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The Adventures of Stetson McGraw
Episode 4: Stetson McGraw and the Cherokee Bride

SCENE ONE: INTRO

MUSIC: THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Radio theatre presents: "The
Adventures of Stetson McGraw".
Episode four: "Stetson McGraw and
the Cherokee Bride".

MUSIC: FADE OUT THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

In our last episode, legendary
lawman Stetson McGraw had
discovered that "Mad Dog" Doud was
no train robber, but an inventor
out to stop a fiendish plot against
the state of Texas. But at that
very moment of discovery, an
explosion tore through the derailed
train, leaving both men to an
uncertain fate....

SCENE TWO: THE WRECKAGE

SOUND: CRICKETS CHIRP. A BONFIRE BURNS NEARBY. IN THE
DISTANCE, A COYOTE HOWLS.

SOUND: TWO MEN WALK THROUGH THE WRECKAGE, OCCASIONALLY
KICKING BITS OF METAL OUT OF THE WAY.

JESSE is barely out of his teens. He always sounds a little
sullen and a little slow-witted.

LEE is middle-aged, with a weary, cynical edge to his voice.

JESSE

Damn. Derailed, wrecked, then
blowed up.

LEE

And then the bandits picked it
clean. Some luck. We gotta clear
the tracks, Jesse.

JESSE

I'll chain up the prisoners.

SOUND: THE LEE STOPS WALKING, THEN THE JESSE STOPS WALKING.

JESSE
He dead?

LEE
Mm-hmm. Old hobo.

JESSE
Stowed away near the locomotive?

LEE
Mmm-hmm. Where the blast hit. (He sighs.) Bury him later.

SOUND: THEY WALK OFF.

SOUND: STETSON WAKES UP, PUSHES ASIDE SOME PIECES OF METAL, AND GROANS.

STETSON
Water...

SCENE THREE: ELSEWHERE IN THE WRECKAGE.

SOUND: SAME AMBIENT SOUNDS AS IN SCENE TWO, PLUS BACKGROUND CONVERSATION AND THE OCCASIONAL CLANG OF METAL.

SOUND: STETSON STAGGERS THROUGH THE WRECKAGE.

JESSE
But I can't --

LEE
Tell 'the governor's man' we're busy!

STETSON
Water!

JESSE
Huh. He ain't dead. Lee sighs.

LEE
Here.

SOUND: LEE UNSCREWS A WATER FLASK.

SOUND: STETSON DRINKS GREEDILY.

LEE
What's your name, old-timer?

Stetson's voice is wheezy, with frequent pauses for breath.

STETSON
Stetson. Stetson McGraw.

SOUND: THE CONVERSATIONS GO SILENT.

JESSE
What?

LEE
Well if it ain't the most
cowardliest, lily-livered excuse
for a man to ever hang on to a
badge. And look what he's come to.

STETSON
This train was--

LEE
Thirty folks died at Devil's Gorge
on account of you turnin' yella.

STETSON
I'm tellin' you something
important, you damned fool! Just
before the explosion, Mad Dog told
me that--

LEE
(laughing)
"Mad Dog" Doud was on the train?

STETSON
I know--

LEE
The man you bound up and pushed
into a ravine twenty-odd years
back? When he was already half
shot to death?

STETSON
He said the train was taking
something to Waco -- and it was a
threat to the whole state of Texas.

JESSE
(mocking)
He says there was a threat.

SOUND: SOMEONE WALKS TOWARDS THE GROUP.

STETSON
 But before the wreck, there was
 this noise, like --

RUFUS
 Just one second.

STETSON
 Rufus! I talked to Mad Dog, and
 there's something --

RUFUS
 Marshall... arrest this man.

SOUND: HANDCUFFS JINGLING.

LEE
 With pleasure, sir.

STETSON
 What?

SOUND: HANDCUFFS CLICK SHUT.

SCENE FOUR: A WORK GANG.

SOUND: NIGHTTIME SOUNDS CONTINUE.

SOUND: THE RATTLING OF CHAINS. THE CLANG OF HAMMERS AGAINST
 METAL.

SOUND: LEE APPROACHES.

LEE
 Water break, fellas. No dallyin'.

SOUND: THE CLANGING STOPS. HAMMERS THUMP TO THE GROUND.
 SLOW FOOTSTEPS.

SOUND: A RIFLE COCKS.

LEE
 You watch it, Stetson.

SOUND: LEE WALKS AWAY.

SOUND: PAOLO UNSCREWS A FLASK AND DRINKS.

STETSON
 Pass it on, fella.

PAOLO says something brief in Italian. Paolo is gruff, and rarely says more than a few words. GIANCARLO, in contrast, speaks rapidly and ingratiatingly in a broad Italian accent.

GIANCARLO

One moment. My brother, he want to know why you arrested for.

STETSON

They say I wrecked this train so that the bandits could rob it. They say I must've made a deal.

GIANCARLO

Paolo and me, 'they say' we pulled one of the most amazing art thefts in a hundred years. Is of course untrue.

MIKE speaks with a slight, hard-to-place accent, and with an intense, earnest quality.

MIKE

Give him the water.

GIANCARLO

(surprised)
You speak English?

JESSE

(from a distance)
Be quiet down there!

SOUND: THE FLASK IS PASSED; STETSON DRINKS.

Paolo says something in Italian.

GIANCARLO

He want to know, what did you 'not steal'.

STETSON

They were shipping something to Waco, and it must've been downright dangerous.

MIKE

Waco.

Giancarlo shudders.

GIANCARLO

Don't talk of that place. Paolo says something in Italian.

GIANCARLO
(agreeing)
Yes, we're not afraid of it. Just

-
STETSON
What about Waco?

MIKE
There are evil forces there.

GIANCARLO
Same as always.

MIKE
No. This is new. These bandits --
they had uniforms?

STETSON
The ones I saw, yeah --

MIKE
And an insignia like a Mason jar?

STETSON
Sure enough. Look, whatever it is
the bandits wanted from that train,
Mad Dog was willin' to damn near
die to keep it from getting to
Waco. What do you know about these
people?

MIKE
Very little. But I think that what
the bandits took from the train was
headed their way anyway. The old
woman knows more.

GIANCARLO
What old woman?

MIKE
At the reservation.

STETSON
Well, we ain't gettin' there.

SCENE FIVE: SOME DISTANCE FROM THE WORK GANG

SOUND: METALLIC CLANGING, VOICES ARGUING IN THE DISTANCE.

LEE

Hmm. They're gettin' right worked up over there.

JESSE

Heh. No gettin' along with that old coot.

SCENE SIX: THE WORK GANG

SOUND: SAME AS SCENE FOUR.

All dialog in this scene is in harsh whispers.

STETSON

There's a dozen armed federal marshals not twenty feet away!

GIANCARLO

It adds to the challenge. Paolo says something in Italian.

GIANCARLO

Paolo says 'panache'. Is similar.

STETSON

If we want to find out what in blazes these bandits are doing, we've got to get free of these chains, travel down fifty miles of track.

MIKE

If we don't, who will? Paolo says something in Italian.

GIANCARLO

Exactly. Also, if one of us can pretend to be law-enforcement personnel, we may have a good chance.

STETSON

Hmm.

SCENE SEVEN: LATER, BY THE TRACKS

SOUND: MORNING SONGBIRDS.

SOUND: A SMALL LOCOMOTIVE CREAKS TO A STOP, AND A DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

ENGINEER
Howdy there, marshal. These the
prisoners?

GIANCARLO
That's us!

SOUND: SOMEONE HITS GIANCARLO.

GIANCARLO
(quietly)
Ow!

ENGINEER
Telegram said four prisoners.
Where's the fourth?

STETSON
He died. Injuries from the wreck.

ENGINEER
Hmm. What about the rest of your
posse?

STETSON
Sorting out the wreck. We gotta
get movin'. We get there much
after ten, the judge ain't gonna be
happy.

ENGINEER
All aboard then.

SCENE EIGHT: ELSEWHERE IN THE WRECKAGE

SOUND: LEE SNORING.

JESSE
Wake up! Wake up!

LEE
Son? (pause, then confused) You're
nekkid?

JESSE
The prisoners got loose!

SOUND: THE LOCOMOTIVE STARTS UP AGAIN, SOMEWHAT DISTANT.

JESSE
I can't figure why they took the
uniform!

SOUND: THE LOCOMOTIVE SPEEDS UP, GETS QUIETER AS IT MOVES AWAY.

LEE
Reckon' I do.

SCENE NINE: AT THE RESERVATION

SOUND: BONFIRE. CRICKETS. PEOPLE WALKING THROUGH TALL GRASS.

STETSON
She's your aunt?!

MIKE
Great-aunt. And she likes the isolation.

GIANCARLO
How can she know about these bandits?

MIKE
Because they kidnapped her.

GIANCARLO
When? Thirty years ago?

MIKE
Last week. She escaped, and she made it all the way back here. I killed the men they sent after her.

STETSON
That's what you got arrested for?

MIKE
Mmm. I tried explaining to the old lawman, but...

GIANCARLO
He does not care for the explanations.

SOUND: A LENGTH OF CANVAS DRAWN ASIDE.

GIANCARLO
People still live in these?

STETSON
Quiet.

SCENE TEN: A TEEPEE

SOUND: SAME AS SCENE SEVEN, BUT MUCH SOFTER.

AUNT
Mike!

GIANCARLO
"Mike"?

AUNT
How did...? Who are...?

MIKE
There is no time. Great-aunt, we
have to ask you about the bandits.

AUNT
Santa Ana's men?

STETSON
Santa Ana?

AUNT
Yes.

STETSON
That man's awful dead to have
himself an army.

AUNT
I tell you: these were Santa Ana's
men.

GIANCARLO
Why did they kidnap you?

MIKE
Because she is his wife.

AUNT
No. His widow.

GIANCARLO
See? Dead.

AUNT
They kidnapped me because he wanted
me back.

STETSON
("You're crazy.")
Okay.

AUNT
 But I escaped. Besides, no woman
 would be married to such an
 abomination.

STETSON
 Right.

MIKE
 Where did they take you?

AUNT
 To their encampment, Mike.

MIKE
 I mean --

GIANCARLO
 Ah! I have a map!

SOUND: PAPER UNFOLDING.

AUNT
 Ah. It was... here. Silence.

Paolo says something in Italian that can only be a profanity.

GIANCARLO
 The far side of Waco.

SCENE ELEVEN: A HILL NEAR WACO

SOUND: THUNDER, A HARSH-SOUNDING WIND, HORSES CANTERING
 FORWARD

GIANCARLO
 I see nothing.

MIKE
 She said it was here.

STETSON
 Maybe... your great-aunt wasn't
 remembering things quite right.
 Mike sighs.

MIKE
 Maybe.

Paolo says something in Italian.

SOUND: PAOLO GETS OFF HIS HORSE, WALKS AWAY FROM THEM.

GIANCARLO

Paolo! Where are you going?!

SOUND: THE OTHERS DISMOUNT.

SCENE TWELVE: AN IMPROBABLE STAND OF TREES

SOUND: THE FOUR MEN WALK AWKWARDLY THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH, BREAKING TWIGS EVERYWHERE.

SOUND: FADE IN MARCHING FEET (VERY FAINT).

SOUND: THE FOUR MEN STOP SIMULTANEOUSLY.

Paolo says something in Italian. Again, it can only be a profanity.

STETSON

You said it.

SOUND: THEY TAKE A FEW MORE STEPS FORWARD.

SOUND: IN THE DISTANCE, A HUGE CACOPHONY OF NOISE. MEN SHOUTING ORDERS. MARCHING. STEAM-POWERED MACHINERY CLANGING AND HOOTING.

MIKE

There must be hundreds of them.

GIANCARLO

And what are the huge contraptions with guns? That cannot be good.

STETSON

We've got to get --

SOUND: A rifle cocks.

The soldier, like the soldiers from episode #1, has a Mexican accent.

SOLDIER #1

Halt!

SOLDIER #2

Tell us what you're doing here, or we kill every one of you!

GIANCARLO

This is not so good.

SCENE THIRTEEN: OUTRO

ANNOUNCER

What are the nefarious plans of the
bandit army? What did they take
from the Round Rock Express? And
why does a dead Mexican general
have his own army?

MUSIC: THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

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

(MORE)