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The Adventures of Stetson McGraw
Episode 1: Stetson McGraw and the Mysterious Strangers

SCENE ONE: INTRO

MUSIC: THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Radio theatre presents: "The
Adventures of Stetson McGraw".
Episode one: "Stetson McGraw and
the Mysterious Stranger".

MUSIC: FADE OUT THEME MUSIC.

SCENE TWO: THE WOODS OUTSIDE AUSTIN.

SOUND: TWO SETS OF FOOTSTEPS THROUGH THE WOODS.

The GOVERNOR is winded and struggling, but excited. His voice is deep and usually jovial.

RUFUS is calm, professional, and (at the moment) annoyed. His voice is precise and Southern-gentleman-ly.

SOUND: ONE SET OF FOOTSTEPS STOPS.

GOVERNOR

(whispering)

Rufus?

Rufus keeps walking.

GOVERNOR

(louder)

Rufus, is this the place?

RUFUS

(whispering)

Quiet!

They continue in whispers.

GOVERNOR

Are we close?

RUFUS

Governor -- please. We can turn
back.

GOVERNOR

Ha!

RUFUS (BRIEFLY LOUD)

But it's --

(back to a whisper)

... it's not going to work. He's likely dead, and if he isn't dead, he's crazy, and if he's crazy, he's dangerous.

GOVERNOR

He is also the last great lawman in Texas.

RUFUS

But --

GOVERNOR

Oh -- it's right through there!

SOUND: THE GOVERNOR HURRIES AHEAD.

GOVERNOR (FADING OFF)

I can see the outbuildings....

RUFUS

Sir...

SOUND: RUFUS RUNS TO CATCH UP.

SCENE THREE: THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CHICKEN FARM

SOUND: DISTANT CHICKENS CLUCKING.

SOUND: RUFUS AND THE GOVERNOR WALK QUICKLY THROUGH THE TALL GRASS.

GOVERNOR

(to himself)

Ha! This is his chicken farm! These are his chickens! Just imagine it.

RUFUS

He might just kill us on the spot.

The Governor chuckles.

GOVERNOR

Rufus, I have plans for this gentleman. Big plans.

RUFUS

Sir, I --

GOVERNOR

Quit whining.

SOUND: THEY WALK A FEW MORE PACES.

SOUND: A GUN COCKS.

STETSON speaks in a low growl. (This is, in fact, how Stetson usually speaks.)

STETSON

Howdy, trespassers!

The Governor and Rufus both gasp.

STETSON

Care to say what you're doin' here?
Or do I skip the formalities and
shoot you in the head?

RUFUS

Why you no-good --

SOUND: GUNSHOT.

SOUND: SOMETHING THUMPS TO THE GROUND.

Rufus whimpers.

RUFUS

You... shot....

GOVERNOR

Sir, that shot was right
impressive. Not many people in the
state of Texas can shoot the
holster off the man's hip.

SOUND: THE GUN COCKS.

STETSON

I reckon so.

GOVERNOR

And one of those folks would be
Stetson McGraw.

STETSON

How'd you know my name?

SCENE FOUR: STETSON'S DINING ROOM.

SOUND: FLATWARE CLANKS AGAINST PLATES.

SOUND: THE GOVERNOR EATS.

STETSON

I don't care if you are the
Governor of the Republic of Texas --

RUFUS

State.

STETSON

Whatever. I got my farm and I ain't
workin' for nobody.

GOVERNOR

These are good eggs. Aren't these
good eggs, Rufus? And
(he sips)
the moonshine?

RUFUS

Um...

STETSON

And whatever 'proposition' you got,
there ain't nothin' you can do, and
nothin' you can say, to make me go.

SOUND: THE GOVERNOR STOPS EATING.

SOUND: THE GOVERNOR SETS DOWN HIS KNIFE AND FORK.

GOVERNOR

"Mad Dog" Doud.

A long pause.

RUFUS

Sir, maybe we should --

The Governor takes a sip of moonshine.

GOVERNOR

'fraid that's why we're here.

SCENE FIVE: STETSON'S BACK PORCH.

SOUND: CRICKETS, FAINT CHICKEN NOISE.

RUFUS
(muffled)
But --

SOUND: A DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

RUFUS
We do have *evidence* --

STETSON
Mad Dog is dead. And what was left
of him couldn't have fed the
jackals!

GOVERNOR
He's not dead, Mr. McGraw.

RUFUS
Let's just go.

GOVERNOR
He's not dead --
(Stetson scoffs)
-- and he's fixing to rob that
train tomorrow. A pause.

GOVERNOR
You and him are from a different
age, Stetson. You tracked him
across half the state once. The
only man to foil any of his bank
robberies. The only man to guess
where he was going to strike, and
when.

STETSON
That was a long time ago.

GOVERNOR
You know you can do this. I'm only
asking you to stop him. Another
pause.

RUFUS
And do some publicity afterwards.

STETSON
Hmm.

GOVERNOR

(improvising quickly)

Nothing big, just tell some folks that I'd asked a legend of the Old West to foil the last great criminal from the crazy days of the Republic. Our future is with the United States. With law and order. The people need to know that.

STETSON

In an election year.

GOVERNOR

Fine. You can stay on your chicken farm. Let Mad Dog do... what he does best. A pause.

RUFUS

We'll give you money.

GOVERNOR

He doesn't want money.

RUFUS

And -- you'll be an official deputy.

STETSON

Hoo-ray.

GOVERNOR

I think Mr. McGraw will find that the job -- and the publicity -- are in his best interests.

STETSON

I don't care.

Beat.

GOVERNOR

I'm a powerful man, Mr. McGraw. I can make, say, a twenty-year-old conviction for criminal negligence just... evaporate from the records.

Stetson scoffs.

RUFUS

He could!

A pause.

GOVERNOR

(quieter)

You think what you want to about
me... but you know stoppin' a train
robbery is the right thing to do.
Plus you get a chance to rewrite
who you are. Some people go their
whole lives waitin' for that.

A short pause.

RUFUS

What do we do, Governor?

Stetson sighs.

STETSON

Where's this train?

SCENE SIX: A TRAIN STATION

SOUND: CROWD NOISE, A STEAM ENGINE.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard!

PASSENGER

Sir, is this --

CONDUCTOR

(peevish)

Hang on.

PASSENGER

But....

CONDUCTOR

You! Yeah, you, ya hobo! Get outta
here!

The hobo groans.

CONDUCTOR

The Round Rock Express is a classy -
- oh. Mr. McGraw.

STETSON

Mm-hmm.

CONDUCTOR

Oh!

(stage whisper)

CONDUCTOR(cont'd)

They didn't tell me you were
undercover.

STETSON

Hmm.

CONDUCTOR

(stage whisper)

Have you spotted Mad Dog?

STETSON

Nope.

SCENE SEVEN: THE DINING CAR

SOUND: THE RUMBLE OF THE TRAIN. SOUNDS OF EATING.
BACKGROUND MURMUR OF CIVILIZED CONVERSATION.

MAD DOG is approaching middle-age, and has a perpetually-
distracted air.

The DANDY is unctuous and self-absorbed.

DANDY

Sir? You're one of the engineers on
the Express?

MAD DOG

Yes. Yes I am.

DANDY

That hobo just snuck into the
dining car. Could you have him
removed to a freight car, or...
perhaps removed from the train
entirely?

MAD DOG

But I've got to -- um -- sure. I
will.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

MAD DOG

Excuse me.

Stetson groans slightly.

MAD DOG

Mister? Mister, this here is for
paying passengers, and --

Mad Dog gasps.

MAD DOG
Stetson McGraw!

STETSON
Mad Dog. How do.

SOUND: RUNNING FEET.

Several passengers react with alarm.

DANDY
That hobo is chasing the engineer!

SOUND: A DOOR SLIDES OPEN.

STETSON
He ain't no engineer!

DANDY
Sir, I shall have to -- waagh!

SOUND: THE DANDY CRASHES INTO A DINING CART.

SCENE EIGHT: THE PASSENGER CAR

SOUND: THE TRAIN RUMBLES ALONG.

SOUND: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

Mad Dog screams.

PASSENGERS
(ad lib)
What's happening? What was that?
It's the engineer!

SOUND: WALKING FOOTSTEPS.

STETSON
Mad Dog!

SOUND: A DOOR SLIDES ONLY A FRACTION OF THE WAY OPEN,
REPEATEDLY.

PASSENGERS
(ad lib)
Ugh! Who's he?!

MAD DOG
Someone help!

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS.

SCENE NINE: FREIGHT CAR #1

SOUND: THE TRAIN RUMBLES ALONG (THE LOCOMOTIVE SOUNDS A BIT SOFTER).

SOUND: A DOOR SLIDES OPEN AND SLIDES SHUT AGAIN.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

Mad Dog gasps for breath.

MAD DOG
(to himself)
Where is it?

SOUND: STOMPING FEET.

SOUND: TARPS ARE THROWN ASIDE.

SOUND: BOXES ARE OPENED.

SOUND: SOMETHING METALLIC CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR.

MAD DOG
Ha!

SCENE TEN: FREIGHT CAR #2

SOUND: THE RUMBLE OF THE TRAIN, AS WELL AS A LOUD, CONTINUOUS RUSH OF AIR AND THE CLANKING OF THE TRAIN WHEELS.

STETSON
Come on, Mad Dog.

SOUND: A FEW FOOTSTEPS.

STETSON
I done chased you down the whole
train.

SCENE ELEVEN: FREIGHT CAR #1

SOUND: SAME AS SCENE SEVEN.

SOUND: A DOOR SLIDES OPEN A FRACTION OF THE WAY.

STETSON
There ain't nowhere left to run.

SOUND: THE DOOR SLIDES OPEN.

STETSON

Mad Dog?

SOUND: THE SAME METALLIC CLATTER WE HEARD IN SCENE SEVEN.

SOUND: A CLICK.

SOUND: A 'PSSHT' SOUND OF EJECTING SMOKE (CONTINUOUS).

Stetson immediately starts coughing.

MAD DOG

Ha!

STETSON

Huh?

SOUND: A PUNCH.

SOUND: A BODY DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

STETSON

No-good --

SOUND: THE DOOR SLIDES SHUT.

SOUND: A LOUD CLANG.

STETSON

Mad Dog!

Stetson continues coughing.

SOUND: SEVERAL HALTING FOOTSTEPS.

Stetson strains at the door.

SOUND: POUNDING FISTS AGAINST THE DOOR.

STETSON

Mad Dog!

SOUND: 'CREAK.'

SOUND: A SUDDEN 'PING!'

SOUND: CRASHING NOISES, METAL AGAINST METAL.

Stetson screams.

SOUND: SUSTAINED SCREECH OF METAL SCRAPING AGAINST METAL.

SOUND: ALL SOUNDS STOP EXCEPT FOR THE FAINT RUMBLE OF THE TRAIN.

SOUND: SILENCE.

SCENE TWELVE: THE TRAIN TRACKS

SOUND: BLUSTERY WIND.

SOUND: A COYOTE HOWLS IN THE DISTANCE.

SOUND: A RATTLESNAKE RATTLES.

SOUND: POUNDING OF FISTS AGAINST METAL (MUFFLED)

Stetson makes little grunts of exertion (muffled).

SOUND: A LOUD 'CLANG!'

Stetson gasps for breath (unmuffled).

SOUND: A BODY THUMPS TO THE GROUND.

SOUND: A FEW UNSTEADY FOOTSTEPS.

STETSON
Where's the rest of the train?

SOUND: THE RATTLESNAKE RATTLES AGAIN.

STETSON
Nice snakey.

SOUND: DISTANT HOOFBEATS.

SOUND: DISTANT TRUMPET.

STETSON
Wha --
(shouting)
Hey! Over here! Over here!

Beat.

STETSON
Oh no.

SCENE THIRTEEN: THE WASTELANDS.

SOUND: THE SAME HOOFBEATS, MUCH LOUDER.

SOUND: ANOTHER TRUMPET CALL, MUCH LOUDER.

The CAPTAIN and SOLDIER #1 speak with Mexican accents.

CAPTAIN

Halt!

SOUND: THE HOOFBEATS SLOW TO A STOP.

SOLDIER #1

Jefe -- who is that?

CAPTAIN

Search the car.

SOLDIER #1

And that old man?

CAPTAIN

(bored)

Oh... shoot him.

The soldier laughs evilly.

SCENE FOURTEEN: OUTRO.

ANNOUNCER

Will Stetson escape from the
wastelands alive? Will Mad Dog Doud
succeed in his nefarious train
robbery? Can this newfangled
'statehood' thing possibly work?

MUSIC: THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Find out on our next exciting
installment of: "The Adventures
of Stetson McGraw"!

MUSIC: FADE OUT THEME MUSIC.