

Gunsmoke **"Cheap Labor"**

by
John Meston

made available courtesy of WRKS Radio Theatre and Arizona TheatreWorks 1998

Cast

Matt Dillon
Man in bar
Foss Capper
Chester
Ben Stancil
Carrie
Miss Kitty
Hank (Stancil's man)

(Intro with Gunsmoke Theme western music...horse riding sound effect and gunshot)

Announcer: Around Dodge City and in the territory on west, there's just one way to handle the killers and the spoilers, and that's with a U.S. Marshall and the smell of Gunsmoke.

(Gunsmoke theme music)

Announcer: Gunsmoke -- the transcribed story of the violence that moved west with young Americaand the story of a man who moved with it.

Dillon: I'm that man. Matt Dillon, United States Marshall. The first man they look for and the last they wanna meet. It's a chancy job, and it makes a man watchful...and a little lonely.

(theme music swells and then fades to the sounds of people talking and eating/drinking in a saloon.)

Man in saloon: (drunk) So your name's Foss Capper, huh?

Capper: Yea, that's right mister.

Man: Well you say your name out like you've got nothin to hide.

Capper: Well now you're right again.

Man: Hmm..well I guess a man who wanted to hide somethin need to be wearing a gun to help him do it.

Capper: Maybe.

Man: Well er you agreein with me er ain't you agreein with me?

Capper: (laughing) Any way you want it, mister.

Man: Yea...you're big Capper, but I ain't afraid a you.

Capper: There's no reason you should be.

Man: You're awful big. Man'd be a fool to go against ya without a gun, wouldn't he? (pause....no response)well, wouldn't he?!

Capper: Mister, have a drink.

Man: Naw. Here, you have this instead. (the ground) I always carry an extra gun in my belt.

Capper: I don't want your gun.

Man: Well I can't fight you lessn' ya got a gun...you're too big.

Capper: We got no cause to fight, mister, now you take you're gun back.

Man: (laughing) You're afraid. You're a coward. You're a stinkin'.....

Capper: (interrupting) Don't you push it Mister.

Man: I said you're a coward.

Dillon: Alright, feller, you've had enough.

Man: Aw...you....now you keep outta this.

Dillon: I am wearin a gun, mister, and I'll bend it across you're skull in a minute.

Man: Oh....you're the Marshall.

Dillon: Get out of here. Go on, move.

Man: Sure.....(walking away) sure.

Capper: Well.....s'pose I oughtta thank you, Marshall.

Dillon: No need.

Capper: Name is Foss Capper.

Dillon: You know, most men around Dodge do wear guns, Capper.

Capper: I've had enough of fightin', Marshall.

Dillon: Oh? And where was that?

Capper: Why the war.....had it from Harper's Ferry all the way to Richmond. You know, a man gets tired of killin'.

Dillon: Yea, I know.

Chester: Mr. Dillon?

Dillon: Yeah, what is it, Chester?

Chester: Mr. Dillon, Ben Stancil's out there in the street.

Dillon: So?

Chester: He's about to beat up one of his riders.

Dillon: I suppose it has to do with his sister again, huh?

Chester: Yes sir, it sure does, and Carrie's there too.

Dillon: Alright, let's go.

Chester: Oh, I declare....that poor Carrie. Mr. Dillon, she was tryin' to load their wagon all by herself and this rider of Stancil's come along, and he was helpin' her when Stancil himself come up and got real sore about it.

Dillon: Stancil doesn't deserve a sister like Carrie.

Chester: She's as nice as he is mean and ugly. There they are.

Dillon: Yeah.

Chester: Well, say...where's that cowboy at?

Dillon: He's lyin' on the ground behind Stancil.

Chester: Well I sure didn't hear no shootin'.

Ben: Get back to loadin' that stuff Carrie. (pause) Did you hear me?

Carrie: Yes, I hear you Ben.

Dillon: Well, I hope you didn't kill him, Stancil.

Stancil: He's alright, Marshall. I only knocked him down.

Chester: Well...I'll go get some water from over there and.....

Stancil: I shouldda killed him.

Dillon: For what? Trying to help Carrie do a man's work.....

Stancil: Carrie's my sister, Marshall. What she does ain't no business of yours.

Dillon: No. But your keepin men away from her the way you do is gonna lead to real trouble one of these days.

Stancill: My trouble, Marshall.

Dillon: Not if you kill somebody. You know, I guess men don't like the way you treat her.... there's somebody else tryin to help her.

Stancil: What?

Dillon: Now just take it easy Stancil, that man's not wearin' a gun.

Stancil: Then he better go get one.

Capper: There ya are mam.

Stancil: What do you think you're doin' stranger?

Capper: Well that box seemed a little heavy for a lady to be liftin'.

Carrie: Please, Ben. He meant no harm.

Stancil: You know this man?

Carrie: Well, he told me his name.

Stancil: Carrie, you're turning into a regular da...

Capper: Now I wouldn't talk like that mister.

Stancil: You shut up.

Dillon: There's been enough fightin' for one day. Stancil, your wagon's loaded.....so why don't you get goin'.

Stancil: All I can say to you mister is you better get yourself a gun.

Get up on the seat, Carrie.

Capper: Good day, Miss Carrie.

Carrie: Goodbye, Mr. Capper.

Stancil: (to horses) Huh there! Huh!

Dillon: Well, how did you get mixed up in this, Capper?

Capper: I was curious, so I followed ya out. Then I seen her struggling with that box. Couldn't just stand there and watch her, could I?

Dillon: Uh huh. You just remember somethin' Some day Stancil's gonna kill somebody over her.

Capper: Well I sure hope it won't be me.

Dillon: Then you know what to do, huh?

Capper: Yeah. Yeah, I know what to do, Marshall.

(Theme music swells.... and then changes to a sort of sad, lonely cowboy music.)

Kitty: Hi, Matt.

Dillon: Hi Kitty, you shoppin'?

Kitty: Well I guess I woman's always shoppin, Matt, whether she buys anything or not. (laugh)

Matt: (also chuckling) I believe that. Well, now.

Kitty: Hmm? What?

Dillon: That's Carrie Stancil.

Kitty: Oh. Well sure.

Dillon: But isn't that Foss Capper drivin' her wagon?

Kitty: Well where you been the last few weeks, Matt? He drives her wagon every time she comes to town.

Dillon: He does?

Kitty: Well sure. He rides out and meets her part way, ties his horse behind, and they drive in together.

Dillon: And this has been goin' on for a couple of weeks, you say?

Kitty: Oh....well at least.

Dillon: Ben Stancil hasn't found out, I take it.

Kitty: I doubt if Capper's ever showed himself anywhere near the ranch, Matt.

Dillon: Why....ya think he's afraid?

Kitty: Don't you?

Dillon: Maybe he only wants to avoid a fight.

Kitty: Isn't that the same thing?

Dillon: No, not necessarily, Kitty.

Kitty: Well if he wasn't a coward, he'd be wearin' a gun, wouldn't he?

Dillon: I don't know, Kitty. I haven't decided about Foss Capper.

Kitty: Look at them, Matt. There so wrapped up in each other they don't even see us.

Carrie: No, Foss. This is the last time. It has to be.

Capper: I hope I don't bring ya no trouble, Carrie, but I ain't gonna stop seein' you.

Kitty: Huh. She's smarter than he is.

Dillon: Yeah, maybe.

Kitty: You know, I guess she'll never be able to get away from that brother of hers. I....oh...Matt, look.

Dillon: Yeah.

Kitty: There's gonna be trouble, Matt. Stancil looks awful mad.

Dillon: (sighing) Well, I don't like to interfere in family matters, but this time I guess I'd better.

Kitty: Yeah, you'd better hurry too.

Dillon: Yeah, I will.

(Sound of footsteps walking and store door opening - bell)

Stancil: What's goin' on, Carrie?

Carrie: Please, Ben. Let's talk about it at home. Not here.

Stancil: We're gonna settle this here and now.....and you ain't gonna stop it, Marshall.

Dillon: I just wanted to make sure you remember that Foss Capper doesn't carry a gun, Stancil.

Stancil: Dirty coward.....of course he doesn't.

Capper: A gun wouldn't solve anything, Stancil.

Stancil: It'd get you killed. That'd solve things.

Capper: Maybe for you. Not for Carrie.

Stancil: I don't even wanna hear you sayin' her name.

Capper: You're gonna have to hear it. Now it's gone on long enough, Stancil, the way you treat her.

Stancil: What I do with Carrie ain't no business of yours.

Capper: I want Carrie to marry me.

Carrie: Foss. You never told me that.

Capper: Well I..... I been thinkin on that Carrie. I figured to wait, but I guess there ain't time now for waitin'.

Carrie: Oh, Foss.

Capper: Carrie's worked hard for you, Stancil, and you never gave her a thing of her own. You kept everybody from her for fear of losin' her. She ain't a woman to you...a sister. She's nothin' but cheap labor.

Stancil: I'll kill you sure, now.

Dillon: No you won't, because you'd hang for it.

Stancil: I'll get you Capper. One way or the other.

Capper: Hmph. Carrie?

Carrie: Yes?

Capper: You go on back to the ranch and get what things you need. I'll be waitin' right here for you tomorrow noon.

Stancil: No, Carrie....

Capper: You can't stop us, Stancil. (to Carrie) You're gonna be free, Carrie. You can make up your mind later about marryin' me, but you're gonna be free.

Stancil: Carrie....

Capper: Stancil, you shut up! And don't you lay a finger on her, or

I'll just beat you to death. Go on now, Carrie.

Carrie: Alright, Foss.

Capper: Noon tomorrow, Carrie. I'll be waitin'.

(sound of footsteps and door opening and closing (bell) as Carrie leaves.)

Capper: And you mind what I said, Stancil. Don't you try to stop her.

Stancil: I won't try to stop her. It's you I'm gonna stop.

(sound of footsteps and door opening and closing (bell) as Stancil leaves)

Capper: Now you know, Marshall, I didn't mean to cause trouble when I come here.

Dillon: (chuckling) Well, maybe not, Capper, but you sure done it.

(theme music swells and then fades into slow, melancholy western music)

(sound of door opening and footsteps)

Chester: Mr. Dillon?

Dillon: Yeah, what is it, Chester?

Chester: You'd better get on out there, quick. It's fixin' ta happen. Ben Stancil just rode in with two of his men.

Dillon: Has Carrie showed up yet?

Chester: No, sir, she ain't. But Foss Capper was waitin' for her when them others came in.

Dillon: I didn't think Stancil would let her go without a fight.

Chester: Oh there's gonna be a fight, alright.....of some kind. Look how their crowdin'.

(many footsteps)

Stancil: Capper. I'm gonna fix you good.

Capper: I see you brought plenty of help.

Stancil: Well....you're too big for one man to handle, but the three of us can do it.

Dillon: No, ya don't Stancil.

Stancil: You keep out of this, Marshall.....

Dillon: You don't think I'm gonna stand by and watch three men work over one, do ya?!

Capper: Wait, Marshall.

Dillon: Yeah, what, Capper?

Capper: Now there ain't no other way. I'll take 'em on.... all of 'em. It's got to be done.

Chester: Wait a minute. Look who's comin' yonder.

Stancil: It's Carrie. I told her to go back home.

Chester: What in the world's the matter with her? She looks like she got drug.

Stancil: You keep away from her, Capper.

Dillon: Shut up, Stancil, leave him be.

Capper: What happened to you?

Carrie: (upset) They caught up with me at the edge of town.....

Capper: Here. I'll help you down.

Carrie: I got here anyway. He couldn't stop me.

Capper: Did your brother do this to you?Did he knock you around?

Stancil: You get back on that wagon and go home, Carrie.

Dillon: Alright, hold it Stancil. Let her talk.

Capper: Carrie, did he do it?

Carrie: Yes.

Stancil: You sure need convincin', Carrie...

Dillon: I told you to shut up, Stancil.

Capper: Chester?

Chester: Yeah?

Capper: Would you be good enough to take Carrie over to Miss Kitty's? Cause I got a little business here.

Chester: I'd be glad to.

Capper: Don't you move, Stancil.

Chester: You come on with me, Carrie.

Stancil: Alright boys. Let's get to work.

Capper: Now just a minute, Stancil. I've changed my mind.

Stancil: What?

Capper: I ain't goin' ta fight you. Not now. Not that way. We're gonna settle this for good and all.

Stancil: What are you talkin' about?

Capper: Marshall Dillon could I ask you a favor?

Dillon: What, Capper?

Capper: Lend me your gun.well?

Dillon: (hesitating)alright. Alright, here it is.

Capper: Thank you.

Stancil: Now what's this?! What are you two doin'? Who ever heard of a lawman lendin' his gun?

Dillon: I think Capper's right, Stancil. This business has got to be settled for good. And he's the one to do it, not me.

Stancil: O.K. then you can watch him die. You ready boys?

Hank: Now wait a minute, Stancil. You didn't say nothin' about no gun fightin'.

Stancil: What difference that make?

Hank: There's somethin' about him. I don't like the way he wears that gun. He looks kind of professional to me.

Stancil: He's nothin but a tin horn and he's a coward at that.

Hank: He ain't no coward. And I ain't havin' no part of this. Come on Bob, let's don't be fools.

(sound of footsteps walking away)

Stancil: (calling to them) Now you're fired....both of ya.

(continued sound of footsteps)

Hank: (calling back) Good.

Capper: Stancil?

Stancil: Was he right, Capper? Are you a gunman?

Capper: You can find out; easy enough.

Stancil: You gonna stand there and allow this, Marshall?

Dillon: I can't stop it now.

Stancil: Well I think he is a gunman. I think he's a killer.

Capper: Stancil. You're through. Get goin'.

(sound of footsteps as Stancil walks away)

Stancil: (sighing)Welp.....

Capper: Marshall. Your gun. I thank you.

Dillon: Sure.

Capper: You remember, I told ya how a man gets tired of killin'?

Dillon: I had a feelin it was more than the war that did it, Capper...

Capper: I was all through wearin' a gun. That's why I asked Carrie to marry me.

Dillon: So?

Capper: You tell her for me, Marshall. Tell her I was ready to kill her brother. I can't ask her to marry me now. The day will always come when I'll have to put on a gun again.

Dillon: Not against Stancil.

Capper: Well there's others. Man like me's got enemies.

Dillon: Why don't ya tell her about it yourself, Capper?

Capper: It wouldn't be fair. I'd be influencin' her the wrong way just bein' there. Will ya do it?

Dillon: It's too late.

Capper: Huh?

Dillon: Look behind you.

Capper: Oh.

Dillon: She didn't go to Kitty's. She was waitin' to see what happened. Yeah. She saw ya, Capper..... gun and all. She doesn't look like she's comin' to tell you goodbye.

Capper: Hm. No. No, she doesn't, does she?

(sound of footsteps as Carrie approaches)

Carrie: Foss?

(Theme music swells)

Announcer: You know, writers like Ned Blum drew exaggerated pictures of the West. But they did no real harm. But next week two writers from New York come to Dodge, and are the cause of an Indian massacre. And that was the West.

(Theme music out)

Announcer: "Cheap Labor" was written by John Meston,

Matt Dillon was portrayed by _____ ,

Foss Capper was played by _____ ,

_____ played Chester,

_____ was Ben Stancil,

Miss _____ gave life to Carrie Stancil and the lovely
_____ played Miss Kitty.