

The Challenge of the Yukon
by Fran Striker

THE RED ACE

Number:

Date:

(USUAL OPENING)

Annrcr; For some weeks things had been comparatively quiet in the town of Three Falls. Constable Mitchell didn't know it, but this was like the calm that comes before the storm. It began with a shot in the night.

(SHOT) (FADE IN CROWD MURMURING)

AD LIB: Is he dead?
Dead is right? Shot right thru the head!
And look at the money drawer! Smashed open an' empty!

Annrcr; The owner of the General Store lay dead on the floor of his room. The drawer in a chest where he kept his cash lay smashed and empty by his side.

Mitchell; Lemme thru there, boys. Lemme through.

Voice; Here's the Constable.

Voice 2; It's Murder, Constable. Murder and robbery!

Mitchell; Stand back, all of you. Don't touch anything.

Voice; There's the drawer where Sam kept his cash.

Voice 2; I reckon the crook got away thru that open window.

- Mitchell; One of you boys go for Doc Stebbins.
- Voice 2; (BACK, FADING) I'll go.
- Mitchell; Here, Jackson, you've helped me before.
- Jackson; What can I do, Mitchell?
- Mitchell; We've got to make sure poor Sam's beyond help.
I -- (BREAK OFF ABRUPTLY)
- Jackson; What's the matter, Constable?
- Mitchell; Look. This playin' card. It was half hid by
Sam's arm.
- Jackson; Playin' card, eh?
- Mitchell; The Ace of Diamonds.
- Voice; (BACK) Looks like Sam had an ace up his sleeve!
- AD LIB: (SLIGHT STIR)
- Mitchell; (SHARPLY) That's not funny! Look at the back of
this card! It's different than the ones that're
used here in town. What's more - it's the Red Ace.
- Jackson; Does that mean something, Constable?
- Mitchell; Mean something? It means plenty. It means that
one of the worst killers in the Yukon Territory
has come to Three Falls. It means we got the Red
Ace here among us.
- AD LIB: (STIR) (FADING OUT)
- Annor; That was the beginning. Twenty-four hours later, in
the dead of night, the Constable was awakened by a
frantic voice and a heavy pounding on his door.

Pierre; (AD LIBBING) Constable! Constable! Come quick!
Let me in! It's robbery! It's like last night!

(DOOR OPENS QUICKLY)

Mitchell; Hey, Pierre, what's all this ruckus? What's the
idea of rousin' me in the middle of the night?

Pierre; Oh Monsier, monsier, attendez!

Mitchell; Come in here where I can see you.

Pierre; I am sleeping, M'sieu, in the back of my cafe! I
hear the noise. I get up. I open the door — there
is a shot and a man — he runs through the window,
and away! I am robbed! All I have is gone! The
money drawer is broken!

Mitchell; Confound it! Another robbery, and if you found —

Pierre; This! This playing card I find!

Mitchell; The same as before. The callin' card of the Red Ace!

(BREAK)

Anner; Two robberies and a murder, but that was not all.
On the third night, the Red Ace struck again — this
time there was no alarm to rouse the Constable from
his sleep. It was a silent murder.

AD LIB: (MURMURING)

Anner; Old Hard Rock Larson wasn't found until next morning.
The bed was stained with evidence that a knife had
been used. His sack of gold dust, accumulated by
years of hard toil, was gone, and in its place—

Mitchell; — another playin' card. Another Ace of Diamonds!

Jackson; The Red Ace again, eh Constable?

Mitchell; Jackson, three robberies - two murders - that's bad enough. But what riles me is the way this dirty murderin' Red Ace leaves his callin' card as if he wanted to brag about his work!

Jackson; And still no clues, eh?

Mitchell; Maybe I'll have somethin' today.

Jackson; Yeah? How's that?

Mitchell; I've sent to the Mountie headquarters over at Dawson to see if they have any kind of description about the Red Ace.

Jackson; Um. I see.

Mitchell; It'd help a lot to know what the killer looks like. () You folks - all of you clear out of here, now. There's nothin' more to see. Get out of poor old Hard Rock's room. Go on.

AD LIB: (FADING OUT)

(FADE IN B.G. OF LUNCHEON TABLE)

Anner; At noon that day Constable Mitchell sat down at the dinner table in his home with his friend Chester Jackson as a guest.

Jackson; (EATING) I want to tell you, Mitch, if I could find a cook like Kate I'd get myself married in no time.

Kate; I'm glad my cookin' pleases someone. What's the matter, Jim? Where'd you leave your appetite?

Mitch; Hang it all, Kate, it's that Red Ace. He's got me

- Mitch; Hang it all, Kate, it's that Red Ace. He's got me so I can't sleep or eat or even think straight.
- Kate; You're not going to bring him to justice by going hungry.
- Jackson; Have you had any word from Dawson?
- Mitch; Not yet, Chet.
- Jackson; It's about time Lefty got back from there, isn't it?
- Mitch; He'll be along. I figured he'd get here soon after noon.
- Jackson; It'll help a lot if we can get a description of the Red Ace. It's pretty hard to get a man when you don't know who you're lookin' for.
- Mitch; Yeah - a description would help.
- Kate; I thought Pierre saw the Red Ace.
- Mitch; Not to identify him, Kate. He just got a quick glimpse of a dark figure goin' out the window.
- Jackson; His cafe was dark at the time. He couldn't see anything that counts.
- Kate; (SIGHS) Can't you eat a little, Jim?
- Mitch; No thanks, Kate. I just - I just got no appetite.
- Kate; Well let me fill your coffee cup at any rate.

(POURING COFFEE AS:)

- Mitch; Old Hard Rock killed and robbed last night - Pierre robbed the night before -- and Sam the night before that.

Jackson; Worryin' won't help, Mitch. We'll just have to take things as they come.

Kate; Jackson will help you all he can.

Jackson; You bet I will, Mitch. You can count on me.

Mitchell; Chet, there's times when a man sure appreciates a friend like you.

Jackson; Aw--

Mitch; I mean it. You've stuck to me through thick and thin, ever since I was made Constable. I declare when I get ready to step out, I'm goin' to try to persuade you to take a job as lawman in my place -- and if this Red Ace keeps on, I'll be ready to step out real soon.

(RAP ON DOOR)

Kate; The door!

Jackson; Maybe Lefty's got back from Dawson.

(STEPS SUSTAIN AS:)

Mitch; I'll see.

(STEPS STOP - DOOR OPENS)

Voice; Hi, Constable.

Mitch; Lefty, I'm glad you're back. Come on in here.

(STEPS IN - DOOR CLOSES)

How was the travel between here and Dawson? Tough goin'?

Voice; Not bad. The ground's hard frozen.

- Jackson; How did you go? Right along the bank of the stream?
- Voice; Yep. Headed due north to the big rock. You know where that is -- right close to the bridge. Then I cut east to Dawson.
- Mitch; Did you cross the bridge?
- Voice; No. The water was pretty high and the bridge looked pretty flimsy, so I took the south bank into Dawson.
- Kate; Will you have some thing to eat Lefty - or maybe a cup of coffee?
- Voice; I don't mind if I do, m'am.
- Mitch; What did you learn?
- Jackson; Did you find out anything about the Red Ace?
- Voice; Got a description of the critter. (EFFORT) It's right here in my pocket. I could have got a lot more, by stickin' around but -- I thought I better get back here bein' as you were waitin' for me.
- (RUSTLE PAPER)
- Here's the description.
- Jackson; You said you could have learned more by waiting around--?
- Voice; Yep. The man I talked to said Sergeant Preston knew all about the Red Ace, but he wasn't expected back in Dawson until supper time.
- Mitch; This may help.
- Voice; That's just a hand bill that was sent out about a year ago when the Red Ace was workin' up in the north.

Jackson; Um. I remember hearing about him up there.

Mitch; (TENSE) Hey, Jackson!

Jackson; Huh?

Mitch; Listen to this. Tell me who it sounds like!

Kate; You mean it sounds like someone you know?

Mitch; Just listen. Height - six feet four inches -heavily built. Dark eyes - hair black and coarse --

Jackson; Great scott!

Kate; That's Mr. Grogan!

Voice; Grizzly Grogan. That's what I thought, Constable.

Mitch; The description fits him to a "T".

Jackson; But hold on, Mitch. Grogan's been living here in Three Falls for the past two months. The Red Ace did most of his work north of here.

Mitch; What of it? I'll bet odds that there's been nothin' heard about the Red Ace north of here since Grizzly Grogan came to town.

Kate; I can't believe it. Of course I haven't seen much of Mr. Grogan, but he always struck me as a harmless sort.

Voice; He's mighty powerful.

Mitch; And ugly lookin'.

Kate; I admit he's homely, but I wouldn't call him ugly lookin'. That is to say, he's not mean lookin'. Why I remember just last week he was all broke up because his dog got skel

- Kate; I admit he's homely, but I wouldn't call him ugly lookin'. That is to say, he's not mean lookin'. Why I remember just last week he was all broke up because his dog got sick and had to be shot.
- Mitch; Well I'm goin' to have a talk with Grizzly Grogan. I aim to find out what he has to say for himself.
- Jackson; Mitch -
- Mitch; Huh?
- Jackson; Wait a second. If Grizzly is the Red Ace, talking to him won't get you anywhere.
- Mitch; What do you suggest, Chet?
- Jackson; The Red Ace has struck every one of the last three nights, and generally around midnight or later. Let's wait 'til tonite and go over to that shack where he lives. Maybe if we watch around there we can catch him in the act of sommiting another crime.
- Voice; That sounds like a smart idea.
- Mitch; Maybe so. We'll follow your advice, and Lefty - you go along with us. It'll sure be a feather in our caps to catch the Red Ace.
- Annor; It was supper time when Sergeant Preston and his great dog King returned to Dawson, from a short trip. They were welcomed by a Mountie named Emory.

(DOG BARKING)

- Preston; Good to get back, eh King?

(BARKS)

- Emory; How'd you find the travel, Sergeant?
- Preston; Not at all bad.
- Emory; Supper will be ready in just about a minute. You can sit right down.
- Preston; And we can do it justice, can't we, King?
(BARK)
- Emory; (LAUGHING) I'll take care of you too, King.
- Preston; Anything happen while we were gone?
- Emory; No, nothing important. That is, nothing but a visitor from Three Falls.
- Preston; What did he want?
- Emory; He was asking questions about the Red Ace.
- Preston; (SHARPLY) The Red Ace?
- Emory; I'd never heard of the character, so there wasn't much I could tell him.
- Preston; Well I could tell him plenty about that killer! He operated north of here. At every one of his crimes, he left an ace of diamonds as a calling card.
- Emory; So I learned! I dug into the files and found a handbill from a year ago. It described the man and his methods.
- Preston; Who wanted the information?
- Emory; Constable Mitchell.
- Preston; Why?

Emory; He said the Red Ace has been operating in Three Falls. Struck three times in the last three nights.

Preston; That changes my plans. I've got to pull out of here right away!

Emory; Tonight?

Preston; Right now!

(CHAIR SCRAPES)

(SHORT BARK)

Come on, King.

Emory; But where are you going?

Preston; King and I are heading for Three Falls, and we're starting right away.

Emory; Can't you even take time for supper?

Preston; No. We'll have to travel in the dark. It will be slow going. Moreover, a storm is coming. I want to cover as much ground as possible before it hits. Come to the kitchen while I pack some food to eat while we travel, and I'll tell you what I know about the Red Ace.

(BREAK)

Annccr; While Sergeant Preston and his dog King headed south Constable Mitchell, accompanied by his volunteer aides Chester Jackson and Lefty, made their way toward the shack where Grizzly Grogan lived.

(DEVELOPING STORM, B.G.)

(STEPS SUSTAINING)

Jackson; Mitch, the place is lighted. Do you suppose we'll find the big fellow there?

Mitch; We'll blame soon know. Stop here.

(STEPS HALT)

I'll go ahead and look in that window.

(COUPLE OF STEPS)

(CUE) The place is empty.

Jackson; (COMING IN) Empty. Are you sure?

Mitch; There's only one room, and you can see all of it from this window.

Jackson; (TENSE) Mitch! I see something else! Look over there on that shelf, right under the lookin' glass! Do you see what I see?

Mitch; Looks like a leather sack.

Jackson; It sure does, and I've seen it before. Old Hard Rock Larson kept his gold dust in a sack like that. He had his name on it. I remember him showin' it to me just the day before he was murdered.

(STEPS SUSTAIN AS:)

Mitch; Maybe I'm stretchin' my authority, but this is a case where I'm justified. I'm goin' into that house.

(DOOR OPENS)

Lefty, you stay outside and let us know if Grogan comes this way.

Voice; Right.

Mitch; Come on in, Jackson.

(STEPS IN, DOOR CLOSE, CUT STORM
B.G.)

(STEPS CROSS FLOOR)

Jackson; If that is Hard Rock's gold dust pouch, we'll have a pretty good case against Grogan.

Mitch; Is it?

Jackson; Here's his name!

Mitch; Um. That just about does it. And look here!

Jackson; Playin' cards.

Mitch; Several packs of 'em. And look at the back. The same pattern as on the Red Aces. We've got to find Grogan — and the sooner the better.

Jackson; (FADING BACK) Wait just a second before you leave—

Mitch; See somethin' on the table?

Jackson; Writin' supplies — paper and pencils — There might be a letter or two. We'll have a look and — (BREAK OFF)

(COUPLE OF STEPS AWAY)

Mitch; What's that you've got?

Jackson; (SLOWLY) I don't know. I -- let's see here. A list of names with some of them crossed out. () Why that ornery, cold-blooded murderin' polecat! Take a look at this, Mitch. He's made a list of the people he aims to rob.

Mitch; The first is Sam at the General Store, then Pierre, then Hard Rock Larson — and then—

Jackson; Ma Kendall's Restaurant!

Mitch; He's crossed off the first three!

Jackson; Mitch, unless I miss my guess he's at Ma Kendall's Restaurant right now! We better get there in a hurry!

(BREAK)

(OUTDOOR B.G.)

Annex; Ma Kendall was one of the best loved women in town. Her spic-and-span restaurant was a little place, but there was always a sizeable amount of money in the till.

(FOOTSTEPS SUSTAINING)

Mitch; She keeps plenty of cash on hand, and she's always willin' to lend some of it to one of her friends.

Jackson; Poor old woman. She probably figures there's not a man in town mean enough to rob her.

Annex; The Constable and Jackson were followed by Lefty as they approached the front door of Ma Kendall's darkened establishment.

Mitch; There's no lights in there.

Jackson; The Red Ace works without lights. Remember Pierre's place.

Mitch; That's right. I -- (BREAK OFF) Jackson, look! Am I seein' things or is that door standin' part open?

Jackson; You're not seein' things, Mitch. It is part open, and unless I'm mistaken there's someone crouchin' just inside the door. Do you see that dark shadow?

Mitch; I sure do.

Jackson; I wonder if he sees us.

Mitch; That don't matter. (CALLS OUT) You in there! I'm callin' on you to surrender!

Grogan; (BACK) Mitchell!

Jackson; That's Grogan.

Mitch; We're takin' you, Grogan.

Grogan; (BACK) (BELLOW OF RAGE) You're takin' me? Like fun you are!

Voice; He's comin' at us!

Mitch; That suits me.

Grogan; (COMING IN ON THE RUN) I'm takin' all three of you!

Jackson; I'll let him have it! The big Grizzly!

Mitch; No you don't! Put that gun down, Jackson!

Jackson; But he --

Mitch; (EFFORT) Down I said!

(SLAP)

Jackson; He's a killer!

Mitch; I want him alive!

Grogan; (ALL THE WAY IN) I'll get you!

(BLOW)

Mitchell; (EFFORT) Like fun!

(AD LIB FIGHT)

Annex; The giant closed in to take on all three of the opponents in a battle to the finish.
We'll continue our story in just a moment --

(COMMERCIAL)

(AD LIB FIGHT)

Annex; Just before Grizzly Grogan closed in with his huge fists swinging, Constable Mitchell gave the word that there should be no gunplay --

Mitch; (FIGHTING) I want the Red Ace alive!

Voice; (AD LIBBING) Let me at him! Let me at him! Hang on to him! I'll get him from behind!

Jackson; (AD LIBBING) I'll crease his head with a gun barrel! I'll get the big galoot! I'll fix him!

Mitch; (FIGHTING) You're big, Grizzly, but not too big.
(EFFORT) Try this on your stomach!

Grogan; (GRUNTS)

Voice; (SHOUTS) That doubled him over!

Mitch; Here's one for the chin!

(SPLAT)

(AD LIB FIGHT AND BLOWS AS:)

Annex; The Constable was fast on his feet and hard as nails. Big Grogan was slow, and his arms were partly held by Lefty and Jackson. Beneath the onslaught of the Constable's hard fists, Grogan's knees began to buckle and his eyes went glassy. Then he slumped to the ground. In his semi-conscious state he heard the lawman saying --

Mitch; That does it. I guess that'll put the Red Ace out of business.

Jackson; We ought to finish him here on the spot.

Mitch; Let the law deal with him, Jackson. I'll put the bracelets on him and we'll take him to the jail.

(FADE IN STEADY RAIN OUTSIDE)

Annecr; When Grizzly Grogan regained consciousness he found himself in the small jail room. Constable Mitchell was on the other side of the barred door while beyond his window the storm had broken and the rain fell steadily.

Mitch; I've been waitin' for you to come conscious, Grogan.

Grogan; I -- I -- wha -- what time is it? How long was I out?

Mitch; It's well past midnight. I thought maybe you'd like to sign a confession to your crimes.

Grogan; There -- there was three of you.

Mitch; Lefty and Jackson have gone home.

Grogan; The Red Ace--

Mitch; I reckon you know all about the Red Ace, don't you? You've got a lot to answer for, Grogan -- in other places as well as here.

Grogan; I -- I've got a lot to answer for? Now you see here, Constable--

Mitch; We caught you red-handed as you were about to steal Ma Kendall's cash.

Grogan; Me? Now wait a minute! I didn't go there to steal no cash. I went there to get the Red Ace!

Mitch; What's that?

Grogan; Constable, I had a letter - a note signed by a friend tellin' me the Red Ace aimed to steal Ma Kendall's cash tonite. I went there an' the door was open, so I was waitin'.

Mitch; Do you expect me to believe that?

Grogan; It's the truth, Constable.

Mitch; Where's the note?

Grogan; I -- I had it right here in my pocket, but it's gone.

Mitch; (SARCASTIC) Yeah, I expect it is gone, if it ever existed. That won't do, Grogan. We've got you hands down. You fit the description of the Red Ace to start with. In the second place we found no end of evidence in your shack and on top of that you fought like a cornered bear when you saw us closin' in on you. You can make things easier for yourself an' everyone concerned by signin' a confession. I've got it all written out here. I'll slide it thru the bars of your cell. You can think it over between now an' when I see you in the mornin'.

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Here y'are.

Grogan; But Constable, I'm not the Red Ace--

(STEPS FADING)

Grogan; You hear me? I say I'm not the Red Ace!

(DOOR OPENS, BACK)

Mitch; (BACK) There's a pile of evidence, Grogan, and it all calls you a liar!

(DOOR CLOSES, BACK)

Annex; Grogan sat alone with his thoughts for some time. He read the confession by the light of a lamp that burned in the room beyond his cell and shook his head slowly - stupidly, not able to comprehend the sudden sequence of events. He lost all track of time. Then suddenly he was startled from his thoughts by a soft metallic thud...

(KEY TO FLOOR)

... on the floor beside his bunk there lay a key that someone had tossed thru the barred window. A note was tied to the key with a bit of string.

Grogan; (MUTTERS) What's this?

(RUSTLE PAPER)

(READING SLOWLY) "Don't let them hang you. Use this key and get away." () Gosh - that - that's how it is. Lemme see what else this here note has to say. (READING) "Keep going, and be careful of the Mounties."

(KEY IN DOOR) (TURNS) (DOOR
OPENS AS:)

Annex; The lock turned easily, and Grogan found himself
in the other room.

(FAST STEPS -- DOOR OPENS -- STORM
-- RAINING HARD)

The outer door was unlocked. Grogan swung it wide--
and then turned back toward the Constable's desk.
He found a gun and cartridge belt and then a knife.
Thus armed, he stepped out into the pelting rain.
Without returning to his shack -- without a backward
glance he hurried north on foot. () Sergeant Preston
and his great dog King had traveled thru the night
despite the driving rain.

(STEPS IN MUD)

Both man and dog were drenched to the skin. They
were tired and cold, but they pushed on. The rain
stopped falling at dawn, and then a mist swirled and
edded, almost concealing the fast moving stream
filled to the brim with flood water.

(STREAM)

The Mountie had followed the south bank for some
distance.

Preston; We ought to find that big rock pretty soon, King.
That's the land mark.

(BARK)

When we get there we cut due south to Three Falls.

(STEPS SUSTAIN THRU PAUSE)

Here we are, King.

(STEPS HALT)

Preston; Here's the rock. And there's the bridge crossing to the north bank.

(KING GROWLING)

You're looking at something on the other side of the creek. What is it, King?

(KING GROWLS)

Annex; King had caught the scent of fear. Though the far side of the bridge was shrouded by the heavy mist King knew that someone was on the opposite bank of the stream — someone who was afraid. The fur on the dog's back was bristling.

Preston; King, I don't want to lose any time, but if you think we ought to cross that bridge —

(KING BARKS)

Grogan; (BACK) Don't try to cross that bridge, Mountie!

(DOG BARKS)

Annex; The voice that came out of the fog was edged with fear.

Preston; (CALLS) How do you know I'm a Mountie?

Grogan; (BACK) I saw you comin' downstream thru a rift in the fog. I know you're after me, but I won't be taken!

Preston; (CALLS) Who are you?

Grogan; (BACK) I'm not the Red Ace, see! I'm not a killer, and no one's goin' to frame me!

Preston; (SOFT) The Red Ace. (CALLS) I want to talk to you.

Grogan; (BACK) Stay where you are, mister! Stay on your side of the bridge! I'm warnin' you I've worked on that bridge. I've weakened it. No one's goin' to come in pursuit of me!

Preston; (CALLS) I'm coming over there.

Grogan; (MORE PANICKY) No no you can't do it! Stay where you are! Even if you get across the bridge, I'll shoot! You hear me? I'll shoot you!

Preston; (CALLS) Listen to me. I know you're not the Red Ace. That's why I want to talk to you.

Grogan; (BACK) You can't fool me. You're tryin' to trick me. Stay where you are!

Preston; Take him, King.

(KING BARKS, FADING FAST)

Grogan; (BACK, FRENZIED) Don't do it! Keep back! Keep back! Get away from me!

(KING BACK, STARLING)

(AD LIBBING, BACK) Get down! Get down! Keep away!

Preston; (CALLS) I'm coming, King!

(RUMBLING STEPS ON BRIDGE)

Anncr; Sergeant Preston knew King would keep the other man from bringing a gun into play. He started across the bridge. He was in the middle when the weakened structure began to sway and then to buckle—

(BRIDGE CREAKING)

Annex; There was a splintering, and then the bridge went down.

(SPLASH)

(KING FADING IN, BARKING)

Annex; King turned from Grogan.

Grogan; (CRY OUT) Where are you?

Preston; (BACK) King — King! (LAST PART LOST IN GURGLE)

Annex; The great dog knew from Preston's voice that his master was in difficulty. Without a second's hesitation he leaped into the water.

(SPLASHING)

The Mountie had been sucked down by the undertow. He bobbed to the surface and saw his dog nearby.

Preston; (GASPING) King — King — here, boy.

(DOG WHIMPERS)

Here King — let me — let me hang on — harness — that's it. Shore, King — to shore.

Annex; The great dog struggled bravely, fighting the rushing current with Sergeant Preston clinging to his harness. Then help came from an unexpected source.

(SWIMMING)

Grogan appeared out of the fog swimming strongly.

Grogan; I'll help you! Come on, dog. We'll get him ashore in no time.

Annex; Between the man and King, Sergeant Preston was soon out of the water on the south bank of the stream.

KING WHIMPERING

- Preston; It's - it's all right, King. It's all right now, boy.
- Grogan; You were pretty close to bein' knocked out.
- Preston; I - I guess I got a blow on the head -- part of the bridge. When I - I tried to swim, I could hardly move my arms or legs.
- Grogan; You feel better now?
- Preston; Yes. I'll be all right. () I thought you were going to kill me.
- Grogan; Aw-w .. doggone it, I'm no killer.
- Preston; I believe that. And I know you're not the Red Ace.
- Grogan; My name's Grogan. Everyone calls me Grizzly. I - I tell you, Sergeant, I was framed in Three Falls.
- Preston; You're about the size of the Red Ace.
- Grogan; I tell you I'm not that critter! I'm not the Red Ace! I -
- Preston; I know that, Grogan. That's why I came down here from Dawson when I heard about the Red Ace.
- Grogan; Huh?
- Preston; The Red Ace has been dead for the past two months.
- Grogan; Dad? You mean that, mister?
- Preston; I know that for a fact. He was executed by the law.
- Grogan; Well someone in Three Falls is leavin' playin' cards at his murders, and whoever it is, he did a complete job of frammin' me. That's why I lit out.

Preston; And that's why you're going back. There's a killer in Three Falls and you're going to help me find him.

Grogan; But they'll put me back into jail as soon as they see me.

Preston; Back into jail? You mean you were in jail?

Grogan; Yeah, I'll tell you all about it.

Anner; With the simplicity of a child, big Grizzly Grogan told how he had received a note telling him to go to Ma Kendall's place and lie in wait for the Red Ace. How he had attacked the Constable and his aides, thinking it was they who planned to rob the restaurant. How he had been captured and jailed. Then he told of the evidence that Constable Mitchell had referred to, and from his pocket drew the confession he had been asked to sign.

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Grogan; This is it right here, Sergeant. It tells of three robberies an' two murders, an' I didn't have a hand in any of 'em.

Preston; You said you had received a note advising you to wait for the Red Ace at Ma Kendall's.

Grogan; Yeah. The door was unlocked when I got to the restaurant so I went in.

Preston; Where is that note?

Grogan; I don't know. I had it in my pocket, but when the Constable asked me for it it was gone so I couldn't prove my story.

- Preston; Did you recognize the writing?
- Grogan; Naw, it was lettered sort of so I couldn't recognize it.
- Preston; How did you get out of jail?
- Grogan; Someone tossed a key into the cell with a note on it. That note had the same sort of letterin' as the other. It told me to clear out. I left the key in the door with the note attached.
- Preston; How could anyone have gotten a key to your cell?
- Grogan; Aw-w that'd be easy. Everyone knows the Constable keeps a couple of spare keys in his desk.
- Preston; One more question, Grogan. How long were you waiting in Ma Kendall's restaurant?
- Grogan; A couple of hours I reckon.
- Preston; Then there was ample time for someone to plant evidence in your home.
- Grogan; Yeah, I guess so.
- Preston; (DECISIVELY) All right, Grogan. We'll go back to town and see if we can make the murderer betray himself.

(BREAK)

- Anncr; Though the morning was well advanced, Constable Mitchell was still raging about the escape of his prisoner. Jackson and Lefty were with him.
- Mitch; Everytime I think of that big galoot walkin' right out of this jail while I'm poundin' my ear, sound asleep, I get mad all over again!

Jackson; That won't help any, Mitch. Now calm down.

Mitch; Havin' the Red Ace right here under lock an' key! Aw doggone it, I reckon it's time I turned in my badge!

Jackson; Is there any chance of tracing the writing that was on that key?

Mitch; No. It was just square block writin'. Anyone in town could have done it.

Voice; Well Constable, it proves one thing. The Red Ace has an accomplice.

Mitch; A pack of good it does to know that.

Jackson; The accomplice must have all of the loot.

Mitch; I guess he has. We sure went thru Grogan's shack without findin' any of it.

(DOG BARKING OUTSIDE)

Jackson; Is that a dog?

Mitch; Yeah.

Voice; Look out the window. It's a Mountie.

(STEPS CROSS FLOOR QUICKLY)

Mitch; Looks as if he had been thru plenty of rain.

(DOOR OPENS)

Hi there, Sergeant!

Preston; (COMING IN) Good morning, Constable. My name is Preston and this is my dog, King.

Mitch; Great day, so you're Sergeant Preston. Well I'm downright glad to know you. This is Chet Jackson and this here is Lefty Barnes.

AD LIB: (ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

Preston; You're the man who was in Dawson yesterday.

Voice; That's right, Sergeant.

Preston; You were inquiring about the Red Ace.

Voice; Yeah.

Mitch; Sergeant, I had him right here in this jail last night, but he escaped.

Preston; What did you do about it?

Mitch; Did the best we could. Lefty and Jackson and I tried to follow tracks, but the rain had washed 'em out.

Preston; How long have you been here in the office?

Mitch; Half an hour or so.

Preston; Then you probably haven't heard the news. I met him not far from town.

AD LIB: (STIR)

Preston; You'll have no further trouble with the Red Ace. He's dead.

AD LIB: (MORE STIR)

Jackson; You got him?

Mitch; Dad, eh?

Preston; And that reminds me. This pouch --

(POUCH TO TABLE)

Mitch; What's in there, Sergeant?

Preston; I promised Grogan I'd see that a fellow named Pierre got back his money. There's also some money that was stolen from Sam the storekeeper. It should go to his heirs.

Voice; The loot!

Preston; The heirs of Hard Rock Larson - if any - should be given Hard Rock's gold dust.

Mitch; You mean to say you got back all that stolen loot?

Preston; It's not unusual for dying criminals to try to make restitution. Will you lock this pouch up in your safe, Constable.

Mitch; Yes, but -

Preston; Then come with me. I'll take you to Grogan.

Mitch; Oh sure. Sure thing.

Preston; Two of us can handle things. We'll not need your helpers.

(BREAK)

Annrc; The Constable locked the leather pouch in his safe, then left the office with Sergeant Preston and King. A moment later, Chet Jackson departed to attend to a personal matter. He walked rapidly, obviously disturbed, to the cabin where he lived alone. At the door, he paused and fumbled in his pocket for a key -

Jackson; (MUTTERING) That big gorilla. He must have suspected that I wrote the notes.... must have doubled back here and waited until I left my place..
 () Here's the key.

(UNLOCK DOOR)

Could he have had a key to the door? () Might've pried a window open.... soon know.

(DOOR OPENS, CLOSES. A couple of fast steps as-

Anncr; Jackson crossed the room quickly, after carefully closing the door. He crouched to the floor in front of the fireplace and brushed aside the ashes that covered slabs of flat stones.

(BRUSHING)

Jackson; (ADLIB MUMBLING) (BREATHING HARDER, AS—)

Anncr; His nervousness increased. His fingers trembled as he felt around the edge of one stone, then lifted it out to expose a hiding place. Sweat beaded his forehead. He reached into the opening and brought out a flour sack. He was so intent on his work that he didn't notice the door opening behind his back. .

Jackson; (MUTTERING) Something in the sack - dump it out on the floor -

(DUMP COINS, PAPER ETC)

The Money! It IS here.

Preston; (BACK) That's what we want!

Jackson; (STARTLED) (GASP)

Preston; (BACK) Tipped your hand, eh Jackson?

Jackson; You! Preston! (WILD CRY) Trapped me. Well I'll
get you for that. (VIOLENT EFFORT)

(SHARP BARK)

Preston; Get him, King!

Jackson; I'll kill -

(DOG, ATTACKING)

(SHARP CRY) (ADLIB STRUGGLES WITH DOG)

(GUN SHOT)

Preston; (COMING IN FAST) We'll take that gun! (EFFORT)

Jackson; (WILDLY) Take him off! Take him off. The dog'll kill
me!

Preston; Down, King!

(DOG SUBSIDES)

Jackson; (GASPING) That- that dog

Preston; On your feet, Jackson! (EFFORT) Up you come!

Constable; (COMING IN) Looks like you got a prisoner, Sergeant.

Preston; And a killer! Jackson, the evidence in that sack will
hang you.

Jackson; You- you lied- you said Grogan was dead! And he's not!
He's right out there!

Preston; I said the Red Ace was dead, and that's the truth.

Constable; Looks like younfell for the old trick, Jackson.
When you thought your loot had been found by Grogan,
you just couldn't rest until you made sure.

Jackson; (SIGHS) You win.

Preston; The law always wins, Jackson.

Jackson; But-- but why did you follow me here? Why did you
suspect me?

Preston; I believed Grogan's story. When he said that the
note, telling him to go to Ma Kendall's restaurant
had been taken from his pocket, I knew that only
three men had access to it. The Constable, Lefty,
and you.

Jackson; So that's where I made my slip.

Preston; The constable and I left the office, to give you and
Lefty a chance to act. Lefty stayed there. You left,
so we followed you!

Jackson; (SIGHS) One little mistake--

Preston; One little mistake, Jackson. That's all it takes to
lose a crooked game. Now, you're under arrest in the
name of the queen.

BARKS

Yes, King, we have our man. Thanks to the way you
spotted Grogan in the fog, and rescued me from the
stream, this case is closed.

BARK

THEME