hoover are you back? Now are you sure about this? Hoover I didn't say you were lyin'. Alright Hoover, me and Darney I'll get right on it. Thanks Hoover.

DARNEY

(Annoyed. Throws his hat onto the desk)

Does somebody wanna tell me what's going on around here?

PANDY

(Laughs to himself)

Looks like Hoover may be letting his imagination get the best of him.

DARNEY

Well that's nothing new?

(Pandy has a strange look on his face)

Ok Pandy! What is it? You wanna tell me why you've got that look on your face?

PANDY

I was just thinking about what Hoover said. The tone in his voice...

DARNEY

Pandy, are you gonna tell me what Hoover said or not?

PANDY

Ok Darney, but you gotta promise me that if I tell you what he said, you won't go around teasin' Hoover about it?

DARNEY

Pandy will you just tell me what Hoover said please.

PANDY

Darney...

DARNEY

*(Nervously picks up his hat and places it
back onto his head)*

Alright, alright! I promise not to tease Hoover. For Christ's sake Pandy, I'm a law man for God sake. You know I'd never do a thing like that. Gee's!

PANDY

Alright! Hoover claims he saw a colored man and a colored gal drive into town.

*(For a moment there is silence.
Then the both breakout laughing)*

DARNEY

A colored man and a colored...

PANDY

I know right?

DARNEY

(Still laughing)

Oh boy... That Hoover really topped himself this time. Oh, that's a good one. A colored man and a colored gal here in Clayberry! I wonder what they were drivin' a Cadillac?

*(They both break back into laughter.
Cleotis, the town drunk comes
rushing in flustered)*

CLEOTIS

Pandy..! Pandy!

(Grabbing hold of Pandy)

PANDY

Hey Cleotis, calm down. Come and sit down.

*(Darney grabs a chair and brings it
over to Pandy's desk)*

Now, Cleotis, try and catch your breath and tell me what's the matter. Lord knows you look like you've seen a ghost or something.

DARNEY

(Cynical)

Yeah Cleotis! Have you been drinkin' already?

CLEOTIS

I Have! But Pandy, I'm givin it up starting today. Promise! Here!

...

*(Reaches in his shirt and takes out liquor
bottle. Thinks for a second and takes one
last swig before handing to Pandy)*

...And don't give it back to me. I want you to lock me up in this here cell Pandy, until I can sober up once and for all.

PANDY

(Placing bottle into one of the draws of his desk)

Why Cleotis, I do believe you're serious about getting' clean this time? ...But would you mind tellin' us what brought about this decision all of a sudden?

DARNEY

Yeah Cleotis, we've been tryin' to get you to straighten up for darn near twelve episodes.

CLEOTIS

Pandy! Darney! I tell you it was awful. I mean, I ain't never seen nothin' like it in all my drinkin' days!

DARNEY

Was it Alice the pink elephant again?

PANDY

Cleotis, did Alice try and sit on you again?

CLEOTIS

No! No! Wasn't nothing like that. I tell you this was terrible. Why... I was sittin' under that big ole oak tree like I like to do. You both know the one.

PANDY &
DARNEY

Yeah!

CLEOTIS

Well, I was just about to take myself another swig a' liquor when I happen to look up and what do I see? Oh my God... I tell you it was the most shocking thing I ever seen in my life.

(Pauses.)

DARNEY

(Anxious)

Well! Well..! Are you gonna tell us what you saw or what?

CLEOTIS

Alright! Alright! Well, I look up and dare dey were just as plain as day. A colored man and a colored gal going by like nobody's business.

CLEOTIS con't

(Jumps up and locks himself into the jail cell)

Pandy, I tell you I know right then and there that I'd finally gone over the edge. It's time to give it up I told myself... Then I ran right over here.

(Pandy and Darney don't know what to say)

AUNT PEA

(Rushes in)

Oh! Oh! Pandy! Pandy! Oh it was awful...

DARNEY

Are you alright Aunt Pea?

PANDY

Aunt Pea calm down. Everything's gonna be alright. You're safe now.

*(Sits down in the chair by Pandy's desk
and tries to catch her breath but begins
to cry)*

There, there Aunt Pea...

AUNT PEA

Oh but Pandy, I tell you it was awful. You'll never guess what just happened in a million years.

PANDY

Let me guess, A colored fella and a colored gal just rode into town.

(The phone starts ringing again)

AUNT PEA

Why yes..!

PANDY

Darney, are you gonna get that?

DARNEY

Oh, sure thing Pandy...

AUNT PEA

But how did you know?

DARNEY

(Answering the phone)

Sheriff Pandy Baylor's office, Deputy Darney Spice speaking...

PANDY

The phones been plum ringing off da hook all morning.

DARNEY

Yes Mrs. Hemingway... We've been made aware of the situation and we're looking into the matter as we speak. Alright... Bye now.

(Hangs up. Phone rings again)

Sheriff Pandy Baylor's office, Deputy Darney Spice speaking... Yes Mayor...! He's right here.

(Puts the Mayor on hold)

Mayor Jenkins Pandy and boy is he upset.

PANDY

(Answering the call)

Mornin' Mayor... Yes, I'm aware of the problem. Well I was just about to take care of it when you called. Yes sir, you'll be the first to know once I've had a chance to access the situation. Yes, sir... Thank you Mayor...

(Hangs up phone)

DARNEY

Pandy... you want me to get a hold of the governor's office?

PANDY

Y'all know what?

DARNEY
AUNT PEA &
CLEOTIS

No, what?

Maybe we're making a mountain out of a molehill about all this? I mean so a colored man and a colored gal were seen driving through Clayberry. So they were passing through our town. There's got to be a first for everything.

AUNT PEA

But Pandy, that's what I've been trying to tell you. They're not passing through. They're moving in right next door to us.

DARNEY & CLEOTIS

They're what!

PANDY

Aunt Pea are you sure about that?

AUNT PEA

Yes I'm sure I'm sure! They are moving in right next door. Me and Clairra saw it with our own two eyes and if you don't believe me call her. I tell you it was awful. Pandy you should have seen the colors of some of the clothes they took into the house. Lord, the things I saw coming off that moving truck. Oh and the music they were playing. Boom-ta Boom-ta Boom-ta. Oh Pandy what will become of our beautiful quiet town?

DARNEY

Pandy, we've got to figure a way to get these two out of Clayberry and fast.

PANDY

Hold on now Darney, we ain't even met them yet.

DARNEY

Pandy mark my words... If we let two in, then two more will follow and then we've got four and after those four we get six and after those six... Well you know what I'm trying to say.

CLEOTIS

He's right Pandy! We all know how it works with those people...

AUNT PEA

Not only that but she's pregnant.

DARNEY &
CLEOTIS

Pregnant?

AUNT PEA

Pandy, you don't want Moppy going to school with them do you?

PANDY

Well..?

DARNEY

The next thing you know, Moppy a'll be coming to you saying he want to be a rapper.

AUNT PEA

A rapper! Oh God no. I think I'm going to faint. Why can't they find a nice black sitcom to move to... Oh you know the "Good Times" or something?

PANDY

Come on now. I still think we're all over reacting. Y'all don't think the producers would allow them to become permanent residence of Clayberry do you.

DARNEY

Where ratings are concerned, I wouldn't put anything past dem.

PANDY

No... They're probably just in town for a few episodes until a pilot can be developed for their own show. I mean, Clayberry is a small southern town. A town rich in a certain type of heritage and tradition. Let's not forget after all, that's why people tune in to watch us week in and week out. Nothing personal, but there ain't room for the likes of their kind. What would they do here?

DARNEY

Pandy that's why I say we should go and have a little talk with them. I mean, they can't expect to just mosey on into town without creating all kinds of problems.

AUNT PEA

Moppy a rap artist... Ohhh!

PANDY

Look Darney, there will be no going over there and...

DARNEY

(Not happy)

No goin' over there! Well, well Mr. Lincoln, just what are you supposin' we do about it?

PANDY

Nothing.

DARNEY
AUNT PEA
CLEOTIS

Nothing!

PANDY

That's right, nothing. Darney, I just don't believe the producers of this fine all American show would do something as crazy as introduce colored characters as the newest citizens of Clayberry.

DARNEY

Well, I still say we go over there and rough'em up a little. Just so if they are planning on staying they know their place.

PANDY

I just can't believe they'd do something so absurd to us.

CLEOTIS

Well I'm with you Darney. You gotta make sure they know their place. I mean, if it's anything we don't need, it's trash in Clayberry.

DARNEY

Pandy, you're too soft. Aunt Pea ain't that what I'm always tellin' him? Pandy I've looked into the whole civil rights stuff.

PANDY

Oh you have, have you?

DARNEY

As a matter of fact, I have. Looked at it real close I have.

PANDY

And..?

DARNEY

...And the first thing that happens is they move in next to you. So we let'em! Then the next thing you know, they want to eat with us. So we let'em! Then they want to go to school with us...

DARNEY

PANDY

(Overlapping)

So we let'em!

DARNEY

Exactly! Then the next thing you know they want to star in a television show with us... Well I'll be darned if I'm gonna let some little ninnies come in here and upset years of tradition. It just can't be Pandy I tell you. It just can't!

AUNT PEA

(With pleading eyes)

Oh Pandy..?

PANDY

(Thinking about it)

Darney, I guess you're right.

DARNEY

You bet your red bonnet I'm right!

CLEOTIS

(Goes and lays down on the jail bunk)

Pandy, now you're talking.

PANDY

I guess with me being the sheriff and all, I've got to look out for what's best for the majority of the people of Clayberry.

DARNEY

That's right!

PANDY

(Picks up the phone)

Hello Clair... Yes, Aunt Bea and Cleotis told me all about it. Clair... I promise I'm gonna take care of everything. Clair... can you get me Floyd's shop. Thank you much...

PANDY

(Pauses)

Hello Floyd? Is that you. Yes, everyone's been filling me in on what's been happenin'... Listen Floyd, Darney and I've been talkin'. Well... You think you could round up some a dah boys for me? Yeah... ..And have'em meet us here at the jail. Oh, say nine o'clock. Yeah dat's right, Alright Floyd, see ya then.

(Turning to Aunt Pea)

Aunt Pea, I know it's last minute, but do you think you could convince the ladies auxiliary to whip up some robes for us to at such short notice.

AUNT PEA

(Full of strength and pride)

Will eight o'clock be alright?

PANDY

Thank you Aunt Pea.

AUNT PEA

It's my pleasure Pandy.

(Getting emotional she kisses Pandy on the cheek)

I should be a shamed of myself. Getting all teary eyed like a young school girl. I better get a move on if we're gonna get everything done in time for tonight.

(Rushes out)

Oh Clairra, You who... Clairra!

PANDY

(Goes over to the gun rack and removes a rifle for examination. Turning to Darney)

Looks like you'd better make sure these are ready and loaded for tonight.

DARNEY

(Grinning from ear to ear)

Yes sir, I'll get right on it!

PANDY

If anybody calls, I'm heading over to the Mayor's office.

DARNEY

Sure thing Pandy!

(Pandy hand the gun to Darney. Putting on his hat Pandy heads out. Darney sits down at his desk and examines and loads the gun. Once he is finished, Darney walks back over to the gun rack and removes another rifle. Heads back to his desk and begins to examine and load the next gun.)

CLEOTIS

(Gets up from the bunk walking up to the jail bars)

Darney?

DARNEY

Yeah?

CLEOTIS

Looks like our boy done come into himself today.

DARNEY

Yep, yep!

CLEOTIS

That's a proud thing to see. A man standing up for the race. Almost brings tears to my eyes.

DARNEY

Yep, yep!

(Silence)

CLEOTIS

Darney?

DARNEY

Yeah, what is it Cleotis?

CLEOTIS

Remember what I said 'bout wantin' to stay locked up in this here cell until I sobered up once and for all.

DARNEY

Yep, yep!

CLEOTIS

Well I do believe it done happened.

(Darney stops and looks over at Cleotis)

...And it would sure 'nough be an honor to know I stood with you and Pandy an all the rest of the fella's tonight.

DARNEY

*(Darney gets up and with keys in hand
slowly walks over to let Cleotis out)*

Why Cleotis, we'd be mighty proud to have you stand with us tonight. Mighty Proud!

*(The lights FADE OUT as closing
whistling theme music is heard)*

THE END