

WYKOWSKI. I don't question orders, Sergeant. I just follow them.

TOOMEY. That's a good answer, Wykowski. It's a chicken-shit one, but a good answer . . . How about you, Epstein? You up to a fifteen mile walk around the swamp?

ARNOLD. . . . No, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. No??? Epstein's not up to it, men . . . Why is that, Epstein?

ARNOLD. We've been on a train for five days and five nights. We haven't had one good night's sleep since we left Fort Dix.

TOOMEY. I see . . . Okay. Fair enough, Epstein . . . You're excused from the hike. I appreciate a man who speaks up.

ARNOLD. Thank you, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. You get a good night's sleep just as soon as you've washed, scrubbed and shined every john, urinal and basin in the latrine. If it doesn't sparkle when we get back, then Wykowski and Selridge are going to do two hundred push-ups. That'll put you in good with the boys, Epstein . . . Anyone else care to stay home for the evening? . . . Okay then, let's get moving. Full field packs in front of barracks at twenty-four hundred hours, ready to march. LET'S GET CRACKING! (*They all jump up, except EPSTEIN.*) HOLD ON ONE GOD DAMN MINUTE!!! (*They all stop.*) Nobody—but NOBODY—leaves here with good U.S. Army chow untouched, uneaten and unfinished. You can sit there poking at it with your fork till it sprouts weeds, but by God, you will sit there until that tray is empty . . . Line up in front of me, trays extended for inspection. (*They quickly line up in front of TOOMEY in single file. WYKOWSKI is first. TOOMEY*

Toomey #2

Stuart

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BILOXI BLUES

looks into his tray.) Okay, Wykowski, move! (*SEL-
RIDGE is next.*) Right, Selridge, move. (*He follows
WYKOWSKI out. CARNEY is next. His food is un-
touched.*) Something wrong with your dinner, Carney?

stop

CARNEY. Yes, Sarge. It's the first food I was ever
afraid of.

TOOMEY. You'll like it about a month from now 'cause
that's how long you'll be sitting there. Back to your seat!
(*CARNEY glumly goes back and sits at the table. EU-
GENE steps in front of TOOMEY, tray extended.*) Don't
approve of our *cuisine*, Jerome?

EUGENE. It's not that, Sarge. It's a religious objection.
This is the week that my people fast for two days.

TOOMEY. This is March, Jerome. Rosh-Ahonah and
Yom Kippur are in September. I have an all-religion cal-
endar in my barracks room. Don't you try that shit on
me again!

EUGENE. It's a different holiday. It's called El Mala-
guena.

TOOMEY. El Malaguena??

EUGENE. It's for Spanish Jews.

TOOMEY. Carney!

CARNEY. Yes, Sarge?

TOOMEY. Put half your tray on to Jerome's.

CARNEY. (*smiles*) Yes, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. (*to EUGENE*) Eat in good health, Jerome,
and Happy El Malaguena to you. (*EUGENE sits as
CARNEY eagerly scrapes half his tray into EUGENE's.
EUGENE, looking miserable, sits. ARNOLD steps in
front of TOOMEY.*) Okay, Epstein, what's your story?
And don't tell me today is La Coocharacha.

ARNOLD. I have a legitimate excuse, Sergeant. I have
a digestive disorder, diagnosed as a nervous stomach.