

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON

created by Geo. W. Trendle

CABIN CODE

by Fran Striker

Number

875

Date

5/12/51

*Striker*

Preston and King

Tom.....heavy 1.

Lefty...heavy 2.

Sam.....prospector, straight.

Kate....his wife.

FILE

The Challenge of the Yukon

by Fran Striker

CABIN CODE

Number: 875

Date: 5-12-51

(USUAL OPENING)

Annex;  
There was gold to be had by panning Scotch River, but the rugged mountain country would not give up her treasure to a weakling. It was a wind swept area bitterly cold and far from any settlement. Men hardy enough to work the region were able to return to Dawson with a sack of hard earned gold.

(WIND & STEPS ON CRISP SNOW)

But Tom Farnum and his partner Lefty Morris lacked both industry and courage. They were on their way back from Scotch River after less than a week, and Tom was in a particularly ugly mood.

Tom;  
Of all the fool ideas - goin' up to Scotch River! I don't know why I listened to you, Lefty!

Lefty;  
You listened to me because you wanted to strike it rich. You knew it wouldn't be child's play.

Tom;  
There could be a million dollars in Scotch River and I wouldn't stay there another day.

Lefty;  
All right - all right, we've left.

Tom;  
Yeah, and where are we? In the middle of no where - with a four or five day hike before we reach Dawson!

Lefty; You'll feel better after we've had something to eat.

Tom; Where'll we get it? You know as well as I do we're out of grub.

Lefty; There's a "Way" cabin straight ahead at the bend of the trail.

(FADE OUT SOUND)

Annex; Way cabins were established at intervals on wilderness Yukon trails. They were stocked with food and firewood for the benefit of travelers. Any man was free to make use of the small windowless cabins and take whatever he might need. Tom and Lefty made themselves at home and soon had food on the fire that crackled in the fireplace. Tom was unfamiliar with the code of the way cabins.

(FIRE CRACKLING IN FIREPLACE)

Tom; Free grub! This beats me!

Lefty; By the time the water's boiled for tea I'll have this steak done to a turn. You'll feel better, Tom, when you sink your teeth into a juicy slab of caribou.

Tom; How about putting more wood on the fire?

Lefty; That's why it's here. We can burn as much as we like as long as we replace it before we leave.

Tom; Replace it? You mean we've got to cut wood before we hit the trail?

Lefty; Sure.

Tom; Not me, Lefty. I'm leavin' here at daybreak, and I'm not cuttin' any wood before I start!

Lefty; All right, Tom. I'll cut it.

Tom; Who stocked this place?

Lefty; Lots of men. ~~see~~ <sup>are</sup> Their names on the vittles. For example, there was a tag on the meat hangin' out in the rear tellin' who shot it and left it here. Names are written on the cans of grub there in the cupboards, and on the sacks of flour and salt.

Tom; Um-m. Here's a name on this can. Sam Lawrence --

Lefty; Yep. You see, Tom there's a sort of unwritten law. Any pilgrim is welcome to whatever he needs in a cabin like this, but he's expected to put back as much or more than he takes.

Tom; You mean we're supposed to come back here?

Lefty; Not here, especially. Maybe before we hit the next cabin, we'll be able to shoot some game. If so we'll take it with us, eat what we want and leave the rest with our name on it for the next man. If we have any extra tea or flour or something like that, we'd leave some.

Tom; Most everyone who leaves Scotch River has to stop at this place, isn't that so?

Lefty; Sure.

Tom; Suppose a man came here and didn't find food. Then what would he do?

Lefty; I reckon he'd tighten his belt and mush on. He'd be mighty hungry before he reached the next cabin.

Tom; Suppose there wasn't food in that one?

Lefty; Well Tom, unless he found and shot some game, he'd be in a critical situation. He might starve to death.

Tom; He'd pay almost any price for food, wouldn't he?

Lefty; He sure would. Why?

Tom; His pockets might be bulgin' with gold, but it wouldn't do him a bit of good if he starved on the trail to Dawson. Seems to me, he'd be willing to give at least half of his gold for food enough to see him through.

Lefty; Tom, what're you getting at?

Tom; (CHUCKLES) It was your idea to go to Scotch River, Lefty. It didn't work out for us. Now it's my turn to have an idea.

Lefty; Tom, if your idea's what I think it is —

Tom; Let those sourdoughs freeze an' starve to get gold from Scotch River. Lefty, we'll take our share without lifting a hand!

Lefty; No no, Tom!

Tom; We'll pack all the grub in this cabin and take it with us.

Lefty; We couldn't carry it all!

Tom; We'll pack it and drag it on a line. We'll do the same with the grub in the next cabin.

Lefty; Tom, we can't get away with it. It's the same as horse stealin' in~~x~~ the States. It's a hangin' crime! Think of all the horse thieves who've had their necks stretched!

Tom; I'm thinking of horse thieves who got rich, then went east to live the life of millionaires.

Lefty; Tom, I won't --

Tom; (SNARLS) Listen, Lefty! I see a good thing and I'm going to act on it. If you're with me you share in the profits; if you're against me - (EFFORT)

Lefty; Tom! You - you wouldn't shoot me?

Tom; No? () Speak up. What's your decision?

Lefty; Tom, what do you think will happen when sourdoughs reach Dawson and tell about findin' no grub in the Way cabins - and tell about us takin' half their gold for food --

Tom; We'll make a quick clean up, then head for the States before we're caught. Now speak up. Are you with me or against me?

Lefty; Well, I -- I don't want to be shot -

Tom; Then you're with me. We'll pack the grub that's here and leave at daybreak.

(BREAK)

Annex; With little choice in the matter Lefty worked with Tom in looting the cabins between Scotch River and Dawson. Then the two proceeded to put their plan into operation. One of their first victims was a prospector named Sam Lawrence. Sam left Scotch River after a successful venture in panning gold. Before reaching his home in Dawson he was forced to surrender much of his hard won gain for food to stave off starvation. When he and his wife saw Sergeant Preston heading into town with his sled and dog team, they were delighted.

Kate; Sam! Sam, it is Sergeant Preston.

Sam; It sure enough is, Kate. And there's his lead dog, Yukon King.

Kate; Well don't stand here by the window. Get to the door. Call him in before he gets past the house. You have a-plenty to tell him about the way you were robbed.

(FAST STEPS) (DOOR OPENS)

(DOG TEAM APPROACHING)

Sam; (SHOUTS) Hi there, Sergeant Preston.

Preston; (BACK) Hello, Sam.

(DOGS COMING IN & STOPPING AS:)

Sam; Sergeant, I sure am glad to see you.

(KING BARKS)

And you too, King.

Kate; (COMING IN) Let me say the same.

Preston; It's good to see both of you. How have you been, Mrs. Lawrence?

Kate; I'm all right, excepting for being mad enough to chew nails.

Preston; Mad?

Sam; Sergeant, I've been robbed.

Preston; Robbed?

King; Yes, and Sam's not the only one. Please step inside so we can tell you all about it.

Preston; Very well.

(KING WHIMPERS)

Sorry, King, but you'll have to stay here while the team's in harness. Keep 'em in line, boy.

(SHORT BARK)

(STEPS IN, AS:)

Sorry to track all this snow into your house.

(DOOR CLOSES, STAMP OFF SNOW - CUT WIND)

Kate; Think nothin' of it, Sergeant.

Preston; By the way, Sam, the last time I was here you were talking about going up to the Scotch River country to try your luck at panning gold.

Sam; I went there and that's what I want to tell you about.

Kate; Sam was robbed of almost all the gold he got in Scotch River.

Preston; Is that so?

Sam; I went there, Sergeant Preston. I froze and starved. I never worked so hard in all my life, but I found gold. Yes sir, I found gold, and if it hadn't been for the orneriest, thievin' skunks that ever lived, Kate and I would have had enough to take us back to the States, and live comfortably for the rest of our lives.

Preston; What happened?

Sam; Sergeant, do you know the country between here and Scotch River?

Preston; I've been over it only once. It's desolate country.

Sam; It sure is. There are three "Way" cabins up along the trail, and there's no part of the Yukon where they're needed more.

Preston; I remember the cabins.

Sam; On the way back I stopped at the first one. There wasn't a mouthful of food or a stick of firewood there. I had to travel the next day on an empty stomach, but I kept goin' and by nightfall reached the second cabin, figurin' I'd be sure to find grub.

Kate; But he didn't!

Preston; You mean to say there was no food in either of the first two cabins?

Sam; That's right. When I started out from the second one, I was just about licked. I was so weak from hunger, I could hardly travel.

Preston; What about the third cabin?

Sam; (LAUGHS BITTERLY) I couldn't believe it, Sergeant Preston. But it was empty just like the others.

Preston; It was?

Sam; I knew it meant the end for me. After I'd looked around and realized that there was no grub, I -- well, I fell down to the floor and I cried like a baby -- I was that weak.

Preston; I'll see that those cabins are stocked right away.

Kate; Wait'll you hear the rest!

Sam; I don't know how long I lay there on the floor. I may have lost consciousness. I woke up with someone shakin' me. It was a man in a bearskin parka. He offered me a bowl of steamin' hot broth.

Preston; Was he anyone you knew?

Sam; No.

Preston; Go ahead.

Sam; He gave me the broth. Then he explained that he had a place in the woods not far away. He offered to sell me grub enough for a square meal so's I could finish my trip to Dawson.

Preston; He took money for the food that saved your life?

Kate; (LAUGHS BITTERLY) Money!

Sam; He took almost all the gold I had for enough grub to see me to Dawson. And what makes me so doggoned mad -- some of it was my own food!

Preston; Your own?

Sam; Yes! There was a can of food with my name on it. One I'd left in another cabin.

Preston; Then those men must have looted the cabins.

Sam; Sure they did. And they worked the same crooked deal on Pete Doolittle. Then yesterday, Jim Forsythe came into town from Scotch River.

Preston; What about Jim Forsythe?

Kate; Tell him, Sam.

Sam; Jim had dogs and a sled, but he was short of food the same as the rest of us. He met the same man in the third cabin. But Jim didn't have enough gold to satisfy the thievin' polecat.

Preston; What happened to Forsythe?

Sam; He had to swap his campin' equipment -- tools, dynamite and everything else he had on his sled. It's a wonder he could keep his dogs.

Preston; Sam, why haven't you men gotten together and gone to look for this man who waits to pounce on starving travelers?

Sam; There's been some talk of it, Sergeant, but we haven't gotten around to it. Besides, the chances are, he'd see us comin' an' light out.

Preston; Um-m.

Sam; What's more, we're so glad to be back in Dawson that none of us feel like goin' out on the trail again. Not right away.

Preston; Does anyone know the man?

Sam; Jim Forsythe remembered seein' him with a partner around Scotch River.

Preston; So he has a partner.

Sam; He had. I don't know whether he still has or not.

Preston; What's his name?

Sam; Jim says they called him Tom - and his partner Lefty.

Preston; (DECISIVELY) Thanks for the information, Sam.

Kate; What're you going to do, Sergeant?

Preston; I'll investigate. I'll take King and leave the rest of my dogs here.

Sam; You'll have to be mighty careful. There's a wide valley just this side of the third cabin. It's open country. You'll be seen long before you reach the cabin.

(BREAK)

Annex; Tom and Lefty had built a small shack for their own use not far from the third "Way" cabin on the trail from Scotch River, and had stocked it with food of every description. Food labeled with the names of men who had left it in "Way" cabins on the trail. Though the shack was partially concealed by trees, it was so placed that the occupants could watch the valley on the Dawson side and the trail in the opposite direction toward Scotch River. It was Lefty who saw two dark distant figures approaching through the valley.

Lefty; Someone's coming this way from Dawson.

Tom; How many, Lefty?

Lefty; Looks like one man and a dog. I'll know better when I get the binoculars focused.

Tom; (CHUCKLES) Those binoculars come in handy.

Lefty; So do a lot of other things we got off the sledge of that last pilgrim.

Tom; What do you see?

Lefty; Tom! This, I don't like!

Tom; Huh -?

Lefty; You said we'd be ready for any of the men who might come up from Dawson looking for us.

Tom; We are ready!

Lefty; Yeah, we're ready for townsmen - but Tom -- the man coming this way is a Mountie!

Tom; All right, we'll deal with the Mountie just as I said we'd deal with the townsmen.

Lefty; But Tom, when it comes to killing a Mountie --

Tom; Take it easy. There'll be no one to prove it's murder. As a matter of fact, I doubt if anyone will be able to prove the Mountie's dead.

Lefty; What do you mean?

Tom; To prove a man ~~is~~ dead, there has to be a body. Isn't that right?

Lefty; Yeah, sure.

Tom; What do you think would happen to a man who has about three pounds of dynamite set off beneath his feet?

Lefty; Dynamite?

Tom; We got some from Jim Forsythe, remember?

Lefty; Yeah.

Tom; Now give me a hand and we'll prepare a reception for the Mountie -- (CHUCKLES) -- a hot reception!

Lefty; We'll have to work fast.

Tom; There's plenty of time. The Mountie will have slow going thru the deep snow in the valley. He'll be nearly an hour getting here.

Lefty; What do you want me to do?

Tom; Take Jim Forsythe's pickaxe and dig a hole right here in the center of the floor.

(PAUSE) (THEN SNEAK IN PICK ON HARD GROUND)

Annex; Working rapidly, Lefty broke the hard dirt floor of the cabin with the pickaxe and prepared a hole. Tom fitted an assortment of articles into a small wooden box while from time to time, he gave instructions to his partner.

(DIGGING)

Tom; That's deep enough, Lefty.

(STOP DIGGING)

Lefty; Good! That ground was sure frozen hard. What about the dirt I scooped out?

Tom; Leave it right there in a pile.

Lefty; What've you been doing?

Tom; Take a look at the way I've rigged this box.

Lefty; Looks like a pretty elaborate contrivance.

Tom; I have the dynamite here in the bottom of the box.  
(SLIGHT EFFORT) Now I'll fix this six-gun right here -- like this. It's a lucky thing the gun has a hair trigger. This is a trick I read about. This clock strikes the hour. The next time it strikes, the blast will go off.

Lefty; When'll that be?

Tom; Just fifty-five minutes from now. I've set the hands for five minutes after the hour.

Lefty; Fifty-five minutes. You're counting on the Mountie being here at that time?

Tom; Yes.

Lefty; What if he's not?

Tom; We'll see that he is. (SLIGHT EFFORT)

Lefty; Seems a shame to blow up this little shack. It was hard work building it.

Tom; I didn't figure on a Mountie coming along the trail. If it were anyone else, we'd have handled him different.

Lefty; There'll be dirt left over.

Tom; Bury it beneath the snow outside. When we're thru, we'll cover the hole with the bearskin robe we got from Forsythe. It'll make a good rug for the floor. (CHUCKLES) Then we'll put the table on top of the robe and leave.

Lefty; How do we know the Mountie will be here when the blast goes off?

Tom; I'll leave a note on the door, and I guarantee it will keep the Mountie here.

(FILLING IN HOLE, FADING OUT)

(FADE IN WIND, B.G.)

(AD LIB DOG BARKING)

Annex; Sergeant Preston and Yukon King found the snow deep in the valley between Dawson and the "Way" cabin. Before leaving town, the Mountie had talked to Jim Forsythe and Pete Doolittle. Their stories coincided with the experience of Sam Lawrence. All three had paid heavily for food to save their lives at the cabin nearest Dawson. So this seemed to be the logical place for Preston to begin his manhunt. When he reached the cabin next to the trail, he noticed footprints in fresh snow.

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING SNIFFING)

He opened the door and looked inside --

(CLOSE DOOR)

-- then closed the door when a glance disclosed the fact that the cabin was empty.

Preston; We'll follow the footprints, King. They'll lead somewhere.

(KING BARKS)

Annex; The footprints led from the door along one side of the cabin.

Preston; They head directly for those trees.

(KING SNIFFING, WHIMPERING AD LIBBED)

Annex; Sergeant Preston saw the small shack when he was half way to the stand of timber.

Preston; It looks new, King. Those logs are freshly cut.

(SHARP BARK)

Anner; The footprints led directly to the door of the shack, then separated. One set of prints went south from the shack and another north. Both were lost among the trees.

(WHIMPERING)

Preston; Steady, King. There's a note fastened to the door. We'll see what it says. (READING) "Lefty - if you get back ahead of me, be sure to wait because I have something important to tell you. Have gone hunting. I will be back by four o'clock." Signed by Tom. () Four o'clock, eh. Well, King, we might as well wait inside instead of following the tracks.

(DOOR OPENS & CLOSES) (STEPS  
ON DIRT FLOOR)

(KING WHIMPERING & SNIFFING)

Anner; King sniffed around the floor while Sergeant Preston inspected the crudely built equipment in the cabin.

(OPEN CUPBOARD DOOR)

Inside cupboards he found a plentiful supply of food. There was an assortment of canned goods, paper sacks and cloth containers, and on each one was written the name of the man who had contributed the item to a "Way" cabin on the trail. He read the names of Sam Lawrence - Jim Forsythe and others.

(CLOSE CUPBOARD)

Preston; That's all there is to see, King.

(CHAIR SCRAPES)

We'll sit here and wait. According to the note, Tom should return in half an hour and Lefty may be here ahead of him.

(FADE IN WIND)

Annex; Tom and Lefty had made divergent tracks from the cabin so the note on the door would appear authentic. But the two had gone only a short distance before meeting. They were within an eighth of a mile of the cabin, waiting among the trees.

Tom; It's too bad we had to leave so much stuff in the cabin.

Lefty; We brought all we could carry. You should have made Forsythe leave his dogs and sled.

Tom; I didn't want the bother of feedin' the dogs.

Lefty; Tom, are you sure we'll hear the explosion from here?

Tom; (CHUCKLE) We'll hear it. There's three pounds of dynamite in that box.

Lefty; What will we do afterwards?

Tom; As soon as we're sure the Mountie's off our trail for keeps, we'll go into Dawson, get a sled and some dogs and strike out for another part of the country.

Lefty; But you said we'd go back to the States.

Tom; I figured we could stay here longer and collect from more of those prospectors from Scotch River before we had to pull stakes.

Lefty; We did pretty well from those three.

Tom; Bah! A few thousand dollars worth of gold! I want ten times that much -- and we'll get it, too!

Lefty; Don't you think it's dangerous to go into Dawson for supplies? We might run into Forsythe or one of those others we robbed.

Tom; You'll do the trading in Dawson. No one saw you around here. I'll keep out of sight.

Lefty; Tom, what time is it now?

Tom; Half past three.

(FADE IN TICKING CLOCK, FULL UP)

Annex; Underground a clock ticked steadily, measuring the seconds and the minutes until four o'clock.

(FADE OUT TICKING)

But the sound of the clock was muffled by the earth and a rug. Muffled so effectively that it was indiscernible to the Mountie who sat at the makeshift table almost directly over the buried dynamite. He glanced at his watch --

Preston; Fifteen minutes to four o'clock.

(KING WHIMPERS)

Anncr; Sergeant Preston was relaxed. He knew that King would give the signal when anyone approached the tiny shack. He was amused by the uneasy way the great dog sniffed around the room ---

Preston; (CHUCKLES) Can't you relax, King?

(WHIMPERS)

Preston; Too much food around here, eh? Is that it?

(WHIMEER)

Anncr; King looked at his master. He couldn't understand why the man was so relaxed, when every instinct told the dog that the cabin was filled with evil - and with danger. It was a danger King couldn't identify. He resumed his exploration. He sniffed at the legs of the table, the corners of the room - then at a spade and pickaxe that leaned against a wall.

(WHIMPERS)

Preston; Just a regular short handled spade, King. You've seen them before.

Anncr; When King touched his nose to the handle of the spade it clattered to the floor.

(SPADE HANDLE SLIDES DOWN WALL)

(SLIGHT YIPE OF SURPRISE)

Preston; (CHUCKLES) Startled yourself, eh boy? (RISING)  
I'll stand it up again.

(STEPS ON HARD DIRT)

Preston; (CUE) Um. Curious thing, King. Fresh dirt on the spade. It's been recently used.

(KING WHIMPERS)

Annex; King watched as his master examined the fresh dirt. Instinct told the dog that the spade had some ~~relationship~~ relationship with the strange feeling that danger was close at hand.

(TICKING FULL UP THEN OUT)

Preston; (CUE) Strange - this pick has the same fresh dirt on the point. That, too, has been used recently.

(BARKS)

Annex; King barked once. He sniffed the fresh dirt and the sharp end of the pick, then turned to the bearskin rug on the floor beneath the table. He gripped it in his teeth and tried to pull it away. Sergeant Preston moved the table off the rug and when the rug was taken away there was a spot where the soil had been recently turned. King began to claw the soft ground.

Preston; I'll help you, King. We'll see what's there.

(KING WHIMPERING & DIGGING, FADE OUT)

(BREAK) (FADE IN WIND)

Annex; Tom and Lefty waited with growing impatience. Four o'clock came and went, but there was no sound of an explosion. They waited fifteen minutes more. Tom looked at his watch for the fifth time, then closed the lid with a decisive snap.

(SNAP)

- Tom;           Something's gone wrong.
- Lefty;          It's way past four o'clock.
- Tom;           Yeah. That blast should have gone off fifteen minutes ago. Maybe the clock stopped.
- Lefty;          What'll we do, Tom?
- Tom;           I wish I knew if the Mountie is still in the cabin.
- Lefty;          We've got to do something. It'll be dark in a little while, and it's getting colder by the minute.
- Tom;           Yeah.
- Lefty;          If we do go back to the cabin, we might get there just as the blast lets go.
- Tom;           We could go to the "Way" cabin. We might spend the night there.
- Lefty;          And risk being caught by the Mountie?
- Tom;           Um.
- Lefty;          If he's still around he's sure to see our tracks. I'm surprised he hasn't followed them.
- Tom;           Lefty, we've got to know about him! I'll go ahead to the cabin. You follow along. If the Mountie's there, and gets the drop on me - well, you know what to do.
- Lefty;          Y - y -yeah -
- Tom;           And you'd better do it! Don't try to double cross me, Lefty!

Lefty; I wouldn't do that, Tom.

(WIND UP & UNDER:)

Anner; Tom set out following his own backtrail in a round-about route to the cabin. King had signalled his approach. Sergeant Preston was waiting for him.

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING BARKS)

Preston; Quiet, King.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Tom; A Mountie -- that dog --

Preston; Take it easy. The dog won't hurt you.

Anner; Tom tried to suppress his surprise when he saw the death box open on the table.

Tom; Wha - what're you doin' here?

Preston; Close the door and sit down, Lefty.

Tom; You're callin' me Lefty. How - How --

Preston; Isn't that right? Isn't that what your partner calls you?

Tom; Well - how did you know?

Preston; When I came here I found this note fastened to the door. It's addressed to Lefty, and signed by Tom. Do you know where Tom went?

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Tom; Well - uh - according to this note he went hunting.  
It - it says he'll be back- I'm to wait here.

Preston; Did he expect you back before four o'clock?

Tom; Yeah - come to think of it - he did.

Preston; He had a death trap set for you.

Tom; Wha - what did you say? A death trap?

Preston; Look at this box.

Tom; Where - uh - what is it?

Preston; It holds dynamite with a contrivance to set off an  
explosion at four o'clock. I found it buried beneath  
the table.

Tom; It - it's after four - -

Preston; It's all right. The box is harmless now. It seems  
to me, Lefty, your partner intended to murder you.  
He expected you back before four o'clock, and left  
a note on the door to be sure you stayed here until  
the explosion.

Annecr; Tom looked at the Mountie -- then at the box. He  
realized that the man in uniform had no suspicion  
of the true purpose of the death trap. Inasmuch as  
he had been mistaken for his partner he decided to  
act out the role of Lefty.

Tom; So my partner was going to double cross me, eh?  
Going to kill me. Why that ornery -wait 'til I  
get my hands on him!

Preston; The law will take care of him for you, Lefty, if you'll cooperate.

Tom; Cooperate? What do you mean by that?

Preston; Lefty, I know what you and Tom have been doing. Several men in Dawson came close to starving because you two took all the food from the "Way" cabins.

Tom; Who can prove that we—

Preston; (CUTS IN) I know what you're going to say. It might be hard to make a charge against you stick in court. There's the matter of proof. There's no actual proof you stole the food, but you and I both know that is the case. It will not be hard to prove that you and Tom robbed men under the pretense of selling food.

Tom; When food is scarce, the price goes up. It was mighty scarce for those men.

Preston; That's a poor excuse. () While I was waiting for you to return I wrote out a full confession. Here it is.

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Tom; You expect me to sign a confession that'll put me in jail?

Preston; I'm giving you a chance to stay out of jail. Of course, your fate will lie in the hands of a jury, but I think if you sign that confession, return what you stole, and re-stock the cabins you looted, the Jury will deal leniently with you.

Tom; What about my partner?

Preston; He'll probably go to jail for attempted murder.

Anner; Tom knew that Lefty would arrive at any moment. He knew he had only to stall for time. While he read the confession slowly, he heard King whimper --

(WHIMPERS)

Preston; What is it, King? Someone else coming?

Tom; Is that why the dog whines?

Preston; Yes, Lefty. I think your partner has arrived.

Anner; For the moment the attention of both the Mountie and the dog was focused on the door. Tom acted fast. He snatched his gun from its holster.

Tom; Get 'em up!

Preston; Eh?

Tom; You're covered, Mountie! A fast move and I'll shoot!  
And keep that dog quiet!

(KING GROWLS)

Preston; Quiet, King! Steady, boy.

Anner; King knew what it meant when someone pulled a gun and held it steady on his master. He trembled with eagerness to leap, but held back only because there could be no misunderstanding the sharp command --

Preston; Hold it, King.

Anner; King wondered at such a command.

Tom; Get 'em up, do you hear me?

Preston; I didn't expect you to pull a gun on me, Lefty.

Tom; No, I reckon you didn't/ That was another mistake you made. You've made a lot of mistakes today, Mountie. The first was in mistakin' me for my partner Lefty.

Preston; You're not Lefty?

Tom; No. My name's Tom Farnum, and that note I left on the door wasn't meant for Lefty. It was meant for you! (LAUGHS) And so was the blast. We saw you coming. I figured the note would keep you here 'til the blast went off.

Preston; So you're Tom Farnum, eh? Well what I said about you still goes. You're headed for jail, and the charge is attempted murder. The law deals harshly with men who plan the murder of a mounted policeman.

Tom; To hear you talk, you'd think you were the one holding the gun!

Preston; You won't shoot. As it stands now, you'll go to jail. Shoot me and you'll hang.

Tom; I'll probably hang anyway for stealin' food. (CALIS)  
Come on in, Lefty!

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING GROWLS)

Preston; Hold it, King. Quiet, boy.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Lefty; (BACK) I've got a gun on him, Tom.

(DOOR CLOSES)

Preston; I wondered where you were.

(STEPS COMING IN)

Lefty; (COMING IN) Well now you know.

Tom; We'll tie him, Lefty, then set this bomb all over again. This time we won't have to bother burying it. () You see, Mountie, if there's enough left of you to be found, it'll be hard for any Jury to prove you were murdered. You thought I'd shoot you and leave a bullet hole, eh? (LAUGHS) Well, that was just one more mistake on your part. Get that rope over there, Lefty.

Preston; Tom, you spoke of my mistakes. Well, there's one mistake I did not make. (SHARPLY) Get him, King!

Ad lib; (COMMOTION)

(KING EXPLODES INTO ACTION)

(COUPLE OF GUNSHOTS)

Tom; AD LIB HOWLS & YELLS)

LEFTY: AD LIB HOWLS & YELLS)

Annex; King had been tensed like a tightly drawn bow. He sensed what was coming and was in the air before his master could complete the command to attack. Sergeant Preston, too, went into action. His gun came up like lightning. He fired a split second before Tom, and as he fired, he threw himself to one side. Tom Farnum's shot went wild, but the Mountie's bullet found a mark.

Tom; My arm! My arm!

Lefty; (ADLIBBINE HOWLS ABOUT DOG) Take him off! Take him off! Help! He'll kill me! Help!

Annex; King's jaws closed on Lefty's gun arm like a bear trap. Lefty, knocked off balance, went down with the mighty dog on top. Tom staggered from the impact of the bullet. His right arm hung useless but he regained his balance, and with his left hand snatched a knife from his belt.

Tom; (HOWLING) I'll get you, Mountie.

Annex; Sergeant Preston closed in, dodged the knife, and jabbed his fist to Tom's stomach.

Tom; (GASPS) (MOANS & GROANS)

(FALLING BODY) (KNIFE FALLS)

Preston; That should do it!

Lefty; ~~XXXX~~ MORE AD LIBBING ABOUT DOG)

Preston; All right, King. (SLIGHT EFFORT) I'll take his gun.  
Stand back, boy.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Lefty; Tha -that dog --

Preston; Get up, Lefty. The fight is over.

Tom; (GROANING)

Preston; You, too, Farnum -- on your feet. King, you stand guard while I bandage this wound -- then we'll take these two into Dawson with the gold they've stolen.

(KING BARKS)

~~SA~~ Sam Lawrence and the others who were robbed will be glad to help restock the "Way" cabins.

Tom; (SNARLING) If it hadn't been for that mutt, Mountie, you'd have been sitting here waiting for the explosion that would send you into Kingdom come!

Preston; You're quite right, Farnum. My thanks go to King for saving my life.

(BARKS)

Yes, King, old boy -- this case is closed.

theme.