

Acting Edition

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

Acting Edition

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

Book by
Larry L. King
and Peter Masterson

Music & Lyrics by
Carol Hall

Based on a story by
Larry L. King

concord
theatricals

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“The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas”

Book by

LARRY L. KING & PETER MASTERSON

Music & Lyrics by

CAROL HALL

(All other main credits)

Originally produced on the New York Stage
by Stevie Phillips in Association with Universal Pictures.
Originally produced by Actors Studio.

No changes, deletions or interpolations shall be made in the book, lyrics or music of the Work without the OWNERS' prior written consent.

FORTY-SIXTH STREET THEATRE

Owned and Operated by The Regency Organization, Ltd.
Irwin Meyer Stephen R. Friedman

*National Pictures
Presents*

the best little whorehouse in TEXAS

Book by

Larry L. King & Peter Masterson

Music & Lyrics by

Carol Hall

Musical Numbers Staged by

Tommy Tune

With

Henderson Forsythe

Carlin Glynn

Delores Hall

<i>Jay</i>	<i>Pam</i>	<i>Clint</i>	<i>J. Frank</i>	<i>Susan</i>	<i>Joan</i>
<i>Garner</i>	<i>Blair</i>	<i>Allmon</i>	<i>Lucas</i>	<i>Mansur</i>	<i>Ellis</i>

And featuring the

Rio Grande Band

Costumes by

Ann Roth

Sets by

Marjorie Kellogg

Lighting by

Dennis Parachy

Musical Supervision Direction &

Vocal Arrangements by

Robert Bellig

Hair Styles by

Michael Gottfried

Associate Chronographer

Thommie Walsh

Production Stage Manager

Paul Phillips

Directed by

Peter Masterson & Tommy Tune

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The Producers and Theatre Management are members of
The League of New York Theatres and Producers, Inc.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Rio Grande Band CRAIG CHAMBERS (BAND LEADER)
Girls LISA BROWN, CAROL CHAMBERS, DONNA KING,
SUSAN MANSUR, LOUISE QUICK-BOWEN, DEBRA ZALKIND
Cowboys JAY BURSKY, BRADLEY CLAYTON KING,
MICHAEL SCOTT, PAUL UKENA, JR.
Farmer CLINT ALLMON
Shy Kid GERRY BURKHARDT
Miss Wulla Jean EDNA MILTON
Traveling Salesman JAY GARNER
Slick Dude K. C. KELLY
Choir JAY BURSKY, BECKY GELKE, EDWINA LEWIS,
JAN MERCHANT, JAMES RICH, MARTA SANDERS
Amber PAMELA BLAIR
Shy JOAN ELLIS
Jewel DELORES HALL
Mona Stangley CARLIN GLYNN
THE GIRLS AT MISS MONA'S:
Linda Lou DONNA KING
Dawn LISA BROWN
Ginger LOUISE QUICK-BOWEN
Beatrice JAN MERCHANT
Taddy Jo CAROL CHAMBERS
Ruby Rae BECKY GELKE
Eloise MARTA SANDERS
Durla DEBRA ZALKIND

Leroy Sliney BRADLEY CLAYTON KING
 The Dogettes GERRY BURKHARDT, JAY BURSKY,
 MICHAEL SCOTT, PAUL UKENA, JR.
 Melvin P. Thorpe CLINT ALLMON
 Soundman K. C. KELLY
 Stage Manager TOM CASHIN
 Melvin Thorpe Singers BECKY GELKE,
 BRADLEY CLAYTON KING, SUSAN MANSUR,
 JAN MERCHANT, JAMES RICH, MARTA SANDERS
 Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd HENDERSON FORSYTHE
 Cameraman TOM CASHIN
 Scruggs JAY GARNER
 Mayor Rufus Poindexter J. FRANK LUCAS
 Edsel Mackey DON CRABTREE
 Doatsey Mae SUSAN MANSUR
 Townspeople CAROL CHAMBERS, BRADLEY CLAYTON KING,
 EDNA MILTON, JAMES RICH, MARTA SANDERS
 T.V. Announcer LARRY L. KING
 Angelette Imogene Charlene LISA BROWN
 Angelettes LOUISE QUICK-BOWEN, BECKY GELKE,
 DONNA KING, DEBRA ZALKIND, JAN MERCHANT
 T.V. Colorman JAY GARNER
 Senator Wingwoah J. FRANK LUCAS
 Aggie #21 PAUL UKENA, JR.
 Aggie #71 MICHAEL SCOTT
 Aggie #11 JAY BURSKY
 Ukranian Placekicker—Aggie #1 K. C. KELLY
 Aggie #17 JAMES RICH
 Aggie #7 GERRY BURKHARDT
 Aggie #12—Specialty Dance TOM CASHIN
 Aggie #77 BRADLEY CLAYTON KING
 Photographers MICHAEL SCOTT, PAUL UKENA, JR.,
 JAMES RICH, JAY BURSKY
 Reporter #1 SUSAN MANSUR

Reporter #2 PAUL UKENA, JR.
Governor's Aide JAY BURSKEY
Governor JAY GARNER
Reporter #3 MICHAEL SCOTT

The action takes place in the State of Texas.

THERE WILL BE ONE 12 MINUTE INTERMISSION

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE	Craig Chambers & The Rio Grande Band
20 FANS	Mona, The Girls, the Cowboys, Farmer, Shy Kid, Miss Wulla Jean, Traveling Salesman, Slick Dude and Choir
A LIL' OLE BITTY PISSANT COUNTRY PLACE ..	Mona and The Girls
GIRL YOU'RE A WOMAN	Mona, Shy, Jewel and The Girls
WATCH DOG THEME	Melvin P. Thorpe & The Dogettes
TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT	Melvin P. Thorpe, the Thorpe Singers & Dogettes
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF LOVIN'	Jewel, The Girls
REPRISE: WATCHDOG THEME	Dogettes
REPRISE: TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT	Melvin P. Thorpe, Dogettes, Mayor, Scruggs, Edsel, Doatsey Mae, Church Lady, Lady Convent, Townspeople
DOATSEY MAE	Doatsey Mae
ANGELETTE MARCH	Imogene Carlene and The Angelettes
THE AGGIE SONG	The Aggies
BUS FROM AMARILLO	Mona

ACT TWO

THE SIDESTEP The Governor, Governor's Aide, Senator Wingwoah,
Melvin P. Thorpe, Dogettes, Melvin Thorpe Singers

NO LIES Mona, Jewel, the Girls

GOOD OLD GIRL The Sheriff, the Aggies

LIST OF SONGS

20 Fans	13
A Lil' Ole Bitty Pissant Country Place	21
Girl Your're A Woman	30
Texas Has A Whorehouse In It	34
Twenty Four Hours Of Lovin'	40
Watch Dog Theme	45
Doatsy Mae	51
The Aggie Song	57
The Sidestep	65
No Lies	74
Good Old Girl	79
Hard Candy Christmas	81
The Bus From Amarillo	86

**Vocal Selections Available
\$10.95 plus postage**

A few minutes before curtain a GROUP OF MUSICIANS begins to drift onto the stage. THEY take their positions on the stand, beginning to tune up for the show. No lights yet. THEY should draw as little attention as possible. The tuning should really be some down home Texas music (an instrumental), beginning out of metre, then as instruments are added, picking up tempo until we are in full swing. As this opening finishes the spotlight hits the BANDLEADER.

The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas

ACT ONE

SCENE I

BANDLEADER. It was the nicest . . . little Whorehouse you ever saw. It lay about a mile down this old dirt road, and if you happened to stumble on it, you couldn't help but notice that the barns were painted and the fences were up and you might think to yourself 'why these folks would probably do to run the river with.'

(As the music begins the stage begins to come alive, as if in the memory of the SPEAKER. Ceiling fans in the upstairs rooms begin to turn and we are seeing a romanticized vision of the 1930's Chicken Ranch. A warm night in the Texas countryside. The director may adjust this scene to the space available but, generally, the following occurs:

THREE GIRLS appear in their rooms upstairs, check their makeup and adjust their assets. ONE comes downstairs, ready for the evening, looking for non-existent customers. Disappointed.)

BANDLEADER. *(Continued.)*
OH THE LITTLE HOUSE LAY
IN A GREEN TEXAS GLADE
WHERE THE TREES WERE AS COOLIN'
AS FRESH LEMONADE
THE SOFT SUMMER WIND
HAD A TRACE OF PERFUME
AND A FAN WAS TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM.

TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
THEY WERE TURNIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
FEVERS WERE A BURNIN'

THEY WERE BURNIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE
A WAY TO COOL DOWN.

(*Meanwhile a FARMER, in coveralls, straw hat, carrying a burlap bag, enters, smiles gleefully, sneaks up on her and grabs her from behind in a playful embrace. SHE is spooked, but sees HE's a friend and THEY sit down together.*)

BANDLEADER. (*Continued.*) Since the 1890's this has been one of the better pleasure palaces in all Texas. In fact, they say that some of our Lanville County boys celebrated here before going off to fight with Teddy Roosevelt at San Juan Hill.

(*A SHY KID gawks into the room, obviously for his first visit. HE is gazing around like a hick in the city, at the same time holding a wad of dollar bills. As his gaze lands on the FIRST GIRL and the FARMER his mouth drops open and his money floats to the floor. HE recovers and quickly falls to his knees and picks it up.*

GIRL 2 has come down and appears behind SHY KID, scaring him. SHE calms him and sits with him, beginning work on him quietly.

GIRL 3 appears, looking provocative and holding a fan over her mouth, slinks by the farmer, who notices, but GIRL 1 grabs him and takes him up to her room. — UP CENTER. HE leans back at GIRL 3 but clutching his burlap bag.)

BANDLEADER. (*Continued.*) At first it was right on Main Street, up above the hardware store. But about 1915 some of the local Jesus bunch got on their high horses and the girls moved out of the city limits, just past the "Bad Curve" sign.

(*MISS WULLA JEAN is pushed on in a wheel chair and makes a grand tour of the room, stopping to talk to GIRL 2. As SHE is distracted, GIRL 3 slips over and whispers something shocking, but not unpleasant to the shy kid. GIRL 2 turns back, catching her and tells her off in no uncertain terms. GIRL 4 retreats with her fan to the steps.*)

BANDLEADER. (*Continued.*) It was during the Hoover depression that Miss Wulla Jean come along. She put in a set of rules

just a shade less rigid than the ten commandments. You see, Miss Wulla Jean didn't appreciate perversions. So, she cut out all the exotic extras. But she did like for her ladies, as she called them, to treat her customers real nice.

(A TRAVELING SALESMAN *rushes onto the stage and looks around hungrily. HE sees GIRL 3, looking beautiful and makes an approach. HE tells her a quick joke, SHE laughs, exposes her mouth. No teeth. HE grimaces. GIRL 4 is conveniently there to ask him to dance and HE goes with her.*)

"20 FANS"

BANDLEADER. (*Continued.*)
 IT HAD NICE WATERMELONS
 ALL COVERED WITH VINES
 AND A VEGETABLE GARDEN
 A FEW SLENDER PINES
 WHITE PAINTED FENCE
 WITH THE ROSES IN BLOOM
 AND A FAN WAS TURNIN'
 IN EVERY ROOM.

She put a jukebox in the parlor to sorta help break the ice. A feller could ask a girl for a dance, or if he held back a little, she'd ask him. And pretty soon they'd get a little business on. Three dollars worth. You see, that was back in the old days . . . when Roosevelt nooky was cheaper than Carter coffee.

(SLICK DUDE *enters. The SLICK DUDE swaggers into the Center of the room. HE sees himself as Rudolph Valentino, Marlon Brando, or probably Elvis since this is rural. HE looks around, focuses on GIRL 2, who is beside him. Does a sleight of hand and takes a cigarette from behind her ear. SHE giggles. HE strikes a kitchen match on his fly, lights up and holds the match for her to blow out. The SHY KID is watching and SLICK DUDE hands him the hot match, which HE takes, and reacts in pain as Slick Dude swaggers over to the juke box.*)

BANDLEADER. (*Continued.*)
 WHEN THE SUN WOULD GO DOWN
 IN A WILD BLAZE OF LIGHT
 THEN THE LITTLE HOUSE LAY
 IN THE STILLNESS OF NIGHT

FIREFLIES WOULD FLICKER
AND FLOAT IN THE GLOOM
WHILE A FAN WAS TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM

(EVERYONE *Onstage freezes. We hear the CHOIR in the distance and approaching. Then THEY appear, saint-like, in robes, as if THEY were in another part of town.*)

CHOIR.

TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
THEY WERE TURNIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
FEVERS WERE A BURNIN'
THEY WERE BURNIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE
A WAY TO COOL DOWN.

(MISS WULLA JEAN sees GIRL 3 exposing her legs to the SHY KID and signals to be pushed over to confront and correct her. SHE shakes her cane at her and signals to be pushed Offstage.)

BANDLEADER. Miss Wulla Jean had a strict rule against competing for customers. And if she caught one of the girls flashing her wares a little more than she thought was ladylike, she raised nine kinds of hell. And she insisted that each girl check her customer real good for the clap and wash him off with soap and warm water. Some of the fellas claimed that was the best part.

(In the upstairs room behind venetian blinds, GIRL 1 is washing the FARMER's privates in a hand basin. His back is to the audience and HE is wearing long johns as well as his straw hat. When SHE has finished her task, HE grabs her from behind.)

BANDLEADER. (Continued.) But you didn't have to worry about catchin' nothin' here like you did with them freelancin' girls down in Galveston.

(SHE pushes him away.)

GIRL 1. Now I told you honey, I gotta have my three dollars first. Miss Wulla Jean don't allow no honeyfuggin' till I pay my rent.

(The FARMER picks up a bag HE has carefully brought along.)

BANDLEADER. It wasn't always easy to come up with three dollars. Especially during the hard times.

(The FARMER pulls a chicken out of the bag and holds it out proudly to barter. HE breaks into a mock chicken sound as HE presents it.)

FARMER.
POC, POC, POC, POC.

(GIRL 1 looks disgusted.)

GIRL 1. Well you just keep the chickens in the bag and I'll take them out back soon as you're finished. *(GIRL 1 goes about her job with resolution, embraces him. HE turns her around, SHE understands.)*

BANDLEADER. And so the girls began accepting poultry in trade. And that's how the place got its name, The Chicken Ranch. And if you grew up anywhere in Texas, you knew at an early age that they were selling something out there other than pullets.

(As the tempo picks up, the FARMER lifts her onto his thighs and THEY rock together in tempo. SHE rides him not unlike a circus girl riding a pony.)

The SHY KID dumps GIRL 2, grabs GIRL 3 and THEY go upstairs together.

GIRL 2, *disgusted, makes a pass at SLICK DUDE. But GIRL 5 arrives late and HE immediately goes for her, takes off his belt and pops her playfully from behind as THEY go to her room.*

The Traveling Salesman and GIRL 4 are still dancing.)

CHOIR & COWBOYS & BANDLEADER.
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
THEY WERE TURNIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
FEVERS WERE A BURNIN'
THEY WERE BURNIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE
A WAY TO COOL DOWN.

(GIRL 1 falls forward on her hands, the FARMER still between her skyward legs as He continues.)

CHOIR & COWBOYS & BANDLEADER *(Continued.)*
TWENTY FANS WERE HUMMIN'
THEY WERE HUMMIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE HUMMIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
CUSTOMERS WERE COMIN'
THEY WERE COMIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE A
WAY TO COOL DOWN.

(EVERYONE listens to the FARMER's cry.)

FARMER.	CHOIR.
I'M COMIN'! I'M	AHHHHHHHHHH
COMIN'! THANK YOU,	
THANK YOU, JESUS!	

(The FARMER gets dressed, GIRL 1 tidies herself up and is getting him out quickly.)

GIRL 2 tries to horn in on TRAVELING SALESMAN, He being the only male left unoccupied. No dice. He dances GIRL 4 up to her room.

GIRL 2 stomps off in anger.

The rooms are alive with activity which is stylized but suggestive of sexual behavior.

The FARMER is about to leave the house with the chicken in the burlap bag.

GIRL 1 calls him back. He takes out the chicken, holding it on high and presents it CENTER STAGE. SHE takes it.)

CHOIR, COWBOYS, BANDLEADER.
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
THEY WERE TURNIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE TURNIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
FEVERS WERE A BURNIN'
THEY WERE BURNIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE A
WAY TO COOL DOWN.

TWENTY FANS WERE HUMMIN'
THEY WERE HUMMIN'
TWENTY FANS WERE HUMMIN'
IN EVERY ROOM
CUSTOMERS WERE COMIN'
THEY WERE COMIN'
AND THEY HAD TO HAVE
A WAY TO COOL DOWN.

(Everything freezes except FARMER and GIRL 1)

GIRL 1. Y'all come back now, ya hear.

(The BAND ends song as GIRL 1 exits with chicken.

Blackout. The faint light Center and Spot on BANDLEADER.

A GIRL pushes the empty wheelchair slowly to center and leaves it there in the half light.)

BANDLEADER. Well, that was in the old days. But about ten years ago, Miss Wulla Jean died. She bequeathed the place in her will to her favorite working girl, Mona Stangley, who you might say had worked her way up from the bottom. Mona pretty well carried out the old traditions of The Chicken Ranch. And that's probably why they lived in peace with the town for so long. That is, until about a year ago, Thanksgiving . . .

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

Two girls, ANGEL and SHY, walk up to the porch of the Chicken Ranch. ANGEL is the most obvious-looking whore you'll see all night. SHE has a wild hairdo, and city whore clothes, bright makeup, the works. SHE wears dark glasses. SHY is the opposite. A country girl, young, fresh off the farm, maybe even gawky. SHY hesitates outside the place.

ANGEL. You don't have to worry about nothin'. Just let me do th' talkin'. And try not to act like you just rode in on a load of turkeys.

SHY. I'm scared.

ANGEL. Well, take off then. Nobody's holdin' a gun to your head.

SHY. I know it. *(ANGEL checks her makeup in a hand mirror, lifts her glasses exposing a black eye.)*

ANGEL. I shoulda just let you find your own way out here. *(SHY nods.)*

ANGEL. *(Continued.)* Out of all them people on the bus how come you to ask *me* where this place was at?

SHY. You just looked like you might know.

ANGEL. Thanks a lot! Takes one to know one! Come on, follow me. *(Angel wiggles sexily into the parlor of the Chicken Ranch. SHY strides in behind her like SHE is following a plow, and hangs by the front door, not sure whether SHE wants to be there or not.)*

ANGEL. *(Continued.)* Hello! Is the Madam here?

(JEWEL, an older black woman, comes out of the kitchen. SHE eyes ANGEL.)

JEWEL. She ever hear you call her "Madam" and you won't stay here. She got more pride than the U.S. Marines. We calls her "Miss Mona."

ANGEL. Well, okay. Can we see her?

JEWEL I don't suppose you want to sell her no Tupperware. *(SHE laughs uproariously at her own joke.)* Hold on a minute, honey, I'll get her. *(Calling.)* Miss Mona, there some girls down here to see you.

MISS MONA. All right, Jewel, I'll be right down.

(ANGEL wiggles over to the STAGE LEFT stairs and perches herself, showing a knee. In other words, showing her wares for the interview.)

SHY takes a pickup truck rear view mirror out of her brown paper sack and checks her appearance, maybe pinching her cheeks for color.

MONA enters at the head of the stairs beautifully coiffed like Tammy Wynette and outfitted in a theatrical lounging costume.)

MISS MONA. (Continued.) Well now . . . What happened? Did the Texas Rangers raid Galveston again. (SHE notices SHY standing by the door.) Or was it a hurricane? I never had girls linin' up for jobs before.

ANGEL. Are you hirin' on anybody?

MISS MONA. Maybe. And maybe not. I'm kind of choosy about who lives in this house. Right, Jewel?

JEWEL. Yes, M'am.

(MONA crosses to ANGEL, takes off the dark glasses, exposing black eye.)

MISS MONA. Pimp whup up on you, honey?

ANGEL. I wadn't holdin' out on him!

MISS MONA. Uh huh! (To SHY.) Honey, you comin' or goin'?

SHY. Yes, M'am. I mean I'm comin'.

MISS MONA. Then why don't you take a seat?

SHY. Yes, M'am. (SHE shuffles over to the STAGE RIGHT stair and sits.)

MISS MONA. (Sitting in wheel chair, CENTER.) So. How much experience have you all had?

ANGEL. Amateur or professional? Ha, ha!

MISS MONA. For money, hunny!

ANGEL. (Sobering.) About four years.

MISS MONA. (To SHY.) How about you?

SHY. None.

MISS MONA. None, huh? Well, Thursday I'm gonna have a whole house full of college boys and they probably hadn't had none either.

ANGEL. College boys?

MISS MONA. Yeah, the winning seniors from the Texas Aggie-Texas U team gets treated to a night here on Thanksgiving by their Alumni Association.

ANGEL. That sounds like fun.

MISS MONA. It's bad for a workin' girl to get to enjoying it too much.

ANGEL. The Johns usually see to it that I don't.

MISS MONA. Hunny! We don't call 'em "Johns" here. We don't call 'em "Tricks." Not even "Customers," no we call 'em . . . Guests.

ANGEL. Guests?

MISS MONA. Guests. We make 'em feel at home, without makin' 'em feel at home, if you get what I mean.

ANGEL. (*Grinning.*) I think I do. Well, to tell the truth. I'm sick of workin' spots all over the state. Movin' all the time from Hotel to Motel. Pimps beatin' you up, takin' your money, bell-boys makin' you give 'em free pussy.

MISS MONA. Now hold it right there. I don't allow my girls to talk like that. Couldn't you just say "free samples?"

ANGEL. (*A bit dubious.*) Yes, M'am. Anyway, I couldn't save any money, and these pimps . . . these uh . . . sample salesmen?

MISS MONA. Now that's very ladylike.

ANGEL. Anyhow, they took my money and they beat my ass . . . my person, and half the time when I did get busted they wouldn't even be around to bail me out.

MISS MONA. I don't want nobody around here who's got law troubles. They after you for anything?

ANGEL. Aw, no, M'am! I'm clean as a whistle! (*SHE whistles. Looks as innocent as possible. MISS MONA stares at her steadily.*)

MISS MONA. How many times you been vagged for prostitution?

ANGEL. Not many.

MISS MONA. *How* many?

ANGEL. Maybe . . . six? Prob'ly not even that many.

MISS MONA. Hot checks?

ANGEL. No.

MISS MONA. Assault?

ANGEL. None of that. (*MONA checks her neck.*)

MISS MONA. Clawin' and scratchin'?

ANGEL. I told you everything.

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