RUSTLERS ON HORSEBACK

Rocky"LANE
HURLS A SIX-GUN SURPRISE IN
REPUBLIC PICTURES'LATEST WESTERN THRILLER
"RUSTLERS ON HORSEBACK"
THRILL TO THE TWO-FISTED ACTION AND SIX-GUN SURPRISES DEALT BY "ROCKY" LANE IN REPUBLIC PICTURES' NEW WESTERN DRAMA "RUSTLERS ON HORSEBACK"
RUSTLERS ON HORSEBACK

starring

ALLAN "ROCKY" LANE

And His Stallion

BLACK JACK

with

EDDY WALLER

ROY BARCROFT  CLAUDIA BARRETT

Directed by FRED C. BRANNON  Associate Producer GORDON KAY

Written by RICHARD WORMER

An Adaptation of A REPUBLIC PICTURE
FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE VAST TERRITORY THEY CAME -- THE TOUGHEST, MOST RUTHLESS MILERS IN THE WEST! AND THEY ALL WERE HEARING FOR THE REYNOLDS RANCH! WHAT BLOODY SCHEME WAS BEING HATCHED IN THOSE BROODING HILLS?

WHEN FIGHTING MARSHAL ROCKY LANE SULKED ON HIS SIX-GUNS AND SET OUT TO SOLVE THIS OMINOUS MYSTERY HE EXPECTED A HEAP OF TROUBLE, BUT HE NEVER DREAMED THAT FATE WAS PLANNING TO MAKE HIM AN ENEMY OF THE LAW AS THE DEADLIEST GUNSLINGER IN THE RANKS OF THE

RUSTLERS ON HORSEBACK!
Late one afternoon near Sloan Junction, a wandering peddler makes his way across the brush. Lost again! Doggone it! Just can’t seem to find my way. Wait! Here comes a rider. I’ll ask him for directions.

Hey, mister! Can you tell me the way to?

Suffering polecats! Just when I’m trying to stay out of sight that Whistled Galoot has to spot me.

Well I’ll be! He ducked into that brush like a scared rabbit when he heard my voice. Something must be up.

At that moment, Marshal Rocky Lane is closely watching the scene.

For a badman, with his reputation, Jake Cline is pretty shy about meeting folks. Let’s go, Black Jack! We don’t want to lose him.

Blast the luck! There’s that other hombre that’s been trailing me for two days. Let’s move, Bronco. We’re gonna make one more try at lobing him.

Just then—Looks like one of Cline’s bad days.
As Rocky dismounts to help the fallen rider, the peddler's wagon pulls up.

Hey! What's going on here? What are you doing to that feller?

Here, old-timer. Have a look at this badge and relax!

A marshal, eh? Anything I can do to help?

Yes, hand me a canteen. If you have one.

I'll do better than that. I ain't a doctor, but there's a few of nugget Clark's home remedies that should do the trick.

Say, what happened to him?

He ran into a tree, trying to shake me loose. His name's Jake Cline. He's wanted for robbery and murder.

Cline? I heard of him, but I didn't know he worked these parts. You taking him in?

Not yet. There've been reports of other gun-slingers drifting this way lately. I was ordered to trail Cline and find out where they're heading and why.

Then this ain't your regular territory?

No, it isn't. I usually work north of here. Lane's the name—Rocky Lane.

He's coming around. Look, let's not tell him I'm a lawman.

Krrmp! No questions. Not till I get through patching him up. He's shook up pretty bad.
COMING AROUND, EH? YOU SURE WERE IN A HURRY WHEN YOU RODE INTO THAT TREE.

I-I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE LAW.

THE LAW, EH?

DID YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO BE SCARED OF IT?

NOW LEAVE MY PATIENT ALONE. WHY DON'T YOU HELP MAKE CAMP? WE'LL HAVE TO STAY HERE TILL THAT FELLOW'S BETTER.

NO! I CAN'T STAY HERE. I GOTTA GET MOVING.

Yeah? Where to?

NOW YOU LEAVE HIM BE. HE CAN'T TALK WHY HE LOOKS LIKE HE MIGHT BE SUFFERING FROM A PROLAPSE OF THE FOURTH MEDULLA OBLONGATA.

ALL RIGHT, I'LL ROUND UP SOME FIREWOOD AND THEN HELP YOU SET UP CAMP.

HERE, HAVE SOME OF THIS. IT'LL FIX YOU UP IN A HURRY.

THANKS, PARDNER.

A few sips of Nugget's strange brew and Clune doubles up in agony.

O-O-OH! I MUST'VE BUSTED SOMETHING WHEN I HIT THAT TREE. GASP! I'M DYING OLD-TIMER!

NOW, NOW! 'TAIN'T NOTHING BUT...

IT'S NO USE. I'M GOING FAST.

LISTEN! I'VE ALWAYS HEARD A MAN'S FORGIVEN ANYTHING IF HE TELLS THE TRUTH JUST BEFORE HE...
All my life I made a living with a gun. Even now I was on my way to do a job at the Reynolds' Ranch.

Hm!

But abruptly the "dying" badman sits erect! Hey! I'm all right! Nothing hurts me now. Sure I fed you an old Indian recipe — mighty painful for a few minutes, but it's great for bruises, sprains and contusions.

Never mind all that! I'm getting out of here.

And when Rocky returns to camp.

What happened to Clune? Where'd he go?

He's gone. Guess the dose I gave him was pretty powerful. For a while Clune thought he was dying.

He confessed to be a gun-slinger. Said he was on his way to a place called the Reynolds' Ranch.

The Reynolds' Ranch? Thanks, old-timer. Come on, Blackjack, let's go!

He's got a head start, but he won't get far on that nag he's riding!
Black Jack closes the distance in short order, and

This is where you get off, friend.

Black Jack: I'll get you there all right. Right now we're rounding up the horses and making camp for the night. We'll start north in the morning.

On your feet, Clune. Your first guess was right. I am a marshal and you've got a date with a jail up north.

If you get me there.

Clune: Over a small brush fire Rocky prepares a meager supper. Then here, I'd better put these on. I like to eat my meals in peace.

Rocky: Ow! Not my right hand! I hurt it when I fell from my horse.

All right we'll put it on your left hand. Mighty nice of you to leave my right hand free.

You: Because that gives me a chance to reach for your gun.

But Rocky's left hand moves with lightning speed, and

I draw pretty quick with my left hand, too! Know any more tricks, Clune?

Owww!
NOW THAT WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, HOW ABOUT TELLING ME WHY YOU'RE HEADED FOR THE REYNOLDS RANCH? IT MIGHT BE EASIER ON YOU IF YOU TELL ME WHO HIRED YOU AND WHY.

I'VE TOLD YOU ALL I'M GOING TO, LAWMAN. NOW, LEMME ALONE!

DURING THE NIGHT, A SHADOW MOVES IN THE BRUSH!

UN-OH! THAT'S BAD... I'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE BOSS, PRONTO.

LATER, AT A RANCH HOUSE MILES AWAY

NEY, LEO—that new guy—CLUNE—what's he look like?

HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I NEVER SAW HIM. I HIRED HIM FOR HIS GUN NOT HIS LOOKS, BUT I TOLD YOU YOU'D FIND HIM ON THE EAST TRAIL.

THEN I FOUND HIM, ALL RIGHT. ABOUT FIFTEEN MILES DOWN THE TRAIL—HANDCUFFED TO A MARSHAL! I DIDN'T KNOW HOW YOU WANTED ME TO HANDLE IT.

YOU FOOL! YOU SHOULD HAVE USED YOUR GUN! WHAT DO YOU THINK I PAY YOU FOR?

TAKE BEAD WITH YOU AND GET BACK THERE! GET THAT MARSHAL! AND BRING CLUNE BACK HERE WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED.

ALL RIGHT, STRAYKIN', TAKE IT EASY.

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

HERE, CLUNE, MIGHT AS WELL TAKE THESE OFF YOUR HANDS NOW. THANKS FOR NOTHING.
Suddenly...

CLUNE! THEY GOT HIM! I'D BETTER DUCK INTO THIS BRUSH!

ARRGH!

HORSES! THE KILLERS MUST BE HEADING THIS WAY.

ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE COVERED. GET 'EM UP-HIGH!

FOR A GUY THAT JUST GOT LOOSE OF THE LAW, YOU AIN'T VERY GRATEFUL, CLUNE.

TAKE IT EASY, PARDNER. STRAYKIN SENT US. I'M MURRAY AND THIS IS BANDE. WE'RE FROM THE REYNOLDS RANCH.

ON! OH, YEAH!—THE REYNOLDS RANCH.

THEY THINK I'M CLUNE.

I SPOTTED THIS CAMP LAST NIGHT, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH WAS YOU. SO I RODE BACK TO CHECK WITH STRAYKIN AND HE NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE EITHER.

THEM HOW DID YOU KNOW WHICH WAS ME?

ANYONE KNOWS A LAWMAN HANDCUFFS HIS PRISONER TO HIS LEFT HAND TO KEEP HIS RIGHT HAND FREE FOR HIS GUN. YOU WERE THE GUY ON THE LEFT. THAT MAKES YOU CLUNE.

SMART FIGURING NOW HOW ABOUT BURYING THE MARSHAL?

BANDE WILL ATTEND TO THAT LET'S GET GOING. STRAYKIN'S WAITING FOR YOU BACK AT THE RANCH.
SOMETHING I DON'T LIKE ABOUT THIS I HEARD A SHOT COMING FROM THIS WAY. SAY, MAYBE THAT LAWMAN'S IN HOT WATER.

BACK AT THE REYNOLDS' RANCH, RODY MEETS THE BOSS OF THE SPREAD. JAKE CLUNE, MEET LEO STRAYMEN. GET US SOME COFFEE, MURRAY.

HEARD YOU TANGLED WITH THE LAW, CLUNE.

THAT'S FIRST HISTORY, STRAYMEN, AND I'M INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE NOW, ABOUT THE SET-UP HERE.

JUST THEN NUGGET!

REACH, HOMBRE! OR I'LL GRILL YOU LIKE A CHEESE GRATER!

GEE! SURE GLAD TO SEE YOU IN ONE PIECE, PARTNER. I WAS AFRAID.

NOW YOU REACH, POP AND FAST!

ULP!

THAT'S BETTER. NOW WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

IT'S ALL RIGHT. THAT'S NUGGET CLARK, MY SIDEKICK. HE TROUT AFTER ME LOOKING INNOCENT IN HIS PEDDLER'S RIG, AND KEEPS ME FROM BEING JUMPED.
This is Leo Straykin. The man we're working for, nugget. The Reynolds Ranch. Remember?

Oh - sure! I reckon my memory's slipping a bit, eh, Rocky?

Rocky? I thought his name was Jake Clune.

Er - yeah, that's right, but we call him Rocky because of all the boulders he's broken up at the penitentiary.

Ha-ha! That's pretty good, all right, Rocky. We were talking about the set-up here.

Whew! That was close.

Operating out of this ranch, we're going to have the biggest gang of raiders the West has ever seen. There'll be two hundred men hitting the railroads that ship gold east, the rich ranches to the south, and everything else worth raiding.

We'll start as soon as we get money for the extra horses and guns we need. There's a dude heading here by stage with a hundred thousand dollars, and our orders are to meet him.

Orders from whom, Straykin? I like to know who I'm working for.

You get your orders from me, Clune. That's all you gotta know now.

As for you, Pop, we're short a cook, think you can fill the bill?

Why there ain't a better cook west of the Pecos. I can cook French, Spanish and New Orleans - with a few tricks of my own thrown in.
Just so you cook better than what we've been getting. There's the kitchen. Help yourself.

Come on, Nugget. I'll give you a hand.

Sorry to barge in like that. Rocky, that ruckus at your camp had me worried. Say, what happened to Clune, anyhow?

They shot him. They figured he was the marshal, and I was Clune.

Well, you've got to run them in. You heard what Straykin's planning.

Yes, I heard. But let them make the first move. I want to make sure I've got them all - including the top man.

Just then...

Hey, Clune! Come on, get your guns ready. One of the boys spotted the stage coming in ahead of time. We're gonna lighten the load before it gets in.

You mean that dude you're expecting?

That's right, and bring that side-kick of yours. I'd like to see how he operates. I'll find a horse for him.

All right, Straykin. We'll meet you out front.

I've always heard a marshal's job was varied and interesting.

First time I ever had to hold up a stagecoach in the line of duty.

Come on, gun-slinger!
On the Junction trail

Murray and Beare and Jed,
Get down there and run that
stage into the road block.
Rocky, you and the old goat
cover me from this side.
When I signal you,
start shooting.

Here comes the stage now,
all right, Nugget. As soon
as those owlnoots
jump the coach
we jump them.

But there’s
four of
them! Ulp!
Say, how’d I
get mixed up
in this
anyhow?

But as the stage heads
into the ambush, Straykin’s
voice suddenly rings out.

Don’t know and I don’t
care. I’m getting out of
here while the getting’s
good.

There was someone on that stage
that Straykin knew. Probably the
man who’s giving him orders.

Now! Just a
change in plans.
We’re riding into
Sloan Junction
ahead of them.

Wait! Don’t
Shoot! Let ’em
Pass.

Get cold feet,
Straykin?

We’ll take the old cut-out to
town. Murray, you, Beare and Jed
get back to the ranch and
straighten up the place.

Right, boss!

Later, as the stage arrives at Sloan
Junction...

Mr. Josh Taylor?

Why, yes. I’m
Josh Taylor.
I'm Leo Straykin, owner of the Reynolds Ranch. Thought I'd take you out to see our spread. It's just the place for those settlers you're buying for.

I hope you're right, Mr. Straykin, but after that hold-up on the edge of town...

Yes! But remember, they let us pass unharmed. Oh well, that's the west, and westward ho! As Kingsley said.

And quite a book, too. Selling at a dollar a volume—bound in buckram.

You're not selling books now, Mr. Paaradine. You're selling a ranch.

Quite so! And for five per cent commission. I don't mind saying the price is ridiculously low at one hundred thousand, eh? By the way, do you have the money with you?

Well, yes and no. I'll explain later—in private.

Oh, I want you to meet a top hand of mine, Rocky Gline, and my cook, Nugget Clark. This is Josh Taylor and...

Johnny Bennett. I'm a surveyor, working for Mr. Taylor.

And this is Ken Jordan. He's a lawyer. I thought it was a good idea to have him check over your title.

Understand you bought the place from a man named Reynolds—now deceased.

Er—yeah! Nugget, pick up a rig at the stable. These folks'll be staying at the ranch.
ROCKY, I want you to meet Mr. Parradine. Book salesman, by trade, selling the complete Shakespeare, The Rancher's Encyclopedia and great works of great minds. And good ranches at good prices, eh? Quite so. Ha! Ha! As a side line, of course, but the Reynolds Ranch should hardly require selling.

Just then

Hey, you're from the Reynolds Ranch. I got a letter here for a Jack Reynolds. Know him?

ER—YEAH! I'll take care of it

That letter seems to have him worried.

Naw! It's nothing come on, let's get moving.

What's the matter, trouble brewing, Strakin?

Back at the ranch

Now, about the money for the ranch. I didn't want to carry a hundred thousand in cash, so my brother's holding the money for me back in Jackson County and he'll give it up only when I authorize him to.

There might be a hole in your scheme though, Mr. Taylor. There's enough money involved to make some men get awful augh.

Sure! What's to stop some hombre from forcing you to write a note to your brother and.
I'm afraid that wouldn't work! Only one thing would make my brother send the money. Here, look!

If he receives the right one of these objects, the money will be here in a week. Any one of the others, and he'll bring a posse.

By the way, did I mention that my brother's a deputy sheriff? Well, gentlemen, a good night's sleep, and in the morning we'll look over the ranch.

E next morning

Look, Straykin, when do we get this hundred thousand? What are you going to do about that guy Taylor?

That's none of your business, Clune. You're asking too many questions.

Which you can't answer until you talk to the boss. Is that it?

I told you, Clune, you're taking orders from me. Now stand up and get ready to help that kid, Bennett, with his surveying.

Good morning, Straykin. Jordan's got some legal business to attend to, but I'm ready to look over the ranch.

Fine! I've got the horses waiting outside. Let's go.
Rocky helps the young surveyor at the ranch line.

Take that rod on down the trail. I'll tell you where to stop and I'll take a sight on you from here.

All right, Johnny.

But after Rocky was gone...

There they are, Straykin and the others. Now's my chance.

On a nearby rise.

I must say the ranch lives up to your promises, Pardner.

You've even more in store, yet—pasture after pasture, each prettier than the other, water, trees and...

Eeeow! Buck! Someone's shooting at us!

EEEOOOOOOOOOO!

That shot came from here. Hey! What's that lying on the ground?

I'd better pocket this. Here comes Straykin.

Somebody took a shot at me. Where's that kid, Johnny?

He was taking a sight on me when we heard the shooting. He probably spotted whoever it was and lit out after him.
Shortly afterward, at the ranch

HELLO, NUGGET! BETTER GET SET. WE'RE EXPECTING A VISITOR A GUNMAN.

YOU MEAN THE ONE THAT NEARLY PUT A BULLET THROUGH STRAYHIN? THEY SENT WORD FOR ALL THE HANDS TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR HIM.

YES! AND I HAVE AN IDEA WHO IT WAS. HE DROPPED THIS SURVEYOR'S TRANSIT AS HE RODE OFF.

LOOK'S LIKE A TELESCOPE. HEY? IT'S BEEN SLOTTED TO FIT A GUN BARREL.

WITH ONE OF THESE, A MAN COULD REALLY SHOOT ACCURATELY AT SOME DISTANCE.

HE DID! ALL RIGHT, HERE WE COMES NOW. HE'S HEADED FOR THE FRONT DOOR.

IT'S YOUNG BENNET. QUIET! WHAT'S HE DOING AT THAT DESK?

HE'S MONKEYING WITH THAT PICTURE HOW HEY? THERE'S A SAFE IN THAT WALL, AND HE'S OPENING IT.

ALL RIGHT, NUGGET! IT'S TIME WE CALLED A SHOWDOWN.
DON'T MOVE, JACK! AND DON'T TRY ANYTHING. NUGGET, YOU KEEP A LOOKOUT.

PRETTY GIRL! IS IT YOUR WIFE, JACK?

WHAT'S THIS "JACK" BUSINESS? MY NAME'S JOHNNY.

AND I FIGURE YOU'RE JACK REYNOLDS. YOU MUST'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE OR YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT SAFE COMBINATION.

WELL, THAT DOESN'T MEAN...

BESIDES, I SEE YOU WERE READING THAT LETTER THAT CAME FOR JACK REYNOLDS AT THE JUNCTION YESTERDAY. OR DO YOU ALWAYS READ OTHER PEOPLE'S MAIL?

ALL RIGHT! I'M JACK REYNOLDS. WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

NOTHING, EXCEPT I HAPPEN TO BE A MARSHAL, AND I HAPPEN TO KNOW YOU TOOK A SHOT AT STRAININ.

WELL, HE KILLED MY FATHER AND STOLE THE RANCH.

GOT ANY POSITIVE EVIDENCE OF THAT?

I HAD HOPED TO FIND SOME PROOF IN THAT SAFE, BUT THERE'S NOTHING LEFT EXCEPT THAT PICTURE OF MY WIFE, CAROL, AND A FEW KEEPSAKES.

WHAT MADE YOU COME OUT HERE TO INVESTIGATE?

WELL, DAD WAS IN THE BEST OF HEALTH AND THEN, ABOUT A MONTH AGO, I SUDDENLY GOT WORD HE DIED. HE SUPPOSEDLY SOLD THE RANCH, YET I NEVER SAW ANY MONEY FROM THE DEAL.
FAWCETT MOVIE COMIC

BESIDES, WHY WOULD HE SELL THE PLACE WHEN HE SENT ME BACK TO STUDY FARMING AT COLLEGE IN MISSOURI?

THAT'S STILL NOT PROOF.

IT'S PROOF.
ENough FOR ME.
I'M SURE ABOUT STRAYKIN', AND I'M GOING TO GET HIM.

AND THEN I'D HAVE TO TAKE YOU IN FOR IT. LISTEN, JACK, THERE'S SOMEBODY BEHIND STRAYKIN'. IT'S MY JOB TO GET HIM.

YOUR JOB IS TO KEEP ON BEING JOHNNY BENNETT.

THAT LETTER DOESN'T TIP HIM OFF TO WHO YOU ARE, DOES IT?

NO, IT'S FROM MY WIFE, CAROL. SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT I MIGHT DO.

SO AM I—UNLESS YOU'RE WILLING TO WORK WITH ME.

ALL RIGHT, THEN. I WON'T TRY ANYTHING ON MY OWN.

YOU CAN'T BE FOUND HERE. I TOLD STRAYKIN' YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE GUY THAT SHOT AT HIM. GET MOVING NOW. FIND TAYLOR AND STAY WITH HIM—AND DON'T LET HIM CLOSE THE RANCH DEAL!

YOU, TOO, NUGGET! GET OUT BACK. AS SOON AS JACK GETS CLEAR, BAING OUR HORSES OUT FRONT.
But as Rocky and Nugget leave...

It's Cline and his side-kick, Wonder, what they were doing here at the ranch. Straymiah ordered everyone out to hunt for that trigger-happy gunman.

A few miles down the trail...

Look, Nugget! There's a girl driving a buckboard toward the ranch.

A girl? Eh? I never knew one of them to do you any harm.

This one can. She's the girl whose picture was in the safe! She's Mrs. Jack Reynolds, and she's needed for the ranch.

It ain't healthy for it around there! Come on!

Oh! Please let me go. I'm not carrying any money.

Whoa!

We're not going to harm you, ma'am. We just want to help you.

I happen to know you're Mrs. Reynolds. You see, I'm a marshal working under cover at the Reynolds' ranch. I just talked to Jack.

Jack? How is he? He hasn't done anything wrong, has he? Has anything happened to him?

He's safe for the time being, but you're not. Look, Mrs. Reynolds, I'm going to have Nugget drive you back to Sloan Junction. He'll explain the situation on the way.

Nugget, get her a room at the hotel and please, ma'am, stay out of sight.

You'd better get back to the ranch, Rocky.
Rocky reports to Straykin

So you didn't spot anything, eh? Well, it wasn't a bumblebee that made that hole in my hat.

It was probably one of your men being funny, Straykin. I hope those roughnecks understand they're through here when I take over.

So you've decided to take the place?

Well, I've seen enough to...

ER - HAS JOHNNY FINISHED THE SURVEYING, MR. TAYLOR?

No, I haven't. Besides, we haven't heard from Mr. Taylor's lawyer. He's still in town checking the title.

Well, suppose I go into the junction and hurry things along meanwhile, Leg. You can try guessing which one of those little gadgets Mr. Taylor is going to send to his brother.

Even if he did guess right, I wouldn't tell him. Come on, Johnny! Let's go up to my room and check your reports.

When Nugget returns to the ranch

Hey you! Where've you been?

Over at Sloan Junction buying some cooking supplies.

A mighty funny thing, your riding off just after that fellow took a shot at me.

He was riding with Clune, here. Last I saw of him, that's right. He said he needed something in town, so I let him ride in. Anything wrong with that?

I don't like your letting him go against my orders.
I don't mind taking orders, Straynin - from the top man.

I hired you! For the last time, you're taking orders from me.

This guy's been talking pretty loud - and pretty often. Maybe we ought to settle this right now.

I'm in a spot. I'll have to work fast.

I don't like guns pointed at me, mister.

Why you - oof!

Maybe you ought to calm down, friend.

Hold it, Murray, we can settle this later. I don't want anyone getting wise to our deal until we get the money from Taylor.

Looks like somebody's wise already!

Don't shoot, you fool! He's the boss!

That's right, I'm the boss. And I don't like the way things are going, Straynin. I just saw Joaquin at the junction. He's been talking to a girl who says she's Mrs. Jack Reynolds. He was coming here to tell Taylor.
I told him she was a troublemaker, so he's going to check further before talking. That gives us time to get rid of the girl. I've got two men guarding her room at the hotel.

Now you get to the junction and make sure no one sees her again.

Just a minute, Parradine. I've got a better idea.

I get it.

This badge I took from the marshal who tried to arrest me yesterday—I could pin it on and get that girl out of town quietly.

You're right, Cline. All right, get moving. Here comes Taylor.

Rocky draws Nugget into the kitchen.

You heard them. They're holding Mrs. Reynolds prisoner. We can't move until we free her. Now I want you to get out of here as quietly as you can, and...

A moment later.

Anybody know the express hours? I have a package to send and I want Johnny to take it into Sloan Junction.

Why, yes. The stage leaves in a couple of hours. Rocky can ride in with him. He's heading for the junction anyhow.

I'll saddle up a horse, Rocky, and meet you up front.

Don't worry, Parradine. I'll take care of everything.
Out as Rocky and Jack mount their horses.

That badge, he's putting in his pocket. He's a lawman! The jig's up!

Hey, boss! That guy is a lawman. I saw him totin' a badge.

Yea! We know, Murray. It's part of a plan to get rid of Mrs. Reynolds. Rocky took the badge from that marshal you shot.

But me couldn't have! Why, he never went near that dead hombre. I had my eye on him all the time.

Come on! We'd better check on this. Let's talk to that sidekick of his.

Hey's gone!

Murray! You ride into the junction and warn the guards. Quick!

Don't worry, Leo, we've got the old man, and we'll get the money.

Meanwhile:

Hi, Rocky! Hitched up an extra team just in case we have to do some running. We still going after Carol?

Carol?!

Easy, Jack! I didn't want to tell you, but your wife's at the hotel. Staryman's men have her under guard, so we'll have to move carefully.

Someone's coming, Rocky.
Just then

WHAT'S WRONG, JORDAN? YOU CAN SPEAK FREELY.
ROCKY IS AN UNDERCOVER MARSHAL.

THANK GOODNESS! YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. I'M ALMOST CERTAIN STRAYKIN DOESN'T OWN THE RANCH. HE'S TRYING TO CHEAT MR. TAYLOR.

WE KNOW THAT, BUT IF YOU GO YELLING IT AROUND, YOU AND TAYLOR ARE AS GOOD AS DEAD.

BUT, ROCKY, THEY WON'T HURT TAYLOR UNTIL THEY GET HIS MONEY.

UNLESS THEY FIND OUT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO GET IT. JORDAN, GET OUT THERE AND STAY WITH TAYLOR, AND DON'T LET HIM BUT THAT RANCH UNTIL WE GET BACK.

ALL RIGHT, ROCKY. I'LL TRY.

IT'LL BE GETTING DARK SOON, SO GET YOUR WAGON INTO TOWN, NUGGET, AND KEEP IT IN THE SHADOWS NEAR THE HOTEL. JACK AND I WILL RIDE AHEAD.

When Jordan reaches the ranch...

MR. STRAYKIN FEELS YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH TIME TO MAKE A DECISION. HE WANTS AN ANSWER.

NOW, PARRAOINE, WE CAN'T BE TOO HASTY. REMEMBER, IT ISN'T MY MONEY THAT'S INVOLVED.

YOU TALK TOO MUCH, YOU OLD BILLY-GOAT.

NO, NO!

OUT OF MY WAY, YOU SHyster!
HAND OVER THOSE LITTLE DO FUNNIES YOU CARRY IN YOUR POCKET.

HERE, FOR ALL THE GOOD THEY'LL DO YOU!

HEY! HE'S HOLDING OUT THERE WERE FIVE GADGETS AND NOW THERE ARE ONLY FOUR! THE BIG BRASS KEY IS MISSING.

THAT LITTLE PACKAGE HE GAVE JOHNNY TO SHIP! HE MUST'VE BEEN IN THERE.

ALL RIGHT, TAYLOR! HAND OVER THOSE KID WITH THE MARSHAL.
THE KID'S WITH THE MARSHAL. WE'VE GOT TO GET IT AND PICK UP THE MONEY OURSELVES, WE CAN'T TAKE CHANCES.

Murray and the guard rush around the corner, and...

THERE'S HIS HORSE, BUT I DON'T SEE.

NUGGET, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO TIE UP THOSE HOMBRES. WE'RE GOING UP TO GET CAROL.

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE.

Meanwhile, Murray has warned the guard at the hotel.

IT'S THAT KID, JOHNNY!

HEY, YOU! WHERE'S THAT GUY YOU WERE RIDING WITH?

CLUNE? HE'S AROUND THE CORNER TYING UP HIS HORSE.
I'M CLUNE. STRAYLIN SENT ME WHERE'S THE GIRL?

SHE'S IN ROOM FOUR.

STRAYLIN WANTS TO GET RID OF HER. I'M TAKING HER OUT OF HERE. YOU WAIT OUT HERE AND COVER THE STAIRS.

RIGHT!

JACK, WE'VE GOT TO WORK FIRST. I'LL TRY TO CLEAR THE WAY WHILE YOU TWO GET OUT TO NUGGET'S WAGON. HE'LL GET YOU OUT OF TOWN.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, ROCKY? YOU CAN'T STAY HERE ALONE.

I GET PAID FOR THIS. IT COMES WITH THE BADGE. YOUR JOB IS TO TAKE CARE OF CAROL.

WHAT'LL I DO ABOUT THIS PACKAGE MR. TAYLOR GAVE ME TO MAIL?

OOPS! GUESS I CRUSHED IT BY ACCIDENT.

LOOK! WHY, THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE BUT AN OLD-FASHIONED HOUSE KEY.

YEAH! A KEY TO THE CEMETERY.

IF PARRADINE AND STRAYLIN DISCOVER THAT TAYLOR SENT THIS TO HIS BROTHER, THEY'LL HAVE NO REASON TO KEEP HIM ALIVE. WE'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST. I'M GOING TO GET THAT GUARD.

As Rocky steps into the corridor...

STRAYLIN AND HIS GANG! UP THE STAIRS, BOYS! GET THAT LAWMAN!
Rocky jumps back into the room and bars the door.

Hey, Nugget! Bring your wagon over here.

Okay, Rocky.

Seconds later

I'm all right, Carol! That canvas broke my fall. Come on, you're next.

Out in the hallway...

They're making a getaway with the girl. I'm going after them. You get that Marshal!

I'm coming in, Marshal! And Taylor's right in front of me.

Don't shoot, Rocky! Don't shoot!

I'll take you on first, Straynin - alone.
Shoot, Bill! Shoot! He's got my back to the door. I'm a dead duck if I don't move fast.

Aargh! Yow!

That's the way you boys wanted it.

Meanwhile...

They're just about in sight. Nugget, but out of gun range.

Right! I'm gonna slow down on the other side of this hill. You grab your wife and jump for it.

Thanks, Nugget! And good luck.

Don't worry. I'll lose them.

Just then...

It's Rocky! And boy, am I glad to see him.

It's that Lawman! He got away from straykin' somebody. Keep going, men. I want him at any cost.

Suddenly...

The wagon's broken loose. It's heading down the embankment.
I've got to save nugget before he hits the water.

Rocky's courageous dive is just in time.

Thanks, Rocky! It ain't time for my spring bath just yet.

There they are down there.

BANG

All right. Start shooting at them. I'm going to climb that cliff and get them as they fire at you.

Jack and his wife are safe, Rocky. I let them off a ways back.

Rocky's plan works, and...

It's that marshal. He's somewhere down there. Get him and get him quick!

Jee, I'm leaped over too far and got dizzy, I guess. That's two down and one to go.

All right, Parraine. Here I come.

It's your last move, lawman!

Eyaaah!

WELL, I GUESS THAT TAKES CARE OF HIM, ROCKY.
HE WAS A MIGHTY CLEVER HOMBRE, BUT I RECKON HE OUTSMARTED HIMSELF!
COME ON, NUGGET, LET'S PICK UP JACK AND CAROL.

AND SO, A WEEK LATER AT THE REYNOLDS RANCH.
HERE'S THE TITLE TO YOUR LAND, MA. TAYLOR. ALL CLEAN AND CLEAR.
I KIND OF WISH YOU'D SOLD US THE WHOLE RANCH. BUT, WELL, WE COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER NEIGHBOR.

SUDDENLY...
WHOPPERS! LOOKEE THERE!
IT'S THE FIRST SETTLERS. THEY'RE COMING DOWN THE ROAD. RECKON THEY FIGURE ON TING IN WITH YOUR SETTLEMENT.

WE'LL HAVE A REAL TOWN HERE. I'M GONNA FEED 'EM IN MY RESTAURANT AND MEDICATE 'EM IN MY DRUGSTORE. CAN'T ASK FOR A BETTER JOB THAN THAT.

SPEAKING OF JOBS, I'D BETTER BE GETTING BACK TO MINE.

ROCKY, WE TRIED TO SAY THANKS BEFORE, BUT...
THERE'S NOTHING TO SAY, MAM! IT'S ALL PART OF A DAY'S WORK FOR A MARSHAL! SO LONG, NUGGET! GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK TO ALL OF YOU.

SOMEDAY THE WEST WILL REALIZE THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE IT OWES TO MEN LIKE ROCKY LANE.
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