

The Challenge of the Yukon -created by Geo. W. Trendle

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RE 54
"The Doomed Witness"

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by Fran Striker

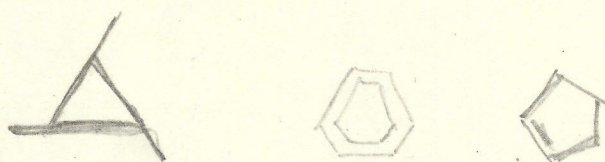
Number: 642 22

Date: APRIL 15, 1949

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- Preston and King
- Jim Carvel middle-aged publisher
- Constable Drake .. straight lawman
- Shifty Baker a suave lawyer
- Blackie Snead..... crook
- Martin crook
- Dave Broderick ... a young trapper
- Voice bit
- Voice 2 bit
- Maggie Simms middle-aged woman, straight
- Indian bit

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The Challenge of the Yukon

THE DOOMED WITNESS

by Fran Striker

Number: 472

Date: APRIL 22 - 1949

(USUAL OPENING)

Annrcr; Sergeant Preston was responsible for the capture of a notorious outlaw named Martin. On the day of the trial, the Mountie and his great dog, Yukon King, came into Dawson. They stopped first at the office of the newspaper -The Klondike Press to greet Jim Carvel, the publisher who was an old friend.

(SNEAK IN KING BARKING)

Jim; (LAUGHING) Yes indeed, King, everything I said to your master goes for you, too. I'm downright glad to see you --mighty glad.

Preston; (LAUGHING) Now, King, you can be quiet.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Jim; I wondered if you'd get here for the Martin trial.

Preston; How do things look?

Jim; Well, I don't pretend to be a prophet, Sergeant, but here's a proof I've just pulled from my front page.

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Preston; Martin Found Guilty.

Jim; I have the type all set and locked. I'm ready to go to press. I expect the case will be handed to the jury by noon, and a verdict arrived at within an hour -- two hours at the most.

Preston; There's no doubt about Martin's guilt.

Jim; None whatsoever. Don't you agree?

Preston; The only question in my mind is whether or not the affidavits of the witnesses will be admitted as evidence.

Jim; It's too bad you can't get the witnesses to testify in person.

Preston; I couldn't do it, Jim. They left on the last boat of the season.

Jim; Personally, I don't think it matters. I think the conviction is a foregone conclusion.

Preston; Is Shifty Baker defending Martin?

Jim; Yes.

Preston; He's smart and crafty.

Jim; Even so, there's a limit to what an attorney can do. Not even Shifty Baker can get an acquittal for Martin. Not with the evidence you've accumulated.

Preston; Well, Jim, I think I'll get over to the court. I'm going to leave King in your charge for an hour or so.

(KING SHORT BARK)

Jim; He seems to know what you said.

Preston; King, you stay here, boy. I --(BREAK OFF)

Jim; Hey, Sergeant! Look out the window.

Preston; Eh?

Jim; People are coming out of the courthouse.

Preston; The trial can't be finished.

Jim; Hardly.

Preston; There's Constable Drake.

Jim; Yeah.

Preston; I'm going to find out what's happened.

(DOOR OPENS, OUTDOOR NOISES)

(CROWD B.G.)

(KING BARKS)

What I said still goes, King. You stay here.

Jim; (BACK) Let me know.

Preston; I shall.

Const; (FADING IN) I tell you I've been ten years as a Constable, and nothing like this has ever happened.

Voice; There's a first time for everything.

Voice 2; It looks mighty bad for you Constable.

Const; Don't say that!

Voice; Here comes Sergeant Preston. I wonder what he'll have to say.

Voice 2; Hi there, Sergeant. Did you hear the news?

Preston; I thought Martin's trial was about to begin.

Const; That's what we all thought.

preston; What happened?

Const; I'll tell you what happened. The evidence has disappeared.

Preston; What!

Const; That's what I said. Those affidavits you had, Sergeant Preston. They were taken from my office. Someone busted into my desk last night and got away with 'em.

Voice; That's the Constable's story! (LAUGHS)

Const; I don't like that kind of a remark, Joe!

Voice; Aw-w, take it easy, Drake. No one's accusing you of any wrongdoing.

Preston; Drake, give me the factss

Const; You've got 'em, Seggeant. I thought we were all set to go on trial with Martin. We had the evidence and the Prosecutor said it was plenty to bring in a verdict of murder in the first degree.

Preston; Were the affidavits under lock and key?

Const; Of course they were.

Preston; Who was the last to handle them?

- Const; I was. Prosecutor Kendall went over them last night while I was with him. Then he turned 'em over to me, and I locked 'em in my desk. Between then and this morning, someone busted into the desk and stole them.
- Preston; What happened in court?
- Const; Well, the Judge postponed the trial for one week to give the Prosecutor more time to prepare a case.
- Preston; One week, eh?
- Const; Yeah. The Prosecutor's got to rebuild his case around a single eye witness.
- Preston; Um-m.
- Const; You know who that is.
- Preston; Yes.
- Const; David Broderick.
- Preston; I had hoped he wouldn't be needed in court.
- Const; Well he's going to be needed now. He's going to be needed plenty.
- Preston; He practically begged me to keep him out of it. I promised him I'd do all I could.
- Const; It boils down to this, Sergeant Preston. If David Broderick don't come into court next week when the trial is resumed, that dirty sneaking murderer will get off scott free.
- Preston; And there will be another feather in the cap of Shifty Baker.

Const; If you ask me, Sergeant, it's my guess Baker can tell plenty about who broke into my desk and stole the evidence.

Preston; Where is he now?

Const; Baker?

Preston; Yes.

Const; I suppose he's still with his client. He's probably talking to the killer and bragging about the fact that he's never lost a case and that he won't lose this one.

(FADE ALL SOUND)

(FADE IN FOOTSTEPS)

(STEPS STOP)

Man; I'll have to lock you in the cell with the prisoner, Mr. Baker.

Baker; Quite all right. Quite all right, my good fellow. I'll let you know when I'm thru conferring.

Man; Just yell when you're ready to leave.

Baker; Right.

Martin; (SULKING) Well, here I am - right back in the cell.

Baker; Sit down. Sit down, Martin and relax.

Martin; I figured to walk out of court a free man.

Baker; You're lucky you escaped a conviction.

Martin; I haven't escaped. They're not turning me loose. They're just postponing the trial a week.

Baker; Don't worry.

Martin; What about that witness who's to testify against me? Maybe by that time they'll have found the evidence, too.

Baker; Martin, they'll never find the affidavits. They have been burned.

Martin; Well - just the same - that witness - Dave Broderick -- they'll have him in court, and one eye witness can do more to get me hanged than the affidavits. Broderick can tell plenty about me.

Baker; He won't talk.

Martin; Humph.

Baker; Martin, you know my reputation.

Martin; I'm paying you plenty on account of it.

Baker; I have never had a client hang, and I don't intend to let you be the first. Don't worry about Dave Broderick. Don't worry about a thing. When your trial is over, you'll walk out of court a free man.

(BREAK)

Annecr; Lawyer Baker, otherwise known as "Shifty" went from the jail to the cafe.

(CAFE NOISES)

Annex; As he passed thru the large, well-filled room, he signalled a swarthy looking individual who sat alone at a corner table. Blackie Snead rose and followed the lawyer to a back room.

(DOOR CLOSSES, CUT ROOM NOISES)

Baker; Sit down, Blackie.

(CHAIRS SCRAPE)

Blackie; I got the high sign, Mr. Baker. I figured maybe you wanted to see me.

Baker; I have a little job for you.

Blackie; (CHUCKLES) Good. Cash on the line and no questions asked, eh?

Baker; That's right. ~~Cash on the line and no questions asked.~~

~~Blackie; Let's make out like this here table is the line.~~

a hundred
Baker; Here's some cash in advance.

(COIN ON TABLE)

another hundred
There will be more when the job is done.

Blackie; Now I'm working for you, Mr. Baker. Name it Boss.

Baker; Do you know where Dave *Broderick* lives?

east Blackie; Yeah. He's got a small shack about ³two miles north of town. You want him killed, is that it?

Baker; Where'd you get that idea?

Blackie; He's going to be called in as a witness at the trial next week, isn't he?

Baker; That'd the plan.

Blackie; You can't win against his testimony, and you can't afford to lose. (CHUCKLES) You'd spoil your reputation. You see, Baker, I know you better than most people. You wouldn't have called me in here, and asked if I knew ~~Broderick~~^{Green} unless you wanted him out of your way.

Baker; You're a smart man, Blackie. I like to do business with a smart man. () I want ~~Broderick~~^S out of the way, but there must be no suspicion of murder.

Blackie; Maybe you've got ideas?

Baker; I have. I'd like to see his house burn down tonight --~~Broderick~~^B, of course, to perish in the fire.

Blackie; I see.

Baker; It must be handled so he doesn't waken and escape from the fire or awaken and catch you in the act of starting it.

Blackie; Keep talking.

Baker; The contents of this little bottle will solve our problem. Put this into his drinking water.

Blackie; Poison?

Baker; No, but it will ^{make him sleep soundly} guarantee a very deep sleep for several hours.

Blackie; How am I going to put it into his drinking water?

Baker; You and I are going to call on David Broderick right now. You can take me to his place in your dog sled. While I'm talking to him, empty this bottle into the drinking water. You can go back there tonight and set fire to the cabin without fear of discovery.

Blackie; For this?

(DROP COIN ON TABLE)

Baker; I'll triple it when the job is done.

Blackie; That's better. I'll hitch up my dogs and be ready to start for Broderick's place in a few minutes.

(BREAK)

(FADE IN KING BARKING)

(WIND)

Annecr; Blackie found it a simple matter to put the sleeping potion into the supply of drinking water while Baker talked to Dave Broderick. The conspirators returned to Dawson, and it was some time later when Sergeant Preston and his great dog Yukon King went over the same hard-packed trail.

(RAP ON DOOR)

Preston; I hope we find Broderick at home, King.

(KING, SHARP BARK)

(DOOR OPENS)

Dave; Sergeant Preston!

Preston; Hello, Broderick.

Dave; Glad to see you. You too, King. Come on in, both of you.

(STEPS IN, DOOR CLOSES, CUT WIND)

Preston; Dave, I don't know whether you've heard the news-

Dave; About my being called in as a witness next week?

Preston; You have heard it.

Dave; Yeah. I hoped it wouldn't be necessary. (NERVOUS LAUGH) I guess I'm not very brave, Sergeant Preston. I --I'll testify, but I'm going to be downright worried about what Martin's friends will do.

Preston; They won't do anything. How did you hear the news? Were you in town?

Dave; No, I had a visitor this afternoon.

Preston; Who?

Dave; The lawyer, Shifty Baker.

Preston; (SURPRISE) He came here? What did he want?

Dave; He told me I'd be called in as a witness, and suggested that it might be healthy if I'd clear out before the trial.

Preston; Plan to?

Dave; No. Martin's a rotten killer. He's got to be convicted. If it can't be done without my testimony, it will be with my testimony.

Preston; Broderick, take my word for it, nothing's going to happen to you. I'm taking measures to protect you both before and after the trial.

Dave; (NERVOUS LAUGH) Didn't anyone take precautions to guard those affidavits that disappeared?
(PAUSE) Sorry, Preston. I didn't mean it that way. The Constable was in charge of those -- not you.

Preston; Dave, I can't prove anything, but I have my own ideas about the missing affidavits.

Dave; So have I. I think that shyster lawyer stole them.

Preston; That' can't be proved.

Dave; He'll do anything to get Martin an acquittal.

Preston; That's why I came here today. I want to make sure he doesn't get the chance to do "Anything."

Dave; Huh?

Preston; I want you to go into hiding.

Dave; Hiding?

Preston; I've made the arrangements. You know Maggie Simms, don't you?

Dave; ~~Good old Maggie?~~ Sure thing. Her place is just about half a mile from here toward town.

Preston; I stopped to see her on my way here. She'll be looking for you. You're to go there right away and stay until I call for you on the day of the trial. You, Maggie and I are the only ones who know where you are.

Dave; But Sergeant --

Preston; I'm going to stay here in your place.

Dave; For what?

Preston; Too see what happens.

Dave; Do you think something will happen?

Preston; I don't know. But I'm going to find out.

Dave; (SHORT LAUGH) I guess I get no choice in the matter.

Preston; I hope you'll cooperate.

Dave; All right, I'll cooperate. You want me to go to Maggie Simms' and lie low.

Preston; Yes, and take your dog with you.

Dave; All right. Make yourself at home. You'll find the larder well stocked, and there's plenty of stove wood in the shed. Say the word and I'll fix supper before I leave.

Preston; King and I will manage our own supper. I'd rather have you get to Maggie's place as soon as possible.

Dave; (LAUGHS) This is the first time I've ever been put out of my own house, but I'll take it without a murmur. I'll clear out as soon as I get my parka. And oh, say -

Preston; Yes?

Dave; Instead of melting snow for drinking water, I haul it from a good clear spring. There's plenty of it right over there in the corner. Enough to last you all week.

Preston; We'll make out, won't we, King?

(KING BARKS)

(BREAK)

Annrcr; We'll continue our story in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL)

Annrcr; Sergeant Preston and King were alone in Dave Broderick's small cabin a few miles from the town of Dawson.

(POURING WATER)

Preston; I'll fill a pan with water for you, King, and then I'll see about some supper.

(KING WHIMPERING)

Annrcr; Sergeant Preston didn't know that the water had been drugged with a sleeping potion by Blackie Snead, acting on instructions of the of the scheming lawyer Shifty Baker.

Preston; There you are, boy. I'll start the coffee going and then we'll have a caribou steak.

(KING WHIMPERING)

What's the matter, King? Aren't you thirsty?

(WHIMPERS)

Now see here, boy, you can't complain about that water. It's supposed to be special.

Annrcr; King held his nose close to the basin of water for the second time, then looked up at his master and whimpered softly.

(WHIMPERING)

Preston; I don't understand you, King. You were licking at the snow just before we came inside.

(POUR CUP OF WATER)

I'll taste it and see if I agree with you.

Annrc; Sergeant Preston dipped a cupful of water from the barrel and raised it to his lips.

Preston; Hum-m. Strange. It does have a slightly peculiar taste. I suppose it's all right. (SLIGHT LAUGH)
King, I guess we're just not used to good spring water. This will probably be all right in ^{tea} coffee.
I'll melt some snow for you.

(BREAK)

Annrc; Sergeant Preston drank two cups of tea made with the drugged water. Then, soon after washing and putting away the dishes and utensils, he stretched out on the bunk and slept. It was a deep sleep. He didn't stir when King uttered a low growl in the middle of the night.

(GROWLING)

The great dog knew that someone was prowling outside, close to the house. He tried to rouse his master again -

(WHINING AND GROWLING AD LIBBED AS:)

Anncr;

This was something King couldn't understand. Sergeant Preston had always wakened instantly at the slightest note of warning. King placed his big forefeet on the bed; gripped the Mountie by the shoulder and shook him gently. The only response was a low snore.

(START FLAMES CRACKLING)

Then King's delicate nostrils caught the smell of smoke. It was seeping into the room between the sidelogs.

(KING ADLIBBING BARKS, WHIMPERS,
WHINES, ETC.)

The smoke increased and the room became quite warm. Presently small tongues of flame appeared. King knew what that meant. Fire! He redoubled his efforts to rouse the sleeping man.

(KING AD LIBS)

He pulled away the blanket, then pounced upon the bed. He tugged and pushed and rolled the Mountie to the floor.

(DULL THUD)

Preston;

(SLEEPILY) Say -what -what's the matter?

(KING BARKING)

(DOPEY) King - King boy - what - - smoke - - I
-- - what's the matter with me? () Wait, King -
wait just a minute, boy - don't drag me. I'm -
I'm trying to - to get to my feet.

(CRACKLING FLAMES INCREASE)

Annrcr; Sergeant Preston's brain was whirling. He had a splitting headache. His arms and legs felt as if they were weighted with lead. He had to summon all his will power to pick up his parka and drag himself to the door.

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING AD LIBBING)

Preston; All right, King - - we- we'll get out, Boy.
(PAUSE) Looks as if that - that lawyer - has made his move - - against Dave Broderick.

(WIND FULL UP AS FLAMES FADE BACK)

Annrcr; The cabin was doomed. There was nothing the Mountie could do to save it. He stood watching the fire for ten or fifteen minutes while the cold, crisp air dissipated the last effects of the drug. Then he and King set out for the home of Maggie Simms.

(BARKING & WIND, FULL UP & TRAIL OFF)

Dave; You mean to say my cabin's burning right now?

Preston; Yes, Dave.

Maggie; How awful!

Dave; I'm going - -

Preston; Sit still. There's nothing you can do.

Maggie; It's the work of that sneakin', skulkin' polecat lawyer, that's what it is.

Preston; You're probably right, Maggie.

Dave; I've lost everything I own.

Preston; We'll do something about that, Dave.

Dave; Maybe if I'd been there myself it wouldn't have happened.

Preston; If you had been there, you would have perished in the fire. Your drinking water was drugged.

Dave; Drugged?

Preston; I'd have perished myself if King hadn't been on hand.

Maggie; Merciful goodness!

Preston; I took your place, Dave, because I expected there would be a move against you. There was a move, but unfortunately I wasn't awake to catch the man who started the fire.

Jmi It must have been him.
 Dave; It ~~was~~ either Baker or someone he ~~said~~. Probably Blackie Snead.

Preston; That's a good guess, but it's not proof that will stand in court.

Maggie; Sergeant, what are you going to do?

Preston; I want Dave to stay here just as we planned. Let Baker think he perished in the fire. *We'll try to find some way to trap*

Dave; What good will that do?

I'll try
 Preston; I don't know yet, but I'm ~~going~~ to think of some way to make that ~~crooked~~ lawyer show his hand.

Baker
 (BREAK)

Amner; *Josh* Baker, the lawyer, *was* was in his office at noon the following day when Blackie *Spead* opened the door.

Baker; Come in, Blackie.

(DOOR CLOSSES, STEPS IN AS:)

Blackie; (APPROACHING) I suppose you heard about the fire last night.

Baker; I heard about it, and I didn't like what I heard.

Blackie; Huh? What do you mean, Mr. Baker?

Baker; Was Broderick inside when you started the fire?

Blackie; (BEWIIDERED) Inside? Sure -- that is -- I guess so. His dog was inside. I heard him barking.

Baker; Did you stay around and watch to see that he didn't leave the cabin?

Blackie; No, of course not. I figured that stuff I put into the water would fix him so he couldn't leave.

Baker; You should have stayed to make sure.

Blackie; And get caught standin' and watchin' the fire?

Baker; Caught by whom?

Blackie; I don't know. Someone might have seen it and come to investigate.

Baker; No one could see it. The cabin's too isolated.

Blackie; Well, gosh, Boss, what's the matter? Why are you asking all these questions?

Baker; There's been no body found in the ruins.

Blackie; There hasn't?

Baker; A traveler came into Dawson this morning and reported seeing the cabin. The remains were still smoking when Constable Drake went to investigate. He can't make a thorough search until tomorrow.

Blackie; Broderick must've been caught in the fire. If he got away, someone would have seen him.

Baker; Um. I dare say you're right. The constable made inquiries at all the cabins between here and Broderick's place.

Blackie; ^{is}no trace of him?

Baker; No. And he hasn't appeared in Dawson.

Blackie; He's dead, Boss! I'm sure of it.

(BREAK) (SNEAK IN STREET SCENE)

Annrc; A thorough search of the cold ashes gave no proof that Broderick had perished. There were several opinions concerning the fate of the missing man--

Jim; If he thought the fire was an attempt on his life, he might've run away --

Voice; Yeah - on the other hand, he might've got out o' the cabin, the collapsed where the wolves could find him--

Voice 2; I say yer both wrong. I figure it this way. Dave didn't want tuh give testimony in court. He was afeared o' what might happen tuh him. So he started his own cabin afire an' lit out for other parts.

Ad lib; (MURMURS PRO AND CON, FADING OUT) (Maybe so.)
 (That's food for thought.) (I say it's a fool
 idea.) (T'ain't like Dave to run away.) (ETC.)

Annrc; Baker gained confidence as time went on. With the
 trial just two days off, he went to the jail to
 confer with his client. The Constable had locked
 him in Martin's cell.

Baker; (LOW, FADING IN) I just wanted to tell you, Martin,
 that I don't think we have a thing to worry about.

Martin; You better make sure of that, Baker. If that jury
 finds me guilty, I'll tell plenty about you.

Baker; Don't threaten me.

Martin; I'm not makin' threats. I'm just stating facts.
 I'll tell about a few of your crooked deals, and
 I'll tell how you stold evidence from the Constable's
 desk, and - -

Baker; (LOWER) Shut up! He'll hear you. He's at his desk
 in the other room.

Martin; Just remember what I said. I paid your price, and I
 expect you to get me out.

Baker; (RIZ) (RISING) All right. I'll visit you again
 tomorrow.

(RATTLE STEEL DOOR)

(CALLS) Constable! Constable Drake! I'm ready
 to leave.

(STEPS COMING IN AS:)

Drake; (APPROACHING) All right, Mr. Baker.

(UNLOCKING AND OPENING DOOR)

Drake; Sorry I had to lock you in, but that's the law.

Baker; That's all right.

(SLAM AND LOCK DOOR)

Drake; By the way, if you're not in a hurry to leave here, would you mind sitting at my desk for fifteen minutes or so?

Baker; Not at all. Why?

Drake; I've got to go over to the newspaper office and see about some handbills. I don't want to leave the office alone.

Baker; Go ahead, Drake. I'll wait until you come back.

Drake; (FADING) I guess I can trust you not to let the prisoner escape. (CHUCKLES)

Baker; He'll be here when you get back.

(DOOR OPENS, BACK)

Drake; (BACK) Thanks.

(DOOR CLOSES)

Martin; (BACK) Hey, Baker, if you're not dead sure of gettin' me acquitted, this would be a good time to unlock this door and let me out.

Baker; Don't be a fool, Martin! That might be the very thing they want me to do.

Martin; (BACK) What do you mean?

Baker; Sergeant Preston is still in Dawson. He's going to stay here until after the trial. He probably knows the law can't get a conviction with the star witness gone. He'd like nothing better than to catch me aiding and abetting the jail break of a man who's on trial for murder. (CHUCKLES) In fact, I think that's exactly what he's planning on.

Martin; (BACK) Yeah ?

Baker; (CHUCKLING) It sounded pretty thin when the Constable said he was going to see about some handbills. Why didn't he wait until his deputy got back?

(DOOR OPENS FAST)

Indian; (BACK) This Constable office?

(DOOR CLOSES)

Baker; Yes, this is the Constable's office. What do you want, Indian?

Indian; (COMING IN) (BREATHLESSLY) Me run long way -bring message.

Baker; A message for whom?

Indian; Message for law. Me on trail when old woman call - give message. Ask White Crow bring here.

Baker; All right. I'll take it.

Indian; She say law give dollar - maybe two.

Baker; Well, I'm not the one who -- (BREAK OFF ABRUPTLY)
Just a minute! Are you going to stay here in
Dawson?

Indian; No good. Me on way south. Good hunting - meet
friends.

Baker; Allright. (SLIGHT EFFORT) Here's your dollar -
in fact, here's two dollars. You go on your way.

Indian; Good medicine.

Baker; On your way.

Indian; (FADING BACK) How.

(DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES)

Martin; (BACK) What have you got there, Baker? You looked
at that message as if you'd found something.

Baker; I have. I've found the missing witness.

Martin; (BACK) Dave Broderick!

Baker; Yes. He wrote this note. He says he can't give all
the facts. He just wants the Constable to know that
he's safe and that he'll be on hand to testify at the
trial but he can't leave Maggie Simms' cabin for
another day or so.

Martin; (BACK) He's hurt, eh?

Baker; Probably. The chances are he escaped from the fire
and got lost in the snow and woods.

Martin; (BACK) How'd he get to Maggie Simms' place?

Baker; He doesn't say.

Martin; (BACK) Listen, Baker, you better do something. If he appears at the trial, I'm thru and so are you!

Baker; Don't say a word about this, Martin. You understand? Don't say a word when the Constable comes back. Leave this to me. I'll take care of Broderick.

Annrcr; Soon after leaving the office of the Constable, the attorney found Blackie Snead in the cafe. And once more he held a conference in the privacy of a back room.

Baker; That's what you've got to do, Blackie. And you better take care of it tonight.

Blackie; Did the Indian who brought that message leave town?

Baker; Yes, I watched him go.

Blackie; Who else knows Broderick's alive?

Baker; Broderick himself and Maggie Simms, and of course, Martin, that's all.

Blackie; Okay. Don't worry, Boss. I'll take care of things.

Baker; Tonight?

Blackie; Tonight. But there's just one thing, Mr. Baker.

Baker; What's that?

Blackie; You went to a lot of trouble to get rid of Broderick in the fire so's no one would suspect a murder.

Baker; I had hoped to avoid suspicion, but now I guess that's impossible. I'll give you some money. You take care of Broderick and if necessary, Maggie Simms. Then keep going. Don't come back to Dawson.

(BREAK)

(WIND)

Annex; That night, the wind howled around the small dark cabin where ^{home} ~~old~~ Maggie Simms had made her home for ^{at the edge of} ~~ten~~ many years. Blackie halted his dog team and heavily loaded sled in the shelter of some trees not far from the house. Holding a gun in readiness, he went to the cabin on foot.

Blackie; (MUTTERS) Hope this door is unlocked. () It should be.

(DOOR OPENS SOFTLY)

(LOW) There.

(DOOR CLOSES VERY SOFTLY)

(CUT WIND)

Now to find which room he's in.

(FLOOR BOARD CREAKS)

(CUE) Try this door first. If that old woman yells, I'll have to let her have it.

(FAINT OPENING OF DOOR)

Broderick; (SNORING)

Annex; The door opened into a small, dark room. The meagre night light coming thru the window revealed a bed near one wall. The figure on the bed was snoring softly.

Blackie; (MUTTERS) Must be Broderick.

(FLOOR CREAKS)

Blackie; (SOFT CHUCKLE) Don't matter whether it is or not.
Both he and the old woman have got to go.

Anncr; The prowler shifted his gun to the left hand, then drew a long knife from inside his boot. He held it over the mound beneath the bed clothes, then plunged it down hard.

Blackie; (EFFORT) There!

Preston; Leave the knife right there!

Blackie; (CRY OUT IN SURPRISE) What the - -

Preston; Don't move.

Anncr; For an instant Blackie stood spell bound. The voice came from beyond the bed and a dark form rose in the narrow space between the bed and the wall.

Blackie; (CRY OUT) I'll get you!

Preston; Take him, King!

(KING SNARLS, LEAPS)

(SHOT)

(AD LIB SCUFFLE)

Blackie; Let go! Let go! Get off! Help! Help! What is this! (AD LIB STRUGGLING AS:)

Anncr; King had leaped from the doorway, and the full weight of his charge had struck Blackie in the middle of the back, driving him forward, off balance. As his gun exploded, the bullet drilled into the wall, then Sergeant Preston leaped across the bed and grabbed the gun hand.

- Preston; All right, King. Get back, boy. We have him, fellow.
(CALLS) Bring a light, Dave.
- Dave; (BACK) Right!
- Maggie; (BACK) Are you all right? Are you all right,
Sergeant Preston?
- Blackie; (STILL STRUGGLING) Let me go, let me up! Who are
you? What is this?
- Preston; Come on, I'll take that gun. Then you can stand up.
- Dave; (COMING IN) Here's a light.
- Maggie; (COMING IN) Did it work, Sergeant Preston?
- Preston; That knife stuck thru the bed clothes into the
dummy we rigged up is your answer, Maggie.
- Blackie; It's a frame-up! You sent that note, and let Baker
get hold of it just to trick him!
- Preston; We had to make him show his hand.
- Blackie; Broderick - you - you're all right! You're not hurt!
- Dave; Who said I was?
- Preston; After Martin is convicted, and sent to the hangman
there will be another trial, Blackie. Your trial,
for attempted murder. But yours will be different
from Martin's. You'll have a chance to escape the
hangman.
- Blackie; I don't want to hang; I don't want to hang, I tell
you! Listen, Preston, give me a chance! I -- I --
(BREAK OFF)

- Preston; You have just one chance, Blackie, and that is to turn States Evidence. A jury might be lenient with you in view of the fact that no one died as a result of your two attempts at murder.
- Dave; You're the one who set fire to my cabin! You tried to kill me then!
- Blackie; I -- I --
- Preston; Who hired you?
- Blackie; You -- listen, Preston, you know who hired me. You know it as well as I do.
- Preston; Baker?
- Blackie; Y-Y-Yes.
- Preston; All right, Blackie, you've turned squealer. Now go all the way. Give me the facts.
- Blackie; It - it was Baker who hired me.
- Dave; Do you mean to say he'd go as far as murder to protect a rat like Killer Martin?
- Blackie; He had to. He's afraid of what Martin will say if he gets convicted. Martin knows too much about Baker. He knows enough to put Baker in jail a dozen times over. He knows the things Baker did to get other crooks acquitted.
- Preston; We'll go into the other room where we can sit down and prepare a full and complete statement for you to sign. Dave, you'd better go back to Dawson with me when we have that statement.
- Dave; Whatever you say, Sergeant.

Preston; We'll see that Baker makes arrangements to pay for the loss of your cabin before we put him into jail with Blackie and Martin.

Maggie; Sakes alive, that jail will be downright crowded with all three crooks together.

Dave; (SLIGHT LAUGH) You can blame King for that, Maggie. Two of the crooks are there because he prevented the death of Sergeant Preston when my cabin burned.

(KING BARKS)

Preston; Yes, boy, Dave's talking about you.

(ONE BARK)

Blackie; That dog - -

Preston; Many crooks have said that, Blackie, and in just the same tone of voice. And each time King hears it, he says to himself, "This case is closed."

(BARKS)

MUSIC: Theme.