

## ACT TWO

## SCENE I

*The lights comes up and we see repeated the last section of The Raid.*

*The bell rings, PEOPLE scream and run, and the lights immediately fade: leaving SENATOR WINGWOAH and GINGER in a spotlight in GINGER's bedroom, and EDSSEL and the REPORTERS in a spotlight on the pit steps. The SENATOR has been literally caught with his pants down.*

*As the GROUP OF REPORTERS speak, SENATOR WINGWOAH will struggle to get his clothes back on, with GINGER's assistance.*

EDSEL. You mean to say, Senator, that you have no independent recollection of how you got to the Chicken Ranch?

SENATOR WINGWOAH. That's God's own truth. 'Course, now, I got my suspicions. I mean who's the most dedicated anti-Communist in the State Legislature?

EDSEL. I suspect you're about to nominate yourself.

SENATOR WINGWOAH. It stands to reason they'd want to harm my good name!

REPORTER 1. But how were you coaxed into a whorehouse?

SENATOR WINGWOAH. I'm surprised you boys hadn't figgered that out for yourself. I was doped!

*(The REPORTERS react.)*

SENATOR WINGWOAH. *(Continued.)* Yessir, Communists are always dopin' our college kids. I was easy prey.

EDSEL. Senator, there used to be a Communist over in Waco. But he died in '68.

REPORTER 2. Presumably then, these Communist agents stripped you and planted you in a strange bed?

SENATOR WINGWOAH. All unbeknowing to myself, yessir! But just remember that church ain't over til they sing! Once this thing has been exposed, I'll be vindicated. *(He zips up his fly.)*

AIDE. Ladies and Gentlemen . . . His Excellency, the Governor of Texas.

*(The band plays a fanfare which continues through the GOVERNOR's entrance.)*

*The GOVERNOR enters, beaming and waving. HE is followed by SENATOR WINGWOAH. The GOVERNOR acts as if HE's receiving the plaudits of multitudes, throws his arms over his head and gives the V for Victory sign. Then HE suddenly and viciously silences the band and the cheer with a gesture.)*

GOVERNOR. My friends I want to thank you for that warm and sincere Christian welcome.

AIDE. Gentlemen, you may ask your questions now.

REPORTER 1. Governor, Sir, what do you think of the explosive situation in the Middle East?

GOVERNOR. Well, I was sayin' at the weekly Prayer breakfast, just this mornin' in this historic capital, that it behooves both the Jews and the A-rabs to settle their differences in a Christian manner.

*(His AIDES and ENTOURAGE applaud wildly.)*

REPORTER 2. How do you account, Governor, for the current high unemployment rate in our state?

GOVERNOR. Ain't nothin' unusual about it. It's just the natural law of economics. Now the real cause of this unemployment thing is that . . . people are out of work!

*(Once again wild applauses from AIDES.)*

THORPE. Governor: Governor. Melvin P. Thorpe, Watch Dog News. What about the Chicken Ranch, Governor?

*(A moment of shocked silence, then.)*

## "THE SIDESTEP"

GOVERNOR.

FELLOW TEXANS

I AM PROUDLY STANDING HERE TO HUMBLLY SAY

I ASSURE YOU

AND I MEAN IT

NOW WHO SAYS I DON'T SPEAK OUT AS PLAIN AS DAY?

AND  
FELLOW TEXANS  
I'M FOR PROGRESS  
AND THE FLAG, LONG MAY IT FLY  
I'M A POOR BOY  
COME TO GREATNESS  
SO IT FOLLOWS THAT I CANNOT TELL A LIE

EDSEL. What the hell did he say?

REPORTER 1. Mairzy Doats and Doazy Doats.

EDSEL. And little lambs ee dyzy.

*(All freeze except GOVERNOR who does a sneaky dance.)*

GOVERNOR.

OOOOOOOOOOO! I LOVE TO DANCE THE LITTLE  
SIDESTEP  
NOW THEY SEE ME, NOW THEY DON'T  
I'VE COME AND GONE . . .  
AND OOOOOOOOOOO! I LOVE TO SWEEP AROUND A  
WIDESTEP  
CUT A LITTLE SWATH AND  
LEAD THE LITTLE PEOPLE ON.

*(Back to action and the REPORTERS begin to press in on him.)*

REPORTER 1. Governor! Governor! Why do certain big banks receive special treatment when the state deposits its money?

GOVERNOR. Sound business practices!

REPORTER 2. Why don't you do something about industrial pollution? Even the Houston Ship Channel caught on fire.

GOVERNOR. But we put it out!

REPORTER 3. Do you plan to take action against the Chicken Ranch?

GOVERNOR.

NOW MY GOOD FRIENDS  
IT BEHOOVES ME  
TO BE SOLEMN AND DECLARE  
I'M FOR GOODNESS  
AND FOR PROFIT  
AND FOR LIVING CLEAN  
AND SAYING DAILY PRAYER  
AND NOW MY GOOD FRIENDS  
YOU CAN SLEEP NIGHTS

I'LL CONTINUE TO STAND TALL  
YOU CAN TRUST ME  
FOR I PROMISE  
I SHALL KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE UPON YOU ALL  
REPORTER 3. This is all going over my head.  
REPORTER 1. You and Wilt Chamberlain.

*(All freeze except GOVERNOR.)*

CHORUS.

OOOOOOOOOOO! I LOVE TO DANCE THE LITTLE  
SIDESTEP  
NOW THEY SEE ME, NOW THEY DON'T  
I'VE COME AND GONE . . .  
AND OOOOOOOOOOO! I LOVE TO SWEEP AROUND A  
WIDESTEP  
CUT A LITTLE SWATH AND  
LEAD THE PEOPLE ON . . .

*(Back to action.)*

THORPE. Governor! Governor! Melvin P. Thorpe. Watchdog News!

GOVERNOR. Yeah, I got that.

THORPE. Governor, why has the Chicken Ranch operation been so long ignored?

GOVERNOR. Beg pardon?

*(The REPORTERS are pushing in closer and closer.)*

REPORTER 2. Sir, is it true that organized crime may be involved?

GOVERNOR. There's some acoustic problems in here.

REPORTER 3. Aren't you worried about possible payoffs and bribes out there?

THORPE. Governor, Governor! Melvin P. Thorpe, Watchdog News!

GOVERNOR. *(Under his breath.)* Son of a bitch!

THORPE. Governor, what are you prepared to do about the Chicken Ranch and Miss Mona?

GOVERNOR.

NOW MISS MONA  
I DON'T KNOW HER

THO' I'VE HEARD THE NAME, OH YES.  
 BUT OF COURSE I'VE  
 NO CLOSE CONTACT  
 SO WHAT SHE IS DOING, I CAN ONLY GUESS.  
 BUT NOW MISS MONA  
 SHE'S A BLEMISH  
 ON THE FACE OF THAT GOOD TOWN.  
 I AM TAKING, CERTAIN STEPS HERE  
 SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE'S GONNA HAVE TO CLOSE  
 HER DOWN!

(He dances Off before anyone can stop him.)

THORPE. Arf, arf, arf-rrrr, rrrr.

DOGETTES & M. P. THORPE SINGERS.

MELVIN THORPE HAS DONE IT ONCE AGAIN  
 HE SHONE HIS LIGHT  
 AND NOW WE SEE  
 MELVIN THORPE HAS GONE THROUGH  
 THICK AND THIN  
 AND LED US ALL TO VICTORY.

DOGETTES & M. P. THORPE  
 SINGERS.

MELVIN THORPE HAS  
 DONE IT ONCE  
 AGAIN  
 HE'S SHONE HIS LIGHT  
 AND NOW WE SEE  
 MELVIN THORPE HAS  
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 THROUGH THICK AND  
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MELVIN THORPE HAS  
 DONE IT ONCE AGAIN  
 HE SHONE HIS LIGHT  
 AND NOW WE SEE.  
 MELVIN THORPE HAS  
 GONE  
 THROUGH THICK AND  
 THIN

REPORTERS, AIDE &  
 SENATOR.

OOOO, HE LOVES TO  
 DANCE THE  
 LITTLE SIDESTEP, NOW  
 WE SEE HIM  
 NOW WE DON'T. HE'S  
 COME AND GONE.  
 OOOO, HE LOVES TO  
 SWEEP AROUND  
 A WIDESTEP. CUT A  
 LITTLE SWATH  
 AND LEAD THE PEOPLE  
 ON

OOOO, HE LOVES TO  
 DANCE THE  
 LITTLE SIDESTEP. NOW  
 WE SEE HIM  
 NOW WE DON'T, HE'S  
 COME AND GONE.  
 OOOO, HE LOVES TO  
 SWEEP AROUND

AND LED US ALL TO  
 VICTORY.

A WIDESTEP. CUT A  
 LITTLE SWATH AND  
 LEAD THE PEOPLE ON.

(A break in the music and the DOWNSTAGE area is empty and the GOVERNOR sneaks away from the CROWD to be alone and with the audience. He gleefully begins to do a softshoe. He is celebrating his ability to sidestep every issue as the CHORUS sings behind him.)

ALL.

OOOO, HE LOVES TO DANCE  
 THE SIDESTEP  
 NOW, WE SEE  
 HE'S COME AND GONE  
 OOOO, HE LOVES TO SWEEP  
 A WIDESTEP  
 LEAD, THE, PEOPLE ON.

OOOO, HE LOVES TO DANCE THE SIDESTEP  
 NOW WE SEE HE'S COME AND GONE  
 OOO, HE LOVES TO SWEEP A WIDESTEP  
 LEAD, THE, PEOPLE ON.

(GOVERNOR continues dancing with music only. GROUP singing,  
 GOVERNOR dancing.)

ALL. (Continued.)

OOO, HE LOVES TO DANCE THE LITTLE  
 SIDESTEP  
 NOW, THEY SEE HIM NOW THEY DON'T  
 HE'S COME AND GONE . . .  
 OOO, HE LOVES TO SWEEP AROUND A WIDESTEP  
 CUT A LITTLE SWATH AND LEAD THE PEOPLE ON.

MELVIN THORPE HAS  
 DONE IT ONCE  
 AGAIN  
 HE SHONE HIS LIGHT  
 AND NOW HE SEE . . .  
 MELVIN THORPE HAS  
 GONE THROUGH THICK

OOO, HE LOVE TO  
 DANCE THE LITTLE  
 SIDESTEP, NOW WE SEE  
 HIM NOW WE  
 DON'T HE'S COME AND  
 GONE . . .  
 OOO, HE LOVES TO

AND THIN  
AND LED US ALL TO  
VICTORY.  
HAS DONE IT ONCE  
AGAIN AND LED US ALL  
TO VICTORY

SWEEP AROUND  
A WIDESTEP, CUT A  
LITTLE SWATH  
AND LEAD THE PEOPLE  
ON.  
HE LOVES TO DANCE THE  
LITTLE SIDESTEP  
AND LEAD THE PEOPLE  
ON.

(End of song—the GOVERNOR exits.)

ALL.  
OOO, HE LOVES TO DANCE THE LITTLE SIDESTEP  
NOW WE SEE HIM, NOW WE DON'T  
HE'S COME AND GONE

MELVIN. Three cheers and a gold star to our Governor who has agreed to do his duty by calling on local officials to "Kill their own snakes." . . . so once again, the Watchdog News bites as well as barks. Arf, Arf . . . (Chanting.)  
"WE'RE A GONNA CLOSE MISS MONA."

(The GROUP begins to march in a snakelike line around the stage wrapping themselves in Texas flags.)

ALL.	ALL.
We're a gonna close Miss	SHAME, SHAME, SHAME
Mona	YOU'RE RUINING OUR
We're a gonna close Miss	GOOD NAME
Mona	SHAME, SHAME, SHAME
We're a gonna close Miss	YOU'RE RUINING OUR
Mona	GOOD NAME

EDSEL. Have you gone crazy Melvin? What do you get out of jumpin' on a bunch of poor, social misfits, tryin' to scratch out a livin' sellin' cheap nookie in Gilbert?

MELVIN. The law is the law!

EDSEL. Melvin, within two blocks of this capitol building you can get anything done to you for money that you can get in Tangiers! Tongue baths, naked massages, midget fags, somebody ticklin' your ass with a feather.

MELVIN. If you know that for a fact, Mr. Newspaper Editor, it's your duty to expose it.

EDSEL. Melvin, I don't give a damn if folks occasionally want their asses tickled with feathers. I'd kinda like to think that's what heaven is all about.

ALL.	Shame, Shame, Shame
We're a gonna close Miss	YOU'RE RUINING OUR
Mona	GOOD NAME
We're a gonna close Miss	SHAME, SHAME, SHAME
Mona	YOU'RE RUINING OUR
We're gonna close Miss	GOOD NAME
Mona	

(MELVIN joins the MARCHERS as THEY leave the stage chanting.)

## ACT TWO

### SCENE 2

*The bedroom lights brighten to reveal ANGEL and LINDA LOU. We can still hear chants in the distance. The MARCHERS have appeared in the audience, now carrying powerful flashlights which THEY shine on the stage and at each other as THEY shout at the house.*

*As the insults are shouted, the GIRLS become aware and begin to move out of their rooms toward the front porch, gathering there to see what is taking place in the darkened exterior.*

HECKLER #1 runs toward the stage down LEFT aisle and hurls something at the whorehouse.

HECKLER #1. Get out of our town! (He runs back to the safety of the MOB. HECKLER #2 runs down the RIGHT aisle and throws another object at the stage.)

HECKLER #2. Go on back to Dallas! (HECKLER #3 and HECKLER #4 appear in different aisles at a safe distance.)

HECKLER #3. We don't want you in Gilbert!

HECKLER #4. Pluck the Chicken Ranch!

(MELVIN begins to parade around the aisle strutting his stuff. WINGWOAH appears in the RIGHT aisle.)

*The GIRLS have begun to appear from various parts of the house, listening to the insults from outside. MELVIN begins to lead the chant "SHAME SHAME SHAME, YOU'RE RUINING OUR GOOD NAME".)*

WINGWOAH. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

ANGEL. What kinda lash up we got out there?

LINDA LOU. Sounds like a vigilante group or somethin'.

(GINGER crosses and goes out on the ramp. The MOB has retreated to safe distance. WINGWOAH is still in view, aisle RIGHT. The GIRLS drift out with GINGER.)

GINGER. Look at that freak show! Ever nut in Texas must be out there!

WINGWOAH. Evil and corruption, get out of my district!

DAWN. (Pointing.) Hey Ginger, isn't that your friend Senator Wingwoah, out there?

GINGER. Where?

DAWN. Right over there.

GINGER. (Waving.) Aw, hi there Senator! How's your Tallywacker hangin'?

(WINGWOAH runs to safety. ALL the GIRLS tease him, laughing at his retreat.)

RUBY RAE. Come on back, Senator. We won't bite you!

ANGEL. Not unless you pay extra!

(THEY ALL laugh.)

SHY. Hey, there's that meddlin' T.V. man!

LINDA LOU. Hey Melvin, do you need a good bitch for your Watchdog T.V. show?

(MONA comes out onto the ramp.)

Miss MONA. What's goin' on out here?

(The MOB is at a distance but we hear some shouts.)

HECKLER #3. Get that filthy operation out of our town!

HECKLER #5. Dirty white trash pigs!

Miss MONA. Now where'd this all American circus come from, anyhow?

(JEWEL comes racing out with a shotgun and hands it to MONA.)

Miss MONA. (Continued.) Give me that thing, Jewel.

JEWEL. Yes m'am. You do it.

(MONA fires a shot in the air. Screams from the CROWD as THEY run hysterically in all directions. MONA hands the shotgun back to ONE of the GIRLS.)

RUBY RAE. That was a mean lookin' bunch, Miss Mona.

GINGER. Yeah, that Thorpe's tryin' to convince ever' body that pure good and pure evil is about to rassle to a dog fall.

Miss MONA. Well, it looks to me like the confused against the mistaken, with the well meanin' comin' in to screw it up on both sides.

GINGER. You reckon the Governor was just makin' political big talk? He ain't hit a lick since he announced he was closin' us.

LINDA LOU. Yeah, that ol' bastard, he don't keep one promise in ten.

Miss MONA. Yeah, but he's as unpredictable as a high wind and he'd probably score in the high 90's on a crazy test. Naw girls, I think we better keep out of sight. You run on up to your rooms . . . It don't look to me like we're gonna have any Guests come callin' with that mob out there.

(THEY ALL go off to different parts of the house where we see them going about their business.)

JEWEL. Yeah, even the Co-cola man says his wife won't let him make no more deliveries out here.

DAWN. (Exiting to her room.) Oh no!

(By this time ALL of the GIRLS have exited to their rooms. MONA and JEWEL are alone on the lower stage.)

JEWEL. We're in trouble this time, ain't we Miss Mona?

Miss MONA. It ain't what I'd call the ideal situation. How many of them politicians you reckon got elected by whippin' up on us?

JEWEL. I can count three in my time.

Miss MONA. Yeah, but you know ol' Miss Wulla Jean'd be back ringin' that bell soon as the polls closed. But this is different what with television broadcastin' it from hell to breakfast.

JEWEL. I sure been disappointed in that old Sheriff.

Miss MONA. He's had his moments, Jewel. When I first seen

Ed Earl he looked like he had walked right out of a cowboy picture show. Tall and handsome. He had blonde hair then . . . Remember? I never told nobody this before, Jewel, but he took me down to Galveston for a night.

JEWEL. Is that right?

MISS MONA. It was Kennedy's inauguration and we watched it on television in a hotel room. That was high cotton for me, fresh out of the panhandle. I'd never seen salt water. I remember the sun was shinin' and the water out in the Gulf was so blue it ached my eyes. The sun was shinin' on Kennedy, too, but it must have been some kind of cold up there because Kennedy's breath made little clouds of smoke when it hit the cold air. That's how I remember that day. We had a champagne brunch and I ordered Eggs Benedict, which I thought sounded mighty high-toned. I didn't even realize the chef had messed up the hollandaise sauce. (*A beat.*) When he brought me back here, he pulled a gown out of a bag and kinda poked it at me like it might bite him, and said, "Here, Cakes. This here's for you." He never was worth a damn at grammar. But I never felt more like . . . Cinderella. Oh, maybe it was no more than a bread and butter note. But I remember the sun and that blue, blue water and President Kennedy's breath makin' little clouds of smoke. (*Bringing herself out of the memory.*) And the worst fuckin' Eggs Benedict I ever put on my tongue!

(JEWEL laughs.)

MISS MONA. (*Continued.*) Naw, Jewel, Ed Earl's never played in the major leagues before and maybe he's not cut out for it. Not now, anyway. Not anymore.

JEWEL. I'm real sorry for the troubles you've been havin', Miss Mona.

MISS MONA. Jewel hunny, don't feel sorry for me. No, I started out poor and worked my way up to outcast. You just got to learn not to expect nothin' out of life.

"NO LIES"

WERE YOU FIXING TO SAY A LITTLE SOMETHING  
'BOUT  
HOW LIFE DON'T SEEM TOO FAIR?  
DON'T EVEN START  
DON'T EVEN START

WERE YOU LOOKING TO GET A LITTLE  
DISAPPOINTED  
TEARDROP GOING THERE?  
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH  
PLEASE DON'T TOUCH MY HEART

WHO SAID LIFE WAS A ROLLER COASTER?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS SWEET SURPRISE?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A CIRCUS POSTER?  
NOT ME!  
NOT ME!  
SO, ASK ME NO QUESTIONS  
GIVE ME NO ANSWERS  
AND I'LL TELL YOU NO LIES

JEWEL.

WERE YOU GETTING YOURSELF A LITTLE MOODY  
'CAUSE  
SOME FOLKS ARE DOWNRIGHT MEAN?  
OH ME, OH MY, AIN'T THAT A SHAME?  
WERE YOU STARTIN' TO MAKE A LITTLE SPEECH  
ABOUT  
THE TROUBLES THAT YOU'VE SEEN?  
PLEASE SPARE ME THAT SAD SELF PITY GAME

WHO SAID LIFE WAS A BOWL OF BERRIES  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS PEACH ICE CREAM?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A BOX OF CHERRIES?  
NOT ME!  
NOT ME!  
SO ASK ME NO QUESTIONS  
GIVE ME NO ANSWERS  
I'LL SELL YOU NO DREAMS

MISS MONA AND JEWEL.

WERE YOU THINKING THAT YOU WERE GONNA  
MAYBE HAVE  
TO LEAVE THIS LOVELY TOWN?  
BEGIN AGAIN  
HIT ONE MORE SPOT  
WERE YOU FEELING A LITTLE LIKE A BABY WHO  
JUST GOT

ITSELF KNOCKED DOWN?  
YOU SAY YOU WERE?  
I SAY WELL SO WHAT?

*(The GIRLS have come out of their rooms and gathered on the balcony.)*

GIRLS. *(Join in.)*  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A SONG FOR SINGIN'?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS SUCH A SNAP?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A BELL FOR RINGIN'?

NOT ME!  
NOT ME!

SO ASK ME NO QUESTIONS  
GIVE ME NO ANSWERS  
AND I'LL HAND YOU NO CRAP

MISS MONA, JEWEL, AND GIRLS..  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A SONG FOR SINGIN'?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS SUCH A SNAP?  
WHO SAID LIFE WAS A BELL FOR RINGIN'?  
NOT ME!  
NOT ME!

SO ASK ME NO QUESTIONS  
GIVE ME NO ANSWERS  
AND I'LL HAND YOU NO CRAP  
AND I'LL SELL YOU NO DREAMS  
AND I'LL TELL YOU NO LIES, NO LIES

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

SCENE 3

*Interior, SHERIFF's office. It is a beat-up old place: a scarred desk and a few old chairs sitting around with a telephone on the desk, FBI "Wanted" posters on the walls, a police radio*

*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.*

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.)

SHERIFF. (Continued.) A man can't even digest his food. (HE lifts the receiver.) Uh, this is Sheriff Dodd speakin' . . . (A few beats while HE is receiving the disturbing news.) Awright, Governor. All ya had to do was ask. We'd a handled this thang locally if y'all hadn't let it get on Johnny Carson. (A beat.) Don't you worry about it none, Governor, you hold the whip hand, yes sir . . . yes sir . . . (The SHERIFF hangs up the phone. HE suddenly looks old and broken.) Goddamn if I don't feel like a country dawg in the city. If I stand still they'll fuck me, if I run they'll bite me in the ass. Well, I reckon you boys heard it.

C. J. SCRUGGS. You really gonna do it, Ed Earl? You gonna close 'er down?

SHERIFF. I said I would didn't I? There's some cats just can't be put back in the sack. (HE rises, shifts his gun belt, and reaches for his hat. THEY file out.)

### "GOOD OLD GIRL"

WELL, SHE'S A GOOD OLD GIRL  
WE'VE BEEN SOME LONG, LONG MILES TOGETHER  
AND THANK THE LORD SHE NEVER WAS THE  
CLINGIN' KIND.

BUT SHE'S A GOOD OLD GIRL  
WE'VE HAD SOME FINE, BIG LAUGHS TOGETHER  
AND I ADMIRER THE WAY SHE ALMOST READ MY  
MIND.

NEVER TALKED NO FOOLISH TALK  
HAD NO TIES AND HELD NO RULES  
HELL, THAT GOOD OLD GIRL AND ME,  
WE AIN'T, DAMN FOOLS YOU KNOW.

WE NEVER TALKED TOO MUCH  
WE DIDN'T HOLD TO CONVERSATION  
THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS I COULD HAVE TOLD HER  
. . . I SUPPOSE  
BUT WHAT I WOULD WANT TO TELL THAT GOOD OLD  
GIRL,  
SHE KNOWS.

(HE crosses to the telephone and starts to lift the receiver. HE

*dials and MONA comes to the telephone at the proscenium. We see the conversation take place in mime. The COWBOYS sing the chorus in the background, leaning on poles, steps, whatever is available, as if THEY are lounging around the storefronts in the town.*

*MONA mounts the steps, calls the GIRLS together and tells them the bad news. THEY react in various degrees of shock, sadness, anger as THEY go back to their rooms and MONA turns DOWNSTAGE as the SHERIFF crosses to leave, pauses, sings the last line and crosses out.)*

COWBOYS.

WELL, SHE'S A GOOD OLD GIRL  
WE'VE BEEN SOME LONG, LONG MILES TOGETHER  
AND THANK THE LORD SHE NEVER WAS THE  
CLINGIN' KIND

NEVER TALKED NO FOOLISH TALK  
HAD NO TIES AND HELD NO RULES  
NO, THAT GOOD OLD GIRL AND ME,  
WE AIN'T DAMN FOOLS YOU KNOW

WE NEVER TALKED TOO MUCH  
WE DIDN'T HOLD TO CONVERSATION  
THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS I COULD HAVE  
TOLD HER I SUPPOSE

SHERIFF.

BUT WHAT I WOULD WANT TO TELL  
THAT GOOD OLD GIRL  
SHE KNOWS

(SHERIFF exits.)

## ACT TWO

### SCENE 4

*ANGEL comes UPSTAGE CENTER and sings the first section, then goes to her room.*

### "HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS"

ANGEL.

HEY, MAYBE I'LL DYE MY HAIR  
MAYBE I'LL MOVE SOMEWHERE  
MAY I'LL GET A CAR  
MAYBE I'LL DRIVE SO FAR  
THEY'LL ALL LOSE TRACK

*(The GIRLS are in their rooms, packing, making up, changing their clothes to leave the Chicken Ranch for the last time. THEY stop and sing their individual verses.)*

LINDA LOU.

ME, I'LL BOUNCE RIGHT BACK  
GINGER.

MAYBE I'LL SLEEP REAL LATE  
MAYBE I'LL LOSE SOME WEIGHT  
MAYBE I'LL CLEAR MY JUNK

LINDA LOU.

MAYBE I'LL JUST GET DRUNK  
ON APPLE WINE

ANGEL.

ME, I'LL BE JUST  
FINE AND DANDY  
LORD, IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS  
I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW  
STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW  
BRING ME WAY DOWN

ANGEL, DAWN, LINDA LOU AND GINGER.

I'LL BE.

FINE AND DANDY  
LORD IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS  
ANGEL, DAWN, GINGER, LINDA LOU.  
I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW  
STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW  
BRING ME WAY DOWN.

RUBY RAE.

HEY MAYBE I'LL LEARN TO SEW  
MAYBE I'LL JUST LIE LOW  
MAYBE I'LL HIT THE BARS

MAYBE I'LL COUNT THE STARS  
UNTIL THE DAWN

BEATRICE.

ME, I WILL GO ON

GINGER.

MAYBE I'LL SETTLE DOWN

LINDA LOU.

MAYBE I'LL JUST LEAVE TOWN

BEATRICE.

MAYBE I'LL HAVE SOME FUN

DAWN.

MAYBE I'LL MEET SOMEONE

AND MAKE HIM MINE

ANGEL.

ME, I'LL BE JUST

ALL GIRLS.

FINE AND DANDY

LORD, IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS

I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW

STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW

BRING ME WAY DOWN

GINGER. Would you believe I'm gonna miss this rat hole?

LINDA LOU. Well, you're crazy, too.

GINGER. No, I just got in the habit of havin' a permanent address. It's the next best thing to a home I've had since the Okay Corral Trailer Park back in Wichita Falls. One night I was out honky tonkin' and when I come home my bastard husband had hitched up our trailer to a truck and hauled ass. Somebody said he went up to work on the Alaska Pipeline. (*A beat.*) Well didn't this whole Melvin Thorpe thing surprise you, Miss Linda Lou?

LINDA LOU. Nothin' surprises me nowadays. If somebody told me it was snowin' shit, I'd just ask 'em if it was chicken or horse and how many inches.

ANGEL. Oh God, when I first started hustlin' I thought sure I'd wind up one of them high priced city call girls. You know, silks and furs and sports cars and slinkin' around in soft lights geared to help my makeup work. I mean, why not? My face don't stop no clocks. So how'd I wind up on a four dollar mattress?

(*SHY appears from her room, carrying a suitcase and dressed for the road. SHE has the breezy air of a kid anticipating a new adventure.*)

SHY. It's about as cheerful in here as a funeral parlor.

GINGER. Well, Kid, I guess you just ain't been around long enough to grow any roots.

SHY. What difference does it make where we do what we do? I mean, it ain't like we gotta carry no heavy equipment around with us.

ANGEL. Shy, hunny, you're gonna do all right in this dirty business.

SHY. Well baby, it takes one to know one . . . Look, I know everything's a mess . . . and I care about it. I just can't help but feelin' like a little kid going on a trip!

GINGER. Maybe you ought to try Las Vegas.

LINDA LOU. Aw, get off it.

GINGER. Man, I made me a shit-pot full of money out there one time . . . Workin' them big hotels and casinos. All them conventioners away from Mama and feelin' wild.

SHY. Well, why don't we go to Vegas and team up?

GINGER. Hunny, I've lost a step. Shreveport's more my speed right now. Just call me Sadie Motel. Open twenty-four hours. Hot and cold runnin' drunks. Waking up ever' mornin' to somebody else's bad breath. Somehow . . . it just never seemed to be quite like that around here.

ANGEL. Well . . . I'm going home to see my kid.

LINDA LOU. Come on, girl. You're gonna be screwin' for money as soon as you get your little bags unpacked.

ANGEL. Don't bet on it. This time I'm really gettin' out . . . This time I'm goin' home for Christmas, and I'm gettin' me a straight job, and I'm gonna like it!

LINDA LOU. Maybe so. But you'll never own a yacht.

ME, I'LL BE JUST

FINE AND DANDY

LORD IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS

I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW

STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW

BRING ME WAY DOWN,

I'LL BE FINE AND DANDY

LORD, IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS

I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW

STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW

BRING ME WAY DOWN

I'LL BE FINE AND DANDY

LORD, IT'S LIKE A HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS  
I'M BARELY GETTIN' THROUGH TOMORROW  
STILL I CAN'T LET SORROW  
BRING ME WAY DOWN  
I'LL BE FINE  
I'LL BE FINE  
I'LL BE FINE

*(As the GIRLS leave the Chicken Ranch carrying suitcases during the last strains of the song, the SHERIFF has appeared on the porch and He tips his hat to them sadly as THEY leave.)*

MONA and JEWEL enter with their bags and the wheel-chair. THEY are dressed for traveling. This is the first time we've seen MONA dressed differently, in a western shirt, boots, western pants, and perhaps holding on to her fur.)

## ACT TWO

## SCENE 5

*As the last GIRL leaves, the SHERIFF is left standing in the doorway. He is awkwardly twisting and turning his cowboy hat in his hands.*

SHERIFF. Howdy, Jewel.

JEWEL. Sheriff. I'll be out in the car, Miss Mona. (JEWEL leaves.)

SHERIFF. (SHERIFF stays near the door, uncomfortable with emotional moments.) You awright, Mona?

MISS MONA. Hadn't felt so good since I had the measles.

SHERIFF. Well, just Goddamn ever'thing!

MISS MONA. Ed Earl, the best thing you can do is put this all behind you, just as quick as you can. (SHE crosses around the wheelchair and sits in it—CENTER)

SHERIFF. No, by God. Nosir! The damn little television idiot, and that goody-two-shoes governor, and all them folks that turned tail when this thang broke open? Some of 'em claimin' to be my frens, by God! Folks I've broke bread with and run rabbits with and took home when they was drunk! Well, I owe them damn people somethin', Mona, and I always pay my debts. (A beat or two. The more HE thinks about it, the more it irritates him.) I still just don't understand how this thang turned to clab-

ber the way it done. I sure as hail don't. It just got outa hand. It ate me up before I knowed it was hungry!

MISS MONA. Ed Earl, I made a lotta money. I had a few laughs, I danced a bit. It's just time to pay the fiddler, that's all.

SHERIFF. Goddamn, Goddamn, if I just hand't cussed on goddamn television . . .

MISS MONA. It's over, Ed Earl! Jesus!

(A beat.)

SHERIFF. (HE's getting uncomfortable.) You likely to get right lonesome out there on that farm.

MISS MONA. Well, now maybe you come over to East Texas every now and again, and hunt squirrels . . . or something.

SHERIFF. Well . . . (A beat.) You or the girls need a ride or anything?

MISS MONA. Naw. I got my pick-up truck and Jewel's car. But you might see if you can keep those newspaper and television boys from houndin' us outta town. If you can do it short of killin'.

SHERIFF. Aw, now don't you worry about that none. Hell I got them peckerwoods roped off a mile each side of your gate. I got deputies and constables and highway patrolmen holdin' 'em back till hell won't have it.

MISS MONA. That's good, Ed Earl.

SHERIFF. Well, I guess I better get myself on back into town, and start stomping out grass fires. There's still lotsa folks stirred up, you know.

MISS MONA. I know. You go on.

(A beat. The SHERIFF rises, then slowly goes out ramp.)

MISS MONA. (Continued.) Ed Earl!

(The SHERIFF stops and whirls to face her.)

SHERIFF. Yeah, Mona?

MISS MONA. Do you remember President Kennedy's inauguration speech?

SHERIFF. Well now, here let me see now . . . uh . . . That's the one where he said ask your country not to do somethin' for you, you do somethin' for your country . . . ain't that the one?

MISS MONA. Somethin' like that. (*A beat.*) You remember where you were when you heard it?

SHERIFF. By God cakes, that's been, what? Must be twenny years ago. Ain't it? Why?

MISS MONA. No particular reason. I just seem to have that day on my mind, that's all.

SHERIFF. But I recollect where I was when Oswald shot him. Yeah, I'd just picked up three Meskin kids—they'd stole themselves a goat from old man W. B. Starr and was throwin' themselves a barbeque. (*He laughs.*) Don't you see, I was jes' out on routine patrol, and I seen this smoke comin' up from old man Starr's pasture? Well, I parked my car in a ditch and I snuck up on them little greasers—they was barbercuin' that goat on a mesquite tree spitz, and sloshin' on the barbecue sauce enough for LBJ. That proved it was pre-med-i-tated, them havin' that sauce, don't you see? So we got 'em for Goddamn *felons*. Anyhow, I'd just slapped the cuffs on them little peckerwoods and marched 'em in lock-step back to the car when it come across the po-lice radio that ol' Kennedy had been shot up in Dallas. I 'member it all just as clear as a bell. (*A beat.*) It's funny, there's certain thangs you just can't hardly forget.

MISS MONA. A-men to that, Ed Earl.

SHERIFF. Now, when Jack Ruby shot ol' Oswald? Why hail, I asseled around and missed that! I damn sure did! Only live killin' they ever put on TV—hail, just about the only decent thang that was ever *on* TV in all history. And I asseled around and missed it. I damn sure did. A-course, I seen all them old films of it that they run over and over. They run 'em til they blame near wore it out. But it wasn't quite the same thang as seein' something without knowin' it was gonna happen.

MISS MONA. It never is, Ed Earl.

(*The musical introduction to "THE BUS FROM AMARILLO"*)

MISS MONA. (*Continued.*) I guess you better run along now.

SHERIFF. Well, right. Yeah, I gotta be runnin'. (*He turns and slowly exits.*)

(*MISS MONA is left alone on the stage. MONA sings:*)

"THE BUS FROM AMARILLO"

MISS MONA.  
CAUGHT A BUS IN AMARILLO

IT WAS GOIN' TO SAN ANTONE  
HAD A BRAND NEW CARDBOARD SUITCASE  
AND A WINDOW SEAT ALONE

AND I THOUGHT THAT I WAS SOMETHING  
AND I DREAMED I'D TRAVEL FAR  
MAYBE BE A RESTAURANT HOSTESS  
MAYBE BE A MOVIE STAR

AND THE BUS FROM AMARILLO  
RACED A TRAIN ALONG THE TRACK  
AND I NEVER LOOKED BEHIND ME  
'CAUSE I WASN'T COMIN' BACK

I HAD A ONE WAY TICKET TO NOWHERE  
I WAS FINALLY TRAVELIN' FREE  
I HAD A ONE WAY TICKET TO GO WHERE  
ANYTHING WAS POSSIBLE FOR ME.

WE WERE DRIVIN' ON THROUGH CISCO  
ON OUR WAY AROUND TO BAIRD  
GOT A SUDDEN FUNNY FEELIN'  
AND I KNEW THAT I WAS SCARED.

I WAS SHAKIN' LIKE A LEAF  
AS WE WERE COMIN' 'ROUND THE CURVE  
HAD THE SUITCASE, HAD THE TICKET  
BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE NERVE.

YES THE BUS FROM AMARILLO  
HAD ME SO DAMN TERRIFIED  
THAT I GOT OFF AT THE NEXT STOP  
AND I NEVER TOOK THAT RIDE.

DIDN'T WANT THAT ONE WAY TICKET TO NOWHERE  
DIDN'T WANT THE TRAVELIN' FREE  
DIDN'T WANT THAT ONE WAY TICKET TO GO WHERE  
ANYTHING WAS POSSIBLE FOR ME.

WELL IT'S HARD NOW TO DETERMINE  
HOW A PLAN JUST DISAPPEARS  
HOW THE DAYS CAN TURN TO WEEKS  
AND HOW THE WEEKS CAN TURN TO YEARS

AND IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU WAIT FOR THINGS  
AND WANT THAT LUCKY DAY  
AND IT'S FUNNY, WHEN THE BUS STOPPED  
I GOT OFF AND WALKED AWAY

AND THE BUS FROM AMARILLO  
I CAN HEAR IT STILL GO BY  
GUESS I MISSED MY ONLY CHANCE  
AND NOW I SWEAR I DON'T KNOW WHY

*(As MONA begins the last verse the following takes place:*

*The GIRLS move across the stage slowly with suitcases making a line behind MONA, expressionless.*

*A strange slow motion scene takes place on the balcony. The GOVERNOR'S AIDE presents the GOVERNOR. The SENATOR applauds the GOVERNOR. MELVIN comes out beaming and the GOVERNOR awards him a plaque for meritorious service, preserving the morals of the great state of Texas.*

*There is a freeze, as if a picture was snapped. Then MONA sings the last line in spotlight.)*

MISS MONA. *(Continued.)*

GUESS LIFE'S A ONE WAY TICKET TO NOWHERE  
GOD, WISH I WAS TRAVELIN' FREE . . .  
ONCE I HAD A  
ONE WAY TICKET TO GO WHERE  
ANYTHING WAS POSSIBLE FOR ME.  
ANYTHING WAS POSSIBLE FOR ME.

*(The curtain call should be a big hoedown finale. Get the people stomping and clapping.)*

# PROPS: STAGE LEFT

## ACT I:

billfold with money  
check (need new check each performance)  
handcane  
wheelchair (water in ash tray)  
cigarettes (light)  
lighter  
dust rag  
five flashlights (plus two as extras)  
sheet music  
working microphone on stand (preset: leet port #one) for  
watchdog  
nine cue cards  
Jewel's overnight bag  
five white decorations  
two red decorations  
two bouquets of flowers  
t.v. camera  
headphones  
working shotgun microphone  
tape recorder  
coke can with water  
pie case with two pie slices  
round bentwood table  
two bentwood chairs  
newspaper  
three dolls (chambers, merchant, king)  
bench with three lonestar beer cans  
hamper  
ledger with pen  
eyeglasses  
extra blank gun

## Act II:

ten flags  
long flashlight  
three suitcases: (Linda Lou, Durla, Ginger)  
deck of playing cards  
award plaque  
rope for twirling

PROPS: STAGE RIGHT

ACT I:

paper money  
 chicken with chicken bag  
 five flashlights (plus two for replacements)  
 nail file  
 two bouquets of flowers  
 long flashlight (plus extra)  
 working microphone on stand (preset: right port #one)  
 extra cable with attachment for Thorpe's microphone  
 sheet music  
 whistle  
 three dolls (zalkind, brown, gelke)  
 three pads, pens, pencils.

ACT II:

Sheriff's breakfast: two fried eggs, coffee cup with water,  
 biscuits, fork & knife, napkin, salt, tray.  
 tinfoil to cover tray  
 rolling chair  
 telephone  
 four suitcases  
 one canvas bag  
 wheelchair

COSTUME PLOT

TWENTY FANS

six choir robes  
 THREE COWBOYS jeans, shirts, bandannas  
 SHY KID longjohns, shirt, pants  
 FARMER underwear, shirt, overalls  
 TRAVELING SALESMAN suit, shirt, bow tie, straw hat  
 SLICK DUDE jeans, jeansjacket, shirt, bandanna  
 MISS WULLA JEAN dress, jewels  
 PUSHER (lady who pushes wheelchair) pants and top  
 one piano shawl  
 one thirtys dress  
 one teddy with jacket  
 one bra, top pants with robe

PISSANT

MONA white pants, fringed top jacket, gold shoes  
 JEWEL house dress, apron, boots  
 eight girls . . . ass't  
 SHY old skirt, top, jacket, boots  
 ANGEL white boots, white dress, pink undies

GIRL YOU'RE A WOMAN

SHY sequin dress, undershirt, white panties  
 GINGER leopard jumpsuit

WATCHDOG

MELVIN P. THORPE dressy light blue suit, flag tie, white shirt,  
 blue, red and white boots, white belt, two holsters  
 SIX DOGETTES six gold jackets, six blue pants, six blue ties,  
 six white shirts, six belts, six grey hats

FOUR LADIES four yellow floor length dresses, four pair shoes

TWENTY FOUR HOURS

JEWEL two piece black outfit, shoes  
 ten ladies ass't outfits

ANGEL pink quilted robe

SHERIFF OFFICE

SHERIFF pants, shirt, jacket, belt, boots, hat, gunbelt, string  
 tie, badge.

CAFE SCENE

C. J. SCRUGGS red pants and sox, white shirt, shoes, striped  
 tie, loud jacket