

SHERIFF THORPE

46 BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

MELVIN.
TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT!

DOGETTES.
LORD HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS!

MELVIN. SIN IS RUNNIN' RAMPANT
LIKE BEFORE THE FALL OF ROME

DOGETTES.
OOOOH, OOOOHH
AAAAH, AAAAAH

MELVIN.
SOMEONE IS PERMITTIN'
YOU KNOW WHAT . . .

(SHERIFF DODD *strides into the street.*)

START

SHERIFF. All right, all right, let's move this stuff outa the way so we can get the traffic movin'. Out, folks, out . . . This here is a street, not a carnival. What are you doin' here . . . ?

(*The CAMERAMAN has moved around to get a better shot of the SHERIFF. The SOUND RECORDER has aimed his mike at him too.*)

MELVIN. The only traffic in this town is what's headed for The Chicken Ranch, right, Sheriff?

(*A beat. The SHERIFF can't believe what HE's heard.*)

SHERIFF. Now, you got two tickets up to now! Paradin' without a license, and insultin' me. I said move it on out of here. Get off the street. (*To the TOWNSPEOPLE.*) Why don't you all go on home and watch some television?

MELVIN. We're perfectly within the law here, Sheriff Dodd. As a newsman I've got First Amendment protection. The public has a right to know what's going on out there, and what kind of pay-off you're acceptin' to protect a notorious house of ill repute.

(*The CROWD lets out a moan, because THEY know what kind of trouble MELVIN's in.*)

SHERIFF. First thang. First thang is you're standing in Lanvil County, which by my figgerin' is about a hunnert miles west of

that sinkhole you call Houston, an' I can't see it's a whole lot of business of yours what goes on here. (HE *wheels back on THORPE, his volume rising.*) Now, number two. Number two is, you ain't a officer of the law and I am, and this is my pea patch you're in. So don't go tryin' to tell me what my Goddamn job is or I'll take them dime store cap guns off of you and I'll whup your butt till it looks like peppermint candy.

(ONE of the CHOIR LADIES has heard all of this kind of language SHE can take, and SHE departs quickly in shock. The SHERIFF once again starts for his office, but now HE's about to explode, and HE spins around once again and the camera and sound are right with him. The SHERIFF is on the low side of screaming now.)

SHERIFF. (Continued.) Now, number three, number three is, number three! No sawed off little shit is gonna accuse me of takin' a bribe and live to tell it, 'cause I wear the badge in this Goddamn County and if I get any madder I'm gonna blow your ass all the way back to Harris County and you can go see the Goddamn Civil Liberties Union in tiny little pieces. If I ever see any one of you sorry shitheads in this town again, I'm gonna lock up your ass until your baby's grown. If I even dream that any one of you bastards even thought about driving through here I'll hunt you down like a hound dawg would a coon. (HE *fires his pistol into the air and before the echo dies the street is empty.*) Gollamn wig-wearin' citified son-of-a-bitch. (Beat.)

BLACKOUT

END

ACT ONE

SCENE 8

The lights rise on the interior of the Texas Twinkle Cafe, a local gatherin' place for coffee sipping, beer drinking, barbecue eating and settling of the town's affairs, sexual or otherwise. It is Thanksgiving, the day of the Texas Aggie—Texas U. football game. DOATSY MAE, a waitress who wasn't born yesterday, is behind the counter pouring coffee, filling sugar shakers, and generally preparing for the morning run. EDSEL