

EXPOSÉ DE LA PRÉPARATION D'UN COURS

431

Ce sujet comprend 3 documents :

- Document 1 : Extrait de Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*, 1993.
- Document 2 : Extrait du film *Mississippi Burning*, réalisé par Alan Parker, 1988.
- Document 3 : *A Crow Flew By*, Andrew Wyeth, 1949-1950.

Compte tenu des caractéristiques de ce dossier et des différentes possibilités d'exploitation qu'il offre, vous indiquerez à quel niveau d'apprentissage vous pourriez le destiner et quels objectifs vous vous fixeriez. Vous présenterez et justifierez votre démarche pour atteindre ces objectifs.

Document 1

That was his story.

The prosecutor's version was different. The prosecutor argued that Jefferson and the other two had gone there with the full intention of robbing the old man and then killing him so that he could not identify them. When the old man and the other two robbers were all dead, this one – it proved the kind of animal he really was – stuffed the money into his pockets and celebrated the event by drinking over their still-bleeding bodies.

The defense argued that Jefferson was innocent of all charges except being at the wrong place at the wrong time. There was absolutely no proof that there had been a conspiracy between himself and the other two. The fact that Mr. Gropé shot only Brother and Bear was proof of Jefferson's innocence. Why did Mr. Gropé shoot one boy twice and never shoot at Jefferson once? Because Jefferson was merely an innocent bystander. He took the whiskey to calm his nerves, not to celebrate. He took the money out of hunger and plain stupidity.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look at this – this – this boy. I almost said man, but I can't say man. Oh sure he has reached the age of twenty-one, when we, civilized men, consider the male species has reached manhood, but would you call this – this- this – this a man? No, not I. I would call it a boy and a fool. A fool is not aware of right and wrong. A fool does not what others tell him to do. A fool got into that automobile. A man with a modicum of intelligence would have seen that those racketeers meant no good. But not a fool. A fool got into that automobile. A fool rode to the grocery store. A fool stood by and watched this happen, not having the sense to run."

"Gentlemen of the jury, look at him – look at him – look at this. Do you see a man sitting here? I ask you, I implore you, look carefully – do you see a man sitting here? Look at the shape of his skull, this face as flat as the palm of my hand – look deeply into those eyes. Do you see a modicum of intelligence? Do you see anyone here who could plan a murder, a robbery, can plan – can plan – can plan anything? (A cornered animal to strike quickly out of fear, a trait inherited from his ancestors in the deepest jungle of blackest Africa – yes, yes, that he can do – but to plan?) To plan gentlemen of the jury? No, gentlemen, this skull here holds no plans. What you see here is a thing that acts on command. A thing to hold the handle of a plow, a thing to load your bales of cotton, a thing to dig your ditches, to chop your wood, to pull your corn. That is what you see here, but you do not see anything capable of planning a robbery or a murder. He does not even know the size of his clothes or his shoes. Ask him to name the months of the year. Ask him does Christmas come before or after the Fourth of July? Mention the names of Keats, Byron, Scott, and see whether the eyes will show one moment of recognition. Ask him to describe a rose, to quote one passage from the Constitution or the Bill of

45 Rights. Gentlemen of the jury, this man planned a robbery? Oh, pardon me, pardon me, I surely did not mean to insult your intelligence by saying 'man' – would you please forgive me for committing such an error?"

"Gentlemen of the jury, who would be hurt if you took his life? Look back to that second row. Please look. I want all twelve of you honorable
50 men to turn your heads and look back to that second row. What you see there has been everything to him – mama, grandmother, godmother – everything." Look at her gentlemen of the jury, look at her well. Take this away from her, and she has no reason to go on living. We may see him as not much, but he is her reason for existence. Think on that, gentlemen,
55 think on it."

"Gentlemen of the jury, be merciful. For God's sake, be merciful. He is innocent of all charges brought against him."

"But let us say he was not. Let us for a moment say he was not. What justice would there be to take his life? Justice gentlemen? Why, I would
60 just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this."

"I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart, for your kind patience. I have no more to say except this: We must live with our own conscience. Each and every one of us must live with his own conscience."

The jury retired, and it returned a verdict after lunch: guilty of robbery
65 and murder in the first degree. The judge commended the twelve white men for reaching a quick and just verdict. He would pass sentence on Monday.

Ten o'clock on Monday, Miss Emma and my aunt sat in the same seats they had occupied on Friday. Reverend Mose Ambrose, the pastor of their
70 church was with them. He and my aunt sat on either side of Miss Emma. The judge, a short, red-faced man with snow-white hair and thick black eyebrows, asked Jefferson if he had anything to say before the sentencing. My aunt said that Jefferson was looking down at the floor and shook his head. The judge told Jefferson that he had been found guilty of
75 the charges brought against him, and that the judge saw no reason that he should not pay for the part he played in this horrible crime.

Death by electrocution. The governor would set the date.

Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*, 1993, pp.6-9

Document 2

À consulter sur tablette

Video excerpt (3'11'') from *Mississippi Burning*, directed by Alan Parker, 1988

Document 3

À consulter sur tablette



Andrew Wyeth, *A Crow Flew By*, 1949-1950