GUNS of PARADISE

"OUT OF THE ASHES"

Episode #1

written by
James L. Conway

LORIMAR TELEVISION
300 South Lorimar Plaza
Burbank, Ca. 91505

REVISED SECOND DRAFT
August 28, 1990

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CAST

ETHAN ALLEN CORD
CLAIRE CARROLL
JOSEPH CARROLL
BENJAMIN CARROLL
GEORGE CARROLL
AMELIA LAWSON
JOHN TAYLOR
DAKOTA

DEPUTY CHARLIE
TINY
AXELROD
CARL
BAXTER

MARSHAL BLAKE
GARRET
EMMET
STARK
JACKSON
ROSE
OTTO
BUTLER (THE PUNK)

GUNS OF PARADISE
"OUT OF THE ASHES"

LOCATION/SETS

EXTERIOR

TOWN OF PARADISE
- BUILDING SITE
- SCHOOL HOUSE
- STREET
- HOTEL
- HOTEL BAR
- TELEGRAPH OFFICE
- MARSHAL'S OFFICE
- HARDWARE STORE
- LIVERY
- BOARDING HOUSE
- AMELIA'S HOUSE
- BANK
- TRAIL

HILLSIDE
CORD CABIN
CAMPSITE

INTERIOR

BANK
AXELROD'S
HOTEL BAR
AMELIA'S OFFICE
TELEGRAPH OFFICE
MARSHAL'S OFFICE
CORD CABIN
HOTEL
BOARDING HOUSE

GUNS OF PARADISE
"OUT OF THE ASHES"

CHRONOLOGY

SCENES 01-24.....DAY 1

SCENES 25-34.....NIGHT 1

SCENES 35-43.....DAY 2

SCENES 44-45.....NIGHT 2

SCENES 46-79.....DAY 3

SCENES 80-83.....NIGHT 3

SCENES 84-107.....DAY 4

G U N S O F P A R A D I S E

"Out of the Ashes"

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

1 EXT. HILLSIDE - EARLY MORNING 1

Quiet, serene. Wildflowers ripple under a gentle breeze, the only SOUND two birds CHIRPING at each other. Then we HEAR the THUNDER of approaching hooves.

2 TIGHTER 2

A herd of cattle crests the rise -- then through the swirling dust ETHAN CORD appears. He rides high in the saddle, his duster blowing in the wind. He BARKS at the cattle, urging them on.

His nephews, JOSEPH, BEN and GEORGE CARROLL, appear behind Ethan, bringing up the rear.

3 ON ETHAN 3

He REACTS as he SEES --

4 HIS POV: A CAMPSITE 4

Small, a one-man camp. Ethan is too far away to clearly see faces, but he does SEE two MEN on Horseback -- OTTO and JACKSON. A THIRD MAN is on foot; a FOURTH MAN is mounting a horse. The Third Man holds onto a fifth man, DAKOTA -- a good-looking young hothead who's trying to defy the formidable odds marshalled against him.

Dakota yanks free, leaps forward to drag Otto from the horse. As he does, the Third Man hits Dakota from behind with his gunbutt; Dakota is dazed but doesn't go down; he swings, lands a punch on the Third Man's head.

5 ETHAN 5

As he spurs his horse...

ETHAN
(to the boys)
Stay here!

Ethan starts for the camp. The boys call after him:

GEORGE
What is it?

BEN
What's hap...happening?

6 TIGHTER ON THE CAMP 6

Dakota gamely tries to fight back, lands a punch on Otto's head, which, not surprisingly, only serves to make Otto madder.

Otto SLAMS his fist into Dakota's face, knocking him to the ground. Otto pulls his revolver, levels it at Dakota. But before he can pull the trigger a shot EXPLODES, blowing a hole in the the tree next to Otto's head. Otto and his gang spin to SEE --

7 ETHAN 7

Riding across the meadow, pistol drawn. Ethan FIRES again.

8 WIDER 8

The man standing next to Otto is hit in the arm, SCREAMS out in pain, drops his weapon.

Jackson aims at Ethan, but Ethan FIRES first: Jackson's horse spooks, REARS, throwing him! Jackson takes off after his horse.

Otto's seen enough. He races for his horse, the others follow. They gallop off.

Ethan rides into camp; he's tempted to continue the chase of the men, but decides he better check on their victim first. He gets off his horse, tries to help Dakota up. Dakota shoves Ethan away, angrily gets to his feet.

DAKOTA
What'd you do that for? I had them right where I wanted them.

ETHAN
Looked like they were stealing your horse.

DAKOTA
My wallet, too. But I had a plan.

ETHAN
So did they. To kill you.

Joseph, Ben and George ride up. Ethan indicates George's horse.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Climb aboard, we'll give you a ride to town.

Dakota shakes his head.

8 CONTINUED: 8

DAKOTA
I don't need anyone's help.

GEORGE
Paradise is ten miles.

JOSEPH
You can't walk.

DAKOTA
Don't tell me what I can't do!

ETHAN
Fine.

Ethan mounts up.

DAKOTA
And don't expect thanks! I don't need help from anybody.

As Ethan and the boys ride off, Dakota calls after him:

DAKOTA
(continuing, almost a religious declaration)
I ride alone!

9 TIGHT ON ETHAN 9

ETHAN
(to himself)
You can walk alone, too.

HOLD on Ethan as Dakota grows smaller in the background.

FADE OUT.

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 10

Ethan and the boys drive the herd toward Paradise.

11 ANOTHER ANGLE 11

Cattle stream by CAMERA. The dust clears revealing a collection of signs at the side of the road. The largest sign says: WELCOME TO PARADISE - POPULATION 65. The 65 has been crossed out and "478 AND GROWING!" has been painted in. A second sign proclaims: PARADISE COPPER MINE -- NOW HIRING! A third sign warns: NO SIDEARMS ALLOWED. CHECK GUNS AT MARSHAL'S OFFICE.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. PARADISE - DAY 12

A cacophony of sights and SOUNDS. The streets are choked with wagons and people -- new storefronts dot main street and a palpable sense of optimism permeates the town.

13 ANGLE ON ETHAN 13

He and the boys drive the cattle down Main Street toward a makeshift corral with a large banner over it declaring: CATTLE SALE TODAY!

Ethan drives the herd past --

14 CLAIRE AND JOHN TAYLOR 14

They walk down the sidewalk. Claire has school books tucked under her arm, a smile on her face and a bounce in her step.

CLAIRE
Isn't it wonderful, John Taylor! Paradise is turning into a real city.

JOHN TAYLOR
New York is a real city. Chicago is a real city. Paradise has a way to go.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

CLAIRE
We'll get there. You'll see. The new copper mine is just the beginning. Soon we'll have electric lights, trolly cars, telephones...

A wagon rolls by, SPLASHING mud onto John Taylor's pants.

JOHN TAYLOR
I'd settle for paved streets.

15 ANGLE 15

MARSHAL BLAKE steps out of his office. Blake has the wary eyes of a professional lawman, and the easy smile of a politician. He waves to Ethan who returns the greeting with a nod. Ben calls to Blake.

BEN
Morning, Marshal.

BLAKE
Hello, Ben. I've got some more wanted posters for your collection. Stop by after school.

Ben lights up.

BEN
Thanks!

As Ethan and the boys ride past we PAN and HOLD on a young punk, BUTLER leaning against a building chewing on a toothpick. He stares at Ethan, the devil dancing in his eyes.

CUT TO:

16 INT. BANK - DAY 16

Ethan slaps a stack of bills onto AMELIA'S desk.

ETHAN
I sold the herd for six hundred and fifty dollars.
(he hands her half)
That goes into the bank account.
(he pockets the rest)
This goes to buy lumber. Now we'll be able to finish the house.

Amelia moves into his arms.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

AMELIA
Our house.

He pulls her close.

ETHAN
I'll have it done in time for the wedding.

They kiss. Warm, loving. Then --

ETHAN
(continuing)
I better get to work.

AMELIA
I could stop by at lunch time. Bring you something.

Ethan nuzzles her neck.

ETHAN
I was counting on it.

AMELIA
Chicken all right?

He brushes his lips against hers.

ETHAN
Who said anything about food?

Ethan kisses her again and before she can say a word he's out the door.

17 EXT. BANK - DAY 17

Ethan exits the bank and heads down the street. Suddenly the punk, Butler, steps out of an alley behind Ethan, his gun drawn.

BUTLER
Ethan Cord!

Ethan stops, turns, eyes Butler, sees that he can't be more than eighteen years old.

ETHAN
Going to shoot me down in cold blood?

BUTLER
Don't need to.

The Punk flamboyantly twirls his gun, drops it into his holster.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

BUTLER
(continuing)
I'm fast as they come.

Butler's hand dangles inches from his revolver.

ETHAN
I'm not.

BUTLER
That's not what I hear. Make your move.

Townsfolk begin to gather as Ethan pulls back his duster, drops his right hand next to his gun. His left hand hangs behind his back.

ETHAN
You got nothing to gain from this.

BUTLER
Sure I do. A reputation.

ETHAN
There's better ways to make a reputation.

Butler's getting impatient.

BUTLER
Come on, Cord. Draw.

Butler locks his eyes on Ethan's gun hand, waits.

ETHAN
(resigned)
Have it your way.

Ethan's gun hand stays frozen next to his revolver -- but his left hand suddenly comes out from behind his back... holding a pistol aimed at Butler's heart.

BUTLER
Hey! That's not fair.

ETHAN
Seems fair to me. I'm not that fast...so I have to be smart.

Ethan takes a step closer to Butler.

ETHAN
(continuing)
But if you want me to draw...

Ethan suddenly draws: now he's got two guns aimed at Butler.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

ETHAN
(continuing)
Bang. You're dead.

A LAUGH from the crowd. Butler's shaken. Ethan takes another step closer to him.

ETHAN
(continuing)
I guess I'm not being fair. You wanted a gunfight.

Ethan pockets the gun in his left hand and holsters the gun in his right hand.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Ready.

This isn't exactly what Butler expected. He's confused. Scared. He doesn't move.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Change your mind?

Butler eyes the crowd, swallows hard.

BUTLER
No.

Ethan takes another step closer to him.

ETHAN
Then make your move.

Butler goes for his gun -- before it clears leather Ethan draws and has Butler dead in his sights.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Hell, you're not even that fast.
(holsters his gun)
Let's try it one more time.

Now Butler is trembling. Ethan takes another step closer.

ETHAN
(continuing, taunting)
Come on, kid. Show everyone how tough you are.

Suddenly Ethan reaches out and pulls Butler's pistol out of his holster.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

ETHAN
(continuing)
See, it's not so hard...

Ethan cocks the hammer, shoves the barrel into Butler's chest.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Now all you have to do is pull the trigger. Like this...

Butler's terrified. Shaking.

BUTLER
Please. Don't...

ETHAN
This the kind of reputation you want?

Butler drops his head. Ethan opens the cylinder on Butler's gun, drops the bullets to the ground, then tosses Butler the empty weapon.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Go home. Find a better way to make your mark.

Butler spins and runs away into the arms of Marshal Blake. Deputy CHARLIE and a new Deputy, GARRET, are with him. Blake hands Butler to Garret.

BLAKE
Lock him up.

As Garret drags Butler off Marshal Blake turns to Ethan.

BLAKE
And I'd like you to hand over your guns.

Ethan looks at him, surprised.

BLAKE
(continuing)
You know the rules. All handguns have to be checked at my office when you ride into town.

ETHAN
Like that kid checked his gun?

BLAKE
I didn't see his. I can see yours.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

ETHAN
And what happens when the next punk rides into town? What happens the next time I'm called out?

BLAKE
Show him an empty holster. A kid looking for a reputation won't draw on an unarmed man.

ETHAN
All the same, I believe I'll hold onto my weapon.

BLAKE
I can't let you do that.

He takes Ethan's arm, leads him aside...

BLAKE
(continuing; confidentially)
Look, Ethan, these people offered you this job. More than once. Am I right?

ETHAN
Yeah...

BLAKE
You didn't want it. Fair enough. And they hired me instead. So let me do the job -- my way. And I can't make any exceptions. Not even for you.

Ethan looks around to find the eyes of the town staring at him.

BLAKE
(continuing)
These folks look up to you. I look up to you. And I look to you to set an example.

A beat, then Ethan pulls out his guns and hands them to Blake.

CUT TO:

18 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 18

Butler is in the cell, Garret sits at the desk. Marshal Blake enters, hands Ethan's guns to Garret then crosses to the cell, unlocks and opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

BLAKE
You can go.

Blake suddenly grabs Butler by the hand -- his gunhand -- and twists.

BLAKE
(continuing)
Why do you think I put that gun-check sign at the edge of town? So punks like you don't litter my streets with bodies.

BUTLER
I won't do it again.

BLAKE
That's right, you won't.

Blake sticks Butler's hand in the open cell door -- then SLAMS it shut, CRUSHING Butler's hand! Butler SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

19 INT. AXELROD'S - DAY 19

AXELROD talks to CARL as he stacks cans on a shelf.

AXELROD
Marshal Blake's the best thing to ever happen to Paradise. Better than the copper strike. Better than the boom. You see the way he made Cord turn over his gun?

CARL
I never thought Ethan'd do it.

AXELROD
Even Cord can't stop progress. And we've got Marshal Blake to thank for it.

They HEAR a VOICE from the door.

BLAKE
Glad you feel that way, Cyrus.

Blake and the new Deputy, Garret enter the store.

BLAKE
(continuing)
I'm working hard to win the town's confidence. But it's not easy, not short-handed as I am. Hard to be everywhere at once with just me, Deputy Garret and Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

AXELROD
(snorts)
Charlie. A lot of help he is.

BLAKE
The man's worked for this town a long time. Can't just boot him into the street. Besides, he means well.

GARRET
But the Marshal and I can't do it all.

BLAKE
Not the way Paradise is growing.

AXELROD
Then you should hire more men.

BLAKE
Wish I could. But lawmen cost money. And I'm afraid without more help, merchants like yourself could be left defenseless.

AXELROD
Well, I could bring it up at the Merchant's Association.

CARL
But we did agree on a fee...

BLAKE
And I'm doing my best with what I've got. I'm just afraid it won't be enough. And instead of going to the Merchant's Association I thought a few of you might just kick in a little extra each week.

GARRET
It'd be in everyone's best interests.

AXELROD
(considers, then)
I guess I can afford a little extra to keep the peace. I'm sure most of us can.
(to Carl)
Right?

CARL
(unsure)
Well...

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

Axelrod reaches into the cash register, pulls out two coins.

AXELROD
Here's two dollars, Marshal.

BLAKE
(frowns)
I'm going to be needing two, maybe three more men, Cyrus.

Axelrod hesitates then reaches back into the register, hands Blake another dollar.

BLAKE
(continuing)
Thank you.
(turns to Carl)
Carl?

CARL
I'm not sure I can afford to pay any more, Marshal.

BLAKE
I'm not sure you can afford <u>not</u> to... Think about it.

Blake and Garret exit as Carl shoots Axelrod an unhappy look.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 20

Ethan is in the early stages of building the new house. The floor platform is in... about half of the wood framework is up. Ethan stands on a ladder hammering, hard. Amelia strolls through the construction site looking at the progress.

ETHAN
I've never seen a town yet where the gun-check rule worked.

AMELIA
New York. Chicago. Boston.

ETHAN
Dodge City. Tombstone. Deadwood. He's going to get me killed.

AMELIA
Ethan, the town offered you the job, and you said no. If you want to be marshal...

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

ETHAN
I don't.

AMELIA
Then let him do his job.
(beat)
The people look up to you. If you don't follow the rule, no one will.

ETHAN
Oh, I'll follow the rule. But I'll spend a lot more time looking over my shoulder.

He hammers again, hard, SLAMMING the hammer into his thumb! He lets out a YELL.

AMELIA
You all right?

Ethan's back is to her. We SEE the agony on his face, but he says --

ETHAN
Fine.

Amelia hides a smile, then to change the subject she moves into one of the framed rooms.

AMELIA
This is the living room, right?

ETHAN
Kitchen.

Ethan climbs down the ladder as Amelia drifts to another room.

AMELIA
This must be the living room.

She points to a window frame.

AMELIA
(continuing)
The view of the meadow is beautiful.

Ethan comes up behind Amelia, wraps his arms around her.

ETHAN
Actually, it's the bedroom.

He turns her around, looks into her eyes.

ETHAN
(continuing)
And the view is beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

They kiss, and as it grows more passionate --

CUT TO:

21 INT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAY 21

A small, one room school. Claire, Joseph, Ben and George sit in the class along with eight other children, ranging in age from eight to sixteen.

The teacher, MR. STARK paces in front of the class, idly slapping a yard stick against his leg. Stark looks like his name sounds. A big man, menacing, and a stern disciplinarian. EMMET, a seven year old boy, reads from his McGuffey's Reader. He stumbles over a few of the words, but for the most part does very well. As he reads, a few of the kids glance at the wall clock -- it's almost three o'clock.

EMMET
"Come, let us go into the thick shade, for it is noon-day, and the summer sun beats hot upon our heads."

STARK
Excellent, Jason.
(he turns to George)
All right, young Carroll. Your turn.

George turns the page, stares at it, but doesn't begin reading.

STARK
(continuing)
We're waiting, Mr. Carroll.

George is getting frantic now. As he stares at the book confusion and panic overwhelm him. Finally --

GEORGE
"Can....can..."

Ben leans over, whispers:

BEN
"Can you fly a kite."

Stark SLAMS the front of Ben's desk with the yard stick.

STARK
Your brother is never going to learn to read that way.
(to George)
If you spent more time with your lessons you'd learn to read.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

GEORGE
I study. Hard.

STARK
Not hard enough! Apply yourself, Mr. Carroll, or you will be expelled from school.

The church bell rings; Mr. Stark checks his watch.

STARK
(continuing)
Class dismissed.

22 EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAY 22

It sits at the edge of town. George, fighting back tears, BURSTS out the door and runs away. Claire and Joseph run after him, but Ben catches them, stops them.

BEN
I can t-talk to him.

23 EXT. STREET - DAY 23

George runs into the alley next to the Barber Shop. He leans against the alley wall clutching his reader to his chest. Behind him, Marshal Blake and Garret talk to BAXTER. George watches.

BLAKE
...But deputies cost money, and I'm afraid without more help merchants like yourself will be left defenseless.

BAXTER
I don't know...

GARRET
All the other merchants are contributing.

Baxter's not happy about it, but --

BAXTER
I can't afford any more. Besides, I'm just a barber. What do I need protection from? Somebody stealing my soap?

24 ANGLE - BEN 24

Ben turns into the alley, runs up to George.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

BEN
Don't worry about Mis...Mr. Stark. Claire, Joseph and I'll help you read.

GEORGE
Why is it so hard for me to learn? You could read right away.

BEN
Claire says everyone is different. You wait. Before you know it you'll be the best reader in the f-family.

Marshal Blake pokes his head into the alley.

BLAKE
Ben, is that you?

BEN
Yes, sir.

BLAKE
As I remember, you and I had an appointment. Something about wanted posters...

Ben BURSTS into a smile.

BEN
Yes, sir!
(to George)
Want to come?

George shakes his head. Ben and Blake move off. Garret turns to Baxter.

GARRET
Even a dollar'd help.

BAXTER
Sorry, Deputy.

George watches as Baxter moves off. HOLD on George.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT 25

We HEAR a lively TUNE coming from the Piano, and the loud VOICES and LAUGHTER of a crowd having a good time. Dakota walks down the street, covered with road dust. A horse catches his eye in front of the hotel -- he moves to the horse, examines the saddle. He rubs his finger over a name elaborately tooled into the leather: DAKOTA.

26 INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT 26

Townsfolk surround the roulette table, the faro table and the poker table. Men stand at the bar vying for the attention of a few bar girls. Charlie sits at a table with TINY and Baxter. Ethan and Amelia sit at another.

Dakota steps into the bar, looks around the room, SEES four men seated at a table. Dakota grabs a bottle of whiskey from a passing bar girl, moves to the table and SMASHES the bottle across the end of the table. The bar grows quiet as the four men glare at Dakota.

DAKOTA
Remember me?

The leader of the men, Otto, looks at Dakota.

OTTO
No.

DAKOTA
You stole my horse, my saddle, my wallet and my guns.

Otto and his men get up: they seem to be a little bigger than Dakota remembered, and he begins to think he might have made a very big mistake.

OTTO
Go away before you get hurt.

DAKOTA
Away. Right. Good idea.

Dakota turns as if to go, then suddenly reaches down, grabs a beer mug from another table, SLAMS the mug across Otto's head. Otto goes down... but the other three leap onto Dakota, fists flying.

27 AMELIA 27

Turns to Ethan.

AMELIA
Aren't you going to do something?

ETHAN
He rides alone.

Amelia looks at him quizzically. Ethan watches as--

28 WIDER 28

Incredibly, the scrappy Dakota actually holds his own against the three men.

29 CHARLIE 29

Charlie makes a move to break up the fight -- but Dakota lands a punch sending Jackson into Charlie, knocking them both to the ground. Charlie stays down as Jackson gets up and rejoins the fight with Dakota.

30 ANGLE 30

The men finally overpower Dakota. They toss him to the floor.

Otto gets to his feet, takes a pistol out of his coat. He aims at Dakota, COCKS the hammer, but before he can fire--

31 ETHAN 31

Bounds to his feet and tears the gun out of Otto's hand. Otto turns on Ethan but Ethan fells him with a mighty blow. Another man comes at Ethan, Ethan lands a punch, knocking him across the poker table.

32 DAKOTA 32

is on his feet again, standing next to Ethan, and side by side they knock out the last two men.

33 ANGLE ON THE DOOR 33

Marshal Blake and Garret rush in, take in the scene. Blake looks at Charlie for an explanation.

CHARLIE
Don't worry, Marshal. Ethan's got everything under control.

As soon as he says it, Charlie regrets it. Blake turns to Ethan, his eyes narrow as he SEES the gun in Ethan's hand.

BLAKE
I thought you and I had a conversation about sidearms.

ETHAN
We did.

Ethan tosses the gun to Blake, then indicates Otto.

ETHAN
(continuing)
But you should have had it with him.

Dakota pulls his wallet out of Otto's pocket.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

DAKOTA
(to Blake)
These men bushwhacked me. I'm just taking back what's mine.

BLAKE
You want to press charges?

DAKOTA
No.

Blake and Garret pull Otto and his men to their feet.

BLAKE
Get out of town. Now. And don't come back.

As Otto and his men stumble out the door, Dakota turns to Ethan.

ETHAN
Sorry. Couldn't help myself.

DAKOTA
I'll let it go this time.
(extends his hand)
Name's Dakota.

ETHAN
(shakes his hand)
Ethan Cord.

DAKOTA
Thanks for the help, but...

ETHAN
You didn't need it: I know.

Dakota starts for the front door.

ETHAN
Where're you going?

DAKOTA
Livery my horse.

ETHAN
Out that door?

DAKOTA
Yeah.

BLAKE
I told those drifters to leave. They left.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

ETHAN
If you're sure, <u>you</u> go out that door.

Blake hesitates only a moment. He crosses toward the door and with a look back at Ethan pushes open the door -- then darts out of the way.

A hail of bullets riddles the door and SHATTERS the windows.

Blake looks at Ethan: touche. Then he listens a moment, HEARS hoofbeats, then runs out the door.

34 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT 34

Blake rushes outside only to SEE the men galloping out of town, disappearing into the dark. Garret and Charlie join Blake.

BLAKE
(to Garret)
Go after them. Charlie, you too.

Ethan drifts outside along with most everybody from the bar.

BAXTER
Good thing you listened to Ethan, Marshal.

Everyone LAUGHS. Blake forces a smile -- though it's clear he doesn't much like the laughter.

BLAKE
Isn't it...

Blake turns back to watch Garret and Charlie ride off -- but the smile vanishes. Ethan Cord is going to be trouble.

FADE OUT.

<u>END OF ACT ONE</u>

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

35 EXT. PARADISE - DAY 35

Early morning. The town coming to life.

36 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 36

Otto and his men are now in the cell. Marshal Blake sits at his desk drinking coffee. Garret leans against the window, puffing on the butt of a cigar, looking into the street.

OTTO
I'm hungry. When do we get fed?

Garret tosses his cigar into the cell.

GARRET
Eat this.

Garret notices something outside.

GARRET
(continuing, to Blake)
Here he comes...

37 EXT. STREET - DAY 37

Baxter crosses the street, moves to his shop then REACTS as he SEES his front window SMASHED. Alarmed, he enters.

38 INT. BARBER SHOP 38

A wreck. The mirrors are SHATTERED. The upholstery on his chair slashed. His bottled lotions and tonics scattered on the floor, broken.

Baxter stares at this, stunned, when he HEARS:

BLAKE
What happened here?

Garret moves into the shop, examines the damage.

GARRET
Looks like vandals...
(beat)
Why they even stole your soap.

BLAKE
We tried to warn you. The way Paradise is growing, it's tough to control the rifraff.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 38

Baxter looks at the ruin of his shop -- at Blake and Garret -- then moves to the battered cash register laying on the floor. He unlocks it, hits a button, and it opens. The money's still inside. Baxter hands two dollars to Blake.

BAXTER
Maybe you can use this to hire a few more men.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 39

Ethan unloads his wagon getting ready to go to work. John Taylor steps out of the woods.

JOHN TAYLOR
Morning, Ethan.

ETHAN
John Taylor.

John Taylor sits on some lumber, watches Ethan unload.

JOHN TAYLOR
This should be good. Exciting.

ETHAN
Watching me hammer nails?

JOHN TAYLOR
Watching the fight.
(off Ethan's look)
You and the Marshal. You made an enemy last night. Men like Marshal Blake don't like to be made fools of.

ETHAN
I didn't make a fool of him. He did it all by himself.

JOHN TAYLOR
Result's the same.
(then)
I was born six hundred years too late. If this were the Middle Ages two powerful men like you and the Marshal would go after each other with battle axes and mace.

ETHAN
What's mace?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 39

JOHN TAYLOR
A club with iron spikes sticking out of it. They'd swing it around, crush each other's skulls.
(savoring it)
Those were the days.
(then)
You'll probably just use guns. Cleaner, quicker, but...
(sighs)
Better than nothing.

ETHAN
(appalled)
John Taylor, I'm not going to fight the Marshal with anything. I'm glad he's here.

John Taylor says nothing.

ETHAN
(continuing)
It's a big weight off my back having a real lawman in town.

Still nothing from John Taylor.

ETHAN
(continuing)
I like the man.

Silence from John Taylor.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Really.

John Taylor gets up.

JOHN TAYLOR
Just send one of the boys to get me.

John Taylor walks back into the woods. HOLD on Ethan, watching him go.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. PARADISE STREETS - DAY 40

Marshal Blake and Garret walk down the street.

GARRET
I don't think Baxter's going to give us any more trouble. Shame about his soap...

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

Garret laughs, Blake doesn't. His attention is elsewhere. He stops as he SEES Dakota playing horseshoes with a Miner alongside the Livery. Dakota hurls a shoe and wraps it around the spike.

DAKOTA
Ringer!

The Miner slaps a coin into Dakota's palm and walks off. Dakota turns to find the Marshal and Garret staring at him. Dakota smiles.

DAKOTA
Care for a game, Marshal?

BLAKE
Just answers. How long you plan to stay in Paradise?

DAKOTA
That depends.

BLAKE
On...?

DAKOTA
Lady luck.

BLAKE
I don't like gamblers. And I don't like you. So maybe you and your "Lady" should move on.

DAKOTA
I'll think about it.

BLAKE
Don't think too long. I want you gone by morning.

CUT TO:

41 INT. CORD CABIN - THE KIDS' ROOM - DAY 41

TIGHT on a toy bank. Coins are shaken onto the bed. WIDEN to find George collecting the coins. In the background, Ben is in the main room packing up for school.

Ethan enters, moves to the washbasin. George continues to shake out coins -- Ethan notices, joins him.

ETHAN
How much have you saved?

GEORGE
Sixty-three cents.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

ETHAN
Before long you'll have enough for that bicycle.

GEORGE
I don't want a bicycle anymore.

ETHAN
No?

GEORGE
I want to help Paradise instead.
(off Ethan's look)
Marshal Blake needs money to protect the town.

ETHAN
Don't worry about Marshal Blake. The town pays him a good wage.

GEORGE
No. Marshal Blake told Mr. Baxter he needs more money. Told him all the merchants were...
(he tries to remember the exact word)
Contributing.

ETHAN
He did, huh...

Ben calls from the other room.

BEN
Hurry up, George. We'll b-be late for school.

Ethan takes the money from George.

ETHAN
You go on ahead, I'll give this to Marshal Blake.

George grabs his books, he and Ben exit. HOLD on Ethan as one by one he drops the coins back into the bank.

CUT TO:

42 INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY 42

Carl looks across the office at a very unhappy Marshal Blake.

CARL
I'm not sure we <u>need</u> more deputies.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

BLAKE
No? Didn't you hear about what happened at Baxter's last night?

CARL
Yes...and I heard about the fight at the saloon, too. Ethan took care of it.

BLAKE
(fights back his anger)
Ethan won't always be around.

CARL
Sorry, Marshal. I just can't afford it.

BLAKE
Well, if you can't afford it, there's nothing we can do -- is there?

Carl doesn't answer. Blake smiles, exits.

43 EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY 43

Blake steps outside then stops as he finds Ethan waiting for him.

BLAKE
You check your gun at my office, Ethan?

Ethan pulls back his coat. No guns, he's not even wearing his holster.

ETHAN
Figured it'd be easier to leave them at home.

Ethan flips Blake a coin. Blake catches it.

BLAKE
What's this?

ETHAN
My contribution. I understand you can't do the job on your salary.

BLAKE
Not the kind of job I want to do. Look around. Paradise is busting at the seams. That's good for business, but bad when it comes to keeping the peace.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

ETHAN
Look, Marshal. I want you to do a good job. If the people of Paradise want to pay for extra lawmen, fine. But if they don't, and you get a little too persuasive...

Blake holds up a hand, stopping Ethan.

BLAKE
Hold it, Ethan. That's not my style.
(beat)
But I'll tell you what would be good for this town. Let me pin a badge on you. We'll walk these streets side by side. A team.

ETHAN
If I'd wanted a badge I'd be wearing yours.

BLAKE
But you're not. I am. I've worn it before. And I know when I need more help.

Blake flips the coin into the air, catches it, slips it into his pocket.

BLAKE
(continuing)
So, thanks for the contribution.

Blake walks off.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. PARADISE - NIGHT 44

Ethan and Amelia are walking toward the hotel. Amelia looks at him playfully, teases --

AMELIA
You used to complain because the town ran to you every time there was trouble. You told them to hire a Marshal. And now you're complaining because they did exactly what you told them to do. They hired Marshal Blake.

ETHAN
I'm not complaining.

AMELIA
You're not?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

ETHAN
I'm just a little uneasy.

AMELIA
Oh.

ETHAN
About the extra money.

AMELIA
Ethan, it's a small price to pay. Marshal Blake needs more deputies if Paradise is going to become a decent place to live...and you can finally put your guns away for good.

ETHAN
Yeah, I'd like that.

AMELIA
(finishes it for him)
So would I.

Amelia takes his arm and they enter the hotel.

AMELIA
(continuing)
Marshal Blake means well. He's trying to do a good job. Maybe he's trying a bit too hard.

CUT TO:

45 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT 45

Ben sits on the corner of Marshal Blake's desk staring at a wanted poster as Blake looks on.

Otto and his men sleep in the cell.

BEN
You captured Kid Ralston all b-by yourself?

BLAKE
He killed my brother. Shot him down in cold blood. It was personal.

BEN
Were you scared?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: 45

BLAKE
Too full of hate to be scared. Tracked him for two weeks, then found him holed up in an old line shack.

The door opens and Garret walks in. The expression on his face tells Blake something is wrong.

BLAKE
(continuing to Ben)
It's getting late, Ben. You better be running along.

BEN
But I want to hear the rest of the s-story.

Blake picks Ben off the desk, sets him on the floor.

BLAKE
Tomorrow. I promise.

BEN
Ok. Bye.

Ben exits, Blake turns to Garret, his eyes ask the question.

GARRET
The blacksmith won't pay either. Says we got enough help.

BLAKE
He's been talking to the telegraph man.

Blake begins to pace.

BLAKE
(continuing)
I've been a lawman for twenty years. In towns no bigger than three tents and a placer mine, to Jefferson City. And you know what I've got to show for it -- nothing.

GARRET
But not this time.

BLAKE
(determined)
Not this time.
(then)
There's enough copper in Paradise to mine for fifty years.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: 45

BLAKE (cont'd)
Some folks around here are going to get very rich.
(beat)
Including us.

GARRET
What do we do about the blacksmith and the telegraph man?

Blake leans against his desk, his mind spinning. What indeed? Then he turns back to the cell, looks at Otto and his men. A smile tugs at his lips.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 46

Blake and Garret are cinching up their horses, Charlie watches.

BLAKE
(to Charlie)
We're going to the train depot at Monkstown, pick up the new deputies. Should be back by supper.

CHARLIE
Don't worry about a thing, Marshal. I'll handle things here.

Blake and Garret mount up.

CHARLIE
(continuing)
Like I told you -- I appreciate your keeping me on after you got hired...and I'm going to do everything I can to make you proud that you did.

BLAKE
You wouldn't be wearing that badge if I had any doubts.
(then)
See you later.

Charlie watches Blake and Garret ride off. Blake's confidence in Charlie has filled him with pride. He starts down the street, head high, shoulders back. He passes --

47 ETHAN AND THE KIDS 47

Riding into town in the wagon. PAN with Ethan as he pulls the wagon to a stop in front of the Hardware Store.

ETHAN
Joseph, I need you to come to the meadow after school and help me put up a wall.

JOSEPH
Can't. I've got to work at the hotel.

He jumps out of the wagon and runs for the school house. Ethan looks at Claire.

CLAIRE
I promised Mary I'd help work on Mrs. Lawson's wedding dress.

She jumps down and heads for school. Ethan looks at Ben.

BEN
John Taylor promised he'd help me with my arithmetic.

Ben drops to the ground, runs for school. George looks at Ethan.

GEORGE
I'll help, Uncle Ethan.

ETHAN
(smiles)
I'd appreciate it, George.

CUT TO:

48 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 48

No one is in the jail but Otto and his men. Otto looks at the wall clock -- ten o'clock.

Otto takes a key out of his pocket, unlocks the jail door. Jackson is worried.

JACKSON
You sure about this?

OTTO
I'm not looking a gift horse in the mouth.

The cell is open. Otto leads his men to the gun rack, starts passing out weapons.

CUT TO:

49 EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY 49

Ethan's wagon is piled high with lumber. As he and a Clerk move another board into the bed of the truck we SEE Otto and his men slip out of the jail.

PAN with them to the telegraph office. Otto and one man enter the Livery, Jackson and the fourth man start for the Telegraph office.

50 EXT. LIVERY - DAY 50

A puzzled look crosses Tiny's face as he looks up from the forge and SEES Jackson and his partner. Before Tiny can react Jackson SLAMS a rifle butt into the side of his head, knocking Tiny unconscious. They start to round up four horses.

51 INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY 51

Carl turns to the door, SEES Otto and his partner, guns drawn. Otto levels his gun at Carl.

OTTO
Give me the cash box.

You don't have to ask Carl twice. He takes it out from under the desk, hands it to him. Otto takes it, heads for the door. Then he turns back to Carl and FIRES! The bullet SLAMS into Carl's shoulder, knocking him to the ground.

52 EXT. HARDWARE STORE 52

Ethan REACTS to the GUNSHOT, spins to SEE Otto and his partner BURST out of the telegraph office, and head for the livery. Ethan instinctively reaches for his gun -- but he's not wearing his holster. Ethan turns to the Marshal's office, no one in sight. Then he spots--

53 CHARLIE 53

gun drawn, running across the street from the Hotel.

CHARLIE
Hold it right there!

Charlie aims, but before he can fire Otto snaps off a shot. Charlie is hit, goes down.

54 WIDER 54

Chaos as people SCREAM and run in fear. Ethan's seen enough. He runs to the middle of the street, toward Charlie. Jackson SEES him and FIRES. The shot misses as Ethan dives, hits the ground, grabs Charlie's gun, rolls and comes up FIRING!

55 OTTO 55

is hit by the first shot, falls off his horse, dead. The other gunmen aim at Ethan -- but Ethan's faster, FIRES again. Jackson is hit. He grabs his stomach, but manages to stay on his horse. The others have seen enough. They turn and ride out of town.

56 ETHAN 56

climbs to his feet, the pistol in his hand still smoking.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

57 INT. HOTEL - DAY 57

The bar is packed. The town has gathered to talk about the day's events. At one table sit Tiny, his head bandaged. Carl, his arm in a sling. And Charlie, who watches as John Taylor finishes bandaging his shoulder. Ethan and Amelia sit at another table. Axelrod and Baxter are at the bar.

Dakota sits off to the side, his arm around the prettiest bar girl, ROSE. He watches the proceedings as a silent but interested observer.

AXELROD
Marshal Blake was right. The sooner those extra deputies get here, the safer we'll all be.

TINY
What do we need Marshal Blake and all those deputies for, when we've got Ethan?

There's a CHORUS of approval. Ethan gets to his feet.

ETHAN
We've been through this before. I'm not a lawman.

CARL
Maybe not. But I'd hate to think what would've happened if you hadn't been there.

ETHAN
Let's just forget about it.

TINY
At least let us buy you a drink.

Before Ethan can answer we HEAR:

BLAKE
Don't bother. He won't be here long enough to drink it.

They turn to SEE Blake standing in the doorway. Garret and three new deputies are behind him.

BLAKE
(continuing, to Ethan)
You're under arrest for murder.

AMELIA
Murder?

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: 57

BLAKE
I understand Mr. Cord killed a man this afternoon. Shot him down in the street.

ETHAN
After he escaped from your jail.

AMELIA
It was self defense!

BLAKE
That's for a judge to decide.
(to Ethan)
Let's go.

ETHAN
No. You want me to appear before a judge, fine. Tell me when and where, I'll be there.

BLAKE
I was hired to bring law and order to Paradise and that's exactly what I'm going to do.

Blake pulls his pistol, aims at Ethan.

BLAKE
(continuing)
Now let's go.

Ethan doesn't move. All eyes are on Blake. Finally he steps toward Ethan -- but Tiny moves in front of Blake, blocking the way.

TINY
You want to put Ethan in jail, you're going to have to arrest me too.

Carl stands next to Tiny.

CARL
And me.

It's a tense moment broken by, of all people, Axelrod.

AXELROD
Look, Marshal. Cord may be a lot of things.. but he's never been a liar. If he says he'll stand before the judge, he will.

Blake's beaten and he knows it. Suddenly he softens.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: 57

BLAKE
(to Axelrod)
You're right.

Blake turns to Ethan, smiles sheepishly.

BLAKE
(continuing)
But put yourself in my place. I come back into town and the first thing I see is a dead body lying in the street...

Blake holsters his gun.

ETHAN
(letting him off the hook)
Yeah, in your place I might've made the same mistake.

Tiny smiles, wraps his arm around Ethan.

TINY
Come on, let me buy you that drink.

Tiny leads Ethan to the bar -- but not before Ethan and Blake exchange a final look... a guarded look. There may be peace between these two men, but it's an uneasy one.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. PARADISE - DAY 58

Ethan walks Amelia back to the bank.

AMELIA
Are you sure Axelrod paid Marshal Blake three dollars?

ETHAN
(nods)
Lewis Petrie paid four. Pearl gave him three --

AMELIA
And I paid ten.

ETHAN
Every merchant in town paid the Marshal but two.

AMELIA
Carl and Tiny.

ETHAN
Funny isn't it?

A beat. She looks across the street.

59 HER POV 59

Marshal Blake with Garret and his new deputies.

AMELIA
No.

60 RESUME ETHAN AND AMELIA 60

AMELIA
I feel responsible...

ETHAN
There's no way you could have known.

AMELIA
Maybe not. But the Merchant's Association hired him, and the Merchant's Association can fire him.

CUT TO:

61 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 61

Marshal Blake stands across from the Merchant Association made up of Amelia, Axelrod, Tiny, Carl, Baxter and a handful of others.

BLAKE
I'm a lawman, not an outlaw. If you want my resignation I'll give it to you. But I had nothing to do with the incident this afternoon.

AMELIA
Then why were Carl and Tiny the only ones attacked?

BLAKE
I don't know. Maybe because Ethan intervened. If he hadn't, they would've robbed the bank, hardware store, any and all of you.

BAXTER
And how do you explain my shop?

BLAKE
I can't. And I won't. I don't have to defend myself. I warned you all what would happen if I didn't get help.

Amelia looks at the new deputies standing outside the window.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: 61

AMELIA
Well, it looks like your help is here.

BLAKE
And now you'll see a difference.
(turning on the charm)
I thought we had the same dream. To bring law and order to Paradise. But if you don't believe me -- if you don't trust me -- I'll pack my bags and leave tonight.

There's an uncertain silence. Finally --

AXELROD
We want to trust you.

CARL
What about all the extra money?

BLAKE
I'll give it back if you want. Or, that seventy-seven dollars can buy additional deputies for one month. With those men on the street you'll see a real difference in Paradise.

HOLD on the merchants, not sure what to think.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 62

Ethan, hammer in hand, nails in his mouth, stares at Amelia. She sits on her horse. George is working next to his Uncle. Ethan takes the nails out of his mouth, a stunned expression on his face.

ETHAN
I understand. You went in to fire him and ended up giving him extra deputies. Makes sense...I guess.

AMELIA
I didn't. The Merchants' Association did. Marshal Blake was very convincing.

Ethan looks at her pained expression.

ETHAN
But he didn't convince you.

63 ANGLE FAVORS GEORGE 63

George shakes his head: no.

AMELIA
(shakes her head)
I was only one vote.
(then)
We've got to do something.

George nods: we <u>will</u>.

ETHAN
We will. We'll finish our house, get married and live our lives.

George smiles as Ethan helps Amelia down from her horse.

AMELIA
What about Paradise?

George looks quizzical: yes, what <u>about</u> Paradise?

ETHAN
The other merchants made their bed. Let them sleep in it.

George nods his head decisively.

AMELIA
I can't do that. Neither can you.

George considers that...then nods his head decisively.

64 ON ETHAN AND AMELIA 64

ETHAN
Yes, I can. For God's, sake, Amelia, we've been over this. I thought we agreed: I don't want to be marshal; you don't want me to be marshal. Fine. But if I'm not marshal, somebody else has to be...

AMELIA
Not being marshal doesn't mean sticking your head in the sand.

ETHAN
My head's not in the sand. I don't trust the man and I've said so. But I could be wrong. And right or wrong I'm not going to be a watchdog...

AMELIA
But Paradise is our home...

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: 64

ETHAN
(re: the house)
No! This is our home!

Amelia doesn't like that but says nothing.

65 ANGLE INCLUDES GEORGE 65

He looks at the house under construction, then back at Ethan. Ethan catches George's eye, and the look on the boy's face softens him somewhat. He takes Amelia's hands in his...

ETHAN
I know how you feel about the town, Amelia.

AMELIA
Do you?

ETHAN
Yes.
(thinks)
All right, what do you want me to do?

AMELIA
Talk to the merchants. Tell them not to get in any deeper... Convince them the marshal's no good...

ETHAN
We're not even sure of that!

AMELIA
Aren't we?

ETHAN
They won't listen to me.

GEORGE
Yes, they will.

Ethan and Amelia look at George, whose presence they'd forgot. Then...

AMELIA
Yes, they will. They grumble about it, but they always listen to you.

ETHAN
And if they do...then what? Have you thought this through? If they get rid of Blake because I tell them to -- then what?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: 65

She knows what he means and has no answer for him.

CUT TO:

66 INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY 66

Dakota finishes dressing as Rose looks on from the bed.

ROSE
Wish you didn't have to leave.

DAKOTA
What time you finish tonight?

ROSE
Ten o'clock.

He throws her a wink.

DAKOTA
I'll see you then.

67 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY 67

A two story building with a stairway on the alley side. Dakota opens the second story door, is about to walk down the stairway when he HEARS a soft, barely perceptible VOICE:

BLAKE
As long as Cord is alive we've got a problem.

Dakota freezes, looks down to SEE --

68 HIS POV 68

Marshal Blake and Garret walking through the alley, talking quietly.

BLAKE
(continuing)
If he's not around nobody'd stand up to us.

GARRET
I'll be happy to put a bullet in his back.

Blake shakes his head.

BLAKE
It's got to look like an accident.

Blake and Garret turn a corner and disappear into the street.

69 DAKOTA 69

considers a moment, then makes a decision. He hurries down the steps.

70 ON BLAKE 70

He and Garret are walking down the street he SEES Dakota crossing the street, heading for the Livery.

BLAKE
You! Gambler! Hold it there!

Dakota stops as Blake and Garret join him.

BLAKE
(continuing)
I thought I told you to leave town.

DAKOTA
That's what I'm doing.

BLAKE
Don't get smart with me, boy.

GARRET
(to Blake)
Maybe a night in jail will convince him he's not welcome in Paradise.

BLAKE
Good idea.

Garret grabs Dakota. Dakota yanks his arm free. Garret throws a punch, Dakota ducks, then throws one of his own, hitting Garret. But before Dakota can throw another punch Blake pulls his pistol, SMASHES Dakota over the head, knocking him out.

BLAKE
(continuing, to Garret)
Lock him up.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 71

Ethan hammers, George hands him more nails.

GEORGE
How much longer?

ETHAN
Another hour.

GEORGE
No. Until the house is finished.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

ETHAN
Oh. A few months.

GEORGE
Go a lot faster if you had more help.

ETHAN
Yep.

GEORGE
I could help you all day tomorrow.

ETHAN
You have school tomorrow.

GEORGE
I'll skip it.

ETHAN
I thought you liked school.

GEORGE
I do, but...

Ethan stops work, he's been with the kids long enough to know what a "but..." means.

ETHAN
But what, George?

George drops his head. Confesses:

GEORGE
I can't read.

ETHAN
Of course you can't. You just started school.

GEORGE
I can't! Everyone else can. Everyone but me.

ETHAN
George, it takes time. Believe, I know.

GEORGE
I'll never learn to read.

Ethan bends down to the boy, makes him look at him.

ETHAN
That's how I felt. I'd stare at the page, at all those words, and wish they'd go away.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

ETHAN (cont'd)
I wanted to quit, but Claire wouldn't let me. And I won't let you -- because once you learn to read...well, it's like a whole new world...
(then)
You'll learn like I learned. Claire will help. The boys will help.
(beat)
I'll help. We can practice together.

George begins to feel better, nods. Ethan tousles the boys hair.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Now get on home, it's going to be dark soon.

George picks up his books, starts to run off.

GEORGE
See you later!

72 ANGLE 72

George runs by a stand of trees -- HOLD as we reveal Blake, Garret and his three new deputies in hiding.

73 ON ETHAN 73

He packs up his tools, bends over to put them in the tool box. He HEARS the SOUND turns around --

74 HIS POV 74

The woods seem still, quiet. Nothing out of the ordinary.

75 RESUME ETHAN 75

He goes back to picking up his tools. Slightly uneasy now. Suddenly a flock of birds EXPLODES out of the trees.

Ethan spins -- still nothing. But Ethan's instincts are screaming now. Ethan's not wearing his holster. He moves to his horse, reaches for the rifle in his scabbard -- but his scabbard is empty. We HEAR:

75 CONTINUED: 75

BLAKE
I figured a man like you'd take better care of his weapons.

Ethan turns to find --

76 BLAKE 76

stepping out from behind some lumber, Ethan's rifle in his hands.

A moment later, Garret and the three new deputies ride out of the trees, guns leveled at Ethan.

ETHAN
(angry)
What do you want?

Blake's answer is to lash out -- he tries to shove the butt of his rifle into Ethan's stomach, but Ethan anticipates the move, sidesteps, grabbing the gun out of Blake's hand and SMASHING the Marshal across the jaw with it, dropping him.

77 WIDER 77

Before Ethan can turn to face his other adversaries they descend on him. Garret strips Ethan of the rifle as the new deputies go to work on him.

78 BLAKE 78

gets to his feet, wiping blood from his lip. He SEES his men pummeling Ethan.

BLAKE
Stop! We don't have to beat the man to death. His own handiwork will do him in.

Blake and Garret grab the unconscious Ethan and hurl him to the middle of the building platform. Blake kicks out a brace, and pulls. Lumber CRASHES onto Ethan. Blake pulls a lantern out of a pile of equipment and throws it into the jumble of wood. It SHATTERS, kerosene soaking the wood. Then Blake strikes a match and tosses it onto the wood pile. It BURSTS into flames! Satisfied, Blake and his men ride off. HOLD on Ethan as fire consumes the house.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

79 EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY 79

The fire burns. Ethan stirs, COUGHS, slowly regains consciousness. He SEES the fire around him -- he's surrounded, no way out. Or is there?

Ethan spots a hammer. He reaches through the flames, grabs the hammer. He drives the claw into the floor plank -- pries the board free.

The flames get closer. Hurt, struggling, Ethan pulls up a second floor board, then a third. Finally, just as the flames are about to get to him, Ethan drops through the opening in the floor boards.

Ethan rolls out from beneath the burning platform and pulls himself to safety, then collapses.

CUT TO:

80 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT 80

Dakota is unconscious on the cot. Charlie dozes in the chair. The door opens, Blake and his men enter. Charlie bolts awake.

BLAKE
(to Charlie)
Make your rounds and go home.

CHARLIE
Yes, sir.

Charlie heads out the door. Garret watches him.

GARRET
He's going to be our next "accident."

That gets a HOOT of LAUGHTER from the other deputies. Dakota stirs, waking. His eyes blink open but his instincts tell him to remain still.

Garret turns to one of the new deputies.

GARRET
Go get us a bottle.

BLAKE
No. Cord had four children. There'll be no celebrating his death.

TIGHT on Dakota as he REACTS to the news.

CUT TO:

81 INT. CORD CABIN - NIGHT 81

Ben sits at the table going through his wanted poster collection. George is struggling with his McGuffey's Reader. Claire helps him, pointing to each word as she reads.

CLAIRE
"Can you fly a kite? See how the boy flies his kite. He holds the string fast. And the wind blows it up." Now. You try.

George stares at the page.

GEORGE
"Can...can...you..."

CLAIRE
Fly.
(points to the word, spells it)
F-L-Y. Fly.

GEORGE
I know, Claire.

Ben chimes in.

BEN
Then why don't you read it?

GEORGE
I will when I'm ready.

BEN
You'll never be ready.

CLAIRE
Ben, leave him alone.

GEORGE
Yeah. Go back to your wanted posters. To your hero, the Marshal. But he's no hero!

BEN
He is!

GEORGE
That's not what Mrs. Lawson thinks. Or Uncle Ethan.

BEN
Shut up. You don't know anything.

CLAIRE
Boys!

They ignore her.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

GEORGE
He's a bad marshal. A bad man. If you don't believe me, ask Uncle Ethan!

BEN
I will!

Ben runs out the door.

82 INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT 82

Busy. Festive. Tiny is at the bar with Baxter. Axelrod sits at a table with a few of the townsfolk.

Marshal Blake enters, his three new deputies behind him. The deputies remain at the door, as Blake crosses to Tiny and Baxter.

BLAKE
Let me buy you boys a drink.
(beat)
Better yet, why don't you buy me a drink?

Baxter and Tiny exchange confused looks. But Blake's intention become clearer when Tiny SEES Garret push Carl into the bar and up to the Marshal. Everyone's attention turns to Blake.

CARL
(scared)
You wanted to talk to me, Marshal?

BLAKE
Just wanted to see how you were making out.

Blake slaps Carl on the shoulder -- his bandaged shoulder. Carl emits a painful GASP.

BLAKE
(continuing)
How's that shoulder?

CARL
(through his pain)
Fine.

BLAKE
Good. I wouldn't want anything to keep you from going to work. Fact is, I got a feeling you're going to be putting in some overtime.
(he turns to the others)
Most of you will.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

TINY
What're you talking about?

BLAKE
You've just given me a raise.
Doubled my salary.
(indicates his men)
Theirs too.

BAXTER
But the Merchant's Association
never --

BLAKE
(interrupts)
There is no more Merchant's
Association.

TINY
You can't do that!

Blake turns to Tiny -- his eyes, hard, cold.

BLAKE
Who's going to stop me. You?

Tiny looks from Blake to his deputies. His anger turns to fear.

Blake turns to Carl.

BLAKE
(continuing)
How about you?

Carl steps back. Blake looks at Baxter.

BLAKE
(continuing)
Or you?

Baxter drops his eyes. Axelrod steps forward.

AXELROD
You'll never get away with this.

BLAKE
Who's going to stop me?

Blake can read Axelrod's eyes.

BLAKE
(continuing)
Ethan Cord? I don't think so.
(then)
I'll be by to see each of you in
the morning. Have my money ready.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

Blake turns and exits, followed by his men.

CUT TO:

83 EXT. BUILDING SITE - NIGHT 83

The fire is almost out. Ethan stirs on the ground. Out of the swirling smoke runs Ben. He SEES Ethan, rushes to him.

BEN
Uncle Ethan. You all right?

Ethan manages a nod.

BEN
(continuing)
What happened?

Ethan looks from Ben to the smoldering ruin of the new house. Determination fills his face.

Ben's face drops, knowing that the Marshal was behind this and that George was right.

CUT TO:

84 EXT. PARADISE - DAY 84

The town is just waking up. The door to the Marshal's office opens, Blake throws Dakota into the street.

BLAKE
You've got an hour to get out of town.

Blake disappears inside his office. Dakota turns, looks at Amelia's house.

85 EXT. AMELIA'S HOUSE - DAY 85

TIGHT on a hand KNOCKING. Amelia opens the door, REACTS as she SEES a grim Dakota.

AMELIA
What is it? What's happened?

86 INT. CORD CABIN - THE KIDS' ROOM - DAY 86

Claire, Joseph and George are asleep. Ben's bed is empty. We HEAR the SOUND of a rifle being COCKED, followed by the almost rhythmic SOUND of bullets being loaded into the rifle. There is a MUMBLE of VOICES from the Main Room.

87 THE MAIN ROOM 87

John Taylor sits across from a battered, bruised and angry Ethan.

JOHN TAYLOR
I gave the Marshal too much credit. I thought he'd make a fair fight of it.

ETHAN
Why fight at all.

JOHN TAYLOR
A fight was inevitable. He may wear the badge, but when trouble breaks out people still look to you.

ETHAN
I never wanted that.

JOHN TAYLOR
They always have. They always will.

Ethan puts down one rifle, begins loading his shotgun.

ETHAN
(frustrated)
I never wanted kids. I've got kids. I never wanted to be a rancher. I've got cattle.

The door opens, Ben enters with a bucket of water.

JOHN TAYLOR
And you never wanted to be a lawman.

ETHAN
I'm <u>not</u> a lawman!

JOHN TAYLOR
Whatever you say, Ethan.

Ethan snaps the shotgun closed.

CLAIRE
Uncle Ethan, what happened?

Ethan turns to find Claire, George and Joseph in the doorway to the kids' room. Ben looks at George, an apology in his eyes.

BEN
The M-Marshal tried to kill him.

Claire watches Ethan load his gun.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 87

CLAIRE
It doesn't make sense! Everything is finally the way we've always wanted it!

ETHAN
I thought so, too, Claire.

Ethan picks up his guns and exits.

88 EXT. CORD CABIN - DAY 88

Ethan moves to his horse as Amelia gallops up. When she SEES Ethan relief floods her face; she leaps off her horse and into his arms. They kiss.

89 CLOSER 89

During the kiss Amelia thinks of something, aborts the kiss, pushes Ethan away.

AMELIA
Where're you going?

ETHAN
To town.

AMELIA
To kill him?

ETHAN
If I have to.

Amelia's eyes fill with tears.

ETHAN
(continuing)
Don't worry. I'll be fine.

A beat. Amelia's expression slowly hardens as she accepts a truth...

AMELIA
(matter-of-factly)
You're never going to be able to put your guns away.

ETHAN
Amelia...

AMELIA
I know: it's my fault as much as anybody's... The town turns to you...I turn to you...

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 89

ETHAN
But you still hate it.

Amelia doesn't deny it. Ethan brushes a tear away from her cheek; she lowers her head. Ethan stands in place for a beat, unable to think of anything to say; then he climbs on his horse and rides off.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. PARADISE - DAY 90

Ethan rides into town. He dismounts, moves to the Marshal's office, a shotgun in one hand, his revolver in the other. He KICKS open the door.

91 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY 91

The door flies open -- Ethan spins into the room weapons leveled.

Charlie is the only one in the office. He almost jumps out of his skin.

ETHAN
Where's Blake and his men?

CHARLIE
Having breakfast at the hotel.

ETHAN
Do yourself a favor, Charlie. Stay here.

92 INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY 92

Blake and his men eat. They HEAR from outside:

ETHAN
Blake!

Blake REACTS. It's can't be. He moves to the window, peeks out.

93 HIS POV 93

Ethan stands across the street, his back pressed to a wagon for cover. The shotgun and pistol trained on the hotel.

ETHAN
(calls out)
Marshal, I don't believe I'll be checking my guns today.

94 RESUME BLAKE 94

He signals his men to split up.

95 EXT. HOTEL - ON ETHAN 95

His eyes locked on the hotel doors and windows. Behind Ethan the townsfolk are scattering. All but Dakota who steps out of the saloon. He watches, waiting... he doesn't have to wait long. Suddenly two of Blake's new deputies appear in second story windows. They SHATTER the glass with their pistols, aim at Ethan -- but Ethan shoots first -- two quick shots from his revolver. The deputies are hit, go down.

96 INT. HOTEL 96

Blake and Garret watch from a window in the bar. The third deputy stands by the front door. Blake exchanges a look with Garret then turns to the third deputy.

BLAKE
Go!

97 EXT. HOTEL 97

The front door of the hotel BURSTS open, Blake's third new deputy rushes out, gun BLAZING. Ethan swings around FIRING both barrels of the shotgun! The deputy is blown off the porch.

98 INT. HOTEL 98

Using the shooting of the third deputy as a diversion, Garret slips out the window. Blake watches him disappear around the back of the hotel, then he starts for the front door.

99 ON ETHAN 99

He pops open the shotgun, slips in two more shells. Then he HEARS Blake's VOICE:

BLAKE
Cord. Let's talk!

Ethan SEES Blake standing just inside the door, using the door frame for cover.

ETHAN
Not until you and Garret throw out your guns.

100 ON GARRET 100

He sneaks around the back of the hotel, darts behind a wagon. During this:

BLAKE
How do I know you won't shoot us down as soon as we step outside?

ETHAN
You don't.

Garret peeks around the corner of the wagon, SEES --

101 HIS POV 101

Ethan standing in the street, his eyes fixed on the hotel door.

ETHAN
Now throw out your guns.

102 RESUME GARRET 102

He aims, is about to fire when --

103 DAKOTA 103

Appears behind him.

DAKOTA
I wouldn't.

Garret spins, Dakota FIRES. Garret drops.

104 BLAKE 104

Takes the SOUND of the GUNSHOT as his cue. He steps into the doorway. But instead of SEEING Ethan dead, he finds himself staring into Ethan's guns. Ethan FIRES!

Blake is hit, drops to his knees then tumbles down the stairs.

Ethan looks at the dead Marshal -- then at Dakota standing over a wounded Garret.

DAKOTA
Sorry. Couldn't help myself...

105 ANGLE 105

Townsfolk begin drifting back into the street... Amelia and the kids ride into town, slip off their horses.

106 CHARLIE 106

Walks up to Blake, bends down pulls off his badge. He looks at it, uncertain.

107 CLAIRE 107

takes the badge from Charlie, crosses to Ethan. And resigned to the inevitable, holds it out to him.

Ethan looks at Claire, looks at the badge, looks at the townspeople...then at Amelia. She forces a sad smile, it's the final encouragement he needs. Ethan takes the badge and pins it to his shirt. BOOM UP as the town crowds around their new Marshal. HOLD then --

FADE OUT.

THE END