

Townies (Best Of)

A friend of mine lives in two different worlds. To support his chronic ranching habit he does double duty as a businessman in the city. As a result, his calf brandings are a mixture of cowboys and “townies”. The city dwellers are invited to take part and share a steak in hopes that by co-mingling we might all come to a better understanding of the opposite worlds we inhabit.

Making peace with the townies sounds good in theory but if you try this on your own be advised you may need extra insurance in case one of the townies breaks a fingernail or scuffs a shoe. And their educated thirst demands that a wide assortment of white wine be kept slightly chilled. But the most important thing to remember is to not invite any antagonists like me to your cross cultural affair.

I have no idea why I was taken off the guest list of my friend’s branding but I do miss serving the townies fresh fried mountain oysters and then watching them turn green when I told them what they were. I especially enjoyed observing the stall fed tenderfeet in their soft shoes and shorts attempt to wrestle big calves to the ground. It was like watching a new pup with its first porcupine: they didn’t know where to start!

For the most part I found the townies to be nice folks. Their children assimilated well with the ranch kids, the wives helped prepare the noon meal and the men tried to make themselves useful. I had to admit I might not have performed as well on my first day on the job in their environment. All in all, it was a fair trade. We enjoyed their fellowship and in return for their bumps and bruises they got a cowboy experience to brag about at the next cocktail party.

Once in awhile, however, someone showed up that got under my skin like a sharp sliver. Reggie was such an irritant. He arrived in a shiny foreign convertible decked out in a tee shirt that indicated his past participation in a charity marathon. He wore a watch that must have cost more than 25 range cows on an up market and expensive sunglasses were perched atop his well oiled, shaved head.

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

It was obvious that Reginald wouldn't be doing any work that day, at least the kind where you get dirty. Instead, he rode the fence and did business on his cell phone with words so big we needed two dictionaries and an encyclopedia just to eavesdrop.

I immediately took a dislike to Reggie but did not let that interfere with the task at hand, which was to make friends with the townies. "Would you and your beautiful daughter like some mountain oysters," I snickered as I offered Reggie the tray.

"No thank you, for three reasons," said Reggie. "First, we are strict vegetarians. Secondly, we do not eat offensive body parts from cows, especially fried ones. And thirdly, this is NOT my daughter this is my wife."

"Oh."

In recounting this episode to my wife I could tell she thought I was exaggerating the extent of Reggie's rudeness. She also realized that in the spirit of the day she needed to undo the public relations damage I had done. So she approached Reggie about the time I was transforming a bull into a steer. Reginald looked in my direction and said, "What a smelly, disgusting creature. Why on earth would anyone like such a beast?"

"Firstly, you get used to the smell after awhile," said my wife. "Secondly, he is only occasionally disgusting. And thirdly, I'll have you know that HE is MY husband."

To which Reginald replied, "My dear lady, I was referring to the cow there on the ground. Not the idiot holding the knife."

"Oh."