The Reconquista Cowboy

The Man from Marion County

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Before the ruckus, a history professor told me that the best way to understand a time period and place was to examine the central debate they participate in. There is always an issue that occupies that part of a man's brain that just won't let things rest. At the particular moment this history was begun, the occupation of Texas, the core everyday argument that would simply not cease was over the responsibility for the EMP attack that brought the former United States to its knees. I say "every day" because it is said that the average man or woman would be engaged in the question a least once a day and every day for years. One would think people would tire of it, and some did, but most persisted. It was occupied Texas' preoccupation. Whether the ultimate responsibility rested with Bill Clinton or Barrack Obama, distracted not only academics but the shop keepers and the starving jail population as well.

The logic was simple and hindsight 20/20. If one felt it was a Korean nuke, they blamed Clinton. If they thought it was an Iranian nuke, they blamed Obama. It had been a terrible debilitating event, but no one blamed Presidents Bush or Trump. The population was filled with such rage, it was the concessions granted that people recalled and not any hard line. Before the attack, everyone was for diplomacy; afterward, it was the namby-
pamby policies that irked people. Naturally, like always
emotions entered into the thinking.

No one was absolutely certain who actually turned the
lights out, but most were certain, the former U.S. Presidents
were responsible. They were the nearest so they take most of the
blame. The question was which one was responsible. It didn't
really matter; the presidents were all dead, by the time Mexico
annexed Texas.

Interestingly, it wasn't this blame that brought down the
Democratic Party, the Republican Party ceased to function as
well. It became pretty clear that technology was what propped up
the political party system because without it the parties
struggled and then dissolved.

The few rhetoricians and sociologists that studied the
debate (not the actual EMP but the society afterward), managed
to mention the "vitiolic hate" involved in the singling out
Democratic politicians and, from ivory towers, they argued that
both parties shared responsibility (no one listened). They also
argued that the debate should be a scientific question of what
nation had the capability. They wanted the politics left out of
it (self-interest or nostalgia); they wanted a return to their
former academic life, where they had money to buy food and an
amount of respect. Shortly after the attack, they learned they
no longer had neither of these. They'd be 100 years trying to build it back.

While everyone was discussing it, it didn't really matter who'd celebrated the most or who'd actually done the attack. The fact was that someone exploded a nuclear weapon in space, one hundred miles above Barton County, Kansas. The electromagnetic pulse that was created fried every circuit board, transformer and electric grid in the county. Every computer being used at the time and thus the entire internet was instantly brought down. Interesting enough Texas was slightly less affected than the rest of the country, most Texans were not really addicted to it. Eight-hundred planes crashed, and their wreckage is still there decades later. A lot of Texans drove pickup trucks, even if the trip took an entire day. Thirty-four cruise ships were disabled at sea; Galveston mourned and them for a few days until the shrimpers went to fetch them back to the island. The highways were littered with disabled cars and trucks with electronic ignitions, leaving only the simplest engines running. After the great calamity, classic cars and motorcycles ruled the Texas highways.

The public consensus, in Texas anyway, was never more resolute and nearly no one ever blames the U.S. president at the time of the event. The U.S. government was bankrupt and even more ineffective than before at nearly every function, but the
Texans seemed to refuse to blame any living politician for the loss of technology, surprisingly insightful if one considers the pre-calamity myopic public. Suddenly, the Texan's collective thinking made sense. They'd been ignoring Washington D.C. since they stopped paying the bills. Why would they expect solutions, or preventions, now after decades of failure?

Journalists were out of business. Barbers, however, called the event different things. On the East Coast it was referred to as "the Upheaval." Southern barbers called it "the Travesty." West Coast called it "the Tech Tragedy." The Texas barbers called it "the Calamity," but it didn't really matter; no one was any longer sharing photos or likes or impressions or much of anything anymore (at least not electronically).

The pastor of the largest non-denominational church in the state, up at Lake Point, said, "The internet's chickens have come home to roost," word spread through North Texas and membership doubled in a week. Anti-technology people, people that never liked it flooded into Rockwall making the once affluent suburb of Dallas something of a wasteland.

The eighty-nine million Hispanic-American demanded the right to repatriation, despite the fact that many no longer spoke Spanish. China, in exchange for free-trade and access to the growing Mexican and Latin markets, vetoed the resolution. So much for La Raza. At the new United Nation's building in Moscow,
a man from Chicago protested, "It's absolutely malo that Hispanic families north of the Rio Grand have to live without electricity when their historically poor relatives can watching it all on Telemundo."

Whether you understand this book to be literature or history, any reader will find it useful to explain the time it was written in - the political, military, economic and social components to the Second Texas Revolution. So, before I expose you to our story, characters and plot, let's examine Texas at the time.

Historians have gone on *ad infinitum* into the geopolitical ramification of the calamity, but since this book is essentially the story about an adventurer and his compatriot, I'll just put it into context by saying three things. First, the United States, falling into this weakened state, could not keep Mexico from taking back Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The Reconquista Party in Mexico had promised a return of their historical lands, "free and easy." In hindsight, many hard-working Mexicans voted for "free and easy" only to later pay for the land with the lives of their son and sometimes daughters.

Second, the United States dissolved itself without interstate violence or civil war and established forty-six nation-states. But to add insult to injury, U.S. Atlantic Fleet were "legally detached" from service the United States by three
admirals set up their own fiefdom in the former U.S. Virgin Islands and the new nation-state of Puerto Rico.

Third, in each of the repatriated/occupied territories (CA, AZ, NM, TX) shadow "Anglo" governments developed. In Texas, it was a "Lutheran" shadow government and the term "Lutheran" became derogatory in some places again. If a loyalist wanted to go soft on the rebels they referred to them as "Congregationalists," but if it was a nasty conversation (and there were plenty of those) the rebels were "Lutherans," regardless if they were or not actually Lutheran.

The Texas resistance government met openly over the two back tables of Sholtz's Beer Garten, spies all about, but after annexation and twenty years of quiet occupation, the Mexicans lost nearly all fear of serious rebellion and practically ignored the rebel leaders. Some days, the Mexican spies didn't even bother to show up and when they did sometimes they didn't report. The Mexican intelligence services became lethargic; perhaps they were being paid but little was reported. Even toward the end, when there were actual hostilities, the most significant Mexican activity at Sholtz's was the traffic cops across the street from the drinking establishment, who stepped up their ticketing, like the "Lutherans" were high school kids in their parent's car, without the power to do anything about
it. It was a source of revenue and promotion with the shadow politicians with no recourse, but, of course, things change.

Militarily, the Mexican government was more interested in the former United States renewing the war. Mexico fortified and occupied the ports of Houston, Corpus, and Brownsville, until mysteriously they moved (based on faulty intelligence) to Matagorda and Calhoun counties to oppose the invasion they "dreamed" would materialize there. Rumored for years and highly speculated on, the invasion was the chief focus of the Mexican intelligence services. The services, which were charged with the task of bringing Mexican politicians and military leaders timely and reliable information, faced many difficulties. One, the services were inundated with first-generation Mexicans speaking agents and analysts but the information was later discovered to be piecemeal and loftily bias; basically, millions of Mexican had lived in the North but hadn't necessarily studied or assimilated. But in the end, the Mexican army, like many occupation armies, faced the difficulty of fighting low-tech Texans insurgents who were motivated fighting on their heels, for what they felt was their backyard.

Economically, Mexican banks existed in Texas as forts and storage vaults and were basically used by the Mexican occupiers. Consequently, the Texas economic boom promised the Mexican
voters didn't pan out. There wasn't any capital, which defeated the primary purpose of having banks.

When all big business ended with the EMP calamity, economic activity devolved to small businesses and the typical Texas entrepreneurs found ways to hide their wealth. With the confiscatory taxes (needed to fuel Mexico's socialism), typically Texas business was on wheels or well hidden in rural barns. And there is a famous story of a dog breeder in Hunt County who fooled the Mexican confiscators for years by opening a no-kill shelter, in order to keep the Mexican socialists from seizing her purebred dogs. She and her father then, the days before the invasion, disappeared and became a complete mystery. Mexico never took her dogs. It was a small victory that many Texans took to heart.

This being said, oil and gas pipelines were built to divert energy south to Mexico's growing economy. Million of tons of cotton, as well as tons of corn, maize, and wheat, were confiscated and brought south. The Mexican government nationalist and branded every cow, steer or bull with the MX brand and moved them south, truckloads at a time. The brand was necessary because of the "more equal" Mexican aristocracy who owned cattle in Texas and branded them TX. which meant the owner was connected and hands-off. Well, Anglos quickly learned that if the TX brand could save their lively hood, well they weren't
so proud. After 2036 any Anglo, regardless of citizenship, found running "unregistered" cattle faced long prison sentences.

Socially, there were several trends that influenced this account or fiction; however, you begin to see it. Let's examine the addiction phenomenon. The growth of the methamphetamines pandemic was a major disruption to society. An epidemic before the Calamity, the scourge afterward was a huge weight on the Texas economy and only a few found meth useful. An entire army of dope cooks and traffickers used especially meth as a weapon. Basically, the first thing a Texas patriot would do when be met a Mexican patriot would be to offer him cheap or sometimes free, meth. Over time, the Mexican occupation forces were just as addicted as the Texan rebels, but the Mexican's immediately began having a hard time administering the territory high. A person can be high on dope and get by for a time, but one can't be high on dope and maintain any sort of responsibility. Guns confiscated; for decades meth was the only weapon available to a certain class of Texan. They cooked it to barter with, but also as a tool to run down the Mexican occupation society. Meth was an effective weapon, and those who deny it simply weren't there.

Escapism (without films or books in a society that didn't have electric power and had forgotten how, or why to read) came in the form of a bottle, a weed, or powder, or a crystal. However, pills quickly disappeared from Texas;
production of opiate-based pharmaceuticals were not picked up and manufactured in Mexico or South America. Mexico had done what the U.S. never could, made a deal with China to stop the importation of opiates. Still, inside the soul of almost every Texan, it seems the lure of chemical escapism (drug use) competed with romantic nostalgia and sometimes the two were used in combination to escape the Mexican occupation. Cowboys, outlaws and rugged individualism made its comeback in Texas under Mexican occupation.

Immigration patterns shifted to the south and "the wall" so famously fought over in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, in the end, became the focus of a second debate in Mexico City. The wall along the Rio Grande was attacked, bombed, tunneled and otherwise destroys by transient former Americans (both Hispanic and Anglo) who wanted a life with electricity and an economic future. The repairs were so expensive and the labor so intensive for the Mexican government occupied Texas sentenced criminals to years of hard labor building a wall along the Red River. As early as 2036, Texas and Mexican opposition politicians were calling the wall "racist" and "divisive" with little result. Of course, the opposition politicians needed the votes of capitalist minded North Americans to win elections. Socialist minded Mexicans didn't want to hear it and the wall progressed
along the Red River and then west along the 37 degrees North border.

And, while I'm a writer/historian by training, researching this book has revealed to me a geographic and transportation novelty - the "Harley trails of Texas," man-made trails created to avoid Mexican law enforcement. As you'd expect, the Interstate highways (10, 20, 30, 35, 37) were vigorously patrolled by Mexican authorities. Traffic on these interstates was said to have declined to nearly nothing during the occupation because few self-respecting Texans would submit to that scrutiny, unless it was absolutely necessary, an emergency. State highways, for example, 289, between Rockwall and Emory was generally a fifty-fifty adventure; one might or might not be harassed. On farm-to-market roads, like 729 from Jefferson to Lone Star, Texans could generally navigate in safety and wouldn't be oppressed with arrest, tickets, fines, or searches of their daughters. Mexico simply couldn't control every single path and the Mexican loyalist soon discovered their chance of being beaten or killed greatly increased as the width of the road decreased. Clearly, Mexicans knew to stay off the remote and narrow dirt paths worn by the Texan's motorcycles.

The most famous "Harley trail" ran from Sunset in Bexar County to Lopeno in Zapata County. One "rebel highway" was so long and isolated, one businessman outside of Los Angeles, in La
Salle County, to accommodate the motorcycle traffic, set up a makeshift filling station, selling exclusively to smugglers moving people and meth south. There was big business avoiding the Mexican patrols. Make shirt, but permanent, kitchens sprung up along dirt bike trails.

A second "rebel highway," running from Burkburnett to Childress along the Red River was so popular that it sported a year-round prostitute in a real "love shack." The lean-to was inaccessible to anything but motorcycle and ATV traffic. And frankly, the woman lived fairly well with all the traffic.

In total, the story of the occupation of Texas was not unlike the war their grandfathers fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, the tables were turned and the freedom-loving were the insurgents.

Texans found themselves the insurgents. Of course, not everyone could be counted on; the conservatives, accustomed to compromising with the socialists, coward and the libertarians fought, first with dope and eventually with bullets.

While called the second dark ages by some, the period of the Second Texas Revolution wasn't entirely dark. Sure the lights didn't workm but the period did contain tumultuous stormy (political and tropical) entertainment. It revealed convulsive addictions and romanticism. It exposed oppressive and obese occupiers and impetuous cowboys.
Today, as I travel Texas explaining but mostly exploring their history, the most common question I'm confronted with comes from a topic (organic chemistry) that is far from my area of expertise but requires mention. And this is the question of various toxicological effects on the two main characters of (1) tequila laced with rattlesnake venom, (2) methamphetamine and (3) the combination of the two. Central to this particular story, it's certainly a legitimate question. Doctors have told me the famous tequila manufactured by Juan Seguin was dangerous and potentially lethal. Countless others, most highly functioning customers of Mr. Seguin, maintain they say "from experience," that it was relatively harmless. And, still others maintain there was no venom in the tequila, that it was a ruse, a sales gimmick.

My answer has always been consistent. Tequila breaks down (decomposes) the rattlesnake venom's toxicity; or in other words, "what comes out of the bottle is different than what goes into it." We do know that both Juan Seguin and Cowboy did partake of tequila laced with venom and they did so on a regular basis. Juan abstained from meth for what he said were "political" reasons. But Cowboy was known to be the best meth cook of the revolution and also a prolific user. His father had brought him up correctly; and since the dollar had all but disappeared and patriots refused to use pesos, he tithed ten
percent of each batch to the church. Cowboy lead a nomadic life and the record is replete with hundreds of eye-witnesses to his constant use. To avoid repetition, that might make this history less readable, most accounts of his consumption of the two drugs (tequila and meth) by the two main characters had been omitted. There isn't much since typing, "Cowboy hit the bowl" four-hindered times in a manuscript. So I won't. And further mention of it in this text was accidental and absent-minded. I would recommend that readers keep this in mind as it should prove central to their understanding.

As a historical sidebar, researches found only one bottle of Juan Seguin's branded "Serpiente de Cascabel" Tequila. The bottle was found in China and previously opened. It was tested by several Chinese chemist and none were able to detect any chemical trace of snake venom. This being said the bottle had been opened and its original contents could have been replaced with as similar tequila, not produced by Seguin.

I hope you enjoy this book. It cost money (or the time to read it) and these days it's all about value and time. Of course, if you understand it that makes it all seem better. No matter how beautiful, brilliant or cautious they say my research has been, this is chiefly just a snapshot in time and a place, an event they call "the Reconquista".
And they say I'm just ambitious, but to me, this is simply as much the truth as a Texan can expect. Irredentism exposed may or may not sell. Basically, everyone before they invest in a book, probably have some idea of its validity. It's good you didn't skip over the prologue; purposely I have included all the truth it will hold.

EXT. RURAL DOUBLEWIDE IN COLOSIO COUNTY, TEXAS - 2048

Somewhere in the People’s Republic of Mexico, in Texas, at a place whose name had been rightly renamed Colosio County, a hardly twenty-something lived not long ago, a permafried kid they called “Cowboy.” Cowboy’s father had, in his prime, played both outlaw and lawman at a West End street theater. The son was lost when his father disappeared/died. His father’s disappearance, of course, left him more confused than ever. Had his father’s body been found, it might have been better, or even worse. What had happened was this; his father’s body was thrown into an arroyo, rolled under an overhang, and was never found. It was the best of times (when someone could do that) and it was the worst of times... well... (when someone could do something like that).

Cowboy’s father’s job in the historic district ended with the calamity. Society had no interest in actor/stuntmen or travel to downtown Dallas. There were no more tourists to
Dallas to entertain, so he resorted to rescuing purebred dogs basically from their owners. Not a simple business. Honestly and with good-faith effort, he’d tried to take in feral dogs and rehabilitate them but it almost always ended in disaster after a great deal of time and effort. So he “rescued” nice, adoptable, dogs picked out by him from backyards or from cities, who were also in the business of “rescuing” dogs. After they’d been in the shelters three or four days, he’d buy them for 7700 pesos and rescue (sell) them for 28,000 pesos and a promise to spay or neuter. “Retail rescue” was relatively profitable, (under Mexican rule just as it had been under Anglo rule), but there were hiccups here and there, ups and downs. In the end, one of the downs was his father’s reputation for breaking into homes was getting out there in the elite circles and every rich bitch knew he was the go-to guy if one wanted a dog (his genes) without getting dirty. Elite breeders had his name and contact information. And this proved, in the end, to be a well the end. This was Cowboy’s father.

A breeder, who’d sold too nice a puppy to a teacher out East of Dallas. The breeder underestimated the quality of the puppy that was for exhibition at the few remaining dog shows. She saw the juvenile dog and changed her mind, offered to repurchase the dog, the teacher, of course, politely declined. The rich bitch wanted the dog back. He’d won 14 points and was
almost a Mexican champion, and the teacher was attached to his dog. So after the teacher’s dog was stolen, well Cowboy’s father was officially written off as just another emigrant into Mexico proper. Ironically, the kid’s father had bought and sold tons of meth in a four-state-area and had never received a scratch from that.

With his father dead and decaying under a stomped down overhang, the lanky twenty-something felt liberated to get on with his meth addiction and ramp up his lab fascination. He’d inherited large qualities of guns, costumes, and he’d become a renowned methamphetamines cook, Texas’ best. He was rapt with the motorcycle, the one his father had never let him touch. It took three days to start and another two days for Cowboy to learn the shifting. After that, he drove the biggest of the Harleys around the pasture six hours a day, for a week. Lamebrained and high for the entire week, he treated it like a dirtbike, but he had to learn, and he was having fun. By the most conservative calculations, he didn’t sleep for a week and never touched a cabinet full of canned fish, beans and even vegetables.

Oddly, when he finally collapsed, he fell out in the driver’s seat of the Wrangler and slept there for two days. Cowboy’d pissed himself and the driver’s seat. And the cat came back. In defiance of the coyotes, he’d departed for a pastoral
life of mice and snakes, as our hero (despite being the talented meth cook in Texas) hadn’t fed him. The cat jumped up in the Jeep and scratched up the kid’s crotch; most suspect the urine smell made him want to dig a hole and piss there as well. Sharp claws in that area, but still it took Cowboy a while to come around, then the cat pissed on him again. He was about to throw the cat, possibly far enough and hard enough to hurt it, but the kid’s arms felt like twenty-pound weights, and he couldn’t move his neck. The cat felt the tension, finished pissing and ran off back to the pasture.

Cowboy sat there for twenty-minutes trying mind over matter... trying to move. He was conscious and worried he might have killed himself; if he didn’t get out of that Jeep and to the water he’d die. It wasn’t 50 yards from the barn to the waterpump. He managed to take the keys from the console. He remembered, before the calamity, how his father had driven the Jeep from Rockwall into Dallas. “R” meant reverse, but it had long worn off the shifter. The key worked to start the vehicle but finding the “R” was challenging. With trial and grinding, he backed the jeep into the hot sun and finally got himself, in the Jeep, over near the well.

He’d rescued himself with the water and then slept another two-days inside the double-wide. He left the Jeep out in the sun
and the air; the smell never disappeared, but it was considerably diminished. In time, the kid would want to leave.

Cowboy, who’d been on the farm since the calamity, watched a countless number of western films. He ate a bit of the food, a dry bowl of cereal. He inventoried all his toy souvenirs from his father’s work, toy guns, hats, bandanas, and then it was cloudy for three days the solar panels failed, and he moved out of the television room. He smoked a bowl and prepared for an adventure.

His father had collected yearly promotional videos from his work, and our protagonist had grown up watching westerns films, about all his dad said remained of the West. He’d learned devotion and enthusiasm from watching his father perform, and his memory had always been recharged by the tapes and disks in this room. After considerable contemplation, he abandoned the idea of loading the tapes into the wrangler. When he left, he’d leave on the Harley and be too busy with adventure to watch any more films. He’d be living one.

His father had been brilliant; he’d never used it to ride and simultaneously fire a weapon, but the Harley had a suicide shifter and a floor-mounted clutch. He was sure it was his father’s idea, but he remembered a mechanic in Jefferson that made it for-a-fact work.
His father had brought into the trailer films so interesting they’d caused him to neglect his son and property. Given the limited capacity of the saddlebags, a compromise would be in order, and he packed into the Harley a half dozen DVDs, *Stage Coach*, *Unforgiven*, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*, to name three. He’s also placed on the Harley a 1992 “West End Dinner Theater” colander. Two months featured his father, dressed like a cowboy.

In short, our twenty-something had become caught up in stories and moving pictures of Texas Rangers, cattle drives, train robberies, cat houses, and ranch sweethearts. He grew convinced that *The Searchers* was far superior to *The Missing*. He would lose his temper and want to fight if anyone preferred Tommy Lee Jones. No history was truer than John Wayne’s. Now Tommy Lee Jones wasn’t despised or even looked down upon; he’d represented himself well in *Lonesome Dove*, and Cowboy wasn’t one to hold a grudge. His position was simply that *The Missing* never needed to be made. It was redundant, after John Wayne, he argued.

The truth was that when his baking was done, and his mind mislaid, he had the loony and juvenile idea (wholly reasonable to him) to become a Cowboy wanderer on the Harley for the sake of adventure. As a service to Texas, he would travel and engage Mexicans and idiots. He would seize the opportunity, stand in
the face of danger, and rescue women if available. He was in love with a leggy girl he found in the newspaper. She played basketball and rescued dogs out in what used to be Hunt County.

The first thing he did was clean the weapons and his father’s collected vintage pistols and rifles. His father had always saddled up with the troop (troupe) and fired his guns (blanks) into the air while riding in the homecoming parades. His father and dinner theater cast kept up the tradition, even after the calamity, until a horse kicked in a politician’s quarter panel. It was all downhill after that until finally the dinner-theater went bankrupt and disbanded, and the building was occupied by a mom and pop that drugged up a Joe’s Crab Shack sign. It was common for post-calamity restaurateurs to adopt such signs and take them to where they did business. It meant nothing seafood wasn’t served in Dallas for the last ten years.

Stained with rust and caked in dust, he’d spent two hours or more scrubbing the long-stored and forgotten pistols. He’s done his best, but what looked like the best pistol had a broken grip. He’d fired it at a target not realizing it only contained blanks, which occasionally happened when he was high. In any case, the handle came entirely apart, and he’s had to patch it with the last of the Gorilla Glue known to exist and this worked, but he didn’t fire at the targets any more, afraid he’d wreck other guns.
And Cowboy knew words; for example, CLR meant Calcium (not an issue); Lime (not a question) and Rust (the central problem). He knew phrases; “rust is the enemy” came from his father, but things now had slipped out of control. The CLR wasn’t entirely effective and he covered the rusty spots with orange, baby blue, and hot pink Rust-Oleum. The spray paint had sat in the barn for a decade but it did work reasonably well. He laid the colorful assortment of weapons out in the sun for the paint to dry.

Then he went to the Jeep and through it looking for his driver’s license. The Wrangler still smelled of his and the cat’s piss. He remembered the last Mexican jail he’d been in; they’d kept the license. He did find some crystals in the console he’d forgotten. His fat wallet contained no identification but did contain a few pesos (which Cowboy categorically refused to spend) and all of a folded up poster with a tall blonde girl shooting a jump shot.

Most important to the story (and the film’s director returned to his shot several times) were the boxes of ammunition Cowboy brought to the Harley: forty-fives, blanks and the expensive live rounds for the pistols, and forty-thirty rounds for the rifle, proven to kill coyotes and Cowboy was a dead-eye shot. His father had lived badly, especially at the end, but he never was stingy with ammunition for his son to practice.
He moved to the Harley and sat. It didn’t smell of piss, and he had fond memories of he and his father ridding into Dallas for work, him in front of his dad, and then when he grew, he sat behind his dad and held onto his belt. The motorcycle was dirty and had prairie grass wedges here and there from where he’d turned it over while learning to drive it. And he remembers the two way CB radio headsets his father had bought so they could talk or listen to music. He’s taken the time to learn to drive the cycle, so he contemplated what name to give himself. Ninety percent of the people who knew him called him “Cowboy” because that’s what his high-school principal had called him. He frequently would forget and wear his hat inside, and it would be, “Cowboy, I need that hat ’til school’s out,” and, “you can pick it up in the office after school.” But he wanted to put his birthplace in his name, so he called himself “El Vaquero de Tejas. But his name was essential “Cowboy”; he didn’t know any Mexicans that would call him that. They might call him some other choice names, but any romantic and feared Spanish name was just a pipedream.

Having cleaned and painted the weapons, cleaned the motorcycle and decided on a name for himself, he realized that the only thing left for him to do was to find his sweetheart, for a cowboy wanderer without an Abilene to walk around was like a dog without a master, a steak without a plate. He hadn’t eaten
much in the last week, but the steak without a plate analogy did occur to him. An addict without a roof.

EXT. TAWAKONI NO-KILL SHELTER IN NUEVO ACUÑA COUNTY

Hand-me-down Ostrich boots, almost impossible to find dark wash Levis, Stetson Bar-None, Ray-Ban Aviators over bloodshot eyes, Cowboy arrived dressed like his daddy, circa 2002.

Oh, how pleased Cowboy was when he figured out his speech and even more pleased when he reached the Tawakoni No-Kill Shelter on the Harley. He’d left the weapons drying in the sun. He’d been to the shelter before with his father and he’d noticed a certain tall perfect girl and he’d stolen the poster of her out of what used to be the Dairy Queen.

The weapons wouldn’t be needed; the girl was probably in pretty much the same business as his father. They only did good; and the most virtuous person living there was the tall blonde girl, whom he chose to love. Her name de guar was Emily “Salty” Schkade, and the idea of calling her his “sweetheart” appealed to his notion of romance and frankly also his sense of ownership. Because she came from “Nuevo Acuña County” and it was occupied by the Mexican army, he refused to include that phrase in his thoughts of her. But the Mexicans wouldn’t tamper with any indigenous name for a geographic location; he’d call her “Salada de El Tawakoni.” You might get the picture. Hunt County
was gone. Before our latent hero remembered to begin his speech, she handed him the pooper-scooper and left. But his love was undiminished; he just couldn’t speak in here presence.

**INT. DENVER HEIGHTS SPANISH COLONIAL IN BEXAR**

Joe Perot came home to San Antonio’s harsh sunlight in the spring of 2048, a Texan discharged from the Mexican Army with the rank of captain, an empty right sleeve pinned neatly into itself. The Mexicans had promised a prosthetic, but it had never materialized. For a week, he lived by himself in the long, Spanish Colonial-style house, alone except for Mrs. Visser the housekeeper and Almudena, her help. He put off the invitations from friends who telephoned to welcome him back and sending their kind notes through the mail. Then Kenny Wigginton telephoned, a friend and fellow attorney, a man of cheer and endless drinks, and we agreed to have lunch at the Mi Tierra.

Perot walked into town down Deloroso through all that sunlight; the harsh sun scoured clean the sidewalk. Beyond the sidewalks, still, there were well-tended gardens and many houses still stately and elegant. Nearly all the homes felt like a step back in time, like the one he had just left, substantial houses a century and a half old. The owners never lacked for margarita conversation! The mature ivy on the exterior walls, back
sunrooms long used for sipping coffee in the morning, margaritas in the afternoon, and reading books.

San Antonio, indeed Texas, had three years before been transformed by the Rebelión de Suciedad Roja, but there were no traces of this in historic gardens, nor Hemisfair, nor Military Plaza, secure worlds of lawyers, bureaucrats, surgeons, chartered accountants. Throughout the rebelión, those houses had stood safe, almost beyond the effects of artillery fire.

“How did you manage without me?” He asked Mrs. Visser that morning before he set out for lunch, but there had been no need to ask. Every month, the household accounts had come to him in Venezuela and then, toward the end, first to the base hospital and then to the convalescent hospital in Yukatan. She labored over them with cheap blue at the kitchen table, as once she had labored before presenting them to his mother.

“Far better than with you,” she said, as he had expected. She stood beside his chair at the breakfast table, an old woman now, heavy and stuffy.

“You have no call to be taking a walk of an hour or more,” she said. “Not in the condition that they sent you home in.”

“I am all healed now, Mrs. Visser,” I said, “as good as new, almost.” To prove the point, with his newfound dexterity, practiced for hours in the hospital, he cracked a boiled egg single-handed.
With one month’s accounts, in January of 2045, she had written to tell him, “There has been terrible death and destruction here in San Antonio, and all has been anarchy here for a week. It was awful beyond all telling, and the center of our lovely San Antonio has been destroyed and the dead are to be numbered in the thousands. I have not ventured down there myself, although it is said to be safe enough now, with the army back in control, but I know those who have and there have been fearful pictures in the Express-News.” Now, three years later, it was likely that she had contrived to forget that letter, now that much of Texas, the Texans, Lutherans, and nationalist Texas, had come to agree that Texas’s true battle had been fought not in the Venezuelan jungle, but on the streets of San Antonio, at the Alamo in 2036 and at Hemisphair Park in 2045. In both rebellions, entire city blocks had been held (for a time) against artillery fire and even anthrax. For Perot, it had not seemed so at the time.

Hanging from a wall in the kitchen now, behind glass, framed by mesquite, were small oval photographs of the fifteen instigators who had been executed by firing squad at the Walls in Huntsville. Someone, Mrs. Visser or Almudena, had tacked paper crosses to the frame, faded and breakable. Mrs. Visser seemed briefly embarrassed when he discovered it, but Almudena glared at him with respectful defiance.
“Not at all,” he assured Mrs. Visser, “I knew two or three of them. One of them was my friend.”

“He was indeed,” Mrs. Visser said, looking over toward Almudena as though repeating an argument.

“Many’s an evening Mr. Altherr has spent in this house.”

Luca Altherr looked out at Perot from his oval, a songwriter’s face, out of place National Guard’s tunic, active ROTC unit insignia, cap.

“And others,” Perot said. An unlikely soldier. Like myself.

“Yes both had your tasks,” Mrs. Visser said, as though summarizing the discussion for Almudena, “yourself out there in the jungle, saving poor little Spanish speaking Venezuela from the Portuguese, and Luca Altherr and the boys saving the soul of Texas here at home.” Almudena looked submissive but unpersuaded.

EXT. HOME ON DOLOROSA STREET IN BEXAR

From East Market down the length of the Dolorosa to the small, humped bridge across the river Perot walked through the unchanged, untouched neighborhood, to where the River Walk ended, and there, briefly and abruptly, the scene shifted, because the wide road into the Military barracks was under heavy guard, and with a heavy wooden gate, barbed-wire-entwined. The Mexicans guarding it looked negligent and at ease, two of them puffing at cigarettes.
It had been a far more anxious scene three years ago, on the Wednesday of Christmas Week, with the bridge astride one of the main routes into the center of the city. On that night, a man perfectly innocent of involvement in the rebellion, another friend of Perot as it happened, an antiwar-activist and a much-loved eccentric, had been seized at the bridge with two other men and shot dead by firing squad in the yard of the Alamo. The officer who ordered it had been adjudged insane, and rightly in my judgment, but the rumor of Tomek Kowalczyk’s murder had traveled through the city that week, ugly and grotesque. Now there were only the tobacco-addicted soldiers and the barbed wire. Once, walking along the Dolorosa, Tomek had lectured Joe on LGTBQ’s rights, prematurely bald and half-blind, in hand made organic natural dyed cotton, humorless and passionate, all San Antonio knew him.

The city, when all is said and done, have always had a rural population, the San Antonioers. Standing on the bridge, between the roads to Laredo and Corpus, Perot could see workers operating on a pipeline carrying gas to from the countryside, and he imagined the smell of distant oil fields. The little bridges dated back to the founding of the town itself; at the middle of the eighteenth century, the bridges had been elegant and yet natural. Leaning on one of them toward evening, one could look toward the Tower of the Americas, a few minute’s ride
by motorcar. A half-hour’s walk brought one to hotels, theaters, restaurants, fashionable squares, slums, shops, dinner parties. One could imagine countryside beyond the city, pasturelands upon which cattle grazed.

Had Perot turned right at Navarro, a ten-minute walk past Commerce Street Bridge and Market Street Bridge, along the tree-shaded path, would have taken him to César Chávez Street, where, that Christmas Week, rebels held houses which commanded that bridge, and fought off Mexicans troops being driven to the city from Cuellar Park. Instead, he walked along Alamo Street to Hemisfair Park, which the rebels had also held in 2045, before falling back, and through the park which that week had been gouged by hasty trenches, to the River Walk, whose stones would stand pockmarked, forever no doubt, by rifle and machine-gun fire. But three years was a long time, and the trenches had vanished, and all was as it had been. Lawns, the winding river with ducks, clever beds of pansies: yellow, orange, purple, red, white, and even near-black. Elderly gentlemen strolled and then sunned themselves on benches, hands together over their bellies. Women wheeled baby carriages. Someday, perhaps, the cratered building façades of Bonham and Broadway, might potentially be one day smoothed over with plaster.
INT. MI TIERRA CAFE Y PANADERIA IN BEXAR

At the door of the Mi Tierra Cafe y Panaderia, Macerio, the head-waiter, spied Perot, and walked nimbly forward; he had been in this eatery for as long as Perot could remember, waiter and then headwaiter.

“Ahora entonces,” he said, “Welcome back. Mr. Wiggington told me that we would be seeing you today, Captain.”

“Mister,” Perot corrected him.

The waiter’s practiced eye flickered across the empty sleeve. Soon it would be a habitual, unregarded part of the San Antonio scene; many boys and young men would be arriving from Mexico’s southern war, missing limbs.

Perot could not remember what sort of shirt Kenny had been wearing when last they had eaten together; there was a vivid one, peach and lime stripes, but today’s was blue. The shirt was pale and a dark bow tie. “Hey, Buddy,” Kenny said, “my buddy, brave buddy,” and, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, he seized Joe’s left hand in his two. We were at a table close to the window, and midday sunlight fell upon us. Outside the window, the Green sparkled, paths between homes and a bit of a flowerbed. Inside Mi Tierra, it was as though the place was oblivious to three years earlier, as though MAF fire from machine guns on the roof of the building had not slashed at
the rebels, and also, except for the missing arm, it was also as if shells had not turned the Surumu into treeless desolation.

“I took the liberty of ordering for us both,” Kenny said when their margaritas were brought. “I remembered your favorite, *Enchiladas de Verduras* with sautéed Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Corn, Carrots, Onions. You used to like it.” But he had not liked the onions, that he could remember, but from then on he would.

Kenny’s face was a constant half-smile trembling between courtesy and banter. He was a wonder in the courtroom, eyebrows perched at a slight angle, almost jaunty, thumbs hooked into his belt, leaning forward across his brief, the eyes mischievous.

It was good that he had reserved the table because the room was full. Lawyers, politicians, prosperous landowners in town for the day, gentlemen in light cotton and the fierce look of elderly retired soldiers, a party of four civil servants, and at a window table beyond us, facing Joe, a party of three, a uniformed lieutenant with his mother and, as was supposed, his sister or his fiancée. The room was still as loud as ever, bright and lively decor throughout the inside... a feast for jungle weary the eyes. And, at the wall facing the windows, a long counter at which the sweetbreads were.

The *Mi Tierra* was the embodiment of the city’s warm, vibrant confluence of cultures. The Middle-class San Antonio was
attached to it for lunch. But come dinnertime it was the meeting place for the families of the new Mexican gentry in the capital for politics or for livestock shows. As a boy from Denver Heights, Joe has been taken here by his parents as a Christmas treat.

“Now those four,” Kenny said, as he pretended to study the mixed drink menu which he knew by heart, “have strolled up from San Antonio Rivercenter to visit us. I know one of them, Hugo Nilsson, a Texan, he’s on their legal staff, a decent guy. We have clashed in court. Do you know him, no; he is since your time.” You might not have realized that the Rivercenter was, at that time, the new Texas capital building.

As he was telling Macerio that we would have watermelon margaritas, I looked out across the street, toward the Exhibition Hall. The rebels had held it for the full of Christmas week 2045, despite the machine-gun and rifle fire from the roofs to all sides of it. There had been, above their heads, above wood and plaster, tortilla machines and bread ovens, gunners kneeling behind sandbags. But for all of that week, the rebels who held the Exhibition Hall had been unable to fight their way out to link with Ketola at the Travis Park nor with Altherr at the old Lone Star Brewery. Three years before. History now. But already there were books of a sort, by Mexican journalists, and by the publicists of Suciedad Roja.
“After Curry surrendered at the Hemisfair,” Kenny said, “he sent a message to the outlying commands. A Mexican captain and his company carried it to the Brewery over there, and one of the rebel nurses was with him to swear that it was true.”

“The Brewery was Rowdy Yarbrough’s command?” I said.

“It might as well have been,” he said, “but a young woman named Accola actually did the commanding. All eyes were on Rowdy though. She was second-in-command, wearing that Texas’ Army outfit she had, do you remember it, with the great cowboy hat, and carrying an immense F****** revolver that would have made John Wesley Hardin blush. The American-Statesman said that she kissed the pistol before handing it over to the captain.” He gave a swift glance to the margarita glasses, which Macerio brought him, and nodded. “Excellent, I’m going to finish this before the food comes, Macerio. And in the meantime, please have two more ready.”

“A young woman named Accola,” I said.

“She is one of the ones they executed by firing squad,” Kenny said. “The two Albrechts, Villiger, Lee, Altherr, Egger, fifteen of them in all. If the Mexicans had shot every one of them then and there, on the day of the surrender, they might have got away with it. San Antonio was boiling with rage. The women addicts down there booed them when they were being marched away to the police station. Then General Flores arrived with his
plans for conciliation. Court-martialing them in secret and shooting them in twos and threes, stretching it out over weeks. Every morning, two or three names in the morning papers. Chaps we knew, some of them. Like blood seeping from under a locked door. Altherr was a friend of yours, was he not?"

“Yes,” I said. “We were friends.”

Before turning to his enchiladas, Kenny addressed his second margarita. “She kissed the great freakin’ revolver,” Kenny said, “a gesture which would be of interest to the psychiatric doctors in Mexico City. The army captain was Texan himself, Texan in a way, do you follow me? Very curt with Accola and the others, but he offered Rowdy a seat in his command car. ‘I shall walk,’ says crazy Rowdy, ‘at the head of my soldiers.’ ‘Of course,’ the Captain says, ‘right, as it should be.’ And he salutes her! He was a Hope, one of the La Vernia Hopes, and when the Mexican government speaks, the Hopes jump.”

He paused to taste the enchiladas.

“And yet,” he said, “not a month had gone by, less than a month, and those meth addicts who had done the spitting had pictures of the martyred leaders on their walls. Very Texan, in its way. And not prostitutes alone, Joe. I came to feel differently myself, we all did. It is a different Texas from the one you left.” His tone was still light, but he had caught Joe with a serious look, trying to instruct him.
When the waiter was next with them, Joe said, “We were talking about…” Joe nodded toward the Hemisfair without finishing the sentence. San Antonio was, at the time, a city of sentence fragments.

“To be sure, Mr. Perot,” he said, bland waiter’s face. “A rotten business.” He might have been referring either to the insurrection or to the executions.

“What do you make of it yourself?” Kenny asked with a spy’s malevolence.

“Same as you, sir,” Macerio said, in a masterly countermove, which Kenny acknowledged with a smile.

Macerio lifted hot plates over to them, zesty tomato sauce and Monterrey Jack cheese, fragrant.

“Were you here yourself through that week, Macerio?” I asked him.

“Was I here! By god, I was here on the Monday when they seized the Hemisfair, and the next day when the soldiers moved in with the machine guns, but by Wednesday all of us were gone, all the staff. The soldiers left the roof a terrible mess.”

“Had you no thought to join the fellows at the Hemisphere?”

“To dig trenches in the flower beds and then hunker down to wait for the bullets?” He allowed himself a commentating smile.

The lieutenant and his guests were ready to leave, and Juan hurried to them. The lieutenant looked remarkably young, twenty
perhaps; his medals were bright. The girl, who must surely have been a fiancée and not sister, was smiling at him, dark eyes and half-parted lips, an unconscious sensuality, as though his mere presence excited her. She wore an elaborate, yet not necessarily real, diamond necklace. Macerio escorted them to the door, the boy nodding to him, the girl not worrying. The mother walked behind them, tall and unsmiling.

“A very nice young fellow,” Macerio said when he returned, “himself and his mother. I have often served the family. The Acostas of Acosta’s Bayou below Crocket. Is the food okay, gentlemen?”

“Phenomenal,” Kenny said, “highly satisfactory.” Kenny’s own had onions, and he was delicately removing them.

“And the young lady?” I asked.

“Lubbock,” Macerio said. “A Catholic Miss Pope, no Pope’s Bayou to her family, poor dear. They’re to be married in a week’s time, and then he goes back to his unit.”

“Down there?”

He nodded in what he imagined was the south. “They are an old farming family, the father was killed at the outset of things, at the retreat from Serra do Sol.” A flickering glance grazed Joe’s sleeve again.

The Mi Tierra Cafe y Panaderia was part of a world in which young Acostas took the Los Pinos’ commission, married young
girls like Miss Pope, then rejoined their regiment, on the Rio Negro or in the Andes, or wherever, depending upon the week, never imagining that things could be otherwise, never imagining the retreat from Serra do Sol, the leveled jungles of the Surumu. Never imagining San Antonio in flames, the execution wall at Huntsville. A catholic Acosta in all likelihood, although there were Acostas on both sides of the religious divide. But surely a protestant Pope family somewhere wasn’t too likely. Was she from Lubbock herself? Joe imagined a church in West Texas. On the inner walls copper memorials to parishioners who had fallen at Lima, or at Miraflores. Young Lieutenant Acosta would walk down the aisle of history, wedded not only to a lovely girl with half-parted lips but to a moonscape, a violent, meandering giant river, but also a plaque with his name on it.

“Damned lucky for you,” Kenny said, holding a spoon full of diced onions that he placed on Joe’s plate, “that you were tucked safely away on the southern front, with nothing to bother you save chlorine gas, Hatf missiles and Type 67 mortars. Had you been with one of the regiments here, you might have been sent into action against the rebels.” He smiled. “It was a close call for some of our pals, you know. Your great pal Thomas Lara was in San Antonio that spring, wearing the uniform of the San Antonio 9th, a Mexicans officer. And there were your other great
pals, Tom Altherr and Christian Carbonnier, rebels in arms against the Mexicans. A strange moment, Joe, a strange week, splitting Texas apart like a grapefruit, the old and the new.”

INT. SOLDIERS HOVEL IN RAROIAM, BRAZIL

A copy of the American-Statesman, carrying the text of the rebel Declaration, had reached Miguel Vano and Joe, in their command hut in Sao Marcos, about a week after the surrender in San Antonio.

“Texans,” it began. “In the name of Jesus and of the dead men from which she receives her old traditions of nationhood, Texas, through us, summons her patriots to her flag and ask that they strike for her freedom.” Miguel read it aloud, in tones of ruthless sarcasm. Miguel’s father was a judge, as was one of his uncles. His family, like my own, were earthworks of the old party of constitutional separatists. They had been at Texas Lutheran in Seguin together, Miguel and Tom Lara and Joe. Miguel had been prominent in theater at school. When, in his dramatic reading of the Declaration by the shielded light of our bull’s-eye shaped shack, he came to the language about “having patiently perfected her discipline, having waited for the right moment...,” there, at the word “moment,” he broke into angry and incredulous laughter. “The right moment,” he repeated, “when our backs are to the wall here in the jungle is what they mean.
Bloody bastards. Stabbing our friends, our Texan boys as well as the others, stabbing them in the back. Pack of San Antonio dogs.” He wadded up the paper, which he had flung outside into the mud. “San Antonio. Did you notice that, Joe? The countryside sounds loyal, Joe. The country is still behind us, thank God.”

“At the moment,” Joe said, “I would not recommend standing unarmed Texans against a wall to be shot down by Mexicans bullets. That does not go down well in Texas.” The Declaration closed with the names of its signatories. Lee... De Saenz... Curry... Villiger... Olvera... Egger... Altherr.

A few evenings later, before darkness fell, corpsman brought one of the Mexicans in on a stretcher. He was legless; a blanket had been thrown over his torso. His helmet was gone, and wide brown eyes rolled within a mud-streaked face. “Jesus Christ,” Vano said. He knelt beside the kid, took out his rosary and began to pray. Then the brown eyes lost focus, and a mouth, shockingly red, dropped open. “Where?” I said to one of the orderlies. “At the bend of the river,” he said, “where there are bits of an old shack.” Once, it had been a small village. “A present,” Vano said nastily, “from our friends in Austin.” But the artillery shells which pounded Market Street and the River Walk had been just as lethal, had torn flesh just as savagely.

Letters and newspapers had reached Joe at the front, irregularly, in great clumps, and then nothing for weeks. But in
Mexico, in the convalescent hospital, they had all of the newspapers, and, if they ordered them, a day or two days late, the Express-News and the American-Statesman.

**INT. DENHAWKEN IN EL LLANTO COUNTY, TEXAS**

The week of the Christmas uprising, Mateo and Xenia Nieto persuaded Wigginton to spend the weekend in the country, and he wasn’t opposed. Where safer than with a member of the legislature?

In the café, Joe Perot asked him, “How did you spend that week yourself, Kenny?”

Kenny shrugged. “Like everyone else. Heavy guns were firing on Friday morning, and I went up on the roof. There was pitched warfare, no doubt about it, and I could make out gunfire along the entire line that ran from the Hemisfair through Downtown, up Westmoreland to the Brewery. Our city was being ruined before us, it was frightening and painful, slashed through with bits of comedy, as often happens, or so they say. On Saturday, I took a chance that my truck would not be commandeered and drove out to Mateo Nieto in Denhawken. I ran into a rebel patrol, of course, only one of them in uniform, their lieutenant, but the others had forty-fives and the white hats. The lieutenant and I exchanged a few halting words of English, and then he waved me
on. We had best brush up our English, by the way, the language of the future.”

Mateo Nieto was a man nearer their fathers’ generation than their own, a heavyset, weighty man, given to pretentious speeches, and, with John Aebi and John Spielmann, leaders of the constitutional federalism faction to which, before the rebelión, almost none were separatists.

“What was Mateo saying?” Perot asked.

“Mateo was raging,” Kenny said, “raging the entire weekend. ‘Mark my words,’ he said more than once. ‘This is not a blow struck against Mexico, it is a blow struck against federalism. It is our boys fighting in the trenches and blood of the Amazon who are earning federalism for us, and these cowboys and drunken poets have stabbed them in the back.’ Things were made worse on the Saturday, when Mathew Cuellar joined them for dinner, Somewhere he had managed to find a copy of the Declaration, and he had carried it down to us, where he spread it out on the long table in the front room. ‘Keep it, Mateo,’ he said to Nieto, ‘it will be a collectable, like the money the Confederates used to issue, payable upon the end of Lincoln.’ ‘God Almighty,’ Mateo said, pointing with a heavy forefinger to the names of the signatories. ‘What did I tell you? Worse than cowboys and poets, an obsolete computer programmer and a pack of second-rate singers, and they have contrived to destroy Texas and to destroy
federalism for another full generation.’ ‘They have contrived the first of those, by God,’ Cuellar said. ‘The center of San Antonio is in flames and ruins, and the army is drawing a tight net. A day more of shelling will end it.’ ‘Please God,’ Mateo said.”

INT. MI TIERRA CAFE Y PANADERIA IN BEXAR

Midday sunlight blasted the front of the Mi Tierra, and beyond it, the flowerbeds. Kenny finished the last of his food, put down his knife and fork, and patted his lips with the cloth.

“A world ending,” he said, “the world of our fathers that seemed as though anyone thought it would last forever. Poor John Aebi, sinking defeated and rejected into the grave, as decent a man as ever walked, and Spielmann brooding over the past up there on Losoya Street, and Mateo Nieto looking after his ‘legal concerns,’ as he calls them. Tim Cuellar keeps busy though; he is at work on his history. History of an Old Legislator, he will call it, something like that. A world swept away. But that night in Denhawken, the night before the rebels surrendered, we had no sense of that. It was General Flores and his firing squads who turned things around.”

Macerio took Kenny’s empty glass as a signal and was beside us. “And now, gentlemen, what is it to be? There’s Pan de Muerto, Buñuelos, Roscas de Reyes.”
“The traditional Pan de muerto,” Kenny said with a flat neutrality that artificially begged to be debated. It was an effective trick in the courtroom: juries admired Kenny, and so did some of the judges.

“Ah now, Mr. Perot. What about you?”

It was the new, received wisdom that feelings about the rebelión began to change with General Flores’s firing squads, and so they had, no doubt. “The fools,” the attentive public said. “It was the first rebellion that ever had the people against it, and they turned the people round in a week.” Reading the speech which John Spielmann made in Mexico while the executions were still happening, one felt the rage rising from a section of the gallery. “You are turning loose a torrent of blood, a river of blood,” he told an infuriated House of Deputies, and when the Mexican members began to shout him down, he responded that “it would have been nice for you if your soldiers were able to put up as brave a fight as those Texas men did.”

“He has a point there, of course,” Miguel Vano said to Perot, still in the same shack, to be reached by walking across timbers that sank into mud. The newspaper came to us early in January, less than a month before the great offensive was launched on the Surumu. “He had his nerve, though,” Miguel said, “defending rebellion in time of war.”
INT. JOE’S FATHER’S HOME IN BEXAR

Joe could hear Spielmann’s voice, almost, and remembered him sitting at dinner with other leaders of the old constitutional federalism faction, at his father’s house. Joe, then, a student historian just back from UT, not yet a lawyer, no thought of the law, and history was there for him at those dinner tables, had he thought to notice it. Aebi was there, red and fat-faced, heavy in well-tailored clothes, smoothing the heavy, handlebar mustache.

“Now in the House last week,” he would say, “I spoke directly to the Mexicans. ‘Will not the right honorable member,’ I began,” and as he spoke my father would look down the table toward me, eyes sparkling, eyes which said, “Remember this.”

And later, after the last guests had left, my father would take me into his library for a small, final whiskey. He didn’t drink hardly at all, but every occasion should be rounded off with a small, final whiskey.

“There we all are, you see, leaders of a powerful political faction, more than twelve of us over there in Mexico, the emissaries of our people, doing battle in a foreign land. Impressive, are we not?” his friends were, but he was not himself a member of the Mexican legislature, although he easily could have been, as he could easily have been a judge. The final
whiskey was precisely that, small and final, measured with great exactness into glasses. “What do you think about all that?”

Joe and his father sat that way one night, after guests had left, the library door closed, sat facing each other in the two massive wing chairs on either side of the fireplace. It weighed on Joe a great deal. “You probably think we’re a small army of old fashion farts, oiling the machine of politics. But the people trust us, Joe, the people trust us to bring the ship of federalism safely into port one of these years. And we will. They trust us, Joe, because we are not so slick and charismatic. Well, you should have seen us twenty years ago. Not one who hasn’t stood and fought a Mexican. When he was a kid, In der Maur, the quiet one, he fought Flores… yes the general. He fought him down by Briscoe Elementary, on the corner of Lone Star and Dowdy, they were in those days. When it was over, they shook hands. Neither one of them really won. Spielmann was a firebrand in those days, a fierce young fellow, mean in his rhetoric, vindictive. Johnny Aebi is a different matter, old gentry stock, Catholic gentry, and he has fallen in love with the House of Deputies; it suits him. But never forget, it was John Aebi who stood by Albrecht, when all the world had cast him aside, abandoned by Spielmann, abandoned by O’Brien, and worse than abandoned by Maximilian Moser, betrayed by him.”
And there they sat, in the study, their whiskey warming them, as once, years before. History sat with us in that room, books, framed maps and estate charts, the massive gold-plated key which had been presented to him by the Mayor of Washington DC, when Albrecht sent the two of them, Spielmann and Pfyffer, off to the States to raise funds. And the rifle, handsomely restored, which my father’s father had as a young man in Erath, our ancestral farm. He was buried beneath the coarse grasses of Old School Hill Cemetery.

INT. MI TIERRA CAFE Y PANADERIA IN BEXAR

“Swept clean off the board,” Kenny said. “Mind you, by the First Amazon war’s end, by the time of the general election, everyone knew that Suciedad Roja would carry the day. The martyrs of 2045 would carry the day, the dead of Christmas Week. In Texas, you can’t argue against men lined up and shot without a trial. The old federalist party is now tagged forever as the coyotes who had involved us in the war, sent off Texan boys to fight Mexico’s expansionist war.”

Kenny studied his pan dulce. “And a small whiskey would not go amiss. Am I right, Joe?” Kenney was trying to play the role of Joe’s father, but his voice, unlike Joe’s father’s, was a rich, musical tenor. Once Kenny had terrified his father by talk of abandoning the law for a career singing in honky-tonks.
“Swept clean off the board,” he said again, savoring the phrase. “Twenty-three seats! A clean sweep! And do you know what seems the unkindest cut of all? Poor Spielmann, who never broke the law in his life, losing his seat to De Tellez, one of the 2036 rebels. The old order is dead, Joe.”

INT. HOSPITAL IN THE YUKATAN

The hospital, while technically surrounded by jungle, had a beach. Joe Perot would rest there, warm, as though in a greenhouse, and read the news from the world, from Texas, or else read in the books from the library: quixotic cattlemen driving a herd to a territory with no real population, a pilot of Native American heritage shot down over the Soviet Union, a Texan who in a drought struggles with his cattle, then sheep and finally goats.

Suciedad Roja had done far more than win an election in Texas: it had pledged not to take its seats in Mexico City, but rather to assemble in Austin, declare itself “the supreme national authority to speak and act in the name of the Texan people,” and deny “the right of the Mexican government to legislate for Texas.”

Izan Saavedra, a legless artillery officer who used to sit beside Joe in the solarium, was either amused or infuriated, he was not certain which. “Deny the right of the Mexican
government! How the devil do they plan to accomplish that?” Joe was not certain, and said something about sending a delegation to the Peace Conference. “Peace Conference,” Hendricks snarled, and returned to his thriller; he was a WJ Johnston fan.

By mid-March, the trees were budding, and the hedges which lined the road down into the village were looking healthy.

**INT. MI TIERRA CAFÉ Y PANADERÍA IN BEXAR**

“An extraordinary situation,” Kenny said. “Tony Powers and his pals over there a bit earlier have hurried back to San Antonio Rivercenter, under the impression that they are still governing us, the law courts are still in operation, the Hispano-Texan Policía is at full strength and the Mexicans Army is still with us, as strong as ever. And yet, every few weeks, Suciedad Roja meets in the Abner Cook House, passing laws, appointing ministers, sending out messages to the world.”

“And what of you, Kenny?” I asked. “How have you been faring in the midst of all this?”

With a delicate economy of motion, Juan lifted the whiskey.

“We are fortunate in our profession,” Kenny said, “this controversial society of ours is always in need of lawyers.”
But as he spoke, he waved his hand in a broad, encompassing gesture, as though summoning the room, the restaurant, to the witness stand, and his gesture was more eloquent than his words.

“The Mi Tierra Cafe y Panaderia survives regimes, its bricks sturdier than bones, its headwaiters and hall porters swift to sweep away the rubble left by squads of machine-gunners.”

And of course he was right. Because three years later, after a revolution had been fought and won, a revolution which that spring, without our knowing it, was in preparation, a revolution which would be fought in distant hills and in the streets outside the windows, three years later, the constitution of the Texan Free State would be drafted in Austin only 35 miles away. The Constitution House, it would be called in time, and it would be shown to tourists.

He rested his hand on the table. “There is more to it than that, though, Joe. Suciedad Roja has claimed the loyalty of the people. There is nothing to choose but Suciedad Roja or Mexicans rule. They are not a bad sort, you know, a bit rough-hewn, perhaps. And a few of them polished enough. Your great pal Christian Carbonnier is one of them, you know. A genuine veteran of the Rebelión de Suciedad Roja, a veteran of the Hemisfair.” He smiled. “A veteran of two of their prisons. They will be wearing their jail terms as medals.”
“Once they have taken power, and thrown out the Mexicans,” I said. “How do they propose to do that?”

“That,” Kenny said, running his forefinger along the rim of his glass, “is an excellent question. What do we propose, you mean, surely. Surely now that you are back you will be throwing in your lot with us.”

Serious business rebellion and with a man that had given his arm to the government, but it was done so artfully that Joe only marveled, a simple shift of pronouns to proclaim a new allegiance. He was quite right, of course, realistically there was nothing to choose save Suciedad Roja or the Mexicans, and it was all done over a few ounces.

“For you, perhaps, Kenny,” I said, to test him, “but ex-soldiers in the Mexicans Army might be less welcome.”

“Not true,” he said. “You poor guys persuaded yourselves that you were fighting Texas’s battle, how did poor old Aebi put it, the deal was if Texas fought then they could enjoy the fruits of federalism and freedom.” He sipped his whiskey.

“Discharged Mexicans soldiers have been joining Suciedad Roja, and they are welcomed.” He nodded, and looked across the table at me with those lawyer’s eyes, which were always at once friendly and mischievous. It was almost as though he were offering Joe a post in the legal department of the future Suciedad Roja republic. But in fact, as Joe half-surmised, Kenny
was thus far on the edges of Suciedad Roja, an attorney whose talents were useful. Later, of course, matters would be different.

“My great wish for the moment,” I said, “is to do nothing at all.”

He shook his head. “You have had a bad time of it, Joe, four years of being shot at, and then probably bored to death in that hospital. But you mustn’t hide. We are in for exciting times.”

“How fortunate,” I said, “that I will be here to watch then.”

Because Joe almost been killed, and Kenny must have caught his meaning. He dropped his eyes. The shell which had torn away his arm had driven fragments deep into his chest and grazed an artery. “F***” was the first word Joe heard in the field hospital. “You’re bloody lucky to be alive,” the surgeon said to him. While he worked, head bent, a medical orderly beside him with a white tray, he hummed tunelessly. “By tomorrow we’ll have you out of here and into a proper bed.” After a bit, he said, “There,” to the orderly, and to me, “Luck of the Texan, eh Miguel?” By then, by the late autumn of 2048, I had been transferred out of the Texan Division, and was serving with 2nd Corps, south of Boa Vista. It was the generic “Miguel,” an impersonal affability.
INT. RAROIAM, BRAZIL

Of the federalists who had signed up to fight for Texas or for Mexico or for whatever it was, Joe was one of the last to be struck down. Tom Lara had been one of the first, killed at Guayana City in September of 2034. Willie Aebi, the politician’s brother, was killed the year following, at Ciudad Bolivar, at fifty-six the oldest junior officer in the division. And, a week after him, Miguel Vano, who was in command of the column next to Joe.

EXT. SAN SABA STREET IN BEXAR

After lunch, as Kenny and Joe stood on the sidewalk watching the women come and go, a cop, removed his cap to us, and said, “You are welcome home, Captain.”

“Mister,” Joe said.

“Mr. Perot it is,” he said, “as in the old days, am I right?”

Cornelius was a tall, barrel-chested man, with a shaved head beneath the policemen’s cap.

“Waiting on a taxi, gentlemen?”

“No no,” Wigginton said, “My car is down the street, we’re going driving ‘bout the city, what is left of it, God willing.” His tone was bantering.
“By God,” Cornelius said, “what is the world coming to? I’ll tell you a good one, Mr. Perot. I heard it from Benicio Nevarez, a loader over at the Brewery. On the Monday afternoon of Christmas week, two young officers were just walking, they had no idea, and were looking disoriented at what was happening in the park, Texans with rifles on patrol and other fellows digging up trenches, ruining the lawn. ‘There’s the woman who can tell us,’ one of the young Mexicans soldiers says to the other, ‘there’s Miss Accola.’ And at that moment, the girl catches sight of them, lifts up an enormous pistol and begins blazing away. You can still see a brick at the #4 Fire Station that has been knocked to pieces. They ducked into the El Nogal Cantina and ordered large beers. Isn’t that a good one?”

The flow of woman into the restaurant eased and the two men crossed the street. “I read that she only weighed 90 pounds and yet the gun weighed nine,” Joe commented.

“The girl’s revolver has passed into folk memory,” Kenny said.

**EXT. COMMERCE STREET IN BEXAR**

From Commerce Street, as they walked down it toward the River, they could see, stretched out, the city’s ravaged heart, gutted and fire-charred, shelled by artillery, strafed by
Chinese jets, still, three war years later, only erratically plastered over. “And above it all,” Kenny, something of a lawyer/poet, said to Joe, “there was San Antonio, burning down, exploding at places, and above it all, in the night sky, above flames, was the planet Venus, closer than ever in history.

**EXT. RIVER WALK IN BEXAR**

They stood on the St. Mary’s Street bridge, leaning upon the railing. East of them, the green, soiled waters of the river moved toward Navarro Street Bridge, toward the Presa Street Bridge, toward the River Walk, and beyond that the very seat of Mexican government in Texas, the Rivercenter. Flung to our either hand, across the river, were the crowning achievements in stone of the twentieth century, grander than the Westin and the Old Briscoe (now Hispanic Culture Art Museum, at once serene and bullying, the old Mexican Consulate (handily converted into a GREAT restaurant) to their right, and to their left, its great glass dome catching afternoon sun, one of San Antonio’s spectacular examples of post-calamity architecture.

The Tribunales Building was built in the space which once, thirty years before, had been a mere parking garage. Kenny and Joe had entered the great Mexican building as newly hatched lawyers, but where the name “Perot” would always mean not Joe, but Joe’s father, Gabriel Perot, Mexico’s Counsel, who could
have been, had he chosen, Don Gabriel, but good Texan separatists did not accept such titles.

“The fountain of order and decency,” Kenny Wigginton repeated, pleased with the phrase, and still beaming toward the Tribunales, which did indeed look solid, graceful, gulls swooped above its dome. But during the Rebelión, the Tribunales had been held by James Morales, another of the executed leaders, and only surrendered on the last day, when the order of surrender reached the River Walk. “Nothing could be done about the broken glass, but they kept the place in order,” Kenny told him, “rebels with a sense of decency, which is a formula in Texas.

Directly across the river from the two lawyers lay the ruins of what San Antonio had learned to call Matt’s Fort. “The rebels held it for most of the week,” Kenny Wigginton said. “At the end, it took artillery and bombing pounding on it, hour after hour. Brave bloody bastards, weren’t they, when all is said and done.” From Our Lady, the Mexican artillerymen would have had a simple shot at the Hemisfair, and the Brewery, farther up St. Mary’s Street, would have been easily in range. Between the two, charred ruins now, lay the Hyatt Regency, where once, long ago, by tall windows, Joe’s mother and he had had sodas, while in the street outside, an angry crowd of his supporters shouted, “Abbot! Abbot! Abbot!” Joe, still in elementary school, said to her, in the cab on their way home,
“It is bad luck when soldiers turn against their chief,” but my mother said, “It is all very complicated, Joe, so your father says.” But she was crying. A part of Joe’s life, of all our lives, lay in ruins.

As though gifted with powers of divination, Kenny slapped his hand against the cool stone, grayish-black, of the parapet. “All of our politics, Joe, the public opinion, the managing of factions, the laws carefully crafted in Mexico City, all of the international alliances, all of our suits and speeches on platforms March 18th and September 16th while cornet bands play ‘Una Nación Una Vez Más,’ all of it blown away by a handful of cowboy poets and rednecks. Small wonder that you abandoned history as a profession, the law is safer by far. There stands the Tribunales below there, a building of basically… glass, but impregnable, the fountain of order and civic decency.”

EXT. MONUMENT ON EAST MARKET STREET

San Antonio celebrates 350 years of history and has an incredibly diverse layer upon layer of statues and monuments. A series of monuments dot downtown in an oval that runs from Commerce Street west to Graf Park and northeast to the new Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

At 100 E. Market St., a monument pays tribute to the 141st Infantry Regiment, the oldest militia unit in Texas, dating to
the First Texas Revolution. It fought in conflicts ranging from the Spanish-American War to Italy and the Rhineland campaign during World War II.

A plaque at the City Council Chamber in Main Plaza marks the surrender of Gen. David Twiggs and more than $3 million worth of ordnance, wagons, mules, horses, supplies, money and a chain of forts to Confederate forces as the Civil War began. At 70, he was dismissed for treachery despite having written his superiors four times for directions on what to do if Texas seceded from the Union. Another plaque commemorating the centennial of the Confederacy also notes Twiggs’ Feb. 18, 1861 surrender.

A monument dedicated to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and “in honor of those who, like him, died for freedom,” stands outside one corner of City Hall and was erected after his death in 1946.

The Cadena-Reeves Justice Center has a Purple Heart Memorial saluting wounded combat veterans from all wars and a “Still on Patrol” plaque that mentions 3,505 submariners who paid the ultimate price during World War II.

A smaller plaque next to it commemorates the light aircraft carrier USS San Jacinto for its role in the push to the Philippines and Japan in the same war. The ship was decommissioned in 1947.
The Alamo has numerous bronze figures as part of an “Alamo Sculpture Trail,” a series of 14 statues.

Two of them — renderings of Alamo commander William Barret Travis and José Antonio Navarro, a signer of the First Texas Declaration of Independence.

Statues in the sculpture trail depict the original Alamo defenders James Forbath and David Crockett; John W. Smith, an Alamo courier and early San Antonio mayor, on horseback; and Susannah Dickinson, an 1836 Battle of the Alamo survivor, depicted with her young daughter, Angelina. Of course, at that time, nothing at the time had been done to remember the second Alamo.

A rendering of Teddy Roosevelt had been “temporarily” installed near the Menger Hotel for the last fifty years.

Statues of Charles Goodnight and Quanah Parker were relocated last year from the Convention Center to an area near the Rosita's Bridge. A statue of Stephen F. Austin was near there as well.

In San Antonio, pasts are not canceled or forgotten but accumulated. San Antonio’s cenotaph just across from the Alamo is perhaps the most sacred monument of all. Rising 60 feet into the sky, it salutes the memory of those who fought the original 13-day siege of the Alamo and sits on the site where their
bodies were piled and burned after the Mexican army made its final charge under Santa Anna.

The monument to men buried “elsewhere” was finished in 1940 and made of marble, granite and concrete, has a colorful history. The marble reliefs are of the original Alamo defenders James Forbath and James Bonham, with others in the background. Crockett, William Barret Travis and other Texan soldiers are on the west side. A male Spirit of Sacrifice and a female Spirit of Texas are on the north and south sides.

Neither the 1836 or 2036 Alamo defenders are buried under the cenotaph, but a Texan hero of the war – Jan Graf, who was killed in 1835 – rests under his statute in a park named for him a short walk from the famous Mi Tierra. A grave marker to Graf sits at the base of the statute. It notes that he helped in the capture of Goliad on Oct. 9, 1835, and was killed two months later.

In the Hemisfair, three years before Wigginton and Perot walked there, a few hundred men, in 2045, had barricaded themselves to wage war against the Mexican empire. Someday, perhaps, an arch would carry names of those who had fallen not in the South American jungle or mountains, but in our own streets or against a wall in a Huntsville prison.
The names of several fallen Texas soldiers who fell in Brazil have been inscribed on a cenotaph — Galvez, Brito, Cerda, Zaragoza. No Bierhals, Vogtsburger, and no Nachtnebe, however.

They’d heard the anti-recruiting songs at the time of the Brazilian war, “Will you do their dirty killing, Tex Fleming?” sang one of them. But Lara and Aebi and Vano and Carbonnier had gone on, years later, to do killing on behalf of whatever. On behalf of Texas, an exchange for the release of the political prisoners and it was hinted also a level of autonomy from Mexico City, or so we had persuaded ourselves.

“We are great in this city when it comes to statues,” Joe said, as they passed a rather memorable tavern.

**INT. TAVERNA DO IMPÉRIO**

Kenny Wiggington’s car was parked not far from the Taverna Do Império, and Perot remembered a chance meeting he’d had with Christian Carbonnier in 1943.

Taverna do Império stood on the Riverwalk only feet from the corner of Commerce and Losoya streets, and once, on one of the last mornings of peace in 2043, Joe Perot had turned down Losoya Street to have coffee with a client. It was a late-July morning of brilliant sunlight, a bit too warm perhaps, and he was not looking forward to a day’s work in the Bexar County Court House Law Library.
Joe’s friend Christian Carbonnier had been having coffee with Thiago Irizarry, but Irizarry had risen up to leave and I walked over to the table.

“Joe!” Christian said with delight. “A surprise! Thiago here and yourself know each other, I am certain.”

“We have met together over the years,” Irizarry said, polite but distant, “on this committee and that.”

Irizarry was a man close to forty, pale cheeks and dark heavy (Pancho Via) mustache, in one of the dark, light weight polyester suits that he wore without sweat, even in the summer. San Antonio was that kind of town in 2033, and the Império that kind of public house, in which a respectable lawyer could encounter an officer of the Texan Republican Brotherhood. We stood smiling at each other without cordiality, and then Irizarry nodded to the two of us and left. Two years later, in that fatal Christmas, Irizarry would be shot dead leading a sortie out of the Brewery, where Luca Altherr, Christian’s friend and mine, was in command.

“You are keeping dangerous company,” Joe said, but Christian smiled and changed the subject. Joe said it thoughtlessly, to tease him. As late as then, as late as 2033, it was difficult to take the Republican Brotherhood seriously, a handful of devout separatists with dreams of an armed rebellion. While many looked Hispanic and had Latino surnames, they were
essentially English-language enthusiasts. They were dark intense humorless men like Thiago Irizarry, or like old Juan Pablo Lee, who kept a tobacco and newspaper shop off Market Square. They were the Adelsverein, or what was left of them, the heirs of the rebels of 2031 and of the dynamite campaign, but quiet enough now, or so we thought.

It was to the book that he had just now finished that Christian Carbonnier had turned the subject, a history of those Texan families who had supplied regiments to the Confederate Army in the American Civil War. The task brought him over often to San Antonio from Austin; he and Joe had talked about it often and at length. But his talk that morning was distracted, as though he were making conversation, and his eyes kept turning to the windows which looked out on Losoya Street.

"Will there be a war, do you think?" I asked him. The day before, Mexico had delivered its ultimatum to Venezuela. Christian turned suddenly from the window to stare at Joe, and then, after a moment, he smiled. He had a lean, handsome face, and a memorable smile. Then, in 2043, he was in his mid-twenties, a few years out of the University of Mexico at Austin (UMAA).

"Did I pull you away from the nineteenth century?" I asked him, and we talked idly, the talk of newspaper readers, about the Spanish meddling and the fledgling Venezuelan democracy and
the sinking of the *Atotonilco*, an obscure naval vessel which now was known to everyone.

What was known to Christian, though, and unknown to me and to almost everyone in San Antonio, was that on that Friday morning, June twelfth, while most of the Western Hemisphere was waiting for a reply from Venezuela, a forty-five-foot ketch called the *Oil Bowl* was on its way to the Texas coast with a cargo of 900 Kalashnikov rifles and 26,000 rounds of ammunition. Two mornings later, the *Oil Bowl* would land them at Matagorda harbor, southwest of Houston, and Christian would help distribute them to the waiting companies of National Guard. These were the rifles which two years later held the Hemisfair, Lone Star Brewery, the Gonzalez Convention Center, and the bridge across the river at César Chávez Street.

**INT. HOME IN DENVER HEIGHTS**

Once, on a night in 2048 when there was a warrant out for Christian and he was staying in Joe’s home, Joe reminded him of that morning in the Império, and he said that he had almost been tempted to tell me about the *Oil Bowl*. “Your talent,” he said, “was for keeping everything orderly, keeping hotheads like myself under John Aebi’s control.” But it seemed extraordinary to the two of us, that night in 2043, that the two events should be superimposed one upon the other, the Mexican ultimatum which
spun the Americas into this disaster, and Erskine Childers guiding the Oil Bowl to Matagora harbor (without GPS) with the cargo of secondhand Kalashnikovs that he and Darrell Figgis had bargained for in New Orleans. On the night of the sixteenth, off the Texas coast, the yacht (then empty) had sailed straight into the Mexican Fleet, on what was to prove its final training mission before the second Amazonian war, on maneuver off of Galveston.

A handful. Indeed, a small handful. From what we on the outside of things had been able to learn by the middle of 2045, the Rebelión had been the work of a half-dozen or so determined men, men like Christian Carbonnier’s friend Thiago Irizarry on the Council of Regulators, men written off as out of has-beens. And, in particular, the work of young David McGregor, crippled but still handsome, an overly cheerful and good-natured fanatic, and McGregor’s mentor, old Juan Pablo Lee, a man in his mid-fifties and looking much older, bald, stoop-shouldered, mustached. In the photographs of the fifteen leaders shot by firing squad, Lee looks out of place among the young men, “San Andres Tabaco” T-shirt and sunglasses, looking in fact like what he was, the proprietor of a small tobacconist’s shop. Looking into his eyes, hardhearted, it’s perhaps just hindsight.
EXT. MONUMENT ON EAST COMMERCE STREET

It was a busy afternoon on Commerce Street. Women shepherded children into the Five & Dime and into Felix Majul’s dentist’s office. A pair of young women swept past them, chattering in accents which were our own, the faintly metallic accents of slightly educated, middle-class San Antonio. Joe saw them reflected in the Marriott’s window, angelic against bright sun. “And since then,” one of them said to the other, “she has had only one letter from him. In five weeks, one letter!” Her tone was indignant. Once, in that world which had been Joe’s, “he” might have been at the front, or in Columbia.

“Roraima,” Joe said, and Kenny, always very quick, caught his meaning immediately. He put a friendly hand on Joe’s remaining elbow. “My dear friend,” he said, “I’m very glad you made it out of there alive. We have been waiting for you, all your friends have been waiting for you.”

But, if one was to think about it, this fellow the girls were speaking of could have been one of the Suciedad Rojaers caught up in the most recent sweep, and sent off to a prison in Mexico, or else serving a term here, in Huntsville or Iowa Park.

INT. RIVER WALK TOBACCO SHOP

Once, Joe had gone into the tobacco shop. Perhaps he knew Joe by reputation, as Joe knew him: it was a small center of the
city. Two young men were leaving the shop as Joe entered. A small shop—a few jars of imported tobacco, tobacco packaged in Vietnam, a carton of Turkish cigarettes, open boxes of Cuban cigars. The varnish on the counter had worn through in places long ago; the bare mesquite was dark brown with wavy, blackish lines. Along one wall were ranged newspapers and magazines—Star-Telegram, the American-Statesman, A Dallas Chronicle, the United Texan. Arranged along the back beside the jars of tobacco, Cowboy songbooks and a series of then illegal “Slocum” paperbacks—Jake Logan’s, See Texas and Die and others.

“Can I help you, sir?” he asked in a thin voice. “You have Delicados’ Mixture there in packets?” Joe asked. A short man, Lee had to reach to his top shelf for it, straining a bit.

In June of 2031, in Mexico City’s Almoloya prison, JuanPablo Lee had been convicted before Don Chief Justice Guzmán of “feloniously and unlawfully dreaming, imagining, and intending and hoping to depose the President from the Imperial Crown of Mexico and Texas” and of levying “war upon El Presidente in order by force and constraint, to compel him to change his measures and counsels.” In language less stately, Lee had been a member of one of the dynamite teams sent over from America by the Club for Growth to blow up El Angel, Castillo de Chapultepec, the Banco de Mexico, and whatever else provided a reasonable target. He was a member of what newspapers called
“the Texas team,” but the Texans took orders from a Virginian named David McIntosh.

Lee was not turned loose from prison until 2040, the last of the dynamiters to be released from Isla María Madre, an Alcatraz knock off surrounded by a unruly ocean. That situation had bitten into his soul; the Texan rebels in Nayarit had been kept in the strictest of solitary confinement.

David McIntosh, in his day, had been a graduate of Harvard, a leader of the Rebelión of 2029, and Lee was a reconquistador of the same thinking, but without the same formal education. As Joe walked away from Lee’s shop that day in 2041, he imagined he fancied memories of a life before Nayarit. Now there were probably only tattered dreams, faded from the once-gaudy colors of his lone star graffiti. Perhaps Joe had misjudged him.

EXT. BONHAM STREET TO THE RIVER CENTER

After reaching Wiggington’s car, the two men stood at the heart of a historic city. History folded and refolded itself, layer upon layer of the same pattern. Once, in 2029, Polanco Rochat, tall and frail, had led his dwindling band of rebels, a hundred or perhaps fifty, up Bonham Street toward the Rivercenter, making their way past the scuffling drunks. After his trial and long-winded speech from the scaffolding, “Let no
Mexican death certificate be written; I’d rather not be remembered,” after that, transformed, he had passed into memory.

In time, the memory, “bold Polanco Rochat, the darling of Polanco,” had drifted into Juan Pablo Lee’s newspaper shop, a 10000 peso booklet, *The Darling of Polanco*. He was photographed in a coarsely colored version of a uniform, self-designed, which he had worn onto Forbath Street, tan, with little decoration.

Now Juan Pablo Lee, weak-eyed, slope-shouldered, staring across a tobacco counter and twenty years, at the picture, on the opposite wall, Polanco Rochat. Rochat had been shoved against a Huntsville wall, hammered to the ground by a firing squad’s bullets so that now his portrait hung on tobacco shop walls.

Joe was later to swear to myself that afternoon with Kenny, as he looked down ruined Bonham Street, the Tribunales to his left and the Rivercenter to his right, across the sluggish, bile-green river, that this time, the chain of repetition and futility might have been broken at last. But he could not have known, surely, guessed, prophesied, that in three months time, the Rivercenter would be a scene of battle, set afire, the enormous metal parts melted by fierce heats. And, a year beyond that, once rid of the Mexicans, Texans would fight amongst themselves for control of things. Who would have guessed, Texans would be holding the tribunales in defiance, not this time of
the Mexican flag, but of other Texans in uniforms of green, shelling the tribunales rebels with artillery pieces borrowed from the Mexicans.

For that spring afternoon in 2048, history was Bonham Street in ruins, and in Austin’s Abner Cook House, was a pretend parliament, Suciedad Roja, its orators gesticulating like Polanco Rochat in the dock, arm upflung, “Let no man write my certificate.” Of the 2048 Christmas rebels, no speeches from their military trials had come forward, and Lee, as we now know, had been shot while wearing too-large pants, not his own but belonging to his wife. The War of Independence, as Joe and the others agreed to name what was about to happen, would come in a bazzar form.

INT. HOME IN DENVER HEIGHTS

The next morning, at breakfast, as Joe read the newspapers, he noted, without paying it too much attention, a murder which had taken place a few hours after Kenny and he had stood together at the River Walk. In the town of Quintana, on the Gulf coast, a resident magistrate named Newton, until recently an inspector of the constabulary, was shot dead in his front room. The gunmen had fired through a tall window which had been opened. Joe paid little attention to it. Every few months or so for as far back as he could remember, and well before that,
before even the first Amazonian War and the boycotting, back
into the remote days of what was, in the Mexican press, called
“indignación agraria,” there would be a story of this sort. An
aggrieved farmer, an evicted rancher, a drunken bar fly — Joe
had defended one such prisoners before going off to war. And
yet, even as Joe was reading the story, he was remembering an
earlier one, earlier by a month at most, of an inspector shot
dead in Rockport, which is also on the coast.

INT/EXT. CHILlicothe, Monahans, Quintana, Rockport

On the very day when Suciedad Roja met officially for the
first time, to proclaim the independence of Texas, on that day,
at a place in the former state governor’s mansion called Cook
House, two policemen escorting a cartload of dynamite to a
quarry were ambushed and killed, and the dynamite carried away.

In 2047, two TDJC guards were shot dead in a raid which
rescued a rebel prisoner from a railway car at Chillicothe. A
month or so later, in Monahans, masked men attacked a party of
Mexicans soldiers and carried off their weapons; trees had been
felled and laid across the roads to prevent pursuit. TDJC men on
patrol in the country were stripped of their weapons and on
occasion killed. A detective sergeant with intelligence
responsibilities was shot dead outside his house in a San
Antonio suburb. Country houses and the houses of resident magistrates were raided for arms.

Stories of this sort had been appearing in the Mexican as well as the Texan papers, but not at great length, and never, not yet that is, placed together to form a pattern. Not even when, in early 2045, Karl Schkade, one of the heroes of Christmas Week, the right-hand-man of Christian Carbonnier, actually at the Hemisfair and later was deeply involved in bringing weapons from Louisiana, was rescued from a west Texas prison in a daring breakout by two other veterans of 2045 whose names were infamous with the Mexicans, Noah Kitzler and Juan Seguin.

The inspector who had been shot down in Rockport, an elderly man close to retirement, named Duenas, had a small house directly facing the bay, and the tall, narrow windows of his front room looked out upon the water. He had been well-liked “by all participants,” as the saying went, and the Express-News had reported the event in angry detail. It was through one of the windows, as with the killing in Quintana a month earlier, that the gunmen had fired. Duenas had stepped into the room to watch a soccer match, “an older television which had been in the family since before the calamity.” It lay shattered beside his body.
INT. JOE PEROT’S STUDY, DENVER HEIGHTS

Years later, Joe wrote a history and happened to reread his accounts of all the political murders. About the the “shattered television” he wondered whether the journalist was an accumulator of details or whether he had an eye for selling newspapers.

EXT. THE CORNER OF 24TH AND SAN LUIS STREETS

At Our Lady of the Lake and 24th Street, was where San Antonio at its most suave and powerful confronted itself. The magnificent college, which once (in this very century), had been a poor run-down Catholic school, now was the center of intellect with its entrance flanked by Enoc’s two tranquil and stubborn statues, one of Pope John Paul II, one of Richard Rohr. As Kenny and Joe drove by, at 24th Street’s edge, suddenly two armored cars appeared from Commerce Street, from the direction of the Rivercenter. In each of them, a bored Mexican stood leaning against a machine gun. Kenny Wiggington turned toward Joe and nodded, as though making a point, as though telling him that San Antonio had changed, for all that the college gates were new (up since the 2045 rebelión) but the same were John Paul II and Rohr.

“During the Rebeiión,” Kenny said, “Lady informed on the students who were rebels. A bit embarrassing now, but what could
you expect?” Christian Carbonnier, like most respectable protestants, had studied at Austin, the son of a respectable Lutheran surgeon, but Kenny, like his own father, had followed all the other socially aspiring Romanists into Lady, a bastion of Catholicism, of loyalty to Mexico. As for Joe, he had been educated by the Lutherans in Seguin, but then had gone off to Austin, which put Joe beyond the pale entirely.

“Lady,” Kenny said, in mock-tragic tones. “The Mexicans gunners staged their weapons at Hondo, on the soccer field, their PLZ-05s. Then they drove them out and down 90 to Our Lady’s soccer pitch, to shell our friends there at the Yanaguana Garden.” Pressing the accelerator, outside Our Lady, bathed in San Antonio’s harsh, well-known light, Kenny looked magnificent, unbending to history and the fight about to happen.

EXT. SUNNY FLAGG IN MEXICO CITY

It was late in the winter of 2048, heading toward spring, that Sunny Flagg decided, if it were the right word, to return to Texas, to the plains of the south, for an extended visit. Sunny would be welcome, she knew, because her sister, Montana, had been writing that they missed her, and it was never the same without her, and they could be two sisters again, and more importantly, her dad while was not failing for sure, his hands
were steady on the wheel, but moving a little slower, and he was a little less ready to make decisions about things, and the decisions were larger now with the miserable war and its impact on farm prices at home. There was a lot more in his letters, about neighbors and weddings (things that she should know). She wrote letters and sent useless but safe things, always Chinese linen. And her father wrote news about people coming from Venezuela and the Andes, but this was the same news. But if there were local tensions, neither said a word about them, and Montana would have for certain, having a melodramatic mentality. It was still their orderly ranch at Crofoot about which Montana wrote, the world of our mother's time, comforting as hay, like long quiet nights the waterpumps running in the background.

It was as if, Sunny decided that after her arrival, Montana made an effort of imagination to convince her, the whole family and the neighbors, that if life had changed; it was only a slow step in back to return to the way it had been before the wars.

The downtown area where the rebels had established their desperate camps at Christmas 2045, if she thought about it at all, was at best another sad story for her father’s neighbors. She had retreated into the convenient cradle of Texas' romantic past. In that, she was absolutely wrong, of course, or with little insight, that would be nearer the truth, but all the woman of West Texas were comforted by the familiar and had never
seen a battle trench in there life. Their landscapes, their homes and their gardens were all undisturbed.

The month before Sunny's departure from Mexico City, Marcelo Ebrard, a seriously clumsy young man in the Foreign Office, did his best to dissuade her at a dinner party.

Ebrard began a rant, “There is always something to worry about in Texas. One day, it’s the bird flu and now it’s the monkey pox. It’s no wonder we don’t want them immigrating here. There isn’t any ozone above Texas and you’ll fry. You can’t stay inside either, the mold. The deer have ticks you, such a refined lady, should stay here in Mexico City where it’s safe.”

“I’ll be fine.”

Ebrard continued, “A while back there was an outbreak of the monkey pox. People were playing with their prairie dogs. Man when I heard you could get a disease from playing with your prairie dog, I thought it was a euphemism. I thought the best was to avoid getting a disease was playing with me pet rodent. People in Texas were getting this disease by playing with their prairie dog. And by the way CENAPRED, swooped right in and solved the problem. But still they were playing with their prairie dog.”

“So what is your point?” Sunny asked.

Ebrard went on, “It turns out a prairie dog was transported from a Missouri Zoo that couldn’t afford to feed it anymore and
it shared a cage with some African rat. Turns out the prairie
dog went to Texas and rat was released and stayed behind in
Kansas out on the plains, and miraculously they found both and
tested them and discovered that the monkey pox came from the
rat. Quick as a flash they found a rat in Kansas and stopped
what could have been a serious epidemic, but they can’t find
this Cowboy everyone is talking about. They can’t find him.
Where the hell is he?”

“I don’t know,” Sunny acted like the question wasn’t
rhetorical. She just wanted to mess with him. Half the film
industry was there at the dinner party and several were
listening even if they didn’t appear to be.

“They can find a gopher with the sniffles outside of San
Angelo and a rat in a field in Ogallala? But they can’t find a
meth addicted cowboy who thinks he’s a Texas Ranger? Remember
Cowboy? And what about his friend? The security forces can’t
find a 400 pound man on a moped? Everyone is waiting for the
arrest of this pair and then a new season of La Reina de la
Cancion starts and they forget about Texas,” observed Ebrard.

Ebrard wanted to impress her with the fact that he’d had
been to Bogotá, attached to the Mexican delegation to the Peace
Conference and, more recently, to Brasilia as a more or less
unofficial observer. “It's very ugly there, dear Mrs. Flagg,” he
said, leaning toward Sunny, leaning toward her dramatic ruby
pendant, "a civil war, and no real hope that anything is settled." Brazilian government troops, but they were not really an army; the capitalist thugs organized in the Corpo Livre; revolutionaries of many kinds; and armed gangs of former soldiers and revolutionary sailors. Armored cars with mounted machine guns, shouting, executions, splashing guns against the walls. And the palace of the resigning president looted, revealing the most appalling ornamental taste, but the looters, definitely socialists, were not choosey. In all this, Marcelo Ebrard overflowed with pride; she was sure that he had an understanding of these events. She didn’t. But, he was clearly smitten by her and seemed to be intent on presenting himself against the capitalists in the form of pictures - coming out of his hotel and hearing the roar of machine guns, Brazilian seamen armed with rifles ready to cross the barricades hastily thrown just down the street.

Sunny said, "But why, dear Mr. Ebrard, do you warn me? I do not go to Brazil but to Texas, a very different place."

"Ah, but is it?" he asked. "Is it? There are also reports of arms, rounds fired, policemen beaten…"

"I’m going to Texas because, you’ll remember what I told you, because I’m Texan."

"Yes," he said, "Of course, but there are Texans and then there are Texans, if you know what I mean. There is Texas
faithful and a Texas unfaithful. What I fear, Mrs. Flagg, is not limited to Texas or Brazil, or even the terrible chaos into which Chile has fallen. I fear for all the Americas. Have you read the newspaper articles from Peru, Argentina and the Andes? You have not, I suggest. They are not that different from the Austin and San Antonio papers."

Sunny had heard of them, read about them, she said indifferently. The fall of South America did not seem like an inviting subject any more than Mr. Ebrard was a reliable guide to his ruined foreign capitals. When he spoke with Sunny, she leaned a little too much for her liking. His eyes were pale blue and searching her neckline.

"I do not pretend to know Texas well," he said, "but I have been there several times. Before the war and during the war elsewhere. A charming country. Between your hill country and our own Yucatan, I would find it difficult to choose."

"I'm glad; your approval is approved," said Sunny, with what she feared was too much sarcasm, but he never realized it, of course.

At the end of the table was the actor Alejandro Frausto, who while talking, drew pictures in the air with both hands. The two young women who listened to him laughed uncontrollably, but Alejandro was impassive, even pretending to be confused. She wanted to be there with Alejandro; they were friends, he had a
movie that had just enjoyed a good opening weekend about a fool who thought he was a Texas Ranger of old.

"Is it your country by chance, the country of the hills?" Ebrard asked.

"It's not my part of the county," I said.

"What is your part of Texas?" he asked.

"West Texas. My father has a ranch over there, beyond Lubbock. But we live in the panhandle, on the Llano Estacado, where the winter is cold and the wind blows like you would not believe it. Or rather, my father, the Crofoots. My husband was a Flagg. Amarillo people. The wind is worse up there. The cattle are famous. Good boy, they do not play football anymore, but the people of the countryside say when they see a big girl say, 'The beeves here are like Hereford cattle.' You’ve heard that expression?" She asked.

He hadn’t heard it.

"Hereford is our market town," she explained.

"Something they could never say about you, Mrs. Flagg," he said. He was really awfully corny. "But to warn you, if I can. Serious attention. Not my office at all, of course, but we listen. The Red Necks have swept the old federalist party off the board; you must know it. It’s terrible business; there were some men among them. Poor John Aebi and his brother, a gallant
man, gallant officer. Died in possession of a Mexican commission, there in the Amazon, as did your husband."

"Burgess was killed at Maracaibo," sunny said. "In Lago de Maracaibo." Why did she despise Mr. Ebrard so? But on his right, Jose Antonio Gonzalez Anaya, of Monterrey, excited his partner - a young woman with rounded breasts who would have led Mr. Ebrard to disgrace if Sunny could just get Ebrard to look her over. But Gonzalez was telling the story of a Venezuelan gold treasure found in someplace improbable. Sunny stayed with Mr. Ebrard, who looked a little pompous. But, she put her hand on Gonzalez's arm to suggest that she wanted to talk to him then. Ebrard looked at him.

"And while they were fighting in Roraima and on the beaches of Maracaibo, the San Antonio Red Necks stabbed us in the back, they have now set up their own phantom government in Austin, they do not want to have anything to do with winning the war. I’m serious, Mrs. Flagg, they had contacts with the Russians until the end, they have hidden weapons, they have practiced espionage, and I am sure the situation won’t calm itself when you enter the territory, but you should know where you stand.

"I know my country," I said.

"I wonder," he said, and his tone changed. "I wonder if you know what your country is, Lubbock, you say, and Amarillo, but you really seem at home here in Mexico City."
“I’m only here because my husband is dead. Texans you will remember aren’t allowed to move down into old Mexico... unless they...” Sunny responded.

He interrupted to explain, “No. I mean here tonight in Condesa, at this table, with your hand on the professor's sleeve. You were born for that.”

Sunny thought, how clever. There is this to say for the political and sexual lechers: they exploit to their advantage the smallest things, the moments, the gestures and the words. Sunny made up her mind to hate the man.

"If the Red Necks have their way," he said, "they'll give us a Texas far removed from it all. Ignorant, antagonistic to the priests, capitalist detractors to our special knowledge of history.”

"Lutherans and capitalist at the same time! Do you see what we are fighting?"

"Congregationalists anyway and Mexican rule is the rule of Rome" is more than a political slogan, you know. "

“Do they say that?” Ebrard said mockingly.

"Do you know, Mr. Ebrard, that I am a Lutheran myself? A slave to noone."

"I knew you were Lutheran. And you know very well what I'm talking about. There is a considerable difference between you
and illiterate cowboys, under the orders of a Lutheran minister who’s barely escaped from that himself."

"Dear Mr. Ebrard," Sunny said, and taking my hand from the innocent Jose Antonio Gonzalez, she placed it on Mr. Ebrard's hand as it rested near his margarita.

"As we say at home, since we can’t change countries, change the subject."

Nobody could say that Ebrard had not noticed. She let her hand rest for a full minute, then slowly pulled her away, her fingers trailing to her wrist. It was mean of her, really. Sunny owned Texas’ most cruel form of revenge.

EXT. COLOSIO TO GENERAL TREVINOS COUNTIES

And, so, having finished all the preparations, including finding a sweetheart, Cowboy did not want to wait any longer to put his guns to the task. Pressed by the great need, there were evils to undo and wrongs to right. All of Texas to liberate.

One morning on a hot day, without advertising his plans to anyone, and without anyone seeing him, he armed himself with his purple and pink Colts, his lethal Winchester, his Stetson, a pearl snap shirt, belt buckle and belt, two jeans, a Kevlar vest, and a bedroll (along with other useful things – a pound of
meth). He mounted Shovelhead and used the state highway to begin his adventure.

But as soon as he found himself on the road, he was assailed by the thought that he’d not been hired by any rancher, mining company, saloon, or government, only the father of his Tawakoni flame. No city, judge or marshal had telegrammed him requesting his aid. Salty’s father had vaguely implied certain things, but nothing was set in stone; he had no proof of their bargain. Salty’s father was something of a politician and spoke very guardedly about violence and turning Texas against the Mexican rule. He refused to make Cowboy a Ranger on the spot, but said that would happen quickly "out West." In fact, Salty's father had said the farther West, the better for a Ranger.

He inquired in two Western Union offices, one at a fueling stop (Rockwall) and another inside a grocery (Vernon). He would have to restrain himself and not take up arms against anyone yet. He’d be a cowboy moving west until he found legal gun work. These thoughts made him nervous, but he resolved to have himself a gun job the first chance he could, in imitation of many others who had done the same. Old dime-novels, but mostly movies, brought him to this expectation. He drove serene and with leisure and Shovelhead off the highway onto a trail. He traveled at a pace not to blow the Stetson off his head. It all seemed reasonable considering his exploit.
And our adventurer traveled along singing.

The last rattlesnake in all of West Texas
Lived in a hole down deep in the ground
He slithered to the top of a big flat rock
Gave his tail a quick shake and he took a look around

Then he resumed speaking to himself as if he were really in love.

“Oh, Salty, princes of the prairie and my arrested heart!
You have done me stiff punishment in banning me from the shelter. Commanding me not to pester, be aroused, or show up in front of you is only a temporary thing. I grow on people. But my untold agony and your father’s tests are nothing. I’ll please your father, and then you’ll welcome me back.” He strung these promises of redemption together mile after mile and threw in a few choice blasphemies. A warm wind in his face, eventually, his already reduced brain began to melt.

Cowboy rode almost all day, and nothing happened worth documenting, which caused him an utter loss of hope. His last confrontation with the rescue princess, Salty, left him wanting an immediate encounter with someone on whom to test his aim and nerve. A reporter from a large Spanish language newspaper said, his first adventure was with the windmills south of Abilene; but what I’ve been able to determine, he rode all day until he was half-dead of hunger.
Cowboy saw Glenrio, and it was as if he had seen a star leading him to the place in the road. He saw a dead Love’s truck stop, abandoned Motel 6, and an old Whataburger, where people seemed to be gathering to fill tanks, taking shelter, and satisfying their hunger.

At the truck stop, there were two young flirts, the kind of women that have always worked at and around truck stops. They’d been working all day over at and about the motel and had decided to venture over to the truck stop to line up some more work. Cowboy drank his neighbor’s tequila and smoked a bowl, and everything happened as it had in books, movies and at the West Dallas dinner theater before the calamity. As soon as he saw the motel, he imagined a saloon, complete with rooms at the top of the stairs, saloon girls and poker tables (actually two lesbians at a vending machine and Mexican citizens and tourists playing conquian).

Before he approached the Glenrio inn, he reined in Shovelhead and waited for fueling as a little person looked out through the truckstop’s glass. When the motorcycle’s belly was full, the little fellow wave at our Cowboy. There wasn’t much delay, and Shovelhead was anxious to get over to the salon. He rode toward the profligate meth cuties standing there, and he thought they were pretty schoolgirls or two daughters of the innkeeper. Parking near the drinking establishment door... at the
moment, a truck driver with a load of pigs blew his horn, a sound the girls responded to. The sound immoderately triggered something Cowboy didn’t expect, which was for the girls to run out and meet the truck. And so he thought he might dismount.

The girls, seeing a man on a motorbike, with weapons and a hat, became frightened and increased their speed running through the parking lot. Cowboy noticed their fright and in a calm sly manner and reassuring voice, he said to them:

“Howdy, ladies. Don’t run away. I’m not drunk. You don’t have to worry about me. I’s raised in a Texas way and can’t allow crime or any dirty deed affect your feminine selves. You lovely fillies are far too refined and pretty to be unsafe.”

The girls looked at him and the neon-colored pistols strapped to his side, and they heard him address them with “Howdy” and then “Ladies” something alien to their ears. They stopped running toward the pig hauler and couldn’t stop laughing, which offended our cowboy.

Cowboy told them, “Self-control, ladies. Laughter for no reason is silly. I’m not here to ridicule you, or be ridiculous for you, but I’m here to have a good evening,” and with that, he tipped his hat.

The bizarre tip of the hat and his incomprehensible talk only intensified their joy and his annoyance. He might have
lectured them more, but a fat little Bangladeshi man stepped out from behind the counter peacefully, smiling at the oddity.

   “Young fellow, you can’t come in here with those weapons.”

   “I’m looking for work. Gun work.”

   “Apparently.”

   “You have money for a room?”

   Cowboy, seeing the friendly attitude of the motel manager said, “For me, fellow Texan, my shelter is my bedroll and gunplay is my rest.”

   “In that case, your bed can be the grass outback. We’ve had some break-ins, and the price is simply your vigilance. If you’re game, you can have breakfast, just don’t kill anyone. But you don’t have to stay, plenty of reasons to keep riding. I guess, but at least two reasons not to ride on.” And the manager nodded to the two streetwalkers at the pig truck and added, “If you get my drift. They don’t work apart if you get my drift.” Cowboy thought that meant the girls were inseparable, perhaps sisters.

   And after this, the Bangladeshi manager watched our Cowboy dismount with extreme difficulty and a hard face-first crash. Cowboy was a man who’d not had beans or bacon all day and found it impossible to rise. It took all four to prop him up.

   Then he begged his host to take care of his hog because it was “the best transportation on the planet.” The manager looked
at the Harley and didn’t think it was so noble or extraordinary as Cowboy thought. It, however, was a very large bike for such a skinny man and the innkeeper asked the truck driver to take care of it for him.

After riding Shovelhead to the back of the motel, near the girl’s room, the pig hauler came back to see what his new redneck friend might be up to. The prostitutes, who by this time made peace with Cowboy, were divesting him of his gun belt. The virgins, as he saw them, remove his pistols and one was admiring one with tactile fervor, not unique to her profession. The other was trying to reshape the malformed cowboy hat. The twenty-something Cowboy refused to allow that, so he would spend most of the night with the hat on. They wanted to have it and touch it. The hat was something curious but not a deal-breaker to the young but much-used women.

The women, unaccustomed to seeing such a thin (but genuine) man didn’t say a word but offered to get him some food from the mom and pop occupied former Whataburger. Whataburger Corporation had long ceased to exist, but the buildings remained. Our Cowboy hero agreed and noticed the thirty-year-old fish sandwich poster still in the window. “Bring it soon please, I’ve driven across Texas in a single day, and the weight of the bike and the heat of the sun has me feeling well… done.”
The smallest of the two temptresses used several of Cowboy’s crystals to buy four “Whatacaughtfish Tacos” and homemade Dr. Pepper, plus meals for themselves. They sat the table in the door of the room to take advantage of the cool air.

It was a great cause for laughter to see him eat; because he was wearing his cowboy hat and holding it on so neither of the girls wouldn’t grab it, as they’d been trying. And so it was working for him to grasp the fish taco with one hand and hat with the other. Cowboy struggled until the larger wh*** noticed how tiresome he was becoming. And so she volunteers to hold that hat without running away or trying to change its shape. To satisfy Cowboy, she put the hat on and ate french fries.

The hat drama ended, he pondered being unemployed with his only source of survival the ability to cook dope.

And so, troubled by this idea, he hurried through the catfish tacos and soda in the motel room. He fetched back what was left of the crystals on the tray under the eight orders of fries. He went to the office and approached the motel manager.

Cowboy explained that he (himself) was half “Chupacabra” and could see them, and this was a very employable skill.

The motel manager had no idea who or what a “chupacabra” was or why one needed to hire a man to point them out. He had a sense it was some sort of code and that the word meant “Mexican undercover operatives,” but he was only guessing.
This brought about a long lecture on the genetic foundation of the Mexican people, about how extra-terrestrials crashed into the Yucatan peninsula, exterminated the dinosaurs, and interbred with the native populations. While some Chupacabra were good, Cowboy explained and others essentially (like every race) all were loyal to the Mexican government. And that was the rub.

The Bangladeshi was curious about this and wanted to know how he could pick them out. The answer was simple; because Cowboy himself had Chupacabra blood, he could see them as they truly were.

“You know about them, right? Dewclaws here, on their wrists. Big bug eyes, Canines. Little tiny wings on their back. Three fingers 'cause one fell off. Hair all burned off from reentry, except the hair on the top of their heads. I can spot them miles away. Mexican spys, everyone one of them.”

Finally, Cowboy explained that he had mixed emotions about actively hunting them, he felt Anglo and territorial, but he has several friends with Mexican blood, including his neighbor.

“I’m going to be here until you hire me outright. It’s no skin off your back to do this for me. I’m supposed to be a hired gun without a hire? I’ve spoken to the father of a young lady, and he as much promised me her hand in marriage if I became a Ranger and help rid our new nation of the Chupacabras. The least you could do is make me an official Ranger.”
The manager, seeing his guest at the counter, looked at him perplexed, not knowing what to do or say; he insisted that he leave, but Cowboy refuse until the manager declared that he had a traveling job open. Mobile Ranger.

“I expect no less. I’ll guard and take the Ranger oath tonight, and you can pay me later. Cash upfront isn’t required for my venture.”

The manager, as you’ve already guessed, was shy and Bangladeshi, but already had some inkling of his guest’s confusion. Of course, it could be the Mexican Security Directorate, DFS. But why would the Mexican’s send an idiot here to test his loyalty? The manager didn’t want to take any chances of being beaten by the lunatic, so he told the want-to-be hired gun that his goal was exemplary and his purpose right and proper. He deserved to be a Texas Ranger, a redneck with a paycheck. Never mind there were no Rangers anymore, nor where there paychecks. Surviving the fall from the Harley was proof of his worth.

What Cowboy had no idea about was the manager’s criminal past and involvement with the rebel government in Austin. Armed robbery from San Angelo. Extortion from Lubbock. Assault with a deadly weapon from Wichita Falls. Theft from Texarkana and human trafficking from Del Rio and while he wasn’t sure of the exact
charges, he maintained that the authorities there could just suck it.

Bangladeshi immigrant had exercised the light-footedness of a road-runner and the paranoia of an addict, committing countless wrongs, bedding many widows and deceiving seven orphans, all female. And finally, he’d spent twenty-three weekends in sixteen different Mexican jails. In fact, he had a list of the best and worst five jails in Texas. But now he was old, fat and reformed. Still a rebel outlaw, only in recent years he had retired to motel management. Because of his past, he welcomed all traveling men of whatever category or condition. He showed a great fondness for itinerant men like our Cowboy, and he felt no animus for good doers for most were Texas patriots.

The innkeeper also said that the front parking lot was visible to Mexican Interstate patrols and in the political situation, they were keeping the important vehicles in the back parking lot. In the morning, if he survived the night, the oath would be performed, and he would be official.

The Bangladeshi asked if he had any dope to pay the bill with; Cowboy lied that he didn’t have any. He’d heard his father lie about not having dope a thousand-times. To this, the innkeeper replied that just because Rangers didn’t have meth in movies, didn’t mean it wasn’t obvious. There aren’t any clean
laundry carried around by these mobile Rangers either, but common sense demands clean shirts. Cowboy had scraped his chine on the pavement, and the manager pointed out that Rangers would have carried a first aid and medical kit to help with cuts and road rash and frankly bullet wounds. And the girls were undoubtedly hanging around his room a lot, for him not to have any dope.

The motel manager probably understood Cowboy did, in fact, have dope, but instructed him that in the future it was forbidden for him to ranger without dope to barter with and the provisions – clean shirts and first aid kit – he had described. Our Cowboy promised to do as he was advised and so it was arranged that he would stand watching the parking lot of the inn. Cowboy gathered all his things and placed them near Shovelhead in the back of the motel. He took up his rifle and with noble expression began to watch over the vehicles. As he climbed the motel stairs to his overlook, the night began to fall.

Cowboy spoke to himself:

"Stay sharp now Cowboy, Chupacabra don’t usually attack at night cause they think its bad doctrine. A Mexican gets killed at night, his soul wanders purgatory forever don’t get to the hereafter in peace. But Chupacabra is the notional kind of folks, and not all Mexicans have the same priest. Never can
tell what they’re going to do. More ‘n likely, if they're out there, they'll hit the hotel at first light, but we don’t know for sure.”

The manager told everyone in the inn about the eccentric new Ranger standing vigil over the vehicles and his expectation that he would be sworn-on in the morning. And the manager apologized to the guests, but the rebellion was in such dire straits they needed men, ANY men. The guests marveled at him from a distance. Most noticed the Cowboy's serene expression as he patiently watched. When he tired of waiting, he smoked a bowl and paced, he never stopped and never leaned on the railing.

**EXT. SUNNY IN CONDESA**

Of course, Ebrard, the hero of "hearing shots from in front of his hotel" was anxious to see Sunny at home, but instead she insisted on sharing an Uber with Matías and Juana Ce Acatl Coatlicue. Matias sat between the two women.

"Did you see that terrible man with whom Sunny was stuck?" Matias asked.

"No," Juana said, and for some reason, Sunny gave them a full account.

"Sunny would prefer not to know these things," said Matias, but he was smiling. "The poor man must be in a terrible state. Although I wonder if he might not be right. A little correct."
"What?" Sunny said, "that we are Congregationalists-ridden? Do you find me congregationalist-ridden, Matias? Whatever that means."

He chuckled and then, "About Texas," he said, "but I do not think he cares, your people have always been decent, are not they? No boycott or anything like that."

"We really don’t have 'people,'" Sunny said, "neither in Lubbock nor at Burgess's; they nationalized oil and gas and now the cattle, all that's left is cotton and people will not stay for that. Half our 'people'; I've never seen, since they've moved south a long time ago. There's really nothing left. But no, you're right Burgess's father was really very patriotic, in fact, a Diputado for a while. And against even the federalists."

"There you are," Matias said, relieved, and now took Sunny's hand, which did not displease Sunny at all. It was comforting in the darkness of the taxi, and Juana smiled at us both. Matías was a great old flirt.

"This time they want more than federalism. This time they want the country. Your country. Our country."

"But that's not constitutional, right?"

He stroked Sunny's arm. "No, not at all," said the man.

It was a lovely night, the air fresh and fresh and the gardens of the park smelled wonderful. She couldn't smell the hippodrome at all, but she knew many times that depended on the
wind. There was a solid moon. Mexico City suddenly seemed enormous, one world, the great government buildings and the Museums of Modern Art and Anthropology, the great stores of the Palacio de Hierro Durango, Naucalpan and their own Condesa, the cities to the west of the city, and towards the east, towards the north, until it was simply suburbs and then eventually open fields. And Sunny loved the city populated in the tens of millions, anonymous, the newspapers and great architecture.

Sunny was suddenly aware of its depth of texture and being. And when Matías moved his hand gently, without threat, up her arm, “comforting” and “fraternal,” or so were the terms that she had labeled it at the time, the three of them.

Sunny was thinking about how much Burgess had loved Mexico City, its amenities and the certainties and risks, its film stars, musicians, and small parties, its small flirtations for him.

The houses that they were passing, after leaving the park, still had their front rooms lit. She could see, through the pulled back curtains, at a red light, a portly gentleman, dressed formally, sitting in a high-backed chair and looking at a relatively young woman who crossed the room to bring him a tray in which there was a nice bottle. His daughter, Sunny had little doubt? Or maybe she was like Sunny, young and widowed, her husband in a Venezuelan or Brazilian grave, or like poor
Burgess buried somewhere unknown, or not yet buried at all... Or maybe, Sunny thought perversely, while Matias caressed my upper arm, maybe the woman was the man’s young lover, bought and paid for with the wealth of the new empire.

When they stopped in front of Sunny's block of apartments, the heel of Matías's hand moved, by accident, he was obviously not aware of it, across Sunny's nipple. It was strange, exciting, but not too much; it was a weak and longwinded feeling, as if it reminded Sunny that she was a woman but had not been touched for more than two years. Sunny asked them inside for a drink, but they declined, it was late and there was an early meeting for Matías with a difficult and lazy actor. They both declined, but you could hear the regret in Matías's voice. It was for the best, of course, but Sunny thought it could have been fun to learn what Matías might do. He was much nicer than the evil Mr. Ebrard. They both kissed Sunny, good evening, Juana almost on the lips but not quite, although Sunny could taste her lipstick.

**EXT. GLENRIO HOTEL PARKING LOT**

Night had fallen, and the moon shined bright. Everyone watched him around corners and through window shade. And just then a group of tweakers, scrappers and hillbilly copper miners,
move into the parking area, intent on capturing something to sell.

Our Cowboy, seeing them approach, murmured to himself, “Chupacabra, I can’t abide by Chupacabra. I can tolerate a bit of theft here and there but not by Chupacabra.”

Cowboy, then said in a booming voice, “Whoever you are, if you think you’ll touch anything metal in my charge, I’m the best shot in these parts, I’ll drop you where you stand. Look at what you’re contemplating. Mexico doesn’t need the copper. Continue if you want to leave this life in payment for your petty crime.”

Our Cowboy disappeared down the stairwell. He would be directly approaching the parked trucks.

The copper fiends would have cared little for the warning even if they’d heard it, and it would have been better for them if they had because it meant caring for their health.

Regardless, the thinnest metal bandit picked up the scrap iron from a trailer and threw it down. And seeing this our Cowboy lifted his eyes to the East and turning his thoughts - to so it seemed to him - his lady Salty, he said, “I hope you’re worth all this blonde Salty. This is an affront to law and order, how will Texas ever be rid of Mexico until we can prove we can keep law and order. I hate to admit that I don’t give a rat’s ass about silly property crime. But she is her father’s only child.
As I can muster enough grace and wherewithal, I’ll not fail him.”

And he turned his pistol butt and gave the villain so heavy a blow on the head that he knocked him to the ground. And the crook was so severely battered that if the first blow had been followed by a second, he would have no need for a doctor. Having done this, our Cowboy noticed the second thief making a move for the metal. He pulled his pistol and fired, and the sound burst the copper thug’s ears.

When the motel heard the noise, all the people in the inn hurried over. Among them the truck stop manager, when he saw this Cowboy held up pistols and made a wave. He said, “If all the thieves in the world challenge me, I’ll not take a step backward, without two steps forward.” The wounded men’s companions, seeing their friends on the ground, one now wholly deaf and the other concussioned began to throw real bullets at our Cowboy from a distance, and he did what everyone else was doing – ducking and dodging behind walls, doors, and vehicles. Most scampered a few blocks away. Cowboy ducked behind the iron they'd been trying to steal but didn’t dare leave the parking lot unprotected. Cowboy fired five blanks in the direction of the bad guys.

The manager yelled at the hoodlums that they should leave, that the Cowboy was insane, and the since the man was crazy he
wasn’t liable for any injuries (loss of hearing, etc.) they might receive. Our Cowboy shouted even louder, calling to them and saying they, the thuggish rogues, would be hung the next day and that once he was sworn in, he’d get their hanging rolling. Cowboy pointed his rifle, which contained, not blanks, but live ammunition.

“But you, filthy and lowborn rabble, I’m gonna mess you up, approach, come on, toy with me once more and see how quickly you pay the price for your stupidity.”

He said this with such boldness and conviction that the others evacuated their friends. Our Cowboy resumed his vigil as required by his oral contract. Cowboy showed the same serenity and tranquility as before the gunplay.

The manager didn’t think much of these seven bullet holes in the side of his motel and the rest in the vehicles of the guests. He feared the Mexican law would arrive. He cut matters short and offered to give Cowboy ten bars of Zanex then and there to chase the bandits and never return. He wanted Cowboy gone before any other misfortune happened.

When Cowboy refused to leave without the oath, the manager pointed out that they had a long-term traveling Ranger contact and that all that was necessary was the oath and the responsibility after that would belong to Cowboy. The manager entered his office and returned.
Flanked by the two truck-stop virgins, as mentioned earlier, he approached the spot where Cowboy stood and shook his hand. It was a solemn ceremonial handshake. The manager produced a book listing all the former Love corporation properties and one of the fake Ranger Company “A” badges sold over the internet before the cataclysm. He put the badge on Cowboy and opened the book and circled the two-dozen stops in Texas. The manager murmured street addresses, cities, where Cowboy might serve the best.

Having done this, the manager handed Cowboy the booklet, stepped aside, and one of the ladies kissed our Cowboy on one cheek. She hugged Cowboy with refinement and discretion, she’d never showed before. It wasn’t this hugger who was laughing but the other one who burst into a cackle. But, the lady hugging and holding Cowboy said, “I hope you’re lucky and fortunate.”

Cowboys wanted to know her name, so he might know who he was obliged. He felt like if he were going to be famous, he’d like to share in the lore. She was Tammy Sue from Kervile and the daughter of a wastewater treatment engineer. She added that no matter where she would go, she’d remember him.

The laughing wh*** was Claudine from East Austin and the daughter of a waitress. She apologized and offered more services and good turns.
And so, this never before filmed ceremony did take place and did change the course of Cowboy’s life. He found himself, a newly hired Texas Ranger, alone in a room with two bookish virgins. Then in the morning at a very early hour, forgiven, both the innkeeper and the fuel manager escorted him to his Harley.

EXT. SUNNY’S APARTMENT IN MEXICO CITY

In the small apartment, to which Sunny had made not a single change in the last two years, Sunny turned on two lamps, one on either side of the cheerful sofa with its fabric inspired by Gosha Rubinchinsky, of which Burgess and Sunny had been so secretly proud. Then Sunny mixed herself a Agave Negro, a good stiff one with a healthy splash in it, and sat down beside one of the lamps looking toward the empty fireplace with its white, virginal moldings and above it, The Surrealist Whose Painting Isn’t Quite a Dream painting which Leonora Carrington did in a Mexican hospital at the age of 94. It is so lovely and sweeping and sad. All swirls, ghosts in those none-too-real Carrington bodies, color and light, but poor Leonora, poor unlabeled artist apart from the others, one of its most vividly subversive characters, but its last surviving link with the zany spirit of the surrealists, and “so reluctant, so misunderstood, but that was her point,” Burgess used to say.
“What the h***,” Sunny used to say, and Burgess would go into those intricate explanations with politics never far away. But then he would catch Sunny smiling at him, and say, “what the h***.” Yes, Sunny thought, surveying the evening and the awful Mr. Ebrard and the touch of Matías Ce Acatl Coatlicue’s hand, by accident of course, it has been so long and Sunny missed Burgess so much.

Everything in the apartment, even in the small kitchen, reminded her of a collaborative design and appearance. Their books and digital media that perfectly preserved the Tejano and Norteno. The sunlight that fell every morning on the carpet was exactly the same as it had been, with its promise of long urban life, but Sunny was now looking alone at the sleeves of and planning the day, alone, an artistic adventure or a visit to a friend. It was not so bad that Sunny missed sex. Indeed, Sunny had a hard time remembering him in bed, even though she’d tried. And not that her life was so shocking – a brief period at first with a boy Lubbock and the one with the other two in Austin – but it was only Burgess who really loved Sunny, and now surely and certainly Sunny knew her memory was fading away no matter how hard she tried.

Sunny hated, truly hated, the thought that she was one in a generation of widows created by that detestable war, which (now that Mexico had won) suddenly was politically correct to
describe as detestable. Millions of young becarios, and thousands of becarias - kids who could have (should have) been in school. South American’s and Mexicans, Brazilians and Venezuelans and Chinese and Russians. And Texans.

But even that was too large a thought. Sunny was resolute against involving her life, her fate, her feelings with those of others, with any others. Sunny was entitled to her period of mourning, but now that had rolled over into a zombie-like purposelessness only accented by such tiny feelings.

Agave Negro, with its complex flavor, had a touch of his taste. She remembered Burgess’s tongue entangled with hers for a second. And so Sunny sat there, drinking what Burgess had always called the only drink worth drinking. Perhaps he was right. And she thought for a moment of how even the land was an undulating ocean, and South America was so grotesque and cratered, presidents and demagogues and rebels in their private holdouts, all that was southern had now gone out of fashion, replaced by meth-addicted boys back from the jungle and prowling, constantly moving, never just standing on a street corner. Sunny call it fashion and Joe Perot called it history; she was sure they meant the same thing.
EXT. COWBOY IN PENA NIETO COUNTY

It must have been dawn when Cowboy left the inn so contented, so high spirited, so jubilant at his new Ranger status and he thought he’d deflowered two fresh innocents. He’d never really traveled and the night passed this quickly.

But recalling the advice of the motel manager regarding the necessary provisions that he had to carry with him, especially crystal and fresh shirts, he resolved to return to his house in East Texas and outfit himself. He’d need a sidekick to deal with things, not wanting to fall victim of another shot out. He would take on his school buddy, who was poor and had children but was well suited for the role. With this goal in mind, he guided Shovelhead back toward his doublewide in the piney woods.

EXT. SUNNY IN SAN ANTONIO

On the Thursday following, Sunny took a flight to San Antonio, and stayed there a day, putting up at the Menger, before crossing Texas on the train from Hoefgen Street. In San Antonio, by choice, Sunny saw no one. Or, almost by choice. Sunny phoned Joe Perot at the Tribunales, but he was in court, and taking that as an omen Sunny left no message. But Sunny phoned up none of her other buddies, Felicitas Solis in Alamo Heights, nor Leticia Robles and her husband in Denhawken,
Texas’s only protestant Robles, as she always boasted. Norman, her husband, would just smile at that.

Sunny had room service in her room, faintly not a polite or sociable thing to do, alone, but a mere boy, someone up from the Colonial Room, recognized her name, and brought her tea and a very nice salad. “Mr. Flagg,” he said, “terrible news. He was well liked in this town.”

“Almost everywhere,” Sunny said, “a likable man. Except, Brazil. Three years ago. But thank you.”

“Yes, Mrs. Flagg,” he said, and came back in thirty or forty minutes for the trays.

“There now,” he said. “And what else?”

“Nothing,” Sunny said.

“No? I brought you an Ensenada wine.”

“Really? How sweet.”

“The pool looks lovely,” Sunny said. Sunny was at a small table on the terrace.

“A beautiful job of restoration,” he said, with commendable excitement.

“It was bombed?” Sunny said.

“Three years ago.”

“And what are they up to now?” Sunny asked, as he stood by her at the rail looking down, not thinking to leave.
There are definitely kinds of Texas faces which, confronted by a direct question, can come suddenly to look almost Chinese, deadpan. But in this kid’s face, Sunny saw a simple and positively un-Texan wish to tell me what he thought. He chose to be direct, without compromise.

“The Congreso de la Suciedad Roja, you must surely have heard, is meeting an hour or less from here, in the Cook House. In Austin.”

“The Congreso de la Suciedad Roja?”

“The new government of Texas, as it calls itself. The fellows who were elected to Chamber of Deputies at general election, but chose to stay here, set up shop. Those of them who aren’t in prisons, over in Mexico. Mr. De Tellez is in one of the prisons over there, the president of the Republic.”

“Of the Republic!” Sunny repeated, and involuntarily Sunny raised her voice.

“Agents dine in here often,” he said, with a cautioning frown. “I wonder they are not here now. Perhaps you’re one?”

“No, they’re probably all gentlemen. All very well-mannered, well-spoken, the ones who eat at the Colonial at any rate,” Sunny guessed.

“I don’t know,” the kid said, with an indifference which Sunny did not entirely understand.
But later, as he opened the wine, he said, in a more serious tone, soft and direct, “Aside from the bad table manners, the one thing that I know for certain, Mrs. Flagg, is that these men are not to be toyed with. And you need to be careful of what you say and to whom you say it. They are seriously rough men.”

“Why do you think I’m eating in my room.” Sunny said. That wasn’t the reason she ate in her room.

“That has always been the norm for revolutionaries. Left or right. Rough men. Since the capital was moved, Austin had become a notorious Mecca of treason and violence, spiced by Methanphetomin and anger. They have T-shirts and bumper stickers, “Keep Austin Angry!’”

“What bad table manners? Please say.” which was witty and the boy laughed.

EXT. CON CARNE COUNTY

At Odell, as always, the Red River was too thin to plow and too thick to drink. The fattest who*** in North Texas, a woman they called “The Whopper” was naked as a bug. Known throughout the area, she came walking up from the red muddy river holding an enormous catfish by its lower jaw. The woman was almost as large as Shovelhead and might have weighed more. Cowboy has woken up after a two and a half days sleep, drank some tequila
and smoked a bowl. He glanced over toward the river and saw all that plump nakedness carrying a full-grown catfish she’d caught, possible with her bare hands; she had no pole or line or bait of any kind that he knew.

Cowboy thought for a minute she wanted paid, or she was going to flop the catfish on him, but she walked right past him to her campfire. He drank tequila like it was water and smoked so much after the panhandle he’d nearly gone blind, so he’d pulled off the trail, washed his face in the muddy river and slept he thought maybe only two days. But now he could see a little better his curiosity was up, so he followed her.

She swung her arm a time or two and headed the catfish in the general direction of her fire. Cowboy saw it sail through the air, then over twice and land on its belly, not a foot from the fire.

Cowboy watched the wh*** chop off the fish’s head with a glazed expression. His vision wasn’t entirely restored. The woman was sweating over the butchering, but she didn’t give up. When the fish’s head finally came off, the wh*** casually pitched it at Cowboy’s feet, which shocked him because she’d been oblivious to him hiding in the bushes. Of course, he’d jumped like it was a live rattler. The catfish’s eyes were angry and really big, and most importantly, its eyes continue to watch Cowboy thought decapitation might have killed it. Cowboy took a
mesquite stick and poked at it, but it never closed its eyes like he wanted it to. A thunderstorm was brewing and Cowboy, and the wh*** could see lighting out on the horizon.

The woman sliced through the belly with a hatchet and was cutting the meat into strips. Cowboy was fixated on the impending storm, and by the time he escaped, the woman was over the fire cooking the fish. The bloody head lay there in the sand, and cowboy smelled the sizzling meat and realize he could eat.

They ate and said nothing.

Clouds had begun to come in, hiding the stars. A hog was snorting in the distance.

“I ain’t going, “ the woman said. “And you ought not either.”

“But there’s not much better for a Ranger then a good hunt.”

The woman was signaling him into her tent and gesturing to the lightning and thunder. Cowboy did not obey.

Cowboy walked rapidly through the night, toward where the pig had snorted. It irked him the fat woman would rather spoon than hunt. But the way he looked at it being a Ranger meant you could range (and whenever he wanted to), which said he didn’t have to sit out any meager little storm. He thought it best to cock his pistol, though, in case he was taken by surprise.
After walking nearly twenty minutes through the mesquite, Cowboy decided to stop and take his bearings. He looked back to see if he could spot the campfire, but the thicket was dark. Thunder had begun to rumble loudly, and in the Southwest, there was considerable lightening.

While he was stopped, he thought he heard something behind him, and he whirled and nearly fired at a juvenile coyote, not ten feet away. The silly coyote was bumbling along, not watching where it was going. Cowboy didn’t shot at it, but he did try to kick it. He was mad at the animal for startling him. It was the kind of thing that would set a man’s anxiety off. Because of the fright, Cowboy felt a strong urge to get back in the tent. It was annoying they the wh*** had been too scared to hunt with him.

On the walk back, Cowboy tried to think of some adventure he could describe to her that would make her think she’d missed out. The campfire had not yet come into sight. Probably the wh*** had been too lazy to build up the fire. Cowboy began to wonder if he was holding a true course. It was hard to see any landmarks, and he couldn’t see anything but when there was a flash of lighting. Of curse, the river was on his right as he was walking back to the camp, but the river twisted and curved, if he just depended on the river he might have overshot the camp and if he continued he might end up several miles from her
encampment. He might miss a second invitation into the lean-to. He’d been lost before, but it had never taken more than a week to get out of the situation, but this time he didn’t have any food. He’d prefer it not take that long this time.

Cowboy stopped and listened for a bit. Some wh**** out on the trails had solar panels and music players, and he hoped she’d turn something on to signal him back. But the night was absolutely silent. It was the silence but also the offensive young coyote that had managed to affect his nerves.

He took a few steps on and thought the best thing to do would be to just sit and wait for the morning. With day, he could find the camp in a few hours. If he kept walking, he might veer off into the river or into a sinkhole.

No sooner had he stopped and sat down, he thought of snakes and scorpion and rose again and walked fast through the mesquite, a feeling of dread came over him. Something told him to move.

The feeling told him to run, in fact, he was already moving at a rapid trot, though he stopped for a moment to lower the hammer on his pistol. He didn’t want to shot his mockingbird off before he got a chance to use it.

Despite what he had been telling himself, now he was having second thoughts, he was afraid maybe he’d fallen asleep with the two virgins and then early the next morning the innkeeper had
ushered him off the property. He regretted that he couldn’t remember what had actually transpired. He was however missing about a half-pound of dope.

As he trotted, Cowboy began to realize that he was scared. The feeling that drove him was fear. It was an unexpected and unfamiliar feeling, and he just realized what it was. He didn’t seriously expect to kill a hog, though. However, here he was driven to a trot through the dark thorned trees.

He could hear the pig behind him, snorting, breathing.

“Pigs here is different. He thinks he’s hunting me.”

He’d shot a few from the doublewide’s porch in East Texas. Different here in the West.

The brilliant lightning flashes were coming more frequently and turned the trees so bright he wasn’t cutting himself to death near a much, and he was tripping much less than before. He worried about being lighting stuck, but he turned around and there was the real object of fear, a boar, a great machine of muscle and clearly huge tusks. The daddy pig was not necessarily angry, but he was there and looked persistent. He was twenty-feet behind Cowboy, and his eyes were like rubies in the lightening.

Cowboy pulled his pistol and fired while running five rounds and then he increased his speed. The hog match his increase. Cowboy forgot everything but running. Salty might
never know how he died, if this hog did kill him. This was not Ranger work. He wanted to get away from the pig. If he could just run all night in circles, maybe the wh*** would wake up and come help him. He didn’t know what direction he was running, he just knew not to stop.

When the rain came there wasn’t much the woman could do but get into her building. The bush was too thorny to walk into, she was too wide and she hardly knew the man. The lighting was big and thunder loud, but she wasn’t all that fearful. The bright flashed at least allowed her to look around. In lightning, she saw movement; she decided it was that cowboy running from or after something.

It was another brilliant flash, and she saw Cowboy half hanging in a mesquite tree his butt just not high enough to avoid being gored by the tusks. She fired quickly and accurately, but the pig had impaled each of Cowboy’s buttocks. A single puncture wound, deep in each cheek. But Cowboy was incredibly relieved but not so satisfied she didn’t have to pry his finds from the limb suspending him. She took him back to the fire and pulled his pants down. She didn’t figure Cowboy to be the type to faint, but he did. Blood was pouring out his butt cheeks. She quickly scooped appropriate chunks of ash out of the campfire to use to stop the flow of blood, while waiting for it to stop, she threaded a needle. She sewed the wounds closed.
Later after the surgery and the storm, she hoisted the pig caucus into the tree and field dressed it, all by the light of lightning flashed. Salty was smart but this wh*** was the most resourceful woman he knew.

**EXT. SUNNY FROM BEXAR TO FORT WORTH**

Security reasons, there were flights in and out of San Antonio from Mexico, but Texans were forced to take trains everywhere else. Most Texans didn’t complain much; the fare was subsidized and so long as the Mexicans were paying... why raise a stink? And most people weren’t *Suciedad Roja* and didn’t see the wisdom in stealing planes, so train travel was fine with them.

But the Hoefgen Street station, like as much of San Antonio as Sunny had seen, was as it had always been. She didn’t look so much at the bullet and artillery scarred facades, but studied the people. Texas people, their dealings in the capital completed, on their way back to their homes: an obese woman and her two still thin daughters accompanied by a store of boxes and sacks, a priest, two Congregationalist clergymen, business travelers. A dozen Mexican soldiers in two groups quite at their leisure, joking and boisterous, judging by their accents Sunny thought the group she could hear was a Mexico City regiment. Waiting for the train, three or four drinking buddies in their late-twenties hungover but wishing they were stoned.
Despite trying, and in every which way, they couldn’t hold their heads in a way it didn’t hurt. They had not been to bed, but looked like they might be in their cleanest dirty shirt, and one of them had part of his shirt’s tail hanging out his open zipper and oblivious to it. They tried a beer for breakfast and it was good so they boarded the train a second in hand.

Sunny splurged upon a first-class ticket, she thought, poor widow or not, it was home and to her pleasure discovered that a priest and she had the railcar to themselves.

He was a Mendez, but the name had originally been Mendel, as he explained to her, and he was the priest of the church in Vistaplana. There was no Mrs. Mendez, of course, Rome had toyed with the idea of allowing marriage, but with their good fortune and renewed wealth (ten percent of the Mexican empire) they had more than enough men lined up to become priests.

He said that he had a younger nephew at Lady of the Lake and an older one, a lieutenant in the Navy, who had not yet been demobilized; “demobilized” was his word, and he seemed to savor it. That and their names were Peter and Paul and that his nieces were also given biblical names, Ruth and Sarah.

“Just because they’re given names from the Bible doesn’t mean they are going to turn to be a good kids.”

The priest looked puzzled.
“I’m pretty sure it was this kid, Jesus, who stole my bike when I was a girl.”

The priest thought about it and finally chuckled.

He was a pleasant old man, and politeness required Sunny to tell him that Burgess had been with the Texans, and had died in the Maracaibo. “So many,” he said softly, “so many.” And so of course there were, it was like a curse, like a pandemic, like the the twentieth century world wars, it was being said that NO other war had taken so many lives; Tel Aviv had been terrible, but it was nothing like the South American jungles. You could hear it said, on occasion, with a kind of pride, as though population control was yet another of Mexico’s accomplishments, along with space-based solar power and the geoengineering. But nice Father Mendez meant it as simply as he said it — so many.

And then he rather spoiled it a bit by going on. “Young lads like yours and like some of my parishioners were the hardest hit, you know, the chaps from St Mary's and Saint Edward's and Lady, some had not even seen a college, straight from Estacado and Permian and Palo Duro. Their young officers as well, of course, young Chinese military advisors, Koreans. And Russians, as well, died helping the capitalists in Venezuela. The best of all our nations. A great tragedy. We must pray for them all.”
Sunny heard it often enough, and perhaps it had its truth. “We” also had lost a generation, a generation of young people, technologists, another Bill Gates; singers, the golden voice of Loretta Aguilera; poets, a second Paz. At a very rowdy and drunken evening, the very opposite of a Condesa evening, Sunny even, once, heard it propounded, that what was happening in Brasil, in Brasilia, happened because so many young officers had been left behind in the mud and never covered with dirt. Angry about it, the returning officers, races their command cars across Brasilia, holding their automatics in their laps, on the prowl for socialists and profiteers and “politicians” alike. They were the tough kids and the hard cases. They had said, what of us, what would all of our young hard-case officers do now—settle back happily into Alamo Heights and Preston Hollow and interpret Lydia Cacho and what was done to her, and discuss Chloe Aridjis and the Book Of Clouds?

Even before they had reached Temple, where the boy brought tea around, and tiny sandwiches, the talk had progressed, rightly, to where they were, to their own country, to Texas.

“It is quite worrisome, Mrs. Flagg,” Father Mendez said, as Sunny poured the strong tea into the cups. “It is an absurd situation, a situation which in simple logic cannot last, but there you are, there at this moment we are, and it is capable of breeding the formless bloody misery of which in the past this
country has proved itself all too capable. For all purposes, we, all of Texas, are represented at Mexico City only by the two loyalists elected out of San Antonio.” He glanced a brief, grateful look thankful for the privacy of the compartment, “Everyone else, every elected Congregationalist rebel is staying at home, if you please, and declaring themselves the legitimate government of Texas. It can’t last, of course, it’s a farce. This is Mexico, not Russia or Europe or Australia. We are the winners in the greatest conflict in recorded history, not the losers. And we won our victory at the cost of our best. Our very best. As we have proof of that, you and I, Mrs. Flagg.” He turned away abruptly, visibly upset, and looked out the window, beyond which, despite the streaks, stretched before us the pastures and low hills of Central Texas, with every now and then a stranded vehicle, the trim steeple of a protestant church, oaks surrounding a ranch house from view.

Suddenly he said, still staring out, not looking back toward Sunny, “Do you know, Mrs. Flagg, that despite my cloth, or because of it, perhaps, I sometimes have taken pride that I am immune to the bigotry and the sectarianism at work in this state? I have preached from my pulpit and indeed in the public prints, against the mean horror of separatism; I refused and refused publicly to make that journey up to Rome to sign their Liga Solemne y Alianza. I have once or twice gone so far as to
suggest that federalism might not be the worst of all fates, a federalism put into place by responsible men. But we have suddenly run past that, and have spiraled downward, down the side of a revine. I can see only violence ahead, and great dishonor for our Texas, Mrs. Flagg."

He turned then, and Sunny handed him his tea, which Sunny had been holding for him. He accepted it with gratitude. He had a narrow, generous, but nervous face.

"Is there no way they can be brought to understand," he asked, "that it is our country as well as theirs, that we love it as they do, that we are all Texan?"

Poor decent priest, Sunny thought, as she focused on the railway tea.

"All of us Texan," he said again. "My father was a rancher, the Mendezs are a West Texas family. He came from Mexico after the tragedy and was a rancher at Knoxville. I would go out shooting quail with his foreman, a protestant, a fine old Texan, I learned a quiet bit of the old Cowboy way from him, phrases, sentences, rhymes, a few songs. My parishioners like to hear them still today. Jolly songs about cows and outlaws. But why am I telling you, dear Mrs. Flagg? You are Texan yourself. We are all Texans now."

"All of us?" Sunny said. "Are we? I would hear talk in Mexico City, a bit of talk, not too much, if things were to get
really nasty, Mexico would simply squeeze Texas. Where will they go, the talk is. They can’t enter Mexico. Some j***-a** even had a name for it, excape theory.”

“Ah, but that is the thing, do you see. That is the thing. If you hear a bit of such talk in Mexico City, you hear far more of it here. And it happened, some years ago, after the Reconciliación Act, the original Mexicans speculators selling out, moving to back to Mexico. But this would be different, this would be people forced out because violence, history itself would be telling them that they have no place here, that they are not – that we are not Texan, Mrs. Flagg. That to be Texan you must be protestant, that is the potboiler. A dreadful pronouncement. We have been here, most of us, since the event.”

After the catastrophe and panic, Mexican’s had rushed in and bought vast sections of land. In 2034, to pacify social unrest in Texas, the politicians worked out a scheme for tenant land purchase. This was called the Reconciliación Act. Sale was to be made not compulsory, but attractive to both parties, based on the Mexican government paying the difference between the price offered by tenants and that the going valuation.

“That is nonsense,” Sunny said. She hoped he understood she was speaking not of him but of all the others. “I’ve seen a copy of the Declaration which the rebels posted up in 2045. I am
certain you have. Everyone has. ‘Cherishing all the children of
the nation equally,’ it says.”

“I know,” he sighed. “A noble document. No, no, Sunny
I’m not using sarcasm, it is a noble document, shaped by
cowboys who pledged their lives to their words. ‘The Republic
guarantees religious and civil liberties,’ or words to that
effect. I accept that. But 2045 was for all that a
Congregationist uprising, the leaders “Protest-ants”, every one
of them, and ninety percent at least of the lads who followed
them. It was Congregationist Texas risings up in 2036 and also
in 2045, and it is Congregationist Texas which claims now to be
ruling us all through their shadow legislature. We are here all
right, and welcome to stay. But we are tolerated here, and must
prove ourselves, as it were. It won’t do. It will lead to
suffering.”

His tone was calm, melancholy perhaps, a bit nostalgic for
times when this had not been so. Sunny imagined that he had had
time to think it all through and come to his gloomy conclusions.

The decent priest had made one mistake at least, and it was
a revealing one. He had assumed that Sunny was a political, and
it was now too late to correct the mistake without creating an
uncomfort. A tightfitting blunder, how had he made it? Because
they were chatting together in a first-class railcar which in
all likelihood they both could afford— even rural priests were
rich, appropriately—and because of how they addressed each other, because of accent, because of the way in which Sunny poured the cheap tea, because Burgess had been an officer in the army. Because, in short, Sunny was a lady, as the priest was a gentleman. And if one met a lady on a Texan train, one assumed that she was political. As simple as that. There were exceptions, of course, hundreds of them; protestant soldiers’ wives, however humble. And on that side there were people like—well, like Sunny. And there was Burgess. And Joe Perot. Well, perhaps. Joe, in fact, was one up on Father Mendez, not Lady of the Lake, but Seguin and Austin, but then he was a lawyer after all, not landed, and to pull the thing off properly, one needed politics. Her other friend Christian Carbonnier, he was the most political figure she knew.

The weird and awful thing was that all of Mexico was thought to be political, and Mexico thought all the Texans were political. Yet in Mexico City, Sunny rarely thought about such things, in terms of whether one was a Catholic or a protestant, or where a person was on the question of Texas. In Mexico City, it was rather dashing to be a protestant, exotic and anarchic, yet always they were considered political. Although in Mexico Burgess was neutral whatever that is, and Sunny, she didn’t give a damn, but once aboard the plane to San Antonio, everything changed.
“Suffering,” Sunny echoed so that her companion would not think she was absentminded.

“Yes,” he said, “I foresee terrible suffering, Mrs. Flagg.” And the priest kept using Burgess’s name. If she hadn’t told him her story, he wouldn’t have known. Flagg was one of those comfortable apolitical names, not like poor Sunny’s father with his Crofoot name, which was 100 percent protestant.

“In the past,” the priest said, “in the past, we have been arrogant enough, God knows. And there are those who think us aliens and invaders—in understanding and faith and race. It is a dreadful way to think of people.”

A decent priest but hopeless, Sunny thought. Men might perhaps, if they think they can win, fight. If their houses are burned, their gods defiled, their mistresses seduced (she didn’t know if this priest had one), but men will always fight, if slighted, carry hatreds leading to lethal solutions.

At Fort Worth, the great cattle town again, bustling and expansive, or as much bustle as Texas can provide, the train halted for ten minutes or more. It is also a great railway junction for Dallas, for Abilene, and then Lubbock. It is lovely prairie country. And it is—was Sunny’s market town as well. Once Burgess’s favorite town, the Stock Yards a mile or so away on the far side of the river, once an unused nightclub district, but now (since the nationalization of the cattle) it was a
fortified place, not friendly at all, but gloomy and daunting. There with that difficult seizure, hemmed in by penal legislation, the hostility of ranch owners, the Flaggs, Burgess’s uncles had contrived to hold on to the several thousand head of cattle. The miracle, of course, is that they had not yet been shipped off to Mexico, with the other Texas cattle. Burgess’s father and older brother had once described the means they took to hide the cattle to me at tedious length, involving a feedlot, a friendly Catholic “front.”

However they did survive, not Burgess, but his family of exotic Westerners, the fragments of the old, vain, defeated cowboy aristocracy, faded maps and rodeo photos on the walls, black and white photos of some ancient branding, six-inch belt buckles and pearl snaps and, out in the barn somebody is bottle-feeding a Holstein calf, a photo of Burgess’s cowboy father’s red, beefy face, the handlebar mustache. If Father Mendez and his parish only knew how to comport themselves with the real Texans.

“Do you know Fort Worth?” Sunny asked the priest. “Our – my husband’s people raised cattle, west of a feedlot up near Amarillo, the house is splendidly sited.” For there was, in fact, never a wind from the East.

But the man smiled and shook his head. She thought maybe he’d read her mind, or she’s slipped. But with a gesture of
question, regret, he unfolded his *Express-News*, and began to read. Sunny caught a glimpse of a one-column headline: “Outrage in Crocket. Police Barracks Burned by Arsonists.” Arsonists. Since the 2045 rebellion, the *Express-News*, and for that matter even the separatist press, for a time at least were conscientious in their use of epithets: “arsonists”... “outlaws”... “robbers”... “killers”. Only later, toward the end, would they say, first “Rangers,” then “Ejército Rojo Sucio,” and then just the ERS. Something was happening surely, and yet Sunny could not measure it, when a newspaper could report, as casually as a sailing accident, the destruction of a police barracks.

Sunny saw now why the train was delayed. For a squad, some six, of the federal police (PF), with a sergeant in command, came along the platform, having climbed down from a Dongfeng, and with them a civilian, a middle-aged man, white sports coat, neat and respectable, soft leather briefcase, lean face and downward-turned mustache. Federal agent (DFS) Sunny thought, or a resident magistrate (MR). They moved past Father Mendez and Sunny, past all the first-class railcars, and Sunny could just, by craning her neck, see them climb aboard a second-class railcar.

“A fine group of men,” the priest almost invariably said when he ran across the PF, sometimes affectionately, sometimes
in sarcasm when they had done something foolish (summary executions, beatings, etc.), but most often as a simple statement of fact. However justified might be the feelings of the most extreme of the Mexicans, the Crocket “arsonists” for example, the Mexican police were, for the most part, familiar and none threatening sights, despite their rifles and belted truncheons. They were Catholic bootlickers, true, but for the most part they were of rural stock, as Sunny was. They were smaller, less able men, looking forward to having their revenge on someone for something. They wanted to see their pensions. Their sergeants in the smaller towns were known for their engine skills, their vehicles vying with those of the priests and the vehicle of their mistresses. It was a mildly odd scene, and the priest and Sunny looked at each other curiously, and they raise their shoulders slightly, he returning to his paper.

Father Mendez was an unhurried, cautious, thoughtful, fact crunching reader, and Sunny could tell, so accustomed in the Express-News’ order of presentation, that he had marched forward through national news and the news from “our correspondents” in Mexico City and Beijing, and the “Church News,” which of course was the news of Father Mendez’s church.

Plans for the diocese, a new bishop for the church in Odessa, and the priest had at last reached the half-page of obituaries and personal news which is for most of its readers
the special feature of the Express-News – the Floresville peanut festival; the rose garden of Colonel and Mrs. Sacristán; Soldado, glorifying the battles of Bochinche, and Las Guaicas, in the Sierra Imataca, is opening in theaters; the wife of General Flores stepping out to a SA Lobos baseball game in a baseball cap, a white T-shirt, skinny black pants, over-sized sunglasses, and blue slip-on shoes; not her customary ballgowns and pencil skirts.

And Sunny, who had not thought to bring a book with her, had the countryside to study as they moved across the prairie. In childhood, and in the years when Sunny was away at school in Austin, at Concordia, the train journey across Texas had seemed to her endless and exciting, and it still had not lost that feel, although the flatlands were never thought to be beautiful, for most, the territory to which Sunny was returning. For her, that began with the Caprock escarpment, NW of Post. The Caprock, like its younger and weaker much-photographed imitator, the Great Wall of China, separated a higher level of civilization from a lower one as far as Sunny was concerned.

Not that her place, outside Lubbock, would count as picturesque, relative to all of Texas. For that people would need to move to central Texas, to the Hill Country. But there was nevertheless an excitement, and Sunny would imagine almost that the landscape was changing subtly, with each mile that they
traveled westward, becoming not so disciplined, and clearly more rebellious.

EXT. PENA NIETO COUNTY

Cowboy had guarded a PG truck as far as Mount Pleasant, to in an alley behind the Peso General, when he noticed some people in conflict - shouting and pointing fingers. He stopped the motorcycle and said, “I give thanks to Texas for an opportunity to fulfill what I owe to my profession. Please allow me to gather the fruit of my virtuous new job. Gentlemen or lady, they might need my assistance. Riding Shovelhead into the fray, Cowboy saw a store manager and a sixteen-year-old boy. The boy was crying out, and not without cause for the store manager was hammering him and yelling at him.

“Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open.”

And the boy replied, “I won’t do it again, sir. I won’t do it again, and I promise I’ll be more careful from now on.”

And when Cowboy saw this, he said in an angry voice, “Sir, it is not right for you to punish one who can’t defend himself; get your pistol. I’m gonna make you understand what you’re doing is cowardice.”

The store manager seeing an armed figure ready to draw pistols considered himself a dead man. Cowboy did look the part, like he could literally draw lightening.
Genteelly he said, “Cowboy, whatever your name is, this boy is an idiot with no family and no real value. His job is to watch over the store, and he's careless at that; I lost money every day, and I'm about to let him go because of his carelessness but not for a good beating. It may have been villainy and not carelessness; he may have let his friends steal. He will tell you that this beating is because of the back wages that I haven't paid him, but he's a liar”

“You dare lie by Barton Springs? I'm going to shoot you in the belly. Pay him now without argument, if you don't I'll just pain ya. Pay him immediately!”

The store manager lowered his head and gestured to his employee in a way indicating his consent. Cowboy asked the boy how much his master owed, and the boy said wages for nine weeks at 4000 pesos a week. So Cowboy, with difficulty, calculated the sum and told the businessman to fetch that amount. The store manager replied that he'd given the boy three uniforms and a pair of shoes and paid for a doctor's exam twice when he was ill.

“All that's fine, but the clothes and medical expenses should compensate for the injuries you have given him for no reason today. He owes you nothing.”

“The difficulty, Cowboy, is that I have no money here, but the boy can come to my house, and I'll pay him there.”
“Go back with him?” Exclaim the boy. “Not me; I won't even think about it. As soon as we're alone, he'll skin me alive.”

“No, he won’t,” replied Cowboy. “It's enough for me to command and he'll respect my badge, and if he swears on his mother's grave, I'll let him go free. I'll guarantee you, you'll have your payment.”

“Sir, think of what you're saying,” said the boy, “for this store manager is no gentleman and he's clearly a Mexican. He's rich and lives above everyone in our town.”

“That's of no importance,” said the cowboy, “for there can be a hero in any class and in any ethnicity and any nationality.”

“That's true,” said the boy, “but what heroics has this employer done if he denies me my wages for my sweat in my labor.”

“I don't deny them son answered the store manager. Be so kind as to come with me and I swear by everything that they use to promise that I'll pay you.”

“Just pay him the pesos, and this will satisfy me; you have sworn and I’m El Vaquero de Tejas, and I’m in the employ of the Love’s truck stops of Texas, a sworn Texas Ranger. I’m here to right the wrongs. I am THE righter of wrongs.” And having said this, he gripped the accelerator and left them behind.
The store manager followed him with his eyes, and when he saw that Cowboy had crossed the road and disappeared from sight, he turned to his employee, the young man.

“Come here my son, I want to pay you what I owe you as the righter of wrongs has commanded me to do.”

“I swear,” said the boy, “that your ass better do the right thing and obey his directions.”

And seizing him by the hair, the store manager began to beat the boy again. “Now you can call the righter of wrongs and tell him to undo this,” and he began to beat the boy again.

The boy promised himself that he would find the noble Ranger and tell him point-by-point (blow by blow) what had happened and that his employer would have to pay a fine and damages. The boy cried, and the store manager left.

Cowboy had righted a wrong and was extremely pleased with what he had done.

EXT. SUNNY IN ABILENE

The high plains would be exciting for Sunny, but this was not true of Abilene, the next stop after Fort Worth of any consequence, nor of the countryside around it. Sunny had never set foot in Abilene, and it had always seemed the dullest of Texan towns. From train windows, one can just make out the Mexican prison which was now the town’s only claim to fame. So
Sunny had been assured first by her father and then by Burgess’s father; the important cattle fairs had ended long ago.

In the station at Abilene, Father Mendez put down his newspaper, and, as Sunny was about to tell him something of what she had been thinking, the corridor door swung open, and the conductor looked in to say, “Well, Father, madam, we’ll not be here long. Abilene, what can I say. I wonder why we bothered to stop at all for the sake of third class. They should just jump, right, if they want to visit their family too bad. Did you take a look at them? The sad times that we are in, Father, madam...” But as he said it, he broke it off, and was staring past us, beyond the window. “Jesus, H. Christ,” he said as though in simple astonishment, and then he said it again with a frog in his voice.

Sunny turned toward the window. Out from behind the station had come seven or eight or maybe nine men, Sunny was so startled that Sunny had no thought to count them, but three at least, all of them Sunny thought at first, were carrying rifles, and two of them, the two in front, held old difficult to conceal revolvers. But they weren’t concealing anything. They were running at an angle to sunny, but then beside her, then past her first-class railcar. The conductor was standing frozen, but then he began a slow movement backwards out of the railcar, and as he did so, he raised a hand toward his radio’s microphone.
The last of the men carried a revolver. Something in Sunny’s car railcar, perhaps the conductor, drew his attention, and he swiftly moved there outside Sunny’s door. He pointed the pistol at the conductor as he backed inside and actually sat down. The door he left open, but the gun was trained on the conductor.

“Take your hand away from that,” he said to the man, who sat motionless, petrified, or baffled, with his hand still half-raised.

“Put your hand down. Don’t be a hero. Take your hand down and come in here and sit down beside us.”

He had now a bit of time for us, the conductor moving slowly back into the railcar. Sunny could understand now that his hand had been raised to the radio.

“It would serve no purpose, but why risk it? The engineer is sitting quiet as an altar boy, with one of these shoved under his ear,” said the man holding the gun.

Sunny looked at his great revolver, and suddenly he said, “I’m sorry, ma’am, Father. We’ll be gone before you know we was here, nothin’s gonna happen to you. I’m sorry for the inconvenience really.”

And in truth he was, or at least seemed so. He could scarcely have been more than nineteen or twenty, a cowboy's
roughstock style straw hat, loud pearl snap shirt, Cowboy Cut jeans, an ordinary boy, genuine, polite and soft-spoken.

“I believe that you do not mean any harm, to us at least,” the priest said, in a remarkably calm and almost courteous voice.

“I trust your leaders in the next car can say the same thing,” The cowboy grinned, and revealed a missing front tooth, then rubbed the back of his hand across his mouth, a rough, casual gesture.

“How you know I’m not the leader?” he asked.

“God save Texas from you people. If it is our valuables you want—” the priest began, and at that the cowboy lost much of his courtesy and on a different day might have pistol-whipped the priest.

“Who the f***** h*** do you think we are,” he said, and then remembered the clerical shirt and Sunny’s presence. He gestured his apology and looked disappointed in himself but only for two seconds.

“This is a military operation,” he said. “It will be done right away, and you’ll be off to Lubbock or wherever you are going. I am sorry about this, but you had to stop here anyway for a second.” It was a cowboy’s soft, rehearsed speech, direct and yet nuanced. The Texan got up and left them.
Then, as the three of them watched, the man in the white sport coat who had boarded at Fort Worth with the police, was led from his railcar. The Texas lad’s revolver and his phrase “military operation” seemed to serve him as a uniform.

“No,” the Mexican official shouted as he jumped down from the railcar.

“Now, you want to be reasonable. Funny,” the leader, a Texan with the loud shirt and missing front tooth, said. Evidently, he was the leader, the same man who’d sat in their compartment. And then to his men, “Move him back into the station.”

Abilene police were watching the entire incidence. Dumbfounded.

“Those police try to stop you, shot them,” the leader instructed. His men looked toward the loud shirt, uncertain, and he looked directly at them. It was a quiet day, hot. There didn’t seem to be any sound, not even in the distance. But as he looked at them, there was a shot from the railcar, it struck the ground near his feet, and raised small chunks of concrete.

“Dear Jesus,” the Mexican said and started running. A cowboy tripped him and he sprawled out on the platform.

There were other shots, and then, very casually, the leader swung his revolver toward the railcar and fired twice. The shots from within the railcar ceased for a time.
The Texan and the other cowboys with him, including the one from Sunny’s car moved to the safety of the station, one of them holding the Mexican official (as Sunny thought him) by the collar. He seemed in shock, quiet, and very frightened. Once, for a moment, Sunny caught the Mexican’s eye and again the eye of the rough stock cowboy in the loud shirt; he’d been handed the man’s briefcase. He tipped his hat to her as he followed the group into the station.

“You can radio for help now,” Father Mendez said.

“’Tis a little late for that now,” the conductor said.

Someone yelled, “Hey!” from the next car.

And the Texan shouted without turning, “We have taken Mr. Robles prisoner to answer for his crimes. Now move off, the herd a ya.”

Sunny heard a PF, their sergeant probably; shout out to him, “Supervisor Robles is traveling under police protection. We intend to protect him.”

“A fine job you’ve been doing (sleeping). It’s over; go home,” our rebel called.

“We intend to do our duty. We’ll fight.”

“There is nothing you can f****** do. Look we’re behind brick walls now, and you are on a Chinese made railcar with notoriously thin walls... you’re just gonna get innocent people hurt.”
“Where you got those guns I don’t know, but we have arms too.”

The PF were exiting the train at the East and West end of the station and would soon by flanking the station. Surrounding it. The talking was done.

There was a short pause, and then they came out together, the Texan in the loud shirt… whose name, Sunny would eventually learn, was Eugene Weakley… and Robles. Robles was frightened and very quiet. Twice, a shudder ran through him convulsively, and Sunny thought he might fall. Weakley was holding him by the arm, but lightly, and now he dropped his hand, and spoke quietly into his ear. Robles looked at him, a look which, even from the distance, Sunny could tell was terror. He walked slowly away from Weakley, toward the open door of the station, and back out onto the platform. When the Mexican official was about twenty feet from Weakley, he paused for a moment as if it were planned and at this, Weakley raised the revolver and shot him in the head. The noise seemed louder to Sunny than the earlier gunshots. The flanking stopped and everyone froze. Then Weakley stepped forward, to where Robles had fallen, looked carefully at the wound, and then moved back into the station.

Sunny screamed without being aware that she was screaming, it was as though Sunny believed myself to be saying something vital, necessary, but it came out warped and strangled into a
scream. Sunny climbed down from the railcar and ran toward where Robles lay. Father Mendez tried to hold her back, clenching her arm, but Sunny pulled herself free.

“Wait, wait,” he shouted, “I’ll come with you.”

“Keep clear of him,” Sunny heard voices from the railcar shouting.

The priest froze, but realized the warning was not for him and caught up to her.

Robles lay with his face pressed sideways against the dusty concrete platform. Below the shoulders, the suit of white polyester was still neat and pressed, his black boots polished, with a faint red film now of dirt upon them. But above the shoulders, he was all blood, and brain. The bullet had struck his head. The mustache was blood-soaked. Father Mendez was beside her now, kneeling, and already anointing what was left of the Robles’ forehead; and then his hands made the sign of a cross.

Then the priest took a large white handkerchief from his pocket, placed it over Robles’s face.

“Shouldn’t we...” Sunny began, but he shook his head.

While they were kneeling beside the man, his executioners, it appears, were making their exit. Sunny should have heard their engines, but she could swear to nothing. It was all a movie in her mind, but vague, like a dream.
A clear sky, a dusty afternoon, there was no clear image, only what Sunny had seen of the skull and face now under the handkerchief. The priest helped her to her feet, and by then there were many people on the platform, the stationmaster, who had been held inside at gunpoint, the DF, other passengers. Sunny looked at them each one of them individually and could say nothing, but Sunny was a mess because the police sergeant put his arm, awkwardly, about her shoulders, and held her for a moment.

"Dear God," he said.

The stationmaster was a large man, almost bald, and he had perfect teeth. "They have been waiting here, in the station, for a half hour or more, an hour perhaps," he said. "They cut the wires; the telephone and the internet both."

"Where is the nearest phone?" the sergeant said.

It took him a few moments to think it out. "At the Reporter-News," he said. "Across the street. You can see the newspaper from here."

"What am I to do now, Sergeant?" the conductor said.

The sergeant smiled, as though welcoming a fresh problem with approval. "You can get your passengers back on board, and make for Lubbock. When I’m am at the newspaper’s, I’ll phone ahead."
“They made off like bats from hell,” the stationmaster said. “Was the Cross Plains road they took.”

“I’m not getting back on that train,” a country woman said to her husband. Her daughter, standing beside her, nodded vigorously.

The sergeant overheard and said, “suit yourself; it’s a free country.”

“Not really,” she said.

Her husband spoke up, “Suciedad Roja is out of control. You people can’t run the railways safely.”

But other than that, no one was inclined to speak out or take sides.

The sergeant tilted back his hat and rubbed his forehead with the back of his hand, a homely gesture which put Sunny in mind of Eugene Weakley, the man who pulled the trigger.

“Get back on board,” the sergeant said, “that’s an order now.”

Suddenly Sunny realized that in all likelihood this was for him, not the first brush with rebellion. Probably his last encounter was more like it; he’d be forced into early retirement.

Father Mendez touched Sunny’s arm, and she turned with him to go back to their railcar, but then paused. “Sergeant,” Sunny finally spoke, “who was he?”
Startled, he looked at Sunny a moment before answering.  

"His name is — his name was Robles, ma’am. Juan Haroldo Robles de Padilla." Sunny was hearing that day, for the first time, a name that would be repeated, again and again, in the years that followed.  

"He was an inspector?" the priest asked while he was making notes in a tablet.  

"Not of the policía," the sergeant said. "He was a bank supervisor, a forensic accountant."

As we’ve discovered, Sunny was nothing near being political, but it did seem strange that a bank accountant should be traveling with police escort, and that he should be shot down in cold blood by armed men attacking a railway train.  

"There was nothing you could have done, Sergeant," the priest said.  

"That is kind of you, sir," the sergeant said, but his eyes denied his words, or rather, Mr. Mendez’s words.  

Sunny wanted to barf at the way the Mexican’s stuck together. She knew the story would change by the time it was reported in Mexico City, the sergeant might not have to resign. Robles had been traveling under police protection, and the sergeant had allowed himself and his men to drop their guard. As the priest and Sunny turned away, the sergeant said, “I don’t know what happened, I swear to God I do not.”
They traveled half the distance from Abilene to Lubbock without speaking, the priest and Sunny, but rather looking at one another, from time to time, and then out the window. It was strange to be in the same railcar.

Burgess had been home twice on leave, once to Mexico City, and once to Amarillo so that they could visit his parents. “No good describing it,” he said; “don’t ask. It’s very strange.” But that was in that first tour his regiment had, in Valledupar. After that, it was Maracaibo, and there was no leave from Maracaibo. His commanding officer wrote a nice letter but Sunny could not make sense of it. She thought these days you die like Robles did, walking in terror and then crumbling when bullets slam into you. Of course, it’s better if you have the good fortune to die in bed.

Then the priest said, “You were the first to run to that poor man, Mrs. Flagg. The very first.”

“I don’t know why,” she answered, truthfully; “it was so awful, to see a life destroyed.”

She thought back to the anxious but courteous boy who’d sat a short time in their car.

“I don’t know why,” Sunny said again.

“It is so strange,” Mr. Mendez said, “coming upon what we had been speaking of.”

“I loathe guns,” Sunny said.
EXT CALDERON COUNTY AT DAINGERFIELD

And having gone only 20 miles to Daingerfield, Cowboys saw a gang of juvenile delinquents in an alley. There were six of them, three on bicycles and three on foot. Cowboy imagine yet another adventure.

“Halt all of you, unless you admit freely that, in the entire planet, there is no freer nation than Texas and that in the entire Texas, no woman more beautiful than the Empress of Tawakoni, the peerless rescue sweetheart Salty.

The young thugs stopped and saw the strange cowboy.

“We don't know any such thing, and the woman should send us her nude .jpgs for if she's as beautiful as you say, we will let her know.”

“If I were to show her to you." replied Cowboy, "where would the fun in that for me?"

“What? We ain't into no BS games, man.”

“You refuse to admit her beauty?”

“Oh, tea-walk-a-knee? I know that bitch, her birth control is just to leave the lights on. Humpbacked and flat-chested that helps. And you can’t rescue dogs unless you have a skin condition; they all have skin conditions. But if you say she's a real beauty.”

“Nothing wrong with her skin,” the rebel Cowboy responded, “and she's not humpbacked or flat-chested either.”
The gang laughed heartily and having said this Cowboy pulled his pistol and accidentally let out the clutch commanding the motorcycle to crash into a dumpster. Exiting Shovelhead, the gang was on Cowboy kicking him as he lay on the ground.

His vest weighing him down, “run you bunch of cowards. I'm on the ground and can't get up. Little Mexican thugs!”

Cowboy was on the ground shouting insolent insults that made them return and thrash cowboy some more. But despite the storm of blows, he never once closed his mouth but continued to rail against the loyal Brown children.

The youths eventually tired and continued down the alley telling stories about beating a Texan for the rest of the evening. They even told their parents about the whipping the White boy and got extra flan after their dinner.

And our Cowboy, then he found himself alone, trying again to see if he could stand, but he couldn't hardly stand in the heavy vest when he was healthy. How could he stand when he had been beaten almost to a pulp? Still, he considered himself fortunate for it seemed to him that this was the sort of mishap that other Rangers might have experienced. Rangers with more claim to legitimacy had been beaten and bruised and left unable to stand because of their heavy vests.
EXT. SUNNY IN LUBBOCK

Sunny remembered that afternoon, in 2048, when the train pulled into Lubbock, and everyone in the station seemed to know that something or other had happened somewhere along the line. Sunny’s father, when her showed me toward their vehicle, with a boy beside us to carry my two bags, he said, “My God, Sunny, what happened? Everyone has a different story. Was the train attacked? Were you under fire?”

“Something like that,” Sunny said, “but, no, I was not under fire,” and told him what had happened.

“A forensic accountant!” her father said, and then broke off, giving a significant look toward the boy who was putting the bags in the back of the Chinese-designed Chiapas-made SUV, which Sunny had never seen before. When they were on the road, and driving eastwards toward the Ranch, he said, “Decent little fellow that lad seemed, but you cannot be too careful these days, damn rednecks.”

“How did you ever get this car, Father?” Sunny asked.

“I bought it, of course,” which wasn’t quite what she’d asked him.

“Damn Chinese,” he said again. Sunny had wanted a splendid day for her return to Crofoot Ranch, but it was burning hot and windless, and all ready a drought. They’d get a dust storm; it
was out on the horizon. They’d probably be in it before they could get home.

“We get the San Antonio paper now.” he said, “never really needed it until now. Something is happening, Sunny. Screwed up stupid Mexicans. They don’t seem to understand that there is a damn war. Sorry about my language, dear.”

“You had best make up your mind, dad,” Sunny said to him, “you had best decide who is damned, the rednecks or the Mexicans.”

“Just because of my own language doesn’t give you permission to ignore your upbringin’,” he said, treating Sunny as though she were a still child, and then, after a bit, said, “Both of them, both of them.” He seemed to be speaking himself. “The whole lot of them be damned.”

“The Brazilian War will be nothing next to this,” he said presently. “Mark my words.”

Sunny marked them, dutifully; after Abilene how could Sunny not, but her mind was on the countryside and a herd of white-faced red cattle. It carried the comforting tones of familiarity, as did a woman riding a bicycle beside the road. As we passed, she raised her arm in lazy greeting, and her father touched his hat brim.

“People like that woman there,” he said, “people whom we’ve known all our lives. I don’t remember the cataclysm all that
well, of course, I was away at school and then came home, but we fared well enough, better than others, never any trouble. It helps when you grow your own food. Your grandfather always dealt well with people, and they all respected him. Others fared less well.”

As he spoke, he kept a wary eye on the caliche road, his hands grasping the wheel tightly.

“We’ll be okay,” Sunny said as nothing but soothing noise.

“What do they want?” he asked me, in sudden, abrupt exasperation.

“They wanted the land, and now they have it. The Reconciliación Act and the government handed it to them on a platter. They wanted Joaquin Allende’s land, and the government obligingly bought Joaquin out. Joaquin lives in Mexico City now, very comfortable, thank you, and comes back every year for the roundup. Stays with Mark Levy. He tells me that he was at the gaming tables in Monterrey one-year. That city has really developed into something. One hundred and fifteen casinos, I read 110,000 gaming, slot, and video poker machines.

So guess who should come in but the former president of Mexico, Matias Varas himself. It was his idea you know, to sell the land back to us. ‘Look here, Varas,’ he called out, and he held up the chips, ‘I’m playing with my Reconciliación.’ Letting the seller set the price without negotiation, scandalous. That
house of his is owned by a computer scientist from Laredo who comes here for the summer, and the land is with twenty, maybe even thirty farmers, sharing one tractor.”

A few row crops remained, pasturelands yes plenty, the wide and empty flatland are not possessions of the imagination alone. Nothing, anywhere, was unowned, if not owned by Mark Levy, whom Sunny could not for the life of her remember, then by strong-farmers, by computer programmers from Laredo. The clouds would not bring rain; they were quickly being burned away. They passed the cattle, and then they were gone from view. Not everyone was losing cattle to confiscation.

“GMOs!” my father said, as though the word were a wire, tripping off another furious thought. “Do you know that the rednecks sent down a ban planting GMOs? Well, they did, everywhere in the blessed state. Monsanto has been a Mexican company for what, twenty years now? And now there’s to be no planting altered seeds, here or anywhere. Crowds came out with pistols and rifles to enforce it. And one shotgun, at least. In DeKalb, a bull was killed. A bull!”

It seemed bizarre, so bizarre that at first Sunny thought he was joking, making his point by exaggeration.

“It worked,” he said, “it worked as well as a boycott might. Only heirloom seeds until the rednecks are back home, the ones who had been jailed in Mexico, De Tellez and that group. No
trouble here, thank God. We have a sensible town. No trouble, no crowds. Daresay the rednecks locally hate Monsanto as much as anybody, eh?"

“Yes,” Sunny said. “What do we plant now?”

“Heirloom, of course. Alfalfa, Sunflowers, Soybeans,” he said. “We’ve managed it really very well, no noise, nothing in the newspapers. Some Mexican was nosing around about the Soybeans so I gave that a holiday this year.”

“But it could not have been pleasant for you,” Sunny said, “an old way of doing things.”

“No,” Father said, “not pleasant at all, and no need for it, you know, by March they had released all of the rednecks, but the planting season was over. Austin doesn’t seem to be troubling themselves about it anymore.”

“They shot a police inspector in Lamesa, you know,” her father said, “and the whole county has got itself under martial law, and below in Tahoka and over in Buffalo Springs. Not much of a welcome home for you, is it, Sunny? But the odd thing is, you know, something quite dreadful will happen, and nothing else talked about for days, and then everything is as it always has been. You’ll see, my dear, it will be a glorious summer to wash that filthy Mexico City out of your system.”
The dust storm arrived, sunless red dust, one could hardly see a block or two; finally Sunny’s father pulled over and waited for the storm to pass.

EXT. CALDERON COUNTY AT DAINGERFIELD

Seeing then, that in fact, he could not move, Cowboy took refuge in his usual remedy, which was to get out the pipe and replay one of the many movies he'd memorized and in this situation that made him recall Gus McCrae in the celebrated TV movie believed to be no truer than the Miracles of Donald Trump. But Cowboy would fight anyone who argued Lonesome Dove wasn’t true. Cowboy didn't have arrows through their knee and survive as Gus had. But as luck would have it, a farmer from his area happened to drive by on his powerful plow horse, John Deere, pulling a trailer back from taking a load of watermelons to the railroad.

The farmer seeing a man lying there in the alley approached and asked who he was and what was the trouble that made him recite dialogue from an old film cowboy. No doubt Cowboy thought the farmer was Pea Eye, the cowboy Gus had sent for help, and so he continued to go with the film's dialogue recounting his misfortune at the hand of blood natives.

The farmer was astounded and picked our dusty and bloody Cowboy up. As soon as he did he recognized him and said,
"Cowboy" for this was his name before the recent outing. Seeing he might not have his wits about him the farmer asked him, "What’s your name?"

"Gus McCrae"

"Okay, what year is it?"

"1878"

"Who's done this to you?"

The cowboy went on reciting his film dialogue.

Seeing no progress, the good farmer picked up the hat and examined it for holes. Find none, he examined the skull for holes. Cowboy might have been shot or stabbed, so he removed the vest and the shirt he only found bruises. All watermelon farmers have hoists and this one managed to hoist Cowboy off the ground and up into the trailer and Shovelhead as well. He gathered up Cowboy's firearms, even the broken pieces of motorcycle, and threw them all into his very green trailer.

The farmer began to putt slowly towards Cowboy's home in the country. He had money in his pocket from the sale of the watermelons but still was depressed and adding to that, in a nonsensical way, several times Cowboy poked his head up out of the John Deere trailer repeating that he wanted Pea Eye to leave him there and go for help.

"I'm not going for help, but I'm taking you home. There have been people at your trailer all week and you're not Gus
McCrae. Your father seems to have taken off and they're looking for him."

"My father is a righter of wrongs in West Dallas. The tourists love him. Have you ever been yelled at by a sheriff in a white hat.

"As a matter of fact…"

"And the next day he’s wearing a black has, just robbed the bank and insulted Miss Kitty?"

"I guess that might be confusing, but that show closed ten years ago, and now he's disappeared, okay? Serious business."

"I understand."

"Then you know who you are?"

"I know who I am," replied Cowboy, "and I know I can never be Gus. First, I know Gus, and I’m not that tough. And second, I only recounted his predicament as a preservation, a method of passing the time and perhaps summoning help. But in the future, my heroics will be better known than Gus McCrae."

"I think you hit your head."

"A Ranger’s life is perpetual suffering."

"Well, you want my advice. Take someone with you next time you leave the county. You might have been lying there for days… Is that what happened?"
EXT. COLOSIO COUNTY AT JEFFERSON

Having this exchange and others like them, they reached the tiny East Texas town as night approached, but the farmer (who had a heart) deterred so no one at the mom and pop operated former Sonic would see what a wreck Cowboy had become. The detour delayed arriving at Cowboy’s doublewide only by a few minutes.

Cowboy's trailer was in an uproar. The minister and the barber, good friends of his father and assigned by Austin to watch over him, were there and in a loud voice his father's girlfriend/housekeeper was nagging at them, "What do you think, Pastor Obenhaus," for this was the minister's name, "of the boy's mishap? Two weeks and no sign of his father or the Harley or the guns. First, his dad and now he’s disappeared! I'm very worried now; I'm sure as h*** convinced that the old movies he and the boy always watch are to blame. He's gone plumb crazy. I remember him talking to himself that he wanted to become a cowboy like his dad, but we all know how that worked out. These old Westerns they ruined the most gentle soul of a boy."

“I don’t suspect anything. I think the boy probably went out looking for his father and he’s still searching, or he’s found trouble, or perhaps the bike was too much and got out from under him and he’s layin in a dirt somewhere,” the minister said.
His father's girlfriend's daughter nodded in agreement and added, "you should know Mr. Serrien," for that was the name of the barber, "when he was a boy that kid was read Western novels by his father for hours and then was allowed to watch Western films for days straight and probably worse than this was when his father was scheduled to work, the boy traveled with him, pistol in hand, ready to shoot Black Bart and Fast Eddie, or whoever. Many times the boy was brought back from the dinner theater, sweat dripping off his brow still after a long commute here sometimes his nose bloody and he always drank a picture of water and slept 18 or more hours. It's our fault for not selling this stuff long ago" and she gestured to a room chock-full of VHS tapes and paperbacks, Western tapes and dime novels.

"That's what I say," said the minister, "and by my faith no later than Saturday, we should have a yard sale so they don't spark another rampage. The boy had work to do, we have work to d as well."

The farmer heard all of this through an open window, which allowed the man to understand his neighbor's predicament, and so he called out, "I have the boy; he's been beaten badly.

With the sound of the farmer's voice, they all came out to the porch and they recognized the boy. Who else was so pale and thin with such a distinctive methstache? Cowboy had just dismounted the melon trailer, and they ran to embrace him.
Cowboy said, "Stop, all of you, for I have been wounded about the face and torso because of my horse's eagerness. Take me to my bed and bring me a picture of water and please care for my unfortunate mount.

"Look all of you," said the father's girlfriend, "let's get him inside we'll fix him right up he'll be back to work in no time, but these books, magazines, and tapes of the West should be gotten rid of."

They brought him to his bed and looked for puncture wounds again couldn't find any and he said it was a "simple bruising," because he'd taken a fall off Shovelhead and then was "kicked and beaten by six thugs as big as oxen."

"Are you sure?" asked the minister. "So, did men the size of oxen do this or children?" The minister measured the size of a bruise in the shape of a small boot.

"By the end of the day, I'll have advertising out to sell this collection." The barber whispered outside.

Inside, they asked Cowboy 100 questions, but he only demanded more water and eventually food. They questioned the farmer, and he told them all that he knew.

EXT. RURAL DOUBLEWIDE IN COLOSIO COUNTY

The minister was burning to sell the collection and ask for the keys to the film vault that contained the books and films.
The girlfriend gladly gave them to him, all of the keys. He went in, and he found more than 20 35mm films and more than 500 VHS tapes and 700 DVDs. The girlfriend gasped and left immediately; evidently, she had never been allowed in the room.

The minister and the barber looked over the collection one by one to see what they had for they might not want to sell everything, not every single film. They supported only selling the harmful influences.

“No,” said the girlfriend's daughter, “there's no reason to keep a single one because they've stolen the innocent child’s spirit. I can save you some time; rather than sell them, let's pitch them in the fire then they won't bother anyone.”

The girlfriend agreed, but the minister and barber refused as the classified ad had already been placed and they were receiving phone calls already.

All the tables and nightstands were taken from the double-wide out to the yard, the books, and films placed on them for sale. Amazing numbers of saw horses were found on the property and two-by-fours laid over them to create additional tables and they were covered with media — books, tapes, celluloid to sell and discs.

The minister wearied of finding tables for all the remaining films and the media was stacked in the prairie grass
in the front yard. No harm really, but the cases did become dusty.

**INT. RURAL DOUBLEWIDE IN COLOSIO COUNTY**

About the time all of the items went on sale, Cowboy began to shout, “here, here, valiant Sheriff, here we show the might of our resolve for the cowpunchers are coming into town to drink.”

The response to this noise and commotion was the remaining 35 mm films cease to exist, and so it is believed that into the burn pile; without being sold or given away, they went into the burn pile. *Texas Bad Men* and *West of the Pecos* along with *Trigger Law*, no doubt were among the remaining films. Perhaps, if the minister had seen them, he might not have been allowed them to be burned.

When they reached Cowboy, he was already out of bed still, shouting and engaging in senseless actions, walking back and forth with a realistic but toy pistol. He was awake as if he had never slept.

They seized him and forced him back to bed and after he calmed down, he turned to the minister and said, “Sheriff, honestly, the greatest discredit to us, they call *The Magnificent Seven* is to do nothing and allow the cowhands a
freehand. It's the Ranger who travels seeking adventure that deserves the glory."

"Be still, Cowboy," said the minister, "for it is God's will that fortune changes and what is lost today, is won tomorrow. You should worry about your health and you still appear fatigued if not still badly wounded."

"Not wounded," said Cowboy, "but bruised and broken. My toe is clearly broken I was beating on account of envy. Cuz I alone are the rival. Please bring me a turkey sandwich. I know what I need and leave the revenge to me."

They did as he asked; they brought him a sandwich and he went back to sleep. They marveled at his both his resilience and his insanity.

That morning the girlfriend rolled the wheelbarrow out to the burn pile so even more films could be disposed of and some great films were burned that could have been saved but their destiny, combined with the minister’s orders from Austin, did not permit this and so as the proverb says, "occasionally the just must pay for the sinners."

The minister and the barber devised a solution for the boy's illness, to wall up and seal off the film room where the books and films had been stored so when Cowboy got up he wouldn't find any reminder of them not even empty shelves, perhaps removing the cause they would reverse the effect. And
they would say that a doped-up Comanche shaman had taken the books and films away, along with the entire room, everything. It was the only story he was likely to believe.

Seven days later, Cowboy got out of bed and the first thing he did was go to the boarded-up library room. He felt for the door and paced back and forth. He questioned his father's girlfriend, and she responded as she'd been instructed, "Comanche medicine."

Cowboy replied that she’d been the one to smoke too much dope.

"It wasn't the dope," replied the girlfriend.

The girlfriend’s daughter, “He's perma-fried his brain. That fool can't remember what's happened. He probably knew what happened to his week, and like a retard forgot or he left a message for us and he’s forgot to tell us where he left it. The cat's gone too and no telling where this moron’s been. There isn’t any sign of his father still.”

Cowboy overheard them bickering and said, “Texas ordained it. It doesn't matter, if I was here or not; the same result would happen."

“I don't want to talk to you; you have no credibility left. You smoked that right up.”

During the next two weeks, Cowboy approach the son of a farmer, Juan Seguin, a school friend, who was a neighbor with
plenty of challenges almost like everyone - a potbelly, slightly slanted eyes, a broad and short skull, big hands with short fingers and he was exactly 75% as wide as he was tall. Just looking at him, his only asset was that he was clearly Hispanic.

And Cowboy told him so much and persuaded and promised him so much that the poor redneck Hispanic chose to go off with him and be a sidekick. Basically, his job would be to pick him up when he fell. But he was promised a “Peninsular County,” the “best” type of county, Cowboy said. Cowboy promised Juan he'd be county judge and this promise made Juan agreed to be our Cowboys sidekick.

This and Juan owed a bit to Cowboys from the last time the Mexicans had incarcerated them, about eighteen Raman total. Idleness didn't suit either man. From time to time, Cowboy cooked meth in the barn and Juan allegedly never did anything but milk the venom from rattlesnakes.

Then cowboy was determined to find some adventure and the last thing he needed on the verge of meaningful Ranger work, was to catch a case. The Mexicans were a bit sensitive about all the meth finding its way into the hands of it’s occupation soldiers. They’d even begun to pay the wives and parents of the men back in Mexico, and still, the soldiers in Texas (with no money) managed to find meth.
A meth cook never wanted for mechanical repairs on a vehicle, and so Shovelhead was repaired and made ready for another adventure. On top of his work for Texas (Austin) he managed to fill three ammo boxes full of crystal. And undervaluing everything, he gave one box to his mechanic and pawned the other for supplies. It helped that he found four other jars of crystal meth that had forgotten. He also found a pair of field glasses and a lifetime of ammo, both blank and live, that his father had stored in the garage and in the barn.

After his motorcycle was repaired, he informed his sidekick of the day and time he planned to start out, so Juan could supply himself as well. He asked Juan in particular to bring some saddlebags and Juan agreed.

As for the transport, Cowboy couldn't remember any gunman riding a donkey, except Ronald Reagan in that one episode of Death Valley Days, yet in spite of this, he figured all along that Juan would be on the Moped. He planned on persuading Juan into trading a moped for a smaller Harley at the first opportunity. He furnished himself with shirts and all the other things he might need: Freshmint toothpaste, Ramen noodles, Brushy Creek chili, Cool Off punch, and Keefy coffee.

They rode off the farm in the middle of the night without witness. Juan rode the moped like a millionaire, or football stud in a parade, with his saddlebags, his mason jars rattling
and a great desire to see himself the corrupt county judge of a island. His friend had promised him an island would be safer than a peninsula.

Cowboy lead them in the same general direction as before, West. He’d traveled his first jaunt which was through the Texas countryside, and he rode there with less difficulty than he had the last time because at that early hour the sun was behind him and weak. Then Juan said to his friend, “Cowboy, be sure not to forget what you promised me about the island. I will know how to run it no matter how big.”

INT. MOM AND POP BURGERS IN FORNEY

Cowboy and Juan entered the abandoned Whataburger taken over by mom and pop; those were really the names they went by. For once Cowboy was hungry. He ordered five tacos and visited the men’s room. Juan thought he was sick because Cowboy never washed his hands. And, Juan chose to play a joke on his friend. While Cowboy was away from the table, he unwrapped one of the tacos, took a bite and wrapped it up again. So that was Juan’s best prank.

Cowboy came back to the table and the first taco he picked up was the one with the bite taken out of it.

Juan said, “Dude, did they make you a taco and then take a bite out of it and then serve it to you? Is that crazy or what?”
It was a childish prank, but under normal circumstances it was harmless. Juan thought it was harmless. Juan thought Cowboy should have come back to the table and looked at the taco and looked across the table at this best friend, who was sitting there alone with him and a friend who also liked to get drunk and have fun, and Cowboy should have said, “Hey man, before I get up and fight the entire kitchen staff, I just want to run this past you…. Did you take a bite of my taco?” That’s what Juan thought would happen. “Did you eat some of my food? Before I go try to fight a group of people, I just want to know. Cause they might be a little confused as to the reason they’re fighting.”

But instead, in an instant, Juan learned the true/new nature of Cowboy. Cowboy opened his taco and couldn’t have ignored Juan quicker; it was like Juan wasn’t even there. Juan later said he thought Cowboy had been there before and it had happened because Cowboy was like, “Again! You did this again. I will fight you again and again, until I find out who’s eating my tacos,” Juan thought he heard Cowboy say.

Cowboy got up and started walking into the kitchen and it was far worse than Juan expected. Juan wasn’t fast enough to catch him to say, “Dude, I ate part of your taco.” Juan said this, but he didn’t have a hold on Cowboy not by the belt or by the shirt as was needed. In fact, Cowboy already had his purple
and pink pistols out and was about to fire on this rough-looking fellow in the back who had his fist practically resting on the grill and not worried about it at all, and he was reaching for his own pistol.

Miraculously, Cowboy heard Juan. He stopped and turned and holstered his pistols. The rough fellow didn’t leave from behind the bullet proof grill and he didn’t take his pistol off Cowboy for five minutes. But Cowboy ignored it and returned to his seat.

Juan scolded his friend, “Amigo, you’re going to get killed someday. You just drew a pistol, two pistols, on a guy you thought took a bite out of your taco. What would have happened if I’d not been here to admit that I did it?”

Cowboy shrugged.

“You were just going to charge back there and shot that guy, without even asking me? You are out there man. Do you really think you can kill a guy who is so confident in himself that he makes tacos and then takes bites out of them and sends them out to customers? You don’t think that sort of guy is probably gonna kill you first? Didn’t you want to check him out first? Try to figure if he’s armed or not? Get him in the parking lot when he’s not expecting it, when he’s not behind that big metal grill?”
Juan waited for an answer. Cowboy contemplate, took a bite of the taco and said, “No.”

**EXT. VINCENTE FOX COUNTY**

As Cowboy was smoking and Juan was drinking, they saw thirty or more of the wind turbines found in West Texas and as soon as Cowboy caught sight of them he stopped and said to his sidekick, “Good Fortune is guiding our affairs better than we could have expected. For there my friend Juan, are 30 or more enormous usurpers whom I intend to shoot it out with and whose lives I intend to take and with the spoils we shall begin to grow rich for this is righteous warfare and it's a great service to the environment to remove so evil a machine from the face of Texas.

“What surfers?” asked Juan.

“Those you see over there,” replied cowboy, “with the long arms sometimes they are almost half a mile tall.”

“Oh, yes,” Juan responded the things that appear over there aren't surfers but wind generators and what looks like their arms the propellers that are turned by the wind and generate electricity for Mexico. They repaired them. It’s their business.”

“Maybe you see more clearly than people imagine,” replied Cowboy, “You are correct; these are Mexican usurpers taking what
is ours, our wind, taking it for the Mexican urban elite never helping with the rural unfortunate.”

“I hope you aren’t thinking what I think you are thinking.”

“If you’re afraid get out of the way, and start to document from over there, while I enter into combat with the stone-cold villains” and having said this he gunned Shovelhead paying no attention to the shouts of his friend who warned him beyond any doubt they were not actually Mexicans or perhaps they were spinning but not generating anything anymore.

But Cowboy was so convinced they were the “employees” of Mexico that he didn’t hear the shouts of his friend and did not see though he was very close.

Instead of stopping, Cowboy called out, “Don’t run you b******, ugly ass creatures, for it is a marksman that attacks you. Just then a gust of wind began to blow and the great propeller blades begin to move and seeing this, Cowboy's said, “freeze desperado don't move.” As he was saying this and commanding himself with all his heart to God and then his sweetheart Salty, asking that she shapen his aim, with the rifle from his scabbard he charged with Shovelhead at full-throttle and attacked the first machine and as he fired rounds into the turbine. The wind moved it with such force that smoke began to pour from the vents.
So amazed at how easy the kill had been, only nine cartridges, Cowboy drove his mount down into an Arroyo and the twenty-something was dropped out of his saddle onto the ground and yet again he was badly bruised. Juan hurried to help his friend, as fast as his moped could carry him. And when he reach him, Cowboy was paralyzed and pained.

“D***, Cowboy,” said Juan, “did I not tell you to watch out what you were doing? That these we're nothing but wind generators and only someone high on dope would attack one and then drive into a revine.”

“Be quiet, Juan, my friend,” replied cowboy, “matters of riflery, more than others, are subject to continual change. More over, I think and therefore, it is true that the same Comanche medicine that stole my library has put an arroyo in the middle of this fight to deprive me of glory. Such is the level of hatred the indigenous peoples have for me, but in the end this evil art will not win against the power of a badge.”

“It's burning, we better get out of here,” Juan helped Cowboys stand, which was his principal job, and they remounted. Cowboy remounted Shovelhead, who's frame was half bent and arguing about the recent misadventure, they climbed out of the gully and continued to the out to the road again.

Cowboys couldn't fail to find a next adventure as he was headed to a more trafficked area, but he rode heavy-hearted
because he didn't have anything but a bruise to show for the nine cartridges he'd spent.

“It was some good shooting, but sit a bit straighter; it looks like you're in less pain,” Juan advised him.

“That's a good idea as we enter this town,” replied Cowboy, “it hurts like the hinges on H***’s Gate, but I can’t complain about the pain, that's because it's not the custom of Rangers to complain about any injury, even if their guts are spill out in the street.”

“If that's true I have nothing to say,” Juan responded, “but I'll be happy if you don’t complain when something hurts you. As for me, I can say that I'll complain about the smallest pain that I have unless what you said about not complaining also applies to the sidekicks of Rangers.”

Cowboys couldn't stop laughing and he declared that Juan could complain anytime he wanted because he certainly wasn't a Ranger.

Juan said that it was time to eat. Cowboy replied that he felt no need for food at the moment, but Juan could eat whenever he wished. With his permission, Juan reach back into the saddlebags. Juan rode at a leisurely pace eating and throwing back his bottle of tequila. While he drove, he ate and drank and all the while he didn't think once of any of Cowboys promises.
He didn't think of it as work but pleasure to go about the highways of such a beautiful place, eating and drinking.

They spent the night out under the stars; Cowboy cleaned the rifle he'd used to kill the surfer. Cowboy didn't sleep that night but thought of renegade Comanches, in order to confirm what he had observed in the movies about Cowboys spending sleepless nights smoking dope out on the prairie worried about their scalps afraid to sleep.

Juan didn't do the same, because his stomach was full. Had Cowboy not poked him awake, it's doubtful the bright sun would have stirred him. When Juan awoke, he made another pass at the bottle and found it mostly empty and his heart was grieved for it seemed to him he'd not brought enough tequila, because it was clearly a very long way to any island. Cowboy didn't eat breakfast; he meant to live on a Ranger's diet.

They reached Bronte about three in the afternoon. "Here," said Cowboy when he saw it was okay to park, "Juan, we can plunge our hands up to the elbows into this thing called adventure, but be advised that even if you see me in the greatest danger you are not to put a hand to a pistol to defend me unless you see that those who offend me are baseborn ramble in which case you certainly can help me, but if they are gentlemen warriors under no circumstances is it permissible for
you under the laws of the code of the West to help me until you are yourself directly asked.”

“I'm a peaceful man, but I am likely to help you. You are paying me with an entire island, but I'll strictly obey your wishes.”

“Thank you,” said Cowboy but as for helping me against an equal adversary, you have to hold your natural impulses in check.”

“That's just what I'll do,” replied Juan, “and I'll keep that promise faithfully.”

As they were speaking, there appeared on the road two San Franciscans mounted on Hondas. They wore their helmets and sun shades. Behind them was a station wagon of travelers and most importantly an 18-wheelered, accompanied by some four or five men on Indian motorcycles. In the station wagon as it was learned later was a coyote princess, a smuggler, with 42 American workers sneaking from Wisconsin to Old Mexico. She was to join her husband there. The Californians were not traveling with her, although their route was the same.

As soon as Cowboys saw them, he said to Juan, “Either I am deceived or this will be the most famous adventure ever filmed because those shapes you see there must be, no doubt, Banditos who have contracted to protect the truck and I need to do everything in my power to right this wrong.”
“You woke up the wrong passenger. This motorcycle club will be worse than the wind-chargers,” said Juan, “look, Cowboy, those motorcycles and 18-wheeler must belong to some human traffickers. Be careful what you do in case the sun and the dope are affecting your brain.”

“I have already told you, Juan,” replied Cowboy, “that you know very little about politics and what I say is true and now you will see that it is so.”

Having said this, Cowboy drove into the middle of the road and when they stopped, the Californians on the Hondas put on their brakes, taken aback as much by Cowboy’s appearance as the roadblock.

Cowboy called out to them in a loud voice, “You wicked and monstrous coyotes instantly release the white people you hold captive in that trailer, or else prepared to receive a swift death as such punishment for your evil trafficking.”

“Sir, we are neither wicked, and have done nothing wicked today, not yet anyway,” and they grinned at each other. “Nor are we monsters but two peaceful men in love with one another, who are traveling and have no idea if there are captive people in that truck behind us or not.”

“No soft words with me. I know who you are faithless rabble you should be moving to improve and rebuild life here instead of running immigrants into Mexico and without waiting for any
further reply he accelerated and attacked the first Franciscan with such ferocity and courage, firing his pistol directly into his face, that if the San Franciscan hadn’t allowed himself to fall off the Honda the man would have possibly been killed. The second Franciscan who saw how his lover was treated drove his Honda off the road and across a field faster than the wind.

When Juan saw the man on the ground, he quickly got off the moped hurried over hurried over to the 100-footer and began to open his saddle bag. Out spilled Carlos Quinto, Palomitas, Salchichas y Jamón, various dulces, Tamarindo, Mazapán, and three RC colas.

At this moment, the travelers got out of the station wagon and asked why Juan was looting the Franciscan. Juan replied that the candy and cakes were legitimately his spoils of the war against Mexico; it was a lie, Juan’s wife had acquired the snacks for his journey. The traveler might not have had a sense of legitimate conquest.

Cowboy moved to speak with the occupants of the station wagon, when the travelers tipped Juan over; they kicked him breathless.

The Franciscan rose, and terrified mounted his bike and rode to join his friend out in the middle of the pasture. The bikers accompanying the truck full of undocumented workers were Banditos and undoubtedly dangerous; the one with the bandolier
was president of the entire organization. He pulled up to listen to everything that Cowboy was telling the woman and seeing that the Anglo would not allow the tractor-trailer to move forward, but was demanding the release of the cargo then and there, that Texas needed the settlers. When the Bandito president heard this he said, “Go on mister, you wrong by God, by the Catholic God who made you, if you don't let the shipment go through, as I be a bandito, I kill you.”

Cowboy understood him well enough and replied with great confidence, “If you were legitimate, as you are not, you’d have a pass from Austin. I will have to punished your foolishness and audacity.”

To which the bandito replied, “not legitimate? Me? Throw away your fear, step off the bike, and pull your pistol and soon we see which make horse drink.”

Cowboy didn't dismount; he pulled his pistols and fired at the Bandito. The Bandito got behind his bike and the two men went at each other as if there they were mortal enemies. While reloading, the other travelers tried to make peace between them but failed because the Bandito said in his tangled words that if they did not allow him to kill the cowboy he would kill everyone who got in his way.

The lady in the station wagon, stunned, had the driver of the 18-wheeler move the human cargo some distance away. From
there everyone watched the fierce contest of which Cowboy took a bullet in the boot and another in the hat. Several other bullets would have struck him had they not been stopped by Shovelhead.

Cowboy felt pain from the enormous blow to his boot saying, “Young girl of my soul, Salty, flower of Pirate volleyball and basketball, if I die here I’m dying because your father instructed me. This was the only way into your heart. Now, I’m for the sake of you, now I finds myself heelless and in grave peril.”

Hearing this, the Bandito walked over and stood over cowboy who was laying in the middle of the highway, his pistol empty of blanks. The Bandito pointed his pistol down at the doomed/d***ed Cowboy for the coup de gras.

All of Cowboy’s problems appeared about to end. A difficulty for the reader might begin here. Juan was contemplating action and was for a moment frozen with indecision. At this very point and juncture, the author of the history leaves the outcome pending and I must apologize because for years I found nothing else written about this duel on the highway. Fortunately, there are clues in Part 2, discovered by a different researcher, that reveal the fate of our Cowboy.
In part one of this history we left the dastardly Bandito and the famous Cowboy with pistols raised and the Bandito about to deliver the final adventure to our noble Ranger.

But the history stopped and was interrupted as the writer ran out of ammunition and was left without a story to finish. This causes me great a great deal of grief.

Ten years after the civil war, it seemed improbable in the Age of Propaganda that such a Cowboy would have lacked such a man to record his historic deeds. At first, I blamed the malignity of time, the devourer of all things. On the other hand, Cowboy’s story was relatively modern and if any era could preserve the events, the story would be saved.

While it might not have been recorded by Juan, it did to live on in the memories/imaginations of the people who Cowboy encountered. I sought to know the truth about Cowboy, the model of Texas manliness. And while not the first of the Reconquista to take up arms, he did right wrongs, defended widows, and protected the maidens with pistols. Despite the political turmoil, It was a time when girls carried their virginity around with them in their Thunderbirds; and unless some villain or some tweaker with hatchet or knife or some enormous brute forced her. A girl could after seventeen years, go to the church head held high.
Cowboy deserves our continual and memorable praise, but where to find the remainder of the story a puzzle?

One day, I was working in the former Toltec County, renamed Dallas County, at Half Price Books. A boy came by to sell some old books in Spanish; accidentally, perhaps the boy had included in the old books a set of journals. He was paid for the old books but I wanted the old notebooks. And since I recognized a vague familiarity, but couldn't read it. I looked around to see if some Mexican was in the vicinity and it was not very difficult to find this kind of interpreter. In short, fortune provided me with one and then I told him what I wanted and placed the book in his hands, he opened it to the middle read for a short while and began to chuckle. I asked him why he was laughing, and he replied that it was something written in the margin of the book, marginalia.

I asked what it was and he continued to laugh as I've said here in the margin is written the “Salada de Tawakoni” referred to so often in this history “they say lost her virginity at the age of 22 having tortured the men of Texas for many years.”

When I heard him say “Salada de Tawakoni” I was astounded and filled with anticipation for it occurred to me that the volumes might contain the entire story. Might contain the entire story of Cowboy and might especially contain the missing outcome of the fight on the road.
With this thought in mind, I urged him to read the beginning of the first notebook and he did. I needed a good deal of cleverness to hide the joy I felt in my heart and wallet when the title of the book was read, *A Contemporary History of the Vaquero de Tejas*.

Half Price Books paid the boy 928 TD (Texas dollars) for the old books, nothing particularly interesting or relevant, but it wasn't the policy of the store to buy handwritten journals. In the parking lot, I handed the boy another 239 TD and gained possession of all of the notebooks. The boy was elated; he wasn't aware of their value to me, or he would have held out for more. Immediately I went on break with my new Spanish-speaking friend, and we made an agreement for him to translate the journals; I offered him whatever payment he demanded without negotiation for I knew I was sitting on a McMurtry-size gold-mine.

To facilitate the arrangement and not allow such a find out of my sight we spent the break and then an hour on top of that photocopying the first journal. He took the photocopies and I kept the journals. A month-and-a-half we finished the copying and after two years he had translated the entire history just as it is retold here.

On the first pages of the second notebook, there was a very clear description of the gunfight on the highway we learned the
Bandito's name, Ponce, not that it matters. We learn something of his background and we are exposed to the particulars as to how and when and where he stole his Indian motorcycle and how the Bandito motorcycle club operated moving Anglo immigrants south. Shovelhead was wonderfully depicted, so classic and dinged up, it was clear that the first part of our story was true.

Next, we are educated more about Juan and his moped. He had a big belly, short stature and relatively young but already had a receding hairline. A few other details were mentioned, but it appears this will be a very long story and there isn't much call for tedium. If any objection could be made regarding the Spanish-half of the story since the Spanish speaking citizens of Texas are very proud to exaggerate. The writer might have taken the side of the Bandito because of the recent war and the outcome of the conflict it might be assumed that the writer of this conclusion of the highway fight has given us too little rather than too much. So it appears to me when he could and should have explain the virtue of so good a Cowboy it seems interesting we passed over a lot in this chapter and in others. I'll try to rectify the negligence.
EXT. MIDDLE OF THE ROAD IN VINCENTE FOX COUNTY

With the pistols drawn the two engaged in mortal combat they seemed to threaten heaven, earth, and the abyss. The first to strike a hit was the irate Bandito and the 9mm that delivered a projectile so furious that the bullet nearly ended Cowboy’s adventure. The bullet truck Cowboy’s left boot heel and it did no more than tear through the shoe there, but the bullet then reflected up into an ammo box tearing the box in half. On the verge of charging the Mexican, Cowboy fell to the ground and was in a very sad state.

“Raisin Bran, I can’t tell you the rage Cowboy showed rising from his horizontal position. A different bullet had torn through his cowboy hat and nicked his ear substantially.

He stood and grasping his second .45 with both hands running at his opponent with so much fury that the Bandito showed signs of falling off his cycle. No doubt if he had not dropped the 9mm and put both hands on the handlebars, the bike would have thrown him. Cowboy shot the Bandito point-blank in the face, temporarily blinding and deafening him. The Bandidos bike left the highway and then even the shoulder of the highway and cross the field. It sputtered a few times in the wrong gear, until it dumped the rider into a prickly pear bush.

Cowboy watched calmly and when the Bandito fell, Cowboy left the road and raced over to the Mexican and placed the tip
of his pistol barrel between the Banditos eyes and ordered him to surrender or else he'd blow his head off. The Bandito was so stunned he couldn't say a word. Cowboy meant to finish the man, but the woman from the station wagon approached him and begged him to do them a favor and spare the life of the soldier. To which Cowboy responded, “Certainly beautiful lady. I'm happy to do as you ask, but there is one condition and that is that this outlaw must present himself in Tawakoni to the unequaled Salty Schkade so that she may find work for him, as she pleases and that will probably be picking up dogshit.”

The coyote princess agreed without considering much of what was being asked; she didn't ask for directions and she didn’t know who or what Salty was to him.

“I shall harm him no more,” said Cowboy. Cowboy, as was the custom, gave them an eight-ball. Juan gave them a bottle of his special tequila and the encounter was over.

By this time Juan, rather badly treated by the travelers, had gathered his snacks and was paying close attention to the battle of his friend and asked God that if it would be his will to grant Cowboy victory especially a lucky shot with which he could win an island to make him judge of.

Seeing then that the combat had ended and his friend was about to remount Shovelhead, he came to assist him. Before Cowboy mounted, Juan rushed to shake his hand and said, “I hope
you give me the judge's position in this county that you've just won in this fierce combat, no matter it’s not in the shape of an island. It may be I feel after this storm, I'll have the ability to govern it well.”

To which Cowboy responded, “Let me point out, brother Juan, that this adventure and those like it are adventures nothing like roller coasters or log flumes, but at this crossroads in which nothing is won but a broken boot and a missing ear. Have patience, for better adventures will present themselves in which you can become not only judge but perhaps even more.”

Juan thanked him generously and after hugging him again, he helped him to mount Shovelhead, and then he mounted his moped and began to follow his friend without saying “goodbye” or even waving at the coyote princess.

Down a dirt road, Juan followed as fast as the moped would go until Cowboy finally stopped to wait on him.

Cowboy wished, “I’d like to time machine back to…”

You mean and not free the immigrants?

“No go back and stop the calamity.”

“There’s no such thing as a time machine. Time travel is impossible,” Juan countered.

“Are you saying it shouldn’t be done?

“Cowboy, time travel is impossible.”
Cowboy became slightly irate, “What does that mean? You mean for now? Are you sure you know what will be possible a million years from now? When everyone was watching people have sex on phones, who saw the catastrophe coming that would take porn away? Fifty years ago, if you wanted to see a naked woman, you just hit a button or two. Who would think if you want to see a naked woman now you have to find a real one? Whether that is good or bad; you just don’t know what is coming.”

“You don’t understand science. The reason you don’t have time machines is because of the grand-father paradigm. Cause if you could go back and kill your grandfather before your father was ever conceived then you could never have existed to use that time machine in the first place.”

“What kind of an a****** wants to kill his grandpa? Of all the cool stuff you can do with a time machine, you want to kill your grandpa? That’s some f***ed up scientific principal!”

“What about going back to Jr. High and stealing Lorena Bowerman’s bra out of her P.E. locker?” Juan suggested?

“What about going back in time and killing Hitler?”

“I wouldn’t kill Hitler, all the Nazis were all nuts and he’s just have been replaced by another nut-job. I’d s*** on his head,” Juan thought.

“How is that going to happen? He had security all around him, all the time.”
“You do it while he’s sleeping and he screams, but you disappear. SS come in with guns. And the best part of that you could do that over and over again. You have a time machine. You do it 1/10th of a second earlier every day for years; he never sees it coming.”

“Why?”

“I guaranty he’d stop all that bull s*** with the Jews.”

“Why?”

“He’d be too depressed. They’d be like, ‘you want to go kill some Jews?’ And he’d be like, ‘no I just want to take another shower.’”

Cowboy observed, “You’d have to be there and do that at the time the time machine was invented.”

“Why?” Juan asked.

“You’re not the first to think of that and he’d see you coming.”

“Huh?” Juan didn’t understand.

Cowboy was disappointed that he needed to explain, “Amigo, if there was a time machine and you did that, you’d be on a mountain of s*** twice the size of Mount McKinley. You need to be more original.”

Juan, tired of looking over his shoulder wanted to change the subject, “Seems to me, sir, that it would be a good idea for us to take refuge in the hills for that man you fought was so
badly injured that it won't be long before he tells the Mexicans what happened and they'll arrest us and with my luck by the time we get out of prison they will put us through a terrible time.”

“Be quiet,” said Cowboy, “where have you ever seen or read that a Ranger has been brought before the law and besides if a prisoner sleeps three-fourths of the time, they only serve one-fourth of their sentence.”

“I don't know anything about grudges or prison,” replied Juan, “and I never was in one my entire life. All I know is that the federal police might take care of a person who has fought in the middle of the road and I don't want anything to do with that.”

“Well, don’t trouble yourself, my friend,” Cowboy responded, “but I shall save you from the bars and razor wire. So tell me have you ever seen a more ballsy fight? Have you read or seen or heard tall-tales of another who has attacked with more spirit?”

“The truth is I didn’t record it. All my snakes fell to the ground and then I was kicked. And besides, I don’t read English so well and I don’t read Spanish at all. I’ve not had the time for so many movies, but I'll wager you that I've never seen and more bold Anglo.

“It wasn’t recorded?”
"No, it wasn’t and I apologize. The next time you fight a Bandito, I’ll be sure to get it and send it to Mexico City."

"Hopefully, you won’t spill your snacks again."

"My bad, but what I’m thinking now, however, is that we should treat your ear. A lot of blood is coming out of your wound and I have some gauze and triple antibiotic in the saddlebags."

"None of that will be needed," replied Cowboy, "if I remember how to prepare the THC tea for just one drop it will save both time and medicine."

"What tea is that?" asked Juan.

"It’s a special herbal tea," replied Cowboy, "the recipe for which I have memorized, and with it a man needs not fear death. A man will not die of a wound if he’s given this potion. All you need to do if you see in some battle that they’ve killed my body (this won’t happen) before rigor mortis, is to set me up into a seated position then you will give me only two mouths full to drink and you will see me sounder than a Hereford bull."

"If that’s true," said Juan, "I renounce here and now the island you have promised and want nothing else in payment, but that you’re a** give me the recipe for this miracle tea for I think an ounce of it will bring millions of pesos and I'd like to live a productive and honorable life, not as a politician. But I'd like to know if it cost a lot to make."
“With less than 30,000 pesos and you can make more than a pint,” replied Cowboy.

“Bit-O-Honey,” said Juan, “What's you’re a** waiting for? Why don't you make it and show me how it's done?”

“It’s too dry here to grow the plants,” Cowboy responded, “Maybe when we are back in East Texas. But, for now can you please treat these wounds for my ear hurts more than I should like.”

Juan took gauze and triple antibiotic out of the saddlebags, but when Cowboy saw his helmet he saw actually saw a cowboy hat and it had been broken. He thought he would go mad and placing his hand on his pistol and lifting his eyes to Heaven, he said, “I’ll avenged this I swear not to sit at a table or lie with a woman until I take my entire revenge on the one who has done this to my boot and hat.

On hearing this Juan said, “Look, if the gentleman did what you ordered him to do and brought himself to Miss Salty down in Tawakoni then he has already seen her and maybe he's spoken with her father and joined the Reconquista. If that is the case, then he doesn't deserve any more bull s*** from you so long as he sees the light.”

“You've spoken well,” Cowboy said, “and I’ll revoke the part of the promise that deals with wreaking vengeance on him but I make it and confirm again that I renounce such a life
until I take by force another hat just as good and don't think this is just more bull s***.”

When cowboy looked in the mirror wearing a motorcycle helmet he saw a cowboy hat in a wide-brimmed hat cowboy in a wide-brimmed hat. When the mockumentary/comedy was made in some very realistic scenes Cowboy was shown wearing a worn and misshaped straw Stetson. In other scenes, an obvious stand-in, an actor, wore a motorcycle helmet, perhaps the director's metaphor for Cowboy’s confusion.

“Your vows should go to the devil,” replied Juan, “for they’re dangerous to your health and very damaging to your psychology. If not, then tell me if how many days we don't happen to run into a man with such a hat, what will you do? Must we keep these asinine promises in spite of the danger and you attending attacking the first man in a hat. We're in the middle of nowhere and there aren't any men in helmets out here.”

“In this you've been deceived,” said cowboy, “because in less than 24 hours we shall see more hatted men than we can count.”

“All right, then so be it,” said Juan, “and may it please God that all goes well with us and the time comes quickly when I get control of an island and then I can likely live happily.”

“I have already told you, Juan, that you should have no care in that regard if an island is lacking, there is always
Still Six Flags Over Texas which was in the past been in the most beautiful amusement park imaginable and it will be the perfect fit for you, but all in due course.

“Do you think it will ever be repaired and back in operation?”

“I have great confidence in you.”

“Thank you.”

“Look and see if you have anything to eat in your saddlebags and then we shall go in search of a motel where we can sleep and make some tea as I have told you of because I swear my ear is hurting a lot.”

“I have here an onion and a little cheese. I don't know a few slices of bread,” said Juan, “but these aren't suitable for a Ranger who's fought a great battle.”

“How little you understand,” Cowboy said, “I shall tell you Juan that there is a question of honor for Rangers not to eat animals; it is our expression that we’re better than most, and when I do eat it is whatever they find near in hand so I don't impact the environment. So, don’t worry with what may or may not be my taste.”

“Forgive me,” said Juan “Since, I don't know how to read or write Spanish as I told you before. I don't know, and I'm not aware of the rules of the Ranger profession. From now on, I'll
keep dried fruits and nuts in the saddlebag since you need something substantial.”

“I'm not saying that it's necessary for Rangers to be entirely vegan, other than beef jerky there are certain plants found near here that will do perfectly. I appreciate your effort.”

“It's a great virtue,” Juan responded, “to know the plants and I'm thinking we might need this knowledge in the recipe.”

Juan took out the food he was carrying, and they ate in peace and good friendship, but they wanted a cool place to sleep as they finished their meal, then they mounted up and sought out a town.

Instead of a town, they found some barns built for cattle, but housing goats, and so they decided to spend the night there. As much as it grieved Juan not to be in a town, it pleased Cowboy to sleep outdoors for it seemed to Juan each time Cowboy did that, it helped him prove his claim to fame.

EXT. GOAT BARN IN SALINAS DE GORTARI COUNTY

Our Cowboy was welcomed by the goat herders west of El Dorado. Juan had followed the aroma coming from certain pieces of meat that were roasting above the fire. He wished to move some from the fire into his stomach. He didn't because the goat herders removed the meat from the fire and prepared their rustic
table with displays of goodwill inviting them to share, but it all happened very slowly in Juan’s estimation.

The six of them sat down having first, with little ceremony, asked Cowboy to sit on an orange plastic bucket that they turned upside down and set out for him. Cowboy sat down and Juan was reminded and remain standing to serve him and fill his cup, “so that you may see one the virtues of Western heroism. You know how those practices always tend to be honored and esteemed in the world. I don't want you to sit here at my side in the company of these good people as I’m your natural leader, but friend, eat for my plate and drink from the same cup I drink from, you are my brother and that it makes us equal. So sit down.”

“You're too kind,” said Juan, “but I can tell you’re a** that as long as I have something good to eat, I'll eat just as well or better standing and all alone as sitting. I like bread and onions better eating by myself as opposed to goat on a table where I must mind my manners, so frankly I appreciate your brotherly gesture, but I'm happy alone.”

“God, all that and you still you will not sit down. It’s wrong for God loves a man who humbles himself,” and seizing him by the arm our Cowboy kindly obliged his friend to sit next to him.
The herder's did not understand their nonsensical talk about brotherhood and proper positions and they simply ate and were silent. They energetically devoured large pieces of meat. They ate pecans and half a cheese. All this time a bottle of inferior tequila was not idle.

After Cowboy had satisfied his stomach he picked up a handful of pecans and begin to speak kindly of the age of prosperity and called Golden by the now elderly disc jockeys and Cowboy went on about the time when paper pesos were readily available. He spoke about Motown and Capitol Records. Ford and Chevrolet. Industrial farming and Cambell’s soup factories and food could be found then with no effort because things are were largely left to buyers and sellers.

Farmers were invited to share their sweet and flavorsome fruit, beside the smooth payment of the interstate highway system. In that age magnificent abundance came from the Austin high-tech bees and clever entrepreneurs establish their harmless empires, freely offering to anyone with a few dollars a computer from a van in the Dobie dorm parking garage. It was Cowboy’s father’s era and he spoke intelligently of it.

He continued, about the time when virgins in their modesty wondered wherever they wished alone, the mistresses of themselves, without fear that ann occupation demon would deflower them.
Juan spoke up, “We’re Lutherans we don’t believe in demons.”

“You may not, but I friend, I’ve seen them. Just as if Tobit were true, I’ve seen them.” Cowboy insisted.

“Okay. I will give you a big maybe on that one.”

“So can I finish?” Cowboy asked.

“I didn’t interrupt you.”

“So, if they fell it was through their own desire and will but now no virgin is safe from this occupation army.”

Cowboy’s rant could have gone on longer than it took to finish dinner, but when it was concluded one of the herders sang a song, and when the herder ended his song, someone said to Cowboy, “You ought to decide now where you're going to spend the night; the work these good men do all day doesn't allow them to spend all night running down the Mexicans and singing.”

“I understand you very well,” Cowboy responded and he turned to his friend, “Juan, you’ve been drinking, and you’re likely to settle down wherever you fall, but my profession prefers standing vigil to sleeping, even so Juan it would be a good turn if you could tend this ear again for it is hurting more than necessary.”

Juan went for the triple antibiotic, but the herder told him not to worry and put on a medicine used on the abrasions of goats and this was all the treatment that was needed.
EXT. SALINAS DE GORTARI COUNTY

At this time, Pedro, a young man who brought the herders things from San Angelo, approached and said, “Guys, do you know what happened in town?”

“We've been out here,” one of the herders replied.

“Well, then I'll tell you,” the young man continued, “This morning the famous student Gillian died they said at school, that he died for the love of that damned girl Ginger, the daughter of Fryst, the rich piano teacher and musician. She's the same girl who dresses up like a shepherdess and wanders around west of town in the wild abandoned places.

“Ginger? Did you say,” asked one of the herders, “red hair and freckles? A real peach.”

“No the b**** is a grapefruit,” replied young man. And the strange thing is that it is that in his final letter he said that he wants to be buried in the countryside like a cowboy of old, that his grave should be at the base of the rocky hill where the loan mesquite tree is, because everybody knows and they say he said so himself that this is where he saw her for the first time, and he also asked for some other things that the priest refused to divulge. Also his friend, Ambrose and the shepherds, most students without livestock but who dress like shepherds, say that everything Gilligan wanted was put in the letter the priests quickly burned. The whole village is in an
uproar over this, but in the end they'll do what Ambrose and the shepherds say. Tomorrow they'll come to bury him in the place. I think it will be worth seeing.”

“I'll be there for certain. We'll all be there as well,” a herder's responded, “and we'll draw straws to see who has to stay behind to water the goats.”

“Good idea,” Pedro said.

One herder said, “You don't need to do that, I'll stay here. I’m curious, but my foot hurts.”

“Even so we all thank you,” Pedro said.

Cowboy asked Pedro to tell him about the dead man and the shepherdess to which Pedro responded all he knew was that the dead man was the son of a rich gentleman a resident of a nearby town who was still in school learning and well-read. “Mainly, people said he knew astronomy and all of the sky especially the Sun and the Moon because he would always announce the eclipses.”

“Interesting boy,” said Cowboy.

“And his father asked his son’s advice. When he said, ‘this year plant oats not wheat,’ and ‘this year you can plant corn and not cotton, next year though there will be a good cotton crop.’”

“Now days, this is an important skill,” said Cowboy.

“He's not really one of us, a herder. One day, he just appeared dressed like one of us and with an ATV and his friend
named Ambrose was also dressed up. Herder poets. I forgot to say Gilligan, the dead man, was a great songwriter. When the townspeople saw the young man dressed like a shepherd they were really surprised and couldn't guess why. At about this time Gilligan's father died and he inherited the farm. Later on, people learned the reason why he dressed up and rode the ATV far and wide; he was following after that b**** Ginger because the poor dead boy had fallen in love with her. And I want to tell you now who this girl is because you ought to know and you probably never heard anything like it."

“Well, I've been a Ranger a time” said Cowboy, “and I've seen a thing or two.”

“As I was saying,” said the herder, “in the town there was a musician even richer than Gilligan's father and God gave him not only wealth but also a daughter who's mother died giving birth to her, and her mother was very respected in the whole county. It seems to me that I can see her now with that face of hers shining like the sun on one side and the moon on the other. The girl's mother was a friend of artists and friend to the poor. Her husband, Emiliano, died of grief at the death of such a good woman and their daughter Ginger was left a very wealthy girl in care of her uncle who was the new Mexican judge. The girl and her blistering beauty reminded everyone of her mother. Many people thought the daughter even hotter. And it was when
she reached the age of 17 that the men fell madly in love with her. Her uncle kept her busy (dance, baking, piano and shooting lessons) and the suitors were intimidated by it all and kept away from her; but even so word of her beauty spread. The sons of powerful men befriended her uncle hoping he would facilitate her marriage; they didn't care about her musical talent or cash on hand even; they were only interested in her beauty. People talk in the small communities and the judge must have been a good man for all the talk was of how he resisted the temptation of higher office in the Mexican Government. He could have easily traded her for promotion."

"That's admirable," said the Cowboy, "please continue."

"Even though the uncle brought San Antonio men to his table to talk politics and socialize and he ask her if she'd like to marry a powerful man, he didn’t pimp her out to the political crowd. She didn't want to marry one just that instant, was her response and since she was young, she didn't feel able to bear the burdens marriage. It seemed reasonable, and the uncle stopped asking and chose to let her proceed without interference.

"A parent shouldn't try to force marriage," Cowboy commented.

"But then one day Ginger appeared dressed like a herder and paying no attention to her uncle's appointed position on the
bench and certainly no attention to public opinion, she bought a worn out ATV and drove out of town into the desert. She joined a group of female friends, she abandoning any pretense of wealth and inside a week there were a number of rich young poets, and farmers as well, dressed up like Ginger. According to his friends, this dead boy no longer loved her but worship her. But for these men, don't think it was this new freedom was so free. She gave no sign of dishonesty or loss of virtue; she didn't give it up, and most of the time, wouldn't give even a glance to a fellow, and she gave no one a legitimate hope of achieving their desire. While she didn't run from male company or small-talk, she treated everyone with politeness and friendship. If any boy would reveal his hunger for romance, she would throw the idea as far as possible, and by living this way and in one of the most remote counties in Texas, she did more harm than good. Her red hair and the ability attracted the hearts of all the young males who were trying to bed her, but she was a plague to them. Her reproaches drove them to despair most of the boys soon thought her callous and a tease, but young Gilligan never gave up and never thought anything but positive thoughts. Not far from here is a place with almost a half dozen old mesquite tree is not a single one without Ginger’s name carved into it's bark and at the top of one there's a butterfly carved as if a lover were saying even more clearly how he saw Ginger. Boys both
fictional and real do that sometimes - climb trees and carve strange things. There were other signs but there were no other mourners (only Gilliland); over yonder amorous songs were heard and farther on there are desperate limitations. This dead fellow spent all hours of the night sitting at the foot of a single mesquite tree or leaning against a goat shed not closing his balling red eyes and we’d find him in the morning absorb lost in crazy thoughts. His friends gave no response or notice to his signs and in the middle of the burning heat of the summer afternoon lying on the burning sand he would send his compliments to a merciless Sun. But the friends watched to see where the beautiful Ginger (now free to roam). The waited to see where her arrogance would lead.”

“They waited in vain,” Cowboy realized.

“Since everything I've told you is the truth, I take it for bull s*** that what the priest said about the reason Gilligan’s death so Mister Cowboy my advice to you is to stay and see the burial.”

“I shall be certain to,” said Cowboy, “I don't know half of what's happened to the heartbroken lovers of Ginger, but maybe tomorrow we'll meet some who will tell us some more stories. She may have f***ed up more than this one dead fellow.”

“For now it's a good idea to find a roof for you to sleep under; the night air might harm your wounded.”
And here Juan was asleep and feeling bruised beside his moped. Juan typically used a chunk of firewood for a pillow; sometimes when the fire burned down he would burn his pillow. How many times Juan woke the next morning with dirt or bugs in his ear.

EXT. MESQUITE TREE IN SALINAS DE GORTARI COUNTY

About the time the sun appeared in the east, five or six goat herders got up and went to wake Cowboy and tell him that if he was still going to the burial, they would all go together. Cowboy wanted nothing but adventure and Navaho blankets. For him the funeral was on his mind so he got up and asked Juan prepare to leave and then he hit the pipe. Eventually and immediately trading meth for gasoline, which didn't take long, Juan warmed up and fueled the motorcycles. Before they could depart Juan observed a phenomenon that Cowboy would later say he saw differently.

Over a ridge came a buffalo coming right toward them. The buffalo was a cow and had been running a while her tongue was hanging out and her gait was unsteady some thirty yards behind her, Cowboy saw a Hispanic man in pursuit on a small garden tractor with a second Hispanic still further back on a moped similar to his ride. The buffalo and her pursuers appeared so suddenly that no one thought to shoot. The first Hispanic had a
large lance and the second one had a simple bow. Cowboy felt they ran right by not thirty yards from the herder’s camp. Neither of the Hispanics seem to notice that they run through a goat camp so intent at not letting their prey escape, they passed through the camp.

Cowboy, who was defecating in the bushes, had thought to bring his rifle and shoot the buffalo and ended the chase. Cowboy had seen the Hispanics and the sad condition of there lawn tractors and put an end to it. Cowboy had made the shot while squatting.

Cowboy felt that after he shot the animal that the Hispanics stopped and simply sat on their vehicles. He noticed both were squinting with fatigue they were too exhausted. They’d needed the animal badly. The encampment of herders began to strike camp and move toward the burial. Juan insisted that Cowboy had shot an innocent but wormy longhorn.

They promptly started out, and they'd gone less than two miles when and at an intersection they saw about six pickup trucks, and with them on the road, men on motorcycles. As the two groups came to the four-way stop, they exchanged waves and asked where the other was going they learned that they were headed for the burial.
When they arrived at the designated area, the foot of a hill in the desert containing a single mesquite, one of the men on motorcycles, speaking to his companion, said, “it seems to me, Virgil, that we're spending time wisely because it's most certain this will be entertaining. According to the strange tales of the shepherds, this Ginger has been murderous.”

“I think so too,” responded Virgil and I would be willing to drive 1000 miles to see if she shows her face.”

Cowboy asked, “What did you hear about Ginger and Gilligan?”

The wanderer replied, that early that morning, they had encountered the shepherds and seeing them in such mournful dress had to ask the reason for their going about in this manner and one of them had recounted the strange behavior and beauty of a shepherdess name Ginger and the love so many suitors had for her and the death of Gilligan to whose burial they were going. He related everything that Pedro had told Cowboy previously.

This conversation ended and another began when the wanderer, called Virgil, asked Cowboy the reason for he is going about armed in that manner, “when the land was now Hispanic and solidly Mexican and so peaceful,” to which Cowboy replied, “I see your bias, but it is a day of mourning; lets leave politics out of it so we can learn what happened here.”
The wanderer kept on with the sanctimonious questions, and consequently Cowboy narrowed his eyes, “the exercise of my profession does not allow or permit me to go about in any other manner. Tranquility, luxury and rest on a couch are for pampered politicians, but difficulty, trouble, and violence were intended for the Ranger, though I'm the least of them.”

As soon as they heard this it was confirmation that he was one of the redneck revolutionaries and to learn more and see what sort of insanity this was, Virgil asked Cowboy the meaning of “Ranger.”

“Have you not seen the films,” responded Cowboy, “the stories and history of Texas in which are recounted the famous deeds of Frank Hamer, Woodrow Call or John Coffee Hays?”

And Cowboy explained that according to an ancient legend the Ranger had never died but was majestically/magically turned into a “horny toad” (horned toad) and has only now return to human form to “chase and ambush” Mexicans. He added that had cost many a toad his life, because given the “sad state of things” presently, no Mexican would spare a “horny toad.”

“Anyway it was in the days of Hamer that the Rangers were most needed,” Cowboy said.

There is also a tweaking of the love between Hamer of the lake and Wichita princess. Here was born this popular story,
“never was a cowboy so well served by ladies as was Hamer when he from Abilene came.”

“Since that time, down generations to the next, the order of the West has extended and spread through different parts of the occupied territory, now even today there are hundreds of cowboys dressed as I am, traveling looking for adventure and wrongs to right. This is what it means to be a redneck and that is the way it is, just as I have said. And I have also taken my vows professing exactly what was professed by Texas Rangers of old and so I wonder the solitary and desolate places in search of adventure offering my ability in defense of those who are oppressed and can't pay these Mexican taxes.

Fully persuaded that Cowboy and lost his mind, the travelers realize the nature of the madness that controlled him and felt the same astonishment that was felt by everyone who wrote about him.

Virgil, who was clever and generally a happy person, wanted to give Cowboy the chance to go on with his charade and entertain them for a while as they waited for the funeral procession and so he said, “it seems to me, Cowboy, that you have taken a vow to follow one of the most austere professions in the world. In my opinion, not even Wal-Mart employees have one so austere.”

“There aren’t any Wal-Marts.”
“They still exist in Old Mexico.”

“Employees? Their work may be austere,” responded Cowboy, “but I have some doubt that it is just as necessary in the world because, if truth be told, a soldier when he carries out his Captain's orders does no less than the captain who issued the orders. I mean to say that the capitalists are in peace buying and selling and of course that benefits the world but we soldiers and professional revolutionaries take what they provide and defend the world, with the valor of our good pistols and sharp reports of our rifles. We don't revolt under a safe roof for the benefit of well-fed applauding people, but we work under an open sky subject to the sun of the summer and blue northers of the winter and in this way we are vicars of freedom and economic justice.”

“Economic justice is put given to us by God, true,” the smart-alec did admit.

“But since the advent of civil war (since 2036) and all things concerned with this war, this occupation cannot be changed except by toil, perspiration and danger, it follows that those who in tranquil peace and taking it easy behind a cash register can't help things, especially if they are in Mexico.”

“Naturally,” the traveler said.

“I don't mean to say that it’s not and it has not even occurred to me that the state of traveling is as virtuous as
that of a cashier. I wish only to suggest given what I'm suffering is undoubtedly more toilsome and impoverished for there is no doubt that traveling men endure many hardships and if some rise to appointed office by their bravery it cost them dearly in blood and sweat, but clearly if they rise to power it was also with the help of methamphetamines and wise friends or two.”

“I'm of the same opinion,” replied the traveler, “but there is one thing concerning Rangers that seems objectionable to me and it is that when they find themselves about to embark on a great and perilous venture in which there is a manifest danger never do they cross themselves to God. This frankly smells.”

“Sir,” responded Cowboy, “It is neither commanded nor prohibited by scripture. I don't see anyone crossing themselves at all especially in my church even when the minister declares his blessing upon us in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit. A weaker Ranger might not want to appear Catholic. Promotion and such. Politics. A Ranger can cross himself, but if they do they might feel ‘looked upon’ as disloyal. A confident Ranger could in theory could cross himself. In my mind, too many Texans don't do it because they don't want to be considered papist or Roman.”

“Even so,” replied the traveler, “I still have misgivings and it is that I have often read that words are exchanged
between two death merchants and one word leads to another their anger rises and they turn their motorcycles and ride off a good distance to the far ends of the street and then without cross themselves, they ride at full tilt toward each other and as the distance between the two closes and what usually happens after their encounter is that one falls from his cycle run through by a bullet or Forbath knife. All this without the ranger praying to God.”

“I'm not sure how you know if a Ranger is praying or not? Speaking from experience, it happens rather fast and furthermore, I don't think a man can get into heaven without prayer, for it is faith alone that gets you there. So you cross yourself all you want, and it will not help you in the slightest.”

“But if you kill a Catholic, the only true religion, you can not enter the kingdom of Heaven.”

“That cannot be,” responded Cowboy, “I mean there cannot be a Heaven without Rangers because it is fitting a natural for them to be there, as for the sky to have stars, and just as certainly you have never seen a history in which you find a Ranger without Christian love for if he had none he would not be a Ranger.”

“Even so,” said the traveler, “it seems to me that, if I remember correctly, I have noticed that the Mexican television star, Cowboy Billy Bob the Pink always crosses himself.”
To which our Cowboy responded, “Sir, one fly does not a summer make, furthermore I happen to know that this cowboy, this pink cowboy, was secretly very much in love with his hair AND his hair stylist, who he also made his producer. And even though the ladies found him attractive (and felt safe around him) as is a natural inclination; it is clearly demonstrated that there was another man whom he made his mistress and that entire crossing himself was a charade. To his lover, stylist, and boss, he commended himself frequently and very secretively because he prided himself a sensitive cowboy. If you get my drift.”

“Well then if it is essential that every Ranger has to be in love with a woman,” said the traveler, “we most certainly can assume that you are as well since you are a member of the profession and unless your ass prides himself as being just as sensitive as Billy Bob the Pink. We would like to know, please tell us the name and county and condition of the beauty of your love for she would think herself fortunate if all the world knew she was loved and loved by the sort of Ranger you think you are.”

Whereupon Cowboy heaved a sigh and said, “I cannot declare whether my love would be pleased or not if the world were to know that I love her, besides I must impress her father of we can’t marry. His opinion is what is important at this stage of things.”
“So who is she?”

“I can only state that her name is Salty, her county you now call Nuevo Acuña which contains the city of Tawakoni. Her condition is that of retail rescue director. At the very least she is my prairie queen, and part-time poster-child of the revolution, and her beauty is plain as day for in it one finds the reality of all the simple and down-to-earth aspects of beauty. Her hair is golden. Her forehead the texture of a grape. Her eyebrows the golden arches at the old McDonald's. Her eyes look blue or green; I’ve not been allowed that close. Her father’s eyes are blue. Her cheeks are puppies. Her lips roses. Her teeth pearls. Her neck unblemished. Her bosoms firm, and she has very long legs. Her hands skilled at roundball. Her skin is kissed by the sun and the parts unmentionable or worthy of mention but impossible to compare.

“We would like to know her lineage and ancestry and family to which Cowboy responding she’s not of the ancient families Jones, Wall, Staubach, Landry, Perot, Cuban or Oswald but she is from the family Schkade of Tawakoni, a lineage so fine although modern that it can give a generous beginning to the most illustrious families of centuries to come, and I shall add no more but to say she is fit.”

“Although my lineage is the Asmussens of Laredo,” responded the traveler, “I don't dare compare it to that of Schkade of
Tawakoni but to tell the truth that name hasn't reached intel..., my ears, until now. Is it possible that so notable a thing has not reached my des... ears?"

All the others had been listening with great attention to their conversation, and even the goat herders realized how bad an actor the traveler was, and also how easily exhausted he could become. This traveler screwed up and made two telling mistakes toward the end of a rather short conversation. They felt Cowboy must have noticed, but apparently, he realized nothing. While Cowboy sounded intelligent to most, he was not entirely right.

Separating two ranches was a road were about 20 motorcycles and a black hearse slowly rolling toward them. When one of the goat herders saw this, he said, “These men are carrying the body of Gilligan and you both should knock off the politics. And are we sure this is the place where he said he wanted to be buried?”

It was the correct location and the bearers set the body on the ground, and with sharp picks, four of them began digging the grave under a partial shade of the lone Mesquite.

They exchanged greetings and then Cowboy and those who accompanied him began to look at the dead man covered with flowers and a laptop. They saw a dead body currently 20 years of age, dressed as a shepherd, and although he was dead. He showed no signs of having a handsome face or a gallant disposition
attributed to him when he was alive. Those who were watching and the men who were digging the grave and everyone else who was present maintained a wondrous silence, until one of those who had been carrying the body, said to Ambrose, “Is this the place Gilligan mentioned since you want everything he asked for in his will to be carried out to the letter.”

“It is,” Ambrose responded, “My unhappy friend often told me the history of his misfortune here. He said he first saw that mortal enemy of the male race and here and this was also where he first declared to her his desire, as sincere as it was loving and here was where Ginger finally disillusioned and disgraced him for the last time putting an end to the tragedy of his miserable life. Here in memory of so much affliction, he wanted to be put in the ground. Oblivion!”

And turning to Cowboy and the travelers, Ambrose went on to say, “This body serves that you look at with understanding eyes was a depository of a soul in which luck placed an infinite number of gifts. This is the body of Gilligan, who was unique in intelligence, unequaled in courtesy, and open to creativity; he had f***ed up dreams and learned to remember them. Peerless in friendship, faultless about charity and undeterred by plausibility. Merry without vulgarity and finally first in everything it means to be good and also first in everything it means to be unfortunate. He loved deeply and was rejected. He
adored and was scorned. He pleaded with a wild beast. Argued with a piece of marble, pursued the wind, shouted in the desert, and was served ingratitude and his reward was to fall victim to death in the middle of his life which was ended by a shepherdess whom he attempted to immortalize in song so that she would live on in memory which could be on the laptop you see there if he had not asked it be committed to the grave. It will serve her right for any record of her existence to disappear with the body of the man she’s killed.

A traveler spoke up about the laptop containing music files. “It is too harsh and it’s neither justice nor correct to carry out the will of someone whose orders go against all reason. You would not think so highly of Franz Kafka’s friend if he had agreed to carry out what that artist had ordered at his death and so Mr. Ambrose although you surrender your friend's body to the ground do not surrender his music to oblivion. If he gave the order, as an aggrieved man, it is not proper for you to carry it out like a foolish wish. You can give life to these files; you can have Ginger’s cruelty life as an example to those in the future as they won't make the same mistake and I and my cowboy companion know the history of your loving and desperate friend and the reason for his death and what he ordered to be done when his life is over. From this lamentable history, one can learn how great was the cruelty of Gina, the victimized
Gilligan, the steadfastness of your friendship, as well as a warning of the final resting place of those who merrily race along the path that heedless love. Please inform them about last Friday night. We learned last night of Gilligan’s death and that he would be buried in this place and filled with curiosity and pity we halted our journey and decided to come over and see with our own eyes what would be said and now we’ve seen and heard there might be music as recompense for this sorrow and the desire born in us to alleviate it if we could. We beg you at least, oh most discreet Ambrose, not to bury the laptop but allow me to have it. And not waiting for the shepherd to respond he stretched out his hand and took the laptop.

Seeing this Ambrose said out of courtesy, “I consent it to your keeping the songs.”

The traveler who wanted to see what the files were there immediately made a survey. I thought to open one of them, the one with the very long file name, “Someday, I’ll be living in a big ol’ city, and all you’re ever gonna be is mean.”

When Ambrose heard the song, he said, “This is the last song the unfortunate man wrote, and so you may see the lengths to which his misfortunes had driven him.” The laptop played it aloud so that all could hear. “For the time it takes to dig this grave will be more than enough time for you to hear it.”
“I will do that gladly.” said the traveler and everyone gathered around the laptop to hear more.

Those who had listened to Gilligan’s songs, thought it was very good though the traveler who wanted the laptop said the song didn't conform to the accounts he had heard of Ginger’s virtue and modesty because in it Gilligan complained of jealousy, suspicion, and absence all to the detriment of Ginger’s good name and reputation.

To which Ambrose as one who knew best the most hidden thoughts of his friend replied, “Sir, so that you may free yourself of this. You ought to know that when the unfortunate man wrote this song he was absent from Ginger, he had run off from her voluntarily to see if absence would have any effect on him and since nothing does vex an absent lover and no fear that does not overwhelm him, Gilligan was as vexed by the distance. He imagined the suspicions he feared as if they had been real. Ginger’s reputation remained pristine except for being cruel and arrogant and very disdainful.”

“Envy didn't find much traction with her that's true,” replied the traveler.

He wanted to hear some more of Gilligan, but suddenly Ginger appeared where the grave was developing, and she was more beautiful than legend. Those that hadn't seen her before looked at her with such amazement that there was total silence. Those
who knew her were pretty much as well, only Ambrose showed any indication and his placard was outrage.

Ambrose said, “Well looky here; the savage usurper of the desert, come to see your cruelty has worked its magic? Do you delight; did you get off when you heard the news? Are you wet now standing at my friend's grave? Why not take a squat over his body and pee on him? Tell us quickly why you have come; what do you want? I know Gilligan's thoughts and he worshiped you and you s*** on him and now you expect us to compliment your good manners?”

“I didn't come here to listen to your bulls***, Ambrose,” Ginger responded, “but I'm here to explain how unreasonable you haters are and why blame me for this? So listen up. It won't take but a minute, and I won't go on about it. So, you keep telling people how beautiful I am and that compels men to love me, and they fall in love and you claim that I'm obliged to love them in return. I know beautiful things are to be loved, but I can't figure for the life of me, why the beautiful things are required to love the one who loves it, and ugly things are to be avoided. It's crazy to say I love you, because you are beautiful. You must love me even though I am ugly, but what if the two are equally beautiful it doesn't mean that their desires or longings equal out, for not all beauties fall in love. Some are eye candy, but don't surrender. Imagine if all beauties
loved and surrendered on a dime. Imagine a world of confusion, free love and all the women not knowing how or where to stop. You have money, parties, talk bulls***, alcohol, weed and now dope for the purpose of tricking us into surrender and now beauty was well? When we do surrender, and we will eventually, we’re called ‘sluts’. True love is not forced or coerced, so why would you want Gilligan to force me to surrender? Simply because he desired me?”

Everyone looked put out, but she continued, “What if I were ugly instead would it be fair for me to complain that no man wanted me? I didn't choose to be beautiful, no one asked me about it and a rattler doesn't choose to have venom.

“Bad analogy.”

“Well, he..."

“Or she.”

“Cute. Okay, fine. She shouldn't be blamed for her venom although it might kill a fellow. Help me understand if chastity is one of the most important values preached about (constantly) why would a woman lose that to satisfy a man who, despite her beauty, may and probably will not be around the next day? You wondering bunch of dogs.”

She wouldn't stop, “I was born free and I chose the solitude of the desert, cactus and sand, and my companions. And frankly a gallon of water is more valuable to me than your lusts
all combined. I'm a league above you so stop b****ing. If you said anything to me lovely I have discouraged you. At best, I could say his knot-headed stubbornness killed Gilligan. I gave him no hope and I've not given any male hope. I'm not the cruel one, and you saying his thoughts were right-minded and for this false reason, I was obliged to respond to him? Right here where you are digging his grave, I told him my proper life was seclusion and quiet; I don't want a bunch of drama and in spite of that discouragement he wished to persist. I'm not surprised that he offed himself. What a joke? If I gave to his desire I would have gone against my best interest.

“Speak up if you want to complain that I have deceived you. Raise your hand if I have given you hope. No one? I promise nothing, deceive no one, called and certainly haven’t accepted anyone, especially your friend…”

At this moment Juan whispered in Cowboys ear asking if there would be a meal after the burial.

She continued, unheard by Cowboy, “I don't love men, haven't loved men, am not likely to be in love with a man. It isn't even on my radar.”

Cowboy shrugged.

She continued and Cowboy heard, “The honest time I have with the shepherdesses and tending their goats this is my entertainment.”
“From now on let it be understood, if anyone dies because of me, they did so out of jealousy and just plain insanity, because the woman who loves no one, that loves no man can't cause jealousy or bring about insanity whoever spray-painted 'bitch' on my ATV, mind your own business. I'm going to castrate you if you do it again.”

And having heard this Ambrose mumbled “lesbian” and the men and boys there chuckled; she turned her back and mounted her ATV and rode toward the most barren part of the desert leaving all those present filled with disgust, as much for her privileged manner as her brazen audacity. And some who were pierced by the powerful powerfully selfish speech and wanted to throw rocks at the girl.”

Reading the emotions, Cowboy thought he ought to put his intentions out on the table he pulled his pistol, and aimed it into the air and said, “I will shoot in the privates any man who tries to follow her. I am furious and outraged she has shown with clear and sufficient reason that she bears little responsibility for this poor fellow Gilligan's death and she's also shown exactly how far she is from giving any one of you horndogs any, so forget about it. You loved her once and now you curse her for having a mind of her own. And if allowed you would be persecuting her and looking for a chance to beat her; can't you people make up your mind?”
Whether it was because of Cowboy’s verbal undressing or his weapons or because Ambrose said they should wrap up what they owed their friend, no one of the young men left or moved away from the place until they placed Gilligan AND his laptop into the ground. There were a few tears shed. They all moved a heavy sandstone over the grave. Everyone except Cowboy, who was using his binoculars scanning the desert in the direction of Grape Creek where Ginger had ridden, they scattered flowers over the grave and everyone began to leave.

Cowboy bid farewell to his hosts to the two travelers. They wanted him to travel with them to San Antonio as they rightly claimed this was the capital and would be the full of tail, better than even Ginger and even better because they liked men. Cowboy politely decline. Cowboy wanted to empty the distant mountains of any villains. They said “goodbye” and everyone dispersed. Cowboy and Juan motored out into the desert looking for Ginger but matters didn’t turn out as expected.

Cowboy and Juan followed Ginger to a small Catholic church, really only a chapel, miles from any city but at the base of a mountain. A good place for cowboys and goat herders to find solace and worship. The priest was giving Mass and on the very back pew Cowboy found Ginger holding the hand of a rather plain shepherdess. He and Juan sat beside them.
Cowboy looked at her. She looked at him. He looked at the couple holding hands on the back row of a Catholic chapel. Cowboy looked again at her and Ginger opened her jacket and showed him in her shoulder harness a black shiny butt of a pistol and she looked at him questioningly as if to ask, “what are you going to do ‘bout it?” She raised her eyebrows cynically. She put a finger on the pistol grip and whispered to our hero, I mean to Cowboy, “If you feel froggy then jump.”

Cowboy had no love for Rome but it wasn't his custom to shoot up a Catholic service over a woman no matter how desirable.

Outside, “Juan, my friend, is it ignorance or apathy that's destroying the world today?” Cowboy asked.

“I don't know and don't really care,” relied Juan.

**EXT. BIKER BAR IN PORTILLO Y PACHECO COUNTY**

The Spanish journals recovered in Dallas tell of it; as soon as Cowboy (visably angry) took leave of the back pew lesbian sacrosanct, he and Juan entered the desert searching for trouble and having spent more than two hours looking everywhere and not finding any villains, they decided to stop at an Iraan biker bar. The bar was so welcome that it invited/obliged them to spend to the hottest part of the day there and it was getting to be that time of day. Cowboy and Juan wanted a buffalo burger
and a glass of Shiner Bock and they had crystal meth to pay for it.

Cowboy and Juan dismounted but Shovelhead floundered into a row of cycles, belonging to the Scorpions motorcycle club, toppling them over like dominoes. The Scorpions, whose custom it was to take a siesta with their beer at a table, exited the bar about the time Cowboy got Shovelhead back up on his feet.

Cowboy said to Juan, “From what I can see, Juan, these are not gentlemen Ranchers but are ruthless people in low gear. You can certainly assist me in taking the proper revenge for the offense of scratching Shovelhead before we get into the building.”

“What's the devil kind of revenge are we supposed to take?” Juan responded, “There are more than twenty of them and only two of us or maybe only one.”

“I'm worth a hundred,” Cowboy replied and pulled his pistol and hardly inspired by his friends example Juan got the hell out of there. But the same Cowboy begin firing several shots toward the bar’s façade. The Scorpion scattered like cats and of course none of Cowboys shots found flesh since they were blank cartridges were all he had for his toy pistols.

Historians are not sure Cowboy ever realized his pistol ammo were only blanks. Cowboy would have hit the shoulder of the motor cycle club’s treasurer who hid behind one of Texas’ last
Camaros. In hindsight, Cowboy’s rage was to his disadvantage because when his pistol was exhausted, he took the rifle and his first rifle bullet pierced a quarter panel on the Camaro.

The Scorpions who saw themselves attacked by only one man when there were so many of them didn't even bother returning fire. But they flanked him and begin raining down fists on Cowboy and then Juan Seguin who fell to the ground and then luckily was able to crawl under a jacked up F-250. The owner eventually drove the truck out into the middle of the parking lot but Juan held onto the chassis and he remained protected. The driver, in response, drove a quarter mile down the highway until he saw Juan (like a gigantic soccer ball) rolling off the road into the ditch. Once in the ditch, he stood up and ran out into the cactus.

The truth of the matter was Cowboy, for once, took the vast majority of the punishment. All of his skill and cowboy courage were of no use to him and he fell at the feet of Shovelhead who was pushed over in solidarity with every other cycle in the parking lot. His life was spared only when one of the Scorpions saw the, originally fake but now legitimate, Company A Ranger badge. They nearly had killed him before noticing they were on the same side in the rebellion to reclaim Texas.

They understood it to be a tragic mistake and mounted their motorcycles and moved out as quickly as they could and continued.
on their way, leaving our main adventurer nearly collapsed and no longer mobile and our secondary character peeking out from cactus looking better but feeling no worse.

When there was little or no chance of the Scorpions returning Juan found himself next to his friend Cowboy.

“Cowboy, are you alive?”

“What do you want, brother Juan?” replied Cowboy.

In a voice as feeble and pitiful as Cowboy’s, Juan said, “What I want, if it's possible, is for you to give me two shots of that drink, the concoction if you happen to have any on hand. Maybe it's as good for road rash as it is for wounds.”

“Oh well, if I had it here we wouldn't need a surgeon,” Cowboy responded, “but don’t you think if I had some, I'd be standing already?”

“That’s a no?”

“But I swear to you, Juan, in two days time I'll have some. The only issue is to live these two days without it.”

“And how many days do you think we'll need before you can move your legs,” Juan asked.

“I don't know how many days I'll be here,” said the beaten and exhausted Cowboy, “But I hold myself responsible; I shouldn't have raised my pistol against men who were not equally armed and therefore I believe that this was some sort of punishment. It's clear to me and this is important for our well-
being; in the future, next time I’m the pistolero and you are the peliar, let's win.”

This was how practical the poor gentleman cowboy had become. But his friend's advice did not seem very good to Juan and he had to respond saying, “Cowboy, I'm a peaceful mild and quiet and I know how to conceal any insult because I have a wife and children to support. Basically, I forgive and forget it's my nature.”

Hearing this Juan’s friend responded, “I wish I had enough breath to speak with less effort. The pain I feel in this rib could be a little less so that I could make clear to you, Juan exactly how clueless you are. Come closer for the winds of change will eventually favor us; you will have your country and will be county judge and will be begged to rule. You are witty and relatively friendly but new officials are frequently challenged and the inhabitants, having become accustomed to checks from the Mexican government, might not be entirely receptive these days. What will you do with your county if they try their luck, govern our run?”

“In this circumstance that's just happened to us,” Juan responded, “I would have liked to have the intelligence and valor you have mentioned but right now I need a doctor more than I need a talk.”
Cowboy asked, “Help Shovelhead stand as well. He's the reason for this beating, but we can't just abandon him here I am very surprised I always thought he was a cycle of peace and prosperity but as they say, ‘you need a long time to know a bike and nothing in life is certain.’”

“Who would have thought this? Live and learn to be accustomed to such beatings,” Juan reasoned.

“It's all very annoying. Maybe I'll die before standing,” to which Juan responded, “since these things are bound to happen because of the nature of your profession, please tell me how will we ever continue?”

“You should know Juan, my friend,” responded Cowboy, “the lives of Rangers are subject to a thousand dangers and disasters, and by the same token, they are just as likely to become sheriffs and mayors.”

“I prefer the path of fortune,” said Juan, “can I be loaded onto your moped and taken to an inn.”

“Like a sack of trash?”

“The wounds received requiring please.”

Abandoning Shovelhead, Juan settled Cowboy on the back of the moped (like a sack of trash) and leading the vehicle by the handlebars he drove more or less in the direction of a hotel down the highway.
In Fort Stockton, the innkeeper saw Cowboy laying across the moped he asked Juan what was wrong with him. Juan responded that it wasn't serious that he didn’t need to call the police; they had “not been fighting Mexicans,” but Cowboy had fallen off a motorcycle and bruised his ribs slightly and face even more slightly. The innkeeper's wife had been a nurse at a hospital, and her personality was unlike most innkeeper's. She was naturally charitable and took pity on the calamities of others, and so she hurried to attend Cowboy and had her daughter, a very pretty girl, bandage him as well.

In the meanwhile, Juan walked to bring back Shovelhead. Given the excellent care, Cowboy thought himself in a hospital. Juan knew he was in an inn.

Working as a maid in the inn was a Honduran girl, with a broad face, flat back of her head, a snub nose, and one eye blind; the other eye was droopy. Her body, however; made up for the eye problems, but she was short (very short). This odd creature helped the innkeeper's daughter, and of the two of them they made up a very nice bed for Cowboy in the very first downstairs room. In the second room, they’d put Juan.

Also staying at the inn was a truck driver whose room was just beyond Cowboy and Juan’s.
Cowboy lay down on his shameful bed, and the innkeeper's wife and daughter applied bandages from head to toe, while Mary, which was the Honduran girl’s name, held a light for them and as she applied the bandages the innkeeper's wife saw Cowboy’s back so bruised and black and blue and so many cuts that she said it looked more like a beating than a fall.

“It wasn't a beating,” said Cowboy, “it's just that the ground he fell on had lots of sharp points and edges and each left its own individual bruise, some in the shape of boots, an odd coincidence.”

Juan when he returned Cowboy also said, “Ma'am, if you're able, can you arrange to have a few pieces of cloth leftover for my friend since he was drug along the highway. He may be hurting a little too.”

She turned to Juan. “So that means,” responded the innkeeper's wife, “you must have fallen too?”

“I didn't fall, said Juan, “but it gave me a great start to see my friend fall, and because of that, my body hurts so much it feels as if somebody beat me a thousand times with their biker boots.”

“That well could be,” said the daughter, “it's often happened to me that I'm dreaming I'm falling off a tower but never reach the ground and then I wake up from the dream I find myself as bruised and sore as if I really had fallen.”
“That's my point,” Juan again responded, “I didn't dream anything but was as wide awake as I am now and I have as many bruises as my friend Cowboy.”

“What's this gentleman's name?” ask Mary, the Honduran.

“El Vaquero de Tejas,” replied Juan, “and he is a Texas Ranger and one of the best and strongest the new nation has seen in a long time.

“What's a ranger?” the servant asked.

“Are you so new to the world that you don't know,” replied Juan, “well let me tell you, my sister, in just a few words that the Ranger is someone who's beaten one day and then finds himself king the next day. He's the most unfortunate creature in the world and the poorest and tomorrow he’ll have control of two or three counties to give to his friend.”

“How is it then since you have such a good friend,” said the innkeeper's wife, “that you, or so it seems, don't already have a political position.”

“It's still early,” Juan responded, “because it's only been a month that we've been seeking adventures, and so far, we haven't come across anything that even resembles a county worth controlling.”

“Maybe you go look for one thing and find another.”
“The truth is that if my friend Cowboy is healed of his wounds from his fall and I'm not crippled by mine. I wouldn't trade my hopes for the best county in Texas.”

Cowboy had been listening very attentively to this entire conversation from the next room, and sitting as the best he could in his bed and grasping the hand of the innkeeper's wife, he said, “Believe me, pretty lady, you can call yourself fortunate for having welcomed me into your inn. I don't like to brag but my friend will tell you who I am and he’s documenting my travels. I say only that he will record what you've done for us in my memory, so I plan to thank you for the longest time.

The innkeeper's wife and younger daughter and the good Mary were perplexed when they heard the words of the Ranger for they understood no more of them then if he had been speaking Russian.

Although they did realize that all were intended as compliments and flattery because they were unaccustomed to such language and I looked at him in astonishment, and he seemed to them different, a different kind of man from the ones they were used to and after thanking him in their own words for his compliments, they left him and Mary, the Honduran, and tended to Juan who claimed to have no less need of healing than his friend.

Before the arrival of our two heroes, the truck driver had arranged with Honduran maid that they would take some pleasure
that night in the first room. She had given her word that when all the hotel was asleep she would be a good night-nurse; she would come to him and satisfy that longevity in any way he asked. It was said of many that she never gave her word without keeping it, even if she gave it in a desert with no witnesses. She prided herself on being very reliable.

The hard, narrow and uncomfortable bed of Cowboy was in the first room in line, and then next to it Juan rested. And next to Juan’s room was that of the truck driver. Juan and Cowboy’s rooms had connecting doors.

Then after the truck driver had urinated and he laid down to wait for Mary. Juan’s ribs were already treated and he was in his bed and although he tried to sleep the pain but his ribs would not allow it and Cowboys ribs hurt so much that his eyes were as wide as a rabbit's.

The entire hospital, Cowboy thought, was quiet and the only light came from the moon. This wondrous silence and time of meditation for our Cowboy, always returned him to the events from films and times like this were largely responsible for this misadventures. What came to his mind was as strange a bit of madness as anyone could imagine and later filming it for his bio-pic would prove costly. And it was this night that he thought he had left the hospital and come to a famous Cowtown hotel. It was always that way if he slept under a roof, the roof
he stayed under become a fancy Fort Worth hotel. And that the
owner’s daughter was the daughter of the innkeeper from a film
he’d seen and that she was easily conquered by his dangerous
bearing, having fallen in love with him and had promised to
steal away from her parents that night and come lie with him.

Because this fantasy was considered to be true to him, he
began to worry about the dangerous predicament he might find
himself if the daughter did appear before him.

He was thinking about this foolishness when the hour
arrived for the Honduran to come in and wearing her chemise with
bare feet and her hair tied back. With silent cautious steps she
entered the first room where Cowboy was, looking for the truck
driver, but as soon as she walked through the door Cowboy heard
her, and in the pitch black, sitting up in the bed despite the
plaster casts and stitches and the pain in his ribs. He extended
his arms to welcome the daughter of the innkeeper. The Honduran
who tentatively and quietly was holding her hands in front of
her and looking for her schedule appointment collided with
Cowboys arms. He squeezed her by the wrist and pulling her to
him while she did not dare say a word forced her to sit on the
bed then he touched her chemist and though it was made of cotton
to him it seemed the finest silk. On her wrist she wore glass
beads but he imagined them to be precious pearls. Her hair which
was rather like a horse's mane, he figured to be strands of
shining black threads and her breath which undoubtedly smelled of yesterday's baked beans, that was a rural aromatic scent wafting from her mouth. And he depicted her in his imagination as having the form and appearance of the innkeeper's daughter he had remembered from whatever movie. Overcome by love and endowed with all the charms stated here, the badly wounded Cowboy holding her closely he began to say, “Would that I were able, oh sweet thing to repay the great favor you have granted me, the touch of the sublime beauty. But fortune would never tire of pursuing the virtuous path chosen to place me in this bed where I lie so bruised and broken that even if I with all my heart desired to satisfy the known desire I could not. Further I add to this impossibility another even greater which is the promise of faithfulness that I have sworn to the incomparable Salada de Tawakoni, the sole mistress of my most hidden thoughts. Her father sent me west to be a Ranger and win her hand via revolution. Besides, your father is a large man and he would kill me. If this great obstacle did not loom between us, I would not be so foolish a redneck as to turn away from so sportive an opportunity.

Mary was extremely agitated and perspiring freely at finding herself held so firmly by Cowboy and not understanding or paying much attention to what he was saying. She without saying a word struggled to break free.
The truck driver whose sinful desires have kept him awake heard this conversation through the door and listened attentively to everything Cowboy was saying, jealous at the thought that the Honduran had broken her word for the sake of another. And he stood there in silence to see what that talk which he could not entirely understand would lead to. Now he tried the door of the first room and entered but then he saw the girl struggling to free herself and Cowboy endeavoring to hold on to her and thinking that the joke had gone far enough, the truck driver delivered such a awful blow to the narrow jaw of the love sick Cowboy that it filled his whole mouth with blood. Not content with this, the truck driver jumped up in the bed and with his boots moving faster than a rocket full of monkeys he stomped cowboy from one end of the bed to the other.

The bed, which was was rather flimsy and not on very firm legs, could not support the addition of the truck driver. It collapsed and the great crash woke the innkeeper who imagined that Mary must be involved in some dispute because he had called for her and and she had not responded.

With this suspicion in mind, he got up found a small LED lamp that he used on special occasions and went to the place where he had heard the disturbance, the first room downstairs. The girl, seeing that her boss was coming down the walk and was in a terrible rage became so fearful and distressed that she ran
through the connecting door and took refuge in the bed of Juan who was still asleep and there she hid curled up into a little ball.

The innkeeper came into Cowboy’s room saying, “where are you; you little wh***? I know. I know this is your doing.”

At that point Juan awoke and feeling that Honduran bulk almost on top of him thought it was a nightmare and he began to throw punches in all directions and don't know how many of them struck Mary but she feeling the pain and tossing all modesty aside hit back at Juan so many times that he struggled to his feet with his arms around Mary and the two of them began the fiercest and most laughable sumo wrestling match the West had ever seen. The stunt doubles demanded extra pay, when taped for television. When the innkeeper turned the light through the connecting door, the truck driver saw what was happening to his lady and leaving Cowboy he hurried to give her the help she needed. The innkeeper also approached, but with a different purpose, because he went in the second room to punish the girl believing no doubt that she was the reason for so much unrest. And as the old saying went, “the cat chased the rat; the rat chased the rope; the rope chased the stick.” The truck driver hit Juan with the stick and Juan hit the girl, the girl hit Juan. By then the nurse was there and she hit the girl and all of them acted so fast and furiously that they did not let up for
longer than an instant. Then the best part was that the LED lamp was struck and the light went out and since they were in darkness everyone hit everyone with so little mercy that wherever their fists landed they left nothing whole or sound.

It so happened that staying in the inn that night was a Mexican policemen who hearing the noise of the fight went to investigate. He entered Cowboy's darkroom, “Stop in the name of Mexican law.”

And without a light, the first one he came across was a badly beaten cowboy who lay face-down in his Juan’s bed in the second room, groping in the dark and feeling that the man he’d had grasped did not move or stir. He assumed Cowboy was dead and those scampering about next door were the murderers. With his with this idea he shouted even louder. In the connecting door he shouted, “Don’t move, no one leaves this room, a man's been killed here, deader than a skinned mule.” This shout startled everyone and they abandoned the room. The innkeeper withdrew to his office, the truck driver to the parking lot, the Honduran girl to her mattress in the supply closet. Remaining was the unfortunate Juan, the only one who could not move from where they were lying. The Mexican policeman could hear Juan breathing and went to find a light so he could look for the criminal.
By the time Cowboy awoke from his coma, in the same tone of voice he’d used the day before to call his friend when he was knocked down and beaten, he began to call him now saying, “Juan my friend are you sleeping are you sleeping friend, Juan?”

“How can I sleep? I'm in pain,” responded Juan full of bitterness and torment when it seems that you've overdone my way to H*** over.”

“You’re undoubtedly are right about that,” Cowboy responded, “because either I'm high or it's the inn staff that's doped up. What do you think? Can you do me a favor keep this a secret until after my death.”

“I can do that, Juan responded.

“I need your help,” replied Cowboy, “I don't want us to upset the apple cart.”

“I can swear,” Juan said, “but I also need your help. I also have a secret.”

“That time we were in the Forbath County Jail?” Cowboy knew, “I know you traded the Bible.”

“You know about the side of potatoes? You shouldn't have accepted the Bible only to trade it in a few minutes later.” Cowboy judged.

“I know but Juan whatever the reason may be,” said Cowboy, “I have great confidence in your friendship and decency and so let me tell you that tonight I’ve had one of the most wondrous
adventures a dope fiend could imagine... to make just a brief feel of the the innkeeper’s daughter. She came to me and she was right here in my bed; I felt her breasts...” and Juan interrupted Cowboy.

“By accident?” Juan suggested.

“No, quite on purpose and they were very full,” admitted Cowboy.

“So what happened?

“Well she's enlightened and very modern to show up like this way however unorthodox.”

“So what happened?”

“I felt that to keep faith with Salada de Tawakoni we should let this pass and never tell about it again. I only wish to say that I'm a lucky man for chance to land those melons in my hand.”

“So what happened?” Juan demanded.

“It might have been the medicines the innkeeper supplied, but I was engaged in an amorous conversation with her when a monstrous fist came down and struck me so hard a blow to my jaw that my mouth filled with blood and then the melee left me more pounded then the Scorpions left me after Shovelheads audacity. The only thing I can figure is her drilling rights must be guarded by some messed up Mexican weightlifter. That’s not for me.”

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“Not for me either,” responded Juan, “because more than 400 Mexicans gave me a beating that made the Scorpion ordeal feel like Hostess Ding Dongs, but tell me Cowboy, how can you say it was wondrous to be laying here this way? Not so bad maybe because you had hands on that wondrous set?”

“Just my point,” Cowboy interrupted.

“But I got the worst bashing I've ever received and touched no one’s breasts,” said Juan, “forget me and this island I'm to receive. I'm not a fighter, (guns, fists, or otherwise) and don't ever plan to be one. So again, I get the worst of all your adventures.”

“Then you've been beaten as well?” responded Cowboy.

“Didn't I just say I was?” said Juan.

“Don't freak out on me,” said Cowboy, “for I'm going to prepare some THC tea and you will be healed in the wink of an eye.”

By now the officer returned with a flashlight and he came in to see the man he thought was dead. As soon as Juan saw him come in wearing the uniform and flashing the light here and there with a grim expression on his face, Juan asked Cowboy, “Is there any chance the blitzed Mexican will come back to hit us some more in case there’s some more beat in the dog?”
“He can't be the same threwed Mexican,” responded Cowboy, “because he's moving at a normal rate so if he were plastered he'd already be here.”

“If they move at supernatural speed, they also have a supernatural strength, as my back can testify,” said Juan.

“As can mine,” said Cowboy, “but are we sure that last beating was supplied by a doped-up Mexican? Are you certain?”

The officer was perplexed when he discovered them engaged in so peaceful conversation. Cowboys still lay on the bed unable to move with is painfully damaged plaster of paris arm and leg.

The officer stopped at Cowboys spot on the floor and said, “well, how goes it?”

“I would speak with more courtesy,” responded Cowboy, “if I were you. It is not the custom in West Texas to speak to strangers in such an informal tone. Are you retarded?”

Feeling abused the officer couldn't bear it and raise the military-grade flashlight nearly to the ceiling and brought it down on Cowboys head. It was a serious blow and since it broke the light and left everything in darkness, the officer left immediately and Juan said, “There's no doubt friend that this man is the twisted Mexican guarding the girl for he certainly not shy about fist or flashlight.”
“That is true,” responded Cowboy, “but don't take him too seriously we're lying in beds and easy targets and how can we take any revenge this week?

“Now? What’s the rush?”

“By next week, we'll have an island to divvy up and this brain-dead Mexican will be gone.”

“Juan if you can and find the innkeeper’s wife and persuade her to give us some canola, wine, salt, soy sauce and bring me some stems from the saddlebags. I'm going to prepare the health-giving tea. In truth, I need a little something since the phantom struck me, my head has been splitting.”

Juan stood, all his muscles aching, he began to walk in the darkness to find the innkeeper's wife but he encountered the officer who had been listening to hear what his adversary would do.

Juan said to him, “stop doing whatever are doing and in all the kindness, fetch us a little canola, salt, wine, and soy sauce. They're needed to heal one of the most renowned peliónro on the face of the state, laying on the bed badly wounded at the hands of a low Mexican, high is a kite, here in this hotel.”

“When the policeman heard this, he thought Juan was out of his mind, but since day was beginning to break he opened the door of the office and call to the innkeeper's wife and told her
what the man wanted. The wife gave him what he asked for and Juan carried it up to Cowboy.

Cowboy was on the bed holding his head in his hands and moaning at the pain of the blow from the flashlight which continued to hurt him rather badly. He was sweating profusely. Unsure, he took the stems and ingredients and made a compound of them mixing them all together and cooking them until it seemed ready then he asked for a flask but there was none. In the end, Cowboy poured his formula into the canola bottle and screwed on the top.

Having completed this, Cowboy wanted to test it and so he drank down the portion that didn't fit into the bottle. Cowboy immediately vomited after drinking it and he barfed until nothing was left in his stomach. He broke into a riotous sweat and for the sweat he ordered they wrap him up in the blankets and leave him alone they did and he slept for three days and then he woke up his body felt much relieved and so much better. After this he considered himself cured. This remedy he could use. From now on he would fear no jury.

“With this knowledge,” Juan Seguin, who also deemed the improvement of his friend a miracle requested the potion that remained in the canola bottle which was no small quantity and greed caused Juan pick up the bottle and with a good amount of trust and even greater optimism he gulped it down. It was the
case that Juan’s stomach was not as delicate as his friends and so before he vomited he endured so much nausea and sweating. So much that he thought it was his last hour. In agony, Juan cursed the potion and the man who made it.”

Cowboy said, “I believe Juan that this reaction is due to your reluctance to fight. I think the formula isn’t designed for a peaceful man.

“Arg! If you knew that, why didn’t you tell me this before I drink it,” asked Juan at this point the tea took effect and Cowboy’s the poor distiller friend began to erupt from both orifices and with so much force that the sheet and the blanket on which Juan lay could not be used again. Juan was perspiring and sweating and suffering such outbursts and cataclysms that not only Juan but everyone else thought his life was ending. The hurricane of distress lasted almost two days. At the end of which he was left not as his friend had been but so weak and dehydrated he could barely stand. Cowboy however as we have said felt cured and healthy enough to leave on a lark.

It being his opinion that the time he spent in that place meant he was depriving the new nation and all those in it who were in need of his help and assistance especially now that he was in West Texas and feeling the tea’s confidence and so pushing his desire he himself fueled Shovelhead and put the packsaddle on his Juan’s moped and helped Juan to dress and
climb on the machine. Then he mounted his Harley and as he rode past out of the inn, Mary discreetly handed him a shotgun.

There in the parking lot, all those people that Cowboy thought were patients (about twenty guests) were watching him and many were trying to persuade him to stay for the sake of Juan’s health.

The young daughter who Cowboy thought he’d felt up and kept winking at, watched him especially closely and he didn't take his eyes off of her either. From the time he heaved a sigh that seemed to come from his nutsack and everyone thought this must have been on account of the pain at least those who had in the past been in car accidents and covered with casts and thought so.

When he and Juan were both mounted and about to depart the inn, he called to the innkeeper's wife in a very calm and serious voice said, “Many thanks for a wonderous wonderful stay. You know my profession. I help those who are unable to help themselves. You are perfectly able, but if I can help by avenging something wrong done to you please don't hesitate to let me know.”

The wife responded with the same calb voice, “Sir, I have no need to avenge any offense because I know how to take care of myself; all I need for you to do is pay the bill. Motels aren't free, you know.”

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“This is a hospital,” replied Cowboy.

“This is not a fancy motel, but nothing is free,” the wife replied.

“Then I've been deceived all along,” Cowboy responded, “for in truth, I thought this was a Mexican hospital and not a bad one. What you can do is forgive the debt for I've never seen in any film a Ranger beaten and defeated having to pay for healthcare and besides my sidekick was made violently ill by your faulty medicines. Look at him.”

“That has nothing to do with me.”

“We never pay because whatever welcome we receive is owed to us by right and privilege in return for the unbearable hardships we suffer. Beatings day and night in winter and summer, on foot and cycle, suffering thirst and hunger, political upheavals of Texas and all the tyranny of Mexico.”

“Pay me what you owe and leave off the bulls***.”

“I care nothing but about being square with the Mexican government or you.”

“You are a fool and you must pay,” the innkeeper was adamant.

Cowboy argued back, “pretending to be a healthcare facility, to trick clients into stopping, is highly unethical and gunning Shovelhead and showing the gathering crowd his new shotgun, he left the parking lot and no one stopped him.”
Cowboy didn’t look to see if his friend, Juan, was following. He rode a fair distance.

The innkeeper’s wife was infuriated by him leaving without paying. She turned to Juan for payment. Juan tried to give her tequila, which was refused. Juan then also said the rules that applied to his Ranger friend also applied to him. This greatly displeased the wife who warned him that, if he didn't pay she would collect her money in a way Juan would regret. To which Juan replied that trickery had been involved and he did not have to pay a centavo for any treatment that he thought was free at the hospital and included with the lodgings.

It was unfortunate for Juan that a Chinese carnival was visiting the inn. They grabbed the weak and ineffectual Juan and they pulled him off the moped and placed him on the Tilt-A-Whirl. With Juan kidnapped and pleading in a car, he began to spin and the Chinese as well as the Mexicans began to make merry laughs at him like he was a sick dog. After two hours, Cowboy realized Juan was not riding beside him on the highway, nor behind him either.

Cowboy returned hours later, cursing them and aiming his pistol at them. His antagonists scattered and Cowboy ended the torture and put his friend on his moped. The vomiting of Juan didn't end but did diminish and the consummate Mary seeing Juan exhausted and humiliated thought it would be a good idea to
bring him a picture of cold water. Juan was about to drink but Cowboy called out to him that he should instead drink some of the HTC tea. Juan drank the pitcher of water and then with Mary then drove over to a convenience store Mary brought out Picot Sal De Uvas for him, purchased with her own money. As soon as Mary and Juan finished speaking he goosed the moped and left without saying anything more.

The truth was that while Juan was being tortured Mary had entered the office and emptied the moneybox. The Honduran maid, while Juan was being spun around in circles, lifted his saddlebags and placed the money there while everyone was so distracted and they hadn't notice.

**EXT. DIAZ ORDAZ COUNTY AT THE LA PASADA**

When Juan reached his friend, he was so weak and barfed out that he could barely remain on his moped. Seeing him in this state, Cowboys said, “Now, I'm convinced that this inn, or hospital, is undoubtedly doped-up because what else could these fellows be but aliens. Laughing at your inundating through the air and spinning around, they must be from the next solar system. I saw, from a distance, the events but it was wasn't possible for me to come help. So I messed up right?”
Juan said, “I know, but I’m very happy they didn’t put me on the Flying Scooters or the Looping Starship. I doubt I could have survived any of that flipping, tripping and tumbling.”

“I hope you know I charged them and would have discharged a few rounds had they not released you.”

“I saw that, friend; I would have got back at them too if I could have, guns or no gun, but I couldn't. Though, in my opinion, they weren't aliens but men of an Asian persuasion, as I heard when they were making their tilts and whirls. So you not being able to shoot any of them was due to something besides alien invasion and it's clear to me that we don't know s*** about adventure, left from right, and the smartest move would be to try to return home, make tequila; you can cook some meth. We can tend to things, but we need to stop running into this barbed wire everywhere we go.”

“How little faith, Juan,” Cowboy responded, “about the matter of our business, be silent please and wait, for the day will come when you will see how difficult a thing it is to work in this job. Tell me what greater happiness in the world is there than to win, to defeat one's enemy?”

“None. That might be true,” responded Juan, “though I don't know anything about it. All I know is that ever since you've been out on the circuit or since you've been out for hire, we've not won a single victory except for the one with the bandito,
blinding and disorienting him and sending him sky-tickling into a big-ass cactus, and even then you lost half a boot and half an ear. Since then it's been nothing but beatings and endless spinning in circles by Asian carnival workers, and I'll never have my revenge on them because you can't shoot them for operating death-defying carnival rides, so I'll never win anything."

"That's why I'm so sad, Juan," responded Cowboy, "but from this time on, I will try to have at hand the shotgun so magically made that whoever fires it is immune from any of the alien tactics. Back at the inn, or hospital whichever it was, I was given such a weapon, one of the best in the world. It will blast them regardless if they are in Loop-O-Plane or not."

"I'm so lucky," said Juan, "What happens, and you find a chance to fire it and it works exactly like the tea and only works for you and not another gunman. We peaceful men can continue to taste the vomit in their mouth."

"Don't despair, Juan," said Cowboy, "God, doesn't need our help, but your neighbor does!"

As Cowboy and his friend were having this conversation, Cowboy saw a large thick cloud of dust coming toward them along the road and when he saw it, he turned to Juan and said this is the day Juan when good luck will arrive.
“This is the day. Today, I'll do a deed worthy of film. Do you see that cloud of dust rising there, Juan? Well, it's being made by huge troop of horses mounted by diverse peoples.”

“If that's the case, there must be two,” said Juan, “because over in the opposite direction is another cloud of dust just like it.”

Cowboy turned to look, and he saw that it was true. He was overjoyed, thinking no doubt, that there was a second cavalry chasing to attach the other in the middle of a broad desert because at all times, his mind was every moment filled with western films, cavalry charges depicted in films of the West. Everything he said and thought and did was directed towards such matters.

The dust clouds he saw actually contain two large flocks of ATV and dirtbikes, traveling along the same dirt road racing, which could not be seen through the dust, but Cowboy insisted so fervently that they were horsemen. Juan asked him then, “what should we do?”

“He said Cowboy, “we become involved. Juan, that group in front of us led by the great Comanche warrior Iron Jacket and the other riding behind us belongs to his natural enemy Burlington Jefferson of the 10th Cavalry.”

“Why do they want to fight?” asked Juan.
“They hate each other,” responded Cowboy, “because this Iron Jacket is a fierce pagan in love with Jefferson's mixed-race daughter. Don't ask me how it happened, but it is what it is. The father doesn't want to let his daughter go with a pagan native. He'd have to renounce his Indian ways first, and that's not going to happen.”

Just then, Juan saw the first group of recreationalist stopped.

“This Jefferson, black, white, or brown, is doing the right thing, and you should do everything to win. Warn him; he might not see the threat in all that dust. In this, you'll be doing the right thing. Let's ride to the top of that hill and signal the 10th, yes?”

They did, and they would have had a clear view of the ambush had the dust not obscured and confuse them and Cowboy pointed out Peta Nocona, Quanah Parker, Buffalo Hump and Iron Jacket with his Spanish rusty breastplate and rattlesnake skin shield and Cowboy turned in the other direction and pointed out the black soldiers all in order, weapons holstered and riding into deadly conflict. Cowboy saw they had a small field cannon and extra mounts and three wagons. Juan saw nothing but dust.

And in this fashion, Cowboy named many combatants from the two sides which he was imagining and for all of them, he improvised weapons, horses, shields and legends. Without
pausing, “this tribe facing us is made up of diverse clans, root
eaters, timber people, buffalo eaters, antelope eaters, movers,
returners, honeyeaters.”

“Lord save me,” what a number of territories Cowboy
mentioned, attributing to each one with marbles detail the
characteristics that belonged to it. Cowboy was absorbed and
immersed in his old films. Juan Seguin hung on his words but
said nothing, and from time to time, he turned his head to see
if he could see the hostile soldiers his friend was naming since
he could not make out any of them.

Juan said, “It's crazy; I don't see them. No black men and
no white men and no brown men. You know them by name, but I
can't find them. Are they ghosts?”

“How can you say that,” responded Cowboy, “do you not hear
the name of the horses the chanting and the sounds of the wagon
wheels?”

I don't hear anything,” responded Juan, “except for the
roaring of small engines,” and this was the truth because the
two groups were drawing near.

“It is your humor talking; it keeps you from hearing
properly because a sense of humor clouds everything. Juan, you
go warn the cavalry and I’ll head along into the hostiles and
fight a delaying action and having said this, he goosed
Shovelhead, pulled his pistol, and rode down the side of the hill like a flash of lightning.”

Juan called after him, “Cowboy come back, you're charging off-road recreationalists. Come back. You're not crazy; there aren't any Indians, no black soldiers either. What are you doing?”

But none of the cries made Cowboy turn back, instead in a loud voice he cried, “Come on, men; follow me.”

Saying this, he rode into the midst of the army of recreationalists and began to run at them with his pistol firing and of course missing the enthusiasts on their rides. The band in the front stood frozen drinking from the canteens, as Cowboy emptied his pistol blanks into them.

Seeing this, the dusty men picked up stones and as big as baseballs. Cowboy took no notice of the stones; instead, he circled crying, “Where are you Iron Jacket? Come out and fight single combat. I'm going to kill you.”

At that moment, a small stone came flying and hit him in the side, bruising ribs. He holstered the empty pistol and pulled the shotgun, but ten stones arrived and struck various parts of his body. The gun, both barrels, discharged into the air, and by that, I mean directly into the air. Seeing himself so battered, Cowboy undoubtedly believed he was gravely wounded, remembered his tea, he took out the bottle and put it in his
mouth and begin to pour potion into his stomach, but before he could finish swallowing what seemed to be an insignificant amount. Another rock came flying and hit his hand, the one holding the bottle, and so squarely that it fell into the sand. A second rock took out three or four of Cowboy's best remaining teeth. The first blow only hit his hand but the second blow was devastating and he couldn't help falling from his cycle. The recreationalists came running for him, they thought they'd killed him, so they turned and took their vehicles and left ASAP.

All this time, Juan was on the hill filming the psychopathic actions of his friend. He pounded his head, cursing the hour and minute of his friend's brave charge. When the dust cleared, Juan saw Cowboy down and lying still in the sand. He came down the slope and went up to his friend. He found him in a very serious condition but he had maintained consciousness.

Juan said to him, “Didn't I tell you, Cowboy, to come back that it wasn't horseman chasing up and down the desert, but ATV clubs of cyclists.”

“This is the work of a Comanche shaman; you should know that things appear and disappear and seem not what they are. I need you to protect me from the medicine man who torments me, envious of the fame I’m headed for. He slipped me a spell that momentarily changed the Comanche raiding party into ATVs. If you
don't believe me, it won't take too much work to learn how he did it. Follow them because the shaman’s medicine will soon wear off and they will resume their original heathen form, but now I need your help can you tell me how many teeth are lost because it seems I can't count many left in my mouth.

Juan came so near that his good eye was almost inside his friend’s mouth. By this time the tea had taken effect on Cowboy's stomach and he threw-up more vigorously than if his stomach were firing a gun. Everything he had inside flew into the face of Juan.

Juan looked down at his clothes, “What just happened?” and “You're as good as dead, vomiting blood like this.”

But looking a little more closely, he realized for the color, taste, and smell that it was not blood but the tea which he filmed his friend drink though the choking dust. Juan was so disgusted by this that his stomach turned over, and he then vomited in the face of his friend and the tea. The two sat speechless in the hot sun.

Juan went to his moped to find some towels in the saddlebags, and when he didn't find the bags, he almost lost his mind. He thought he would leave his friend and return home; he was willing to forfeit the promised governorship of an island.

When Cowboy rose to his feet, he placed his left hand over his mouth so that no more teeth would fall out he grasped
Shovelhead’s handlebars with the other hand learned he couldn't move the Harley regardless how loyal and well doped-up he was and ride over to where Juan was standing, leaning against his moped and resting his cheek on his hand.

Juan was a man in deep thought, and seeing his friend Cowboy said, “You should know, Juan, that a man is only valuable if he can weather the storms we've been hit with. I can see signs the weather will improve, so don't worry about it. Any bad luck that I have, you have no part of it.”

“What do you mean no part?” responded Juan, “by some chance was a different man spun two hours on a carnival ride, and now the saddlebags are missing containing all the food. I’m a different man, not me?”

“Did you say that the saddlebags are missing?” asked Cowboy.

“Yes, they're gone,” responded Juan.

“And we have nothing to eat?” said Cowboy.

“Not, unless you can eat these wild plants,” responded Juan.

“I'd rather have bread and fried snake, but God will provide burning sun or rain, just or unjust. Even the sparrows eat will.”

“Maybe you should end your gun career and be a minister.”

“I'm happy to know a little about a lot of things.”
“Coach Williams was that too. Seems like there was a film where a gunfighter had to stop traveling and give a sermon and then another in a field after a Civil War battle.”

“If there is such a film, maybe we could do that instead? Make films?” Juan suggested.

“Collaborative arts are difficult for me, but perhaps that would be better suited for you, Juan. You follow well.”

“Fine, I would prefer you to make films, as opposed to this type of adventure. It would be less painful.”

“God's will be done, my son,” said Cowboy, “and led the way to a place where we can sleep, but can you first tell me how many teeth I've swallowed?

“Four or five,” Juan answered.

“I think I'd rather have lost an arm so long as it wasn't my gun hand. I feel like Salty will notice I'm like a mill without a millstone.”

Cowboy finally lifted his Harley, mounted laboriously.

“Maybe if you buy some rings, she'll be occupied with them and not look into your mouth?”

“Lead the way, my friend, I'll follow.”

Juan did so and headed in the direction where he thought they might find a city and lodging. They rode very slowly, because Juan's moped was leading the way but also because Cowboy’s jaw was giving him fits.
EXT. DIAZ ORDAZ COUNTY AT THE LA PASADA

“It seems to me, Cowboy, that all our problems have been caused by your idol promises and this is our punishment.”

“Idle promises?” asked Cowboy.

“You didn't keep your vow not to eat bread from a tablecloth or to lie with a woman and everything else that comes afterwards, and this includes you swearing to take the helmet of the Mexican, whatever his name was.”

“You're right, Juan,” said Cowboy, “but to tell you the truth, it's slipped my mind, but the reason you had the incident with the Tilt-A-Whirl is that you were negligent reminding me of it in time, but I'll fix that for you.”

“But when did I not warn you?”

“I understand, and that should be enough.”

They were engaged in this useless banter and other conversations when night found them still on the road, not having found a place to sleep. Even worse, they were dying of hunger, for the loss of the saddlebags meant loss of their food, and to make things worse, they were on an adventure that for miles didn't seem entertaining at all.

They were riding along when the hungry men saw a multitude of lights on the road traveling toward them. Juan was
frightened, and even the cowboy felt uneasy. They eased to off the throttles and they came to a halt. They looked at the strange trail of lights.

“This, Juan, is no doubt a new chapter in the adventure in which I might have to prove my skills.”

“Does that mean it will be painful? I don't know if my ribs can take it.”

“Whether they are a carnival or not,” said Cowboy, “I shall not let anyone touch you. You were thrown on a Tilt-A-Whirl because of our distance, however now we are near each other.”

“And if they are Comanches or cavalry or some other illusion?”

“Despite the past and the supernatural,” replied Cowboy, “I beg you, Juan, to have courage, for experience is worth millions they say. Millions!”

“What do they say about bruises?”

And the two of them waited on the lights, whoever they might belong to in the end.

It was not long before they were able to make out a good number of men on Chinese motorcycles, that were not as bad as Cowboy considered them, and behind them came a hearse.

This strange vision at that late hour and in so deserted the place was more than enough to instill fear in Juan's brain and even in Cowboy’s heart. It was a vivid image, almost like a
movie, so noir that Cowboy smoked up some bravery and then began to act upon it.

It seemed to him that the hearse carried a dead hero and that he might be the only revenge intended to the deadman, so without another word, he pulled his pistol and rode into the middle of the road. When they slowed he raised his voice, “Halt, friends or whatever you might be, and give me a picture of what is going on. What hero has died, and why and where are you taking him. What offense was committed against him.”

“We're in a rush,” responded one of the men, “and the inn is miles up the road. We're tired and not in the mood for folly.”

And firing the pistol once in the air Cowboy said. “You will be more helpful. Give me the accounting I've earned or you all can shoot it out with me.”

All the men were nervous to start with, but the pistol and the most ardent demands cause them to scatter like quail. They ran faster then they’d ever prayed.

Cowboy was marvelous and charged with Shovelhead into the middle of them. The men were shy and unarmed. Eight took off across the desert as if they were on dirtbikes. Five of them returned to the road traveling back in the direction they came. The man who had spoken turned his cycle over in the road in his haste to escape. The hearse didn't move. Once all that happened
and Juan thought to respect his friend’s boldness finally and said to himself, “no doubt about it, my friend is as courageous and brave as he claims.”

The man thrown by his cycle was struggling to remove his leg from under it but also crying out in pain. Cowboy moved over to him, pointed the pistol in his head, and the man with a broken leg said, “I have yielded and then some. I can't move my leg; if you are a gentleman, don't kill me for you would commit a great crime if you do. I'm a priest; we're all priests. We’re an Order of priests. Bikers For Catholic a Texas.”

“Being a sky pilot with the Mexican church, why are you out here in the middle of nowhere?”

“Sky pilot? Just my bad luck. Another cowboy!”

“It will be bad for you if you don't answer.”

“Fine,” said the priest, “I've come with eleven others.”

“The men who fled?”

“We were going from San Angelo to El Paso, escorting the dead body that lies in the hearse .”

“Who killed him?” asked Cowboy.

“God,” responded the priest.

“In that case, there's nothing for me to avenge; if anyone else killed him, there would be a call to action for the Vaquero de Tejas. It's my occupation to wonder Texas doing right.”
“I don't know you can say this is your profession because you have broken my leg, which won't ever be right again.”

“God works in mysterious ways, but this isn't any mystery. You ride up here in the middle of the night, and you refused my questions. You would look like the devil even if I'd known you to be that I'd still have attacked you since this is clearly my fate.”

And the priest begged Cowboy to help him out from under the Zontes. “My leg is caught between the bike and the pavement.”

“I might have talked all night, said the Cowboy, “How long would you have waited to interrupt about your leg?”

Then he called Juan, who took no notice, because he was busy going through the provision scattered about the highway. Things to eat. Juan made a makeshift saddlebag out of his coat sleeves and gathered up as much of the food as he could fit, loaded it onto his moped, and only then did he respond to Cowboy’s call. They helped remove the Zontes off the priest; they put him in the front of the hearse with the petrified driver. Cowboy told him he was sorry and that he should continue and deliver the body.

Juan also said to him, “If by chance you could, we would like to know who this hero is, he is the famous El Vaquero de Tejas, also known as the Pelionero with the Floor Mounted Clutch.”
“El Loco Pelionero with the Floor Mounted Clutch?”

“Yes,” Juan affirmed it.

The priest then motioned for the hearse to proceed.

As the Hearst drove off and Cowboy asked Juan what had moved him to call him the, “El Pelionero with the Floor Mounted Clutch,” now and not before.

“I'll tell you,” responded Juan, “I was looking at you for a while in light of this adventure with the unlucky man and the new Chinese bike, and you have the worst cycle anyone can dream of, and of course it's unique. Shovelhead is your trademark.”

“It's not that,” responded Cowboy, “but rather my father who dreamed the dream of shooting and doing combat from a moving cycle, and so I say that he already probably might have used this name, but ‘yes’ I agree. I would be happy to call myself is from now on.”

“The only drawback now will be you’ve advertised your ability to fire and ride at the same time. They’ll expect you to shoot at them on the move, and the element of surprise will have gone.”

Cowboy laughed at Juan’s martial insight, but even so, he resolved to market himself as “El Pelionero with the Floor Mounted Clutch,” as soon as the film put together and the business cards could be printed.
They noticed the hearse rolling back to their location. The priest with a broken leg said out the window, “I forgot to tell you. You are both hereby informed that you've been excommunicated for having laid violent hands on some sacred priests. *Pillion arrows es el Diablo.*”

“Don't speak Mexican,” Cowboy responded, “but I do know that I didn't touch you. You fell off your bike all by yourself. I didn't attack any priest or church relics, but you hobble up to the Pope, and you tell him how your people ran like Justify.”

On hearing this, the priest left with the hearse not to return.

Cowboy wanted to see the body in the hearse, but Juan insisted that the adventure was over and that he’d defeated and routed several men was one reason. And, they might figure out it was done by only one man (or two men), and they might return with Mexican police.

The moped was carrying what it could, and the mountains of West Texas were nearby. Hunger was pressing, and nothing would be better for them if they left “the dead to the grave and living to the turkey and mayo sandwich to their stomachs.”

And riding ahead on his moped, Juan asked his friend to follow him on a silent cruise into the mountains. They went to a place between two mountains. They had breakfast, lunch, and
dinner, all at one sitting on the grass between two mountains in far West Texas.

EXT. DIAZ ORDAZ COUNTY AT THE LA PASADA

“It's not possible, Juan, for this grass to be growing west of the Pecos River. There is a spring or a brook that waters these plants, and so I think if we push on a bit farther, we can find a place to quench this terrible thirst. It's harder to bear than hunger,” asserted Cowboy.

This seemed a good idea to Juan, and after picking up the leftovers from their dinner, Cowboy and Juan drove their rides to the base of a mountain. They felt their way in the dark as they couldn't see much. They had gone about 200 yards off the road, and Cowboy thought he could smell the cooking of meth. It was as if the odor were being tunneled through a huge canyon to them. The smell made Cowboy uneasy and he stopped to try to determine where it was coming from.

When Juan smelled the exceedingly loud aroma, it watered down Cowboy’s joy at finding a quiet isolated place. This was especially true, for Juan was naturally fearful and not very brave. They smelled what they thought was Preston starter fluid along with a certain whiff of anhydrous ammonia that triggered Juan’s curious cow sense. The idea of stumbling on someone’s lab would have put terror in the heart any heart other than Cowboy.
They figured they’d stumbled onto someone's meth kitchen that night, as we have said, it was dark and they happened to walk under what Cowboy thought were some shad trees. In short, solitude of place, the darkness, and smell of Meth cooking, and murmur of leaves all combined to cause panic and apprehension, especially when the odor didn't cease. The wind did not stop.

The morning was still a long way, and that added to the fear. They still didn’t know if they would be killed or not. But Cowboy, accompanied by his speedy temperament, literally leaped on Shovelhead and said, “Juan, my amigo, know that I was born by the will of Heaven in this our Age of Acetaminophen to revive the one of the Hot Cook or P2P age, it was called. I am he for whom are reserved dangerous and great deeds. I am, I repeat, the he who is to revive the Ponderosa, The High Chaparral, The Big Valley. I’m the one that is to make the world forget about Joe Kidd, Rooster Cogburn, Gus McCrae, Captain Call, The Sacketts and Lucas McCain, and a horde of other famous wandering cowboys. By performing in this way, I might revive the great and extraordinary deeds and feats of shooting.”

“But how can you hope to over-shadow these heroes?”

“Don't worry, my amigo, luck is with me. Wait for me here no more than three days, and if I don't come back by then, you need to return home to your family, and from there, go out to Tawakoni and tell Salty that I died performing deeds that would
have proven me worthy to be called hers. Tell her father, I died trying.”

When Juan heard his friend’s words, he began to cry with great tenderness, and he said, “Cowboy, I don't know why you want to leave on a journey by yourself. Nobody can see us out here, so what it’s spooky. We can turn around and leave, and even if we don't drink anything for three days, no one will see us here, and they can't call us cowards. I left my family with the promise of an island, and now I see my payment and the reward is for you to leave me now in a desolate place far from civilization, please don't do me wrong. At least put it off until morning.”

“No,” cried Cowboy, “no, and no crying. What you must do is prepare Shovelhead for his journey and remain here. I shall return either alive or dead.”

Juan seeing his friend’s firm resolve and how little he accomplished with tears, advice, and pleading to make Cowboy wait until daylight and so as he was moving food from the moped to Shovelhead he very cunningly and quite quietly disable the ignition and when Cowboy tried to leave he could not because his cycle could not move.

Seeing the success of his deception, Juan said, “Shovelhead can't move and if you persist and spur him he will only you only anger him and make him more stubborn,” at this Cowboy grew
desperate for no matter how hard he spurred his cycle he could not make him move. Then not realizing Juan's trick, he calmed and thought he'd wait until morning when Shovelhead would probably move.

So Cowboy said, "Well, Juan, since Shovelhead won't start. I'm going to wait until dawn, but I'm not going to enjoy the delay."

"There's no reason to be upset," responded Juan, "I'll tell you a story or ten, until daylight, unless you want to climb off and sleep on the sand like Cowboys of old. That way, you'll be rested when the day comes, and you leave on your adventure."

"What do you mean, climb off and sleep?" asked Cowboy. "Juan, you sleep because you're professionally inclined to. I, however, can't sleep in the midst of danger."

"I don't mean anything by it," and Juan looked guilty and fearful of the familiar smell, which continued.

Cowboy told him to recount some story as he promised.

"I'll tell you a story if I can manage it. So pay attention 'cuz I'm pretty afraid out here. Here I go, 'Once upon a time' and may good come to all and evil to he who asks for it; you probably know this story was from the times when everyone had electricity, not just Mexicans, and it says evil to him who seeks trouble. It is pretty much the story of our adventure. You shouldn't go out on a route a night, especially with that smell
in the air, but remain still no one is forcing us to continue on this. With all the darkness and the noises and the strange smell of someone's meth farm.”

“Continue with your story or leave the route to me, please.”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” Juan continued, “it was somewhere along the Concho River. There was a goat herder, I mean to say the man attended goats and this man I am telling you about was named… His name was Luis Ramos, and this Luis Ramos was in love with a shepherdess named Rachel Ferrer, and the shepherdess’ name was Rachel Ferrer. And she was the daughter of a rich herder and this rich herder was …”

“If you tell your story this way, Juan,” said Cowboy, “repeating everything you say two times, you will not finish before I leave. Tell the story in a sensible way, like you understand the story yourself. That or don't say anything at all.”

“The way I'm telling it is the way they tell stories in East Texas, and since you are from the same spot on the road, you should understand and I don't know any other way to tell it and it's very mean of you to ask me to do new things.”

“Tell it. There isn't anything I can do about it; you are the only storyteller in a hundred miles of here,” and so it was Juan continued.
“As I've said already, this goat herder was in love with Rachel and the shepherdess, who was a stout girl and wild and a little butch because she had a bit of a mustache. It's as if I could see her myself now.”

“Then did you know her?” asked Cowboy.

“I didn't know her,” Juan responded, “but the men who told me this story said it was true and that I could say I'd seen it all. They told me I could say I saw it all. You believe in the devil who never sleeps and is always about, especially out here in the West. This devil turned the love that the goat herder had for the shepherdess into hate and ill-will, and the reason was the gossip and a certain amount of jealousy that she made him feel and it was too far into forbidden areas and then the goat herder hated her so much that in order not to see her all, he wanted to leave his home and go where he would never lay eyes on her again. Rachel, when she found herself rejected by Luis, begin to love him dearly though she never loved him before.”

“That is the nature of women,” said Cowboy, “they reject the man who loves them and love the man who despises them. Go on.”

“It happened,” said Juan, “that the goat herder put his plan into effect and driving his goats ahead of him he set out through the old Concho County headed for a place south of Abilene. Rachel, who found out, followed him at a distance. She
had a large bag with just a mirror and a broken hair comb and some makeup for her face and whatever. So I'll just say that people say the man's herd came to the Concho and at that time of the year it was rising and almost flooding its banks and the part he came to there wasn't any boat or barge to ferry him and his goats and this caused him to despair because he could see Rachel coming closer and closer and he knew she would bother him with tears and begging, but he kept looking around until he found a fisherman with a bass boat, one tiny boat and it could fit any two goats and one man in it. Even so, he talked to the fisherman, and they agreed on a price to ferry each of the 300 goats across the river. The fisherman ferried across two goats. He came back; he ferried another two. He came back, again and again, ferried two across each time. Cowboy, you must keep count of the goats in the story because if you miss counting, the story will be over and it won't be possible to finish.”

“Four goats, go on,”

“Did I say that the landing on the other side was very muddy and slippery, and it took the fisherman a long time to go back and forth?

“Yes.”

“So, even so, he came back for another two goats and then another set and another two...”
“Just say ‘he ferried them all,’” said Cowboy, “if you keep going back and forth, it will take all night.”

But he didn't ferry them all. So how many have I said he ferried?”

“How do I know?”

“That's why I told you to keep count.”

“How can you expect me…”

“Well, that's it; how can I continue? I've lost my place.”

“Is it so necessary to know the exact number of goats that crossed?”

“I forget everything, I had left to say, so the story is over. Done.”

“I tell you honestly,” responded Cowboy, “that was one of the most bizarre tales that anyone ever thought to tell and beginning and then stopping without finishing is something I've never heard of even, but I'm not surprised perhaps the smell of the meth cooking has affected your brain.”

“That might be,” responded Juan. “But I know that in my story there's nothing else to say. It ended right where you lost count of the goats north of the river.”

“Then let it end,” said Cowboy, “and let's see if Shovelhead is still sleeping,” he spurred him again, and Shovelhead just stood there. That was how tired the motorcycle was.
At this moment it seems that either because of the cold morning which was approaching or because Juan had eaten prunes for supper or because it was the natural order of things, which was probably the case, he felt the urge and need to do what no one else could do for him. But Juan’s heart was so overwhelmed by fear of the smell of cooking meth that he dared not move more than a few feet from his friend, but not wanting to make too much noise, he cunningly loosened the belt, and his pants slip down around his ankles, like leg irons. After this, he lifted his shirt the best he could and stuck out his butt which was very white, despite there was no moon, and very oversized.

Having done this which he thought was half the effort, he was overcome by an even more fearful thought how to relieve himself without making a noise and he began to clench his teeth and hunches shoulders holding his breath as much as he could, but despite all his efforts, he was so unfortunate that he finally made a little odor himself. It was a smell quite different from the one that had caused him so much fear. Cowboy smelled it and said, “What is that, Juan?”

“I don't know,” he responded, “it must be something new. Adventures never have a reason.”

Juan tried his luck again, and things went so smoothly that with no more odor then the last time, Juan found himself rid of the burden that caused him so much grief.
But given Cowboy had a sense of smell as acute as his hearing and Juan was so near to him, the vapors rose almost as in a straight line, some inevitably reached his nose, and as soon as it reached his nostrils, he squeeze them closed between two fingers and in a somewhat nasal voice Cowboy said, “It seems to me, Juan, that you are very rotten.”

“What makes you think that?”

“Because you smell now more than ever and not of Chanel,” responded Cowboy.

“That might be so,” said Juan, “but it’s not my fault. It’s your fault to choosing the most ungodly times to put me through these strange paces.”

“Next time, take three or four paces back, friend,” said Cowboy without removing his fingers from his nose, “and from now on be more mindful of your person and of what you are to me. We’ve been engaged in too much conversation, and that has caused this lack of respect.”

“I’ll wager, replied Juan, “that you feel guilty about the neglect you’ve afforded me, and that’s why you want to pass the night in these exchanges and others like them.”

But Juan seeing that morning would soon be upon them, very carefully stealthily enabled Shovelhead.

And later, when Shovelhead found himself started, he sounded fierce and ready to go into battle. Cowboy hearing
Shovelhead’s attitude, realized it meant he should start on his adventure. He took a whiff of the ammonia and it had only increased, but he still couldn't see what lab or who was causing it. So Cowboy again ordered Juan to wait no more than three days and that if at the end of this time he could pretty much figure his friend’s life was over. Cowboy reminded him again about the message to Salty and her father out at Lake Tawakoni. As far as a last will and testament, Cowboy had made his will before leaving home and in it, Juan would find at least some recompense for everything relating to his time. Juan thought that if Cowboy survived, Juan would certainly have an island to govern.

Juan didn’t want to be left alone and began to cry again when he heard the sad words from his good friend, and he resolved not to leave until the conclusion and the retrieval of Cowboy’s body. Those tears and Juan Seguin's honorable decision to stick around led the author of the journals I purchased in Dallas to conclude that Juan must have had a solid moral education and at the very best an FFA member from his school days and at the very least a member of the 4-H.

Despite the sentiments of Juan, Cowboy had never demonstrated any weakness. Like an ignoramus, he simply road in the direction of the cooking meth.

Forgetting his instructions, Juan followed. He followed on his moped as was the custom. The moped was his constant
companion to good fortune and bad, having traveled some distance through those somber times.

They came upon a tiny spring at the foot of the spring was a stolen delivery truck riddled with bullet holes and what looked more like leaking dry cleaning fluid. At that distance, it looked more abandon than functional, and they realize that the smell and danger of finding a meth lab had not ceased, and the smell was definitely coming from the truck for there was nowhere else to hid a meth lab in that desert. Juan did not leave Cowboy’s side, craning to see what had so frightened and perplexed him.

They drove another hundred yards, and there appeared in clear and plain sight, the cause of the terrible odor and for them. The terrifying smell that had kept them frightened and puzzled the whole night, and it was if you had not already guessed already target practice for a group of hoodlums. The truck apparently had been abandoned and that was responsible for the drama.

When Cowboy saw this, he fell silent and sat paralyzed from head to toe. Juan looked at him and saw that his head was held down low indicating that he was mortified. Also, Cowboy looked at Juan and said that his cheeks were puffy, and his mouth was containing laughter. Four times Juna calmed down and four times his laughter returned as powerfully as before by now Cowboy was
sending him to the devil especially when he heard Juan say in a derisive/mocking tone, “Cowboy, my friend, know that I was born by the will of Heaven in this our Acetaminophen and P2P Age. I am here for whom are reserved dangerous great deeds and…”

“What's so funny?” asked Cowboy.

“You attacked an Order of priests carrying the body of a Mexican dignitary to a burial, but when you encounter spilled dry cleaning fluid in the dark, you were afraid we'd stumbled onto something dangerous, a meth lab,” and in this fashion, he repeated all or most of the words that Cowboy had said when they first smelled the fearful ammonia in the dark. Cowboy, seeing that Juan was mocking him, became so angry he raised his pistol and struck Juan twice, blows so hard that if he had received them on the head instead of the back, his friend would have been free to bury him.

Juan seeing that his jokes were taken so seriously and fearing that his friend would go even farther striking him said to him very humbly, “Don’t throw a conniption fit. I'm sorry. I'm only joking.”

“Well, you may be joking, but I'm not,” responded Cowboy. “Come here, you merry little man; do you think that smell was created by dangerous cooks. I wouldn't back down and run. I'm not obliged to know what every smell might or might not be. Let's pretend that the truck was full of six meth cooks, and if
I didn't kill them, then you may mock me openly, and you may anyway. You like to mock me anyway.”

“No more,” replied Juan, “I confess I've gone a little too far with my joking, but tell me now that you've calmed down, wasn't it laughable? How frightened we were and wouldn't it make a good scene in a film? This might be a comedy after all. At least I was frightened, I doubt are never afraid.”

“I will admit,” responded Cowboy, ”that what happened to us is a little funny, but it doesn't deserve to be told. Most people wouldn't laugh and maybe we should keep it to ourselves.”

“At least you didn't hit me over the head, or I took the time to duck your blows.”

“Well, I've heard the persons who hurt you the most are the ones that love you,” Cowboy said.

“And I've heard of a friend receiving new pants after a fight, but I've also heard of entire amusement parks being given to their friends. Islands even.”

“The dice may fall,” said Cowboy, “so that everything you say turns out to be true.

“I forgive you for what happened.”

“Juan, you are clever, and you know our first impulses are not ours to control, but in the future, you'll please not talk so much. I've seen a thousand films and most Rangers travel alone and you being here is a special favor I've done for you.
The few Rangers with traveling companions, most of the sidekicks have been silent or almost silent, but it's partly my fault for not allowing you to have a high opinion of me. I'll demand a bit more and you'll refrain from mockery. In this way, the rewards I promised can be awarded in a reasonable time," Cowboy promised.

“Everything you say makes sense,” said Juan, “but let’s say you aren't able to provide me with an island can I perhaps earn a wage?”

“I do not believe,” Cowboy responded, “that friends pay wages to friends but as I've mentioned in my will there is a moderate amount of meth stored in a secret location, meth you can sell, and I don't want to go, but you know my profession is the most dangerous.”

“That's true,” said Juan, “the smell of the meth lab could upset a low man's heart. A Ranger’s heart must feel even more stress because he’s the one walking in first. So I'll not joke anymore about your sensitive susceptibilities in that way.”

“Juan, you'll live a long time,” replied Cowboy.

EXT. LOPEZ MATEOS COUNTY ROAD

At this point, a rare rain began to fall and Juan, without a slicker, wanted to take shelter in the shot-up truck. Cowboy was opposed to it because of the previous night’s uncomfortable feeling, and under no circumstances did he want to go inside
regardless of the high it might yield. And so turning to the right, they came upon another road, similar to the one they had followed on the previous day.

A short while later, Cowboy smoked a bowl and caught sight of a man riding toward them wearing on his head something that glistened as if it were made of gold and no sooner had he seen him, he turned to Juan and said, “It seems to me, Juan, that there are no proverbs that are false because all of them are judgments based on experience, the mother of all knowledge; in particular the one that says, ‘one door closes another one opens.’ I say this because if fortune last night closed her legs on what deceived us, the ammonia smell now seems to open her legs wide for a bona fide baptism. If I do not succeed in going through this door, the fault will be mine and I shall not be able to blame my ignorance of dry cleaning fluid or dark of the night.”

“I understand,” Juan said.

“I say this because, unless I'm crazy, coming toward us is a man who wears a golden cowboy hat, which you know I need. “Careful what you say and even more careful what you do,” said Juan. “You don't want this to be another dry cleaning truck, cleaning your clock again.”

“Enter the devil,” replied Cowboy. “What does the last adventure have to do with this one?”
“I don't know,” responded Juan. “If I were free to talk as much as before, I'd have a few things to say about the general direction our adventures are heading.”

“How can you doubt our mission,” said cowboy. “Tell me do you not see that man coming towards us mounted on a cycle wearing a cowboy hat of gold?”

“What I see and can make out,” responded Juan, “it's just a man riding a Tour Glide and wearing something shiny on his head, probably a motorcycle helmet.”

“Well, close, but that's that is my hat,” said Cowboy. “Move aside and let me face him alone. You will see that, without speaking a word and not waste any more time, this adventure will be only a snack and I'll have my hat.”

“I'll move,” replied Juan, “but please know that he may riddle you with bullet holes and you’ll look like the dry cleaning truck.”

“I've asked you not to mention or even think about mentioning last night to me,” said Cowboy, “or I swear I'll riddle you.”

Juan fell silent, fearful his friend might carry out the threat.

This was the deal. What Cowboy saw was a cowboy hat on a rider. But in that area there were two towns; one of them so small it didn't have a court, so a Mexican judge from the larger
one served the smaller town on Tuesdays. He was traveling there carrying his records and wearing a bright golden Bell helmet. He was riding a Tour Glide which gave rise to Cowboy thinking he was on a dapple gray horse and wearing a golden Cowboy hat and when he saw the poor gentleman approaching...

Without saying a word to him and with Shovelhead at full throttle, he attacked with pistol in hand intending to blast him from the saddle but when he drew near without stopping the fury of his attack Cowboy cried, “Defend yourself, trick-ass punk, or hand over to me of your own volition what is mine.”

The judge who never imagined or feared such an attack, when he saw Cowboy bearing down on him had no other choice in order to protect himself, but fall off his cycle. And as soon as he touched the ground, pitched down his hat, leaped up as nimbly as a mouse, and begin to run across the desert.

Satisfied, Cowboy said that the heathen had behaved with discretion and imitated the lizard which finding itself caught drops off the instinctual tail he being held by. He told Juan to pick up the helmet, and he did say, “Wow this is a nice helmet and might be worth 10,000 pesos or maybe more.” And Juan gave it to his friend, who after putting it on his head, turned it side-to-side, and looking in the rearview mirror he saw the shape of his new golden Cowboy hat.
Cowboys said, “He had an extremely big head, but he must have appreciated cowboy hats because it is an extremely well-formed one.”

When Juan heard the “motorcycle helmet” called a “cowboy hat,” he couldn't contain his laughter, but he remembered that he had promised his friend and broke the laugh in half. “Why are you laughing, Juan?” said Cowboy.

“It makes me laugh,” he responded, “to think that the fat head of this judge would fit in this motorcycle helmet.”

“Do you know what I imagine, Juan? This famous cowboy hat by some accident must have fallen into the hands of someone who could not recognize or estimated value but that I recognize it and it's lacking a hatband.

“It shouldn't matter.”

“I will repair it in the next town that has a haberdasher. I prefer the rattlesnake bands up until then I can only do my best to wear it well.”

“That will work,” said Juan, “if your enemies are using stones like they did in the battle of the ATV race, I mean cavalry, they broke your head half-open and spilled the medicine the bottle.”

“Losing the tea does not make me all that upsets,” said Cowboy, “I have the recipe committed to memory.”
“So do I,” responded Juan, “but if I make it or taste it again in my life, let me be dead besides I don’t intend to put myself in a position of needing it because I plan to use all my five senses to keep from being wounded or wounding anybody else. And far as for being spun on a spinning carnival ride in a bucket, again I don’t want say another word.”

“Such misfortunes are hard to see coming,” Cowboy commented.

“If they come, all I can do is shrug, hold my breath and let vomit fly.”

“You are a bad philosopher, Juan,” said Cowboy, “because you can’t forget an injury once it has been done to you. But you should know that it is just fun and games.”

At which point Juan said, “It may go down as a joke then, but I doubt my mind or stomach will forget it. But tell me what will you do with the Tour Glide now the man has abandoned it?”

“The horse is nice, but it has never been my practice,” said Cowboy, “to plunder those I’ve defeated nor is it the custom of Rangers to deprived men of their transportation out here in the middle of nowhere.”

He told Juan, “Leave the man his horse, or what whatever you are calling it, cause when the owner sees us leaving he will return.”
“I'd like to take it or at least exchange it for this moped of mine, because I don't think it's more reliable/comfortable.”

“The laws of the West are strict.”

“If they can't be stretched to let a man like me trade one moped for a Harley, I'd like to know if you could at least swamp the trappings.”

“I'm not certain about that,” responded Cowboy, “In case of doubt, until I'm better informed, I should say that you may exchange them if you are in dire need of them.”

“So dire that I need them for my personal survival,” responded Juan.

Then on the basis of that permission, Cowboy executed a “new order of the ages,” and Juan decked out his donkey with the judge's record book and a large bag of food and wine, which had been essentially bribes. They ate some of the food and drank some of the wine. Having pacified their hunger and satisfied their lust for burning Mexican legal documents, they remounted and with no fixed destination, since it was very much the tradition of Rangers mobile not to follow a specific route.

They begin to ride wherever Shovelhead took them; behind Cowboy came his friend and they returned to a trail and followed it with no set plan or purpose in mind.

As they were riding along, Juan said to his friend, “Do you want to let me talk a little? After you gave me that harsh order
of silence, more than a few things have been coming to mind, and the one that I have now on top of my head I don’t want to go to waste.”

“Say your peace,” Cowboy said, “but be brief for no speech is listened to if it’s long.”

“What I have to say,” respond Juan, “is that for the past few days I’ve been thinking how little gain or profit there is in looking for the adventures that you look for in these deserted places and mountains because even when you conquer and conclude the most dangerous there’s nobody to see these feats or know about the details and so our adventures will be perpetually silent. Now, this isn’t your goal or intention but you do deserve some recognition.”

“Clearly.”

“So it seems that I have recorded most all of our adventure thus far and we might take the files to some producer or editor who is involved in filmmaking or streaming in San Antonio, and if we could show your work to this person he might reward us according to our your merits.

“Not San Antonio. It is a hotbed of loyalists.”

“I don’t know about politics, but someone in Austin then might make a film of your exploits. If it gets produced you might be remembered forever; for my own exploits they are limited and it’s not so customary to publicize the sidekick’s
story. However; it would be nice to be remembered as your good friend.”

“That's reasonable,” responded Cowboy, “but before participating in a biopic, it will be necessary to wander Texas a bit longer as a test, seeking more scenes so I can acquire a reputation and fame before the film is released. Then when people see the film, we'll demand more respect or even earn more in prizes.”

“I’ll make a note of that.”

“As soon as the young boys see us ride into town and we're proceeded by reputation, and they follow and surround us shouting, only then will we know to look for this editor or producer. It's all about word-of-mouth and the boys who cheer and, of course, the shadow politicians and Austin powerbrokers will eventually notice the film and at this point, the moneybags will come halfway down the street and embrace the two heroes warmly and welcome us.”

Juan was caught up in the story and suggested, “And then the power broker will lead you into a saloon and introduce you to the casino boss and extend to you credit and not a poultry amount.”

Cowboy corrected him, “You mean poultry?”

“Perhaps.”
“Eventually the hero learning about a wife, and mistress, and finally a daughter who is without doubt perfect, something like Sarah Wheeler in *Pale Rider* and Sarah Wheeler will very chastely turn her eyes to the Ranger and they will, without knowing how or why, be caught in the tornado of love. It's a mess because they don't really know how to speak or tell to the other their inclination.”

Juan suggested, “Then you will no doubt be taken to a sumptuously decorated room in a hotel, having removed your gun belt, bathe and change clothes.”

“Then at supper with the new boss and his family, he will never take his eyes off this Sarah. His looks, however; are sly and her looks are the same.”

“She's as shrewd as discrete.”

“And after the dinner the Texas kingmaker, the shadow president but the next president of an independent Texas and that's now all; his several hired guns are called to compete in a shooting contest.”

“His victory makes the girl extremely wet and she will think herself as extremely well rewarded and compensated for having loved so loftily,” Juan offered.

“And the fortunate part is that her father is waging a fierce civil war against the Mexican tyranny and the hero will be soldiering in that conflict.”

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“And that night you climb into her window to arrange your futures and kiss each other all over, and over again.”

“Juan, that is from an ancient song.”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Well anyway, then he goes to his room, throws himself on the bed and can’t sleep because of the pain of their parting. He arises very early in the morning and goes to talk to the magnate. Afterwards, he goes to see the daughter to say goodbye.”

“But she’s indisposed and unable to see you. You figure it is because of her sorrow at leaving your heart so wounded but you struggles to keep it hidden.”

“But her friend appears and promises to take and receive notes to the Ranger.”

“But you’ve already gone; you go to battle in the war with inside information you’ve been trusted with,” Juan said.

“He sabotages the Mexican Army and takes banks, trains, and cattle.”

Juan added, “With the Mexicans in retreat from Texas, you see this girl in the arrange place, and you agree that she’s not returning to her father, and you'll be united in marriage.”

“No, the father is reluctant, given his new power, he thinks he can find a better match for the daughter.”
“But politics calls and he sets up to govern Texas from Austin. He’s too busy to stop you,” Juan entertain.

“The Ranger and the prairie princess, are at the ranch, and he puts his sidekick with the go-between, the one who arrived with notes. Juan, you could easily have a second wife.”

“That's all I need is a second wife,” sarcastically said Juan, “and that's not what I'm counting on.”

“I’ve offered.”

“And everything will happen exactly to the letter.”

“Don't doubt it,” replied Cowboy, “for this is how men win counties, golf courses, and amusement parks. All we need to do is find the shadow president in a bind.”

“And what if that's not so easy?” Juan asked.

“Either we abduct her or we come to an arrangement.”

“And tell me more about this second wife of the sidekick.” Cowboy explained, “Well one thing you'll need an island...”

Juan interrupted, “This judge, fortunately he, when he ran, left his record book I see that you've burned half of it. Let’s keep it relatively close and not lose it.

“I can record your new wife there on the unburned pages and make it legal. No need for East Texas wife to know about the West Texas one,” Cowboy offered.
EXT. DEL NORTE COUNTY ROAD

It was recounted in the journals recovered in Dallas, a high-sounding, detailed, and totally disturbing story that followed the loopy conversation between Cowboy and Juan Seguin his friend.

Cowboy looked up and saw on the shoulder of the road a TDCJ bus with a dozen men standing in shackles like beads on a great chain; a flat tire had delayed them. Accompanying them were two men on federal cycles and two men from the bus were changing the tire. The ones on motorcycles had shotguns and those on foot carried pistols.

As soon as Juan saw them he said, “This is a chain of prisoners people forced by the government to go to build the wall.”

“What do you mean ‘forced’?” asked Cowboy, “Is it possible that the Mexico City regime forces innocents?”

“I'm not saying they are innocent,” responded Juan, “but these people who because of their crimes have been ordered by the Mexican president to labor putting up the wall.”

“In short,” replied Cowboy, “for whatever reason, these men are being taken by force and not of their own free will.”

“That's right, said Juan.

They slowly pass the stalled bus.
“Well in that case,” said his hero friend, “here is my chance to put into practice my profession, to right wrongs, and come to the aid of the oppressed Texans and thus make a name for myself. Make certain to record all of this encounter.”

They slowed and Cowboy pulled a U-turn. Juan followed dutifully. They returned to the bus and the men.

“Cowboy, my friend, don't forget,” said Juan, “that Justice, which currently is the Mexican government, does not force or do wrong to prisoners but sentences them to labor on the wall for their crimes.”

By now they'd reached the chain of workers and Cowboy, with a very courteous speech, asked those who were guarding them to be so kind as to inform him and tell him the reason or reasons these men are being taken in that fashion.

One of the mounted guards responded that they were all slaves, his excellency's prisoners who were condemned to the welding torches and to put up the sections. There was nothing more to say.

Cowboy was told that if he wanted more information, he should watch the 5:30 news that video and news of the progress was frequently broadcast at that time.

“Even so,” replied Cowboy, “I should like to know the particular reason for each one's incarceration,” and to these
words he added other so civil and powerful to persuade them to tell him.

The mountain of a guard said, “although we have the record and certificate of sentences of each of these men it is not the proper time to stop and take them out and read them. You may approach and question the prisoners and they will tell you themselves if they wish, and they will because these people are so also braggarts and proud of their crimes, but then of course they are liars as well.”

With this authorization, which Cowboy would have acted upon even if it had not been granted, he approached the chain and asked the first man what crime he had committed to be taken away so unpleasantly to the Red River. He responded that it was on account of his being a lover.

“Is that all?” replied Cowboy, “if they throw men into hard labor for being lovers I should be down up at the border five minutes ago.”

“It isn't the kind of love you might think,” said the wall slave, “mine is a great love for loads of laundry, a dryer full of high thread-count sheets that I liberated from the washateria. I loved it so much and embraced it so tightly that if the laws hadn't taken it from me, I'd be laying on them now.”

He was a young man about 24 years old who said he was a native of Alpine.
Cowboy asked the same question of the second man who was so downcast, he didn't say a word, but the first prisoner responded for him, and said, “This man, sir, is being taken away for being a canary.”

“You mean a musician and singer?” Cowboy responded, “men are abused for being musicians?”

“Yes sir,” responded the wall slave, “because there's nothing worse than singing when you're in a pickle.”

“But I have heard,” said Cowboy, “that troubles take flight for the man who can sing.”

“Here just the opposite is true,” said the wall slave, “warble once and you weep for the rest of your life.”

“I don't understand,” said Cowboy.

But one of the guards told him, “Sir, among these people singing when you're in difficulty means confessing under torture. They tortured this fellow and he confessed his crime which was withholding cattle and because he confessed his time was increased, but also he's depressed because of the rest of the thieves and the ones who got away and the ones who are here now with him abuse him and really hate him and think he's weak. Because sometimes men refuse to confess and some don't have the courage to say “no.” Sometimes it's easier to say “confess” then “face” the wrath of the prosecutor, especially when there are no witnesses or evidence.”
“They manufacture evidence?”

“Didn’t have to. They simply tortured him and he sang. But it is jailhouse code not to sing until after the evidence has been created.”

“Well, I understood that,” responded Cowboy. He passed to the third prisoner and asked the question he had asked the others.

This man responded immediately with great confidence and said, “I'm going to the border for five miles because I didn't have the 100,000 pesos.”

“I should give you two hundred thousand pesos,” said Cowboy, “to free you from this burdensome fate.”

“You seem to me like a man who has money in the middle of the desert dying of hunger without a place to buy anything. These guards won't take the 200,000. I've already tried. Where were you when I needed you? I'd have grease the quill of the clerk and sharpen the wits of my attorneys and today I'd be at the Radisson in Big Spring and not chained here like a bulldog, but I'm okay. I have patience.”

Cowboy passed on to the fourth prisoner, a man of venerable character with a white beard that hung down to his chest. Hearing himself asked the reason for his being there he began to weep and did not say a word in reply, but the fifth prisoner served as his interpreter and said this honest man is going to
the border for four miles. Having been paraded over the television and shat upon in the newspapers."

“What it seems to me, sir,” Juan said, “he was propagandized.”

“That's true,” replied the wall slave, “and the crime he is being punished for was dealing in purebred puppies and even intact adult dogs. In other words, this gentleman was a puppy broker and he's being punished for having a bit of dog breeder in him.”

“If you had not added that bit of a dog breeder comment,” said Cowboy, “I might not feel he doesn't deserve to be sent to the border for work and should be given a responsible position of leadership or production because the position of dog breeder is not just for anyone. It is a job for a discerning man, one that is necessary for a well-ordered economy. It should be practiced by the well-educated. Who else would be able to produce one of man's most reliable tools – dogs? Who else overtime could transform the wolf into the companion Chihuahua? What about the Dachshund and Greyhounds, Australian Shepherds, and Pit Bulls and Pekingese? All magically, genetically selected, designed and now we prosecute those men and women?”

Juan chimed in, “He could speak on this all day about this noble game.”
Cowboy did begin, “The sport of Cleopatra, Frederick the Great, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It’s now illegal in Mexico and then I see every other human endeavor to make tools illegal as well.”

“That's true,” said the bearded old man, “and in fact in the matter of breeding, I was innocent in the matter of selling puppies. I could not deny it I bought and sold. The only thing they had me on was ‘profiteering’ and then they said thousands of worthless dogs were put down because of my actions the jury was whipped into a frenzy. But I never thought I was doing wrong. My entire intention was to satisfy the demand in the market give people the tools they needed - herding dogs, alert dogs, protection dogs or general buddy dogs.”

“Can’t a mutt be a companion?”

“Perhaps, but a pure-bred has a better chance. Mathematics and genetics. Especially designed companions,” The convict answered.

Cowboy said, “You've been prosecuted by the same idiots who outlawed genetically engineered corn and wheat. How crazy is that a majority of Mexicans voted for worse food,” chuckled Cowboy.

“Alos, less food,” Juan added.

“The same people who voted for worse dogs!” said the convict.
“And here we are standing today, in once a free place,” concluded Cowboy to his friend and Juan pulled out some of the judge’s food and money and handed it to the old dog breeder.

And after an odd moment of pause, Cowboy moved on and asked the next prisoner his crime, and he responded with rather a great deal of gusto, “I'm here because I made too merry with two girls who are were cousins and then with two other sisters from the same family. In short, I made so merry with them all that it complicated my life, and not even the lawyer's could sort it out. They nearly executed me, but I'm young and they gave me six miles to put up. It will be a long time, because I have no money for welding equipment, if you could help me I would greatly appreciate it.”

He was obviously a student and one of the guards said, “He is a great bullshit artist, clever even in Spanish.”

Behind all of them came a man of about 32 who was very good-looking except that one eye tended to veer slightly toward the other. He was shackled differently from the rest because around his foot was a chain so long it encircled his entire body and there were chains attached to his neck, and also two chains and his feet. He could not raise his hands or pull up his feet more than a few inches.

Cowboy asked why the man had so many more shackles than the others.
The guard responded that it was because he alone had committed more crimes than all the rest combined and he was daring and such a great villain that even though he was bound in this way, they still did not feel safe around him and were afraid he would escape.

“What crimes can they be?” asked Cowboy, “if they have such a punishment that he is being sent to repair the wall?”

“He's going for 10 miles,” replied the guard, “which is like a slow death. You should know this Gilly de Paseo.”

“Boss,” the wall slave said, “just take it easy with the name dropping. My name is Gilly, but my family name is Partilla, not Paseo like you claim, and if everyone would mind their own business, they'll have plenty to do.

“You talk a lot for a thief; I should shut you up,” the guard said.

“You weren't given your job to abuse and threatened us but to guide and lead us to where the president of Mexico want the wall to stand, with poor food and lacking health care. I have lots to say, but the joke's gone on too long.”

The guard raised the butt of his gun to strike Partilla in response to the talk, but Cowboy stepped between them and asked if he would kindly not abuse the prisoner.
The guard responded, “It’s a little surprising that a man whose hands are so tightly bound would have a rather loose tongue.”

Turning to all those on the chain Cowboy said, “From everything you’ve told me, brothers, I figure that although you are being punished for your faults, the penalties you are about to suffer are not to your liking and you go to them unwillingly and involuntarily. It might be that the lack of courage this one showed under torture, that one’s needed money, and another’s lack of favor, and finally the messed up idear’s of Mexican judges.

“Also the President’s promise to the people they would not have to pay for the wall to keep the Anglos out,” Partilla wised off.

“And with this came the false allegations; I want the guards to kindly unchain you and let you go and what will the President do? Fire you? Who will he find to replace you? You can’t make slaves of free men. I ask calmly, but if you refuse, I'll not be so calm with my pistols and the shotgun will make you regretful.”

“Who will build the wall?” an inmate asked.

“A fine piece of nonsense,” responded the guard, “he's finally come out with it. He wants us to let the president's
prisoners go like we have the authority for that. Be on your way and stop looking for trouble.”

“You are tyrants and rats,” responded Cowboy speaking and acting all in one motion he charged so quickly that he didn't give the talkative guard time to defend himself, knocked him to the ground, wounding him with a butt of a shotgun and it was lucky for Cowboy that he did because this was this man was holding the Mexican shotgun. The other guards were stunned and overwhelmed by the unexpected turn of events but they came to their senses, and the one remaining on his the motorcycle put his hands on his shotguns and those on foot grabbed for pistols and they drew down on Cowboy. But an opportunity presented itself; the prisoners had all along been attempting to break loose of the chain, succeeding it caused so much confusion that the guards didn't know what to do.

Cowboy, who had waited on the guards volley, charged once again. Juan freed Partilla, who leapt into the battle free and unencumbered. Partilla took up the fallen guard’s shotgun and the other prisoners pelted the guards with rocks. Since Partillaa had the shotgun, it caused them to drop their pistols and slowly back away. And then the three guards ran into the desert. No shots were fired but rocks, plenty of rocks, were thrown.
The prisoners stripped the fallen guard naked and everyone gathered around Cowboy to hear what he wanted to do next.

“It is customary to thank God for your freedom in such cases, but after you get up off your knees, I want you to travel to the city of Tawakoni and appear before Salty of the no-kill shelter (the girl in the FREE TEXAS posters) and say to her that the Vaquero de Tejas has freed you and that you offer her your labor and you will tell her point-by-point every detail of what has happened here and then you will remain with her, picking up dog shit until she releases you.”

Partilla responded, speaking for the group, “We might pray but cannot do that other, fool; we can't travel the roads together. We should go our separate ways each man on his own trying to avoid the laws.”

“Well then, I swear to you that I'll march you there in these very chains heads down and in six-inch steps.”

Partilla was not a man to hesitate, already he did seem to have the prisoner’s loyalty. He winked at them and they began pelting Cowboy with rocks and Juan as well. Shovelhead and the moped were also struck with stones and then the prisoners ran in twelve different directions.

Juan Seguin took his coat and filled it with food from inside the abandoned prison bus. The moped escaped - was
stolen, and driven off by Partilla. Poor Shovelhead was lying beside Cowboy also pushed to the ground.

Cowboy was grief-stricken at seeing himself and his ride toppled over by people who he had just helped.

Juan didn't realize the loss of his moped and was elated by his new snacks, which he had loaded into his coat.

**EXT. PANCHO VILLA COUNTY**

Seeing himself injured and Shovelhead knocked over, Cowboy said to his friend, “Learned a lesson. Helping the poor is like throwing water into the sea. I should have believed what you told me. I should have driven past them and none of this would have happened.”

“You learned your lesson like I'm a thin man. Since you didn't listen to me last time, listen now. We are in grave danger, you laying there and me standing here. I feel a rifle scope on my chest as we talk here. We should run away.”

“You're a coward, Juan,” Cowboy said, “you say I'm stubborn and I never do like you say. Let's make a deal, you never tell anyone this situation and that you insist that you drug me fighting and kicking from here. Any other account from you and I'll say you are lying. Just you thinking of publishing makes me want to stay and face the TDCJ or federales, whoever might come in revenge, sitting here alone along the highway.”
“Leaving is not running away and waiting here is not sensible. Danger outweighs hope and a wise man will save some skin for tomorrow. Why risk everything on a single day or spot on the road? I'm not the wisest pecan but do know a little about avoiding trouble and now my advice is to mount Shovelhead. We’ll use our wheels more than are tongues.”

Cowboy mounted Shovelhead, not saying a word, with Juan on the back. Cowboy refused to allow Juan the use of one of the federale’s Chinese bikes, successfully arguing it wasn’t dignified. They drove with the Sierra Diablo close by on the left.

Cowboy led them across the entire range, rested at Fort Davis, but at Juan’s insistence, his design was to hide for a few days in that rugged isolated terrain and not be found by any Mexican police who might come looking for them. Cowboy had been encouraged to do so when he saw how many provisions Juan carried in his coat. In fact, poor Shovelhead loaded with snack cakes, Ramen and canned sardines as well other food from the prison bus was as fair a take as could be hoped for.

EXT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COUNTY

As soon as Cowboy saw the Guadalupe Mountains in the distance, his heart filled with joy for it was a landscape that seem suited to the adventures he was seeking. What he recalled
was from marvelous television events, two wandering Cowboys in desolate and wild places. He rode along thinking of these things, so enthralled and transported here by fate, he thought of nothing else. And Juan’s only care was the many spoils and so he rode behind his friend, spinning around and sitting side-saddle behind Cowboy and eating out of his coat and packing them away in his belly, careless about adventure -- past or present.

In the clear dry air, Cowboy thought he saw a spot on the mountain. It was puzzling. How could there be white on a mountain in far West Texas?

“See those white specks up on that hill?” Cowboy asked.

Juan looked and saw nothing.

“I swear I think it's a mountain goat,” Cowboy said. “I never heard of mountain goats in Texas but there they are.”

In seconds they were off the trail and racing toward the humpy Mountain. Cowboy had immediately forgot his intention of staying on the trail and in his excitement at seeing what just now sure must be exotic goats, the creatures he had only heard of but never seen.

“Look, Juan, it's mountain goats,” he informed his friend who had fallen off the back of the Harley and was struggling to climb back on.
Two goats were invisible to Juan but clear to Cowboy who thought them to be grazing. Cowboy already at the edge of the mountain and left Juan behind.

“What do you think you're going to do? Ride Shovelhead up that mountain?” Juan, hoofing it, caught up and said.

From the level plain, the side of the mountain seemed impossible for motorcycles to climb. The flat prairie was one thing but here he would be chasing after goats up the side of a mountain.

Juan, Cowboy, and Shovelhead had raced to the foot of the mountain only discover at close range what Juan had at a distance seen was the tallest mountain in Texas and was too steep for motorcycles and perhaps even too steep for men.

Juan had never seen a mountain before, and if a person could sit top not only could shoot some sheep, but touch the sky as well. At the bottom were several good-sized boulders that had toppled down and rolled out nearly onto the plain.

Cowboy grabbed his rifle. Juan dismounted and vomited, the result of over eating and the rough ride over rough terrain.

“Let's climb,” said Cowboy, “those goats aren't likely to get dizzy and tumble down into our stomachs.”

Juan couldn’t hold his tongue, “Whatever they are, they aren't grazing.”
“Juan, your most annoying trait is that you keep producing information that I didn't want to hear.”

Juan apologized.

Cowboy climbed some thirty yards up, then Shovelhead’s legs gave out.

“Look out you’re falling,” Juan said embarrassed for indeed his friend was falling or rather tumbling down Cowboy trying to grab for a tiny tree to stop his decline. He missed and rolled farther. Just as his descent was nearly over he reached out and managed to grab the handle of a weighty briefcase and he took it down the remainder of the slide.

Neither men ever learned that the white boxes at the top of the mountain, where seismographic instruments from before the cataclysm.

Then Juan looking up, saw Cowboy rolling down the last bit of mountain and was attempting to hold on to some sort of bundle on the way. Juan rushed over to him and helped Cowboy up, lifting the case half-rotted and falling to pieces, but weighing so much that Juan had to strain to pick it up.

Juan’s bruised friend told him that he wanted to see what was inside the case. The case was closed and locked; it was so worn and disintegrated that Juan could see what was inside: four shirts and some other items of linen, as curious as they were,
and a handkerchief, a nice pile of gold coins. And when Juan saw them he exclaimed, “Finally, a profitable adventure.”

And searching farther Juan discovered a small diary that was richly decorated. Cowboy ask for this, but told Juan to keep the money for himself. Juan smiled in gratitude and emptied the case which he packed away in his coat with the provisions.

All of this was observed by Cowboy who said, “It seems to me Juan and it can't be otherwise that some traveler lost his way in these mountains, and was set upon by hoodlums who must have murdered him and carried him no telling where; they might not have even buried him.”

“That can't be right,” responded Juan, “because if they were thieves they wouldn’t have left all the money here.”

“You are right,” said Cowboy, “I can't guess or surmise, but wait we shall see if there is something written in the diary that will tell us what happened.”

He opened the book, and the first thing he found here in a kind of rough draft but the written in a very fine hand was a song, and reading allowed it aloud so that Juan could hear the song he read....

I don't know why I act the way I do
Like I ain't got a single thing to lose
Sometimes I'm my own worst enemy
I guess that's just the cowboy in me
I got a life that most would love to have
But sometimes I still wake up fightin' mad
At where this road I'm heading down might lead
I guess that's just the cowboy in me

"From this song," said Cowboy, "I’ve learned everything."
Juan asked, "Do you also know about songs?"
"More than you think," responded Cowboy, "as you will see
when I collect Salada de Tawakoni, because I want you to know
that this cowboy was known for two talents – music and riflery,
and perhaps more."
"Please read some more, said Juan, "soon something that
will satisfy the audience."
"Certainly."
"This is kind of a letter; it's a message or another kind?"
asked Juan.
"Seems at first glance to be a love letter," responded
Cowboy. "I see the words, 'misfortune' and 'bogus promise.'"
"Read it aloud, please," said Juan, "Love is a big draw at
the box office. I really like things that have to do with love."
"Sure, I’m happy to know that," said Cowboy.
Reading it aloud as Juan had suggested he saw that it said, "Your bogus promise and my sure misfortune brough thee to a place where the news of my death will reach your ears before the words of my complaint. Ungrateful b****, you have rejected me for one more wealthy, but not more worthy; but if virtue were esteemed wealth, I should neither envy the fortunes of others nor weep for misfortunes of my own. What your beauty raised up, your deeds have laid low; by beauty I believed you to be an angel, by your actions I know you are just another woman. Peace be with you who has sent war to me, and Heaven grant that the deceit of your new husband be forever kept from you, so that you repent not of what you have done, and I seek not a revenge I don’t want."

When he finished reading the letter Cowboys said, "Judging from this, 'ungrateful b****,' the man is a jilted lover."

And leafing through almost the entire notebook he found other verses and letters of which he could read and others that contain complaints, laments, suspicions, joys and sorrows and slights, either celebrated or wept over — nothing about music or riflery.

While Cowboy was looking through the book, Juan looked through the briefcase, each corner of it for more coins because his wife had insilled an enormous appetite in him. He didn’t find more than he had already found, but figured that it was all
time well spent in possible payment for being tossed circles, vomited on, the loss of his moped, saddlebags and all the belongings, and the hunger and thirst he had endured.

The hero we have known as Cowboy wanted to know who the owner of the briefcase had been, supposing, on the basis of song and letter, the gold coins and excellent shirts that he must be a well-born and noble lover driven to some desperate end by his lady’s gouge, but since no one appeared in that desolate rugged place his only concern was to move on the path that Shovelhead chose.

Riding along with these thoughts, at the top of the hill that lay ahead of him, Cowboy saw a man leaping from rock to rock and bush to bush with Jackrabbit agility and speed. The man appeared to be half-dressed and he had a homeless person's beard, long disheveled hair, no shoes on his feet, and nothing at all of his calves were covered by pants, that seem to have been made of quality denim years before. Tattered and torn in places, his skin showed through. His head was bare.

Cowboy saw and noted all these details, follow him, but he couldn't catch him because it was beyond the ability of the Shovelhead to travel that rugged terrain, especially since he was, by nature, an easy going highway horse.

The Spanish journals found in Dallas said, he was “phlegmatic” but I've admittedly become attached to him and
refuse to think of him that way. Then Cowboy imagined that the man was the owner of the briefcase and he concluded to look for him and even to spend a year in those mountains. So he ordered Juan to get off the Harley and go around the mountain and he would go around the other direction, and this way they might encounter the man who thought he was a Jackrabbit.

"I can't do that," responded Juan, "because everytime I leave you, I'm filled with fear and it plagues me. A million different frights and hallucinations, and I just want to let you know this so that from now on, I won't have more to move more than a finger's width from your presence."

"So be it," said Cowboy. "I'm very pleased that you rely on my courage. I'll not let you down. And follow me slowly and keep your eyes open, and we will circle the hill and maybe we'll cross that man we saw who is beyond any doubt the owner of the briefcase.

To which Juan responded, "It would be much better not to look for him because if we find him and he's the owner of the money, of course, I'll have to return it to him, so it would be better not looking for a ghost."

"Keep it and if it's his he'll come out of hiding to claim it. If he shows up and isn't strange then consider returning the money."
“By then, I’ll have spent it. I won’t have to repay it because of the bankruptcy laws.”

“Good luck with that now,” responded Cowboy, “There’s a new government in San Antonio; while the elite are helping the poor by redistributing the wealth, they are also collecting on all the debt owed to them. Your Hispanic family name might buy you some standing, but they won’t forgive such a large debt. Now that we suspect who the briefcase belongs to and have him practically in front of us, we really should search for him. I'll feel better if he's found.”

And so he gunned Shovelhead and Juan followed on foot and when they had ridden around part of the mountain, Cowboy discovered, lying dead and half-eaten by coyotes, a mule. Juan, however, saw a crashed Cushman scooter, big tires, a Briggs and Stratton five horsepower engine. Either or both images further confirmed their suspicion that the Jackrabbit was the owner of both the Cushman/mule and the briefcase. What any sober man would have seen was a thoroughly disabled Chang Jiang motorcycle.

As they were looking down into the Ravine at the dead transportation, they heard a whistle like that of a herder tending his goats, and suddenly on their left, they saw a good number of goats and behind them was a very old man. Juan called him and waved at him to come down. The old man shouted in
response asking what they were doing in this place, and they rarely, if ever, received visitors except for goats and coyotes or snakes, but never coyotes and snakes.

Juan responded that he should come down and that they would have a nice long talk. The old herder came down.

Now, this scene was masterful filmed, because the Mexican director clearly painted the ravine from all three points of view. From Cowboy’s POV it was a putrefied mule. From Juan’s POV it was a broken Cushman, and from the old herder’s POV it was a Chang Jiang. The filmgoers in Mexico just roared with laughter.

The old herder reached Cowboy and said, “I'll wager you're looking at the Chang Jiang that’s been lying there for 6 months. Tell me, have you run across the owner?”

“We have not run across any Chinese,” Cowboy said, “but we found a briefcase not far from here.”

“I saw that too but didn't pick it up, because the devil may have put it there. Someone might say I stole it and there’d be trouble that I don't need.”

Juan lied convincingly, “That's just what I said. I found it too and I didn't want to get near it. I don’t have a bell on my bike and don’t need trouble either.”

“Tell me friend,” said Cowboy, “do you know who the owner of the briefcase might be?”
“What I can tell you,” said the goat herder, “is that there’s a goatfold about three miles from here and about six months ago, more or less, a young gentleman came there very slick in his manner and bearing, riding that same Chang Jiang crashed there, the same and with the same briefcase you found, and didn’t touch. He asked which part of this country was most rugged and remote; we told him where that was. You know that’s the truth, because if you go in just half a mile more maybe won’t be able to find your way out; I’m surprised that you even got this far because there isn’t a road or path that leads to the spot.

The old herder continued, “When the young man heard our answer, he turned and rode off to the place we told him about leaving us all pleased by his good looks and surprised at his questions and how fast we saw him riding back toward the mountain range. We didn’t see him again until a few days later he crossed paths with one of the shepherds not saying a word, he went up to him and began to punch and kick him, then went to the ATV with the provisions and took all the bread and cheese; and with Jackrabbit speed he ran back and hid in the mountains.

“When some of us borreguero heard about it we went and looked for him almost two days in the wildest part of the mountains, and then we found him under an overhang. He came out as gentle as a kitten, his clothes torn and his face sunburned,
but we recognize him. We knew that he was the one; he greeted us courteously, and in a few polite words he told us not to be surprised to see him in this state because he was performing a certain pittance that had been imposed upon him because of his various sins. We begged him to tell us who he’d killed, but we could never get him to say. We also said that whenever he needed food, he should let us know where to leave it, and if he didn't like that idea, at least, he ought to come and ask us for food and not take it by force.

"He thanked us for our offer and asked our forgiveness for his earlier attacks and said from now on he would beg for food and not bother anyone at all with bruises. As for his dwelling he said he slept wherever he could find a place, and when he paused talking, we began to cry because he was a handsome and pleasant man, and his words had been so sincere that we country folk appreciated it.

"And then when the Jackrabbit man was talking at his best, he stopped, looked down at the ground for a good long time, while we were all puzzled, and didn't say anything waiting to see how the fit would end. Feeling very sorry to see it because from the way he opened his wide eyes and stared at the ground for so long, we knew that some kind of craziness had come over him. He soon let us know what we thought was true; in a great fury, he jumped up and attacked the man nearest him with so much
violence that had we not pulled him off he have killed the man. And during the fight, he kept saying, ‘O false, Freddy. Here is where you will pay for the wrong you did me. I'm going to rip your heart out, where all the evils live and dwell together especially fraud and deceit!’ To these he added other words and all of them spoke badly of this Freddy and accused him is being a traitor and a liar. We pulled him off with great difficulty and without saying another word to us, he ran off into the mesquite brush so we couldn't follow him.

“From this we gathered that his insanity came went and that some villain named Freddy must have done something bad to him to bring on the fits.

“All of which turned out to be true. Sometimes he comes out of the brush asking from the other's and sometimes he's taking food by force. Yesterday, one of the other herders and I decided that we would look for him until we found him and after we found him, whether he went willingly or we had to force him, we would take him El Paso which is 114 miles from here. They might have a cure. It's all I know to tell you.”

Cowboy was astonished at what he had heard and more curious than ever to know the man’s story. Cowboy resolved to do what he had already thought of doing to look all over the mountain until he found him, but fate did what he was planning. At that very instant it intervened and led the Jackrabbit man to the place
there. And standing there was the young man he was seeking. He appeared talking to himself saying things. He approached Cowboy and he could see the Jackrabbit man’s PBR championship belt buckle, which meant he wasn’t any motorcycle tramp, but Texas royalty and a breed now almost extinct.

Cowboy dismounted and embraced the ragged bull rider. The embrace was for a long while. He stepped back and placed his hands on Cowboy’s shoulders. Maybe they knew each other?

EXT. ECHEVERRIA COUNTY - DUSTY AND DRY

The journal says, Cowboy paid close attention to the tattered jackrabbit/rodeo man who began to speak saying, “I don't know you, but I appreciate your courtesy and I wish I could be more of a host. All I have, however, is goodwill. I have no home or food to share, but you're kind to come visit me.”

“Maybe I can help you,” responded Cowboy, “I was just saying I'm not leaving until I speak with you. I'd like to know why you are so f***ed up and why you are leading this odd life, and if I can't help, I'll be depressed and mourn with you as long as I'm able. You might be able to use the services of a man like me. Perhaps for revenge?”

The raggedy Jackrabbit man did nothing but look him and looked at him some more, from hat to boot tip and afterwards he
carefully said, “If you have any food for me, I’ll tell you my story and then you can do what you want. Stay or leave.”

Then Juan from his coat and the old goat herder from his took out some biscuits and some peanut butter cookies and the Jackrabbit man ate as if he were starving, quickly one mouthful after another. He gulped and chewed very little.

While he ate, no one said a word. When he finished, he signaled them to follow, and they did. He lead them to a warm but perfectly flat rock. When he reached it he turned to the others and said, “You guys aren't going to interrupt me are you? Because questions will only upset me and I'll have to end the story.”

These words reminded Cowboy of Juan’s goats across the river story that was never finished. As the Jackrabbit man continued, “I'm warning you because I want to pass over the details quickly. Remembering them brings out new memories to my mind, and the fewer the memories the better. But I'll share the important parts.”

Cowboy promised for the others not to interrupt the man.

“My name is Carl. My home was in one of the finest cities in West Texas. My family political. My parents wealthy. My misfortune so great that the family grieved, but wealth couldn’t do much about it. In Jacksboro there lived a redhot hot beauty, Lacey. Nice and successful family and she was a smart student.
Lacey, I worshiped and adored from kindergarten and she loved me with all the energy and innocence of those puppy years. Our parents knew of our love and weren't opposed because they saw clearly, at the time, we'd end up married. It was a lock, guaranteed. We grew up and just as we were about to love, her father locked me out, forbid me to see her. Okay, he was trying to protect her, but we would have married. What did it really matter?

“We only became more adamant, but talking was difficult. Our parents were loyalist and we were allowed emails and texts but they didn’t solve the problem because written words don’t always to reveal the hidden soul. I was never allowed in the same room with her alone. Oh, the huge number of texts I sent and received. The songs and poems I composed in which I declared my burning love up and ready for action. I devised a plan to achieve the prize, my just and deserved catch. I asked her father for her hand in marriage, but he said he did have to think about it because he didn’t feel that I had a ‘future enough’ for his daughter. I went home to see my father because while Lacey was not a woman to be taken or given lightly, her father had added a few comments that might have been seen as an insult to the family.

“I don’t know what I wanted my father to do, but before I could say a word he showed me a letter and in this letter I was
notified that I’d been accepted into the Mexican Military Academy in San Antonio. And in the letter was also a personal note from General Ricardo Garza. You probably know he is very powerful here in Texas. Wealthy. Make or break a career. The note was so consistent and complementary, we thought it would be rude to decline and so my father sent me to San Antonio to enroll in their Military Academy. They would then educate me and assign me to a rank.

“I read the letter and kept silent as I read it, but I heard my father exactly what I was thinking.

“He spoke a few words of fatherly advice, ‘You will in two year’s time, Carl, as the general states ‘have a great career.’ The great career that you deserve.’

“The time for my departure approached and I told Lacey everything that had happened and did the same with her father. Her father was elated and volunteered to wait a year until any choice was made, and then only to make certain that the military life would be for me. And he added that he expected that Lacey would agree to wait.

“I arrived at the military academy and met General Garza. I was so well-received and treated by him and the school that envy immediately begin its work and affected the other students. They were afraid I’d outpace them with help from the General. And I’d made friends with the general’s youngest son, Fernando. Charming
youth, magnanimous and incline to fall in love in a very short time, we were friends and although the oldest son of the general was nearly graduated, he wasn’t so fond of me. While I didn't go as fast as Fernando in commandeering, there were few secrets between friends at the Academy and Fernando told me all his thoughts especially ones having to do with love. And his chief concern was his love for a peasant girl in his father's employee, whose parents were very loyal and she was beautiful, modest and discreet. It sounded ideal and Fernando was eager but had to promise to marry her before her virginity was given. Otherwise, she simply wouldn't allow it. I tried to dissuade him and explain the potential problems. I mentioned for one, his father, and Fernando seemed to sense that. So he managed to persuade his father to distract him and deceive me, send me to Fort Worth to pick up helicopters where they were manufactured. Soon I learned of the assignment I was in fact distracted because it would be an excellent opportunity for me to see Lacey again.

"With this in mind, we departed for Jacksboro and then the next day we would pick up the hellos. I learned that he had in fact enjoyed the girl by promising to be her husband and he was hoping his father didn't find out about his foolishness because it was pure appetite and just a short-term goal. All lust ended after it was achieved. That is to say after Fernando had
impregnated the girl, his love for her ended and his desire cooled. And he headed north with me so not to have to see and negotiate with the girl.

"When we came to Jacksboro, my father gave us a proper welcome; I saw Lacey and immediately my desires were rekindled, though they had never completely died. I spoke to Fernando about my love for her. It only made sense, given our friendship, not to hide anything from him. He praised the beauty, grace and will-power of Lacey. He was eager to meet her. I introduced him to Lacey and this was my downfall. We snuck to her bedroom window in the night and he saw her in her nightgown and he went silent, lost all of his sense of his surroundings, was in a daze, and finally fell in love with her. My sweetheart!

"Fernando found a text that she had sent me asking me to hurry and arrange our marriage with her father. The message only heightened his desire to steal her away. He told me to marry her, that there was no more beautiful or charming woman, but secretly there wasn't a minute he wasn't dedicated to pilfery.

"I didn't fear any change in Lacey but I did feel apprehensive concerning my friendship and the political relationship with Fernando’s father, the general. The made and sentenced hundreds of men to summary executions; he was a man I didn’t need as an enemy. Fernando always wanted to read the texts I sent and the ones she sent back to me, claiming that he
enjoyed our wit. It so happened that Lacey's favorite film was *High Noon* with Gary Cooper and he claimed it was his favorite also.”

As soon as Cowboy heard him mention a Western film, he said, “If you had told me that beginning that Lacey was fond of cowboy films nothing else would persuade me of her value. I would have liked to send her, along with *High Noon*, a copy of *Gunsmoke, the First Season* for I know she would have enjoyed Marshall Dillon and Festus. I'd invite you back to my home and allow you to bring Lacey to see my hundreds of films, but some sort of evil has liberated them from me. An entire room of them, malicious Comanche devils, stole my father’s entire collection. I’m interrupting your account please continue.”

While Cowboy was speaking, Carl had lowered his head to his chest showing he was deep in thought and although Cowboy asked him twice to go on with his story, he did not raise his head or say a word, but after some time had gone by he raised his head, saying, “I can't help but think and I don't try to change my mind, the great scoundrel Doctor Galen Adams was the lover of Miss Kitty.”

“Pecan pralines,” Juan exclaimed.

Cowboy said, with wrath and vigor, “that is wicked and villainous. Miss Kitty was a pillar of virtue and it would never be true that such a lady would become the kept woman of a lonely
old sawbones, no matter how cordial the fellow. Whoever believes
this accusation is lying. And I’ll make him understand by force
– fists, knives or pistols – take your pick.”

Carl looked at him attentively, for a fit of madness was
about to overcome him and he was not about to go on with his
story, nor was Cowboy prepared to hear it. He was upset about
the insult to Miss Kitty. Carl had been called her a w**** and a
slut and some other similar insults. Neither man took things
lightly.

Jackrabbit man and shirker picked up a stone and it struck
such a blow to Cowboy’s chest, it knocked him flat on his back.
Then when he saw what had been done to his friend Juan attacked
the madman with clenched fists. And the Jackrabbit man received
him in such a way that blow he had Juan laying at his feet. He
jumped up and down on his ribs several times. The same thing
waited the goat herder, who tried to defend Juan. And when Carl
was done stomping and bruising them all, he left them and went
calmly peacefully to take asylum in the mountains.

Juan got to his feet and was so angry at finding himself
beaten, he tried to blame the goat herder saying it was his
fault for not warning them that the man suffered fits of rage.
The goat herder responded that he had told Cowboy and Juan
hadn't heard or chosen to listen, that was his own fault. Juan
and the herder fought until Cowboy got up and stop them. Juan
said as he kept hold of the old man, "Let me at him, he's not a
gun fighter but a man of my skill level and I'm free to fight
him hand-to-hand."

"True," said Cowboy, "but I know he's not to blame for what
happened has happened."

Saying this he pacified his friend and Cowboy asked the
goat herder again if it would be possible to find Carl. He
wanted to know the end of the story. The goat herder said what
he had said earlier, that he wasn't sure where he stayed, but if
he wandered the area, Cowboy couldn't fail to find him, either
in his right mind or out of it. Carl eventually would become
hungry.

EXT. ECHEVERRIA COUNTY

With both men on Shovelhead, Cowboy and Juan left to
explore the area. Gradually, they entered the most rugged part
of the mountains.

Juan wanted to begin a conversation, and the silence was
unbearable, and so he began, "Cowboy, I want to go home to my
wife, and kids, and our business, and my dog. I want to talk as
often as I want and for as long as I want. It is a hard thing
when all a man finds on the trail are kicks and punches, stones
and fists, and still he is asked to keep his mouth shut not
daring to say what he thinks, 'look out' over there. 'Duck that
punch’ over here. Asking me to follow you through this desert, looking for lunatics day and night, it has nothing to do with the film it’s simply not fair.”

“I understand you very well, Juan,” responded Cowboy “You want me to lift my prohibition on your jawboning? Consider it done, and you may say whatever you wish on the condition that this agreement last no longer than the time we spend in these mountains.”

“That’s fine,” said Juan, “Let me talk now because who knows what will happen later.”

“Okay, agreed.”

“We are in Echverria County?

“That is what the Mexicans call it.”

“There are a couple of things you need to know. Out here before you go to sleep at night, you have to check your bed for spiders.” Juan said. He basically was saying Cowboy would not sleep.

“That’s cool,” Cowboy responded.

And then Juan explained, “There are a lot of snakes too venomous snakes, so keep an eye out for snakes, but if you get bit by a snake, just go ahead and catch the snake and bring it with you to the doctor.”

“Why?”
“Because you then say to the doctor, ‘this is the snake that bit me,’” Juan enlightened him.

Cowboy thought and then said, “Well, I’m probably not going to do that part of it, you know.”

“Why not?”

“Amigo, I never caught a snake in my life and I just got bit by a snake for the first time as well, and you want me to get myself together and catch a snake? It’s not going to go well, he’s just going to keep biting me; that’s what is going to happen.”

“It won’t matter, cause you’ve already been bitten.”

“I don’t even know if you know what a snake is, ‘cause it completely matters. The difference between one and probably thirty bites, which is what we’ll be at if I try to catch this snake.”

“Well, you should try.”

“Who told you to tell me this, the snake? Is that what he said, Juan?”

“In theory, it would be better.”

“Friend, whose side are you on?”

“There is a second issue. I'd like to know why you so strongly defended Miss Kitty, after all, she was a saloon girl or whatever. The marshall, or the doctor, both, or both of them at the same time; what difference could it possibly make? Just
let it drop; the lunatic would have gone on with his story and we could have avoided the contusions and now this silly search.”

“Listen, Juan,” responded Cowboy, “if you knew as I do the honorable and distinguish lady, Miss Kitty, I know you would say that I showed a good deal of patience. I didn't strike him for his blasphemous talk; it was he who struck me.”

“Miss Kitty, she was written that way to draw female viewers; half of the them so marginalized by their men, they thought they were Miss Kitty. No? If she was a loose saloon girl, then they’d lose the female viewers,” Juan argued.

“Juan, the truth of the matter is that doc Adams is a prudent man, a counselor to the Marshall, a tutor to Festus, and of course a physician to everyone in town no matter their situation. To think that she was his mistress is an outrage, and only someone not in his right mind would make such an outlandish charge.”

“Consider the source,” Juan said, “Why pay attention to a madman? And it was only luck the stone hit you in the chest and not the head; you'd be too disabled to defend frighten anyone and Carl would be judged insane at trial because he is crazy.”

“Against sane men or insane men, every Ranger is obliged to defend a woman, no matter who they are. I just happen to have particular regard for Miss Kitty, and prudence and patience. It
was vulgar to say what the Jackrabbit said. A lie is a lie regardless of how many times Mace Gore repeats it.

“Cheesy Cheez-Its,” responded Juan, “It is his affair whether he thinks they were lovers or not. They are long dead and have paid for their sins. I attend my vats; I mind my own business. I don't stick my nose in, even when many people think there’s bacon to can win, and even when there’s a hook to hang it on.”

“Bacon on hooks?” asked Cowboy, “What a load of foolishness. What does ham have to do with our conversation? If you value our friendship, you'll shush. People see my idea as based on reason and devotion to the female character.”

“Is it reason, you should wander through these mountains, with no path, or direction looking for a madman, who when he's found, promises to enlighten us on the coupling habits of saloon women and perhaps say nothing at all and just break ribs again?”

“I told you to hush up,” said Cowboy, “not only are we looking for the Jackrabbit, but also I'm looking for a deed that will bring me lasting fame and renowned with the shadow government in Austin and it will be so great and deep a feat that it, given the viral electronic touch, that it might make me known. That’s the purpose of your recording all these events, is it not?”

“But you must someday chose if you are an actor or a cop.”
“Well, I’m certainly not your actor, to order around.”

“Yes, but is this endeavor you are looking for very dangerous?” asked Juan.

“No,” respond to Cowboy, “although depending on luck and the dice, our fortunes may be either favorable or adverse will depend on your industry.”

“My industry?” replied Juan.

“Yes,” said Cowboy, “because if you return quickly from the place where I intend to send you my suffering will quickly be ended and my exploits can be edited. It’s not fair making you wait for my directions, but I want you to know that Ethan Edwards was one of the most perfect, no I’ve misspoken not “one of the best” but singularly the best of all the pistoleros. I say when a filmmaker tries to win his fame, he imitates John Ford, Howard Hawks. Sergio Leone. This same rule applies to all the important occupations that serve to build nations. It makes sense that the man who wishes to be known as prudent and long-suffering replicates Pecos Smith in hardships and Zane Gray painting portraits of prudence and forbearance. McMurtry in the person of Woodrow Call, a valiant man and experienced commander. And now experience is watching you.”

“Cowboy, they were depicted,” said Juan, “and described not as they were but as they should have been, to serve as examples.”
“It's this way with Ethan Edwards, the one who should be imitated by us all. He's the nearest to perfection, and as he faced danger in the desert so will I in this place and you will on the road. Since this terrain is appropriate for this imitation, why not seize the opportunity since we are here in the first place?”

“So you want to die out here in pursuit of a young lunatic/captive?” asked Juan.

“I have not told you already,” responded Cowboy, “that I wish to live like Bill Munney, playing the part of the one who is alone facing death.”

“It seems to me,” said Juan, “that Munney was unprovoked, and the reason he did the foolish things he did was a bit outlandish.”

“Therein lies the virtue,” responded Cowboy, “and the excellence of my penchant for ranging deserves a bit of glory, and thanks, for if a man goes ballistic for a no real reason and please remind Salty that if I can do heroic feats without reason, just think what I should do if there were a real cause. Moreover, I have more than enough reason because of my long absence from Tawakanee. As you heard the shepherd Ambrose say, ‘all ills are sufferable and feared by the one who is absent.’ So Juan, stop wasting your time trying to make me give up imitation. I'll chase this Jackrabbit madman until you return
with a reply to a letter which I intend to send with you too my 
sweetheart Salty. If it is my fate that I'm killed by this 
Jackrabbit, or perhaps a rattlesnake, and perhaps eaten by 
coyotes, our love will come to an end; if not, I'll bring her 
the story of the madman.”

To which Juan responded, “I’m losing patience and can’t 
stand all of this because I thought you were all about winning 
land and political positions and giving me islands and granting 
me favors and honors as is the custom of Rangers. It must be all 
talk and lies, because if anyone heard you talk about the 
motorcycle helmet being a golden cowboy hat, they would think 
you’re insane.”

“You have the hat; they’ll think you are insane.”

“I have the hat and it’s all dented and scratched. It’s 
golden, not gold. I'm taking it home to fix it and sell it, that 
is if I ever get home to my wife and children again.”

“Well Juan,” said Cowboy you must be the dimmest friend a 
man ever had. You've been traveling with me, but there are 
hordes of shaman always riding just abreast of us and they 
change everything into comical and foolish and senseless events. 
They turn things into whatever they please according to whether 
they favor us or not. Gold becomes only golden. But you know 
that I smoke a special bowl that can make everything appear
clear and as they really are. Since you won’t smoke the stuff, you fall victim to their magic.”

“I’m not so sure smoking so much is to your advantage.”

“Since you see it is as a merely a helmet, it's to my advantage. You saw the man throw it to the ground and run, not even trying to pick it up. You keep the gold hat, my friend, since I have no need for it at the moment.

As they were conversing, they came to the foot of a high mountain which almost like a peak carved out of the rock stood alone among the others. At its base was an absolutely desolate dry patch poisoned by salt. It was a harsh ugly spot. Cowboy chose this place to make his Comanche cleansing ceremony and so as soon as he saw it he began to say and in a crazy voice, “This place I visit and choose a Great Spirit to experience my fate. This place is where the wit of my eyes will increase. The sayings on this flat and my continual deep faith will move the sand and is the test that will make me brave. Send the unfortunate Jackrabbit maniac, or rattler, or mountain lion. I will endure, sweet Salada de Tawakoni, day of my night, glory of my grief, guide of my travels, witness my faithfulness, monolithic mountain to my solitary friends. I'm here for the duration. Juan? Pay attention and where is your camera and put this place in your memory and remember what I do here so you can recount it to Salty.”
"Account what?"

"My bravery, fool."

They dismounted Shovelhead and Cowboy slapped the Harley on the rump and said, "Shovelhead, you are given to the run wild. Eat whatever grass you can find. None has been as fast or loyal as you."

Seeing the motorcycle refused to leave, Juan said, "Good luck to whoever spared us the trouble of unsaddling him. If you're serious about me leaving you here, it would be a good idea for me to take Shovelhead instead of you releasing him to find his own way. If I'm walking on foot back to Tawakoni, Shovelhead would make my trip faster and easier as my walking is clearly less reliable."

"What I say, Juan," responded Cowboy, "is that you may take the horse if that is your plan. Stay there three days and see what happens. I'll need, you'll need to tell Salty of this great adventure. Some of it you have not seen yet."

"But what else do I need to see?" asked Juan.

Cowboy disarmed himself and handed Juan two revolvers (one pink and one purple), a rifle, a shotgun, a Forbath knife, and a smaller Old Timer.

"How little you know about the way of Comanche manhood test," responded Cowboy, "where a brave must do without food or water, and he must fall down several times, tear his clothes and
cast aside all weapons and suffer along with all the calamities nature brings. All of which will astonish you/her.”

“For the love of Salty?” Juan asked, “she doesn't even know who you are. This is a joke and make-believe. Let's just tell her you are out here without weapons and clothes, with no food or water. It doesn’t have to be true. You keep your weapons.”

“Thank you for your good intentions, friend,” respond Cowboy, “but I want you to know it's not a joke and make-believe or otherwise I wouldn’t be telling you the rules of Comanche manhood. And, doing one thing instead of another is lying, and so I'll be thirsty and hungry, feel good about it. Worse comes to worse; I’ll make tea.”

“The loss of the moped is serious,” responded Juan, “When we lost him, we lost the bandages, food, and everything else and please don't talk more about the tea, my stomach. Three days? Let's just pretend that the three days are up and I've seen all there is to see and I'll tell her the wonderful things I’ve seen, if she’ll listen.”

“Absolutely not.”

“So let’s make the tape and I’ll be on my way; the sooner I go, the sooner I'll be back to take care of you from this purgatory.”

“Better call this place ‘H***’ or worse, if it comes to you.”
“Whoever's in H*** can't escape this.”

“I don't understand that,” said Cowboy.

“Never mind. I'll tell her very foolish things if you think it will help and then I'll come back to this purgatory.”

“There is no purgatory. It’s a marketing scam.”

“The world’s first, I think.”

“No, you better tell her it is H***.”

“It seems like ‘H***’ but isn't since there's hope of getting you out, which the people in ‘H***’ don't have, and I hope you're not still arguing in three days.”

“No. I'll not argue,” said Cowboy, “now I need something to write with...”

“Why don’t we just film your testimony onto this card.”

“A fine idea.” Cowboy agreed.

“And your consent to replace my moped,” added Juan.

“Everything will be included,” said Cowboy.

“Maybe we should not have the mountains in the background as that will give up your location,” Juan said. He was growing as an operative and had he experienced the same privilege growing up as Cowboy, the roles might have been reversed. Cowboy might have been following Juan around in the desert.

Juan interrupted, “Maybe it would be better to record it and later attach it to an email, and then I wouldn't have to
travel all the way to Tawakoni, if I can reach one of the special Mexican schools.”

“No. If you want you’re the moped replaced you will do as I instruct you.”

“In person?”

“Yes. The order for the moped will be written on the same clip and it will be signature enough as a check, and when my banker sees it there will be no difficulty.”

“As for the love letter as a signature, you will have to put it, ‘Yours until death, El Vaquero de Tejas,’” Juan observed, “If it's from a different name it might matter because I don't think Salty knows you by any other name.”

“I've only volunteered at her rescue shelter and platonically glanced at her and as innocent as it all sounds, I’ve loved her two years and only lusted after her 14 times.”

“You’ve only... only 14 times?”

“I find that hard to believe. Does she know your name?”

“She might not have noticed, as the dog kennels secluded things well. She was modest around me. And I was nervous.”

“Well, well,” said Juan, “you are saying the girl at the animal shelter is the lady Salada de Tawakoní?”

“That’s the name de guerre her father has given hundreds of young suitors.” Cowboy said.

“Any of them Rangers?”
“All of them probably are now Rangers. Her real name is... I forgot.”

“Regardless, she is,” said Cowboy, “worth the trouble and isn't she the best?”

“I know her very well,” Juan lied. “She’ll joke and laugh about you out here and doing crazy things for her.”

“I doubt that. The poster girl of the revolution? Please!”

“If you hung yourself, people would say you did the right thing.”

“What does that mean?” Cowboy asked.

Juan explained, “The posters of the girl in that uniform holding that basketball? The famous recruiting poster posted in nearly every store in the state, as if it were a local girl? Until now I didn't know for sure who you wanted, but her name is Salty, huh?”

“You said you know her.”

“And she's not a stuck-up bitch, but she does let her father use her,” Juan said.

“She’s a dutiful daughter. And how else will young rebel-minded fellows know to go there.”

“I guess that is right you can’t come right out and just say, ‘Come to the Tawakoni shelter and we’ll get you signed up’. The Mexicans would be all over that. But what sort of man puts
his daughter on a poster like that? What sort of fellow falls in love with a poster?"

“I knew her before any poster. I saw her ten years ago.”

“Before she grew tall?”

“Well, she was tall even then.”

“Oh, I forgot. You told me. Your father and her father, were friends, rescued dogs for a living, right?”

“Juan, what are you trying to say?”

“Only that I know who she is now. And I can honestly say she beat me numerous times in basketball, and she beat most of the other boys who challenged her as well,” Juan lied some more.

“Sturdy as a tractor and just as able to pull any Jeep out of a mud hole,” Cowboy claimed.

“D***, she’s strong and what a jump shot!”

“And she loves dogs.”

“Speaking of dogs, what will she do with all these people you sent to work for her at her shelter -- a wounded bandito, a dozen prisoners, immigrant workers -- because it might be when they arrived that she's out raking dog shit or mopping up dog piss and they'll run away when they see what is in store for them.”

“Maybe she doesn’t want people poking around the dogs?”
“No, the illegal dogs are in the back and before they get back there, her father will persuade them to rebel against the Mexican government...”

“Or he won’t...”

“And they’ll have to leave.”

“Maybe she'll laugh at this video, but I've told you that many times before,” said Juan.

Cowboy said, “You talk too much and though your wits are refreshing, your tongue is sometimes sharp.”

“I learned from you.”

“Juan, so you can learn how slow you are and how smart I am, let me tell you a story. Once there was a widow who was beautiful, free, rich and above all easy in her ways and she fell in love with a common farmer, a sturdy, good-looking fellow. And one day a professor learned of this one day, and he said to the good widow in a brotherly warning, “I'm amazed ma’am that a woman as distinguished and as beautiful, as rich as you are, has fallen in love with a man so rough and ornery and as slow as he, when there are how many scholars, so many theologians for you to make a selection. As if you were choosing hams saying, ‘I want this one but not the other.’

“But she responded with a good deal of wit and verb, ‘You’re very much mistaken and you are thinking in an out-dated way. If you think I have chosen badly, no matter how stupid he
may seem to you because considering the reason I love and want him he knows as much philosophy as Greg Gutfeld and even more.’ In the same way, Juan, because of my love of Salada de Tawakoni, she is worth as much as the highest Junior League debutante in Texas, and I’ve not heard a poet who praises this lady call her by another name.”

“Really, do you think ‘Claire Allen’ is her real name?”

Juna was puzzled, “Do you think it’s strange that hse has the same name as THE mini-series?”

“Stranger thangs have happened.”

Juan added his insight, “And so men will fantasize of her as their lover. And therefore it’s enough to bring men to the republican army. The Rangers?”

“Of course, but I saw her first.”

“First will be enough?”

“I didn’t say that. If first were enough, we wouldn’t be on this adventure.”

“You think and believe that your good Salty is beautiful and virtuous as for her simple job at the rescue shelter, but now you tell me it’s a façade for raising pure-bred puppies? So, it’s not the poster you are in love with?” Juan asked.

Cowboy answered, “You should know if you don’t know already, that the two things inspired love more than any other
they are beauty and a good heart and these two things describe Salty.”

“I only understand her father’s marketing...”

“But I don’t care. I am her’s and she is mine. And we'll sink or rise together.”

“I imagine that everything you say is true.”

“Barbara Hale or Barbara Stanwyck can't approach her.”

“So let people debate. You're right; I'm an a**,” responded Juan, “and I've lost so let's make the video and I'll say adios.”

Juan picked up his camera and very calmly Cowboy begin to explain things. When he finished, he asked Juan to play over four times so that he could commit it to memory in the event it was lost along the way. And that their past bad luck was such that it was reasonable to fear the worst in the future.

To which Juan responded, “Maybe you should write it two or three times in the notebook, give it to me and I'll take good care of it because it's foolish to think I can commit it to memory. My memory is bad and I often forget my name, but even so let’s watch it. It was very romantic.”

“Listening to the words in case it is lost,” said Cowboy.

The recording said, “Hello, I’m Cowboy and this is for Salada de Tawakoni, shooting forward and scoring maiden. I'm sore, angry and upset that I'm apart from you. My heart is
broken gorgeous Salty. But, I send you my best wishes. If you don't like me, while I can tolerate a great deal of punishment, I probably won't endure that sort of pain. It would be grievous and long-lasting. My good friend can account the entire story to you and your father. I'm in a situation in the West for you and your father's sake. If you want me, I'm yours. If not do as you please, for by ranging I shall have satisfied both your cruelty and my own desire. Yours until death, Cowboy.

On the tape, Juan in the background can be heard saying, “I thought you would sign it *El Vaquero de Tejas*?”

“I thought it a bit too much. Too pretentious.”

“Well, that family is all about pretentiousness.”

“It’s politics.”

“But the sake of history and your bio-pic; for anyone, not her, how will they know how you are?”

“Okay, Yours until death, *El Vaquero de Tejas*.”

The tape ended.

Juan contemplated it all and then spoke sarcastically, “Given you know their true nature. Your letter that's the highest thing I've ever heard. Confound it, but how did you say everything anyone could needed to hear? And how well Cowboy it fits into the closing, ‘satisfied your cruelty and mine.’ I'm telling the truth when I say you are the Devil himself and there isn't anything you don't know how to address.”
“Thank you, Juan. Everything is necessary,” responded Cowboy, “for the profession I follow demands such words.”

“Well then,” said Juan, “you just have to make second recording about the three mopeds that you owe me and speak very clearly so that when they see it they'll know it is you.”

“It will be my pleasure,” said Cowboy, and when he recoded the second file and played it back. It said, “To whom it may concern, please arrange by means of this order that three donkeys in my garage be given to Juan. These donkeys should be transferred as payment for services received which shall comprise by this note as compensatory, full and complete payment, hereof duly executed in the heart of the Guadalupe Mountains on the 22nd day of August of the current year,

The tape continued...

Juan spoke off camera, “Donkeys?”

“It is code.”

“That's fine if it works,” said Juan, “now you should end it.”

“It's not necessary to say,” said Cowboy, “they know who I am. All I need to do is say what I’ve said and that should be enough. Enough for three donkeys and even for three-hundred.”

The tape continued to roll as Juan forgot to stop recording.
“I trust you,” responded Juan, “let me go and I'll take Shovelhead and you can get on with your starvation and exposure to the elements. I plan on leaving before the crazy stuff begins but I'll say that I stayed to witness it.”

Stay for a moment longer, Juan, at least. Because it's necessary, I want you to see me naked and performing one of the two dozen Comanche dances which will take me less than half an hour. Because if you see them you'll better be able to testify to them and recount that I actually did perform them.”

“Please, please. I beg you not to let me see you naked. It will make me feel so bad I won't be able to stop crying and my head is in such a state after a trauma like I've received. I'm exhausted. If you need to do a native dance, please do it fully clothes and let it be brief. None of this is necessary for me, I can embellish any story for a woman, remember I’m married. And like I said before, the sooner I leave the sooner I'll be back with news of Salty. If I can leave now, if she doesn't give me a good answer I'll have time to trick one out of her, because how can a Ranger go without rhyme or reason for the sake of modesty. She doesn't know me and she’ll think twice about refusing you.”

“Well Juan,” said Cowboy, “It seems you are no saner than I.”

“I'm not crazy,” responded Juan, “Crazy requires too much activity. And I have a more caloric nature. But that aside, what
will you eat until I get back? Will you go and out into the road like Carl and take food from Shepherd's?"

"Don't worry about it," responded Cowboy, "because even if I had food, I would eat nothing but the plants and the fried cactus of this desert.

"You don't have a pan to fry anything." Juan pointed out.

"I have a few Jolly Ranchers, but the elegance of the plan lies not in eating but in suffering and other comparable Comanche hardships."

"But I'm afraid I'll not be able to find you in this place again."

"Juan, film the landmarks and I shall try not to leave the vicinity," said Cowboy, "and I'll climb up to the highest peak and watch for you. Better yet cut some of the cactus and leave it as markers on the path."

"I'll do that," said Juan, and then he realized he'd recorded the entire conversation, including Cowboy undressing. He filmed the mountains and mounted Shovelhead and left; all the while Cowboy still urged him to watch at least two sets of Native American mad calisthenics.

Cowboy then performed the dances naked alone.
EXT. ECHEVERRIA COUNTY

Cowboy did his wild dances then climbed, still naked, to the top of a high rock and saw that Juan had left. There on the rock, Cowboy pondered the nature of the desert.

He would have recalled several places in Texas, but as we have said, he could remember no more than one or two. He spent his time chanting and signing, “I'm calling on the snakes and lizards of the desert and the coyotes of the hills and on the lonesome echos to answer and console and hear me.”

He also searched for plants that could sustain him until Juan reappeared, and if the man took three weeks instead of three days? Cowboy would have been altered so that even Juan wouldn't even know him.

EXT. TORTILLA COUNTY

It's prudent to cover Juan and his trip until Stephenville. When he came out on to the US Highway 67, he began in the direction of Tawakoni and the next day he reached an inn.

Something gave him and a fright. And he didn't want to go there even though he had arrived at an hour when he could and should have walked right in. It was time to eat and he longed to enjoy something hot and homemade because for many days he had eaten nothing but the priests’ snack cakes and sardines.
This necessity to eat drove him to approach the inn, still doubtful as whether he should go in or not and while hesitating, two guest came out of the inn and recognized him immediately and one guest said to the other.

“Tell me pastor, that man on the Harley, isn't that Juan Seguin the man who the girlfriend/housekeeper said had left with Cowboy?”

“It is,” said the pastor, “and that's the motorcycle of our Cowboy.” And they knew him so well because they were the pastor and barber, friends of Cowboy's father the ones who had sold all his western books and films.

As soon as they recognized Juan and Shovelhead they approached seeking news about Cowboy.

And the minister called Juan by name saying, “Friend Juan, where is Cowboy?”

Juan knew who they were and decided to hide the place and condition in which he had left his friend, and so he replied that his friend was, “busy somewhere with something that was very important to him,” but he couldn't reveal what it was.

“No, no, Juan,” said the barber, “if you don't tell us where he is, we’ll think and we already do think that you've killed him and robbed him since you're riding his motorcycle. As a matter of fact, you had better tell us where Cowboy is or you'll regret it.”
“There's no reason to threaten me, I'm not the kind of man who robs or kills somebody, but each man is killed by fate.

“Cowboy is supposed to be working for us. I don’t think Austin will mind if we break a few fingers, your fingers.”

“My friend is doing unnatural dances in the middle of a desert.” And then in a rush and without stopping, Juan told them of the state in which he had left Cowboy and the adventures that had warped him. Then how he was to send a message to Salada de Tawakoni, who was at the rescue shelter and the woman Cowboy was head over heels in love with.

They were both astonished at what Juan told them and although they already knew the insanity of Cowboy and new cause of his madness. It was whenever they heard about it they were amazed all over again. They asked Juan to show them the tape his friend had ordered him to take to Salty.

The pastor replied that he should show it to him and he would make sure she received it. Juan put his hand in the breast pocket of his pearl snap looking for the card but he did not find it, and would not have found it even if he had been looking for it before because Cowboy had kept the camera and had hadn't given it to him by accident. It was another of hundreds of absent-minded foul-ups, not mentioned in this account.
When Juan saw that he couldn't find the card, his face turned deathly pale and quickly patted down his entire body again. He saw again that he could not find it.

"I think the card is maybe still in the camera, which is still with Cowboy." Juan admitted.

The barber observed, "You two are really something! He can remember the ingredients, formula and process to manufacture money/meth. You can destile tequila like no one but together you can’t remember to take a memory card out of a camera."

And with that, Juan put both hands to his face and punched it solidly and then very quickly and without stopping he punched himself half a dozen times until his nose bleed. Seeing this the minister and barber asked him what had happened to drive him to such demented behavior.

"What did not happened," responded Juan, "From one moment to the next in an instant, I've lost three mopeds and each one almost new."

"How did that happen?" replied the barber.

"I've lost the recording," responded Juan, "that had a video to Salty and one to the girlfriend/housekeeper. It said for her to give me three of the five mopeds in his garage."

And Juan recounted the loss of the mopeds; the reverend consoled him and told him that when they found Cowboy he would revalidate the order and make out another request.
This comforted Juan, and he said that if this was true, he did not feel so bad about losing the letter to Salty because he knew it almost by heart and it could be written whenever wherever they wished,

“Then tell it to us,” the minister said, “the barber and I, we'll take her a copy of it to of it later.”

Then Juan stopped to scratch his head. When he could not remember the words, he stood on one foot and then on the other; sometimes he looked at the ground, sometimes he looked at the sky, and after a very long time, when he had gnawed off half a fingernail, keeping those who were waiting and surprised, he said, “I’ve forgotten but it started, Most handsome and sullied lady.”

“It wouldn't have said,” said the barber, “'sullied' but maybe 'supreme' or 'sovereign' lady.”

“That's right,” said Juan, “as I recall it.”

Juan went on to say, “As I recall it also said, ‘this ignorant and sleepless and sore minded man kisses the toe of your ungrateful and thoroughly recognized beauty,’ and then something about ‘health and sickness.’ And that he was sending her someone and then it just went along until it ended with, ‘dying until death, El Vaquero de Tejas.’ Which was my idea.”

They both chuckled about Juan's good memory, and they praise him for it and asked him to repeat the letter two more
times so they could commit it to memory and take the message to Tawakoni later. Juan repeated it three times more; in each time he said another 30 pieces of nonsense.

Following this, Juan recounted other things that happened to his friend, but didn't say a word about being restrained on the Tilt-A-Whirl. At the same time he refused to divulge some things, he told them how his friend, if he brought back a favorable reply from Salty, would set out to try to make him a county judge or at least a county commissioner. That's what the two of them had agreed to and it would be an easy thing for his friend to give. His friend would then arrange for him to marry a second wife, one of the friends of his new wife, and Juan said he would have all this without being laid flat again or bleeding more than necessary.

Juan, in sincerity, wiping his nose from time to time, and with so little rationality that the two men were astonished again as they considered how little real power Cowboy had. He was an excellent dope-cook and the source of their livelihood and the chief frustration to General Garza, who was now responsible for a tweaked out occupation army. But the idea that he could capture an entire county sported a good sense of humor. They reasoned that it would be better to leave Juan where he was so they would have the pleasure of hearing his foolishness.
And so they told him to hope really hard that Cowboy could make the transformation from guerilla leader to a political figure, that is wasn’t always possible. To which Juan responded, “What if Cowboy wants to enter the ministry? What would his friends receive?”

“Usually,” responded the pastor, “they become a deacon or a church treasurer.”

“Don't worry, friend Juan,” said the barber.

“Ask your friend to examine his conscience,” said the minister.

The barber said, “He should become a county judge and not a minister, which will be easier for him, since he's clearly more of a soldier than a student.”

“That's what I say too,” responded Juan. “Though I can pray that he has a place where I can get paid. Now, since you need me to lead you to him in the morning, let's go eat.”

Juan rode over to the former Burger King and the two men walked. The men went inside and Juan rested outside with the Shovelhead and in a short while later the barber and minister brought him some food.

Then later, when they had thought carefully thought about how to get Cowboy home the pastor had an idea that would appeal to Cowboy and achieve what they wanted. He told the barber he would dress in the clothes of a young woman, and they would go
to were Cowboy was doing his native fasting dances, the woman pretending to be in trouble and asking for help. The woman would need a favor and the favor of an armed escort, a Ranger. If she were wrongfully treated Cowboy would end his madness and follow them home.

**EXT. ECHEVERRIA COUNTY**

The barber did not think the pastor’s plan was a bad idea; in fact, it seemed so good that they immediately began to put it into effect. They visited the thrift store for a skirt, a wig, and sunhat. When she asked about the strange purchases, They told the Guatemalan clerk, a woman named Luciana, about Cowboy’s most recent madness and how the disguises were the only thing to get him out of the mountains.

When hearing the plan the clerk, outfitted the pastor in the most professional fashion; she dressed him in a polyester skirt with thick woven stripes a hand wide and a blouse of green dacron adorned with white satin binding and both the blouse and the skirt must have been made in the heydays of disco. The pastor did not permit the wig on his head, but pulled the broad-brimmed hat down lightly over his head and it was so large he could have used it as an umbrella. He wrapped himself in sunscreen and mounted his Dark Horse and the barber mounted his custom lowrider. They said ‘goodbye’ to everyone including the
Guatemalan clerk, who wished them all the best and excused the bill at their daring.

But as soon as he had ridden out of the parking lot, it occurred to the pastor that he was committing a sin by dressing as a woman. Word might reach his the congregation, no matter how important the reason, it might not be perceived well. He told this to the barber and asked him to trade clothes with him since it would be better if the barber was the young woman in distress and the pastor play the part of her hired hand. In this way, his dignity would be preserved; if the barber refused, the marvelous idea would end.

At the first rest area on the highway, Juan approached and he saw the two of them exchanging women's clothing; he couldn't control his laughter. In fact, the barber had agreed to everything and they traded disguises. The minister informed him how he should behave and the words he had to say to Cowboy in order to persuade him to leave the desert and the barber understood perfectly. There was no better play than a young ranch heiress in need of a little protection.

The barber didn't want to put on his disguise until they were near the place they expected to find Cowboy and so he folded the garments and they continued their journey led by Juan again. Juan recounted what had happened with the madman and did come across the mountains, although he did hide the discovery of
the gold coins from the briefcase; he didn't want to appear greedy.

On the following day, they reached the place where Juan had made the trail of candy wrappers so that he could find the spot where he had left his friend and when he saw this Juan pointed that was the way to the mountains and they ought to put on their disguises if that was needed to achieve his friend’s sanity. The minister, of course, told Juan this was the only solution. They reminded Juan every three miles, on average, not too warn Cowboy of their deception.

If his friend asked, as he was bound to ask, if he had sent the letter to Salty he was to say “yes” and because she had almost immediately read it and responded saying that she ordered him under pain of her apathy to come to see her in East Texas immediately and it was very important that they change his course back towards becoming a county commissioner. They were sure to point out that Juan would be richly rewarded by the Republic in Austin if he could facilitate Cowboy’s return.

Juan listened to everything, and he thanked them profusely for their designs and for the favors he might receive. Juan also said it would be a good idea if he went first and found his friend and told him his lady's reply for that would probably be enough alone to make him leave the desert and save them a good deal of costuming and play-acting and trouble. The idea seemed
reasonable and they decided to wait until Juan came back with the news that he had found his friend.

Juan entered the ravines of the Guadalupe Mountains leaving the minister and the barber in the shade of a large rock they were there on a day in June and the heat was intense, particularly in that area. The time was three in the afternoon in extreme West Texas.

And as the two men were resting in the shade, a voice reached their ears and it sounded so sweet and delicate that they were a little more than taken aback for the place didn't seem like any concert hall. Although it was true sometimes goat hearers sayings sang stunning songs, this was the verse of a learned man.

Like painted kites, those days and nights they went flyin' by The world was new beneath a blue umbrella sky Then softer than a piper man, one day it called to you I lost you, I lost you to the summer wind

The hour, the weather, the solitude, the voice of the and skill of the singer caused both men to marvel. They were silent hoping to hear more. They were amazed at the entertainment and they decided to look for the musician and as they were about to get up from the shade, the same voice kept them from moving.

Poets often use many words To say a simple thing. It takes thought and time and rhyme to make a poem sing. With music and words I've been playing.
For you, I have written a song. 
To be sure that you'll know what I'm saying, 
I’ll translate as I go along... 

The song ended on the profound side, and the two men waited again listening attentively for more singing, but seeing that the voice had turned to sobs and pitiful moans, they decided to learn who was singing so beautifully and wept. But before they had gone very far they looked behind a large rock and saw a man whose figure and appearance were the same as those described by Juan when he told them the story of Carl and this man when he saw them he did not become agitated but remain motionless, his head lowered as if he were lost in thought, and he did not raise his eyes again to look at them after a short glance when they appeared so unexpectedly.

The minister, who understood it was a well-spoken man and already knew of Carl’s affliction for he had recognized who he was, approached him and in brief display of very descriptive words implored and exhorted him to leave the starvation game he was playing there or else he might lose his life which would be a terrible loss.

At that time Carl was completely rational, free of the fits of insanity that so often drove him to outrage, and when he saw them dressed in clothing so different from those worn by the goat herders who wondered the desolate places, he was
astonished, especially when he heard his affairs gossiped about
for the words the minister said led him to this conclusion and
he responded, “I see clearly, sirs, whoever you are. Okay, I'm
here in this lonely dry place without milk, or candy, or
vegetables, and people might I want to change this. But how do
you know I won't be persuaded to leave and then take a tumble
into a worse life. I wouldn't doubt a worse situation because my
affliction is so intense. I'm ruined. I freak out and have no
control. I can say ‘thank you’ and punch you in the face the
next moment. However, because most men see the madness and then
have pity on me if you came to persuade me to end my misery, I
beg you to listen to the unfinished story. Perhaps then you
won't insist that I leave and save us all this time.”

The two men who wanted nothing else but to hear from Carl's
own lips the reason for his ills asked that he tell it to them
and afterward promised to leave him alone, neither to persuade
or cajole him.

Then the disturbed gentleman began his contemplative
history with almost the same phrases he had used to relate it to
Cowboy and the old goat herder a few days before when because of
Cowboy’s interruption and film critique, the tale was not
concluded.
But now it was their good fortune that the attack of insanity was hovering about, giving Carl an opportunity to narrate his tale to the end.

And so, when he came to the letter Fernando had found Carl said he knew it by heart and what it said was this, “Dear Carl from Lacey. I am so proud of you and the things that drive me to love you even more and I wish you to free me from this debt without any dishonor. You can do it easily. I have a father who knows you and who loves me, and he without too much a stir might grant us permission to marry. And, in fact, you do love me.”

Carl explained, “This letter moved me to ask for Lacy's hand as I have said before. It was the reason Fernando considered Lacey to be one of the most intelligent and sage women. This letter was the one that filled him with the desire to destroy me. Before I could get over there and seal the deal with Lacey, I told Fernando what Lacey's father had said about the military being the path to wealth and fortune. And my own father said something similar, but I did not dare mention it to my father for fear he would not agree, not because he was blind to Lacey's quality, worth and beauty or that she possessed more than excellent connections to enable my family in Texas but because I understood that he didn't wish me to delay marry until I graduated and had a position in the Mexican Army. In short, I
told him I had not spoken to my father for this reason and a few others.

“To all of this, Fernando replied that he would assume the responsibility of speaking to my father and persuade him to speak to Lacey’s father. Oh ambitious Joey Garza, oh cruel Buffalo Hump, a wicked Gomez, villainous Blue Duck, man burner Mox Mox, a horse thief Kickingbird, boll weevil evil Black Vaquero!

“Cruel vengeful and lying man. How did I offend the man; what did I say? I only wanted him to comment on such an intelligent and insightful woman. Not thieve my sweetheart.

“So he wanted me out of earshot when he spoke lies to my father, he sent me on to his older brother in San Antonio with a request for money to buy six Dongfengs which he intentionally bought for the sole purpose of having me leave. And on the same day he offered to speak to my father, he asked me to go for the money. Could I foresee this betrayal? Could I, by some chance, then figure it out? No, of course not. Instead with great pleasure, I offered to leave immediately dutiful of the purchase he was making.

“That night, I spoke to Lacey and told her that I had arranged with Fernando and said she should be confident that we’d be happy soon.
“In the end, she was as surprised by Fernando's treachery as I was. She told me to return home quickly because she believed we'd be married and in bed together in the time it took for our fathers to speak.

“I didn't know why but she teared up, and a lump in her throat kept her from speaking coherently. She spoke, but it wasn't clear. There was a lot of emotion which had not seen in her before (it was weird), plenty of joy and gladness, but not yet with tears or fears. I was very happy to be hers.

“She returned to the compliments like she was a woman in love. We talked about thousands of trivial things that happened in and about Jacksboro, but on the night that preceded the sad day of my departure; she wept and moaned. She withdrew leaving me confused and apprehensive. I told myself she was in love and she had miss me for a few days. Sure, I was worried, imagining threats, and the suspicions were magnified, but there was nothing to foretell the future.

“I reached my destination and gave the letters to Fernando's brother and I was well-received but then I got the runaround. I was told to wait and I waited. I wanted to leave and go see Lacey especially because of her state of agitation when we last spoke. But I obeyed and waited for the delivery of the money for the Dongfengs. I knew it was going to be a problem for me but after four days, my phone chimed with a message which
she sent me. I opened it fearful and apprehensive, believing that something very important because she did so rarely and then I open the message it said, 'Fernando's promise to you that he would speak to your father about speaking to my father has been carried out, more to his advantage than yours. The clever Mexican had the balls to ask for my hand in marriage and my father carried away by the advantage he thinks Fernando, (actually his father the general) can bring and my father's agreed to everything and in two days it will be done and secretly. Imagine how upset I am. If you come, you will see and you'll know that I truly love you. Respond and come here.'

"These, in short, where the words of the message contained which I responded to and set out immediately not waiting for any money for now I realized then that it was not the purchase of the Dongfengs that Fernando sent me to see his brother. The anger I felt towards Fernando, together with my fear of losing Lacey, made me fly, and by the next day, I reached Jacksboro just in time to go and speak with Lacey. I entered in secret but something wasn't right. She knew me and I knew her but it wasn't as she should have greeted me. It was less than emotional almost like she’d been sedated. But who knows the heart of a woman? As soon as Lacey saw me, she said her time for dressing was up and the wedding was waiting. The traitor Fernando and her greedy father were waiting for her downstairs along with the witnesses."
She explained, ‘the witnesses will see my death rather than my marriage.’ She added, ‘Don't be angry dear, but try to be there at this sacrifice which could deter even more determined forces will but put an end to my life and a beginning to your knowledge of the love I have had and still have for you.”

“I responded urgently in great agitation fearful I would not have enough time to answer her, “No, no don’t shoot yourself. There is no deed needed to confirm the truth you love me. If you carry a derringer as proof of your sincerity save it, I'm carrying a 9 mm with which to defend you, and I’ll be the one to kill that Mexican, if we’re lucky we’ll be together. We might be on the run but together.’ I do not believe she could hear everything I said because I heard them calling to her with some urgency for the bridegroom was waiting, and she zombie-like obeyed.

“With this, I was devastated, but understanding why I needed to be there I couldn't move. I did the best I could and I walked into her house; no one saw me. I hid in the enclave, concealed by two curtains, and looking between them, I could see everything that would happen. My heart was pounding more than a few things went through my head.

“The bridegroom entered not in any military regalia but wearing an ordinary suit. As best man, there was one of Lacey's
first cousins and the entire drawing-room; there were no outsiders but only servants.

“A short while later, Lacey emerged accompanied by her mother and two maids and she was dressed in traditional white. My uncertainty and confusion did not permit me to know the particulars of the dress; forgive me, peach roses and white with a few jewels on her headdress. I noticed her hair, lovely blond hair, was lifeless and unwashed. The old memory of her was shattered that eternal day. It's better to talk about what she did then. Wrong. So wrong.

“Well then,” Carl continued, “when we were all in the room, the parish priest came in and took them by the hand. And when he said, ‘do you Lacey take Fernando (here present) to be your lawfully wedded husband?’ I gripped my pistol and extended my head and neck between the two curtains with attentive ears and I listen for Lacey's response expecting her reply to be either a pistol shot or at least an affirmation for my continued life. I should have shouted out, ‘Lacey is my wife and I and her husband.’

“You probably realized that I am a dolt. Now that I am here and far from danger, I’m plenty brave. I should have done what I couldn't then. I'm a coward and I've lost my most precious jewel, but I curse the thief. I could have reaped my vengeance on him shot him in his d*** fifteen times, if I had mustered the
courage. In short, I was a coward and a fool then, and you can't be surprised to find me here dying of shame.

Carl paused almost inviting a comment or question, but the barber, minister and Juan all sat mesmerized and didn't dare interrupt.

So, Carl continued, "The priest was waiting for Lacey's reply and I thought she took a long time to give it and as I stated I thought she would take out the Derringer and at least point it at him and that would be my signal to enter. I thought she would in some way prove her sincerity, but I heard her say in a weak faint voice, 'Yes I do.' Perhaps she was waiting on my action and I was waiting on hers. The worst 'yes' I ever heard. The falsity of Lacey's word in the promise and the impossibility of ever retrieving the treasure I've lost I was left with knots with nothing, I was left with nothing.

"And when I was calculating our mutual miscalculations, Fernando said the same and gave her a ring and they were joined.

"The groom moved to kiss his bride and she fainted. When Lacey fainted, her mother loosened her dress to get air inside her. She found a sealed letter, which Fernando took and began to read. When he finished it, he sat on a chair and rested his cheeks in his hand like a man lost in thought and took no part in the worry for his wife's health."
“Regardless of whether anyone saw me or not, I resolved to leave. That if I were seen, I would do something rash to harm the lying dog and maybe and maybe take even the fainting female traitor. But my fate was to think of harming myself. In short, I did nothing but leave. I went to where my Chang Jiang was parked, and without saying anything to anyone, I mounted and left the Jacksboro for the West. I didn't look back when I found myself in the country in the dark of night. In the silence, I freed my voice and screamed my curses at Lacey and Fernando.

“As this silly gesture would avenge the wrong they had done me? I called her ‘cruel, ungrateful and thankless’ and above all ‘power-hungry and greedy.’ I forgave her; it was the fault of her parents. She had been accustomed to and trained to obey them but in the end, I decided that ‘too little love’ and ‘too little judgment,’ too much Xanax and ‘too much ambition’ and ‘too much desire for money’ had made her forget me.

“With these arguments, in this anxiety, I traveled the rest of the night, and at dawn, I came upon the mountains. I rode another full day with no plan in mind until I reached a desolate area where I asked some goat herders if there was an even more desperate and desolate place. They told me it lay in this direction. I traveled here intending to end my life. My Chang Jiang ran out of gasoline and I pushed it down into a ravine. I
believed it was humane to free the machine of carrying my useless self.

“I was left on foot humbly by nature broken by hunger and not having a plan or anyone to help me. When I woke up I was not hungry anymore, nor was I alone; the goat herders help me. They said that I muttered many foolish things, and I did many nutty things as well.

“I'm so tired and bruised, I can barely move. My most common abode, under that large overhang, is barely large enough to shelter this miserable body. The herder's did help but in my fits drove them away and now they say I'm violent and steal food.”

EXT. ECHERERRUA COUNTY

It was the best of times when Cowboy traveled Texas, looking for honorable fights. It's because of this journey, we're enjoying our time here in front of the television and the reason the Central de la Comedia is enjoying such bounty. The story is Cowboy’s true story, as well as each scene that appears in it are authentic. An estimated 26 million Mexican homes (1.3 million of them in Texas) tuned in to watch, unusually high numbers for a Reconquista at that time. The Reconquista genre, especially stories emerging from Texas, was considered dead by most people, as was the television miniseries. By the show's
end, it had earned huge ratings and virtually revamped the entire 2048-2049 television season.

The minister was about two console Carl, he was prevented from this by a voice...

"Let it be true that I found the place that can serve as a hidden tomb for the bulk of my body. It is the final place; bless these mountains. I'll be at rest in these rocks and prickly shrubs, they will probably set the mood for my tirade against the world."

All these words were heard and heeded by the minister and his companions because it seemed to them, they originated only 20 paces away, behind another large rock. On inspection, they were spoken, it was thought, by a boy dressed as a peasant; he had a slight belly and since his face was lowered they couldn't see it. They approached so silently that the boy did not hear them. His feet pained him and he'd liberated them; they were the purest white.

The pastor was leading the group, and he signaled them to crouch down and hide behind some rocks and they did. They watched the boy carefully; he wore a white shirt, grayish Brown close-fitting sleeveless vest, he also wore short pants and Danskin leggings, and on his head was a Houston Astros cap. His skin was so white that he looked like he'd never worked a day in
his life. He finished airing the sore but beautiful feet and then he lay in the sun.

He lifted his face, and those who were watching had the opportunity see a real beauty, so great that Carl, said to the pastor in a low voice, “This, since it is not Lacey and clearly a man, but still he is the most lovely of creatures.”

The boy removed his cap and shook his head from side to side and his hair, shown in the sun, begin to loosen and tumble down. With this they realize that the person who seemed to be a male peasant was essentially an exquisite woman, the most beautiful ever seen by the eyes of the pastor, the barber and even Carl, (had he not already gazed upon Lacey). Carl later said that only Lacey was more beautiful. Her long blonde hair covered not only her shoulders but was also was so abundant and thick that it concealed her entire back. For a comb, she used her white hands. The crowd watching was bowled over and though “forget Carl’s story.” Everyone wished they knew her story.

For this reason alone, they showed themselves. They made a sound as they rose to their feet and the beautiful girl lifted her head and moved the hair away from her eyes with both hands. She looked at them as soon as she saw them, she left up and not taking the time to put on her shoes or pin-up her hair, she quickly seized a bundle that was there and attempted to flee, filled with confusion and alarm; but she had not taken six steps
when her delicate and sore feet unable to withstand the jagged rocks. She fell to the ground. The three men – Carl, pastor and barber – saw as they drew near.

The pastor was the first to speak, “stop whoever you may be, we hope you... there isn't any need to run away. Your feet are tender and we won't let you harm yourself in any way.”

Spooked and dizzy, she did not say a word in reply and so they approached her and the minister taking her by the hand continue to speak, “You are dressed as a boy but your hair reveals the deception. It’s odd for a beautiful young woman to disguise themselves in cheap clothes here in so desolate a place. It's lucky we found you. If you won't tell us how can help you, at least tell us your name. We don't want to scare you; together we might be able to help.”

As the minister spoke these words, the disguised girl seemed stupidified. She looked at all of them, not moving her lips, like a child suddenly shown a rare exotic seashell. But the the minister continued speaking the same stuff until she heaved up and broke her silence.

She said, “I thought this was the most solitary place on Earth, but evidently not. I'd lie to you but my hair gives it away. It would be useless to lie, I guess, but I appreciate your offer of help and I probably owe you an explanation, but I doubt you'll be able to help, even if you are moved to emotion.
Nonetheless, so you won't doubt my honor and you know I'm a woman and see that I'm alone and down and out like this. I'll tell you, but I'd rather not.”

She put on her shoes and put up her hair again. She sat on the rock, and it wasn't necessary to ask her again. She did as promised and she did it with a fluent tongue in a gentle voice. The three men gathered around and made a clear effort to hold back the tears that would eventually win as she told her story.

“Over in San Antonio there is a general who is supreme in Texas, almost an autocrat since the Mexicans have been here. He has two sons. The elder, the heir to his estate, is apparently a soldier of good character, but the younger, he's also a soldier, but is, in fact, treacherous. My parents, employees of the general, are a humble family but wealthy enough to be appalled at my situation. I can't think. I'm here because... I'm not... I can't help but think I'm here because I'm not from an aristocratic family and rather think they would probably think it was their fault. They are farmers, gentlefolk, and the most valuable thing they own has been me. I'm an only child and was the most doted on daughter. I look like them. I help them around the general’s estate. The accounts of what was planted and harvested and I helped buy and sell. I helped oversee the vineyards, the cattle, the cotton. In short, I kept records of everything and even had time to embroidery and I read books. I
play the piano. I'm not bragging; just saying. I've moved from happy to this sad state just in the past few weeks. I was close to my parents and happy and kept busy by the ranch and my mom and dad. I went to church once a week. Few men saw me but I accidentally caught the eye of Fernando, the general’s younger son.”

As soon as she mentioned Fernando, Carl turn pale and begin to sweat and became so agitated that when the pastor and barber looked at him. They worried he’d suffer an attack of insanity, but Carl did nothing more than perspire and remain very still staring directly at her and figuring who she was. She didn't notice the awe in Carl and continued her story.

“No sooner had he seen me, that is what he said later, the perv was smitten with lust as his actions made clear. I'd rather not talk too much about all his efforts to rape me. To speed things along, he bribed all the general’s servants and hired hands and sucked up to all of my kinfolk. The nights were all celebrations and dancing; no one slept. The love letters were never ended and they were filled with the fanciest sounding words, offers, promises, and vows. It was too much. My heart hardened, I didn't want him. Hell, no; not that I disliked Fernando or thought the affection excessive. Not every woman, loves to hear all that, falls for lines like these. My modesty
opposed it, as did the nonstop advice from my mother, who was aware of it all.

"By this time Fernando didn't care who knew. My mother continually preached; she knew he was up to no good, and she promised to speak with my father about marrying me immediately to whomever I wanted, but NOT Fernando. I was resolved not to give in; I refused and didn't give an inch but it only inflamed his passions more.

"In short, Fernando learned that my parents were about to arrange my marriage in order to deprive him of possessing me or at least as a test of his true affection. One night, I was in my bedroom with a companion, a girlfriend of mine, the doors carefully locked so that my virtue would not be endangered. Without knowing or imagining how, despite these precautions and preventive measures in the solitude of the secure bedroom, I found him standing in front of me. The sight of him perturbed me so much that I lost control of my tongue; I froze. I couldn't scream; he wouldn't have allowed me to cry out because he immediately approached and took me in his arms. I was distraught and couldn't fight back and he began to speak in such a manner (I do not know it is possible) a lie so skilled and it's wording so cleverly arranged that they seemed to be the truth. The Jackass' tears gave credibility to the words, his sighs were confirmation. I was abandoned, my friend up and disappeared, and
not I was alone in the middle of the night and inexperienced in such matters. I don't know how I thought his lies were true. The tears and sighs didn't work. But my initial fright faded. I recovered and said to him, ‘if I were in the clutches of a savage lion as I am in your arms now, I couldn't protest more?’ I told him if he won, ‘he might have my body but never my heart,’ which is entirely different from his, as you will see. ‘If you attempt to achieve me by force, my parents know your parents; they work for your parents. But I am not your slave and so your father is a general; that doesn't give you the power to have me. I'll only go willingly with my legitimate husband.’”

“The dog then said, ‘If this is all that concerns you oh beautiful, Dorothy…’ that is my name. The traitorous man then said, ‘I offer you my hand; I’ll to be your husband and let that be my solid promise.’”

Carl knew this was the girl that Fernando seduced and when he heard her say her name was Dorothy he became agitated again confirming what he was already guessing, but he did not want to interrupt the story for he wished to see how it turned out. Although he almost knew the ending, he said only, “Then Dorothy is your name? I have heard of another with the same name whose luck may be worse or the same as your own. Go on then please tell us what happened.”
Dorothy listened to Carl’s words and noticed his strange ragged clothes and asked that if he knew anything about her affairs he should immediately speak up, for if fortune had left her with anything of value it was the courage to endure any disaster. That might be better since, in her opinion, nothing could be worse than the one that had already befallen her.

“What I know can wait,” responded Carl, “It won’t help you at all now.”

“Whatever,” responded Dorothy, “I'll go on with it. Fernando picked up a holy image of Mary that was in my room and called on it to witness his promise. It sounded persuasive; he promised to marry me. I told him to think about it before promising and to consider how upset his father, the general, might be. I even teased with him that he shouldn't let beauty blind him that I wasn't so beautiful in the morning and that it probably would not justify such a huge mistake. I told him it was an unequal marriage, and it wouldn't be happy.

“All these words I said to him as well as a few others, but they had no effect, and it discouraged him not in the slightest. But after all a man who has no intention of paying the bill, can afford to buy in a rush. He ignored all the reasons he should not make the buy. I had a brief talk with myself saying, ‘yes I would not be the first woman who got married and rose from humble to noble position. And Fernando was not the first man
moved by beauty or irrational attraction. It's the history of the world, a woman submitting to a man.' I thought I might as well join the party. Even if the love only lasted a minute or two, after all he would be my husband in a Catholic country. And I thought if I rejected him he'd probably rape me anyway and then drag my name through the mud afterwards. I'd be disgraced and with no one to blame, except my friend who he'd probably bribed to leave me alone that night. The man could have made up such a lie, I doubt even my parents would believe me. He's that talented.

"All of the questions and answers were resolved in my imagination and even more important, I began to feel inclined to what was, without my knowing it, my trip to h***. Convinced by Fernando's verve and Mary as his witness, and persuade by his tears, he shed and finally his disposition in gallantry, which along with so many displays of true love, were enough to vanquish even a heart as unencumbered and chaste as mine. Before giving him my mother mary, I called my friend so that a witness on Earth might know, she didn't pick up. Fernando again repeated and confirm Mary as his witness. He added new Saints to the earlier ones. He called down on himself a thousand future curses, if he did not keep his promise to me; tears filled his eyes again. And his grip on me increased and he held me even tighter.
“Morning wouldn't come fast enough for Fernando; after a man's appetites been met, he wants to leave out. My friend, mysteriously reappeared, to help get him out of the house. But before he left, he gave me a ring. When he left, I don't didn't know if it was good or bad. I didn't say anything to my friend as I didn't know if she was helping or hurting at the time. But she had put him into the bedroom, it was the only way he could have been there.

“When he left, I told him since we were as good as married, he could come again on other nights until the marriage was announced. Except for the next night, he did not come again, and I did not see him on the ranch, or in church, for more than a month. I tried in vain to talk with him, I sent him countless emails and text messages. I felt ashamed to have been tricked, and I pretty much figured I couldn't trust Fernando anymore. Then my friend heard a few choice words; it was her fault in the first place. I've not spoken to her since this has happened.

“I had to hide my unhappiness from my parents but it didn't work, and they were always asking me why I was so unhappy. I couldn't think of a spin so I just didn't respond. But when the talk reached the ranch that Fernando had married an extremely beautiful girl and from a distinguished family, although she was not so extremely beautiful she did bring some nice political connections to Fernando and his father. People said her name was
Lacey and that some strange goings on had happened after the wedding.”

Carl heard the name Lacey but did nothing but hunch his shoulders, bite his lip, scowl and then let tears stream from his eyes, but this did not stop Dorothy from continuing.

“This sad news reached my ears, and instead of freezing up my heart was aflame with rage. I almost went outside to scream. I took my father's pistol. I took some clothes from a young man and put a plan into effect. I told him what happened and he agreed to take me to Jacksboro to confront the entire mess. So I threw a dress and some money into a bag and left the ranch in the middle of the night. I wanted to ask Fernando why he had done what he had done.

“I arrived in two and a half days, and I saw it clearly as I entered Jacksboro. I asked for the house of Lacey's parents and this person told me more than I wanted to know. He told me that on the night Fernando married Lacey, after she had given her 'yes' and 'I do,' she had fallen faint and when her mother found a letter under her dress, it declared that she could not be Fernando's legal wife because she was already the wife of Carl and she had agreed to marry Fernando because she feared the violence from a jilted Fernando.

“In short, the man told me that the letter said that Lacey had intended to kill herself. When the ceremony was over and
they did find a Derringer, under the dress with the letter. Fernando read the letter and felt a fool and took the Derringer and tried to shoot her and would have, but the friends and family jumped between them. The man told me Fernando left immediately and Lacey was sick in bed for two days. And then she told her parents that she was the true wife of Carl, the true legal wife of Carl. It sounds to me like a ruse, but in my own self-interest I will play along with it.

“I walked into the Green Frog Café and learned more. People in the next booth were saying that Carl had been at the wedding and when he saw her married (his worst nightmare), he left the city in despair but first wrote a letter in which he revealed how badly Lacey had broken him and how he was going to a place where no one would ever see him again. All this, all of this, was widely known and everyone was talking about it.

“At another booth people were talking about how Lacy had disappeared from her parents home and from the entire city of Jacksboro and how no one could find her and how distraught her parents were.

“Like any woman in my position and acting in self-interest, I revived my ambition and invented a faint hope. I unloaded my father's pistol and stored it safely away. It was better not to find Fernando married, for it seemed to me that my problem is
still not entirely without a solution. He might believe that his second marriage to Lacey isn’t legitimate and he might revert to his first to me. The obligation is obsolete today, but perhaps in the military circles there might be a faint chance.

“While I was in Jacksboro, not knowing what to do since I couldn't find Fernando, I read in the newspaper that the law was seeking me and that I had adducted the boy who accompanied me and there was a reward for our return. I was hurt; my name was dirtied by the idea of suddenly leaving, but also the outrageous idea I was bangin’ the boy. I immediately left the city with the boy, basically a servant who was already showing signs of wavering.

“That night we entered a remote part of these mountains, afraid of being discovered. He took it all in, my strange condition, my vulnerability and the remote desolate location. He was faithful and trustworthy, until we entered these mountains. Inflamed by his lust, he tried to take advantage of the opportunity to persuade me to make love with him. Little shame and little respect for me in the end. I had to fight him, and surprisingly, I was able to win; I didn't mean to but I ended up pushing him over a cliff. I left him hanging there by a limb. He might have died, I hope not. But then he might have pulled himself up. He probably pulled himself up, but I came here and
thought of little else. I need to flee this whole ordea; people will be looking for me.

“This was my desire when I came here. I don't know how many days along, but I found a drover who took me on as a cook in a place on the other side of the mountain and I have worked as his helper. I tried to hide my hair, but he discovered it and tried the same hanky-panky as the kid. There wasn't a ravine handy but I was able to run and take refuge here. Either I'll learn the desert or… well, it’s better I’m able to learn… I just want to forget the memory of Fernando and this ill-fated woman. It’s no fault of her own, but we're both the gossip of San Antonio and Jacksboro (both), and now out here in the mountains, you’ll want to tell everyone. Don't people ever tire of other people's misery?”

EXT. ECHEVERRUA COUNTY

“This is my tragedy. I should have cried more telling you, but I think I’m all cried out. Yes, I’m all cried out. I guess all I want to know is where can I live, raise my baby, without fear of being overwhelmed by fear and terror and Mexican politics. I could go home but would be filled with so much shame for I'd have to appear to mom and dad in this swollen condition. It just seems easier to live in exile rather than see their faces.”
Dorothy fell silent, and her face flushed with color that clearly showed the grief and shame of her soul. The men listening to her felt as much compassion and astonishment at her hard-fix; the minister wanted immediately to counsel and advise her to return San Antonio and her parents.

Carl stepped forward saying, “Then ma'am you are the beautiful Dorothy and the only child of Cato Clemens?”

Dorothy was surprised to hear her father's name and to see the wretched condition of the man who named him, for the rags Carl wore we have already been mentioned, and therefore she said to him, “And who are you, friend, that you know my father's name? If I'm not mistaken I didn't mention him.”

“I am, ma'am,” responded Carl, “I am that luckless man who as you told us Lacey declared to be her husband. I am Carl and also the friend of the wicked man responsible for your delicate condition and the one responsible for me being here in my ragged, naked, organ donor condition. Dorothy, I'm the one who witnessed the wrongs committed by Fernando because he simple told me everything he perpetrated on you, and I’m the one who wanted a life with Lacey. I'm the one who didn't have the courage to see the consequences of her fainting, or the outcome of the letter, I just could not bear to see this happen and so I just left. I sent a letter to Lacey and came to this solitary position place where I intended to kill myself. I hated myself
for my milksopestry. But fate is a funny thing, perhaps I was
saved in order to meet you here. I now have an idea how things
might be made right, since Lacey can't marry Fernando because
she is mine. I'm going to tell you, it's was a ruse.

"As long as they think she is mine legally, Fernando can't
marry her... because he's yours. Most importantly, we can
reasonably think maybe we'll make this whole. I think you and I
should be hopeful; the glass is half-full. I vow to you to try;
I'll stand by you until we can confront Fernando, and then even
if he doesn't do his duty, I'll beat the snot out of him. I'm
willing to try. Forget General Garza and politics; this is
personal. Forget Lacey and our problems for now (she’s not
pregnant; I don’t think), we should find Fernando and solve your
little problem first.” And Carl gesture to her stomach which
wasn't technically showing yet but showed promise.”

Overwhelmed when she heard Carl’s speech, and she didn’t
know what to say so she hugged Carl, but Carl didn't know how to
respond, so he neither balked or returned the affection.

The minister and the barber approved of the speech,
"Failing, we will return Dorothy to her parents or whatever.”
Carl and Dorothy thanked the minister for the offer. The barber
said he would help in any way possible way.

The pastor also recounted briefly the reason they that had
brought them there, the strangeness of Cowboy’s dementia and how
they were waiting on his friend, a short fat Hispanic fellow, who had gone to find him. Carl recalled and told everyone about it, but he couldn't honestly remember the cause of the fight he'd had with Cowboy.

Then they heard shouting and recognized Juan Seguin’s shouts for when he didn't find them in the place where he had left them, he began to call out. They came out to meet him and when they asked about Cowboy, he said he had found him naked except for his shirt, thin, sunburned, famished, and still wishing for Salty.

And although Juan had told Cowboy that she had ordered him to leave the mountains and return to Tawakoni where she was waiting for him, Cowboy had responded that he was not returning until he has performed a few more dances.

And Juan told him that if this went on much longer Cowboy ran the risk of becoming a dead Ranger and that he’d no longer have a chance at becoming a county judge with all the spoils and graft. For this reason, Juan was adamant about beginning the exit strategy.

The reverend responded that Juan should not worry for they would take Cowboy away from there even if he didn't want to go. Then the minister told Carl and Dorothy what they had planned as a fix for Cowboy or at least a way to trick him home.
To which Dorothy replied that she could play the part of the troubled young woman given the fact that she was, indeed, a troubled young woman and her condition slightly showing; it was all very plausible. She mentioned that she had her costume to play the part naturally and they could trust her to know the lines after all she was, literally, the right woman for the part and they and could trust her to carry the play. She was crafty enough to mention that she had watched many Westerns and knew the dialogue used by women in distress when they begged men for help.

“Well nothing else is needed,” said the pastor, “but to put the play on the stage; we have an unexpected star to appear just when we needed her.”

“Then Dorothy took a certain sequined fine Rodeo shirt and tight riding pants, made of an expensive fabric. And from a box she took a silver belt buckle and the cowgirl hat and with these she fixed herself up as a wealthy ranch owning barrel-rider.

All of this she had brought with her. Her extreme good taste and allure delighted everyone and confirmed to everyone that Fernando was an absolute idiot to have cast her aside. And, what an actress she promised to be! And when later they put this on the screen, it was said, “Mexico City had never cast so well.”
But most amazed was Juan again, for it seemed to him and it was true that never in all his days had he seen so beautiful woman, and so he asked the pastor very eagerly to tell him who the beautiful lady was and what she was doing in this most remote place.

"This gorgeous lady," responded to minister, "is, and it's no small thing, the heir by direct male line to the Galveston Island Great Possum Fork Ranch and she has come looking for Cowboy... to hire him to correct a situation right or wrong. Frankly, she's been done an injustice by a soldier hardly perceptible now, but in time, it will become obvious. Even you as simple as you are, know what I mean. It’s because your friend's reputation she’s here; a ranch princess has come all this way to find him."

"A longshot search and lucky find in this large state," said Juan, "but if Cowboy is skilled enough to undo that injustice, that would be a sin."

"Oh, you don’t mean that. You mean he will be killing that son of a dog soldier?" the pastor said.

"He’ll want to kill him if he finds him, but one thing he needs is to marry her immediately. So my friend can focus on the issue at stake, maybe you should invite him to marry her right now, and he'll come easily into his new Galveston pie and I'll finally get the island I deserve. I've done thought about it
carefully. He's got to marry her today. I'm sorry, I don't know her name.”

“Her name,” responded the reverend, “is Miss Dorothy, and since her ranch is called the Great Possum Fork of Galveston, of course, that is her name as well. She probably has another name, but this isn’t important. You should know her by her title.”

“It seems long to say.”

“Just call her Miss Possum Fork.”

“I can do that,” responded Juan, “I've seen lots of people take the name of the place where they were born and they must have the same custom in coastal Texas. The ranchera takes the name of her ranch. Makes perfect sense.”

“That must be the case,” said the minister, “and about your friend marrying, I'll do everything in my power to make that happen. But don’t hold your breath. She wants to give the soldier one last chance to repent.”

This made Juan both sad and happy and the minister was astonished both by his simplicity and how his imagination was filled with his friend’s nonsensical ideas, for Juan believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that Cowboy would become an island emperor and cattle baron.

By now Dorothy had-mounted the minister’s Harley; and the barber had now in disguise warned Juan not to recognize him or
the minister because the whole con depended on them not being recognized.

The minister didn't want Carl to go with Dorothy because he didn't wish to provoke Cowboy into another dispute. And the minister, because his presence was no longer needed, they allowed the others to go ahead while they follow slowly on foot. The pastor did not fail to remind Dorothy of what she had to do. To which she replied that there was no need to worry, everything would be done as written in the script and exactly as required by the old Western films.

They had ridden about two miles when they caught sight of Cowboy among some rocks dressed as his birth had clothed him, sunburned and filthy and as soon as Dorothy saw him she applied the gas, followed by the barber on his motorcycle. And when they reached him, Juan jumped off Shovelhead and helped Dorothy dismount gracefully and she went to approach Cowboy and held her curtsy. She spoke to him in a soft vulnerable tone.

“I can't leave this place until you agree to help me recover my ranch and my honor. If it's true about the speed of your guns and your generosity, you can help me. I've come from distant lands following your famous name and searching for a real Ranger.”

“I can't agree to anything pretty lady,” responded Cowboy, “one way or another, until you end your curtsy and face me.”
“I shall not raise,” responded the woman in distress, “until you agree to restore my honor and recover my graze.”

“I'll do what I can,” respond to Cowboy, “as long as it doesn't harm the environment, nor harm animals or another pretty lady or waste water. Look around, we are in a drought.”

“You know that I'm aware, and I will not ask you to harm any of the things you mentioned,” responded the doleful Dorothy. As they were speaking Juan again approached and whispered in his ear, “Marry her quickly.”

They walked a few paces away and Cowboy was suddenly wary and concerned, “I can’t just attack someone, they must have broken a law. I’m a Ranger.”

Juan in a hushed tone explained, “Cowboy, you’ve attacked people before without provocation. You can easily grant the favor she’s asked. It's nothing, just killing a soldier and the lady who asks is an unmarried sole heir to the Great Galveston Possum Fork Ranch. She is rich and powerful, just like you promised me. And he is guilty of adultery.”

“But that’s Mexican law. I don’t know what the shadow government in Austin has put in place on this subject.”

“Law is the law. One government says it’s illegal, and that should be enough, especially for a ranch princess. She deserves the protection of both sets of laws. No?”
“Whoever she may be,” responding Cowboy, “I've already promised to do what I can to uphold the law and what my conscience dictates under the oath I have taken,” and turning to innocent and gentle Dorothy still expertly humble-looking, he said, “Little lady, I'll both execute the law and fix whatever is ailing you.”

“You'll come with me?” asked the girl, “and you won't become involved in any other fights or ventures or enter into any new or interesting adventures? Not until my journey is finished? Until you've arrested, for my sake, the betrayer?”

“I say flat out ‘yes,’” responded Cowboy, “Please look me in the eye and cast off your blues and let your hope take hold; with a little luck and a flurry of fists or if necessarily bullets, you'll see yourself back in charge of your father's ranch in spite of the coward who put his fly in your ointment…”

“We should get going,” Juan suggested.

“Juan, I’m parched and do you happen to have some water?”

The aggrieved girl looked up and hugged the s*** out of Cowboy. The discreet and courteous gentleman in everything did not return the embrace. Cowboy ordered Juan to prepare Shovelhead and make ready his weapons there as well. “Let us leave here in the name of the Great Spirit and both of Texas’ laws to help this great lady.”
The barber was laughing so hard at Juan’s control over Cowboy’s will that his disguise kit fell off. But, he helped the lady on to the minister’s ride. Then Cowboy mounted Shovelhead and the barber got on his cycle this left Juan on foot.

He’d lost his moped, but he enjoyed the walk out of the desert and was in good spirits because it seemed to Juan that now his cowboy friend was well on his way to good fortune and without a doubt Cowboy probably thought he’d marry the girl and become a barrier island ranch owner.

Unknown to anyone at the time, but made clear in the popular Mexican propaganda film, Juan had the idea that because it was in the East that the island and ranch was probably covered in the pines, there would be timber to harvest. And he quickly used his imagination to find an exploit and Juan said to himself, “what difference does it make to me if the land will be covered with trees, all I have to do is cut them down and put them on trucks and bring them to Guadalajara’s high-tech corridor, where I can sell them to builders and I'll be paid in real cash. I'll buy an amusement park and live out the rest of my life. Who can be too dumb to sell 10,000 trees in the wink of an eye. I'll sell them all, large and small; it's the same to me and no matter how green they are, I'll convert them into rides and attractions, or maybe I’ll just make insane amounts of tequila.”
This made him so eager and hopefully he forgot he was walking in a desert. But 30 minutes later, as his feet began to hurt and he began to tire, he began telling himself that he regretted losing the moped, “Bring on this infernal soldier; we’re burning daylight here.”

Carl and the pastor, watched all of this through some bushes and they did not know what pretext to use to blend in with the group, but the minister who was a creative thinker thought of what to do and, with a pair of clippers the barber carried, cut the curls from Carl’s hair and dressed himself differently. Carl's appearance was so changed that few would have recognized him.

When this was done, they walked out to the highway. They reached the highway before the others because the rough terrain made traveling by motorcycle more difficult. In fact, they position themselves on the highway at the exit of the mountains and the entrance to the Mexican paved highway and as soon as Cowboy and his companions emerged from the desert, the minister made like he recognized him. And, after waving at him for a while the minister went toward him, his arms wide open, and he called out.

“We meet the fastest and most wise gun in the West accurate on foot and horseback. And the most reasonably priced killer in the great land of Texas.”
Cowboy, at last, recognize him as his father's friend and leader of the church community, the man he'd promised his missing father that he'd tithe ten percent of what he cooked. Cowboy offered to dismount but the minister wouldn't allow it.

"Let me walk and you ride," said Cowboy.

"Under no circumstances shall I do that," said the reverend.

"Perhaps my lady’s hired hand will let you ride with him. You can get on the haunches and perhaps the animal can carry you both." Cowboy gestured at the barber.

"That will work, I’ll allow you to ride," the barber said.

When the minister sat on the motorcycle, unfortunately when the barber tripped, and his disguise wasn’t just dislodged but fell completely to the ground. All that the barber could do was cover his face with both hands and feign that his teeth had been broken. Cowboy was confused, which was the idea.

The minister, who saw Cowboy about to question the problem, carried the disguise to the barber who was pretending to cry. The minister said some words in Greek and then some in Hebrew, for added effect, and reattach the fake beard to the barber’s face. Cowboy dumbfounded asked the minister to teach him the incantation when he had time. Cowboy was thinking the value must be more than the minister realized because it might reattach more than beards, arms, legs and fingers.
Together, they agreed that Carl would ride on the haunches of Shovelhead with Cowboy. They agreed that Juan would walk until someone picked him up and delivered him to the next town.

“Cowboy,” said to Dorothy, “You may lead us wherever you please, but the island is on the same road as San Antonio.”

“Toward the ranch?” interpreted the pastor. She was sharp-witted and said yes reverend, “I'm going to my ranch on Galveston.”

“Great,” said the pastor, “we have to pass through beside the lake at Tawakoni and from there we can take the road to Possum Fork. It will not take more than nine days.”

She fell out of character momentarily, “I left there less than two days ago and the truth is I never had any delay.” But she recovered quickly, “Perhaps it was more than two days, probably more like nine; I might have driven mindlessly searching for Cowboy, eager to speak with him in confidence and then entrust my cause to his badge.”

Anything a woman said range true with Cowboy, but something occurred in the back of his mind he did need to question, the minister, who he’d never expected to find in West Texas.

“Tell me why you are out here alone?” Cowboy asked.

“Briefly, responded the minister, “because I and Mr. Serrien, your father's friend, the barber, have been in El Paso collecting a sum of money that a mule... uh I mean... minister
friend of mine brought back from the interior of Mexico. He sent me no small some about sixty thousand gold pieces, enough to build a megachurch. Yesterday, we were traveling through this area when four masked highway robbers attacked us and took everything even our bikes because when you knew me, I had a nice ’68 Harley.

And he pointed to Carl strangely enough, “It is common talk around here that the men who assaulted us were convicts freed, they say in this very desert by a man so brave that despite the soldiers and the guards, he released all the prisoners. There can be no doubt he was either out of his mind, or a great patriot, as they say a man with conscience. He wanted to murder the Chief Justice and impail the Mexican president for he opposes Mexican tyranny.”

Juan had told the minister and the barber about the adventure releasing the wall slaves. Juan’s friend had released the criminals who would steal his mega-church, and for this reason the minister felt very angry, but prudent enough never to burn bridges. When the minister referred to the act, not to upset Cowboy and only to see what his reaction would be, he changed the color of most of the words and never indicated that the thrown Cowboy might be the “libertador.”
"These men," then said the minister, "were the ones who stole my mega-church. May God forgive the man who helped them escape their labor on the wall."

EXT. ECHEVERRIA COUNTY

The minister finished talking and Juan said, "Well, the man who did that brave deed was my friend, and don't think I didn't warn him and I warned him to be careful about what he was doing. And that freeing criminals was going to cause a problem."

"Imbecile," said Cowboy, "It's not the responsibility or concern of a Ranger to determine if the afflicted, the chained, and the suffering whom he meets along the road are in that condition because of misdeeds or rebellious acts. They might have been guilty of nothing but having too much fun. My obligation is to help them and worry more about the oppression and less about any mistakes they might have made. Salty's father says Texas is in need of rebels. I encountered a chain of rebels headed to put up the wall; he'll be impressed. It's a wall that for too long held back the hordes from the North. And I cut them free because that's that's my occupation. I hear anything different from anyone, except the minister, I'll pistol whip them."

And as he said this he thrust his feet firmly on the cycle and he accelerated, placing what he thought was a golden cowboy
hat on his head. Juan saw it as the golden helmet that had hung from the side of Shovelhead waiting for repair of the damage received at the hands of the wall slaves.

Dorothy who was quick-witted and very spirited knew almost immediately that Cowboy’s mind was addled and that everyone mocked and deceived him except Juan. She didn't wish to do any less and seeing him speed off said into the radio, “Cowboy, your ass should remember the job you have agreed to and you aren't supposed to become involved in any other adventure, no matter how urgent. Your ass should calm down for if the minister had known the wall slaves had been freed by you he would have bitten his tongue.”

“I certainly swear to that,” said the minister.

“I shall be quite ma'am,” said Cowboy, “and repress the righteous anger that has welled up in me and go quietly and peacefully until such time as I have fulfilled the work I've contracted. But as recompense, I asked you to tell me, if it doesn't distress you too much, who, what and how many are the persons on whom I must wreak vengeance?”

“I'll be happy to do that,” responded Dorothy, “if it doesn’t not frighten you.”

“I don't get frightened,” responded Cowboy.

To which Dorothy responded, “Good for you, Cowboy.”
As soon as she said this Carl and the barber caught up with them. They were, of course, listening to the conversation via their headsets, but they wanted to see how clever Dorothy looked inventing her story.

“First of all, is everyone listening?”

“They all appeared to be watching her as they drove.

“I'm called,” and she paused for a moment because she’d forgotten the name the minister had given her, but he came to the rescue for he understood why she hesitated.

The minister said, “it's no surprise ma'am. That you've become confused and distraught when recounting your bad luck. For something this traumatic must often rob people of their memories, so they can't even remember their names and that is what they've done here, causing you to forget your name. Galveston, legitimate heir to the great Galveston Possum Fork Ranch. You will now remember the rest of your story?”

“Yes, I think I can. Thank you,” responded the young woman, “and from now on. I don't think it will be necessary to remind me of anything and I shall come safely into port with my history.”

“Which began with?”

“The Rancher, my father, whose name is Tivo and my mother Jara, would die. She first, and then a short while later, he too would pass. Just before his death, father said he was less
worried about me being left on an orphan as he was confronted by the sure knowledge that this soldier, son of a General, whose name is Fernando, would divert water flowing naturally to my ranch and then he became weak. He invaded the ranch with his cattle wrestling and took everything from me and didn’t leave me even a small town where I might hide. I could have avoided all this, but I would not give into the marriage. And I still refuse. I never dreamed of the marriage, no matter how huge and monstrous the man. Before he died. My father said I should build defenses, which would lead to the total destruction of the ranch, but he wanted me and a few people to set out for West Texas and find a ranger for hire called “Cowpoke” or “Cowboy” or “El Vaquaro” or something like that.”

He must have said, “Cowboy” said Juan.

“That is correct,” said Dorothy, “he also said his body would be lean and tall and that his sidekick drank tequila and he smoked dope and would go without sleep for days at a time.”

“Cowboy rarely sleeps. I can attest to that,” Juan said, “he's gone a week without sleep before. He’s also slept an entire week.”

“That is sufficient evidence,” said Dorothy, “because among friends one must not worry over details and whether it's hours, days or weeks. No doubt, my good father was correct in everything and he was right that I should secure Cowboy’s
employment. He has an excellent reputation. I landed at the port of Laredo and no sooner did I step foot on soil I heard stories of his bravery.

“But how did you land at Laredo,” asked Cowboy, “if it's not a seaport?”

Before Dorothy could respond, the pastor begin to explain, “The poor girl must mean that after she disembarked at Corpus Christi and the first place she picked up the trail of Cowboy was in Laredo.”

“That is just what I meant,” said Dorothy.

“And now that this is settled,” said the minister, “Dear girl, you may continue.”

“There is no need to continue,” responded Dorothy, “except to say in conclusion, that my good luck has been so great finding Cowboy and that I already consider myself back in control of the ranch for he's promised to go with me, wherever I may need him and that is wherever we find Fernando, so Cowboy can confront him and restore to me what is rightly mine. My good father told me this would happen and I believe it now. And also that after Cowboy frightens the rotten soldier, if he wished to marry me then I should be his legitimate wife with the ranch and of course my person as well.”

At a rest stop, Cowboy signaled Juan to change channels, “What do you think, Juan,” asked Cowboy, “do you hear what is
taking place? Did I not tell you I'll see if we have a ranch to run?"

“I think we do,” said Juan, “and what is up with the man who doesn't marry after blowing the head off Mister Hildago. Tell me she's a good catch? All the Rangers should be so lucky,” and saying this Juan kicked his heels in the air and almost toppled over. He and Cowboy got off the cycle and everyone present laughed at the madness of Cowboy and the riveting joy of his friend Juan had with words and it renewed everyone's laughter for miles.

They changed back to the channel they'd previously monitored.

“This serves,” continued Dorothy, “as my history. All that remains for me to say is that the entire entourage I took with me from my ranch, the only ones left is this hard-working hand. The others drowned in a great storm that broke over us when we were far outside of port and he and I swam on a raft and reach land. It was a miracle. If I left anything out of the story, it's because I'm highly stressed.”

“I'll not abandon you, pretty lady,” said Cowboy, “no matter how great or new the difficulties I may suffer. I'm with you for the long haul, until I encounter the arrogant soldier and make him beg... when? I can't say because someone stole my pistol.”
He muttered this last remark between clenched teeth and continued, “and after I have shot him and placed this pretty lady back on her ranch, it will be left to her what she'll do with me. I’m fairly sure that marriage will not happen, so long as my memory is filled with Tawakoni and I’m held captive by and thinking not always thinking clear because of the certain lady that resides there. I ain’t gonna say no more ‘cause it's not possible for me to consider or even think of marrying although it would be nice with someone as unique as you.”

Juan was so displeased by what his friend had said about not wanting to marry, that he became riotous and raised his voice and said, “I swear, Cowboy, that you're ass is not in your right mind. How can your ass have any doubts about marrying into a ranch the size of this one? Do you think fate will offer you better luck around the next corner? Salty by some chance is more beautiful? No, certainly not. Not even by half and I'd go so far as to say she can't even touch the shoes of the woman we have before us. So hit me in the face! I'll never get an island if your ass goes around asking for the moon. Marry. Marry right now. You, me and Dorothy take the ranch that was dropped into our hands without you lifting a finger. And when you're the owner make me the master of clearing the timber and I’ll expand your grasslands and then I'll be off and you can forget about your debt to me.”
Cowboy, who could not stand hearing much more unpleasantness about his Salty. He raised his fist and without saying a word he struck Juan twice in the face with blows sufficient to knock him to the ground, and if Dorothy had not interrupted and forced him to stop Cowboy might have killed his friend.

“I hope you don't think,” Cowboy said after a while, “trick ass punk, you will disrespect me again, that you will always mouth off and I'll forgive you? You're wrong, weak-ass trick; you probably realize that you’re a ho, because you're talking bad about Salty. Don’t you know that she gives me inspiration and without her I wouldn't have the strength to pick up a gun? Tell me, rattler breath, who do you think has won this ranch and shot the soldier and made you timber foreman?”

“You didn’t.”

Cowboy spoke, “All this I consider already done and finished. Through me Salty does combat and she conquers. I'll live or breathe because of her. What an ingrate you are. Raised from redneck distiller to timber manager on a great spread, like the Possum Lips, and you speak bad about the woman who made this possible?”

“Tell me, Cowboy, if your ass is set on not marrying this ranch princess, it's clear the ranch won't be yours, and if it isn't true, what position will I have? That's what I'm
complaining about; your ass should marry Dorothy for now; she's
the prize puzzle on Wheel Of Fortune, and afterward for
recreation, you can visit Salty. There must be a lot of ranchers
who live with their mistresses. I don't judge beauty pageants
and don't know a thing about it, but they both seemed fine to
me. Although I've never heard of Salty offering you this much
wealth... I mean beauty.”

“What do you mean... you dirty lying dog,” said Cowboy, “you
just took a message to her.”

“I mean I didn't look at her so carefully,” said Juan,
“that I could notice her beauty in particular and her good
features point-by-point, but on the whole she seemed perfectly
satisfactory to me.”

“You b***!”

“I should go tell her about your temper and your propensity
to strike her without warning.” Juan threatened.

“Now please forgive me,” said Cowboy, “and you must pardon
this anger. I've shown you first impulses that are difficult in
my line of work, hesitation might signal the end.”

“I can see that responded,” Juan, “just like in me a desire
to talk my way out of trouble is always my first impulse. I can
never help saying what I'm thinking.”

“Watch,” said Cowboy, “what you say, Juan, because you can
go to the well only so many times. I'm done preaching to you.”
“Well,” responded Juan, “the vocabulary word for the day is sanctimonious b****.

“That’s two words,” Cowboy counted.

“Me not saying the right thing, but you not doing the right thing.”

“Enough idiotic banter,” shouted Dorothy, “Juan, hurry up and shake hands; kiss and make-up or whatever you’re going to do. Here’s a novel idea, say ‘you’re sorry’ and from now on trying not to insult Salty and stop worrying about your lumber franchise, you opportunistic oaf.”

Juan with his eyes on the ground went to shake his friend’s hand and Cowboy gave it to him with a peaceful air and after they shook hands, Cowboy asked that they take their headsets off and walk a bit away from the others because he had to ask Juan some important questions.

Juan did so and the two of them moved away from the others and Cowboy said, “Since your return, I have not had a chance to ask you many details about the message you brought to Salty and now that we have a little time, don't tease me with the details.”

“You can ask me whatever you want,” responded Juan and I'll answer, “no problem, but I don't want to be smacked again.”

“Why would you say that, Juan?” asked Cowboy.
"I say it," Juan responded, "because you just punched me twice and it hurt, and it's happening more and more often especially when Salty is the topic of conversation. I like her, even if she's never around and offers me personally little in return for my investment. I endure her because she belongs to your ass. It doesn't mean she's going to give me a county to control. And I think her father is a blowhard."

"Since you value your face, Juan, don't even mention her name again," said Cowboy, "for it's depressing. I forgave you then, but you know what they say, 'a new sin plans a new punch.'"

While Cowboy and Juan were engaged in this chat, the pastor told Dorothy that she had shown great dexterity not only in the story, but in making it so brief and so similar to the Western films. She said that she had spent many hours watching films with her father as a little girl, but she didn't know where the seaports were, and that is why she made the mistake of saying she disembarked at Laredo.

"I realize that," said the minister, "which is why I interrupted you, but isn't it strange how easily this unfortunate man believes all those inventions and lies simply because it's similar to something in a film he once watched?"

"Once saw?" said Carl, "I'm sure he's the type to watch a film until the tape wears out. Thank goodness for discs, digital
video disc. Who feels the truth is more strange than fiction? Dorothy you are my master."

Dorothy observed that Cowboy might have been too high to notice her mistakes about geography.

“Well, I've noticed something,” said the minister, “aside from the fixation with guns and the law-for-hire, where he's clearly a loon, when he's talking about things one wouldn't necessarily notice he's disabled.”

While they were having this conversation, Perillo reappeared riding Juan’s moped. Cowboy began to shout, “thief” and he fumbled to get off a few rounds as Perillo ran away leaving the moped behind. Juan was overjoyed, especially when Cowboys said that this didn't nullify the transfer of the three mopeds he'd promised already.

After the recovery, Cowboy continued with his talk with Juan. “Señor Seguin, my friend, let us make peace and forget about our quarrels and tell me now, without anger or ranker, where, how and when did you find Salty. What was she doing? What did you say to her? What did she say in response? What was her expression when she saw my video. Tell me everything you saw that is worth knowing and answering, not exaggerating or lying to give me a thrill and especially not omitting anything for that would be a downer.”
“Cowboy,” responded Juan, “if truth be told no one responded to a video because I didn't take any video.”

“What you say is true,” said Cowboy, “I found the card where we recorded the video, in the camera, two days after you left, which caused me great disappointment. I didn't know what you would do when you discovered that you didn't have the card and I believe you would return when you realize that you didn't have it.”

“That's what I would have done,” responded Juan, “if I hadn't memorized it when your ass played it over and over and so I told it to a school teacher and she typed it point-by-point from my memory and she said that although she had read many 8th grade love letters, in all her days, she had never seen or read a letter so romantic one as that.”

“And do you still have it in your memory, Juan?” ask Cowboy.

“No friend,” responded Juan, “because after I told it to her and didn't need to remember it anymore I forgot about it. If anything, I remembered the word “sullied” and “sexy” and the last part, “yours until death, El Vaquero de Tejas.” In between these the first and the end, I put in more than 300 “afternoon delights” and “pushes” and “nipples of yours.”
“All this is okay with me; go on,” said Cowboy, “
“So, you didn’t see her?”
“No I did. I needed to get an answer. I mean that was the entire point, right?”
“Okay, so when you arrived what was the angel doing. Surely you found her feeding, bathing, or killing ticks and fleas on her rescue animals?
“I didn't find her doing anything,” said Juan, “except picking up dog s***.”
“Tight or runny?”
“It was just plain dogs***,” responded Juan.
“But go on; what did she do when you were about to give it to her? When you gave her my letter did she kiss it? Did she smile learning it was from me? Did she engage in some celebration?” asked Cowboy.
Juan responded, “She was in the middle of a run and she said to me, “friend, put the letter in that wheelbarrow. I can't read it until I'm done picking up.”
“A wise lady,” said Cowboy, “that must have been so that she could read it slowly and savor it. Go on, Juan, and while she was engaged in her work, what discourse did you have with her? What did she ask about, me? What did she respond; come on
amigo, tell me everything and do not leave even half a character
on the keyboard.”

“She didn't ask me anything,” said Juan, “but I told her
how your ass, to impress her father, was out in the desert naked
from the waist down like a Comanche fasting, and sleeping on the
ground, eating lizards, crying, and cursing.”

“Cursing? You lied,” said Cowboy, “Rather I said
blessings.”

“She's so tall,” responded Juan, “I get confused. She must
be a foot and a half taller than me?”

“How do you know Juan?” said Cowboy, “did you measure
yourself against her?”

“I measured her,” respond Juan to Cowboy, “dumpster diving
behind Golden Fried when I walked over to help her get the old
fried chicken out of the dumpster, she was a good foot and a
half taller than me.”

“I don’t know why you are standing to near to her but, that
is true,” replied Cowboy, “that her great height is accompanied
by a thousand wanna-be Rangers, but did you not smell the
perfume of Chanel and aromatic, sometimes pleasing fragrance? I
remember it well.”

“What can I say?” asked Juan, “what I smelled was a manish
kind of odor and it must have been that with all that work in
the hot sun, she was sweating and sort of acidic, in personality as well as essence.”

“Impossible,” responded Cowboy, “because I know very well the fragrance of that show dog among dogs that Isle of Dogs shampoo that she herself uses. That wild bluebonnet scent. You must have had a head cold or else you smelled yourself.”

“That may be,” responded Juan, “because very often that same smell comes from my underarms, though at the time, I was sure it was coming from Salty, but there's no reason to be surprised.”

“All right then, Cowboy said, “she finished picking up the dogs*** and took it out to the compost pile. What did she do when she read the letter?”

“She didn't read the letter,” said Juan, “because she took the wheelbarrow to the compost pile. She said she didn't want anyone knowing about her business, and she was satisfied with what I told her about your love and the special Native American ordeal you were doing for her sake.”

“That’s all?”

“Finally, she said she'd rather see you then write to you. “That’s all?”

“So she begged and commanded that you leave the West and stop doing crazy things and set out for Tawakoni ‘unless something more important came along,’ she said, ‘like an
island,’ because she wanted to see your ass very much, but ‘Rangering comes first,’ she said.

“What else?”

“She laughed a lot when I told her your ass was called “El Vaquero de Tejas.”

“And?”

“I asked her if the bandito, you shot in the face had come to volunteer and she said, “He had and that his eyesight had returned. I also asked her about the wall slaves and she said that a few had shown up. ‘Good men,’ she said, ‘who not only cleaned but played with the dogs as well.’

“Okay that's good,” said Cowboy, “but tell me when she said ‘goodbye,’ what panties did she give you as a reward for the news of me that you brought her? Cuz, it is a tradition and custom among Rangers and their sweethearts to send a pair back with a message. This is done so there aren’t any forgeries.”

“It might be in the old days, but that custom now must be just a chewy treat for that's what Salty handed me through the fence when she said, ‘goodbye’ and it even tasted like real cheese.”

“You ate a treat?”

“Of course. Why not?”

“She’s generous to the max,” said Cowboy, “and if she didn't present you with a pair of panties, no doubt it was
because she didn't have any on hand, but a cheese-flavored treat can never go wrong.”

“She’s not so generous as you say. She didn’t give me more than just the one.”

“Maybe she didn’t know how far you traveled? It seems to me that you flew back because it's taken you a little more than three days to go to Tawakoni and come back here again. You must have traveled without sleep, and so, Juan, my friend, I want to let you know I appreciate that.”

“That must be it. I didn’t sleep,” said Juan, “because Shovelhead was running like a bat out of hell with Meatloaf in his ear.”

“And not just Meatloaf, said Cowboy, “but a legion of musical artists from the 70s to who can run and make others run without getting tired, whenever such tunes are played.”

“Must be what it was.”

“Hearing Salty commanding me to come to see her, makes me regret a promise I made to Dorothy to help her.”

“But Salty said specifically, ‘unless something more important arose, like an island,’ and you have promised.”

“I know I promised her.”

“You’d not be distracted.”

“On the one hand, I’m hounded by the desire to see my sweet shelter seductress, but on the other hand, I understand the
promise I've made and the glory of a fight with a Mexican calls me. But what I plan is to travel fast and kill the soldier quickly, restore the princess to her ranch and then return to Tawakoni. Her father will love it, the son of a a general, but I'll have to explain about the delay and I’ll have to hope she’s understanding.

“The ordeal might bring the two of us even more glory and fame. The audacity.”

“Salty’ll love it too.”

“Ya think?”

“She’ll get a bit of the credit because everything you do stems from her father’s orders.”

“I’m an independent oppreator. This film you are organizing should make that clear.”

“Oh,” said Juan, “You're still going to marry Salty?”

“Of course.”

“You’re really screwing up there. Tell me your ass doesn’t intend to make the trip to make this trip to Galveston for nothing? And let slip away and lose a marriage as profitable and distinguished as this one? When the payoff is a ranch on an island covered with pines. The truth is I've heard it's more then eight-hundred square miles and overflowing with cattle and timber. It’s all we’ll need and bigger than the King and Wagner put together.”
“So?”

“Take my advice and get married as soon as possible in the first town where there's a church, or use the minister at this very rest stop. I’ll go ask him now.”

“No.”

“He'll do a wonderful job beside this very road. Remember the advice I'm giving you, ‘a vulture on the highway is better than a vulture in the air.’ And, ‘if you have something good but choose bad, you can't complain.’”

“Look, Juan,” responded Cowboy, “If your advice is to marry so I’ll become powerful and rich, after I kill the soldier, I’ll have that anyway. And if it’s wood you want, I can grant you the timber concession for the entire Big Thicket. I promised you, and you should know, that I’ll take care of this without marrying.”

“How will you do this?”

“When the Mexican government falls, Salty’s father will grant me this. After we win, I can send him word that I need such a concession. How can he refuse such a hero?”

“Mexico might never fall and you might not win anything. He is a soldier, but not any soldier. He’s the son of General Garza. He’s probably trained in MMA and firearms, both. So, please, when you speak to me of timber concessions, be for real.”
“Okay, then before I fight, I’ll make a deal with Dorothy so that she does not have to cede over in marriage control of the ranch. That she, instead, as a reward for your service, give you the timber rights. It might break her heart about the marriage, but if she’s a true cattlewoman, she’ll want rid of the trees. Forests are not conducive to running cattle and she’ll give it to over, or I’ll not rid her of the Mexican.”

“I know you and you’ll not miss an opportunity to kill such a high profile Mexican.”

“Ha, you know me well, friend. But she doesn’t know me so well.”

“So you would bluff with her? A ranch princess?”

“That's what I'm talkin' about,” responding Cowboy.

Responded Juan, “But your ass should be sure to choose the part along the coast because if I'm not happy looking at the trees then I might need to put them on a ship back to market in Mexico. And, your ass shouldn't take the time to stop in Tawakoni and see Salty. Now you ought to go directly to deal with this soldier and let's finish business first. It seems there is fame and profit in it, both.”

“I'll take your advice,” said Cowboy “but say nothing about our discussion. Salty is so modest and shy, it wouldn't be right to reveal any lust she has for me. In fact, it might make her upset that I'm satisfying Dorothy's thirst for land first.”
“Well, if she's so she's so shy,” asked Juan, “why does your ass make all those who you defeat present themselves at the shelter when that's as sure as a signature you're in love with her.”

“Villainous rebels, with pooper-scuppers, picking up dogs*** for a week. It’s all on tape?”

“How is anything a secret, after your instructions to me to record everything? People will soon learn what you look like, a red dot surrounded by two circles.”

“This is not about me,” said Cowboy, “surely you can see, Juan, that all of this promotes her image.”

“Yes,” Juan added, “her father must be very happy. Promoted even.”

“What?”

“It's a great honor for a lady to have so many Rangers courting her.” Juan rephrased his wise-a** comment.

Cowboy explained, “From afar they have no shot at marriage with her, but of service only. Marriage to Salty is important, but now it's this larger service to Texas, that I’m concerned with.”

“And the victims you’ve sent there?”

“It's what her father and I have arranged. He loves his daughter and doesn’t want to see her picking up s*** all day. I mean she is the poster girl of the revolution. And pickin gup
s*** is a small favor to retail rescue, which can't survive without volunteers."

"That's the way," said Juan, "I've heard it said in circles we need professional rescuers to do all they do to avoid euthanasia of the poor animals and also to inflate the price of purebred animals."

"Well spoken," said Cowboy, "What intelligent things you say sometimes. I think maybe you'd studied economics in school?"

"Honestly, I don't remember much about school. I just hear things," responded Juan.

At this point, the barber called them to mount up, because the others wanted to get up the road to an old Dairy Queen now producing sandwiches. Cowboy did stop talking, much to Juan's delight. Juan was tired of telling lies and was afraid his friend would catch him in one, and besides the people operating the abandoned DQ were probably not just spinning their wheels; there would be some nice treats to buy.

The barber and the minister both knew Salty was something of a grifter and illegal dog breeder from Tawakoni, but also knew that her father was a high-ranking leader in the rebellion, probably in charge of recruitment. Neither the barber or the minister had seen the young woman. But Juan and Cowboy's conversation had been broadcast to everyone via the open mic.
As there were eating, a boy traveling the dirt road happened to enter the DQ, and he began to look seriously at the people around the table and then he stopped and looked at Cowboy and recognized him, “Sir, doesn't your ass know me? Look closely. I am Andy, the boy you befriended from the Peso General where I was being beaten.”

Cowboy recognized him and shook his hand and turned to his companions and said, “So to show your asses how important my profession is in correcting wrongs, a week or two ago...

“It was two months ago,” the boy interrupted.

“Well, okay. I was passing through a town and heard shouts and cries and indeed, I check the alley behind a store where I found this boy being punched by his employer. His boss claimed that the beatings were the result of the boy’s thievery or perhaps simple-mindedness. But the boy insisted it was a dispute over wages. In short, I was obliged to end the beating and forced the supervisor to promise to pay back wages. Was that not true, you said you’re name was what? My short term memory is fried. Sorry.”

“How is that? You’re only a few years older than I am.”

“Yes, but I’ve lived a hundred years in the last month alone.”

“I can see that.”
“Did I solved your problem? Speak up don't be shy; tell these friends what happened. Everything was pretty much like that?”

“True,” responded the boy, “but the matter ended in a different way than you fancy.”

“What do you mean different?” replied Cowboy, “Do you mean the manager didn't pay you.”

“He not only didn't pay me,” responded the boy, “but as soon as your ass left side, he beat me again and hurt me worse than before and he made a joke about how he fooled you’re a** and if I hadn't been feeling so bad from the beating, I would have laughed as well. But the fact is, I've been in the hospital and all because you stopped to help me. Nobody asked you to jump into my or anyone's business. You so insulted him and delivered him so many insults that he wanted his revenge, but with your guns there, he couldn't get that. He couldn't get that then, so he took out his anger on me later. So please don't do me or anyone else any favors. Please.”

“The mistake,” said Cowboy, “Was my leaving, for I should not have gone without/until you were paid. I ought to have known from long experience that no Mexican keeps his word if he sees something in it for him, but remember, please tell me your name again.”

“Andy.”
“I swear, Andy, that since he didn't pay you, I will hurt him and I’ll find him even if he’s left Texas.”

“Well, it didn't work the first time, said the boy.

“Now you will tell me in a few days if it work this time,” said Cowboy and having said this he stood up very quickly and ordered Juan to fill the belly of Shovelhead and gestured to the gas station next door. Dorothy then asked what he intended to do.

Cowboy responded that he wanted to find the boy’s boss and punish him for putting the boy in the hospital and that he had promised “the kid” (Andy) he would be paid down to the last peso.

To which she responded that according to their agreement he could not become involved in any heroic enterprise until her’s was concluded, and since he knew this better than anyone, the discussion was over.

“That is true,” respond Cowboy, “and it is necessary for this kid to be patient until my return as you have said. I promised and eventually I'll see the man pay.”

“I don't believe your promises,” said Andy, “I'd rather have enough to get to Corpus Christi then all the revenge in Texas. If you can spare it, give me some fuel and food to take with me. Good luck, but I hope you don't try to help me. I hope you don't try to help this nice lady either.”
Juan looked at his basket and rather than half a hunger sandwitch and a basket of potatoes. He stated that he was not done and gestured for Cowboy to guard over his meal. Juan rose and went to Cowboy’s saddlebags. Juan gave the boy no food but rather dope, which was used as money among the rebels. He took and handed a healthy amount to the boy.”

“So much?”

Juan answered, “Take this, Andy, for all the shadow government in Austin has a part in your sad luck. But we’re fighting a war here, and we need your story to help us and not hurt us.”

The young man contemplated. He looked at Cowboy, who he regarded as an idiot, and then signaled to Juan that he understood.

Juan continued, “There is a good amount there, first to buy your silence, or perhaps you would like to change the tone of the story. That might be better; tell people you were helped. Here take some more; we have plenty. Don’t you smoke the stuff, but you can trade it with nearly anyone for fuel or feed. If you are in a bind take it to a Mexican soldier; they love the stuff."

Juan handed him another handful and added “And, I’m giving you this because if you’re going to Corpus you’ll need it
because I'll I'm telling you, my Amigo, this traveling Texas by back roads is something extraordinarily expensive."

Andy took the dope and seeing that everyone was watching, but no one else was giving him anything else, he lowered his head and left. He took to the back road with both hands on the handlebars.

But before the boy left, he said to Juan, “Okay, I’ll help. It’s my dream of being rid of Mexico, but if you ever come across me and they are beating me to death just keep on driving. Don't stop, forget the Mexicans and forget all the Rangers ever born.”

It was an open mic again, and Cowboy was about to fight with the boy, but the boy zoomed off on his dirt bike and no one attempted to follow.

Cowboy was touchy and looked like he might go into a rage if anyone laughed. Fortunately they didn’t.

EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY

They finished their meals and fueled their mounts, and without much more happening. On the following day, they reached Fort Stockton. They reached the same Fort Stockton hotel that was the terror and fear of Juan Seguin, and he’d rather have not gone in, but it was unavoidable. The innkeeper’s wife, the innkeeper, their daughter, and Mary (the Honduran shotgun
gifter) saw Cowboy and Juan arriving. They went out to receive them with displays of great joy; Cowboy greeted them with a grave and solemn look and told them to prepare a room with a better bed than last time, to which the innkeeper responded, “if he'd paid better than he had the last time, we would provide him with a bed worthy of a cattle baron, or football coach.”

Cowboys said he would pay “differently” this time and so they prepared the same room, the one nearest the office, he had previously. Cowboy laid down, weak and defeated. Mary the Honduran brought several gallons of wine and discreetly joined Cowboy. She and Cowboy, no sooner had closed the door when the innkeeper's wife rushed at the barber and demanded the beard back.

Everyone at the inn was astonished at the beauty of Dorothy and the fine young appearance of Carl, once he was cleaned up. The minister had them all walk over to the abandoned Whataburger and the innkeeper kept hoping for prompt payment.

Cowboy kept slept all the time and they agreed not to wake him, figuring he needed more sleep than food. During the meal, at the table with the innkeeper, his wife, their daughter, Mary and the other travelers, they spoke of the strange insanity of Cowboy, but that he was needed to cook for the revolution and men like him were both the revolution’s most reliable source of revenue and degradation of occupation forced. The pastor flat
out admitted it. The barber added that it was unfortunate that he wasn’t reliable, that he ran off on adventures when he tired of cooking.

And, Juan argued, “That it might be true about the adventures, but my friend is a particularly pathetic/prolific cook and is totally reliable.”

Charged by Austin to care for Cowboy, the pastor and the barber despaired about the state in which they had found him.

The innkeeper's wife recounted what had happened with him and the truck driver, and when Juan was in the toilet she told them about his day-long ride on the Tilt-A-Whirl which she now felt guilty about and that she had no idea of thier importance.

The innkeeper sought to justify their treatment of Cowboy, “We thought he was a Mexican loyalist. Sure, he’s clearly an Anglo, but running an inn like this and seeing a lot of people, I’m finding Anglos on both sides a this thang.”

The pastor vouched for his loyalty to the cause and pointed out that the films of the West that Cowboy watched as a child had made him lose his mind, the innkeeper said, “I don't know how that can be the cause. To my way of thinking there's no better films in the world. I have two or three hundred of them myself, along with some other lesser films, and they really have put nothing but starch into me, and not only me but other people too. I can say that because during the wheat harvest, the
harvesters gather in the TV room there during their evenings and there's a few who know good art and they take down one of the Westerns and we've had more than 30 people in there watching 1936 Oregon Trail. Westerns are great medicine for an area of the occupied territories that has been left out of the economic prosperity. As far as I'm concerned, when I hear the furious and deadly shots ring out in Dobby theater sound, it makes my heart pound, and my trigger finger itch. I'd be happy to keep them playing for days and nights on the end.”

“Same goes for me,” said the innkeeper's wife, “because I never have any peace in my house except when we're watching a film; my family gets so caught up that they forget about arguing with me.”

“That's true,” said Mary, a bit out of place, “and really I really like to watch the Westerns too. They're very pretty, especially when they tell about a cowboy in the middle of the street, guns drawn, and a sweet innocent girl is the only one to watch his back. And she's dying in anticipation, scared to death. I think all that's as sweet as honey.”

“And young lady what do you think of them,” asked the pastor speaking to the innkeeper's daughter. She didn't want to respond. “I watch them, but the truth is I don't understand them. I like the horses, the beautiful landscapes, and even the Western culture is great, but I don't like the violence that my
father likes. I like the Cowboys winning their girlfriends but the truth is sometimes they make me cry, because half the time, they don't always care for the girl and then the cowboy rides away. It's all so depressing.”

“Then young lady you like Cowboys?” asked Dorothy.

“I don't know what I like,” the girl responded, “All I know is that some of the ladies are so maligned; the cowboys call them ‘nebulous’ and ‘teases’ and a thousand other indecent things. I don't know what kind of man can be so heartless, and I'm feeling that sometimes they don’t like to marry and let her do without. Dying or lose their minds, I understand, but sometimes they simply ride away. I don't know the reason for such on-screen virginity, if these men are so righteous let them marry and let nature take its course. It’s not enough to shot up the place; you’ll never run the Mexicans out of here if you don’t procreate.”

“Be quiet girl,” said the innkeeper's wife.

“You seem to know a lot about these things and it's rare for young girls to know or talk so much about politics.” the pastor responded.

“Asked and answered,” she stated.

“Well now,” the pastor changed the subject, “let's go look at your film collection, I'd like to see what you have.”

“Let's. I'll be glad to show you them,” said the innkeeper.
They walked to the motel and into the television room and on the shelves, the minister found 35 mm films. He pulled one out of them. It was Arizona Bound and the second was Texas Bad Men and the third Fangs of the Arctic. As soon as the reverend read the first two titles, he turned to the barber and said, “Our friend’s girlfriend and daughter are the people we need here now.”

“We don’t need them,” respond to the barber, “I also know how to take them outside and build a fire.”

The innkeeper pulled a large knife, “Then you want to burn my films?”

“Only these two,” said the reverend, “Oregon Trail and Texas Bad Men.”

“Well,” said the innkeeper, “by any chance do my films seem satirical or loose money. Is that why you want to burn them?”

“Poor release is what you mean,” said the barber, “not lose money. I never understood the marketing back in the day. But today, they might have become popular again and are making money for you?”

“That’s right,” replied the innkeeper, “if you want to burn one, let’s burn this one about the mountie and that husky dog. I’d rather let a child of mine be burned then either one of the others.”
“Dear brother,” said the minister, “these two films are chock-full of foolishness and nonsense, especially this one about Captain John Delmont who because of the many lies deserves to be burned by everyone. While it’s true that Delmont was a distinguished gentleman, a native of the City of Casa Piedra in Texas, he was also a very courageous soldier and the idea that he could with one finger stop a steam engine; it’s laughable. He takes a leave of absence and travels to California to find out what happened to his missing father. Aided by a group of Spanish soldiers, yeah right, in the film he defeats and captures the guilty men. Why do people need to know about these outlandish things, and the film recounts and writes about other Hispanics helping Texans. If any other directors were to free to circulate these ideas there’d be no revolt at all. What we need are the people to remember are the deeds of Walt Reardon, Pecos Smith, and Marshall Hoot Gibson. They didn’t need Spanish soldier to help.”

“Tell that to my old father in Heaven,” said the innkeeper.

“Look at what you believe, that he could stop a steam locomotive!”

“Your ass ought to see one pic of Smith who did it when outlaws held up a stage and killed driver. Another time he attacked a large and fast Comanche war party. And then you would say of the good cowboy Dave Saulter, who was so valiant and
brave, as you can see in the film where he tells us that he retrieved the stolen gold, proved his innocence and then marries the girl. Be quiet, because if you watched you would love it and give it 4 out of 5 stars.”

“I don't give two figs for Dave Salter, Hoot Gibson or Bob Steele or fighting Claim Jumpers. There ain't no gold in Texas and I ain't never been to Alaska. Or California.”

When Dorothy heard this she sat very quietly and said to Carl, “our host doesn't have far to go to be a second Cowboy.”

“I agree,” responded Carl, “according to what he says he believes that everything in these films really happened and not even a trained or ordained minister can make him think otherwise.”

“Listen, friend.” the minister said, “Again there never was a Ranger in this world or a Pinkerton or Rough Rider or anything or any other cowboy like them that films tell us about, because it is all fiction made up of idle minds. They are all composed by idiots like our Cowboy to create the effect you mentioned; you waste away the time just as your guests amuse themselves by watching them. Really, I swear to you there never were cowboys like these in the world and their great fights and all that other nonsense never happened. They were all, if anything as harmless as our friend, who is thank God, sleeping right now.”
“I’ll tell him of your comments when he awakes. That will be throwin’ a dog a bone,” responded the innkeeper, “as if I don't know how to add 2 + 3 or where my ice pick is. Your ass shouldn't try to treat me like a child because I'm not an idiot. That's really something your ass wants me to think that everything in these films is foolishness and lies when they've been printed with the permission of the Motion Picture Association of America and other guilds as if they were the kind of people who would allow the printing of so many lies and so many Indian battles and so many wagon trains it could drive a man crazy if he realized they weren’t true.”

“I have already told you my friend,” replied the minister, “that these films are intended to amuse our minds in the moments of idleness just as in, our recent history, PlayStation or Nintendo were allowed for the entertainment of those who didn't or shouldn't or couldn't work. The films are also allowed on the assumption that no one will in ignorance make a mistake and think they're history. I'd like to drone on, but I don't think it would do any good, but remember what I told you and maybe you'll someday realize, and please put the knife away and don't follow in the footsteps of Cowboy. I’ll not burn your films, not today.”

“I will put up the knife, but I think you work for the Mexicans. Who else would make such arguments?” the innkeeper
asked. “And you don’t have to worry. I see very well these days are different from the old days when a man could be free and roam doing good. I’m not crazy enough to become a Ranger and wander around Texas looking for trouble. And my wife is not crazy enough to let me. But you shouldn’t disrespect those that do wander looking for trouble.”

Juan had returned from the meal in the middle of this conversation and was left very confused and bewildered. When he heard that nowadays there were no more Rangers wandering, doing good, and that all the films were foolish lies, he resolved in his heart to wait and see the outcome of Cowboys trip if it would change the public perception of that.

The Honduran girl noticed Juan contemplating it all and she asked him what he would do. He said if it did not turn out as well as he hoped, he was determined to leave and go back to his wife and children and his customary work of distilling tequila and raising rattlesnakes.”

The innkeeper put up the knife and picked up the film cases and was returning them to the shelf but the minister, needing to mend some fences, said, “Wait, I want to see that film.”

“The innkeeper took out the DVD case he was pointing at and gave it to him to read, and the pastor read the cover title, The Story of the Man Who was a Reckless Cowboy. The minister read, three or four times, the summary to himself and said the title
of this film certainly doesn't seem bad and I think I would like to watch it.”

To which the innkeeper responded, “Well, reverend you can certainly watch it and not burn it. You should know some of the guests have likened it very much and watched it over and over. To tell the truth, I don't want to return it in case the man who left it here returns. I'm sure it was by mistake. I'm still a Christian; I would give it back, if forced.”

“You are absolutely right, my friend,” said the minister, “but even so if I liked the film you will let me copy it? I'll be happy to, respond the innkeeper. While the two men were talking Carl had put the disc in the player.

“I would gladly watch it,” said the minister, “but it might be wiser for me to sleep.”

“It will be very restful for me,” said Dorothy, “to spend the time watching. I’m too worked up to sleep right now.”

“In that case,” said the minister, “I do want to watch if only out of curiosity, perhaps it will have something positive and uplifting.

The barber made the same request and everyone sat including Juan, the minister pushed play on the remote, “well let's see how true this film is.”
Only a little more of the film remained when gunfire came from the nearest downstairs motel room, Cowboy’s room. Inside the room, the Honduran rolled on the floor and was perfectly still as the bullets flew. Only Juan moved to investigate. The others only waited in dread of what was happening.

Mary stealthily exited/crawled from the motel room covered in wine and after a time, Juan rushed back to the others exclaiming, “Come. Come quickly. Cowboy’s involved in the fiercest most awful gunfight I’ve ever seen. He’s wounded the soldier, the enemy of Dorothy, I think he’s blown his head apart just like a watermelon.”

“What are you saying, Juan,” said the pastor who had stopped the film, “are you in your right mind Juan? How can that be true, if the soldier is out on Galveston Island?”

Just as they started toward the embattled room, they heard what might have been a loud scuffle and the sound of Cowboy shouting, “Hold still scoundrel, coward. I have you now and you're going to do little with your Chinese rifle. It will be of little used to you.”

And there were a few more sounds of a tussle.

Juan said, “Don’t just stand and listen. Go in and stop the fight or help Cowboy. The soldier might not be dead, if he’s still lecturing him. I saw his blood, I saw his blood running
along the floor and certainly enough bullets found their target. I counted six shots, it might not be necessary, but maybe we should get in there.”

“Strike me dead,” said the innkeeper, “If Cowboy, or El Diablo, hasn’t shot up the room including two wine bottles off the counter and the spilled wine all over the carpet.”

“Must be what poor Juan thinks is blood,” the barber surmised.

And when she heard, the innkeeper’s wife rushed into the room and all the rest followed her. And they discovered Cowboy in the strangest outfit. He was in his pearl-snap shirt, which was just long enough to cover his privates, almost completely. His legs were very long and thin and hairy and his socks we're not particularly clean. On his head, he wore the helmet he thought was the golden cowboy hat. Wrapped around his left arm was the blanket from the bed toward which Mary still felt some resentment. In his left hand was a Forbath knife. In his right was an empty pistol. Still, cowboy was slashing the knife in all directions and shouting as if he really were fighting a soldier. Best of all his eyes were not open because he was still sleeping and dreaming that it was a furious fight. He had arrived at the ranch and was winning it back in Mortal Kombat, firing blanks but then holding the pitol by the barrel and smashing so many of Mary’s wine bottles that the entire room was covered with wine.
When the innkeeper saw this, he became so enraged that he, disregarded all danger to himself, and threw down on Cowboy and begin to give him so many punches with his fists that had Carl and the pastor not pulled him off, Cowboy would have lost the fight with the soldier. When it was all done, Cowboy did not awaken until the barber got the ice chest with water and threw it over him which roused Cowboy, but not well enough for him to realize that he had been dreaming or knowing what had been happening.

Dorothy, who saw how scantily and nakedly Cowboy was dressed, did not wish to come in and stood in the doorway. She understood the knife and pistol combat was between her hired gun and what she knew were bottles of wine.

Juan looked everywhere on the floor for the soldier's body and when he did not find it, he said, "Now, I know that everything in this motel is messed up. The last time I was here I was punched and I never knew who was doing it, and I never could see anybody and now the body of the soldier is nowhere to be found though I saw blood spilled left and right."

"What blood," asked the innkeeper, "don't you see, room wrecker, the blood has come from the wine bottles that little wh*** brought up here and this is what is soaking the carpet now. This Ranger is the most destructive force this side of h***. Wait until Austin hears about this."
“All I know,” responded Juan, “is that if I don't find the body, my luck will be exhausted and my island will dissolve away like salt in water.”

Juan awake was worse than his friend asleep, such was the faith he had in the promises his friend had made. When the innkeeper saw the denial of Juan and the damage done by Cowboy and he had sworn it would not be like the last time when they left without paying. This time they could not claim any immunity to escape payments for staying at the inn, including now the cost of the carpet and broken mirrors and furniture.”

The minister was picking Cowboy up. Cowboy was the leaving, the job finished? No, the hero stumbled over to Dorothy in the doorway. He was swaying left and right in front of Dorothy saying, “Now little lady, I'm certain that from this day forward to this low-down cowardly soldier can do you no more harm and I'm released from the promise I made to you, ‘cuz I've kept my end of the bargain.”

“Didn't I tell you,” said Juan when he heard this, “I told you, I wasn't drunk; now you can see my friend has indeed killed the soldier; now it's for sure my county judgeship is on the way.”

Who would not have laughed at the foolishness of the two dimwits? Everyone did, accept the innkeeper, who again cursed his luck.
But at last, with no small effort, the barber, Carl and the minister returned Cowboy to the bed where he again fell asleep, exhausted. They left him sleeping and went back to the TV room consoling Juan for not having found the soldier's body as "proof."

It was considerably more difficult for them to placate the innkeeper who was very grumpy. And the innkeeper's wife said with great shouts, "it was an evil moment in a cursed place when this Cowboy drifter came into my house. I don’t give a rats a** how much f***ed up the Mexican army is; he’s cost me too much. I wish I'd never laid eyes on him. The last time he left without paying the cost of the night in a bed with sheets and not just any room, our best, and now he's literally destroyed the entire room. The room nearest the office! Wine stains everywhere. Everything broken. Well, he won't get away with it this time' he'll pay me every peso he owes."

These words and others like them were said in great anger by the innkeeper and the innkeeper's wife and even the maid, Mary, assisted them in this, largely because the wine was her fault. The innkeeper's daughter said nothing, but from time to time she chuckled.

The minister tried to explain that he didn’t have the funds to repay hotel, by telling the story how he’d sent a large shipment of dope to Mexicom but the gold pesos he’d received had
been stolen by escaped prisoners. However, he promised to do everything in his power to compensate them for their losses: the gunpowder stained ceiling, the wine covered walls, the soaked floor, and in particular the broken furniture which they valued so highly.

Dorothy consoled Juan and promised him that as soon as it was certain the soldier had been mortally wounded and had crawled off to die, he’d receive the lumber concession. And she stated that she would soon be back on the ranch and he would be given a nice stand of trees to clear.

Juan was comforted hearing this, and he assured the ranch princess that she could be certain he had seen the body of the soldier. Dorothy said she believed him, and he should not worry everything would be fine and turn out just as he wished.

When everyone was calm the pastor wanted to finish watching the film because he understood how near the end they were. Carl, Dorothy and all the others asked also if they could finish the film. The minister, who wished everyone to be happy, pushed the play again on the remote. They watch the remainder of the film and it ended.

Everyone was tired, except the pastor who still wanted to debate. “This film seems fine,” he said, “but I can't persuade myself that it is true. If it is invented, the author invented badly because no one can imagine any husband foolish enough to
conduct the costly experiment that someone did. If this occurred between a cowboy and his lady it might be plausible but between a husband and his wife? It seems impossible. But I did not find it entirely displeasing."

No one responded. The innkeeper might have, but...

**EXT PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY**

But just then the innkeeper, glanced outside to the entrance to the inn and said, “here comes a profitable collection of guests. If they stopped here, we'll have some cash.”

“What kind of people?” asked Carl.

“The kind of men with cash,” responded the innkeeper, “Four men on choppers, with rifles and pistols, and all of the them wearing wrap around, full face, motorcycle helmets, black. With them a woman dressed in white riding in a sidecar and her face is covered too, but with a white helmet and there are two servants on loaded down trikes.”

“Are they very near?” ask the minister.

Responded the innkeeper, “they are arriving now.”

When the film ended, Dorothy had put on her motorcycle helmet and was about to take a drive around town. Carl went into the room where Cowboy was sleeping; they almost did not have
time to do so before everyone described by the innkeeper came into the parking lot.

The four riders, of a very rough appearance and disposition, dismounted and went to help the woman down out of her sidecar, and one of them took her arm and set her in a chair that was near the door of the room where Carl had gone to mop up wine. In all this time neither she nor the men removed their helmets or spoke a single word, but as the woman sat in the chair she sighed deeply and let her arms fall to her sides as if she were sick or weak. The servants who had come on trikes begin to unload the baggage.

The minister seeing this and longing to know who these people were, who dressed in this fashion and kept so silent, walked over to the servants, and ask one of them what he wanted to know.

The servant responded, “I can’t tell you who these people are; I only know that they seem to be very important, especially the one who took the lady in his arms and I say this because all the others have respect for him and do only what he orders and commands.”

“And the lady, who is she?” asked the reverend, “I don’t know that either, because during the whole journey I haven't seen her face. I’ve heard her sigh very often and each time it sounds as if her heart were about to break. It's no surprise we
don't know more than this because my companions and I have been traveling with them for it only two days, we met them in Jacksboro and they asked us, persuaded us, to go with them as far as El Paso and they offered to pay us well.”

“Have you heard any of their names?” ask the minister.

Dorothy was leaving on a cycle, but she noticed something strange. Perhaps it was intuition, or only something familiar about the man in black giving the orders.

“No, we surely haven't,” responded the servant, “because it's a wonder how silently they travel all you hear from them are the sighs and Psalms as the poor lady prays. And we feel sorry for her. We think she’s being forced to go wherever it is she's going. From what we've seen of her clothes she's a nun or she's going to become one dressed in white as she is. Which seems likely, and maybe she isn't marrying Jesus of her own free will and that's why she's so melancholy.”

“That's possible,” said the minister.

And leaving them, he walked back to Dorothy, who hearing the masked woman sigh and moved by her natural compassion approached her and said, “What troubles you? If it is an ailment that I know about, I can help, and you can sure I'll be happy to help i I can.”

In response to this, the sorrowful lady remained silent and although Dorothy repeated her offer, she maintained her silence
until the group’s leader approached and said to Dorothy, “don't waste your time, ma'am. It's no use to offer her anything since it is her custom never to give thanks for anything that is done for her and don't encourage her to respond unless you wish to hear her lie.”

“I've never told one,” said the woman, who up to this moment had been silent, “rather it’s because I'm so truthful and never learned any deceptive tricks that I find myself in this predicament. I call on you as my witness for the absolute truth...”

“Until she turns it into a lie,” the man said.

Carl heard these words clearly and distinctly because he was very near the woman who said them, separated from her only by the door to Cowboy’s room.

And when he heard them Carl gave a great shout exclaiming, “Lucky Charms! What is this I hear? Whose voice is this that is reaching my ears?”

The lady in consternation turned her head, when she heard the shouts from inside the room and not seeing the one who was shouting, she rose to her feet out of the chair and was about to enter Cowboy’s room. The man in black, seeing this, stopped her and did not allow her to take another step.

She was so distraught and agitated that she took off the helmet unrevealed and an incomparably beautiful face, though one
that was pale and frightened. Her eyes looked all around, darting back and forth with so much urgency that she seemed a person who had lost her ability to think. These gestures and movements, thought Dorothy didn't know why she was making them, filled her, and all who looked upon the lady with great pity. The man in black, now clearly her captor, held her tightly, and because he was so involved in holding her back and worried about outside interference, he felt the need to raise his helmet.

Dorothy, who had put her arms around the lady looked up and saw that the man also holding the lady was her rapes, Fernando. No sooner had she recognized him then from the bottom of her heart there rose a long full, “Howdy,” and she fell backwards in a low-blood-pressure faint and if the barber had not been close by and had not thought to catch her in his arms, she would have fallen on the concret.

The minister hurried over to remove Dorothy's helmet and splash her face with water, only then did Fernando recognize her for it was he who held the other woman and he turned deathly pale when he saw her. Even so, he didn't release Lacey for it was she who struggle to free herself from his arms having recognized Carl's voice, as he had known hers.

When Carl heard the “howdy” that came from Dorothy and when she fainted, he thought it had come from his Lacey and he rushed out of the room terrified, and the first thing he saw was
Fernando with his arms around Lacey. Fernando also recognized Carl and four of them (Lacey, Carl, Fernando and Dorothy) were left speechless with astonishment barely knowing what had snuck up on them.

All were silent as they looked at each other. Dorothy at Fernando. Fernando at Carl. Carl at Lacey and Lacey at Fernando and then the glares ran themself back in the opposite direction.

But the first one to break the silence was Lacey, who spoke to Fernando in this way, “Let me go for your own sake. Take your hands off me, you can't touch me with your solicitations, threats, promises, gifts; none can buy you that. See how fate and it's miraculous and mysterious way has brought my true legal husband before me and you know very well after a thousand costly efforts that only death is strong enough to wipe this man from my memory. He knows that I’ve kept faith with him.”

“That letter is a farce, and probably a ruse. Austin hasn’t the authority can’t marry anyone.”

“They can’t?” Lacey scoffed. Juan held his GoPro in one hand, and with the other, he pointed a pistol at Fernando. And the soldier began to listen.

“What God puts together let no man put asunder,” Juan explained tightening the frame.

Lacey turned to Carl and said, “I swear to God; I have not let him touch me.”
In the meantime, Dorothy, recovered from her faint, she heard everything Lacey said and realized who she was and seeing that Fernando still had not freed Lacey or responded to her words, Dorothy used all her strength to stand in front of him and shedding a great quantity of heart-rendering tears, she began to speak to him saying, “If you are seeing clearly and care to remember I'm Dorothy, unlucky and a bit lost until you change your mind about me. I am the humble girl, who you out of kindness, for the sake of your pleasure, for a few days, could call you her’s. I am the one who lived a happy life until hearing your urgent words and what seems to be fitting and lovely sentiments opens the doors to her modesty and now I have for you a son, a gift so little valued by you. I have come to this place and in this condition, out of desperation. I don't want you to think that I left because I'm pregnant, that's not so embarrassing for me. Babies are wonderful. I'm out here because of losing you.”

“Seriously?”

“You wanted me to be yours and you wanted it in such an urgent way that even though you no longer do, it will not be possible for you to stop me thinking of you as mine.”

“Considering all the love I have for you might make up for the beauty of the one you left me for. You can't belong to the beautiful Lacey because you're mine and she can't be yours
because she belongs to Carl. If you think about it, it would be easier for you to turn your wheel to loving someone who adores you rather than trying to force love from someone who clearly despises you. You begged me and you know I'd never done anything before, and you know very well how I surrendered completely to your desire. You have no reason to claim you were tricked. I advertised nothing that you didn't receive, and if you're as honorable as a soldier, then why have you gone to so much trouble to avoid me? You can't be content unless you stop running? Okay if you don't want to love me as your wife then at least take me as your mistress and raise our son. If I'm possessed by you I can think of myself as happy and frankly lucky again. Please don't leave me again; this incessant gossip is terrible. And I ask that you not ruin the old age of my parents and they're loyal in their service to your father; they deserve better. And if you think you are debauching your bloodline consider that many noble bloodlines in the world have taken this path and the woman’s side of the pedigree isn't all that relevant and a military career consists of virtue and if you lose yours, by denying our son, then you’ll have more of a career opportunity than I will. In short, I will say this one last time, whether you want me or not, I am your wife; your words prove that and you didn't lie in front of Mary the Mother of Jesus, unless you no longer respect yourself. Respect that
you scorn me for not having? Your promise and if this doesn't weigh on your conscience, I think it will work on your happiness. You can't enjoy a baseball game, or a film. You can't even enjoy your wife, knowing I'm out there with your son. All your greatest pleasures and happiness will be clouded."

The unfortunate Dorothy said these and other words with so much emotion and so many tears that all those present even the hard men who accompanied Fernando were moved. Fernando listened, not saying a word, until she concluded speaking, and then he too began to sob and heave so many sighs that one would need a heart of stolen brass not to be affected.

Lacey watched Dorothy, and she was moved by her speech as well. She was astounded at her intelligence and beauty and although she wish to approached her and say some words of comfort, Fernando still held Lacey tightly in his arms and would not release her.

Fernando filled with consternation and confusion stared at Dorothy for a long time and then lowered his arms releasing Lacey and said, "You have won. You and the baby are beautiful, and you have won not because I'm a soldier but because I'm no longer able to deny so many true spoken words in such a rapid-fire manner."

When Fernando released her, Lacey fell so faint and almost fell, but since Carl was so close to her standing behind her, he
defied all danger and hurried to support Lacey and take her in his arms. He said, “if you need to rest, sweet wife of mine, you will find none more secure than these arms that welcome you and welcomed you in the past when it was my luckiest day. I’m happy to finally call you mine.”

At these words, Lacey rested her eyes on Carl and having recognized him first by hearing his voice and then seeing him she was almost mad with joy and unconcerned about modesty, she threw her arms around his neck and put her face close to his and she said, “You are my man. No matter what luck you have or what happens to me, I'm with you.”

This was a strange sight for Fernando to digest and for all the others not so much. They marveled at so unusual a turn of events. It appeared to Dorothy that Fernando might take revenge on Carl, because she saw him move his hand towards his gun and as soon as this thought occurred to her, she hastened to throw her arms around his neck kissing him and holding him so closely that he could not move.

In her tears, still thinking, she said flowing tears, “What do you intend to do shoot him? It's an odd situation; a woman, your true wife and mother of your child, here in your arms and the woman you want instead is in the arms of her husband by Texas and God’s law. You think we need a 'Texas redo'? To undo this? Maybe you want to reward my consistent and steadfast love?
I'm standing here in loving tears; so you are going to let it rest? Let them enjoy their time without gunplay or interference.”

Dorothy glanced at Juan who still held both items (camera and gun) clearly on Fernando.

“You'll be known for your generosity, and noble heart, and everyone will see you in that light. Given the revolt and the need for good public relations... politics is more powerful than an appetite; don’t ya think?”

As Dorothy was saying this, Carl had Lacey in his arms but didn't dare take his eyes off Fernando, determined that if he made any move against him he would defend himself and attack anyone who threatened him even if he might be killed.

But then our good friend Juan Seguin, put down the pistol but not the camera, approached Fernando and implored him to, “consider Dorothy's sincerity.”

The barber reasoned, “and if what she said is true, and we believed it undoubtedly is, then you should not allow her to be cheated of her hopes.”

The minister chimed in, “You should accept that it was not by chance but the will of divine providence that you four all met, and at so unlikely a place, and you are advised to admit that only God can take Lacey from Carl and the new Republic of Texas says that only death could take Lacey from Carl.”
The innkeeper’s wife argued, “and even if they were put under with a sharp edge shovel, they might consider their death joyous in the face of bonds as indissolvable as these.”

The innkeeper added, “It is the height of reason to show a generous heart, overcoming and conquering yourself and by your own free will permitting the happy couple to enjoy the happiness already granted them by the Austin government.”

The Honduran spoke, “Look at Dorothy and realize how beautiful she is. Surely, you can see that few, if any women, are her equal, and none that I’ve seen are her superior.”

The innkeeper’s daughter said, “And in addition to her beauty, you should consider her humility and her great love for you and above all you should realize that if you valued yourself as a gentleman and as a soldier you can really do nothing other than keep the promise you made.”

One of the rough fellows with Fernando broke rank and said, “By keeping your promise, you would keep your faith with God and satisfy all discerning people, including your father.”

The second soldier said, “Your father has plenty of power, don’t worry about him needing any family alliances. He’ll want you to be happy first.”

The third man in black hesitated but added, “Everyone knows and realizes that many a woman of humble birth, beauty and
virtue, weigh enough to rise to any rank and be equal to any officer. Such a marriage will not lower the officer.”

In the end, everyone added another round of words to these and they were of such a nature that any sane man would capitulate. Juan was about to raise the pistol again and shot the troublesome soldier. He could think of two, no three, reason he should and only one for him to hold back.

But the heart of Fernando melted. It had been always fed by machismo, jingoistic and illustrious blood. But the heart softened that day in the Texas sun and let itself be vanquished by truth. Fernando could not deny, even if he had wished to, the need to surrendered and ceded to the good advice sent his way.

He embraced Dorothy and said to her, “Dorothy, it is not right for the woman I have in my heart to run around West Texas uncertain and unsheltered. I see your fidelity and intend to give you the love you deserve. What I ask is that you don't punish me for my poor behavior, ingratitude and negligence. This is been a great tragedy and let's put it behind us and to prove to you that this is true, turn and look at Lacey who is now content and in her eyes you will find forgiveness for all my errors since she's found and obtained what she desired, and I have found in you what pleases me. May she live safe and content for many long and happy years.”
And having said this Fernando embarrassed Dorothy again and pressed his face to hers with such tender feeling that she had to choke back the tears that were undeniable signs of his love and repentance. But the tears of Lacey and Carl were not held back either nor were those of almost everyone present and so many were shed for one's own joy and for the joy of others that it seemed as if some second calamity had befallen them all.

Even Juan cried, although he later claimed the reason he had cried was his discovery that Dorothy was not a ranch princess from whom he had hope to retrieve a lucrative timber concession.

Everyone's disorientation lasted for some thirty minutes, was the two couples disspeared into rooms. And after that time, at least that long, Carl and Lacey went to speak to Fernando, thanking him with so much restraint and courtesy/kindness. It was so sincere that Fernando did not know how to respond and so he embraced them displaying great love and civility.

Carl and Lacey then asked to speak with pastor, in private, and they went back into the room. There they admitted that the claim of a legal Texas marriage had been, in fact, a ruse and that they wanted to now be married legally. The pastor said he had thought it a clever trick and that, fortunately, it had worked. He married them without witnesses and no one would ever
question it. Juan knew nothing about it, so this scene did not appear in the Mexican propaganda film.

While this secret wedding was going on, Fernando and Dorothy made pillow talk and he asked that she tell him how she’d come so far from San Antonio. Briefly and discreetly, she told Fernando everything she had told Carl earlier, which pleased Fernando.

Fernando’s traveling companions were so happy they began flirting with not only, the Honduran girl, the innkeeper’s daughter, but also the innkeeper’s wife, openly and without embarrassment.

When Dorothy finished, Fernando told her what happened to him in Jacksboro after the letter was discovered in Lacey's wedding dress, the letter in which she declared that he was Carl's wife Texas wife and could not be Fernando's Mexican wife. He admitted that he had wanted to kill her and would have done so if the pistol hadn’t misfired. Then he said he had felt resentful and humiliated and he left the house determined to have his revenge at a more convenient time. The next day, he learned that Lacey had fled her parent’s house and no one in the town would say where she was for a week.

When she was discovered, she was in a woman shelter where she desired to remain for her entire life, if she could not spend it with Carl. As soon as he learned this, Fernando chose
the three professional soldiers to accompany him and they went to the shelter, but did not attempt to speak to her, fearing that as soon as it was known that they were there the shelter would be made more secure. So they waited for a day when the delivery door would be open and left two of his companions to guard the door while he, with the third, entered the shelter looking for Lacey, whom they found in the office talking to a counselor.

They seized her not giving her a chance to resist and brought her to a place where they had prepared everything they would need to keep her. They had been able to do all this with impunity because they were military, and the shelter was in fiercely loyal Sierra Blanca County and a good distance from any strife.

Fernando said that as soon as Lacey found herself in his power, she had fallen into a faint and when she regained consciousness, she had done nothing but cry and had not spoken a single word and so accompanied by silence and tears they had come to Fort Stockton, which for him had been the same as coming to Heaven, where all the misfortunes on Earth are repaired in a roadside inn.
Juan thought about all of this with a very downcast spirit for he saw that his chance at a big payoff was disappearing and going up in smoke and that the lovely ranch princess had suddenly turned into the soldier’s true wife and he was no longer the rapist, and all the while his friend and only person clever enough to do something about it was in a deep sound sleep and unaware of anything happening.

Dorothy could not be certain she had not dreamed this great story; Carl was in the same frame of mind. Lacey had the same thoughts as Fernando, thank Heaven for its mercy and an extra thanks for rescuing them from the terrible daze they were in and threatened their good name, and they said the daze had threatened their soul.

All the people at the hotel were pleased and rejoiced when the desperate affairs came to a happy outcome. Fernando mistook the Lutheran minister for a priest and confessed and threw himself into a religious fervor. Add to that Fernando confessed his sins, found Jesus, and a protestant Jesus at that, and swore allegiance to the Texas Republic. He then was told how important Cowboy was and important a cook Cowboy was and how important it was for him to return home.

The reverend, a judicious man, put the final touch on everything by congratulating them all on the happiness each had.
achieved, but the one who is most happy was the motel manager’s wife because Carl and Fernando paid her for all the damage and all the cost she had incurred on Cowboys count. Only Juan was dejected and so with a sullen expression, he went in to see his friend who eventually two days later awoke and said, “Feel free to sleep all you want now and not worry about killing any soldier or returning the ranch to its rightful owner; it's all over and done with.”

“I certainly believe that,” responded Cowboy, “because with that fight I’ve had, the most unusual and breakneck battle I think I shall ever have in all my days and with a six-shooter pistol-whipping him, I killed him dead and so much blood poured out of him that it ran in streams along the floor as if it were water.”

“As if it were actually spilled from bottles and it was red wine? Watch your ass should I say,” responded Juan, “because I want your ass to know, in case you don't already, that the dead soldier’s head was a wine bottle, his blood the red wine and the soldier you pistol-whipped has robbed you of our ranch and me my trees. D*** the sad luck that works in this hotel; d*** it all to h***.”

“Madman, what are you saying?” ask Cowboy, “have you lost your mind?”
“Get your stupid a** up,” said Juan, “and you'll see what ranch you've won and what two new husbands have had to pay your damages. You’ll see the ranch princess transformed into an ordinary chick named ‘Dorothy’ and other developments that will amaze you, if you can see them for what they are.”

“I shall not marvel at any of it,” replied Cowboy. “because if you remember the last time we were here I told you that all the people that live in this motel are shape-shifting dope fiends and it would not surprise me if the same were true now.”

“I'll consider anything,” responded Juan, “like my day on the Tilt-A-Whirl was that kind of thing, but it wasn't if it was real and true and I saw the Chinese carny who held the ride’s controls and he was rejoicing and laughing. And though I'm a simple man and a patriot I believe it true. When you can recognize people, there’s no demon. The only thing I know to be true was just a lot of dizziness, vomiting, bruising, and a lot of bad luck.”

“Well then, I'll remedy everything,” said Cowboy, “give me my clothes and let me go out there ‘cuz I wanna see the morphing you claim.”

Juan handed him his clothes, and while he was dressing, the minister told Fernando and Lacey about the madness of Cowboy and the stratagem they had used to take him away from the Guadalupe Mountains.
The minister also related almost all the adventure that Juan had related to him with astonished and made them all laugh, for they thought what everyone thought it was the strangest kind of madness that had ever afflicted any drug-addled mind.

The barber added that the fortunate change in Dorothy's newly-acquired fate prevented their plan from going onward, and it would be necessary to designs another plan so they could take him home, back to his primary work. Carl offered to continue to past Jacksboro and have Lacey act the part of the ranch princess.

“No,” said Fernando, “by no means. I want Dorothy to go on with the ruse. Cowboy's town is probably not very far from here and I will be happy if we can find a cure for him there.”

Carl agreed, “It's no more than two days travel from here. Even if it were more I would be glad to make the trip for the sake of a cure.”

At this moment, Cowboy came out leaning on his rifle and wearing his gun belt, the golden motorcycle helmet on his head. Fernando and the others marveled at the strange battered appearance of Cowboy: his dry, yellow and sick face that was at least a quarter-mile long, his ill-matched weapons and his solemn demeanor. They remain silent waiting to see what he would say, and he very gravely and serenely turned his eyes toward the beautiful Dorothy and said, “I have been informed by my friend
that your ranch has been returned and your claim done because you've turned into an ordinary woman. I slept, but if I'm still a little bit high, please correct me. I'm afraid you've lost confidence in me and only feign ordinary to avoid me, but I guarantee there are lesser cowboys who have concluded more difficult tasks than to kill a soldier and no matter how arrogant because not many hours ago I found myself with him and I prefer to remain silent because I don't want anyone to say I'm lying, but time will tell.”

“You fought yourself two jugs of wine, not any soldier,” said the innkeeper.

Fernando ordered him to be quiet and not under any circumstances to interrupt Cowboy, and Cowboy continued saying, “I say then, ranch princess and disinherited lady, that if for the reason I'm mentioned you brought this change on yourself then again place your trust in me because there is no danger and you don't have to pretend to be ordinary any longer. In a few days, I'll kill the soldier who's infected you and give you back your ranch.”

Cowboy stop speaking and waited for the ranch princess to respond and she knowing Fernando's bent and that the hoax should continue until Cowboy had been brought home responded with agility and reserve.
“Whoever told you that I had changed and altered my story didn't tell you the truth, because I'm today the same woman I was yesterday. It is true that some alternation has been caused in me by certain events that have given me the best I could desire, but I have not for that reason stopped being who I was before and I still have the same intention I have always had to avail myself of the use of your gun. Therefore sir, let your goodness restore honor to the ranch who sired me. All that we have to do is begin again with the journey tomorrow and I'll let you work out the details.”

“This would be clever,” Dorothy said and when Cowboy heard it he turned to Juan and showing signs of great anger, he said, “You idiot, Juan, you must be the most confused man in Texas. Tell me you worthless piece of excrement, did you not just say to me that the ranch princess had been transformed into an ordinary girl named ‘Dorothy’ and that the soldier that I pistol-whipped was dead? Do you see how embarrassing this is to me? I swear,” and Cowboy looked up to the sky and clenched his teeth, “that I am about to do so much damage to you that, from this day forward, it will put some truth in your head.”

“You’re a** needs to calm down,” responded Juan, “because it might be true I made a mistake about the change in the princess but as for the soldier's body or should I say the wine, so poor and beaten, there's a lake of wine on the floor of the
room. If you don't believe me, the proof is in the pudding. I mean you'll have your proof when the motel presents you the bill for the damages. As for the rest of it, the ranch princess being the same as before I'm happy because I will in the end get my due perhaps."

“I tell you now, Juan,” said Cowboy, “that you are forgiven, a jackass, but forgiven and let us say no more.”

“Enough. Enough,” said Fernando, “let there be no more talk of this, and the lady says she will sit out tomorrow because I’m newlywed and I’d like to spend tonight in pleasant conversation, or perhaps amorous pursuits even. When day breaks, we'll all go with Cowboy because we all want to witness this ranch rescue enterprise.”

“It is I who should accompany you,” respond Cowboy, “you are the one now married to the woman, you take the ranch back. I have no map or any idea where we are but I appreciate your confidence and good opinion of me, which I shall try to improve on or die trying and even more if that's possible.”

Many words of praise and much military bravado were exchange between Fernando and Cowboy, but silence was imposed when a new traveler came to the inn.
EXT PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY

His clothes said that he was a Catholic recently arrived from Old Mexico for he was dressed in a sombrero, blue woven poncho, and white pants and he had a bandoleer and a rifle strapped to his back. When a Chinese woman came riding after him on a moped and also dressed in the newest Shenzhen fashion, she wore a small brocade cap and a long cloak covering every inch of her from neck to toe.

The man's appearance was strong and handsome, his age a little more than forty. His face rather dark with a big mustache and a carefully trim beard; he was confident and if he had been well-dressed he would have been an aristocrat.

When he entered, he asked for a room and when he was told there was none he seemed troubled. He approached the woman, whose dress made her seem priveledged, and lifted her down in his arms. Lacy, Dorothy, the innkeeper's wife, the daughter, and Mary walked up to see her clothes, which seems strange to them for they have never seen it like this before. They gathered around the Chinese woman and Dorothy, who was always charming courteous and clever thought that both she and the man who accompanied her was distressed by the lack of a room, and Dorothy said, "don't be worried, ma'am, not finding a suitable room here is almost par for the course. Even so, if you would
like to stay with us,” and she pointed to Lacey, “you'll not find a better place then down the road.”

The Chinese woman didn't say anything in response, but she rose from the lobby chair where she was sitting. She brought both hands together and inclined her head and bowed to show her thanks. From her silence and the fashion, they figured that she undoubtedly was a Chinese national. China being allied with Mexico, but she couldn't speak English or Spanish.

Just then the man, a former captive of a Chinese cartel, turned and seeing that all the woman were standing around his companion she was not respond to the suggestions directed at her, he said, “this woman barely understands my word and does not know how to speak any language, but a very little Spanish and that is why she is not answering your questions.”

“We only offered her,” responded Lacey, “her and a bed for the night, and she seems to have understood. Regardless of the politics, she deserves to sleep well and we are bound to help all strangers who need our help especially if she's a woman in a foreign land without language skills.”

“On her behalf and mine,” responded the former captive, “I appreciate the offer.”

“Tell me, sir,” said Dorothy, “is the lady a protestant or Catholic her dress and her silence make me think that she's what we would rather she not be.”
“She's been a Catholic, but her soul and body are now devotedly protestant because she has a very strong desire to be my wife.”

“Then she hasn't been born again?” replied Lacey.

“We've not had the opportunity for that,” responded the former prisoner, “since we left Mexico, her father's home, on the run from the law. Until now, she has not been in mortal danger that would allow her to be saved with all the decorum her devotion deserves.”

With these words, he woke everyone's desire to know who the Chinese lady was and who the former captive was, but no one wished to ask any questions. Not just then since it was clearly polite to allow them to rest, then later they could ask about their lives.

Dorothy took the strange lady by the hand, lead her to a seat next to her own, and asked what her name was. Dorothy thought the Chinese lady was prettier even than Lacey, and Lacy thought vice versa about Dorothy. Fernando asked the former captive where they had traveled from but the man replied that the woman’s her name was Senora Aisin Gioro Puyi, and as soon as the Chinese woman heard this she understood that what she had been asked and hasten to say with a lot of charm, “no not Puyi, Katharina. Katharina.”
In this way, she indicated that she was not the daughter of the well-known Aisin Gioro cartel don, but she was just simply "Katharina." These words and the great emotion with which the Chinese lady said them brought more than one tear to the eyes of who was knowledgeable, the minister and the barber. Lacey embraced her with a good deal of affection, saying "Yes. Yes. Katharina. Katharina." to which the woman responded, "Yes. Yes. Katharina. So Puyi no."

By the time night fell, Cowboy had smoke another bowl and they all sat in the former Whataburger, and they gave the best seat to Cowboy almost although he tried to refuse it and wanted the stranger to sit at the head of the table as a sign that he was a protector of a female defective/defector from China. Then came Lacy and Dorothy and facing them Carl and Fernando and then the others including the reverend and the barber. And in this order, they enjoyed their meal, even when Cowboys stopped eating and began to imagine someone asked him, "which is mightier, the pen or the sword;" what the barber actually had asked was "Which is better, to clean a pig pen or be bored?" Cowboy began to speak his philosophy, but their memorable time together wasn't deflated.

"Truly if you think about it the work of Rangers and we're all present at this time. It’s extraordinary; for who in this world coming through that saloon door and seeing us as we appear
now would believe the deed that have been done today. Who would say that these ladies are all ranch, vineyard and cartel princesses? There can be no doubt that this art and profession exceeds all others endeavored by men for the more dangerous something is the more it should be valued anyway with those who say that the pen is mightier than the sword I can offer that the pistol may surpass both. If you don't agree, consider that knowing the enemy's intentions, surmising his plans and stratagems, foreseeing difficulties, harassing tyrants. All these actions of mind in which the body plays no part. If true spirit is required for both letters and weapons, let's judge which is more effective. Letters might bring a man or woman together but the purpose of firearms is peace, which is the first and best desire of men. And so the first news that the world heard on this day was from my rifles, glory be to God in the highest and on Earth peace goodwill to men. And they greeting the best teacher on Earth and Heaven taught his disciples and Facebook followers was they should say ‘peace be in this house’ and often he said to them, ‘my peace I give unto you’ and ‘my peace I leave with you’, ‘peace be with you.’ This peace is the true purpose of war. In saying ‘firearms’ it’s the same as saying ‘war’ except yet as true that's the purpose of war is peace, the greater than the purpose of letters.
“Now let's talk about the hardships of letters versus armed men. Keyboard cowboys versus real men.”

In this manner, with some reluctantly cogent arguments, Cowboy continued his diatribe; none of the others in the restaurant were listening to him. At the same time, an outsider would think he was a learned gentleman whose profession just happened to be violence.

He went on saying, “I can say then that the hardships of the keyboardists are basically poverty; because they're all extremely poor, and having typed what he had to say, they suffer poverty. It seems to me that there is nothing more to say about their bad luck because they chose books over the weapon, and if they are poor and have nothing that's good they might suffer hunger, cold, and nakedness, and sometimes all three at the same time. They might, in hunger, need to take the leftovers from others, but the worst misery is what keyboardists must sometimes visit the food bank or soup kitchen.

“I don't want to mention the lack of nice shirts, shoes and clothing that is, but all this rough and difficult time ends once their fame is achieved. Then they can rule the world from a comfortable chair, building air-conditioned and with their belly's full.”
But, that was only half of it. "How can the fear of want and poverty," Cowboy a wordsmith in his own mind, "ever equal the fear of the soldier who finds himself besieged in the Alamo breathing anthrax or sarin, knowing Mexican bombers are coming their way toward him. He can't leave for a lot of reasons or flee the danger that threatens him. All he can do is inform his captain of the situation, so that he can remedy it with what's available, and he might be quite fearful waiting for the moment when he will suddenly he'll be paralyzed or amputated against his will."

Cowboy continued his delusional talk, "Happy where those blessed times that lacked the fury of the diabolical weapons: artillery, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, who's inventors, in my opinion, are in H*** receiving their just roasting. It grieves me greatly that I have to practice my profession in an age as despicable as the one we live in now; but at the same time, my hopes are resting on confronting more dangerous than those faced by Cowboys in the Western times. The more the dangers the more the fame."

Cowboy gave this long discourse while the others were eating, and he forgot to eat more than two bites, although Juan told him several times that he should eat and that later there would be a time for speeches. Those who gleaned what he was
saying were overwhelmed with pity at seeing him intelligent but knowing he might fly off the handle at any moment.

For the sake of peace, the minister said he was correct and everything he said about Rangers and wordsmiths. He had learned degrees and actually did agree with the importance of the fighting man. They finish their meals, the tables were cleared, and after that, the innkeeper's wife, daughter, and Mary finishing finished soaking up the wine and preparing Cowboy’s room for the Chinese women.

Fernando asked the former captive to tell them the story of his life, which was bound to be unusual and interesting as he had showed them by arriving in the company of the beautiful Chinese woman, really only still a girl. To which the captive responded that he would gladly do as he asked, though he feared the story would not give them the pleasure they expected. Even so, in order to oblige them he would tell it. The minister and the others thanked him and again they asked him to begin and seeing himself asked by so many said that more entreaties were not necessary when one request was more than enough.

“And so let you all listen up and you will hear the true story that could not be equal by fiction writers with so much care in artfulness. When he said this they all stopped eating and became absolutely silent and seeing that they had stopped
talking and we're waiting for him to speak in a calm voice he began his story saying...

EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY

“My family had its origins on the Llano Estacado where the waterwell proved kinder and more generous than most places. Even in the extreme draught of the area, my father was known as a rich farmer and he truly would have been one if he had been a skilled in preserving his wealth as he was in spending it. This propensity for being generous and a spendthrift both comes from his having been a soldier in his youth, for soldiering is a school where the stingy man becomes liberal and the liberal man becomes prodigal and if there were any soldiers who are miserly they are (like monsters) very rare.

“My father exceeded the limits of generosity and bordered on being the prodigal, something of little benefit to a man with a wife and children. My father had sons, half a six-man football team, all of an age to find a profession. Seeing as he said that he could not control his own nature, he decided to give away the cause of him being poor and a spendthrift. He resolved himself to give up his money and thus avoid the temptation to spend. And so one day he called the three of us into a room where we could be alone and he said, something similar to what I've just said.
“My sons, to say that I love you and that is enough for you to know and say that you are my children and to understand that because I love you it I’m taking measures to exercise control in preserving your inheritance. What you need to understand is that I have a problem spending money, wasting it and I don’t want to waste your future as if I were your stepfather. I want to do something that I have been thinking about for a long time and have and after mature consideration have decided to do. You are all of an age to choose a profession or at least to select an occupation that will bring you honor and profit when you are older. What I have decided is to divide my fortune into four parts, three I will give to you each, one receiving exactly the same share and the forth I will retain to keep me, and your mother, for the time we remain alive. But after each of you has his share of the estate, I would like you to follow the path indicated. There is a proverb in Texas one that I think is very true, as proverb all are for they are brief maxim's taken from long experience. The one I have in mind says, 'The sea, the sword or law law.' In other words, whoever wishes to be successful and wealthy should enter the law, or go to sea, or enter military service.

“I say this because I would like it if one of you would pursue a career in the law, another commerce and the third he'll serve the government in war. The soldiering because as they say,
history teaches us that nations are frequently over-run by politicians who, in their self-interest, chose to buy guns over butter.

But no profession will bring merit and fame in a week. I shall give each of you his entire share in cash, down to the last peso, as you’ll see. You will tell me now, if you wish to follow my opinion and advice and what I have proposed to you.”

The man with the Chinese women said, “And because I was the oldest he ordered me to respond first, and after I had told him not to divest himself of his fortune, but to spend as much of it as he wanted for we were young and could make more money in our own lives. After a stern look from him, I buckled and concluded by saying I would do as he wished and my choice was to follow the military profession.

“My second brother made a similar statement that he chose to go to China using his portion to export cotton and then import consumer goods here by ship. The youngest, and I believe the wisest, said he would enter the law and complete the studies he had begun school. When father had finished expressing agreement in our choosing, he embraced us all, and then in as short a time as he had stated, he put into effect everything he had promised and gave each of us his share, which I remember amounted to 3 million gold pieces and an uncle of ours bought
the entire farm so it would stay in the family and paid for it in cash.

“The three of us said ‘goodbye’ to our good father on the same day and on that day, thinking it was inhuman for my father to be left old and the without his fortune. So I attempted to persuade him to take two of my three million because the remainder would be enough for me to acquire everything I needed to buy rank a military. My two brothers, moved by my example, each gave him a million gold pesos so that my father had four in cash and another three million that was apparently the value of his portion of the estate, which he did not want to sell but kept as land.

“In short, with a good deal of emotion and many tears, we took leave of him. He and the uncle, I mentioned, asked us to inform them whenever possible about our affairs, whether preposterous or prosperous. We promised we would and they embraced us and gave us their blessing. One of us set out for Austin, the other left for China, and I took the road to Corpus Christi where I had heard of a privateer ship loading weapons bound for the civil war in Greece.

“It has been twenty-two years since I left my father's house and in all that time though I have written several letters I have not heard anything from him or my brother's. I enlisted and embarked in Corpus Christi, arrived in Liverpool, went on
from there to London where I got these tattoos, and from there I was sent to Athens to fight. I was already on a ship to Greece when I heard of the EMP.

“Later with the Mexican aggression and Reconquista, their Reconquista, I sailed with Admiral Kalper, under a famous captain from San Marcos name Langston Hugo. Sometime after our expeditionary force landed in Houston, we heard news of the alliance that President Bryan had made with England and Canada to fight our common enemy, the Mexicans. Mexican marines had recently conquered the island of South Padre (the last piece of Texas real-estate) which had been under the control of the Texas National Guard, a lamentable and unforgivable loss.

“It was known that the commanding general of this Anglo Alliance would be Anthony Bryan, the full brother of our good President William Bryan. Confronting the Mexican’s, and taking back California was stated priority of the alliance and the reports of the great preparations for war moved my spirit, and excited my desire, to be part of it. Most specifically there was a promise that, at the first opportunity, I would be promoted to Captain. I chose to leave mercenary work in Texas to become one of the last U.S. Marines and went to California and it was my good luck that Luis Maus of Fresno had just arrived in San Francisco on his way to Long Beach.
“Among all the unfortunate men who were there, the Anglos who died there were luckier than those left alive. I was the most unfortunate for contrary to what I might have expected in naval warfare, instead of being burned to death, I found myself, on the night following that disastrous defeat, in the brig of an antiquated Mexican diesel destroyer, one we had sold them thirty years prior, with my hands and feet shackled and this is how it happened.

“Marco Ignatius governor of Baja California, a daring and successful pirate, attacked the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hurst, leaving only three sailors live and they were badly wounded; the Cutter Pulitzer on which I and my company were sailing came to her assistance. In doing what was needed, I jumped onto the Hearst but my soldiers were prevented from following me and so I found myself alone surrounded by my enemies, who were so numerous I could not successfully resist them. Finally, covered with wounds, they took me prisoner and probably from the history you know that Ignatius escaped with his Mexican navy but five U.S. ships found deep graves. I was taken to Acapulco where Ignatius was made commanding Admiral of the Pacific because he had won the battle.

“The following year, I found myself in a Mexican prison at Veracruz and I want to tell you that we lost a chance to destroy the entire Mexican Navy. We all watched the fleet assemble, all
in one location, but the prison guards would not take any amount of bribe to let a message out; escapes were attempted with the idea to leave out across the land to warn our forces in Texas. So when the attack came on South Pardre, it happened not through negligence of our POWs, but because of the arrogance of the Anglos and bad luck that we lost the last of the Gadsden purchase, Texas west to California. We’ve been and continue to be punished.

“And so Hugo withdrew to Galveston Island and put his people ashore he fortified the entrance to the port of Houston and remain there until Ignatius attacked there as well. I was soon joined in prison by the son of the infamous Cajan Massosoit and he was beaten until his soul went to Heaven. So cruel was our treatment, after that, I thought perhaps I would pass as well.

“We were taken to Monterey and the following month we heard how Ignatius had conquered Houston thereby destroying the hopes of Admiral Kalper, the wisest and most Brave American naval commander. General Garza hen attacked, the following month, at San Antonio. The city was lost too but the Mexicans had to take square blocks at a time because the Texans who defended it fought so valiantly and fiercely that they killed more than 25,000 Mexican soldiers and it too more than twenty-three general assaults to take it.
“The Alamo, never considered impregnable, was the last redoubt to fall (again) not because of any fault of the defenders who did everything they should have done and all they could do but because experience has shown that since 1836 how easily earthworks could be breached. Their demise is quicker and more certain, and to be honest with a name like ‘The Alamo’ and with the lore the name has always carried, who would come join in its defense? In hindsight, it was the general opinion that our forces should not have closed themselves inside the Alamo but waited in suburban areas for more mobile and guerrilla campaigns.

“History repeats itself because inside downtown San Antonio and the fort there were barely 700 Texans. How could so small number. no matter how brave. have defended the city center against the far larger Mexican army and how was it possible to hold ground with so many resolute enemies fighting in such a Hispanic city, betrayal at every corner.

“When the Alamo fell, three-hundred of our soldiers surrendered, everyone of them infected when taken prisoner, a sure and certain sign of their tenacity and bravery and how well they defended and protected their positions, the small historic and largely symbolic fort in the middle of the city. The commander, David Hopkins, a famous gentleman/soldier from Lufkin surrendered on advantageous terms. They captured Jake Watson,
the General in command of all of San Antonio, who did everything possible to defend the city, especially the fortress, and it’s said that its loss was felt deep in his bones and he died on the road to Little Rock at the exact moment the fort fell. They also captured the general who refused to leave the Goliad fort; his name was Landon Posey, a Texan who was a great marksman and a courageous soldier, but a poor student of history.

“Many notable men died in those two forts; one was Jeff Tigrett, a true hero, an extremely loud and extremely generous man, who showed his great liberality to his brothers.

“The famous Max Schlegel, and what made his death even sadder and was that he died at the hands of the Texicans who he trusted when he saw that the fort was lost they offered to take him, dressed him as a Mexican to Port Aransas where the trucks from San Antonio came for fish and seafood. These Texicans cut off his head and took it to the commander of the Mexican fleet who can confirm for them the proverb, ‘for the treason we are grateful, though we find the traitor hateful.’ And so they say the Mexican fleet commander ordered the two who brought Max’s head to his flagship to be hanged, because they didn't bring the Byrne to him alive.

“Among the Anglos captured in the Alamo, there was one named Mike Lunney, a native of Lampasas, who had been an Ensign and a soldier of great merit and rare intelligence. He had a
special gift for what they call poetry; I say this because his luck brought him to my prison in my tank, confirmed as a prisoner of war, and before we left that jail, this gentleman composed the entire sad history of the Reconquista in verse. One volume for the loss of San Antonio and the other for the loss of Houston, The truth is many of us learned them by heart, and people always seem to enjoy them, however lamentable they are.

A former POW named Bigfoot Martinez, after spending two years in Monterey, escaped disguised as a Cuban in the company of a Greek spy. I do not know if he made it to freedom, but I hope he did. Later, I saw the Greek in Monterey so I figured he might have just made it.

“Tomas ‘Tater’ White is now in Borger safe and sound and married with three children thanks be to God. In my opinion, there is nothing better than having your freedom after being treated so inhumanely.

Cowboy interrupted, “I know the poetry your friend wrote. You should recite some, ‘cause I'm certain you can say them better than I.”

“I'd be happy to,” respond to the former captive, “the one where the Alamo falls says…”

EXT. OLD MEXICO

“That is how I remember it also,” said Cowboy.
The captive then remembered correctly the poem dedicated to the fall of Houston. No one spoke of Austin.

And after the poetry, the captive continued with the story.

"Then the Army return to Mexico triumphant and leaving Mexican police in charge of their new conquered territory. A few months after that my captor Ignatius died and I was passed along to a wealthy industrial marijuana grower and financier; his son intended on ransoming me and some other POWS. His father had pampered him a good deal, yet he became the cruellest cow or raven anyone ever had ever seen. His name was Miguel Desoto and he had become very rich and he also became a cartel kingpin. I came from Veracruz and Monterey to near Ciudad Victoria, where the fields were located, fairly happily. To be farther from Texas was not good, but I wanted to see if my luck would be better near the sea then it had been in the mountains. I had tried a thousand different ways to escape and none had been successful.

“And in Tamaulipas, I intended to look for new ways to win my freedom for I never gave up hope. When I failed, I invented a new plan and invested in that no matter how lame or improbable. This was how I spent my life locked in a prison, but in Ciudad Victoria put in a house where they hold Anglo captives, those whose ransom was assigned to the Mexican president as well as some that belong to private individuals (people like me) and
these they worked they called ‘stockpiled’ which is like saying public prisoners who serve the individuals industrial works (slavery). These captives find it very difficult to obtain their freedom because they have no money, or family in Texas, and there wasn't really anyone to negotiate their ransom. Even if a ransom where to be collected, it would fall into a bureaucratic abyss as I've said. Some private individuals are brought to houses principally when they are ready to be ransomed because there they could be kept working and in safety until the ransom money arrives. The president's ransoms also don't go out to work, unless the payment is long delayed. I was one of these waiting to be ransomed. For when they learned that I'd been a captain, I told them I'd probably not be ransom because of my lack of wealth they did put me with aristocrats and other people waiting ransom.

“While hunger and poor clothing troubled us at times, even most of the time, nothing troubled us as much as constantly seeing this Desoto’s cruel punishment of Anglo’s each day. He hung someone and impaled another; he cut off the ears of many with so little provocation that the Mexican did it almost for sport. The only one who stood up to him was a Colorado National Guardsmen name Dinky Buerger who did many things that will be remembered by those people for many years and all to gain liberty.
“In any case, overlooking the courtyard of our prison home were the windows of a house of a wealthy and important Chinese businessman, and these as is true with most Mexican houses were more slits than windows, especially on the daughter’s bedroom. Yet even these were covered with very heavy awnings.

“One day, I happened to be on a flat roof of our prison home, fixing a leak, with three companions. We were passing the time by trying to see how far we could jump with our chains on for we were alone, all the other Anglos had going out to the marijuana fields to work. By chance, I looked up and saw that through one of these narrow little slits, I’ve mentioned, a wood dowel stick appeared with a handkerchief tied to the end of it and the dowel was moving about almost as if it were signaling that we should come and take it. We thought about it and one of the men who was with me went to stand under the window and see if it would drop. He did shuffle over there, but as soon as he reached the spot the dowel was raised and moved from side to side as if shaking its head ‘no.’ The Anglo came back and again the dowel was raised and lowered with the same movements as before. Another of my companions approached and the same thing happened again; then the third man approached and the same thing was repeated and seeing this I wanted to try my luck too and as soon as I place myself under the window it was dropped inside the courtyard and fell at my feet. I immediately untied the
handkerchief, which had a knot in it, and inside, there were 100
ten-peso bills. I was delighted with this discovery, and my
happiness was wow. But all I could think of is where that girl
had come from and why it was directing the money to me. Since
the signs of not wanting to drop the dowel for anyone but me
clearly indicated that I was the object of the favor.

“I took the money and return to the roof looked at the
window and saw a fine woman’s hand emerge and close the window
very quickly. With this, we understood or figured that a woman
lived in the house and must have done me this kindness and as a
sign. No one appeared to be watching us so we thought to thank
her for it; we waved a big Texas ‘howdy.’

“A short while later, a small Texas flag made of
handkerchiefs was dangled from the window and immediately pulled
back in. As soon as it was clear we would receive the signal
this confirmed that a Texan was probably a captive in that house
and was the one who had done us a good turn, but the beauty of
her hand, rings and bracelet and the money made us think she
wasn't a POW. The Mexican government refused to admit they even
held female prisoners of war but we figured she must be a
renegade Texan, for many had been kidnapped by the narco-
terrorist during the war and were still being used as sex
slaves. These Texas women were valued more in the narco industry
than women from their own nation. It was all our guessing and we
were far from the truth but we weren't aware of it at the time. We looked at the window for two weeks and saw no more signals.

“During this time though we made every effort to learn who lived in that house and if there was a renegade Texan there was no one who could tell us anything except that it belonged to a very prominent wealthy Chinese businessman named BaoGem Zhang, who imported toys electronic toys and exported CBD oils, both very lucrative business, but when we least expected another stack of hundreds, we suddenly saw the dowel appear with another handkerchief attached to it. This one had an even larger knot. This occurred when the courtyard, as before, was deserted. We made the same test each of the three men and the same ones I had with me the last time, but the dowel was not given to anyone but me. I dropped and I untied the knot and found 4,100 ten-peso bills and a paper written in Chinese at the bottom there was a Texas flag drawn. I kissed the letter and took the money, waved in a motion that I'd read the letter ASAP.

“We were all astounded at what had happened, but since none of us understood Chinese, our desire to know what the paper said was immense and the difficulty in finding someone to read it was even greater. Finally, I decided to trust a renegade a native of Puerto Vallarta who claimed to be a great friend of Texas and promised me he would keep my secrets I shared with him because certain renegade when they intend to return to Angelo lands take
with them signed statements from important captives testifying in whatever fashion they can that the Renegade is a moral man and always has had treated Anglos well and deserves political asylum. Some obtained here decorations with good intentions; others used them as a possible defense when they come to plunder north of the river. If they happened to be stranded or taken prisoner, they’d show their declarations and say these papers prove their intention to remain in the new territories. In this way, they avoid the initial violence of their captors and reconcile with Anglos and no one does them any harm. And then at the first opportunity, they return to Mexico to be the thieves they were before. I was counting on my friend to use the papers I wrote with good intentions to remain in the North.

“Well, my friend was one of these Renegades and he had statements from all our comrades attesting and in every way possible to his good faith, and if the Mexicans had found him with these papers, they would have burned him alive. I had learned that he knew Chinese well and could not only speak it but write it too. But before I told him everything I asked him to read the paper for me saying, I had found it in a crack in the wall of my cell and folded it and spent a long time looking at in analyzing it and murmuring to himself. I asked if he understood it and he said he understood it very well and if I wanted him to repeat it word for word I should give him an ink
pen which would allow him to do a better job. We gave him what he needed and he translated the letter slowly and when he was finished he said, ‘everything written here in English is exactly what this letter contains and you should know that where it says ‘Geman rebel’ it means Martin Luther.’

“We read the paper, and this was what it said, ‘when I was a little girl this my father hired a nanny who taught me in my own language a Lutheran catechism and she told me many things about the German rebel. The Lutheran nanny died and I know she did not go in the fire but she went to God because afterward, on her death bed, she told me to go to Texas and see the Lutheran Church in Serbin, that I'd love it and very much. She also directed me to see the statue of Luther in Austin. I did pray to Mary, without result of any kind, so now I pray to Jesus and suddenly here you are.’

“‘I have seen many Texans through this window and none has been so much a gentleman as you. I am young and some say beautiful and I have a good deal of money to take with me; see if you can plan how we can go and when we are there you can be my husband if you like and if you do not, it will not matter because the Good Shepherd will give me someone to marry. Be careful who you ask to read this note; do not give it to anyone. Do not trust any Mexican because they are false. I am very worried about this. I wish you would not show it to anyone,
because if my father finds out, he will throw me into the sea with stones. I put a dowel and a thread on it to place your answer there, and if you don't have anybody who writes Chinese give me your answer signing. Martin Luther will make me understand. May he and Jesus protect you and this catechism that I reread many times as the nanny taught me to do.'

“I consider if there was reason for the words of this letter to astound and delight us all, the feelings were so intense that the Texican renegade realize the purpose and the paper had not been found by chance but had really been written to one of us. He implored us that if what he suspected was true that we trust him and tell him so and he would risk his life for our freedom and saying this he pulled out from under his shirt a small Lutheran catechism of his own. He promised to keep it all secret. He said his last name was Buerger, and that he longed to be Lutheran again and in his native church. He was so sincere we told him the entire story hiding nothing.

“We agreed it would be a good idea to reply to the Chinese lady’s letter since we now had someone who could do that. The Texican immediately set about writing down the words I told him which were more or less the words I'll tell you because none of that has been forgotten and never will be.

“This was my response, ‘I am Lutheran and I'll be happy to escort you to Texas. I've not seen the church or the statue, but
may the true God, ma'am, the Holy Spirit who has given you the desire to go to Texas and see the church and take the instruction and become Lutheran yourself. Pray and ask how you can accomplish what you are looking to do. Mary is simply the mother of Jesus. On behalf of myself and all these protestants who are with me, we offer to do everything we can to help. Continue to write me and tell me what you intend to do, and I shall always reply, because almighty God has given us a Lutheran captive who speaks and writes Chinese as you can see. Therefore without fear of any kind, you can tell us whatever. As for what you said about marriage, if you reach Texas safely, I give you my word as a good man that you will find a husband, either myself or another more desirable man.’

“This letter was written and sealed. I waited two days until I was again alone in the courtyard, and then I went to the usual place under the window to see if the dowel would appear, and it did after a short time. As soon as I saw it though, I could not see who was holding it. I tied the letter to the thread and a short while later the dowel appeared again with a knotted handkerchief, white like a flag of peace. She let it drop and I picked it up and found in the handkerchief a variety of bills more than 50 different bills, which increase my confidence of bribing my way out of captivity.
“That same night the renegade returned and told us he had learned that a Chinese merchant sometimes lived in the house. He was extremely rich and had only one child, a daughter, who is rumored to be the most beautiful Chinese woman in Mexico. Many suitors had come to date her but she never found one she was interested in. He also confirmed that she had a Lutheran nanny from Graham who had died recently. Then we talked about how to best escape with her to Texas. I figured she already had an idea so I figured to let her orchestrate things, so we waited for the second letter. After this, the renegade told us not to worry it would work out in the end.

“For four days the courtyard was filled with people. When finally the courtyard was deserted, once more, the dowel appeared bearing a handkerchief so pregnant that it promised a newborn baby’s worth of money. The dowel came down to me and in the handkerchief I found another letter and a thousand one-hundred peso notes and no other denominations. The Texican said this is what the note said, ‘I do not know how we shall go to Texas. God has not told me, though I have asked him, but what we can do is this. I shall give you money through the window use this to ransom yourself and your friends and one of you will go to Tampico and buy a boat and come back for the others. You will find me on my father’s country estate which is near La Pesca not far from the ocean, where I spend the summer with my father. We
will not return here until Croptober. That night you can safely take me from there on a boat. Remember you must marry me because if you do not I'll ask God to punish you. If you don't trust anyone else to go for the boat pay your ransom and go yourself. I know you are more likely to return than the others for you are a gentleman and a Lutheran and my future husband. I will try to learn where exactly the estate is and when you come out to the roof, oh no, the courtyard and give you a good deal more money. God help keep you, sir.'

"This is what the second letter stated. When everyone had heard it, each man offered to be the one who was ransomed promising to go and return quickly and I also made the same offer. This was opposed by the Texican, who said that under no circumstances would he consent to one man leaving to freedom, until all of us could escape together for experience had taught him how badly free men kept their promises under made in captivity. Important prisoners had often used this same plan ransoming one man so that he could go to La Pesca or Tamiahua with small villages with enough money to equip a boat and return for those who had ransomed him but those men never returned because as he said the freedom they obtained, and the fear of losing it again, erased from their memories any obligation they had. Buerger told a strange story of an English gentleman in that situation.
“Eventually, what Buerger said was what we could and should do is give him the ransom money so that he could buy a boat in Tampico pretending that he planned to become a merchant and trade in seafood along the coast. Where he was in possession of the ship it would be easier to devise a way to get everyone out of Mexico, especially if the Chinese lady did as she said and gave us enough money to ransom everyone.

“The greatest difficulty would be that the Mexicans didn't permit Texans to buy, or rent a boat unless it was a large slow sailing vessel. They feared Texans would use a powerboat for making pirate raids. But a sailing vessel might be just right for a Texan who wanted to take a group of escaped prisoners. Buerger would avoid this problem by going to Tampico and taking on a perfectly legal Mexican to be his partner in the purchase of a boat and to ‘share in the profits,’ and by means of deception, he would become master of the ship and then all the rest would be simple.

“Although my comrades and I thought it would be better to buy the boat in La Pesca as the Chinese lady had suggested, we didn't dare contradict Buerger fearing if we did not do as he wished he might betray us and end our lives by revealing our dealing with Katharina and to protect her life we would certainly have given our own. And so we resolved to put ourselves in the hands of God, and the renegade, and we replied
to Katharina telling her we would do everything she advised because her advice was as good as if Martin Luther had told her himself what to say, and it was entirely up to her whether the plan should be delayed or put into effect immediately.

“Again I offered to be her husband and then on the following day the courtyard appeared to be deserted and using the dowel and the handkerchief several times she gave me 2,100 one-hundred peso bills and a letter in which she said that next Friday she was going to her father's estate by the sea and before she left she would give us more money and if it was not enough we should tell her and she would give us as much as we ask for because her father had so much money he would not miss it, especially since she had the keys to everything.

EXT. OLD MEXICO

“Before the two weeks had passed, our Texican bought a very nice sailboat with room for a bit more than 30 Anglo expatriates. To guarantee the success of his plan and lend it credibility, he wanted to sail to a town called Tampamachoco some miles from Tampico, where there is a brisk trade in shrimp and tuna. He made the trip two or three times, accompanied by the Mexican he had partnered with.

“In any event, each time the Texican renegade passed by in his boat he anchored in a cove not two football fields from the
country estate where Katharina was waiting, there the renegade
very purposefully join the Mexicans who were at the fishing
nets, so if there was trouble they’d say they recognized him. He
wanted to speak to Katharina as he later told me and tell her
that she should be happy and free of worry because he was the
man who would take her, on my orders, to an Anglo land. It was
not possible, because Chinese drug lords typically were
suspicious of everyone and everything. They allowed captives and
Texans to spend time with them and even work in the drug trade
but to speak with a daughter? Never! I was glad he didn't try to
speak with her, because she might have been alarmed to see her
affairs were being discussed with renegades.

“He didn't get to see her, but he proved to himself and us
that he could sail back and forth along the coast in safety and
anchor whenever and wherever he chose, and he saw that his
Mexican partner followed his instructions to the letter.

“I had been ransomed, and all he needed to do was find
Anglos in the prison to help sail and so he had he told me to
decide which of the prisoners, beside those who had been
ransomed. I told him who I wanted to take with me and arranged
for them to be ready the following Friday.

“Consequently, I spoke to twelve Texans, all of them brave
veterans who could leave the fields without difficulty. It was
no easy task finding so many at that time because it was time to
groom crops and the industrialists had taken most of the men doing that and I wouldn't even have found these if their owner hadn't decided to finish a new ship he had built at the Tampico's shipyards.

"I told them only that that on the following Friday in the afternoon, they were too sneak out one by one go to the far side of the Chinese country estate and wait for me there. I gave cash to each of them and these instructions separately and said that even if they saw other Texans, they were to say nothing, except that I had instructed them to wait in that spot.

"While I arranged this, I still had another task to attend to, which was most important to me. I had to inform Katharina of the progress we had made so that she would remain observant and alert and not be frightened if we came before she thought it possible. And so I resolved to go to the estate to see if I could talk to her and on the pretext of gathering greens. One day before my departure, I went there and the first person I met was her father who spoke to me in Spanish. He asked me what I wanted in his garden and who's captive I was. I replied that I was held by Miguel Desoto; I knew that the man was his great friend, and I was looking for greens to prepare his salad. Then he asked me if I was for ransom and how much my captor was asking for me. As we were exchanging these questions and answers the beautiful Katharina, who had not seen me for some time came
out of the house; she didn't hesitate walking to where we were speaking in fact as soon as her father saw that she was walking towards us rather slowly, he called and asked her to go ahead and approach.

“I can't begin to explain to you the great beauty or grace revealed to me by my beloved Katharina. I will say only that more electronic devices and diamonds hung from her body then she had hairs on her head. Around her ankles which were bear in accordance with the newest style, she wore two pulseras of fine gold, studded with even more diamonds.

“Later, she told me her father had traded 10,000 pesos worth of CBD oils for them, and the ones on her wrists were worth even more. She had access to a Jaguar XKE, old enough to be totally unaffected by the EMP; Katharina's father clearly owned the finest automobiles in that part of Mexico and had more than 20 classic cars. And she who is now the owner of my heart was the owner of all this. If she looks beautiful now after all this intrigue and travel, imagine how lovely she was that day in front of the mansion in all her finery and lithium connectivity.

“It's well known that the beauty of women has its ups and downs, it's rhyme and reason, all derived from what happens to them. The body is the window to the soul, although most commonly a beauty is demolished overtime. But at that moment, she appeared so richly attired and so exceedingly beautiful that she
seemed the loveliest woman I'd ever seen; furthermore, considering all that I owed her, it seemed to me that I had before me a dream-like goddess coming to Eden to ennoble my situation.

“As soon as she approached us, her father told her, I assume because it was in Chinese, that I was a prisoner of his friend, Desoto, and had come to pick a salad. She began to speak in Chinese. Her father translated, and she asked me if I was a gentleman and why I'd not been ransomed. I replied that I had been ransomed and was only waiting on a ship north. She wanted to know my price. I told her the pirate got 15 thousand pesos for myself, to which she responded. ‘In truth, if you belonged to my father, I'd make sure that he didn't ransom you for less than twice that amount because you Texans always lie and pretend to be poor to deceive the poor Mexicans.’ We all chuckled.

‘And when you do return to Texas?’ asked Katharina’s father.

‘Tomorrow I believe,’ I said, ‘because a ship from Cuba is scheduled to sail tomorrow and I intend to leave on it.’

‘Do you think it might be better,’ Katharina replied, ‘to wait on a vessel from Texas and sail on that rather than on a ship from Cuba? The Cubans are not your friends.’

‘No,’ I responded, ‘it’s true eventually a ship will arrive from Texas that might take me, and I might wait for it
but it's more likely that I shall leave tomorrow because I'd like to be home with my people, with the people I love. I just can't wait another day even if it's a Cuban ship.'

"No doubt you must miss your wife," said Katharina.

"I'm not married," I responded, "but I have given my word to marry a woman as soon as I return."

"And this lady to whom you have given your word, she is beautiful?" asked Katharina.

"She is as beautiful as you are," I responded, "truthfully and she dresses a great deal like you."

"At this, her father laughed heartily and said, 'by God, you are very lucky she must be very beautiful if she resembles my daughter, who is the most beautiful woman in Mexico. If you doubt it look at her carefully and you will see that I'm telling you the truth."

Practically invited by her father, I did take the opportunity to look over her closely.

Katharina's father, who was a Chinese operator, who ran oils into China for decades and spoke very good English and very good Spanish, acted as our interpreter for most of the conversation for although she spoke a little English she tended to declare her meanings more by gesture than words. As we were talking, a Mexican came running, shouting that four emaciated Nebraskans had come over the fence of the estate and were
picking the fruit even though it wasn't ripe. The drug lord was shocked, as was Katharina because the illegal transients normally would be too fearful to pick the orchard of an estate with such an impressive enclosure.

“She said, 'They must be starving to be so insolent and overbearing to jump such a wall.'

“And so her father said to Katharina, 'Go into the house and lock yourself in while I speak to these dogs and you Texan, you go look for your salad and good luck in Texas.'

“I understood and he went to frighten the Nebraskans, leaving me alone with Katharina who began to give indications of following her father's instructions. But as soon as he was out of sight, she turn to me her eyes full of tears and she said...

“Sixteen shots rang out over the wall in the direction of the orchard. Her father probably didn't even aim but fired his pistol in the general direction for effect.

“'Tu Vives en Tejas' is what she asked, which means, 'are you leaving for Texas?'

“'Yes, Señora, but not under any circumstances without you. Wait for me on the beach, and don't be alarmed when you see us for there isn't any doubt that we will go to Texas.' I said this in such a way, and in Spanish, that she knew very well what I meant, and suddenly she put her arms around my neck and she whispered, "Mi bomboncita."
“And she began to enticingly sashay toward the house, luckily her father didn’t return from his sport to see it; he’d have known what was afoot immediately.

“Having done all I could further our scheme, I returned to the renegade and my companions and told them everything that had happened. They all laughed and teased me about how psyched I was about the prospect of marrying Katharina.

“Time passed and finally, the hour we longed for arrived and by following the plan and procedure, we had the opportunity we needed. On the designated Friday, our renegade anchored the boat at nightfall across from Katharina’s mansion. The Texans who would sail waited for me, and longed to storm the boat and get out of there, but they knew nothing about the renegade’s friendly arrangement and thought they would have to fight for control of the boat and kill for their freedom.

As soon as I and my companion showed ourselves on the playa all the other Texans came out of hiding. By now the beach was deserted and not a soul was seen but individuals headed for Texas. Since we were all together, we wondered what we should do first: go for Katharina or subdue the Mexican crew. As we were discussing this, our renegade leader approached and asked why we were waiting; the time had come. His Mexican sailors were not on guard and were actually sound asleep. We told him the reason for the indecision and he said the most important thing was to take
the ship, which could be done very easily and with absolutely no
danger, and then we would go for Katharina with considerable
danger because her father had demonstrated he carried a pistol
with a 16-round capacity.

“Everything seemed okay, so we rowed out to the boat.

“The renegade boarded it first, held up his pistol and said
in Spanish, “none of you move unless you want to lose your
life.”

“By this time, almost all the Texans had come aboard and
the Mexicans who were not very brave and especially frightened
when he used his pirate voice. None of them reached for weapons,
for they had few. Without a word, they allowed the Texas to tie
their hands. We threatened the Mexicans that if they raised any
kind of alarm or called out they’d be killed.

“When this was done, half our men remained on guard. The
renegade again acted as our guide and we went back to shore, to
the estate of Puyi, and it was our good fortune that when we saw
something the beach, it appeared to be only one guard. It was
night, but this figure couldn't have missed us, but they didn't
move an inch as we approached. One of the men raised a silenced
pistol, but luckily, another stopped him from firing.

The figure was Katharina, and she asked in a quiet voice
broken Spanish, “if we were Lutherans?” which was her delightful
way of asking “if we were Texans?”
“I replied that we were and that she should come down to the water.

“When she recognized my voice, she did not hesitate for an instant. Without a word, she dropped her bags and ran into my arms. She was so warm even on the Mexican summer beach, the contrast with the cool sea air was amazing. As soon as I felt her, I kissed her face. The renegade and two comrades appeared in awe, the others didn’t know her and were more fearful of the estate guards, but when the kissing was done, for some strange reason they all lined up to shake her hand.

The renegade asked her in Spanish if her father was in the house. She replied that he was asleep.

“Then we have to wake him,” responded the renegade, “and take him along with us and as much money as possible from the house.”

“No,” she said, “my father is not to be touched in any way, in this house there is nothing of value except what’s in a bag, and that is not enough to risk being caught.”

“There’s enough to make everyone here a small businessman when we return to Texas.”

“Just wait a minute,” she begged.

“She wanted to go to some palm trees down the beach and, saying this she returned quickly, and we should be quiet. I asked the renegade what had passed between them, and when he
told me, I admitted that there was nothing to do but wait for her.

“As bad luck would have it two of the Texans had done their assigned tasks and neutralized two guards. In fact, they then neutralized the remaining guards.

“Unknown to anyone, we’d recruited veteran Airborne Rangers. However lethal and silent, Katharina's father heard a noise and woke; he looked out the window and saw all the Texans. He began to shout and in an extremely loud voice sang out in Spanish, “Gringos! Gringos.”

These champions we’d hired rushed upstairs and before the man could find his pistol in the dark. In brief, no one was shot because of the good planning to throw the breakers to the house. Very good planning, but I can’t take credit for it. This was as much a surprise to me as Katharina. The Chinese father might have struggled, but when he saw his daughter was on the boat, he began to look pitifully pitiful, especially when he saw that I had her in a close embrace and that she didn't struggle or protest or shy away, but remained calm. Even so, she was silent.

“I could do nothing, the renegade many threats might have been carried out.

“In Chinese, she told the Renegade to please release the Mexicans and her father, because she'd rather jump overboard rather than see her father held prisoner on her account.
“The renegade told me what she said and I responded that I was happy to release them, but it wasn't a good idea at that exact moment. If we left them behind, they would alarm the Mexican Coast Guard and the Navy, and they’d come after us in the motorized cigar boats and end our escape, probably our lives as well. What we needed to do was set them off when we were nearer Texas.

“We all agreed, even Katharina; then in concentrated silence and a little cunning we raised even more sail, tipped the boat over and pointed her boldly north-north-east, toward South Padre Island, the nearest Island.

EXT. SAILBOAT OFF GULF COAST

“Because of a bad wind, we were kept from Brownsville. We managed to follow the coast towards Corpus.

“By the same token, we were afraid of running across one of the pirate schooners that trafficked to up and down the coast. The pirates were renegade Texans, for the most part, but Mexican bandits sailed the Gulf as well. But on the other hand, all of us hoped to encounter a powered ship that we could pirate. We felt we couldn't be defeated and would capture a powered ship on which we could finish our escape from more comfortably and more quickly.
“As we were sailing, Katharina hid her face in my arms so as not to see her father, and I could hear her calling on Jesus (not Mary) to help us. We had gone some 30 nautical miles when the sun found us a good tee shot from shore.

“Again more lamenting of the loss of the GPS satellites, 20 years before, we saw the shore was uninhabited with no one to report us, even so, we made a quick move seaward. We ate, for the ship was well provisioned.

“We headed for Brazosport since no other direction was possible. All this was done quickly with the ancient way of navigating. We travel at more than eight knots and the only fear was meeting a renegade ship. We untied and fed the Mexican sailors and even Katharina's father; we told them they weren't prisoners and would be set free at the first opportunity.

“Katharina's father responded, ‘I wish I could believe in your good nature, gringo, but I don't think you'll let me go so easily. I'm not that slow. You’ve gone too far to such trouble and risk rather a lot taking me. You would not let me go so easily. Specifically, you know who I am, what I do and you know how you can profit by giving me back. If you wish to name a price for me and my daughter, I'll gladly pay it.’

“When he said this, he noticed his daughter's ankles and the gold bracelets. When he saw them, she saw his pitiful face. She moved away from me, toward him, and she thought there would
be an embrace. But her father pulled apart her slicker and saw her fine clothes and jewelry. For being abducted in the middle of the night she was a bit overdressed.

“He said to his daughter, “What is this? Last night, before this terrible misfortune occurred, I saw you in your ordinary house close, and now you didn't have time for these clothes. Here you are wearing the finest of your clothes and jewelry. Answer me!”

“The basics of what the father said to his daughter was translated by the renegade.

“When her father saw as her feet a duffel bag where she kept her money and he assumed it was the money he had left in Monterey and had not brought to his seaside estate, he was distraught and he asked what was in the bag and how we'd captured it.

“To which the renegade replied not letting Katharina answer, 'Don't bother asking your daughter so many questions because with one answer I can satisfy them all. I want you to know that she's a Lutheran, and she ransomed us and helped the others escape prison. She's here of her own free will and I imagine she’s as happy as a puppy.

“Is what he's saying true, daughter?” ask the father, “You really are a Lutheran, and you have placed your father, and be honest, into the hands of his enemies?”
“I'm traveling to Texas to become one, but I didn't mean for you to get out of your bed, much less be here in the Gulf. I was only looking to help myself.”

“And what good have you done, daughter?

“As soon as this was said, the father jumped into the ocean. Katharina begged for us to turn around and rescue him. We did, but he swallowed a good deal of water and it took him two hours to regain consciousness. During that time, the wind changed and drove us back towards shore and we had to use our engine to keep from running ashore, but it was our good luck to reach a cove is beside a small point or cape that the Mexicans called Ostra, which is the place where the traitor who caused the loss of San Antonio lies buried. The Texans landed there, otherwise I would never have, but they did that day because it was a safe port to anchor.

“We ate again and fed everyone. We prayed with all our hearts that we find a conclusion to the situation.

“At Katharina’s request, the order was given for her father and the other Mexican, all of whom were unbound, to be put ashore. Because she did not have the heart to see her father bound and cast ashore on a deserted Texas beach, we promised her that we would release unbound when we departed. There would be no danger to us if we left them there.
The wind beginning began to calm and we put them all ashore. When it was time for Katharina's father to disembark, he said, “Texas, why do you think this perverse female wants to give me my freedom? Do you think it's because she feels compassion for her father? No, of course not, she has done this because my going with you, to whereever you are going, would only hinder her doing what she wants. Don't think she's changed her religion because her belief in the Catholic church is superior to yours, but only because she knows that in Texas there is more lewd behavior.”

“And turning to Katharina, while I and other Texans held him away from her because it looked like he might harm her, he said to her, “Shameless. Absolutely shameless. Why are you going blindly and thoughtlessly and in the power of these rednecks, our natural enemies? Curse it be the hour I fathered you. Cursed be the comfort and affluence which with which I reared you.”

“But seeing that he did not appear likely to finish anytime soon I hurried to put him in the dingy and from there he continued to shout curses, praying to Mary to ask God to sink us and to send termites to eat the boat.

“Come back, my daughter. I love you. I forgive you. Come back, give them the money; it's already. Here and come and consol your grieving father, I'll die in this desolate beach if you leave me.”
“Katharina heard all of this and she grieved and wept at everything and could only respond, “Pray to God, dear father. Jesus is the sole reason I'm a Lutheran; he may control your sorrow. God knows I could not help doing what I did. And these Texans owe me nothing for my decision for even if I had chosen not to go with them and to remain in my own house it would have been impossible given the burning desire in my soul to make this move. It only looks bad.”

“When the father had sat down in the dingy, we had set sail and could still hear his shouts, we could still hear his outrage. He shouted as we edged out of earshot.

“She gave a sign when her father could not hear her and we could no longer see him.

“That done, we concentrated on our journey which we were certain we would land a bit up the coast of Texas, by dawn the next day.

“But since the good rarely if ever comes to us simple country folk, but it usually accompanies or followed by some disturbing evil, it was our bad fortune or perhaps the result of the curses the Chinese had hurled on his daughter, for a father's curses no matter who he may be are all ways to be taken seriously.

“When we were out on the open sea and of the night had gone by and we were running under full sail, we saw a ship very close
to us with her sail unfurled and bearing slightly into the wind. She crossed in front of us so closely that we were forced to shorten sail in order not to ram her. As they had to turn hard and give us some room, they had gathered on the deck of their vessel and ask in a thick Cajun accent, who we were and where we were going. But since we figure the worst, our renegade captain said, no one should answer them for they are surely Cajun pirates and they plunder everything they come across Texans or Mexican, either and both.

"Because of his warning, no one said a word and when we had moved a little ahead of them and they were leeward of us without warning they fired two RPGs. The first cut our mast into halves and with it the sail fell into the sea. A moment later a missile hit us amidships; the entire side of the vessel was blown apart. We found ourselves in real danger and all began to shout calling for help to those on the other boat.

"Then they shorten their sails and lowered a skiff into the water and twelve Cajuns got in well-armed and holding spotlights. And they pulled alongside to help us.

"When we were all on board the pirate ship and they learned everything they wanted to know about us. As if they were our mortal enemies, they took everything we had and stripped Katharina even of the gold anklets she wore. But I was not so perturbed by Katharina's distress as I was my own fear that
after they had gone and taken her designs the pirates would not stop with the jewelry.

“Fortunately, their greed didn't go beyond the jewelry and money.

“Many of the pirates wanted to take us back to Mexico and ransom us again. If they took us back, their piracy might have been discovered. But the captain, and the man who took Katharina's jewels, said they wouldn't go to the Mexican ports but would return to Louisiana instead and so they agreed to give us a skiff and some provisions for the short journey that still lay before us, which is what they did the next day.

“As we came within sight of the coast all sorrows were forgotten as if they had never happened. It must have been midday when they put us in the boat giving us a Home Depot bucket of water and three cases of relatively edible peanut-butter.

“And as the beautiful Katharina was getting into the skiff the Cajun captain moved by some sort of sick perverted lust gave her 40,000 pesos, but refused to give her the gold bracelets.

“We climbed into the small boat and thanked them for their hospitality displaying more gratitude then sarcasm. They sailed away heading east-northeast and we with no star other than the land we saw before us, begin rowing so quickly that as we begin to set out we figured we might run into land before nightfall,
but since there was no moon and the sky was overcast we didn't
know precisely where we were and it did not seem wise to rush
for the coast as several of the men wanted to. They argued that
other pirates Mexicans or even Texans might be out making rounds
or returning to their homes at night.

“After a long discussion, we finally decided to approach
the shore slowly, and if the sea was calm enough to put ashore
wherever we could, this is what we did and it must have been
just before midnight when we ran the boat into the sand, climbed
out and took stale peanut-butter provisions up to a small hill.

“Looking out, there were no lights, not a single one. Power
had never been restored to this section of the coast, and of
course, you know that story. These areas we call ‘dark’. We
still were not certain and could not really believe that we were
standing in Texas.

EXT. BEACH ON THE TEXAS COAST

The sun took forever to come up it seemed. I thought it
wise to climbed to an even taller hill to see if we could see a
house or perhaps even a village. But though we looked in every
direction there was no village, no person, no path or road. Even
so, we resolved to move inland; we were bound to meet someone
soon who would tell us where we were.
“What troubled me the most was watching Katharina walking was a strain. Though I carried her on my back for a time she grew very tired. She rested and didn't recover, but she did not allow me to take her up again. With a great deal of patience and many small victories and with me holding her hand, we finally came on a wonderful noise, a cowbell of old.

“All of us looked around for it and at the bottom of a lonely tree. We found a young cowboy taking a break and idly whittling a stick with his knife. We called to him and he looked up and quickly scrambled to his feet, for the first of us he saw was the renegade and Katharina and because pirates typically look the way the renegade did, he probably thought an outlaw army was attacking him. And running with extraordinary speed toward his horse, he mounted shouting at the top of his voice, “Pirates! Pirates. Pirates have landed. Get your rifles!”

“His shouts confused us and we did not know what to do but assuming that the cowboy’s outcry would rouse the countryside and that the men, either Mexican or Texan, who guarded the coast would soon come to investigate, we agreed the renegade should remove his stolen Mexican hat and jacket and show only a simple shirt. We followed the same general path as the cowboy and expecting mounted troops to bear down on us at any moment -- the Mexican army or Texas gorillas.
“And we were not wrong because in less than two hours, we had come out of the scrub and into a plain we saw some fifteen men on motorcycles coming toward us at a quick trot. As soon as we saw them we stood still and waited for them, but when they rode up and saw so many poor Texas veterans instead of the pirates they had been searching for. They were perplexed and one of them asked us if by any chance we were the reason the cowboy had sounded the alarm.

“I said that we were and as I was about to tell them our story where we came from and who we were, one of the Texans ask a question, ‘Unless I'm crazy you are my uncle, Pedro Bustamante?’

“As soon as the Texas veteran said this the rider jump down from his cycle and rushed to embrace the man saying, ‘My nephew, I recognize you and frankly thought you were dead. Your mother and all your family we mourned you. Thank God. They'll all be overjoyed to see you, that you're alive. We knew you were in Mexico and just looking at you I bet you have one heck of an escape story. A miracle?’

“‘Pretty much, yes,’ said the young man, ‘and there will be time to tell you about it but my friends and especially the lady. Can we get some food and sleep?’
“As soon as the man realized that we were from the wars, they dismounted each of them and invited us to ride their horses into the city of Freeport, which was five or six miles away.

“We told them where we had left the skiff and some went to the beach to row it to the port. Others had us mount behind them and Katharina rode with me on a cycle. With the man’s uncle, the entire city came out to welcome us, for they had been informed of our arrival by a guard who had ridden a head. They were not used to seeing escaped POWS or ransomed men along that section of the coast. Most escapees had the brains to put in farther to the south, Brownsville or Corpus. But what really dropped their jaws was Katharina good looks, in something of a parade. Beside the exertion of the trip, her joy at finding herself in Texas, and freedom from fear, brought so much color to her face that unless I was deceived by my affection, I would have said there was no more beautiful a creature in all of Texas at least I'd not seen anything to compare. We went directly to the church which ironically was Lutheran and the doors open to us.

“As soon as Katharina entered the sanctuary, she said there were many faces in the stained glass windows, but none resembled Martin Luther. We found some images of Luther in the pastor’s study and I tried to explain the best I could what Luther meant and he certainly wasn’t an idol or icon of any sort. She showed a good understanding. From the church, our companions
were taken to various houses in town, but the renegade, Katherina, and I were taken by the mayor to the house of his parents who were quite wealthy. We ate very well and slept even better.

“We spent six days in Freeport and at the end of that time the renegade having shown the letters and made the required oath, went to Austin where through the mediation of the shadow underground Texas government, his citizenship was returned to him. The New Republic of Texas even awarded him a military honor, tin and cut out of a Dr. Pepper can, but expertly and decoratively scored. It was presented for leading the 36 captives out of Mexico. Each of the freed POWS went wherever they chose, most back to their hometowns.

“Only Katharina and I remained with nothing but the few pesos that the Cajun pirate had given her, and with that I bought her this trike. I've been her boyfriend and protector but not her husband, and we are going to see if my father is live or if either of my brothers have been more lucky, but I feel lucky to be admired by Katharina.

“Actually, I might come out better in the end. What is a few years in a Mexican prison compared to a lifetime without this lovely lady. I need her. What if my father and brothers have gone? I will arrive home without family and only her in my life.
“Well, that's pretty much it. What else can I say? You can judge for yourselves. Sorry, the story took so long to tell; I didn't want to leave anything important out.

EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY

When the captive fell silent, Fernando said, “Certainly Captain, you are one heck of a storyteller. What a rare extraordinary event we've enjoyed hearing it.”

After he said this, Carl and the others offered to do everything in their power to help the Captain, using words so sincere that he was certain of their good will, in particular, Fernando who offered to provide everything needed so that the captive could return to the panhandle with dignity and the comfort that he and Katharina deserved. The captive thanked him and mentioned that a few gallons of fuel would certainly help.

Night was falling by this time and when it grew dark, a van arrived at the inn accompanied by some men on cycles. They asked for accommodations and the innkeeper's wife replied that they did not have any empty space in the entire inn.

“Well, even so,” said one of the men on a cycle, “you can't turn away his honor, the judge, who is approaching now.”

When she heard the title the innkeeper's wife became perturbed and said, “Señor, the fact is I have no free beds; if his honor, the judge, has brought his own. as he probably has,
then he is welcome. My husband and I will give up our room in order to accommodate his honor.”

“That will be acceptable,” said the judge's clerk. By this time a man had descended from the van and his clothing immediately indicated his office. An expensive suit didn't necessarily mean that he was a judge, but it seemed to make sense, that he was what his assistant said he was. He held the hand of a young girl approximately 16 years old, who wore sweats, but still, she was beautiful that everybody marveled at the site.

Cowboy watch the judge and the girl come inside, and when he saw them he said, “Surely you may enter the inn and rest here, it's crowded uncomfortable and dirty, but there's no place in the world so crowded as to not have room for such a beautiful woman. If you enter you'll find the most awesome fighters and the most frisky women. You're fortunate in the extreme.”

The judge astounded at Cowboy’s words, looked at him very carefully, and was no less astonished by his appearance and not finding words with which to respond he was astounded all over again. Then the judge saw Lucy and Dorothy and Katharina. For when the innkeeper's wife told them there were new guests and had described the girl's beauty, they came out of their rooms to see and welcome her. Fernando, Carl, and the minister gave the
judge a courteous greeting. His Honor was somewhat bewildered by Cowboy and then profoundly by the three beauties.

The judge saw clearly that all the people there were gentlefolk, but the disfigured face and dialect of Cowboy left him perplexed. After the exchange of courteous greetings and careful consideration of the accommodations, matters were arranged. Despite reunions, weddings and the jollifications, all the women would sleep in the previously mentioned second floor, and the men would stay on the first floor as kind of a guard. The judge was content to have his daughter go with the ladies which she was happy to do.

From his first glimpse of the judge the Captain thought with a lot of certainty that this was his brother. He asked the judges servant to find the name and if he knew where he was from. The servants stated out his name was Juan Perez de Viedma and that he had heard that he came from Plainview this information convinced him that the judge was indeed his brother and one who followed his brother's advice to enter the law and with a great deal of excitement he called Fernando, Carl and the minister and told them what had happened and assured him that the judge was his brother and the servant had told him who he was again. He was going to San Antonio to serve as a judge on the territorial high court and the captive also learned that the girl was the judge's daughter and that her mother had died in
childbirth and that he was very wealthy because of the dowry his
daughter had inherited. The captive asked their advice as to how
he should make himself known or if he ought to determine first
whether his brother would feel humiliated when he saw he was
aligned with the rebels, how poor he was and that he planned on
marrying a Chinese girl. He might not welcome him
affectionately.

“Let me find out for you,” said the minister, “though I am
certain Captain that you will be very warmly received your
brother's face reveals a good sense, and doesn't seem arrogant.”

“Even so,” said the Captain, “I would like to reveal myself
to him gradually not all at once.”

“And I say,” responded the minister, “that I will arrange
it in a way that satisfies us all.”

By this time everyone had walked over to the former
Whataburger, and they all sat at the table, except for the
captive and the ladies who ate by themselves in the back of the
restaurant.

In the middle of the meal, the reverend said, “Señor judge,
I had a comrade in Monterey where I was held captive for some
years, who had the same name as yours. This comrade was one of
the bravest soldiers and captains of the entire war but unlucky
as he was courageous.

“And what was his captain's name, sir,” ask the judge.
“His name,” responded the minister, “was Ray Perez de Cotton Center, and he came from the Texas Panhandle. He told me about something that happened to him as father and his brother and if I had not heard it from a man so heroic, I wouldn't have not believed because he said that his father had the wisdom of President Donald Trump. And I can say that the course he chose to follow which was to enter the Marine Corps. It served him well for a few years and he rose to Captain and was on his way even higher when the EMP happened so; he lost it all the day we lost our freedom at Long Beach. Through a series of circumstances he became a prisoner in Monterey. From there he went to the coast where he became involved in one of the strangest stories.

The reverend continued the tale and briefly recounted what had happened to the Captain and Katharina. The judge listened more attentively than he had ever listened to lawyers in a courtroom. The minister stopped at the moment when the Cajuns robbed the Texans on the sailboat and left his brother on the beach and the beautiful Chinese lady in poverty. He said he knew what happened to them and did not know if they ever reach West Texas or had been carried off to Louisiana by the Cajun.

The Captain listened to everything the minister said, sitting a little in the back of the restaurant observing everything his brother did and the judge seeing that the
minister had come to the end of his tale, heaved a great sign as his eyes filled with tears and said, "Oh sir, if you only knew what this means to me. It touches me so deeply, I can't not cry. I'm usually cautious, but that brave captain is my older brother who being stronger and more combative did join the military. I entered the law, my younger brother is in China and is so wealthy that he sends millions home to my father and me. He sends so much money back that even after the Mexican occupation, I was able to achieve and keep my current rank on the Territorial Court of Justice in San Antonio. My father is still alive though aching for news about Ray. He really wants to see him again before he dies but I don't understand why he never informed our father of his capture. Was there no possibility of ransom? We could have sent money, but now I'm worried about what the Cajuns did. Well, I was happy but now I'm sad. I'd find him and help him if I can and bring him to our father. And for Katharina do you think she's confirmed and married to him?"

The judge said this with such conviction everyone was happy. The minister saying his plan had worked didn't wish then to be sad any longer, so he rose from the table and went to the table where Katharina was eating and led her over by the hand following him Lacy and Dorothy and the judge's daughter. The Captain was waiting to see what the minister intended to do, he took the Captain over as well to the table where the judge was
and said, “Sir Judge, stop worrying. Your wish has come true. Here are your brother and future sister-in-law. This is Captain Perez and his beautiful lady, who was so kind as to ransom him. The Cajuns, as I said, left him in dire straits, so now you can show him your generosity.”

Embracing the words, the brother’s emotions were impossible to document. They gave themselves an accounting of their lives. The judge offered his entire estate and embraced Katharina. When he had, his daughter embrace the new family member.

Juan was very attentive, not saying a word, he’d spoken too much during less strange events and attributed it all to the theater of Texas rebellion.

Cowboy continued to sleep and it was agreed that the Captain and Katharina would go with his brother to panhandle and they’d tell their father that he had been found and was free and as soon as he could their father would come to the confirmation and wedding of Katharina. There wouldn’t be any delay. The judge intended to do all this and still make his scheduled journey to San Antonio.

In short, everyone was pleased and since it was late at night and they decided to sleep until the morning.

Cowboy offered to guard the motel in case some “mercenary natives” decided to attack, “greedy of the pretty women” there.
Those who knew him, thanked him and later they told the judge about Cowboy's strange madness which didn’t amuse him.

Juan offered to guard the café and he made himself more comfortable, not bothering to walk to the hotel, but he simply laid down and slept in a booth inside the old Whataburger. The ma and pa operators lock him in there, until the morning, when they reopened. Which wasn’t entirely bad. Juan awoke in the middle of the night and raided the icebox. Literally, they had an icebox.

The ladies went to their room on the second floor, and the others settled in theirs with little discomfort. Cowboy stood outside the inn to guard as he had promised.

It so happened that shortly before dawn a voice so harmonious and blissful reached the ears of the ladies that they open the window and heard more clearly. Especially Dorothy who was awake and sharing a bed with Clara de Cotton Center which was the name of the judge's daughter. No one could figure who was singing so sweetly without any other music. At times they thought it was coming from the courtyard of the times from the parking lot and the women were in bewilderment. Carl came out of the men's motel room and said, “since you're awake listen and you will hear the voice of one of the judges drivers a young boy who sings like an angel.”

“We hear him,” replied Dorothy.
And so Carl return to bed and Dorothy listen very attentively and heard the words the boy was singing.

**EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY**

When the singer had reached this point, it seemed to Dorothy that Clara ought not miss having heard such a fine voice and she gently shook her awake saying, “forgive me my dear sorry for waking you, but I want you to listen to the best voice you may have ever heard in your life.”

Clara stirred and was still half-asleep and at first she didn't understand and needed to be told again and she finally Clara paid closer attention. But when she heard barely two lines singing by that voice, she begin to tremble and shake and she threw her arms around Dorothy and said, “Oh my, not again!

“What do you mean? Clara said.

“The boy who is singing is the sort of a gentleman from Hale County; he owns two separate ranches and he had a house across from my father's house in Cotton Center. I don't know how, but this young man wasn’t going to my school, he saw me somehow, probably it was in church and well he fell in love with me and let me know it from the windows of his house with so many gestures and fancy words I even felt I loved him in return, but I didn't know how or why. One gesture was to join hands and exchange rings, but I hadn't any mother and really no one to
talk to. I didn't really encourage him, much, but then last week when my father was out of the house and his father too, I raised my window shades and let him see me full length which sent him into a big clown smile. It was eerie.”

“When it was time for my father to leave west Texas, the boy learned about it not from me because I never got a chance to tell him. He was taken ill as I understand it with grief and so the day we where to leave, I could not see him to say ‘goodbye,’ if only if only with my expression. But after we had been traveling for one day as we were checking into a motel a day's travel from here, I saw him out in the parking lot dressed as a cyclist and looking as if he were one of the hired drivers.

“If I didn’t carry his image around in my head, it would have been nearly impossible to recognize him. Instead of having a few drivers now we had five, but I did recognize him and that was nice. He looked at me without my father noticing and he always seemed to turn his head when my father looked his way. Since I know who he is and believe that it’s on account of me he’s traveling this long journey, I'm worried. I don't know why he's come here or how he's escaped his school, work, and responsibilities. And let me tell you something else, everything he sings, he writes; they aren’t the songs of others. There haven't been much on the radio, but his songs are unique and I think quite good. When I hear him, I'm afraid my father will
recognize him. I've never said a word to him, but it's weird I love him so much, I don't think I can live without him. This voice doesn't belong to a driver but a rather wealthy Mexican pop star. But he's a Texan."

"Say no more Clara," said Dorothy as she gave her a big smile, "Say no more and wait for morning. With your permission I can probably arrange things with your father, for you two kids deserve to be happy."

"Oh ma'am," said Clara, "What is going to happen. He's distinguished and wealthy but my father's linked to the Mexican government and my father won't like him.

"Well, you probably know self-interest is always difficult, even matter of the heart."

"And also think of the boy's father, he'll not think I'm good enough to be his son's girlfriend, let alone his wife?"

"Well, let's not get ahead of this."

"Well, I can't marry without my father's permission for anything in the world. And I can't get involved with someone unless there is the change of marriage. There is too much at stake and I just hate wasting time."

"You are a wise for your tender age."

"All I want is for this boy to go home and write me perhaps from a distance. I don't see how this is going to work out with
with the violence and also with the great distance we have to travel.”

“Perhaps, your father will retire or change his allegiance? It’s not unheard of a political man wanting to be on the winning side. Of course, Mexica might win this thing.”

“Well, I’m sure they will. I think, probably, the boy’s love songs will fade when that becomes evident, but I can say that I don’t believe this outcome will do me much good at all. I don’t know what the devil this is or how I ever fell so much in love with a voice since there are so many young boys and so many loyal to Mexico City. I think we're the same age; I'll turn 16 on the old Labor Day Holiday.”

Dorothy could not help laughing but she said, “Clara, let’s sleep for a while and tomorrow; you have a good grasp of things and probably don’t need my help but sometimes it is easier for a someone to speak for you. So, with a little luck things will go well for us, if I have any skill in such matters.”

After this, they were silent and a profound stillness fell over the motel; only the innkeeper's daughter and the maid Mary were not asleep, for they couldn’t resist the madness that affected Cowboy, who was tweaking outside their window, mounted and armed, on guard. Sick of listening to his foolishness, they decided to play a trick on him or at least to pass the time.
It so happened that above the motel office there was a flat roof, only eleven feet off the ground; and so the one virgin and the Guatemalan semi-virgin stood on the roof naked and called Cowboy over to the wall. It appeared to Cowboy that the daughter of the innkeeper and her friend had both been overcome with love for him and were soliciting his more than just his attention. And not wanting to appear ungrateful he pulled Shovelhead over to where he might use the bike to step up onto the roof he yelled up to them, “Why not go back to your room and invite me there? Whatever you're going to do you need to hurry; the sun is coming up.”

“Sir, there's no need for that?” the women responded, “What you want to be is discreet. Just pull yourself up here. Sure, it's risky, but what are you going to do? Just try to hurry and be quiet nothing will happen to you. I'll be silent with both or either of us, the only question is which of us is first? Just stand on your mount and reach up.”

Mary and the innkeeper's daughter were convinced Cowboy would give them his hands and sure enough, Cowboy grabbed up for the edge of the roof standing on Shovelhead’s back. “Senora, help me and take my hand and pulled me up so I can show you my discretion.”

“Now you'll see,” said Mary, and after making a slip knot out of a rope she put it around Cowboy’s wrists and the other
and she tied around the not useless air conditioning unit.

Cowboy, who felt the rough cord around his wrist, said, “you girls are kinky instead of fondling you’re into bondage? It's okay, but I'd prefer it if you were the ones bound. But beggars can't be choosers, so pull me up. I'm more than willing to play your games.”

But no one was listening to these words of Cowboy because, as soon as Mary attached the rope to his wrist, she and the innkeeper's daughter ran off the roof giggling with laughter and they left him so securely hanging there that it was impossible for him to get down. He was standing on Shovelhead his two arms tied to the wrists and that's when the motorcycle began to tip over left and then right, but faithful Shovelhead remained upright.

In short, when Cowboy discovered that he was bound and the ladies had vanished, he began to figure that he was hanging there on account of the dope and the two female addicts would now be robbing him. Again as it had been the last time and the time before that as well, he cursed his lack of intelligence and questioned his good sense. He should have noticed they were f***ed-up (nude on the roof); he hadn’t given them dope and he resolved to raise the matter of giving dope to teenage girl. Cowboy felt certain that Juan had given it them and now the’d strung him up like a carcus.
After having been hurt so badly the last time he was at this particular motel, he found himself in a very bad situation. Even so, he pulled his arms to see if he could free himself but his efforts were in vain. He wanted to sit down in the saddle; but all he could do was remain standing.

He wished she could reach his knife but all he could do was curse the girls. Then he cursed his fate and called for Juan, who was repressed in sleep, still snoring in the old Whataburger and dreaming of an island full of rattlesnakes. Then Cowboy called on the ghost of Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp to help him. Then he summoned his friend Gus McCrae and Woodrow Call to come to assistance.

Finally, morning found him so panicked that he was balling like a calf because he had coyotes approaching the inn watching and listening. When he saw the coyotes working up their nerve, he reasoned that crying out like a castrated steer might not be best idea, and he figured the coyotes might take advantage as he was standing on a motorcycle a slight distance off the ground. And they were looking at his bare feet, his toes small bites. Shovelhead, fearless, hardly moved at all the coyotes so near and Cowboy soon forgot about the coyotes wanting to eat his toes; that, for him, the worse thing that could possibly happen was to be tied up and high on meth, the worst of mental tortures.
But again, he was wrong; because not long after the hoochie-mamas ran off, four men on motorcycles came riding up to the inn and they were handsomely dressed and well-armed with AKs and even at dawn one could see their skin was burned from the sun. The only good thing about it was the coyotes ran off leaving Cowboy’s toe feeling better about it. The men pounded on the office door which was still locked and when this Cowboy was this and who even tied was still technically guarding the motel, he called out to them in a loud arrogant voice, “Sirs, whoever you are, there’s no need for banging on the door, for it can’t be more clear that at this hour those people inside are asleep or not used to opening their doors so early. Take two steps back and wait until the day begins; then we'll see if they want to open up.” He said all this hanging.

“What the devil kind of motel is this?” said one rider, “that we should be forced to do such b***s***. If you're the innkeeper and have an injured back, please tell your staff to open. We are travelers and want only to rest and then move on because we're in a hurry.”

The questioner grew weary of Cowboy and began to pound on the door again with even more fury, so loud this time that the innkeeper awoke as did the others. He got up to ask who was at the door. Just then one of the men rode around to the side of the office and Cowboys feet slipped from the saddle and
Shovelhead fell to the ground leaving him hanging by his arms. This caused him great pain in the wrists and shoulders. He was left dangling so close to the ground that the tips of his toes were nearly touching the ground. He stretched and stretched in the hope of just a bit more to reach the ground.

**EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY**

Cowboy cried out so loudly that the men were not to be trusted, in fact, that the terrified innkeeper suddenly threw open the doors of the inn and ran outside to see who was caterwauling. And the others inside the motel did the same. Mary, who had been guilted by these stranger-danger shouts, guessed they might need Cowboy, and she went to the roof. She cut the rope and Cowboy immediately fell to the ground and in full view of the innkeeper and the travelers who went up to him and asked what was wrong and why he had been hanging like that.

Cowboy, experiencing the worst of all embarrassment, not saying a word, removed the rope from his wrist, stood up, picked up and mounted Shovelhead and rode out in the parking lot. He turn to face the crowd, he took out his pistol and opening the revolving mechanism, he put what seemed clearly to be real bullets in the empty chamber. Where he got them has never been clear and the sequal film is ambiguous about it. He slapped the mechanism back in place and holstered it. He faced the crowd,
“should anyone say my dope is bad and if Salada de Tawakoni lets me, I shall call them out and will draw.”

The newcomers were astonished at Cowboy’s words, but the innkeeper did away with their tension when he told them that this was just Cowboy and there was no need to fight with him because he was out of his mind.

The travelers asked the innkeeper if they had seen the 15-year-old who was dressed as a driver come to the inn, and they described his features which were the same as those of Clara's sweetheart. The innkeeper’s response was that with so many people in the inn he had not noticed the boy about whom they were asking, but when one of them saw the van in which the judge had arrived, he said, “The boy must be here; no doubt about it because this is the van we were told he was following. One of us should stay at the van while the others go look for the boy and it might be a good idea if one of us rode around the inn so he doesn't get away.”

“That's what we'll do,” responded one of the travelers.

And two of them went to the door, and the other rode around the inn. The innkeeper saw all of them and guessed they were professionals, probably revolutionaries. They were looking for the boy they had described.

But now it had dawned and because of this, as well as the noise that Cowboy had made, everyone was awake and out of bed.
Especially awake were Clara and Dorothy, who had slept very badly that night, one filled with excitement and having her sweetheart so close by, Dorothy with a desire to sort out the mess.

Cowboy, who saw that none of the four travelers paid attention to him or responded to his demand for a fight, raged and fumed with indignation and fury. At that time if he had discovered in his laws of the West that a Ranger could legitimately take up and embark on another adventure, after having given his word, he would have attacked all of them. But since he did not think it correct to begin a fight until he had restored Dorothy to her ranch, he had no choice but to remain silent saying nothing.

One of them found the kid they were seeking as he slept beside another driver, little thinking that anyone was looking for him, let alone that anyone would find him. They seized the boy shaking him awake; the man said, “Louis, these people you are traveling with don’t complement your politics rank and this Mexican b**** you are following, her father is tied to San Antonio. Your father misses you and doesn’t want you in this danger.”

Wiping the sleep out of his eyes, Louis looked for a long time at the man holding him before he realized that he was one of his father's compatriots. And this went on for some time and
the patriot continued, “now Lewis you have no choice but to be patient about this girl and return home, unless you wish to see your father in the next world which he is bound, considering the grief your defection has caused him.”

“But how did my father know,” asked Lewis, “that I was on this road, working this job, and wearing these clothes?”

“You disclosed your intentions to a classmate,” responded the man, “and he was moved by pity at your father's distress and he realized you were gone and revealed everything and so your father dispatched four of his subordinates to look for you and all of us are here to fetch you back. There could be violence on this party, just up the road a bit south of here, are you awake? And your father, he’ll be happier then you can imagine that we’ve caught you so quickly and now we can bring you back safely to your father.”

“That shall be as I choose,” responded Lewis.

“What is there for you to choose? You might have been killed had we not caught you. We’ll bring you back safely.”

The driver, sleeping next to whom Lewis, heard all of this conversation. He got up and went to tell Fernando and Carl and the others what was happening. By now everyone was dressed and he told them how a man had called the boy, “sir” and about the words that had passed between them and how they wanted him to return to his father's house to avoid assassination, but the boy
did not want to go. And this, in addition to what they already
knew about him which was the beautiful voice only filled them
all with a desire to know in detail who he was and even to help
him if something was planned for down the road and they went to
the place where he was still talking and protesting to his
father's followers.

At this moment, Dorothy came out of her room, and behind
her was a greatly perturbed Clara. She scorned all the
attention. Dorothy called Carl aside and briefly told him the
tale of the singer and Clara and Carl told her about the arrival
of the servants who were looking for the boy and there was a
threat to her father's safety as well as the boy's, he didn't
say this so quietly that Clara could not hear. This so worried
her that if Dorothy had not held her up, she would have fallen
to the ground. Carl told Dorothy that she and the girl should
return to their room and that he would attempt to resolve
everything and they did as he asked.

The young man was surrounded by men trying to persuade him
that he should return immediately and without any delay to his
father. He responded that under no circumstances could he do so
until the girl's father was spared and it was a matter his life,
his solemn self-interest and his heart, depended. When the
rebels urged him more insistently, they said they would not
return without him and that they would bring him back whether he wished it or not.

“That you will not do,” replied Lewis, “unless you bring me back dead, but no matter how you take me back, you’ll not be killing a judge and father. Not today anyway.”

By this time everyone in the inn had come to listen to the dispute especially Carl, Fernando and the judge, oh, the minister, and the Barber as well. Cowboy, who no longer thought it necessary to guard the hotel, was fast asleep, sitting astride Shovelhead. Carl, since he already knew the boy’s story asked those who wanted to take the boy if they couldn’t come to an accommodation.

“What moves us,” responded one of the four rebels, “is the desire to return the boy to his father, the boy’s in danger of losing his life because of this stubbornness.”

And to this Louis said, “There is no reason to tell everyone here my business, I am a free man. I shall return only in the absence of violence. I believe your sinister plot is spoiled, but just in case it’s not, I need some assurance. And the best way to ensure nothing happens is if I continue to travel with this good party.”

“We might use reasonable force,” the man responded, “and if that’s not enough, we’ll do what we came here to do and what we are obliged today.”
“Let us hear what is at the bottom of this,” said the judge. But the rebels who recognized him as a neighbor and a high ranking Mexican official, responded, “Judge, don't you know this young man? He's your neighbor and as you can see he has left his father's house to follow you.”

The judge moved more closely and recognized him and embraced him saying, “what foolishness is this Lewis what reason is so powerful that has moved you to ride with us and what is it these men are so concerned about?”

Tears filled the boy's eyes; he could not say a word in response. The judge told the four men they could rest assured that everything would be settled and taking Lewis side asked his reason for coming along on the journey.

As he was asking him this and the other questions, there was an outburst of deafening shouts at the door of the inn and the reason was two guests, who had spent the night there, seeing that everyone was concerned with finding out what the four men were seeking, had attempted to leave without paying what they owed. But the innkeeper who tended more to his own business than to those of others laid hands on them and demanded payment and he curse them so bitterly for their dishonesty that they were moved to respond with their fists and they began to beat him so ferociously that the poor innkeeper had to cry on and plead for help. The men might have intervened but they were more concerned
with the fate fo the judge and the boy suitor. The innkeeper's
wife and daughter saw that the only one who might enter the
fight was the sleeping Cowboy and the daughter said, "Sir, with
the strength your raging hormones give you, help my poor father
for two wicked men are beating him."

To which Cowboy responded very slowly and with great calm,
"No, the time isn't right. I can't get involved until Dorothy is
back on her ranch, but I can tell you run and tell your father
to prolong his combat for as long as he can and not allow
himself to be defeated and in the meantime I shall ask leave
from the ranch princess' to help him in his fight. If she gives
it to me, I'll be certain that I can save him."

"Oh, this is bad," said Mary, who was standing nearby and,
"by the time your ass gets that permission my boss will be in
the next world."

"Just let me ask," responded Cowboy, "and when I have
permission it will not matter at all if he is in the next world
or not for I'll help him out there even if that entire world
opposes me. At the very least, for your sake, I shall take such
revenge on those who sent him there that you will be more than a
little satisfied."

"And without saying another word he motored over to talk to
Dorothy employing with words that she be so kind as to give him
permission to help the innkeeper in his shuffle. The princess
gave it willingly and he immediately pulled his pistol and hurried to the back of the inn where the guests were still beating the innkeeper. But as soon as he arrived Cowboy stopped and stood perfectly still, although Mary and the innkeeper's wife asked why he was stopping and told him to help their boss and husband.

“I've stopped,” said Cowboy, “because it is not legal for me to raise any gun against unarmed folk. Call my friend Juan for this fight rightly belongs to him.”

This took place at the back of the motel where the punches and blows were reaching their high point to the detriment of the innkeeper and the fury of Mary and the innkeeper's wife and her daughter all of them realized this beating was terrible. When they saw not only Cowboy’s cowardice but how badly things were going for their husband, employer and father the women entered the fight to their detriment.

But for now, we shall go back fifty seconds and see how young Louis responded to the judge whom he had led off to one side and asking Lewis the reason he had arrived as his escort wearing such rough and tough clothes; and the judge held his shoulders tightly as a sign that a great sorrow trouble his heart and shedding more than a few tears said, “Sir, all I can tell you is that from the moment Heaven wielded which was fascinating our being neighbors that your daughter is the
question from that very moment I met her she will be my wife. For her sake, I left my father's house and for her sake, I put on these clothes and dove in. I had no idea what they were planning I only wanted to play the sailor following his star. I knew nothing of the ploy on your life and she knows nothing of my desire except for what she's able to figure. And in addition she has seen the tears flow from my eyes. Sir, I’m loyal to whatever government is in power, also and I'm an only child and my father doesn’t want me killed. But I’m in love with your daughter and so when they told me to return, I protested. I believe if I’m allowed to continue with you, violence might be avoided.

“I see,” the judge said and he contemplated the situation -- his guard and the circumstances.

“I hate to be opportunistic, I generally detest politics, but if you can accept me as your future son-in-law, then if my father wants to continue his rebellion, well he can go to the devil. My plans only include your safety and your daughter's happiness. I have an idea a little time can do more to change thing."

When he had said this, the wise judge was moved by the intelligence and discretion with which Lewis had revealed his thoughts to him. And suddenly finding himself in so unsettling and on expecting situation, the judge replied that Lewis should
remain calm for the moment and persuade his father’s friends not to take him back that day so that there would be time to consider what was best for everyone. The judge grasped the boy’s hand and they shook hands.

The judge was, of course, an intelligent man and already knew how adventurous a romance this would be for his daughter, although if possible, he would have preferred to live long enough to walk her down the aisle. And even still, the romance might take place with the approval of Lewis’s father who he figured might want a hedge on his revolutionary bet. His son's romance might bring political benefits if the revolution went sour. By this time the guests had tired of punching the innkeeper and then open for persuasion and good arguments from Cowboy, our hero threatened them with a very long and tedious Tilt-a-Whirl ride, which convinced them to pay all that they owed. And those traveling with the judge were waiting for their employer to conclude his conversation and with the boy and to make his decision.

At that very moment the devil (who never sleeps) wheeled up at the end of the fight; the Justice of the Peace who Cowboy had taken the helmet and Juan Seguin who had taken his saddlebags full of snacks, an inequitable exchange for his own, arrived. While this minor judge was riding his moped through the parking lot, Juan was putting donuts from the continental breakfast in
the saddlebags and as soon as he saw Juan he recognized him and he attacked him saying, “Thief! Now I have you! Now give me back my helmet and saddlebags and all the rest you stole from me.”

Seeing himself attacked so unexpectedly and hearing himself insulted so bitterly Juan grasped the saddlebags with one hand and punched the minor judge with the other, bathing his teeth in blood. But despite this the minor judge continued to hold on to the saddlebag and gave so loud a shout that everyone in the inn rush to the place where they were fighting and the minor judge called out his big mistake, “Help. Help in the name of the Mexican President and of Mexican Justice. I know he’s only taken my saddlebags, but there's the thief, and the highway robber is now trying to kill me.”

“Bull,” responded Juan, “I'm no highway robber; my friend Cowboy (Vaquero de Tejas) won the spoils in legal combat. Confiscated material. Contraband.”

Cowboy was present and felt very happy to see how well his friend could both defend himself and go on the offensive. And from that moment on Cowboy felt Juan was a brave and upright man and certainly no sheep. And Cowboy promised to treat him as an equal. And at the first opportunity for new pistols, he would give his current ones to Juan.
One of the other things the minor judge said was, “This, oh God, and this is as much mine as the debt I owe God and I know it like I gave birth to it. And here's my moped in the parking lot and it will not lie, just put the saddlebag on it and if it isn't a perfect fit then I'm the villain and there's more, a golden motorcycle helmet. On the day they stole from me, they also took a golden motorcycle helmet. It had never been used and cost me rather a lot.”

After this point Cowboy couldn't keep out of it and placed himself between the two men and separated them and laying the saddlebags on the ground where everyone could see it well.

Cowboy said, “The truth can be worked out. There is clearly a mistake for what he calls a helmet, is and will and always will be a Stetson, which I took off the ground when he ran from confrontation. Juan asked my permission for the snack cakes previously owned by the lowest of all Mexican judges. This I granted. Contraband that was illegally being withheld from the rightful government in Austin and ababdoned in a legal fight. My friend took them, and now you come to our inn claiming the sacks have transformed themselves into saddlebags. We can confirm this; Juan can run and bring here the cowboy hat this man claims is his helmet. Also bring the box of snacks, so we can all judge.”

“If this is the only proof we have...” said Juan.
“Do as I say,” replied Cowboy, “I'm tired, but I’m not blitzed at the present. Bring the golden Stetson and the cakes, please.”

Juan went for the helmet and brought it back in as soon as Cowboy saw it he took it in his hands and said, “Just look, you ass. How does this man presume to say this is a helmet and not a Stetson? I swear by the law of the gun this is the same hat I took from him when he ran from a fight. He’s a Mexican nationalist, and I say this is a cowboy hat.” And with this one line Cowboy won the debate.

“There's no doubt about it,” said Juan because then on my friend Cowboy, until now he's fought only one battle not wearing it and that was when he freed the luckiest men in chains headed north to the Red to rebuild a section of the wall. If it wasn't for the helmet, er... I mean cowboy hat, things wouldn't have gone so well for him because there was a lot of stone-throwing in his fights.”

**EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY**

“What do you asses think of what they're saying, sir?” said the low Mexican judge.

“These gentlepeople are still insisting that isn't a helmet but a cowboy hat,” said the high Mexican judge.
“And whoever says it's not,” said Cowboy, “if he is a gentleman, I shall show him that he lies, and if he is a friend that he lies a thousand times moreover.”

Even the important judge, who was present through all of this and who had been so involved in the matter of Luis, was distracted by the gravity of the play/positioning wondered might it be advantageous to taken part in the deception and side with Cowboy. Of course, our San Antonio judge recognized Cowboy’s insanity but seeing his political party outgunned at the Inn, he quickly designed to use the opportunity to prove his loyalty to republican Texas, the direction his brother was leaning given his bad experience in Mexican prisons. And so he did something he would never have done as a Mexican judge, he encouraged Cowboy’s misconception, and to carry the joke even father, give everyone a laugh, he spoke to the lowly judge. He said...

“Sir, whoever you are, you should know that I too follow your trade and have held my license for more than twenty-years and knowing very well all the tools of judging without exception, for a time I was even a quality control inspector in a helmet maquiladora in my youth, and I so I know what a helmet is, and a snack cake and a saddlebag, and other things related to traveling about, and I mean to say I know a little about the law as well; and I say that it's not a helmet, at least not a full helmet. It’s not complete.”
The praiseworthy judge winked at the minister.

“No, of course not,” said Cowboy, “whoever heard of a Stetson with a visor?”

“That is true,” said the minister, who understood the attention of his new friend and the same was affirmed by Carl, Fernando, and his companions, ...

“Tarzan of the Apes,” said the truncated judge, who now was the only Mexican there, “I don't see how so many of you think this is not a helmet, but a cowboy hat. It might cover the head of an illegal bull rider, but clearly this is not a Stetson. This seems to be something that could astonishing entire state hospital, no matter how poorly funded. Enough! If it's true that this helmet is a Stetson then this saddle bag must be a little Debbie Snack cake just as the lunatics claims?”

“It looks like a saddlebag to me, but I have already said I’ll not get involved in that,” Cowboy said.

“Whether it's a saddle bag or a box of snack cakes,” said the minister, “is for Cowboys to say; we generally defer to him in matters of politics.”

“To be honest,” said Cowboy, “so many things have happened to me that this hotel, on the two occasions I've stayed here, if a question about anything in it, I wouldn't dare give a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. I imagine the continental breakfast is laced with an unknowable drug, the first time. I was greatly troubled by a
f***ed-up Mexican and things didn't go very well for a while at the hands of the carnival people; and last night, I was suspended by my arms most of the night not having any idea how or why. So if I sound screwed-up, I'm not high now but I’m just so tired. It might be that I've been high here before and since everything is relative, any judgment right now would be rash, I leave it up to your asses. Maybe this place hasn't affected your mind yet and you can tell what is what here.”

“There is no doubt,” responded Fernando, “that Cowboy has spoken very eloquently today. It is up to us to decide the case and in order to make our decision a valid one, I shall take the votes of these gentlemen in secret and give a clear and complete report.”

For those aware of the Mexican judge’s loyalty, all this was a joke, but for those who were not it seem more lunacy than they’d ever seen, especially the four young guards assigned to protect the San Antonio judge.

All the joking went well until three PF, Mexican Federales, arrived and one would think the joking would end but it continued without more than seconds hesitation. In fact, the odd happenings allowed Mary to steal the radios from police cycles. She promptly dropped them into the rain barrels.

Radios or not, the San Antonio judge might have thrown in with the Federales and sought their protection. He did not and
this only added to the confusion of the judge whose helmet had been stolen and transformed into a golden Stetson, at least in the very eyes of what seemed to be everyone there.

Everyone laugh to see Fernando going from one to the other and taking his vote having him whisper it into his ear so that each could declare the secret whether it was a hat or a helmet. It was judged to be a hat. The results were announced without explanation or argument.

The second vote concerned if the nugget, that had been so fiercely fought over, was a saddle bag or snack cakes. After he had taken the votes of those who knew Cowboy, he turned around and in a loud voice...

"The fact is, my good man, you've presented your case very badly if you would have opened up the bags and shown us that inside they no longer contained donuts, Juan’s favored type of cake, perhaps we would have voted in your favor, but I grew tired of hearing vote after vote that the item here is a snack cake.

"May the Hotel California burn," cursed the second judge, "if all your asses are not drug whored punks. I'm certain that these are my saddlebags, but if you’ve not got the mind and if you got the might, I'll say no more, but the truth isn't so easily thrown as you all so clearly are."
The judge’s simple-minded talk caused no less laughter than distortions of cowboy, who at this point said, “All that can be done now it is for each man to take what is his and be thankful his eye wasn't gouged out.”

One of the three Federales, who had watched but not interfered, said, “Unless this is a trick of some kind I can't believe that men of intelligence, which is what all of you are or seem to be, can daresay that this isn't a helmet and this isn't a saddlebag, but as I see you do say it I suppose there's some mysterious reason why you claim something so trick-ass to what truth/experience shows everybody. And I swear,” he swore, “that not all the people alive in the world today can make me think this isn't a helmet and that this isn't a moped saddle bag.”

“Those cakes might belong to a Hondamatic,” said the pastor.

“It doesn't matter,” said the policeman, “that's not the point. The question is whether it is or isn't a saddlebag as you’re a** claims.”

Upon hearing this, another of the officers in the federal police come into the debate said in a fury, “If that's not a saddlebag then Mexico doesn't own this trick-a** state and whoever says otherwise must be drunk or fried.”
“You lying, big dog!” exclaimed Cowboy and raised the pistol that never had never left his palm. He prepared to shoot the Federale in the head and if the man had not dodged Cowboy would have blown his head clear off. The rounds were live and shattered a number of clay pots, wine bottles and lunch boxes behind the police. Everyone, on both sides of the contest, dove out of sight.

The other PF seeing their companion so badly threatened fired all their 32 shots, equaling a waste of ammunition, and then their companion and then they shouted warnings that they were federal police. The residence of the inn fired 645 more rounds. And no one was harmed miraculously. So, it played well in the film, over 700 shots fired and no one came near to being wounded.

The innkeeper, who was a staunch Texas loyalists, went for his shotgun and sided with his politicos. Louis’s rebel friends surrounded him, like the old Secret Service, so he wouldn't be shot but also so he couldn't escape during the gun battle. While everyone was reloading, the lower judge seized his pack saddle again and so did Juan. Cowboy emptied, reloaded and charge the officers. Lewis, eyeing the girl’s hiding place, shouted at his father's men to leave him and to go help Cowboy, Carl and Fernando who were fighting alongside Cowboy. The minister shouted at the innkeeper's wife to hide her daughter, who cried
and Mary was fascinated and wet began to pleasure herself. Dorothy was confused and Lacey was distraught and Clara fainted.

When all the bullets were expended, the tiny Mexican judge remained beating Juan and Juan, in turn, gave as good as he received. Louis, when one of the rebels, dared grab him by the arm to keep him from leaving, punched him so violently in the mouth it was bathed in blood. The senior Mexican judge defended him. Fernando had one of the officers under his foot and was taking glee in kicking the other. The Innkeeper was struggling opening a safe that presumably contained more ammunition. He cried out for his wife to come help him open the thing. In short, the entire inn was filled with Christ's shouts, yells, confusion, fear of assaults and attacks that'd pierced phones, the only working refrigerator west of Waco and the Mexican flag and the smell of blood (but no one was injured). And in the midst of this chaos, this enormous confusion, it passed through the mind of Cowboy that he had been thrown headlong back in time to the O.K. Corral. Cowboy cried out for the Clanton’s to hold their fire. Which happened because the DF were out of ammunition. “All of you this isn't Tombstone or is it? All of you holster your weapons, stop fighting and listen to me if you wish to live.”

At this great shout everyone, the Earps as well as the residents of the inn, stopped and Cowboy continued saying,
“Serious, did I not tell you how this motel is messed up and that everyone's dope has been contaminated if confirmation of which I wished you to see with your own eyes what has transpired here and how the discord at the O.K. Corral was descended upon us. Look, there they do battle for pesos; there for the moped; over there for the saddlebags, right here for the hat and all of us are fighting and all of us might be killed. Come on man! Pastor Obenhaus, we should be smart about this right? Judge whatever your name is, are you on our side now?"

The San Antonio judge, brother of the captive and future father-in-law, answered, “I am. Yes!”

“And, Mr. Nicholas you please count the dead.”

And the barber looked at the minister with a blank expression. Was Cowboy suddenly making sense?

“Now you, you Mexicans, you Mexican foxes, make like the Clantons and make out of here because it's a great sin for well-bred Texans to kill low-bred swine, especially over trivial reasons.”

The officers of the federal police, who barely understand understood English, and certainly didn't understand Cowboy’s version of the language and found themselves outgunned and out of ammunition. The smallest and most Quixotic of the officers thought he might receive a promotion if he continued, but the
low-browed judge didn’t love Mexico that much and wanted to quit.

As well as the rebels who’d come to fetch Louis were frightened. Only the innkeeper insisted that his wife open the safe and the laws be punished. Juan stopped on the orders of his friend everyone who knew Cowboy lowered their gun and finally the clamored in ended and in the imagination of Cowboy the saddlebags remain cakes and the helmet continued to be a hat and the motel a saloon.

When it at last ended, persuaded by Cowboy, the judge and the minister, everyone made peace and became citizens of the same country. Lewis's employer, the judge, began to insist and Lewis's rebel caretakers began to insist again that he come home with them immediately and as the impasse appeared, the judge spoke to Fernando, Carl and the minister regarding what should be done in this matter recounting what Lewis had planned on someday marrying his daughter. Finally, it was decided that Fernando would reveal his identity to Lewis and the rebels and tell them it was his wish that Lewis accompany him to San Antonio, where his father, the Regional Occupation Commander, would welcome him. As for the romance, he was for it. When it was clear that Lewis would not now return willingly to his father and the four men realized both the high rank of Fernando and the determination of Lewis, they decided that three of them
would return to report what had happened to Lewis's father and the one would stay with Louis to serve as a guard and not leave him until the other rebels return for him or he had learned what his father's orders were.

So it was that the two officers stop fighting and they withdrew from the combat because it seemed to them they that regardless of the outcome they would get the worst of the argument but one of them; the little one who had aspirations for promotion but also the one who had been beaten and trampled by Fernando recalled that warrants he was carrying for the detention of certain rural delinquents. Defeated and out of ammunition, the little weasel still had one for Cowboy whom the federal police wanted to arrest just as Juan feared cuz he has freed the wall slaves.

When the tiny officer remembered this, he wanted to certify that the description of the cowboy in the warrant was correct and after pulling a paper from his pocket of his sure he frowned found that he was looking for and began to read it slowly, chiefly because he wasn't a very good reader but also because he feared Fernando might kick his a** again.

At each word here and he raised his eyes to look at Fernando, and then at Cowboy, comparing the description in the warrant with Cowboy’s height, weight, and hair color and he discovered that there was no question that it that this was the
person described in the warrant. As soon as he had certified this he folded the paper and handed it to the minister the officer pulled his pistol and put it to the Temple of cowboy and said, “In the name of the Republic of Mexico and so everybody can see that I'm serious I have this warrant ordering the arrest of this counter-revolutionary gringo.”

The minister looked at the warrant and saw that what the officer said was true and that the features in the description matched those of Cowboy, who arranged at this moment to stomp the unrealistic little Mexican’s toe and in his entire body cringed and made easy Cowboy’s effort to put his hands around the varlet’s throat and if his federal companions had not hurried to his assistance, the toad would have lost his life before Cowboy released him.

The innkeeper who was obliged to assist his comrade rushed to Cowboy’s aid. The innkeeper's wife who saw her husband involved in yet another dispute, raised her fists again. Mother fighting. Mary fighting. And the daughter immediately joined her after imploring the help of everyone. In the end, Juan when he saw all of this said, “Good God what my friend says about this hotel must be true you can't have a minute's rest here.”

The women were doing well, biting, scratching and pulling hair; but still, Fernando separated the officers from Cowboy with his pistols, one blow to each Mexican’s temple. So to the
relief of Cowboy, Fernando loosened the hands of both men for one was clutching a collar and the other was squeezing a throat, but this did not stop the officers from demanding that Cowboy be arrested and that the little one insisted he be cuffed and committed to their authority, as demanded by his duty to the President and federal police, which were, without leverage of any kind, once again asking for the people’s help and assistance in arrest of the cowboy revolutionary.

Cowboy, when he heard these words said very calmly, “Come on, tyrants! You filthy creatures. You still call it counter-revolution to free those and give liberty to the imprisoned? To assist the wretched? Rise up the fallen? Support the needy? Oh, imperialist pigs, your low intelligence does not deserve to have Heaven communicate with you the great worth of rugged individualism. Come on you brotherhood of organized Mexican criminals, stealing more from us than our own homegrown thieves. Stealing in the name of the federal police, who wear Dolt brand underwear. We will not submit to your laws that make every human activity illegal? Where’s the idiot in all of Texas who think we will continue to pay this president's taxes and finally what Texan does not have the courage to shoot any federal police six times each if they oppose him?”
EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY

As Cowboy was saying this, the minister was attempting to persuade the officers that Cowboy was not in his right mind and as they could see by his actions and his words and that they had no need to prove the matter because even if they arrested him and took him away they would have to release him immediately because he was a madman. The smaller officer, the one with the warrant, replied that it was not up to him to judge the madness of Cowboy, but only to do what was command by his commanding officers ordered him to do and once Cowboy had been arrested it was all same to him if they let him go.

“Even so,” said the minister, “this one time you should not take him and as far as I can tell he will not allow himself to be taken.”

In fact, the minister was so persuasive and Cowboy looked so fierce (with plenty of profanity to boot) that the officers (out of ammunition) would have been crazy to try anything with him. They recognized Cowboy’s affliction and so they wisely thought it best not to proceed and even to intervene and make peace between the tertiary judge and Juan who still persisted with solid ranker in their dispute over the confiscated snack cakes. Unsure they were still officers of the law, out of ammunition, with no radios or expectation of resupply, they mediated and arbitrated the matter in a manner that left both
parties if not completely happy at least somewhat satisfied. They negotiated the returns of the saddlebags, no snack cakes or donuts were transferred. As for the golden helmet, the minister secretly and without Cowboy knowing anything about it, paid 8,000 pesos for it and the lesser judge gave him a receipt promising not to sue for dishonesty then and forever.

Having settled these two disputes, which were the most urgent, it remained only for Louis’s people to agree that they would return home while one stayed behind to accompany him wherever the judge wished to take him. Since good luck had begun to intervene in favor of the lovers and the quality people, in the end, overcoming all difficulties. Lewis’s father’s soldiers proceeded to the boy’s wishes which so pleased Clara that no one could look in her face and not know the delight in her heart.

The young Chinese girl although she did not completely understand all of the violence she had seen became sad or happy by turns depending on what expression she observed on the faces of the other people, especially her texting The innkeeper who had failed to notice the complimentary gift given to the judge by the minister demanded payment from Cowboy included the one stolen by Mary and taken to his room including damages to the room swearing that neither Shovelhead nor Juan’s moped would leave unless he was first paid. The minister settled the matter and Fernando paid the bill, although the San Antonio judge had
very willingly offered to pay as well and everything was peaceful and the inn looked, but no longer sounded like a war zone. As Cowboy said it seemed like the calm before the storm most figured the peace was brought by the minister and Fernando.

When Cowboy found himself free and clear of so many disputes, his friend as well, it seemed to him they might get on with their journey. And so resolute, he went to see Dorothy and said, “Let's get going, while the going is good. It's a common proverb, but nowhere is this truth more applicable than after a disturbance. They, the Mexican government imperialists, are probably preparing for more hostilities and it seems our stay here is no longer profitable. It might even be harmful. Who knows which or how many of these people are spies? If the Mexican army gets wind of our being here, we should disrupt any plans and make like Santa Claus and leave the presents. Let's get, before soldiers get here.”

Cowboy fell silent said no more and waited very calmly for the reply of the beautiful ranch princess who with a sweet down-home bearing responded in this way, “I thank you, Cowboy, for the enthusiasm you’ve shown in my great distress and like a true ranger whose profession and preoccupation is to help orphans and return ranches. As for my departure, let it be now as before. You take care of the arrangements and I’ll go along with it.”
“Good deal,” said Cowboy, “I don't want to lose any opportunity to win back your property. Let's leave. Danger lies in delay. Juan, feed Shovelhead and your moped and the hog of the lady Lady and let's get the hell out of Dodge.”

Juan who'd been present for the conversation, shook his head and said, “Oh, that's not smart, not smart at all; there's more trouble on the road. You've just fought a great battle and now you want to run off immediately?”

“What trouble can there be on any road or in all the cities of Texas or even Mexico that can defeat me, you featherbrain?”

“Your ass is going to get angry,” responded Juan, “I'll be quiet and won't say what a friend would naturally let you know and what a loyal Texan is obliged to say.”

“Say whatever you wish,” replied Cowboy, “as long as your words are not intended to instill fear in me for if you are afraid then you are true to the person you are, and if I'm not then I'm true to mine.”

“That's not it; I'm a movie fan that,” responded Juan, “it's just that I'm absolutely certain that this lady who says she's the princess of a ranch is no more a property owner than I am, because if she was needing the help of your guns, she wouldn't go around bangin' a fellow here at the inn, behind every door and every chance she gets.”
Dorothy was a good distance away but was able to listen and she turned bright red at Juan's words because it was true; she and her husband Fernando had on occasion taken various parts of the trophy his love had won and Juan had witnessed it in the parking lot, twice in the laundry room, twice in the television room, again in the parking lot and finally, Juan suspected some events took place in the former Whataburger's ladies room bathroom stall. Such boldness and frivolity had seemed to him "more appropriate for a crack wh*** than for the princess of a great Ranch." She could not or would not say a word in response to Juan but allowed him to continue as he did.

"I'm saying this because if after having traveled so many highways and gone through so many bad nights and worst days, the fruits of our labor is being plucked by a man until recently was a soldier in the Mexican army and his father is the state's chief oppressor. He's living at this hotel and enjoying your labors; 'n there's no reason for me to ready and fill his fuel tanks, because we're better off sitting still and doing nothing. Let each wh*** to her clients go for food and sleep."

"Beetlejuice!" What a rage came over Cowboy when he heard his friend's discourteous words. But, Cowboy then spoke with a hesitant voice and stumbling tongue and calm in his eyes he said, "You dumbass. You dare to say this to me; you're making it
up. You said it so loudly she might have overheard you. Get away from me, or I'll hurt you.”

And saying this, he scolded Juan, putting a puffing in his cheeks, looking all around him and stamping his right foot very hard on the ground, all signs of the great anger raging in his heart. These words so frightened and terrified Juan that he would have been overjoyed if the Earth had opened up and swallowed him.

And Juan didn't know what to do, except turn and leave as his enraged friend fumed, but perceptive Dorothy who did this time understood Cowboy’s insanity perfectly well said, “In order to settle the range don't be so indignant, Cowboy, at the foolish things your good friend has said, because it may be that he does not say them without reason, nor can we suspect that his good character will allow him to tell a lie and so we can figure all the drugs in this inn have been compromised.”

“I say once all of the things he said shocked me, but I understand I don't think,” said Cowboy. I’ve known him far too well and for too long. He's a distiller and a drinker but generally a nice guy.”

“That is certainly the case,” said Fernando. As a ranger, you ought to pardon him and give him a big hug before we begin to think the visions were real.
Cowboy responded that he would forgive his friend and the minister went to find Juan. In the end, he walked to the inn and very humbly begged his friend for a handshake and Juan asked, “why must we always have harsh words?”

Cowboy explained, “Now you remember with certainty, Juan good my friend, that everything in this motel is messed up; do you not believe it?” responded Cowboy.

Juan answered, no. “Because if that were true, you would have avenged me then and there.

“But I couldn’t, who would I have attacked? And even now I don’t see anyone upon whom to wreck my vengeance for the affront to you.”

“My word is still good with you?” asked Juan.

“Of course.” Admitted Cowboy.

Later, everyone wanted to know what had happened with the Tilt-A-Whirl and the innkeeper told them in full detail about Juan Seguin and the projectile vomiting which caused a great deal of laughter and Juan would have been embarrassed but Cowboy assured him again that the carnival was just another insufferable dose; that it really didn’t happen that he’d been tricked into thinking he’d endured it.”

Juan accepted the explanation, but never was there a doubt that it was the pure truth, that he had been on the Tilt-A-Whirl half the day by flesh-and-blood Chinese carnies. He’d not
dreamed or imagined phantom (with Chinese accents ghosts do not posess) as his friend believed.

The illustrious company had already spent two days at the inn and thinking it was time to leave they devised a scheme that would spare Dorothy and Fernando the trouble of returning with Cowboy to Marion County under the guise of restoring the princess to her ranch and would allow the minister and barber to take him back with them and get him in the lab, over the cook stove, as they desired and treated his madness at home. Their scheme was to arrange with a cattle hauler, who happened to be passing by, that he would carry Cowboy home in this manner, they prepared the cattle trailer to hold Cowboy comfortably and then Fernando and his companions, the rebels concerned with Lewis, the federal police, the innkeepers, the federal police who had not been paid in months, and Juan, all of them under the direction of the minister, braced for impact.

When they're done this, they finally entered the room where a Cowboy lay sleeping, resting after his recent shootout and fist fight. They approached as he slept soundly suspecting nothing and seized him firmly and tied his hands and feet together so that when he awoke with a start he couldn't move or do anything but feel astonishment and wonder at the strange figures he saw before him. He immediately found an explanation in his delusional imagination, continually speaking to him, and
believing that all these individuals were demons, after all he was at the enchanted inn and that not only they but he might have also been drugged for he could not move or defend himself which was exactly what the pastor who had devised the plan thought would happen.

Only one of all those present was in his right mind and not pretending to be someone else and although he was not far from being afflicted by the same disease. His friend could still be recognized among the masked figures, but he did not open his mouth until he saw how far the assault on Cowboy and his capture would go. Juan did not say a word because he wanted to see the outcome of this setback and it was then that the cattle trailer was brought up. Cowboy and Shovelhead were locked inside and the gate padlocked. In a voice as ominous and as eerie as possible, the barber said, "Vaquero de Tejas don't worry about your confinement for its needed in order too more quickly conclude the adventure that brought you here. It's all so you'll transport from this ugly and disordered adventure into the next, all part of restoring the republic."

The minister whispered to Juan, "I’ll make sure you are paid a reasonable amount and we don’t want you to worry about your friend being hauled away like a steer for slaughter; soon will see him restored to health and transported to a place he
knows well. We feel, Austin feels, his greatest service would be over a stove.”

And at that exact moment, Cowboy stopped prying on the trailer gate and noticed a worn and tattered twenty-year-old billboard purchased by the now-defunct ASPCA depicting a litter of mongrel puppies; meant to vilified AKC (also now-defunct) breeders demagoguing how “buying an AKC puppy results in the euthanasia of five less fortunate puppies.” And Cowboy was mollified for hours trying to grasp the math of that.

Juan was so concerned they all feared he would fight to free his friends, but when Cowboy was calmed by his economic calculations, Juan also relaxed a bit and the threat of rebellion eased.

And as the minister finished his prophecy to Juan, the barber raised his voice to Cowboy to so high a pitch and then lowered it so quiet a whisper and so vague a language, Cowboy stopped the market equilibrium calculus. And even those who knew of the deceit almost believe the truth and what they were hearing from the barber.

Cowboy was consoled by the barber because what he heard made him understand that he was being hauled off in holy matrimony to his beloved Salada de Tawakoni, whose happy womb would give birth to puppies, which was to say they would be his sons to the everlasting glory of Texas. And believing this
firmly, he raised his voice, “whoever you are who foretold such blissful union for me; I’m not angry. In fact, I see this cattle trailer as a glory and these chains that bind the gate and the discomfort of this floor, covered in dried cow chips. To me it’s like a nice soft wedding bed. And my friend on the outside, I trust in his kindness and goodness and know he’ll not leave me in good or bad luck. If it’s not as you’ve promised I trust him to take our revenge on you, demon/angel or neither. I won't be able to give him an island as promised, but at least I'll give him some wages later.

**EXT. PORTILLO E PACHECO COUNTY**

After a time, Cowboy contemplated himself being caged in this manner and he said to Juan, “I have watched many extremely serious histories of travel, traveling cowboys, tumbleweeds, tumbleweed cowboys, but I’ve never have seen or heard of cowboys being carried in this fashion and at the pace of this sluggish animal. The cowboys are always transported by a fine horse, or riding shotgun on a stagecoach, perhaps or on an iron engine mounted on rails, but being carried now by prison wagon by Cummings diesel that leaves me confused. Perhaps in these modern times, however restless natives or bandits have called for a different path to be followed. It might be that I'm a victim of
unknown shamanry and this might be the prudent way of the
demonic transport their quarry. What do you think, Juan?”

“I think you are hallucinating and you probably will see
things that was until you sleep it off,” Juan said.

“No I need to know.”

“Aske me in a week when you wake up,” Juan said.

“Juan, are we not friends?”

“I don’t know what I think,” responded Juan, “since I’m not
as well read as your ass in Western lore, but even so I'd say
and even swear that it’s a ruse. These demons wandering around
here are not entirely spectral.”

“?spectral¿ The Ghost and Mr. Chicken!” responded Cowboy.

“How can they not be spectral if they are all demons who have
taken on hideous faces. What human could be so ugly as these
demons?

“Costuming.”

“How could actors bring me to this situation, throw me in
this trailer? And if you wish to see the truth of this touch
them and feel them and you will see they have a have no body.”

Juan replied, “Cowboy, I’ve touched them and this devil,
who was so busy locking you up, is stocky and well-built well
feed and has another trait that's very different from what I've
heard about demons, because people all say demons stink of
sulfur and brimstone and other offal odors, but this one smells of Dos Equis half a mile away.”

Juan said this about Fernando, who being so well-supplied, must have smelled just as Juan said.

“Don't be surprised at this, Juan, my friend,” responded Cowboy, “because I can tell you that devil's know a great deal although they bring odors with them they themselves do not smell at all because they are spirits and if they do smell it can't be of pleasant things but only of things vile. The reason is that since they maybe carry h*** with them in their bug-out-bags and while they can't find any kind of relief from flowers or the perfumed smell of women, an unpleasant odor is something that brings less pain and maybe even a bit of pleasure if that’s possible in h***. It's not possible for them to have an agreeable smell. And so if it seems to you that the demon you have mentioned smells of Dos Equis whether you are mistaken or he wants to deceive you by making you think he is not a demon, possibly by bathing it it.”

All these words passed between Ranger and sidekick.

Fearing that Juan would capitulate and free his friend to wreak havoc, which he had already been shown himself capable of doing, Fernando and Carl reasoned they were young and newly married and had plenty of pleasure in front of them and they didn’t need to be shot or mauled by a drug-addled cowboy. For
them, this possibility, no matter how slim, would be the worse possible death or disfigurement. They decided to make their departure as quickly as possible; they called the innkeeper aside and told him to fuel their vehicles which Mary did very quickly.

Meanwhile, the minister had reached an agreement with the officers they would accompany him to his village and he would pay them a bribe, a considerable amount of meth. Carl hung Cowboys pistol belt on one side of his cycle and the golden helmet on the other. He signal to Juan to mont his moped and lead the truck and cattle trailer. On each side of the trailer Carl placed two Federal officers with reloaded firearms, curtesy of the innkeeper’s safe, but before the prison wagon begin to move the innkeeper's wife, her daughter and Mary came out to say “goodbye” to Cowboy, the two pretending to cry at his sore luck. Only Mary’s tears were genuine, to which Cowboy said, “don't cry Mary, because it is just what happens. If this and this sort of thing doesn't happen, the little fame and renowned happen. The more often this sort of thing happens the better the box office. It happens because many politicians fear justice and Rangers lust for freedom and the pols attempt to control them out of their selfish self-interest, but despite this Rangers in the end win. Despite all the shamanism ever conjured by Iron jacket Buffalo Hump, each day and the others we emerge victorious from
every trial and shine a light on everything between the Sabine and the Rio Grande. Forgive me, Mary, if I offended you inadvertently, I'd never hurt you willingly; when there's a new government and when I'm freed I'll never forget your kindness. Thanks for the stay in your friendship; I'll repay you as soon as I can. You other b****es can go straight to h***!"

While the ladies of the motel were shocked and awed by Cowboy, the minister and the barber took their leave of Fernando and Carl and all the companions, and the captain and his brother the San Antonio judge and all the recently mentioned ladies, especially Dorothy and Lucy.

Everyone embraced and agreed to send one other another news and Fernando told the minister where he should write to tell him the news of Cowboy and assured him that nothing would make him happier than to know the outcome. Fernando, in turn, would tell the minister everything that to interest him truth troop movements strengths and weaknesses of various fortifications. But also news from his marriage.

The captain promised news of the Chinese girl's baptism to conformation and eventually their marriage.

Carl spoke of Lucy's return home. The minister promise to send all the news in the most punctual way; they all embraced again-and-again; they exchanged even more promises, mostly surrounding an eventual reunion in Austin, soon.
The innkeeper came up to the minister and gave him a DVD saying that he discovered it in the lining of a case that contain the film of The Man who was a Reckless Cowboy, and since the owner had not come back for it, the minister could have it because he didn't want it. The minister thanked the innkeeper and open the jacket and saw it was a film The Story of Shovelhead, which interested him since The Reckless Cowboy had been entertaining and funny and they might very well be by the same director, and he kept it intending to watch it as soon as possible.

The minister mounted his moped as did his friend, the barber, both of them wearing helmets with masks so they would not be recognized by Cowboy and they begin to ride behind the cattle trailer. They rode in a certain order; first, came the trailer with Cowboy and Shovelhead in the back. Federal police raced ahead to stopped the traffic at each cross-road and had there been any traffic, it might have looked even more official. As we have said the PF were now holding loaded weapons. Behind the trailer, came Juan on his moped and bringing up the rear were the minister and the barber on their cycles their faces covered. Riding with a solemn and somber look, their pace was no faster than the truck hauling the trailer. Cowboy sat in the trailer his hand still tied his legs extended but also his back leaning against the panels and with so much silence and
petulance/patience that he seemed not a man of flesh and blood but a famous statue of TFR bronze.

**EXT. TULUM COUNTY**

And so slowly and silently they rode some two hours until they reached a truck stop at Big Lake that the diesel’s driver thought would be a good place to refuel the vehicles. He communicated this to the minister but the barber said they should ride a little farther because he knew of a better stop with cheaper fuel and better entertainment. They followed the barber’s advice and continue their journey. Just then the minister turned his head and saw six or seven well-dressed and well-mounted men riding behind them and they soon overtook them since they were traveling not at the slow and leisurely pace of a cattle trailer but like Catholic priests, exemption from traffic laws, who were riding on sprint bikes and wanted to have their siestas at the next inn that was probably only an hour away. The diligent overtook the slothful at the truck stop and after courteous greetings were exchanged, one of the newcomers who was, in fact, a bishop from Windthorst and the leader of the other, seeing the orderly procession of the cattle trailer and the caution of the federal officers, noting the minister, the barber and particularly Cowboy imprisoned in his cage could not help asking why they were carrying the man in that fashion
although he already knew, seeing the insignia of the federal officers so guessed that he must be some highway robber or another kind of criminal whose punishment was the responsibility of the federal police. The smallest of the officers, to whom the Bishop had directed the question responded, “Padre, why this gentleman is being carried this way is something he should say because we don't really know.”

Cowboy heard this exchange and said, “By chance father, or your grace, are you well-versed and expert in matters pertaining to traveling tumbleweeds? I ask because if you are, I shall complain to you my treatment, and if you’re not versed, there’s no reason to bother. By this time, the minister and the barber seeing that the traveling priests were talking to Cowboy rode up so they could respond in a way that would keep their deception from being revealed. The bishop responded to what cowboy said, “the truth is, brother, I know more about the code of the West than I do about papal authority. Therefore if that is your concern I can relate to anything you say. Perhaps.”

“If we have time,” replied Cowboy, “I should like you to know father that I am in this way because I have been drug by evil men envious and fraudulent for good is sometimes broken by evildoers, and only later is it repaired by good people. I am a traveling Ranger…”

“Oh, what is your name? Have I heard of your legend?
“I’m not famous yet, but I will have my name immortalized to serve as an example and standard to the young if they want to pursue a career in armed insurrection.”

“You are a rebel? I should have guessed.”

“Senor Vaquero de Tejas is telling the truth,” said the minister. “He is moved in this cattle trailer not because of his faults and bad taste, but on account of the evil intention of those who are angered by virtue and invigorated by oppressing others.”

Juan added, “This senior is the cowboy you might have heard about his deeds will be inscribed in film and if they ever begin making them again.”

When the bishop heard both the prisoner, the pastor and Juan speak in this way, he began to cross himself but wasn’t able to finish because of the astonishment, unable to imagine what had happened and the other priests with him felt the same astonishment.

“Loco Vaquero de Tejas,” a mere priest cracked and they all chuckled.

At this point, Juan, wanting to put the finishing touches on everything said, “You Romans will hate this hearing this, but my friend isn’t any more crazy than the Pope; he’s in his right mind, he eats and drinks and defecates like other men, like he did yesterday before they put him in the cage. How can you make
believe he's crazy? Crazy people don't eat, or sleep, or talk; if he wasn't depressed here by these tyrants, he could talk more than thirty lawyers."

And turning back to the minister he continued, "Pastor, Reverend, Minister, whatever, your a** does stink. I know you; do you think I don't know where you're taking us? I know you no matter how you cover your face and no matter how you hide your lies. In short, this is a Lutheran minister and if it wasn't for your self-righteousness, my friend would be married by now to the ranch princess and I'd be timber manager of Galveston Island at least."

Juan turned back to the priests, "But now the Wheel of Fortune has thrown a ball bearing and only yesterday we were on top of the world today we are locked in a cattle trailer. I grieve for my children and my wife; they expect me to return as a county judge or amusement park director; they'll greet a stable boy. I've only spoken to urge you to take into account the bad treatment my friend is receiving and to be careful that God doesn't punish you for not considering all the good deeds he would be doing and people and friends he would be helping if you would if you had not locked him up. Please have a word with your police friends."

"I can't believe it," said the barber. "Are you in the same labor union as your friend? You've been so ruled by logic in the
past and you've taken in so much of this lunacy and Western bulls*** it looks like you'll be keeping him company in the trailer, being as crazy as he is. It was an unlucky day for you when he impregnated you with his promises it was the worst day of your life, the day you got that island to rule in your head.”

“I'm not pregnant by anybody,” responded Juan, “and I'm not the kind of man to let himself get pregnant even by the president of an empire. While I'm poor; I'm an old Texan and don't owe anything to anybody and if I want a county to rule, other people want things that are worse. Each man is the child of his actions and because I'm a man who could be appointed, and maybe even elected, especially since my friend would have so many lands he might not have enough people to give them to.

“Your a** should be careful what you say, senor,” warned the Barber, “because there's more to life than cutting hair and there's some difference between one congregationalist and another. You know me and you can't fool me as for my friend he may or may not be crazy, let's leave it at that. The more you talk to priests; however, the worst things are going to get.”

The minister, somehow through the visor, signaled the barber not to respond. Neither wanted to answer Juan in case his response would uncover farther what the minister had taking days to conceal. Because of Juan’s intervention, the minister asked the bishop to get on the same radio channel and as they rode and
he would explain the mystery of the caged man and tell him other things they would find interesting. The priests all immediately did so, even before the bishop. And moving ahead with the minister, this bishop listened intently to everything the priest wish to tell him regarding the condition life and madness of and customs of Cowboy which was a brief account of the origin and cause of his delusions and the series of events that had brought him to that cage and the scheme they had devised to bring him home to see if they somehow could find a cure for his insanity. But instead of explaining they needed him to cook dope for the revolution, the minister explained that Cowboy’s father (although in reality dead) was worried about his son and that was the reason for this huge undertaking.

The bishop and his party were astonished a second time when they learned Cowboy’s remarkable story and when it was told the bishop said, “Pastor, it seems to me that Western films, in general, are prejudicial against rebuilding this state of Texas although. These rebel cowboys, and the state is full of them and this isn’t my first rodeo, they’ve been moved by a false and idol taste. I have read the beginning of almost everyone that has ever been published and I have never been able to watch any from beginning to end because it seems to me they’re all essentially the same and one is no different than the other. My opinion is that this kind of film belongs in the comedy genre.
and I think these stories only entertain and don’t teach any moral lessons, other than occasionally mentioning loyalty to the current Anglo government, which only confused them because the legitimate government is in San Antonio. These film cowboys simply do what they want and we can't let that happen. I will freely admit that although the principal aim of these films are to delight, I don't know how they can help anyone understand the current political situation, there are so many excessively foolish elements. I say this because the enlightenment can only come from beauty and harmony and nothing that is ugly and disorderly as a Western can make us understand. I’ve exorcised many a Western spirit from cowboys gone wild. If I had to talk to the writers, I'd say to them stick to something the near the truth. Non-fiction is the better and the more probable and possible the more pleasing. Furthermore the plots are fatiguing, the action incredible, the love lascivious, the courteousness clumsy, the battles long, the language foolish, the journey nonsensical, and finally who takes a herd of cattle past the urban populations and rail centers to a territory so far north and so cold and unpopulated? The author might have intened it as a comedy or=f sorts, but the population in the 1980s certainly didn’t see this. I’ve witnessed more than five fistfights and at least one confession of murder over this dispute. I don’t know what McMurtry intended but he wrote a comedy. And since these
wreckless cowboys today are totally lacking in intelligence they
deserve to be placed in cattle trailers like all the other
unproductive people.”

The minister listen with great attention and thought the
bishop a man of fine understanding who was correct in everything
he said and so he told bishop that since he held the same
opinion and felt a good deal of animosity towards films western
films he had buried, burned, buried even more and sold all of
Cowboy’s, which there were many. He recounted the examination he
had made of them, those he had condemned to the dumpster and
those he saved and at this the priests laughed a bit and the
bishop said that despite all the bad things he had said about
the films, he had found one good thing in them which was the
opportunity they offered a good mind providing a broad and
spacious field where one's camera could record shipwrecks,
storms, skirmishes and battles depicting a brave captain with
all the traits needed showing him to be wise a wise predictor of
his enemy’s cleverest moves, an elegant orator in persuading
soldiers, mature in council, unhesitating in resolve, brave
waiting to attack, portraying a tragic lamentable accident
incident, or a joyful unexpected events, a most beautiful lady
who is virtuous, descret and modest, or a cowboy who is
courageous and kind. an insolent Texas braggart or a politician
who is courteous, valiant and astute. The filmmaker can show his
convergence with his intellect of politics, geography, history and economics."

The minister then spoke equally learned as the bishop, "They can display the bravery of Matilda Jane Roberts who walked into the desert to carry back the body of Josh Corn. The reliability of Deets the depravity of Sam Douglas, the misfortunes of the Irish kid, the disloyalty of Jake Spoon, the treachery of Blue Duck, the friendship of Pea Eye Parker, the liberality of Gus McCrae and inventiveness of Dish Bogget and the prudence of Woodrow Call. In short, all these characteristics didn't make a noble near-perfect sometimes placing them all in one individual and sometimes dividing them among several."

The bishop concluded as they moved into the next county, "And if this is done to a pleasing style and with some creative arrangements and if it's drawn as close as possible to the truth, it will no doubt weave a screen of many characters and will display perfect perfection and beauty. These are the highest goals of filmmaking."

**EXT. NUEVO CASTILE COUNTY**

"It's just as you said, bishop," said the minister as the crossed over the county line at CR 320, "and for this reason the films of this kind are most worthy of criticism; their makers
writers and directors care nothing for solid discourse or the arts and rules that could guide them and made them so popular in theaters as action-adventures or romantic comedies."

"I at least," replied the bishop, "have felt a certain temptation to make a film of Western lore in which I follow all the points I have mentioned and to tell the truth, I have already written more than 100 pages and in order to learn if they are any good I have given them to intelligent and learned men in California who are fond of this kind of movie and two other men who are ignorant and care only for the pleasure of hearing nonsense and from all of them I have received a most agreeable approval."

"So, will anyone make your film? You are a bishop it seems someone might look at it seriously."

"Even so, I’ve not pursued the matter further or it not only seems I'm suited to my current profession, but I also saw that the number of Reconquista screenplays is greater than the number of Texas counties. Everyone who can remember how to word process has a story about a cowboy wandering California or Texas, raising h***. While I like my rules for the genre, it’s enough to be prudent. And while it's better to be praised by wise men and mocked by so many fools, I don't wish to subject myself to the confusion between the two. Judgment of the
“presumptuous commoners” who tend to be the ones who watch these films.” I nearly didn’t finish it.”

“God gives us just the grace we need.”

“What most influenced me to finish it was an argument I had with myself based on the films that were produced when I was a child and the argument said, if all, or most all, the films of my childhood imagination works as well as the ones historical ones are known to be nonsense without rhyme or reason and despite this, the mob sees them as with pleasure and thinks well of them and think they’re good, then they are very far from the truth. The writers and producers who make them say they must be like this because that is how the mob wants them and no other way. The films have that have a design and follow the story as art demands appeal to a handful of discerning persons who understand them while everyone else is incapable of comprehending their artistry and since as far as the authors and actors are concerned it is better to earn a living with the crowd than a reputation with the elite. This is what would happen to my film after I singed my eyebrows trying to keep the precepts I've mentioned and be the tailor not paid but also who loses by not being reimbursed for the expenses.

“So they are making it, but your name is not on it? It’s anonymous or posthumous/presumptuous with a pseudonym?” the minister asked.
“No, they are making some nonsensical story similar to the one you’ve told me about this cowboy, written by a man they call El Gordo con la Cámara de Vídeo, allegedly an eye-witness to it all. And get this, the reason they chose this script over mine is, they said, half the film is already in the can because the writer sent them videos of most of the story. As a church courtesy, I was given a copy of the script and it’s so fanciful it can’t be true.

“I’m sorry,” the minister, while not an artist himself, he felt the bishop’s pain. 

“And although I had have tempted at times to persuade the producers that they are mistaken to think as they do and that they would attract a larger audience and gain more renown with artful films than with nonsensical ones, regardless of savings on the production end, they are so bound and determined in their opinion that there are no arguments or evidence to make them change their minds.”

“Well maybe you can find another producer outside of Mexico City. They say California will eventually make films again.”

“This is Los Angeles I’m speaking of. They are making a film.”

“That’s news.”

“It would be if they were making the right kind of film, yes. I remember that one day I said to one of these stubborn
Californians, ‘tell me do you remember a few decades ago when three tragedies were produced in Hollywood that were composed by a famous screenwriter from Hermosa Beach and they delighted and amazed all who saw, them the simple as well as educated, and these three films went on to earned more money than thirty of the best films that have been produced?’”

Said the bishop, “I'm telling you about you are referring to Unforgiven, Open Range and Young Guns. Every computer and digital camera in North America becomes fried and useless and suddenly now silly films are legitimate? Why?”

“Precisely,” the minister replied, “and considering whether they follow the precepts of the art and if they, following them, prevented them from being what they were and pleasing to everyone which means the fault lies not with the mom who demand nonsense, but with those who don't know how to produce anything else.”

The bishop continued, “There was no foolishness in Hang 'em High, High Noon and other than the drunkenness, not much found in True Grit or in The Searchers or in none of the others composed by certain talented screenwriters who gained fame and renowned for themselves and profit for those who produce them.”

“And you told them this?”

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“And, I said some other things that I think left them confused, but they were not pressured/persuaded or convinced enough to change their erroneous opinions.”

“Did you ever think the Iranians...” asked the pastor.

“You mean the North Koreans?” the bishop said.

“Okay, whoever, id you ever think they were trying to hit above Hollywood and just missed with hitting on top of Kansas?”

“You've touched on a very good topic,” the bishop said, “What greater nonsense can there be then for a child to appear in the first scene in diapers and firing off cap guns at rescued dogs, and in the second scene to be a full-grown man with a meth-lab and a side-kick of his own? Or to create a character who is a brave teen but becomes a cowardly old-man.

“Or, a dumbass lackey who becomes a wise politician who was once a mere laborer.”

“True,” said the bishop.

“Or a supermodel who was once a meth w****.”

The bishop paused to think, “There isn’t any supermodel in the script I read, unless...”

“Oh, you are speaking about the script you read? The movie to be filmed in California; the first one in twenty years?”

“Yes, and what shall I say about their observance of time in which the actions take place I've seen films in which the first act began in Texas and the second in Montana and the third
considered concluded in California and the fourth with the birth of a baby in Philadelphia.”

“What’s wrong with that?”

“I personally, don’t write anything that’s not true.”

The minister spoke, “And let me guess you turn it off if you don’t write it?

“Pretty much, yes,” the bishop admitted.

“So you are of above-average intelligence but you never saw in the days of Cro-Magnon and a Neanderthal looking for fire. Or something even more insane, the two species procreating missionary style?”

“What woman do you know what would go with a Neanderthal?” the bishop asked. “No, I didn’t see that film. Totally, unrealistic.”

“Have you ever seen a twenty-five-foot White shark? Sink a fishing boat?”

“Of course not.”

“What about the Nazis ruling half of American and Japan and the other half?”

“Who rules Texas in that film?”

“Nothing happens in Texas. The Japs rule everything east of the Mississippi, nothing near a historical truth.”

“Did the Texans’ rebel against these Japs.”
“Is that politically correct? Can you say that on the radio?"

“You just said it.”

“I don’t work for the pope.”

“China is our ally and I’m a bishop, I can say wherever needs to be said; papal authority for that, I assure you.”

“You aren’t afraid of provoking the Japanese? They might enter or aide this rebellion. Won’t the pope oppose such language?”

“The Pope is as realistic as the lowest of the acolytes.”

“I spoke to the Holy Father once, about this very issue?”

“Racists comments of the clergy?”

“No; silly, film and its ability to demean the enemy.”

“I thought your focus would be saving the souls of your parishioners,” the minister commented.

“I’ll get to that, but the worst thing about these modern Reconquista films are they are practically useless to us. The ignorant folk who they are perfect and needed and that is what is predictable and whimsical. It’s what they want.”

“Well, then what shall we say about the two apocryphal plays. Why did it take forever for you to make ‘Tobit’ for example…”

The bishop interrupted, “Tobit is not apocryphal. And neither is Judith. I see where you are going with this.”
“Okay, take, for example, other films where false miracles and poorly understood stories, they’ve invented, attribute the miracles of the one deity to the ‘catholic’ one.”

“There is only one God. The catholic one.”

“We might disagree on that. But for the sake of a peaceful ride, let’s agree to disagree.”

“Agreed. I agree film can become a false idol. And even in the politicians in Mexico fund secular films many times they dare perform miracles with no other concern or consideration than thinking that some miracle or ‘special effect,’ as they call it, would be a good idea at that point so the ignorant will marvel and see the film.”

“Well, this particular film everyone is talking about, in California, is especially prejudicial to the truth and damaging to history and it’s even going to be marketed to even to the clergy, a clear poke to their intelligence.

“They can’t laugh?”

“Well, they might laugh, but generally they don’t.”

“You don’t believe a Cowboy, like the one in our possession, could wreck so much lunar-malevolence?” the minister asked.

“Oh, no. I’ve read the script and I think your Cowboy is far less dangerous than you’ve portrayed him to be and far less troublesome than the one I know of and have written of. This
sorry excuse for a cowboy might raise a pipe once a synodic month. I hope he’s not the one depicted in this new film, it would be a total fabrication, but honestly, it would be par for the film industry."

“And if he is?”

“If he’s what?”

“If he’s the cowboy in this next film?”

“Then, it will prove my point. I win; debate over. Films wreckless exaggerate; a harmless and bumbling idiot can be the leader of the Texas revolution? Really?”

“He might be… in theory.”

“He’ll have a target pained on his back. Any your back perhaps as well.”

“Generally, I believed/hoped the Californians, because they are still being treated as foreigners and have not really been included the empire after more than twenty years now, they would be a little slapdash in obeying rules of Mexico City.”

“Sometimes it would be nice if the Mexican government thought of us as foreigners. I doubt Mexico City had anything to do with it; they think of us in the territories as ignorant barbarians seeing the absurdities and idiocracy in the films they send us. If Mexico was directing this film, they’d have made my version of your Cowboy.”
“Eventually, the California filmmakers will resume production and all these difficulties and many others, I’ve not mentioned, will cease. I’m told, and this is between us, there will there were in Mexico City an intelligent and judicious agency spring up what will examine each tape or disc before it is sent into the rebellious territories. Not only those films made in Mexico, but also those made anywhere in Texas or California. Without the proper approval stamp and signature, no film could be made and this fashion The Producers would be careful to send their plans to Mexico City, perhaps there will be an office in San Antonio, and they could film them in safety and those who write them would consider that they’re doing with more care knowing their work would be examined by a Mexican who understands the rebellion as being fueled by these Reconquistas, as they are called. This way good screenplays would be written for the common people, so as not to foster revolution.”

“Also, censorship would change the opinion of the creative minds, and foster the interests and safety of the occupying army? Without films they might avoid being punished.”

The bishop scoffed and then continued, “And if another office or maybe even the same agency were charged with examining the old Western films that are floating about, no doubt with some of the same infections they are producing in California,
you might have avoided the problems you’ve had with the steer you are hauling across Texas.”

“What will they do with the films they don’t approve?”

“If destroyed, they would enrich our Hispanic culture and end this atrocious/precocious treason.”

Did you ever consider that destroying some of the old films this, in some obscured way might, encourage the production of new even more rebellious films to take their place?”

“I will say this; virtuous distraction/entertainment not only for the lazy, but for the educated as well, is the goal of both the church and the government, and even after the cataclysm it’s not the nature of men and women to live without a little honest recreational streaming video.”

“We don’t have streaming video here, still after twenty years. I don’t know how you have it in Windthorst, Padre. A few of us have televisions and many have collected vast shelves of the old disks.” Yes, it is true; the Lutheran minister called the bishop of entire North Texas, “Padre,” as if he were a mere novice.

The bishop and the minister had reached an awkward moment in their conversation, the catholic had unwittingly persuaded the Lutheran he’d made a mistake with the yard sale of Cowboy’s collection and now the two men disliked each other far more than one would guess. In fact, the minister gave serious thought to
releasing Cowboy and never attempt to bring him before a stove again, to let him rampage.

When the Barber rode up to them and said to the minister, “This is the place I mentioned where we can rest and fuel the vehicles.”

“I agree,” responded the minister. He told his now antagonistic companion what they planned to do and the priests decided to dog with the minister as he walked over to the relatively well maintained truck-stop motel and former Wendy's that lay before him. The minister wanted to enjoy the rest without the needling of priests for whom he had developed a earnest dislike. The priests, who were privy to the radio traffic between the two men, seemed accustomed to having the last word on every discussion and sent carefully pointed questions to the minister. And when they couldn’t get a rise out of him, because with Cowboy restrained, he thought it best to remain calm, the priest began to ask in more detail the deeds of Cowboy. The bishop had retired from the debate and seemed happy to let his minions banter with the congregationalist. He signaled as much with his eyes that they enjoyed a numerical superiority and the priests were all opportunistic enough to know what to do. They sat under a tree and peppered the minister with more than 100 questions.
The bishop did order some of his servants to go to the old Wendy's that wasn't far away and bring back whatever they could offer to eat, enough for everyone because he had decided to rest there that afternoon. Worthy of note is an entirely separate but equally popular volume which is the account of the three hours the minister was surrounded by wolves (in priest’s clothing) with nothing to defend himself but two books and something in the back of the priest's minds, their fear of Cowboy.

In the meantime, Juan saw that he could speak to his friend without the continual presence of the priests, minister, the barber, the PF, all of whom he regarded with suspicion and he rode up to the trailer that carried Cowboy and said to him, "Cowboy, I want to relieve my conscience and tell you what is going on in this matter of your insanity. The fact is, these two riders here with their faces covered are the minister and the barber from our village and I believe they came up with this way of transporting you out of sheer greed, because of your ability to cook meth is now more famous than theirs and if what I say is true it means that you're not crazy but have been deceived and misled. To prove it I want to ask you one thing; if you answer in the way I think you'll answer you'll put your finger right on the deception and see that you've been possessed, that you've been simply turned around; you haven't been demonized but had
your wits turned around by politicians or the agents of politicians.

“Ask what you wish, Juan, my friend,” responded Cowboy, “I’ll answer in response as well as I can. As for your saying that the men riding here with us are the minister and the barber from our home town, it well it could be anyone under those black wrap-around helmets. But on the other hand, I find myself tied in a cattle trailer and know that nothing human could have put me in this cage. What can I say or think except that I disagree with you. If they really are from our hometown, then I’m an El Salvadorian. As for wanting to ask me something speak and I’ll answer even if you ask me questions from now until tomorrow.

“Holy Nat Geo,” responded Juan with a great shout, “is it possible that you, your-a** is so thick-headed and so short on brains that you can't see what I'm telling you is the absolute truth and that malice has moved to do more with your imprisonment and misfortune than the devil or even Mexico City?

“Well, they took my pipe and maybe if you retrieved it, I might see your argument more clearly.”

“They have all that locked up and have concealed if from me.”

“I’m listening.”

“I'll prove to you you're not listening. Just tell me when God frees you from this torment and you find yourself free, come
to my home and we will discuss it, then,” And Juan turned in anger to leave his friend incarcerated without explanation.

“Enough theatrics,” said Cowboy, “just ask what you want; I’ll have already told you I’ll do my best answer everything completely.”

“That's all I ask,” stated Juan, “and what I want to know for you to tell me without adding or taking anything away but truthfully which is what we expect of Texas Rangers.”

“I ain’t gonna lie to ya,” responded Cowboy, “ask your question for the truth is Juan, I’m getting tuckered will all your vows and begging and ambling/preambling.”

“I say what I say because it’s the truth and I as likely to go head-long into something as am to get right to the heart of the matter. Speaking with respect, since you’re a** has been locked up in this cage and chained, now be honest have to needed to take a dump?”

“I don’t understand what you mean ‘take a dump,’ Juan? Speak more clearly if you want me to respond in a straightforward way.”

“You know what I mean! Even school boys know that well what I mean. Have you had the desire to do what nobody else can do for you?”

“Oh now I understand you, Juan. You have quite often fouled the air. You aren’t the only ‘Juan’ who needs to the
deficit. And so just as you don’t save me from this predicament, for everything in this trailer is absolutely horse and cow sh**,” and Cowboy gestured up and down the length of the trailer.

**EXT. NUEVO CASTILE COUNTY**

“Ah,” said Juan, “I've got you there! They aren’t demons in black helmets. When someone is possessed and being taken to H***, they might eat, drink and answer sensibly they're spoken to, but they sure as H*** will sh**. I mean right?”

“I’ve not. But, I might have had I not been tied up. Now that you mention it, I could.”

“But you didn’t sh**! Had you sh**, I might have agreed you must be f***** up and on the road to H***, but from that you can conclude that people (not demons) are controlling and oppressing you. And if you were on your way to H***, lead by demons, you wouldn’t have parked a Buick somewhere in there.”

“What you say is true, Juan,” responded Cowboy, “but I have already told you that there are many roads to H***, but only the devil himself would imprison a man and take him there in a cattle hauler.”

“So,” replied Juan, “you don’t want me to help you ease out of this?
“It has taken you ten minutes all this gyration to get to the point. You want to help me? Juan, why didn’t you just... help me?”

“I will; I promise I'll do everything I can to get help to help get you’re a** out and back on Shovelhead...

“Who also sings demonic he's so melancholy and sad...”

“Okay, and when we’ve done that, we'll try our luck at another adventure, one with an island at the end, rather than a cattle trailer. I’ll wait for the best time. This thing still might not go well.”

“Careful; with all the priest milling about like Darking beatles if you aren’t careful we'll have time together here in this cage.”

“If I’m unable to free you, like a good and loyal friend, I’ll lock myself up with you.”

Well, since you are on the outside looking in, I'll be happy to do as you say, Juan, my brother,” replied Cowboy, “and when you have the chance, get me out.. I will do what you say but you will see, soon enough, how mistaken you are in understanding the situation.

This dialogue went on until the cattle hauler unhitched the cattle trailer and drove the truck to the fuel pumps. Juan pleaded with the minister, and then with the bishop, to allow his friend out of the cage for a while because if they didn't
let him out his pants would not be so clean. The bishop understood this but was also motivated by the chance that Cowboy might do something to give him material, a new scene that might put his script over his competition. And so the bishop said he would gladly allow it, if the church were guaranteed Cowboy wouldn't flip out and do something bold and then run away.

“I'll guarantee that he won't run away,” responded Juan, “and I'll guarantee that as well,” the minister said, each knowing Cowboy probably would raise hell right and then not run.

The minister, still upset about the grilling he’d endured and sought to provoke Cowboy a bit, added, “if he gives me his word to these catholic priests and guards. As a gentleman and Ranger that he'll not go away from us until we agree he can.” The message was lost on Cowboy.

“I can agree to that,” responded Cowboy, who was listening to everything, he winked at Juan and said, “especially since the same God who put me in here can make me stand stock still and not move from one spot until he comes fetch me.”

Since this was true, they could did release him, especially because it would be everyone's benefit (or revenge) and he protested that if they had not released him the smell would surely trouble them unless they troubled to moved a good distance away.
In this moment, Juan took the opportunity to trade his last bottle of tequila for a rock, Cowboy’s pipe and his unloaded weapons.

The Bishop reached through the cow panels and shook both of Cowboy’s hands, on account both hands were still tied, and on the basis of the Cowboy’s promise and a short prayer to preserve the empire (Cowboy prayed under his breath ‘the republic’), they let him out of the cage and he was infinitely happy to find himself free.

The first thing Cowboy did was stretch his entire body, then went up to Shovelhead and whispered into this distributor and he said, “I hope still that we can soon again see ourselves as we wish to be and with your master on your back and I mounted on you and exercising the profession that’s been faded/faïted.”

The bishop looked at him marveling at the strangeness of his profound charisma and how he displayed a fine the very fine intelligence. The catholic leader was curious why some said his “motor was missing” as has he’d heard.

Immediately the bishop joked with our hero, “So you thought they were taking you to purgatory?”

Cowboy, sharp as a tac, responded, “Where is that? Up North or down South? Mexico maybe?” And then very seriously, “There’s no scriptural basis for purgatory? And to boot, in my view, after death the soul goes directly either to heaven (in the case
of a Christian) even maybe you of the catholic persuasion, or hell (in the case of a non-Christia
non-Christian), not to some ‘intermediate’ place or state that’s always been about marketing.”

“Marketing?”

“No one in the catholic church (from top to bottom) ain’t human with all the frailties that go along with it. I think a crafty priest, in need of money, invented the whole place. That’s what I call marketing. B****!”

And having said this Cowboy moved away with Juan, saying loud enough for the bishop to overhear, “Juan, we gotta get home. There’s a voter’s meeting after church, Sunday.”

Our hero and friend went to a remote spot, out in the mesquite, smoked a bowl, there wasn’t any tequila so Cowboy defecated and returned relieved and even more desirous of putting his friend’s island plan into effect.

And so after everyone sat on the green grass to wait for the provisions, the bishop, moved by showing the group his huge compassion, said to Cowboy, “It’s possible that the idle nature of Western films could have so affected you that it has unbalanced your judgment, first about purgatory but also made you think that you’re going to dislodge an empire, from such a wealthy land.

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“It ain’t so special. It’s mostly dry and wild. Ya ever figure it’s the people that ‘ave produced a lot from marginally okay land?”

“It might be. But it’s not”

“And they ain’t gonna work for ya any longer.

“That’s cause of these d*** movies. Mexicans laugh at them, you Texans just want revenge for ‘em. Can’t make fun of a ranger, you’ll have to fight ten Texans.”

“Like I said, ain’t never seen one of ‘em.”

“For myself, when I watch these Reconquista comedies, they’re all frivolous lies. I do like finding them, what mortal man doesn’t chuckle a bit, but when I realize what they are, I throw even the best of them against the wall and I’ve put more than a few on the fire.”

Cowboy admitted again that he’d never seen one. That his experience was limited to Westerns made decaded before.

The bishop continued, “If there’s a producer I could capture, I’d like to punish him for being deceptive and false and giving the rebels heros, no matter how comical.”

“I don’t see what the harm could be. There are other reasons you are facing a rebellion. One, you sent 100,000 Texas boys to the jungles and said that would be enough for statehood, and it never came.”
“Such impatience; the word of the president is like the word of the Pope. Eventually. It’s coming it’s coming.”

“The cotton, oil and natural gas and the cattle, are they coming back also?”

“Well, I don’t know about that, but it is hard to believe that you can’t see that this educated, but mistaken, man of the cloth, has brought you to the point where it is necessary to lock you in a cage and carry you in a cattle trailer from town to town like you were a dog or a while cat come on cowboy return to the breast the underwear of Good Sense and learn how to use the brain reason has given you.

“Using me?” asked Cowboy.

“I don’t know how, but this sure seems a great trouble for a man who is of no use. He’s apparently bribed federal police to escort you and make your journey appear legitimate. He’s said, he’s fetching you back for your father…”

“What do you know of my father?”

“Only that I don’t believe the pastor was sent by your father to retrieve you. While many fathers would have he inclination, very few would have the resources for such a enterouge as you keep. What is it?”

“I’m handy with a gun, but they constantly seek to restrain me. How is that usedful to them?”
"It must be something else. How do you pay your sidekick? It appears that you can’t."

"It appears?"

"Your clothes and your weapons."

"I don’t know what that matters."

"Son, give up the rebellion. Devote your time to watching other kinds of films, and find a vocation other than harassing legitimate men. If you must watch films about Cowboys please watch the modern Mexican cowboy films where the hero wears the brown hat and the bad guy wears white. Watching their brave deeds all loyal to El Presidente, entertain and instruct and delight and astonish the best of minds. This would certainly be worthy of your intelligence and from it you might emerge knowing a little history and wise in goodness; study these and by that way add to the fame of Colosio County where I have learned you were born and live."

"You’re saying I was wrong to watch them and worse to believe them and even worst that that to get involved in my profession which you purple hated haters and I’ll bet you deny that there ever was a John Chisum in Texas.

"That is precisely what I’m saying."

To which Cowboy responded, "your ass also said that these films have done me a good deal of harm for the turn my wits and put me in a cattle trailer and it would be better for me to"
alter and change my viewing habits and devote myself to films that are truer and more pleasing and more instructive?"  

"That's true," said the bishop.  

"Well then," Cowboy said, "it is my opinion that you are the one who's deranged and f***ed-up cause you’re a** has uttered so many blasphemies against something so widely accepted in the world isas true that whoever denies it as your a** has done, deserves the same punishment."

"Please name a film you believe to be true."

"Two films come to mind..."

The bishop interrupted, "Brokeback Mountian and..."

Cowboy interrupted, "Apocryphal, and while written by established western writers, I believe they needed Hollywood and didn’t ming prostituting themselves to the agenda and of course money is always nice, but you don’t sell your soul for it."

"I was going to say that probably is the only true story you could have possibly watched," the bishop quipped.

"Are ya gonna let me talk or not?"

"Very well, sometimes it's advantageous to let your opponent talk. You were going to mention two films?" the bishop asked and looked around at the six or seven frocked men who would side with their superior regardless of what he said,

"You say that there was never no Charles Goodnight or John Loving in the world or any of the adventuring cowboys?"
“How many times must I say it?” complained the bishop.

“What about the story of Gus and Call and the tale of the Council House Massacre which occurred in 1847 and it’s as true to fact today as it ever was. If Gus and Call is a lie, you must thing there was no blue pigs to eat the rattlers, no Hellbitch to kill Newt, no cattle drive to Montana, no farmer turned cattleman, no Pee-Eye Parker who walked a hundred miles naked. You want to go down that road and say the history of the Hat Creek boys is false and the search for the saddle and boots of Billy the Kid and the loves of Cynthia Ann Parker and Peta Nocona and the stories of Larry McMurtry are apocryphal.

“I say it. I say it loudly!”

“Even though there are persons who can almost remember having seen Wanda Harper Bush, the greatest rodeo queen ever, bye ‘em a beer in Mason. And if you don’t believe that, this is so true that I remember my paternal grandmother saying whenever she saw a lady on in a sequined rodeo shirt say, “My boy, she looks like the rodeo queen in from this or that.” She must have known or at least have seen a photograph of the woman. And who can deny the impact of the Hereford and Angus, ‘cause you can’t hardly not see it them in genetics in the feral cattle even today, the few cattle Mexico ain’t stolen yet

“What are you saying?”
“Well, since there was Angus and Herefore, then they had to be cowboys too. They don’t work themselves you know.”

“Film, it all just film. Make believe, Walt Disney.”

“I thought you said you knew something about Westerns?”

“I do. They’re fiction.”

“You don’t know shit about it’s what I think.”

“I will stand by what I’ve said.”

“Er’ you calling McMurtry Disney?”

“If you want.”

“Well, them’s fighting words; I ought to whip you’re a**.”

“I’d like to see you try.”

“Well, if you wasn’t in your pretty purple uniform.”

“Don’t let that stop you.”

The bishop took off his purple baseball cap.

Cowboy chuckled, “What are you 80? I can’t fistfight no old man.”

“Well, Gus or Call, neither of ‘em ’d fight anybody as old as you, so I better not neither.”

“Gus and Call if anything were thieves.”

“Thieves?”

“They stole the Herford bull Charles Goodnight gave Quanah Parker.”

“Got you, they existed. You just admitted it.”
“I said, if they existed, then they stole the bull. It’s a big IF.”

“Well, I didn’t hear you say that.”

The coven of priests all nodded and mumbled that they’d heard it clearly. A conditional argument.

“Well, it was a Durham bull they got. And I don’t know if it was out of meanness or’s they’s hungry. Don’t matter”

The bishop lowered his head as if he’d been defeated, but then spoke proudly, “I’m impressed, Cowboy, you put up a very spirited fight, but you are on the wrong side of history. It doesn’t matter what is decided here today the winner writes the history.”

“I thought it was winter writes the history.”

“No. But you can’t win.”

“You just said I might win.”

“I cannot deny, Cowboy, that's some of what you have said is true especially with regard to Texas Rangers. So, as a gesture of good relations between our two faiths, I wish to concede that there were Texas Rangers, though I can't believe they did all the things McMurtry wrote about them, because the truth of the matter is that they we're men chosen by the president of Texas who were called ‘Rangers’ because they moved about freely.”

“Of course.”
“But I believe that they were more of a drinking fraternity similar to TKE or KA, and I believe Lane Frost was the last member,” the bishop said.

“There can be no doubt that he existed; there were songs that were written about him.”

“The group died the day he did. It sucked the wind right out o’ ‘em.”

“Well, still.”

“And certainly McMurtry existed, but I think it extremely doubtful that he wrote the movies people say he did.”

“For a religious man, you sure don’t mind taking out you’re a**, do ya?” Cowboy commented.

The bishop ignored him, “with regard to Billy the Kid's boots and saddle, I confess my ignorance, I'm so ignorant or short-sighted that although I have seen the boots, I've never set eyes on the saddle. If it's as big as they claim I don't know how such a small man as Brushy Bill Roberts…

“No-doubt-about-it, he existed.”

“I seen the boots in Hico, but the…”

“I call bullsh**!” exclaimed Cowboy, “It’s impossible to see only one of the relics, excuse the pun; they’re housed side-by-side in a glass case in Hico. And there’s a little old lady there to guard, polish and protect the leather from agin’.”
“That may be,” responded to the bishop, “I do not remember seeing a saddle and I don't recall reading any historical papers on the item and even if I concede that they are there. I'm still not inclined to believe the histories of so many Texas Rangers, basically a bunch of drunk goat ropers whom ravenous writers cite to us in stories. Is it reasonable for an honorable man like yourself, self educated as you are, to accept as true the countless absurd Western exaggerations on film?"

Cowboy had listened very attentively to the Bishop’s words and when he saw that he had concluded, Cowboy looked at him for a long time, they say in a manner pointing to perhaps capitulating, but finally in a long Texas drawl, “Sh***t! I think that long a** speech was trying to make me think cowboys don’t still exist.”

“You see any?” I don’t,” the bishop twisted the knife he had in our hero.

“You’re lookin’ right at me.”

“At best, the only thing I’m aware of you doing was free a much of prisoners and turn loose a bunch o’ cattle. How fantastical was that? Movie hero’s would have don that times ten.”

“Well, ya. So what ‘re ya tryin’ to say?”

“I’m saying you’re an embarrassment.”
“Freeing them prisoner is something you Mexican’s are gonna regret and him and I did it!” Juan was furious about the way the bishop was speaking to his friend. His rage, body language and combative tone gathered the attention of the three PF, who sauntered over, at first just curious like, but the little Quixotic one predictably tied his leg strap and released the hammer loop, which informed everyone the bribe he’d taken was off. The other two PF followed his lead.

“You two fools are the ones that did that, and it did more harm to Austin’s cause then good. I guarantee it.”

“You saying I ain’t of no value to Texas?”

“Counterproductive.”

“I don’t figure that.”

“Maybe you should leave politics to the professionals?”

In the normal course of events, Cowboy’s already drawn and fired off a ten rounds, but Juan had gone to extra ordinary lengths to tell him, three times, he was handing him empty weapons. Cowboy thought about it, remembered Fernando handing a few spare rounds to the Mexican escort, frowned a bit and finally calmly walked to the cattle trailer and put himself back inside.

Undetered Juan approached the PF and argued that if they bribe was off then he wanted his tequila back; he had a mind to toast Cowboy’s defeat of the bishop. But they refused, arguing
that the tequila had bought Cowboy’s empty guns and besides the bribe was still even though the little one had nearly drawn down on Cowboy. They said so long as the bribe was still valid in the mind of the minister, they’d continue escorting them to East Texas.

The minister and barber, and after a time Juan also, nonchalantly strolled up to the trailer. They praised him for his performance “screw the cabal of priest; they’re bias as rattlers.” The three men all admitted to their friend that no one could have done better, and they congratulated Cowboy for living to fight a different day.

The twenty-year-old listened to them, but refused to look them in the eye, acknowledge them, speak or move for well over one-hundred miles.

**EXT. CENTRAL ZIPOLITE COUNTY**

Cowboy sat in a trailer as it lumbered east. Naturally, he thought of an argument that hadn’t occurred to him when debating with the bishop. Despite the fact that the opportunity was passed, he said it to himself anyway, “Films were made with a Motion Picture Association of America license and with a ration of those officials a rating of those officials and watched to widespread delight in celebrated by rural and urban, rich and poor, in those day everyone had a television screen. Ignorant
and educated, in short by all kinds of people saw the film. How could they by wrong today? Also, the films beared so close a resemblance to the truth and tell us about the horses, cattle, the geography, the family, the age, the birthplace and the deeds, point-by-point and day-by-day life of the cowboys or cowboy in question.”

Cowboy imagined the bishop was there still debating with him, “You’re impenitent a** needs to shut your bazoo and stop with the blasphemies and believe me when I tell you what you, as in intelligent man must do in this matter, which is to see new films and then you will see that real rangers are in the service of the empire. They wear gray.”

“Those are TDJC lackies, not Rangers. And no one here wants to see that bullsh**.

“Give Texas time. They will come around to the Mexican tastes in film.”

“Propaganda; only Quixotic heros in gray battling comical outlaws. Now what this genre nees are a few head. I’m told there are no cattle in the new Mexican films. If that's not true, I apologize. But, tell me, is there any greater joy than seeing on the screen, a boiling pitch of longhorns all stampeding wildly there are many cows, heifers, steers and a bull, a fierce and fearsome creatures and from the middle of the herd comes and extremely panicked voice of a woman, and the cowboy without
hesitating or stopping to consider the danger he throws himself into the middle of the boiling lake and when he can't see or imagine we're where he'll land he finds her and the cattle part, and he finds himself in a flowing meadow. The sun shines with a new clarity; the cattle have stoped their rampage and before the couple now grazes a peaceful herd of cattle so fat and lazy their beauty brings joy to his eyes. Here he discovers a small River who's cool water refresh the cattle."

"Now this is silly," the bishop said in Cowboy’s dream.

"Suddenly there appears before the two a cowtown whose buildings are made of wood, a bank, railroad station, livery, a church, hotel and saloon."

"No, no. It's out of an old movie. No one wants to see this. They saw it already, fifty-years previous."

"Want to see it and so, that is enough."

"No one should seek their own good, but the good of others."

"Please, be for real, film is no different from anything. You thought it was about story, acting, direction and marketing? No, its about self interest."

"You are the most cynical ill-natured cowboy in the occupied territories."

"I’m trying to do this for other people who are like me."
“Fine, I’m listening, but I can’t guarantee I’ll use it in my script. Adding a scene is a pain, the pagination and all.”

“And after this there the most amazing scenes. We see a good number of girls come out to the corral wearing dresses so splendid and sumptuous that if forced to describe them I would never finish. And the girl who seems the most energetic takes the cowboy by the hand and without saying a word guides him to the hotel and has him strip naked as the day he was born and she baths him in water and then smooth his entire body with sweet-smelling ointments and dresses him in a shirt of finest cotton all fragrant and perfumed.

“It’s a film.”

“No at this time, the theater manager hires young girls, all perfumed to walk through the theater, down the aisle.”

“Not a bad idea. What will you do so the audience can smell the heard of cattle, employ wheel burrows of it?”

And then another girl, the daughter of a bootmaker comes and covers his feet with boots, that appear to be worth at least a city or more. Always beneficial for a film is a good dinner; in the dining room table covered with the finest steaks and potatoes, biscuits and gravy. How wonderful for him to wash his hands in a basin. How marvelous it is to hear the music that a mariachie band plays as he eats. No; scratch that. And when the table is cleared, the cowboy is shown reclining in his chair on
the porch, cleaning his teeth with a toothpick as was custom. to have another young woman, much more beautiful than the others, comes out in and sits on the cowboy’s lap.

“Familiar.”

“They’ve known each other from childhood.”

On top of the cowboy, she begins to explain to him what cattle are his and which are not. And she give him instructions how to locate her bedroom window.”

“If she lives there on the ranch with all these sisters, she’ll need to share the room with one, or maybe two of them.”

“She’s the oldest and she says several other things many other things that amaze the cowboy.

“Basura!”

Cowboy dreamed he was telling this to the bishop, “I don’t wish to go any further. Why would I help you? You have shown nothing but antipathy for my ideas, for THE idea. For myself, I can say that since I became a cowboy, a Ranger, I have been valiant, well-mannered, liberal, generous, courteous and bold.

“You are locked up because for the bold part. I don’t like you for the liberal part.”

“Your d*** wall is why I’m locked up in a cage like a madman, I have my weapons back and Heaven help me I’ll find ammunition and in a few days I shall find myself a cattle baron with a ranch large enough that I can display the gratitude of my
heart after all. Juan, a poor man, can't show any gratitude if he doesn't receive anything. I want the ranch so I can make him the country judge."

At this point in the dream, the caravan pulled into a fuel station in Grandbury. Two of his friends were on their way to the trailer, first Juan and second the minister. But Cowboy continued to dream.

"Self-interest. Of course. It's always wise to have friends in the political class," the bishop said in the dream.

"My friend is the best friend in the world; I should like to give him an amusement park, an island, or a county, which I promised him many months ago even though I fear he may not have the ability to govern such."

As soon as Juan heard Cowboy mumble these last words, he said, "Your ass should get to work finding me the island that you promised and is hoped for by my wife."

Juan poked him four or five times with a stick. Cowboy awoke from his dream.

Juan continued, "I promise you I'll have no problem governing it and if I do, I've heard it said that there are men in the world who farm the estates of the aristocracy who pay them so much each year to manage everything, and the gentleman sit with his feet up enjoying the rent they pay him and not worrying about anything else."
“And you want to be the manager?” Cowboy asked.

“No, I want to be the gentleman with his feet kicked up, watching everyone else work.”

“That would be your work. I see.”

“And that and that’s what I'll do. I won't have to go all over and haggle over trifles, but I'll turn my back on everything and enjoy my rent like a baron and let the others do the work.”

The minister walked up at this time, “Brother Juan, that's fine as far as enjoying the rent is concerned but, we are still an Acreocracy and unless things change in San Antonio, the administration of justice has to be tended to you by the owner of the estate and this is where ability and good judgment come in and in particular, a real attention to do what is right because if this is lacking this might feed depravity.”

“I don’t intend to deprive anyone of anything.

“No, that’s not what I mean.”

“I don't know about these philosophies,” reasoned Juan Seguin, “you know I’m in church with my wife and family every Sunday I’m in Jefferson, but all I know is that as soon as I have the island, I'll know how to govern it. I have as much soul as any other man and as much body as the biggest of them and I'll be as much a king of my state as any other is of his and this being true I'll do what I want and doing what I want I'll
do what I like and doing what I like I'll be happy and when a man is happy he doesn't wish for anything else and not wishing for anything else I'll be the father who can't say what he wants for Christmas, even to his children, because he literally has everything.

“Juan, I’m worried,” said the minister, “You have the self-interest down but that might be the end of it and you’ll bring this island/county, wherever it will be, a sad fate.”

“Why?”

“Because you have no guiding philosophy.” The minister said, “There must be winners and losers; public policy isn’t neutral. If power was impartial, we wouldn’t need to fight so hard over it.”

“I think I might like to favor the charitable intentions of the simple man and confound the wicked intentions of the intelligent.”

These is an interesting philosophy, I’ll have to study that. But, please let me know how what works out for you.”

To which Cowboy offered, “I don't know if there is more to say, I think he can do it. I’m not concerned.

“Why do you say that?” the minister asked.

“I am guided by the example of the great Samuel H. Walker who made his friend judge of then Bosque County. Therefore I can without scruple or Christian of conscience make a judge of Juan
Seguin who is one of the best friends a Ranger ever had.” Cowboy answered.

For the four-thousandth time, the minister was astounded by the reasonless nonsense spoken by Cowboy. He recalled the way he was portrayed in *The Adventure of The Reckless Cowboy* and by the impression that had been made on him by the intentional lies the Mexican propaganda machine told and finally by the simple madness/mindedness of Juan who was so ambitious for his friend that he’d been the one to send California the material, at least ninety pages of screenplay and three hours of tape. Yet, so fervently Cowboy held to his decision to obtain a mirco-empire, county or island, for his friend, as promised. The minister simply could not break the news to either one of them, so he let things quietly progress.

By now the priests had returned from a roadside café where they had gone for a meal and finding a long table they sat in the shade of some trees and digested their meal. The bishop slept under an entirely different tree.

There while they were sitting, they suddenly heard the tinkling of a cowbell from some nearby brambles and heavy underbrush and at the same time, they saw a beautiful black and white and gray spotted Longhorn cow emerged from the thicket. Behind her came a real cowboy, somewhere between hay and grass,
and calling her saying words. Real cowboys say things to make their animals feel comfortable.

The fugitive cow fighting an anxiety, apprehension with a touch of ADHD, came up to the company as if asking for their help and there she stopped. The cowboy rode up on horse back, dismounted and seized her by her horns and as if she were capable of rational thought and speech said to her, “Now Dollop, you’re so wild these days, running all about. Why are you scaring me, my girl. Don't you tell me you are lonely, but what's wrong, my pretty? What else can it be but that you're a female and can't be quiet and the devil take your condition and all the females you're imitating. Come back. Come back with me, my friend. And if you're not happy, at least you'll be safer in the fold; these priests might want to take you to Mexico to some stinking bull or worse to a table kitchen.

The cowboy grinned at the priests resting at the table, “And what about your companions? If you who are supposed to lead and god*** go astray, and dragging me with you, what will happen to them?”

The priests were amused, those who were listening, especially the two priests. One priests said to him, “By all your life, brother, calm down a little and do’t hurry to fetch that cow back so quickly to her herd. Since she is a female, as you said, she must follow her natural instinct no matter how you
may try to prevent it. Come over and eat something and have a
drink to cool. We aren’t in the mood to take what must be your
favorite cow to Mexico. In the meantime the cow can rest,” and
saying this, the priest handed him a hamburger they’d ordered
for down the road.

The cowboy accepted it’s with thanks. The authentic cowboy
drank and chewed his food calmly and then said, “I would not
want you good people to think I’m simple just because I talk to
this animal sensibly as if she could understand, for the truth
is, the words I said are not mysterious. A rustic maybe but not
so rustic that I don't understand how to talk to them one way
and to beat me into a different way.”

“I certainly believe that,” said the priest, “for I already
know from experience that prairie-bred born men and ranch style
home philosophy philosophers do exist.”

I wasn't invited but if you'll listen I'll tell you the
truth that confirms what the priest has just said,” the true
cowboy said.

To which our heroic Cowboy responded, “because this matter
seems to have a adventure in it, for my part, I allot upon to
hear it and all their bishop priests will do the same for their
bishop is an intelligent Mexican who is fond of curious and
extraordinary things. So begin then my errant friend and we'll
all listen.”

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“I passed,” said Juan, “I'm going over there with those hamburgers and eat enough for three days because I've heard my friend, El Vaquero de Tejas, saying a cowboy on the move must eat when you can.”

“You’re right there,” said the cowboy, “Go where you wish and eat when you can.”

“I am satisfied with that, and all I need to do is walk over there and eat, which I'll do and leave you to the blather.”

“And so shall we all,” said the priest.

Then the cow miraculously set by the men as if she were one of them. The real cowboy began his history.

EXT. EAST ZIPOLITE COUNTY

Ten miles from Grandbury is DeCordova, Texas, all though small, it’s one of the richest in the entire West and there lived a farmer who was very respected, so respected in fact that he was more honored for his good deeds than for his pesos. But his greatest joy, as he would repeat, was having a daughter of such extraordinary beauty and exceptional intelligence, grace, and goodness. Whoever knew her and saw her marveled to see the unsurpassed gifts that genetics and good nature had granted her. As a child, she was cute and as she grew, so did her beauty and at the age of sixteen she was exceedingly attractive; in fact, the fame of her beauty began to spread to all the neighboring
tows. Why do I say neighboring? It spread to distant cities and
even entered the ruling class, Mexico's attentive public and as
if she were a rare object or a miraculous image; they came from
far and near to see her. Her father watched over her and she
watched over herself, because there are no locks, bars or bolts
that protect a girl better than her self.

The father's wealth and the daughter's beauty moved many
from the town as well as strangers to ask for her hand in
marriage, but the daughter was perplexed and couldn't decide on
which suitor she would give herself to. I was one of the many
who wanted her and I had many great hopes of success knowing
that her father knew I was worthy. Since I came from the same
small town and had pure Texas blood and in the prime of my life
and had a large ranch and was not lacking in intelligence as
witnessed by this book. Another man from our village with the
same qualifications had, except author status, dated the girl
but she hesitated unable to reach a decision.

In order to resolve the problem, he determined to discuss
it with Leandria, which is the name of the wealthy virgin who
kept many in misery. Because he believed that since we were
equally qualified, it would be a good idea to allow his daughter
to choose to her liking. In all this chaos, both political and
social, I didn't think a young girl should be able to pick the
best or less of two evils, but if the options are all good and
they should be allowed to choose freely, but her father put it off citing her young age, neither Anselmo or myself have the girl to marry. It's not concluded but it doesn't look like a harmonious ending for anyone.

At this time, a certain Vincente came to town; he was the son of an unfortunate family from Barnhart and had been a soldier in California, and in some other places; he had been taken away from our town when he was a boy of 12 by soldier passing through. With his troops, the boy who returned ten years later a soldier with the look, uniforms, ribbons, and weapons. We farmers, with little else to do that time of year but but drink coffee, calculated that he had only three uniforms but they were so craftily combined most thought he had dozens of outfits. You might think it's silly for the growers of food to count, but it's key to the story. He would sit on a the park bench that is under a great oak tree in our town square and there he would keep us all entertained with war stories. There was no land anywhere in the former United States that he had not seen and no major battle in which he had not fought and had killed many Americans as he lived in Arkansas and he had never been even wounded.

On the other hand he would show us the scars of the wounds and even though we could not clearly make them out, he let us know what type of weapon had caused each scar. Finally, with
unparalleled it arrogance he would address us as his equals that is that his war record was his class and rank and as a soldier he owed nothing to any man not even the president of Mexico; however, he was a nice singer and the girl became infatuated with the glitter of his clothes, and the medals and his singing. She gave him full credit for the stories he told and the devil made her fall in love with him.

He promised to take her to the most wealthy and joyous city; we thought he meant maybe someday San Antonio. She was thinking next week Mexico City but Anselmo and I found her in San Angelo three days after she ran off with Vincente in a rundown motel wearing only her tennis outfit and without the money and jewels she had taken from her house. We brought her back in anguish to her father and she admitted that Vincente had deceived her, promising to be her husband and persuading her to leave Barnhart and to bring as much money as she could. Her father enrolled her in Llano Estacado Community College. Her extreme youth helped to excuse some of the behavior at least with people without a stake in the war, but we stakeholders chalked it up to the natural inclination of Mexican soldiers. But we speculated it was a little as Luise Brooks had so eliquenlty phrased it.

Anselmo and I left Barnhart and came here to Big Lake. Grazed my herd of Angus and he a herd of Santa Gertrudis, curse
her, and call her unpredictable. He condemns her as frigid but absolves and pardoned her and I would pardon her as well. There's no rock or stream no shade tree that hasn't heard our conversation about her. And this is the reason for the words and arguments address to the sky and when I arrived here she's a female. I like her plenty; she's the best in my herd. This is the story I promised to tell. I've gone too long for give me please.

**EXT. CENTRAL ZIPOLITE COUNTY**

The tale of the waddie pleased all who heard it, especially the priests, who with remarkable curiosity noted the manner in which he had told it because he was as far from sounding like a rustic cowboy and he was closer to the discussions of intelligent aristocrats. And the priest, who had said the prairie-bred man could be educated man, was absolutely correct.

Everyone paid compliments to Eugene, but the most liberal in doing so was Cowboy who said, “to me there can be no doubt, brother herdsmen, that if I were able to embark upon a new adventure I would begin immediately to bring to a happy conclusion for I despise the barkin’ at knots these priests have forced on me. I’d like to rescue Leandria from the community college and I’d rescue her from the creepy coed dorm. But, adhering to the laws of the West which are clear that no lady
shall have any offense whatsoever committed against her person. I can give the help and assistance as I'm obliged to do by my profession which is none other than favoring the work the weak and helpless.”

The genuine cowboy looked at him and, then realized Cowboy was so badly dressed and looking so shabby, he was taken back, and he asked the barber, who was not far away, “Sir, who is this man? He looks so odd and talks in this outdated fashion.”

At this time Juan exited the café and approached.

“Who could he be,” responded the barber, “but the famous Vaquero to Tejas righter of wrongs; and here comes his famous friend, writer of wrongs, forgive the pun.”

He winked at the minister, who was near enough to overhear.

“What?” asked the genuine cowboy.

“I’m sorry that’s an inside joke.”

They ride around Texas dreaming up wrongs, redressing/guessing grievances. They defend young women in skirts. Turn out cattle collected by the denizen wranglers and we don’t know how, but they’ve won more than a few victories/battles.

“That sounds to me,” responded the able Cowboy, “like the things one hears in western films where the Cowboys did everything you just ran through. It seems to me, either you're
joking or this gentleman must have a few empty chambers in his revolver.”

Cowboy had come within hearing distance without them realizing, and he said, “You are a villain and a scoundrel and you are the one who ain’t got no ammunition in his head and are foolish. I have more upstairs than the wh*** who bore you ever did.”

As he was speaking and saying this, he seized a glass of home-made Dr. Pepper that was beside him and hit the undoubted cowboy with the full of it in the face and did this with so much fury it exploded everywhere. But the actual cowboy cared nothing for jokes and when he saw how badly he was being mistreated with little regard for the priests or the barber of Juan or the sleeping bishop, he leaped Cowboy and put both hands around his neck and surely would have choked him if Juan had not seized him by the soldiers shoulders and throwing him down or on the long table breaking plates and shattering cups and spilling and scattering everything that was on it.

Cowboy when he found that he was free, threw himself on top of the proper cowboy throwing punches as Juan kicked at him. The real deal fell to all fours, looking for a knife on the ground, to take his bloody revenge, but was prevented from doing so by the barber.
The bishop awoke just in time to rope one of Juan’s hind legs, looped it over a branch and pull that leg half-way up a tree. The two priests helped the valid cowboy turn the tables on Cowboy and hold him down for a few punches, so then both cowboys were bleeding as heavily as the other. The three federales pulled the two priests off cowboy and the fight between invented and real cowboys resumed.

The bishop and the minister, both doubled over in laughter, the officers of the federal police jumped up and down with glee and every one sicced the children on, as if they were pit bulls in a pit. Juan was spared the fighting and who prevented him from helping his friend because he could not shake from the bishop’s rope.

In short, everyone was diverted and amused except for the two who were flailing away on each other, when they heard a car horn playing the El Diablo I found someone full it made them turn toward the place where it seem to originate, but the one most aroused by the sound was the imaginary Cowboy, and though he lay beneath the physical cowboy, much against his will and more than a little battered he said to him, “Brother demon, is it possible that you are anything else since you have had sufficient power and strength to overcome mine. I implore you let’s call a truce for at least an hour, because it seems to me that the sad sound of the car horn summons us to a new
adventure. The proper cowboy, who by this time, was weary of hitting and releasing only to be hit again by Cowboy released him a final time and Cowboy rose to his feet as he turned toward the sound and suddenly so many Catholics in procession, so many men dressed in white, in the manner of penitence, marched into the parking lot.

In fact, that year the clouds had denied Texas its moisture and in every town and spot in the road there were processions, “Pray For Rain” parades, basically huge public penances asking God to send the rain. To this end, the people living out at and off the lake’s resources were going in procession to a holy hermitage located near Pelican Plantation, renamed by the always politically opportunistic/correct Mexican’s Pelícano Hacienda. The new name for the religious community didn’t rhyme or sound particularly interesting, but this was Mexico now and had been for twenty years.

Cowboy saw the strange dress of the penitents and not remembering the times he must have seen them in the past he imagined that this was the start of an adventure, and since he was a Ranger, he alone could undertake it and this idea was confirmed for him when he thought that an image draped, and why they were cheering, was actually a noble lady Mother of God carried away against her will by a group of cowardly mystics. No sooner had this thought passed his mind and he rushed over to
shovelhead who was sitting up in the cattle trailer and called in a loud voice to everyone, “Now my brave companions you will see how important it is that there be cowboys in the world who do more than herd cattle and wobble ’re jaw. I’m gonna see to the liberty of that good lady held captive there how cowboys are seamed up.”

And as he said this, he pressed Shovelhead on out of the trailer and into a brisk canter, nowhere else either original or film sequel do we see Shovelhead run at a gallop. Cowboy rode out into this encounter with the rain worshippers, although the minister, barber, and five of the priests did what they could to stop him but to no avail. Nor was he stopped by Juan who shouted, “Where are you going Cowboy? Why attack the Catholic faith, you just came from a cattle trailer, do you want to return? It's A procession of pendants with a statue of the virgin.”

Juan’s efforts were all in vain because his friend was so determined to reach the figures in sheets and to free the lady that he didn't hear a word, and if he had he wouldn't have turned back or even if the shadow president in Austin had ordered him to. And so he reached the procession and rained in Shovelhead he pulled his pistol and waved it at them and they scattered like quail.
Cowboy cried, “Oh, you cowards, scatter because you're evil and don't intend to hear what I wish to say to you,” and Cowboy fired his pistol five times then at the broken covey. Only one penitent didn't break for cover; perhaps he knew the pistol only contain the blanks Juan had smuggled to him, or because he thought the Virgin would protect him. We don't know; the history isn't clear. Plenty of debate on this question.

The penitent said, “Big Jake, stop shooting; if you want to say something, we'll listen.”

“Release the lady,” replied Cowboy, “you will not take her another step.”

When the quail heard this they all realize the cowboy had to be insane Cowboy pulls his rifle and was about to pick off some of the penitent pigeons/quail but the one penitent bum-rushed Cowboy and the rifle inadvertently discharged, the only live round Juan could muster, and the head of the statue shattered and Cowboy was tackled off the motorbike and fell on the ground in a very sorry state. Juan again came panting but shouting at Cowboy’s attacker not to hit him again because he was a poor f***ed-up Ranger who had never harmed anyone in all his life. But it took Juan, with his girth, a long time to arrive. What stopped the penitents blows was the bishop who thought Cowboy was perhaps dead, because he was totally unconscious. And believing the bishop that maybe he’d killed him
accidentally, he quickly got on his motorbike and fled back in the direction of Blue Bonnet Creek like a deer.

Now then, all of Cowboy’s escort had reached the spot where he lay. Those in the procession, who saw only federal officers, holding their pistols, running toward them feared real trouble and made a circle around the broken statue. They waited for some arrests but the only thing Juan did was throw himself on the body of his apparently dead friend. Juan cried and cried. The minister approached the procession and quickly gave them a brief account of who Cowboy had been and then they all moved over to see if Cowboy was really dead and they heard Juan’s lament, “a single blow, a single blow has brought down the honor and strength of Texas, attacker of drunken tyrants, a drunken poet himself and endurer of insults. I don't know why. And I don't know where or how to bury him.”

Juan’s cries and questions about his burial revived Cowboy and the first words he said were, “Anyone stupid enough to leave Tawakoni is subject torture and even death but but help me anyway, Juan. Juan, help me come back into that f***ed-up cattle trailer; I can't sit any longer on Shovelhead for my body is shattered.”

The game birds were all so happy they’d not killed the man, they applauded.
“I'll do that gladly,” Juan whispered into cowboy’s bloody ear, “You’ve taught these Catholics a good lesson. Maybe you should give them time to ruminate on it. So, let's return to Marion County with our friends and the minister, and the barber who wish to help you set up your lab again. After a short vacation, you and I will make another trek and this next one will bring us more profit and less pain. Maybe later you’ll some fame.”

“Well said, Juan,” responded Cowboy.

Juan looked for his friend’s approval, “For now it will be best for you to take a rest from battle and the coyote to pass unharmed.”

Cowboy, unable to speak, nodded. The minister and the barber both told Cowboy that what he intended to do was wise and so having been greatly amused by the oration of Juan, they placed Cowboy in the trailer along with Shovelhead almost as they had been before. The procession formed once again and took the broken statue on its way. The genuine Cowboy had left with his cow just as Cowboy charged the parade and hadn’t cared to see the ending. The federal officers didn't wish to go any further they took the dope owed them, the bribe, and turn South.

The bishop asked the minister to inform him, care of the Windthorst Cathedral, what happened to Cowboy, if he was cured of his insanity or continue to suffer, and with this his
Excellency excused himself and the priest all continued their journey. In short, they departed in peace and went their separate ways and those remaining were only the minister, the barber, Cowboy, Juan Seguin, Shovelhead and the cattle hauler, who related everything you've heard in this particular chapter to me and with far more patience than he might have.

The cattle hauler hitched the trailer and settled our introspect cowboy on a fresh bundle of hay and with his customary deliberateness followed the route indicated by the minister and in six days they reached Cowboys hometown which they entered the day of the afternoon of the football parade

EXT. STREETS OF JEFFERSON - COLOSIO COUNTY, TEXAS

Chased by at least three feral dogs and one seriously confused cat-bobcat mix, the cattle trailer carrying Cowboy drove right into the middle of the homecoming spectacle. The dogs undeterred by all the noise and everyone was tech everyone hurry to see what was in the trailer and when they recognize their neighbor they were astounded and a boy ran to give the news to his father's girlfriend and her daughter. He told them Cowboy was arriving in a “fair-to-Midland sized trailer, was skinny, yellow and lying near death in a pile of hay.” It was a
terrible thing to hear, but the cries of the two women would soon turn to curses once the saw him again.

At the news of their arrival, Juan’s wife came running and as soon as she saw Juan the first thing she asked was if the moped was running.

“Well,” Juan responded, “it’s in better condition than my friend.”

“You're lucky you didn't ruin it cause he look dead,” said the wife.

Three city blocks later, Juan’s moped did die and he and his wife had to crawlly up in the bed of the truck hauling the cattle trailer. But it was a parade and grand for Juan to be so admired.

In front of their bank, the bank that held their mortgage, she asked Juan, “All the gossips in this town are telling me what you've endured for our family. I appreciate that, but with all your gallivanting about have you brought me any new clothes? Did you bring your children new shoes?”

“I didn't bring anything like that dear wife,” said Juan, “though I do have other things that are more valuable and worthwhile.”

“That makes me very happy,” she responded, “show me these things that are more valuable and worthwhile. I want to see them
and be happy. I've been so sad and unhappy during the century of your absence."

"I'll show them to you at home," said Juan, "and for now be happy because, if we go out again and in search of adventure in no time you'll see me made a county judge or director of an amusement park and not just any county around here but the best and most wealthy in Texas.

"I hope so because we really need it. And tell me what's all this about an amusement park?"

"Honey's not for the donkey's ears," responded Juan. "In time you will, dear wife, and even be amazed to see yourself a top of the best rides, free of admission."

"What are you saying, Juan, about counties and parks," responded Theresa Seguin, which was the name of Juan’s wife and they were not kin but in Texas, they still usually took their husband's name.

"Hobble your lips and don't be in such a hurry, Theresa, to learn everything all at once. It's enough that I'm telling you the truth. Shut up and kiss me with your mouth closed. I'll just tell you this in passing, there's nothing nicer in the world for a man then being the friend of a cowboy seeking to kick up a row. Even though, it's true that most don't turn out as well as men would like because out of the 100 adventures, you’ll find 99 play out wrong and twisted. I know this from experience because
in some I've been left hours on a Tilt-A-Whirl and in others
I've been knocked into a cocked hat, but even so, it's a fine
thing to be out looking for things to happen, crossing deserts,
searching mesquite thickets and enduring the sun and rain,
visiting hotels and drinking rattlesnake tequila and not backing
down from s***. It’s my grand life I’m tied to and I love you
for allowing it!”

While Juan and Theresa were having this conversation,
Cowboy’s father's girlfriend and her daughter climbed into the
back of the cattle trailer and formally welcomed him home with
expletives. They addressed him harshly but eventually realized
he was half dead, and that wouldn’t “do for beans,” so they put
even more hay under him. He stared at them, his eyes transfixed
and he clearly did not understand where he was.

The minister rode up alongside them and instructed the
daughter (again), Cowboy’d “nearly gone down the spout” and that
she should look after him with great care and be very sure she
didn't allow him to escape again, telling her in short what they
had undergone to do to bring him home. At this, the two women
began to cry again and to renew their curses, but less personal
this time round. They were even more distraught than the last
time he’d been brought home and fearful they would find
themselves out of a house.
The double-wide was owned by Cowboy's father and no one had seen him in over a year now and no one would ever find the body. If Cowboy also disappeared, they’d be responsible for the taxes and the Mexican government my take the house, leaving them homeless. If the hero disappeared or stopped cooking meth then the Mexican Government might take render them homeless.

But the jounals I purchased in Dallas don’t end here. The author, showing great curiosity and diligence, included several stories not previously know about Cowboy. The final journal documents that after Cowboy rested, he participated in the Santa Fe rodeo and took part in several other famous rodeos in and about Texas. And, of course, everyone knows about the rumored week-long trip, without Juan Seguin, he took to Tawakoni. And of course, these things surely happened to him but this is where the journals end.

The Dalls journals didn’t include anything about Cowboys final end, his passing, and I never would have learned the rest of the story, if good luck hadn't been presented to me, by an elderly physician who was in possession of a flash drive that he claimed to have found in the USB port of the computer in the Throckmorton Public Library. The old doctor shared, fortunately for the world, that text with several scholars (including me), more exploits of Cowboy and more descriptions of the beauty of
Salada de Tawakoni and the reliability of Shovelhead and the loyalty of Juan.

Please note that I'm not asking and unreasonable sum for the second volume. Serious his readers who are interesting in bringing the story to life should not balk. I ask only that you seek out other histories as well if not as true then at least as informative and entertaining as this title. The first words of the second volume were found on the doctor’s flash drive.

VOLUME TWO

EXT. SUNNY AND CHRISTIAN AT GALVESTON

Despite hating guns, a year after witnessing the Abilene execution, Sunny would be in love with the man described by the Mexican newspapers as “Texas’ most villainous gunman. There was even once a statewide “most wanted”. “Christian Carbonnier,” it said. “University educated, proper Spanish speaker, well-mannered and neat appearance.” Sunny would tease him about that quizzical phrase, “well-mannered.” Who in the Mexican government had he ever been polite to?

“Yes,” Sunny would say, “polite but not neat. Perhaps not neat at all, but certainly well-mannered.”
“Yeah, right,” he would say, “a doctor’s son, educated in San Marcos, not even in Austin. I think neat appearance fits the bill.”

Not quite a “killer,” perhaps, not a “triggerman,” as young Weakley was on the day he shot down bank inspector Robles, nor even Weakley of a few years later than that afternoon, when he had become Colonel Weakley, and you would hear his name in the media. Not a killer, perhaps, but a man who sent killers out upon their chores, which in the mind of many was “just as bad,” surely, or “perhaps worse,” as any priest will tell you.

It wasn’t long after Christian and Sunny had become lovers that Sunny told him of seeing poor Robles shot down. He looked at Sunny at once, concerned, shocked. “That was terrible,” he said. Robles’s murder was something one heard of often at the beginning of the mess because like San Fernando and the shooting of the soldiers as they came from a religious service in the old cathedral, it seemed like the beginning. By the time they were sleeping together, two years after the Robles killing, it was just a footnote of history.

“A forensic accountant,” Sunny said, “Somehow, I think he knew that he was going to die, although none of us did, none of the passengers, certainly not the PF who had been trying to guard him.”
“A bank inspector,” Christian said. “Did you wonder why a bank inspector would need the protection of the police?”

“I wondered,” Sunny said, “of course, and I wasn’t the only one. People wondered. Was he a rebel who’d betrayed someone? Is that it? I never heard.”

“No,” Christian said, “you wouldn’t. No, he had been a bank inspector, by then he was retired, living somewhere not far from you, Floydada I think. But he had special training, special skills, and so he was brought back.”

“By his bank?” Sunny asked.

“By San Antonio, the Rivercenter.”

Christian and Sunny were staying the weekend in a bungalow that Joe’s friend, Wigginton, had given them the key to, on Galveston. Beyond the uncurtained windows, low, they could see the ocean, with very far off tanker moving into port, and nearer at hand, two shrimp boats. They faced each other, at ease, in easy chairs, and they had chili ready on the stove.

Sunny waited for him to go on, and when he did he said, “He had been a bank inspector twenty years before, in the days Texas was a probationary territory. The anti-probates kept funds in this account or another, under this name or that. Robles’s job was to search them out, deprive the rebels of their cash. He was legendary at it, a hero to the Rivercenter crowd. More recently, we had been doing the same thing with the Suciedad
Roja money. We had a problem, you see, the only treasury of the Republic was the money loaned to it, and frankly it was quite substantial. We couldn’t keep it in De Tellez’s Toyota.”

“But the loans were quite legal surely,” Sunny said. “It was all done out in the open. They collected for it in the churches in Lubbock. All the protestant churches, I’m sure of it.”

“Indeed it was not,” he said. “In Texas, San Antonio Rivercenter decides what is legal and what is not. By the end of the day, we had 200 million pesos in hand, part of it in silver and gold and the rest in fiat accounts under an assortment of names. The bookkeeping has been formidable. Robles headed an inquiry set up by the Rivercenter under the Ley de Delitos de Texas, and he was downloading account information and investigating bank managers. It was fortunate indeed for us that he decided to conduct an inspection in Lubbock. We couldn’t get him at the Rivercenter, and he was living there, to stay under close guard.”

Carbonnier spoke with a curious detachment, as though he were previously removed from what he was saying. How close to what had happened had he been? Sunny was not sure that she wanted to know, and her not wanting to know frightened her. Sunny was remembering, down on her knees beside Robles (shattered skull) at that railway station in Abilene.
"You must understand," Christian said, as though he saw what Sunny was seeing. "It’s that war is not pretty, and we are in a war. The Mexican’s deny that, but it is true."

"You are right there. It’s not pretty at all," Sunny said.

"He was acting as a spy," Christian said, "a spy or a b**** informer or both. Spies are shot."

"But he was just doing his job. How is that being a spy?"

"We are the legitimate government in Texas. Austin. Not Mexico City or San Antonio."

"I see, but someone else took his place?"

"Yes," Christian said. "Someone did. A man named Bell. They (we) got him as well. In San Antonio. It took a bit longer and was messy. He wouldn’t leave the Rivercenter for long periods. And then when we caught him out; it was half botched."

Christian mattered, but the people in Austin or San Antonio, they mattered little to Sunny.

"You must understand," Christian said. "The work I do is quite different. But I have been a part of it all, of Weakley at Abilene, of all of it."

"Yes," Sunny said, "that was his name, the young man. He is one of your operatives; there is a song about him in that loud shirt. Imagine, a boy. In a loud shirt, killing a man."

"He wasn’t a boy. I mean he was a boy once. He looks younger than he is. He’s your age," Christian said, "he is a few
years younger than I am. He’s very skillful, with a flying line of pickups, they have come close to fighting a pitched battle with the Mexicans, twice. It’s only the men with the flying line of pickups that we can sing songs about; they really know how to come and go. The others, you know, the local volunteers, those are men who have ordinary lives -- farmers, teachers. But fellows like Weakley, their names are known and they are on the run – that is how the ‘flying line of pickups’ phrase was coined. After Abiline, he never traveled in a procession of less than five trucks; they’re obvious as hell, kicking up all that caliche dust, but what Mexican has the balls to try stopping five of them? And they travel fast.”

Across the darkening waters, the tanker seemed almost motionless; the water was slate-green.

“In Crane,” Christian said, “the TDJC broke into the house of Matías Clancy, the mayor (our mayor), and shot him dead. Killing Robles was no different from that. Clancy was one of our brigade commanders.”

“No different,” Sunny said, but he took no notice of her irony.

“This is the first time in our history that we have fought effectively,” he said, “the first time that we have devised a way to fight. We are fighting an empire, with jets and tanks and wealth at its disposal. We have handfuls of men, moving across
prairies, down rivers, and deer trails. The empire doesn’t know how to fight that kind of war; we have reinvented an ancient sort of doing things.”

“And when the war is over,” Sunny said, “what will your Eugene Weakley do, your boy-commandant with the song written for him? He had the look of a real cowboy, but that was a year ago, he may have changed. Maybe he’ll go back to that?”

“Sunny, I don’t know,” Christian said, “I doubt if he knows. I doubt if he has thought about it. Are we in an argument, Sunny?”

“About what?”

“You told me that you had seen a man shot down, and now you’re more worried about the triggerman. So maybe... we are?”

“No, my dear,” Sunny said. “No argument, just inquiry.”

Sunny never argued with anyone and certainly not Christian. The newspapers had lied to her about the Amazonian Wars. Her husband had sent her letters from Maracaibo, and Sunny had read them over and over, she also felt love and loneliness, but those he had tried to re-create for her the world in which he lived. He’d put his all into it, but the letters remained distant and confusing because the newspapers were saying the opposite.

The newspapers of Christian’s time were worse, and Sunny was certain, were surely still lying. And now, all that was
reported in Texas seemed equally distant, judging from what
Sunny had seen and what Christian told her. The armed cowboy
who for a moment had sat in her railway railcar, the accountant
shot down on the railway platform, and his face before the
priest had covered it. Christian explained why it had happened,
had to have happened.

It was like in the newspapers a few years earlier maps and
articles by “experts,” retired colonels, who explained to Sunny
why the landing at on Maracaibo was brilliant and how brave all
our men there were, including of course poor soon-to-die
Burgess.

Christian traveled armed when he and Sunny had their
weekends at Kenny Wiggington’s in Galveston. He was always
careful not to impose on her with the weapon, but Sunny saw it
once in the bottom of his suitcase, a large heavy automatic
pistol, beneath the shirts, and beside it the box of ammunition.

But after they had had their drinks, they walked along the
sea wall. There was one other bungalow in sight, a fisherman’s
home a block or two along the road, with two strands of red
chili pepper lights, strung across the porch. The sea stretched,
immensely quiet that particular time. Sunny thought there
couldn’t be any place in the world more quiet than that island.
Behind them, somewhere, was thoroughly Mexican Houston which cut
the island off from the rest of the world. Texas, her Texas,
their Texas, seemed a far and dirty place, and far too populated by Americans with nothing but an antique car they were probably living out of. A gull’s cry broke the calm and Christian turned toward her.

“We are safe here from your damned politics,” Sunny asked to him.

“Yes,” he said, but told her later, dry, conclusive, that even the island had its flying line of pickups and several homes at the other end had been raided by the TDJC and bulldozed, one burned because the machine brokedown. And he added, that a young boy from Galveston had been hanged in San Antonio after the 2045 rebelión.

“What can there be to quarrel over here?” Sunny asked, “over beaches and back roads and a dock. What do they want here?”

But on the sea wall that night he said only, “Guns.” Yes, there was the strong possibility the imported guns were coming through Galveston and not Houston or Corpus Christ. Probably all the Texas ports, from Beaumont to Brownsville, and maybe even Shreveport was being utilized.

**EXT: ALAMO – SAN ANTONIO – 2036**

Jan Graf had already packed several lifetimes into his forty-seven years. He was a long-time Texan, sometimes human
smuggler and full-time adventurer. Though barely computer literate, he could claim as much military experience is anyone in Texas. He had fought in both Amazonian wars, was hired a few years later as a freebooter in an expedition into Oklahoma with the notorious Victor Scott, battled Arkansas State Troopers near Texarkana and until 2027 served as a colonel in the Army of the new Republic of Mexico for a time until Augustine Uribe had assumed power via coup d'état. Graf had resigned his commission, declaring that he would never serve a dictator. By order of that despot, he had been pursued arrested, put in prison for a short time, until the Nacional Socialistas took over in March 2028; he had received a large land grant in Tepozteco County in 2029, although six years later he had only introduced twenty-two American families into his colony and his license was not renewed. At one time, he held claim 2200 Acres. Such a life held little room for a woman and the only one he had any success with had given up waiting and married another man. But his many exploits had proven unsuccessful and by 2035 he had little more than one section.

For his various crimes, all political, like many Texans, he had seen the inside of more than one Mexican prison. He had only just escaped from one in Monterey. His friend had arranged a motorcycle and made his way hundreds of miles to Texas, somehow reaching Goliad just in time to join the skirmish there. His
clothes in tatters he had only the items taken from Mexican soldiers there, but the pants and sleeves were at least 6 inches too short on Graf who was above average in height. A few days later, when he drove into the state safe house at New Braunfels, Fassbender had made him commander of a motorized recognizance company.

The former Nebraskan’s right knee was seriously arthritic and his lower back gave him fits, but he was still muscled-up and energetic. In 2036, just returned from a long scout toward Laredo, he became furious when he learned of Fassbender’s plan to lay low for Christmas.

He found General Eyer’s adjunct, the short-tempered Eamon De Tellez and filled his ear. De Tellez, another long-time resident of Texas and a Reconquista firebrand from the very beginning, was persuaded they should march into San Antonio and take and occupy the Alamo, to make a point. They laid out their plans and Eyer listen to them and agreed; if he could muster enough on volunteers they could proceed with the action.

The next evening Graf walked outside his Austin apartment to find hundreds of eager men; word had spread that something was up. Nothing was ever really confidential anymore; there was far too much anger for much secrecy. One friend of Graf’s remembered his commanding appearance, he’d lost the stolen Mexican uniforms, and gave a fine address. Graf had some skills
and he used them to his best ability when he took his cowboy hat off and waved it above his head, he shouted, “Who will go with old Jan Graf to take back the Alamo?”

Scores of volunteers who had gathered between the apartment and the abandoned Sonic yelled, “I will,” and then “we will!”

Graf was wise enough he felt he needed a definite number of men, so he stepped across the street that ran in front of the Sonic and shouted, “Well, if you're going with me, get on this side of the road.” The men roared approval and rushed to cross the street. Apparently, it wasn’t just drunken bravado, but there must have been a bit of that involved as well.

Graf counted the number to be more than 300 including every able-bodied New Orleans blue, Cajun’s who weren’t supposed to be in Texas, but still wore light blue shirts to distinguish themselves. In true democratic fashion, it was no surprise they chose Graf to lead them.

A few men made speeches against the move and some men begged their homies not to throw away their lives for a silly monument, with no real military value. But after a time the Alamo’s publicity value won out.

All that night, the volunteers prepared for the attack. The naysayers mounted their bikes and headed for home. Ezekial Forbath had left in late November most likely fed up with Fassbender's indecisiveness and chaotic mess known as the army
of Texas. Never one to miss a party, he would return for the Christmas rebellion.

Fassbender's leadership was less than dynamic and his lame-ass orders almost begged to be ignored and Forbath always took advantage.

“Contents read and duly considered,” Forbath nearly always replied to Fassbender's directives. After reading Fassbender's orders, Graf generally did what he thought was best.

Forbath had departed albeit on orders to oversee the harassing of Mexican police at Goliad, 95 miles down the San Antonio River. Karl Schkade left also about the same time as Forbath; he also would return for the Alamo occupation. He had achieve recognition for capturing, with just a dozen motorcycles, a large shipment of Mexican guns, fifty miles south of San Antonio. He led an attack straight into the Mexican caravan and took the soldado escorts, high on meth, prisoners without a shot fired. When Fassbender learned of the 300 captured rifles he praised his cavalry Captain Karl Schkade who returned to Austin at the end of November and was commended by the Beer Garten crowd there and news of his fine work appeared in Liberation newspapers.

Eyer would advise the operation from a safe house in New Braunfels, where there were 200 or so men that would constitute a reserve force. Few of them gave the assault much chance of
occupying the Alamo or keeping it for long against a
professional Mexican Army.

On the north side of Bexar, half the distance from New
Braunfels, the assault force gathered at three a.m. only 200
men, fifteen small companies showed up, the others apparently
giving into arguments that they would be cut down.

A blue-norther was blowing and actually blew over several
bikes and the weather helped persuade plenty to remain in
they're warm beds. Graf's followers wrapped wool blankets over
their leather shivering as they waited for the signal. The
Comanche Moon was still high in the western sky at five that
morning.

December 5th, a loud blast split the cold air as a tow
missile crashed into the riverside entrance to the River Center,
it was a diversion. Earlier chief technologist Captain James
Neal, who had fired the first missile shot at Gonzalez, had
snuck a tube and a few men into downtown. Closer to the fort,
the roar of the explosion was answered by alarms and that
cheered Neal’s men a great deal. It was also a satisfying sight
to see a horde of Mexican infantry moving out of the fort. They
put up fusees to light the way. The ruse had worked perfectly
and once outside of the Alamo, they were snipped on mercillessly.

When Neal’s missile boomed, Graf’s men drop their blankets
and road as quickly as possible the three miles south, through
the no longer sleeping city. Into downtown, they rode down two parallel streets toward Main Plaza with Graf at the head of one column; Eamon De Tellez led the other. Two local men guided De Tellez's unit: Samuel Maverick an enterprising young man from Lubbock who had only recently arrived in Bexar and Horace Smith the Louisiana native and spy extraordinaire — despite being paraplegic — who lived south of town with his Texican wife and four children. Guiding Graf's division was John W. Smith, a local computer programmer, and translator (nicknamed "El Colorado" for his red hair) and Hendrick Arnold, a black man and Para Smith’s son-in-law.

Eamon De Tellez's men powered through a roadblock of soldiers, then ran into a single Mengshi as they reach downtown. Smith quickly shot the occupants dead. The roadblock had spread the alarm and the Mexican soldiers opened fire with volleys on the Norteamericanos in the narrow streets.

Less than a hundred yards from the Main Plaza and the objective, the Texicans dismounted and hugged the walls. They broke down the thick old doors of a few stone structures and broke the glass of the newer metal buildings and drove inside. Several of the buildings were brokerages and banks with night guards and in these, the Texicans found themselves in deadly combat involving semi-automatic rifles and when the guards ran
out of ammunition, they pulled out pistols, and used them up, then they simply left out by way of the alleys.

Both armies were well entrenched behind walls thick sometimes just yards from each other. What followed was a building-to-building and often hand-to-hand fighting that would ultimately last for five bloody days, each one cloudy and frigid.

Chinese AK-47s using weak Cuban gunpowder were no match for the Texans accurate Russian rifles and antique AR-15s, but the Mexican forces had the advantage of position. Each building, each atrium, and sometimes each elevator became a fiercely fought battle, a mini-fort to be taken on the path to the greater historic (newsworthy) fort.

Since the smartly placed Mexican units made the main streets a virtual shooting gallery, some Texans took to climbing to upper stories and rooftops of buildings and firing down on the Mexicans. But several of the Mexican soldiers had beaten them to it and a dozen or so marksman armed with QBU-88s loomed over the plaza finding rebel targets. To complicate matters, the gusty wind made it increasingly cold, so cold the rifles shook as the men shivered.

A few of the assault parties were forced to cut holes in the roofs and drop down into the building some of which contained soldados.
The Texans battered the outside wall of one historic building until it fell into the occupants inside, the rubble nearly buried some women and their families, when there weren't even any soldiers inside. Bizarrely, one small Bexarena emerged into the back yard and told the rebels they were invited to a dance that night. The Mexican journalists inside vamosed, afraid they'd be held hostages.

From the safe house almost 20 miles north of Bexar, Eyer kept his motorcycles patrolling the outskirts of downtown to prevent Mexicans from leaving or entering. Most of the cyclists were Bandito’s and Cossacks who also pillaged local filling stations for gasoline and motor oil, although about 40 of them had temporarily given up their hogs to join Graf's door-to-door fight. The mounted patrols prevented the Mexican General, a man named Sandoval, from sending in some of his police units as reinforcements.

The fighting ended after sundown. A supply truck, a beige Nissan, appeared with water, munitions, BBQ beef and bread. Eyer made his way into Bexar and conferred with the two leaders who, despite the Mexicans turning off the city’s one cell tower and jamming the radios, had finally established communication with each other.

The resistance had become stronger than they had calculated; the stories upon stories of untrained convict
Mexican units hadn’t been entirely accurate, not at the tip of the spear anyway. Also, the Texans' recent success, attacking the armory at Gonzalez, had led to overconfidence.

Just getting to the San Antonio fort, they’d suffered eleven casualties, one dead and ten wounded, who were taken back to New Braunfels to the veterinary clinic of Dr. Samuel Stivers and Amos Pollard, a punch drunk white supremacist from Michigan.

That night, while the men refuse to dance at the fandango, they also refuse to withdraw and give up the territory. They sat at the dance exhausted and decided to continue to attack the next day.

Eyer brought news that some men who had left prior to the attack had returned home, and his fighters spent the evening watching the local women dance with the non-violent local men and while they did that, the patriots cleaned their weapons. A few used the dance to fill sandbags and all this was done wrapped in blankets and as the Mexicans head cut off the natural gas and electricity to the area. They slept only a few hours.

The next day was colder than the first and Sandoval ordered a counter-attack at dawn. Both sides fought with tenacity and courage. Much of the combat, the second day, was also at close-range, especially after six rockets sent the Mexican snipers scattering from their rooftops. Rifles gave way to pistols and in the end, a few hunting knives were drawn. Progress was slow
and tedious. The women and children hiding from the previous day had disappeared.

With crowbars and axes and crude battering rams, ten feet long, the rebels would bash holes in the wall of the next building so that it looked like a pigeon nursery from where flame and lead poured out as fast as the men could fire.

One Texan recalled then the Mexicans would do the same as the Texans reloaded. While the hole was being enlarged, occasionally, those occupying either side of a wall would argue their political positions and debate the prospects for the battle and the coming civil war. When the opening was large enough to transgress, Graf's men would make their way through into the next building which was sometimes occupied by Mexican soldiers. Some fought back, some surrendered and were released on a pledge not to return to Bexar, though not many honored that parole.

By sunset, the Texans had moved forward another half block, or more. The men were dangerously cold, exhausted and filthy and dust from exploded buildings gave them a ghostly appearance, but they hunkered down that night and burned office furniture to ward off the chill.

When the sun rose on the third-day assault, it revealed a new threat on the Texan’s left flank, across the river near the Alamo. The Mexicans had erected a redoubt that was now full of infantry. Behind them, four RPGs supported them. But the
volunteer’s accurate rifle fire quickly put the soldiers to flight. Before the day was out the Mexicans were pushed back to the plaza.

Downtown another problem presented itself; the Mexicans had fortified the building directly in the path of De Tellez's division and the heavy small-arms fire and RPGs fired from it made progress impossible. Only when a remotely control robot wheeled up a barrel of fertilizer mixed with kerosene did the Mexicans abandon the stronghold. When a Cossack wanted the barrel moved into the open street facing the enemy, two of the robot operators were shot dead by snipers and then two others were wounded. The fifth man to control the robot was an Arkansan named William Carey; he continued to move the robot up the street. He escaped a skull-splitting bullet that passed through his cowboy hat. Carrie was made first lieutenant soon after.

Jan Graf lead a final push toward the Alamo, then made his way through rubble to confer with De Tellez at the large pink house called by some the “Forbath House” since it had been owned by his former father-in-law.

Graf suggested a daring plan to capture General Sandoval, who was working from a building to the south of the Alamo. Dressed in black leathers, Graf stepped into the open and about one p.m. with a small set of field glasses to get a better look at the Mexican’s command post and determine the best course
there. A second later, Graf fell to the ground a bullet through the skull; he died instantly.

The Texans pointed to a puff of smoke coming from out of a building along the opposing riverbank; several Texans took aim and fired and later a drone was sent to fly over and a motionless body was spotted. After the battle, Mexican television reported the name of the sniper, Felix de la Garza, reputedly the most deadly killer from the Second Amazon Wars. He'd been recalled from the war and was in San Antonio on leave the Christmas the Texans attacked the Alamo.

The stunned Texans buried their captain in a walled garden on Solidad Street, not far from the Alamo and spent the remainder of the day figuring who could possibly replace Graf.

Unknown to the Texans, a Mexican journalist secretly taped the burial and they broadcast it the next day. His loss put a huge damper on rebel morale, reported the journalist. In reality, most Texans put it out of their minds and trudged on.

Rumors of Mexican reinforcements coming from the south were rampant. That evening the Texan officers selected Eamon De Tellez to oversee things.

The man knew Graf’s plan well and had no desire to change it. About ten that night, in a chilling drizzle, four company's of volunteers attacked and seized the stone building just north
of the church and sent the Mexican television crew out into the rain.

The fourth day was more of the same — bracing cold, stiff reassurance, and every full foot of advance expensive with blood. In the afternoon, a serious counter-attack pinned down a company of Banditos behind some cars and a stonewall. When a well-aimed rocket tore down even that poor protection, one angry cyclist, a tall redhead man Henry Carnes who had migrated into Central Texas as a wild hog hunter, yelled for cover fire and dashed across the street through heavy fire to a stone building full of Mexicans with rifles from every window and several on the roof. The twenty year-old professional hunter, high on meth eighty-percent of the time, carried a crowbar in one hand and his rifle in the other. He hit the door with his shoulder and it moved an inch, enough progress for him to beam back at his comrades, while they loosed a steady fire on the soldiers on the roof. By the time he broke open the door most of the Mexicans had skedaddled off the roof and out the back.

Both sides of the plaza were exhausted after four days of constant fighting. One of the Texan columns had been reduced by half, down to forty-nine men, and they were almost out of ammunition.

The freezing rain, the next morning, resulted in less gunfire, but the rebels pushed on past smoldering buildings and
burning cars until they were only yards from the main plaza, Sandoval’s final line of defense before the Alamo walls. At mid-morning Chicano rap music and a radio warned what the Texans had been dreading, the arrival of 400 reinforcements from Laredo and Corpus Christi led by call Domingo “Edge” Eritrea, and from the north, a 200 man contingent of experienced PF from Dallas-Fort Worth. They drove through the streets of Bexar marched across the footbridge spanning the river and into the Alamo and in an arrogant show some where even accompanied by their women and children. They brought two new news crews.

Although they were many in number, the new arrivals were far from ready. In the last 24 hours none of them had eaten more than refried beans due to the emergency situation. They didn't have winter clothes; they had been mustard at two in the morning and were dead tired.

With the reinforcements was Major Jose Juan Sanchez proud leader of the family that had distinguished itself militarily in both the first and second Amazonian Wars. A quarter of a century earlier Sanchez had been a classmate of the dictators in officer training school and then an early Reconquista champion of Mexican annexation of the Reconquista territories (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California). He earned the rank of Major in his teens. He reported to Sandoval later that morning and then began his intelligence duties.
A newly confident Sandoval raised the Bandera Negra over the fort, the sign that no quarter would be given to the enemy. However, most of the new soldiers were clueless recruits including numerous convicts, some still in chains these untrained and humiliated felons (chicken thieves and mere dope fiends) couldn't even load rifles and were in no mood for a fight, unless it was to perhaps help the rebels. The convicts actually made the situation worse for the Mexicans, not only were they constantly in the way and obstinate, but also already food supplies were low and the convicts had brought little with them. The convict situation was so bad the reinforcements were awash.

Meanwhile, the rebels continued to move into the main plaza and Sandoval moved his command back into the Alamo. That afternoon, he advise a desperate strike against the Texans headquarters three miles north of the fort. Two columns, one of motorized bikes and one of infantry in trucks rolled out of the Alama and approach the Texans from opposite sides in a classic pincer movement. But the rifle teams of James Neal were ready and accurate; when the Mexicans came into range the Texans let loose a storm of gunfire and rockets. The attackers turned and retreated back inside the Alamo.

Downtown, the fighting went on past midnight when the last building on the main plaza was taken by rebels, mostly West
Texas, “flat-land hillbillies” (as they called themselves), who fought harder the nearer they came to the prize. In 1936, it was a disorganized or semi-organized army of cliques and each group of friends, generally hunting or fishing clubs, sometimes former youth sports teams. Each needed to be identified in operations and simple conversations, so each clique was referred to by what they called themselves, not by numbers as in a regular army.

And also the New Orleans Blues fought increasingly hard. Under a nearly full moon, about thirty “Crecent City Crawlers” (as that portion of the Blues would later be distinguished) crawled along a wall to avoid rifle fire from inches above them so close that several had their hair singed by the blaze of guns above them; one man’s bald head would be scarred from raising up and grazing a Mexican’s gun barrel; then they rushed the square.

They immediately encountered two RPGs aimed directly at them from an, at first, sad little sally then later a serious sally. The Texans fired at the Mexicans, but even more emerged from the Alamo and the rebels took shelter in a store that ironically sold toy soldiers. The Mexicans rallied around a small artillery piece and begin to pound the store. By then, the West Texas Hillbillys lost contact with the Blues inside the store, and figured they had all been killed, probably.

The news reached Eyer in the Texas safe house right after he was informed of the reinforcement. He summoned De Tellez and
they debated leaving. They had only a Volkswagen Golf of ammunition and under the circumstances, retreat appeared to be the best action but simply riding away would not be so easy.

The men inside the toy soldier store where injured by the pounding but they threw everything, lead bricks, casts, paint, the wooden shelving, desks, typewriters, the cash register, against the front but the artillery continued to blast through. The Blues’ leader turned to his volunteers and gave them a choice, retreat out the back door, surrender or die. The blues were exhausted and short on ammo but to a man they told him, “do or die;” they would remain in the store and take as many Mexicans with them as possible.

About one in the morning Sandoval decided to consolidate his forces; he ordered the remaining troops outside the Alamo to start moving inside the fort. What was left of the elite Saltillo Battalion acted as rearguard as the sick and wounded moved back inside. And, after all the remaining arms and munitions were moved into the Alamo, Sandoval begin to discuss the options with his staff who had rejected his idea of a counter-attack. As the night wore on conditions worsen for the Mexicans; thanks to the hording by the convict soldiers, provisions were almost gone and the Mexican’s intelligence officers had turned off the water, electricity, natural gas and now the Texasn’s had over-run the cut-offs to cut it back on.
Generators inside the Alamo had run out of gasoline. The lights emulating the plaza fell dark. Hundreds of motorcycles inside the Alamo were out of fuel and the reinforcements had neglected to bring fuel.

The post’s morale had plummeted. After the two hundred convict soldiers had deserted and confusion was at hand. The convicts, those that didn’t run, insulted and even attacked their officers and after two rapes, the fort’s women and children added to the panic is they ran out of the fort. When the lights went out, the thirst made the cold even more unbearable. Word began to spread that the Alamo had become a route and the soldiers, not just the convicts, all wished they were home in Mexico.

As Sandoval walked out into the courtyard, trying to calm his army, when the battery-operated bullhorn failed, his voice was drowned out by the disgruntled. A Texan rocket raced over their heads; there was a panic and in the darkness, Sandoval was trampled and suffered two broken ribs, after that even a repaired megaphone wouldn’t matter. Sandoval was put in a bed and it would be up to his officers to restore order. They managed to calm the soldiers for a short time; the journalist didn’t calm so easily, arguing that if captured by the Texans they would be the one’s tortured. But at six a.m. Sandoval called for his officers, most of whom had taken up rifles and
manned the walls. Sandoval sent Sanchez out of the fort to approach the Texans for the best terms possible.

As Sanchez made his way to the plaza he met his Saltillo Commander Colonel Nicola Marin, who with seventy of his men was still guarding the retreat. Earlier in the heat of battle Marin had told Sanchez that they would die there if needed. Now in the dark, Sanchez told him about his plan, Marin objected; the Saltillo Battalion has never surrendered, he argued. They took off their sidearms and laid them on the ground; and when the fistfight was over, Marin picked himself up, put on his belt and holster and walked toward the gate defeated. Marin turned and gestured for Sanchez to continue with the surrender. Sanchez raised a white flag at the main Square 7 a.m. as the sun rose. He was quickly surrounded by talkative Texans.

When the dirt-covered NOLA soldiers from the toy soldier store emerged, they did so cautiously in the early morning light. In the absence of gunfire, they saw the white flag above the Alamo. Somehow every rebel in the store had survived, although one Blue had been badly wounded.

A group of Scorpions, driving from Wichita Falls, late to the fight and still fresh, escorted Sanchez to Colonel De Tellez, who sent for Eyer; negotiation lasted until three in the afternoon. When they finally agreed to a generous eighteen-point
contract, a few hardliners complained; it was a “loser's bargain!”

The Mexican officers would receive paroles to return to the interior of Mexico and the enlisted men would leave within the week. Everyone would give their word that they would not oppose an independent Texas. The Texans allowed them to keep their guns and ten bullets to “protect themselves from retaliation once back in reach of the Mexican Government.

The Texans even gave them fuel to reach Laredo and strangely enough by the afternoon of the next day soldiers from Mexican army (both convicts and regular army) were mingling and play poker with the Texans and that evening everyone attended a fandango. The Texas Lonestar flew above the Alamo on December 14th.

Sandoval drove South to Laredo with twenty of his officers.

Over 250 Mexicans, mostly from the Saltillo Battalion, now occupied coffins. Measure against this, the Texans who only buried thirty. The seriously wounded were transferred to the old Air Force hospital.

The men of the original Mexican garrison, were given the option of staying in town with their families, all but four took the offer.

Behind them the Mexican Army left a small arsenal.
Many of the rambunctious young volunteers, mostly from the motorcycle clubs, signed on for a new adventure that promised real plunder, a new action, an expedition to South Padre Island. Many of Mexico's elite families had condos and beach homes on the island and it had become something of an illegal banking center. Just as alluring as its fat bank vaults were its rumored black-eyed beauties. They knew most of the cash found would never reach them, but the Austin government was hungry for cash; the Beer Garten council tentatively supported the idea and 200 volunteers all on cycles moved down the road south.

The excursion left only a handful of men to occupy San Antonio; strangely enough from the very beginning the plan was to occupy just the fort and that was likely all they could accomplish now. It all looked a temporary occupation especially when word of an army of the 10,000 elite soldiers, helicopters and air support would arrive in Texas and put down the occupation, much as they had in Honduras the previous year, that is to say in a very unpleasant manner.

A week after the battle had begun, word begin to reach Bexar and even the rest of all North America that a full-scale invasion was on its way; it's leader none other than the tyrant, El Presidente himself. The dictator, a former democrat, had definite plans for the traitors. The "Mexican race" he said, "had been insulted" and in the media for everyone to observe.
And taking Bexar, the new Mexican capital of Texas and especially, the “ungrateful vaqueros” had humiliated their mother country.

The tyrant had made an interesting argument that Texas had been lucky to be invited to participate in two empires, the American AND now the Mexican empire, while they loved the Anglo-Empire now they were disloyal to the Hispano-Empire. And he chalked that up to an inherent racism.

On the other hand, the president of the shadow government in Austin, Fassbender, made a statement to the press that the American Empire was chiefly capitalistic and the Mexican Empire was chiefly socialistic. He asked if the media would broadcast that answer, the journalists refused and they argued back that it was “not so black and white.” Another reporter told President Fassbender, “the people don’t want to hear such nonsense."

For the tyrant now, it was imperative that he, for the sake of his allies, retake downtown Bexar and hold the town not only to establish a supply center to attack the rebels and keep Texas, but to punish the insurgency and hopefully avoid other parts of the empire getting the idea a rebellion might succeed. But, to be honest, it would be all about revenge.

Too many Texas journalists had witnessed the battle and their networks and control of technology were growing. Texas
wasn’t any longer what they called a “printed word” territory, like Arizona and New Mexico.

Thomas Trinkenschuh and his 400 men were just 95 miles away two or three hours ride, and somewhere to the East Bärbel Durchdenwald was surely gathering his army of Texans to come help them; perhaps they were on the move then.

So, where was President Drexel Fassbender Christmas of 2036? The breakaway territory’s severe lack of funds was a chief reason Fassbender had been gone with two others to the American Gulf Coast cities to drum up support and money. Southerners avidly followed the progress of the revolution and overwhelmingly supported the Texas cause. Most of their information came from Mexican television and from a few liberation minded newspapers, but many learned of the struggle from Fassbender and his two friends who travel from New Orleans to Biloxi, then to Mobile and then to Tallahassee spreading the Texans grievances to crowds of thousands and sometimes tens of thousands.

Fassbender succeeded in acquiring several private loans from individuals and even a few banks, but Fassbender knew their chances would be improved only if the provisional government could get their act together. The provisional government hadn't even issued a Declaration of Independence or established a legitimate functioning government. It was typical of the Texas
spirit, having experienced a runaway tyrannical government of their own in the last gasps of the American regime. They would always fight but they did not want a government, which they saw as nothing but a group of unproductive losers turned professional politicians telling them what to do and making everything against the law again. Most Texan’s felt that if they wanted everything to be against the law, why fight? If they wanted leftism, the Texas figured they could easily remain under the Mexican rule. But of, course, they didn’t want that.

They had an army but no formal government. And without a government, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida would keep insisting on neutrality. The last thing they wanted was a war with Mexico, sure Mexico was overextended and three-fourths of their army was occupied in South America, but Texas would have to go it alone at least for a time.

Skipping ahead, past the Second Fall of the Alamo, having reconquered San Antonio and also the fort at Goliad, the Mexicans ordered both forts to be demolished because they especially the Alamo was left so contaminated there was nothing left to do and in order to do this more quickly and for public consumption (in time for the Spanish language news broadcast) they mined the façade in eight places. The charges were set by eleven that very night, but they didn't bother delaying things
until the next day. With a middle finger extended the U.N. protesting in Moscow they imploded the historic structure.

But typical, they were negligent mining the old building. What they wanted was and what they got on television were two different things. What they wanted was propaganda. Only a chirde of the charges went off on live television. There was a dust cloud from the parts of the building that collapse but most of the building, so famous from the 1836 battle, remained. Embarrassed on live television, the Mexican dictator later had the fort bulldozed and only after it was level was the media allowed near the location. By then, visually it was only a parking lot and the Mexican public had lost interest.

INT. MARION COUNTY, TEXAS

Dr. George Claiborne Prescott Bush, the third, tells us in the second part of his history, which recounts the third excursion of Cowboy, that the minister and the barber did not see Cowboy for almost a month in order not to restore or bring back to mind the events of the past, and not interrupt the production of the dope being exported into Mexico, but this didn't stop them from visiting the girlfriend and daughter and charging them to be sure to “pamper him” (to which the daughter scoffed) and to make sure he ate. The nutrition would fortify and restore his brain, they hoped; and regardless of him smoking
seriously less when at home, and seriously more when out on the road Cowboy’s handlers worried a great deal more than they hoped.

For Cowboy’s handlers, it seemed to them, they had done the right thing by bringing him home in the famous cattle trailer. Everyone in Texas with a brain knew the dope was the cause of all his bad luck, but as it would turn out, the tina friendly kitchen was not his entire contribution to the Reconquista.

As one Mexican journalist recounted in the final chapter of the first part of his history, “and so they just decided to visit him and see what dope had been produced for export into Mexico and, not to take the word of the women, to check on his improvement for themselves. They did worry but they didn't worry too much about the production of dope because Cowboy had always come through in the past, and in any mental or physical condition, he could mix the chemicals in a magical/prolific way. While they considered a complete cure impossible, they agreed not to make any mention at all Cowboy’s excursions so as not to run the risk of re-opening his brain injuries (adventurism) which were still so fresh.

The two women said that they already were doing slave labor, but after being reminded, understood his importance in drying up and destabilizing Mexico’s army (“pulling the teeth”)
of Mexico's source of usable soldiers). The minister certainly had a way with words the two women freely admitted.

Cowboy had boasted to the women, a bit more than occasionally, "You can fight if you’re f***** up, but that assumed you still have your teeth and good judgment and these Mexican soldiers ain’t got neither thanks to me.” And he just smiled, revealing he’d lost half of his own teeth.

And the women said they would continue to take care of "the fool" willingly (meaning reluctantly) and carefully (meaning they wouldn't kill him) as/if possible. They generously admitted that they could see that there were moments when Cowboy showed signs of being sane; he could cook dope and the sheer volume of product produced made the pastor and barber very happy.

One day after a long and productive period, the professional men visit Cowboy and found him sitting up in bed dressed in a camo pearl-snap shirt; and they were taken aback because he nearly always wore it to war (and not out the barn). And in bed, even though he was at the time highly functional and productive, he was in a gold Stetson and looking so dry and gaunt that he seemed to be one of the Peruvian mummies recovered by UNESCO after being looted by the Mexicans.

The men received a warm welcome; they asked about the dope and then his health, and he said his health was good and there
was plenty of dope for them out in the 940 (barn), “enough to make all of Nuevo León flail,” he added.

And the men felt that his good judgment seemed to have returned and Cowboy used such elegant words in the conversation, they begin to discuss The Reasons to Rebel and the Message to Correct the Abuse of the Current Mexican Government. Amazingly (given all that had occurred), they spoke about performing one policy and eliminating another and each man (for a moment) became shadow legislators and would have fit in perfectly well if they had traveled to Austin to participate, as men as Christian Carbonnier and Karl Schkade transformed the Mexican state of Texas into a new Republic. Cowboy spoke with such an intelligence regarding all the philosophical, legal and moval controversies they touched upon that there was little doubt Cowboy was completely well and his sanity restored.

Cowboy’s father would never return and the dead man’s girlfriend and her daughter were left with incredible power. They were present for most of the conversations, but they never dreamed once of reporting his small private rebellion to the Mexican authorities; with all their wits they were hoping Cowboy would continue to cook meth and remain there paying taxes on the house. But the minister changed his earlier idea which was not to mention any of the growing civil unrest because he wanted a more thorough test of Cowboy’s recovery and so he mentioned that
it was speculated, in Austin, that a powerful fleet would come from the East, but no one knew the plans or where the thunder boomer would clap. The rumors which were spread via barber shops almost every year, for two decades now, affected all the patriot’s dreams and the Mexican Government had fortified the Gulf Coast especially Houston, Corpus Christi and Brownsville, to which Cowboy reasoned that this Mexican occupation General (Garza) was behaving foolishly by fortifying the ports and any invasion fleet would easily find their way around such fortifications and if the shadow government were smart they’d find a new entry point (Beaumont or Matagorda). As soon as the minister heard this he said to himself, “May God help poor Cowboy, for it seems to me he’s leapt from adeptly gathering the precursor chemicals (wisdom), into the profound abyss brewing sloppy batches of fuming, stinking, toxic speed (foolishness).”

But the barber, who thought maybe Cowboy had picked up a tidbit of history from school, or maybe it was something he’d learned out on the land roaming about, quickly considered and dismissed the same thought as the pastor. It was the barber who asked Cowboy to tell him the secret measure he thought Texas would need to undertake. Perhaps it might have some merit and could actually stand out in the list of the many impertinent ideas that were bandied about and offered up at Schultz’s.
“And if they didn’t use one of my landing sites, they might feign landings at them to pull the army from the actual landings.”

The minister objected that it was “impertinent” for Cowboy to wrecklessly guess.

“His idea, our idea!” said the Barber, “is not impertinent but might be crafty and... well... applicable.”

“I don’t say it isn’t,” replied the pastor, “but from what I’ve seen, almost all of the schemes presented to the council are either impossible (Houston) or absurd (Corpus) or harmful (Louisiana) to the effort to free Texas.”

“Well, Matagorda’s your huckleberry,” responded Cowboy, “it’s neither harmful nor absurd. Do the math, it’s easy calculate. It’s practical and shrewd. Either actually, send the invasion fleet there or lie to the Mexican about it.”

“That is a pretty clever idea. You think of that yourself?”

“No, had a man help me.”

“Really? Who?”

“A dead man floating off the coast of Spain.”

“Are you serious?”

“He was The Man Who Never Was,” Cowboy protested.

“You mean, the man about to escape the asylum, but then he spoke crazy,”
“No, I mean the man in the film; I’m pretty sure you burned it along with the others. Bitches. You told me it was a Comanche shaman!”

The minster and the barber looked at each other appearing guiltily and feeling even worse that their charge now, and maybe always had been, was aware of their deceit. They expected a haranguing, but Cowboy was too busy to continue with that topic and instead he pondered things in the future; and he jumped out of bed, fetched a map, and jumped back into bed.

“You're certainly not going to withhold from us the details of your plan Cowboy?” asked the minister.

Any idea of a grudge was lost on Cowboy, whose brain in that particular location had been destroyed; he almost never understood the need for that. “I would not want to say it here and now and tomorrow have it find its way to the ears of the Austin patriots so that another receives the thanks and rewards of my idea.”

“Or the Mexican’s might hear it,” the minister observed, which gave him an idea he could promote himself with.

“As far as I'm concerned,” said the barber, “Everyone here should give their word here and now not to repeat what your asses have heard here. Everyone should promise not to take the idea to Schultz’s. I certainly will not tell the men in my
barbershop chair or anyone about it. I’ve learned from the occupation priests who know how to keep a secret or two.”

“I know nothing of priests,” said Cowboy, “but I do know you've made a sincere vow because you’re a trustworthy man.”

“Even if he were not,” said the reverend, “I would vouch for him and guarantee that in this case he will say no more than he’s allowed to by Austin.”

“And who vouches for your ass?” asked Cowboy.

“My profession,” responded the minister, “which is pious and honorable.”

“GI Joe in space,” said Cowboy looking at the map, “what else can the beer council do but command that on a specific day all the Rangers wandering through Texas are to gather there at Barnyards RV and even if no more than a half a dozen were to come, there might be enough to establish a beachhead to escort the invading army directly to San Antonio.”

“And after that?” the minister asked.

“It's not included in my plan, I imagine they'll have a different plan to siege the Rivercenter and fight door-to-door across the entire city if needed. I can’t do everything you know.”

“Matagorda?” the barber and minister remarked at the same exact moment.
“Yes! Your asses should listen; I envisioned a lightning strike, splitting the occupying army in two and racing to San Antonio. We’ll beating the Mexicans from Houston and Corpus and Laredo, to take the capital.” Cowboy said.

The men agreed to take the idea and ruminate on it for a time. They stepped out into the yard and decided to decide later. When they returned, Cowboy had smoked a bowl and was working up his courage for yet another adventure.

When the two men entered a second time, Cowboy was still studying a map out on the covers of his bed and he spoke in great detail.

“Delaying actions along highways 10, 37 and 35. They are so hungry for information, the Mexicans they have a wide throat and this plan is made of chocolate candy. Tell me then how many histories are filled with such invasions? It's our bad luck the famous Douglas MacArthur isn't alive today or any of the descendants of Bill Munny or Ned Logan. If any of them were here with me today, we wouldn't ask the beer garten crowd for permission; we’d just secure Matagorda Bay and watch the expeditionary force march right through it.”

“But you have spoken in such detail,” the barber observed.

“You’ve already received this order?” the minister encouraged him.

“Maybe so. Maybe no so,” Cowboy responded.
“Oh,” said the daughter, “You can knock me over with a ballon; this lunatic wants to be the rambling Cowboy again and lead the invasion.”

To which Cowboy said, “I'll say no more.”

And the minister said, “I beg you to let me tell you a story that occurred in Seward Nebraska when I was a young seminarian.”

Cowboy gave permission. The minister spoke and the others listened carefully and the pastor told a story about a mad man who was just about to escape an asylum to by talking clearly and distinctly. He seemed perfectly sane, but at the last moment, standing at the gate, just before being released, he started a sentence of nonsense. And after the seminary story, the barber and the minister (both) signaled each other, for certain, they would take the diversion/ruse to Austin and they would bypass the beer garten legislature and put it directly before the shadow president. Until then, they would allow Cowboy think whatever he would, talk to anyone he could, and move in anyway that might make the Mexicans think the invasion would come at Thick Bush.

First, in any given month Cowboy had always fought several Mexicans and that would probably continue, and he was well know for wanting to talk to them after the fight was concluded. It was something of his trademark. Second, Cowboy had a great
number of friends, and put in the same situation would be just as talkative. Finally, the barber reckoned there were far too many Mexicans in barber chairs eager for something to report back to San Antonio. The only drawback, as they saw it, was that Cowboy might be the lunatic about to talk his way out of the asylum.

“Well, pastor, this is a story,” said Cowboy, “so pointless I don’t know why you told it. I’m not insane nor have I been attempting to persuade you that I’m a clever man. I’m not only devoted to making Texas understand its error in submitting to Mexico all these years, destroying the happiest times of cowboy culture, and made a wh*** of the Rose of Texas; it’s restored the Comanche nation.”

The men, his caretakers, raised their eyebrows at that.

Cowboy continued, “And frankly, I doubt our decadent age deserves to enjoy the good that was enjoyed by Texas when Rangers took it as their responsibility to defend the border. We handed things over to the Washington DC idiots and now look what’s happened. No more protecting and no more safeguarding. We fell because we punished the proud and rewarded the humble with laws out of sync with human nature. Some Rangers today wear baseball hats and pearl-snap shirts made of girly fabrics, they sit at home and clean their pistols they can’t afford to fire and no more riding out into the land looking for something to
sloth triumphs over diligence, idleness overwhelms vice... virtue. Ignorance over valor and theory over practice.

"So we're doomed?" asked the minister.

"No. Who are more brave men then the injured Bandito and Perillo? Who are more devious than the released wall slaves? Who're more good-natured than Carl. Who is a better marksman and good-looking than Fernando?

"It; s war not dating," said the barber.

"Or more sincere than Ambrose? Who more than Virgil? There are cowboys like them and they are the ones who will like my scheme, if they can be part of it. Austin will be well-served and it will have a good deal of money and a reason for people eto follow their will and have a chuckle."

"A chuckle?"

"The Mexican's will shave the head of their general (bald) and send him south for a trial once we're in San Antonio. I know this; that I will be in San Antonio before you."

"Again, this is a crazy idea," the woman's daughter argued.

"The truth is, Cowboy," said the minister, "this isn't why I told the story and why I promised not to take the idea to Austin. My intentions were good and your ass should not be offended. It's nothing personal."

"I know perfectly well," responding Cowboy, "whether or not I should be offended."
At this juncture, the minister said, “Though I have hardly said a word until now, I should like to impress some misgivings about the plan that are gnawing at my conscience.”

“Pastor, you have permission for many things,” responded Cowboy, “so state your misgivings, but we would rather not hear about your conscience.”

“Well, having received this approval,” responded the minister, “I’ll state my misgivings. I'm not at all convinced that this crowd of cowboys to whom you referred are real and truly persons of flesh and blood who live in Texas, rather I figure they were all fiction, fable, falsehood and dreams by a Mexican screenwriter/propagandist.

“Juan can tell you they are real; he documented everything.” Cowboy argued.

“Then they were actors credited, or should I say maybe uncredited?”

“That is another error,” responded Cowboy, “into which many have fallen. They don't believe that such Rangers actually exist today and with a variety of people watching I’m fixin’ to remedy this common misconception. The truth is, I can almost say, I have seen Leander McNelly with my own eyes - tall and with a pale face and nicely trimmed mustache and gaze both everyday and only angry on occasion. He’s a man of few words, slow to anger and quick to draw, just like George W. Baylor. There are all
types of Rangers who wander through all the histories of the worlds where they lived and by using sound philosophy, we can deduce their features, their nature's and their statures.”

“What was the blinded Bandito like?”

“The Philistine Goliath!”

“What was Perillo like?”

“Face Broad and ready, his eyes merry and temperament exclusively conscientious and calorific and a friend of dissolute people, not a Mexican spy as people keep reminding me.”

“And what about Ambrose?” asked the barber?

“Not much of a gentleman Ambrose, as this film indicates,” replied the pastor, “He’s not been very political correct scorning Ginger,” the minister responded.

“Is Cowboy going to say Ginger was another Mary?” the barber asked.

“Mary Magdalene, maybe,” responded Cowboy. “Ambrose was correct to slut-shame the lesbian. Ginger is a capricious young filly and clearly a slut, of sorts. His judgment is intact and he would be part of the plan; let me explain…”

At this point, they heard the girlfriend and daughter, who earlier abandoned the conversation, shouting in the yard and they all heard her.
Weeks later, the minister and the barber made it to Austin with the ruse to lure the Mexicans to Matagorda, but De Tellez prohibited it.

INT. APARTMENT - DOWNTOWN AUSTIN

In the spring of 2048, Christian Carbonnier was living in an apartment in downtown Austin. His afternoons were spent in an office on Congress Avenue, and his evenings and early nights at 1010 across the street from the montaña roja grante (the demolished capital). Across from the ruins there was an assembly calling itself Suciedad Roja coming into being, and after that Carbonnier’s late nights, several nights of the week, were spent in the backroom of the beer garten, or in safe houses scattered across the city north and south of the Trinity. Carbonnier, on occasion, went to remote farms of the hill country or to homes lent to him on Galveston. In these safe locations, in these late-night meetings, he met Sunny, but he also assisted in the reorganization of the Ejército Rojo Sucio, as for a year longer they would be called that, although gradually that name was replaced by another -- Texas Rangers.

From his top-floor flat, two windows opened upon Sexta Calle. The live music was nice. Most of the year, he could stand by his window with a cigarette, listening and calculating the military force which would be needed to drive the Mexicans out.
He’d tried in 2045 to remove them from the Hemisphere Park and been lucky to survive a year of Mexican prison. Luckily, Mexico was facing a crisis of support for the second war in the Amazon and he’d been released in 2046. It was part of a deal San Antonio had made with Mexico City -- Texas would provide a certain number of enlistments for the war in the south, and all political prisoners would be released. After the war, the enlistees would be allowed to live in old Mexico. And if they didn’t survive the Brazilian jungle, their wives and women officially registered as girlfriends would be allowed to immigrate into old Mexico; so Mexico’d gotten their soldiers.

From Austin, an hour’s drive, at the most, down I-35 and then East Houston Street to the Hemisphere. He had been in the middle of the fighting. In a Mexican prison, the Tower of the Americas frequently returned to him; the park had been a disorderly week of small victories. Christmas again.

At Almoloya, he remembered music of a different kind. In his cell, at night, lying sleepless, hands folded, patient and hopeless across his chest, he would hear the Mexican ballads, which were sorry stuff, boastful with sudden dips into themes of broken-hearted love, but the voices sometimes gave them, for the moment of their utterance, a sad intensity.

The songs in English were a different matter. From a distant cell, a clear voice raised in a song, “Home of the
“Armadillo” or “London Homesick Blues,” or, in harsher voice perhaps, firm San Antonio accent, a Brian Burns ballad or one of the ballads of Johnny Bush. They would be sung, however badly, but with an almost sacramental reverence, always telling the truths which lay within secret patriotic sounds and gestures. Even the Mexicans criminal’s voices would sometimes join in. The jailers, easily bribed most of them, save for the occasional bastard, would let both sides sing away, so long as it didn’t result in a fight, and even then they might not care. The Mexican voices singing Texas patriotic songs, would echo down corridors of steel and stone.

INT. MARION COUNTY, TEXAS

The cries heard by Cowboy, the minister and the barber came from the daughter and girlfriend of Cowboy’s dead father and were directed at Juan Seguin, who was struggling to come inside to see Cowboy. The women were blocking his way shouting, “what does this alcoholic want in our house? Go back home to your single wide, for you and nobody else can lead Cowboys away and lure him out to those godforsaken places. He’s needed here.”

To which Juan responded, “Woman from hell, the one who’s been lured and led astray and taken to godforsaken places is me, not your boss. He led me everywhere and you two are blaming the wrong person. He lured me out of my house with tricks and
expectations, promises, promising me an island or amusement park that I'm still waiting for."

"I hope you choke on your damn island, you dumbass," respond the daughter, "and what are amusement parks to you, but something you eat, you lazy lard-ass?"

"It's not something to eat," replied Juan, "but they are places in need of government and administration. In the coming vacuum (without the tyrants), a resolute county judge will be more indispensable/indefensible than any town council or strong mayor system."

"Even so," said the girlfriend, "You won't come in. No, we won't let you, you bag of s*** and sack of vomit inside a sack of s*** that is inside yet another in a bag of s***! Go and govern the town's stray dogs and stop trying to better yourself by ruling islands or amusements or whatever you call them."

The minister and the barber were delighted to hear this three-way conversation, but Cowboy, fearful that Juan would blurt out and disclose all their military secrets and touch on points that might embarrass him, called to him and made the two women be quiet and allow him to enter. Juan came in.

The minister and the barber reluctantly left in despair over his vacillating mental health because they saw how fixed his Matagorda idea was and how enthralled he was by the idea of leading an attack on a coastal city. And so the minister said to
the barber, “you'll see, compadre, that when we least expect it our Cowboy will leave again and beat the bushes putting all the birds to flight.”

“I have no doubt about that,” responded the barber, “but I'm not as astounded by the madness of the Cowboy as I am only a friend of a man who only wants an island to govern and I don't think he'll ever get that out of his head.”

“May God help them,” said the minister, “and let us be on the alert. We'll see where all the foolishness and despair will lead because it seems as if both are made from the same mold. The insanity of Cowboy means little without the support of his friend.”

“That's true,” said the barber, “and I'd certainly like to know what they're talking about right now, probably not producing another batch of dope and certainly not enough to undermine the Mexican army.”

“I assure you,” responded the minister, “that the daughter and her mother will tell us later because they're not the kind of people not to listen.”

In the meantime, Cowboy had taken Juan into his room and close the door and when they were alone he said, “It grieves me Juan what you have said and still say that I lured you away. We went out together and we travel together; we shared a single fate. If you were on a Tilt-A-Whirl half... half the day... I’m
sorry. I have vomited before as well, and that's one advantage we have over our opponents.”

“That was right and proper,” responded Juan, “because according to the rules, the protagonist suffers equally in the misfortune.”

“You are wrong, Juan,” said Cowboy, “as the saying goes ‘Cuando mi cabeza me duele me dicen todos las partes de mi cuerpo.’”

“I don't understand any language but my own,” responded Juan.

“I mean,” said Cowboy, “that when the headaches all the other members hurt. So since I am your friend who owns weapons, highly accurate weapons, I'm your head and you are part of the big picture and... oh forget it.”

“That's how it should be,” said Juan, “but when they spun me on the carnival ride you’re a** rode away and a good distance and I’m sure didn’t feel nauseous at all, since the a** is not obliged to suffer the pains of the parts.”

“Do you mean to say, Juan,” respond Cowboy, “that I felt no nausea when you were being spun about? If that is what you mean, don’t say it and don’t think of it for at the time I felt more pain in my spirit that then did your stomach. But let us put that aside for a moment; tell me what are people saying in Jefferson? What opinion do people have of me? What do they say
about my deeds. What do you think about the *Revival of the Cowboy Way.*”

“What does that matter to you?”

“Tell me without adding anything good or deleting anything bad. I want to know the naked truth.”

“I’ll do that very gladly,” Juan said, “on the condition that you’re a** not get angry at what I report, since you want me to tell the truth and not dress it in any underwear except the pair it was wearing when I heard it.”

“Under no circumstances shall I be angry,” responded Cowboy, “you may speak, Juan, freely without skirtings.”

“Well, the first thing I'll say,” Juan said, “is that the common people think you are a great man, and I'm just as great an idiot. The people who own their homes say you stepped out of bounds, and the renters and worthless, like those two b******, understand your quest and that you can be ornery especially when you get high. But you are ornery in the right way, to the right people. The ranchers say they don't want you leading their employees off to the troubles. Some of the ranch hands are dressing like you now. Camouflage pearl-snaps are for no longer for Saturday night apparently, but are for attacking Mexicans in obscure ports.”

“You didn’t tell anyone of our plan, did you?”
“Of course not, but sometimes people just fall behind a leader without a lot of secrets being told.”

“And the pearl-snap shirt is making a comeback?”

“I’m happy to say, yes; the more ragged the better. It’s how ya know you aren’t talking to a loyal a**.”

“A loyalist,” said Cowboy, “that has nothing to do with me because I'm always well-dressed and perhaps in patches, but my clothes are frayed not by the suns and time, but the rough and tumble. What do they say about our fights?”

“As for your exploits and the men you’re putting down,” Juan continue, “there are different opinions, some say it’s crazy, but amusing. Others say brave, but unfortunate and others courteous, but insolence. Some call you a gadabout and others a provocateur.”

“Yes, but what do they really think?”

“One thing everyone can all agree on is that you’ve brought more Mexican occupiers to Jefferson. They won’t leave out of the city for fear of getting shot up, but they sure as h*** are in town. The people hope they will leave as soon as we leave on this next adventure. And the people go on and on about us leaving for Matagorda and the end of all this surveillance.”

“What? They aren’t supposed to know. You told them?”

“There are several who want to help.”

“How do they...”
“They’re wearing the pearl-snaps. Many are doing everything they can to look like you. Men who used to have teeth and now wear methstaches; the more ambitious ones, now have floor-mounted clutches. So, I have several of them lined up to help.”

“How many of them are there?”

“In Jefferson?”

“Yes.”

“Three.”

“And what about those without snaps and clutches?”

“They want you out of the area. The fellows breaking the Mexican laws...”

“That would be just about everyone in this county.”

The say you are too loud and bring the federal police around to their doorstep. They call you El Pararrayos de Tejas.”

“That’s good.”

“I’m not sure. They say it in a peculiar way.”

“Look Juan,” said Cowboy, “whenever extraordinary events happen in history, the best are glorified but equally persecuted. I’m very sure very few if any of the famous men of the past escape the blender machine. Sam Houston that most spirited prudent and brave general was called ‘vicious’ and ‘not particularly clean’ and his deeds earned him a big statue in Huntsville that lasted until the Mexican’s toppled it over. Hoss, the brother of Little Joe, was whispered to be ‘more than
a little quarrelsome’ and his brother was called ‘tearful’. And so, Juan, with so many calamities directed against us good men, let them say what they wish about me as long as there's no more then what you've told me.”

“That's going to be a problem,” replied Juan,

“There's more?”

“There's more question marks and something much worse. So far it's only small-town gossip, but if you want to know all the slander they're saying about you, I'll bring somebody here who will tell you everything and he'll not leave out a crumb.”

“Who?”

“Last night, Sam Houston's X's son, a kid called 'XI', who had been studying at the University of Mexico in Austin came home with his bachelor's degree, and I went to welcome him home and he was amazed to see me there because he said you and I are the subject of a film and it's called The Engenius Vaquero de Tejas, and he says that in it they show also Salada de Tawakoni and other things that happened when you and I were alone, so that I have no idea what unemployed rodent could have told the films. It is said, it's a California filmmaker, and he’s spared no one and nothing. I'd almost rather your film have been made in Mexico, I assure you,” Juan said to Cowboy.

Juan continued, “Evidently, there is both good and bad news about this film?”
“I guess we should start with the good news.”

Juan was silent. He’d lied. There wasn’t any good news.

“Well, I may have spoken too soon.”

“There isn’t any good news?”

“You have six million followers in Mexico and another million following you here in Texas, which is outstanding because few Texan’s have that connectivity.”

“That’s good news.”

“No, because that’s means they know who you are.”

“I view that as good.”

“They know what you look like. And there is the old Mexican saying, ‘if they (the government) know who you are, then you are screwed.’”

“Maybe they’ll fear me and get out of my way.”

“Okay. I can’t hold it back any longer. It’s best that you know. The film is a mockumentary.”

“I don’t know what that is, but it sounds like a story about our days at on the playground?”

“The first episode of the mini-series, it aired on Central de la Comedia, and I’m not so sure this is good, on a Saturday night from eleven till one.”

“Perfect.”

“That eleven to midnight hour was what the leftists call “Hora Terrestre,” and apparently, even while you sleep, you must
to turn your electricity off that hour or you will be castigated by the people who can’t mind their own business. And since this type of person are the majority, many people didn’t watch you.”

“Well, that’s good, they won’t recognize me.”

“No, that’s bad because their televisions were off. As you know televisions, even in Mexico, require electricity. Most of the viewers saw only the last hour.”

“Do I care.”

“Don’t you?” Juan asked and Cowboy shrugged.

“There is another issue. You had an adventure without me, I understand from this film.”

“You are jealous?

“Perhaps a little. Why wasn’t I told about this trip to the panhandle? It’s very embarrassing to learn, I’ve been left at home.”

“Are you done yet?”

“No. And it turns out your only demographic groups are damn red dirt farmers (eighteen to twenty-four) and (sixty-four to eighty-four), they were all either out drinking Saturday or in bed asleep. You took one on the chin there.”

“This is the fault of the television station. What about the content? Did I look good and sound brave?”

“Well, according to Sam Houston XI, that’s the name of the person I was telling you about, they portray you as Quixotic.”
“What’s that?”

“Don’t ask me. Something funny maybe? It’s listed as a comedy/adventure.”

“A comedy?”

“I have no idea how that happened.”

“The director must be f***ed-up, ’cause nothing about this adventure is humorous.”

“I can testify to that. Not the chaos, the falls, the blows or the brusing. Certainly not the projectile vomiting. Not the lack of sleep and especially not funny has been the bad food.”

“Well,” said Cowboy, “if he was wise he’d make it a comedy. What other option does a f***ed-up director have in this dictatorship”

“All this is according to what XI says, I had nothing to do with it. The director of the film is a comedian named Matías Coatlicue.”

“That's the director’s name?” responded Cowboy.

“Yes.”

“And it’s a comedy?” responded Cowboy.

“It must be,” responded Juan, “’cause I've heard that the Mexicans love the cabro macho vaquero de Texas”

“You must be mistaken,” said Cowboy, “in the Spanish language cabro means goat.”
“That may be, I don’t speak Mexican” replied Juan, “but if you’re a** wants me to bring XI here, He’s seen the film in a theater. He said it was big with college students…

“You said dirt farmers were my only demographic?”

“Well, maybe college kids lied to Mr. Consejo de Calificación de Medios. Think about it a Mexican walks up to a student and what is his natural inclination?”

“To lie.”

“I believe that is what happened. Nailed to the counter. More bad luck for you.”

“I have a hundred questions.”

“I’ll go find him right away.”

“I would like that very much, my friend,” said Cowboy, “what you have told me has left me in suspense. So much so, nothing I eat will taste good until I’ve learned about this film.”

“Then I'll go for him now,” responded Juan, and leaving his friend, he went to find the young man with whom he returned in a very short time, and the three of them had the most entertaining talk.

**INT. CARBONNIER HOME – SAN ANTONIO**

Carbonnier had returned to Texas in June of 2046, with the final batch of convicted rebels and on the same train with their
leader in Almoloya, Eamon De Tellez, who had commanded part of the attack on the Alamo in 2036, a tall, bespectacled teacher of mathematics. Like the larger group who had been released five months before, in time for Christmas, they were welcomed as heroes, with immense crowds to cheer them at the train station and to escort them throughout the city. But they had been expecting this; news had been smuggled into Almoloya. Both Christmas uprisings (2036 and 2045) had become a legacy, political gifts of incalculable power, but there was no certainty as to how it might best be put to use.

At first, before finding his rooms in Austin, Carbonnier had lived with his mother and his son in San Antonio, in a trim house of Victorian style, suitable to the widow of a San Antonio surgeon. From his bedroom window there, he could see the Rivercenter, and, in the far distance, the now empty Alamo plaza. In the evenings, when he was visited by one or another of his “acquaintances,” as his mother called them, she would leave the front parlor to them. But often they had the evening together, the two of them. They would close the drapes; because of her son’s proclivity/hobby of making life rough for Mexicans, she liked shutting herself off from the city that was actually close at hand. Carbonnier would read newspapers and so too would his mother, although at times, because she knew he liked it, she
would play the underground Texas radio, English tunes and current events from an anglo point of view.

When his acquaintances left, she would always say, “He’s out of fashion with in Austin, no doubt,” she said, “poor man.”

“Oh, entirely,” Carbonnier said.

It was a reminder of how strange life had managed to become for him, a historian and son of a skilled doctor, in “armed rebellion,” as the words in the indictment had it. And stranger still that he should have been sentenced to life imprisonment and yet, a year later, be back in San Antonio, with his mother, her critiquing each of his new friends.

“It is a pity,” she said, “that you were not here at Christmas. It was a lonely enough time for Chris without either his mother or yourself. But the De Tellezes were very thoughtful. We were in his wife and children for Christmas dinner.”

“I remember, Mother,” he said. “You wrote to me.” Chris’ mother had been a nurse in the Aztecha Army Medical Corps (quite a famous unit), in Venezuela, where she had been killed.

“It must have been terrible over there in the jungle,” his mother said, “as terrible as anything that has yet happened to any woman.” She was standing by the piano, and rested a hand, a feather, upon the keyboard, as though summoning back some earlier scene.
“And what about you? A year in a Mexican prison! I can’t imagine.”

“It wasn’t that bad for me,” Carbonnier said. “Really not bad. Nothing like poor Maria off there in Venezuela. They were severe to be sure, but not savage. And it was dry.”

Above the gate at Almoloya was an inscription, Perdona al sumiso y desgasta al orgulloso. “Spare the submissive and wear down the proud.” One morning, as Carbonnier and the other rebels were lined up for morning exercise, they encountered a new convict, Eoin MacNeill, the scholar who had spoken against storming the Alamo and then drove off with a healthy number of potential soldiers. Now, he had to face the men who had took the Alamo in spite of him. It was an awkward moment. De Tellez broke the tension. He stepped forward, said, “Welcome,” and saluted MacNeill. De Tellez marched back to his cell, but he had made his point, a complicated one.

Much later, on the bus back to San Antonio, released prisoners, Carbonnier had asked De Tellez about it. He was a tall, thin man, awkward of gesture and movement, self-contained. He paused before answering. “The Rangers are still in existence, Mr. Carbonnier. And Professor MacNeill is still our commander. I have heard nothing that would contradict that.” De Tellez, thanks to his American birth, was almost the only leader to have escaped execution.
Framed photographs of both Christian’s wife and son stood on the piano, a recent one of Chris, with his prized Boston Terrier, and one of Christian on the occasion of his degree conferral at San Marcos, gowned and holding the diploma like a rifle. Slightly behind them, a photograph of Carbonnier’s father, formally dressed, a doctor but a cowboy hat resting on his knee. On the night table in Maria Carbonnier’s bedroom was a photograph of Christian Carbonnier and herself in New Orleans, taken on their honeymoon, in a pigeon-littered Mississippi River District, a café out of focus in the background, the sunlight brilliant. When his father was still alive, the doctor had studied that photo; Maria was dressed in the comfortable fashion of the day, and yet seemed to the old man hard, almost strong like a man; she was looking not into the camera but toward her new husband.

“Do you think it’s over?” his mother asked.

“No,” he said. “I do not. I think that the Mexicans government is desperate to keep Texas quiet for so long as the Amazon conflict goes on. And I think they were desperate to extend conscription to Texas. They are setting up a convention to resolve the Texas question, and it would never do to have us locked up in Mexicans prisons in our hundreds. Not as ordinary people have come to feel about the rebellion. Do you remember
back in the early 2020s, the Mexican President Obridor pacifying the drug cartels by releasing the son of Guzman?"

“Yes.”

“Same thing, as far as I’m concerned. They’re involved in a war they can’t possibly win, and they’re weak.”

After the Texan’s 2036 occupation of the Alamo failed, while the executions were still underway, Carbonnier’s father had traveled from San Antonio to Mexico City to speak to an infuriated House. “These were men,” he said of the rebels, “who had fought a clean fight, a good fight.” There were now photographs of the executed men from one end of Texas to the other. It would never be possible to discuss Texas while pretending that 2036 had not happened.

“No doubt,” Carbonnier’s mother said, “no doubt. But you will find, when all has been said and done, that your father and Mr. De Tellezes and Mr. Fassbender and all the others have the best interests of Texas at heart. That has long been the case.”

She was speaking sensibly enough. There were some twelve of them in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, the Texas Federalism Party. While elected, they simply never showed up in Mexico City, as they pointed out, that would have been a waste of time. For his mother’s generation, and part of his own, that was political reality; they were the party of the previous oil and gas, cattle and cotton interests; and now all three sectors had
been essentially stolen by the Mexican socialists and the wealth distributed south of the Rio Grande.

Carbonnier’s childhood had floated the emblems of nationalism: statues of martyred Dallas Cowboys, March 2nd Day speeches, more iconography of martyrdom, Spiral Jones, Bean Adair, the Craig Watkins; red dirt music heard so often that they had become married to men’s nerves.

But all this had ended, been infected with anthrax in Military Plaza and shot against the wall at Topo Chico. Or earlier perhaps. Carbonnier had been present, in civilian clothes, when Albrecht, in the uniform of a Texas Air Guard officer, spoke to an immense crowd at the Texas State Cemetery, at the burial of Marian Brown, the old, battered, hard-drinking former governor, the last governor before capitulation, bitter about the loss of Texas and unrepentant; she had died in exile, in New York. But when Albrecht spoke, in the heat of an August midday, his language had lifted the crowd above that: “Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of Texas have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Texas. They think that they have pacified half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have deprived us of everything including our will to fight; but the fools, the fools, the
fools! They have left us our bitter and outspoken dead, and while Texas has these graves, Texas unfree shall never be at peace.”

Christian agreed with his mother, that his son’s safety was paramount. Chris’ would stay in San Antonio with his grandmother until the trouble was over. That freed Carbonnier to move to Austin and enter politics.

INT. MARION COUNTY, TEXAS

Cowboy was very thoughtful as he waited the new graduate, XI, from whom he hope to hear the news about himself that had been put on film as Juan had said, although he could not persuade himself that such a comedy existed. And California was beyond imagination. Films had not been made in over two decades in California and yet before he’d even recovered from his last beating and then put it all out in Mexican theaters? In Austin? Even so, he imagine that some wise-ass government man either a friend or an enemy of the art of getting f***ed-up or trickery had made the movie. Theh film could have been made by a friend, in order to elevate them and raise the specter of revolutionary Rangers, that was one thing. It would be another thing, entirely, if an enemy had tried to humiliate them and vilify their acts to the easily dupped citizens of Mexico, who were paying for both wars and occupations. It occurred to him that
the film might also feature Juan and the western films his father had studied focused almost entirely on the cowboy and hardly ever on the sidekick. And as he noted that he was leaning toward an enemy making a political film.

This gave him some real worry, and piling on, and a personal foul was the thought. Its director was a Mexican as suggested by the name Cabro and one couldn't expect the truth from the Mexicans, because all of them were tricksters, liars and swindlers. He feared Salty had been treated with indecency in the film and that would harm her reputation; he earnestly hoped there had been a declaration that the events and characters weren't actual, but deceptions/depictions and that any similarity to real events and people were entirely coincidental but then he remembered the better movies in his father's collection hadn't contain this disclaimer. The lesser (modern) films all contained it and he played this issue back and forth his mind, until he was found by Juan and XI, whom Cowboy received with great courtesy.

The young graduate though his name was Sam Houston was not particularly large, but he was very sly. His color was pale but his intelligence was obviously bright. He was about twenty-four years old with a round face a snobbish nose and largemouth, all signs of a mischievous nature and fondness for jokes which
brought to Cowboys mind the idea that this might all be an elaborate hoax. However, he was sincere in addressing Cowboy.

“Wow, you are really him, one of the most famous cowboys of our age right here right now not in our little hometown. Thanks be to the cabro who directed the film of your deeds and double thanks for the man who translated from Spanish to our vernacular English for the closed captioning.”

Cowboy shook his head and said, “so then is it true that the film exists and that it was directed by a Mexican comedian?”

“It's true, sir,” said XI, “and I believe there are more than 112,000 Blu-rays out there if you don't believe me travel to California, Mexico City or Argentina even for many people have enjoyed the farce. It is even available in Austin, which is a hotbed of counter-revolution and I don't doubt it that every nation and language will eventually have its copy.”

“One of the things,” said Cowboy, not understanding the word farce, “That must give true entertainment to a moral and imminent man to see while he is still alive.”

“It’s a film shown from Tornato to Santiago.”

“I said ‘true entertainment’ because if it were the opposite no death could be its equal.”

“In the matter of a truth and a good reputation,” said the graduate, “your reputation triumphs over all the tom-foolery for as much as the Mexican pokes fun at heroics, he must also show
your tenacity in confronting danger, your patience in adversity and your toughness suffering wounds, your ‘Bowls for Souls’ piety and of course modesty in the ‘Beaver Cleaver’ love of your lady, Salty of the Tawakoni animal shelter.”

“Never,” said Juan Seguin, “have I heard her called just ‘Salty of the Tawakoni animal shelter’ and that's where the film is wrong it should be ‘Salty of the Tawakoni No-Kill Shelter.’”

“That's not such an important objection,” responded Sam Houston.

“No, of course not,” responding Cowboy, “but tell me sir which attacks of mine were are the most popular?”

“In that regard,” responded Sam, “there are different opinions just as there are different tastes. Some prefer the distraction of the wind generator, which your ass thought were Mexican socialists. Others, that ordeal out west with the cleaning fluids. One-man favors the scene of the two armies that turned out to be herds of cattle. Others praised the story of the body being carried to Crockett County for burial. Two say that the release of the wall slaves is best. Yet another says that nothing beats the two New Yorkers and the dispute with a Bandido.”

“Tell me XI,” said Juan, “are the adventures of the naked Comanche dances depicted when Cowboy showed his manhood to the Moon and all of West Texas?”

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“The wise comedian,” responded XI, “left nothing in the proverbial canister; he takes note of everything and films everything, even the vomiting that you did on the carnival ride.”

“On the Tilt-A-Whirl, I wasn't vomiting,” responded Juan, “but I was laughing, and more than I generally do.”

“It seems to me,” said Cowboy, “there is no human victory in the world that doesn't have its ups and downs especially those in the West. They can't be filled with only successful exploits. No one would believe it.”

“The film's cruelty is artistic, but some people who saw the film say they would have liked it better if some of the beatings given Juan had been left out.”

“That's where the truth of the film comes in,” said Juan.

“They also could have kept quiet about my beatings for the sake of fairness,” said Cowboy, “because things that don't change or alter the story plot don’t need to be shown, especially if they belittle the hero. Josey Wales was not as bruisless as Clint Eastwood depicts him or Ethan Edwards as healthy as John Ford shows him. Only Unforgiven is realistic in the sense of a cowboy’s beatings.”

“That is true,” replied XI saying, “but it is one thing to write as a satirist and another to write as a documentarian. The satirist can talk about things as they should have been and the
documentary must write about things that were. The keywords are 'can' and 'must.'"

"Well, if this Mexican gentleman is interested in telling the truth," said Juan, "then among all the beatings my friend received, they were bound to have watched mine you were bound to have watch mine because of if the head hurts then the body must hurt as well."

"You're very crafty, Juan," responded Cowboy, "you have no lack of memory when you want to remember."

"I would like to forget the beatings I've gotten," said Juan, "the bruises won't let me because they're still fresh on my ribs."

"Be quiet, Juan," said Cowboy, "and don't interrupt the man. This is important. Please continue telling me what the critics say about the documentary."

"And about my part," said Juan. "They also say I'm one of the principal actors."

"Character, not actor, Juan, my friend," said Cowboy. "A professor who corrects my vocabulary," said Juan. "Actually, he's both. In some scenes, Juan is an actor and other scenes a character."

"Wait, I don't understand."

"For the sake of peace, that might be a good thing."

"Explain, please."
Juan looked worried his secret would emerge.

“Well, both of you keep it up and I'll never finish,” XI said.

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“Well, both of you keep it up and I'll never finish,” XI said.

“Okay, please continue, but about me,” Juan said.

“I saw the film, Juan,” responded Sam, “you are the second person in the film and there are some who think you are the cleverest person, though there are others that believe you devious/deceived to think you'll ever be given an amusement park or island to run.”

“The sun has not yet gone down,” interjected Cowboy, “and as Juan grows older with the experience gained this last year, he will be more skilled an administrator than the governor's we have currently. Give him time to grow. Reagan, Lincoln and Trump all took decades to grow up.”

“Reagan?” said Juan, “The island I can govern at the age I am now, I won't be able to govern it if I get as old as Reagan. The trouble is that this county is hidden someplace I don't know where or how to get there; it's not that I don't have the good judgment to govern it.”

“Trust the counter-revolution, Juan,” said Cowboy, “that everything will somehow turn out well and perhaps even better than you expect. Not a leaf quivers on a tree unless Austin wills it.”
“True, that’s true,” said Sam Houston XI, “if it’s Austin’s will, Juan will have a thousand islands to govern not just the big one. You have your eye on a particular piece of real estate? Something you’ve scouted out? Staked out? Somewhere between Corpus and Houston, say?”

“No, but I’ve seen some county judges inland,” said Juan. “who in my opinion don’t come up to 5 foot 2 in and yet they are given great responsibility.”

“They aren’t governors of islands,” replied XI, “but govern the more easily controlled places. The Mexican who governs Galveston is at least five foot five, at the very most.”

“I can best that,” said Juan, “but only with one inch to spare, but I leave the question of my being a county judge in the hands of Austin. They can do what they think is best. I can add that the director of the film has shown me in such a way, the things said about me do not give offense. If anything, Austin will understand my loyalty in the face of unrelenting lampooning.”

“Propaganda, everyone understands propaganda,” Cowboy added.

“That would be a miracle,” responded XI, “If all people could recognize it.”
“Miracles or no miracle,” said Juan, “men should be careful how their films portray history or people and not film, willy-nilly, the first thing that comes into their head.”

“One of the objections people make to the film,” said the former student, “is that its author put in the subplot the man who was called The Reckless Cowboy not because it was bad, but because it's out of place and has little to do with Cowboy’s rebellion.”

“I'll bet,” replied Juan, “that dogs’ son mixed apples and oranges.”

“Now I say,” said Cowboy, “that the director of my history has no genius, but an ignorant gossipmonger who without rhyme or reason begin to film not caring how it turned out just like the American Justice when asked, ‘what was pornography?’ he said, ‘I can’t say, but I know it when I see it.’”

“There isn’t any pornography in this film. Your character can’t even speak to the Tawakoni woman without shaking uncontrollably. Comical, I assure you.”

“Perhaps the director didn't know how to make a documentary,” said Juan, “but maybe it snuck up on him and when he was done he could watch at it and say, ‘Wow, we have a comedy here.’”

“Not at all,” responded XI, “the man is a well-knwon comedian; it's clear that there isn't any confusion. He’s only
made comical films and it's not something made by accident.
Comedy is comedy. Men, youth and even children understand it.
The old enjoy it and in short I think it's popular. So popular,
I was walking on Congress Avenue and a child saw a similar
motorcycle with the suicide shifter and floor mounted clutch and
he shouted out, 'there goes Shovelhead,' and those most fond of
the film have been we Texans ourselves; forget that it's racist
Mexican propaganda. There is something endearing about it. It is
at least, at some level, entertaining and not really harmful. In
fact it might even be counterproductive to the Mexican cause."

"How is that?" Cowboy asked.

"The film is agreeable."

"They like me?"

"They like Juan."

"They dislike me?"

"No, you are simply the revolutionary. Hated in Mexico for
a number of reasons, and loved in Texas for even more reasons."

"I can live with that."

"Maybe the Mexicans have created a much-needed icon, a
face, for the revolution," XI explained.

"I don't know anything about politics," said Cowboy, "but
film in any other fashion is only another lie. And the
historians who make the use of these lies to tell their films
ought to have their pancreas removed like those who counterfeit
pharmaceuticals. I don't know why the director would add fiction to my documentary.”

“There are some who make film and toss them out as if there were french fries.”

“There are no films so bad,” said the young man, “that it doesn't have something good in it.”

“There isn't any doubt about it,” replied Juan, “but it often happens that those who deserve and who won fame have lost it when the movie comes out.”

“The reason for that,” said Cowboy, “is that the films are watched over and over and they're heroes faults are easily seen and the greater the fame of their characters the more closely they are scrutinized. Also, men who are great poets, profiteers, and gunfighters are always or almost always envied by the critics who never accomplished anything.

“That's not surprising,” said Juan, “if you can't be a hero then become a film critic.”

“All this is true,” said the descendant of THE Sam Houston, “but I should say I'd like the critics to be more merciful. Whoever produces a film exposes himself to great dangers since it is utterly impossible to tell a story in a way that will satisfy everyone who sees it.”

Long pause. Cowboy contemplated.
“I'm sorry, I'm just now understanding the film is a farce. I apologize for my mental flatulence.”

“Then the film must have pleased very few?” Juan asked.

“Just the opposite is true. A number of people, escaping their filthy reality and daily drudgery, have loved the movie. Some have faulted the writer’s memory because he forgot to show who stole Juan’s moped, for it suddenly showed you both traveling on Shovelhead and then later Juan was back on his moped. They also say that the part where Juan had the hundred pesos he found in the briefcase in the Guadalupe Mountains was flawed, for it was never shown how he spent the money if he ever did. But these are minor errors by the editor probably.”

Juan felt the need to respond by not really responding, “I'm in no condition to explain all the different accounts. I've always been so bad at math and my stomach hurts I'm going to leave and get a bite or 20 to eat. Maybe later, if you remember, you can ask me about the moped and the money,” and without waiting for anymore questions or saying another word Juan left Cowboy’s house.

Cowboy asked the young man to stay and eat with him. The young man stayed and they ate and discuss the film in more depth. The meal ended and the two men slept.
Juan traveled home to check on his wife and children and the installation of the new distillation vats he’s bought with the hundred gold coins.

Juan eventually returns and the conversation resumed.

EXT. MARION COUNTY, TEXAS

On January 1st, the Congreso de la Suciedad Roja, meeting in public session, and elected De Tellez as president of the Texas Republic, but this title “Shadow President,” and indeed not “shadow,” or “republic,” or “president” were not used by him in his letter accepting the invitation to a conference.

And so, Texas began the New Year on a perilous note; everyone was watching the man who stormed San Antonio and took the Alamo and kept it from the Mexicans for two weeks. And, whatever may have been the radical leanings of the cabinet, of a part of Suciedad Roja, matters promised to sorted themselves out, for on the last day of January, the President of the Republic, Eamon De Tellez, sent to the Mexican President an acceptance of the invitation to a conference, to meet in Mexico City on February 1st.

When the cabinet met on January 9, to settle upon the delegates who were to negotiate with the Mexicans, De Tellez, declined to serve on the mission. Kiefer Jentsch, and Christian Carbonnier were named as the heads of the mission, and were
joined by Evi Baumann (Eamon De Tellez’s cousin), Eric Lang, Tim Kramer, and two members of the Congreso de la Suciedad Roja with legal training, Joe Perot and Kenny Wigginton. The secretaries to the delegation were to include Wolf Pfeiffer and Dieter Groß.

As all the world knows, in hindsight, much ink and much Texas blood flowed from De Tellez’s decision not to head the delegation. His decision can be justified upon several grounds. When the Congreso de la Suciedad Roja met a Scholt’s in January, for its first day of session, 300 uniformed Rangers kept order outside amongst a big crowd, and there, in the beer garten, De Tellez was elected president of the Republic. It was as a head of state that he named his delegation. But it was certain to everyone that if a treaty emerged from the negotiations, it would not recognize Texas as a Republic. Moreover, in the cabinet, at least two irreconcilables, Fassbender and Stack, could only be won carefully and subtly to the acceptance of anything less than a Republic. In choosing Jentsch, as head of the delegation De Tellez had made, granted, that he himself would not be going, the obvious and the appropriate choice. He was a man whose passion for Texas independence was of long record but he was not a doctrinaire Republican.

But why Carbonnier? A treaty would require the support of the army, and although Carbonnier, in the cabinet, was “minister of finance,” and, in the Ejército Rojo Sucio, “director of
intelligence,” it was at him that the army looked. In the eyes of the public, he was the army. He had argued strenuously, indeed desperately, against the appointment. And he accepted with bitterness.

EXT. MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

The Texas delegation, all but Carbonnier, left Austin for Mexico City on January 27th, a party of sixteen, diplomats, secretaries, aides, stenographers and journalists. They traveled by special train from MLK Station to Estación Buenavista, where they were met by an enormous crowd of Texans in Mexico. There was another crowd waiting for them at a large narco style mansion, which had been rented for them, and it was there, later in the day, that they posed for photographers, in a tasteless drawing-room, scrolled mirror above purple walls, nude paintings, a wide, marble table, a tall window looking out upon the Zhenli Ye Gon famous garden. The secretaries were seated in the foreground, delighted and nervous, and the men in two rows behind them, Jentsch, like a “bulldog schoolmaster” the Mexican president would describe him, and beside him Joe Perot, thin, celibate even in a photograph, recessive, unsmiling. But Carbonnier, the man whom the press and the press photographers had been waiting for, was not there. He had been “delayed on
urgent business,” Jentsch explained to the security agents, posing as journalists.

When the cars drew up in front of Zhenli Ye Gon’s mansion, they discovered that someone had scrawled upon the pavement, in large letters, “Carbonnier, Wanted fro the Murderer.” Dieter Groß scrubbed at the name with a towel, but the chalk-white letters remained clear.

Christian Carbonnier slipped into Mexico City on the morning of the first, and went not to Gon’s home, but to a different house. The night before, he had spent in a hotel in Cuautitlan, “working almost asleep.”

It was at Pulquería la Rosita that he spoke a well-vetted and genuine journalist, on the morning of the second. “Mr. Carbonnier has the Texas sense of humor,” El Universal reported. “But this big, good-humored Texan with the rich brogue and the soft yet decisive voice, has another side. His face is stern and he speaks with emotion.” El Universal was the newspaper that a year previous called him “a murderer.”

Carbonnier had rented his own house in Esperanza, with a housekeeper and a waiter from the ABGB. But the building also housed the information bureau and Carbonnier’s picked intelligence agents, members of his Squad, and Sunny. Everyone but Sunny carried two heavy revolvers strapped to their chest beneath their coat, this included the housekeeper. Also in
official-looking diplomatic briefcases, each carried Israeli machine-pistols.

The distance between Zhenli Ye Gon’s and Francisco Javier Clavijero Street had been dictated by prudence. Jentsch was the leader of a delegation of statesmen, of whom, of course, Carbonnier might not be considered one, but Carbonnier was also directing an intelligence operation.

On early the morning of the first, accompanied by a bodyguard, Carbonnier traveled by taxi to Gon’s Place, to accompany the other delegates to the Los Pinos. The whitewashed slur had been scrubbed at, all but his name, and part of a word, “______ er”, in were legible. He smiled as he stepped over it, and walked inside.

**INT. MARION COUNTY, TEXAS**

The next day, Juan came back to Cowboy’s double-wide and they all return to their earlier discussion.

That next day, Juan said, “As for what XI asked about people wanting to know who stole my moped, and how and when, I can answer by saying that on the same night we were running from the federal police and entered the Guadalupe Mountains after the misadventure of the wall slaves and of the dead men being carried to Pandale, Cowboy and I stopped at a roadside park where he rested on his bike, and I mine. And battered and tired
from our recent skirmishes, we begin to sleep soundly as if we were lying on four Sleep Number beds. I was so sound asleep that whoever the thief could come up to me and put me on 2 x 4s, that he propped under the four sides of my moped and left me mounted on them and rolled my moped out from under me without even my even waking.”

Cowboy chimed in, “That is an easy thing to do and nothing new the same thing happened to Billy Dixon when he was at the fighting at Adobe walls with the same trick the famous Comanche Buffalo Hump took his horse from beneath his legs as he slept.”

“Dawn broke,” Juan continued, “and as soon as I moved the 2 x 4s gave way and I fell to the ground I looked for the moped and didn't see it. Tears filled my eyes and I began to lament and if the director of our film didn't put that in, well I can't be responsible for that. After that, I don't know how many days when we were traveling with the ranch princess, I saw my moped and riding him, dressed like a gypsy, was Ginés de Pasamonte, the lying criminal that my master had freed from the work pulling putting up the wall.”

“The error doesn't lie there,” reply to Sam Houston, “but in the fact that after the moped disappeared, the film director shows you were riding on that same moped. A continuity mistake.”
“I don't know how to answer that,” said Juan, “except to say that either the director was wrong or the editor made a mistake.”

“That must be the case, a continuity mistake; no doubt about it,” said Sam, “but what happened to the hundred gold and pesos are they gone? I spent them for myself and my wife and my children and they are the reason my wife didn't beat the living daylights out of me for traveling to West Texas with my friend. If after so much time, I came back home without money, and without the moped, an ugly fate would be waiting for me. If there's any more to know about me, here I am. I'll answer the president of Mexico in person and nobody has any business worrying about whether I spent them or banked them. I figure I got about 12 pesos for each beating I received along the way.”

“I'll be sure,” said Houston, “to write the director of the history in case there's a second release.”

“So, it was a history after all?”

“No.”

“You just said ‘history’?” Cowboy asked.

“It is a comedy.” XI said.

“So, the film has many accounts that need to be corrected?” Cowboy commented.

“I'm sure there is,” Sam responded, “but nothing as important as the ones we've already mentioned.”
“And by any chance,” asked Cowboy, “do the producer promise a sequel?”

“Yes he does,” responded Sam Houston, and turning to Juan, “but he says no one has sent him a script for it yet, so we don't know for sure if it will ever get funded without a script.”

Juan was picking a particularly pesky bugger from his nose and didn’t appear to be listening.

“Juan! Are you listening?”

“Of course.”

“They are waiting on a second script.”

“Why must I know that piece of information? I’m not responsible for this film or the next.”

“Please continue. My friend is about as likely to write a sequel as the moon is to crash into the Yucatan.”

“Well, and of course, some people say sequels aren't even very good and others say what's on film about Cowboy is enough. There is some doubt there will be a Cowboy Strikes Back, but the Tío Tacos say let's have some more Cowboy. Especially in San Antonio, they say let Cowboy go shoot up places and for Juan to keep reasoning and whatever else happens that will make us money and further demoralize the rebels.”

“So, thy funded the film? San Antonio?” Cowboy asked.

“I imagine. Yes.”
“And what does the director say of all this?”

“He says,” responded Sam, “that as soon as he finds a second history, which he searching for with extraordinary diligence, he will immediately begin shooting for he is more interested in earning his profit than winning any praise from the Mexican government for at the same time since this is the first film made in the four occupied states, and there isn't any competition for an Ariel, why not just cash in?”

Juan responded to this by saying, “The director’s interested in money and profit? I'd be surprised if he gets any because all he'll do is rush, rush, rush like a tailor on the night before a wedding, and the work done in a hurry is never more than passable. Let this comedian, or whoever he is, pay attention to what he's doing. Cowboy and I will give him such an abundance of scenes and so many different sequences that he'll be able to film not just a second part but several parts.”

“No doubt the director must think we're asleep here.”

“Well, just let him try to film us and he'll know if we're lame or not.”

“Juan, you have much to say, it seems. Maybe you should put it into a device?” The Houston suggested.

“What I can put in is that, if Cowboy would listen to me, we'd should be already traveling to the coast to affect change. This would be worthy of a sequel.”
No sooner had Juan revealed the secret then the sound of Shovelhead reached their ears.

Cowboy took this as a very good omen that after three or four days several motorhead's from the Jefferson had come out, in exchange for a baggy of meth, to repair his spirits and Cowboy figured in a few days they would be able to begin another adventure and after declaring his intention to the young man he asked his advice as to the direction he should take on his journey.

The young man, XI, responded by asking Cowboy which highway to the coast would be the safest because certainly, the Mexicans would want to capture or even eliminate him.

In his opinion, Cowboy thought he ought to use State Highway 60 and that XI should accompany them because in a few weeks they would be holding a shooting contest, and a seafood festival, and there he could win fame defeating all the Mexican shootists.

The young man praised Cowboy for his previous exploits but warned him to be more cautious about rushing into danger because his life belongs not to him but to all those who need him to protect the culture and restore the old order.

“And if you are killed, what will become of the planned sequel?” XI added.
“That's exactly what I fear most, XI,” said Juan, “Cowboy goes charging at a hundred Mexicans like a greedy film star, attacking a dozen donuts, there's time to attack and times to retreat and not everything's Remember the Alamo, Goliad, Refugio and Brownwood.” Juan paused to listen to himself, “That sounds abundant.”

“You mean ‘redundant,’” Cowboy corrected him.

“Is this your speech or mine?” Juan asked Cowboy.

Cowboy didn’t answer but began a speech of his own, “Actually, it’s mine.”

“Knock yourself out, buddy,” Juan yielded.

“Very well, you’d think people would have learned; the fort became obsolete with the invention of gunpowder.”

Juan interrupted, “You’ve told me a hundred times the golden mean of valor lies directly between the extremes of cowardice and recklessness and,” Juan turned to XI an added, “I want what is coming to me, but I don't want him to chase after some imaginary payoff and haul-off and attack when the numbers suggest a different action.”

Cowboy said, “I'll haul-off on whoever and whatever.”

“And you’ll argue with whoever, even your friends, but don't think I'll raise a weapon. I don't expect any result from violence and I figure I'll win plenty of fame by befriending the hero who does believe in violence.
“And you expect good things to come from passivity/sloth?”

Some histories say Cowboy used the word ‘sloth,’ which might have been judged a harsh criticism of Juan.

Juan answered, “And as a reward perhaps an island, or an island the size of a county, I’ll land this.

“You think you can manage?” XI asked.

“I’ll be glad to accept it and if he doesn't give it to me, I'm independent and don’t need anyone to help me.”

Cowboy interrupted, “as they say, ‘don't squat with your spurs on.’”

“I don’t know what that means?”

“It means shut up, if you know what’s good for you.”

“Well, I’m not holding my breath for an island. I now own a distillery and not just an empty barn full of mealworms. I sow what I reap; I'll not change. Healthy I was born and health I plan to die. If I am not offered a county I’ll simply buy one.”

“I’m sensing some hostility. Are you no longer the fast friends depicted in the film?” XI asked.

“It’s normal,” Juan relied.

EXT. MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Mexico offered the Texan’s everything north of 29.89. Alpine, San Marcos and Beaumont would be essentially border towns. Texas would be partitioned into North and South. North
would be an independent republic but without the right of a standing army. The South would be permanently annexed to the Mexican empire, and they insisted the documents include the terminology “Mexican Empire”. Many historians, not just myself, have refused to capitalize phrase fully.

What happened that night, between eight and two the next morning, would bring Texas, within months, into open civil war, and in the years which have followed, its events have passed into documents, records, arguments and charges and insults in the floor of the Congreso de la Suciedad Roja, into the remembrances of men, into the histories of families. And finally, the events were put down in countless films.

**EXT. TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

Once, back in Austin, late at night, Tommy Franke talked with me, and once, most extraordinary of all, late on a night in the Spring of 2048, I listened to a man who had not been there with them in Mexico City at all, a Republican with a price on his head, moving out of Austin to join desperate men in the expanse of West Texas, but who imagined those hours with fierce, murderous anger. “They were the traitors,” the Franke told me, “they were the ones who bargained and sold, they were the ones, slow in the head; the Mexicans were too clever for them, or perhaps they were willing to be hoodwinked all along.”
And of course I spoke extensively with Christian Carbonnier, and who better to document the entire event than the head of intelligence who was there with a private army of ears and recording devices. He told me and at length as much as he could remember, not just the arguments, but gestures, tones of voice, memories, not one but several, and he would remember fragments of phrases, looks, everything enacted in those hours before and after midnight of the fifth and sixth of February. That might be included in a different history.

Oddly, the only thing uniquely related to me and pertains to this history, was the account which Sunny gave to me of what Christian told her, how he had looked, when he came to that house in Esperanza at almost three in the morning.

Christian had phoned Sunny after the offer was made, and she was waiting for him in lawn chair she’d brought to the front steps of the Esperanza house. She saw the taxi pull up and Christian get out. There was a Comanche moon, and added to that, with the light taxi, she could confirm with her eyes something was up. Of course, he’d not discussed anything over the phone, but she knew something dreadful was happening by the stress in his voice. At that hour, the world seemed empty, except for the taxi and the silvery moon and herself at waiting on the porch in her best red evening gown and Christian coming to see her.
He brushed her lips lightly with his, and as she took his coat, he ran his fingers lightly along her throat, touched her collarbone. His fingers had the warm of spring upon them.

“What is it?” she asked. “What happened?”

“It is signed,” he said. “Signed by every man and every man on their delegation, and ours as well, except me.”

“They cannot sign that thing,” she cried out, “they can’t sign it. They didn’t have the authority to sign it.”

“He gave them only three hours to decide; take the deal or nothing. We couldn’t get a secure line to Austin. I think they were isolated and tricked. But it’s done now.”

“Is that what they want?,” she said, “It’s not what we want. That is the treaty you were working for?”

They went inside and she poured whiskies, and when he had taken his glass, she would have touched hers to his but he recoiled. She was a bit embarrassed she couldn’t have judged the situation better. And to make matters worse she had he best gown on.

“Oh, yes,” he said. “It cannot be called a treaty, ‘Articles of Agreement’ is what the document is called. We didn’t have the authority to sign a treaty. But it is a treaty, right enough.”

“Well, surely Austin will reject it. And this will be for nothing.”
He walked over to the thick chair which stood beside the fireplace and sat down heavily in it. He took a long sip of the whiskey.

“You were the only one to not sign?” she asked, her voice making it a question.

“It’s really not that bad a deal, if you look at a map,” he said, “Militarily, I doubt we can take and keep that much territory, perhaps, they got as much of Texas as they could get.”

“I guess they are all celebrating?” Sunny said.

“I came here. Most of them went back to Gon House,” Christian said, “It’s signed but Joe Perot is still there ‘seeking clarification,’ Kenny Wigginton took a cab to Doctores, probably looking for dope, I expect; God knows where Groß goes.”

“Celebrating, isn’t that what we Texans do?” Sunny said.

“We Texans?” he said, and smiled. “Perhaps we’ll all celebrate later.”

“This is just such a shock.”

“After the signing, and for the very first time in these months, the Mexicans came round to our side of the table, and there were handshakes, like this is it; it’s over.”

“You shook hands with that awful Mexican president? Really and truly? It’s a hell of a thing to ask a Texan to do.”
“Well, yes. But I was in the bathroom for the photographs,” he said, “but, still this could be the end of my political life.”

“Your political life,” Sunny said, with a savage weight upon the adjective.

“It could very well be the end of my life.” Christian said.

“But who... oh, the Mexicans?” Sunny understood.

Christian was very proud of Sunny. She always said she didn’t like or understand politics, but in this instant she did.

He told her what she already knew, “We should probably leave.”

Sunny’s mind was racing, calculating.

“Now.” Christian sped things up.

“Trains leave on the hour throughout the night,” Sunny knew.

“That’s right. You used to live here.” Christian smiled.

INT. DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

When the translator begin to work on this 5th chapter, he says he thought it was untrue because in it, once again, Cowboy speaks in a manner different from what one might expect of his limited intelligence and say things so subtle one would not think it possible that he knew them, but the translator didn't
wish to admit it for the sake of his professional obligations and so he continued saying...

**EXT. JUAN’S DISTILLERY – A BARN EAST OF JEFFERSON**

Juan came home so happy and joyful that his wife could see his joy at a distance which obliged her to ask, “what's the news, Juan, my husband? What makes you so happy?”

To which he responded, “My wife, if were only lucky enough to be unhappy, I'd be delighted. And today I’m unhappy.”

“Husband, I don't understand,” she replied, “You look happy and delighted. And I don't know what you mean when you say you would be delighted if it were your good luck not to be happy. I might be a fool but I don't know how anybody can be happy not to be happy.”

“Look Teresa,” responded Juan, “I’m happy because I've decided to stand, despite all the antagonisms, beside my friend Cowboy again because he wants to leave a third time to seek adventures and I'll leave with him again because of our need for trucks to deliver all the Tequila that we are going to sell, which makes me happy, that despite the hardships of travel, I might find another briefcase like the money from the last trek, but it makes me sad to have to leave you and the children; and this time it might be my luck to have food and air conditioning, he might not lead me through wastelands and over countless...
baking highways. I can afford another adventure. I’m totally healed from the last trip, and just by wanting another case of coins, then of course my happiness can be firmer and truer but because what I feel now is mixed with sorrow of leaving you and so I was right to say that I would be delighted if it was my dumb luck not to be happy.”

“Look Juan,” replied Teresa, “ever since you became that man’s brain, your talk is so roundabout, nobody can understand you.”

“It's enough if you understand me, my wife,” responded Juan, “If you understand me I think I’ll say no more about it for now. You should know Teresa that I have to take the moped into the shop for the next three days so it can be ready to carry weapons and myself. New oil and fuel filter; we're not going to a wedding but traveling the state having the traditional battles with the treacherous/traitorous Mexicans and there are guns and there are ‘arribas,’ ‘ques,’ and ‘dones’ in and ‘the promise of a sequel’ but none of that will matter much if we don't find some renegades and Mexicans to mess with.”

“I do believe, my husband, that you will get nothing for free so I'll keep praying that our Lord delivers you from as soon much trouble as we can afford.”
"I'll tell you, Teresa" respond Juan, "that if I don't expect to be a county judge or lord over an island before too much longer, I'd fall dead right here."

"Not that Poppy," said Teresa, "I don't want you to die. Please let the devil be all the county judges there are in Texas."

"But you agreed that nothing is for free."

"It seems expensive for you to die. You came out of your mother's womb without a county and you've lived until now without being lord of a county and when it happens you'll go or they'll carry you to the grave without ever exploiting a county."

"You think?"

"Just find as many briefcases full of coins as you can and return safely with them. That will be the best thing you can do for our distillery business."

"But doubt I'll be lucky enough to find another briefcase, but islands and counties are numerous."

"Many people in Texas live without a county or island to control and that doesn't make them give up or to not be counted in the census. The best hot sauce in the world is hunger and since people have plenty of that they always eat Ramen soups with pleasure."

"I am more hungry than that."
“Okay look. Juan, if you happen to find yourself a county judge somewhere, don't forget about me and your children. Remember Rutilio is already fifteen and he ought to go to a college if he’s going to enter the seminary and don't forget about your daughter Brandeisica, she won't be sad if we marry her off.”

“Why do you think I’m doing this?”

“To find a good man for her?”

“Yes, and weddings are very expensive.”

“She will soon begin dropping hints that she wants a husband as much as you want a county and, when it's all said and done, a daughter's better off badly married then happily kept at home.”

“Teresa,” responded Juan, “if Cowboy lets me have any kind of a county, I'll marry our Brandeisica so high up that nobody will be able to reach her unless they call her Senora.”

“Do that, papasito,” responded Teresa, “but she should marry an equal; that’s the best thing if you raised her from flip-flops to Prada from cotton t-shirts to silk gowns, from ‘holler at ya’ to refurbished Chinese iPhones and from ‘you’ to county judge, the girl won't know who she is and wherever she turns she'll make a thousand mistakes and show that her upbringing was rough and country.”
“Quiet, momasita,” said Juan, “she just needs to practice for two or three years and then the aristocracy and dignity will be a perfect fit. If not what difference does it make. Let her be the daughter of a county commissioner and it won't matter, of shre makes mistakes.”

“Viejo, be content with your/our place in life,” responded Teresa, “and don't try to go to a higher one. Remember the proverb that says, “take your neighbor's son lots of snot from his nose and bring him into your house.”

“Sure it would be very nice to marry our Brandeisica to some sophisticated politician’s son…”

Teresa interrupted, “…who might get it in his head to insult her by calling her, ‘the daughter of tequila distillers.’ Not in my lifetime, dear husband; I didn't bring her up for that. You bring me the money to expand our tequila business, but leave her marriage to me.”

“I don’t have any say?”

“No. There's Lupe Toca Tocho, the sturdy, healthy football hero and the son of Juan Tocho, and we know him and I know for a fact that he doesn't dislike our girl. He's her equal and she would make a good marriage with him and we'd always see her and we would all be together -- parents and children and grandchildren and in-laws and the peace and blessings of East Texas would be with us so don't go marrying her in whatever
courthouses or counsels, where they don't understand her and she won't understand herself."

"Ann Coulter!" replied Juan, "Why do you want to stop me now, and for no good reason, from marrying my daughter to somebody rich and powerful?"

"I'm angry, don't speak to me."

"Look, Teresa, I've always heard the old folks say that, if you don't know how to enjoy good luck when it comes, you shouldn't complain if it passes you by."

Teresa slammed a door between them.

"And, it wouldn't be a good idea, now that it's come knocking, to shut the door in its face. We should let the favorable wind that's blowing carry us along this manner of speaking."

And what Juan says below is why the Spanish translator of this history considered this chapter untrue...

"Don't you think, you sweet smelling/ignorant woman," Juan continued, "that it will be good for me to come into some profitable political position that will take us out of poverty, let Brandeisica marry the man I choose and you'll see how they start calling you 'ma'am' and you'll sit in church in the front row, with all the women in town envying everything. But no not you; you would rather always stay the same, never changing, like
a painting on the wall and we're not talking about this anymore. Brandeisica will be well-married no matter what you say.”

“Do you hear what you're saying, husband,” responded Teresa who emerged from behind the door, “well even so, I'm afraid that my daughter becomes ‘well-married’ it will be her ruin. You'll do whatever you want whether you make her into a lady, entrepreneur or a ranch princess, but I can tell you it won't be with my agreement or consent.

“I've always been in favor of equality and I can't stand to see somebody putting on airs for no reason. They baptized me, 'Teresa' a plain and simple name, without any additions or decorations are trimmings. My father's name was 'Cascajo' and because I'm your wife they now call me 'Theresa Seguin' though they really ought to call me 'Teresa Cascajo-Seguin' but were laws, go sheep and socialist follow. I'm satisfied with this name without worrying that it weighs so much, I can't carry it into the distillery and I don't want to give people the chance to see me walking around dressed as expected and say, 'look at the heirs the woman is putting on. Yesterday she was busy hauling tequila to the market in a rusted out pickup and today she is driving her kid to football practice in a SUV.' I don't intend to let anyone see me in a spot like that.

“You, mi amour, go and be a judge or insular and pretend all you like. I swear I'll not set foot out of this town and to
keep her chaste, I'll break her leg and keep her in the house, for a chaste girl’s work is her fiesta. You go have more problems and brusing with your cowboy friend and leave us with your solutions. We will get the tequila to the market, I certainly don't know why your friend thinks that he's a Ranger? His father was only real for pretend."

“Now I'll say,” replied Juan, “that you must have an evil spirit in that hot little body of yours. What a lot of willy-nilly ideas you strung together. What do the Cascajos, tequila, nonsensical proverbs and pretend actors have to do with that with what I'm saying?”

“You were listening?”

“Come here, you need a spanking, for sport but also because you want to run from luck. If I had a daughter like Cynthia Ann Parker, who wanted to run away and live with the natives, you'll be right to not go along with that but if I take her out of this red dirt and put her on a pedestal in a cushy mansion why won't you consent and do what I want?”

“Do you know why, Juan?” responded Teresa, “because of the proverb that says, ‘whoever tries to conceal you, reveals you.’ Nobody does more than glance at the poor, but they look closely at the rich. If a rich man was once poor, that's where the whispers and rumors begin, and a woman moved up? You will really
provoke the wicked rumors of old-women who litter the stores with gossip, busy as bees with it."

“Look Teresa,” responded Juan, “and listen to what I want to tell you now because maybe you haven't ever heard of it in all the days of your life and what I'm saying now. It isn't something I made up on my own. Everything I plan to say to you are the judgments of the pastor who preached in our church during Lent last year and if I remember correctly, he said that objects in this mirror are closer than they appear.”

All the words that Juan says here are the second of his statements that caused the translator to consider this portion of the chapter false and it seems the comments far exceed the capacity of Juan who continued saying...

“This is a famous proverb relating to the fact that when we see someone finally dressed nicely, when they find a running vehicle people’s memory never recalls the bicycle they road for years, for we only see the present. We see him handsome and well-mannered and generous; nobody will remember what he was but will respect him for what he's made of himself into unless they're envious. And that is an entirely different sermon.”

“I don't understand,” you replied Teresa, “so do what you want and don't give me any more headaches with your long speeches and fine words and if you're evolved to do what you say…”"
"’Resolved’ is what you say dear," said Juan, "not evolved."

"Don't start an argument me, Juan," responded Teresa, "I talk as I choose and let's stick to the subject. I say you're determined to have an island or a county. You should take your son along and teach him to be a bulls*** artist as well; it's a good thing for sons to inherit and learn the trade of their father."

"As soon as I have control of an island," said Juan I'll send for him posthaste and I'll send you some of the money I'm able to extort from them. I'll have plenty because there are always plenty of people who hand money over to politicians when they don't have any. But be sure to dress him so he looks already wealthy and not who he is who he really is."

"You just send the money," said Teresa, "and I'll dress him up as you asked."

"So you agree," said Juan, "that your daughter will be married on the island?"

"The day I see her marry outside of this town," said Teresa, "will be the day I'll have to bury her but you do what you want. Women despite all our progress we still have the obligation to obey our husbands even if they're fools."

And with this she began to cry and tried to run away; Juan again tried chased her and consoled her saying that she might
both ‘marry well’ and ‘happily,’ but that it could be delayed for several more years. This ended the tussle and Juan return to Cowboy’s place.

**EXT. TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

In the beer hall again, De Tellez spoke in favor of the agreement. But the final word before the vote was taken was spoken by Christian Carbonnier, bound as always by a code of old-fashioned honor. “I do not care,” he said in his high-pitched, determined voice, “whether the King of Mexico or the symbol of that damn eagle and snake be in front of every classroom in Texas, so long as the people of Texas be free to shape their own destiny. We have the means to do that here. I say now to the people of Texas that it is their right to see that this treaty is never carried out. I simply can not see this state partitioned for what? Expediency? Convenience? Texans will not give up such a chance to live their own lives in their own country and take their place among the nations of North America.”

The vote, when finally it came, was so close that the chamber was silent, listening intently, and when it was at last announced, twelve in favor of the Treaty and fourteen against it; there was a total silence, which was broken at last by De Tellez. His tone was personal and not public.
“It will, of course,” he said, “be my duty to resign my office as chief executive. I do not know what I should do it just now.”

“No,” Christian said at once. “No. The president knows how I tried to do my best for him in Mexico City.”

“I understand that,” De Tellez said.

Kenny Wigginton was out the front door as the two men spoke.

De Tellez was also taking refuge in an old idea of honor, something everyone understood he’d learned from books. But Christian, who of course was sitting close to him, only the table separating them, told me later that De Tellez’s eyes, behind the thick spectacles, had begun to water.

“He has exactly the same position in my heart now that he always had,” Christian said, and this brought applause from both sides. “We must reach some kind of understanding – perhaps you should resign and run again, Of course we need leadership, there will be an election in any case,” but there he paused, and shook his head as though in bewilderment.

De Tellez resigned as president, then offered himself for reelection, and his opponents nominated Carbonnier to oppose him.

There were two simple assurances made. De Tellez pledged to maintain the Republic until the “Texas people have voted on the
treaty.” Carbonnier pledged that “the army will remain the army of the Texas Republic."

De Tellez was defeated by only two votes (11 to 13), Carbonnier and himself not voting.

Carbonnier was elected president of the Suciedad Roja Republic.

“I would like my last word here to be this,” De Tellez said. “We have had a glorious record here for two years. It has been two years of magnificent patience in our nation. The world is looking at us now—”

At this point, in the printed record of the debate over the treaty, the secretary found no other words than these, placed in apologetic quotation marks: “The President here breaks down.” And the poor secretary had no choice. De Tellez had begun sobbing, and, out of grief or embarrassment, rested his forearms on the table, and buried his head in them. He was not the only man weeping.

After De Tellez left the building, without vote or discussion, Carbonnier appointed an entire cabinet, with the Tawakoni girl’s father, Karl Schkade as the Intelligence Director. Since day one, Schkade had served as second and chief recruiter under Carbonnier.

From this moment, while there was still bitter debate between supporters and opponents of the Treaty. The Suciedad
Roja was less of a deliberative body, and more of a rubber stamp for Carbonnier’s conduct of the war. And with a cabinet composed entirely of hawks, the entire shadow government, shadowy in its own unique way, now existed to replace Mexican authority with Texas authority.

INT. WEST OF JEFFERSON – MARION COUNTY

While Juan Seguin and his wife Theresa Cascajo were having the indelicate talk we related to you, Cowboy’s father's girlfriend and daughter were not sitting on their butts anymore. A thousand little things had them thinking that Cowboy was planning on leaving for the third time and return to his calamitous life on the road. They attempted everything to dissuade him from so brazen a thought, but all the nagging and complaining in Texas couldn't bend him.

Even so, in one of the exchanges they had his father's girlfriend said, “The truth is that if your ass doesn't keep your feet firmly on the ground and you’re a** in this house and stop looking out at the prairie longing for misfortune, I'll have to have the authorities declare you insane.”

Which Cowboy responded, “Look, I don't know how the Mexicans in San Antonio will respond to your complaints or the patriots in Austin either, all I know is that if I were in
charge I would excuse myself from responding to the countless nonsensical requests presented to me each day.

“They won’t believe you. As far as I know, I’ve not told anyone my true identity and certainly not where I live. The Mexicans think I’m simply, the Vaquero de Tejas.”

“After your appearance in the parade, on your return, they might.”

“I’d hate it if I caused the government any trouble. Not on my account.”

“Well if you don’t fall into line…”

“Remind me to remind Juan, he’s in training for this sort of political bullshit. And he should expect nagging women to complain to him about everything they don’t like. He should know, one of the greatest burdens of politicals and county judges is the obligation to pretend to listen and respond to powerless petitioners without ever really doing anything.”

To which the girlfriend/housekeeper said, “Tell us, are there Rangers who remain in one place allowing/inviting adventure to come to them?”

“Yes,” responded Cowboy, “quite a few and it’s fitting that there should be as an endorsement to new nations, like our Republic, and to display the stateliness of law and order.”

“Well then, couldn’t you,” she replied, “be one of those?”
“Look, you were my father’s girlfriend, I don’t know where he’s gone,” responded Cowboy, “but he might have explained to you? Not all gunmen can be city folk and not all fellows can be Rangers mobile; there has to be some of each in the world, and while we’re all Rangers, there is a vast difference between us. Urban cowboys, without leaving their cities or passing out of their counties and contrast that with the mobile type, traveling the state looking at a map, refusing to spend a peso and suffering heat and rain, hunger and thirst; but we are the true Rangers that move around, measuring the miles, exposed to sun and wind, we know the Mexicans not from newspapers but from real encounters. We do battles and worry little about laws or what fight is on the horizon. A mobile Ranger might encounter well-equipped men and feel a need to not let them pass, and he might need to attack them and, if possible, defeat them no matter if they’re armed with high caliber weapons or just sharp knives. I’ve only mentioned this so you’ll know, after all, you asked me the question. I didn’t ask you.”

“Ahm Cowboy!” said the daughter of the girlfriend, “Your ass should remember that everything you say about Rangers is invention and lies from films, and each of their histories, if it isn’t burned, deserves an inquisition in Mexico City or some other sign of official repression.”
“My profession sustains me,” said Cowboy, “if you were not the daughter of my father’s girlfriend, I’d punish you so severely for the blasphemy you have spoken here. The whole town should hear. You are a silly girl who knows little about Rangers or history or culture or politics.”

“Not all those calling themselves Rangers are actual Rangers through and through, some are gold, other lead and all might appear to be Rangers can pass the assayer’s test.”

“Three Musketeers bar!” said the daughter, “Your ass knows so much that in an emergency you could stand in the pulpit, and yet in spite all of this you've been struck by such a great blindness and such obvious foolishness that you tried to make us believe you're smart when you're dumb, brave when you're scared and wise when you're only a spoiled little dope-fiend. Most people in town know you're not a real Ranger. Whoever heard of a meth-addicted Texas Ranger?”

“I am. By the power invested in Salty’s father out at Tawakoni.”

“You cook dope for the rebels; when will you get that into your head?”

“You are certainly correct in what you say, dear girl,” responded Cowboy, “I’m told it’s all part of the plan and I’m doing my part.”
“They hate when you leave and they plot to do everything to keep you home.”

“I’m my own person.”

“You’re a fool.”

“Impertinent, little b**** aren’t ya?”

“I’m my mother’s daughter.”

“I could tell you things about her genetics that would astonish you, but I don’t want to mix genetics with phonics which is what you’re studying in school right now.”

“You're a dumbass!”

“My little friend there are four genes in a man (or woman) you can inherit: (1) ‘humble beginnings extended and expanded until they reach greatness’ gene, (2) ‘noble beginnings preserve and maintain them right where they are’ gene (3) still there’s having ‘noble beginnings but having a diminished and annihilated’ gene and finally (4) some people have a ‘reasonable beginning but become ordinary and numerous’ gene.”

Cowboy continued, “You can maybe understand how complicated genetics are and if you don’t like them then you can use epigenetics to turn the genes on or off with huge amounts of vitamin B-12 and tequila, but always one knows what gene a person has based on his/her understanding of the realpolitik and in the wealth and generosity they display. I say understanding because a reality-based man might appear extremely selfish and
the confused man might look to be a very generous man or he might not be happy unless he’s fishing or hunting defenseless animals. An impoverished Ranger has no way of showing he’s a Ranger except through hunting revolution.”

“Not by being affable, well-mannered, courteous and civil?”

Well, a Ranger shouldn’t be proud, arrogant, or prone to gossip and he can be generous in that are down-times (resting). If you see these traits in the middle of a fight, than you can easily mistake a Ranger for a dubious type of man.”

“You’re nuts.”

“There are two roads my dear which men can take to become rich and honored. One is the pen and the other the pistol. I have more pistols than pins so my inclination is towards gunplay.”

“Great. Now you can count, a regular mathematician.”

“I was born under the influence of the planet Mars and (I’m my father’s son)…”

“And also an astrologist, a sport totally revered.”

“So I'm compelled to follow this path I must follow it despite the rest of the world. It's useless to try to persuade me differently; I know the infinite benefits and that can be attained through rangering. I know the path to reality is narrow and the road to cowardness is wide. I know they're ending are different because the road to faintheartedness ends in ‘itos’
(los despropósitos) and in other roads to words ending in leads to words ending in ‘schaft.’ (gefolgschaft)"

“Oh f*** me,” said the teenage girl, “Cowboy is now a poet; he knows everything; he understands everything and I’d wager that if he thought he was a Shriner he now be pretending to build Children’s Hospitals. If a catholic, a cathedral as well; if a welder then a cattle trailer.”

“I promise you child,” responded Cowboy, “that if these ideas did not carry with them all my thoughts that would be there would be nothing I can’t make and no curiosity my hands would not create, especially hospitals and cattle trailers…”

At that moment, there was a knock at the door and when they asked who was there, Juan Seguin responded. As soon as the girlfriend heard that, he she quickly exited the room because she claimed Juan nauseated her. The woman’s daughter impolitely open the door and Cowboy came to greet him and with open arms and the two men shut themselves away in Cowboy’s room where they had another conversation just as historic as the previous one.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT – PORT ARTHUR, TX

Ten days into Christian Carbonnier’s administration, March 2nd, the Gulf Coast Warehousing complex was on fire, under a continuous bombardment but not from the Mexican army, loyalist volunteers were riding in close and hurl incendiaries and cans
of petrol. Part of the Texas garrison, those over 70, had surrendered under a white flag on Monday, and on Tuesday the women, and teenagers and the other children had been guided through back lanes to safe houses. But now, on Wednesday, the flaming building was held by seventeen men under Karl Schkade, the Tawakoni girl’s father, with three nurses to care for the wounded.

Most of the fellows had been drawn to Tawakoni, and Salty’s father, by her basketball and volleyball posters. By design, when they wound up being seen in store windows as far as Orange and Canutillo, insightful men and just adventurous men and even just foolish men saw it as a signal.

“Ford High School.” They thought.

They didn’t have a Ford high school anywhere near them. They never heard of a town called Ford and the cipher in it weeded out more than a few idiots. But eventually, the more clever/ambitious fellows got their curiosity up and, influenced by the beauty of this daughter, they’d eventually come to town hunting here. They’d be sent to speak with Karl Schkade, and he’d given hundreds (thousands) of father future-son-in-law talks. Some of these fellow were a foot shorter than her, but if they wanted her, they’d have to prove themselves worthy. Schkade “enlisted” the reliable type and turned the unreliable sort loose as “mobile” Rangers.
Many of these men, the enlisted sort, all one hundred percent loyal to Schkade and the idea of marrying his daughter, were with him in the warehouse. While the mobile type of men were scattered about, for the most part, they were on their way to Matagorda.

They contrived to hold out through much of Thursday, but then Schkade called them together and ordered them to vacate the building, whose walls were about to collapse. They left, under a flag, and surrendered to the soldiers who had sealed off the rear alleyway. Beyond the barricades, watching with a small crowd in the blackened, acrid air, straining to hear despite continuous machine-gunning, Salty stood with two other women who had managed to escape on Tuesday without surrendering. A Mexican journalist, with a HD camera stood beside them, and one of Salty’s friends, in rage, knocked the camera from his hands and then kicked it twice, half-way down the block.

There seemed, at last, to be no one left in the building, and there was a shuddering, deep noise which may have been the buckling of a wall. Even beyond the barricades, the heat from the three burning buildings seemed to Salty intolerable. And just then, her father, the Karl Schkade, came running from the building, soot-streaked, but like a ghost. He was holding a heavy revolver straight in front of him, firing at the Mexicans. Or so the girl remembered it, but some remembered him holding
two pistols, like a gunman in films about the Wild West, and some remembered that he had but the one gun and was holding it at his side. It was over in seconds, a minute perhaps at the most. “Fire low,” some heard one of the soldiers shout, but Salty says that she did not hear the shout. The figure, Karl Schkade’s figure, looked large and terrifying; she thought she saw him running toward the soldiers, enraged and smoke-smeared.

In any event, a bullet that severed the femoral artery killed him. He was carried up Jimmy Johnson Blvd, the Mexicans still calling it ‘Javier Hernández Blvd,’ to the Dubuis Hospital by ambulance, with one of the nurses, holding the artery’s ends in her fingers. It took two days for him to die.

**INT. SAM HOUSTON’S TWO STORY – JEFFERSON, TEXAS**

When the girlfriend's daughter saw that Juan had shut himself away with Cowboy, she knew what their business was, and imagining that this consultation would result in a determination to leave out on a third trip; she got on her bike and filled with sorrow and grief went to find Sam Houston XI for it seemed to her because he was well-spoken, handsome and just returned from college maybe he could persuade Cowboy to abandon his insane intentions or at least for him to tell them his destination on the coast. Formally friends, she found him in the library of his house and when she saw him he noticed she was
perspiring and in distress. When XI saw this display of sweat and fright, he said to her, “What is it? What has happened? You look as if your heart is about to burst.”

“It's nothing, Sam, except the man who owns the house mom and I are living in he disappeared and his son is a lunatic. He's about to leave, he's going to attack some Mexican coven or convoy, I forget which he said.”

“You don't mean ‘coven’ but ‘cove’ maybe?” ask XI, “a harbor perhaps?” Houston had been coincidentally studying a Baidu map on his Chinese made desktop. He shifted his attention and quickly scoured the Texas coast for a ‘cove’.

“You know anything you tell me will be kept a secret,” he reminded her.

“I know. I trust you.”

“Thanks,” XI turned from his map and smiled.

“The idiot said ‘coven’; I don't know what that is,” she responded, “but then he might not either since he's insane and wants to leave again and this will be the third time too win ‘trophies’. The first time a farmer brought him back to us lying in the back of a watermelon trailer, his motorcycle just as beaten and knocked galley-west as he was. The second time he came home in a cattle trailer, locked and claiming he was drugged and the poor man was in such a state the town hardly knew him: skinny, pale, his eyes shrunken into the back of his
head. To bring him back a little it took more than six Hostess Twinkies. Honest and the woman at the Tex Stop knows this well and she'd not let me lie.”

“I certainly can believe that,” responded XI, “for they get out on the road, high on meth, and do not eat. But here, it's good and they can become plump and so full of sugar and you are right, the woman at the Tex Stop would not fabricate a story even if it killed her. In fact, is there something else? Some mishap other than the one you fear Cowboy plans to take under take?”

“No, Senor,” she replied.

“Well then don't worry, I’ll figure it out,” the young man said, “you go upstairs and crawl in bed and prepare me some hot afternoon delight, I'll be there soon and then you will see wonders.”

And while the lustful little trollop got herself going, Houston messaged his handlers in Mexico City in order to keep them current.

**INT. COWBOY’S DOUBLE WIDE – MARION COUNTY, TEXAS**

While Cowboy and Juan were shut away together they had a conversation that is recounted in the history with a good deal of accuracy and attention to detail.
“I gotta go back on the road with you, friend, to get some rest.” Juan complained.

“Rest? Now the road is rest? You’ve done nothing but complain.”

Juan said to his friend, “I have already conceived my wife to let me go with you’re a** wherever you want to serve.”

“‘Convinced’ is what you mean, Juan,” said Cowboy, “not conceived.”

“Once or twice,” responded Juan, “if I remember correctly, I ask you’re a** not to correct my words if you understand what I mean and then if you don’t understand to say, ‘what the Dickens; I don’t understand you,’ and if I can’t explain then you can correct me. That’s my only suppliant.’”

“I do not understand you, Juan,” said Cowboy, “because I do not know what suppliant means.”

“I said, ‘complaint’” responded Juan, “and that’s what I mean, humbly. That’s just the way I am.”

“Now I understand you even less,” replied Cowboy.

“Well if you can’t understand me,” responded Juan, “I don’t know any other way to say it that’s all I know, I’m relatively willowy.”

“Oh, now I have it,” respond Cowboy, “you mean to say that you’re a tree so docile so easily bent that you will accept what I tell you and learn along the way.”
“I'll bet,” said Juan, “you knew what I was saying and understood me from the beginning, but wanted to mix me up so you could hear me make another 200 mistakes.”

“That may be,” replied Cowboy, “tell me then what does Teresa say?”

“Teresa said,” explained Juan, “that I should keep to a sharp eye on you and ‘there’s no arguing against written proof because if you cut the deck you don’t deal,’ and ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.’”

“And I say that a woman’s advice is no jewel,” argued Cowboy.

“And the man who doesn’t take it is a fool,” Juan retorted.

“And after dark, I say that as well,” responded Cowboy, “Continue on my friend go on for today you are speaking perfect crystals.”

“The fact is,” responded Juan, “that as your a** knows very well we’re all subject to death suddenly in this political turmoil.”

“Here today and gone tomorrow,” Cowboy admitted.

“And the lion goes as quietly as the sheep and nobody can promise himself more hours and life in this world than the ones luck provides because death is silent. But when she comes knocking at your door it’s a racket and there isn’t much to say about it all that.”
"That’s true," said Cowboy, “but I don't know where this is taking us."

“It's taking me to this,” said Juan, “your a** should tell me exactly what salary you'll give me for each month I serve you and this salary should be paid to me from your estate and I don't want to depend on anybody's favors which come late or badly or never. I just tend to my own business just as my wife is tending to hers."

“Explain, please.”

“A lot of little ones add up to a lot and as long as you're earning, you don't lose a thing and if it should happen that you give me an island the size of a county and I don't believe or expect that you ever will. I'm not such an ungrateful person and not such a penny-pincher that I won't want the rent collected from the island to be added up and deducted from my salary prorated."

“Juan my friend,” responded Cowboys, “sometimes connected is as good as collected.”

“I understand,” said Juan, “but I'll bet you should have said 'elected' and not 'connected,' but it doesn't matter at all because your ass understood me.”

“And I’ve understood you so well,” responded Cowboy, “that I have penetrated to your most hidden thoughts and I know the
target you are trying to hit with the countless arguments and proverbs."

“Really? Finally you will pay me?”

“Look Juan, I certainly should have specified a salary for you, if I had found in any of the films of Texas Rangers an example but I have seen and read all or most of the histories and I do not recall reading that any cowboy ever paid a fixed salary to his friend. I only know that all of them came along without pay, and when they least expected it, things had gone well for their friends, they found themselves rewarded with an island, new duds, or a horse, or something comparable at the very least. Maybe they received a ranch or saloon. If with these expectations and agenda you would like to go with me again then you're welcome but, Mr. Willow Tree, if you think I'm going to force the western way of life, beyond its limits, beyond its established limits and boundaries then you're sadly mistaken.”

“What are you saying, no?”

“Yes, my dear friend, return to your house and tell your wife my intention and if it pleases her you can serve with me without wages then that's fine with me.”

“And if not?” Juan asked.

“We still will be friends, but remember remind her that fine hopes are better than miserable promises.”

“And a good lawsuit is better than a bad payment,”
“I’m only saying so you understand but also so you know that I can rain down proverbs, just as yourself, but what court would hear such nonsense? It’s anarchy here in Texas.”

“A friend is anarchy is a friend indeed.”

“And so, if you don't want to accompany me as my friend alone, don't worry I'll find a friend more obedient, more eager, less uncouth, and certainly less talkative than you. The East Texas woods are chalk full of them.”

When Juan heard his friends resolve the sky filled with clouds and his heart sank because he thought Cowboy would never leave without him for all the money in Texas.

Juan was still perplexed when the eleventh Sam Houston came in along with the daughter, fresh from buying frisbees, and was eager to hear the arguments her man would use to persuade Cowboy not to seek adventures again.

Sam, famous for his sly humor came up to him and embraced him as he had done before and said “Savior of Texas, I hope the people trying to dissuade you from your plans never succeeded in holding you back,” and turning to the daughter he said, “You can stop praying that Cowboy will delay his original and noble plan; he's resolute. I'd hate to hear he's delayed the righting of wrong or making way for big things to come. Why not start today for the coast and not wait for tomorrow and...

XI gave them, Cowboy and Juan, both new cell phones.
And, “if you need anything just let me know food or money I might even go with you, I'd be lucky to be included.”

The daughter felt betrayed but she sensed something important was playing out, something larger than her desire to keep Cowboy cooking dope.

At this Cowboy turn to Juan and said, “Didn't I tell you that I would have more than enough companions? Look who is offering to come along. Sam Houston XI! How could anyone be more qualified by history or indication maybe indignation, for the sort of job I have in mind? But, I'll go alone since Juan doesn't want to come with me.”

“Oh no, I want to come I want to,” responded Juan, deeply moved and with tears in his eyes. He added, “let nobody say to me, ‘when the round fellow has eaten he leaves.’ No. For I don't come from ungrateful stock; everybody knows especially in this town what kind of family I came from. I have performed many good actions and even more good words. You should know this and if I tried to work out a salary it was only to please my wife. When she puts her mind to changing me, you know grapes have never been pressed so hard.”

“But the truth is a man must be a man and a woman a woman.” Cowboy philosophied.

“I have an irresponsible will and we’ll leave on a bigger and better quest than before.”
Sam Houston was astonished to hear the manor and fashion which Juan spoke and although he had seen the film in which Juan played a significant comic role, he now believed the man was as far more amusing than he had been depicted. When XI heard him say they're "irresponsible" instead of "irrevocable" he believed everything about Juan that he'd seen in the film might have been true and Sam Houston set to sending even more exaggerated reports to Mexico City.

"Okay. Thank you for clearing that up Juan," Cowboy nodded and turned to XI, "Please remain here with your parents, they're old and you've been at school. They want you to remain, I'm certain."

Cowboy and Juan embraced and were friends again, and with the approval of XI, Cowboy declared that his departure would take place in three days, which would give him time to prepare what was needed for the trip and to find a better cowboy hat/helmet which he said would be a must. Sam Houston offered him a helmet one the People’s intelligence service had suggested he offer to Cowboy.

Outside, the curses of the daughter hurled at the Texas heroe’s namesake (XI) were beyond number. She tore XI’s hair and scratched his face and screamed like no addict ever had before. But, Houston's plan, when he betrayed her and urged Cowboy to
leave again, was to do what history will record later and he did it all on the orders of Mexico City.

And in short, in those three days Cowboy and Juan prepared everything they thought necessary and Juan having placated his wife and Cowboy his housemates with enough dope they could sell and pay the taxes.

And one morning the two women and XI accompany the two men a mile down the road, Cowboy on Shovelhead and Juan on his overburdened moped, his saddlebags filled with food and provisions (lbs. of dope) and his purse with money and technology devices gadgets (easily tracked) given to him by Sam Houston to record his adventures.

Houston and embraced Cowboy and asked that he keep him informed and remind him that he had provided him with a phone, he needed to keep charged and on, in order to report his adventures. He wished Juan good luck, as the rules of friendship demanded. Cowboy promise that he would keep Sam Houston in mind to direct any sequel. He also promised to resupply the two women when he returned. And then the two men took to 155 West toward Tawakoni.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - TITUS COUNTY, TX**

“Hail Mary...” says George C. P. Bush at the beginning of this chapter. “Hail Mary,” he repeated three times and says he
gives these blessings at seeing that now Cowboy and Juan were out in the countryside and the readers of his admirable/amiable history can assume from here on the feeds and exploits of the Vaquero to Tejas and his confederate will begin. And he will persuade the reborn nation to forget the past deeds and set its eyes on those still to come.

They would travel just as easily as earlier; they had headed West it's not too hard to look forward and so he says Cowboy and Juan were now all alone and Shovelhead began to rumble and the moped to putter and Cowboy and friend considered this a magic sound and a fortunate omen. For some unknown reason Juan thought the moped buzzed more than normal. And from this he concluded that his good luck would best that of Cowboy. The mechanics of internal combustion or astrology, Dr. Bush don't know how Juan would have known this. The only passage in the history about this early part of the trip concerns Juan’s thoughts about the feeling of the ride and that even when he took a tumble at Argo, even then he didn’t wish Cowboy had left him at home. And Doctor Bush noted that in the past the only thing Juan got from following Cowboy was torn skin and broken ribs, speculation is rampant that when Juan did fall from his moped and his injuries were not much different than mentioned, but his outlook was clearly different.
Cowboy said to him, “Juan, my friend, night is coming on more hurriedly and more darkly than I like. I'm determined to stop at Tawakoni before we head to the coast. If we are to be there at dawn we need to rest.”

“Why not go directly into action?”

“I need to see Salty and with her father’s approval I believe and I'm certain that I shall finish and bring to a happy conclusion this dangerous adventure, for nothing in this life makes cowboys mobile, more aggressive, than finding themselves smiled upon by their future squeeze.”

“I believe that too,” responded Juan, “but I think it will be difficult for you to talk with her or be with her at least any place where you can speak with her and unless she shouts to you from through the fence around the kennel, where you saw her the first time and where I brought her the letter with news of the foolish and crazy things you’re a** was doing in the heart of the Guadalupe Mountains.”

“Didn't you imagine there were Priefert fences, Juan,” Cowboy said, “which you looked through in order to see that lovely creature? Surely there were hedges or walls or some encumbrances or whatever they are called. The hidden nature of the rich and righteous no kill shelters. They all have them.”
“People like dogs,” responded Juan, “but they don’t like looking at them. They prefer to look at fences I think, unless my understanding fails me.”

“Despite everything, Juan, let's go there,” replied Cowboy, “as long as I see her it doesn't matter to me if it is through fences or windows or narrow cracks or the grill works surrounding a kennel. Any ray of light from the sun of her beauty will eliminate my understanding and fortify my heart so that I shall be unique and incomparable in tactical judgment.”

“Well the truth is, Cowboy,” Juan said, “that when I saw the sun of Salty of the no-kill shelter at work and it wasn't bright enough to send out any rays. It must have been that since she was picking up the dogs***. I told you about that.”

“Do you still persist, Juan,” said Cowboy, “and saying is thinking and thinking is believing and insisting that my Salty was picking up dogs***, when that is a task and practice far removed from anything that is done by beautiful people, daughters of connected men, who are created for other practices and pastimes which reveal their rank even at a distance!!!”

“God, I’m hungry. Where is the nearest cochina?”

“I think you mean cocina?”

“What ever.”

“Listen, I fear that in the film of my deeds, which they say has been released in Mexico, if the director by chance has
some writer who is my enemy, he will have put in certain things instead of others, mixing two thousand lies with one truth, digressing to recount confusing fiction rather than coherent truthful history.”

“You might become famous, if the critics like you.”

“All films, Juan, bring with them some kind of delight, but every critic brings nothing but aggravation, ill-will and fury.”

“That's what I say too,” responded Juan, “and I think that in legend and in the film about us this Sam Houston told us he saw my good name must be turned upside down and dragged helter-skelter here and there as they say, ‘through the dust,’ but by my honor is as an honest man.”

“I'll never I've never said anything bad about any critic.”

Juan added, “and I don't have enough scenes for anybody to critique me.”

“True,” Cowboy said.

“XI says I have some cleverness in me and a touch of sneakiness, but all of it is covered/concealed by the great story of my loyalty, which he says is always natural and I’m never bashful.”

“I believe your bashful scenes were probably cut from the film,” Cowboy speculated.

“And even if I had nothing else there is a belief that I'm a tequila distiller, a working man...
“Even though Theresa does all the work?"

The filmmakers don’t know that and so they might to take pity on me and treat me well, but let me say whatever they say, naked I was born, and naked I’ll die, so I don't I haven't lost or gained a thing as long as I’m compensated along the way. I don't care what they say about me so I’m listed in the credits.”

“What did XI say about that?”

“He doesn’t know if they spelled my name correctly.”

“Well, ‘Juan’ isn’t difficult.”

“No I mean ‘Seguin’.”

“Not difficult either.”

“I’m not so sure.”

“People didn’t forget the town of Seguin, named after the hero from the first Texas Revolution.”

“Yes, but it hasn’t been called that since the Mexican occupation.”

“People forget things like that; I need to know if it is spelled correctly in the credits?”

“That reminds me,” said Cowboy, “there was an American president, I can’t remember his name; he said that he didn’t care what the newspaper said about him so long as they spelled his name correctly.”

“So?”

“It’s similar to what you are saying.”
“So, I’m hungry.”

“You just said that, and there aren’t any cochin as out here.”

“No I mean, I have a daughter to marry and I don’t want there to be any confusion about that. I mean that the desire to achieve fame is extraordinarily active/addictive. What do you think made Obama leap from the bridge dressed in a Santa suit?”

“Well, the retirement wasn’t being paid on the disillusion.”

“Dressed in a Santa suit? Come one. He could have made it.”

“I guess.”

“What happened to Kelly Clarkson?”

“Why, against all press reports, did Garza sweep across the West Texas desert up to Amarillo when it would have been easier to make an amphibious landing and use the rivers to central Texas?”

“He did that to what they call flank us.”

“Sure, whatever you say. But it was for the cameras.”

“And so they would spell his name correctly?”

“His name is Garza.”

“And yours is Seguin.”

“Well, in the end he reached Austin and San Antonio.”
“Right, from the North. What sort of Mexican conquers Texas from the North?”

“One that is famous, and rich and controls two-hundred-fifty-four counties?”

“Then more controversial example where the U.S. sailed off and left the brave Texans led by the gallant Kepler stranded and isolated on Mustang Island.”

“They did that so they’d have to fight. No retreat.”

“Do not imagine, friend, that leadership is pleasure and no one is famous in 15 minutes anymore.”

“We are,” Juan pointed out.

“XI said the film runs two hours and ten minutes,” contradicted him.

“Why so long?” Juan asked.

“We are a complexed story.” Cowboy said.

“You mean annexed? We are annexed.”

“No, I mean complexed.” Cowboy insisted.

“Not me. I’m not.” Juan protested.

“Time arguing with you seems like an eternity.”

Juan thought... and just short of the Holly Lake Ranch turn off, Juan said, “Maybe we were famous in the first fifteen minutes of the film and not after that.”

“Then it would have been what they called a short.”

“So why us?”
“There aren’t a lot of other Rangers, promised the hand of a woman, running around, getting f***ed-up and kicking Chupacabra’s a**es.”

“How do you know?”

“In all our travels have you seen another pair like us?”

“No, I mean how do you know Salty’s father isn’t just dangling her out there for a lot of fellows and we just ain’t run across them yet? He sent them all in different directions?”

“You’re not making sense, Juan.”

“And after the war, and you’ve done all this fighting and me all this hauling, she and her pops just disappear? Or she up and marries a handsome Ranger and not like you? One that stays in on place and still has teeth?”

Cowboy was taken aback. Contemplating how to respond...

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“Everything you’ve said you so far,” said Juan, “I have understood very well but even so I would like to absolve the doubts that a crossed my mind.”

“’Resolve’ is what you mean, Juan,” said Cowboy.

“I’m doing the best I can.”

“What is bothering you, senior Juan?” asked Cowboy.

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“That never happens.”
“Okay, all these fighting men, the ones who are dead where are they now?”

“Undoubtedly,” responded Cowboy, “the Chupacabras are in hell or on their way and the Rangers are either in on their way to Matagorda or in Heaven perhaps.”

“I want to talk about them,” said Juan, “tell me now the tombs where the bodies of those big important Rangers are. And do they have lamps burning in front of them? Elaborate engravings on headstones? And if not how are they decorated?”

To which Cowboy responded, “the tombs of Rangers for the most part are isolated. The body of Tom Horn was placed in a field in Wyoming which they now call ‘Tom Horn’s End.’ Jesse James has a tomb as grand as government; it’s in Granbury.

“Not, Missouri? They say he loved Missouri.”

“He also loved living and liked to speak in code – ‘Grand Bury.’ Get it?”

“And you can prove that?”

“Don’t need to.”

“So you studied this?”

“I did and not just Jesse James. Ginger Rogers and Dale Evans have in a tomb considered the greatest at that particular time. Over at Apple Valley, Texas.”

“Where is that, when I thought apples wouldn’t grow here.”

“They do in the valley.”
“Are you sure?”

“Boot Hill in Deadwood is supposed to be nice, but it’s not in Texas. But none is more important than the grave of Tom Horn.”

“That’s not here either.”

“I was about to mention that,” replied Juan. “I know a little about that Horn fellow.”

“He wasn’t a Ranger.

“Maybe he was a cowboy then who was framed for murder?”

“Sounds like you’ve studied the case.”

“I did.”

“I’m happy for you, Juan. A book now and then didn’t hurt anyone.”

“I didn’t study a book.”

“Then you saw the film?”

“I did happen to see that one. Yes.”

“So, what are you hinting at? You have something to ask me?”

“Now tell me which is the greater deed raising a dead man or killing a whole division of Chupacabra?”

“The answer is obvious,” replied Cowboy, “it is greater to raise a dead man.”

“I wonder if you get my drift,” said Juan, “the fame of those that raise the dead and vindicate an innocent cowboy would
be greater, in this world and the next, than the fame of two attackers of an insignificant port garrison. You get my drift?"

“I doubt if you are saying what I think you're saying. I doubt that would work out to be true anyway. One deed would be in the past and one the future.”

“You mean you think Tom Horn killed that kid?”

“I doubt he did. But that is in the past. The gulf coast is the/our future.”

“So, you know how you cowboys stick together?”

“Yes. It’s the cowboy way.”

“Well, not only that, but raising this particular dead man might it bring fame, these favors. These...”

“Prerogatives?”

“Whatever they’re called...”

“You mean girls who dress provocative?” Cowboy speculated.

“Islands, counties, half naked girls, it will all come to you if you can prove Tom Horn innocent. Salty’s father might give you... well... her!”

“How the devil are you going to do that?”

“Not me. You!”

“Okay, how will I do that?” asked Cowboy.

“First, we’ll have to put the cock-eyed ideas of the American invasion of Texas behind us and then turn north at Dallas and head to Wyoming.”
“And?”

“We dig, I’ll do the digging. I dig up William Lewis, Matt Rush and William Christian, the wrestlers everybody pretty much a know Horn kilt, dig out the bullets. Dig up the kid, Willie Nickels, everybody pretty much a knows Horn didn’t kill, and get the bullets, compare the bullets forensically. They’ve been doing that a while now, you know?”

“These fellers was said to have been shot with a 45/60 rifle and rolled up princess-like and he put a rock under their head,” Cowboy knew a little about the case.

“I understand that, but we need the bullets. Whoever killed the kid just made it look like Horn did it. He was framed.”

“I know for a fact he was framed,” Cowboys said.

“So we can head north and no not south?”

“The bullets aren't in them buried bodies,” said Cowboy.

“Why you say that?” ask Juan.

“Through and through. The bullet would have run right through anybody: kid, wrestler or any other feller,” insisted Cowboy, “basically its that same with my rifle here.”

“So we're going to see Salty and then head south?” asked a disspointed Juan.

“Yep,” said Cowboy.
They spent that night and the following day in this and with similar distractions about fame in Wyoming but nothing worth mentioning happened to them.

Juan caused no small sorrow to Cowboy until finally the next day at dusk they could see the lake, a sparkling site that brought joy to Cowboy’s spirit and saddened Juan's heart because he knew if Cowboy found Salty or heard more promises from her father he’d drive head long into a new battle. And, he didn't know where the no-kill shelter actually was. He had never seen it and he had only spoken from clues Cowboy had dropped.

As they approached the lost shelter their sentiments were as could be expected. Juan's outlook diminished because he didn't know where Salty lived and neither could Cowboy remember and Juan couldn't imagine he would send him into Tawakoni. Cowboy’s outlook looked up.

In the end, Cowboy decided to enter the town after night had fallen and they waited for the total darkness in a stand of oaks growing near the park. While they waited Cowboy and Juan spoke of something neither liked to remember, something that had happened in Comal County.

EXT. LAMB COUNTY – MONTHS BEFORE

Juan had warned Cowboy that maybe the bank teller might not understand what he was telling them. Cowboy’s jaw, tongue and
general face was so swollen from fighting and at least two infected teeth. All Juan knew about it was that Cowboy was talking differently from most people and looked like someone had recently cleaned his clock. Juan wondered if the men in the bank would understand his meaning, but surely every bank manager knew what a gun meant when Cowboy shoved it in the face.

Juan was sure everyone back in Jefferson would be furious at him and Cowboy both. But he knew he couldn’t talk Cowboy out of the notion of getting cash money for the boys in Louisiana. War wasn’t cheap and if the Cajuns could properly buy weapons, well they’d surely be over to help their neighbor. Cowboy was better at long range planning than at listening.

Cowboy gave the bank several minutes scrutiny. “I was in there six or seven months ago. Doubt it’s changed much.”

“You’ve robbed it before?”

“I don’t look at it like robbin’; it’s a confiscation. And a little humorous. Don’t ya think it’s funny the Cajuns buying weapons to fight the Mexicans, with Mexican money?”

“I don’t know; it’s weird.”

“Well, I think it’s funny.”

“Yea, a regular comedy.”

“Well, that ain’t the reason I’m doing it. They been confiscating vehicles, computers, cattle, cotton, entire plots of land and oil and natural gas. If it’s a Texan’s and ain’t
nailed down, chances are you lost it ‘legally’ to a Mexican. If the Mexican government is in the cattle, real-estate and oil business, then I’m in the bank regulating business. Just ain’t been able to get serious about it yet.”

“How many you done?”

“Just this one. Well, it’s about to be two.”

“Wouldn’t you do better with a different bank? They might be wise to ya.”

“Nope, just the opposite. They probably feel safe figuring what are the odds they get hit again, especially by me.”

“Reverse thinking.”

“Besides, it ain’t right, those Cajun boys not having money to buy weapons with all our money taxed down to Mexico and ain’t never coming back.”

“I’d like it if they fixed up our roads.” Juan complained about his back.

“They aint never gonna fix out roads, Juan.”

“And we can’t travel on a paved highway anyway, cause you had to attack the prison bus.”

“We’re just diverting pesos from one place where they’re just sitting to a place where it can be more useful. Something like when the Mexican’s diverted the Rio Grande so the people south of the river ‘could get some use out of it.’ That’s what they said you know. All, I’m doing is sharing the wealth with
our neighbors. That’s what international relations is all about.”

“Buyin’ guns for New Orlean’s pimps?”

“They ain’t all pimps, it’s just the pimp is the one you can trust.”

“They all wear eight rings?”

“Not all of them.”

“Some of them.”

Juan saw three hogs parked in front of the bank. He wondered if their owners would stand idle while Cowboy robbed the place, because he’d pretty much decided to phone this one in.

“Hadn’t you better go in and look thing over first?”

“They might recognize me from the last time. Best thing is to get straight to business. Now you stay with the bikes and leave them running. I’m liable to be in kind of a rush when I come out.

Cowboy took up his rifle.

“You taking your rifle?”

“I don’t know about these pistols, I don’t seem to be able to hit anything these days.”

“Don’t turn these engines off.”

Juan was relieved he’d been excused but still his hands were shaking when he took Cowboy’s hand and shook it.
“What if things go wrong and you don’t come out.”

“Then run like h***. A Mexican prison ain’t no place for a heavy well-nourished man.” Cowboy turned away, carrying his saddlebags over one shoulder.

Juan’s stomach turned summersaults.

He tried to ease the tension by pretending that Cowboy was only teasing him, the he actually intended to negotiate a legitimate loan, loan from a Mexican bank used to buy weapons; and Juan’s fantasy fell apart. The truth was as solid and forbidding at that red brick bank building.

A friendly voice called, causing Juan to start.

“Que tal, Juan? What you doing so far from home, homie?”

He turned, trembling. TDJC officer Baldemar Garza walked toward him. Sancho stammered, trying for some kind of an answer. He remembers that the captain had tried to recruit him a yew years ago.

“I’m with Cowboy,” Juan managed. “He came and picked me up and we’re on a quest.”

“Cowboy! I thought he was...” Baldemar broke it off. “Where is he now?”

“In the bank, taking out a loan.”

“The bank!” Baldemar turned on his heels, drawing his pistol as he moved. He barely had time to enter the front of the bank before Juan heard a shot from inside.
Cowboy rushed out, a smoking rifle in his hand, the saddlebags slung over the other shoulder. He tossed the bags to Sancho and grabbed the handlebars. “Hang on to them bags. Hold them tight.”

“He swung into the seat and fired a shot through the open bank door.

Someone stepped quickly back and out of sight.

Cowboy shouted, “Let’s get. This town ain’t gonna get no friendlier.”

Juan was too frightened to talk until the had cleared the outskirts of town. They drove eastward along a path (somewhere real sandy) along the Prairie Dog Town Fork there just above Antelope Flats. Looking back, Juan couldn’t see anyone in chase, but he reasoned that they would eventually get out there, “I hope you didn’t kill somebody.”

Cowboy rarely cussed, but he did that instant. “F***! Everything was going just dandy ’til some feller come storming in with a pistol. Wasn’t nothing I could do but shoot him before he shot me.”

“He was from Marion County. I knew him.”

“He’s TDJC. Wearin gray, clear as day.”

“I know.”

“They won’t let him die, they’ll have a helicopter come get him.”
“Yea?”

“Sure, they don’t let them boys die; it’s hard enough to recruit new boots. If people think they just leave them to die, well they won’t nobody sign up.”

“I’d hope.”

“Would you work for TDJC?”

“Nope.”

“See, nobody wants anything to do with them. Prison guards and glorified bounty hunters.”

“He’uz my friend.”

“When it comes to the law, us revolutionaries ain’t got no friends.”

Juan wanted to go home, but couldn’t now.

“Did you kill him?”

“Things went so fast, I think I hit him, pretty sure of that. Might not of killed him. He should a minded his own business. I was minding mine.”

“He was dong his job.”

“He’s a d*** jailer.”

“They do other stuff.”

“Only cause the Mexican’s can’t find nobody else to do their dirty work and them grays is so loyal to Mexico.”

Juan felt maybe his friend hadn’t been killed.

“That’s his business, chasing criminals.”
“Don’t call me no criminal again or I’ll belt ya, Juan. I swear you Texicans these day got no sense of perspective.”

Juan’s anger flared, the aftermath to his earlier adrenalin. “Well, I ain’t no Texican. I’m brown but I ain’t no Mexican.

“Well, you called me a criminal!”

“Well, if you aren’t a criminal what are you?”

“Being an outlaw don’t mean being a criminal. I believe in the Ten Commandments and the work of the original founding fathers over in Virginia, the Declaration of Independence. But these laws that are made by your regular run of the mill a*******; I can’t abide. Mexican, American, Texas a*******; that don’t mater, but I ain’t no criminal. I’m an outlaw, understand?”

“An outlaw?”

“Sure, they got too many laws in this country, and I’ve fought against d*** near all of them. I was born free. I intend to stay that way. Texas, Mexico, America whoever’s here, I ain’t listening to ‘em.”

Juan thought, “the might not be easy, given the number of Mexican soldiers and laws in the new Texas.”

Juan actually said, “The Mexican’s will be after us now, and even if we cross over into Oklahoma they’ll follow.”
Cowboy had been in a foul mood since he has stopped to open the saddlebags and find out how much the Cajuns would appreciate him. Juan treaded lightly around him uneasily, fearful that he might become the whipping boy if Cowboy wasn’t satisfied, which he wasn’t. So far, he’d not been frustrated. He actually seemed to feel rich, but Juan remembers several cases of hard hateful word directed at him after only minor setbacks.

Cowboy painted the wind blue, again. “D***ed Mexican teller with his pink shirt and baby blue tie. A dirty lying cheat Clay Aiken is what he is, stealing from me this way. I wouldn’t put it past him to have stuck the real money in his pants and then claim I got it all.”

Juan considered the implication, “That’d be double jeapordy, wouldn’t it? You stealing from him and him stealing from you.”

“H*** yeah!” Cowboy exclaimed.

“That’d be robbing you and the bank both. He could go to prison for that.”

“Twice!” said Cowboy.

“Cowboy rumbled along, “I’d go back and put out his candle, but that town’ll be swarmin’ with TDJC by now. We better keep moving east.”

Juan knew Cowboy was right about the teller and he certainly was right about the TDCJ. He worried the gray and
brown shirts and maybe even the MAF would come down this trail. They might not enjoy it, but they would eventually.

Cowboy was sometimes avoiding the river road (much of it just dirt) to venture out onto the grass so to confuse anyone following them. Leaving and reentering the path was on strategy. The other was blending in with the other tracks making it difficult to separate them from the others. They had not appeared to leave a track one could use.

Juan was torn up with fear that the TDJC would catch up with them and if they did they might shoot first and discuss consequences never. He’d heard enough talk in the piney woods to know that at times it was considered “office politics” to bring a prisoner in dead rather than alive, it depended on how ambitious for promotion the Mexican was.

When under a microscope, the TDJC were prone to be both judge and jury and the occupation government was perfectly all right with that, it saved them tons of money. The Mexicans in San Antonio called it “cautionary measures.”

Cowboy muttered, “We ain’t got near as much money as I figured. We’re gong to have to find us another bank.”

Juan said, “We don’t he to seize money this way. You can cook dope. We could sell tequila and earn enough for the weapons. All fair and square.”
“That’ll take forever. You’re a competent distiller and I’m a famous dope cook. But d*** it Juan, this is a war. We ain’t no more helpful to Austin than store clerks or ranch hands. I’m a cook and you are a bootlegger. Outlaws. Distillin’ and cookin’, what we’re good at, takes too much time. Texas need people with balls enough to walk into banks and ask them for what we want. Generally, they just hand it over, you know.”

“It’s weird you pay for everything in meth…”

“I refuse to give the peso any legitimacy. It’s already getting worthless, why would I prop it up by spending it.”

“So it’s a personal choice? So, why don’t you just make meth and give that to the Cajuns and let them use that to buy the weapons.”

“I assume they would buy their weapons from the Russian’s and I doubt they’d want the meth. They will, I’m guessing, want cash only.”

“Too bad. You are excellent making meth.” Juan thought that would help his argument.

“I’m tired of cooking dope. I’ve cooked literally tons of it and they practically just give it away to the Mexicans. Something about the supply; they’ve ruined that market. With all that cheep dope out there, no body’s gonna give you anything for it.”

“Maybe then just the tequila.”
“Wow, that’s a good idea. Maybe I should mention it to pastor and the barber?”

“No.”

“Why not? That would f***-up their soldiers just as bad, or maybe worse.”

“There ain’t enough rattlers in the entire state for that strategy.”

“You saying there’s more occupiers than snakes?”

“I ain’t arguing with that.”

“Maybe we need to thin em out a little?” Cowboy grinned.

They came in sight of a modest frame farmhouse. Cowboy signaled for Juan to stop. He studies the place a while, then observed, “crop ain’t well tended. Weeds look to be doing better than the wheat.”

Sancho, smelled wood smoke and saw that it was coming from three or four stills out back of the house. A skinny middle-aged woman carried water from a well to a tub. She began grinding the mash.

Cowboy speculated, “the husbands off at war, hopefully helping us. If she had a man here the weeds wouldn’t be taking over that way.”

“These days you don’t know that.”
Juan knew the truth was his Teresa would be doing exactly the same thing, in East Texas. “We ain’t fixing to rob her, are we?”

Cowboy appeared scandalized that his specifically appointed friend would think such a thing. “There’s no gain in holding up poor folks and she don’t look like no Mexican. Look ta her hair. That woman ain’t got nothing to do with politics, and she’s too poor. But maybe we can get a home-cooked meal. I’m felling a bit narrow.”

Juan had not had much to eat either since Estelline, where he’d had some Ramon and someboy’s chicken, he’d caught pecking around for worms.

“I’m with you on that, Cowboy.”

The woman raise from her mash tub as they approached the rear of the house. She seemed unworried. Juan supposed that she figured that a hog traveling with a moped posed no threat.

Cowboy touched his finger to the brim of his misshaped Stetson. Juan wanted to touch XI’s gift of a helmet but seemed to always forget. And following Cowboys’ lead always seemed just superfluous.

“Howdy, ma’am. Me and my compadre are just passing through. We noticed that your garden stands in need of weeding. We was wondering if we might trade a little weeding for a good meal. We ain’t et proper for a time. At least I ain’t.”
Juan thought the woman looked a little like his wife when she gave them a tired but thankful smile. She said, “That’s be a might welcome trade. My husband’s laid up with a broken leg, and things around her have gotten away from me some. Soon as I get this mash in that here still, I’ll see what I can cook up.”

Juan, without a word, just walked over and started in on the mash.

“Well, my. It looks like you know what you are doing.”

“A little bit.”

Cowboy nodded, “And if you’ll kindly tell me where your husband keeps his working tools, I’ll get busy.”

She accompanied them to a small farmed barn where a hoe, a rake and smaller hand tools were neatly arranged.

She said, ”you wouldn’t see nothing in this shape if my husband was able to work. Neighbors come now and then again to pitch in, but they got their own problems, the Mexican’s stealin’ their cattle and wanting um to pay taxes on them they already lost. I don’t expect to seem ‘um any more.”

Cowboy said, “I’ll do the best I can.”

Then the lady went inside, Juan was cracking a few pecans to throw in the mach and then he hauled it all over to the still. Cowboy smoked a bowl so he could work faster on the
weeds. He probably smoke a bit too much, because Juan found the hoe on the ground and Cowboy pulling weeds by hand.

“Cowboy, you look like you done this before.” Juan said to him.

“I got a little practice staying a year at that Territorial Youth Commission camp. Thy expected us to earn our keep. You’re older than me, but I still thing this is fun, guessing how much root is gonna come up out of the ground or if it’s gonna break off.”

“Watch out you don’t pull up no okra.”

“That?”

“Yep, don’t pull it”

“It looks like a weed.”

“It ain’t”

“That’s okra?”

“Yep.”

“Ever tried to distil it?”

“Nope.”

“How come?”

“That’s a good question. I thought you were f***ed-up, seeing you work like that.”

“I am, but it don’t excuse you from answering the question.”
“Well, I guess I figured someone already tried with the okra.”

“Maybe not.”

“Well, it would make alcohol, nearly everything will, but the issue is the taste and the public acceptance. You might make a batch, and see if the pigs like it first.”

“Pigs, they got a right to be happy.

“Well if you’re just gonna feed it to the pigs, why don’t you just take the raw okra over to them, if you want happy pigs, they don’t care if it gets ‘um drunk or not.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

Juan picked up the hoe and pitched in. He probably didn’t have to, the woman’s still was lined up and going. But Juan wasn’t immune from a little weedin’.

Juan soon worked up a good lather. He was not sure he liked this sort of work, but so long as Cowboy wasn’t re-examining banks, it was okay.

Between them, they finished most of the garden, just as the woman was calling supper. The food made up in quantity what it lacked in quality. She said apologetically, “I don't fancy it but there's work here for an active man. Lucky, we still got ham in the smoke house. How's the bread the butter?”

Cowboy said, “That's mighty fine.”
The woman's husband that limped to the table aided by crutches; one leg was immobilized by homemade splints down securely with strips cut from old denim jeans.

He said, "I'm much obliged to you fellas; as you can see, I've been about as much you surround here as tits on a boar."

It was obvious to Juan that the place had been a long way from prosperity even when the farmer had the use of both legs. The little furniture he saw, it looked as if its best service might have been to start a fire in the fireplace. Newspapers and magazine sheets had been pasted to the walls, a substitute for wallpaper and insulation. They might block some of the wind seeping in but they would do little to stop the summer heat or the winter cold.

The woman noticed Juan’s silent appraisal of the whiskey. She said, "it ain't much, but it's ours. We made it all by ourselves. Grewed it up, me and my husband. Fermented it with the Lord's help."

That startled Juan; he doubted Cowboy was a believer, hadn't been to church in two years, and was robin' banks and shooting Mexicans.

But Cowboy surprised his friend, "God, bless your place here."
The farmer said, “if you all ain't in too much of a rush you're welcome to stay and eat breakfast before you go on your way in the morning.”

Cowboy said, “that's kind of you.”

Juan smartly enjoyed others people's cooking, more than Cowboy, who was still skitzing. Liking to eat, from the looks of things, was probably the biggest reason Juan was married. He’d been eager to find Teresa, an excellent cook.

Juan worried a Mexican drone might be peering down on the farm and their bikes were left out in the open. Cowboy was far too high to even worry about their being seen. No sign of rain, Cowboy elected to spread a little hay out on the ground and then unroll his blanket to top it off.

“Ain't nothing healthier than clear air with a full and unobstructed view of the planets,” he said.

Later, he asked Juan, “Are you sure you want to be a liquor maker? These people are and they got a little factory here and they’s poor as dirt.”

“That’s because they ain't got enough stills. Teresa and me we ain't going to settle for nothing as distasteful as this set up. She's already at work on it and we'll have cactus fields stretching for as far as the eye can see. We've had lots of time to plan it all out I know just were everything is going to be, factory, warehouse and house.”

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“All that is going to take lots of money, Juan.”

“I agree.”

Cowboy was still high and talked the entire night and the only thing he said that neared any sense was, “I figure most people don't have enough money because they don't have the balls to go where it's at to get their fair share…”

Juan interrupted, something he rarely did, “and you're about to tell me to sell me on the idea of going where?”

In the morning, they finished breakfast. Juan saw Cowboy stick a roll of pesos into the sugar jar when the farmer and his wife weren't looking.

Juan said nothing about it until they had put the little farm behind them.

“You said you don't spend Mexican pesos but I seen you leave a wad of them for those folks.”

“Do good where you see the need and karma will reward you. Juan concluded the talk by saying, “Next time have karma lead us to a bank where the teller ain't such a cheat.”

EXT. WICHITA COUNTY PRISON

Cowboy pointed down the highway toward the TDCJ barracks (Allred - Santellana). The prison was on the other side of the Santellana barracks, hard to see it from the Allred side.
Cowboy drew his pistol to be certain it was loaded. Juan noticed and suggested, “I'd leave that thing in the holster, if I was you. It's going to be better to try to talk your way through this one. There's time enough later to shoot your way into history.”

Cowboy holstered the weapon but before he did, he inserted a cartridge in the chamber customarily left empty for safety. Just as that was done, three columns of vehicles, many of them armored cars, exited the security perimeter of the barracks, the former prison. Then a single column left and they dispersed into the three Mexican directions. The timing was perfect the barracks would be empty or nearly empty, and the prison would have a bare minimum of guards. The war in the Amazon kept things sparse up north.

Juan warned, “remember we are here on your own; we don't have authority from Austin and not even Carbonnier. Tell me now, Cowboy; you got any reason we have to kill anybody here?”

“Nope, not at all.”

“You might imply that you will kill if it helps, but don't actually kill anyone.”

Cowboy could not see that they were attracting any special attention as they rode up to the razor wire turning up a little dust with their bikes. The few guards they encountered had no reason to know they were Rangers, neither wore a badge. Austin
had not yet redesignated any old design. Later cowboy and Juan both would fashion their own stars out of U.S. silver dollars. At this time (2048), Juan and Cowboy hadn't done so because of silver was hard to come by.

Riding in, a mechanic stood outside the big doors of his garage; he recognized Juan and it made his jaw drop and he started to raise his hand in greeting but withdrew the gesture. Cowboy asked, “friend of yours?”

Juan explained that the mechanic seemed to be neutral in the war. He knew the man because the mechanic retailed his tequila to both sides, whoever was willing to pay. “He's a reasonably decent customer of mine and of help to me and Teresa sometimes; nobody knows it, but you and I now.

“And if things go western around here about the time we exit that prison?”

“I expect he’ll duck in that garage like a prairie dog.”

Cowboy said, “I noticed a lot of the store signs are in Spanish, haven't seen a single one in English.”

Juan said, “there's considerable more Mexicans than Anglos out here. You are seriously, behind enemy lines.

“Anglos was right to leave, if I was an Anglo I'd leave.”

“You ARE an anglo!”

“Well that is what I’m saying. I’d leave.”

“There's not much logical about this war.”
“Language gets tangled up in it and twists tongues so people can't think straight.”

“I don't understand that.”

Cowboy said, “Well, I'm not a Mexican.”

“Me neither,” Juan said.

“We're East Texas boys thrown together by the luck of the draw.”

“That's not entirely true.”

Cowboy said, “But it's the best we got.”

Juan tensed as the prison gate came into view, “How about we barge in there like we have the entire revolt behind us, catch them smoking.”

Cowboy made no argument. “You've been here before and know the layout you do the talking and I'll follow your lead.”

Juan had long been used to following Cowboy. It struck him as strange now for cowboy to be the follower. He couldn't keep leaning on Cowboy all his life. But there was still much he didn't feel confident about. It would be easy to make a costly mistake, charging into a razor wire hornet's nest like they had been contemplating. He’d crossed razor wire before and it had cost him and others more than it was worth. Teresa and their daughter had suffered, much like they were now, him gone and then him on this cowboy adventure.
“Well, if I make a mistake, I won't be far from the prison. I’ll be right here, already inside.”

There wasn't a guard at the back gate and finding it open he and Cowboy walk directly inside. Warden Truscott sat at his desk. Startled, he dropped a stack of papers and jump onto his feet. Juan made several strides, stopping so close that he could have reached over the desk and, had he been fit, grabbed the man and pulled him over it. Truscott was not wearing his pistol and his belt and holster lay at the edge of the desk; he made no move to reach for them. Juan summoned the strongest voice he had, “you don't need that gun. We're from Austin and we're here on official business.”

There had been enough killings to gather just about any Mexican’s attention and when the lawman heard Juan mentioned the shadow government he seemed slow to gather his wits.

“I know you. You and your partner was the ones it made that idiotic movie.”

“We had nothing to do with that. We're not actors and this isn't propaganda. These are real guns. This is Cowboy. Now you've got Karl Schkade locked up here on political charges we come for him.”

“That's easily said.”

“Either we leave here with him or you'll have the rest of us in here. You'll feel run over by tequila truck,”
The warden struggled to remember, "Tequila truck... wait a minute... you've been here for not paying the liquor tax. I know who you are."

"Four-hundred and seventy-five percent ain't a tax, it's theft."

"What is everybody a libertarian nowadays? Why can't every Hispanic born in the former States just acquiesce? Just aqueous to your fate. It's our country and our economic system yet you all..."

"Shut up!" Juan shouted. The warden had bitten off a big chunk of his bluff, but there was no backing down now. But Juan calmed.

"What do you say, warden? Do you turn him loose or do we get some more bodies in here and just take him from ya?"

Enrique Martinez, a guard called El Gordo, (a man larger than Juan) walked in from the half where the cells were, "What the hell's going on here?"

Truscott pointed his chin at Juan and Cowboy, but El Gordo already felt Cowboy's rifle in his ribs.

"These men are from Austin."

El Gordo gunted, "I know them, that big one was here. Anyway."

He pointed to Cowboy then said, "and I can recognize the skinny gringo anywhere; he thinks he's a Texas Ranger."
Truscott said, “They’ve come for Schkade.”

“The patols are out and won't be back for...”

“Idiot!”

“They won’t be back for 40 minutes,” Juan finished the sentence.

El Gordo said, “You better not let them have him; San Antonio will bellow like a bull.”

The warden knew well that El Gordo had family in the government. El Gordo had survived as an employee based on this fact.

Warden Truscott turned on the sarcasm, “Maybe your family would like to come talk to these men; they claim they are volunteers, promise violence, and they have volunteers behind them.”

“Us Mexicans are the law here.”

Juan retorted, “Maybe today, but when the war's over, the warden and you fats and your San Antonio relatives are likely to wind up on the other side of the bars, maybe in this very prison, or next door.”

El Gordo smarted off, “The army’s over there.”

“No need for a Texas army to hide behind razor wire; we’ll reserve that space for types like you.”
El Gordo said, “Ever heard of a troop surge? We double the number of TDCJ troops, they can live in tents until they've proven themselves.”

Truscott looked impatiently at El Gordo, and said, “I wish you was twice as smart and half as loud.”

Truscott wanted to freely admit there wasn't enough Mexicans of fighting age above the equator to secure Texas.

Cowboy spoke up for the first time, “You remember what happened to the Germans when they fought on two fronts?”

El Gordo was looking at the various security camera monitors, “I don't know what you're talking about but I don't see anybody with you too.

Cowboy began to assert himself, “We’re Rangers and two is more than enough.”

Truscott looked away from his deputy, “I guess we can give up the politician, we've still got Theimer woman.

Cowboy, “I hope you are feeding her well.”

The warden said, “Feeding her three meals a day at San Antonio’s expense.”

El Gordo couldn’t resist, “inches as well.” And the fat man turn into the light.

Juan noticed a cut above a discolored eye.

The warden snapped, “I told you to stay out of her cell; looks like she gave you what you deserve.”
“Yeah, but I'm going to do the same to her. I'll show her.”

Truscott’s eyes betrayed concerned and he rolled his eyes at Juan and Cowboy, “D*** you, Fats you keep talkin some folks around here’ll peel your hide, won't matter who your related to in San Antonio.”

Cowboy had an ugly mental image of El Gordo forcing himself on Theimer or trying to. Fighting down his anger, he demanded, “This miscarriage of a man, he's one of yours; can't you control him?”

“His family,” the warden responded.

“Promote him; isn't that what you people do in a situation like this,” Juan suggested, “or you want us to kill him.”

“No, don’t do that,” the warden said.

“Well, what about Schkade,” Juan asked again.

The warden gave El Gordo a go to h*** look, “Go on tattle to San Antonio, but I don't care to have Austin hunting me like a criminal when this thing is over. I'm giving them Schkade, no shooting, no violence…”

“And in a timely manner.” Juan added.

“But you gotta leave the woman. She’s a bargaining chip.”

El Gordo scowled, “you’d better hold on to that woman, I ain't done with her yet.”

“Don't you be trying to tell me what to do! Regardless of family connections. I’m in charge here. I'll keep her for now,
but it ain't got nothing to do with your say. I'm spreading the word that I'm willing to trade if her husband renders himself up."

    El Gordo's jaw dropped, "You wouldn't do that."

The warden, "Damn right I'll let her go to get the chief of staff. We don't all have your sex drive and some of us are trying to win this war."

    El Gordo glared at his boss, "you're a poor excuse for Mexican, you know that?"

    "I ain't Mexican. It was all a mistake."

    "Huh?"

    "I made the mistake of marrying one, but the name is still Truscott and I'm still warden of this unit."

    Juan told the warden, "You got a deal, but if I was you I'd look into moving to some South American country where there ain't no Mexicans."

    "It's funny, I've thought about it a lot."

    Truscott jerked his head as a signal to Sancho and Cowboy, "Come on back."

    The keys were on top of the desk, but El Gordo grabbed them and waddled off in the other direction saying, "If I was running this unit a lot of things would be different."

    "If you shot the fat man, the deal is off."

    "What deal?" Juan asked.
“We have a deal right?”

“Yes.” Juan agreed.

The warden opened a cabinet and took a second set of keys. Cowboy didn’t shot but caught El Gordo after twenty yards and he collapsed exhausted. Cowboy and held him a gunpoint.

The warden took Juan unlocked the door to the cell block, “you got company, a blanket hung in front of one cell. Juan realize it was a concession to the Theimer woman’s privacy.

Cowboy lead El Gordo at gunpoint into the cell block.

The 1990s Texas builders of this particular jail had designed it for male prisoners only. From behind the blanket came a woman's angry voice, “Warden if you let that fat SOB in this cell again, I swear I'll kill him.”

“I’m sorry. I've told you, I'm sorry. If he ever tries it again I'm liable to killing myself.”

Cowboy was quick to show his anger, “a man who would abuse a helpless woman ought to be shot or at least castrated or donkey punched,” and with that Cowboy hit him over the head with the rifle butt.

Juan had never seen Cowboy so angry and suspected he was thinking about Tawakoni, Salty.

“Yea shouldn’t have made that deal, Juan.”
The warden thought Juan could use a little help and he threw, “whatever else you might say about her, you can't call her helpless, she fights like a bobcat,” out there.

Cowboy said, “This lard a** ought to be in jail, not running one. I don't see why you don't cut him loose.”

The warden took time to contemplate and calculate the Cowboy, “are you about seventeen percent retarded? We just talked about this. San Antonio don't give me any choice I have to try to keep what little power I have. Most of the Mexicans out here on the Southern Plains think Theimer deserves anything she gets. I thought about checking it to the whole prison industry, just doesn't pay like it did when we were part of the States. Check it and leave out for Venezuela, Truscott said,

“They say it's the last free spot on earth.”

From the last cell in the row chain Salty’s father and educated voice, he said, “I'm willing to pay for your ticket there.”

The warden chuckled but stood haunched one-hand gripping a bar to steady himself. He seemed not to see well.

“It's Austin,” he explined, “They sent the fellers from that movie to take you out of here and I've agreed.” The prisoner squinted to recognize Juan and Cowboy, “You took your sweet time getting here.”
Schkade’s face was bruised and cut, one eye was swollen and nearly shut.

“Cowboy, is that you,” the prisoner asked.

Cowboy was still holding the rifle on El Gordo, even though he was still unconscious.

“Yes, sir.”

“How’s Salty?”

“Oh… she’s fine.”

“You don’t sound to…

Juan turned angrily to the warden, “How could you let somebody work him over like that?”

“Like I said; I don't call the shots. I can't be here all the time,” the warden explained.

Schkade commented to the warden, “I can take a beating as well as anymore but you don't try any too hard when that good woman was hollering her head off. You was awfully slow coming down here.”

“She made a pretty good fight of it, but she's a woman. El Gordo got what he came for; excuse the pun.” Truscott unlocked the cell and pulled the steel door open; its hinges squeeked, “get the f*** out; you’re leaving.”

Schkade was unsteady, but waved off Juan's instinctual idea to help, “They haven't managed to cripple me yet,” he held one hand to his ribs where he'd been punched and kicked.
Juan demanded of Truscott, “You had a doctor come and look at him?”

Like a robot giving pre-recorded tape, the warden said, “Did when he first got here, Mexico provides a medical examination within 48 hours; that’s policy,” and then like a human he said, “He gave the physician such a hard time that he won’t come back.”

Schkade muttered, “damn Mexican doctor did more damage than good like he wanted to kill me. El Gordo there came around and tried to finish the job.”

Cowboy kicked El Gordo in the ribs which woke him up.

In the property room, then the warden took Schkade’s belongings from a locker. They amounted to little: a shop-made knife, a few coins, a leather wallet. Schkade looked into the wallet and observed it was empty.

The warden shrugged and in that old robotic voice, “There's people in and out of here all the time, I can't watch everybody.”

Schkade turned to Juan, “They’re worse thieves than we are. And the warden here stays in his office, right smart of him, like he doesn't want to know what's going on and he’s the law or above the law!”

Schkade turned to Cowboy, “Cowboy, I want you to kill him.”
Cowboy gave the warden a blistering look and certainly would have, and moved to…

Juan spoke up, “This was entirely up to the warden, we asked for you and he agreed.”

“I will.” Cowboy declared and was about to pull his rifle around.”

“I expect you to remember that if the question ever comes up in one of those tribunal's you Austinites keep talkin about.”

“No, not the warden, the fat man. Kill fats.”

Juan was quick to x-nay that idea, “Whoa, no killin’. And I got a slew of reason.”

Schkade pointedly ignored Juan, and looked at the warden, “I had a colt. I ain't leaving this place without my grandfather's gun.”

Reluctantly Truscott opened another drawer and withdrew a pistol belt and holster, just like out of an old western, Cowboy thought.

“I thought you were a political prisoner. Sure is nice gun for a politician,” the warden slyly said.

“All freedom stems from the barrel of a gun, that's why you Mexicans are so intent on taking them up….”

“It's empty,” the warden stated the obvious.

Schkade strapped the belt around his waist and check the pistol and found it, in fact, empty.
He took a step toward the warden, “if this was loaded I’d shoot you dead.”

“That's one of the reasons the gun is empty.”

Out on the bowling alley, Schkade realized even an unloaded pistol was heavy enough to make a nice weapon. The heavy barrel struck El Gordo just behind the temple and he went to his knees and then his face. And then with a question on his face, Schkade looked at the warden. The warden made a poor effort to smile; he knew now for certain he'd be moving south of the Mexican’s new Empire.

“I reckon not but you need to leave before the patrol comes back.”

Schkade bent to strike the fat man again.

Juan was becoming accustomed to logic and reason, “if you hit him again you might kill him.”

“He deserves it.”

Juan responded, “Let the devil roast him; he's got it coming sooner or later.”

Juan ask Schkade, “do you think you're strong enough to ride.”

“I'm strong enough but I can't, I ain't going anywhere quite yet. I'm staying right here until I see that poor woman set loose.
Juan faced yet another crisis of leadership, he realized that the patrols would be returning soon and the objective of the prison raid was maybe not going to move, despite the deal Juan’d made with the warden.

Juan reasoned, “She sounded pretty strong and El Gordo will be out of action for a while.”

Cowboy had the sense to say, “He may piss his pants three times a day after you hit him that hard.”

They looked at the warden, “Don’t ask me after what Chavez did to Venezuela, I’m there. I’m leaving two minutes after you.”

“Austin doesn't want us to get tangled up in personal feuds.”

Schkade walked over like he might hit the El Gordo in the head again.

And just then a female guard walked toward them, oddly enough, she seemed unconcerned about El Gordo sprawled out on the concrete. She looked Schkade in the eye and said, “I just wanted to say ‘thank you for your service’ I figured if you ever came out of here it’d be feet first. El Gordo? What’d you hit him with, he’d bleeding out his ear... Well, he was bragging he'd see you dead. Well, yawl leaving?”

Juan walked Schkade rapidly to the back gate, where the transportation waited.
A patrol returned to their barracks behind the wire next door. Cowboy stuck around to chat.

"Why do you work for the Mexicans?"

"I haven't been able to find work in the real world, ever."

"Never?"

"I'm single, a baby, no man, don't want a man, don't need one, what do I care about things... the more things change the more they stay the same."

"Really?"

"I appreciate your concern, but having you here on my walkway is like standing in a storm with a golf club."

"He raped that woman. My boss wants him dead."

"I know," she said and thought.

"If I notch his nose, will ya go?"

She pulled out a rather large knife and didn’t just notch it, but she cut off a healthy chunk. She picked it up and threw it over into the cats they used to keep the rats and mice down. The fastest cat, a black juvenile, grabbed it and ran off, not wanting to share.

EXT. STREETS OF TAWAKONI – HUNT COUNTY – NIGHT

Finished with their remembrances of the bank in Lamb and prison in Wichita counties, items that never found their way onto film, it was midnight, more or less, when Cowboy and Juan
left the countryside and walked into town. It was in peaceful silence, because all the residents were in their beds “sleeping like Mexican record books” as the saying went.

The night was fairly clear, although Juan would have preferred it totally dark so that he could have an excuse for not knowing Salty’s shelter. All that could be heard in the town was the sound of coyotes howling, which troubled the men. From time to time a donkey braying and cats meowing. Their voices seemed louder in the silence of the night which the enamored Cowboy took as an evil omen.

Despite this, however, he said to Juan, “Juan, my friend, lead the way to Salty’s shelter. Perhaps we will find her awake.”

“What shelter am I supposed to lead you to,” respond Juan, “when the place I saw her was a very small house with cats and not dogs?”

“She might have withdrawn at that time,” responded Cowboy, “to a small apartment in her shelter finding solace alone with her comic books and rom-coms. That's common.”

“Friend,” said Juan, “since you insist in spite of what I say that the house of Salty is a shelter, do you think we'll find them open at this hour and would it be a good idea for us to knock loud enough for them to hear us and open the door disturbing the dogs with the noise we make and are we by chance
calling at this house of your girlfriend where we can visit and knock at the door and go in anytime we want no matter how late?"

"Before we do anything let's find the shelter," replied Cowboy, "and then I'll tell you what is right to do and how to look, Juan. Either I can't see very well or that large shape and the shadows over there must be the shelter of Salty."

"Well, lead the way," responded Juan, "and maybe you'll be right. I've been here but it's so dark now."

Cowboy led the way and after some 200 yards he came to the shape that was casting the shadow and he saw a light tower and when he realized that the building was not a kennel but the church of the town," he said, with a fright, "we have come to the cemetery, Juan."

"I can see that," responded Juan, "and we are lucky that we don't come to our graves; it's not a good idea to walk through cemeteries at this hour of the night especially since I told you if I remember correctly that the lady's house is on a little dead-end lane."

"D*** you for a fool," said Cowboy, "where have you ever found a kennel or shelter built on a little dead-end lane? I've been here you know. I met with the girl's father..."

"Where he dangled some expectations."

"Yes, Juan, where he dangled expectations."
“Friend,” responded Juan, “each place has its way, maybe here the people build shelters and large buildings in small lanes and so I beg you to let me look along the streets and lanes that I see here maybe in some corner I'll run into that shelter and I hope we didn't come this far for no reason.”

"Speak with respect, Juan, of the things that pertain to this town," said Cowboy, “and let us be patient; we shall not give up."

“I’ll control myself,” responded Juan, “but how can I be patient if I saw our lady’s shelter only one time and that was during the day. But you want me to know it forever and find it in the midst of the night when moreover you’re a** can't find it either. While as much as you talk about her you must have slept with her a thousand times and yet you can’t remember?”

“You make me want to losse heart, Juan,” said Cowboy, “come here you scoundrel, I have I told you a thousand times that in all the days of my life I have not slept with her largely because of respect for her beauty, tender age and the possible wrath of her father.”

“So you say,” responded Juan, “and I'm a bit shocked you put me through that dad-blasted trip to and from far West Texas and you never even kissed the girl?”

“You never saw her did you,” respond Cowboy.

“How did you know?” Juan asked.
“You snake in the grass. You told me you saw her picking up dogshit when you brought me her answer to the letter I sent you.”

“Don't depend on that,” responded Juan, “because I want you to know that I only heard about seeing her and bringing you her answer and I have as much idea who the girl is as I have chances to fly.”

“Juan, Juan,” responded Cowboy, “there is a time for jokes and a time when jokes are inappropriate and out of place. Simply because I say I have not slept with her doesn't mean that you must also say you have not spoken with her. Also, you know you saw her and carried the message but you're carrying this friendship to extremes.”

They were engaged in this mindless conversation when they saw a man on a tractor coming toward them in the middle of the night, and by the fact he had a plow that was half dragging the pavement, they figured him to be a farmer who’d gotten up before dawn to begin work. His tractor putted over rhythmic hip-hop music pounded.

“Juan,” said Cowboy when he saw the farmer, “I doubt anything good will happen to us tonight.”

But when the laborer had reached them, Cowboy asked, “Can you tell me my friend the location of the no-kill shelter of Tawakoni?”
“Señor,” the young farmer responded, “I'm a stranger and I have only been here a few weeks working for this farmer in fields scattered about here and there. The priest lives in that parsonage and he might be able to tell you about where it might be. He maintains a list of everyone in town which is of great importance to the Mexican authorities.”

And engaging his tractor he waited for no more questions.

“Cowboy, it's almost day,” said Juan and it won't be a good idea to let the sun find us out on the street. Your presence, in front of that priest, will only alert the authorities and it will be better for us to leave the city and then you can wait in some woods and I'll come back in broad daylight and scour every corner of this town. I'll remember it, find it, talk to her and tell her you're out here. No one will even know and...”

“You are wise, Juan,” said Cowboy, “let's go look for a place where I can wait while you find her.”

Juan was anxious to get his friend outside of town so that (1) he would not learn of the lie he'd seem Salty and (2) to avoid an armed confrontation, so he hurried from the town. They found a stand of trees or a woods where Cowboy could wait.

On Juan's mission, things occurred that you'll want to hear.
EXT. STREETS OF TAWAKONI - HUNT COUNTY - DAY

The original author of this great story said, “Cowboy had seen her volleyball poster in the McDonald's and her basketball poster in the Peso General, but the first time he had ever felt attracted to Salty had come as a surprise, by walking into an electric fence strung about forehead high. She had it strung up to keep one of the larger dogs from scaling the chainlink fence, specifically it was strung about six feet up, over a gate. He saw her but for a second and was laid out for the next five minutes. She’d seen it happen before, to a fellow who’d driven over from Point and he’d eventually come around, so she just let him come to naturally.

She had been thirteen to his twelve and he had been at her kennel picking up dog s*** and her father and his father had gone inside to trade dime novels. When he did wake up, Salty was supervising a mating. It was a comedy and the smaller dog was hopping up and down hoping to find the mark as it was all a bit uncoordinated, but in an earnest and necessary effort and all, but he remembered Salty laughing, ‘Go Django. Go. You can do it.’ And when the dogs were finally tied, ‘That’s a good boy; I knew you could do it.’ She enjoyed the sweetest life and it was the most sincere congratulations, but when she’d looked over at Cowboy and that surprised him. It became abundantly clear he had been so embarrassed, he had made a thousand excuses and waited
in the Jeep for his father. The embarrassment had never gone away, not after that.

After that experience, he didn't see her as a poster girl, like nearly the entire state, but as a real woman, but it had also created a vague ache. After that first day, instead of just a sunburn, he now had a continual knot in his belly. And that was how it had to stay repressed, controlled; she was far too gorgeous and intimidating to approach. He would do as her father asked and cleaned up the kennel for years when his father visited and traded films, books and western memorabilia.

But, then the troubles became aggravated and he turned eighteen. And, given that he had made his decision to become ‘Salty eligible’ by helping her father ‘run off the Mexicans,’ he'd made a promise not to cheat (shot, kill or maim) the other candidates, but after his trips now he didn't see the point, or how he could possibly win. He'd been beaten and traveled extensively (as was expected of anyone who worked for her father) but he and Juan had gone West, the most dangerous trek. And now a coastal invasion, which was as bad as it sounded, an actual ‘coastal invasion’ with ships and boats and artillery and trained soldiers who knew what they were doing, and it was looming and Mexican’s would be looking to kill him in earnest before any of that stuff began. And before this trip to the coast, he planned on going into town and enjoying the sights of
her a** in those tight jeans. Maybe she would be mating another set of dogs.”

The author also said, “Want was in this chapter was the height of Cowboy’s insanity and that he had not added or subtracted an atom of truth.” He wasn’t concerned with accusations that he was a liar and basically he was right.

“I’ve learned that the truth can be stretched thin but always floats on the surface of the lie like oil on water,” the author said.

And so something this early history says was that as soon as Cowboy entered the pecan orchard near Tawakoni he ordered Juan to return to the city and not come back without first having spoken on his behalf to Salty “with the gold hair, longest of legs and the sweetest disposition.”

Juan hem-hawed around and Cowboy had to yells at him, frighten him into action.

“The same girl that’s in all the posters!

“Can you please be more clear. I don’t want to make a mistake.” Juan asked. “Please.” Sidekick or not, Juan liked being difficult, especially when Cowboy was asking him to do something he didn’t want to do.

“They are strung from one end of the state to the other. She’s holding a basketball, blue and white uniform, in front of a green screen, I mean in front of the Hemisfair. And holding a
volleyball, big smile, long legs, different uniform tighter, same colors, in front of the Alamo.”

Juan was supposed to ask her if she would see Cowboy and then Juan would let her father know that Cowboy was joining the Rangers gathering at Matagorda. She was supposed to then wish them luck and send her love.

Juan agreed to do everything exactly as ordered and to bring back a reply, as good as the one he had brought back the first time.

Internally, Cowboy was skeptical. But something about giving instructions changed his outlook and now he projected confidence.

“Go slow, my friend,” instructed Cowboy, “and don't come become distracted when you find yourself looking at the light of beauty that emanates from her golden hair, the sun of beauty. Oh, you are more fortunate than all the men in the world, to see the rest of heaven. Remember everything and do not miss a detail of how she receives you. If her color changes as you give her my message, if she becomes agitated or troubled when she hears my name, if she moves about on her chair, if you happen to find her in her richly furnished office at the shelter, if she's is standing look to see if she shifts from one foot to the other, if she repeats her answers two or three times, if she changes
from gentle to severe from harsh to loving, if she raises her hand to her hair just to move it although it's not messed up."

Juan agreed, but Cowboy insisted.

"Finally, my friend, observe all her actions and movements because if you relate them to me just as they occurred I shall interpret what she keeps hidden in secret. Because you must know, Juan, if you do not know it already, that with lovers the external actions when love is mentioned are reliable messages bringing news of the soul."

Juan agreed.

"I hope you have more luck then I’ve had and please bring me good news. I'll wait here and I’ll not get high until your return."

"It's good to hear, but you’ve often promised that and not complied. I don't know how you can smoke that stuff anyway; it makes me want to jump out of my skin," Juan said honestly.

"Well, you're thin-skinned, friend."

"I'll stick to my tequila. It only makes me look for shade."

"Well, you’re part rattler then, my friend," Cowboy joked.

"I'll go and come back very quickly," said Juan, "and well hid that beast of yours which is distinctive and better known that either of us and thus shouldn’t be seen in the day by Mexicans or Texans either, and remember what I say, 'a good
heart bests bad luck; and where there are no steers, there are no steaks,’ and they also say that, ‘a hare leaps out when you least expect it.’”

“Yes, slick down your hair. Remember your appearance reflects on me.”

“I figured because we couldn’t find Salty’s kennel last night in the dark, now that it’s light I think you’ll find her when you least expect me to, and once I found her just leave everything to me.”

“Well Juan,” said Cowboy, “you certainly bring in proverbs that suit our affairs perfectly and I hope we have the luck we deserve.”

This said, Juan turned away and got on his moped and Cowboy remained on his cycle, resting in the stirrups. After about five minutes he would get out the pipe and then run about the orchard half the day, full of excitement and confused images.

There we will leave Cowboy and go with Juan who rode away no less confused and thoughtful than his friend. In fact, as soon as Juan had emerged from the orchard, he turned his head and seeing that Cowboy was nowhere in sight, he dismounted his moped. And at the foot of an oak tree with a bottle of tequila and begin carrying on a conversation with himself saying, “Now Juan, my friend, let’s find out where you’re a** is going. Are you going to look for some donkey that gets lost?”
“No, of course not.”

“Well then, are you going to look for what are you going to look for?”

“I'm going to look for a rescue princess, like that is an easy thing to do.”

“Who is this ‘Sun of Beauty’ and the ‘Rest of Heaven’ and where do you think you'll find all that in the tranquilized city of Tawakoni? Do I go east or west, in search of her?”

“All right, first answer this. For those whose sake are you going to look for her?”

“For the sake of the famous for Vaquero de Tejas, who rights wrongs and cooks meth for the Mexican Army.”

“And the Tequila?”

“I give that to all who are thirsty.”

“All that's very fine, but do you know where her kennel is?

“Cowboy says it has to be a large kennel as well and for while there is very little profit made from each forever mutt there is big money in the purebred dogs she houses in the back.”

“Have you, ever by chance, seen her?”

“I’ve never seen her there, my handsome friend.”

“Never going to either.”

“Do you think it would be right and proper, because they might batter your ribs with baseball bats and break every bone
in your body, if it’s know you have come here intending on luring away their rescue princess.”

“The Mexican will say, ‘who will keep dog breeders in check if she leaves to marry Cowboy?’”

“And what will the young suitors say? ‘He seeks to take her away!’ By Quanah Parker, if they suspect what you’re up to then I predict bad luck to you.”

“The truth is they would be right, and unless they remembered not to shoot the messenger.”

“Don't rely on that, Juan, because Texans are quick-tempered and as they are horrible and they don’t put up with anything from Cowboy. And for that reason, I should be smart enough to stay out of the way.”

“Get out you dumb, bastard.”

“Let the lightning strike someone else, not me.”

“I'm not going to look for trouble to please someone else, besides looking for a breeder masquerading in a rescue kennel here is like looking for a Maria in Mexico or a bachelor in a small town.”

“The devil, the devil and nobody else has gotten me into this.”

Juan held his drunken soliloquy to himself at this point and the conclusion he drew was that he talked to himself again saying...
“Well now everything has a remedy except death, under who's thumb we all have to exist, even if we don't want to live large and not dwell on the end. I’ve seen a thousand signs; my friend is crazy enough to be tied up and I'm not far behind him. I'm as much a fool as he is because I follow him and if that old saying is true, ‘tell me who you're friends are and I'll tell you who you are,’ and that other one that says ‘birds with feather flock together,’ which is what he is with the kind of craziness that most of the time takes on things for another and confuses compliments with complimentary colors, like the time he said that the wind generators were socialist and the helmet was a cowboy hat and the heard of cattle enemy armies and many other things of that ilk.”

“And, it wouldn't be very hard to make him believe that a blonde small-town girl, the first one I run into is Salty and if he doesn't believe it's true and if he swears it isn't, I’ll swear again that it is her and if he insists, I’ll insist more. And so I’ll always have the last word. No matter what. I win the argument.”

“Maybe I'll be so stubborn, he won't send me out again caring messages seeing the bad answers I find or perhaps he’ll believe it's her which is what will probably happen. I’ll say one of his evil bowls has changed her appearance.”
When Juan Seguin had this idea, his spirit grew, and he considered the soliloquy completed and he stayed there until afternoon so that Cowboy would think that he taken the time to go into Tawakoni.

“I'm back and everything and everything went so far so well for him,” when he stood up to mount the moped he saw them coming toward him from the direction of Tawakoni and they were on three “minis” or “micro” bikes (since the author doesn't specify) which they were, though it is more likely that they were “dirt” bikes for they were the ordinary small-town girls, not that it matters.

As soon as Juan saw the local girls, he drove back as fast as he could to look for Cowboy and found him pacing from pecan tree to pecan tree, lecturing them.

As soon as Cowboy saw him he asked, “What's the news Juan, shall I mark this day on my calendar?”

“It would be better,” responded Juan, “for you to stop talking to trees and start-up Shovelhead.”

“That means,” replied Cowboy, “that you bring me good news.”

“So good,” responded Juan, “that all your perverted-a** has to do is accelerate yourself and Shovelhead into the open and you'll greet Salada de Tawakoni who's coming to see your ass with two of her friends.”
“Holy guacamole, what are you saying?” asked Cowboy, “Don't deceive me or try to lighten my true sorrows with fake news.”

“What good would it do to deceive your ass?” responded Juan, “Especially since you're so close to discovering that what I say is true. Use the accelerator and come with me and you'll see the rescue princess riding towards us. Your bunny all half-dressed and ready for the lake, and her friends are all tan in bikinis, silky hair blowing in the wind, it's like ice cream pie coming your way they're riding muddy sport bikes to the lake. The prettiest sight you've ever seen; write that on your calendar or you can go see for yourself.”

“You must mean mudder's, Juan.”

“There's not much difference,” responded Juan, “no matter what their riding they're the best looking ladies anybody could want to see especially Salty, who's hotter than hell in that red bikini.”

“Let's go, my friend,” responded Cowboy, “and to celebrate this news as unexpected as it is good I promise you the best spoils that I win in the adventure and if this doesn't satisfy you I promise you one of the custom lowriders I’m soon to own when this is done. A guy will bring me three in exchange for the dope I'm planning to cook and you can have your pick.”

“I'll take the lowest of them,” responded Juan, “because it's not very certain that the spoils of your Matagorda
adventure will be profitable at this point. They speed out of the orchard and saw the three girls close by.”

Cowboy looked carefully up and down the road to Tawakoni and since he saw no one but three fugzy tenii; he was bewildered and hurt at Cowboy thought they'd left Salty back in the city. “What do you mean back in the city,” responded Juan, “by any chance are your eyes going bad, is that why you don't see them riding towards us in a bright and shining afternoon sun?”

“Juan, I don't see anything there except three ugly pubescent girls on dirt bikes.”

“Christmas caroling,” Juan said, “save me from deception. Say ‘Christmas’ three times! Hurry… too late I imagine.”

“What? Why?” ask Cowboy, “Is it possible? I wasn’t going to smoke, but I had the urge and didn’t fight it long. It promised to be such a nice day. And now this is a dreadful hallucination.”

“Christmas has come too late; it's a f---ed-up deal, you can't see these nice shiny street bikes and instead you see dirt bikes... And that probably means that you can't see your Salty?”

“Well, I can tell you,” said Cowboy, “that is true, they’re commonly called dirt bikes and as I'm called ‘Cowboy’ and you “Juan’ and at least that is what they seem to be…”
“Don't speak, friend,” Juan requested and he pulled a huge fallen branch from the ditch into the path of the girls. They probably would have gone into the ditch to get around our two heros, but people were generally hyper-cautious (after the EMP) even with dirt bikes. Juan correctly figured the girl's fathers would punish them if the bikes became disabled.

By the time Cowboys pulled off his hat, the girls had stopped within a foot of the roadblock and Juan removed his helmet as well. Cowboy put his hat over his heart and looked at the dirt road since he could see nothing except a blonde young girl, and not one especially attractive since she was round-faced and snub-nosed. He was so astounded and amazed that he did not dare open his mouth.

The girls out for a swim were equally awed at seeing our two men of integrity, so different from each other, standing without hats in the hot sun and not allowing them to get down to the lake. But the one in the red bikini was the angriest and annoyed and breaking the silence she said, “Out of my way damn fool and let us get by. It's hot and we're in a hurry.”

To which Juan responded, “Oh princess of no-kill shelters give a little smile at the man whose most inspired enamored by you. He has more than twenty newspaper articles and two posters -- your basketball posters he stole from the Dairy Queen and
your volleyball poster he stole from Luigi's. Originals, not those political knock-off."

"Perverts!"

"His love for you goes far back, before the Alamo was even a gleam in your father's eye."

"I should kick you in the nuts. Look how these f**ed-up cowboys are making fun of us girls. Can't you get a girl your own age? Get out of the way or say 'goodbye' to your nutsack."

"Put your hat on, Juan," said Cowboy.

To the thing in the red bikini, he said, "You are right the dope continually f**s with me and is now corrupting your image and those of your friends. The dope has changed your peerless beauty and innocence into a tore up from the floor up and monstrous Polanski'd local girl. Nice outfit, however. Don't hold the other opinions against me. I'm going to put my hat on now."

"You can tell it to my Grandpa," responded to the local girl, "I love listening to the insane, but he shoots them. Now step aside and let us pass or I'll go get him."

As soon as the girl who had played the part of Salty, was released she gunned her bike and lost control of it, and the front of it went into the air and when she struck the road Cowboys was there to help her up and Juan began to pick up her bike up.
Cowboy tried to lift her up in his arms and put her back on the bike but the girl got up from the ground and saved him the trouble because she jumped up, agile as a frisbee dog, and kicked Cowboy in the nuts.

And Juan said, “by NASCAR your girlfriend is faster than a stock car of old and she could teach the most skilled Comanche or Kiowa how to ride.”

She vaulted over the handlebars and was in the seat in one jump and without a second delay, she had the motorbike pelting our heros with gravel and she and her friends were not far behind her. Her friends looking back at them and riding like the wind and it was true because when the convenient Salty was mounted, the whole group raced their engines and popped the clutches and peeled out, racing down the road. The girl Juan had chosen to be Salty didn't look back until she reached the water.

Cowboy followed them with his eyes and when he could no longer see them he turn to Juan and said “Juan, what do you think of that? Look at the extent of malice and ill-will. I've been denied my love in her true form, but in truth I was born to be a poster child of bad luck, and a target for arrows and the worst part of it these troublemakers changed my Salty into a major b****, ugly and smelly as well, forget the red bikini.”

Juan said, “She’s clearly gotten into a bad dose of shit.”
Cowboy reminisced, “If only you could see the vision once knew saw, the true Salty.”

“Everyone in the state has seen her poster and knows she’s the picture of revolution.”

“Hair with the purest gold hair in the sweetest position. I saw none of the ugliness only her beauty.”

They discussed how powerful the dope was, even the ugly mole the thrown girl playing Salty had been given, but neither could explain why the dope had done so much to ruin Salty but allow her to retain the athletic motocross skills, but when Juan mentioned that she had fallen off the motorbike, the conversation accomplished nothing.

Juan tried to clear his friend by pointing out what a ‘nice motorbike’ she had, continuing to mention her “blonde hair” and “long legs,” as he saw it.

But the result of it all was that Cowboy still felt that he was the most unfortunate of men and finally without much more conversation between them, they mounted their vehicles and followed the road south to Matagorda where they hoped to arrive in time to take part in the festival, but before they reached the celebration certain things happened.
EXT. KAUFMAN COUNTY, TEXAS

Cowboy was thoughtful as he went on his way considering the awful tricks the dope had played on him when it turned his Salty into the ugly figure of the mole marked country girl and he struggled to figure what he might do to return her to her original state. These thoughts distracted him so much that without realizing it he dropped his attention and Shovelhead sensing some freedom that had been giving him exited the highway and “rode” onto the shoulder and then into a bar ditch.

Juan brought his friend back from his tears and preoccupations by saying, “Cowboy, sorrows were made not for animals but for men, but if men feel them too much they turn into animals. Your ass should restrain yourself and return to yourself and pick up Shovelhead’s handlebars and liven up and rouse yourself and show the bravery that Rangers ought to have. What the devil is it? What mood is this? This isn't you and we’re here in Texas and not in New York or California? Forget the mole on the side of her face the well-being of Texas is at stake and your job is to ranger and not die in a ditch for no real reason.”

“Be quiet, Juan,” responded Cowboy in a voice that was not particularly faint, “be quiet, I say and don't say ‘forget the mole’ for I alone I am to blame for her mole and now I might
never be able to forget it. If I'd not got f***ed-up in the orchard, I'd not be forced to remember her this way."

"That's what I say too," responded Juan, "but it goes back farther than that. If you'd stayed at the farm in the doublewide and not followed your father on his adventures, you'd have never seen her in the first place and we would be safe at home."

"That is something you can rightfully say, Juan," replied Cowboy, "for you always seen her in tastiness and meatness, the tequila hasn't obscured your view; it only poisons me in my view."

"You can always stop getting f***ed-up."

"I'm a damn good cook, you know."

"Maybe that's the problem?"

"I'd rather not picture Salty this way, but it has happened."

"Cowboy, I have a problem," stated Juan, "when we conquer combatants and other Mexicans and send them back to work for Salty it seems that I can see them wandering around like idiots looking for her, and even if they find her in the El Pollo, they might not recognize her."

"Perhaps, Juan," responded Cowboy, "the patriots we send to Salty aren't so f***ed-up as this and it doesn't go as far as what we've seen today."
“We can determine if they see her original beauty or not by having them tell us what happened to them there.”

“I'll tell you,” replied Juan, “that I think; what you have said is fine and with this plan we will find out just what we want to know and if she's hidden only from you.”

“As long as Salty's health and happiness is at stake we'll just do the best we can, continue on your adventures and letting time do its work. It's the best doctor for these ailments.

Cowboy wanted to respond to Juan Seguin, but he was prevented from doing so by a bus that came out across the road filled with the most diverse morons that one could imagine.

The bus stopped on the road and the door flew open; the one driving the bus was a hideous demon. The first figure that appeared to Cowboy was that of death himself with a human face. Next to him was an angel with large paper mache wings. To the other side was George S. Patton wearing four stars, apparently of gold, on his collar. At the feet of death was the gold cupid without the blindfold but still a certified little person, holding his bow, quiver and arrows. In the back, there was a cowboy, fully outfitted. Accompanying these persons where others with various outfits and costumes.

All of which, without caution, agitated Cowboy a great deal but planted terror in Juan’s heart, but then Cowboy was glad believing that a new and dangerous adventure was upon him and
with this thought and a spirit prepared to face any peril he stepped in front of the bus and in a loud menacing voice he said, “lesbian bus driver, devil, or whatever you are, tell me immediately who you are or where you are going and who are the people you are carrying on your bus. Which looks more like it's on a highway to hell then any normal bus.”

To which the devil driving the bus said, “Gentle sir, you are close. We’re on the highway to Poetry. We’re actors (so I believe you mean ‘thespian’ bus driver) and we’re in the world-famous Hull-Down Theatre Group. This morning which is the eighth Thursday after Easter and the Eighth Day of Corpus Christi, we perform in a town located somewhere over to the west. We perform the mystery play Why Men Think They Can Attrit Death and/or to perform it this afternoon in the town you can see over there and because it is so close and to save ourselves the trouble of taking off our costumes and putting them on again we are dressed in the same clothes to perform in. That young man plays death, and the other one the angel. That woman, who is married to the manager, plays the queen. This one is the soldier, George S. Patton. I play the demon and I'm the principal figure of the play because in this company everyone plays the leading roles. If you wish to know anything else about us, just ask me and I will respond. Since I am the devil many things are within my grasp.”
“I don’t think I’ve seen this play, How Can They Attrit Death. What is it about, other than devils and angels and cowboys and midgets?”

“Better known for his profanity than for his prayers, George Patton was actually a devout and religious man. Patton's prayers, however, (written in his journal) reflected his deep and sincere faith in God. Throughout his life he prayed daily and attended protestant churches almost every Sunday, even in wartime. He opposed his daughter’s marriage to a Roman Catholic. General Patton broke his neck in a car crash in Germany. And with prognosis for recovery increasingly grave, Patton seems to have known that his injuries were irreversible, if not terminal. He resisted for eleven days before he asked for a priest. He took communion on the feast of Corpus Christi and confessed his sins and then he died, this is the play we perform around the state 320 times per year.”

“Thanks to funding from the Catholic Church?” Juan asked.

“Well, yes. The bus was bought by the church, but donations generally propel us to the next location.”

“And you believe this story to be true, given his life long...”

“The people believe it and I’m a person. He’d be a saint but stopping the Lutheran assault on the Catholic church in Bastogne counts as only one miracle.”
“As soon as I saw this bus,” responded Cowboy, “I imagined that a great adventure was waiting here and ever since I was a boy I have enjoyed the theater and in my youth was a great lover of plays. But now I know the premise of your play, I can say that it's necessary to teach a few lessons and f***-up your festival for the sake of truth. Consider it my way of being of service to the state. And I’ll do it gladly and willingly because…”

As luck would have it, while the theatre group was being threatened, a member of the company came up to them and he was dressed as a Bull Terrier, wearing a good number of bells and he was carrying three bags of fireworks. This buffoon began to jump in the air and shake his bells and after a time danced behind Cowboy and there he lit a fuse and as the fireworks begin to pop, the sound so alarm Cowboy, that Shovelhead without Cowboy being able to stop him, (accelerator stuck) begin to bolt across the field with considerable speed. Juan, who considered the danger that Cowboy would be thrown, jumped off his moped ran as fast on foot as he could to help his friend, but when he reached him, Cowboy was already on the ground and next to him lay Shovelhead who had fallen along with his rider, the usual finale of the motorcycle’s exuberance.

But as soon as Juan left his mount to assist Cowboy, the demon-dancer jumped on the moped and begin to pedal like the
naked. The moped ignition sparked, hit and it began to fly across the countryside to Poetry where the festival was to be held.

Juan looked at his racing moped and his fallen friend and didn't know which of the two problems he should take care of first, but in fact because he was a good friend and loving lover of humanity, love of humanity won out over affection for his moped, although each time he saw the little clown's feet pedaling up and down, he's suffered the torments and tears of death and would rather have had those feet kicking him in the head and then peddling his ride.

In his perplexity, Juan reached Cowboy who was much more bruised and bitter than he would have wished and helping him to remount Shovelhead. Juan said, "Cowboy the devil clown has made off with my moped."

"What the devil," said Cowboy.

"The one with the propaganda play," responded Juan.

"Then I'll go get him back," replied Cowboy, "even if it takes me down to the deepest darkest pits of theater."

But Cowboy had already zoomed off in pursuit of the moped. Cowboy pulled up next to the devil, pulled the pistol and fired five blanks into the ear of the fling devil, who was so frightening the actor drove the moped into the ditch dodging the
imagined bullets and then the devil came out of the ditch and ran on foot toward the bus.

Juan did finally arrive, running, if one could call it that.

“Keep following me, Juan, for the bus is traveling slowly and I'll compensate you for the loss of your moped with a bus or maybe I’ll just burn it.”

“What do you want with an Iveco?”

“It’s like Fiat’s dog Elroy’d, Renau’s ugly sister and look at the result.”

“So tell me what to do?”

“There's no need to go to all that trouble, Cowboy,” responded Juan.

“Even so,” said Cowboy, “it would be a good idea to punish the dishonesty of that demon by chasing down that bus and may be dragging off that George Patton and teaching him a lesson or two.”

“You should put that thought out of your mind,” replied Juan, “They think they are doing the Lord’s work.”

“The work they are doing helps only Mexico.”

“Well, and take my other advice then, which is never to interfere with actors for they are lucky people. I've seen an actor arrested for two deaths and then released with no fines. You should know that since they are happy, gay, and look
marvelous, everyone favors them, especially if they are one of
the Pope’s companies with an official license from Mexico City
and that bus looked fairly official.”

“Well all the same,” responded Cowboy, “the actor demon is
not going pause even if the entire audience are sure…” And
saying this he returned his attention to the bus, which by this
time was stopped waiting for the “fleeing” demon to catch up.

Cowboy, on Shovelhead, approached saying, “Stop, wait, you
happy gay throng for I want to teach you a lesson about how to
treat a Cowboy’s motorcycle and moped.”

Cowboy’s shouts weren’t so loud that the actor’s heard
them, but they judged him hostile and they all orderly exited
the bus with military precision and lined up they raise their
arms and let fly a healthy number of sharp rocks.

Cowboy, who saw them arranged so well, their arms raised
and ready to release another volley of stones, he pulled up
Shovelhead and begin to reload his pistols.

When Cowboy stopped to reload, Juan approached and tried to
calm him, “it would be crazy to attempt this adventure. You’ve
already killed, at least seriously deafened, the devil. Who on
board the bus - the angel, queen, the general, the Bull Terrier
- which do you want to harm next?”

“You think it would be anti-climatic if they make a sequel
film this scene.”
“It won’t play well if you attack a fleeing bus full of actors just trying to make it. They probably know the play is shit, but who wants to starve?”

And Juan was right, and by the time Cowboy realized it, the bus was loaded with drugstore cowboys and desgraciados, trailing off toward Poetry as fast as possible.

“Well if that is your decision,” said Cowboy, “let’s leave these clowns to their mysticism and seek more legitimate adventures down along the coast.”

Then he pulled the handlebars around and turn Shovelhead around, and before Juan picked up his moped, death and a stone-deaf devil-clown were long down the road. Thanks to Juan’s sound advice cowboy was happy to ride away on cycles and not an embarrassing electric bus, a bus that would have destroyed his legend.

EXT. LOUISIANA AT NEW ORLEANS

Since before the blast, if you arrived at what is still today is called Edwin Edwards Airport, jumped into an Uber, and told the operator that you were in the market for meth, wh***s, no-limit poker, stolen jewels, cheap liquor, a premium high, or gourmet cuisine he’d probably take you to see Bouchée Thibodeau.

That fact didn't make him a bad guy; it only proved him the most resourceful man in New Orleans and being the most
resourceful man in the Crescent City was an art, as Bouchée saw it. It was the art of looking good fun, feeding an itch and getting rich, doing as little as possible. For Bouchée it was the art of making it big while taking it easy. The Big Easy wasn’t just a tourist marketing slogan. And if he appeared to be working, he figured he was cheating the city. One would think being a city's unofficial mascot would require a stressless existence, stability, sobriety, monogamy, respectability, a legitimate source of income and plenty of lawful conduct. A mistake!

He was a slippery as fried chicken fingertips. Bouchée had been on a working vacation in New Orleans since 2015. He was 17-years-old when he stole/borrowed his big brothers Harley-Davidson and rode from Negreet to New Orleans. He knew all about “The Big Easy” from his Sunday school teachers, that it was the southern capital of all vice populated by gangsters, and women who would sell themselves for an eighth ounce of dope. That was one strong sales pitch and Bouchée was hooked.

So with that picture in mind, like thousands of other backwoods Cajuns throughout the centuries, he made it to New Orleans to escape the hunting and fishing down in that corner of the state. It only took one night in a New Orleans bar to become a pimp for life. He became a French Quarter character and it turned into a profession. To a bored Cajun “rebel without a
cause,” there was nothing cooler than the diamond-encrusted pimps he met in the Quarter. They were cooler than Jeff Lebowski, cooler than even Chili Palmer, and definitely cooler than a job. Pimping to Bouchée qualified as part of the American dream. From that St. Ann Street encounter, it never appeared to anyone that he lifted a finger.

A dumb Cajun virgin “let the good times roll” and learned the pleasures of wine, women and good times in a single night. Over the years, he was only slightly inconvenienced by jail and he felt it was a fair trade for a full life. Work and even a good night’s sleep pales in front of devilry and easy money.

It took years for them to admit it, but finally Texas and Louisiana both learned to thank New Orleans for the lessons Bouchée learned.

In the quarter, never a good student at a desk, he learned the lessons of the street backwards and forwards and learned not to take the word of degenerate government propagandists. Before becoming a national hero, before becoming relevant, the FBI had amassed 700 pages in a file and the Louisiana State Police 200 pages in their file, but even more inside could have been found in his three divorce settlements. Nothing resembling any respectable employment, outside of a few prison jobs which he could not escape by sliding a few soups to trustees. He never
did an honest day's work since hauling hay that one day as a teenager.

There's been tons of quotes attributed to Bouchée but there are only three adequately documented, “Crime doesn't pay, fun pays and keeps paying,” and “I don't commit crimes what will get you convicted or dead, I commit fun,” and “I don't deal in victim's, you catch beefs and moralizing sermons from them, I deal only with willing customers.”

One could call his specialty victimless crime and he was an ordained minister, that without a victim there was no crime. He told everyone he met that the police shouldn't arrest someone just for “breathing or being human.”

Bouchée made his money selling the sort of fun people “say” they can do without. But he made millions and spent millions selling fun to people that it turned out they desperately needed. The brand names, and the charges, changed but the product was always consistently fun.

So to sell fun you have to at least appear to be having it so Bouchée's profession was that of a reveler. When he raised a glass, a pipe, or a set of legs, people's wallets magically spilled into his wallet. His business model was simple: every party was fun, but he brought extra fun to every party, so for a price, he could cut the fun-challenged in on the action.
Both before the cataclysm and after, he was a movie star in the Quarter, with nothing on tape. A good-looking bodybuilder wearing Italian suits, unbuttoned neon shirts and diamond rings on eight fingers and always alligator skin Tony Lamas. He drove only new convertibles before the downfall; after the problems, he drove only old convertibles and for a dash of Hollywood he took along one of his pets, either a steroid jacked Neapolitan Mastiff or a gigantic red parrot who cursed everyone with a Cajun accent. He never showed his face in public without two beautiful women at his side. The only way he ever described himself was cool, others might have called him a “walking fiasco” or “a falling down drunk.” But he saw himself as an original work of art with no concept of what paid advertising meant, he was the expert his costume said he was. The look sold the idea they could have fun if they would just follow the weed smelling Italian suit down Burbon Street like the Pied Piper.

With that amount of power it should be no surprise his entire life he was followed by a gang of prostitutes, clients, junkies, gamblers, gangsters, dancers and government men who all marched behind him like he was the devil leading a Fat Tuesday parade.

One newspaperman joked that you could follow a trail of lingerie, wine bottles and parking citations in his wake all the way back to the St. Ann Street bar where mafia player Pier
“Polecat” Brouillette bought a nobody named Bouchée one of the infamous hurricanes. He had never acted on any bad judgment and it was his first real adult beverage. He had a gentle heart but a week will and an even worse work ethic. Had he remained in southwest Louisiana, he'd have been the town drunk. But he hadn't; he'd come to New Orleans those traits there would make a man into a gangster prince. He looked like a prince and was paid like a gangster.

This account might suffer from the misconception that all underworld characters are corrupt people and hurt others. Some of them just sell their clients something that they might use to harm themselves, no different than a socialist or a football coach. When a politician, or television reporter, went on about crime, Bouchée heard them saying “vote for me,” or “don't change the channel.” If you think anyone needs to sell drugs or gambling or sex you're kidding yourself, Bouchée never uttered a word of marketing; he could barely put 20 words together without forgetting one and someone needing to loan him one. He would have starved if he had relied on corrupting anyone. People came to him and he felt it was the worst of taste to hustle them like a car salesman. He fought a man that once called him a hustler.

Maybe the only high school class Bouchée paid attention to, he remembered a little bit from his economics class and when it came to people wanting a gram or buying a whole or slim chance
in a game. Supply never trumped demand. He was simply a nighttime salesman.

But the police station trash called him, “a predator” and “a killer,” partially to create a little job security for themselves and partly out of habit. The cops, Bouchée understood, their bosses expected all that “bull s***.”

The only thing he ever shot was meth, that and an unlucky kid in a Big Bird suit when he was a little redneck kid. I’m sure it hurt, the .20 to hit him in the ass, but the argument the government came and took care of his wife and kids while he had a little vacation.

The state troopers were telling the journalists that he had been wasting people ad hoc since the Trump Administration. The cops will transform any criminal into Al Capone or Pretty Boy Floyd in this case if the media let them and the media loved Bouchée.

Bouchée gave them plenty of ammo to defame him with, but if you value the truth, you're better off forgetting what these low ability, but opportunistic, people have to say. You can't listen to cops and learn anything about the human condition. Bouchée was technically a criminal, but the decent kind; he had never hurt anyone while he had his wits. However, he woke up in jail a few times with serious charges, but with no recollection of what happened. On those occasions, he was more of a victim then
mastermind criminal. Aside from shooting Big Bird in the a**, the only person Bouchée hurt was himself. He never changed after coming to the city; he was happy-go-lucky, shiftless and shy, but he went nearly everywhere nearly drunk to mask it. He saw it as his fate to harm no one.

If he had been born at the Salton Sea, he would have gone to LA to be an actor and he’d have been successful at it. If he'd been born in western Massachusetts, he'd have traveled to Boston and been carried away by a sailing ship. Strangely, lucky for Texas, he'd been born two hours west of the vice capital of the South and carried away by the New Orleans lifestyle.

He came from a tradition of power, the same as the pirate Jean Lafitte. While he'd never put himself at that level, he did regularly deal with three men who were at that level Cuba's Valdimir Castro, New Orlean’s John Michael Crebillion and Karrem “K2” Kalidasa.

When the connected godfather had a whale gambler in town, or anyone else, who they wanted to treated right, they gave Bouchée a call and turned him loose. Bouchée gave the fish reasons enough to stay in town until they lost their money. Before the cataclysm, he made sure the Baton Rouge politicians screwed fine enough girls they forget to haggle how much money they sent the mob in economic “redevelopment.” Bouchée phrased
it that way, because New Orleans had been developed dozens of
times. He drowned them in good times until they offered
political favors of their own volition; some politicians were
easier than others. Feds from Washington were a breeze until
their dollar became worthless (the calamity) and and they quit
coming to New Orleans all together. After that Charlottesville
served the purpose.

Before the chaos, when something disappointing or
unpredictably strange happened in the underworld they said,
"chalk it up to the game," afterwards the saying was, "chalk it
up to the sad state of affairs."

The New Orleans airport was named after four-term Governor
Edwin Edwards; he had died in a federal prison, but most people
understood and once Louisiana was rid of the federal government
there wasn’t any chance in h*** the anyone could change the name
of their airport. Whatever the people wanted, "chalk it up to
the sad state of affairs." If the man's grandchildren could pull
off such a feat, forget one of the great grandsons was Bouchée
Thibodaux and a flashy pimp, the more power to them. Great
grandpa was the finest, most sophisticated, pimp in the history
of the state. Anyone who was around the two decades Grandpa
Edwin ran the state, would have known Edwards would have had
Huey Long turned out and doing tricks in downtown Baton Rouge.
Edwin ran the state Louisiana like a disorganized, but
televised, cat house. And never one to do anything half-assed, when Edwin Edwards finally went down he took most of the New Orleans mafia with him as well as two of John Gotti's New York Lieutenant's and the owner of the San Francisco 49ers with him.

Also a great grandson and made in the mold of Edwards was the third president of Louisiana, a man named Victor Turenne and when he needed a favor out on the street he turn to his cousin Bouchée. Bouchée became an odd power broker; that was on the public/government side.

In the underworld/political world he became the go between; if there was a problem too complicated or delicate for John Michael Crebillion and his network of criminals, including police marionettes, to solve then the crime boss would ask Bouchée to intercede with President Turenne.

If you can't trust blood, just cash in your chips and walk away and it works the other way as well. If Victor Turenne had a problem too delicate or complicated for Crebillion, he used Bouchée as a liaison to carry word to the New Orleans underworld. Shortly after the first signs of rebellion in Texas, Crebillion begin running guns into Texas. It was illegal to poke Mexico in the eye. Crossing the Sabine, with guns for sale, was not just a poke but a gouge.

Normally, there wouldn't be a law against buying and selling guns, or nearly anything else, but the current law was
designed to protect Louisiana (growing and rebuilding) from the new bully on the block. Turenne intended to have Louisiana lay low until able to resist the new Mexican Empire.

As a gun smuggler, among other things, Crebillion was afraid the stated policy (actually being enforced by the government), would interfere with profits. Bouchée negotiated around a few landmines, until things went bad. Journalists (most of them beaten and two of them killed) dug and continues to dig and eventually expose the entire operation which threatened Louisiana security. If provoked Mexico could have easily toppled the Baton Rouge government and either install a puppet or simply annex the territory as they're done with Texas and the other Reconquista territories. Surprised by the allegations, facing opposition and taking a pounding in the press Turenne cut Crebillion loose and handed it over to the investigator, and then the judiciary, promising not to interfere. Judging by the Wylie Coyote smarts on display on that occasion, it's surprising Turenne didn’t take a nosedive into an alligator’s digestive tract. Crossing Crebillion was like a defector to the south locking his screen door as protection against Kim Jong-un.

Something of an idiot, Crebillion ask Bouchée (Turenne’s cousin) to secure his muscle man and proven killer for a permit to carry a gun into a government building. Just because Bouchée was a pimp that could put his hands on almost anything, didn’t
mean he could or would get a permit that would obviously be used to harm kinfolk. Not that there was even such a permit, so Bouchée never even brought up the request.

As the election neared and the gun-running story was splattered across even more newspapers, Turenne tightened the vice on Crebillion, the crime boss needed either a permit or a good lawyer.

Cooler heads prevailed and Crebillion chose a crack criminal lawyer Alex Cimabue. Unfortunately for Crebillion, his legal rabbit's foot was a friend and customer of Bouchée which meant that Cimabue was an addict of some sort. Turned out he was a lech, pill head and wannabe African-American. He had a seriously compromised life expectancy. At any moment, if Crebillion discovered the truth, the “jive talking” lawyer might take a swim in the swamp or fall from a plane.

Luckily for Cimabue, his wife saved his life when she tossed him out of the house and told him to move in with Bouchée, his source of drugs. With Cimabue as Bouchée's housemate, his confidences were certainly safe. Crebillion knew Bouchée wouldn't let anything happen to his lawyer. Once Crebillion told Bouchée he'd be holding him responsible if anything happened to his attorney; Bouchée made sure their friend wouldn't overdose or throw the court battle, which was always a possibility. Bouchée's life depended on it.
Behind every historical figure, there is a good dog story; Bouchée is no exception. Bouchée named a female from his first litter “Peril” because it suited her temperament. She was wrinkled as sin and big-boned, well-made and expertly designed dog of war, a Neapolitan. He understood the thousands of years effort that went into her confirmation. She was good-natured with friends but she was an extra-helping of bite-in-the-ass to strangers. She’d kill anyone who looked wrong at Bouchée or his house. Bouchée told me in 2048, just before his name became a household word, that he would trade all three of his ex-wives and a future first-round draft pick for a clone of this dog.

He also told me to a story where he took on the New Orleans mob in defense of the dog. One morning in 2045 about 1 p.m. Bouchée took Peril out for a walk they were feeling feisty since they were both steroids upped champion specimens. Dressed like movie stars, eight diamond rings, black dyed alligator cowboy boots, open-collared suit and the dog had a jeweled collar of gold, they went for breakfast at the Fleur De Lis in the Quarter. The place was run by a semi-retired pimp called “Pissant” Labonte, who, when he wasn't stabbing people, served some pretty decent Oyster Benedict.

Bouchée was sitting at a booth, the dog under the table, but at the bar was a mafia enforcer named Août La-Verne tripping on acid. He was tossing a Caesar salad made of money and he was
mixing mayonnaise and diced tomatoes with the tongs. Fat greasy and f***ed-up Août was an obese clown. He had been shot in the bladder and carried a catheter and piss bag, but he was a professional killer. He murdered like a Guatemalan drove a nail; it was nothing to him. Août finished his salad with the mayonnaise and tomatoes and sprung up; he navigated clear of the few pimps up at that time of the morning. But, he didn't give the dog near enough room; he stumbled in Bouchée's direction and belched. The dog turned into a blind killer. Totally out of it, Août never saw it coming. Bouchée's 200 lbs of loyal muscle flew and like a T-Rex, broke Hadley's leg and ripped off a huge hunk of meat and then she bit him on the face causing his nose to need some serious surgery. It needed to be re-attached. Piss and blood was everywhere. The dog slid on bloody paws as Bouchée dragged her out of the eatery, barking and growling to the car.

If a condemned man gets a last meal, Bouchée needed the same and he had not finished his oysters. He drove to another restaurant because in a few hours Août would have a new piss bag and catheter, and a new nose and he'd have his .45 looking for his dog. He could have just handed the dog over to one of Crebillion's boys but he couldn't do that. It didn't take a few hours; it took two days before Août hobbled up to Bouchée's door holding crutches and the .45 obviously in his belt. His face was covered in bandages and there was the leg cast and he was drunk.
as a skunk. The killer began banging on the door. Bouchée looked through the peephole and was going to try not to let the mob hit man kill his dog; that was Bouchée.

He put on a shirt he locked the dog in the bathroom and pulled a dresser in front of the bathroom door. He put a 9mm his belt.

"Bouchée, bring that dog out here and I aim to kill it," the fat crippled gangster yelled.

Bouchée spoke to the goon through the door, "She didn't mean it; you scared her. She thought you was coming after me.

Bouchée had never been the fighting type, more like the lover, drinker, doper, and sometimes he was too lazy for even that. Sure, so he had never really been in this spot.

They talked a bit through the door and when the door opened, Août was persuaded mostly by the teary eyes. Bouchée was for real. But who knows; the 9 mm was probably evident under his shirt. Maybe Août didn't feel like gambling, on crutches and his nose and cheek screwed up.

Août grunted a truce and hobbled over to the couch, put with the .45 out on the table, and he said that he'd let the dog live if he got a puppy from her next litter. Bouchée quickly agreed; it was a small price to pay for peace. Août and Bouchée even became friends. Août never got a permit to carry a gun in a
government building, as two different Louisiana lawyers now tell me, there wasn’t such a thing but he did get a nice pup.

After the incident, Peril became something of a pariah; she could clear a barroom or restaurant in seconds and it got so Bouchée had to leave her outside in the car. She could spend hours on hours watching people come and go and she could distinguish what was going on inside, eating or drinking. A few times she heard gunshots inside and saw people fleeing the exits; she became depressed and Bouchée said it caused premature aging. Sure she survived and had nice healthy pups but she was never the same.

As depressed as the dog was she still had the gumption not to flinch when confronted. Early one morning about an hour after Bouchée turned in for sleep (8 a.m.) a rock crashed through his front room window before Bouchée had his senses the dog ran out the dogue door and raised hell like a Saints fan of old, before the Superdome collapsed from neglect. He jumped out of bed and looked outside; all he could see was his dog drooling and full of rage. By that time, she was an old dog, but something was clearly on her mind; obviously, the broken window. At any moment, she might scale the fence and someone was there; it was a man in a black suit standing there with his arm cock back ready to lunch another Drew Brees and there was some jughead in a Pink Floyd t-shirt trying to shush Peril. He looked like a
lame pro-wrestling referee trying to wave someone off the top rope. It was Sean Michael Crebillion in the suit and Sammy Barcena, in the t-shirt, was the bodyguard and driver.

Crebillion, of course, was then godfather and the richest crime boss in what used to be the United States. Bouchée looked out the broken window; he steps on the broken glass but that wasn't near as bad as the look Crebillion gave him.

"Bouchée get up; get your ass out here," he shouted with a red face. "I don't want to be seen knocking on that damn door; you hear me?"

This was pretty much an excuse not to shoot the dog.

Bouchée was the premiere pimp in New Orleans and throwing rocks through a window was evidently better than shooting a dog and then knocking on a pimp's door?

Worried the dog wouldn't wait, Bouchée rushed and fell in the glass, he picked himself up and noticed the three prostitutes and Alex Cimabue, the lawyer, hadn't woken. They hadn't even stirred it seemed. Bouchée carefully walked out in the front yard and quieted his dog, who had more civility than any ten women, once she calmed down. She stopped drooling, still Crebillion was clearly afraid of her. Peril knew the score; She'd seen men and dogs shot, but to hell with that, she'd s*** out the remains of any crime boss stupid enough to throw a second rock at the house. Bouchée was pretty adamant she could
count. So with 10 years under her belt, she had the wherewithal to know Crebillion was in charge.

Crebillion always skipped the formalities and got to the point, “Wake up and get that skinny-ass lawyer out here before I get his f***ing a** myself and he nervously glanced at the dog. Forget the fine suits, Crebillion was a mean-a** criminal; he was far too rich to speak with such little class, but he was uneducated. He’d grown up loading and unloading crates of vegetables at the farmers market and had worked his way up from there.

The accents were the worst, if you think about them that way. If you threw together Bouchée, Crebillion, and Cimabue, the high-end lawyer who outside of court thought he was black, anyone from outside of Louisiana wouldn’t understand what they were talking about.

“He’s going to come with us,” Crebillion continued, “Tell his redneck-a** we got girls and all the food he wants, just no meth; you hear me man? No pipes, no needles, dat f***!”

Crebillion’s new attorney was a miserable addict, whose greatest love in life was meth and he had just spent four days in a constant buzz. Toward the end, Cimabue had run out of dope and second had taken a handful of sleeping pills. Crebillion would fly into a rage if he found his lawyer an exhausted idiot.”
Bouchée took time to contemplate poor Cimabue who had been higher than Mary the Mother of Jesus four days/daze. He was on Bouchée's couch and hadn’t moved through all of it.

Crebillion had two fishing camps he could clear at a moment's notice and Cimabue hated both. Women sure, food sure, but they were so isolated and everyone there 100% loyal to Crebillion, which meant no bump and he detested having to fish sober.

Cimabue didn't mind the camp at Unice, over in the corner of Louisiana, he claimed he could see to Cuba, were Vlad Castro had re-established the casinos for Mexican guests and he was making millions importing German cars into the once rundown island now turned gambling mecca. Not bad for the great-grandson of a dead communist dictator. As smart as Cimabue was when sober, when f***ed-up, he always felt the need to reminded Crebillion that that Castro’s German car business in Cuba was doing better than his Peugeot business in New Orleans and that he'd chosen wrong.

Crebillion was unforgiving of his employees, even lawyers, and the only chance anyone had of mollifying him was to get the old man talking about the cataclysm. No one in the west knew for certain who’d done it, both sides claim credit, but clearly that was for domestic consumption (for Koreans and Iranians). So,
despite five generations living in New Orleans, Crebillion was Cajun and full talk of revenge. But against who?

“I need him for that court thing. I need to borrow him to the fish camp, get a plan together to deny it all,” Crebillion continued.

Generally, he never explained anything, maybe it was the dog that made him more polite that day, maybe he was scared President Turenne would sacrifice him for peace and reelection.

Bouchée offered to drive out to Freeport, in west Louisiana, where the guns were still waiting, being staged, but Crebillion said he wasn’t getting rid of them. He wasn't stopping “s***” and that the legal drama was just cosmetics. The gun-running would continue.

He didn't ask Bouchée how he knew about Freeport. Bouchée knew a lot for a pimp and provider of fun. “Bouchée,” Crebillion said in a slow stubborn tone, “I said go get his ass and put him in this car.”

Inside, Cimabue was a potted plant, drooling on the couch, his head wedged between a hooker’s knees. Bouchée could have picked him up and carried him outside like a bag of dog food; he was worried his friend and housemate might never wake up. He deadlifted the lawyer, but Cimabue dog paddled and then turned away and fell onto the couch again; falling on top of what must have been the boneyist hooker in the city, woke him up. He
murmured that his mother had dropped him a few times then he was when he was young and he didn’t like it, but that he was okay. Bouchée had the intention of carrying him to the car. Naked as the lawyer was and trying not to piss off the man outside waiting, but at the same time not wanting to insult the idea of compassion, pulled on Cimabue’s shorts and shirt. No addict deserves to be wholly naked in the light of day and delivered into the arms of an angry Cajun under indictment.

Bouchée shook his roommate until he couched his eyes open, “Listen, Alex you got Jean Michael Crebillion and Sammy Barcena out front waiting; don't act like a f*** up. They don't know you've been up four days,” there was a hushed Cajun reality to his accent. Cajuns can do more with their tone of voice than most breeds.

Alex Cimabue blinked and looked betrayed or like perhaps this was nothing but a prank. Finally, the gravity of the situation brought him out of his stupor. Wide awake, Cimabue seemed ready for action. Cimabue stood, swayed left then right, and then steadied himself and walked to the front porch, where his legs went out from under him. He didn’t fall apart at the tumble; Cimabue was a bobcat and knew how to walk in on a razor's edge.

Cimabue loved the underworld and sought out every danger available. He was a hippie lawyer who wanted gangster clients
and he had them; of course, they paid him in girls, free food and sometimes simply access to the table when they were just chilling, but always they paid him in dope. Basically, he represented the worst of the worst, and he wagered his life every month or so on his legal ability.

Someone had screwed up and told Crebillion he’d never see a jail cell for moving guns into Texas, “f*** the politicians; Turenne needs you more than you think. Who’s going to do this his favors?”

Crebillion wasn't dumb about elections; while not much of the old world still existed, but elections still took place in Louisiana.

That said, Crebillion would hold Cimabue responsible, even if the Attorney General rolled over him with a street grader, but the man had been ‘promised’ by someone. Funny how a Cajun gangster will lie to everyone like there's a free deer lease that comes with every eight-ball, but if someone broke their word then they'd be dead and coyote eaten out at one of those leases.

Eventually,, Bouchée came to doubt the entire story about needing a defense to the gun-running charges if they ever really existed. Août La-Vern, whose streetname was “Magnum PI” (personal indemnity), and Bouchée and a lot of other people made the connection years later that Cimabue was also Août La-Vern’s
attorney and that maybe there wasn't any legal crisis. It might have been Cimabue real job to helping Crebillion pull the puppet strings on the man who shot Turenne's rival David Joe Philphyfe, a Laotian in 2048.

Cimabue would be grilled about his part in the supposed mafia conspiracy; every policeman and reporter in Louisiana.

It was the standing topic in every barber shop in Louisiana, how long Cimabue had to live. What's important to know is that Cimabue’s life was endangered long before anyone was shot in Baton Rouge; if he faltered in any respect Crebillion might have chainsawed him in into pieces, probably out at one of the Fish Camps he hated so much.

And Bouchée was smack in the middle!

Facing the likelihood maybe someday would murder him, Cimabue picked himself up and walked out the gate, past the dog and got in the car. Bouchée swears up and down to this day, the dog was not “perplexed;” she tilted her head in “wonderment.”

Bouchée Thibodeaux's exile from New Orleans was reluctant, but his move to Texas was opportunistic. The first reason for it was the assassination of David Joe Philphyfe (Asian-American and candidate for the Louisiana presidency). Something simple that people have made complexed, someone known to Bouchée killed him probably Août La-Vern. It was probably done at the request of John Michael Crebillion but ultimately on the orders of
President Turenne. Then the history books are full of Sam Barcena killing Août La-Vern in the Baton Rouge police station. Really simple; Bouchée's network was out of control.

The second reason for Bouchée moving to Texas was actually more complicated than Bouchée running with almost everyone involved in the most famous political assassination in all of Louisiana history. It was more of a French Quarter reason opposed to a Baton Rouge reason.

You might realize from other sources that the lying c********* Jim Waugh would have never been New Orleans District Attorney if not for the cataclysm and it certainly never would have happened on in the days of Bouchée's great-grandfather; Edwin Edwards never would have allowed it. Problem was that Waugh was not the clean honest unbridgeable servant of the Pelican Nation as he portrayed himself. The opposite; he was as crooked and shifty as anyone, just as corrupt as Crebillion or Turenne. For Waugh to persuade the public he’d solve the assassination of Philphyfe was a coup of sorts on the way to being a Louisiana hero. He was truly a freak of nature; first he was six foot eight and a bisexual with an oversized melon-shaped head and he had enormous hunger for red-headed wh***s and swinger orgies and blonde drag queens down in the Quarter. The hookers called him the “Jolly Yellow Giant” because of his jaundice yellow skin and the size of his member. The police
called him “Mickey Mantle” because he was a switch hitter and wield a virtual Louisville Slugger. He was elected because it was assumed that a bisexual sex fiend was the easiest type of politician to handle and straight ones had always been unmanageable.

The mafia were also happy with the government’s lead investigator, Piercy Mulraux. Strange but Mulraux was the most corrupt cop in the history of the city. Think about that a bit! In the history of New Orleans! Melrose’s reputation as a backstabber and sleaze ball was humbling to every other Crescent City hustler.

His resume was long: ballot stuffing, bribery, informant, sexual deviant, male prostitute, gay bar owner, political bagman and spy for the government of Mexico and later it was, “lying spy for the government of Mexico” too. With a pencil mustache and greasy hair, Mulraux was so disreputable a person almost immediately assumed everything he said was a lie and most of the time they were right. He was compulsive not only about fibbing but also about stealing. Will power or planning played no part in his life and if not for his friendship with Waugh he had never have become the lead investigator on such a famous and political case.

It's a miracle he survived. He'd been kicked off the New Orleans Police Department; imagine that happening. He’d stolen
$150,000 from before the catastrophe and gone on an orgastic bender in Amsterdam; he was there when it happened. In the aftermath of the EMP his conduct made it all the way back to Louisiana and they let him go. With all the trouble in the world, the chaos, they were still able to get rid of him. Mulraux rebounded by working for the State Patrol, where he fit in perfectly in that nest of vipers. He invested everything he could steal in in a gay bar called The Hole which had a reputation for rolling and blackmailing the closeted clients.

So the mafia let Waugh and Malraux into office. Surely no DA's office run by these two men would present a substantial problem. Mulraux collected the campaign donations and bribes from every topless bar, bordello, casino, bar, and dispensary in the city. This was done with the express promise of immunity from prosecution. Rumors were the two men (Waugh and Malraux) were more than political partners.

Immediately after the election the Jolly Yellow C******* set about killing the Quarter and burning down Bouchée Thibodeaux's life. It immediately became clear that Waugh had ambitions to higher office, probably the presidency, which was silly since no candidate was has ever had a less a chance in a nationwide election then an obviously crooked New Orleans District Attorney.
Looking for good publicity from the first day, Waugh went after the loudest pray possible, the Quarter. The climber who cleaned up the French Quarter would receive the admiration and vote of every born-again Christian (half the country). But this was where it got complicated, and few seem to understand there were very few targets he could actually arrest. The mafia, bookmakers, drug dealers were untouchable because he was terrified of Crebillion and he couldn't close and prosecute the gay bars because of his own personal history. All that was left for him where the w**** houses, which we're in the backyard of the police superintendent, a man named Joe Fine. Surely the district attorney would not go to war with the superintendent of police. What was to be done?

Well he went after every bordello in the city. The newspaper carried it above the fold for thirteen days straight; this was done in spite of arguably a more important “Mexican War of Aggression” in the Amazon and the growing insurrection in Texas’ Civil War. It was a sick play to gain the approval of the western Jesus vote. The East could care less what happened in the Quarter; most of the East were worried about surviving in unsettled times. The west wanted into Heaven.

Unfortunately, Crebillion was unable to respond; he had pretty clearly been responsible for the Laotian’s death. Sam Barcena was in jail for killing the triggerman.
Waugh and Mulraux’s war on the French Quarter caused the exodus of money that began in 2047 and it quickly took on apocalyptic proportions. It was incredible to see the glamorous hookers running out of the Quarter. It wasn’t long before the better girls were in Galveston and Havana and the better drugs as well.

Bouchée’s “Apple Tree” was just one of the victims. The morning after Waugh’s undercover agents infiltrated “The Apple Tree,” Bouchée bailed himself out of jail and drove to Shreveport and told Crebillion’s men he was in charge now. That New Orleans could go to h***, that he was going to Texas. They moved about 1,800 AR-15s and other assorted weapons down to Grand Chenier, a new staging area where the weapons could be brought over by boat.

What is thus far unexplained in history, and journalists have interviewed hundreds, is how a plan as simple as a smuggling operation became a full-blown invasion and how the Louisiana shrimp boats became an armada.

**EXT. HENDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS**

Cowboy and his friend spent the night that followed their encounter with the devil under some tall shade trees at a rest stop in Henderson County and Cowboy, having been persuaded by Juan, ate some of the provisions carried by the moped.
During their supper, Juan said to his friend, “Cowboy, what a fool I would have been if I'd chosen the spoils of the first adventure you’re a** completed. As my reward instead I now have my choice of three full-sized motorbikes. It's true; a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

“Even so,” responded Cowboy, “if you, Juan, had allowed me to attack as I wished to, at the best, at the very least, you would have had as spoils a bus to deliver your precious tequila. You could have painted a big rattler on the side with your logo.”

“I didn’t think about that.”

“What were you thinking?”

“How imbarrassing with is to drive a Chinese electric vehicle.”

“What about what was inside? At least you could have had the gold stars of Patton and the painted wings of an Angel. I would have taken them by force and place them with you,” speculated Cowboy.

“Not at the same time, you wouldn't have,” pointed out Juan.

“That might have been awkward,” replied Cowboy, “because it wouldn't be right if the finery in plays were really available to the good people instead of illusionary. Have you ever seen a play that presents presidents, occupation generals, pontiffs,
soldiers and harlots and other ‘establishment’ characters? One plays the rogue, another the liar, this one the merchant, and that one the soldier, another the wise-ass, yet another the foolish lover, but when the play's over and they have taken off their costumes and all the actors are equal."

“Yes, I've seen that,” responded Juan, “well the same thing happens in the drama business and business of politics were some play occupation generals, others pontiff, some federal police.”

“Be sure all the figures that can be presented in a play will be on stage, but at the end, which is when life is over this removes all the buttons and funny clothes that differentiated them and all are equal in a common grave.”

“Does that mean,” responded Juan, “we're going to kill some Mexican politicos?”

“Everyday, Juan,” said Cowboy, “you are becoming less simple and more intelligent.”

“It's a fine comparison,” said Juan, “though I’m not so new that I haven't heard it many times before like the one about civil war and football; as long as high school lasts, each kid on the team has his particular ranking (social position) depending what position he plays, but when the season is over they are mixed and jumbled and thrown together in a high school with girls, and some of them have brains, you know.”

“I like that analogy,” said Cowboy.
“Yes, some of your wisdom has stuck to my ribs,” responded Juan, “spread a little manure on a field and you're bound to produce some fruit.”

Cowboy rarely chuckled, but he lost it at the manure analogy but he did think that what he said about the change in him was true, because from time to time Juan was really improving himself. His friend was still a simpleton prone to plunging into the depth of ignorance, but both his analogies and proverbs, regardless if they were topical or not, were greatly improved and his stupidity was less recently.

They spent a good part of the night in this and other interactions like it, until Juan felt the desire to “close the barn door” with his eyes, as he said when he wanted to sleep. Finally, Juan fell asleep under a picnic table and Cowboy dosed on top of it.

Not much time had gone by when Cowboy was awakened by noise out in the parking area and turning he began to listen and look in the direction of the sound and he saw that there were two men on motorcycles and that one dropped to the ground said to the other, “Get down my friend, turn off your b****; this seems to me a good spot for the night. I'd like some silence and solitude.”

His companion asked, “more lamented tonight?”
And not waiting for the answer the companion drove to the very far end of the rest stop picked out a table and went to sleep on it saying nothing and laying down on a picnic table.

These travelers looked nearly identical to our travelers, Juan and Cowboy. The leader lay down his pistol, clanked the table in a telling way, a clear sign to Cowboy who recognized that he must be a ranger. And going up to Juan, who was asleep under the table, Cowboy grasp his armed and with no gentle effort brought him to consciousness.

Juan Seguin, shaken and hearing voices, suddenly rose up forgetting that he was under the picnic table; he bonked his noggen so loudly that Cowboy laughed.

“Shut up, I think my skull is broken open,” Juan said.

“Brother Juan, we have an adventure.”

“I hope it's profitable,” said Juan.

“As sure as church, there’s profit,” said Cowboy.

“And where is this crosstitute, this b***, adventure?

“Where?” replied Cowboy, “turn around and look lying on the far picnic table there you'll see a Ranger; and from what I can tell he’s not happy and when he lay down I could hear his side arm clank against the table.”

“But where is the profit?” asked Juan.

“I don't mean to say,” respond to Cowboy, “that this is a profit just laying about, but rather the start of some profit.
This is the way profit begins, but it seems as if he's tuning a guitar and considering how he's clearing his throat."

"He must be preparing to sing something big."

"Any cowboy can carry a tune. The trouble comes when he tries to unload it."

"Maybe he's in love," responded Juan. "There isn't any Ranger who isn't," said Cowboy, "Well, there isn't any profit in that."

Cowboy said, "let's listen to him and if he does sing. Maybe we'll learn is his thoughts for the tongue speaks from the overflowing heart."

Juan wanted to reply, but the voice of the cowboy was from Montague, which was neither very bad or very good. The song prevented Juan from speaking up and men we've been following two listened in wonder.

The only thing our travelers learned was that the ranger was from Spanish Fort and that he was in love with a small-town big-city stripper, a girl who traveled weekends from her Mickey Mouse little town to Fort Worth. And all the Mexicans wanted to tip her.

With an "Oh" torn apparently from the very depths of his heart the cowboy from Spanish Fort ended his song and then a short while later in a sad and sorrowful voice he said, "how can the most beautiful and ungrateful woman in Texas look so sleek.
and for a peso a peek, let the Mexicans make her acquaintance and then leave, leaving me a captive heart to be consumed and to parish in continual wanderings and aimless labor's. I'd rather be in Fort Worth, but now I'm obliged like all the cowboys of Tyler, Longview, Marshall and Jefferson to support the landing of the liberation army when the location is selected?"

"Oh, no, Jefferson?" said Cowboy,

"We're from Marion County," Juan remembered.

"I've not agreed to any such thing, and I would not confess to anything so secret."

"Did you agree to attack any port?" Juan asked.

"I think I did."

"With Salty's father?"

"But what's with this cowboy?"

"He seems to be talking nonsense but maybe he'll say more."

"He's bound to say more."

"He complains about life like a b****," Juan said.

But that didn't happen because the cowboy of Spanish Fort, hearing voices speaking nearby, lamented no more. But he rose to his feet and said in a loud but courteous voice, "Who is it? Who are you? Do you count yourself among the half-full or half-empty crowd?"

"Full," responded Cowboy and "Empty," responded Juan at the same time.
“Shh, he wasn’t speaking to you, Juan!” Cowboy scolded his friend.

“Confusion. Then approach,” responded the cowboy from Spanish Fort, “and you will realize that you are approaching distress and pessimism personified.”

Cowboy, feeling his reply was the most genuine, approached him with Juan following.

The sad cowboy grasp Cowboy’s hand saying, “Sit here, Sir. Lucky me to find you sleeping out like this where there’s solitude and I see you wake up in the morning with the night’s dew as your companion.”

“The natural law lodging of Rangers.”

“So, I understand that you, you're probably a great patriot and the one who can lead us to the fighting? Are you indeed traveling to meet the fleet on the coast?”

To which Cowboy responded, “I am a Ranger of the profession you mentioned and I am headed for the expected battle.

“And the glass is half full?”

Well, though my girl has been turned into a hideous meth-addict, moles on her face, this doesn't mean that hope has left me entirely. I gathered from what you say from your song a little while ago that yours is ‘zoned,’ and probably a ‘mercy me,’ and I mean the result of the love you have for this dancer is great, but its not interrupting your journey to the coast.”
During this conversation, they sat together on a concrete table in peace and good fellowship, as if at break of day they would not need to shoot each other up. They appeared far too similar for this.

“By any chance,” the cowboy of Spanish Fork asked Cowboy, “are you a patriot as well as in love with a stripper as well?”

“Unfortunately, I am not,” responded Cowboy, “I doubt a dancer would be so affected by malady.”

“But still, you too are escaping the responsibility of love to go where?

“The coast is south of here. And yes, I once considered the attraction to my love a merry addiction, but with the adventures I have had the last few days, I know can say looking on her is now more of a chore.”

“It's sad,” said the cowboy from Spanish Fort, “but I can't begin anything resembling revenge and win the heart of my love until I learn the proper location and time of the invasion.”

“You want me to divulge the arrival of the invasion fleet?”

“No, of course not. He can't say,” said Juan, who was close to them... “because his arrangements and even his rank are secret.”

“This is your friend?” asked the cowboys from Spanish Fort.

“Yes it is,” responded Cowboy.
The farmer friend of the cowboy from Spanish Fork arrived and took Juan by the arm and said, “let's go where we can talk in a private way about how we can work together to help our warrior friends. Help the revolution and win their loves. In the morning they'll probably have a plan for us to follow, but we should be loyal enough to them to try to help. Right?”

“Alright then,” said Juan, “we’ll swap stories, and in the morning we'll see what happens.”

The farmer said this to move Juan and they moved away and their conversation was just as whimsical as the one between warriors was weighty.

EXT. HENDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS

The two cowboys and two friends were separated. The friends, Juan and Pascal, returning to their lives and wives, but the history in this chapter relates to the conversation of the friends and then goes to that of their combative superiors and so its told that as they moved a short distance away, the farmer, Pascal, from Montague said to Juan, “We have a difficult life, friend, those of us who flow these self-appointed Rangers at any coast.”

“The truth is when we eat our bread sometimes there is sweat pouring off our brows down onto it. I hate when that
happens, but my friend is legitimate and he’s going to the coast
to be sofishticated,” Juan related.

“Cry havoc and sweat slip the dogs of war,” the farmer came
back, “If it’s not graining cats and dogs, then you are sweating
the world on fire and at the same time salting your bread.”

“You could also say,” added Juan, “that we eat it through
our frosty breath because no one surfers more heat and cold then
these Cowboys? If we ate more, it would be easier because
sorrows fade a little with bread but sometimes we can go a day
or two with nothing for breakfast but the wind.”

“The wind leading the wind,” said the man from Spanish
Fort, “But it’s bearable because of our hope of a reward because
if the sun of a beach is not killed to order, the friend who
tags along might be awarded a hospital or fine church.”

“I've,” replied Juan, “already told my friend that I ignore
pier-pressure. I'll be content with an island and he's so noble
and generous that he keeps reminding me of his promise.”

“Overseas promises and territories,” said the farmer from
Spanish Fork, “I’d hate to get tided down, I’ll be satisfied
with a mega church as payment for my efforts and my friend has
already set aside one for me and what a large building it will
be. Eight collection plates!”

“Your friend,” said Juan, “must be an ecclesiastical kind
of cowboy who can do favors like that, but mine is a layman
though I do remember when some very wise people, so I think, they were malicious two advised him to become a minister but he only wanted political office and I was trembling at the thought he’d settle for a church because I didn’t think he was qualified to hold any religious off a seas.”

“Well, the truth is you you’re mistaken about the island,” said the farmer from Spanish Fort, “because naut all coastal counties are a shore thing. Many shrimply have had all their wealth conchfishcated, are poor and some might have a bit of wealth remaining but are just gloomy…”

“Waterever, I don’t care. Life is a beach. I’m unlucky anyway.”

“Oh, good ones. You are catching on. And they call this Ranger life shore boring?”

“Seas the day!”

“So what about this opportunity.”

“You mean why am I doin’ this?”

“Beach better have my money.”

“Your friend, net sure where he’s going?

“Cray-sea.”

“Whale, why then?”

“His gull friend, of course.” Juan said.

“What? Him in a relationship? Is there are a pun in the oven?”
“I don’t even really think I can commit on that.”
“You’re not very engaged in this conversation.”
“No, their love is a battlefield, for sorts.”
“My friend has survived pepper spray and mustard gas and is now a seasoned veteran. But his feet are bad.”
“Nukin’ like a good war. Good for the sole,” Juan said.
“I’m curious are you the type to carry a gun, or a pun?”
“I like guns, when you have a gun you don’t have to work out!”
“Very abs trek,” the farmer quiped.
“You got pecks, I got techs,” Juan said.
“Mexican’s come for your pecks yet?”
“It would be a fairly difficult pun-dertaking!”
“Hitlarious, how the germans just handed their guns over.”
“I’m 1836% sure that ain’t gonna happen here.”
“I guess you lost your cattle then? I guess your not amoozed,” the farmer grinned.
“There was a real beef with them, but they did knot get the cattle. We’re from East Texas, the trees. They took the timber.”
“Timber… Uhhaha… Trees… uh….
“Can’t think of Juan?”
Oh, my friend you did it. You are the winner!
“All good things come to tree who waits.”
“Congratulations. You are better man than me.”
“I aspire to be the most witty of county judges, equally lampooned and lauded.”

“You know you don’t look like the sort who can pun, I mean run.”

“A criminal’s best asset is his lie ability.”

“Oh, I give up. You are too quip for me.”

“I don’t want to punish you.”

“It’s important that we get along.”

“I don’t generally do this, but you’ve groan on me!”

“Okay, we will stop. But, friend, even the proudest counties and best of them bring a heavy burden of cares and troubles that has to be born on the shoulders of the unlucky county judge.”

“It would be much better for those of us who perform this miserable service to our friends to return at home and do some easier work like making tequila or butchering snakes, for there isn’t a Texan that can’t make a living at this.”

“What would happen if you put the venom in the tequila.”

“Are you trying to trick me?” asked Juan.

“Well, I wasn’t; did I say something wrong?”

“Well, the truth is I have an interesting business gemick, putting the snake venom in tequila, making and marketing the concoction as ‘rattlesnake tequila.’”

“Is that legal?”
“You mean will there be any fugitive damages if I sell it.”

“The Mexican’s know you’re doing this?”

“Well, that’s takes the snake! There is a rebellion and you want to know, if I’m a wanted lucrative on the run?”

“I mean, can you even do that?”

“Well, it’s not sleazy, they don’t like it so much and they get agitated, but sometimes ‘yes.’ I can get motivated, but sometimes I don’t get the venom in the bottle. My wife is much better at is then me.”

“Your wife?”

“She is better than me, but I don’t care so long as she snakes me in her arms at night.”

“You are joking again!”

“I snake no bones about it, I’m the better man.”

“I don’t care about that... what about your clients?”

“Snake them offers they can't refuse.”

“Their health?”

“You mean like will it cause a cerebral tequila?”

“Never heard of it.”

“You know, where stupid builds up around the brain?”

“Well, I hope they think long an hard before drinking it.”

“They can’t tell if there is venom on it or not?”

“I sell it as if I’ve been successful, label and all, they can't tell if the juice is in there, not from taste alone.”
“So why milk the snakes? If your clients don’t get any kick from it, you’re just…”

“Sick from it either way, but happy sales are here again, according to my wife.”

“But still…

“Just trying to snake it in this ‘peso’ poor Texas economy.”

“Really?”

“My friend, there talking to your friend, he can make out the taste and it’s true he can; we tested his Lindsay Lohan and he can taste a drop of venom in a bathtub of tequila and I can’t and it was my idea, and he won’t drink tequila without it.”

“You are an oddly freethinking man.”

“He turns his nose up at it unless it’s laced.”

“And you are the second behind a celebrity crazed cowboy.”

“I snake my own kind of music, I recon.”

“I give up, friend, you have bested my at my own game.”

“I snake no prisoners at these games.”

“Okay. Okay; I give up. The truth of the matter,” responded the farmer from Spanish Fork, “is that I’ve decided to leave the crazy goings-on of this cowboy and go back to my village and rear my children and I have three beautiful pearls.”
“I have,” two said Juan, “a boy who could be president of the new Texas and a girl who might marry one. I wish and hope, but her mother is opposed.”

“And how old is this boy ready to stab backs and girl who's being brought up to be a president's wife?” asked the farmer.

“Sixteen and fifteen, give or take a couple of months,” responded Juan, “he can really kick a soccer ball and she's as tall as a basketball goal and as fresh as a morning in April and as strong as a laborer. And wholesome too.”

“Those are qualities,” responded the farmer, “not only for any political but a nymph of the prairie. Ohwh***andsome, I mean wholesome, but that damn that little wh*** can sing.”

“To which,” Juan replied, rather crossley, “she isn't a w**** and neither was her mother and neither of them will ever be one as long as I'm alive. And speak more politely; for someone who's in the company of a patriot you aren't very careful with your words.”

“Oh friend, you don't understand,” replied the farmer, “its only a game.”

“Have you never been to one of the illegal baseball games? When the hitter hits the ball over the fence for a homerun or when anyone does anything to score a run they all applaud and face the wife or girlfriend, they smile and cheer her.”

“No.”
"Well the crowd always shout 'Ohwh***andsome!' then demanded that the girl sing, 'Homerun With Me Tonight, Baby.' And then they answer her with, 'Wholesome, but that damn that little wh*** can sing.'"

"I disavow this practice," responded Juan, "and in that sense and for that reason, your ass could dump a whole wh***house on me and my children and wife because everything they do and say deserves the best compliments and I want to see them again. I don't like this mortally dangerous work that I've fallen into a second time, tempted and cured by a purse with a hundred gold pesos that I found in the heart of the Davis Mountains and my friend is leading me to the coast, I can’t even say where, with dreams of money and power and every step I take I dream to touch it with my hands and put my arms around it and buy great vats and buy properties and collect rents and live like a rich man that controls the county and when I'm thinking about that my friendship is strong, but all the while I try I think he's more madman than Ranger."

"That," respond the farmer, "is like they say that it's greed that tears the sack and if we're going to talk about insane cowboys there's nothing in the world crazier than my friend because he's the one who pretends to have lost his wits to help another Cowboy find his and he goes around looking for adventure."
“A big time rush?”

“Not so much.”

“A big time love.”

“Yes,” said the farmer, “with a certain Conception from Henrietta the cruelest lady in Clay County and the easiest to look at in Texas but visibility isn't her greatest asset in his eye. Monday through Friday she waits tables at the Longhorn, where he goes to stop the growling in his belly.”

“Nothing wrong with a bowl of beans.”

“They cook beans everywhere, but in my house they do it by the pot full. Craziness must have more companions and friends than wisdom.”

“Weekends she’s on the pole down at Babydolls.”

“Grilled beef.”

“But if what they say is true, misery loves company, then I can find comfort with you because you serve a patriot whose as great a fool as my friend.”

“There's no road so smooth,” replied Juan, “that it doesn't have some obstacle or stumbling block.

“Fool, we should go home,” responded the farmer. “These fellows are ruining out names, our chances for promotion. Scoundrels.”

“There's nothing of the scoundrel in him,” Juan explained, “Mine is innocent as a puppy. He doesn't know how to harm any
one. He can only do good to everybody, and there's no malice in him. A child could convince him night is in the middle of the day and because he's simple. I love him with all my heart and couldn't leave him no matter how many crazy things he does.”

“Even so, sir,” said the farmer, “if the blind man leads the blind man they're both in danger of falling into the ditch. Brother, we better leave soon and go back where we came from, people who look for adventure don't always find good ones.”

Juan spit out a certain kind of sticky dry saliva and said, “I think we've talked so much our tongues are sticky, stickin' to the roofs of our mouths.”

“I have an unsticker in my saddle bag and it's a pretty good one too.” And the farmer stood up and came back in a little while carrying a large bottle of tequila. And the farmer also and brought back a plate of tamales and when Juan saw this he said, “Sir, you have both tamales AND tequila?”

“Well, what did you think,” responded the Juan, “I'm not by any chance a run-of-the-mill sidekick.”

“I don’t know, I’m only guessing.”

“Well, I can tell you I carry better provisions on my cycle than that Mexican general does in one of those armored buses.”

Juan ate without having to be asked twice and in the dark he wolfed down piston size bites and he said, “you’re faithful and true right and proper and a great cook, as this feast shows
and if you haven't come here by some miracle of luck at least it seems that way to me, but I'm so poor and unlucky that all I had in my saddle bag was as a bottle of tequila."

The farmer put down the bottle and breathed fire, “So potent I use it as a weapon.”

“I think we are going to be great friends.”

“Keeping the tamales company are some beans and pecans.”

“Thanks to the poverty of my friend, who insists Rangers in any era must live off dried fruit and nuts, my stomach is used to thistles and wild peaches.”

“Let our friends have their rules what to eat what their code command. I have my basket of food.”

“And I have a two more bottles of this stuff in my saddlebag.”

“You are devoted to it?”

“I love it so much I can't go more than a few hours without a taste.”

And saying this the farmer laid the bottle in Juan’s hands, who tilted it back and put it in his mouth and looked at the stars for what seemed like five minutes and when he was finished drinking he lay his head to one side leaving a great sight, said, “Ohwh***andsome! Wholesome, but that damn that little wh*** can sing.”

“What?” the farmer chuckled.
“She is a damned rascal, but she really can sing.”

“So, you see,” said the farmer, “you want to complemented the tequila by calling it a w****.”

“And I say,” responded Juan, “that I now know it's no big deal to call something a w**** when your saying it as a compliment. But tell me, is this tequila from Duval County?”

“Bravo, what a great set of taste buds,” responded the farmer, “it's from there and no place else and it's aged an entire year.”

“You can't fool me,” said Juan, “you shouldn't think it was beyond me to know about tequila; I know where it comes from its taste, ingredients and age and how it will change. It's because in my family, on my father's side, where the two best tequila distilleries in the Old Texas.”

Juan tasted it with a tip of his tongue only and then swallowed it immediately.

“He added juniper berries to the mash.”

The other only brought it up to his nose, “and he added peach pealin’s.”

Juan contemplated things.

“It occurred to me to use rattlesnake the second time the federal police came to inspect my vats.”

“Trying to kill ‘em?”
“ Didn’t work, ” responded Juan. “ But they kept testin’ and testin’ and kept testin’ it and it didn’t kill ‘em. ”

“ Well, not right away anyway, that you know of. ”

“ They loved it and loved it so much they didn’t even wreck the place or close me down. ”

“ Fine, ya? ”

“ Nope. Said I was an artist. So I begin my very own mark. ”

“ That’s why I say, ” said the farmer, “ that we should stop looking for trouble and, from the Spanish for, ‘ if we have Greyhounds we shouldn’t go around looking for Chihuahuas’ and we ought to go back home. Luck will find us at home and we won’t be shot for it hunting for it. ”

“ Thanks, but I’ll tag along with my friend, until after we’re rid of the tyrants; after that we’ll work something out. Don’t worry. ”

In short, the two men traded back-and-forth the man’s tequila and the two men drank so much that only sleep stopped the bragging and lie telling for it was impossible to drink it any other way. With mouths half full of tamales, they fell asleep.

EXT. HENDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS

The history says that the cowboy from Spanish Fort said to our Cowboy, “ Finally sir, I want you to know that my dumb luck
or I should say my own indiscretion led me to fall for this peach, Conception of Henrietta. I call her peach because of her sweet taste and bronze complexion. This girl, Conception then, I guess repaid my thoughts and the attention I paid her by having me pull all sort so dangerous stunts, promising me at the end of each one my hopes would be realized. But all this crap she asked me to do, this has been going on for so long that I have lost count and I figure she’s just messing with me because she keeps piling them on me and I have no idea which will be the final one that puts me with her.”

“On one occasion she ordered me to challenge that famous Beltran Ramos of San Diego called ‘Pelon’ who is as slippery and strong as if he were made of bronze. She is the most changeable and fickle woman in Texas.”

“So what happened?”

“I came. I saw. I conquered.”

“And?

“Nothing, she gave me only a slight grin.”

“It’s too bad, but were either of you high?”

“Another time, she ordered me to weigh the testicles of the bucking bull of the Fort Worth Stock Show and an undertaking better suited for idiots and Cowboy, on another occasion she ordered me to hurl and fling myself and a flimsy parachute into
the Palo Duro Canyon and bring her a detailed report of what fossils are at the bottom. She also asked me to halt trains between Laredo and San Antonio.”

“So?”

“I weighed the testicles in Fort Worth. I threw myself into the canyon, found a bunch of fossils, and my hopes are deader than death and her commands and disdain for my safety was more anxious than ever.

“There' are two theories to deal with a woman like that.”

“And?”

“Neither one works.”

“Tell me about it. Most recently she ordered me to travel through all the counties of Texas and have all the Rangers wondering there tell me where they would be meeting.”

“Good luck with that.”

“Why? If I profess my loyalty to an independent Texas and speak loudly that the Mexican occupation must end.”

“Still most will not divulge.”

“She wants to organize a force to prepare the beachhead. You want to tell me where?”

“We all got pieces of crazy in us, some bigger pieces than others.”

“I’ve traveled already most of Texas and shot many a man who contradicted me. But what gratifies me the most and I’m most
proud of is having shot the famous *Vaquero de Tejas* and forced him to confess his loyalty to the new free state of Texas. It's a big deal because he conquered them all and I shot his ass; I believe that makes me the very best.”

Cowboy was stunned by what he heard the cowboy from Spanish Fort say. And Cowboy was about to tell him he was lying like a big dog and he had ‘you lie’ on the tip of his tongue but did his best to restrain himself in order to have the cowboy confess his lie with his own mouth and so calmly Cowboy said, “with regard to your having contacted almost all the Rangers of Texas I say nothing, but you having shot the *Vaquero to Tejas* the cowboy from Marion County, about that I have my doubts. It might be you shot someone who resembled him although there are few with his good looks.”

“What do you mean?” replied the cowboy of Spanish Fort, “by a six-pack of the old Busch Beer above us, I fought with the Vaquero and I shot him and won; he is a man of tall stature, a dry face, long lengthy limbs, blond hair and in his face he looks like the great racehorse Street Smart, a somewhat hooked nose and a large blonde handlebar mustache. He used the alias ‘Vaquero’ and for a friend he has a tequila distiller named ‘Juan Seguin.’ He rides a hog named ‘Shovelhead.’ Finally the lady of his desire at one time was a basketball legend known as the ‘Tawakoni Tornado’ and now is known as ‘Salty’ and she runs
a profitable no-kill shelter and if all this is not enough, here are my pistols which gave me the balls to do it."

"Be calm, Sir," said Cowboy, "and hear what I wished to tell. You should know that this Cowboy whom you have mentioned is the dearest friend I have in the world; I could even say that I value him as I do my own person and by the description you have given me which is detailed and accurate only think that he is indeed the one you have conquered. On the other hand, I see with my own eyes and touch with my own hands the impossibility of his being the one and yet there are many f***ed-up people who are his enemies, especially one Mexican who ordinarily pursues him and another Mexican who they say has taken on his appearance and allowed himself to play the fool in order to cheat the real Cowboy of the fame that his deeds have earned. And for a Ranger known throughout the world because of the film they made about him, and as confirmation of this I also point to some bad dope that only two days ago transform the figure and person of Salty into a foul filthy-mouthed peasant. I saw it transform an innocent into a dead soul. And in the same fashion this dope may have effected you. If this isn't enough to persuade you there is Cowboy himself who will defend it vigorously as soon as he arrives."
And saying this, Cowboy rose to his feet and gestured to the pistol and tapped his holster waiting to see what decision the Spanish Fork cowboy would make.

He responded in a tranquil voice, “The man who pays debts, doesn't mind guarantees. I shot the man and can certainly defeat you, but since it's not right for Rangers to engage in duels in the dark, like the thieves in your family, we’ll wait for the daylight whoever wins, if the other survives, will command the him.”

“I am more than happy with this condition and agreement,” responded Cowboy, and having said this they went to the place where their amigos were and found them snoring in the same position they were and when the tequila overcame them. The cowboys woke them and ordered them to ready the machines and prepare the Kevlar because as soon as the sun rose the two of them would engage in bloody single and “unequal combat,” boasted the cowboy.

At this news, Juan was surprised and stunned and worried about the health of his friend because of the brave stories the Spanish Fork cowboy’s friend had told, but without uttering a pun the two friends fired up and positioned the cycles at opposite ends of the rest stop. Juan took the Kevlar vest and laid it beside Shovelhead. Cowboy drank a swig of rattlesnake tequila and smoked a bowl and then paced waiting for the sun.
Waiting, the friend from Spanish Fork, said to Juan, “you should know brother that it's the custom among fighting men in Montague County, when there are el padrino, in any dispute not to stand idly by switching thumbs while their betters fight.”

“Well, the fight they will have probably will not be to the death, however that custom,” responded Juan, “may be accepted and allowed by ruffians and fighting men near the Red but for friends of mobile Rangers it doesn't apply at all, at least I haven't heard Cowboy mentioned the custom and he knows all the rules of combat by heart. No matter how much I'd like it to be true that there's a specific rule that we have to fight, I'd pay whatever fine they make peaceable men pay, so long as it's not more than a few ounces. That will be cheaper than the doctor I'll need to patch my holes and there's something else; it's impossible for me to fight because I don't have a gun and I've never owned one in my life.”

“I know a good remedy for that,” said the friend from Spanish Fort, “I have to burlap sacks here and they're both the same size; you'll take one and I'll take the other and we'll hit each other with the sacks and our weapons will be equal.”

“Well, then let's do it that way,” responded Juan, “because that kind of fighting will dust us off more than hurt us.”

“Then it can't be that way,” responded the other man, “because we have to put half a dozen nice stones, all of them
the same weight inside the sacks so they don't blow away and then we can hit each other and not do any real harm or permanent damage."

"I swear by the old Butterfingers bar," responded Juan, "just think of the sable or cotton you'll have to put in the sack so our skulls don't get crushed and our bodies bruized, but even if you fill them with cotton, silk cocoons, let me say I won't fight. Let the heroes fight and you are welcome that. Let's drink and live not chasing movie producers with death or serious injury. Who wants to die before they are ripe and ready?"

"Even so," replied the friend, "We have to fight, for at least half an hour."

"Oh, no," responded Juan, "I'm not discourteous and ungrateful enough to have a quarrel even a little one with a man after eating and drinking with him especially if there's no anger and no insult. What type of person can fight without provocation?"

"For that," said the friend from Spanish Fort, "I have got the remedy; before we fight I come upon you and give you three or four slaps in the face. Hard enough to knock you down and that'll be enough to wake your anger since it's sleeping like a baby."

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"Well, I know another, more just and just as good," responded Juan, "I'll just pick up a stick and before your ass comes over to wake my anger, with a few wacks, I'll put your anger to sleep.

"You wouldn't dare."

"I can make it last into the next world. Don't mess with something that ain't bothering you. Let each man look out for himself though. The best policy would be to let sleeping angers lie; nobody knows what might happen but if you climb in the saddle, be ready for the ride. I'm for peace but you don't know me and they say Never drive black cattle in the dark. And since you're a man who knows little about what I could turn into, I'm letting your ass know you're only going to be hurt."

"Don't go in if you don't know the way out," replied the friend, "the day will dawn and I'll be around."

"Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back."

By this time a thousand different blackbirds begin to chirp on the trees and with their varied and joyous noises they seem to welcome and greet the new dawn who threw the clouds the sun cast light on the trees and at this exact minute the birds set forth a white rain down on the leaves of the trees, but as soon as the light of day reached the ground that made it possible to see and determine one thing from another, the first thing that
appeared before Juan’s eyes was the nose of the friend from Spanish Fort which was so big it almost cast a shadow over the rest of his body. In fact, his nose was outlandishly large and covered with warts and hooked in the middle and it made his face so repugnant Juan understood why the man wanted to fight, the poor hideous thing.

Cowboy looked at his opponent and found that the lesser cowboy’s helmet was already on and the wind mask still up, but he couldn’t see most of the man's face and he noticed that his rival was a husky man, not very fat but with new guns and a new cycle and everything possible said “Hecho en China.” Over his Kevlar armor and he wore a kind of long jacket or coat, the cloth made of the most water-resistant material making him look splendid and a strongman backed by Mexican or Chinese money.

Cowboy looked at everything and thought this Spanish Fort cowboy must be exceptionally strong but for that reason he wasn't like one trade rather galiant with courage.

He said to his opponent, “if you're so fired up and ready to fight that you've lost your good manners, I'd like to see your face and so take off your helmet. Is your face familiar to me as your account remittance? Why do you look so magnificent? Let's see your face.”

“Generally, you ain't learnin' nothing when your mouth's a-jawin'.”
“No, seriously. Who are you? Pull off your helmet and show us your face, for history and posterity.”

“When you're done flapping your yams' regardless who wins you'll have time to see me, and if I don't show it to you now, I'm anxious to kill you and raise my helmet only delays things more so stop talking.”

“Well, as we mount our bikes,” said Cowboy, “at least tell me if I'm the same Cowboy you claim to have shot.”

“That is positive; you are a match and I'm going to shoot you again and maybe three times.”

“One time before and three times more today? That's enough, don’t you figure.” respond Cowboy.

“Generally, you ain't learnin' nothing when your mouth's a-jawin'.”

And with that the two men cut short the idle chatter checked the cartridges in their pistols.

CUT TO: Cowboy checking his blanks and the Spanish Fort cowboy checking his lethal bullets.

They mounted the motorcycles and turned over the engines. Cowboy turned Shovelhead in the parking around in order to be in a position so he could ride out and let his adversary have a little lead. The Spanish Fork cowboy did the same, but Cowboy had not gone far when he heard the Spanish Fort cowboy say, “Remember that the condition of this gunplay is that the loser,
if living, as I've said before is subject to the will of the victor."

"I know that," responded Cowboy, "so long as the things called for don't endanger patriot or the new state."

"That's understood," responded the cowboy.

At that minute, Cowboy caught a glimpse of the farmer's nose and he was no less astounded to see that in fact he judged it to be a new kind of species of man he'd never seen before.

Juan, saw his counterpart ready to charge and didn't want to be left open to be attacked so he shouted at Cowboy, "Hey I wonder if you wouldn't boost me up in that tree before you kill that fellow?"

"What you are in a dispute. That's isn't like you at all, Juan."

"To tell the truth, I think the fellow with the nose wants to fight me."

"It's a very large nose; watch out for that thing." And Cowboy motioned that he'd ride over to the tree and Juan could use the bike as a step up into the tree. "If he hit you with that thang, it'd be lights out and call the law."

"The only good reason to fight a man is to meet a nurse. And my wife at home would not approve of any nursing, even if I actually needed it."
“Well, I wonder is it that, or you just want to be out of the way and up in the stands to watch the bullfight?”

“Just 'cause trouble comes visiting doesn't mean you have to offer it a place to sit down,” Juan reasoned.

“I'll help you into the tree,” Cowboy had his eye on his opponent. Shovelhead boosted his Juan into the tree.

Not waiting for any sign or signal or any more birds to s***, the lesser cowboy turn the handlebars of his cycle and road at full blast at Cowboy. But as Cowboy was occupied with Juan's climb, he went off the accelerator in the middle of the charge. The Chinese engine on the Spanish Fort cycle died and wouldn't start up again. He pulled out his automatic pistol and begin firing Cowboy as he turned to face his enemy. The numerous bullets flew wild hitting the tree and also missing everything. A slue of bullets flew over Cowboy’s shoulders and one bounced off Shovelhead, before he turned to gun Shovelhead directly at the other cowboy.

Cowboy pulled his pistol as he accelerated. Cowboy found his adversary held back by his stalled-out ride and without ammunition. Cowboy, who cared nothing for these obstacles, without risk and with absolutely no danger charged firing his bullets. He passed the other cowboy and fired at point-blank range stopping the heart of the of the Spanish Fork cowboy. When they past each other, they looked and recalculated.
The Spanish Fort cowboy started his engine and he reached for a second clip. Cowboy holster the six-shooter and pulled his .45-60 and struck his opponent in the chest knocking him to the ground back over the haunch of the motorbike but it was so great a fall that without moving feet or hands he gave every sign of being dead.

As soon as Juan saw him fall, he slid down from the tree and, still recording the historic event, ran past the farmer, who had dropped his camera in dismay.

Juan rolled/ran as fast as he could to his friend, who dismounted Shovelhead to approach the Spanish Fork cowboy and unstrap his helmet and to see if he was dead, and if he were alive to give him some air. Cowboy, to his dismay, saw the very figure and very image and personification of Sam Houston XI himself, the recently graduated young man from their hometown, and as soon as he realized he shouted, “come quickly Juan and look what you will not believe. Hurry my friend and record what film you can do, what good dope can do.”

Juan came rolling/running and then he saw the face of XI, he zoomed in on Houston and in quiet bad taste recorded the dead body from every conceivable angle.

During all this time, the Spanish Fort cowboy/XI gave no sign of being alive and Juan said to Cowboy, “It's my opinion, Cowboy, to be on the safe side you should fire a bullet into his
head. He seems to be Sam Houston XI, clearly a venomous Mexican informant.”

“Or maybe I’ll kill one of those Mexican doppelgangers.”

“I’d shot him in the head anyway, so there won’t be any doubt.”

“That’s not bad advice,” said Cowboy, “because the fewer enemies the better,” and as he reloaded his pistol to carry out the advice. The farmer from Spanish Fort not knowing where there were only blanks and now without the nose that made him so grotesque came up to Cowboy and shouted, “Cowboy think about what you’re doing; the man laying there is your homie Sam Houston XI from Jefferson and I’m his friend.”

And Juan seeing him free of his earlier ugliness, asked, “what happened to your nose?”

To which he responded, “I have it here in my pocket,” and then he put his hand into his right pocket and pulled out a nose made of plastic or rubber and Juan looked at him more and more closely.

And Juan said in a loud surprising voice, “Mr. Clean of old, can this be Tommy Cecil my homie and friend?”

“Of course it is,” responded the desperate man, “I’m Tommy Cecil. Juan, my compadre, I’ll tell you later about the secrets and lies and tricks that brought me here. But in the meantime, I beg you not to put a bullet in his brain as well. He’s been
bold, but badly advised, but he is the same Sam Houston who gave you those phones and urged you to travel.”

At this point, Sam Houston regained consciousness.

“Rat bastard!”

“Well, fella. When you're throwin' your weight around, be ready to have it thrown around by somebody else,” Cowboy said.

“You shot me!” he complained.

“Ya, seem surprised.”

“Well, ya. Wouldn’t you be?”

“No, not particularly. Happens to me every so often.”

“I’m helpless laying out flat, a maniac standing over me with a pistol.”

Cowboy holstered his pistol and said, “Nature gave us all something to fall back on, and sooner or later we all land flat on it.”

“Am I dead?” the cowboy from Spanish Fort asked.

“I believe the vest stopped the bullet.”

“So, what am I supposed to do now?”

“Well, if you get thrown off a horse, you have to get up and get back on, unless you landed in a cactus; then you have to roll around and scream a lot in pain.”

“No cactus.”

“Nope.”

“I guess you expect me to get up?”
“Well, ya. And since you ain't dead, confess your independence and fall in line under my command. You must travel to the city of Tawakoni and tell Salty that I'm commanding the attack on Matagorda in advance of the invasion and that you'll gather like-minded patriots and join me there and you will do that and join me there as we agreed before our combat.”

“Matagorda, you say?”

“You ain't much for hearing things, er ya?”

“I give up,” said the fallen cowboy, “I'll travel and find your girlfriend.”

“And?”

“Do what she instructs?”

“Find recruits to help me make way for the invasion and you'll give me a full accounting?”

“I promise.”

“You ain't joshing me?”

“I give up and accept everything that you’re sayin’,” said the cowboy, now with a half-broken back. “Help me up, if I can get up and, I'll be headed that way.”

Cowboy helped him to his feet; Juan helped, who then asked Tommy Cecil twenty questions or more trying to determine if he was friend or foe.

Unsure, Juan let the cowboy and friend from Spanish Fort ride away gloomy and out-of-sort, but all the while intending
to find the nearest cell tower and contact San Antonio with the news.

Cowboy and Juan continued on their way to Matagorda.

**EXT. ANGUS, NAVARRO COUNTY**

Cowboy was filled with satisfaction, pride and vainglory at having achieved victory over so “valiant” an opponent as he imagined the Spanish Fork gun to be. Par for their relationship, Cowboy felt it so Juan embellished it.

“Tommy Cecil said he seen him eatin’ off the same plate as a snake.”

“I can see that.” Cowboy agreed.

“Said, he’s so mean, he’d fought a rattler and gave him the first bite.”

He and Juan argued as they rode south, about all the questions XI asked. Juan argued that his loyalty to Mexico caused the curiosity, Cowboy that he, however unrealistic the dream, he was ambitious to become a Ranger and pitch in.

And from his victory, he hoped Edi could shake the dope and leave it behind her. It was all about to drive Juan insane, because Cowboy would not, “SHUT UP about it!” And Cowboy had the crazy idea that if XI would seek out Salty and tell her what had transpired, she might get off the dope and his poster-girl image might be restored.
Cowboy thought one thing and Juan with the Mexican turncoat thought another, for the lesser cowboy’s only thought was to find a place where he could contact Mexico City, as was already stated. And so the history tells us that when Sam Houston XI advised Cowboy to return to the fight he’d for two weeks abandoned, it was because XI had spoken to the Minister of Intelligence in San Antonio and in person and in Spanish. Depending on who you listen to today, either the intelligence officers either were clever enough to want to learn the invasion plans or they weren’t.

The minister and the barber wanted Cowboy cooking meth they could sell to the Mexican army. They wanted him to remain out of the fray, quietly cooking. It was a priority for Austin and it reflected badly on the prospects for the two men, who clearly couldn’t control their ward, Cowboy.

But when Cowboy spent all that time with XI and was so talkative about the invasion, it caused XI to take his case to Mexico City. They would give Cowboy and Juan a cell phone they could track from Texas’ twelve rebuilt cell towers. A thirteenth would go online in a week’s time. The phones would also incentivize and document content for a sequel, the first propaganda film was so profitable, monetarily and thry thought politically.
Sam Houston would encourage and allow Cowboy to leave East Texas and then XI would meet him on the road, confirm for certain the plan. All this was done on the assumption that Cowboy and his mobile ilk would be at the invasion and that this killing him would be an easy thing to do.

The debate, and there was an intense one, first in San Antonio and then in Mexico City, stemmed from the timing of the killing. Killing Cowboy almost right off the bat would ruin any sequel; General Garza in San Antonio, didn’t care one way or ther thither and actually was leaning toward killing “maldito vaquero del este de Texas.” However, several of the president’s advisors (mostly from the entertainment industry) didn’t want it done until an hour and fifty-five minutes running time. The Henderson County rest stop would be the end of the third act and would be the culmination of work of a great number of Mexican screenwriters. But, needless to say it had not gone as written. Cowboy was not a union actor, the joke was told.

Cowboy was slippery and it seemed to the XI and the farmer that stopping him would be impossible. Juan refused to betray or inform on Cowboy or his destination, and was shrewd enough to even deliver the fellows from Spanish Fort some misinformation.

Fresh from recruitment at the University of Mexico at the Austin, the elaborate ruse was Sam Houston's idea and Mexico City thought they had a gem of an agent. Tome’ Cecil was
actually a compadre of Juan’s and neighbor and a cheerful light-hearted man, he volunteered to help in exchange for private schooling for his children.

Houston armed himself with the most modern weapons attainable and procured the most impressive Chinese bike available and Tome’ Cecil, whose face already was as ugly as a burnt boot, placed on his extra-large nose an even larger false nose, already referred to so that his compadre wouldn't know him immediately.

They had tracked the cell phone from the rare working towers and they almost arrived in time to take part in the adventure of the bus of death. Finally, they caught them at the roadside park, where everything the reader just read ‘literally’ happened to them.

If it had not been for Cowboy’s drug-induced idea that the invasion was Matagorda, tens of thousands of troops might have greeted them. Cowboy had just (flat out) played coy, until he defeated XI (the spy), and then just blurted out his destination to XI while the spy was flat on his back. Had it not played out this way, the young Houston might not have been convinced and may have never sent the clandestine report to is agency.
EXT. SILVER CITY, NAVARRO COUNTY

Traveling at breakneck speed to the nearest cell tower (at Bellmead), Tome’ Cecil, who saw how badly their plans had turned out and how unfortunately their journey had ended said to XI...

“For sure, Señor Sam Houston, we've gotten what we deserved it's easy enough to think up and begin intelligent operations, but most of the time it's hard to end it. Cowboy’s crazy-like-a-fox and we didn’t count on that. I thought it was all propaganda but he is well seriously convoluted. The invasion isn't going to be at Matagorda Bay; it doesn’t make sense, if anything Austin's employed him to fake the entire thing. Believe that and they'll come at Houston or Corpus or maybe even Brownsville.

“One, he's talkative and has crazy ideas, or two, he knows something he shouldn’t know.”

“Either way, it’s Matagorda,” the lesser cowboy maintained.

“Or, three. He’s brilliant and it’s a ruse,” the lesser friend and farmer maintained.

“I’m not convinced.”

“Or, they’re brilliant in Austin, turning an idiot out for us to follow, and it’s a ruse.”

“In that case, it will NOT be at Matagorda.”

“That’s what you are going to report?”

“That he's crazy.”
“Crazy enough to shout out the location of the invasion and shot you.”

“No, he shot me and then shouted out the location, that is the key.”

“I don’t get it.”

“Think about it. If he were going to feed us bullshit, he’d have done it before the shooting.”

“Help me out, please.”

“If I’d have killed him, what then. Who’d have told us Matagorda?”

“Mexico City will be angry.”

“Nothing goes as planned.”

“Clearly, we were supposed to get the information and then kill them.”

“Why did you bring him to the shooting before he divulged the invasion’s location?”

“He just made me angry. I couldn’t help myself.”

“I believe I know what you mean.”

“You do?”

“Yes, I wanted to shot his fat little friend, Juan, also before he gave me anything.”

“Did he ever?”

“Hell, no. He thinks he’s a poet.”

“Crazy, the both of them.”
“But they’re riding away healthy and laughing while your ass is bruised and broken so tell me now who’s San Antonio going to deem crazy: the man who’s crazy because he can’t help it or the man who is ordered by an intelligence service to play crazy?”

To which XI responded, “the difference between these two madmen is that the one who can’t help it will always be mad, and the one who is ordered to be insane can choose to stop whenever he wants to.”

“Well that’s true,” said Tome’ Cecil, “I choose to be crazy when I decided to become your ass’s sidekick and by the same token I’m going home now, if you will sign that I helped you and my son’s tuition is paid.”

“That might be convenient for you, but the pain in my ribs doesn’t allow me to sign anything. In fact, I doubt I’ll be able to sign anything until we reach Matagorda and have f***ed him up.”

“If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging.”

“Sorry you can’t go home,” responded XI, “but if you think I’ll go back to mine before I’ve given that deer knuckle cowboy a good beating then you’re sadly mistaken.

“What about San Antonio? They will be looking for your information,” the farmer asked.
“Let them think I’m dead for now. I’m less moved by San Antonio now and more by revenge, so the whole question of invasion will, of course, remain with my bosses.”

“As it should.”

“So you are supposed to give me advice now?”

“My advice is to not report, but follow him; we’ll see if he goes to Matagorda. If I know him, he’ll go where the invasion is.”

“Why?”

“Because he’s crazy.”

The two men conversed in this manner until they reached a small town where they happen to find a doctor who tightly wrapped up XI’s ribs. The only real discussion was if the impact of the bullet broke a rib or the impact with the ground did the damage.

Tome’ Cecil loved his son, but turned back and left XI behind to plan his revenge. The history speaks of the hater later, at the proper time, but it returns now to our Cowboy.

EXT. MEXIA - LIMESTONE COUNTY

Cowboy continued his journey to the sea, imagining, because of his recent victory that he was the future nation’s most badass stray. He considered any adventures that might befall him from that time on as already a done deal and himself invincible.
He smoked increasingly less dope and held Mexican’s with even more contempt. He did not recall the countless meetings had received in the course of his exploits or the stones that knocked out half his teeth; in fact, he could run his tongue left and right and it didn't bring back the image.

He didn't worry any longer about the ingratitude of the wall slaves or the Mexican’s audacious attack.

In short, he saw himself that if he could find the means and manner to rehabilitate Salty at one of the fancy Mexican resort facilities, he would cook a truckload of dope to pay for it but he couldn’t hardly be in need for rehabilitation at the same time. The man was completely lost in these positive thoughts when Juan said, “Isn't it funny, Cowboy, that I can still see the awful oversized nose of my compadre Toma’ Cecil?”

“Do you still believe one that the cowboy of Spanish Fort was the Sam Houston we know the 11th Generation descendant of the Sam Houston?” Cowboy asked.

“I don't know what to say about that,” responded Juan, “All I know is his friend knew about my house, my wife and my children. Except for the nose, his face was that of Thomas Cecil, my friend since elementary school. Just as I have seen him so often in our town and the sound of his voice is the same.”
“Let's be logical about this,” replied Cowboy, “does it make sense that this guy would drive all the way here dressed like a Mexican hitman, armed to the teeth, to shoot it out with me?”

Juan was silent on the issue.

“Okay there was the film, but have I been his enemy?”

“Fifteen minutes of envy is the only fame your’ve won.”

“There's never been any reason; am I his rival or does he want a career as an informant?”

“But what do we think,” responded Juan, “about whoever he was looking so much like Houston and his friend looking like my compadre Tome’ Cecil? If they're doped up like your ass says weren't they better serve to look like other men, men that we don't know?”

“And why didn’t they just lay by side of the road and bushwhack us? Why all the pomp and ceremony, gunplay from the back of cycles?”

“That’s easy. Honor.”

“And how’d they find us. This is a huge territory and there are many paths for transportation like we have, both pavement and dirt trails.”

“Everything is unreal and messed up,” responded Cowboy.

“Devised by some San Antonio dumbass, manufactured and insured to throw us off our task.”
“Oh, they showed the face of my friend, and your friend as well, so the friendship we have for them would be replaced with the tip of a bullet,” Cowboy guessed.

“Must everything be for advantage?”

“Every inch counts when all this land is at stake, the oil and cotton. The Mexican’s no long eat corn, you know. They want beef.”

“I’m beginning to understand.”

“It might dull the righteous anger of our hearts and in this manner, sending friends.”

“The one who was attempting to take your life through trickery and falsehood might give them an extra inch.”

“An extra fraction of a second, looking for me to hesitate.”

“The demon’s are very active in Texas,” Juan pointed out.

“As proof of this you already know what they've done to Salty making the beautiful into the ugly. If I had not seen the transformation of Salty, we might still have been at the dog shelter and not at the roadside park,” Cowboy said.

“In the end, the truth of all things emerge,” responded Juan and since he knew the transformation of Salty had been his gimmick to avoid danger and work, he didn't want to say too much and reveal his lie.
They were engaged in this conversation when they were overtaken by a man riding behind them mounted on a very beautiful Evo and wearing a coat of fine green cloth trimmed with an orangey velvet and a helmet made of the same color. The custom lowrider’s trappings were in the ultra-modern style, with extended forks, purple and green. He wore a machete hanging from a wide green and gold pirate’s belt and his Pirarucu boots matched his belt. He was wearing a com set, the same Russian brand Cowboy and Juan used.

When the traveler reach them, he greeted them courteously and accelerated his cycle in order to pass, but Cowboy, after negotiating an open channel, transmitted to him, “If you're traveling the same road and you're not in a hurry, you are welcome to travel up with us.”

“The truth is,” responded the man, “I would rather not travel so fast. I’ll slow and go with you two.”

The traveler remained beside Cowboy and marveled at the bearing and face as Cowboy who rode without his helmet, which Juan had hung like a bag over the back of his moped. And if the man in green looked at Cowboy a great deal, Cowboy looked even more at the man in green thinking him a virtuous and judicious person and that he seemed to be about fifty, a few gray hairs, and an handsome square face. His aspect was both cheerful and
yet grave. In short, his dress and bearing made it clear that he was a man of good qualities.

The man in green’s judgment of Cowboy was that he had never seen anything/anyone like him, in manner or appearance. He was amazed by the condition of his cycle, his lean weight, his thin shallow face, his weapons, his bearing in form and appearance. Nothing had been seen, ever, in all or part of Texas.

Cowboy noticed how alternatively the traveler was looking at him and it prompted his curiosity. And since Cowboy was courteous and wished to please everyone, before the traveler could ask anything, Cowboy met him halfway saying, “you notice my appearance? And you think it’s unusual and far removed from what is commonly seen in the occupied territories. I'm not surprised that you’re surprised, but you'll no longer surprised when I tell you that I'm a Texas Ranger, the kind as people say who go and look for trouble. Before I left East Texas, I cooked enough dope to f***-up the entire Mexican Army. And I left my safe double-wide in the woods and threw myself into the wind so that she might carry me wherever she chooses.”

“And currently she is blowing you south.”

“If I may be so bold, yes!”

“I know you,” said the man in green.

“Well, you look shocked.”

“I am.”
“Why? I told you my profession. My motorcycle, or pistol, or rifle, the dope, or this compadre, my Kevlar, my shallow face or extreme thinness? I shouldn’t surprise you.”

“No, I know who you are,” said the man in green, “You are the Cowboy of Marion County also known as the Vaquero de Tejas. You have a well-published desired to revive the long-dead Texas Rangers, moving about, stumbling here, falling there and dropping down to sleep in one place and waking up in another. You have fulfilled great desire of mine: to harassing the occupation government, flattening the tires of cattle trucks moving our beef south, humoring patriot women, supporting orphans.”

“All of this is the proper and natural work of Rangers.”

“I only notice your many patriotic deeds, because of my mini-patriotic deeds. You deserve to be portrayed in video. While largely missed when portrayed on television, there are supposedly now 30,000 copies in Mexico alone and pirated by many more in the former United States. They say perhaps 300,000 disks out there now with the English subtitles.

“English, you say?”

“Yes. While I wouldn’t have made it a comedy, there are plans for a documentary answer (a sequel), if the invasion is successful. Briefly then to summarize everything in a few words, you are the one I am looking for.”
“Well, that was some nice praise and although praising oneself is vile I am obliged say ‘thank you for your kind words,’” Cowboy responded.

Cowboy fell silent after he said this, and the man in green took so long to respond that it seemed he didn't know what to say, but after some time, he said, “I was taken aback a little and even if you're listening back there, Juan; is that your real name? I'm even more astonished that you haven’t returned home, to your family and business.”

“I’m still here.”

“Well, thank you, it was your idea flattening tires and releasing the confiscated cattle?”

“Maybe.” Juan was still a little flattered the man knew who he was and even his name, but at the same time, having been recently burned by the dogs, Sam Houston and Tome’ Cecil, he was a bit hesitant. He’d enjoyed the speech the man in green had given to Cowboy. After all, it was his job to prop up his friend. But he did gesture a little to Cowboy and with that slight motion gave him the credit.

“Frig, I don’t remember flattening any tires or releasing any stolen cattle.” Cowboy admitted.

“Quiet, you might have,” Juan tried to help.

“You don’t want to get the reputation of a law-abiding cowboy, do you?”
“That was in the comedy?” Juan asked.

“No, this was since then,” said the man in green. “But since the movie came out, the Mexicans have had hell keepin’ them cattle coraled. It’s all sleeperin’.”

“Why, can’t it be in the documentary then?” Juan asked.

“Because you couldn’t have been in Olton, Lawn and Dime Box all the same night.”

“You need to understand, friend; his name has been besmouched, and not in a good way,” Juan admitted. “Cowboy’s been the victim of fiction.”

“You must mean he is the subject of a’ addiction... the director is a while known meth addict. Said he picked it up serving in the Mexican Army and can’t shake it. He said that in ten magazines.”

“Well, that’s good news.”

“The week before, I’m guessing, you released the slow elk from the Waco Stockyards?” the man in green speculated.

“At the time, seemed a bit petty. I mean Waco. How many head could there have been?” Juan wondered.

“10,000 head; the “mayor liberación juvenil” in Mexican history is what they said,” the man in green reported.

“We did it. We definitely did that.” Juan was quick to admit. “That is what should be included in the documentary.” Juan brightened up.
“It’s in bad taste to admit s*** like that, I feel,” Cowboy was suddenly shy and not clear he had participated at all.

“Are you serious? It was genius! Most Texans hate nationalization and all the trucks taking their beef to Mexico.”

“A good cowman knows genetics but especially how to lie to the authorities,” Juan quipped.

“Excatly!”

“People’s fightin’ mad about it too. You just did what everyone was thinking,” the man in green explained.

Juan volunteered the man in green a choice of clichés, “When in doubt, print the legend,” and others.

“The documentary should have Cowboy releasing all the cattle in one wild night.”

“Okay,” the man in green responded, “let’s go with that.”

“Or, our over zealous policia are the finest form of foolery. Maybe admit that we didn’t do all that, but suffice to say the Mexican police are fools for believing we did. It can be a comedy about them instead.” Juan suggested.

“Maybe in the documentary, we’re just two fools laid up in a LaGrange whorehouse and others was out driving off the cattle?”

“I’m the Mexican’s fool?” Cowboy asked.

“I think you are taking this all wrong, friend. I can’t find anyone in Texas today who’s harassing the occupiers that
ain't compassionate about the first film and looking forward to the second. They know you aren't an addict and they know you do more damage than you absorb. And frankly, most of them are imitatin' ya. You should be flattered."

"I’ve not seen anybody flattered, just a bunch of backstabbing informing bullshit."

"But if the film is becoming popular... maybe it’s not so improbable."

"XI said I was a clown."

"Sam Houston that kid? He’s working for the Mexicans. He probably said that to demoralize you."

"He’s just jealous of my friend if you ask me."

Cowboy was winding down from his last smoke and was looking in the face of a day or two in bed. His speech was slurred.

"I shot him or someone who looked a lot like him back, I don’t know... back there. When was that, Juan?"

"Yesterday."

"Oh."

From this confusion, the traveler assumed Cowboy must be fried or extremely tired, and he waited to see if any further evidence would settle it, but before they could engage in other conversations, Cowboy asked him to say who he was because he and Juan had informed him of their philosophy and had even admitted crimes to him.
To which the man in green responded, “I'm a gentleman who is native of a small town where we'll have our dinner tonight. I am more than moderately wealthy and my name is Solas Armenta; I spend time with my wife and children and my friends. My pastimes are hunting hogs and fishing, but keep neither Ridgebacks nor ASTs.”

“Why don’t you call them ‘Pitbull’ like everyone else?” Juan interrupted.

“Because language is my battlefield and words are my bullets.”

“For me too,” Juan said.

“I speak only English and if you use the word ‘American Staffordshire Terrier,’ it is ammunition for our side.”

“I didn’t know there was this war of words being fought,” Cowboy said.

Juan was intrigued, “I’m sorry, please continue. I’m learning something.”

“Okay, I hope you do. I only have a little Chihuahua; there isn’t anything I can do about that, my children love the dog. And a few goldfish. I have some six-dozen DVD discs some in Spanish that I never watch but most are in English. Some are historical and some fiction. Westerns all.”

“I hope you aren’t saying what I think you are saying,” said Cowboy.
“I’m not. However, I do entertain my neighbors and friends and often they are delighted with the old films I’ve discovered.”

“You said we’ll be eating?” Juan asked.

“My meals are carefully prepared and nicely served and never meager. I don't like gossip and I don't allow it at the table. I don't meddle in other people's lives, unless they’re the subject to Mexican propaganda,

“Like us?” Juan asked.

“And then of course you might find me an English Bulldog.”

“Oh, that’s why you were to curious about the stockyards?” Juan wanted to know.

“I don't pry into what other people do, but you two are just too much to let pass.”

“But you are catholic?” Juan wanted to know.

“I hear Mass every day, but I’m a Traditionalist Catholic and a well known even published sedevacantist. I give to the Helping Hands of Limestone County and my charitable contributions never leave the county, but I don't boast of doing good works. I try to bring peace to those whom I know are quarreling. But you are an exception, my friend.”

“Thank you.”

“I am devoted to Austin and trust always to the idea that Mexican rule will not endure. Basically, I feel that it will
collapse of its very own weight, but don't let that stop you, Cowboy, if you want to push it along, knock yourself out.”

Juan was very attentive to this recounting of his life and pastimes of a gentleman and finding it necessary to placate the man who had clear anti-Mexican sympathies, he quickly dismounted the moped in a hurry to shake the hand of the gentleman.

Seeing this, the man in green asked first to shake hands, but Juan responded, “No, let me shake your hand, because I think you are the first saint on a custom lowrider I've seen in my life.”

“I'm not a saint,” responded the gentleman, “but a great sinner, but you brother must be a good man. Your loyalty to this warrior proves it.”

“We're both loyal then, sir” responded Juan.

Out of no where, Cowboy asked how many children he had.

“I have a son,” responded the gentleman, “and if I didn't have him, I'd worry less and not because he's bad but because he isn't as good as I would like him to be. He’s twenty-four and has spent the last six years in Austin a hotbed of revolution and free love, studying literature and film and when I warned him to study another productive area of knowledge, I found him so enthralled with Westerns, if that can be called knowledge, that I can't make him show any enthusiasm for the law which I wished him to learn. If it were theology, even Roman
Catholicism, I wouldn't even be sad if he took up the priesthood. I would like him to be wealthy and successful, but he spends the whole day determining if Tarantino was indecent in a particular scene of Hateful Eight. If McMurtry wrote well or badly in a certain paragraph of Lonesome Dove. If specific lines of Louis L'Amour can be interpreted differently. In short, all his conversations are about the books and films and these cowboy poets whose names have been lost to history. And of McMurtry, L'Amour, Kelten and Omar Baker. He does not think very highly of the modern writers in the 'Mexican Century' and despite the antipathy he displays for the rebellion in the vernacular, his work now is fictional.”

“Is he famous? Have we read anything he’s written? Has he won any awards?” Juan asks.

“Something about a Texas meth cook who destroys the Mexican Army with his product but fries himself in the process.”

“I think for a literary competition, yes.”

Cowboy looked and had been exhausted, but seemed to now have a second wind, “Sir, children are the very apple of their parent’s eye and whether they are good or bad, they are loved, as we love the food that gives us life. From the time they are little it is the obligation of parents to guide them along the path of virtue and good taste and good Texas custom, so that
when they are grown they will be a support in the old age of their parents.”

“I agree.”

“I didn’t finish, and that I don’t think it is good to force them to study one thing or another. Although persuading them, might not be a bad idea and since you are more than wealthy and your son has been spared the need to learn what’s so wrong with the Mexican occupation, what’s so wrong in pursuing an area of knowledge to which you can see he’s inclined? Clearly western culture is more useful in the current political climate.”

“Military climate.”

“Yes and you might lightly nudge him into associating with the patriot’s movement,” Juan suggested.

“He might write a western, that will inspire even more rebellion,” Cowboy suggested.

“Western writers, in my opinion, is like an innocent virgin who is extremely beautiful who doesn’t want to be pawed and dragged through the town’s rumor mill. Her alchemy is such that she wants a man who can turn her into the purest gold of inestimable value and the man who has her must not let her turn to indecent comedies or cruel satires. My son thinks only in terms of comedy and satire. Unfortunately.”
"I wouldn’t worry too much about your son, as a writer is born, that is to say the writer is a writer when he comes out of his mother's womb, with no further study needed so don't blame the college at Austin. Maybe you should allow him to follow his star, if he's a good student let him become well-known. I'd only in a few instances interfere with his dream.

"Continue," the father in green asked.

"For example, if he begins to write satires that damage other people's reputations; recently I’ve experienced this and only then should you speak with him and, depending on how bad the slander was, tear up his papers but from the sound of your son’s work you should increase his allowance and let him remain in Austin for as long as he wishes."

The gentleman in the green coat was amazed at Cowboy’s generosity and he begin to change his mind about Cowboy’s brain being fried.

Because it was not very much to Juan’s liking, too pretentious for his tastes, at the end of Cowboy’s speech, he turned off the road to buy some milk from a convenience store on the side of the road.

In the meantime, the gentleman was about to continue to enlighten Cowboy how he was now seen by the native population, a hero being victimized by Mexican propaganda.
But Cowboy look down the road and saw a truck showing the flag of the Mexican government and believing that it might be an opportunity at adventure. He looked at the truck like it was carrying currency, so he called to Juan to bring him his helmet and body armor.

EXT. LIMESTONE COUNTY AT KOSSE

The documentary recounts that north of Kosse, Cowboy called to Juan to bring him his Kevlar and helmet. Listening to the man in green speak of his growing legend, Cowboy had a shot of tequila and smoked a bowl.

Juan was in the midst of trading a Solo cup of tequila for three cups of milk and was flustered by his friend’s urgency. Juan did not know what to do with the milk or how to carry it in order not to lose it. Since he had already bought the liquid, he placed the cups in the helmet. He went back to see what cowboy wanted and as soon as he approached immediately Cowboy snatched the helmet, “Friend, either you know very little about adventures or you didn’t see what is rolling this way, and it obliges me to take up arms. It’s not an island but I see an opportunity.”

The gentleman in the green coat heard this and looked all around and saw nothing but a tractor-trailer coming toward them with two or three Mexican flags on it which led him to assume
that it was carrying currency that belonged to the Mexican president. And that since the comedy film had been released the Mexicans had experienced a rash of currency heists and had reverted to placing entire platoons of armed soldiers inside trailers that looked to be hauling pesos.

And he told this to Cowboy, who accepted what he said. Cowboy always believed and thought that what happened to him had to be an adventure or a hallucination and so he responded to the gentleman, “nothing is lost by cautioning me, although I know from experience that I have visible and invisible enemies and I do not know when or where or how or in what guise they will attack me,” and turning to Juan he asked for his helmet. Juan did not have time to take out the cups of milk and was obliged to hand him the helmet just as it was.

Cowboy took it and without even glancing at what might be inside, he quickly placed it over his head the milk begin to run down Cowboy’s face which startled him so that he said, “what can this be, Juan? It seems to me if my head is softening or my brains are melting or that I am soaked in perspiration from head to foot and if I'm perspiring, the truth is, that it is not because a fever although I undoubtedly must believe that the adventure about to befall me will be a hassle. Give me something if you have it, that I can use to wipe away this copious perspiration for it is blinding me.”
Juan remained silent but gave him a towel and thought himself lucky his friend didn't realize the truth. Cowboy wiped his face and took off his helmet to see what was that seemed to be drilling in his head and see that white liquid inside he brought the helmet to his nose and smell it and said, “by the life of Barbie you've poured milk in my cowboy hat.”

To which with great aplomb and dissemination, Juan responded, “If that is milk I must also have demons who pursue me and the milk must have been put there to turn your patience to anger and move you to beat me about the ribs and distract you from that bank wagon that is just about here.”

“Thank you Juan, for helping me focus on the real task at hand, as you do every once in awhile. But this time they are off the mark because you're wise to Asmodeus’ tricks,” Cowboy said.

“I wish I'd have put the milk in my stomach, but that’s not possible now,” said Juan.

The gentleman in green observed all this and all of it made him especially puzzled.

When Cowboy, after careful cleaning his head, face and mustache, replaced the helmet on his head and called for his Kevlar. He checked his pistol and said, “now, come what may, for here I am ready to do battle with Mexico herself.”
At this moment, the tractor-trailer with the flags reached them and the only people in it where the driver and a man sitting in the front.

Cowboy stepped in front of the 18-wheeler and said, “Where are you going brothers and what wagon is this and what are you carrying and what flags are these?”

To whom the driver responded, “The vehicle is Mexico’s and in the back are the fierce lions General Garza is sending to Mexico City as a present for the president. The flags belong to our employer the general and I forget what other asinine questions you asked.”

“I assumed that what's inside he calls his; he’s taken everything in the state what hasn’t been nailed down. And a lion wouldn’t be easily nailed. And this lion is big?” Cowboy asked.

“So big,” responded the passenger, “no lion is bigger or even as big has ever been brought from Texas to Mexico. I am the lion keeper and I've seen the other lions in Texas zoos but not like this one. He’s so big, he is being sent to Mexico City. He's a male and he's hungry not because he hasn't eaten today, but because he’s always hungry, and so move out of the way because we have to hurry to the place where we'll feed him.”

Twitch. Cowboy, despite his resolve to cut back on the dope, had smoked a bit too much and he was twitching uncontrollably.
Cowboy twitched slightly and said, “You Mexican’s talked of lions to me and I figure he is only a little lion. Well by God, the gentlemen who sent them here, they'll see if I'm a man who is frightened by lions.” Cowboy raised his pistols.

“Climb down from there, you bunch of *propagandistas*, and since you are the lion keeper, open the door and bring out this beasts, 'cause in the middle of nowhere, I aim to let them know who the Vaquero de Tejas is and in spite of and in defiance of the Maria Faustina who, fortunate for me, sent you along this road.”

“Well that proves it,” said the gentleman to himself, “Our good Cowboy has shown exactly who he is; the milk no doubt has softened his head and rippened his brain.”

At this moment, Juan came up to the man in green and said, “Sir, for the love of blueberries, do something to stop my friend from doing battle with this lion. If he fights him the cat will tear him all to pieces.”

“Well your friend’s so crazy,” responded the gentleman, “that you fear and believe he'll actually fight with such a savage animal? It’s not just bravado for the second film?"

“He has no concept of film as we know it. He’s not crazy,” responded Juan, “he's just reckless.”

“I'll do what I can to keep him from daring too much,” replied the gentleman, and going up to Cowboy, who was at gun
point urging the lion keeper to open the cages, he said, “Señor Cowboy, Rangers ought to undertake adventures that promised some hope of success not those that are completely devoid of hope or valor that crosses over into audacity. Think of your followers, the people who saw the film and know you would not provoke a wild animal. This has more to do with political correctness than courage particularly because these lions are not attacking your ass or even dreaming of doing so, so long as they’re caged. They are gifts to the president of Mexico and it would not be wise to stop them or turn them out in the middle of cattle country.”

“Sir,” Cowboy said, “your ass should go and see to your tame Chihuahua and your goldfish and let each man do his work. This is mine and I know whether are not this noble is attacking me.”

And turning to the lion keeper, he said, “I swear, scoundrel if you don't open the cage immediately I'll shoot you in the face and let them out myself.”

The driver, who saw the determination of the armed revolutionary and had seen the fliers about him, said, “Señor, if it pleases you, I beg you let me take these people into the Tienda La Esquina Que Tiene Todo, somewhere safe before the lion shows himself, because if he kills these people, I'll be ruined
for life and the only job I have is driving things to and from the Mexican president.”

“Old man of little faith,” responded Cowboy, “run away and do whatever you wish for soon you will see that you’ve hid in vain and could have spared yourself the effort.”

The driver quickly bolted and the lion keeper cried out, “Let all those here present bear witness that I have been forced against my will to open this cage and set free the lion that I declare to this gentleman that he is answerable and accountable for all the harm the damage this beast may do, as well as for my salaries and fees, your ass should take cover before I let him out.”

Once again, the gentleman tried to persuade Cowboy not to commit “an act of madness” or to engage in “something so foolish” as to tempt luck.

To which Cowboy responded that he knew what he was doing.

The gentleman in green responded that the driver and loin keeper should be careful because he knew that Cowboy was now fueled by the combination of rattlesnake tequila and methamphetamine.

“Now, sir,” replied Cowboy, “if your ass doesn't wish to be a witness to what you believe is going to be a tragedy, then spur that motorcycle to safety.”
Juan did not flee to the safety of the store, but stood sadly, dangerously, near his friend.

Cowboy said quietly to Juan, in case he was wrong, “I feel we will only find pesos there in the trailer and the lions are only a ruse.”

Hearing this Juan with tears in his eyes, because the lion was roaring loudly back at Cowboy. Thinking about this and comparing this to the adventure of the windmills and that of the pipeline and, in short, all the feats they’d fallen into before.

“Look Cowboy,” said Juan, “there’s no trickery here, everything is like it appears; I can hear the lion. And I have seen through the grating and cracks in the cage, the claws and whiskers of the real lion and I think the lion must be bored (born) and bread (bred) in Texas; he’s very large.”

“Our friend in green he told me Mexican’s were losing too many peso wagons and are resorting to placing soldiers in the trailers.”

“All the more reason to leave and not open the door.”

“But if the would use soldiers, they might also pretend a lion guard the loot.”

“But there is a lion.”

“O’ trickery. You didn’t hear, you were too busy filling my helmet with milk. I don’t think there is a lion inside. The
Mexican government is going bankrupt oppressing us and can no longer afford guards for their currency and have elaborate schemes to fool less ambitious robbers and rebels. Now, withdraw Juan and leave me. If I die here, either devoured by a lion or because the guards inside the cash trailer come out blazing with shotguns…”

“What? If you die here… what?”

“I forgot what I was going to say…”

“I’ll edit this part out but you need to remember what you want done, if you die. Perhaps something about me to add to your last will and testament?”

“Okay, I remember. You know our old arrangement? You will take yourself to Salty and you'll share my story with her and add a few words if you will. And see that she wears black.”

Juan didn’t wait but added a few words then and there to his friend, all designed to take away all hope and that he prayed his friend would not pursue his mad intention.

The gentleman in the green coat, halfway to safety, would have liked to stop Cowboy, or at least stand with him, but he was not as well armed and he didn't think it proved much to restrain or fight beside a madman because by now he thought Cowboy was completely out of his mind robbing a cash trailer in broad daylight, and one that might contain a grown-ass lion.
Cowboy again began to press the lion keeper and to repeated his threats which gave the gentleman, Juan, and the driver time to run into the convenience store before the lion was freed. Juan wept for the death of his friend; this time he believed there was no doubt he would fall into the clutches of death. His friend was a good shot with the rifle, but it appeared he was planning on using the pistols, which had in Juan’s experience hardly ever worked out well for Cowboy. Juan remembered seeing him miss several times before, even at point blank range.

Juan cursed his luck and regretted coming on the trip, but none of this prevented him from being the first into the safety of the store. Then the lion keeper seeing that those who were fleeing had reached safety pleaded with and warned Cowboy one last time, using the same *por favor* and *advertencias* he had used before.

And Cowboy responded, that he had heard what he had to say and he should not trouble himself with more warnings and please for they would be of no avail and what he should do was *prisa*.

In the time it took the lion keeper to unlock the cage, Cowboy was considering if it would be better to do battle on foot or on Shovelhead and finally, he decided to do battle on foot. Know that Shovelhead had a tendency to accelerate erratically and might become frightened at the site of Mexican guards with shotguns, or lions, and for this reason he didn’t
rely on his motorcycle, leaving his rifle in the leather scabbard. He checked his pistols and at a deliberate pace, with marvelous courage and valiant heart, he went and stood before the trailer door, dreaming of how delighted Salty's father would be if he could deliver a trailer-truck load of cash to the revolution.

And it's worth noting that when he reached this point the narrator of the documentary would say, "most valiant and supremely courageous Cowboy of the East Texas piney woods, paragon of all the brave men in Texas, a third new defender of the Alamo parking lot, the glory of Texas resistance." What words can be used to recount his "fierce," indeed that phrase would indeed lend credence in the decades to come. "You, on foot and alone. You, an intrepid and of noble rebellion, armed only with pistols."

The aforementioned narration ended here and the documentary moved on, picking up the thread of the story and saying that when the lion keeper saw what that Cowboy was in position and that he himself could not avoid being shot if he didn't release the lion, he opened the cage which held the male lion who was the indeed, as he had warned, was big as Texas and just as fearsome.

The first thing the lion did, when the door opened, was turn around in the cage. Where he was lying and unsheathed his
claws and stretched his entire body then he opened his mouth and yawned very leisurely and extended a tongue almost two spans long and cleaned the dust and sleep from his eyes and washed his face. When this was finished, the lion stood, put his head out of the door and looked all around with eyes like coals, a sight my father (the lion keeper) said he saw and that could frighten anyone, “except Cowboy,” he insisted.

There was really a lion inside, only Cowboy saw a fat Mexican guard, washing his face in a bowl when the door opened. The guard was nearsighted, because he’d laid down his glasses and couldn’t find them. When the door opened fully, he fumbled for his glasses, but found his shotgun and decided to bluff it (blind) and had walked to the door. Cowboy, watched the lion/guard squinting in the bright sun (blind), alternatively waiting for him to head from the trailer and come within range, sporting-distance, for a Ranger was mighty near; for he intended to shoot the guard at the first provocation. But it wasn’t a nearsighted guard, but a large nearsighted lion.

Not high on any drug other than milk, the witnesses in the store were seeing the lion standing in the trailer’s door. They didn’t see the overweight guard.

But the magnanimous lion was more courteous than arrogant, he took no notice of either Cowboy’s childishness or his bravado and after looking in both directions, like looking for traffic,
he turned his head back inside and showed his ass, and two giant
testicles, to Cowboy and with great peace and calm he
disappeared back into his cage and lay upon the hay.

Seeing an armed guard refusing to fight, but willing to hide inside a trailer full of cash, Cowboy ordered the lion keeper to warn the guard they were under attack and provoke him into coming out.

“That will not work,” responded the lion keeper, “because if I instigate him, the first thing he'll tear to pieces will be me. Señor, if you want a piece of the peligro, you'll have to go in after him.”

“What honor is there in that?”

“You should be content with what you've done. You stood in front of a full-grown male lion showing your courage. Don't tempt a tragedy a second time; it's the lion’s disorder not yours. Despite his size and reputation, he’s simply not a fighter.”

“That's true,” responded Cowboy, “and so friend, close the door and give my friend Juan, the guy with the camera, the best statement you can regarding what you have seen. Which is to say you opened the money cage, I waited for the guard and he did not come out, but instead washed his face, I waited for him and eventually he looked outside, again I needed to do no more than
wait for the shotgun blast and then the guard returned inside
and so then I instructed you to close the door.”

“Very well,” the lioni keeped agreed.

“I'll signal those who fled into the store, but since they
ran away I order you to tell them what you have seen.”

The lion keeper closed the door and locked it and Cowboy
approached his bike, attached the towel to the end of his rifle
and began waving it to call those who had rushed into the store.

Juan saw the signal with the towel and said, “touchdown,
strike me dead, if my friend hasn't killed the beast for he's
calling us.”

Everyone stopped shivering and realized that the one
signaling was Cowboy and losing some part of their fear they
gradually left the convenience store. They could clearly see
Cowboy calling them. Finally, with much worry, they returned to
the armored truck and when they arrived Cowboy said to the
driver, “climb in your vehicle my friend and continue on your
way and, Juan, give him two ounces, one for him and one for the
lion keeper, in recompense for the delay I’ve had caused them.”

“I'll do that gladly” responded Juan, “but what happened to
the lion is he dead or alive?”

Then the lion keeper in great detail, with great inflection
and many pauses, recounted the outcome of the contest,
exaggerating to the best of his ability and skill the valor of
Cowboy, the sight of who made a coward of the guard who, “refused and did not dare to leave his cage although he had kept the door open for some time and only because he was trying to get me to provoke the lion and force him to attack” the lion keeper said, “I closed the door against Cowboys wishes.”

“What do you think of that, Juan,” said Cowboy, “are there any demons that can prevail against true courage and chance may deprive me of my luck but not spirit or courage, no not ever.”

Juan weighed and gave the men the dope and the driver started up the vehicle and the lion keeper shook Cowboy’s hand for the cameras and in exchange for the promised that the events would be told to the president himself when the truck arrived in Mexico City.

“If by chance his Excellency asks who performed the deed to tell him it was the Vaquero de Tejas. I'm the Cowboy from the piney woods.”

It was reported in the Mexican papers that the front half of the truck was full of freshly printed pesos and that it went on its way unmolested by the “adventurous but drug-addled Cowboy.”

Juan, Cowboy and the gentleman in the green coat continued on their way, all the time Solas c had not said a word but was careful to observe and notes the actions and words of Cowboy who
seemed to him to have gone mad but was now a madman edging his way back toward sanity.

Armenta had first heard about and then seen the first part of Cowboy’s history, the comedy, but he thought it all propaganda. And even though a huge film skeptic, he was astonished by Cowboy’s actions. And the man in green later would tell his son, the writer, that “he sometimes said and sometimes acted mad, because but his speech was coherent and sometimes even eloquent few noticed that his actions were nonsensical and foolish.”

Mr. Armenta said to himself, “What greater madness can there be than putting on a helmet full of milk and believing that Asmodeus had softened his head and what greater illness than recklessly opening the cage of an adult lion?”

Cowboy drew him away from his soliloquy by saying, “Señor Amoreta, you think I'm a half-witted man? You think I acted foolishly? That might be so, but I'm not as mad or foolish as you must think. The mobile Ranger is the hero when he faces down his enemy in the day and then prevails at night when he boosts a herd of cattle confiscated by the Mexican government.”

“They confiscate more property than thieves steal,” the man in green agreed.

The gentleman’s son wasn’t there but eventually wrote about the aftermath, “Cowboy was handsome when he donned his Kevlar
and engaged in a military exercise. He was so handsome even the Mexican senoritas, who had everything to lose, were smiling and winking at him.”

Cowboy now expected and, at the first opportunity, was resolved to demand Salty’s father live up to their bargain. That was the plan.

Cowboy explained to the man in green, “The best Rangers who have been traveling wastelands and desolate places waiting for the coastal invasion, are no longer waiting. It is our sole purpose to wonder, raising hell right, until the day of glory and fame. After and during the summer sun and harsh rigors of freezing winds why would we be mystified by pretend lions or any scorpions, Gila monsters or diamondbacks the job may conjure up.”

The man in green took careful notes, for he knew his son would have plenty of questions for him.

“I can't help attacking all things that fall into my jurisdiction and so it was my rightful job to stop the bank car it, but it's not reckless. Valor means it is a virtue that occupies a place between wicked extreme and cowardice. And boldness, it's better to navigate the hearts of the timid and settle somewhere between cruelty and compassion, than to pull oneself up from cowardice.”

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“Señor Cowboy,” responded the man in green, “I say that everything you’ve said and done has been a moral play for Texas and I understand that if the code and laws of the West, whatever laws, they are found written in your heart more clearly than any in any library and now let’s hurry for it is getting late. When we reach my house you can rest.”

“I consider your offer a great kindness and favor, Solis,” responded Cowboy.

And revving up their motorcycles they increase their speed and after about an hour they reach the town and house of Solace Armenta.

Cowboy would from then on begin to call him Vaquero en el Abrigo Verde.

EXT. BRAZOS COUNTY RANCH HOUSE

Cowboy found Solis Armenta’s house to be spacious, a rustic western ranch-style, with Longhorn head were mounted above the fireplace, above the dining and study doors, and above the wine cellar, full of wines from Lubbock. And having a son and not caring what he said or who heard him, he said, “Oh Lubbock wines which have brought to mind the sweetest treasures and of my deepest grief.”

He was heard to say this by the literature student, Solis’s son, who had come into the cellar with his mother to greet him.
And both mother and son marveled to see the strange cowboy figure. Solis courteously went up to her and their son and said, “Meet the Cowboy of Marion County whom you have heard of before, the most valiant and intelligent Ranger in Texas. He's talking taking his time until he moves to support the invasion.”

The lady, whose name was Christina, received him with signs of respect and courtesy and Cowboy responded with a number of discrete and refined phrases; he used almost the same phrase with the son, whom when he heard Cowboy speak, thought him a man of intelligence and wit and possibly the subject of a new novel.

They showed Cowboy a bathroom, where Juan remove his armor vest, leaving him in pants and a cotton t-shirt under a pearl snap shirt that was stained with the sweat of the vest. Cowboy showered and dressed and moved into his cleanest shirt, Cowboy went to a room where the literature student was waiting to entertain him while the tables were being laid for with the arrival of so unusual a guest and given the subject area of the young man's novel, Cowboy would be that guest.

Senora Christina wanted her son all the advantages possible; she slowly and elaborately arranged for a fine meal.

While Cowboy had been removing his armor and showering, Lorenzo, which was the name of Solis's son had the opportunity to say to his father, “Sir, who can this Cowboy be you have
brought into our house, his name and appearance and his saying that he is a Cowboy mobile fits perfectly into my novel.

“Son, I don't know what to tell you,” responded Solis, “I can only say don't ruin your story with this fellow. Maybe more mad than sane. In either case, he will be done here in a bit and he'll be gone. Maybe if you speak to him you will learned the location of the invasion.”

“He won't be so silly as to tell us,” replied Lorenzo.

“Son, I can tell you,” said Solis, “I've seen him do things worthy of the greatest madman in the world and heard him say things so intelligent that they wipe out and undo his mad acts. Try speaking to him explore what he knows and since you're clever you'll maybe learn where he's going.”

Then Lorenzo went to entertain Cowboy, “So Cowboy, how’s life.”

“Man couldn’t be better. Life is fantastic.”

“Yeah, that's fine.

“You really can’t complain about it. First of all, I’m lucky be alive. When you think about it, I'm saying my mother had to have sex with my father, and my grandparents had sex, grandparents, and my great-grandparents had to have sex. There are many people out there that didn't get to be alive.”

“Really?”
“If you do the math. So people that carp about it, I just don’t get it. Being alive is the greatest job in the world. You get to wear hats, feel the wind in your face.”

This was said to Lorenzo’s dismay and he wanted to know, “Cowboy, are you high?”

“No, I’m just way cooler than most,” was Cowboy’s response.

And there was more. Cowboy told Lorenzo, “Your father Solis Amarento has inform me of the rare ability and subtle intriguing ingenuity which you have and in particular that you’re a great writer.”

“No, but perhaps someday,” responded Lorenzo, “but I’m by no means the greatest truth-teller as I have a penchant for westerns and enjoy reading good westerns, I know all Rangers enjoy them as well, but nothing justifies calling me great as my father claims.”

“This humility seems an odd thing to me,” responded Cowboy, “because there is no writer who is not arrogant and does not think himself the greatest writer in the world.”

“Every rule has its exception,” responded Lorenzo, “and there must be some who are not great and but think so.”

“Very few,” responded Cowboy, “but tell me what novel you are working on now. Your father told me it’s a second novel about an errant Cowboy and it’s not making you any money, but
thoughtful. I know a little something about your subject and I'd like to hear about it if it's for a literary contest."

“Yes,” said the young man.

“You should try to win second place; first is always won through favor or because of political connections. Second is won because of pure justice and by this logic, third becomes second and first becomes twenty-third. In the same manner of the degrees offered by universities, but even so being called first carries a great deal of weight with the media. They are making a comeback in Texas, you know. Many people are leaving Mexico to return to Texas.”

“It is my goal to win first,” said Lorenzo but then to himself, “so far, I can't say if you are crazy.”

“Let's move on,” and to Cowboy he said.

“Okay, it seems to me that you have spent time in school. What sciences have you studied?”

Cowboy replied, “I don’t believe in science. I don’t understand it so its easy not to believe in it. They could be making stuff up, you know. I read they think cockroaches are like 350 million years old. Are they? You know I don’t know how to go look that up! Cause that is what I think they’re doing. I think they’ve figured that out that I wouldn’t even have a clue to start to figure that out. Or want to. So they’re just throwing numbers out at me and I just shrug and go, ‘alright.’”
Cowboy struggled for another example and found it.

"Pluto is not a planet? Pluto has been a planet for a while. That’s how long I’ve been out of science. You can’t just leave that off the list of planets my entire life and suddenly put it back on. And now the Mexicans are saying, ‘We were just kidding about Pluto.’ That burned me up man. ‘Cause in elementary school, I got a C in Earth science ‘cause I put Pluto down on a test of the planets. And it turns out I should have gotten above an A. I should have been teaching the class, at age 10, ‘cause I nailed it like Martin Luther. I always believed in Pluto. They said it was too far, I said, ‘you bunch of p*****!’"

Lorenzo tried not to chuckle, but asked, “Well, what class you enjoy the most?”

“The science of Ranger mobility,” responded Cowboy, “which is as good as literature and perhaps even better than film studies.”

“I don't know of that science,” replied Lorenzo, “I haven't heard of it until now.”

“It is a science,” replied Cowboy, “that contains all or most of the sciences, because the man who walks the walk must be a jurist, a theologian, a physician, an herbalist, an astronomer, mathematician, and a metallurgist, because at any moment he might have need of a particular skill. He must know how to swim, run, ride and shoot. He must most importantly have
a friend who can fix a flat tire and change the oil and conduct small engine repairs. Of all these great and trivial parts composes a good Ranger, so I'll let you decide if it's a shallow area of study."

"If this is true," replied Lorenzo, "I say this that this science surpasses them all."

"What do you mean, 'if it is true,'" responded Cowboy.

"What I mean to say," said Lorenzo, "is that I doubt there have ever been Rangers mobile and, if there were, they weren't adorned with so many virtues. I have evidence that two Ranger stole Quanah Parker's Herford bull."

"I have often said, and I repeat now," responded Cowboy, "most of the people are of the opinion that they never have been Rangers mobile and that all the depictions are fictional. I hope you can see the truth though to all the propaganda, if not just think of how they exist now today. Can you see, in a certain political situation, how beneficial in this area are such Rangers might be?"

"Well, let's talk about Rangers today, please. I might be persuaded."

"Well, if they are useful now, why wouldn't they be useful in the past?"
“I understand that, but what are they doing today, but releasing cattle from holding pens? All the authorities do is round them up again and...”

“We don’t talk about everything we do or are going to do. In part, because of modesty and in part for you can’t trust hardly anyone in Texas these days, they won’t go blabbing it all around.”

“Well, you are correct. Enemy agents have found their way to our dinner table, often.”

“All true nature of the Ranger is fortunately obscured by people’s sloth, idleness, gluttony, and self-indulgence.”

“Our guest has gotten away from me,” Lorenzo said to himself, “but even so he is a gallant madman, and I would be a fool not to explore his character, explorer his vanity. Given time, he’ll probably tell me one the location of the invasion and also enough material to complete my novel. Here their conversation came to an end, because they were called to the table.

Cowboy went immediately to the table allowing Solis ask his son what he had learned regarding his guest’s wits.

To which Lorenzo responded, “not all the physicians and notaries in the world could make a final accounting of this gingo. He’s a combination madman and a man who has many lucid intervals.”
The father’s literary advice was to, “take advantage of every insane moment.”

They went to eat the meal and it was just the kind Solis had declared on the road, that he usually provided for his guests, pure abundance and it was delicious, but what pleased Cowboy the most was the marvelous conversation which seemed like reading an Austin newspaper.

When the meal was over, Cowboy asked to hear about Lorenzo's work written for the literary competition.

“I realized my work is amateurish, for which I don't expect any prize at all. I've written it only to exercise my wits.

“A wise friend of mine,” responded Cowboy, “was of the opinion no one should tire of writing.”

“I'd like to catch you in a mistake, but you slipped out of my hands like a catfish.”

“I don't understand,” responded Cowboy, “what do you mean about me slipping away?”

“I'll explain later,” responded to Lorenzo, “but here are some of my words.”

When Lorenzo finished reciting his poem, Cowboy rose to his feet, applauding loudly and grasp Lorenzo's hand to shake it, “Praise be, you must be the best poet on in this civil war and you deserve to be crowned with a laurel wreath.”
It was not surprising to anyone that Lorenzo was extremely happy to be praised by Cowboy even though he considered him a madman. Flattery, how powerful you are! How far you extend.

And Lorenzo was asked to read a second poem.

“Praise be,” said Cowboy. “I've discovered a consummate regional storyteller.”

For four days Cowboy entertained the house of Solis Amarenta, and at the end of this time, a mysterious messenger brought a note. Cowboy asked permission to leave telling the house that he was needed in Matagorda, but that he was very grateful for the kind and generous treatment he had received in the house and he explained that it no longer seemed right for Cowboys mobile to devote too many hours of idleness. He stated that he had adventures to attend on his journey to the sea. He wanted to tube down the San Marcos River and second he wanted to explore the cave of Joey Garcia. Solis Amorenta and his son praised his determination and told him to take from their house and estate anything he wanted to complete his mission.

On the last day before his departure, as happily as Cowboy was to get out on the road again, Juan Seguin was sad and mournful; he was quiet content with the abundance of the house and was opposed to returning to the hunger and heat of his nomadic friend's life. Despite this he filled the saddlebags with what he thought necessary, and as they left Cowboy said to
Lorenzo, “Let me give you some sound advice, it might save you a great deal of time as you seek fame. Leave the writing behind and take up the path of mobility, live the dangerous life and then you will have something to write about.”

With these words, Cowboy brought to a close the question of his madness.

“I’d like to take Lorenzo with me to Matagorda,” Cowboy asked, but his mother said she won’t allow it.

“I can tell you I’ve achieved fame and I can tell you he’ll achieve fame if his stories are read. There’ll be a great battle on the coast and the combatants will be remembered longer than any chronicler. Once again the father and son were astonished by the mind and speech of Cowboy -- sometimes intelligent, sometimes loony. And they were amazed by his persistence and the complete devotion to the revolution, but also by his reckless disclosure of the invasion target.

The compliments were paid and even more courtesies were made and with that Cowboy and Juan mounted Shovelhead and the moped and left driving South again.

**EXT. WASHINGTON COUNTY**

Cowboy had not gone very far from Solis Armenta’s house when he encountered two men who seem to be well-mounted students, specifically Aggies, and they were accompanied by two
peasants each riding markedly lesser cycles. One of the students carried a kind of traveling bag made of course maroon material and wrapped in it there were apparently a piece of fine maroon cloth and two pairs of denim jeans. The other student carried only two new black Micarta tactical knives with leather scabbards. The students carried other things which were a sign that they were returning from some large city where they had bought them and were carrying them back to their town. Both students and peasants experience the same astonishment felt by all when they saw Cowboy for the first time and they longed to know who this man might be. He was thin and so familiar to them.

Cowboy greeted them and after he learned the road they were taking was the same one he was following, he offered them his company and he ask them to slow their pace because their small motorcycles were traveling faster than his Harley and to oblige them in a few words he told them who he was and announced his profession which was that of a Ranger mobile, who went seeking adventures everywhere in Texas. He told them that his proper name was Cowboy of Marion County and that the Mexican’s call him El Vaquero de Tejas.

For the peasants all of this was like speaking to them in Cajun gobbledygook, but that was not the case for the Aggies, who would immediately understand Cowboy was the one the Mexican television constantly made sport of. And so, my enemy’s enemy
is my friend, they viewed him with admiration and respect and the first of the Aggies said, “Señor Cowboy, since you say that you're following the specific road to Matagorda, maybe you would like to come with us and see one of the finest and richest weddings ever celebrated in the Brazos Valley, or in all of Texas for that matter.”

Cowboy ask them if it was a politician's wedding, that he would be highly pleased. “No,” responded the first Aggie, “not a politician, but the wealthiest farmer in this entire valley and the most beautiful farm girl the orchards had ever produced.” The Aggies, pointed out that the preparations for the wedding celebration were extraordinary and remarkable because it would be held in a field near the brides home-town.

“She is named Quiteria and the groom is called rich Camacho. She is 18 and he is 22, they are equals, forget that certain inquisitive Mormons, who have traced their lineage, now claim that fair Quiteria is superior to Camacho, but wealth has a way of minding a good many cracks with the arrival of Mexican authority. With the withering away of the Texas Rangers, Camacho’s father legally seized every deed and bank mortgage and he had used his banking and political connections to capitalize on every landowner’s hard luck and during this Mexican occupation had grown a huge empire size ranch.”

“Outrageous,” exclaimed Cowboy.
“But few care now; it was commonplace. In fact, El Camacho is extremely generous and he has taken a notion to sew a great tent to cover nearly the entire field so that the sun will have great difficulty if it wants to reach the fair bride. He also has arranged for music, fireworks and is bringing ice from College Station, where the true brains of the state have repaired a rudimentary electric grid, and have established a community freezer.”

The now the second Aggie spoke up, “But none of this will not make it a memorable wedding but rather the things I figure Beltran will do. He's desperate; he's a cattle breeder from the same small town as Quiteria and his boss properly shared a fence line with the ranch of Quiteria’s parents, allowing love the opportunity to thrive. But because Beltran loved Quiteria from the earliest tenderest age and she responded to his desire with a thousand ‘honest’ favors, so many that in the town the love of the two children was talked about with the great amusement. As they grew older, Quiteria’s father decided to block Beltran the access to her and to spare himself what he thought would be trouble, Quiteria’s father arranged for his daughter to marry rich Camacho. For her father, it didn't seem profitable to marry her to poor Beltran, even though he was growing some impressive beef for his employer, no one could see the marbling until the animal was butchered and even then society has gone
straight to hell. It’s simply the end of civilization and no one cares anything about carcass-ultrasound or ribeye area any more, certainly not the Mexicans, who are the only ones with money.”

“Beltran, sounds like a man I need to meet.”

“Not that Beltran is worthless, it’s just that the Mexicans might at any time come and confiscate the bloodline he’s established. He was the most agile youth at his high school, a great footballer and track athlete. He could really spin her around that ol’ dance floor and play the guitar and has the red meat yield husbandry skills of the old-time veterinarians before the calamity.”

“For that one accomplishment,” said Cowboy, “the youth deserves not only to marry the fair girl, but also to own a ranch with herds and have to fear their seizure. He deserves it and Texas needs keep the beef.”

“Try telling my wife,” that said Juan Seguin, who so far had been listening in silence. “The only thing she wants is for everybody to marry their equal, following the proverb that says, ‘like goes to like.’”

“What I'd like is for good Beltran,” Cowboy spoke up, “and I'm fond of him already, to marry Miss Quiteria. And people who keep people who love each other from marrying should rest in peace, the world with out, Amen.”
“If all people who loved each other were to marry,” said Juan, “it would deprive parents of the right and privilege to marry their children to the person and at the time they ought to marry. If daughters were entitled to choose their own husband, Cowboy, they might choose her father's hired hand and another daughter might pick a man she saw walking along the road, who seemed to be proud and gallant although he might be a talker or a film maker; for love and affection easily blind the eyes of understanding, which are so necessary for choosing one's state and the estate of matrimony is at particular risk of error. Great caution is required, and particularly, luck is needed to choose correctly.”

No one was really listening but Juan continued, “If a person wishes to make a long journey, if he's prudent before setting out he’ll find a reliable and peaceful companionship for his trouble. When why would he not do the same for the journey that takes a lifetime, until it reaches the repose of death and especially if his companion will be with him in bed, at the table, every way in which a wife accompanies her husband. The companionship of one's own wife is not merchandise that once purchased can be returned or exchanged or altered, it is an irrevocable circumstance that lasts as long as one lives. It is a rope that if put around one's neck turns into a Gordian knot
and if the sighs of death doesn't cut it there is no way to... I'm tired."

Cowboy picked up, “I could philosophize much better in regard to the subject, but I’ll not embarrass my friend. I want to know if the distinguished Aggie has more to tell us about Beltran.”

To which the Aggie responded, “there really is no more for me to say except that ever since the moment Beltran learn that he was getting the mitten he hasn't left the ranch or even spoken coherently and he always goes about pensativo and sad, talkin’ to himself which are clear and certain signs that he has lost his mind. He eats little and sleeps less and what he does eat is fruit (they speculate he’s gone vegan) and if he does sleep it is in the field on the hard ground like a damned animal. From time to time he looks up at the sky, at other times he fixes is eyes on the ground, and is so still that he seems like a dressed statue who's clothes are blowing in the wind. In short, he gives so many indications of having a heart ache that that those of us who know him fear he’ll kill himself the day Quiteria marrys.”

“I recommend heart ache medication, 90 proof is sure to cure,” Juan suggested.

The second Aggie was adamant Beltran would not be sedated, “No one knows the future; there's several hours until the
wedding and in one of them and even in a minute a house can topple over.”

Cowboy spoke, “I've seen it rain on the left and at the same time on the right the sun was shining. A man goes to bed healthy and can't move the next day, and tell me is there anybody who can claim that he's driven a nail into luck’s wheel. No, of course not and I wouldn't dare put the point of a pin between a woman’s ‘yes’ and ‘no’, because it won't fit. Tell me that Quiteria loves Camacho with all her heart and soul and I'll give you a sack of dope because I've heard that love looks through spectacles that make copper look like gold, skinny longhorns look prize beef, river stones like pearls.”

“Damn you Cowboy, when you get to stringin’ together it makes me think you should go to Austin and enlighten the poets a bit,” the Aggie smiled and winked at Juan.

“Oh well, if you understand me,” responded Cowboy, “I don’t know why my companion can’t understand me. He’s always taken my speech for nonsense, but it doesn't matter I understand what I'm saying and I know there's not much foolishness in what just I said.”

“You shouldn't get angry with me,” respond Juan, because you know I didn't grow up at a dinner theater or study in Austin so how would I know if the speeches you are making any sense.
Cowboy responded, “Well, I make sense but you can’t hear it and you can’t force a flat-land hillbilly to understand a Mexican newsreader.”

“That’s true,” said the Aggie, “because those who grew up in broadcasting can’t speak as well as those walking the streets of Dime Box. Pure language, appropriate, and elegant, and clear, used by discerning Texans, even if they were born in Eagle Pass, I said discerning because there are many who are not discerning in the grammar of good language which is accurate when used with care. I, for my sins, have studied at A&M and I’m am rather proud of speaking clearly and meaningfully.”

“If you hadn’t been prouder of how you move those knives you’re carrying then of how you wag your tongue, said the other student, whose name was Corchuelo, “maybe you would have placed first in your class instead of last.”

“Look, friend,” responded the student, “you are all wrong about knives. It’s a useful skill.”

“As far as I'm concerned it's not an opinion, that knives are worthless, but an established truth,” replied Corchuelo, “and if you would like me to prove it to you, experimentally prove it to you; you’re carrying two knives. There's a convenient spot, I have a steady hand and strength and together with my courage, which is no small thing, they will make you
confess that I am not mistaken. Dismount and use your changes of posture, your circles, your angles and your science.

“I expect to make you bleed until mid-day with my skills and after the sun, I put my trust in these knives,” said the student.

Corchuelo responded, “There’s no man born who will make me turn away and none in the world whom I can’t forced to retreat.”

“I won’t get involved in questions of turning or not turning away,” replied the knife master, “though it might be that on the spot, where you are pointing, your grave will be open wide; I swear that you will be lying dead there on account of the mastery you mock so much.”

“Now we’ll see,” responded Corchuelo, and he dismounted his cycle with great agility and furiously seized one of what the student was carrying on his bike.

“Hang on this isn’t right,” said Cowboy, “for I wish to be the official of this duel and the referee of this question and because so frequently without referees many are frequently left unresolved.”

After dismounting Shovelhead, and grabbing his rifle, he stood in the middle of the road at the same time the student with spirited grace and measured steps was advanced on Corchuelo who came toward him his eyes, as the saying goes, blazing the two peasants who accompanied them did not dismount their cycles
but served as spectators to the innumerable lunges slashes downward, thrusts upward, reverse strokes, and two handed blows executed by Corchuelo aware denser than liver and more minute than hail. He attacked like an angry rattler but was met with one blow to the mouth by the tip of the student's knife which stopped him in the middle of his fury and which he had to kiss as if it were a crucifix, though not as devotedly as most kissed them.

Finally, the student's slashing accounted for all the buttons on the shirt Corchuelo was wearing and slashing his shirt arms to into octopus, twice he knocked off his hat and tired him so much that in fiery, anger, and rage the student seized Corchuelo's knife by the hilt and threw it so far, the peasant who went to fetch it testified that it had been it had traveled one-hundred yards.

Corchuelo sat down exhausted and Juan approached him and said, "Sir Corchuelo, if you will take my advice from now on you won't challenge anybody to a knife fight, but to wrestling, or hunting, or hurling the shot put. Since you're young enough and strong enough for that because I've heard that the men they call 'master knifeman' can put the tip of their knife in the eye of a needle."
“I'm happy,” responded Corchuelo, “that I fell off my high horse and that experience has shown me a truth I refused to acknowledge.”

Standing up, he embraced the student and they were better friends than before and not wanting to wait for the kid who had gone after the knife, because it seemed it would take too long, they resolved to continue on their way in order to reach Quiteria’s village early, for that is where all of them were from.

For the rest of their journey the students told them about the excellencies of the knife fighting and so many demonstrations and figures and mathematical proofs that all of them were well informed regarding the virtues of science and Corchuelo’s pessimism was overcome. It was dark, but before they arrived it seem to everyone that the sky was filled with innumerable bright stars.

They also heard the sweet rhythmic sounds of a West Texas dance band and when they came close they saw that a group of trees, erected at the entrance to the town, were filled with red chili pepper lights.

The musicians were entertainers at the wedding on a makeshift stage; they played instruments and smiled as some of the guests danced. In fact, it seemed that in the field, joy was
dancing the grass right out of existence, putting a haze of dust up in the air.

Many people were busy hauling in chairs where, on the following day, the wedding would be comfortably viewed. Cowboy did not want to enter the former historic site, though both the peasants and both the students asked him to, but he gave as an excuse which seemed more than sufficient to him it was the custom of Ranger's mobile to sleep in fields and deserts rather than in towns even under gilded ceilings and saying this he went a little ways off the road, much against the will of Juan, who remembered the fine accommodations he had enjoyed the house of Solis Armenta.

EXT. WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS

No sooner had the sun begun to dry the dew in his hair. Cowboy rose to his feet and called to Juan, who was still snoring. Cowboy saw this and woke him saying, "Juan, you are the luckiest man on Earth; you're not envied nor do you envy. And you sleep soundly; you aren't persuaded by mystic demons nor are you alarmed by them. You don't lust after anyone, or worried too much about your debts, or how you'll feed yourself or your family."

Juan did not respond to any of this because he was still asleep and he would not have been awake until noon if Cowboy,
with the barrel of his rifle, had not brought him back to consciousness. He awoke finally and turning his head in every direction he said, “Coming from the direction of that tent, if I'm not mistaken, there's an aroma that smells much more like roasted side of beef, possibly some chicken and pork as well. Weddings that begin with smells like this must be pleasant and generous.”

“Enough, fat boy,” said Cowboy, “Let’s go to the ceremony to see what the jilted Beltran will do.”

“No matter what he does, what he’d like,” responded Juan, “is not to be poor and to marry Quiteria. He doesn't have a row to hoe and he wants to rise above the clouds? I think a poor man should be content with whatever he finds and not go asking for the moon, given this party. I bet an arm that Camacho can bury Beltran in pesos and if that's true, as it must be, Quinteria would be a fool to give up the fun, gifts, and jewels that Camacho must have given her already and still can give her for the way Beltran throws the football, a good throw or touchdown will get you only a pint of tequila in most bars. Talents and skills that can't be sold for gold aren’t talents. But when those talents fall on someone who collects good money for them, then that's the life I'd like. You can build a good business with that kind of talent.”
“For the love of bacon,” said Cowboy, “that's enough of your harangue. I believe that you, as much as you talk, you never have time to eat or sleep. You would spend all the time talking if your ass hadn’t the appetite you have for you have to stop talking to eat.”

Juan and his friend got on Shovelhead and the moped and at an unhurried pace they rode into the big tent. The first thing that day that appeared were three steers, sacrilegiously nicknamed “Father, Son and Holy Ghost,” but all the same roasting on spits made of entire trees and in the fires a fair size mountain of mesquite was burning and six huge cauldrons were placed around the fires. Juan counted more than 60 cases of wine, excellent ones. There were also mounds of loaves of bread and cheeses were criss-crossed like bricks and two giant pans of oil were ready to fry 20 lbs. of okra. Finally, there was a crock of honey ready and waiting.

The caballero’s cooks, male and female, numbered more than fifty, all of them devoted diligent and contented. A dozen small tender suckling pigs were sewn into the expanded belly of the steer to give it flavor and make it tender, the allspice seemed to have been brought not by the pound but by the five-pound sack. In short, the provisions for the wedding were rustic but so abundant they could have fed an army.
Juan Seguin observed everything and contemplated everything and felt affection for everything edible. First, his desire was captivated and conquered by the steer and the cauldrons from which he planned to fill a plate or three. Then his affections were won over by the wine, and finally by the vegetables by the skillet. So when he could bear it no longer and it was not in his power to do anything else he approached one of the most nubile cooks in humble, but hungry terms, and asked to be allowed to dip a crust of bread into one of the cauldrons to which the cook responded, “Brother thanks to Camacho, hunger is no object, just make your way to the rotisserie and pick up a chicken or two and hearty appetite to ya’.”

“I don't see one,” Juan responded.

“One what?” asked the pretty girl, “Lord save me, what a squeamish husky fellow you must be,” and having said this she seized a large plate and took out two chickens and a quail and said to Juan, “Eat, my friend, your breakfast can be these birds until it's time to eat after the wedding.”

“While Juan was engaged in these matters, Cowboy watched as some dozen farmers, dressed in their best clothes and mounted on twelve beautiful cycles decked out in rich and colorful trappings rode around the tents in an orderly and choreographed way. They rode not once but many times around the field, joyfully. It was early but they were drunkenly shouting, “Long
Live Camacho and Quintaria. He's rich as she is nice and she's the best looking in the world.”

Then Cowboy said to himself, “it certainly seems that they have not seen my Salty from Tawakoni for if they had, they would restrain their praises of Quintaria.”

A short while later, many different groups of dancers begin to come under the tent, among them one performing tricks with twelve couples all dressed in white linen and wearing red headscarfs of silk.

Cowboy had seen many dances, but had never seen one as good as this. He also liked another group. A cluster of beautiful young maidens, none younger than fourteen and none older than eighteen, all dressed in green clothes, their hair partly braided and partly hanging loose and so blonde it could compete with the rays of the sun and in their hair they wore garlands made of Pinkladies, Indian Paintbrush, and Beebalm. They were led by a venerable older man and an ancient matron more agile and nimble than the young girls. The virgins, with modesty in their eyes, performed with their feet spectacular moves.

Cowboy asked one of the fairies, “Who had composed and directed the dancing?”

She responded, “It was a priest, a beneficiary from the village, who had the great talent.”
“I would wager,” Cowboy answered, “that this priest must be more a friend of Camacho than Beltran and that he is more inclined to writing satires than to singing prayers at Vespers. He's incorporated Beltran's athletic skills into the wedding at the expense of Camacho.”

Juan who heard everything said, “My Boston Terrier is meaner; I'm on Camacho’s side.”

Cowboy pointed out, “It seems clear, Juan, that you are a peasant of the kind who shouts, ‘Long Live’ whoever is winning.”

“I don't know what kind I am,” responded Juan, “but I do know that I've never had such fine chicken from Basilleo's cooks,” and he shows Cowboy the plate full of chickens and quail and seasoning. Juan begin to eat with great verve and enthusiasm saying, “the hell with Beltran, Beltran's athletic and Beltran's musical talents. You're worth what you have and what you have is what you're worth. Wealth is better than wisdom and old is better than young. The larger the Harley, the better off you are.”

“Have you finished your jaw bonin’?” asked Cowboy?

“I must have,” responded Juan, “because I see your ass is bothered by it. If you hadn't cut this one short I would have gone for another three days.”

“Enough, Juan,” said Cowboy, “Stop now before you fall, for the truth is, what you have said sounds more like a professor of
economics rather than a philosophy of a tequila distiller. You could teach at a college, if you could remember such things.”

“Being a good teacher means living a good life,” respond Juan, “but I don't know anymore sayings. Can you allow me to eat these birds?”

“And saying this,” he resumed the assault on his plate with so much gusto that he awoke the appetite of Cowboy who would have helped himself, if he had not been distracted by what happened next.

**EXT. WASHINGTON COUNTY UNDER THE TENT**

Cowboy and Juan were engaged in idiotic conversation when a great noise was heard from the men on motorcycles, for with a huge outcry they rode to receive the bride and groom. They were accompanied by the Thomas-sharps and their families and the most distinguished people from the neighboring cities towns and countryside, all of them dressed in the finest clothes.

As soon as Juan saw the bride, he said, “She isn't dressed like a peasant girl, but like an elegant lady. Look at that engagement ring, and her dress is flawless and thousand thread count; I'd swear it's made of satin. And then just look at her maids all with identical (or near-identical) matching turquoise rings; the rings are silver and likely to be worth something. And take me again for a pumpkin roller but what hair; I've never
seen hair longer or blonder in my life. She's a pecan tree, loaded down with nuts, is what she is. I swear she's a fine rosy-cheeked girl who can pass through the doors of the Mexican Reserve Bank in San Antonio and not be stopped. They wouldn't say a word."

Cowboy laughed at Juan’s rustic praise though it seemed to him that aside from his Salada de Tawakoni, he'd never seen a more beautiful woman. However, Cowboy pointed out that fair Quitaria seemed somewhat pale and nervous; Juan explained that it must have been because of the sleepless night the brides always experience as they prepare for their wedding.

One side of the tent was adorned with candy and bouquets of flowers. The wedding party was approaching the podium, where the marriage would take place and from which they could watch the dances and the priest’s dramatic inventions and as they reach this spot they heard shouts behind them and one voice cried out saying...

"Hang on Belvidere, shunt this shivaree."

At these words, everyone turned around and saw that the one who had called out was a man slicked-up in a black suit and wearing a fiery red tie. As he came closer to the party, a smart sprinkle recognized the gallant Beltran and everyone was as surprised waiting to see the outcome of his taunts and fearing the worst from his appearing at the wedding.
It lasts her stopped, tired and breathless, before the bride and groom and suddenly a shot rang out from outside the tent. A puff of smoke divulged the direction of the shot, but the shooter slipped away when everyone looked at Beltran and realize that apparently he'd been shot in the chest he stumbled to the ground at the bride's feet and he said, “You know very well forgetful Quitaria, acknowledge the corn, according to our promise as long as I'm alive you can't take a husband and you’ve forgotten also that you promised me time to improve my sit’ation and buy a ranch of my own. But you've turned your back on all the obligations you owe to my honest efforts and now this? I'm shot and dying. Long Live Camacho, and with the thankless Quitaria, may he live many long and happy years. It’s death for poor Beltran whose poverty cut the wings of commitment and sent him to the grave.

His friends hurried over to help him, grief-stricken and in shock at his misery and sad luck. Cowboy hurry to help him and was the first to take him in his arms and discover that he had not yet died. Some wish to evacuate him to a hospital in Bryan, 50 miles away, but the mongoloid priest who was standing right there held that it would kill him to move him and wouldn't allow it until he had his confession and give him the last rites. But Beltran rallied and in a faint and pained voice, he said...
“If you would like cruel Quitaria give me your hand in marriage in my final dying moments and then I'll I think I'll be able to forgive you. I'll be happy for a minute or two at least.”

When the priest heard this, he told him to attend to the well-being of his soul rather than to the pleasure of his body and to beg his pardon for his sins and his rash act of despair and added that he had enough friends there pitch in and pay for his last rites.”

They all nodded that they would take up a collection for the priest.

To which Bresilio replied, “Under no circumstances will I make this confession until Quitaria give me her hand in marriage, that Joy will strengthen my will give me courage to confess and to die in the church.”

Cowboy, during the request of the wounded man, said in a loud voice, “What that Beltran is asking for is something very fair and reasonable given he won’t live more than a few minutes. And moreover it would be very easy to do, everything that is needed is present. And,” Cowboy added that, “Mr. Camacho would be just as honored receiving Quitaria as the widow of the brave Beltran as if he had received her from her father's side, that is if Mr. Camacho is honorable.”
A suspicious friend of Beltran added, “Looking at this wound, it will clearly be his last vow because the nuptial bed of his only marriage will be the grave.”

Camacho heard all of this and all of his all of this, and it confused and baffled him. He didn't know what to do or say but the orchestrated voices of Beltran’s friends were so clamorous, asking him to consent. And the priest glanced at him suggesting that Beltran’s soul would not be commended if he agreed. Camacho, perhaps a thoroughbred, perhaps a sap moved or maybe even ‘forced’ by a thousand sad eyes to say that if Quitaria really wished to do so, say he was content to marry her “later in the day.”

Then all eyes toward Quitaria and some with “please” and others hankering and still others set to with hefty arguments that she should give her hand to pour Beltran.

She, as hard as marble, and as motionless as a statue showing that she could not and would not and did not wish to say a word either way, and she would not have responded at all if the priests had not told her to, “stop crow hopin’ and decide quickly” because Beltran’s soul was “not a fish in the refrigerator.” He told her there was no time for her to be indecisive. Still, she remained motionless. Until the friends of Beltran began to chant, “Save his soul! Save his soul!” And it
caught on with the entire crowd, even the family of Camacho joined in.

Then ansy Quitaria, without saying a word but clearly perturbed and apparently anxious, went to Beltran whose eyes were turned up and his breathing was quick and hurried and who was whispering to himself the name Quitaria giving every indication that he would die like a Protestant and not like a Catholic.

Finally, Quitaria fell to her knees and signaled for his hand, not asking for it. Beltran rolled his eyes up and looked at her intently and he said, “Oh, Quitaria be merciful to me. I'm about to die; give me your hand not because everyone is peerin' or because everyone is singin' out that you ought to give me your hand, but do it because you of your own free will, that you want to be my legit wife, for it's not right to whitewash this solemn and last moment of my life.”

As he said these words, he fainted and everyone figured the worst but he found himself and Quitaria, filled with flummux, took Beltran's hand and said, “No power is strong enough to turn my will and so with the freest will I have, I give you my hand as you want and become your legally wedded wife. I receive your hand if you give it to me of your own free will and not with your dying breath.

“But I’m bleeding buckets.”
“Your bleading out everywhere has nothing to do with it.”

“I’ll accept that,” responded Beltran, not clouded not confused. “I’m only acting on your promise to me years ago and I give myself to be your husband.”

“And I give myself to be your wife,” responded Quitaria, “whether you live a minute more or whether 50 years more.”

Juan said under his breath, “It sure takes a lot to kill these Aggie boys. For someone who's so mortally wounded, this whippersnapper is certainly ambitious. They should make him stop the romance and pay attention to how they're going to transport him to the hospital.”

Then as Beltran and Quitaria held hands and kiss the syndromed priest, tender-hearted and weeping gave them his blessing and asked Heaven to rest the soul of the newly wedded husband, who as soon as hearing, “I now pronounce you man and wife,” leapt up with a great agility to his feet and pulled open his shirt showing everyone his bloody but unblemished chest all the onlookers were astonished and some of them more Catholic-minded in the back of the tent began to shout a miracle (a miracle).

To that Beltran replied, “not a miracle or impertinence, but ingenuity and innovation. And opportunity.”

The priest confused and bewildered hurries to touch the wound with his hands and he discovered a bullet had not passed
into the chest, but a bag filled with pig’s blood had exploded there.

After an entire minute contemplating the priest, Camacho and all the bystanders considered themselves fooled and deceived. During the great wedding debate, Camacho’s supporters used the “señor” and Beltran’s supporters had used the “sir” and from this the two entire tent was divided and everyone knew immediately which side was which.

The bride showed no sign of regretting the trick, rather she heard someone say that the wedding, because it had been a trick would not be valid, she said that she confirmed it again. Everyone then began to whisper that she had known about all along and went along with the ruse. And this talk found its way back to Camacho and his companions and they pulled a dozen different pistols and aim them at Beltran, but in an instant just as many irons were aimed at Camacho's friends most importantly Cowboy’s two smoke poles were point blank aimed at Camacho.

Slowly, mindful of all the pistols breathing the air out of the tent, Cowboy begin to march the bride and groom out of the tent, still aiming deuces at Camacho.

Juan who never took pleasure or solace from a fuss took refuge beside the steer, where he was cutting brisket into a
very large pan, for he thought that cut of meat was sacred and wanted to share some of it with the newlyweds.

Cowboy in a great voice as he exited shouted, “Holster everything. It’s not right to take revenge for the offense that love commits. You should know that love and war are the same and just as in war it is legitimate and customary to make use of tricks and stratagems to conquer the enemy; so, in the contest and rivalries of love the lies and falsehoods used to achieve a desired end are considered fair and as long as they do not dishonor, discredit or dishonor the beloved. Quitaria belongs to Beltran and Beltran to Quitaria all presided over by the Holy Mexican church. Camacho is rich and can buy whatever catalogue woman he wants. For Beltran is only a humble man, but no man no matter how powerful or rich can take her from him now. Those who God has put together, let no man put asunder and if anyone wants to try step up and pass in front of these asunder pistols... they’s welcome to try.”

And hearing this Beltran's friends holstered their weapons and slowly backed away. Cowboy continued to brandish his pistols with such strength that he filled all who didn’t know him with fear.”

Quitaria’s cold look to Camacho's cause him in an instant to abandon all hope for her and so he was easily persuaded by the Cowboy’s arguments and those of the priest and he asked that
his supporters be calm and finally indicated the ranker was over and they should holster their pistols also. Typical of Mexican culture, they blamed Quitaria’s treachery more than Basileo's inventiveness and never once mentioned Camacho's stupidity.

Outside the tent Basileo's friends laughed and laughed at the swindle and publicly Camacho reasoned that Quitaria wasn't even a virgin anyway and that Basileo was only collecting his deeded property. Privately, he was devastated but didn’t want to catch a bullet as well as lose a wife.

Once his followers were consoled the rich Camacho, in order to show that he didn't resent the slight or consider it of any real importance, decided that the feast should go on as if he really had been married.

It wasn't an hour before Camacho was drunk and dancing with the daughter of the state’s biggest anarchopharmacist, an acquaintance of the barber and minister.

Beltran and his new wife and their followers didn't wish to attend and so they went to the ranch where Beltran worked, because poor men who are good and smart can also have alliances and friends and there on his turf he was honored and a mini-banquet was held. The hero was Juan who had liberated the two of the three briskets.

The newlyweds took Cowboy with them, deeming him a great man of courage. Juan only wanted to save the brisket from
gloom; when it was clear that he’d have to walk away from Camacho splendid banquet, he did what comes natural. While everyone was being carried away with rankour, he was carrying away heaping platters. Festive and boisterous, but not really hungry, as he’d had two chickens and a quail earlier, he followed Shovelhead on his moped loaded down with brisket.

To everyone’s surprise, the largest of tables was set and waiting their arrival, which caused the ranch’s owner to be rumored to have invented the ruse to help Beltran.

INT. LEE COUNTY RANCH

Many nice gifts were presented to Cowboy by the Ranch owner and the newlyweds who were indebted to him for the actions he taken in defense of the ruse. They said his intelligence was just as laudable as his courage and they considering him a regular “Walker Texas Ranger” in fighting ability and a, “Pappy pass the biscuits, please” in eloquence.

Our good Juan had a wonderful time for three days at the ranch owner’s expense. And there he learned that the scheme to feign a mortal wound had not been communicated to fair Quiteria and that it was entirely Basilleo's idea, as logic demanded. Beltran had hoped to achieve exactly what had happened. It is certainly true that he confessed to sharing part of his thinking with one of his friends, so that his friend would fire a blank
through a crack in the tent, while he set off the bag of blood. Only the two knew of the deception. But many of his friends had been told to be there at the wedding.

“They cannot and should not be called deceptions,” said Cowboy, “since the purpose was virtuous.”

“The two lovers marrying was the most excellent purpose, but,” he warned that, “the greatest adversary love has in Texas is hunger and continual need for technology because love is all joy and happiness and commitment especially when the lover is in a possession of the beloved and Mexico was responsible for withholding technology and of course causing the poverty as well.”

“The honorable poor man, if a poor man can be honorable, possesses a jewel when he has a beautiful wife and when that is taken away from him, so is his honor destroyed. The beautiful honorable woman whose husband is poor deserve to be crowned with laurels and palms of victory and triumph. Beauty in and of itself attracts the desires of all who look upon it and recognized it and coyotes and buzzards swoop down for it as if it were savory bait, but if this beauty is joined to need and want it's also attacked by crows, kites other scavengers and the woman who stands firm through so many encounters surely deserve to be called her husband's crown.”
Cowboy was saying this all the time, so that Beltran would continue practicing the skill he knew or thought would bring him recognition. He never touched a computer in his 18 years. His work with animals brought money to the ranch owner, but not to the employee. Cowboy wanted him to become more commercially viable.

“Look, my clever friend, Beltran,” added Cowboy. “It is believed by some very smart fellows, or other, that there was only one virtuous woman in the entire world and they advise each man to think and believe that the one virtuous woman is his wife and in this way he would live contently. I'm not married and so far it's not even cross my mind to marry and yet I should dare to warn any man who asks my advice how to find the woman he wishes to marry first and only then have the audacity to dream. I should advise him to consider their reputation, more than their wealth, because the virtuous woman does not achieve a good reputation simply by being good but by appearing to be good. A woman's honor is damaged more by public liberties and acts of boldness than by subterfuge. If you bring a virtuous woman to your house she will be easy to maintain and even improve that virtue, but if she is immoral it will be a formidable task to change her for it is not very likely that she will pass from one extreme to another. I do not say it is impossible but I consider it extremely difficult.”
Juan heard this to himself, “This jingler friend of mine, when I talk about things of pith and substance, usually says that I could make take a pulpit and go through the world preaching, find sermons. And I should give him the same when he begins to string together judgments and to give advice he could not only take a pulpit and but go through town squares and say exactly the same thing. What a devil of a Ranger demagogue you are and what a lot of things you know I thought in my heart. I figured that he only knew things that had to do with rangerin’ but there's nothing he doesn't kick or poke his pipe into.”

Juan was mumbling this when his friend heard him and asked, “What are you mumbling about Juan?”

“I'm not saying anything and I'm mumbling even less,” responded Juan, “I was just saying to myself that I wish I'd heard what your ass said here before I married, maybe then I'd be saying now the, ‘Ox whose free can lick where he pleases.’”

“Is your Teresa so bad Juan,” asked Cowboy.

“She's not very bad,” responded Juan, “but she's not very good either, at least she's not as good as I'd like.”

“It is wrong if you want,” said Cowboy, “to speak ill of your wife, who is in fact the mother of your children.”

“I doubt she’s too worried about it,” responded Juan, “because she speaks ill of me too, whenever she feels like it.
Especially when her cupboards are bare and then not even Satan himself can bare it.”

In short, they spent three days with the newlyweds on the ranch and were regaled and listened to as if they were kings. Cowboy asked the student skilled with a knife to find him a guide who would lead him to the cave of Joey Garza, because he had a great desire to enter it and see with his own eyes if the marvel's told about it told through throughout Texas were true. The student said that he would get him one of his cousins, who was a famous student and very fond of reading novels of the West, and he would be very happy to bring him to the mouth of the cave and also show him Barton Creek swimming hole, famous in all of Texas. And the student said he would find him pleasant company because he was a lad who knew how to write books and had dedicated some to a ranch princess out Pecos way.

At last, the cousin arrived on a panhead trike, it's passenger compartment covered by a small Navajo rug. Juan prepared Shovelhead and made ready his own moped and provisioned his saddlebags. He then joined the cousin, which was also well-stocked. They said “adiós” and they set out on their journey traveling west in the direction of the famous Cave of Joey Garza.

On the road in Lee County, Cowboy questioned the cousin regarding the character and nature of his activities, his
profession and his studies, to which the cousin responded, that
his profession was being a humanist and his activities and
studies compose composing books, all of them helpful and not
divisive for the two nations.

“I dad!” exclaimed Cowboy and our hero accused him or
writing the film that he felt defamed his good name. It might
have come to blows but Juan assured Cowboy the man was so
neutral it would have been impossible for him to have lampooned
anyone on either side.

The writer was less concerned about the allegations of
liable and more concerned that he was accused of written for
television. He said that he’d promised his mother he would never
write for such a low jag, even if it meant eating beans, and
that she’d be soarly displeased if it were true.

Cowboy bought that and asked about the books his mother
loved most. One of the books she’d most loved had been on the
ranches of Texas, “which depicted seven-hundred-and-three cattle
brands and general maps of each ranch, from which any Cowboy
would know the owner of any branded cattle they came across and
wouldn't have to go begging the locals or overtaxing their
brains in order to match their intentions.”

“She also is proud of a book about the cattle breeds that
still exist in Texas; you would be surprised given the turmoil
since the EMP and with all the open range how many pure breeds
there still are and how much effort people have taken to maintain the genetics in spite of the Mexican’s hauling off every head they could find, even the breeders.”

“My mother cares little for it but I have a book on the invention of things since the EMP, but it’s more the reinventions of things and the smartest return to the old technologies.”

Juan, who had been very attentive during the cousin’s narration, threw into the fire, “and that book should be very useful to everyone.”

Cowboy said, “I wish you luck with your books you must know everything. But tell me, sir, have a question or two for me?”

INT. COMAL COUNTY AT NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

The day was spent on Cowboy jawing adventures since the comedy had appeared, and the cousin was quite receptive. And at night they stayed in a small town which because Cowboy was now less than a mile from the cave of Joey Garza, and if he was determined to go inside he would need to have ropes so that he could tie them around himself and lower himself into the depths the cave had been visited by a paying public along a safe manicured path, but after the EMP, the path was destroyed to discourage exploring.
People had too much trouble paying for such ventures and after the paying crowd stop the owners of the cave left for Mexico and the occupation government had to stop the explorations; they had too much trouble to worry about confiscating at first weapons, and then they were in the pet business and of course real-estate, oil and gas, cotton and cattle. They couldn’t see themselves in the amusement cave business.

The Mexican police, who replaced the Texans, became tired of doing their jobs (rescuing people), so they simply made entering the cave against the law and when that didn’t work, they destroyed the concrete path as they quickly tired of dealing with free-exploring people. It was a way of avoiding work for the Mexicans and very few of the occupiers reveled in heroics like the old Texas cops. Ironically, destroying the path simply added work for the Mexicans and the need to rescue people increased at the dark cave.

Cowboy said that even if the cave went down into the abyss of hell, he had to see where it ended and so they traded dope for almost a 600-foot of rope and the next day the two (with Juan), and at two in the afternoon, they reached the cave who's mouth was spacious and wide but was filled with brambles and thorns, a mesquite tree and cactus so thick and intertwined that they completely covered and hid it.

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As soon as they saw it, the cousin, Juan, and Cowboy, dismounted and they tied Cowboy securely with the ropes and while they were wrapping them around him and tightening them Juan said, “Sir, you should think about what you were doing. You don't want to be lost alive or be in a place where you're like a hung down in a well to cool. And, it isn't the place to be high on meth, exploring this place high, would be worse than the time you were high in that jail in Kilgore.”

“Tie the rope and be quiet,” responded Cowboy, “for an undertaking like this, my friend, was intended only for ‘methodic’ exploration.”

And then the cousin said, “I beg you, Cowboy, that you observe carefully and scrutinize with this camera that you find. What you find inside, perhaps there are things that I can put in my next book.”

When this was said and the ropes were secured, Cowboy said, “it was an oversight not to have brought a small cowbell to hold next to me on this rope for its sound would let you know that I am still descending and still alive, but since that isn't possible, just wish me luck.”

“The spurs are on just the right boots,” responded Juan.

“Here's how!” Cowboy exclaimed.

And then Cowboy took a bottle of Juan’s tequila, swallowed long and hard, and “Canebreak!” he exclaimed.
And he then blew clouds of meth and he tugged on them long enough and hard and then he said aloud, “Salada de Tawakoni, I'm about to throw myself and plunge into the abyss and see what I can see here, So with a writer to witness it so the world will know I’m not a clown and that with the love of a woman, nothing is impossible for me,” and saying this he approached the chasm.

He saw that it was not possible to lower himself or make his way to the entrance except by the strength of his arms he wrestled with a thicket of prickly plants in the path, but as soon as he pulled at them, an infinite number of huge bats flew out of the thorns and there were so many flying, and so quickly, that they knocked Cowboy to the ground. If he were as much of a reasoner as he was a Ranger he would have taken this as a bad omen and refuse to go down into the place.

At last, he stood and seeing that no more bats were coming out and with the cousin and Juan gradually letting out the rope, he began to lower himself down to the bottom of the fearful cavern and as he entered Juan looked very apprehensive, he drank heavily from his tequila bottle.

“Oh cookies and cream; of all the Rangers, there you go. The bravest in the world, heart of steel, pistol of bronze, I hope you are back safe and sound and free to continue your adventure.”

The cousin didn't just hope but prayed to God.
Cowboy kept calling out for rope and more rope and they let it out slowly and when his cries which were channeling out of the cave could no longer be heard they had already unwound the 600 feet of rope and it seemed to them that they ought to bring Cowboy up again since they couldn't give him more rope.

But they waited for about half an hour and at the end of that time they begin to pull up the rope very easily and with no weight at all which made them imagine that Cowboy had remained at the bottom and because of this Juan began to cry bitterly and to pull very quickly and learn the truth. But when there was little more than a hundred fifty feet of rope left they felt weight which made them extremely happy. Finally when there were 20 feet remaining they saw him and shouted to him, “a very hearty welcome to you, Cowboy, we thought you were going to stay down there and start a family.”

But Cowboy didn't say a word and when they had pulled him all the way out they saw that his eyes were closed as if he were sleeping. They laid him on the ground and then untied him and still he did not awaken but they turned him this way and that and shook him and moved him so much that after a fairly long time he responded. He regained consciousness and stretched as if he were waking from a deep and profound sleep and looking around as if in alarm.
He said, “May God forgive you friends, for you have taken me away from the sweetest life and most pleasant sites that any human being has ever seen or experienced. In truth, yes, I realized that all the pleasures of this life pass like shadows and dreams or weather like the flowers in the field. Oh unfortunate Jackie & Burgess Pattons, gravely wounded Captain Call, transplanted and luckless Brookshire. Ben Lily’s murdered dogs. Oh, weeping Irish brothers and you children of Maria Sanchez, who made the Texas rivers with the number of tears shed by your beautiful eyes.”

The cousin and Juan listen to the words of Cowboy, who spoke them as if he were tearing them with great sorrow from the very depths of his being. They begged him, especially the writer, to explain what he was saying and to tell them what he had seen “in that hell, you call it Hell?”

Cowboy said, “don't call it that for it doesn't deserve the name as you shall see.”

Naturally, he’d forgotten to record anything with the camera, but he asked them to give him something to eat for he was very hungry; they spread the cousin’s blanket on the green grass had recourse to the provisions in the saddlebags and the three of them sat, uncompanionable, sat and ate both dinner and supper, waiting for him to speak.
It must have been six in the afternoon, when the sun began to be hidden and it gave Cowboy the chance, free of the oppressive heat, to tell what he had seen in the cave of Joy Garcia. Cowboy said, “now is as good a time as ever, my friends, now listen carefully.”

His two illustrious listeners listened and he began...

“In this Cave at a depth of apparently 84 feet on the right side of the cave there is a concavity, a space capable of holding an 18-wheeler tractor-trailer, and a small amount of light comes through openings in the Earth's surface. I saw this concavity and space when I was already tired from being suspended from the rope. As I moved through that dark without a fixed or certain route and so I decided to go into the cave inside the cave and I shouted to you asking that you not let out more rope until I told you too, but you probably didn't hear me.

“I picked up the rope you sent down and made it into a coil and sat on it becoming very thoughtful as I considered how I wanted to reach the bottom without anything to support me and when I was deep in this thought and confusion suddenly and without my wishing it I was overcome by profound sleep and when I least expected it not having knowing how or why I woke up. I found myself in the midst of the most beautiful pleasant cow pasture that nature could create or the most discerning human
mind could imagine. I opened my eyes wide, rubbed them and saw that I was not sleep, but really I was awake. Even so I felt my head and chest to verify whether it was by myself or some false and counterfeit demon sitting there. But my sense of touch, my feelings, the reasoned debate I held with myself, verified for me that there and then I was the same person I was and am here now."

"Then there appeared before my eyes a room full of antiques watches, telescopes, rifles, fine spurs fancy saddles, a 1960s era Surge style vacuum milker, and silver tableware. After three nights in a room full of antiques, I was taken to the pier a Chinese officer overseeing men in the Mexican Army and he had and earthen jar he sat the jar on the table it had a cloth over it."

"'At last, we come to the moment of our ceremony,' he said, 'you are guilty of attempting to overthrow the waffle government of Greater Mexico, but the normal waffles of war, you should be shot, but given your travels and your propaganda value, the authorities have decided to be merciful.' I didn't understand but he said, "Some will live and some will die,' said the Chinaman, 'there are ten of you and some of you must take responsibility for your rebellion, the woman from Tawakoni will be freed,' a woman in a veil and totally covered stood at the end of the pier observing it all.
“Juan, you were there and you sold the fellow to ‘bugger off’ and you widely pointed out that they were going to shoot us anyway. And you figured no one there wanted to listen?”

“The Chinaman paused and looked at you. ‘We started from all parts of Texas nearly two-hundred Rangers,’ Juan you said this from a long pier, “now we are here with only ten I’d call that punishment.”

“The Chinaman spoke then, ‘I don’t know what you’d call it; that’s the fortunes of war you attacked the entrance of the Colorado River didn’t you know we are crafty and had spies to warn us of your adventure? Now this is how the ceremony will work; in the jar there are ten beans, five of them are white, and five are black. Each of you will shuffle up in your leg irons and take a bean from the jar. The five who draw white beans will live and the those how to draw black beans will be allowed to swim for it; we have priests standing by as you can see,’ and he held out a cell phone. ‘So men, who would like to be the first to draw a bean?’ There was a pause and I remember thinking maybe I could wrestle the rifle from the nearest guard. I wasn’t thinking of beans yet I was thinking about getting off the pier. The leg irons were the deuce to cope with. I didn’t trust the Mexicans or the beans, there might have there might be ten black beans. The Chinaman called the others all cowards as I stepped up to draw; fortunately, I drew a white bean and was
placed at the land end of the pier. They drew white and black beans until there were three white beans and two black beans. Then my ever logical compadre, always seeing an advantage, Juan stepped up to draw and he drew a white bean.

“

When the beans were exhausted, the men who were to live were marched over and offered the chance to exchange last words with those who were to die, but less than ten words were exchanged. When the ten words were exchanged, the men to die were marched to the edge of the dock; the sharks in the water below seemed to understand the Chinaman as he announced the gracious and melodious Salada de Tawakoni will now sing a song. The woman took off her veil and it was Salty's face but she just wrote entirely revealing a horribly disfigured breast and shoulder she was a leper breast black and bags of yellow skin and hanging from her shoulders at this time I halted the hallucination but not the history, or reasonable premonition of it, and bias in the most malicious way for you know the all problems I’ve had with the demons.

I did and, with this satisfaction given to me by McMurtry, my heart recovered from the shock I'd received at hearing my lady Salty compared to Lady Gaga. I simply stated Salty is Salty and Lady is Lady.”
“What surprises me,” said Juan, “is that your ass didn't jump on the Chinaman and push him into the water and take a rifle or two.”

“No, Juan my friend,” responded Cowboy, “I didn't.”

“You realized?”

“I know bull s*** when I hear it,” Cowboy said.

“But, this is the first time you have come out of a hallucination of your own volition!” exclaimed Juan, like a giant reality war had been won.

“But it was a very distinctive pier.”

“Will you know it if you see it again?”

“I imagine, yes.”

“We are going to a location on the coast... famous for a magical pier?”

“Maybe.”

“Let’s not go. Let’s go north.”

“Juan, It would not have been right for me to do that because we are all obliged to have respect for the invasion and even if Matagorda does not end in favor of the Rangers.”

“Especially if they are all f***** up.”

“I know very well that getting geared up won't change things.”
At this point the cousin said, “I don't know, Cowboy, how you could have seen so many things and spoken so much and responded so much in the short time that you were down there.”

“A little more than an hour,” responded Juan.

“That can't be,” replied Cowboy, “because night fell and day broke while I was there and the night fell and broke three times and so by my account I spent three days in the remote regions that are hidden from your eyes.”

“My friend must be telling the truth,” said Juan, “since all the things that have happened to him have been given him by the fiends. Maybe what seems like an hour to us seems like three days and nights down there.”

“That must be so,” respond to Cowboy.

“And, sir, have you eaten in all this time?” asked the cousin.

“Its been a PCDPPP,” respond Cowboy, “did the thought of food did enter my mind.”

“Do the fiends eat?” asked the cousin.

“They do not eat,” responded Cowboy, “nor do they s*** or piss, although some believe that their nails, beards, and hair all grow.”

“And by any chance do the fiends sleep past one pm?”
“No, certainly not,” responded Cowboy, “at least in the three days I've been with them not one of them closed their eyes at night and neither did I.”

“Here,” said Juan, “the proverb fits; birds with feather flock together you flock with fiends, people who fast and don't s*** but it's no surprise you don't sleep while you're with them.”

“But you'll forgive me, if I tell you I don't believe a single word of all the things you claim happened.”

“What do you mean,” said Juan, “would Cowboy lie? And even if he wanted to, he hasn't had time to invent or imagine so many million lies. I don't believe my friend is lying,” responded Juan.

“If not what do you believe, Cowboy? I believe that's McMurtry or another fiend your doped-up ass that found its way into your head, or memory. The whole story that you've told us and the rest that you still have to tell could not be true.”

Cowboy said, “It's not McMurtry but it was Elmer Kelton who found me down there and showed me the meth-wh***s, riding motorcycle bikes. Going to swim in the lake. As soon as I saw them I recognized one of them as the mud faced Salada de Tawakoni, the methed-up and moled version, and with her was the other two, as the same wh***s who came with her and the ones who
spoke to us as we left Tawakoni. Juan was there and they were
down in the cave.”

When the cousin heard Cowboy say this, he thought he would
lose his mind and die laughing.

And since Juan knew the truth about the demise of Salty for
he had invented the story. He realized beyond a shadow of a
doubt that his master needed some help and so he said, “it was
an ugly moment and a worst time and a ill-fated day when your
ass went down to the next world and an unlucky meeting you had
with Kelton.”

“I did see Kelton,” Cowboy insisted to the cousin.

To which the cousin responded, “Now you've become cracked
to us; you were better off up here when you had your wits and
were always saying wise things and giving advice, not like now
when you're saying the most foolish things and anybody could
imagine.”

“Since I know you,” responded Cowboy, “I shall ignore that
comment.”

“And I wouldn't pay attention to yours,” replied the
cousin, “not even if you wound me, not even if you kill me on
account of the ones I've said to you or the ones I plan to say
if you don't change and correct your story.”

There was a long pause, but finally the cousin’s curiosity
got the better of his pride.
“So in Hell, tell me how did you recognize Salty? And what did you two talk about?”

“I know her,” responded Cowboy, “because she was wearing the same red bikini she wore when Juan showed her to me.”

“And…”

“I spoke to her but she didn't say a word to me instead she turned her back and ran away so quickly that a Nolan Ryan fastball could not have hit her. I wanted to follow her and would have but Kelton had advised me not to bother, especially since it was nearly time to leave the cave. He told me that eventually, he did teach me how to cure the fiends. One of the meth wh***s, a friend of Salty, approached me in private and she said, ‘Salty kisses you and wanted me to ask you how you are and because she is in great need she also asked you to please take these silk panties that I have here as security on half-a-dozen crystals or whatever amount you may have on you and she gives her word to pay for them as soon as she can.”

“So that is where you got the panties,” Juan asked, “you took them for security? What would be the purpose, Cowboy? You’re not gonna get paid.”

“I didn't accept them thinking I’d ever get paid, I gave her the dope cause she wanted it.”

“And you gave her 4 oz that the barber and preached could use.”
“How did you know it was 4 oz?” asked Cowboy.

Juan answered, “Because that’s what we are short. You gave her that much dope, you’ll never see her again.”

Juan asked, “So what did her friend say when you handed her the dope?”

“I told her when she least expects it I'll make a come visit Salty and do something memorable. And this, Juan, is why it’s so important for you to remember where she lives.”

“Is that all you talked about?” Juan asked.

“This and more you owe my friend,” responded the maid and after taking the dope instead of shaking my hand and she gave me a kiss on the cheek and darted off.”

“Holy Mountain Dew,” shouted Juan, “is it possible that there are demon’s so strong to trick you into leaving solid meth in an empty cave? It's foolishness. Think about this and reclaim your honor.”

“Since you know me, Juan, you speak in this fashion?” asked Cowboy.

The cousin commented, “there's a sucker born every minute” and Juan wanted to fight him over the “catty” comment, but Cowboy wouldn’t let him.
EXT. EDWARDS COUNTY AT THE SOUTH LLANO

Texas, like much of the old West, has given many a man a place to stand and flip the bird to their past. One such man was Nick Stephanopoulos of Carta Valley. He was a sheep breeder in one of the most famous and admired in this parts of the world.

Cowboy talked to Nick, on a simmering day returning from the cave, just a few weeks before his 75th birthday. He and his son Mikhail and several of Mikhail’s sons worked cheerfully together raising their voices to be heard over balling of several hundred lamps that had separated from their dams. The Lambs lament would have melted the heart of many a coyote, fortunately Nicks family-owned over thirty Anatolian Shepherds spread out between Devils and Frio Rivers.

With assembly-line efficiency, lambs tails were docked, ears were notched, wooly backs were stamped and red paint with the TX brand. With a sharp knife and his perfect white teeth Nick Stephanopoulos turned young Rams into wethers. “They got a machine to do this,” he said, “but it's too damn slow.”

They stood on the exact place Comanches met to trade captives. The Edwards Plateau sparkling in sunshine for them to see. In every direction stretched a quarter-million acres where the Stephanopoulos flocks were pastured. Cowboy spent a day and a little more on the farms and in the cities, at the cafe and
the First Battle of the Alamo movie set and he’d forgotten that some Texans had not wanted Mexico to make the desert bloom.

Some like Nick Stephanopoulos had taken it as they found it, stark and stern and made it work and make sustenance and even wealth. As he worked, he told Cowboy about his life and for once Cowboy listened and preached nothing of his own. Stephanopoulos came from Greece in 2012, about the time the country went bankrupt. As a dollarless boy he found work as a shepherd. Alone on the plateau, he saved his money and bought his first small flock when he was 21. Yes and now he had 10,000 genetically superior ewes and their ever-improving lambs ranging over the empty dry uplands. All the Stephanopoulos family spent summers on the range, tending and moving the flocks over vast distances. It didn't seem to them too hostile an environment for creatures and shepherds who knew and accepted the plateau was a good even a prosperous place. Mexican’s didn’t bothering with sheep or shepherds.

“When I was a kid I noticed that the deer and antelope lived pretty well and reproduced,” Stephanopoulos told Cowboy, “I thought the sheep were their cousin. There must be good nourishment for them trees and bushes and things that a horse or cow wouldn't even look at. I found out I was right and that's what I'm handing over to my family when I go.”
At noon, before Cowboy and Juan and the young cousin departed, the women of the family brought dinner to the notable sheep camp - pot roast, vegetables, bread and watermelons salad. The menfolk who had been working hard in the sun since it rose did extreme justice to the cooking. Stephanopoulos had invited our film heroes to a feast. “Food on the table, Sons on the land,” he said. Cowboy was almost in tears.

They all ate and chatted; four generations of Stephanopoulos’ fill the air with a particular mixture of easy talk, gentle banter, kids roughhousing and babies crying. That was the sound of a family that I found it's place in Texas.

The Mexican’s hadn’t done anything to them but still the family would braved the elements (baking sun or ice) to battle the Mexicans. It was the same for nearly every refugee from the collapsed European Union; it was almost like the fight was the reason they came to Texas.

Years later, when interviewed by a journalist, Cowboy lauded the EU immigrants and said they fought harder I the revolution than any other group, because they’d seen Europe’s collapse.

“Do you think you could have found a better place than this part of Texas,” cowboy asked the greek.

“A better place than this?” he replied, “are you kidding or crazy?”
Cowboy smoked a bowl and returned to the east.

EXT. NOT FAR FROM MARION – GUADALUPE COUNTY

The man who translated this odd history from that original, composed by its first author George C.P. Bush, says that when he received the chapter concerning the cave, he found in the margin written in Bush's own hand these exact words, “I cannot believe nor can I persuade myself that everything is written in the preceding chapter happened in its entirety to the hero of Marion County. The reason is that all the adventures up to this point have been possible and plausible but with regard to this one in the cave, I can’t find an ounce of reason to consider it true since it goes so far beyond the limits of imagination, but it’s not possible for me to think that Cowboy, the truest and most noble Ranger of his day, would lie or he would not tell a lie even if he were shot with arrows.”

Moreover Cowboy recounted and told it in all its circumstances and details and in so short a time that he could not fabricate so enormous a quantity of nonsense. If this adventure seems apocryphal the fault is mine and so without affirming either its falsity or its truth I write it down.

You can read, and since you are a discerning person, you must judge it according to your own ideas for I must not and cannot do more. Yet it is considered true that at the time of
Cowboys passing, he is said to have retracted it, saying he allowed the cousin to invented it because he thought it was harmonious and reconciled with the adventures he had seen in the first film.

And then the other Dr. Bush continued writing.

The cousin was astounded both by Juan Seguin’s genuiness and his friend’s patience and he assumed that his mild disposition was because he hadn't seen his Salada de Tawakoni even though she was f***ed up. Otherwise Juan’s words would have brought about a good beating.

The cousin thought Juan was being insolent to his friend and said, “Cowboy, I consider the journey I’ve made with you very worthwhile because I have derived four things from it. The first having met you, which is a great experience. Second, having learned what is inside the cave of Joy Garcia along with the mutations of the aquaphor and the Texas rivers which will be of great use to me in the Texas Ovid that I'm putting together. The third, having realized the antiquity of marijuana strains, still growing along the banks of Texas rivers, which go back to the time Texas was in the United States. If not for the War of Mexican Aggression that historical crop might have been lost as the US in the face of invasion was diverting men seeking to destroy the weed up until the bitter end.

“What’s the forth?”
“Oh, yes, I forgot. The fourth is having learned the truth regarding the origins of the San Marcos River, unknown to anyone until now.”

“You are correct” said Cowboy, “but I should like to know who you'll dedicate your books to. Should the Mexican Government approve them, there are nobles and landowners in Texas to whom they can be dedicated.”

“Not many,” he respond to Cowboy, “and not because they aren’t worthy of dedication but because they do not wish to accept the dedication, in order not to be obliged or provide the rewards that the work and courtesy of the author seem to deserve. I know a Rancher who can make up for all the others and with so many advantages that if you fear mentioned them, you might perhaps awaken envy in more than one generous cash cow, but let us put that aside until a more suitable time and find a place where we can spend the night.”

“Not far from here,” responded the cousin, “is a shebang where a hermit lives and people say he once was a soldier and his reputation is of a good patriot and a very intelligent and charitable as well. Beside the shebang is a small lean-to that he built his own expense and although it is little, it can receive guests.”

“Does this hermit have chickens by any chance,” asked Juan.
“There are few hermits who don't have chickens,” responded Cowboy, “because the ones today are not like those of old Texas who dressed in leather and ate snakes and you should not think that because I speak ill of the earlier pre-EMP Hermits, I speak ill of current ones. I mean to say only that the suffering of current hermits is not as harsh or rigorous as the old ones but all of them are still good at least. I judge them to be good in the worst of circumstances, the hypocrite who pretends to be good does less harm than the public sinner.”

While they were conversing, they saw a man coming toward them riding a smoking, almost junk, ATV. The man was loaded down with weapons and rusted guns there when he reached them he greeted them and passed by.

Cowboy cried out, “Hold on partner, for it seems you are traveling faster than your vehicle would like.”

“I can't stop,” said the man responded, “’cuz the weapons you see me carrying must be cleaned and repaired to be used at on the coast and I can't possibly stop. Good luck you you however.

Cowboy begged, “I want to know why your’re carrying them.”

The man answered, “I plan to spend the night at the inn that's just past the shebang and if you're traveling the same way you'll find me there and then I'll tell you some wonderful news and so maybe I’ll see you there,” and he accelerated the
missing and sputtering ATV so quickly that Cowboy didn't have a chance to ask him what wondrous things he plan to tell them and since he was rather curious and was always filled with the desire to keep up with events, Cowboy said they should leave immediately and go spend the night at the inn and not stop at the shebang.

And so they mounted their transports and all three followed the road that led directly to the inn where they arrived shortly after nightfall. On the way, the cousin said to Cowboy that they should stop at the shebang for something to drink. As soon as Juan Seguin heard this he turned his moped toward the shebang and Cowboy and the cousin did the same but Juan’s bad luck would have it the hermit was not at home, which is what they were told by a small child whom they found in the shebang. They asked for some wine and this child responded that his father didn't have any but if they wanted some cheap water he would gladly sell it to them.

“If I wanted water,” responded Juan, “There are wells along the road that I can drink. Wine. I’ve had it at the near wedding of Camacho and there was plenty of wine at that house of Solis Armenta. I miss wine so often.”

They left the shebang and drove their mounts to the inn and in a while they came upon a boy who was walking not very quickly in front of them and they soon overtook him he was carrying an
AR-15 over his shoulder and on it there was a bundle apparently his clothes which were probably a military pants and shirt, because he was wearing green undergarments and his boots where military-style as well. As he walked he sang a military cadence to relieve the tediousness of the road. When they reached him, he had just finished singing the one that the cousin remembered and eventually wrote down.

Well I kicked off the year in Boise, Idaho
The snow was comin' down in sheets
And these New Year's blues are like breakin' in boots
I got blisters nobody can see
Two bald tires and one headlight
Closin' down 93
But if everything goes the way it should, Darlin'
I'll be seein' you later this week
This road to you is windy, steep, and cold
The road to you made of concrete, gray, and gold
I drive all night and
I keep it in sight like a lighthouse standin' alone
And the moon over Custer County tonight is pullin' me back home

The first to speak to him was Cowboy who said, “you're traveling very lightly, sir. Where you going, let us know. If you care to tell us,”

Which the boy responded, “I like traveling light because of the it’s hotter than a whorehouse on twenty night and my own poverty and I'm going to war.”

“Why poverty,” ask Cowboy.

“The heat is enough of a reason, sir,” replied the lad, “in this bundle I'm carrying my only shirt and my only pants both military issue from the Kansas militia; if I wear them out on
the road I won't be able to look sharp in them in the city and I don't have the money to buy others for this reason and to cool myself I'll travel this way until I reach the Ranger companies that are no more than 60 miles a head of me. Away, we are all enlisted and there will be plenty of vehicles that I can ride until we confront the Mexicans, which they say will be down in on the coast and I'd rather die in the South, on the beach, then survive to starve to death in the North.

“And what sparked your interest in our conflict?” Cowboy inquired.

Civil war was, in part and for a long while, an investment – optimism reigned in on the industry then and so the boy answered honestly.

“One of the best selling books up there is The Texas War and How to Get Rich Picking Up the Pieces. Maybe it’s the chance for an outdoor life, I’ve a taste for guns, for adventure, open air and strenuous activity. War seems a productive way of satisfying these.”

“And did you receive a bonus or commission by chance?” asked the cousin.

“If I'd worked on a grand ranch or for some distinguish businessman,” the boy responded, “I'd certainly have a bike, which is what you get when you serve good employers and you leave the company for war and you become an Ensign or Sergeant.
and get a good allowance but I always worked in an office of babrer’s cats and beef-headed artists, whose income was so sparse they spent half of it before they touched any of it. It would be a miracle if a beliked employee in my shoes had any sort of support.”

“And tell me, friend,” ask Cowboy, “is it possible that during the year you served you haven't been able to obtain a vehicle?”

“I was given two motorcycles,” responded the boy, “but like somebody who leaves the football team before the last game, they take away his jersey and give him back his street clothes and they took back the bikes they’d given for the parade out of town. It was all for propaganda and you can see I’ve been belly through the brush across Oklahoma and half of Texas to get here”

“What? Is that is a noteworthy stinginess,” said Cowboy, “but even so you should consider it good fortune to have left Kansas, you say, with such good intentions because there is nothing in Texas more beneficial than serving the revolution, first of all. And second of all, now that we know who you are we can so something about your material well-being. As I've said often, ‘through demagoguery has has founded many a local career, real estates are formed and maintained by arms. This adventure will pay in the end.”

“Thank you but you don’t happen to be a Ranger are you?”
“As a matter of fact, yes,” Cowboy answered.

“A man from Tawakannee made me one.”

“What rank?” Cowboy asked.

“Mobile. He said I would receive a permanent rank and transportation once I reached the coast.”

“Okay, I wish to tell you and this will help you in times of trouble. Being a Ranger mobile, you must put your adversaries out of your mind for the worst of them is death and if it is a good death then dying is the best thing that can happen. If you walked across Oklahoma and this much of Texas then you know this to be true.

“I understand its dangerous, but I’ve not see anything interesting at all, yet.”

Julius Caesar was asked what was the best death and he responded the one that is unexpected sudden and unforeseen and he was correct for it it doesn't matter if it's the first battle or skirmish or you are shot by artillery, or kicked to death in mixed martial arts, it's all dying in the end of the story.”

“Thank you. I’ve been thinking about it for what, a thousand miles?”

“The soldier killed in battle looks better than one in flight,” Cowboy said.

“Cowboy, he’s walking toward a fight not away.” Juan felt he needed to be heard.
“I know that but I’m saying that a Ranger, whether born here or elsewhere, prefers the smell of gunpowder to the scent of perfume and if he lives to an old age and even if he is scared from wounds or maimed or crippled, he will not be without honor and it is an honor that not even poverty can diminish and for now I think you understand. Climb on and you can ride with me and in the morning we will continue on our way. And may the battle be as smooth and glorious as you deserve.”

The boy did not except the ride although he did say “yes” to Cowboys offer of finding him a Mexican’s bike at the next opportunity. And at this moment it is said that Juan asked himself how is it possible that a man who knows what to say to a young man on the road to battle can still speak so foolishly about what he saw in the cave of Joy Garcia?

Time will be the answer, Juan decided.

At this point they reach the motel just as night had fallen and much to Juan's delight he saw that Cowboy saw it as a real hotel and not a saloon, gold mine or general store as he usually did.

As soon as they had entered Cowboy ask the innkeeper about the man with the guns and he responded that the man was working on them in a garage across the street.

The cousin and Juan filled the vehicles with fuel planning to leave early the next morning.
Cowboy walked toward the workshop where the guns were being repaired.

INT. ACE AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - GONZALES COUNTY

Cowboy was high strung on tenterhooks until he could talk to the man carrying the weapons. He went to look for him in the garage where the innkeeper had said he was and found him. Cowboy begged that the man tell him what news he had, to which the man responded, “The retelling of my story will take some time and we shouldn't be lollygagging. Let me clean these weapons and make repairs and I’ll tell you then you’ll be astounded.”

“Don't delay,” responded Cowboy, “I’ll help you.”

And they did. He had prepared a vat of solvents to soak the rusty guns and supplied ramrods to get the dirt out of the barrels. They took the weapons out back to test them; fortunately the man was smart enough to test them at the end of a long twine. Despite the care cleaning and repairing four of the first five exploded. Unfortunately they’d spent hours cleaning and repairing over sixty guns likely to explode, they didn't have the equipment needed or anyone really with any expertise. The only success worthy of mention were the knives save from rust.

A strange man arrived at the inn, just in time to hear the five practice shots/explosions and hearing them fire/explode, it
got his curiosity up. He went inside the inn and inquired, but was told the inn keeper was across the street, cleaning/testing guns. He sayed well away but moseyed over once the testing of the guns ended.

So the man now back inside the garage appeared ready to tell them about the guns and the sitting down on a bench with Cowboy beside him, and the cousin, the young Kansan, Juan and the innkeeper as jury and audience, the man he told them about the guns. Unknown to the audience a man outside the garage had been waiting and was now listening.

“The guns had come from the Second Battle of Marble Falls, the Mexican Army had buried 260 rifles and 70 pistols with the bodies of the defenders who suffered the same fate as the First Battle of Marble Falls. The second mass killing was sensitive material of course and the Mexicans had given a local historian an order to leave the mass grave unmolested. But the Mexican authorities never showed up to stop the digging. Everything was documented and the bones were interned in individual graves and marked, as best as possible, but most of them were left nameless. The guns and other artifacts were placed to the side.”

The man who had hauled them from Marble Falls, sat depressed for a minute, perhaps thinking of the deaths or possible the uselessness of his weapons cache.
Cowboy had a light bulb go off in his head, “it's not for naught, these guns might still be of use to the cause and Cowboy, quoted from Art of War on deception…

Cowboy explained, “I've been sent to support the invasion and know the time and place. These weapons can be used as decoys in various stratagem, so our work here has not been in vain.

“I've brought them this far and you've helped me. A ruse is perhaps plausible. You’re welcome to them. You think you can use them in a battlefield rouse?” the man who brought the guns said.

The stranger, became an eavesdropper as he paused at the door just long enough to hear, the cousin point out, “I know the Mexicans fly drones over constantly; they'll see them being transported.”

“Not, if they are covered in blankets,” said the young Kansan.

And after this the men were about to hear from Cowboy, but the eavesdropper dressed all in chamois came through the door of the garage and in a loud voice he said, “Señor innkeeper is there room in the inn? For the magic monkey is coming here and a puppet show as well about the Reconquista.”

I forgot to say that this eavesdropper was a puppeteer and had his left eye and almost half his cheek covered with a mask, a sign that this tissue had been infected with staph. In any
case, shaving was difficult and uneven around the outside of the mask.

"Jumping jelly beans," said the innkeeper, "It's Mr. Pedro and you're a week early. I wasn't expecting you so early but we'll have entertainment tonight? Where are the monkey and puppet stage? I don't see them."

"There nearby," responded the man in chamois, surveyed all the guns, "but I came on. I had to find out if there's room."

"I'd move out the president of Mexico to make room for the monkey," responded the innkeeper, "bring the monkey and the puppet stage too because tonight there are celebrity combatants, that I would never dream of asking to pay, but there are and plenty of people in the inn who will pay to see the show and the monkey's talents."

"It's entirely a strike of luck," responded the man with the mask. "I'll lower the price and consider myself well paid, now I'll go and bring up the van that is carrying my things." And with that he left the garage.

Cowboy gestured for the guns to be covered with blankets and then ask the innkeeper about Mister Pedro, the puppet show and the monkey he was bringing.

To which the innkeeper responded he's a famous puppet master, who's been traveling the patriot side of Texas, the Senderos de Texas, the smaller unoccupied towns, performing a
play about the tragedy that has befallen us. He's also has with him a monkey with the rarest talent because he pays attention like a school child and if hears something interesting then jumps on his master shoulders and whispers in his ear. Sometimes it’s the answer to a question and Pedro tells the audience what it is. He's not wrong most of the time. People say he's rich.”

“The monkey?” Juan asked.

“People say Pedro is rich and he clearly talks like six men and drinks like twelve all paid for with his wit and his monkey.”

At this point they returned to the inn and in a van something like a food truck arrived. The food truck came a puppet stage and a large monkey with a rump like a seat cushion, but actually intelligent looking.

And as soon as Cowboy saw him he asked, “Sir, fortune teller, can you tell me what fish I'll catch. What will become of us and here, you can see my two pesos,” and he told Juan to hand the money over but Pedro wouldn’t take it responding, “Señor, this animal does not respond to or give information about things to come, about past things he knows a little bit, about the present that’s all he knows.”

“A little more salted pretzel,” said Juan, “I don't pay anything to have somebody tell me what's already happened to me who knows that better than me? And it would be foolish to pay
someone to tell me what I already know, but since he knows about present things here's my two pesos for his monkey. Can he tell me what my wife’s doing now and how she’s spending her time?”

Pedro refused to take the money saying, “I don't wish to receive payments ahead of time before the service has been rendered,” and he twitched his left shoulder twice and with using his right arm as a step ladder the monkey put his mouth up to his ear and clicked his teeth together and after that he jumped down and received a small food treat and when this was done Pedro rush to shake his Juan’s hand.

He said, “I'm glad so glad to meet you, Juan; you're the famous friend of the Cowboy er, ah, the Vaquero de Tejas. Courage of the weak, support for those who have no food or hope, a man often harmed in defense of the underclass. Your friend has confronted the worst of demons?”

“You're monkey knows me?” Juan asked.

“He watches films like everyone else,” Pedro stated.

Cowboy was dumbfounded. Juan, the cousin, the boy from Kansas were all baffled at the stunts. The man who brought the guns was stupefied and the innkeeper perplexed and in short all who heard the words were amazed but he continued speaking, “you are once again the best friend of the best Cowboy in the world and be of good cheer. Your wife, Teresa, is well and is at this very moment she is harvesting 500 lb of cactus for distillation,
to be more specific she has a bottle of wine in one hand and with that she keeps her spirits up and she waits supervising her hired men.”

“I can believe that,” responded Juan, “because she's a great lover of wine and actually doesn't like the tequila we make. Other than her distaste for the national beverage of Texas, she's a good woman but she's a bit jealous. Still I wouldn't trade her for the blonde giantess Salty, who according to Cowboy is a very honorable and upright woman.

“Your wife is one of those women who won't let themselves fare badly,” the stranger Pedro added.

“Now I say,” said Cowboy, “at this point I've been around and seen a thing or two but I've never seen such an animal that knows the nature of men's wives. Hard to believe, but I'm the Cowboy the monkey mentioned and he was a little too kind and he spoke a little crazy about me, but no matter I give thanks to heaven who graded me a gentle spirit always inclined to do good to everyone and harm only those who ask for it.”

“If I had money,” said the Kansas boy, “I'd ask this insightful monkey what will happen to me in this bitter political climate.”

To which Pedro responded, “I would give up all profit if the monkey can help you, but… I've already said that this beast doesn't speak of the future, but if he had some idea of your
destination, money wouldn't be an issue, you're obviously under the command of this esteem Cowboy."

"But he doesn't know where he's going yet," Cowboy interjected.

"Well in that case, I'll set up the stage and delight everyone in the inn and at no charge. Free!"

When he heard this the innkeeper, who was overjoyed, indicated the spot where the chairs would be placed and the food truck's window opened to reveal a bright red and green curtain and this was done in rapid order.

Cowboy wasn't very pleased with the monkey's soothsaying for it did not seem right that a monkey could divine things, whether things in the future or the past and so while Pedro was arranging the stage, Cowboy withdrew with Juan to a corner away from the puppet wagon where nobody could hear them and he said, "Look Juan, I have considered very carefully the strange talent of this monkey and my opinion this Pedro, his owner, must have made a pact either implicit or explicit with Sam Hill or the Mexican Government. How did he know your wife's name?"

"That would be a very dirty trick but what good would it do him?" Juan asked.

"You don't understand me, Juan," Cowboy explained, "I mean, he travels the back roads gathering information for Mexico City.
He saw the guns in the garage, waiving the fees for a show he's all right with pesos paid to him for information."

"Him seeing the guns might not be a bad thing; yes, they do appear to be working there now so clean and shiny, he is sure to report their location and maybe even follow us."

"Even so," said Juan, "I would like to ask the monkey if what happened in the cave of Joey Garcia is true. In my opinion, if it was all deceptions and lies or at least a perverted dream."

"Everything is possible," responding Cowboy, "but I'll do as you advise although I still have certain reservations in this regard."

As they were speaking Pedro came looking for Cowboy to tell him that the puppet stage was ready and that he should come and see it, because it was a cigar of sorts.

And Cowboy told him he had one more question for the monkey, "was what occurred in the cave of Joy Garcia false or or true?"

To which Pedro, without a word, went through the act with the monkey and then told Cowboy, "The monkey says some of the things you saw were true and some of the events were false and this is all the monkey knows until next week. He's used up his abilities, but ask me later."
Juan spoke, “Didn't I say that was half of the things were true and what half of the things you saw where lies?”

“Events will tell the truth of things, Juan,” responded Cowboy, “for time which reveals all things begins brings everything into the light of day even if it's hidden in a cave.”

“Enough of that for now let's have some tequila,” Juan suggested.

“I’m smoking a bowl and then we'll see the puppet show for I believe if it might hold a few surprises.”

Cowboy and Juan did as they wished.

Cowboy took his rifle and went to the food truck, turned into a stage, and it was filled with light from hundreds of LED lights that made it look colorful and resplendent.

“Look at all those lights, who in Texas has this much pull? He’s a spy and a half.” Cowboy surmized.

“What should we do?” Juan asked.

As soon as they arrived, Pedro went inside the puppet theater. Of course he was the man manipulating the figures and over a speaker system a young orphan served as interpreter and narrator.

When everyone in the inn was sitting in the parking lot and some standing in front of the stage, Cowboy, Juan, the boy from Kansas and the cousin were seated in the best places. The child
interpreter began to say what the Mexicans said happened at the Second Battle of the Alamo.

**EXT. GONZALES COUNTY IN A PARKING LOT**

Everything fell silent when the Mexicans and Texans, I mean to say all those looking at the stage were waiting to hear the words of the narrator, when the sound of a large number of drums and trumpets heard and a good deal of artillery fire erupted. Cowboy reached for his rifle but stopped when the sound ended. The boy was heard over the speakers, “This ‘true history’ presented here is taken literally from the Mexican chronicles and Texas ballads which have been in the minds of everyone. This play tells the story of how the last moments of old Anglo order barricaded themselves in the Alamo. It shows how the Mexican General Garza was playing a game of backgammon as negotiations went on…”

The play progressed until the final scene where there was no lack of curious eyes and the kind that tend to see everything. “To see Hölzer mount a giant motorbike, sound the call to arms, and lead the anglos into the Alamo and see how soon this was done and how the city lifted not a finger to help them, but flooded the streets and sounded with bells from all the towers. Texas ask not for whom the bells tolled, they tolls for Texas.”
Cowboy was a bit too loud, “This is nonsense and propaganda the Mexicans simply assaulted the Fortress and murdered the patriots. There were no bells; it's bulls*** and it's all fabricated. No one believes that account.”

In the middle of the play, Pedro's head popped up behind the puppets, “you shouldn’t concern yourself with trifle depictions, senior Cowboy, or try to carry things so far that you never can reach the end of them. Aren’t ten plays a day performed in Texas, my company and others as well, with similar debates and yet no one interprets them and they are left to progress. They receive applause at the end, now let the play continue and let this boy finish his narration.

The people, some of them were sheep. For many it was the only entertainment they’d had that year and the most all of them glared at Cowboy.

The boy said, “Look at the number of brilliant motorcycles or converging on the Alamo from all over the city look at how many soldiers and armaments Mexico can rain down on everyone who opposes them. I'm afraid they will overtake them and march them to San Antonio Cemetery for burial.”

And cowboys seeing and hearing so many Mexican puppets on stage thought it would be a good idea to help defend the Alamo and rose to his feet and in a loud voice said, “I shall not consent in my lifetime and in my presence to any such offense.
against patriots in real in show. Halt you outlaw propagandist. Do not follow across the stage and do not breach those sacred walls unless you wish to shoot it out with me.”

And speaking and taking action he pulled his pistols emptied them at the stage; the air was filled with smoke, but when it cleared the puppets of Mexican soldiers remained. Cowboy holster the empty pistols and begin in with the rifle and similar smoke clouded the stage but this time the result was a bit different Mexican puppets were knocked over and scattered. Some where beheaded and ruined, destroyed and with great luck Pedro was spared for he was stooped crouching down and hunched over from the pistol shooting, otherwise he would have had his head blown off as easily if he were a puppet as well.

Pedro cried out saying, “You must stops that crazy cowboy and realize the ones you are destroyed and killing or not real Mexican troops but only puppets. I'm a poor and a poor man and you're destroying everything I own. But this didn't keep Cowboy from raining down more bullets, until the bullets neared the propane fuel tank. At this time Pedro evacuated his stage and the very next bullet ignited the fuel and a shorter time than it took the second Alamo to full, Cowboy put the puppet theater out of action. All its scenery and figures broken or in flames. The President’s puppet was badly wounded and general Garza his head was in 3 pieces.
The audience of spectators was in a tumult. The monkey ran out of the food truck and onto the red roof of the inn.

The cousin was fearful, the boy was frightened, and even Juan wasn't laughing anymore. Juan said he had never seen his friend in such a state a wild fury.

When the general destruction ended and the fire was extinguished, Cowboy calmed down somewhat and said, “at this time I want here in front of me anyone who doubts the value of cowboys mobile. Who doubts the good we do. If I had not been here, just think of the propaganda he’d have you endure. The dogs would have overtaken them again and committed the same outrage again. In brief, long live the Alamo over and above everything in the world today.

“Long, life and good fortune,” said Pedro in a faint voice in his clothes still smoking, “and nothing but agony and poverty for me. Not half an hour ago I was master of the Senderos de Texas company, a van and puppets, money in my pocket and now I'm desolate and rejected by our most famous Cowboy. I’ve been made a beggar by the man who protects orphans and rights wrongs and does our charitable works and with me he shoots up my show. In short I'm finished.”

Juan reasoned that if Pedro was a Mexican spy then the next day he did have a new puppet theater and within a week or so Pedro's puppet collection would be replaced.
Not long after that and Juan was offered by the heartfelt words and outright sobbing of Pedro and he said, “don't cry Pedro and don't worry too much or you'll break my heart and let me tell you that my friend is so just and scrupulous a Texan that, unless you're a Mexican spy, if he's done you harm, he'll apologize and repay you for your losses.

“If senor Cowboy would pay me even a part of the money he owes me I'll be happy and I'm not a spy for the Mexican government.”

“That might be true,” said Cowboy, “but until now I don't know you. I didn't know you now.”

“What do you mean, you bankrupt every stranger you meet?”

“Now I believe,” said Cowboy, “at this time what I have believed on many other occasions the the demons who persue me, simply placed figures is they really are before my eyes and also change and alter them. I don't know your Mexicans who they make look innocent or Texans they a make look complicated.”

And Juan added, “Let Pedro decide what he wants for the damages and he can present it to the next government. If he's a Mexican spy, he’ll be dead or too afraid to enter Austin. If he's innocent he’ll be there with everybody else we’ve shot up.”

“No one could tell us better than my monkey,” said Pedro, “but not even another monkey can catch him now on that roof
though I imagine that affection and hunger will bring him down tonight, and at dawn we’ll ask him spy or showman.”

In short, the storm over the puppet show came to an end and everyone ate supper in one of two groups. One group thought Pedro a traitor and the other group thought him a mere puppeteer just trying to make it.

Before daybreak the man carrying the weapons had loaded them up and rushed out in the direction of Matagorda. Pedro didn't wish to engage in further disputes with Cowboy; he was bruised and burned and hopped a ride with the man and his weapons.

Later the monkey came down and left with the cousin in a northerly direction.

The boy left, hoofing it still, to join the rebellion, but no one knew what trail he took. But Cowboy had given him twelve ounces of meth for equipment and or a motorbike whichever he preferred.

There weren’t many Mexican Army motorbikes out there to patrol the trails, soldiers had sold most of them for the East Texas meth.

The innkeeper was astonished both by Cowboys insanity and his generosity when Juan paid him so well.

When it was almost an hour after sunrise, Cowboy and Juan said “goodbye” and ambled at a leisurely pace South again.
EXT. GOLIAD COUNTY IN THE PARKING LOT

George C.P. Bush, the chronicler of this great history, points out that you should remember very clearly Perillo who was with the wall slaves that Cowboy gave his freedom in the Guadalupe Mountains, “a charitable act that was repaid with ingratitude and thanklessness by those ill intentioned and badly behaved people.”

This Perillo was the man who stole Juan’s moped; and fearful of being captured by the officers of the law who were looking for him, so that he could be punished for his infinite’s deceptions, given every human activity was a against the Mexican laws and the Mexicans knew his name, he was writing a book about his extra legal career; he decided to buy the monkey from corrupt Mexican zookeeper who were selling everything they could out of the Fort Worth Zoo. The monkey practically ripped out Perillo’s eye and he covered that but eventually a monkey was a monkey and man settled a truce, and the monkey learn to jump on his shoulders at a certain signal and eventually began whispering, or seeming to whisper in his ear. When he’d done this, before he had entered any town where he was taking his puppet theater and monkey, he would learn in a nearby town, or from anyone, who could inform on specific things had happened in the village and he would memorize the various stories.
First thing he did was put on his puppet show, sometimes playing the story of the second Alamo and sometimes of the second Goliad and sometimes another random massacre but all of them unhappy and designed to demonstrate the Mexican domination of the townspeople. It probably served to fester the resentment, but the Mexicans who paid for the propaganda, they saw it different.

When the show was over, Perillo announced the abilities of his monkey, telling the audience that he could see everything past and present, but that he had no skill in divining the future. For the monkey to answer a question he'd asked for two pesos and for some he lowered the price depending on the mood of the questioners. Rarely if the people were loyal to Mexico and didn’t take the puppet play badly, he would entertain them for free.

On occasion, he would stay in houses where he would know certain things that had happened to the people who live there and even though they did not ask anything, because they did not want to pay. He would signal the monkey and then say that the animal had said something that fit perfectly with those incidents. In this fashion, he gained such remarkable credibility and everyone came to see him since he was so slick and no one ever ask him how his monkey could know such things.
He made a monkey of them and fill his pockets, but it wasn't like he was a Mexican spy, still there were those who insisted he was giving information to the Mexican government in exchange for a pardon. Nothing has been proven in all these years.

As soon as he entered the garage, he recognized Cowboy and Juan, this made it easy for him to a stand everyone at the inn but it would have cost him dearly if Cowboy had lowered his hand a bit when he decapitated General Garza’s gorgeous head and destroyed his soldiers.

**EXT. GOLIAD COUNTY IN THE PARKING LOT**

Returning to Cowboy of Marion County, I will say that after he left the inn, he decided to first see the banks of the San Antonio River and the surrounding region before entering the city of Matagorda, since he had enough time for everything before the scheduled invasion began. This was his intention as he traveled along the coast and he rode for 2 days without anything happening worth note and then on the third day, as he was riding up a hill and he heard the loud sound of a crowd and a band. At first he thought it was one of the now illegal football games (*prohibido*) between communities.

As they approach the field, Juan tugged long and hard from his tequila. Cowboy obtained, from both snake and bowl.
They saw what appeared to be a small pig, about a foot long, being fought over and then one young man hauled off and kicked the pig 40 yards down the field and everyone ran and jumped on it. Cowboy was certain that they had kill the small pig because, after watching the fight for several long minutes, he never saw the pig move. And then there was a disturbance on and off the field, militia rushed out of the stands on both sides of the field firing pistols rifles and guns, two militias, one black and gold and in the other white red and white.

Cowboy spurred Shovelhead down the road and when he reached the group of men, with a variety of weapons, such as bats, crossbows, pistols, shotguns, he clearly saw the banners, especially one standard, of black and gold, on which was painted a donkey painted in a life like manner, a donkey that seem to be in pain his head raised mouth open and tongue out as if it were crying.

In short, Juan and our hero concluded that one town had come to do battle with the other and not to fight over a pig. Someone felt insulted more than neighbors should. Cowboy rode in the middle of the field were the young men had been fighting and he stopped dead center. He held up his hands to perhaps avoid a fight, Juan arrived by his side.

"Sirs," Cowboy advise the Anglo town.

"Señor's," Cowboy address the Hispanic town.
“Sam Houston! What would Sam do? I have a bracelet? Ancient patriot and true president, who never lied, nor could he, nor can he be laughed at, he wanted only to normalize relations between Texans and Mexicans. You are only making the work greater and Austin’s burden heavier and so if he were here he would we are obliged by history and human laws as well as to make peace improve and proof in is in the pudding. Return to your fighting over the piglet.”

And as the towns contemplated the message, Juan echoed, “if my friend isn't a historian, but if he isn't, then he is he's as man like Sam, and they are two peas in a pod.”

And just as he finished, from the Hispanic crowd an egg that had been aimed at Cowboy struck Juan directly in the forehead. And for that good reason, Juan saw the banner with the donkey and, although he was Hispanic himself, he began to bay like a donkey and rallied the black and gold Anglos into a charge.

Cowboy took a deep breath and a huge baseball bat came swinging from, what side they still debate, but that the bat hit Juan directly in the back and it knocked him off this moped. He was racked with pain. Cowboy who saw Juan so badly treated turned and pistol drawn hunted the man who most likely had hit him, but so many men came between them it wasn't possible to avenge his friend.
Instead seeing a storm of helmets and stones flying and a similar number of shotguns aimed at him, he turned Shovelhead and sped off to the southern end zone. As Cowboy rode those 60 yards, he fearing a bullet would injure his back and exit his front and he prayed God would save him from the danger. The two towns were content to see him flee and they didn't shoot him in the back.

When Cowboy had gone some distance he turn to see Juan, back up on the moped, negotiating the battle trying to reach him.

With in a few feet of where Cowboy and Juan greeted each other, the hometown erected a small monument of their victory.

**EXT. GOLIAD COUNTY IN THE PARKING LOT**

When trickery is revealed, a brave man runs from a fight and the prudent man waits for the better opportunity. His truth was proven by Cowboy who let out from the two towns fighting on the football field and the evil intent of the people not thinking of Juan or the danger in which he left him and rode the distance he thought sufficient to ensure his own safety. Juan followed, when he regained consciousness, but then when they or a safe distance from the fray, East North Street, Juan dropped off his moped. at Shovelheads feet, perturbed, bruised and battered.
Cowboy dismounted to tend to his friend’s wounds, but since he found him sound from head to toe, with some anger, he said, “it was an evil hour when you learned how to bay, Juan! And when did you decide it would be a good idea to mention rope in the house of a hanged man? With baying like that what counterpoint can there be except a beating? Give thanks to Houston Juan there they were both not dead.”

“I'm not about to respond,” responded Juan, “because it seems to me, I'm talking with a brick wall; let's leave this place and I’ll stop the braying, but I won't stop reminding you that Rangers don’t run away and have their good friends beaten to a pulp.”

“Withdrawal is not flight,” responded Cowboy, “because you should know, Juan, if it's not prudent then it's called recklessness and if recklessness ever worked out for you then it's because of good luck not on account of courage. And so, I confess that I withdrew but not that I ran away. Many men have waited for a better moment. History is full of examples, but in your condition, I doubt you want to hear them.”

Buy now Juan had remounted his moped with the assistance of Cowboy, who then mounted Shovelhead and slowly they rode toward a group of trees that appeared a mile or so away. From time to time Juan heaved some very deep sighs and mournful groans and when Cowboy asked the cause of such pains Juan responded that
from the base of his spine to the back of his neck he was in such pain that it was driving him mad.

“The cause of this pain no doubt must be,” said Cowboy, “that since the baseball bat they used to beat you was long and strong it hit the length of your back, if it had hit more of you more of you would be in pain.”

“Frito Bandito,” said Juan, “You’ve cleared up a great mystery and it’s so nice to know the cause of my pain, which was so hidden. If my ankles hurt there might be reason to try and guess, but guessing that I hurt where I've been beaten isn't such a guess every day. And how can you had to tell me where the man's bat hit me?”

“It was just a luck guess, I guess,” Cowboy answered.

“You are a pretty good guesser if you ask me,” Juan said.

“Thank you.”

“I would prefer you guess a little less and act a little more. But what can I expect from being your sidekick. You let them beat me this time. You let them put me on a Tilt-A-Whirl and you let them keep me there.

“I mozied along. How was I supposed to know you weren’t behind me? You generally are.” Cowboy said.

“If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there with ya.”
“Now it's my back, and next time you'll let them take my eyes. I'd be much better off at home with my wife where the abuse is only psychological. But I'm an idiot and will never do anything smart in my life. If I went home to my wife and children, instead of following you on roads that lead only to battles, and meeting people that only report to San Antonio, drinking poorly and eating even worse and sleeping! The Devil Himself will allow me more sleep.”

“I’ve made an observation, Juan,” said Cowboy, “Now that you are speaking with and no one restraining you have no pains anywhere on your body. So, speak my friend and say everything that comes to your mind and/or your mouth. It’s a good exchange for you not having any more pains. I shall consider the irritation, your impertinence causes me the cure for your pain.”

“What?”

“Keep talking, wheel-horse. It’s the best medicine.

“I’m done.”

Okay, then I will elevate my pain a bit; if you so fervently desire to return to your house and wife and children I won't do anything to stop you. You have my money, calculate how long it has been since we left your village and calculate what you can and should earn each day and pay yourself a salary, or are you my friend at are my employee?”
"When I work for Sam Houston X," responded Juan, "the father of young Sam Houston XI, who you know well learned a fair amount though I know I've done more work riding with you because with him no matter how much work we did during the day we had food and a bed except for a few occasions, I have not had this traveling with you. Camacho's wedding was filled and Rosario's house was restful but the rest of the time was miserable."

"I confess," said Cowboy, "that everything you say, Juan, is true, but in your opinion what do I owe you?"

"Let's see two thousand pesos per month for twenty years; how much is that?"

Cowboy gave himself a great slap on the forehead and began to laugh very hard and he said, "My travels on the Guadalupe Mountains took barely two months if I pay you that amount for the last twenty years, that will be all the dope I can make for the next five years and by then the Mexicans will have put down our rebellion. I'll be just a meth-cook and no longer a Ranger mobile. Salty will never be mine. I would rather be punched in the face four times and now you go off on this course just before a monumental battle and when I was going to name you the governor of an island. In short, you've come this far only to become a jackass."

Juan stared at Cowboy, in remorse and tears came out his eyes, "I know I'm a jackass all that's missing is my tail and
I'll serve you like a donkey, forgive me and take pity. To err is human and forgive divine.”

“I would be amazed, Juan, if you didn't make some little proverb into your talk.”

“Of course,” said Juan, “Forgive me.”

“Well then, I forgive you as long as you mend your ways it might take some time but it won't be impossible.”

Juan responded that he would try “mending the ribs first,” this as they entered the trees and Cowboys settle down at the foot of an oak and Juan at the foot of another.

Juan spent a painful night because he felt the breathing pulling the ribs apart, more in the cold night air. And Cowboy spent the night in his constant memories, even so their eyes closed to sleep and at daybreak they continued on their way looking for the banks of the Mission River.

EXT. REFUGIO AT THE RIVER

At an unhurried and leisurely pace, two days after they left the stand of oak trees, Cowboy and Juan came to the Mission River and seeing it brought great joy because Cowboy contemplated and observed the pleasantness of its banks the color of its waters, the gentleness of its current and this happy site revived in his memory. One-thousand thoughts of Salty before her addiction. Thoughts that lingered on what he had seen
in the cave of Joey Garza, although Pedro's monkey had told him that some of that was a lie, he relied more on the true parts then on the false unlike one who figured it was all one giant lie.

And as they proceeded to drink tequila and Cowboy to smoke dope, they noticed in view a small boat that lacked any kind of fishing gear and it was pulled up to shore and tied to the trunk of a tree on the riverbank. Cowboy looked all around and saw no one and then without warning he dismounted Shovelhead and told Juan to do the same with his moped and there they parked both bikes under a willow tree that was growing there. Juan asked the reason for this sudden dismounting and parking.

Cowboy responded, "You must know, Juan, that this boat clearly and beyond any doubt is calling and inviting me to get in and sail to assist a Ranger or some other eminent person in need because in the films of Ranger lore this was always done to facilitate a rescue. There is a chase and always a horse, boat or other transport left specifically for that purpose and so this boat has been placed here and this is true as fact today and then leave the animals under that tree and we'll launch."

"Well if that's true," responded Juan, "and your ass, at every step, insists on insisting on nonsensical things, or whatever you call them, there's nothing I can do but obey and follow the proverb that says, 'do what your friend tells you and
sit with him at the table,’ but just to satisfy my conscience I want to warn your ass that I don't think this boat is one of those left by film directors and property managers. It seems to belong to a fisherman because the best catfish in Texas swim in this River.”

They left the motorcycles and entered the boat.

Juan said, “What do we do now?”

“What?” responded Cowboy, “raise the anchor, I mean cut mooring line that holds us.”

And Juan cut the line to the tree and the boat started to move slowly away from the shore. At that time, Juan found himself trembling, fearing he was lost.

Cowboy imagined he heard a donkey baying and the saw Shovelhead struggling to break free from his tree and he said to Juan, “don't worry the donkey is baying and my horse is trying to get free to jump in and follow us. When we return they'll be happy to see us.”

What Juan saw on the bank were two teenagers trying to joyride the two vehicles. Juan’s moped sputtering and was making noise like an ornery donkey and Cowboy’s motorcycle ran for about ten yards until the kid kill the engine with reckless clutch work. Shovelhead bucked and died.

And seeing this Juan begin to tear up and show some bitterness, at perhaps losing the moped a second time.
Just as the kids gave up and ran away, Cowboy said, “Why are you afraid, Juan. No one is chasing you.”

They floated down the river with without power and debated the Ikea toy wolf, Primark jeans and Katy Perry eyelashes, the 2016 election, pokes Juan had had and those Cowboy wish he’d had, Christian Louboutin shoes in five shades of "nude", botox, Mamma Mia!, coffee, Frederikke Dahl Hansen vs. Evy Norlund but nothing was decided.

At this point Juan saw a pipeline being constructed across the river, but as soon as Cowboy saw it he said in a loud voice, “do you see, my friend, you see a bridge where some Ranger is caught in the middle between two hostiles? I've been brought here to rescue him.

“What the devil are you talking about a bridge,” exclaimed Juan, “Can't you see they're constructing a oil, or gas, pipeline. It's common practice. The have to have a way to get the oil back to Mexico; it's a worker suspended and those aren't hostiles.”

“Be quiet, Juan, for although it seems a pipeline it's not. I've already told you about addictions that alter things; you know what happened to Salty,” and then the boat having entered the middle of the current begin to move more rapidly.

Many of the workers, and on both banks who saw the boat coming, began to shout and wave their arms warning what was
about to occur, “You idiots! What are you doing? There's a cable there do you want hung up on it?”

And sure enough there was a cable suspended beneath but above the water several feet.

“Wicked hostile! Set free this Ranger and back away and let him leave in peace. I'll see you in prison for I’m Cowboy from Jefferson County and I'm going to kick your asses.”

Juan was trying to steer the boat, which was unsteerable. Cowboy pulled his pistols and emptied one at the Left Bank in the other at the hostiles on the right bank, the sound of which sent them scrambling for cover. The cable caught both our heroes at about waist-high and threw Cowboy and Juan both into the river.

It was fortunate for Cowboy that he knew how to swim, although he managed about as well as a dog. He managed to save his pistols by holstering them and paddling. But still, if it hadn't been for the workers who jumped into the water and pulled them out it would have been the end of Texas hopes and this story as well.

When they had been pulled out more, more soaked than and dying of thirst, the fishermen arrived who owned the boat, which was then floating down the river, and they demanded Cowboy pay them and he very calmly as if nothing had happened told them he
had already paid for the boat on the condition that they let the Ranger sitting on top of the pipe free.

Of course, they refused, not knowing what he was talking about. Cowboy gave up trying to persuade them marking it down to them being f**** up and he settled giving them a pound of dope for the boat. The construction workers returned to their work, the fishermen went back to their truck, they drove 35 miles down to the next bridge and caught their runaway boat.

Cowboy and Juan walked back to their vehicles, not more than a few yards away from where they had left them. Cowboy commented on how glad Shovelhead was to see him.

**EXT. VICTORIA COUNTY AT THE TELFERNER MANSION**

Cowboy and companion return to their vehicles feeling rather down and out of sorts, especially Juan because getting into their store of money/dope touched a nerve, since it seemed to him that taking part of it meant taking money from his own pocket. Finally, without saying a word, they mounted and rode away from the famous river. Cowboy somewhere deep in thoughts of love and Juan in those of his increased revenues, which seemed even farther away. He understood that he was a fool and Cowboy was insane and he was looking for an opportunity to tear himself away and go home, without even a word to his friend.
It so happened then that the next day as the sun was setting and they were riding out of a wood, Cowboy cast his eye upon a green meadow and at the far end he saw people, and as he drew near, he realized that they were radio control drone operators. He came closer to them he saw a graceful lady on a snow white's Sportster adorned with silver saddle bags. On her left ring finger was ten years of work, and in her right hand she carried a Chinese made drone, which indicated to Cowboy that she was a demanding woman and tech-savvy and probably the leader of all the other techubus, which was true. And so he said to Juan…

“Run Juan, my friend, and tell the lady with the drone, who’s on that Sportster that I, El Vaquero de Tejas want to approach her, pay my respects and give her the jar of honey you’ve been saving for a special occasion and be careful not to inject any proverbs into the message.”

“You take me for an injector,” responded Juan, “you say that to me? This isn't the first time in my life, you know, that I've carried messages to high and mighty ladies.”

“Except for the one you carried to Salty,” said Cowboy, “I do not know that you have ever carried another at least not in my company.”

“That is true,” responded Juan, “but if you pay your debts you don't worry about collectors and in prosperous house
supper’s soon on the stove. I mean that nobody has to tell me things or give me advice. I'm prepared for anything and I know something about everything.”

“I believe you, Juan, said Cowboy, “go then and good luck.”

Juan buzzed down on his moped, faster than usual, and when he reached the beautiful technologist, he dismounted and said to her, “Tech lady, that cowboy, over yonder, is called El Vaquero de Teja. He is my friend and I sort of work for him, not really because of the poor pay, but I'm called Juan Seguin at home. This brave man has sent me to ask you to have the goodness to give permission for him and your agreement approval and consent to put his desire into effect which is as he says, I believe none other than to impress you and give you some local grown sweetness and honey and by accepting it you will do something that will only increase your reputation and he'll as well receive a bit of happiness.”

“I don’t know what you just said,” responded the lady, but you have delivered your message with all the pomp and gumption that any such backwards ass message would demand. I’ve heard of this cowboy. Tell your friend that he is welcome to bring me and my husband honey at the ranch we have nearby.”

Juan was amazed by her beauty and by her good breeding and courtesy and especially by her saying that she had heard of cowboy.
The technologist asked him, “tell me, my friend, this cowboy isn't the true one who had a film made about him called *The Ingenious for Vaquero de Tejas* and isn't his girlfriend named Salty from Tawakoni and isn't her father one of the rebel leaders?”

“He's the very one ma'am,” responded Juan, “and that friend of his is or ought to be in that film the one named Juan is me unless they changed my character's name.”

“All this is interesting,” said the lady, “go to your friend and tell him that he is a most welcome visitor and that nothing could give me more joy than to entertain a celebrity.”

Juan with his extremely amiable reply return to his friend with great pleasure and told Cowboy everything that the lady said, praising to the sky, in his courtly way her great beauty and charm and courtesy. Cowboy sat up straight in his seat and adjusted his cowboy hat and rode to them. The group, most having seen the film, knew of Cowboy’s abused turn of mind; they agreed so long as he was there he would be treated well insane or not.

At this point Cowboy reach them and gave signs of dismounting, he set the kickstand and unfortunately when he dismounted he caught his foot in a cord and couldn't get free, instead he was left dangling with his face and chest on the ground Shovelhead almost toppled over on him, but Juan had already come up and caught the bike.
The lady's husband, no tech genius, but a formidable cattle baron himself, ordered his people to assist Cowboy and they helped him. Cowboy was again badly bruised from the fall and limping and hobbling, attempted to apologize. He approached Cowboy and said, “I'm sorry your first steps weren't taken well, but your friend should have caught the cord you tripped on.”

“Maybe but no Ranger ever had a more talkative or comical friend than I've had, for every bruise he’s caused, I’ve laughed ten times, and he'll prove me honest if you put us up for a few days.”

To which the lady responded, “Juan’s sense of humor is famous and I look forward to it. He's clever witty and funny as you know.”

“And talkative. He could talk the ears off a dead mule,” added Cowboy.

“So much the better,” said the husband, “for there are many witticisms that can't be said with only a few words. Come to the ranch and live as long as you like.”

“By this time,” Juan had Shovelhead standing ready to remount; every one mounted and they rode for the ranch.

The lady told Juan to ride near her because she wanted to hear some clever jokes. Juan did not have to be asked twice and he weigh rode his moped among the three of them and made conversation with the lady.
“What did one math book say to the other math?” to the delight of the lady.

EXT. VICTORIA COUNTY AT THE TELFERNER MANSION

Juan’s joy was obvious; at finding himself as it seemed to him so favored by the lady, because he imagined he would find at her ranch what he's found in the house of Solis Armenta and in the house of Beltran’s employer, for he very fond of the good life and he missed no opportunity to indulge himself wherever he was and where everything was free to him.

The baron and baroness’ ranch lay just north of Victoria. The gentle rolling grassland and scores of year-round streams and creeks made it ideal for cattle ranching. Cowboy felt a dozen Cowboys were part-time employees and probably another dozen were full-time employees. Those who weren't married lived in a couple long low bunkhouses, white with red roofs. The married couples lived in small houses adjacent to the bunk houses, all of them painted green with red roofs. A cookhouse large enough to feed all the single men, a barn, a machine shed, a grainery, and a large stable were also on the property. For cowboy the most interesting feature of the ranch was what the cowboys called, “El Grande Casa,” a stucco sided example of, ironically, Spanish Colonial Revival. It had an arcaded portico on the southeast corner, stained glass windows and an elaborate
arched entryway. Juan saw none of this one saw the estate of affluent Mexicans with too many damn cattle not to be in the pay of the Mexican government and a huge wine cellar. But no sign the Mexicans were confiscating cattle. It looked to Juan like another square jaw Bridger.

The history of accounts, then, that before they reached the ranch the Cattle Baron husband rode ahead and gave orders to all his servants concerning how they would treat Cowboy. As soon as the Ranger arrived at the house, two mechanics immediately came out, dressed in matching coveralls, as mechanics were for before the calamity. They took Shovelhead into the garage and began the finest of care.

They said, “go Cowboy and help our lady dismount.”

Cowboy did so, and there were extremely polite exchanges between them regarding this matter, but in the end the persistence of the lady, she refused to get off her cycle except into the arms of her husband, saying that she didn't consider herself worthy of imposing so senseless a burden on so great a Ranger.

Finally, the husband came out. And when they had entered a spacious courtyard, two beautiful virgins approached and placed in Cowboy’s hand a lemonade and a soft serve ice cream cone and with both hands full Cowboy hardly noticed the courtyard becoming filled with employees, family members, and other guests.
shouting, “Welcome, Cowboy, the greatest of all Patriots,” and all or most of the them clapping their hands, not all of them entirely sincere. All of this astounded Cowboy and this was the first day he really felt appreciated as a true Rancher mobile, but not a fantastic Ranger because he had seen similar celebrations in old films.

Juan, forgetting his moped, attached himself to the lady and entered the house and feeling some remorse at leaving the moped out in the courtyard went up to the family's grandmother figure and in a quiet voice he said to her, “Señora Gonzalez or whatever your name is…”

“Donna Rodriguez is my name,” responded the grandmother, “how can I help you, brother?”

To which Juan responded, “I would like you to please go out to the courtyard where you will find my moped, and if you'd be so kind please take him to the garage, because he'll need an oil change and some routine maintenance.

“If the Ranger was as clever as his friend,” responded the grandmother, “then Mexico is certainly sitting pretty. Go on idiot, you may bad luck follow you and whoever brought you here and take care of your moped yourself. The grandmother's in this house are not used for this sort of work.” “Well the truth is,” respond to Juan, “that I've heard Cowboy and he knows all the western films ever made telling the one about Elijah Brooks and
then he came from Estelline wounded and the virgins tended to him and the grandmother cared for his horse, but in the case of my moped, I wouldn't trade him even for Cowboy’s Shovelhead.”

“Brother if you're a stand-up comedian,” replied the grandmother, “then keep your jokes for people who appreciate that sort of humor and pay for it. You won't get anything from me but this,” and she showed Juan the length of her middle finger.

“That's rich in culture and fine breeding,” replied Juan, “as long as you count years and not points you're sure to win the basketball game.”

“Son of a b****,” said the grandmother in a rage, “if I'm old, or not, is none of your business you tamale stuffed scoundrel. And she said this in so loud a voice that the lady heard her and turning around and seeing the grandmother so agitated and her eyes ablaze, she asked who she was degrading.

“He's right here,” responded the grandmother, “this clown who asked me very consistently to go and put a moped of his into the garage and he started talking nonsense that he knew of a grandmother's somewhere that took care of an injured horse and then for good measure he called me “old”

“I would consider that the worst insult,” responded the lady, “that everyone could say to me. Be advised, Juan my
friend, that Grandma Rodriguez is very young and wears that makeup more for reason of custom then hiding her few years.

“May the next meal be cursed,” responded Juan, “if I said it for that reason; I said it only because I'm so fond of my moped that it seemed to me couldn't entrust him to any person more experienced than Donna Rodriguez.”

The lady took grandmother Rodriguez to the side and whispered the plan to her; obviously she’s not been aware of Juan and Cowboy’s status or significance to the invasion.

Cowboy, who heard most of this, said, “Is that the kind of talk appropriate to a grand house?” “Sir,” responded Juan, “each person must talk of what he needs no matter where he is, over there by the window I remembered about my moped and here I talk about him, if I remembered about him in the stable I talked about him there.”

To which the husband said to Cowboy, “Juan is absolutely correct and there is no reason to blame him for anything. The moped will be serviced with the finest oil and one need not worry for the moped will receive the same care as you're fine but battered cycle.”

With these remarks pleasing to everyone, except Cowboy, they proceeded upstairs and brought Cowboy into a fancy bathroom. Six virgins removed his dusty and grimy clothes, all of them instructed by the Cattle Baron and wife, a second time,
that they were to do and how they were to treat Cowboy, so that he would imagine and believe they were treating him well because he was a Ranger loyal to the Austin government.

When his clothes had been removed Cowboy was left in his oversized boxers. Tall, very thin, his cheeks sucked in and cheek bones protruding his muscles minuscule and if the young women hadn't been sufficiently warned not to laugh by the Cattle Baron they’d have split their signs laughing.

They asked that they be allowed to remove his boxers and bathe him in the shower and dress him. He looked at the large walk-in shower and judged it large enough for seven but he wouldn't give his consent saying that modesty was the reason. Even so he said they should leave the clothes on the countertop.

After the girls had left, Cowboy and Juan enter the shower and finding themselves alone Cowboy said, “tell me you recent comedian and long-time headache, does it seem right to you to dishonor and insult a grandmother as venerable and worthy of respect as the one in this house? Was that the time to mention your moped or would these nobles let it rust in the sun or rain. Please for the love of the Republic restrain yourself and do not reveal your true colors least they realize the cloth you're made of is cotton. Also, if they see you as a bumbling idiot, they'll next see me as an imposter, and not a real Ranger. Now, please get your act together; it's one thing to be a talkative clown
but not for his buffoonery. Curb your tongue and we will find out maybe something about the fortifications and emerge with our skin and maybe a little fame and fortune increased.”

Juan promised very earnestly that he would shut up and wouldn't say a word unfit and that he’d carefully considered every word he would for stutter. He said Cowboy didn't need to worry that he would only speak when he was addressed, when he was ordered and at last resort.

Cowboy and Juan dressed and a butler came to take them to dinner. The Cattle Baron and baroness were waiting for them. They place themselves around him and with great pomp and decorum at a rich table with only four settings. The baron and baroness invited Cowboy at the head of the table and though he refused the baron urged him so insistently that he had to agree. The bishop sat across from Cowboy and the host at each side.

Juan was left out, stupefied and amazed to see his friend so honored, Juan said, “if you'd like I'll tell you a story about this business and of seeding that happened in my Village.” Juan had what he thought would be an amusing story, but the lady wouldn’t hear it.

The baroness, with feigned anger, spoke into the intercom system scolding the staff, that they had miscounted the settings and she ordered them to bring am extra setting.
"It would be better," said Cowboy, "if he ate with
grandmother that they might heel each others wounds. Let her
listen to his thousand witless remarks."

"By M&Ms," said the baroness, "Juan is not to go even a
smidgen away from me. I adore him dearly because sometimes a
comedian can heal and he's always wise."

"Thank you," said Juan, "I appreciate your high opinion of
me though I don't deserve it."

Cowboy turns a thousand different colors, that look like
marbling on his skin and the baroness had her laughter so that
Cowboy wouldn't lose his temper and so to change the subject and
keep Juan from being slugged, the baroness ask Cowboy what news
he had received of Salty and if he had recently sent her any
volunteers to help her to clean the kennels for surely he'd
defeated a healthy number.

To which Cowboy responded, "Ma'am, my misfortunes now
they've had a beginning will never have an end. I've sent
soldiers, villains and malefactors to her but how can they find
her if she's been transformed into an ugly monstrous meth
w****?"

"I don't know," said Juan, "to me she looks like the most
beautiful creature in the world, at least as far as jumping and
speed are concerned. I know that no basketball player can
compete with her and she keeps busy working with law enforcement
confiscating dogs from breeders thus enhancing the value of her litters. She's a shrewd business woman."

"Have you seen her enchanted, Juan?" asks the baron.

"A course, I've seen her," responded Juan, "I'm the one who discovered the addiction? She's as enchanted as most people think impossible."

"Idiots."

"Cowboy and Juan are resting here with us, they are 'traveling' to the coast," the lady tried to make the priest understand.

The priests, who had only just arrived and didn’t know Cowboy was an “informed guest” and who had heard too much talk of El Chupacabra, El Cucuy, Duende, La Llorona, and Sihuanaba realize that all this must be part of Cowboy’s vivid imagination or perhaps his insanity, saying, "It is foolishness even to listen to any account of this man..."

"Whoever they are, wherever they’ve been, and wherever they’re going is seriously no concern of ours," the baron explained and tried to smile.

"So, have you been to ‘San Antonio’ recently?" the baroness tried again to make the priest understand that their orders came from the capital of Texas.
“No, but I’ve been to Rome and Rome, enlightens Mexico City.” The priest said which meant that he reports to the Vatican and the Vatican informs the national capital.

With Cowboy sitting and the table, incredulous, the priest kept up the rhetoric, “The film isn’t so fantastic.”

“That’s not entirely fair.”

“I figure his half-wit Cowboy,” the priest then looked directly at Cowboy, “or whatever your name is, is not so great a fool as you want him to be, but still whenever he does divulge the information you want, it will be full of nonsense.”

“Can you help us out by simply not making our guest angry?”

“Vaquero, hombre de mente simple, whoever put into your head that you’re a Texas Ranger and your task is to restore the Republic of Texas? Go home in peace and stay there and stop playing these political games. Fix up your double-wide, rear some children if you can have any after all the drugs you’ve ingested. Join the Catholic Church.”

Juan chuckled, “not likely, pardre.”

The priest ignored Juan and focused on Cowboy, “Someone is using you as a tool, some sick joke perhaps, wandering around wasting your and our time both. Where the devil did you get the idea that mobile Rangers exist anyway? Where are they dreaming there will be invasion fleets or attacks on coastal
installations or enchanted women thrown into a snaggle-toothed meth wh***s. It's all nonsense."

Cowboy listened intensively and politely to the carefree but at the same time crafted words of the priest. And seeing that finally the priest had fallen silent and without regard for the baron or the baroness and with an angry and wrathful face he said...

**EXT. VICTORIA COUNTY AT THE Telferner Mansion**

Cowboy then rose to his feet, and trembling from head to toe like leaves on a Mesquite, he spoke quickly and with great education, “The place where I am now and the present since which I find myself and the respect I've always have had and have now for the vocation a priest professes and restrain my anger and the because everyone knows that the weapons of men of the cloth are the same as those of women which is to say their tongues. I shall limit my efforts for the sake of civility.

“For you I expect to hear honest words and nothing abusive but I was wrong. Holy advice should take place under different conditions and circumstances but you've made your assault in public and made it so nasty and hurtful that it lacks legitimacy. I have no knowledge of the sin you feel I'm committing by participating in the greatest revolution of my
time. Revolutions don’t come along to lift up every generation. And resort to base name-calling. You call me a fool?

So I took it so tell me what shallow and silly actions have you seen? And you condemn me to revile when you've been a witness to nothing but a film? Or is it enough for priests simply to enter other people's houses willy-nilly and to mislead the owners about their guests. I understand priests are generally brought up in the narrow confines of a boarding school and never have seen the world or touched a woman, but you can talk to a man about his wife. And now suddenly you've decided to dictate politics to men and to make judgments.

“If we’re called a fool by Rangers, or great generals, or the aristocracy then I would take it seriously, but since today I am called a simpleton by a child of a man, who never walked or follow the path of man it doesn't concern me in the least. A ranger I am and a ranger I'll be. I took an oath to do good and evil to no one unless they are out of place. If a man understands this and desires this, but it is still called a fool then let these excellent people, the baron and baroness, say so. We will leave without another word.”

“That was wonderful,” said Juan, “he said all that was needed. What's more to say? Besides this priest is denying and has denied that there ever were Rangers mobile in the world or
that there are any now. Is it any wonder he doesn't know anything about politics.”

“By chance brother,” said the priests, “are you the Juan that has been promised an island to govern.”

“I am,” responded Juan, “and I'm the one who deserves it as much as anybody else a stay close to good men and become one myself, and I'm play 'birds of the feather flock together' and 'lean on a sturdy tree trunk, if you want good shade.' I’ve leaned on him several months now and I'll become just like him, if a long life allows it and no lack of counties and islands for us both.”

“Juan my good friend,” said the baron, “I'm calling the governor in San Antonio tomorrow and I'm going to recommend he appoint you county judge of Loving County. It's small, but it will be a good start.”

There was a short pause, a raw nerve and an air of unease, but Cowboy weighted things out and instructed his friend...

“Say, thank you, Juan.”

“Thank you?” said Juan to the baron.

“Now,” said the baron, “what would be the best course to take for our friend, Cowboy.”

At the overt bribe, the priest rose from the table in a fury saying, “by the Holy Church, I must say that a million acres of cattle or not, you're as much simpleton as these two
idiots. Did you ever thing they might be mad, since the intelligence services on both sides understand and have even sought to increase their madness. Help them for as long as you have the ear of the governor, why don't you tell him these two Rangers are headed to Matagorda with weapons? Why not? Frankly, it looks to me like every meth cook and addict in the state are headed in that direction?"

And without saying another word or eating another mouthful, the priest left. The baron and baroness did nothing to stop him, though the baron was prevented from saying very much by the baroness who didn’t want to lose their Mexican cattle concession.

When the priest was well gone, the baron said, “Cowboy, Señor Cowboy, I'm sorry you were subjected to such insults. I hope you don't take it as an insult. Priests and women can't offer insults, of course, you know this as well as I.

“That's true,” responded Cowboy, “I only wish that he had stayed a bit longer so I could have convinced him of his error saying there were never Rangers mobile in the west. I know it would not have gone well for his grace.”

“I'd like to add,” said Juan, “They would be the least likely to put up with a joke like that. They would have shot him full of holes head-to-toe.”
The baroness was weak with laughter, when she heard Juan speak and in her opinion he was more amusing and even crazier than Cowboy, at last became calm and the meal was completed. And as the table was being cleared, five virgins came in. The first bearing a silver basin. The second holding a picture also of silver and a third entered carrying two very white very thick towels. A forth a rare rectangular cake of commercial soap, from Europe. And a fifth had a very nice new razor.

The one with the basin approached in with charm and grace and placed the basin on the table in front of Cowboy and he, not saying a word, marveled at such a ceremony but believed that it must have been a Mexican custom. He calculated all he'd need to do is close his eyes, but he did only told he had only told Juan one to say thank you to the recommendation in order to the line his real intention his patriotism and at that moment the pitcher begin to pour. The maiden with the soap begin to rub Cowboy’s face with the bar until a good lather was up. As the girl with the razor approached him Cowboy was obliged to closes eyes.

Juan paid careful attention to the ceremony of shaving and said to himself, “Can it be the custom in Mexico to shave important men in this manner? And we county judges, as well as Rangers, are important enough for this custom, because I could use it and appreciate that part of the job.”
“What are you saying, Juan, ask the baroness,

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know I was talking out loud,” Juan responded, “generally I’ve washed my hands after a meal, but I’ve never been been shaved and that’s why it’s good to live a long time because you see a lot. You see a lot of trouble also but this is not one of the bad things.”

“Don't worry, Juan my friend,” said the baroness, “you will have my maid shave you, and even put you in the tub if necessary.”

“Just my stubble will satisfy me,” responded Juan, “at least for now. Later, on knock yourself out.”

“Butler,” said the baroness, “see to whatever our good Juan wants and obey his wishes to the letter.”

The butler responded that Señor Juan would be served everything, and have having said this he left to eat and took Juan with him, while the baron and baroness and Cowboy remained at the table speaking of many different things, but all touching on his aspirations of political office, but after a time the conversation devolved into talk of Salty and the tragedy of her addiction. The baroness breached the subject of Salty and eventually got around to questioning her very existence perhaps the Mexican Police Service were looking for her.

Cowboy testified that he had indeed seen her and had helped pick up waste at her no-kill shelter and then more recently he
had seen her toothless and with a nervous tick. He did say he'd been to in Tawakoni and was unable to find her shelter a second time.

According to Cowboy’s reasoning she must have been the one enchanted, altered and changed and transformed.

At this minute Juan burst into the room being chased by the most ugly barber imaginable who was holding a razor.

“What is this my friend?” ask the baroness, “What's the fuss? What do you want from this good man? Haven't you considered that he'll soon be selected a county judge.”

To which the ugly barber responded, “this gentleman wouldn't let himself be shaved though I was told, ordered, to shave him. Just as the girl's shaved his friend.”

“I'll shave myself,” responded Juan in a fury, “but I want clean towels and silver basin and some pitchers of clean water would be nice. Cowboy had that luxury, my beard is short and I don't need a shave. And if this fellow doesn’t stop chasing me about, I'll leave an imprint on his head we'll see if he remembers the soap after that.”

The baron, at this point, said, “Juan is correct and everything he said and everything he will say he doesn't need a shave. If our custom doesn't please him that should be the end of it.
“From great ladies,” Juan responded, “great favors are expecting and you and the one you just granted to me can't be repaid easily, but I'm only a peasant. My name is Juan Seguin and I’m married. I have children and I’m friends with and the employ of a Ranger. If I can help you in any way, I'll act faster than you command. “It certainly seems,” Juan responded.

“It certainly seems, Juan, “ responded the baroness, “that you have learned to be courteous in school, or perhaps by befriending Cowboy you’ve learned some useful skills. Cowboy must he the cream of courtesy. My husband will have you a post as soon as possible.”

Cowboy begin his four hour afternoon siesta.

Juan only slept an hour and then rejoined the baroness for idle chatter.

**EXT. VICTORIA COUNTY AT THE TELFERNER MANSION**

The sequel recounts that Juan didn't sleep that day at siesta, but kept his word to the baroness and came as requested. Juan obeyed her command to sit as a governor and speak as a friend so he sat and the virgins and grandmother and all her friends gathered around to hear what he had to say, if he would try to impress them with his future plans.

The baroness spoke first, “now that we are alone where no one can hear us, I should like you, Señor County Judge, to
resolve the doubts I have, which have their origin in the history of the great Cowboy that already it's been put on film; one of these doubt is that Salada de Tawakoni actually exist. He claims to have seen her and it is believed that his working for her father, but we can't find anyone else who has ever seen her. You didn't take her a message and you didn't find her when you were last there and how did you invent that your friend actually was picked picking up dogshit? This was a deception and a lie that did her reputation more harm than good, tell me you're not as loyal as your friend as we supposed."

At these words, without saying a single word in response, Juan got up from his chair and with quick silent steps his body bent, his finger to his lips, he walked around the room lifting all the picture frames then looked under all the lamps, and when he had done all of this he sat and said, "Now that I've seen, Señora, that nobody is listening to us, except for those present without fear of recordings, I'll answer what you've asked me and anything else you may ask me, but the first thing I'll say is I believe my friend Cowboy is completely crazy, like a fox, even though sometimes he says things that are in my opinion and in the opinions of almost everybody that are so insane and poorly-reasoned that Donald Trump himself couldn't say them better. Even so, it's clear that he's a genius and because he has everyone convinced that he’s crazy. He has the ability to make
the Mexican spies completely to discount his movement and intentions.

“For example?” an ambitious virgin asked. “For example, like something that happened six or eight days ago, that’s not on film yet. I mean the transformation of Salty into a meth w**** on a motorbike and that story is something like a fairytale.”

The baroness asked him to tell her about the addiction, or delusion, and Juan recounted everything just as it had occurred. From which his listeners had no small pleasure in continuing their conversation.

A virgin whispered something into her ear and the baroness said, “From what Juan has told me it only make me worry and I can’t help wonder, ‘since Cowboy turn down numerous positions and bribes refusing to be pinned down and he’s clearly an ambitious man, and his best friend admits this and still serves him and follows him and is never too concerned about his hollow promises, there can be no doubt that he’s more of a cunning agent and if that’s the case he and you might be more interested in a place in history and not in any mere county. You might want the entire pie. And this invasion fleet to you must seem like pie on the sill. I’m a correct?”

“I like pie,” and he winked at the virgin who had whispered in the ladies ear.
“So, why would we pull strings and have you assigned to administer a county when all you want to administer is the entire state?”

“The entire nation?”

“I’m worried about you, Juan. Maybe you are the brains behind your team and I’m worried about the wrong cowboy.”

“A Kit-Kat bar,” said Juan, “it’s not a legitimate concern and it’s not what I expected because it’s hardly telling the truth. If I were a clever man, I’d have left my friend months ago, but this is my fate and this is my misfortune; I can't help it. I have to follow him; we're from the same small town. I have been eating his bread and loved him like a brother. He's a grateful man he gave me countless mopeds and more than anything else I'm faithful and so it's impossible for anything to separate us except the men with backhoes and AstroTurf rugs and if you don't want me to be your county judge in Loving County as I was promised, I was born without it and maybe not having it will work out for the best. I may be a fool, but I understand the proverb that says, ‘it did him harm when the ant grew wings,’ and it might even be that a banker will smile on me and friend and frown me the politician. The dead politician doesn't take any more room in the ground then a warrior, and when they were alive they had similar size stomachs and the steak the in Matagorda is just as good as Loving County. But not every cat is
gray in the dark. So if you don't want too, then please don't give me a county, and tell Cowboy that it’s because I'm a fool. He’s heard that before and it had no effect on his opinion more than a few minutes. I'll be smart enough not to care at all.”

The baroness sprung up out of her chair in a huff, “You ungrateful little b****,” as if her patients was at an end, but it was an act. The baroness had heard what she wanted to hear.

Juan countered, “Don't think you've offered so much, for I've seen more than two jackasses go into county judgeships and if I take mine it won't be anything new.”

Juan was left sitting with the grandmother cougar, the same one who he had gotten into a dust-up with earlier. It appeared that she’d strangely developed a crush on him and coveted just time alone with him.

Juan told her he and cowboys would be leaving at ten the next morning and she'd need say her goodbyes before then, possibly in the courtyard.

However, at four a.m. Cowboy and Juan push the moped and Shovelhead off the ranch. By five a.m. our two heroes were 30 miles safely down a trail and the assassin entered their recently vacated room.

The sequel portrayed the ranch house, as a narrow escape, but the truth is it was all rather leisurely but quietly done, very quietly.
EXT. CALHOUN COUNTY AT PORT LAVACA

Cowboy and Juan were about to partake in an event that was billed as one of “the last of its kind.” It was called “la cita” a gathering of the breed of men the Mexican established almost always raised a dubious eye toward and were doing their best to push out of historical accounts. The smoke of scores of campfires could be seen from a distance away. As Cowboy and Juan drew closer they came aware of the sounds of the rendezvous and, Juan, the aroma's of roasting meat from the many cooking fires. In the early days of mobile rangering, after the Reconquista but before the current war and the southern migration, La Cita would old bikers meeting at Lubbock, Tyler or sometimes Temple. Those days were over, and there were still a few old, warn out, bikers, but this day the Rangers at Port Lavaca for the most part were kids, pipes in hand.

Later they would spend their adult life in one place, behind the counter or under a vehicle, but in here at this time, during their youth, they were traveling to the Sea and confrontation at Matagorda.

When Cowboy and Juan arrived outside Port Lavaca they found a curious fistfight between a man named Ginés and Perillo, the criminal moped thief, puppeteer, and former monkey trainer. The fight was filthy, dirty and they were rolling around in the
dirt, wrestling and occasionally punching another. The rough-looking characters were surrounded by twenty or more equally rough-looking kids, skinny and pale addicts.

Cowboy sighed and looked for a moment at the pitiful rangers gathered. Juan would later tell historians that no matter what they wanted to say about Cowboy, they were required to write about his keen hearing. And that was true, Cowboy heard something no one else heard, artillery.

Juan and Cowboy turned from the fight and rode over a slight hill and saw a hundred Mexican batteries practicing on targets (rusted barges) out in the bay.

“All right,” he said, “Unfortunately, we don’t have a leaders or a plan. But we’ve lured half the Mexican army to his place that’s the upside.”

“Not, I my eyes; not if you’re talking about military action,” Juan said, “They are just as likely to turn their guns and kill us.”

“Exactly, we’ll tempt them and when they turn we’ll attack their a**.”

“You want to invite an attack? It would be suicide.”

“Don’t worry regardless of our feint or fate, if I don’t get you home safe, the filmmakers will thing poorly of me, and that’s not to mention the wrath I’ll feel from your wife.”
They returned to the fistfight, which was still being pitifully fought.

Juan noticed immediately that they were exhausting themselves without doing any real damage. The teenagers, a lot of them very similar to Cowboy were becoming bored.

Cowboy, like Juan, guessed the men were on similar missions to his and asserted himself into the fight. He pulled his pistols and pointed them at the combatant’s temples. When the men stopped fighting, Ginés sucker-punched Perillo and in turn Cowboy struck Ginés with the butt of his pistol. The fight ended.

Cowboy imagine the fight was over leadership of the Ranger group or perhaps over the tactics to be used he had suggested to them in the garage that the weapons should be used in some sort of Rouge and that might be the purpose of the fight turned out it was over a gambling debt but regardless the end of the fight left cowboy in charge of any attack.

Cowboys quickly determined that the group of men all of motorcycles were effectively Rangers mobile and that he was their leader. He had no idea that most had been sent by the father of a beautiful basketball standout, who rescued purebred dogs. They all had eerily similar stories to those of Juan and his friend.
EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT BAY CITY

Once organized Cowboy had them occupy the abandoned community college, they struck the old ruined weapons off the roof and out the school's front doors then the group secluded themselves across the street in four buildings, a closed EX Mart, the Shadow Bay Apartments and dentist’s office and on the roof of a defunct carwash. The school was on the primary road, in and out of the town, and the guns surely would attract attention of the Mexican authorities. It was all designed, in Cowboys mine, to provoke an armed response, so they could counterattack.

The Mexican Army didn’t, and after a day, the Rangers saw some action, not the action they expected; for three hours Chinese-made Hummers, trucks, tanks and armored personnel carriers approached and deterred around them (Mockingbird to Hiram Brandon and then Thomson to Roberts) and passed around them only to emerge on the highway headed out of town east toward Houston.

Unknown to Cowboy, simultaneous invasions in Houston and Brownsville ended his ruse. and caused the Mexicans to try to avoid his ambush. Frankly, they had more important fish to fry.

Apparently the Mexican Commander knew their positions and skirted around them and out of town and didn’t want the distraction. After two hours with Mexican Army well down the
road and out of Matagorda County, the Cowboy’s ranger friends all reluctantly emerged. Bewildered, they didn't immediately understand why Cowboy instantly declared victory and explain that the Mexicans had recognized the superior force and we're retreating out of town probably to Houston because it was nearest, but at that moment a second two hours of military vehicles came down the road and again circumvented the planned counter attack. The ranger dove back into their concealed places, but it was relatively clear the Mexicans knew they were there they as well left town in a non-conference to confrontation away Cowboy attributed this to a force evacuating towards the west on their way to Brownsville.

“They say there's enough gold lying around Matagorda to fill up two pick-up trucks,” Cowboys said, piling it on a bit thick.

“Why would the Mexicans just give us two trucks full of gold? It don't sound like any Mexican I've ever met,” Juan said.

“You're too damn contrary,” Cowboy said, “I've never known a person more apt to take the opposite view then you. You're too damn negative banging everything and every idea.”

“I expect I've spent too much time with you. It's just become a habit,” Juan said, “when do you figure they'll finish leaving and we can get in there and get that gold?”
EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT MATAGORDA

Cowboy, Juan and the Rangers then drove to Matagorda and entered that city and they woke up a Mexican policeman, overweight and sleeping and in the police station. There were a few military vehicles left on the side of 60 and at a few strategic-looking locations, but as it was determined that they weren't in working order.

The county by the sea was totally theirs. When they returned, Cowboy wanted and expected the people to come out of their homes to greet the conquerors but it was slow. In fact, they didn't come out of their homes for days and long after he’s left. Juan would tell him about it.

INT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT BAY CITY

Cowboy felt that Ginés never fought fair and that meant that Perillo would take six Rangers southwest to follow and harass the Mexican caravan going to Corpus. Cowboy would take six Rangers east to snipe at those forces sent to relieve Houston. With Cowboy were Hendrick Arnold, John W. Smith, Samuel Maverick, Horace Smith and William Carey all who had fought in 2036, and a shepherd kid named Stephanopoulos, who’d never fought before, but was willing.

Cowboy named Juan the new county judge, as the Mexican appointee had literally ran away in his personal car, a
confiscated a 1968 Lincoln convertible. The man almost turned the car over, two wheels off the ground, a feat difficult to achieve, on the way out of town.

As far as Juan was concerned, it was a bloodless coup and every Texan was satisfied Juan was left in charge and it wasn't any joke. There were ill-intentioned sycophants surrounding him but no more than any other politician.

When they entered Juan’s new office, he sat behind the desk and Cowboy in front end. In a tranquil voice Cowboy said, “Let them bury me with you, Juan my friend, prior to my good luck today I haven’t appreciated your loyalty. I noticed now and no fortune is going to be enough as payment for your loyalty. We together have run the enemy out of their fortress and you find yourself rewarded with all your desires. Others bribe, importune, solicit and some plead and do not achieve what you've won here.”

“Thank you,” Juan said with a thankful tear in his eye.

“How are you going to spend all your wealth.”

“I have a daughter. She’ll need a husband.”

“Juan, you also have a son. Are you going to help him?”

“No, he’s fifteen now,” Juan said.

“What do you two do together?” Cowboy asked.

“I play with him, basketball, football, baseball.”

“Not soccer?”
“Oh, hell no. I weigh 380,” Juan was honest.

“Okay. So he must love you and look up to you,” Cowboy asked.

“No, because when he was little, three or four, we’d play games, all kinds of games and I’d let him win. And now he’s older, he can beat me at everything, and he tells me, ‘I can beat me at everything.’ And I said, ‘It wasn’t always that way, you know.’ He said, ‘yes, always.’ I said, ‘I used to let you win, man.’ He doesn’t believe it. He thinks I’m a retard that can’t beat an infant.”

“I'm mentally retarded and I'm offended.”

“Wait, if you understand this. and wait a minute, you’re leading men into battle; you're not mentally retarded. If you’re a retard then you need to get back cooking dope and stop hiding behind your Ranger badge.

“I'm even more offended by that.”

“What prompted your interest in the subject of my son?”

“Finances. Almost no one finds themselves in an office, that so many others have strove for and here the saying certainly applies, ‘aspirations are ruled by good and bad fortune.’ You who have been debatably call a dolt but without rising early or staying up late, or firing a single shot in anger. And with nothing more than the company of Ranger, you are
not in total charge of this island as if it were no consequence.”

“But it’s not. It’s the mouth of the Colorado River.”

“Precisely; do not let it fall back into the hands of the Mexicans.” As Cowboy spoke, Juan glanced at the map on the wall of his new office; it wasn’t technically an island. There were islands in on the map but given there weren’t any features, roads or buildings, Juan figured they had always just misspoken and it mattered little and to correct Cowboy at this time would have been in poor taste.

“Now, don’t let this office go to your head. All I can say that you shouldn’t think this office was earned on your merits, but send word to Salty and her wise father and to your friends in the Jefferson City.”

“I will do this immediately. Tomorrow.”

“Good. Now that I have your attention and you are suddenly disposed to listen for once. Follow the advise of Machiavelli, do right when you can; do wrong when you must; jump the gun if you can, but hesitate if you must.”

“This is the rule you follow?”

“Yes. And you might not want me to advise you and guide your course. In this confusion, don’t forget your Cato, “First you must fear God because you’re educated only to a certain level and if you fear him, he’ll brings you’ll understanding,”
and if you're wise you can have this office and the benefits for a lifetime and perhaps even hand them over to your son.

“Who said that?”

“I did.”

“Teresa will be jumping up and down when she hears.”

“Take a few days before you contact your wife. Women are violent and uncontrolled animals, and it is useless to let go the reins and then expect her not to kick over the fence. You must look at this relationship and make an effort to keep it all from going to her head. When you have established some rules, then she will not put herself out there like a palm or pretend to be a poodle in foolish arrogance.”

“I understand,” responded Juan, but we raised Boston Terriers and didn't care so much for palms, poodles, pekes, malts.”

“You see my point,” Cowboy responded, “not every humble woman grows up to marry an entire island. See that she remains a Boston. Please.”

“It’s her nature,” replied Juan.

“It’s no woman’s nature, Juan,” Cowboy said, “and for that reason people of not so noble origin should bring the gravity of the position they hold a gentle mildness with prudence.”

“I understand. It will be a big change for me.”
“I should cite some examples to help you, but that fellow was supposed to fill Shovelhead with fuel and pull him up front.”

Cowboy looked him directly in the eye, “Try to remember people's name and pump your own gas. I think that will help you a great deal. Good luck Juan.”

They shook hands and Cowboy turn to pursue the enemy.

But Cowboy turned and returned; he held up a phone and slung one at Juan, saying, “I found two phones in the police station; they seem to work,” then he left to chase the enemy.

EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT VAN VLECK

There are written histories that claim this chapter impossible, because Cowboy wouldn’t have caught the Mexican convoy at Van Vleck. However, these are the same historians that deny Cowboy’s propensity for nailing roads. There are numerous examples of Cowboy scattering nails on paved roads. After all, he and his Rangers nearly always, and after the invasion, always used the established off-road trails. Cowboy did spend an amount of time but the prevailing history is that nails, from Markham to Van Vleck, effectively delayed both convoys. They didn’t slow the tanks but the heavy armour was slow enough to catch at Van Vleck. Also, evidence that Perillo caught the south bound convoy before they reached Elmaton. Cowboys group have been called, the
'Van Vleck Rangers' and the Perillo have been called the "Elmaton Rangers."

Within sight of Van Vleck, Cowboy’s squad came on the stalled main body of Mexicans. In the middle of the attack, auditioning for a second chance at film history, he called Juan.

Juan was still in his desk, not thinking about a sequel and not really contemplating his new position, but was putting English papers in a very short stack and Spanish language papers in a very tall stack. He was about to throw them all in the trash, and he’d be rid of them. But a secretary-looking woman entered and without interrupting the phone call, she neatly packed away all the Spanish language papers in several boxes and place them in a storage room. She packed away the English papers into a different storage room.

Cowboy was calling from a battlefield, the Rangers (including Cowboy) were, from their cycles, snipping at the Mexicans and the Mexicans were recklessly firing back. A few tank shells fell and exploded. All this was heard over the phone. It all sounded more violent than it really was.

Cowboy didn't mention the action, but to say they’d "Jimmyed a bull or two." It could was clearly audible in the background. Cowboy started in on the advice again, “Consider, Juan, that goodness is your resource and energy. And pride molds your deeds there is no reason to envy the others in government,
the Austin crowd, because their blood is mostly inherited. But your goodness has been acquired on the trails we’ve taken and good has a value and blood does not. This being said, if one of your Marion County relatives comes to see you while you are on the island, do not scorn or insult him. On the contrary, you should welcome and receive even entertain him; in this way you'll make everyone happy.”

“Good idea, because they will all return home eventually and tell everyone how rich and powerful I’ve become,” Juan reasoned.

“Also,” Cowboy “Bring your wife with you, because it is not a good idea for those who govern for a long time to be without their own spouses. Teach her, instruct her and smooth away her natural roughness, because everything a governor acquires can be lost and wasted by a crude and foolish wife. If by chance you or widowed, which we don’t want to talk about it, it is something that can happen. With your position and you wish to better your life, don't choose one that spends too much money or takes too many gifts. Everything received by a judge's wife, her husband will be accountable when later he's asked to pay four times over for the gifts.”

“Is someone shooting at you,” asked Juan.

“A bit, but mostly we're shooting at their a**,” replied Cowboy.
Cowboy was about to continue the lecture, but Juan thought he needed to focus on the shooting so he hung up.

Cowboy and the Rangers were fighting hit and run. And Juan was wise; Cowboy put the phone up and fired a few rounds and then moved locations.

EXT. BRAZORIA COUNTY AT OLD OCEAN

A similar encounter just outside Old Ocean found Cowboy, again, with a phone and in contact with Juan. Again, cowboy and his men were shooting and moving, shooting and moving, receiving fire and giving as well.

“Never be guided by arbitrariness in law which tends to have a good deal of influence on ignorant men who take pride in being clever. Let the tears of the poor find in you more compassion, but not more Justice then the underwear of the wealthy.

“No one has given me any underwear.”

“Who said anything about underwear?”

“I thought you just said…”

“If they are giving out gifts, they are up to something. I’m trying to tell you, try to discover the truth in all the promises and gifts of the rich man. As well as in the poor man sobs and entreaties. They want something as well.”

“I’ve got no quarrel with that.”
“When you can make a place for charity; do not bring the entire rigor of the law to bear on the offender. For the reputation of the harsh judge is not better then that of the compassionate one. If you happen to check the baseball bat of justice, let it be with the weight of a gift but of mercy. If you judge the case of one of your enemies, put your enemy be out of your mind and turn your thoughts to the truth of the question. Do not be blinded by your own passion in another's trial, for most of the time the mistakes you make can not be remedied and if you can it will be to the detriment of your good name and even your fortune. If a beautiful woman comes to you to plead for justice don’t look at here, and if she speaks don’t listen.”

“Don’t listen?”

“No, you can listen, just don’t listen and look at her at the same time.”

“I can do that easily, if Theresa is here.”

Slowly, consider the substance what she is asking.”

“If you must punish a man, do not abuse him with words for the pain a punishment is enough for the unfortunate man without the addition of malicious speech.

“Consider the culprit who falls under your jurisdiction as a fallen man and remember you too were under the jurisdiction of more than a few Mexican judges. Subject to the conditions of you
and my adventures and to the extent that you can without doing
injury to the opposing party show him compassion and clemency
because although all the attributes of God are equal in our view
mercy is more brilliant and splendid than Justice

“Where are you,” questioned Juan.

“I don't know but if you follow the road... if you follow
these rules, Juan, your days will be long your fame legendary.
You will marry your children as you wish and your grandchildren
will have property. And you’ll live in peace and harmony with
both sides of people, winners and losers alike. And in the final
moments of your life in a gentle ripe old-age the moment of your
death will come and the tender delicate hands of your great-
great-grandchildren who will close your eyes.”

At that moment Juan headed a heard a long thud and the
philosophizing ended. Cowboy had been shot in the in his Kevlar
vest. After a nervous moment, Cowboy laughed into the phone, he
coughed up some blood and remove the vest. The force the bullet
might have broken a rib or two but hadn't penetrated through the
vest. Cowboy laughed and laughed, “don't worry, friend, we're
winning.”

“What happened,” Juan asked.

“Oh, I dropped the phone,” Cowboy said, with absolutely no
mind toward more drama or a sequel.

“Good to hear it.
“Wish you were.”
“I have no desire to be there.”
“No you don't; you have an island to run.
“So, I'm busy and you're busy being shot at, so I'll let you go. Bye for now.”

EXT. MATAGORDA AT BAY CITY

Journalists arrived from the east coast of the former United States, one each from New York, Washington, Maryland, and Miami. They were in transit to Austin. Various letters and reports were placed on the boat for passage up the river to Austin. None were more important to Juan to one than the letter he sent his wife Teresa.

Dear Teresa
If they gave me a good beating at least I rode a nice moped. I'm here and have a good county to govern, it isn't an island, not technically. It cost me several beatings but you won't understand this now my dear but someday you will see the film. You should know that I've decided you should go around in a car and leave that delivery truck behind, beside because that's the way it should be and anything less any less than four wheels would be inappropriate. I believe the paved roads are safe now. You're the wife of a county judge and nobody's going to talk about you behind your back. I'm sending you cloth and some seashells I can pick up in my county. They are numerous here and just wash up on the shore. With the cloth make a skirt and blouse for our daughter. I'm in a spacious and well-stocked office now, but I imagine there will be several young men in this area, sons of wealthy farmers or fishermen. It might be difficult to choose one for her; there are many. Any would be lucky to have her as a wife. You've done a wonderful job raising her. I'm here with an idea to make money, because I've been told that all county officials have the same aspiration and I don't want to look out of place. The moped is fine but I think he's
retired, there is a 1973 Cadillac outside the office and I speculate it goes with my position wouldn't we be lucky, if I found another case with another hundred million pesos in it like before?
Your husband the County Judge,

Juan Seguin.

PS: to whomever it may concern, please forward this letter to Theresa Seguin with the seashells, so unique and interesting to most Texans. Don't forget the cloth intended for my daughter.

EXT. BRAZORIA COUNTY AT BAILEY'S PRAIRIE

That night sitting around the campfire, miles from the Mexicans, Cowboy again spoke with Juan, this time without interruption. Again, he sounded like a wise and well-intentioned person, there was no nonsense, except the praise and laughter at being shot in the vest, without the braggadocio. His actions were consistent with war and modern methods of attrition.

Juan listened to him over the phone, very attentively and attempted to commit it to his vast memory, like a man who intended to follow it and use it to bring the science of government to its full usefulness.

Cowboy spoke, “the first thing I recommend is that you keep clean and that you trim your nails. It might seem superfluous but you aren’t an eagle eating a snake.”

Do not go around Juan without a belt or negligent, No belt, regardless if it’s needed or not, is an indication of listless
spirit and you are a preeminent resident now. Negligence is a sign of shrewdness as was the case of Julius Caesar, and you know what happened to him.

“Determine with intelligence the worth of your position and if it allows you to hire employees let it be modest and useful rather than showy and splendid. And divide the jobs between the educated and the poor. I mean that if you are given to have six people, chose three educated and then three poor. And in that way you will have workers on both sides of the train tracks.

“Do not eat garlic or onions least their smell reveal your piney wood origins. Walk slowly, not a problem for you, but speak calmly and not in a way that makes it seems you are listening to yourself. For all your affectations Juan you must eat sparingly at midday and even less for supper. For the health of the entire body is forged in the workshop of the stomach. Be temperate in your drinking, remember that too much tequila can't keep either a secret or a promise. And while I was the only one watching you, now everyone will be watching you.

“Be careful Juan not to chew with your mouth full or belch in front of anyone not your close friend. You shouldn't sleep past one...

“We are about to sneak off; we know where are their campsites is and I imagine sleeping the hell we gave them today.
We’re all wide awake, with very few hallucinations, and we're going to give them a rude awakening,” concluded Cowboy.

“Be careful friend,” wished Juan.

Cowboy mounted Shovelhead and him fired up, “can you hear Shovelhead, who has perform like a trooper,” said Cowboy.

“Good luck,” said Juan.

“And when you sit on your new cycle, don't slouch over or lean too far or hold your legs out sticking out at an angle from the bike or ride so carelessly that it looks like you're on your moped. Ride your hog like a gentleman. Work real hard and never play the fool…”

There was a loss of cell signal as soon as Cowboy moved his soldiers.

As soon as the cell was dropped, Cowboy felt lonely for his old friend and as he rode to attack the Mexicans again and in the dark if it had been possible for him to revoke the friend’s mandate and take back his island he would have done so.

Cowboy made his man wear numbers on their shirts. One and two and nine, so he didn't have to speak to them like human beings. In fact, three and eight, their accounts were instrumental in telling this story.
EXT. FORT BEND COUNTY AT NEEDVILLE

After the 4 a.m. wakeup call for the sleeping Mexicans, Cowboy and his band of Ranger gorillas, no longer f***** up and needing a rest, found a ranch house to spend the rest the next day. The rancher's wife happened to notice Cowboy’s solemn mood in contrast to the ruckus humor of his messed up followers.

She fed them all breakfast outside on the porch, and quickly found places for their bedrolls. Cowboy, however, was brought into the kitchen and he sat at the table for his breakfast. She had the wherewithal to ask if he missed his friend, Juan. And she wondered if perhaps he had been killed in the fighting?

“Know he's fine safe and sound in Matagorda,” responded Cowboy. “I do feel his absence, but that's not the reason I feel so blah. You've made me feel so welcome, I don't really know how to repay you.”

“No need. No need at all, you boys are doing the Lord's work, as far as I'm concerned.”

As this moment four friendly, freshly showered and dolled up virgins invaded the kitchen and sat down clearly there to make eyes with the only movie star they’d ever seen.

Cowboy, became just as nervous as he had been that day picking up dog shit in Tawakoni, stopped talking and stared at his plate. He did slowly glance up at the girl’s faces, who
were in awe. Beside having never seen celebrity in life, they were all relatively insulated and had never seen an addict, at least not this closely. Cowboy couldn’t bring himself to say anything, but clearly he saw the girl’s wheels spinning.

The woman loaded their plates and they dug in, except one virgin, who ate suspiciously sparingly.

“No, school?” Cowboy had worked up his nerve.

“Not today. Not for a while I image.”

“Why not?” one of the virgins asked.

“Invasion Fleet’s in Houston; lots of fighting. I was going to let you girls sleep,” the ranch lady explained.

“We woke up,” a different virgin commented.

“We never just wake up in time for school,” the third virgin said.

“Well there’s no body in town.”

“Well, it’s about time,” that first virgin spoke again.

The forth virgin who wasn’t really eating, didn’t speak either, but just couldn’t take her eyes off of Cowboy.

“I heard motorcycles, loud like a bunch of them.”

“Tommy Ledbetter and some of his friends were sleeping out on the porch; they’ve been fighting over from Matagorda.”

“Tommy Ledbetter? I haven’t seen him since he left town on that bike,” that first virgin spoke and led two of the girls to look out, And sure enough there were six Cowboys out on the
porch. In direct sun, but sleeping soundly, having eaten now they were sleeping and would for two and a half days.

The three girls ran to the barn and to look at the fighting boy’s cycles, they were reckless, giggling and knocking about, but didn’t come close to waking up the soldiers.

The young girl that remained at the table was still fixated on Cowboy. She strangely reached out and touched Cowboy’s hand, which rested on the table. Cowboy looked up from his plate and their eyes met. Cowboy had never hesitated to smile throughout his the first film but now the sequel had arrived and he thought to hide his missing teeth.

The young girl whispered, “thank you,” and abruptly left to join the other girls who were calculating out on the porch, each secretly choosing themselves a sleeping cowboy. She’d already staked her claim and looked back at Cowboy for a very long time.

“Looks like you've got a fan,” the ranch lady said.

“A fan?”

“She's usually the once burned twice shy type.”

“Okay.”

“The other girls are a mess, but Gina, she's well... she doesn't have a mama. I’m sort of her mama.

“Okay I understand,” said Cowboy.

Cowboy felt a hole in the bottom of his left boot and he reached down to examine it. He knew his cowboy hat was sweat-
soaked and he suddenly felt his shirt was grungy and worn through in spots and he felt emaciated not just skinny.

The girls rushed back into the kitchen and finish their eggs and chattered about which sleeping Cowboy was their choice. It all seemed improper to Cowboy but he noticed the one girl, the one young lady, who didn't openly call dibs after one of his soldiers.

Once again Cowboy thanked the lady; and since his breakfast was finished, she took him up to a bedroom, not permitting anyone to disturb him.

There wasn’t a lock on the door and, for a cowboy, he was modest. He pulled the bed over in front of the bedroom door. He looked at himself in the mirror and he thought to himself, “freedom, justice, order, obedience, and resilience, but even so why am I so poor? And my teeth I miss my teeth. How embarrassing, a man of action nurturing his honor, eating well but now behind a closed door playing the hypocrite with a toothpick and no teeth to clean.”

He pulled the shades and tried to sleep. It was hot and he couldn't sleep. He took a look out the window that overlooked a beautiful vegetable garden. He open the window more than it was already open and he perceive two people working in the garden. He began to listen, “don't ask me to sing at Jewel, since the minute I saw him at the table. Wow, there's something wrong with
me. I can't sing; maybe he's going to leave when he wakes up. Anyway he seems a more light sleeper than the others and I sure don't want him to awake up. He might be up there listening to us and even if he's around tonight, he would not be interested in me.

"Don't worry about that, Gina." was the reply.

"You have a lovely voice. I know his type and he's the sort that will like you, who cares if he's been traveling, hunting and running for who-knows-how-long.

"You saw him, his condition is like some of the dogs we find people dump out here in the country.

"He'll be sleeping for a day or two."

"Oh, Aunt Jewel, it that isn't the point," responded Gina. "It's just that I wouldn't want to sing. My teacher says I can't hide my emotions when I sing. And besides it just too aggressive."

"Honey," said Jewel, "that's a compliment."

"He'll think I'm a frivolous young girl, impertinent."

"I already told him you're not frivolous."

"What?" exclaimed Gina.

"You touched his hand across the table. What was I supposed to say?"

"What did he say?" Gina wanted to know.

"He said 'I understand.'"
“I told him you were a very serious young lady.”

“Rhonda said he has a girlfriend, a political woman, tall and athletic. He's supposed to marry her.”

“Probably not, this girl's father is in the governor's mansion in Austin and he’s promised her to at least a hundred fellows, made them all Rangers.”

“And he promised his daughter...”

“If they would free us from the Mexican usurpers, but who knows maybe it's all propaganda. “And there they are an item propaganda?

“It's part of a comedy, he'd ever dream of winning a woman like that. The poster girl for the revolution and well you said he was like a dog needing rescue. The Mexican's have picked on him mercilessly.”

“And now they are regretting it.”

“Let's go inside; your beau has a reputation.”

After that Jewel and Gina disappeared into the television room.

Cowboy could hear a little music, vaguely and he imagine the title credits were playing. After a short way, giggles and then full-blown laughter downstairs. The three other girls had joined Jewel and Gina and in front of the television. There were we're reliving the first film and the strange story of his life as a revolutionary.
Cowboy was frozen, imagining the virgin niece of Jewel had been in love with him and that modesty forced her to keep her desire secret. “Why must every 17-year-old girl in Texas expect to interrupt my marriage with Salty? I'm solid as flint and she's my honey, only Salty is just so ugly now.

CUT TO: The front room.

We see three young girls watching a comedy and laughing hilariously. We see a teary young woman, with Aunt Jewel’s arm around her, trying to understand the bizarre propaganda.

Cowboy lay in bed, and while he’d not seen the film himself, he feared like nothing that she might surrender to the propaganda.

As a self-defense mechanism he lay there in the bed and resolved himself not to allow himself to be distracted. He would return to Tawakoni and Salty after the war. He decided to listen to the film and pulled the bed from its place blocking the door. It made a noise downstairs and Aunt Jewel smiled confidently as her vulnerable young niece.

Cowboy sat in the hallway at the top of the stairs listening to the film that mocked him mercilessly.

When the film concluded, he politely went back and slammed the bedroom door, to alert the females downstairs that he had not been listening, but had been asleep. It frightened the cat, who feared no insurgent, F**** up or not, and latched on
securely to Cowboys shin, thigh, stomach, chest and then permanently latched onto his face.

The women downstairs looked up at the top of the stairs and saw the poor Ranger struggling with all his might to remove the cat from his face. It was an unequal battle. Jewel stood up and was about to ascend the stairs to help Cowboy, but Cowboy shouted, "It's okay, I'm okay. It's just that she's playing, if I were in pain. I'd remove the cat. I don't want to hurt her. But the cat understanding little of karma; she snarled and dug in even deeper. At last, Cowboy tumbled head over heels down the stairs and the cat released him, ran out the open door. Gina fainted. Cowboy’s face was covered with scratches and his nose was half destroyed and he was very indignant but mostly embarrassed. Aloe was called for and Gina, by then recovered, with the hands of an angel put gell and bandages over his wounds. And as she did, in a low voice, she said, “all these misfortunes have occurred because of your friend’s rattlesnake juice, the tequila. It's part your nature and obstiinancy, but mostly it’s been the snake venom when your drinking Juan’s tequila and then smoke the meth you have a bad adventure. I totally understand the meth, you are a Ranger and it was invented to for that purpose and when you simply smoke, things turn well or at least bearable. You need to tell your friend, because I don't think he knows the harmful side effects, you’ve
nearly died of. If you don't stop drinking it you might win Salty, but if you continue I think you'll never enjoy her nakedness; they say she’s incredibly beautiful. At least that's the way I see it. I love you,” Gina admitted.

Gina of course, had no idea Salty had become easily mistaken for a meth w****. Jewel, a wise woman, however had heard the rumors.

To all of this Cowboy did not respond, except to heave a deep sigh and then feeling safe for the first time in days, he slept on the television couch, but not before he thanked Aunt Jewel for her kindness.

Not that Cowboy was entirely over the seemingly rabid cat, but because he vaguely understood that Jewel had whisper into his ear, something to the effect that if the ‘dog breeder’ didn’t work out and he wanted to marry Gina, that she would be fine with that.

While the idea of having Gina, in wedded bliss, would have invigorated most any man, Cowboy’s body was exhausted. He slept two entire days on that couch.

Aunt Jewel was saddened by the unfortunate combination of cat and staircase, but she didn't think that the lacerations and bruising was too high cost if Cowboy did in fact marry her niece.
She calculated the war would end quickly and Cowboy would be back in a week or two.

When he finally woke up, Cowboy vaguely remembered but was technically aware of Jewel’s promise and he promised to return for a visit when the war was over.

He laid there on the couch five more hours and then left with his followers, who had their pipes out and were working up their nerve. Cowboy was visibly less eager than before, preoccupied.

**EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY – BAY CITY**

Juan remained in his office for just under 48 hours, which shouldn't alarm anyone. The office had a toilet and a shower and a mini-kitchen. It was an aged building, but was from the age of government opulence, pre-calamity. To give you some idea about Juan’s once new situation, the office was built after 911, but before the EMP attack melted every circuit board in the United States. When he came to the office came out of the office into the street, it was clear from reports that the Mexican Army was in retreat and it looked like the Texans were free of them. And so a town councilman was there to greet Juan, the church bells rang and most of the inhabitants came out as well, and when they learned that he was left to liberate them, with a good deal of the pomp they brought him to the high school gymnasium for a
ridiculous ceremony they presented him with the keys to the county and accepted him as permanent county judge of Matagorda.

The plumpness and short stature of the new county judge didn't surprise anyone because warriors took all all shapes and sizes. Finally, they led him from the gym and brought him to the county judge's seat in the commissioners boardroom and the city mayor said to Juan, “it is and it was an Anglo custom of the bay, that the man who came to take control of the port is obliged to respond to a question that is somewhat intricate and complicated and from his response people can weigh and measure the intelligence of their new judge and either celebrate or mourn his arrival.”

On the back wall of the boardroom an artist had his mural interrupted; he was still there in the chamber, but he’d had put down his brush. On the wall was a half-completed painting of himself, clearly the image was seventy-five percent as wide as he was tall and the receding hairline was most obviously his. Juan was trying to make out the pencil scratch at the bottom still unpainted, yet he asked what was to be painted low on the wall.

The response from the artist was, “Sir, the day which you liberated the city and took possession of your office. That date will be written here and ‘the day on such and such a date on
such-and-such year, Dr. Juan Seguin took possession of the bay and may he enjoy it for many years."

"And who are you calling Dr. Juan Seguin," ask Juan.

"You, of course, responded the mayor, “for no other Seguin came to our bay except for the one sitting in your chair.”

"Well you should know for the painting," said Juan that I don't have a doctor in my name and I don't have anyone in my family with one either. I don't know a soul with one and I'm not sure even if any physician has one legally in his name nor does any school call me doctor. My name is Juan Seguin, plain and simple and my father's name and grandfather they were all Seguin's without any adornment. Now, I'll answer the best I can whether people go into morning or not."

At that moment, two men entered the room, one wearing the clothes of a peasant in the other dressed as a tailor for he carried a tape measure scissors and his in his hand and the tailor said, “Sir, I and this peasant have come before you because this corrupt man came to my shop yesterday (for I those present will excuse me have passed the tailor's examination), he placed a piece of cloth in my hands and asked, ‘sir, is there enough cloth here to make me a shirt.’ I examine the cloth and told him there was; he must have thought, which is what I thought and thought correctly, that I truly wanted to steal part of the cloth, basically this on his own wickedness and on the
bed reputation of other tailors and he told me to see if there was enough for two. I guessed at what he was thinking and I told him yes and still riding his earlier wicked intention, kept adding shirts and I kept adding yeses, until he reached five shirts and now he just came for them I gave him gave them to him and he refuses to pay me for the labor but demands that I pay him or returned his cloth.”

“Is all that true, brother,” asked Juan.

“Yes, Sir,” responded the peasant, “but you should have him show you the shirts.”

“Gladly, responded the tailor when taking his shirts out of the tiny briefcase he showed Juan five tiny shirts about the size to fit a puppet or a small monkey and he said, “here are the five shirts this corrupt man asked me for and I have no cloth leftover and I will even show the work to labor union inspectors.”

Everyone present laughed, not only at the multitude and small size of the shirts, but also at the idea the Mexican labor unions would become involved since most were running south for their lives.

“It seems to me that in this case there's no need for long delays for it can be judged quickly by the judgment of a sensible man and so my verdict is that the tailor should lose the cost of the labor, and the peasant his cloth, and the shirts
will go to the next puppeteer or monkey trainer that comes to the bay.”

The first case that was heard by Juan provoked laughter in the gallery and in the end the judges order was carried out.

The next to come before him were too old men. One carried a walking stick and the other, without a walking stick, said...

“Sir, days ago I let this good man ten gold Mexican coins as a kindness and a favor to him on the condition that he returned them to me whenever I ask for them. A good number of days went by without my asking for anything so that his repayment would not put him an even greater difficulties then when I lent him the money, but because it seemed to me that he was negligent about his debt I have asked him for repayment over and over again and not only does he not return the money but he denies the debt and can't remember me giving him the gold coins and if I did he's already repaid them to me. There's no witness to the loan or the repayment because he never repaid me. I would like you to put him under oath and make him swear what do you say to this.”

“Come and be sworn,” said Juan to the old man with the walking stick. The old man with the stick handed the stick to the other man his friend to hold while he stepped up to the judge to be sworn. He said it was true that the ten gold pieces had been loaned to him but that he had paid them back directly
into the hands of the other man who was forgetful and might not even realize he had been repaid. They'd been friends for decades and so the man didn't want to make an issue of it and felt that his friend simply forgot how and when he had returned the money and from now on he wouldn't ask for anything. The debtor took back his walking stick and bowed his head to Juan.

Juan lowered his head and placed the index finger of his right hand over his eyebrows and nose set thoughtfully for a moment, then he called to the man with the stick. He approach the bench and Juan said to him, “my good man give me that walking stick I need it.”

“Gladly,” responded the old man, “here it is, Sir,” and he placed the stick into Juan’s hand. Juan awarded the walking stick to the other man. The debtor protested and Juan cracked the stick open over the bench and ten gold coins fell out onto the floor. Everyone was stunned and felt very lucky to have the new judge.

“Pick them up, you've been repaid.”

They asked him how he deduced that the coins were inside the cane.

Juan responded that when he had seen the old man who was taking the oath give the walking stick to the to his adversary to hold, well he swore an oath and swore that he had really given him the money and then when did finished his oath asked
for his walking stick back again that it occurred to him that the money he was being asked for was inside the cane from which he can deduce that those who govern even if they are fools sometimes make lucky judgments.

Finally, with one old man mortified in the other repaid, they left and those present were amazed. The court reporter did didn't know what to record “fool” or “wise” man.

Then when this case was concluded, a woman entered the court dragging a man dressed in clothes of a rich cattle baron and as she came in she cried out, “Justice Senor, Justice! And if I don't find it I'm going to kick somebody's ass. Senor, this wicked man sees me in the middle of a field and used my body like a rag doll and he took what I had safeguarded for, well, about 22 years, defending it against Mexicans and Americans and even a Texan or three. I've always been like an oak kept myself pure, just so this man could come along and put his dirty hands on me...” “That's something we have to look into, whether or not his hands are clean now or not,” said Juan.

“Sir, I’m just a poor herder of cattle and this morning I left here to sell, you'll forgive me but people want to celebrate their new found freedom with some cookouts, four steers and why without the Mexican taxes and general good market, let them go for a rather a pretty peso and so when I was returning to my ranch, I met this woman and the political,
social and economic factors combined to persuade us to lie down together. I paid her enough, even extra, she wasn't satisfied I guess and so she dragged me in here. She says I forced her and she lies. This is the truth,"

Then the new judge asked him if he was carrying any money. He said he had about twenty thousand pesos in a leather bag. The judge ordered him to take it out and give it to her and he did. The overjoyed woman took it, making a thousand “thank you”s and then she left the courtroom. As soon as she left Juan said to the cowmen who was dejected and looked low, “my good man go after that woman and take the purse back from her even if she resists bring the purse back here and he did not say this to a fool or a deaf man because the cattleman ran out of the court like a bolt of lightning. Everyone was in suspense waiting to see how the case would end and in a little while the man and the woman returned, each holding and clutching the bag.

other more than fighting than buffet in more fighting than before she with her skirt tucked up with the purse thrust aside the man struggling to take it away from her, which is not possible because the woman defended it so fiercely and she cried out, “Thief! Thief!” and, “Look how shameless and cruel this man is, for in the middle of town, in the middle of the street. He's tried to take the purse you gave me.”

“Did he take it from you?” asked Juan.
“What do you mean take it? I'd let him take it over my dead body. Not me! My mother taught me to fight and every time he's about to wrestle it away from me I kick him in the balls, if you ask me he's a miserable weakling.”

“She's right, said the man, “and I'm too worn out to confess I've been wrestling with her for 30 minutes and she's not getting tired, in fact, she's becoming stronger.”

Then Juan said, “honorable woman show me the purse she gave it to him immediately and then Juan returned it to the man and said to the unforced woman, “What if, my dear sister, you had shown the same strength and courage or even half as much in defending your body as you showed in defending that purse? The strength of Superman would not have forced you! Go and good luck, but don't stop anywhere in this county or for 60 mile from here. I suggest you flea and try to catch the Mexican army, I understand they abandoned a vault of Mexican pesos, but left here with two trucks full of gold.”

She left dejected.

Juan said to the man, “My good man, go home with your money and if you don't want to lose it try to hold off your desire to lie with anyone.”
EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY - NIA'S TOWNE SQUARE RESTAURANT

The sequel accounts that Juan was taken from the courtroom to an eatery. It was country enough to smell like ham and not extremely clean. The table was set as soon as Juan Seguin entered the restaurant. He went into the restroom and solemnly washed his hands. Juan sat down at the head of the table because it was the only chair and only place. A person who later proved to be a medical doctor brought a chair and asked to join him. Juan agreed and the waitress brought another place setting. After a short wait the waitress brought a huge salad and it was nice and appeared fresh but Juan was worried that it's size indicated that it would be his entire meal he casually mentioned that he had not ordered the salad and the doctor interjected, “I ordered it for you, according to pre-calamity, research you'll live longer with this sort of meal. Don't worry about the expense the county has a fund for this sort of food and my pay. The Mexican county judge...

The man I saw leaving?”

“Yes.”

“He ate this way?”

The doctor had to say, “I can honestly say he tried. There aren't any healthy alternatives.”
"I don't feel like a rabbit, at this precise moment, I care more about everyone's health more than mine. So I’ll just have some of that wonderful ham I smell, please."

"I study day and night and I'm your doctor."

Juan sat and thought.

He said, "The principal thing you do is monitor people's intake? I ordered dishes removed that contain more fat or carbs than is allowed."

"Of course you don't allow them, nor spicy, nor greasy dishes."

"Of course not."

"So that means that the dish across the room, the shrimp over there, moderately seasoned. It seems you won't allow any that either?"

To which the physician responded, "The county judge will not eat them as long as I'm alive."

"But why?" asked Juan.

And the physician responded, "Because my mentor at Vernon College said once, ‘a full stomach is bad, but I stomach full of shrimp is very bad.’"

"If that's true," said Juan, "then which of the dishes on the menu which you refuse to let me see will do me the most good and the least harm. I’m dying of hunger and denying me good me
food no matter what the reason is means of taking my life instead of lengthening it."

"You are correct in your response of the position and so it is my opinion that you should not eat the pizza over there, because of the pepperoni sausages and hamburger, perhaps with anchovies only within anchovies. Anchovies I can allow."

And Juan said, "I was born and raised in Marion County and never learn to appreciate that. What about that big steak and baked potato with cheese and sour cream."

"By no means," said the physician, "may so wicked a thought be never brought up again. Nothing is worse then red meat and potatoes, which might activate your diabetes."

"I don't have diabetes."

"Yet! You don't have it yet. Tomorrow, I'll be around to diagnose that."

Hearing this, Juan guessed, "And almost everyone here has it?"

"As a matter of fact 'yes' everyone, some worse than others."

And in a solid voice Juan asked what his name was and where he studied.

To which the doctor said, "My name is senor Dr. Pedro Ricci de Aguerra, and I'm a native of Agua Dulce, which is south, our
state capital and west of Corpus Christi and I hold an associates degree from Vernon college.”

“Well you receive this education after the calamity and you're fully licensed to practice medicine?”

“And your fees are completely paid up?”

“And both the official and unofficial, yes.”

“And these ‘official and unofficial’ fees they are sufficient enough for you to practice in Texas?”

“Of course.”

“This isn’t Mexico any longer.”

“Perhaps but the science of nutrition hasn’t changed, not that I’m aware.”

“Well, Doctor Pedro Ricci de Aguerra, a native of Agua Dulce, south of the former state capital, west of Corpus Christi esteemed graduate of Vernon College. Get out of my sight, and if you don’t, I’ll beat you and every other doctor I can find here with this chair, at least the ignorant controlling ones. And if they bring charges against me I’ll clear myself by saying it was self-defense and I'm only killed the doctor who's basically been an executioner.”

And Juan turned to the waiters, “Now, all of you, bring me something to eat or otherwise take back your judgeship and take back the Mexicans as well. Amy office that doesn't give a man food to eat, isn't worth the trouble.”

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The physician became very agitated and was in a snit because his monopoly had ended and the government it was now apparently dry. He wanted to attack Juan but a car slid into the parking lot so fast that gravel flew up from the tires and pinged the glass on the door. The owner of the eatery greeted the man who was soon announced as a courier, The owner listened and then pointed to Juan.

“A courier has come from Austin, the governor, and must be carrying an important dispatch,” explain the doctor.

The courier came in perspiring and intimidated and after delivering the letter to him, Juan said, “Who is my secretary?”

In one of those present, the woman who boxed up all the papers, responded, “I am, sir, because I know how to read and write and because I'm an Argentinean.”

“With that distinction,” said Juan, “You could be secretary to the governor himself. Open the letter and see what it says. The young woman, a literate adventurer, sat and read what it said.

She said that it was a delicate political matter and needed to be read in private. Juan didn’t have to order the next two tables cleared, the occupants simple rose and left the café.

Juan looked at the physician, “I thought I told you to leave?” And the doctor left the cafe and then in a hushed quiet voice the secretary read the letter...
It is my pleasure to announce the successful invasion of Texas by a coalition of Angelo forces. Two armies have landed one at Texas city and the other at Port Isabel. The landings were not unopposed but were successful, as a result of the combined stratagem involving an elite group of newly-formed Texas Rangers and the two liberating fleets. Liberating armies are rapidly moving inland and the main body of the Mexican Army who are currently positioned approximately 100 miles Southwest of Houston and are being harassed as they moved from their original positions.

Juan gestured for her to stop. He sat and thought and then said, “we knew that right?”

“There's more, sir, this second paragraph is especially for you,” she said.

Juan Seguin:
It has come to my attention that my enemies and of the new Republic will launch a counter attack. It is advised that you prepare the Matagorda Bay Area for such an attack. I’ve also learning from reliable sources that four persons loyal to the Mexican regime have remained in Matagorda and plan to take your life. Keep your eyes open and allow only authorized individuals to enter the river. I'll be sure to come to your aid, if needed. If you encounter difficulty, act with your customary intelligence.

Christian Carbonnier, president of the new Republic of Texas
August 16th
1010 Colorado St., Austin.

Juan was astounded, as all the café was trying to guess the situation.

Juan said to the waitress what has to be done to get rid of the salad and bring me a bowl of shrimp, half a pizza, a small steak and a baked potato.

She smiled abundantly threw the salad in the trash and ran into the kitchen.
Juan turn to his secretary, “have ‘Doctor’ Rico arrested. He tried to kill me with salad and if that doesn’t stick then charge him with slow starvation.”

“It also seems to me,” said the secretary, “that you shouldn't eat anything from any of these places because it's been prepared by questionables and as the saying goes the way to stop a man's heart is through his stomach.

“I don't doubt it,” responded Juan, “I don't want to be poisoned, but then I must eat and if we have to be ready for these battles that are running we’ll need to be well fed because a full belly gives you courage and not the other way around. And if you will please write back to President Carbonnier in Austin and tell him that all his orders will be carried out and that neither this county nor the Colorado River will fall into the Mexican hands. Also write that the American journalist will be in Austin in a few days. I’ve entrusted a nice collection of seashells for you and my wife please have your wife separate her favorites and send the remainder to Teresa. Tell him to kiss and hug Salty for Cowboy and myself and ask her if she won't send the letter and the package to my wife Theresa Seguin and I'll be grateful. Cowboy is I'm not sure where but sure to be making things difficult for Big Mex. You can add whatever you think is needed.”
He turned to the waitress again, “Now clear this table and bring me something to eat and we’ll go find the spies and killers and who want to take my island.”

At this moment a low-level clerk came in and said, “there's a farmer here a petitioner who wants to talk to you about a matter he says it's very important.”

“What it's strange,” said Juan, “about these people is they're so foolish. They can't see that there's a war and a meal? And in the middle of all this they come with their petitions? By some chance aren't those of us who are leaders of men in the new government are of flesh and blood and we need time to eat? If my position lasts, I'll get this under control, but today I'm a humanitarian, so let him come in so long as he's not a spy or a killer.”

“He seemed simple enough,” respond to the clerk.

“There's nothing to fear,” said the secretary, “we're all here.”

The waitress brought the plates, pizza, steak and potato and bowl of shrimp.”

Juan waved for the farmer to approach and the farmer came in he was a man of decent parents but the first thing he said was, “Which of you is the County judge? Who else would it be responded one except the one who sitting in the chair at the table eating his supper?”

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“Then I'm sorry to interrupt.”

“Get on with it, please,” Juan said.

“Senor, I'm a farmer, a native of LaGrange, a town up the river a spot.

“Go on; I know of an old legend about cat houses in LaGrange but the film my cowboy friend showed me was terribly silly.”

“Well, senor, the fact is,” the farmer continued, “I’m married, and it was in a church too, and I have two sons who are students. I'm a widower, because my wife died or I should say a bad doctor killed her, well my oldest son who studying in Austin fell in love with a girl from our town, the daughter of a rich farmer. She's from a palsied family and had acne really bad as a child but he loves her madly. They’re to be married in two days and I'm stuck down here in only a small boat. Can you give me a pass to take the boat up the river to attend the wedding?”

“Is there anything else you want a good man,” asked Juan.

“I would like something else,” said the farmer, “except I don't dare ask but I'm worried that I’ll regret it if I don't ask.”

“Well get on with it after I eat I'll need to sleep and you are already putting me to sleep,” said Juan.
And so the farmer asked, “I would like you to give me 300,000 pesos, or maybe even 600,000, to help me... help my son... I mean to help him set up a house and maybe a small farm.”

“You want me to help a someone from LaGrange, help a son who is going to marry a scarred faced girl with palsy? Now, today in the middle of a war?”

“Yes, please.”

Juan took about ten seconds to contemplate, which seemed an eternity to the farmer.

“Well, make sure there isn't anything more you want,” said Juan and don't be shy or too embarrassed to say.

“Well that plate of shrimp certainly would ease my hunger,” and as soon as he said this Juan rose to his feet walked to retrieve a second chair, a metal chair. The farmer was afraid Juan would use it on him, but he gestured for the farmer to sit in the comfortable chair and they sat down to share the meal.

**EXT. COLORADO COUNTY**

His face bandaged, the badly wounded Cowboy, and not from grenades but by the claws of a cat was far too dejected and melancholy at the misfortunes inherent in Ranger mobility.

He had been in a room on the second floor of a motel in Colorado City for six hours, again unable to sleep, his men were probably not sleeping.
Cowboy was aware he was in the middle of a break in a long-running battle with the rectum of the Mexican army. Not to discount the our Ranger’s valiant actions, but any Mexican soldier with any brains were fighting in Brazil. He’d refilled their pipes and had given them the opportunity to fight as they wished. He thought a little autonomy would make them fell better about themselves. He only hoped they remembered to fire and then move. If they forgot to move, to run, Cowboy thought he might regret it.

But, aside from that, Cowboy was in the hotel room, thinking about his recent misfortunes (That Darn Cat) and Aunt Jewel’s offer, which he assumed was really Gina’s offer. He heard someone opening the door of his room with a key and then he imagined it was the enamored virgin was coming to reward his bravery and put him in a situation where he had he would probably fall short of the faith he was obliged to keep with his girl Darsy of Tawakoni.

“Yes,” he said in a voice that could be heard. Believing what he had just invited in a very nice beauty, Aunt Jewel’s young niece. “Salty will not stop me from loving you. You may not be a Maxim cover girl, but if you want to be mine, I will be yours.”

At the conclusion of these words and the opening of the door, Cowboy stood on his bed wrapped from head to toe in his
white cotton bedspread, nothing underneath, and a new black cowboy hat on his head. The hat was something he took off a dead Mexican Soldier and his face and mustache were still bandaged. His face on account of the scratches, his mustache so that it would not droop or fall. And in his garb, he seemed the most extraordinary ghost that anyone could imagine.

He fixed his eyes on the door and where he expected to see the overwhelmed and lovesick Gina coming in, he saw instead a most reverend grandmother Rodriguez, nearly 80 and wearing a dress so long and intricate that it covered her from head to foot. In her left hand she carried a tiny LED Lantern and with her right hand she hide her face so that the light would not shine in her eyes which were covered by large spectacles. She stepped very softly and moved her feet very quietly Cowboy look down at her from his elevated position and when he saw her manner of dress and noticed her silence, he thought, what a witch, or spy, that’s had come in that attire to commit some villainy against him. He began to think he was really an idiot for expecting Gina. He’s left his weapons more than ten feet away and the terrifying vision continue to approach and when he when she reach the middle of the room, she raised her eyes and saw with what urgency Cowboy was shivering and fried and if he was fearful at the sight of her figure.
She was terrified and seeing his terror, because this as soon as she saw him so and so white in the bedspread and with the bandages that disfigured him, she scream saying, “Jesus what is this?” And she was so startled that she dropped the lantern and finding herself in the dark she turned to leave and on her fear she tripped on her skirt and fell with a terrible noise.

A fearful Cowboy begin to say, “I don't know who you are; tell me. If you are some tormented ghost in the night gown I'll do my best to help.”

The dumbfounded cougar, who heard cowboy in a condition similar to her fright, responded “Answer Cowboy, if you're indeed Cowboy. I am no ghost as you might have thought but Donna Rodriguez, the grandmother of the baroness and I've come to ask you for an unusual favor.”

“Tell me ma’am,” said Cowboy, “by any chance have you come to act as a go-between? For I must tell you that I'm not available to anyone, thanks to the peerless beauty of my fiance Salada de Tawakoni. In short, I say that if you want to fix your light, or maybe lets step out into the moonlight, and we can visit.”

“I'm not anyone's messenger service,” said the grandmother, “you don't know me very well indeed, I’ve not yet reached so advanced an age that I can resort to such foolishness I still have my soul in my body and my and all my teeth, but wait for
wait for me a moment and I'll put the batteries back in the light and I’ll return in an instant. I'll tell you of my cares as if you were the one to remedy all the cares in the world,” she scoffed.

And without waiting for a reply she left the room where Cowboy remained calm and at peace. He waiting for her but then he had a thousand thoughts regarding this new adventure and it seemed to him that he had behaved badly and shown a Dinklage’s judgment by breaking the exclusivity he had promised his Salty. And Cowboy said to himself, “who knows if this solitude this war, this silence, this sleepless night at my lustful young age, will awaken my desires and cause me to fall where I never stumble? In cases like this it is better to flee and wait for battles” and saying this he leapt off of bed, ran to his weapons in the corner and took up a Beretta, he intended to close the door and not allow her to re-enter, but as he was about to close it, she returned, light hand and when she saw Cowboy more closely wrapped in the bedspread with his bandages and his Beretta, she became afraid again took two steps backward and said, “I don’t take it is a good that you've gotten out of bed and are carrying a pistol. That looks like a nice pistol, a Beretta, and Mexican army issued. Is my safety assured, Sir?”
“I could ask you the same thing,” responded Cowboy, “and so I asked if I shall be safe from assault in violation from whom or to whom.

“Mr. Ranger,” responded the cougar front from you and to you responded Cowboy for I'm not marble and you're not bronze and it's not ten in the morning, but two at night, or even a little later. I imagine and this is a hotel room who’s seen hundreds of conceptions over the ages. The don't work but give me your hand and we'll agreed to be put the war aside at least until sun rise, and having said this she kissed him and held it and he did the same with the same serious intent.

Here the author, the biographer, received a healthy amount of h*** for his version of the story. The writer has to offer the better of his two computers if they didn’t then shake hands and cowboy got into his bed and the cougar Rodriguez sat in the chair at some distance from the bed not removing her spectacles or anything else and he swears publicly they sat down and spoke by electric lantern.

Cowboy concealed and hid himself completely, only leaving his face sticking out of the sheets and when the two had recorded their composure the first to break the silence was Cowboy saying, “Now you can reveal and disclose all that is troubling you; I'll do what I can to help whatever is ailing you.”
“I appreciate that I knew that would be your response being a Ranger mobile. The fact is that although you see me now sitting here in South Texas and in the dress of an exhausted grandmother in decline, I'm a native of North Texas the panhandle my family goes way back but I left as I was in impetuous teenager and came to a suburb of Dallas where I made quilts and sold them at various street fairs and gatherings there isn't anyone who can quilt as well as I can. Well, a man fell in love with me, some more advanced in years. He was imposing and a former bulldogger and above all he had a government job. We were married in a church and had a daughter which is the beginning of my bad luck, not there was anything wrong with her, but my husband died. He was in a car accident and then let go by the state. I have no doubt that his loss of that check is what caused his death. I was left a helpless widow with only quilting profits to live. Well, fast forward to today, this is about my granddaughter who is now a young woman living with her aunt who is without a mother. Her mother was murdered, by a Mexican soldier, when she was only a baby not 15 years ago. The baroness offered that the young orphan could come live on the ranch, but she learned to hate the baroness. She ran away and refused to return. She sings like a green jay and urban dances like someone with Tourette's and country dances like a spinning top, she reads and writes like a librarian and counts
like a Excel and the Edwards Aquifer isn't any more pure than her heart. If I remember correctly she must be sixteen and five months and a few days old give or take a few.

"I know she can make some sick ass cobbler; she cooked peach cobbler for us."

"You know my granddaughter?"

"Oh, I don't know. I was just guessing?"

"But how you know she can make cobbler?"

"I just figured she was passionate like you, but tell me about her. I'm working as a Ranger to impress the father of a young woman, but that doesn't mean I'm not curious."

Yes, all the boys your age are curious. In short, the son of a very rich farmer who lived in the same town as her other Aunt, he fell in love with her. I don't know how it happened, but he promised to be her husband. He deceived my granddaughter and now he refuses to keep his word even though the baron knows about it and I've complained to him several times, he doesn't want to get involved. The baron is friends with the boy's father, business partners and to complicate things this kid has run off to join the Mexican Army and so sir I would like you to take responsibility for writing this wrong, either by persuasion or by force, please keep in mind that she's an orphan. I'll take care of her and the baby, but she refuses to come to the ranch and her Aunt has her hands full with three rowdy hormonal
daughters of our own. They are nice but can't hold a candle to Gina, my Gina has more beauty than vanity and more spirit than modesty men want to tackle and besides she's very healthy. She's the breath of an angel."

"Gina? I might have run across such a girl. It seems familiar to me."

"Now can you please explain what is wrong with life at the ranch and with my with the baroness, as you and Juan bother know she's a lovely lady, but Gina in the time she lived there felt like she was being pawned off by the baroness to every son who had a business relationship with the with the baron. She felt for sale and she told the baron she wasn't a prize heifer and she threw a plate at him but then she fell for the tricks of one of these boys over here.

"Maybe its that. Maybe she just hates Mexicans, I mean one killed her mother."

"Well, maybe she didn't like the baron or and baroness allegiance to Mexico. She's confused." "Well she's not too confused," As soon as Cowboy said this a stream of tracer bullets streamed into the motel room.

Cowboy rolled out of the bed and onto the floor.

The electric lantern and Grandma Rodriguez were shattered and pierced the gunfire.
As the gunfire moved as directed to other motel rooms, this allowed Cowboy to gather his vest and weapons and escape. Mexican artillery was brought to bear on the hotel and lasted half an hour and then Mexicans left.

Cowboy was left alone groaning over yet another misfortune. Sorrowful and defeated and confused he stood over the dead cougar’s body. He asked himself, “What would Juan have to say about this?”

**EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT MATAGORDA**

After the business of the president’s letter was concluded, the doctor came back into the café. Juan had changed his mind about having him arrested. Physician and patient/victim came to an agreement and they prepared to go on patrol and for the first time in his life someone placed a Kevlar vest over Juan, and of course it covered about one third of his girth, but the sentiment was genuine, and he accepted it and the responsibilities that went with it. But to the trained observer, not the comedian who wrote the first volume, he appeared hesitant and reluctant. Four brand new and armed county commissioners all fisherman, the secretary, the clerk the new bailiff and an army of busybodies made up a medium sized patrol. Juan was in the middle of the group walking the streets of Matagorda and it was a sight to see and when they were gone down
a few streets they heard a dispute. They speculated it was a Mexican invasion and many hurried to the spot, a few conveniently become separated from the group.

But they only found two men fighting. Seeing armed men approach, the men stood still and one of them said, “Here over here in the name of Texas and the new president. How can you allow people to be robbed in the middle of town and the rest assaulted in the middle of the street?”

“Calm down, Sir,” said Juan and tell me the reason for this fighting for I am the new county judge sent here by the new President.

The other man said, “Judge, sir, your highness, your eminence. I'll tell you as briefly as I can; you should know that this gentleman has just won more than a million pesos in the gameroom across the way. God knows how I happened to be present and going against the dictates of my church. I observed more than one doubtful play, in his favour; he left the game with his winnings and though I expected him to give me at least a hundred-thousand as the price for my silence, which is customary in Mexico.”

“This isn’t Mexico,” Juan said. IT was ignored.

“And it’s important for my children and because it's my job.

“So you work for the owner of the establishment.”
“Not exactly, but I have the ability to determine if the gambling has been done correctly or badly, he's just put the money in his pocket and left. I came after him indignant but it was hidden with a few kind words; I politely asked him to give me only two-hundred-thousand pesos for he knows the Mexican schools aren’t free and without a trade and eight children, I have no money and no future prospects.”

“And this cheat didn't want to give you any money?”

“It’s my wife and our anniversary. I offered him more than four-thousand pesos and you can see how shameless he is and how little conscience he has if you would come along after me after I’d already made it out of the building.

So, you were fighting him here in the middle of…” Juan looked around for a street sign, Highway 60?”

I'd have won if you hadn’t come and interrupted.

And you have made him give up his winnings and taught him a lesson?”

“What do you say to this one,” the doctor asked.

But the other man responded, that what his adversary had said was true; he had not wanted to give him more than four-thousand pesos, because he had given him that amount many times and those who expect a tip have to be well-mannered and take what is given to them whether small or not. They shouldn’t
demand tribute from the winners unless they know for certain that they are cheats and their winnings are ill-gotten and as a sign that he was an honest man and not a thief as the other man said there was no better proof than he is not wanting to give him anything because cheats always have to pay tribute to the onlookers who know them.”

“What ought to be done is this,” respond Juan, “you the winner good, bad or indifferent. You must give your opponent a hundred-thousand pesos and another fifty-thousand each to the men behind me, the Mexicans have had them locked up and we just released from them from jail and your wife will have to be content with affection. Maybe I’m doing you a favor.”

Juan turned to the extorter, “You, who have no money and no real work and are living in a casino extorting money from gamers, and are no longer needed on this island take the hundred pesos and leave the island tomorrow. You you're banished for ten years and if you come back, I'll hang you!”

The extorter was about to protest. He might have taken it from a Mexican, but Juan, though his skin was brown, was clearly a Texan.

“No a word, settle it and walk away.”

One man paid and the other received and left the island. The winner went home to his wife.
Juan remained in the street saying, “Either I’m mistaken or I’m going to close down these gambling houses because it seems clear to me that they’re very harmful.”

“You won’t be able to close down this one at least,” said the clerk, “It’s owned by the very important a very important Mexican and it brings money into the county; we routinely ticket and fine the winners. Everything is against the law and it’s not too difficult to profit when you are the government.”

“Still,” Juan insisted.

“You can show your power against dog breeders or auto mechanics or some other easy prey and of less distinction and besides the notorious cheats don’t dare to use their tricks in this distinguished casino, they typically go to the casinos where they keep the poor fellow half the night and skin him alive.

“That said,” said Juan, “I know there’s a lot to say about …”

And at that moment the Anglos how ran at the idea of a Mexican landing found the group again and they were holding a young man and the lost posse member said, “Judge this lad was coming toward us and as soon as he saw we were the law, he turns his back and begin to run like a deer. It’s a sign that he must be a criminal. I went after him and if he hadn’t tripped and fallen. I never would have caught him.”
“Why are you running away,” asked Juan.

To which the young man responded, “Senor, to avoid answering all the questions, that these Anglos ask since the goings-on in Houston and Brownsville.”

“What's your trade?”

“A jewelry maker.”

“And what do you make?

“The tips of bullets.”

“Are you being funny with me or are you proud of being a joker? Fine; where are you going now”

Senor, to take in the air.

“Where do you take the air on this island?”

“Wherever it blows.”

“Good, your answers are right on the point. You're a clever boy, but you should know that I'm I'm the air and I'm I'm blowing at your back and sending you to the jail. Everything is against the law including running and wisecracking with officials. Take him away to sleep in jail.”

“No,” cried the young man, “you can't make me sleep in jail.”

“And why can't I make you sleep in jail?” responded Juan, “don't I now have the power to arrest you and let you go wherever I want to?”
“No matter how much power you have,” said the young man, “it won't make me sleep in jail.”

“You think so,” replied Juan, “take him right now to jail where he'll learn some science, and with biology you'll sleep.”

“All this is laughable,” said the young man, “the fact is that every soldier alive in Texas today won't make me sleep in jail.”

“Tell me who the devil,” said Juan, “do you who will take you out and remove the handcuffs I plan to put on you?”

“Judge,” the young man responded with great claim, “let's use our reason and come to the point suppose you order me to put on chains and taken to jail and placed in a cell even so I wouldn't if I don't want to sleep and I’ll stay awake the whole night and all your power is not enough to make me sleep if I don't want to?”

“Good point,” said Juan, “you may go on your way, go home and sleep therefore I don't want to rob you of that sleep. You're so easily easy to give up but I won't run from anyone else on this island. I might want to take the joke out of your hide.”

The young man left and the county judge and his new followers continued on patrol and in a little while to commissioners came along holding a man and they said, “Sir this person who looks like a man isn't one, she's a woman and not an
ugly one. She's dressed in men's clothes however. They raised two or three LED lights up to her face and in the light they saw the face of the young woman, who seem to be 16 years old or probably a little older, with her hair put up in a baseball cap of red and blue and they pulled off the cab and her hair fell like a spilt glass of whiskey. They looked at her from head to toe and saw that she was wearing argyle socks and men shoes, men's cut blue jeans and a Van Heusen button down shirt; on her belt she wore a lady size Forbath knife about 2/3 of size of most men's knives.

In short, she didn’t have to be in shorts for everyone to know it was a girl and think she was lovely. But no one recognized her and the men in the squad couldn't imagine why she might be there in the middle of the night. Everyone inside at that hour and she was out. She might have been a spy but it didn’t occur to them that she might be. Far too pretty for that work.

Juan was amazed at the girl’s beauty and he asked her who she was, why she was there, where she was going and what had moved her to dress in these closed.

Her eyes lowered and modesty and shame responded, “I can't sir say publicly what it has been so important for me to keep secret, but I want it want understood that I'm not a spy or a disloyal person, but I am an unlucky girl forced by my curiosity...
out of the house and into these clothes. Juan, becoming a very
wise man, ordered everyone to walk away a bit and when they were
alone the virgin said that her mother had died 6 years ago and
that her father was so afraid of the Mexicans that his daughter
that should be educated in her home. Home-schooled and
instructed in religion but totally blocked from society, she had
learned that the Mexican Army had left and the people the people
at Matagorda were again having fishing tournaments, football
games, and skateboarding. She had persuaded her brother to take
her out to see the town they were walking around the town that
night when they encountered a patrol of citizens, the brother
and sister had run, but she had did tripped and fell and as she
explained other citizens brought a young man to Juan.

Juan remembered the wisea** brother and it seemed to
confirm the girl's story, the girl wept and didn't want to stop.

Juan tried his best to comfort her with words, but nothing
worked until the clerk, a young man himself, was moved by her
beauty and moved over to ask if there was anything he could do
to remedy her tears. She stopped crying and the clerk promised
to persuade her father that now that the Mexicans were really
gone society were safe and he should allow him to escort her
around town in the daylight.

"Nothing's been lost here," ruled the judge, "Lets go and
we'll leave you at your father's house maybe he won't have to
learn about this, and from now on don't be so childish or eager to see the world at night. If you want to defy your father do so in the bright daylight.”

She looked at Juan like a pillar of wisdom.

“That's all I have to say,” Juan disappointed her with not an ounce more of advise.

The girl thanked the county judge, and commissioners as well. When they reach the girl’s home they entered and it appeared that they might have escaped detection.

The clerk’s heart had been pierced and Juan teased him that he’d be marrying them inside of a year. Juan said for the clerk to remember the date and that if he could arrange to marry the girl inside of a year, the judge would waive the fees. And in turn, if he didn't get it done in a year's time, normal fees would occur and double every year he hesitated. The clerk was further motivated and went the next day to ask the girl's father for permission to show the girl her own tiny beach town.

And Juan was so impressed by his clerk’s skill, he was moved to help and offered the county’s 1973 Cadillac so they wouldn't have to walk.

Juan thought about his own daughter and that he might have wed her to this clerk. But there were bigger fish to fry, there had to be another a successful young man somewhere. What son of
a successful man would turn down the hand of the county judge's
daughter?

EXT. MARION COUNTY AT PINE HARBOR

The sequel tells us that a courier was very ambitious, and leaving Austin he rapidly travel to Juan’s hometown in East Texas. Before reaching Jefferson City, he saw a number of women washing clothes in a lake surrounded by Pines and he asked them if they could tell him if a woman named Theresa Seguin, the wife of Juan Seguin, who was a friend of the Vaquero de Tejas lived near the lake and when he asked a girl, who was washing, rose to her feet and said, “Theresa Seguin is my mother and Juan is my father and that Texas Ranger is our friend.”

“Then come along girl,” said the courier and take me to your mother because I have a letter and a present for her from your father.

“I'll do that gladly, Sire,” respond to the girl, who was called Brandeisica and only 14 years old. And leaving the clothes she was washing with a friend and without even saying “goodbye” or putting on her shoes (she was barefoot) and she jumped in the front seat of the courier’s automobile and said, “Come on; our house is out on Old 736 and my mother is there. She's been sad because with the war starting up again and not hearing from Dad.”
“I'm bringing her news, very good news,” said the courier that she'd give us a somersault for it. They drove until she said to stop, jumping out, running, and leaping the girl finally reached the door to the house. She called to her mother come out, “Mom come out. Come out because a gentleman is here with a letter and some sort of a present from dad.”

At her call, Teresa came out holding a large rattlesnake by the neck as if she had just been milking it. She was wearing a dun-colored shirts so short it's looked as if it had been cut to shame her a blouse that was also done colored she was not very old though, she could not have been 40. She was strong and vigorous and this healthy as a horse. She said, “what's this girl? Who's this man?”

“A courier of the new president man,” Juan’s daughter explained.

And hearing this he left his car and humbly approached Teresa and snake, saying, “You are the wife of Juan the new county judge of Matagorda County?”

“Oh, I didn't know about all that,” responded Teresa. “I don't know. I don't have anything to do with that place. I’m a poor distiller of tequila here, but I am the wife of Juan Seguin.”

“Ma’am,” the man responded, “You're worthy and the wife of the highest political office holder in the county. Here is a
letter and a package. This package is for you and he immediately took from his pocket a rectangular jewelry box and handed it to her. Teresa opened it and of course her eyes lit up the. The daughter took a string of the shells with gold beads and put it around her mother's neck, saying, "Oh my, Cowboy has something to do with this; he must have given my father the island he always promised."

"This letter, said the courier, "is from the president's wife and the first lady of the new Republic. She sent me to bring you her best wishes and congratulations."

"Daughter, please read it to me," asked Teresa, "I can read of course but I'm holding the snake. Mom put up the snake," said Brandeisica, "I'll open it and read it."

And so the courier and Theresa listen to the girl read the letter.

My new friend, Teresa:
The qualities of your husband's bravery, which moved me to write you and deliver this gift to you the seashells were collected on the shore of the county where he's been appointed county judge. The gold beads decorating them are contraband confiscated from Mexican officials fleeing the Austin City limits. I've been told that Juan governs in grand style which makes my husband, very happy and of course the entire state. The new Republic sends you their thanks. My husband, President Carbonnier, said he was not deceived when he chose Juan as his representative and that finding good men is hasn't been easy.

I'm sending you this necklace in the hopes we can soon meet each other, but who knows when that will be. I hope to recognize you wearing this unique creation. Remember me to your daughter. I have a fifteen-year-old son, who has a Boston Terrier. You two must have the only pair of purebred Bostons in the new nation.
Maybe we should have a litter? I’ll arrange it if you agree. I remember when nearly everyone had a Boston and it seems now everyone has a God forsaken Chihuahua. I say now let’s fight back; a legal litter of well publicized Boston Terrier puppies might change a lot in the minds.

In the meantime, I understand that there are fat pecans in your area. Please send me about a pound of two; I’ll love to make my husband a pie.”

Write me a letter information me how you are and your family are and when you’ll be traveling to Matagorda.

Your friend who loves you,
The First Lady, Sunny Carbonnier

“Oh,” said Teresa, when she heard the letter, “What a good and straight-forward humble lady. Nothing like the self-righteous women at this lake, who go to church with all the airs of the Mexican aristocracy and seem to look down on the women that work.”

“Want what about Rebel,” Brandeisica said, “I don’t think he would mind a little work.”

“We’ll ask the First Lady to send a photo of the bitch.”

“No, mom. This is an honor. How could it possibly be a bad match? She said her Boston was pure bred and Rebel is beautiful. How can he have ugly puppies? How can you ask for a photo?”

“You think it would be an insult.”

“Yes, you must simply agree.”

“Okay, you are a sensible girl. I’ll say that Rebel agrees.”

“And as far as pecans?”
“I'll send her a bushel will that fit in that car? And now, Brandeisica, look after this gentleman have junior change the oil in his car and you let and you get some eggs and cut some bacon off the slab in the icebox feed him like a prince, he deserves it for he's brought good news. And in the meantime I'll go out and tell the news about our luck, the neighbors, the reverend minister, the barber. They will tell everyone in Jefferson, all of our your father's and cowboys friends and enemies.”

“I will, mother,” responded Brandeisica, “but will you give me half the necklace to wear?”

“It's all for you, dear,” responded Teresa, “but let me wear it around my neck for a day or two., please. It makes me feel so rich.

The courier spoke, “You're all so... genuine.”

And in the sequel, here at this scene, the actors performed marvelously. Had the academy still existed, it would have been a recognized performance. The actors playing the mother and daughter simply stared at the courier for just the appropriate time. They didn’t understand genuine or whether it was an insult. Why wouldn’t they be genuine? No one had every said they weren’t and the actors nailed it.

It was an awkward moment for the courier, but he cruised through it by adding, “Also, you'll also want to know I brought
some material, it’s still in the car, a bolt of fine cloth for you to make your daughter dress.

“Father really didn't!” respond Brandeisica, but it was no joke.

She put up the plastic snake, and left the house wearing her carrying the letter and wearing the necklace. She made the rounds everyone north of the lake and brought back two hours later the minister, the Barber and two neighbors all who wanted to meet the courier and in very bad taste they interrogated him.

Their jaws dropped as the courier told them without reservation that Juan was the county administrator and judge of a county that unfortunately didn't produce pecans but did have a population over 10,000. The Courier said Cowboy was chasing the Mexican Army from Matagorda. The enemy had moved towards Houston, but when the reinforcement of the port seemed unlikely, or impossible, they then turned west at Rosenberg.

Cowboy had last reported from Columbus and was harassing the retreating Mexican Army. It was divulged that the Mexican Army had destroyed worst or all of the state’s cell towers to deny their use to the rebels.

Brandy and her mother made plans to make one special dress and to buy other new dresses and in two weeks travel to the coast to join Juan.
The minister had asked once or twice before, but he couldn't resist another try. He asked the courier one last time, "So you still say that Juan is running the county and an important, strategic, location?"

"Of course."

"And the new first lady sent Teresa presents and writes letters to her?"

"Yes."

"And Cowboy is firing live rounds at a retreating Mexican Army are you sure you aren't a spy?"

The courier said, "I am a true Emissary of the president of the new Republic of Texas. Juan Seguin, owner of this house, is a real county judge and the first lady gave me a letter, jewelry and a bolt of cloth for me to bring here. I can testify that Cowboy has been and is certainly a war hero."

The minister offered to write letters to send back with the courier to Austin, but Teresa didn't want others involved in their family's business.

Brandeisica wrote the first lady.

EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT BAY CITY

The following morning, Juan's breakfast, by order of the doctor, consisted of a piece of toast in a small amount of preserves and four swallows of orange juice, which Juan traded
for eggs and bacon the minute the doctor stepped out. He traded with the fellow who wanted the trash pickup contract, but ended up eating the toast and drinking the juice as well. This happened when the fellow after waking up and driving into town to eat at the cafe, suddenly learned he wasn’t really all that hungry after all.

Juan thought it was pitiful that the doctor tried to persuade prescribe such small amounts of such delicate foods when men needed to enliven their wits, something that was necessary in times of war and authority. In spite of the doctor’s sophistry, Juan refused such hunger but he secretly cursed his political position. He was perfectly able to take care of it but he seriously hated having to finagle his meals.”

Juan began each day with an unholy alliance of sorts, and after a time men jostled with each other who would trade with him. He then looked at the empty jail and offended the other commissioners who wanted it filled as soon as possible, so it would create revenue, like it had forever. Juan was vehemently opposed to jails for profit and refused to go back to a government where everything was some violation of the law. The other commissioners wanted to lock a man up for ninety-days, at his wife’s expense, because he had taken a half-eaten chicken out of a trash can and they wanted to give a man ten-days for riding a bicycle at night without lights.
Juan lampoon them for their greed and probably made at least two enemies.

The secretary and others admired Juan’s principled response and lied to the doctor that Juan had gone home to rest. In reality, he had escaped to the cafe to peruse the menu at ease. The waitresses also were perfectly willing to lie for Juan. So it happened that the county judge, having eaten that day in defiance of all the rules and aphorisms of the doctor, stood up from the table when a courier came in, with the letter from Cowboy. Juan asked the secretary to read it out loud if it wasn't private.

Dear friend, Juan:

I'm sorry the Mexicans have toppled every cell tower I've come across this last week. How about a letter? When I expected to hear news of your negligence and impertinence, Juan my friend, I've heard about your intelligence for which I gave special credit to our travels which have turned a poor dunce head into a wise man. They tell me that you govern as if you were a man and that you are a man, as if you were a shy Italian Greyhound. So, I want you to be aware, Juan, that many times it is proper and necessary because of the authority of your position, you might need to toss out some of your natural humility. Be ready to contravene this humility because the admirable qualities in the person who hold high office aren't to be a wet mop. To confront the demands of office, you might need to crack some skulls, so be prepared to put your timid and calm self aside.

If required dress uniformly, for a neatly decorated stick doesn't seem to be a stick at all; I'm not saying dress like a soldier, but I'm seeing many county judges as I travel, dressed in fatigues. Regardless, look authoritatively clean and neat.

I realize your position has been awarded for life, but it's always good to keep the popular support to win the goodwill of the people, waiters, farmers, fishermen. You you must do two things: one is to be civil to everyone, although this is something I have already told you, and two is to attempt let the farmers and fishermen alone without harassment. They provide
people with the necessities of life. Only the free market will provide the best quality at the lowest price. Hunger and need is minimized with low prices. And do nothing to cause farmer and fishermen to raise their price. In fact, do nothing to cause anyone to raise their prices. The Mexicans allowed the unproductive to vote away from the productive any wealth and initiative. This never has worked in the history of man and is a guaranteed way to ruin industry, both meanings of the word.

Do not issue any ordinances and if you do, try to make sure they are needed and above all the old ones that's make everything illegal should not be enforced. Ordinances that are enforced simply because they exist will make you a tyrant as much of one as the commissioners who wrote them decades ago before the Mexicans. And don’t be tempted to do it slowly, frogs don’t leave a slowly boiled pot, but a human will shot you for it if significantly motivated.

Laws eat productivity and erode over time our standard of living. It’s low already, the cataclysm and then by the Mexican socialist. Don't add to our misery or postpone prosperity if it wants to come around.

Be a father to virtues and a stepfather to vices; do not always be severe or always mild but choose the middle way between these two extremes. This would be wise. Visit the jail, the slaughterhouses and the marketplaces for your presence will be felt there. It consoles the prisoners, frightens the butcher who might corrected his scales. And coming around will frighten the men of the market as well into good behavior.

Don't show yourself to be a greedy man, a womanizer, or a glutton, Juan, because people will learn how to best deal with your specific inclinations that is where to attack you.

Write to the president and the first lady and show them that you are grateful, for ingratitude is the daughter of pride and one of the greatest mistakes we know well. The politician who is grateful to those who have given him office, indicates that he will also be generous if the tables are ever turned.

I understand the first lady has dispatched a messenger with the cloth and seashells to your wife, Teresa. I expect you will get a reply soon because travel up and down the Colorado is free and unimpeded at the moment. I've been somewhat indisposed by a certain clawing that happened at the expense of my nose but it was nothing for your tequila treated far worse than this cat.

Tell me if the secretary, clerk, doctor and other commissioners or others have anything to do with the Mexicans. Suspect everyone until you hear differently and tell me about everything that happens to you for the distance is not very great and the river makes it the mail effortless if you need me
to come there and put down any insurrection, I will come to your assistance.

A matter of the death of Grandma Rodriguez threatens to discredit me with the baron and baroness. She was killed in my motel room, a victim of Mexican commandos, but before she was killed, she gave me the idea to leave this life of war very soon. I wasn't born to be violent but a friend to Elmer Kelton, but an even better friend to Omar Baker.

Your friend,
Cowboy of Marion County

PS You need to stop putting rattlesnake venom in your tequila; it causes hallucinations.

Juan listen very attentively to the letter and it was considered wise by all who were happy to hear it. Then Juan asked his secretary that without delay to write down a letter of reply that said the following...

Honest Cowboy and Vaquero de Tejas:

I've been so busy with my affairs that, I don't have time to scratch my head or even cut my nails and so I'm wearing them too long, my apologies. I say this, dear friend, so that you're not surprised that I haven't told you anything until now about how I'm faring and in this new job of mine. I'm hungrier than the two of us were wandering through the desert and wild places in the west, fortunately I have friends to help with that. The president of Texas wrote me the other day saying that certain spies had been ordered to kill me and so far I haven't discovered my any except for the doctor who tries to starve me slowly to an early grave and this doctor says about himself that he doesn't cure diseases, when they arrived but prevents them so they won't come, and the only medicines he has is ridiculous diet, more accurately starvation, until the person is nothing but skin and bones, as if skinny weren't worse than a fever. In short, he starving me to death and I'm dying of despair because I thought all political offices came with hot food and cold drinks. When I occupied this office I found my Mexican counterparts food and drinks and lived off them for two days finding no real reason to leave until that was exhausted.

I also expected not sheets and a feather bed but I've come here to be punished I don't know why but I've done this to myself. I intend to leave this life of professional politics for I wasn't born to be poor. So far I haven't touched a fee or
taken a bribe; in fact I’ve dispensed most of the Pesos abandoned here by the Mexicans. It’s a serious net loss for me. And it goes to show, the faster one moves, the farther he falls behind.

Can you see any wisdom in a simple man, like myself, taking out loans? I can’t fathom this, but they told me here that people give or lend credit, a great deal of money, to county judges who come to their island, and they have even this before they even arrived. They swear this is common practice for everybody who is in my position, not only this one county. I’d rather stick my head in a rattlesnake den.”

Last night, when I was on patrol, I came across a beautiful virgin in men's clothing and her brother who was with her out late in the night. My clerk fell in love with the girl and I'm guessing they'll someday be married according to what he told me and I'm still looking for a boy to be my son-in-law.

I visited the jail and fishing docks and marketplace only yesterday of my own volition. I found a woman in the market selling fresh tomatoes mixed with other tomatoes and made her put up a sign, “buyer beware” people told me it was the right thing to do and that the Mexican official would have probably arrested her and given the tomatoes to their children to sell. I figured the townspeople might be hungry for at least the new ones and maybe even the old ones might have found their way into the stomachs of the less fortunate. It seems later in the day, the price of the older ones was very affordable and the poor were happy to buy them. One told me he was very happy I hadn’t expelled the woman from the market.

Yes, I'm very happy the first lady has written to Teresa and sent her the presents I've sent and I've try to show my gratitude. At the same time you should continue to send them our regards. You and the president haven't thrown a weight in a torn sack as my actions should will prove.

If you have a dispute with the baron or baroness, it's no skin off my back or yours for that matter; there's always the chance someone will clean their plow in this tumult. If you'll remember they wanted me to travel to Loving County as opposed to continuing our venture here. Cold water on that. I believe you know and knew their alignment with Mexico and were wise to refused to all the worthless appointments they offered you.

I don't understand about the clawing and my tequila doesn't cause hallucinations. I've tested it plenty. I'll like for Teresa to send you something to help in your struggle, but what bottle of tequila would survive such a journey? Maybe something to strengthen Shovelhead but I don't know what to send except some very curious seashells, though if my position here lasts, I'll find you something to send you one way or another.
If my Teresa writes me, I'll pay the postage when it arrives. I long to know the condition of my house and my wife and children. I don't think I'll get away from here with much more than my life.

Your friend,
Juan, County Judge

The secretary sealed the letter and took it down to the many boats traveling up the Colorado with weapons and supplies for Austin. Compliments of the newly former TXPS the letter would be in the new nation's capital in two days and in four days it would be at Teresa's. Juan spent the afternoon Xing out ordinances and took that evening relentlessly exposing their harms in front of the commissioners, ensured the Commissioners voted to cleanse ninety-two percent of the pre-clamity ordinances off the books and scratching all the Mexican ordinances off the list.

Scratched off the list were ordinances governing dog breeding, open toed footwear, minimum wages, song lyrics and especially a target of the Sharpie marker were a number of ordinances designed to grow county government. In short Juan, streamlined and limited the government so that to his very day, historians call the remaining 8% of the ordinances, The Constitution of the Great Short-Termed County Judge Juan Seguin.

The only new ordinance Juan wrote concerned tequila, that no tequila would be imported into the county from anywhere unless it its place of origin was indicated and its contents
clearly listed so that it could be priced accordingly to its value. Called Quality and Reputation Act, it stated that whoever watered it down or change this label would lose his life.

**EXT. TRAVIS COUNTY – 1010 COLORADO AVE.**

The most fantastic news that reached the governor's mansion was that the Mexican Army was withdrawing from San Marcos and moving toward San Antonio. President Carbonnier was elated and it looked as if his promise of rolling back the Mexicans might actually come true. President and first lady had a meal and a small celebration and just as things begin to fizzle, into the room came the courier who carried the letter and gifts to Theresa Seguin wife of Juan. His arrival made the president and first lady very happy for they wanted to know what sort of woman had married such a reformer as Juan and what he had found.

The courier came from a humble background himself and didn't want to sour the mood of the first couple, they were entertaining and so many people were there to be privy to this sort of entertainment. So when he was asked about the Seguin family he exaggerated and said, “Mr. President and Madam you should wait until we're alone, but they are the finest family in the East and they make a fine tequila whose reputation has exploded since it was mentioned in that blasphemous Mexican film.”
The courier put a bottle on the table and his help brought in a case and put it in a different room. He handed two letters to the first lady; one of them said in the address, “Letter to the First Lady of Texas, and the other said, “To my dear husband Juan Seguin Matagorda County judge.”

The First Lady commented to her husband that the Seguin family had a nice Boston Terrier “a mighty nice male Boston.” Her husband noted that he understood. She opened the letter to her and read it to herself and seeing that she could read it aloud, so the president and the others could hear it, she read as follows...

Dear Ma'am:
The letter you wrote to me made me very happy, for the truth is, it’s something I'd been wanting, a string of shells with gold. They are very nice and my husband's cloth is just as fancy. The presidents making my spouse the county judge of such a key county has given a lot of pleasure to the whole town here, even if nobody believes it, especially the minister, and the barber and Sam Houston Xith, a recent graduate, but that doesn't bother me as long as we all know it's true, which it is. Each person can say whatever they want. Through to tell you the truth, if the necklace and cloth had not and come, I wouldn't have believed it either because in this town some people take my husband for a fool for fallowing Cowboy and his ranger work. Funny, at the same time, they drive miles and miles to buy his tequila which I've sent in a case. Careful as it packs a wallop.

I've decided to make hay while the sun shines by going to the coast in a car, making their eyes pop for here there are several envious of me and so I beg you to forward the other letter to my husband so that he'll send some money and to make it enough because of expenses are high: fuel sells for 5,000 pesos and a loaf of bread cost 1,000 pesos, which is the end of the world and if he doesn't want me to come he should let me know soon because my feet are itching to see the ocean, which I've not seen, and of course my husband who I've not seen in a while.
My friends think my daughter and I will look grand in an open top car and important. It's my goal to have my husband be known through me. I'm sure he's a fine administrator, but I want people to ask who's that woman and young lady? And for an employee of mine to answer the wife and daughter of Juan Seguin, county judge of this island, and in this way you'll be known as well because you appointed Juan to his position.

It's makes me so sorry as I can't send you the very best pecans from Marion County, the drought has cut their size some years and the pecans were are the size of golf balls. I mix them into Juan's tequila mash, but I picked this bushel personally and these are the best I've found.

Please don't forget to write me, I'll be happy for Rebel to breed your Boston b****, he'll even be more happy.

Please tell me about your son and everything about everything in Austin. I wish you the very most rapid of victories.

I'm your friend, Teresa Seguin

Everyone derive great pleasure from hearing Teresa's letter, especially the president and first lady who went on and on about how genuine and Homespun she found it. How genuine. She asked the president for permission to open the other letter and he agreed in the interest of National Security, but also to give everyone confidence in the new government's grassroots.

Dear Husband:

I received your letter; Juan, and on my soul I swear to you that I went crazy with happiness. Just think my husband when I heard you were a county judge, I thought I'd fall down dead from sheer joy, because you know people say that's sudden joy can kill just like sudden sorrow.

Your daughter, Brenda, wet herself without realizing it. She was so happy I have the bolt of cloth you sent us in front of me and the sea shells and gold necklace around my neck and both letters in my hands. The man that brought them right here and even so I believe that and thought it was a dream because who could ever imagine that a tequila maker would become a County Judge. I'm told you're a very important man because the Colorado River supplies Austin without interruption. Our allies overseas must trust you. And you know, dear husband, my mother used to say you have to live a lot to see a lot. I mention this because I plan to see more, if I live more, because I don't plan to stop
until I see you as a landlord or a tax collector for these trades after all in which you always have to handle money, but please don't miss use that power. Use your judgment to tell me how much I need to travel there, tell about it and let me know if you like the idea. I'll try to honor you there by riding in a convertible.

The minister and barber and that damn kid Sam Houston visited tonight and even the sensible farther of the XIth Sam Houston. The Xth can't believe you're a politician; they say it's a fraud or a question of drug abuse, like everything that has to do with your friend Cowboy, Sam Houston has been brought about by the use of drugs.

The boy says he'll go bring you back and prove the idea of political power only a fantasy and he's also promising to get the insanity out of Cowboys head. I didn't do anything but laugh and show him my necklace and I plan to show him the dress I'm making for your daughter, our daughter.

I sent some pecans to the first lady I wish they were larger and made of gold.

Send me some pearl necklaces if they make them on the island.

The news from Lake of the Pines is that Bruce Anika married her daughter to a painter without any talent who came here to paint whatever it turned out to be. The Commissioners told him to paint over the Mexican eagle over the entry to the community center and the town hall. He asked for fifty-thousand pesos and they paid him in advance, he worked for a week at the end of that time he hadn't painted anything and after the invasion, he said he couldn't paint trifles. He gave them back most of the money, and even so, he still got married. The truth is he's down and out, he's put down the brush and picked up a hoe and goes to the fields like any other man. They say he has a real hatred of weeds and his labor is in demand. Pedro de Lobo's son has taken orders and intends to become a priest, when mean Migel Salvado's granddaughter found out, she made a complaint saying he promised to marry. Her girl friends are saying she's pregnant by him, but he absolutely denies it.

There are no more people to hire here as the lake, however, people are driving here to work from town. The problem with that is I've had to pay them more to compensate for the fuel they use getting to and from work. The tequila is selling well, very well. I've managed to secure six more vats, even larger than the originals, and built a second barn to house them. The minister says I need to stop calling it a "barn" and "call it what it is, a factory." But to me, it's just a barn. The trucks are running non-stop. Thank goodness you started such a large batch when you did. We may just growing rich, but I've invested everything back into the business. We now operate four delivery
trucks and the entire snake-venom marketing is holding up nicely.

A small company of Mexican soldiers came through here and took three girls away with them, I don't want to tell you who they were or maybe they'll come back and there's bound to be somebody who will marry them; good or bad, they're pretty girls.

Brendasika is experimenting with a new recipe, half the "venom" but double the pecans and it's selling well and she's putting the money in a box to help buy her husband a house but now she's the daughter of a county judge, you'll have you'll have to do that for her and she won't have to work for it.

The fountain in the square dried up. A tornado destroy the jail and the Mexicans, who are still in charge here, must drive everyone into Marshall to their jail, which doesn’t bother me a bit. It’s slowed them down a bit.

I'm waiting for your answer to this letter and a decision about my arrival and with the I hope you live longer than I do or as many years, because I don't want to live without you.

Your wife, Teresa

This letter was also celebrated, approved and admired. And as a final touch to everything the courier arrived with the letter Juan had sent to Cowboy, which was also read publicly and it finally cast doubt on all the film inspired rumors of his foolish.

When the president read Juan’s letter, the first lady withdrew to the kitchen, in order to learn from the courier what had happened in East Texas, which he recounted in great detail. Primarily, the first lady wanted and an assessment of the beauty of Juan daughter. Second, she wanted to know what Rebel look like, the Courier showed her photos of the dog and he gave her his bottle of the new pecan flavored tequila, because it was even better than the venom laced bottles.
The first lady received it with the greatest pleasure and took it with her to bed.

**EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT BAY CITY**

If you think the things in this life will injure forever and unchanged, you have confidence in the impossible, or maybe you're too much of Juan’s tequila or smoke some of Cowboy’s dope.

I mean around in a circle, spring precedes summer, and summer precedes fall, and fall comes before winter and the winner proceeds spring, and in this way time turns around in a wheel. Only human life race is more quick than time. George C.P. Bush, politician but also a philosopher only mentions this because of the speed with which Juan ended his political career in a puff of smoke. Juan was in bed on the 27th night of his days in Bay City, full not of steak, shrimp or wine, but of debates and giving opinions and voting on ordinances, but when sleeping despite his hunger he heard such a great noise of gunfire and then ringing bells and police sirens and then voices shouting that it seemed as if the entire island were being destroyed.

He set up in bed listening to see if he could learn what the cause might be of so much tumults. Not only did he fail but the sound of the wind began to drown out the noises he was
trying to understand, leaving him more confused the more full of fear and consternation. Getting out of bed he put on slippers because his diabetic nerve pain had been bothering him and without a robe or anything resembling one, he went to the door of his room in his vintage NASCAR pajamas. He arrived just two just in time to see hurricane-force weather conditions and more than twenty persons coming along the street carrying LED lamps and holding firearms and knives. One lunatic had a sledgehammer. All of them were fighting the wind to walk and chatting in loud voices, “To Arms, get your guns, Judge Seguin, to Arms.”

The mayor shouted, “A Mexican fleet has entered the bay and we’re lost if you don’t have a plan. We need you to inspire some bravery.”

Clamorous, frenzied and in an uproar, they approached the door where Juan was standing, astonished and stupefied at what he was hearing and seeing.

When they had reached him, a man the first Juan had freed from the Mexican jail, said, “Your Honor, you should arm yourself immediately or else we’ll all be killed and your position lost. The island is under of attack the river is on the brink. Come help us.”

“What do I have to do with guns,” responded Juan, “And what do I know about strategy or coming to anybody’s aid. It’s
raining and it looks like the wind is blowing a 100 miles an hour. These things are better left to Rangers.”

“Cowboy would attack without hesitation.

“Send for him immediately. I don't know anything about this sort of battle.”

“Sir,” said another of the oppressed Anglos, “there's time for reluctance! Get your guns and if you don’t have any here, we have a 8 gauge, a pistol and a two vest for you. You're covered both offense and defense; lead us out there and be our guide, by right and duty, it's your job.

“Then get me those vests, I may need two of them,” replied Juan, and they immediately brought pistol, a shotgun, a set of the new Kevlar pants and two relatively small vests they'd been carrying to him. He put on the pants over his pajama bottoms and they placed both vests over his nightshirt, not allowing him to put on other clothes. They angled the vests and tied them in a peculiar, but intelligent manor, so fully half of his torso was covered. When they had him in this uniform, they told him to walk and they led him and encouraging him. With Juan in lead, they gave him his weapons and a lantern and expected him to lead them to fight the Mexicans.

“Walk?” responded Juan, “When I can't bend my knees? These boards in these pants are sewn up so tight against me what you'll have to do is put me in the Cadillac like a wooden
Indian. Everyone come on let’s drive it down on the bridge and we'll fight them there to the last man; they want the river, but I can't move.”

“Go on, Sir, said another man, “it's fear more than boards that keep you from walking put one foot forward and then the other and start to move for it's late the Mexicans have Patrol boats in the gulf and a heavy cruiser in the bay.

The six men didn't what was ordered of them, they lifted him up into the convertible like a wooden Indian, and at that moment a naval bombardment begin raining down on the town the explosions here and there as well as the pounding caused poor Juan to begin to move he made about ten feet into the street and was blown over by the wind. He fell into the ground with such force he thought he was broken. He lay there like a giant turtle enclosed by a Kevlar shell, or like a half side of bacon held between two salted boards or even like a fishing trawler stuck in the sand. With great compassion, they stood him up in the back of the convertible.

EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT THE FM 521 BRIDGE

Eventually the Cadillac, minus the rag top, of course, got all six men and Juan to the bridge and sure enough there appeared fifteen or twenty shallow draft patrol boats lined up in the river.
“Men, here is where we make our mark; you will never be ridiculed again after this night.

They filed out of the vehicle and positioned themselves at the railing.

“Ready! Aim! Hold it,” and something occurred to Juan and he spoke again, “but if we fail someone get in that Cadillac and warn Bay City, Columbus, LaGrange and don’t stop driving until you reach Austin.”

After months traveling with Cowboy, Juan’s followers looked to him as possibly unreliable. They might fire too early and, just as likely, they might not fire at all.

“Don't fire yet and then when its time make sure you do.”

When the first of the enemy boats were almost under them Juan, yelled “fire” and he discharged the 8 gauge. The townspeople made short work of that first boat, it caught fire and it listed and the wind blew it too the riverbank. The other boats halted their progress. And when the wind reached a sustained hundred-and-twenty-five, half the patrol boats exited the river in reverse; half were blown over the bank out into the wetlands.

There were half drowned Mexican marines scattered from the bridge to the Gulf. The patrol boats who managed to exit the river, faired even worse. The historical record say three sunk in deep water and the rest were blown into the barrier island.
what is commonly called the Matagorda Peninsula. A single Mexican crew made it and tied up at Port O’Connor. They surrendered to a man, with a story very similar to that of Juan, whose dream was for someone to give him a marina office to sit in. After the seven marines begged refuge from the storm, the Cruiser escaped out of the bay and into the Gulf.

Nine Boats were wrecked out of the river and the storm surge carried three of them up into the city of Matagorda.

“Victory! Victory! The enemy is retreating. Juan, get up and come enjoy your conquest.”

They all suspected that Juan’s size made him essentially a large sailboat, and the wind had blown him over and out of the Cadillac. He lay on the ground, unable to rise.

His men were excited. “Tomorrow all these folks will all be beached and the spoils will be ours.”

From his reclined position, Juan spoke, “Make a note of all the men standing on this bridge, enduring the wind and killing Mexicans.”

The clerk looked about and nodding he took out a piece of soaked newspaper and a pencil and wrote down the names.

Juan added, “also make a note of the time.”

No one including Juan knew at the time, because of the wind and excitement of battle.
"For history’s sake, pick me up," Juan said over the wind. And only then was it discovered that he had been knocked up and into the air and had almost blown off the bridge by a 50 caliber round that was miraculously stopped by the vests, where they overlapped.

Juan hadn’t realized that himself. He thought he had been blown over by the wind.

Standing in a Force One hurricane on the bridge, Juan said, "I can't believe it, but if it's true, there's no purpose standing out here, is there? I'd like to have a drink of wine.”

And this is the reason to this very day, in Matagorda County, Force One hurricanes are called a Force Juan hurricanes.

**EXT. MATAGORDA COUNTY AT BAY CITY**

Once inside his office they dried him, brought him Wine and he shared tequila with them. They took off the vest and pulled out the deformed around and showed it to Juan; he didn't move for a full half-minute from fear, shock and awe.

Juan asked the time, they responded that dawn had broken and the eye of the storm was over them. He fell silent and without saying a word he begin to dress, deep in silence and everyone watched him waiting to see what the outcome would be of his dressing so urgently.
Finally he was dressed and very slowly because he was bruised and not moving quickly he went to the garage, followed by everyone present, and when he reached his moped he embraced it and put a gallon of fuel in it.

Juan said, “come my friend, comrade in all my suffering, when we were on adventures together I had few worries, fill your tank, change your oil, I only had all kind thoughts but since climbing the towers of ambition and pride a thousand of miseries, a thousand troubles, and 4000 brave Marines are buried in my soul.”

When the moped was fueled with great sadness and sorrow he mounted and directed his words and thoughts to a group of men who had stood with him on the bridge. He said, “make way, Sirs, and let me return to my old liberty, let me go and find my past life so that I can come back from this present death. I was not born to be a politician, or a soldier, or to defend islands or rivers from enemies who want to control them. I have a better understanding of fermentation and distillation, bottling and distribution, St Peters was fine in Rome and Trump was fine in New York. I mean that each man is fine doing the work he was born for and in the place natural to him.”

The men seemed to understand. They didn’t, but were sycophants still.
"I'm better with a tequila bottle in my hand, then a gavel, or rifle. I'd rather eat my fill of my wife's tamales than suffer the miseries of a brazen doctor who starves me to death and I'd rather lie down under an oak tree in summer and wrap myself in an old quilt in winter than lie between cotton sheets and wear gold and be subject to government. Send a message to Austin that I was born naked and I'm naked leaving now I came here without any money and I'm without it now which is very different from how the governors of other islands leave. Now move aside and let me go. I'll apply some wrapping later because I think all my ribs are crushed thanks to being shot in the chest."

"It must not be like this, Sir, said the doctor, "for I shall give your prescription against falls and more bruising, which will return you to your former vigor and as for food, I promise you I'll mend my ways and I'll allow you to eat as much as you want of everything you like."

Juan said to the doctor, "I'm reminded of a story about a man who sucked on an egg and when the chick wiggled around in his throat and peeped, he said, 'me thinks you peeped too late.' Well doctor you peeped too late."

Juan exited the garage, pedaling until the moped engine caught and this was exactly the minute the wind started up again. It immediately blew Juan off his moped and he splashed
into two feet of water over Seventh Street. The men from the bridge ran out into the storm, picked him up and brought him back to his room. The others brought the moped back to the garage again.

They dried him and wrapped his ribs the doctor wanted to administer drugs but the hero was catatonic and refused to swallow. They put him in his bed.

They all agreed that should he survive, after the storm, that everything would be done to accommodate him staying. And if he didn't agree to that, then they would give him everything he might need to get to his home, including the Cadillac.

They sent true accounts of the fighting to Austin and cleaned up after the storm. They confiscated the grounded patrol boats and hauled them on trailers down to the bay.

The jails in Palicos, Collegeport, Matagorda, Sargent, and Bay City were full of waterlogged Mexican sailors and marines. More than that number were buried in a grave yards near Wadsworth.

Juan didn't get out of his bed for another three days the scene was repeated, he rose, he dressed, he gave a very similar speech to the entire town this time. He refused the Cadillac and suggested they put in the in museum as a reminder of what the seven did at the bridge. Everyone embraced him and he weeping
embraced all of them and he left them marveling and not only at his words but at his decision which was so resilient and smart.

EXT. LASALLE COUNTY AT THE COURTHOUSE

The day after Juan left Matagorda, a desperate letter arrived from Cowboy for Juan.

Juan, friend:
I'm in a bunch of trouble here in Cotulla. Come to San Antonio and turn South toward Laredo. These Chupacabras say I killed a kid, a 13 year old kid, he was supposedly driving cattle with the Mexican brand South between Encinal and Nueces. You should know that they found him shot with a 44-30 which is the rifle I carry. Most importantly should know before I lost my men, my trademark was putting a rock under the head of the dead Mexicans, like the they were laying on a hard rock pillow. I have to tell you I continue the practice ever since I’ve been alone, just me and Shovelhead, but I was well north of there and only learned about it when I come in to here. They done arrested me and the new sheriff, a New Yorker, trying to make a name for himself, like in a hundred western films, wants to hang me. Sure I killed plenty of Mexicans, I don't know how many and this kid they say was not wearing a uniform, but I didn't do nothing of the sort. Bring everything you learned as a County judge and a lawyer if you can find one in San Antonio. Cuz I need your help, amigo.

Your friend, Cowboy
Temporary Resident of LaSalle County Jail

It never reached Juan, as he had already set out for Columbus to try to catch up with Cowboy and the retreating Mexicans. Of course Cowboy had been in Columbus about the time the Mexican Army had retreated through there, Juan thought of traveling from there to Austin to enlist the help of the government in finding his friend, but he was advised they would be too busy to look for a single Ranger, even a famous one, so
Juan traveled southwest after the path of the Mexican Army. Miracle of miracles he was actually in Cotulla when he learned that Cowboy was in the local jail, being held on murder charges.”

Juan hadn’t arrived until the day, before the trial. It would be an English language media circus, the first in over forty years. The media interest were just as loyal to the Mexicans after the calamity as they had been to the socialist Anglos before. There must have been ten journalists in the tiny town, but they felt no need to report the Mexican narrative now that they were clearly not in power anymore. And with the Austin government new and not in any position to bribe the media with any sort of inside information, they were far from a monolith to ruin someone. With the media temporarily confused, Cowboy had a change he could beat the charges.

One the other hand, it promised to be the first sign of a return to normalcy, the yellow journalism. All in one-and-a-half days, Juan managed to do a number of important things he visited the laconic cowboy in the jail. Juan was adamant making him admit, “it was a d*** fool thing to do, chasing them this far, when they’d already lit out.” Juan reasoned that when this kid was killed, most of the Mexican occupiers were already in Mexico. So, once that was out of the way, Juan felt he could get
on with the business of proving him innocent and keeping that d***ed film and bank robbery out of evidence.

Also, Juan made friends with a one armed San Antonio lawyer named Joe Perot, who showed him where the body was found and tagged along as a witness as Juan collected evidence.

Juan drove along the deer trail north, carefully measuring the miles on the odometer, until the moped ran out of fuel he pushed it several miles to a makeshift gas station. Several miles east of Los Angeles he pissed blood and fueled up and asked the businessman if he had fueled Shovelhead or had seen Cowboy the day of the killing. The man wasn't hostile but clearly wanted to be helpful and couldn’t; he did, however, admit to selling fuel to the kid driving the cattle.

Juan proceeded to Somerset and the distance between there and the crime measured 107 miles Juan return to Cotulla and exhumed and examined the body of the kid. Without refrigeration the body had been nearly immediately buried. Now this was a disappointment, as there was no bullet in the body. It was ‘through-and-through’ as they say.

Juan secured a metal detector and rare batteries with Cowboy’s last ounce of dope. He ever had to borrow a few thousand pesos from the lawyer.

After they made certain that the bullet had indeed exit the body, they headed back to the crime scene. After hours and
hours, they found the shell casings plain as day and not collected by anyone.

Juan explained to the attorney how, Cowboy would have always collected the casings. Despite his fame, he wasn't wealthy enough to abandon them and it was the attorney who concluded the murder had been done by an independently wealthy or extremely absent minded individual, not to pick up the casings.

Juan and Joe spent several hours searching, and the bullet was found and collected they returned to the gas station on the deer trail and question the businessman again and asked if he would come to testify at the trial, which he respectfully declined to do. A fight ensued and Juan and the businessman rolled around ten minutes and that's a long time for a fatboy to fight. There was that, but also a rattler bit Juan on the back and the businessman rolled him over a cactus but Juan in the end dragged the man into town by force.

Juan and Joe liberated a microscope from the abandoned high school. Juan found a man as thin as Cowboy and had to give him the moped in exchange for a suit for Cowboy to wear at trial.

Juan cut his nails. He also Juan pissed more blood and threw up on the bank and then bathed in the river. The attorney had tried to have him see a doctor about the snakebite and when
Juan fell asleep in the river, Joe thought Juan had died. They were only ten minutes late to the trial.

When Juan and Joe did walk into the courtroom, the aging Anglo prosecutor was finishing what had seem to be an elegant opening statement. This seventy-something prosecutor hadn’t prosecuted a case in twenty years, not since the Mexican occupation, but obviously he was capable. Juan sat down beside the 80-year-old defense attorney. The San Antonio attorney, young and quick, was needed as a witness and so they had found the next best attorney.

For an opening statement, the older defense attorney stood and said, “He didn't do it,” and then sat back down. The judge looked like the type who’d just received his commission from Austin and might not regret hanging someone. Juan thought he looked anxious. It hadn't been a good start for Cowboy, the opening statements, but after the prosecution rested things, began to improve.

Here I must apologize the only English-speaking court transcriber in the county with any experience was between the age of the two attorneys and she just couldn't keep up; as a result, there is a partial record and more than a few journalists wrote articles but putting the historical record together I wasn't able to learn much more than I've already related to you.
The defense case basically constituted of Juan and the attorney and a few forensic exhibits. Asking questions the older attorney asked Juan questions about their adventures and then the attorney asking ask questions of the San Antonio attorney, who collaborate confirmed Juan’s collecting the evidence. Then they called the man, Juan had fought. The jury seemed impressed Juan had been friends enough to fight a man to make sure he was there in court. In the end, Cowboy testified and true to form Cowboy said he didn't do it. In the closing statements Cowboy’s attorney miss read the San Antonio attorney’s notes and called it “miraculous,” “brilliant,” and “scandalous”, which were all words one would expect from the prosecutor, but it didn't really matter.

Cowboy was acquitted of the murder. One journalists, desperately needing to impress his boss in Mexico city, insisted that the murderer had taken place in Webb County and that Cowboy would have to be a retrial there, and properly be found guilty.

That wasn’t going to happen, but Cowboy was convicted of resisting arrest, he had fired blanks at some deputies and the judge, never having watched the propaganda film, said he was lucky that he’d missed.

The film was never mentioned at the trial, understandably, it was Mexican propaganda. And neither was and bank robbery
mentioned, which perhaps had never been attributed to Cowboy, a different cowboy possibly?

Cowboy was sentenced to a year's home arrest in Marion County. They confiscated his guns which eventually found their way into the LaSalle County Historical Museum, and are still today prominently displayed.

Of course Juan and in the attorney were elated, but the celebration was short, the biggest fans seem to be the thin man whose suit Cowboy had bought. The man wanted his suit back and the man traded the moped back “even-steven.” The man wanted the suit for a museum he plan to build; he eventually saw both films of Cowboys exploits and he felt sure the trial and the publicity would make his Museum financially viable.

Cowboy shook hands with the mostly celebrity starved county folks, but still he looked in shock still and it was clear this was a shock to his ego and it's all it was all Juan could do to put him on Shovelhead and get out of town. Fortunately, the San Antonio attorney pitched in money for fuel and a sidecar if one ever became available.

Historians and criminologist today love the controversy who really murdered the kid. There are those who say Cowboy was responsible and the trial was simply the new “Anglo justice,” just ask any socialist in Mexico. However, north of the Rio Grande, there is an entirely different way of thinking about it,
the case has never been solved and there is a long list of suspects: Sam Houston, Ginés, General Garza, the Baron and Baroness, TDJC, CNI, the Bandito called Ponce. And sometimes it had degenerated into the ridiculous; even a creditor “coalition of inn keepers” is mentioned in some accounts.

Writing about it and producing documentaries have become a cottage industry. In total, there are twenty-seven commercially available books, all with different theories. There is even a theory that Salty, the jilted Tawakoni dog breeder was responsible. Also there exists one totally irresponsible, Spanish language, book that accuses Juan Seguin.

EXT. LIVE OAK COUNTY AT THREE RIVERS

If any thoughts at all had trouble Cowboy before his fall, many problems troubled him after he was toppled. Under a tree in Three Rivers not only did bee swarm around him but thoughts also came to him and stung him just as painfully. Some had to do with Salty and others with the life he would have to live in his forced retirement. Jun slept unmolested by insects under the same tree, but when Cowboys decided to marry Gina, he wanted to get on the road again immediately and he jolted Juan awake.

Cowboys said to him, “a former Ranger may well be in love but strictly speaking he can never be pushy. You think she'll agree? She might curse me. She appeared maybe in love with me,
but that was war and now I've been disgraced. I have no treasure or hope of it now, I am a ghost and all I have to offer or some innocent memories.

Juan responded, “If you want to know the truth, I was never convinced Salty was the right marriage for you. Political marriages aren't meant to last and mysterious father's peddling their daughter, out of a dog shelter. It always seemed a bit cloak and dagger and you know how politics are like an ocean, with waves and tides up and down. This Gina from what you tell me, she gives you good advice, except for the part about my tequila and she bandaged your café and it hardly scarred at all, just that little one on your nose. And you said you think she loved you at one time.”

“She's probably pregnant.

“You didn't!” Juan was insensed!

“No, it's the responsibility of a boy in the Mexican Army, who has disappeared, not just across the border, he's totally disappeared.”

“Well, who's to know.”

“What do you mean?”

Juan advised his friend, “You know how people are, maybe it's better just to leave the Mexican out of it. Marry her and if someone asks, I doubt they will, tell them the baby is your, offer to fight them.
“Will that work?”

“He might not have blond hair, but who's to know the truth; he’ll have a nice German last name. Your last name.

“I couldn't do that; it's not the truth.”

“Really? And you want to stick to after what both sides have done to you?”

“Rangers don’t lie.”

“Your Ranger days are over.”

“True.”

“There's no more code of ethics anymore just old-fashioned being a man and solving problems.”

“I don’t want to fight anyone anymore.”

“That’s why you have to lie, so you don’t have to fight anymore.”

“It’s all so strange to me.”

“You used to fight for no real reason.”

“Maybe you’ll get lucky and someone will make the mistake about your son? That might give you a reason to fight.”

“Let me think about this on the way.”

“Look, you are you are the most torn-down and propped-up character in the history of film and of Texas history in general.”
EPILOG

EXT. CAMERON COUNTY AT RIO HONDO

Perillo, who apparently had been wrongly maligned as a Mexican sympathizer and spy, was shot off his Harley while leading a charge against Mexican soldiers who ran down into the Arroyo Colorado, but refused to surrender.

EXT. VICTORIA COUNTY AT THE RANCH

Like nearly everyone loyal to Mexico, the baron and baroness had fled south and in Victoria. Cowboy and Juan took a sidecar out of the Cattle Baron’s garage. They also took the entire wall safe from the Baron’s empty mansion, when it wouldn’t open easily.

EXT. FORT BEND COUNTY AT NEEDVILLE

Without hesitation, Gina agreed to marry Cowboy. Her sisters gave her a ton of outfits and Juan looked at her treated her like a queen, opening doors and carrying everything. It was an white wedding and afterward Aunt Jewel handed Cowboy 237 silver dollar coins. She gave Juan a moped, as Gina would occupy the sidecar. The only thing Cowboy complained about was Gina’s three cousins kissing him and reminding everyone about the cat who’d nearly taken his nose.

INT. ANGELINA COUNTY IN LUFKIN

They ate at a real Whataburger, not the abandoned type.
EXT. HARRIS COUNTY IN HOUSTON

They passed through, but stopped to watch a parade. An old fashioned ticker-tape parade, columns and columns of soldiers mostly from Louisiana but also from Alabama, Florida, Ohio New York and even Russia. Everyone speculated that every state in the former USA had contributed someone or something, weapons for vehicles. There were a number of technicals, pickup trucks with 50 caliber machine guns, mounted in the bed and then at the very end. Gina counted 108 Texas Rangers, the noise from their the motorcycles was deafening and this was at the conclusion, the most popular part of the parade. Cowboy watched from the sidewalk, and didn't move an inch to join them, as he easily could have. Other biographers have described the parade as Cowboy's catharsis. They claim the heroism magically left him as he stood on the sidewalk watching the Rangers pass. It’s disputed, however.

EXT. NACOGDOCHES COUNTY IN NACOGDOCHES

Shovelhead had a flat tire that delayed things.

INT. HARRISON COUNTY IN MARSHALL

They had ice cream; none had eaten ice cream in their entire lives. That wasn't entirely true; Juan had been born
before the EMP catastrophe and it is highly unlikely he have never had ice-cream, if he did couldn’t have remember it.

EXT. MARION COUNTY AT TEXAS FIRST BUSINESS PARK

Much could be written of Gina, even a third volume, but suffice to say she could put almost anyone to sleep. Days before returning to her new East Texas home, Gina had responded to an email from a company a computer company in Russia after all Russia ahead helped Texas free themselves from the China-Mexico Empire, and she and Cowboy would be the company’s sales representatives for the entire nation. All they would need would be a few trucks to pick up and deliver the computers, the thousands of them, that would come to Shreveport each month.

All they’d have to do it go to Corsicana, eat gumbo, gamble and bring them back to in a truck.

Given the electric grid was slowly being re-established and the interenet was no longer being suppressed by the Mexicans, everyone agreed it was a business coup and undoubtedly a sweetheart deal, payment for Cowboy’s service in the Rangers.

Juan told everyone, he met for the rest of his life that the President of Texas had personally called the President of Russia to secure the deal for him and for good measure and Juan added that Cowboy and Gina's first 12 trucks were paid for by what they’d stolen from the baron and baroness’ wall safe.
Neither part were true but Tequila sales were so brisk and Juan could afford to be generous. That being said, Juan was never known to tell anyone, he was the sole exporter of tequila into Russia, so maybe someone had called the Kremlin.

Each bottle label was printed with a rattlesnake’s open mouth and his brands motto “Fortes fortuna juvat.”

Juan's daughter, Brenda had a brief puppy romance with the son of the President and they bred three nice healthy litters, but she married Lupe Tacho and they had seven children all at home. They remain to live in Marion County, several went into the computer import business and the others remained working in the tequila export business. Gina and Cowboy’s numerous kids also worked in both the Tequila and computer business.

The two couples had so many children and grand-children, neither company hired an outsider for seventy years. Shipping containers were abundant and readily available for purchase in almost every County of Texas, accept Marion County, where the containers that arrived full of computers were returned to Russia full of Juan's tequila.

Cowboy died at a very old age, Gina asked his great-great-grandson to close his eyes as he lay on the bed with his “gre-gre-gramps.”
1 Last Rattlesnake In All Of West Texas, courtesy of Charlie Stout.
2 The Cowboy in Me, courtesy of Al Anderson, Craig Wiseman, Jeffrey Steele.
3 Summer Wind, Frank Sinatra.
4 Fly Me to the Moon, Nat King Cole
5 Road to You, Micky & The Motorcars