

GUNSLINGER

A Wild West Show

by

RICHARD CRANE

Music by

DAVID JOSS BUCKLEY

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

GUNSLINGER

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INTRODUCTION

Gunslinger is a celebration of the Wild West, a bringing together of the elemental forces that go to make modern America. It is important before the production, for the company to be familiar with the careers of Wild Bill Hickock, Buffalo Bill, General Custer, Billy the Kid, Jesse James, Belle Starr, Geronimo and Sitting Bull, and also to see how the values, emotions and contradictions of these archetypal heroes have been inherited by the badmen, lawmen, showmen and pioneers of modern times.

On the practical side, the company should be trained in the skills of the West. Before rehearsals for the original Leicester production, the cast spent a fortnight, under expert tuition, mastering the quick draw, knife-throwing, lariat-spinning, sliding a glass along a bar, square dancing and fist fights. Classic westerns should be seen. Pastiche westerns should be avoided. The challenge of *Gunslinger* is to take it seriously, to believe in its vastness, to understand that it contains not a word of 'send-up', and then to *enjoy* it!

Characters - There are four basic characters:

JOHN MILTON SPEED - *the gunslinger-lawman. Raised on a pioneering homestead, which was wiped out by Indian raiders, he sees the West as a wilderness bequeathed to the white man, to be tamed by the Bible and the gun. A one-man militia, he rides rough and never rests, outside and beyond the law, which pursues, then honours him.*

COLONEL CONQUEST - *the frontiersman-tycoon, who sees the West in economic terms. Sharp, devious, authoritative and full of charm, he re-arranges the law, never breaks it. Essentially a showman, he makes his millions in gold-prospecting, railroads, dime comics and exhibiting Indian chiefs at circuses.*

ANGEL 'KID' MCGREW - *the young outlaw who rips up the west for his own gain and glory. He is safe only as long as the West is wild. With the taming of the land and the spread of communications, he is cornered and overtaken by his own glamorized reputation.*

CHIEF BLACK MOON - *the Indian warlord who watches and waits as his civilisation is chipped away by the white man's deviousness and superior technology. He is powerful and dignified, acute and dangerous, an equal match for Colonel Conquest. He embodies the wildness of the West. The*

efforts to contain him are met with savage resistance. *Gunslinger* follows the trails of these four characters, criss-crossing with preachers, cowpokes, badwomen, sainted mothers, quacks and barkeeps, as the West is tamed, the nation made, and the soul of America, good bad ugly and glorious, drives on into the next episode.

Setting

It is important to establish the *size* of the continent in which the play is set. The action emanates from No-Name Saloon but this should in no way suggest an 'indoor' production. The characters have been raised and spend most of their time in the open. The saloon is a brief respite on their various journeys. The setting should therefore be simple, as uncluttered as possible, capable of swift transition from saloon or homestead, to wide open plain.

This is the kind of play which ideally should encompass the whole theatre building, involving the audience from the moment they arrive, with the actors in character, engaged in 'pre-show' fairground activity - demonstration of skills with rope, knife and gun, fundamentalist Bible-thumping, teeth-pulling and peddling wares and charms. The attempted lynching and roof-top escape of John Milton Speed should, if possible, take place on a scaffold erected in the theatre fore-court or car park, as a side show during the interval. Usherettes and bar staff should accord with the western style.

Music

The music is integral to the play. The barkeep plays the guitar. The piano-player and drummer are features of the saloon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Peter Moss, Joss Buckley and the Phoenix Theatre Company for bringing *Gunslinger* to life, and Faynia Williams for her continuing help and encouragement.

FOR SABRA

CAST OF FIRST PRODUCTION

Gunslinger was first presented on 10th June 1976 at the Phoenix Theatre Leicester, as part of the Leicester Arts Festival, by the Phoenix Theatre Company. The cast was as follows:

John Milton Speed	Russell Henderson
Colonel Conquest/Banker	Geoffrey Durham
Angel 'Kid' McGrew/ Hardiman Crabbe/ Billy Speed	Chris Barnes
Chief Black Moon/ Little Thunder/ Rancher	Alan Rickman
Belle Tenderloin/Momma Speed/Liberty Lou/Woman	Heather Baskerville
Longhorn Hank/ Buddy Bullpuncher/ Preacher	David Gretton
Huckleberry Smith/ Mr Wells	Joss Buckley
Dungaree Lil/ Tart/ Belinda Speed	Jenny Whitby
Wild Willie Fifty-Fingers	Ian Smith/Victoria Wood
Drummer/ Mr Colt	Stephen Price

Director:	Peter Moss
Musical Director:	Ian Smith
Designers:	Paul Bannister, Linda Ferguson
Lighting Designers:	Chris Donaldson, Laurence Southon

LIST OF

CHARACTERS

COLONEL CONQUEST - *U.S. Cavalry*
JOHN MILTON SPEED - *Gunslinger*
ANGEL 'KID' MCGREW - *Badman*
CHIEF BLACK MOON - *Indian Warlord*
BELLE TENDERLOIN - *Golden-hearted Tart*
LONGHORN HANK - *Cowboy*
BUDDY BULLPUNCHER - *Cowboy*
DUNGAREE LIL - *Cowgirl*
HUCKLEBERRY SMITH - *Barkeep*
WILD WILLIE FIFTY-FINGERS - *Piano-player*
LITTLE THUNDER - *Indian Scout*
HARDIMAN CRABBE - *Quack Preacher*
LIBERTY LOU - *Soul of America*
MR COLT - *Gunmaker*
MR WELLS - *of Wells and Fargo*
MOMMA SPEED
BILLY SPEED
BELINDA SPEED
PREACHER
RANCHER
BANKER
TART
DRUMMER
WOMAN
BRAVES, BUSHWACKERS, VIGILANTES,
GOLD PROSPECTORS, etc.

GUNSLINGER

by Richard Crane

ACT I

The stage is No-Name saloon. An upper landing spans upstage, with stairs at either end, descending to half-way landings, and then instage to the saloon floor. Downstairs, beneath the landing, is a covered walk-way. In the centre, saloon swing-doors, and to the right of the doors, a life-size poster proclaiming:

WANTED FOR MURDER

\$2,000 REWARD

JOHN MILTON SPEED

and a picture of the wanted man. Two wagon-wheels flank the swing-doors. A long bar, well stocked with bottles and glasses, stretches from up left centre to down left. Piano and drums down right. Two bar-room tables and several chairs. A painted cyclorama depicting desert, cacti, distant craggy mountains and blue sky.

Quiet saloon activity as the audience comes in.

LONGHORN HANK and LITTLE THUNDER are seated at a table. HANK is an archetypal cowboy. LITTLE THUNDER is a westernised Indian scout with one feather. They play poker for high stakes. HANK always wins - reluctantly.

At another table, sits DUNGAREE LIL asleep, feet on table, stetson over face - a hardy, outdoor cowgirl.

Behind the bar, HUCKLEBERRY SMITH fills whiskey glass and slides it to HARDIMAN CRABBE who drinks and slides it back. SMITH refills it and slides it to CRABBE who drinks and slides it back etc...SMITH is a quiet, honest barkeeper. CRABBE is a drunken, aged, quack-preacher, in dusty black coat and hat.

At the piano WILD WILLIE FIFTY-FINGERS plays a pleasant background 'country and western' overture, accompanied by DRUMMER.

BELLE TENDERLOIN, the 'Golden-hearted Tart' cruises between tables and piano, serving drinks and making sure everyone is having a good time. A blowzy blonde, in scarlet and black satin, she controls the saloon with warmth and good humour.

The scene is established, quiet, easy, relaxed.

The overture ends. The house lights fade. COLONEL CONQUEST strides through the audience. He is stout, with flowing fair hair, neat beard and moustache, flamboyant boots, stetson and fringed coat.

Conquest: €Good evening ladies and gentlemen, hi there guys and gals, howdy friends and welcome strangers - (reaches the stage) €to **'Gunslinger'**, the Wild West Show!

Smith€: And Colonel Conquest, your host!

FIFTY-FINGERS and DRUMMER accompany each introduction.

Conquest: €I'd like you to meet my compatriot, my brother, €my prairie pal and poker partner - Little Thunder!

Thunder: €How!

Conquest: €And the red-hot-hearted Bonus of the Bar and Solace of the Saloon - Belle Tenderloin! (*Slaps her behind*).

Belle: €Glad ta know ya!

Conquest: €The Prince of the Prairie, Lord of the Lariat, King of the Cowboys - Longhorn Hank!

Hank: €(*Swings his lariat*) €Yahooooooow!

Conquest: €The sharp-shootin', sheriff-shiverin', trigger-juggin' flank rider - Dungaree Lil!

Lil: €Howdy pardners.

Conques€t: And at the piano - Wild Willie Fifty-Fingers!

FIFTY-FINGERS does justice to his name and continues playing as CRABBE pushes to the front, exhibiting a pickled head and hand.

Crabbe: €I have here, ladies and gentlemen, the authentic and edificacious, whiskey-pickled head of the notorious bandit Joaquin Murieta, and the triple-digit hand of three-fingered Jack!

Conquest: €(*Laughing*) €Doctor Hardiman Crabbe!

Crabbe: €One kiss from these lips, ladies and gentlemen, one touch of these fingers,

guys and gals, will cure you - sure as the Good Lord is no drinker! - from acidity, dyspepsia, nausea, dysentery, pox, plague, palsy, leprosy, anthrax, mange, delirium tremens, falling sickness and coma

He collapses - out cold. Laughter, SMITH fills a bucket of water behind the bar.

Conquest: €And behind the bar - (*Suspense music*) €the man with the bucket, Mr Drunk-Drenchin' Huckleberry Smith!

SMITH comes round the bar with bucket.

Smith: (*Front*) €Figure the Doc needs dilutin' Ladies and gentlemen?

Belle: €No Huck! Don't do it Huck! He can't take it! He's an old man! Stop him somebody! Stop him!

SMITH empties the bucket. It contains paper. Laughter. CRABBE revives.

Conquest: €Say does anyone have a light for my cigar? (*LIL spins her gun. Fires. The cigar is shot in half!*) €Well I'll be doggone -

THE NO-NAME SALOON SONG

€Hank, Belle: *The days are hot and the nights are cold*
Lil: *All along the trail that the wagons rolled;*
Tall are the tales of the bad men bold, bold, bold
Of rustlers, redskins, cattle and gold.

All: *No-Name, No-Name,*
Honky tonk it Fifty-Fingers play your tune;
No-Name, No-Name,
The gunslinger's riding by
No-Name Saloon, Saloon.

Conquest: *The hills are rich, and the prairie wide;*
Thunder: *Wild is the wind on the western side;*
Crabbe: *Wild is the trail of the buffalo hide, hide, hide*
And wild is the anger of the men who died.

All: *No-Name, No-Name, etc.*
Crack and flame from a Colt 45!
Who knows who's gonna come out alive?

*You gotta shoot first on a fast draw gun, gun, gun,
Or die in a hurry with your high boots on.*

€ *No-Name, No-Name, etc.*

Smith: *(at bar) Watch for a stranger as he hits the town;
Wise up and mosey on before sundown;*

All: *Piano player play a penultimate tune
€ For the gunslinger riding by No-Name Saloon.*

€ *No-Name, No-Name,
Honky tonk it Fifty-Fingers plays your tune,
€ No-Name, No-Name,
The gunslinger's riding by
No-Name Saloon, Saloon, Saloon, Saloon!*

JOHN MILTON SPEED strides through his 'WANTED' poster and ambles to the bar. He limps slightly from a gun wound. Silence. SMITH understands. Slides SPEED a glass and bottle. SPEED pours and drinks. Murmuring in the saloon.

Crabbe: €Jumpin' Jehosovat!

Thunder: It's John Milton Speed!

Belle: He's wanted for murder

Hank: €Two thousand dollars reward

Lil: €Dead or alive

Hank: €What are we waitin' for?

Belle: He's nothing to be scared of.

Lil: He's a cripple. Shot in the foot.

FIFTY-FINGERS plays. BELLE sings.

ONE-LEG JOHNNY

Belle: *They call him One-Leg Johnny-*

Hank: *Hey, stranger*

Belle: *If money's what yer need -*

Hank: *You new in these parts?*

Belle: *The price on his head is bonny -*

Hank: *Hey Mister ...*

Belle: *For One-Leg Milton Speed.*

Hank : €Hey One-Leg €Hopalong €Limpin' Lizard . .(Pause)

Speed:€ Yer talkin' to me, cowboy?

Hank: €Yah, Mr One-Leg John Milton Speed. I sure am! (Laughs)

FIFTY-FINGERS plays jauntily. All laugh. SPEED finishes his drink. He turns suddenly. A crack and flash of flame from his right hand and HANK and FIFTY-FINGERS die in a hurry.

Speed:€And the same goes for any other son of a bitch, as calls me 'One-Leg'. (He ambles to his poster)

Lil: (going to the body) €Hank!

Belle: C'mon Lil, let's get him outa here.

They remove HANK. The saloon clears except for CONQUEST, THUNDER, SMITH and SPEED.

Conquest: Mr Speed

Speed: €Umh?

Conquest: €How come ya hit town so cool with a price on yer head?

Speed:€ I am an innocent man.

Conquest: €There's some as don't think so.

Speed: €I think so, Colonel and that's good enough for me.

Thunder: €How many men, Mister Speed, have you killed to your certain knowledge?

Speed: €Excluding Injuns and Mexicans, I guess considerably over a hundred.

Thunder: €And that makes you an innocent man?! - Why you - !

Speed:€ But by heaven I have never killed one man that did not deserve it!

Conquest: €Would you elaborate on that, Mr Speed?

Smith: How did it start?

Thunder: How were you induced into the murderous, irresponsible, unpatriotic, mercenary, degrading trade of an innocent gunslinger, Mr Speed?

Speed:€ (indicating piano) €Anyone here play this?

Smith: Only Wild Willie Fifty-Fingers mister, and he's dead, cos you shot him, cos he deserved it, cos he referred to you as having only er as being a monopod Mr Speed!

Speed:€ Prop him up and flex his fingers before rigor sets in.

SMITH props up FIFTY-FINGERS on the piano.

Thunder: €Arrest him, Colonel.

Conquest: €No, Little Thunder. Not yet.

Thunder: But -

Conquest: €I think we should hear what he has to say.

Speed:€ My story starts with a song dedicated to my mother. Please close the bar.

They close and clear the bar as SPEED begins - solo spot down centre, the saloon fades.

Speed:€ When I was a kid we lived and worked upon a lone prairie homestead, at Li'l Vermilion Creek, ten miles out of Troy Grove, Illinois. There was me and Momma, my brother Billy and sister Belinda.

THE HOMESTEAD SONG

(Sings) ***Momma kept the homestead,
Like an old oak tree,
Shaded and protected
Bill, Belinda and Me.***

(Speaks) €I was a naïve and stubborn kid, I guess. I believed in the Good Book, word for word. Thou shalt not drink, thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not gamble at cards, neither shoot crap nor fornicate.

(Sings) ***It was Saturday night on the homestead,
The cattle herd was penned
The rattlesnakes and scorpions
Were at peace for the weekend.***

€MOMMA fades up in a spot up left of SPEED. A forceful white-haired old dame. She has a Bible and a whip.

€

Momma:€ *(calling)* €Johnny, Billy, Belinda -

Speed: *(Sings)* ***My mother's voice was calling.***

Momma: €***Children come to prayer.***

Speed:€ ***The mocking-birds were silent;
A stillness filled the air.***

Momma: €Johnny, I'm concerned about you. You read the Good Book. You observe and honour the commandments, but you persistently fail to read between the lines. Johnny, you are the fastest draw and sharpest shooter on the homestead, yet you ain't yet plugged no Injun nor badman. Belinda and Billy have seven notches between them, but your gun Johnny is smooth as your own yellow belly ass!

Speed:€ (front) €I told her the Good Book says: Thou shalt not kill.

Momma:€ Shalt, Johnny, shalt!

Speed:€ My mother never used her horse whip -

Momma:€ (whipping) €Future tense!

Speed:€ (wincing) €- to whip horses.

Momma:€ Shalt is future, when the Promised Land is WON€! MUST €is NOW€!

Thou MUST €kill Johnny cuz we gotta TAME€ this territory of the Philistines!

BELINDA and BILLY enter and kneel either side of their MOMMA.

Belinda and Billy: €Tell it Momma.

Momma: €We have a holy dispensation as deputies before the Lord -

Belinda and Billy:€ Praise his name, Momma.

Momma:€ To prepare the Promised €Land for €His coming!

Belinda and Billy: €Hallelujah!

Momma:€ To take a life Johnny in the name of the Lord -

Belinda and Billy: €Yeah!

Momma: €- is no sin for it hastens the day -

Belinda and Billy: €Hasten it Lord!

Momma: €- when the earth shall be filled with His grace!

Belinda and Billy: €Amen Momma!

Three INDIAN BRAVES appear silently up right on upper level. They stalk and surround the Speeds - one below and two above. MOMMA continues, oblivious.€

Momma: €To thrive and prosper in the name of the Lord -

Belinda and Billy: €Hallelujah!

Momma: €- to store up treasures and profits in the name of the Lord -

Belinda and Billy: €Praise Him!

Momma: €- to trample down evil creditors and competitors in the name of the Lord -

Belinda and Billy: €Hallelujah! Praise Him!

Momma: €- is no sin Johnny!

Belinda and Billy: €No, Momma!

Momma: €It is glorious!

Belinda and Billy: €Yes, Momma!

Momma: €It is courageous!

Belinda and Billy: €It IS€, Momma!

Momma: €- and a sign of faith!

Belinda and Billy: €Faith, Momma!

Momma: €- to lead us into glory, into temperance, to be fruitful and multiply!

Belinda and Billy: €Multiply Thy chosen seed Lord!

Momma: €- to husband Thy vineyards, to raise plentiful harvests and fat kine, oh Lord!

Belinda and Billy: €Yes Momma, yes!

Momma: €- till the fountains and rivers overflow with milk and honey!

Belinda and Billy: €Hallelujah!

Momma: €Until Thy chosen children are rich in Thy grace!

Belinda and Billy: €Amen Lord, Amen!

Momma: €- And have dominion and power and glory over all the world!

Belinda:€ Aaaaauurrrgh!!!! (She is arrowed)

Billy: (screams) €Injuns!

Momma: €Vengeance on the redskin usurpers of the Promised Land!

Belinda: (in agony) €They've fired the stables!

Billy: €And rustled the cattle!

Belinda: €We're surrounded Momma!

Billy: €The Injuns are upon us!

With a horrific war-cry, the BRAVES leap upon them with knives and tomahawks.

Momma: €In the name of the Lord!

They freeze in attitudes of fighting as SPEED speaks.

Speed: (front) €I stood alone. I could not disobey the Good Book. I could not re-interpret the scriptures to suit the needs of the moment.

Battle continues.

Momma: €Death to the enemies of the Lord!

Billy: €Purge the mountains and valleys!

Belinda: €Purify the still waters!

Battle freezes.

Speed: (front) €Insensitive and helpless, I watched as Injun braves rubbed out my sister -

Belinda: €Aaaaargggh! (dies).

Speed: €My brother -

Billy: €Aaaaarrggh! (dies).

Momma: (fighting) €Fight Johnny! Fight yer garl-darn spunkless puceylanemous

rabbit!

Speed: €- and my Momma.

Momma: €Aaaarrgghh! (*dies*).

The BRAVES freeze.

€

Speed: €Numbed with horror at my own impotence, I witnessed as the red-skin warriors deftly barbered my close relatives.

1st Brave: € (*indicating SPEED*) €Kid?

2nd Brave: €Him chicken.

3rd Brave: €Brave no scalp standing chicken.

They scalp the bodies. FIRST BRAVE utters war-shriek as he lifts scalp. The BRAVES run off. Light dims to tight solo spot for singer - SMITH - seated with guitar on steps.

MELANCHOLY PENANCE

€

Smith: *His mother's hair was snowy white;
His brother's hair was brown,
His sister was the blondest belle
This side of Kansas town.*

Spot returns for SPEED. He is alone.

*A melancholy penance
For thee, John Milton Speed;
So shall the cup be drained away
So shall the Injun bleed.*

Speed: *Say, mother can you hear me
As you ride the range up there?
For you I'll kill a hundred men
Because I truly care.
For you I'll purge and purify,
For you I drink this cup;
It's bitter and it hurts - but oh,
I shall not give it up!*

Smith: *A melancholy penance
For thee, John Milton Speed;
So shall the cup be drained away
So shall the Injun bleed.*

Speed: *Dear Ma, I now do swear by God!
My pledge is this - until
The West is won for such as you
So shall I drink and kill.
So shall I truly purify
And play the poker game
Until the Promised Land is clean
Until the West is tame!*

Momma: *(above with Heavenly chorus)*
*I hear you little Johnny
As I ride the range above;
You kill, you purge, you purify
For the sake of those you love!*

Light fades on MOMMA and SMITH as song ends. SPEED alone.

Speed: €And so, over mindful of my solemn pledge,
I gambled, I drank, I destroyed.
My gun got itchy with notches.

MR WELLS, business man, approaches SPEED.

Wells: €Say Mister, maybe you can help me. I'm looking for someone who's either very brave or very stupid or preferably both.

Speed: €Go on.

Wells: €Mr Fargo and I - my name is Wells - we gotta get this stage from A to B thru' Injun territory.

Speed: €Say no more.

Wells: €We're looking for a fearless gunslinger who is dedicated to extending and fortifying the dominion of the white settler across the longitude and latitude of the American continent.

Speed: €Hold it there.

Wells: € From Oregon to Florida
 And Idaho to Maine,
 From Maryland to Washington,
 Utah and back again -
 Say mister do you dig the plan?

Speed: €Uh-huh, I dig. I am your man.

They shake hands. WELLS goes.

Speed: € (front) €So commenced my career as a sharp-shootin' driver for Wells and Fargo along the A to B trail.

Enter four passengers, PREACHER, RANCHER, BANKER and TART. They set up five chairs to represent stagecoach.

Preacher: €This the stage for the A to B Trail?

Speed: €Sure thing.

Rancher: €You the driver?

Speed: €I am sir.

Tart: € You know we're headin' thru' Injun territory?

Speed: €Drivin' stages is chickenfeed mam, for a €fearless, peerless gunslinger with iron wrists and a fistful o' reins, a team o' wild horses, a whip that cracks and a gun that ain't jest decoration.

Tart: € Oh, my!

Banker: €Are you for the South, sir?

Speed: €Yes sir. My sympathies in the Civil War lie with the Confederate States.

Preacher: €Amen to that sentiment Mr Driver.

Rancher: €Are you quick on the draw?

Speed: €Toss a dime.

RANCHER tosses a dime. SPEED fires. Amazed and noisy reaction of passengers as the dime shatters, and they take their seats, facing front, and sing. SPEED stands behind on chair, with whip.

THE STAGE COACH SONG

€

All: *Four in hand is a lot of horse;
When you ride Wells Fargo it's a matter of course -€
Four passengers hangin' on tight
As we ride across the nation!*

€ *Build our land with a bible and gun;
Keep on goin' till the West is won;
All we want is a good clean fight -
So drive on driver, drive on!*

SPEED cracks whip.

Preacher: *Listen everybody to the word I say
The Lord is a-comin' to call some day€,*

***Over Rocky mountain and desert sand €-
Prepare ye the €Promised land!***

Speed:€ Where are you bound for, preacher?

Preacher: €Itravel west Mr Driver, to spread the Word, to crush the unbeliever, and bind together in brotherhood all the Confederate States and territories. Amen.

PASSENGERS agree as all sing.

All: ***Build our land with a bible and gun
.... So drive on driver, drive on.***

Rancher: ***Drovin' cattle is a dangerous trade;
Bad men rustle and Injuns raid;
We gotta blaze a trail thru' Kansas Chief
To make it safe for Texas beef.***

Speed:€ Where are you headin' rancher?

Rancher: €Itravel west Mr Driver. My herd was ambushed by hostile Injuns, my partners killed, my cattle captured. I am returning to drive another herd along that same trail which I shall blaze Mr Driver and blaze again till it is safe for every bull, cow and calf across the length and breadth of the Confederate States.

All: (*agree and sing*) ***Build our land with a bible and gun
.... So drive on driver, drive on.***

Banker: ***Business is big in the south and west;
Civilise the nation, you know that's best;
€ Get rich quick - you got me to thank:
€ Put your money in my bank!
€***

Speed:€ Which way do you go, Mr Banker?

Banker: €Westward Mr Driver, to plant the germ of profit-makin' in the fertile virgin seed-bed of the pioneering mind. So shall the land be rich with millionaires Mr Driver. So shall the Confederate States unite in the common bond of business efficiency.

All: (*agree and sing*) ***Build our land with a bible and gun
.... So drive on driver, drive on.***

Tart: *The land is rich, the land is wide,€
Milk and honey on the other side;
I will pledge the all-American male*
€ *Good times at the end of the trail.*

Speed: €And you lady, what is your destination?

Tart: €Same as the rest Mr Driver. Say what you will, my trade is the oldest in the world, and necessary for peace and prosperity. You name me a bushwhacker who don't want the kiss of a big-hearted dame after three months cowpokin' trail, and I'll name you a degenerate traitor to the Confederate States.

All: *(Sing) Four in hand is a lot of horse,
When you ride Wells Fargo it's a matter of course -
Four passengers hangin' on tight
As we ride across the nation!*

€ *Build our land with a bible and gun;
Keep on goin' till the west is won;
All we want is a good clean fight,
So drive on driver, drive on.
So drive on driver - drive on!*

A rifle shot. A masked KID RAIDER comes through the audience. Commotion.

Raider: €Whoa there horses. Rein 'em in Driver! Hold it! No tricks. Do as I say and no one gets hurt.

Preacher: €What the -!

Rancher: €What's goin' on?

Banker: €This some kinda hold-up, Driver?

Tart: €Shoot him Mr Driver!

Raider: €Step out you bushwhackers in line.

The PASSENGERS and SPEED descend, hands raised. The RAIDER places his bag before them.

Rancher: €A jay-hawker!

Banker: A union scout!

Preacher: €Well I'll be -!

Tart: €Shoot the northern Yankee bastard Mr Driver -

Raider: €Button it lady. Jest reach.

Speed: €But this is Injun territory. We ain't expectin' -

Raider: *(disarms him)* €Nuttin's expected in Civil War, driver.

Covered by the RAIDER, the PASSENGERS place their money, guns and jewels in the bag.

Tart:€ We're jest innocent citizens journeying from A to B.

Raider: *(frisking a pistol from her bloomers)* €And I'm jest an innocent raider collecting charity for the Yankee Soldiers' Fund, lady.

Banker: €Whom do you rob for, raider? Or do you ride alone?

Raider: €I ride alone for Colonel Conquest.

Rancher: Is he for the North?

Preacher: €He's a Southerner.

Tart: He was invited to lead the Confederate States!

Raider: €Hehad a double invitation, lady, and the wily bastard knows who's gonna win this goddam war.

Speed: *(suddenly)* €Injuns!

Raider: €Where?!

Off his guard, SPEED disarms the RAIDER. Spectacular fist fight. PASSENGERS urge on SPEED.

Passengers: €Darn me! Go it driver! Kick him! Flatten him! Shoot him Driver!*etc.*

SPEED achieves the gun, raises the RAIDER to his feet, ripping off the mask.

Speed: €Well I'll be -!

Raider:€ What the -!

Speed: Angel "Kid" McGrew!

Raider:€ Johnny Milton Speed?

Speed: That's me!

Raider: Well doggone me, you son-of-a-gun!

Speed:€ Darn my chaps! I'll be jiggered!

Affectionate knock-about greeting of long lost friends.

Rancher: *(disappointed)* €They know each other.

SPEED and ANGEL turn to face the trembling line of passengers.

Banker: €Let's get the hell outa here ...!

The PASSENGERS run for it, taking the chairs. SPEED and ANGEL alone.

Speed€: For seven years Angel, I have nursed a fearful secret - that I was responsible for your murder. An old Injun woman once told me that I would bring death upon my nearest friend. I did not realise at the time, that she was referring, obliquely, to my mother. But how come you're raidin' for Jay-hawkers, Kid?

Angel: €That's a long story.

Speed: What happened after I threw you in the river seven years ago when we were kids at Troy Grove, Illinois?

Angel: Far as I remember, guess it was like this. I swam underwater fit to bust a gut

Speed: €I was within my rights to cast you in the water. You insulted my sister, and for that I would not stand.

Angel: I thought, I'll scare the pants off that son of a fat-ass bitch.

Speed:€ (*biffs ANGEL*) €Take that €for desecratin' my mother! Go on..

Angel: €Then I surfaced and hailed a passin' paddle-€steamer and I said: "Scuse me sir, what river is this please?" And darn my shorts if he didn't say (*biffs SPEED*) "€Why, young whipper-swimmer, this is the Mississippi!"

Speed: €You're kiddin'.

Angel: Straight as I stand here, ol' timer.

Speed: Hey, not so much of the age difference, Kid (*biff!*).

Angel: €I was ten years old when I boarded that steamer. I paddled ol' man river to New Orleans where I stowed away and sailed Spanish Main, got captured by pirates, then shipwrecked off of Cape Horn. Then so help me, in only TEN DAYS I WALKED €to California and found gold, and got in a fight (*biff!*) and shot up six gunslingers. (*bop!*) €Then the lynch-mob came to get me. They strung me up so help me (*throttles SPEED*)€. I thought I was a goner as the breath choked outa me, when one of the regulators turned to fire a shot at my quivering torso and missed and straight as I stand here, the bullet went clean thru' the rope and I fell to the ground (*blat!*) €a livin' breathin' man!

Speed: €It's a good story, Kid.

Angel: You don't believe it?

Speed: Nope (*kicks him over*).

Angel: €Me neither.

Speed: Why you -! (*They fight*).

Angel: (*as they fight*) €And did I tell you about Injuns?

Speed:€ (*diving on him*) €I'll tell you about Injuns, Kid. I was up this dead-end

gulch (*biff!*)

Angel: € Right. I geddit.

Speed: Pursued by hostile Injuns.

Angel: (*biffs him*) €Geronimo!

Speed: €The narrow passageway leadin' into the gulch would permit Injuns to enter jest one by one and I could pick 'em off like flies - except

Angel: €Except what?

Speed: €I was armed with only a single shotgun, a knife and my bare hands.

Angel: €Holy smoke!

Speed: An Injun came. I shot him. Another came. I threw my knife. Then another. I buffaloed him with my butt (*biff!*). €And another. I kicked him to glory with my spurs. Then another (*biff!*). And another (*biff*). €More (*biff*) €and more (*biff*)€. I was unarmed. I was bushed. They had me surrounded. They had guns and arrows and tomahawks. I had to think fast.

Angel: €What did you do?

Speed: Guess I was stuck.

Angel: What happened?

Speed: Reckon I jest died.

They laugh and fight.

€ Y'know, Angel, that's the first time I've laughed since my Momma died.

SPEED relaxes as ANGEL sets up bedrolls and opens can of beans. LIBERTY LOU has appeared on the steps right. A bedraggled Statue of Liberty with torch gone out. She sings. Harmonica accompaniment.

CIVIL WAR SONG

€

Liberty Lou: *There's a little creek in Kansas
Where the clear cool waters flow;
There's a fertile plain in Arkansas
Where willow and hickory grow;
There's virgin soil in New Mexico
Where the prairie chicken and quail
Fly among the blossom
Along the Santa Fe Trail.*

*Freedom lives to the eastward;
There's an open land to the west;
Cotton grows in the southland-
This nation is God's bequest.*

*But from Gettysburg to Shiloh,
Manasses to Bull Run,
Brother is fightin' brother,
Father is killing son.*

*And tears they flood the water,
And grief lies 'cross the plain;
The virgin soil is thick with blood
Where soldier boys are slain.
The prairie stinks of slaughter,
The rivers all run red,
Where Soldier Blue is dying,
And Soldier Grey is dead.*

She comes down to join SPEED and ANGEL.

Angel: A mighty sad song, lady.

Lou: Pardon me sirs, I'm at my wits' end. I don't know which way to turn.

Speed: We are gunslingin' desperado prairie scouts. We will not harm you.

Angel: Fancy a can of beans, mam?

Lou: No. Thanks.

Speed: Please park your ass.

Lou: (*sitting*) I guess I represent the soul of America, torn apart in this heart-rending Civil War. But tell me, boys which side do you scout for?

Angel: Jayhawkers -

Speed: Bushwhackers.

Angel: Union.

Speed: Confederacy.

Lou: (*distraught*) Can't you see - I'm crazy for the both o'ya!

Angel: Come north with me. Come see Chicago, Boston, New York.

Speed: Come see the cotton lands, prosperity and peaceful living.

Angel: Big business, profit, sophisticated culture.

Speed: The old agrarian home-land haven of temperance and high principles.

Angel: Where all men and women live free.

Speed: Where every man and woman, slave or free, lives in the security that he knows his station.

Angel: Mr Lincoln came north, lady. He champions the right of every American to make an honest buck in the manufacturing industry. He upholds democracy and loves the good life. Why, he even goes to the theatre from time to time.

Speed: Choose me, Mam. Choose the old ways.

Angel: Choose the 19th Century and the free world, lady (*takes her hand*).

Speed: €Keep yer hands off her - you Yankey Bum!

Angel: €OK, Bushwhacker, ya askin' fer it.

They prepare for shoot-out.

Lou: €No! Stop it! Please! I beg you! (*to ANGEL*) €I love neither of you if you fight each other! (*to SPEED*) €Do not tear me apart!

Speed: €Stand aside, mam. This is a shoot-out.

As he pushes her to one side ANGEL fires. SPEED is shot in the leg - the origin of his limp. They freeze on either side of LIBERTY LOU as she sings.

Lou: *But tears they flood the water
And grief lies 'cross the plain;
The virgin soil is thick with blood
Where soldier boys are slain.
The prairie stinks of slaughter,
The rivers all run red,
€ Where Soldier Blue is dying,
 And Soldier Grey is dead.*

The Last Post sounds.

Angel: €Come on lady, the war is over.
 €Come north with me.
 So long, One-Leg Milton Speed

ANGEL and LIBERTY LOU go. SPEED returns to his solo spot.

Speed: (*front*) €Alone, without let-up or compunction, I robbed, I raided, I killed and regulated, with an unwritten authority born of the pledge I vowed to my mother.

The saloon light has crept up. CONQUEST, SMITH and LITTLE THUNDER re-set the saloon as they speak.

€
Conquest: €You have told your tale with a reckless dignity, Mr Speed, but it cuts no ice in No-Name.

Smith: String him up, Colonel.

Thunder: €There stands an indication of the aimless and desperate violence that hangs over the losers in a civil war. He needs to be shaped up and rubbed out.

Speed: €I am a one-man militia and sole custodian of a tangled vineyard.

Smith: €String him up, Colonel.

Conquest: €The Confederate States have been persuaded to see the error of their ways. This nation is at peace with itself.

Speed: €This nation is SICK€with a POX €called FEAR€! And I am the surgeon that shall shoot out the symptoms!

Conquest: €And kill the patient, Mr Speed?

Thunder: €(*crossing behind SPEED*) €Rectify him, Colonel.

Smith: String him up.

Conquest: €There is a price upon your head -

Speed: € And a pledge in my heart and a bullet in my gun - !

Conquest: €Disarm him.

THUNDER disarms him.

€

Smith: €String him up.

Conquest: €Call a trial.

Smith: Trial! Trial! Call a trial!

He calls in the saloon regulars. LIL and BELLE come from upstairs right. BUDDY BULLPUNCHER with his lariat in a noose from the opposite stairs. Din. Excitement.

Conquest: €(*over-riding the din - front*) €Ladiesand gentlemen of the jury, I would ask you now to straighten your faces and raise your hackles - we have us a TRIAL€!

Speed: €Vigilante trials are unconstitutional!

Conquest: (*to SPEED*) €You are charged with highway robbery, cattle rustling, arson, brawling, trespass, discourtesy to Miss Belle Tenderloin, desecratin' a wanted poster, failure to appreciate a casual good-humoured observation on your physical debility -

Speed:€ I do not recognise the authority of this court.

Conquest: (*continuing*) €Contemptof temporary judicial institutions and the murder, excludin' Injuns 'n' Mexicans of considerably over a hundred men.

Smith: Whaddaya gadda say fo' yahself before we string yah up?

Speed: €I demand a proper trial. Where's the Sheriff?

Conquest: €There ain't no Sheriff, mister.

Smith: You shot him.

Speed: € Where's the Marshall?

Conquest: € Six feet under, mister.

Smith: You shot him too.

BUDDY advances to SPEED.

Speed: € Ain't I seen you some place before?

Buddy: € Nope.

Speed: € Didn't I just shoot you up?

Buddy: € That was my identical twin brother.

Smith: His name is Buddy Bullpuncher.

Buddy: € (*brooding*) € I loved my brother and I swear to God he ain't gonna push up no daisies alone.

Speed: € What is this man's function in this court?

Smith: Prosecutin' attorney.

Buddy: I put it to you, One-Leg, that you stepped into this saloon and shot my brother. I call Miss Belle Tenderloin.

Smith: Call Belle Tenderloin!

Buddy: € Do you swear by Almighty God -

Belle: € So help me I swear.

Buddy: € Are you Belle Tenderloin, bar-scrubber and golden-hearted tart of No-Name Saloon?

Belle: € I sure am.

Buddy: € Do you know this man?

Belle: € He shot your brother.

Buddy: € Did he shoot my brother?

Belle: € He shot him.

Buddy: € I call Dungaree Lil.

Smith: Call Dungaree Lil.

Buddy: € Do you swear?

Lil: Uh-huh.

Buddy: € Are you Dungaree Lil?

Lil: € Uh-huh.

Buddy: € Did he shoot my brother?

Lil: € Uh-huh.

Buddy: € Case closed.

Smith: Right, this is the summing up, okay.

Conquest: You have heard the testimony of two witnesses -

Belle: € The reward, Colonel.

Lil: €Tell the jury of the reward.

Belle: €Before they give the verdict, Colonel.

Lil: €Tell them about the 2,000 dollars!

Smith: Order! Order in this court!

Conquest: €(*front*)€ Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I have been asked to acquaint you regarding the judgment of this court concerning the reward for the capture of the prisoner.

Belle: €2,000 dollars!

CONQUEST takes a bag marked \$50 from his pocket.

€**Conquest:** €I have here fifty dollars to be distributed to every man woman and child in the city of No-Name upon conviction of this desperate and most guilty renegade murderer -

Belle: €Fifty dollars!

Lil: €Now wait a minute!

Belle: €What about the rest of it?

Lil: €What about the 1,950 dollars, Colonel?

Conquest: €(*appeasing the girls with cuddles and winks*) €Custody of the remaining portion of the reward rests entirely within the jurisprudence of the president of this court.

Speed:€Objection!

Conquest: €Order in the court.

Speed:€ I demand the right of defence.

Smith: Order!

Speed:€I am innocent. I never shot no man that did not deserve it. I appeal to these good people (*audience*). €I call upon the Fifth Amendment. Okay, so I shot your Sheriff. He was a low-down dirty card-sharper. He needed killing mighty bad. Okay, so I shot your Marshall. He had to go. This town wasn't big enough for the both of us. Okay, so I shot your Deputy Marshall

(Continues catalogue of his killing of dignitaries and lawmen, amid the rising tide and din and song).€

THE TRIAL SONG

€

Belle, Lil and Thunder (*sing*):

Emergency tribunals

Are fun as you will see -

For guys and gals and colonels

And all the familee.

*Just listen to whatever
The prisoner has to say,
Then take him down the highway
And hang him up to-day!*

They repeat the song twice with increasing volume and clapping. COLONEL CONQUEST roars with laughter throughout, SPEED, furious, bellows his defence, but cannot be heard. Finally:-

Conquest: €Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you reached your verdict?

Buddy: €(front) €Hands up any dead man who says not guilty. (*Shoots anyone who puts hand up.*)€

Conquest: €How do they find the prisoner?

Lil: €Guilty as hell, Colonel.

COLONEL CONQUEST comes forward. House lights.

€

Conquest: €Ladies and gentlemen, the emergency vigilante law 'n' order judicial council of No-Name Saloon have found this man guilty beyond all possible doubt of murder, discourtesy, contempt, arson, robbery and etcetera, and it is the judgment of this court that we take him outside and string him up. So could I ask you to stand up. Everybody stand and file out, if you please, into the yard

He walks up the aisles urging the audience into the yard. FIFTY-FINGERS plays and the girls sing THE TRIAL SONG with BUDDY, THUNDER, SMITH and CONQUEST. They file the audience outside, whipping up vigilante bloodlust.

€

Outside a scaffold is erected. Festival atmosphere as the crowd waits for the execution. Music: Country and Western sing-along. BELLE and co. urge extroverts to come up and sing solo, with the lure of free beer vouchers.

Conquest: (*calls*) €Bring on the prisoner.

Jeers and abuse as SPEED ascends the platform preceded by DRUMMER.

Conquest: €(with solemnity) €John Milton Speed, you have been found guilty of murder and etcetera, and so it is curtains for your body and may the Lord have mercy upon your soul, €amen.

Drums roll. BUDDY fixes the noose round SPEED'S neck. He is about to kick him off the platform.

Speed: €I request the right to speak my famous last words.

Conquest: €Granted.

Drum stops.

Speed: €Listento me, people of No-Name. Okay, so I done wrong, and I killed and I drank and I gambled. But I told you already for why and for whom I did these things, and that I never killed no man that did not deserve it. And now I tell you this, ladies and gentlemen. I stand here before you, a martyr to the ways and conditions of the emergent civilization of this continent. I will not have died in vain. I will have died with a prophetic and unforgettable utterance upon my lips. America has a great future - no one is denying that - but an even greater future awaits this nation, if the citizens of our nation will only pause for a moment to reflect upon this final prophetic utterance: that Americans in their eagerness and simplicity, will always destroy the men of principle and foresight, whose services they require the most.

BUDDY raises his boot to kick SPEED from the scaffold. A gunshot. The rope of the noose is shot through. ANGEL 'KID' McGREW stands above on the rooftops. Fires another shot and covers SPEED'S escape. SPEED grabs a gun, leaps to the rooftop, tosses down the noose to the gaping crowd.

Speed: €Y'know, Kid, there's one thing we gotta get.

Angel: €What's that?

Speed:€ Outa this business!

Together they leap from roof to roof and make a clean getaway into the night.

Conquest: €(angry - to the crowd) €Okay, ladies and gentlemen, I guess this dirty, low-down infringement of judicial proceedings calls for a serious RE-APPRAISAL €of law and order in this town! So I figure, we take a fifteen minute break, ladies and gentlemen, sink a drink, and THINK ABOUT IT€!

Cheers. Shouts of agreement. Applause for COLONEL CONQUEST.€

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

No-Name Saloon. The regulars return: SMITH to behind the bar; FIFTY-FINGERS and DRUMMER play; HARDIMAN CRABBE, DUNGAREEE LIL, BELLE TENDERLOIN and LITTLE THUNDER drink and play cards at tables and at the bar. Saloon activity, music and din. They greet COLONEL CONQUEST as he enters through the audience. They ask for news of SPEED and ANGEL 'KID' McGREW.

Conquest: *(front)* Welcome back ladies and gentlemen. With regret I have to tell you Speed and 'Kid' McGrew are still at large.

(Cries of shame and frustration.)

But No-Name is not down-hearted!

(Cries of "No sir! ou tell it Colonel! No Siree!")

We have vigilance! We have vengeance! We have cattle to drove, and trails to blaze!

Enter BUDDY BULLPUNCHER, centre with lariat and chaps. Cheers. Roars of delight.

Buddy: Yahooooooow!!

Belle: Let's hear it Fifty-Fingers for the Cowboy Song!

BUDDY stands centre on chair. A square-dancing, lariat-spinning, song of cattle-droving and showmanship.

THE COWBOY SONG

All: *Swing, flank and point riders
Hit the trail of dust and drought!
No laggin' chuck wagon,
Head 'em up and move 'em out!
Texas to Kansas
The long trails lead;
Cow-punchin', herd bunchin' -
Whoa! Steady speed!*

Conquest: (*speaks - the others hum*).

The cowboy's life is full of dangers.
He works long hours in all weathers.
He is an expert horseman, a crack shot,
Skilled in ropin' cattle and fightin'
Injuns and rustlers.

Belle: The stetson serves the cowboy for a sunshade, an umbrella, a bucket, a drinking cup, a bellows for fanning the camp fire, and also for wavin' about, either to signal a distant rider or to attract the attention of horses and steers.

All: (*chorus*) *Swing, flank and point riders*
Hit the trail of dust and drought!
No laggin' chuck wagon,
Head 'em up and move 'em out!
Texas to Kansas
The long trails lead;
Cow-punchin', herd bunchin' -
Whoa! Steady speed.

Lil: The bandana serves the cowboy for a sweat-wiper, nose-blower, dust from the face and eyes remover, a mask, a scarf, a blindfold for a nervous horse, a sling, a bandage and a strainer of muddy waters.

Crabbe: The chaps are the cowboy's protection against sagebrush, cactus, horse-bite, rain, cold and snow, worn over dungarees, jeans or overalls of blue denim.

All: (*chorus*) *Swing flank and point riders,*
Hit the trail of dust and drought etc.

Thunder: And the boot is snug around the foot and loose around the ankle. The narrow toe allows the rider's foot to slide easily into the stirrup, the high heel keeps it in place. The tinkling jingle-bob spurs are designed to acquaint the highly strung steers of a cowboy's approach in the dark.

All: (*chorus*) *Swing flank and point riders,*
Hit the trail of dust and drought.
No laggin' chuck wagon,
Head 'em up and move 'em out!
Texas to Kansas
The long trails lead;

*Cowboys know shock noises
Can cause - stampede!*

(fast)
*Over the rocks and over the prairie,
Precipice, canyon, gully, ravine -
Furious, crazy, bellowin', blazin'
Fastest trail ya ever seen!
Full stampedin' gatherin' speed n'
Thundering, travelling over the plain;
Cattle are panickin', horses gallopin' -
Hold 'em in, rein 'em in, swing riders, rein!*

(steady - with square dance routine)
*Swing, flank and point riders
Hit the trail of dust and drought!
No laggin', chuck wagon,
Head 'em up and move 'em out!
Texas to Kansas
The long trails lead;
Cow-punchin', herd bunchin' -
Whoa steady -
Whoa steady -
Whoa steady speed!*

They finish in a tableau pyramid which collapses. CONQUEST enters to landing of steps left. He has a document.

Conquest: Ladies and gentlemen, I have an announcement to make. It has been decreed by the Congress of the United States of America, endorsed and honoured by the personal signature of Mr President himself, that this territory of Kansas should henceforth and hereafter be known to the world as the 35th State of the Union! *(ecstatic cheers)*

They stand or kneel in formal group.

SONG OF THE NEW STATE

All:
*Kansas where the buttonwood
And cottonwood and strawberry
And sweet plum blossom grow;*

*Abilene and Atchison
Wichita, Topeka,
And don't forget Ellsworth
Where the cattle herds go;
Kansas where the mountain
Meets the plain
And the Arkansas and Missouri flow -
The President, the Congress
Say to Number thirty-five
Hi! Howdy! Hello!
Hi! Howdy! Hello!
Hello!*

Conquest: But seriously fellow Americans, let me tell you what this means. We have achieved maturity, responsibility and respect in the eyes of this continent. We must honour this respect. We are a beautiful, fertile and virgin state. We bow before the blessing of Congress and the trust of Mr President. And goldarn it, we'll doggone show that honourable, trustin' son-of-a-gun what the 35th State of the Union is worth!

Cheers. Music.

WATCH IT IN WICHITA

All: *Watch it in Wichita,
Take care in Topeka,
Dodge City sit pretty too;
Act like yah oughta,
Inflict law n' order -
Abilene I'm talkin' to you!
States of the Union
Live free in communion.
You outlaw and maverick,
Desperado, renegade,
Hustler, rustler, badman -
Quit the territory - yah thru!*

Conquest: State of Kansas, America honours you!

Swing doors are kicked open. Masked and firing, SPEED and ANGEL McGREW execute a lightning saloon raid with minimum fuss. SPEED covers while

ANGEL takes cash and bottles of drink. They turn to go.

Buddy: *(drawing)* Are we lettin' 'em git away with this?

Speed: *(shooting gun from his hand)* Yes cowboy, you are.

SPEED and ANGEL make getaway.

Conquest: *(angry)* That's just the kinda thing I'm talkin' about!

Buddy: We ain't got no sheriff, Colonel.

Smith: Ain't no man stupid enough to stand fo' sheriff neither.

Lil: We need a sheriff to put an end to these disorders.

Belle: A sharp shooter.

Buddy: Dedicated t'inflictin' law 'n' order upon No-Name!

SMITH has given BELLE the star from behind the bar and indicates CONQUEST.

Belle: Looks like it's you Colonel.

Lil: Will you wear the star Colonel Conquest?

Conquest: *(polite)* Much as I respect authority and responsibility I can't.

Lil: Why not Colonel?

Conquest: I got buffalo business in Injun Territory.

Buddy: Buffalo?

Conquest: *(brightening)* Wanna hear about it?

Belle: Sure.

Conquest: It's a long story.

Lil: We appreciate long stories Colonel.

Lights dim to solo spot for CONQUEST, as he starts to speak. They clear and close the bar.

Conquest: I guess it began with the railroad plan
commencing after the war
to girdle the land with an iron band
extending from shore to shore.
Two railroad teams competed with schemes
to join California to Maine:
one from the west and one from the east
and to meet someplace in-between.
I was despatched and quickly attached
to the team that came from the west;

the race began - a competitive plan,
to prove which team was the best.
The eastern side had an easy ride,
the land was flat and clear,
to transport fuel and timber and rail
and wagons of technical gear.
But we on the west had a different test
that had to be bravely borne;
for lumber and rail had to come by sail
two thousand miles round the Horn.
In addition to that, the land was not flat -
no sir! Twas vertical peaks!
We tunnelled and spanned the mountainous land
by hours, by days and by weeks.
Forests of pine were felled for the line
and boulders blasted back,
and I was ascribed to keep Injun tribes
from nosin' around the track.
But the land was dry and the men fell by
with hunger and parchin' thirst,
with nothin' to eat but festerin' meat,
they sweated, collapsed and cursed.
So I said: Railroad chief, it's my belief
morale is sinkin' low.
I can serve you best and the team of the west
if you permit me to go.
The men need meat that's juicy and sweet
for the victory to gain.
'I know' he sighed, 'but how?' I replied:
There's buffalo in the plain!
Now eatin' buffalo, case you dunno,
refortifies, rendering fit
that muscular streak of moral physique
called Competitive True Grit.
'But it's Injun buffalo' chief exclaimed.
I smiled and said: I know.
He said: Take ten stout-hearted men
And return in a week or so.
He saw us ride down the mountain side
to the distant pasture green

We hunted a herd and a second, a third
and no Injun braves were seen

CHIEF BLACK MOON in resplendent full chieftain's head-dress and attire, and seven war-painted BRAVES, in Indian blankets, are emerging from the shadows to surround the unsuspecting colonel.

Guess they were afraid of our lightning raid
for in a couple of days or so,
believe it or not, we had hunted and shot
some eight hundred buffalo!
I reckon the braves were staggered, amazed
at our skillful horsemanship;
we galloped around their huntin' ground
with whoops and the crack of a whip.

(Grows aware that he is surrounded.)

We slowed to a trot and idly shot
one or two more for a joke
and slowed to a walk gettin' ready to talk
as the Chief came up and spoke

Black Moon: You steal buffalo.

Conquest: Now wait a minute -

Black Moon: Chief angry. Chief will revenge.

Conquest: *(fast)* I am Colonel Conquest of the US Cavalry attached to the Transcontinental Railroad - Western Division. And you - correct me if I'm wrong - are Big Chief Little Horse of the Pawnee tribe.

CHIEF and BRAVES adopt sudden aggressive attitudes.

Black Moon: *(furious)* Pawnee! Little Horse!

Conquest: Am I wrong?

Black Moon: We are Sioux!

Conquest: Oh my God Oh jumpin' jiminy

Black Moon: Pawnee sworn enemy to Sioux!

Conquest: I know that Chief, sure as I know the US Cavalry is the sworn ALLY to the Sioux in their struggle AGAINST the Pawnee!

Black Moon: Ally?

Conquest: Friend.

The BRAVES relax their pose.

Black Moon: You aid Sioux against Pawnee?

Conquest: Sure! Didn't you know? Heavensakes, that's why we're building the railroad. So we can be of service faster.

Black Moon: Rail road?

Conquest: (*blinding him with politics*) And that's why we killed the buffalo, because we thought they were Pawnee property and by decimating the herds we would be undermining their economy and crippling their food supply, thus AIDING you, the Sioux in your worthy and rightful struggle for supremacy of the plain.

Black Moon: (*dubious*) Hum (*retires upstage out of light*).

Conquest: (*front*) See what I'm doin'? Playin' off one tribe against another. Divide and rule. Never fails.

BLACK MOON returns into light the other side of CONQUEST.

Black Moon: You. Chief Black Moon. Brother.

Conquest: (*humble*) This is an heartfelt honour Chief, inasmuch as being totally unsolicited, and on that account, I shall cherish it with humility and a deep sense of respect. You don't mind about the buffalo?

Black Moon: We give buffalo.

Conquest: But Chief -

Black Moon: You swear friendship to Sioux tribe.

Conquest: (*kneels*) I swear to honour and preserve your tribe across the length and breadth of this continent.

Black Moon: You tell Big White Father in Big White House, Big Chief Black Moon friend and brother.

Conquest: It is my pleasure and my privilege so to do.

Black Moon: Braves bear buffalo to camp of brother.

BRAVES depart.

Conquest: (*head bowed*) I have not the words to express my gratitude (*notices BLACK MOON has gone also*) and doggone relief Chief!

(*front*) And so they heaved the buffalo beef
back to the railroad crew,
and all did feast and swore that the East
would fail to pull their line through.
And the track was laid and a railroad made
and in Utah the day did dawn -
when west met east and the contest ceased
And the Transcontinental was born!

Saloon light returns as he finishes his story. DRUMMER drums the triumphant passage of the first train along the railroad. Cheers, applause, delight from the saloon regulars.

Lil: But I don't understand Colonel. You can still be Sheriff. The railroad is complete. The track layers have quit. You have concluded your task.

Conquest: Not quite.

SAMUEL COLT has come in - a gunsmith in a long coat the lining of which advertises his trade. CONQUEST greets him, they confer confidentially.

Colt: My name is Samuel Colt.

Conquest: Let's cut the crap, Gunmaker. A reservation scheme for Indians is mooted in Congress. This will mean enforced migration of tribes on a large scale. There will be trouble. Space is required for the industrial development and the communications proliferation that the new railroad encourages. Buffalo hunting is part of this process, being required in bulk for political, economic and gastronomic purposes.

Colt: Uh huh.

Conquest: I have been detailed to commission the sophisticated hardware which will ensure minimal retaliation from the evicted tribes.

Colt: One thing I don't understand Colonel.

Conquest: Unh?

Colt: How did you hear of me?

Conquest: You supply guns to Speed and 'Kid' McGrew.

Colt: (*firmly*) No deal.

Conquest: But I am here as a private military citizen. I have no judicial or moral motivation when negotiating a deal, Mr Colt

They continue speaking softly. BELLE is re-hanging the 'wanted' poster.

Lil: Waste of paper Belle. Speed's in Mexico.

Belle: I'd heard he was in South America.

Lil: Wherever he is, if he walked in here, we couldn't do nuttin'. (*Glance to CONQUEST*) We ain't got no sheriff.

SPEED strides through his 'wanted' poster.

Belle: Hey, Mister. I jest fixed that what the!

SPEED ambles to the bar, SMITH appears, slides him a drink. SPEED grips the glass, slowly crushing it. His hand bleeds.

Speed: I've wandered alone for ten long months. I ain't wanderin' no more. Let justice take its course. I have a duty to my God and my country. I'm a bum and a murderer and of my own free will I surrender. *(Lays his gun on the bar).*

Smith: We ain't got no sheriff.

Speed: *(raising him off the ground by his lapels)* Then elect one you dummy bastard!

Smith: *(afraid)* Buddy Bullpuncher?

Buddy: Me? Oh no - I'm just a kid, I have no authority.

Smith: Dungareee Lil?

Lil: I ain't stupid.

Belle: Me neither.

Smith: *(suddenly - big idea)* Hey! I gaddit! Hows about YOU Mister Speed?

Belle: Speed?

Lil: Speed for Sheriff?

Smith: With the creation of the state of Kansas there was a general amnesty - you are pardoned Mister Speed.

Still grasping SMITH by the throat, SPEED considers, gazing up, as if communing with his mother.

Lil: *(gives him Bible)* Take the Book in your right hand.

Buddy: One-Leg John Milton Speed, Sheriff of No-Name!

Belle: It's yer big chance Mister.

Lil: To rectify yer criminal past.

Smith: And to divert yer restless itchy finger gunslinging ability to the service of this state for the infliction of law and order upon irresponsible un-American renegades such as yourself up to but not includin' this moment, Mister Speed.

Speed: *(softly)* Okay.

Excited reaction around the bar.

Buddy: All we need now is Angel 'Kid' McGrew for Marshall! *(laughter).*

CONQUEST and COLT return to their deal.

Colt: *(showing gun to CONQUEST)* This gun can fire six shots without reloading.

Conquest: I'd like to put in an order for a thousand. Can you fill it?

Colt: Certainly, Colonel, it's a pleasure to do business. *(They shake hands).*

Conquest: I intend to show these Injuns once and for all who is the boss around here. *(They go).*

Light concentrates into solo for SPEED as the saloon clears.

Speed: *(soft and tense)* I swear before Almighty God and this company that I will abide by the laws of this state of Kansas and the constitution of the United States of America and that I will pursue without let-up or partiality all infringers of these laws and this constitution and bring them to justice, that this town may live in peace and order. So help me God.

Music as he pins on the star.

THE KID SONG

Speed: *There's a kid I used to fool with
When I was a boy,
Play and go to school with
Back in Illinois;
We would fight and cut up rough -
We got by somehow.
He would laugh
And so would I -
Where is that kid now?
Where is that kid now?*

*He's the kid I spent my teens with
Way outside the law,
Drank and shared my beans with
In the civil war;
We scouted cross the prairie,
Killed a hundred men;
He would laugh
And so would I -
Will he come again?
Will he come again?*

*There's a kid I gotta deal with
Now I'm with the law,*

*Rectify and finish with -
He's a pal no more
He ain't a pal any more
Kid I wanna tell yah
Listen what I say -
If you come
I'm killing you -
So you stay away.
Kid you gotta stay away*

Saloon light returns. The saloon is empty. ANGEL 'KID' McGREW stands in the doorway.

Angel: Johnny I've been lookin' f or you. Where've you been What happened Johnny? Hey it's me - Angel. Remember?

Speed: Stay away.

Angel: The bank raid where you quit out on me. Remember?

Speed: I ain't raidin' no more.

Angel: I was cornered and you quit. You took the lot and headed on outa town, leavin' your kid partner up to his ass in regulators and lawmen.

Speed: Figgered if I beat it, I might confuse 'em.

Angel: Oh yeah. They were mighty confused!

Speed: Figgered I could draw them off and you could git away and we could meet up some place when the heat was off.

Angel: John Milton Speed chickens out on 'Kid' McGrew!

Speed: I did not chicken out.

Angel: I was cornered! If it wasn't for some dumb dame screaming on account of the gunfight precipitatin' her birth pains, I'd be two yards under fillin' a hole in Boot Hill!

Speed: I don't wanna talk about it.

Angel: *(shows him a dime comic)* Seen this? It says you and me, we're partners.

Speed: Not any more.

Angel: *(reads)* 'Angel is cornered. The posse have him surrounded. Will John Milton Speed ride to the rescue like Angel rescued HIM from the gallows at No-Name? See next week!'

Speed: Trash kidstuff.

Angel: The world is waiting.

Speed: I ain't rustlin' 'n' raidin' for no dime comic.

Angel: You can't avoid it. You're a livin' legend.

Speed: I am a man, with my feet on the ground, and my heart in the hills and

valleys of a great nation! I live for the day when the west is tamed and the land is plentiful, and good people multiply in peace and rectitude.

Angel: You live for ME Johnny, cos it says so! And I say so! And I don't take no holy Promised Land and "I love America" bullshit - ! What's this?

Speed: A star.

Angel: What star?

Speed: Sheriff.

Angel: Sheriff!

Speed: I've been sworn in as Sheriff of No-Name. *(Pause)*

Angel: *(laughs)* Why you son-of-a - ! If I didn' know you Johnny - *(laughs imitating SPEED)* "I was up this gulch. They had me surrounded." "What did you do?" "Reckon I jest died!" *(laughs)*.

Speed: I'm serious.

Angel: You son-of-a - !

Speed: I've sworn a pledge to clean up this town and regulate lawless vagabonds like yourself. *(Pause)*

Angel: You dirty bastard.

Speed: Quit town.

Angel: You dirty, c hicken-livered bastard!

Speed: You gotta reform or push up daisies, Kid.

Angel: Because of you I sweated blood with the regulators in this town! Because of you, there ain't no place in this God-sodden world I can sleep easy! Because of you I SHOT UP that child-bearing dame - !

Speed: Wise up kid. Your high-ridin' days are numbered.

Angel: You dirty, crawlin', bastard rat - !

Speed: Don't mess with the law!

Angel: I'll get you.

Speed: I'll get YOU. *(Pause)* Hit the trail before sun-up.

ANGEL goes.

CHIEF BLACK MOON in full attire centre of upper level. A corridor of light below him. Indian drum beats - very soft.

Black Moon: *(quiet)* Apache, Shoshone, Paiute, Crow, Creek, Navajo, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Sioux, Pawnee. Never before has there been a gathering of tribes in such strength and unity. Our land is not our own. Our buffalo falls in his hundreds. Our running deer in his thousands. Our mountains are wounded. Our prairie scarred. And we, the masters of this Land, snarl and snap like the wild coyote as the white man smiles from his

iron horse, urging us to blame each other. The day of the gentle rain is over. We wait as the grey clouds gather. We are prepared. We are strong. We are still as the sky before the storm.

(COLONEL CONQUEST enters below).

Colonel

Conquest: I come alone as friend and brother, Chief Black Moon. *(Looks round)*
What is this union of hostile tribes on a war footing?

Black Moon: We watch you Colonel. We trust you as the bear will trust the rattlesnake.

Conquest: And so you should, Chief. But listen - Big White Father in Big White House has Big White Plan for Little Red Man. *(shows him document)*

Black Moon: We resist further encroachment on our land.

Conquest: Your reservation will be in the Bad Hills of Nebraska -

Black Moon: Reservation?

Conquest: Territory Chief. Your very own private property. Sunshine, peace, healthy outdoor pursuits. No one will trespass upon your eternal summer vacation -

Black Moon: We hunt across THESE plains.

Conquest: Not so Chief. See! It's written down by Big White Father himself - a solemn pledge that the Sioux tribe reservation in the Bad Hills will not be disturbed or encroached upon by any unauthorized body. I'd like to congratulate you chief. You're a lucky man.

CONQUEST deposits the document at the feet of BLACK MOON.

Just a word by the way Chief - you may hunt and so forth and practise your ancient and honourable customs within your reservation but it must be emphasised that outside these areas, the land is no longer your concern. Good luck and may your Gods go with you.

CONQUEST exits. BLACK MOON picks up the document and goes.

Light for SMITH with guitar seated behind the bar.

THE SONG OF CHANGE

Smith: *A change is taking place across the nation,
A different kinda' danger in the air;
The Injun is contained in reservation*

*And No-Name is the same as anywhere
Anywhere*

*The West is opened up for cultivatin'
And grass is risin' high along the trail
And East and West are now communicatin'
And rangers get from A to B -
Rangers get from A to B by rail.*

*The bad man lies in idle contemplation,
A stack of paper comics on the floor,
A-readin' with a smile of 'ppreciation
Of who it says he shot the week before
Week before*

*The lawman with his gun of dedication,
The preacher with his enervating prayers,
They nurture from the humble vegetation
A sturdy crop, a sturdy crop,
A sturdy crop of worthy millionaires.*

In the last verse the tempo slows to half, the saloon light returns and the regulars enter and seat or slump themselves at tables or the bar. LIL and BUDDY play cards at table right. BELLE wilts at the top of the stairs. DRUMMER slumps on steps. FIFTY-FINGERS plays wearily with his feet up. CRABBE leans on the bar. At the table left, CONQUEST checks through a dime comic and SHERIFF SPEED sits with hat over face. All this, gradually, during the last verse.

Smith: *A change is taking place across the nation,
A different kinda danger in the air;
The Injun is contained in reservation,
And No-Name is the same as anywhere
Anywhere*

Pause.

Crabbe: You finished Huckleberry?

Smith: Yeah.

Crabbe: Well darn me, if I ain't clean outa nickles and dimes. What say you swap me a slug o' red eye for a recitation?

Smith: Just the one Doc.

SMITH pours as CRABBE recites for the saloon regulars, who ignore him, and the audience.

BALLAD OF LIQUOR AND LONGEVITY

Crabbe: The horse and mule live thirty years
and nothing know of wines and beers;
the goat and sheep at twenty die,
and never taste of scotch or rye;
the cow drinks water by the ton,
and at eighteen is mostly done;
the dog at fifteen cashes in
without the aid of rum and gin;
the cat in milk and water soaks,
and then in twelve short years, it croaks;
the modest sober bone-dry hen,
lays eggs for nogs, then dies at ten.
All animals are strictly dry;
they sinless live and quickly die.
But sinful ginful rum-soaked men
survive for three score years and ten!

He drinks his slug o' red eye.

And some of them - a very few -
stay pickled till they're ninety-two!

He grabs the bottle and drinks from it. SMITH retrieves it by force. CRABBE collapses. The long hot heavy stillness returns.

Conquest: Kinda quiet Sheriff.

Speed: Kinda peaceful.

Conquest: You cleaned up this town.

Speed: Scrubbed and purged with a bleach called lead.

Conquest: What became of 'Kid' McGrew?

Speed: I ain't hearin'.

Conquest: The world is waitin' the final episode. The children of America got to read about it.

Speed: I ain't murderin' no more for no dime comic, Colonel.

Conquest: You git on out there, and hunt him down!

Speed: He was my best friend -

Conquest: (*angry*) And I got shares in Legends of the West Publications Incorporated! So you get him. Get him big. Sensation 'cross the Nation. Then mosey off crooning into the sunset. Okay?

Pause. SMITH collects and refills glasses.

Belle: (*to SMITH*) What's with this saloon, Huck? Never seen so many half-assed dangle-dropping cowpokes.

Smith: Figure they's in need of a crisis Belle. Law 'n order sits like a flannel on No-Name.

Belle: Yer tellin' me Huck. I gotta trade that is half crustin' up on account of low competitive turnover and the law of diminishing returns

Pause. BUDDY and LIL get restless.

Buddy: Hey them's rocks Lil.

Lil: Why not?

Buddy: I play for bucks.

Lil: I ain't got no bucks.

Buddy: I don't play for no rocks. (*Throws rocks across saloon*)

Belle: Easy cowboy. Sheriff's fingering his holster.

Crabbe: (*Examining rocks*) Them's not rocks, them's nuggets.

Throws to SMITH.

Smith: Nuggets?

Lil: I was nosin' round the Bad Hills of Nebraska - gottem off an alcoholic squaw.

Buddy: (*Slowly realising*) Nuggets!

Speed: Bad Hills is reservation territory, Lil.

Conquest: Not in this instance Mister Speed.

Speed: Hey! This is gold!!

Crabbe: Shucks! Did I say nuggets!

Eruption of excitement and music in the saloon.

THE GOLD RUSH SONG

Conquest: *No-Name was awoken, one sunny day;
Cast aside inertia, chuck the blues away,*

Speed: *Take a pick, a barrow and a shovel or two -*

Conquest/Speed: *That gold is waitin'!*

Lil: *Waitin' for you!*

All: (*chorus*) *Gold in the Bad Hills,
Travel and git that gold!
Head on boys for the Bad Hills -
Dig that doggone gold!*

Buddy: *Sheriff was a man of order ob-durate -*
Belle: *But come that nugget knockin' on his gate -*
Crabbe: *No-Name knew no order no more -*
Buddy/Belle: *Cos gold y'know*
Crabbe: *Outshines the law!*

All: (*chorus*) *Gold in the Bad Hills*

Smith: (*slow tempo*) *No-Name was a ghost town by high noon;
Poker playin' boys had quit the saloon;
Liquor-lovin' cowmen left their ale -
And everybody -
Hit that trail!*

All: (*chorus*) *Gold in the Bad Hills
Travel and git that gold!
Head on boys for the Bad Hills -
Dig that doggone GOLD - !*

They head off fast out of the saloon with noise and excitement. SMITH remains to clear and close the bar.

Smith: (*putting chairs on tables etc*) *Guess like the rest, I got goldstruck. I closed the bar, took a pick and a pan, and followed, as, from the east and west, the prospectors came marching - singing and digging across reservation territory. (Closing the bar) Reckon them Injuns got mighty sore, and a sore Injun is a dangerous Injun. But who's carin'? When there's gold in the hills, you git that gold - and you pay later! (He runs off to join the prospectors).*

Lights dim to central downstage area. CONQUEST meets CHIEF BLACK MOON.

Conquest: *Okay Chief.*

Black Moon: *Colonel.*

Conquest: *Let's keep our shirts on.*

Black Moon: *Your people trespass!*

Conquest: I got this order of authorisation from Mister President to permit honest peaceful hardworking gold prospectors to occupy, excavate and urbanise your reservation Chief Black Moon.

Black Moon: No.

A stream of GOLD PROSPECTORS cross up stage with picks, pans and shovels. They sing the chorus of the gold rush song.

Conquest: *(continuing - showing the CHIEF a document)* Now this ain't half so bad as it sounds Chief. Readin' between the lines I can even see substantial benefits for the Sioux tribe, Chief. A new era of partnership and mutual co-operation between our peoples.

Black Moon: This land is reserved for my people.

Conquest: Exactly so Chief. But the prospectors are excavating in full authority within the terms of the reservation contract.

Black Moon: *(with irony)* White man speak with forked tongue.

Conquest: *(affronted)* I speak with the integrity of a servant of the United States!

Black Moon: The Sioux resist encroachment upon this territory.

Conquest: Oh, come on Chief, you're a nice guy. We cherish our ethnic minorities. We wish to preserve you for the anthropological edification of posterity.

Black Moon: No.

The long stream of PROSPECTORS has now crossed the stage. The singing fades in the distance.

Conquest: Okay.

Black Moon: You go.

Conquest: Sorry Chief.

Black Moon: We fight.

Conquest: Oh, come on.

Black Moon: We have nothing to lose. We fight to the end.

Conquest: This is untactical Chief.

Black Moon: We stand! We take no more contract! *(Tears reservation document and throws it down)* We fight!

Conquest: We fight also Chief.

Black Moon: We save our land.

Conquest: We drive you in full authority from our land!

Aggressively they mount the stairs - CONQUEST right, BLACK MOON left. They

face front. Below, the PROSPECTORS return to the saloon with sacks and bags of gold. Din.

All: *(sing)* **Gold, gold in the bad hills,
Travel and git that gold!
Head on boys for the bad hills -
Dig that doggone gold**

They settle and examine and swap their nuggets, play cards, drink etc.

Conquest: *(aloft - addressing his men)* Listen to me, Cavalry of the United States - we have a task to perform and a duty to fulfil. There is disorder in this land. We are called upon to rectify it. Have confidence in the President. Have faith in this nation. We have the hardware, we have the arsenal, we have the knowledge, the integrity, the authority and the grit, to purify these valleys and shape-up these mountains in the name of honour, liberty and the security and prosperity of our children.

Black Moon: *(addressing his warriors)* This land is ours! This land is for our children! Wait brave warriors. Be still and save this land. Be silent. As the rocks, before they tumble

Meanwhile below in the saloon, ugly scenes are beginning over the exchange of nuggets.

Conquest: Easy men. These Injuns are cunning. They come up in silence. Keep a watch to the rear. Steady to the front. They know the territory. Sly bushwhackers the lot of 'em. Watch it - keep in line

BLACK MOON utters his war-cry.

Below them, the saloon brawl breaks out with full force. A fight with fists, kicks, chairs, tables, bottles etc - not fire-arms. Although it looks random and unthinking, each character has a motivation, a line of anger and a selection of expletives to scream.

Buddy: *(anti-SPEED. Accuses him of cheating)* Fool's gold! Dirty-card-sharper! Cheatin' sonofabitch! Take THAT for my brother! etc.

Speed: *(for peace and rectitude, in the nation generally, and No-Name in particular)* Order in this bar! Clean up this town! Purge this nation! Purify these valleys! I fight for PEACE! I never killed NO MAN as did not

DESERVE it! I swore a PLEDGE *etc.*

Drummer: (*pro-BUDDY, anti-SPEED*) Get him Buddy! Flatten the card-sharpen' sonofabitch! Kill the murderin' two-faced cheatin' bastard! *etc.*

Belle: (*Fighting for order in the saloon*) Stappet! Staap fightin'! For Pete's sake COOL it fellers! Turn if OFF! Let's have some ORDER in this bar! Quit brawlin'! *etc.*

Lil: (*pro-BUDDY, anti-SPEED*) Get him Buddy! Flatten the bastard! Sheep-dip-stinkin' rustler! *etc.*

(*SMITH pro-SPEED, anti-BUDDY, anti-disorder. Fights to protect bottles and glasses*).

Crabbe: (*pro-anarchy and proving, with the aid of liquor, he can still flatten men and women half his age and twice his size. Anti-BUDDY*) Jumped-up-ass-faced yellor-bellied tail-rider!

(*FIFTY-FINGERS plays for all he is worth, until knocked out cold*).

Over the din aloft, CONQUEST and BLACK MOON shout orders, encouragement and war-cries to their troops and warriors.

Conquest: Front the bastards! Fire! For liberty! For our children *etc.*

Black Moon: Save this land brave warriors! Drive the white man to the sea! Shoot warriors! Kill brave warriors! *etc.*

This fight with its din and violence is the climax of the play. It continues for several minutes until all in the saloon are senseless except SPEED.

Conquest: (*shattered*) Retire leave the slain forget the wounded get the hell outa here this humiliation of the US Cavalry shall not go unrevenged! (*Goes*).

Dim to BLACK MOON solo.

Black Moon: Our chiefs are killed. The old men are all dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more, forever. (*Fade. He goes*).

Suddenly CONQUEST appears and addresses the audience. The bodies in the saloon leap up and go.

Conquest: And now, ladies and gentlemen clean your ears and peel your eyes and bate your breath, and gape in amazement for the confrontation the world has

been waiting for! The final shoot-out, ultimate showdown, single combat Armageddon between the kid you love to hate and the sheriff you hate to love! Angel 'Kid' McGrew meets John Milton Speed (*music*). The kid was sighted last night in a lonely shack at Stinkin' Springs. Sheriff Speed and Deputy Bullpuncher pay him a call

*Suspense music as SPEED and BULLPUNCHER approach the door of the shack.
Dim light through slats. Night.*

Buddy: (*nervous*) Sheriff ... looks like this is it ... the show-down ... I never seen the kid face to face 'cept in comic books (*SPEED knocks*) He'll be alone yeh? (*SPEED knocks*) He'll be armed. I guess (*SPEED knocks*) Mighty dangerous if he knows he's cornered Gee! (*SPEED knocks*) You nervous, Mr Speed?

Door opens. A WOMAN appears.

Woman: Yeh

Speed: We are lawmen, we have cause to believe you are harbouring the outlaw Angel 'Kid' McGrew.

Woman: I never heard no such name sir.

Speed: Mind if I step inside?

Buddy: Sheriff -

Speed: (*to BUDDY*) Wait here. (*He goes inside*)

Buddy: (*alone*) Gee wiz shicks jehosevat phew

The KID appears in the shadows.

Angel: (*softly*) Who is it?

Buddy: Who's that?

Angel: Who is it? Are you a friend of Maisie's?

Buddy: I dunno. I'm waiting for Sheriff Speed -

ANGEL darts across front of the house. SPEED shoots him in the back. ANGEL spins round, SPEED fires again. ANGEL falls. SPEED goes to him crouches over the body. A voice - SMITH - sings quietly.

Smith: *There's a kid I used to fool with
 When I was a boy,
 Play and go to school with*

*Back in Illinois,
We would fight and cut rough -
We got by somehow.
He would laugh and so would I -
Where is that kid now?
Where is that kid now?*

Lights slowly fade, as SPEED slings the dead KID over his shoulder and bears him away. BLACK MOON stands above and speaks front.

Black Moon: *(quiet - still)*

He was dead and now is living.
Brought a message from the spirits,
Sang for us a message holy,
For us dancing holy dances;
How he saw the Gods descending,
How he saw the hope of summer -
Hills and valleys, prairie country,
Buffalo and winding river.
Always all belonged to red man
And to red man soon returning.
He was dead and now is living,
Saw the miracle was coming.
Soon a darkness on the country,
Darkness over all the mountains,
And all the people wailing, sobbing,
"All is over" in the darkness.
Then the still and lonely silence
Over all the heavy blackness,
Breathing gently, breathing softly,
So he sang a holy message:
How the light would come for red man,
Hope of summer soon returning,
White man sail the big sea water
Land restoring to the red man.
So he sang, and so we followed
Hopefully into the darkness,
As the white man came upon us
Fell in war upon our people

Softly in the distance a lone voice sings slowly the verse of the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

Slaughtered sons and slew our daughters,
Killed the women and the children.
Blood upon the prairie flowing
Filled the river - red forever.
Darkness fell on all the country,
Darkness over all the mountains

Voice: *(sings - as BLACK MOON speaks)*

***Mine eyes have seen the glory
Of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage
Where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He's loosing of the lightning
From his terrible swift sword -
His truth is marching on.***

As the VOICE sings, the company in silence and in darkness, take their places for the finale tableau. They have reached their positions and are still for BLACK MOON's final speech.

Black Moon: So he slowly journeyed onward
Down the pathway of the dead men,
Crossed the melancholy river,
Came unto the lake of silver.
In the stone canoe was carried
To the island of the blessed,
To the land of ghosts and shadows

Light fades on BLACK MOON.

Blackout.

FINALE:

Blazing lights.

The Statue of Liberty - LIBERTY LOU in brilliant white robe - centre above with flaming torch, like Columbia Pictures against the distant mountains. BUDDY AND LIL flank the statue waving massive stars-and-stripes banners.

CONQUEST, SPEED, ANGEL, SMITH, FIFTY-FINGERS and DRUMMER are posed in patriotic formation down steps either side. All sing the final climax of the Battle Hymn of the Republic with the monumental recorded backing of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

BLACK MOON stands apart, silent.

All: *Glory glory Hallelujah!
Glory glory Hallelujah!
Glory glory Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on!*

*Glory glory Hallelujah!
Glory glory Hallelujah!
Glory glory Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on!
Amen! Amen! Amen!*

Blackout.

THE END