

# THE THIRD CHAIR

## Synopsis

### Short Synopsis

After a physical confrontation at a school board meeting over teaching slavery in the founding documents, two men—Sam, a retired Army veteran, and Alex, a political science professor—are given a choice: complete court-ordered mediation or face criminal charges. They arrive at the mediation room. The mediator never shows. They have seventy minutes to produce a signed agreement or face trial tomorrow. Trapped together with three chairs and unbridgeable differences, they must decide: keep fighting or find a way to coexist.

### Medium Synopsis

Sam Morrison and Alex Harper were arrested after their debate at a school board meeting turned violent—in front of their children. Sam called Alex a traitor for saying the founding documents protected slavery. Alex called Sam a fascist. They grabbed each other. Both were arrested.

The prosecutor offered a mediation agreement: complete this session by 6:00 PM and charges are dropped. Fail, and both face trial tomorrow morning. Sam will lose his concealed carry permit and his business. Alex will lose his job. Both need this to work.

They arrive at the mediation room and discover their court-appointed mediator has a family emergency and won't be coming. They're alone. Seventy minutes. No escape.

Over seventy minutes in real time, they debate immigration enforcement, election security, gun rights, federal power, and who has the moral authority to decide America's future. Sam believes certainty and moral order are necessary to save the country. Alex believes pluralism and democratic restraint are the only defense against tyranny. Both make arguments that sound reasonable—until they reveal what lies underneath.

The intensity is sustained and brutal. Both men are forced to expose vulnerabilities they'd rather hide. Both experience moments where their certainty cracks—not enough to change their minds, but enough to show them what their beliefs cost.

Sam lost his gay son fifteen years ago when he couldn't affirm his sexuality—and still misses him every day. Alex fears his seven-year-old son will grow up in Sam's America. Both are protecting what they love. Both are terrified of what the other represents.

They write a document brutal in its honesty: "We remain in fundamental moral conflict. That is the full extent of our agreement." They sign. They leave—destroyed, not defeated. The empty third chair remains—waiting for whoever will eventually sit there with enough certainty to impose their vision on everyone else.