

DOATSEY MAE
RUFUS
77 C.J.
SHERIFF

BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

microphone, and a single file cabinet might suffice to suggest where we are. The SHERIFF is talking on the telephone as DOATSY MAE enters bearing a covered tray of food.

START

SHERIFF. *(Into telephone.)* Yessum, yessum, you ain't the first one to tell me that. Awright. *(He hangs up the 'phone.)* I've had so many goddamn phone calls, I can't even leave to eat.

DOATSY MAE. *(Placing tray on the desk.)* Well, here's your curb service breakfast. I'll probably retire on the tip.

(The SHERIFF uncovers the tray and peers at it suspiciously.)

DOATSY MAE. *(Continued.)* It's the same as always, Sheriff. Two fried blind with beeswax and bullets on the side.

SHERIFF. Why can't you just call it eggs, honey and biscuits like everybody else? All that cafe lingo sounds like a Chinaman's jabber.

DOATSY MAE. *(Grinning.)* I hear folks is runnin' up and down the sidewalks with two sets of petitions. One to close the Chicken Ranch, and the other to declare it a National Historic Monument.

SHERIFF. I'd just admire if you didn't talk to me about them Goddamn petitions 'til after I ate.

(DOATSY MAE sits on the edge of his desk. The SHERIFF looks up from eating.)

SHERIFF. You waitin' to see if it's gonna make me sick?

DOATSY MAE. Naw, I tried it out on my dog first. Just thought I'd be neighborly and take your plate back.

SHERIFF. Neighborly my hind foot! You and everybody else in this Goddamn town's been snoopin' around like you'd been hired to write a book. I could use me a little Goddamn peace and quiet around here, 'cause I got me some hard thinking to do.

DOATSY MAE. Yeah you're under enough of a handicap as it is.

(In come, rapidly and suddenly, C. J. SCRUGGS, and MAYOR RUFUS POINDEXTER.)

C. J. SCRUGGS. *(Rapidly and without pleasantries.)* Dammit Sheriff, you can't hear nothin' except this Goddamn talk about the Chicken Ranch. Why it's like a broke record: CHICKEN

RANCH, CHICKEN RANCH, CHICKEN RANCH, CHICKEN RANCH. Now what the hell you gonna do about it?

SHERIFF. Scruggs, there's some folk just won't do to fart with and I'm one of 'em. Now you jes' leave the lawin' to me.

C. J. SCRUGGS. But nobody's buyin' nothin'. People just standin' around in clumps, wringing their hands and talkin' about this damned mess.

RUFUS. And I'm havin' to spend all my time playin' mayor. Hadn't sold a car all week.

DOATSY MAE. She ain't got a handful of supporters left, Ed Earl.

C. J. SCRUGGS. See there?

RUFUS. I gotta admit I don't care for the publicity. Not good for business. Not good for the town.

C. J. SCRUGGS. Course not. And you can't just sit around waiting to grow tits. You gotta do something. And now everybody's goin' ape shit over this Mafia scare.

DOATSY MAE. Yeah, they're afraid you'll start findin' bodies wearing cement overcoats.

SHERIFF. Doatsy Mae you just gonna have to clear on out of here now, 'cause we got some men talking to do.

DOATSY MAE. Yeah, I see what you mean. You fellas done such a good job on this thing so far. Keep up the good work. (SHE leaves.)

C. J. SCRUGGS. Now the Governor said he'd call out the Texas Rangers.

SHERIFF. He don't need no Goddamn Rangers! I got myself a purty good bullshit detector, boys, and I can damn sure tell when somebody's pissin' on my boots and tellin' me it's a rain-storm. The damn Governor is just trying to keep the television idiot happy and cozy up to the Jesus Bunch. If he's so all fired keen about closin' Miss Mona down, all in hell he's gotta do is give me one little bitty phone call and I'll do it. Hells fire, I wouldn't have no choice.

C. J. SCRUGGS. Well then why you got to wait for his phone call? Why can't you just take the bull by the horns an' take care of it yourself?

SHERIFF. Scruggs . . . I'm gettin' just a little bit sick of your Goddamn whinin' . . . Now you's willin' enuf to keep your eyes closed as long as we had a bird's nest on the ground, so I don't wanta hear . . .

(The telephone rings.)

END