

THE SIX-GUN ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY COLT & FRANKIE HERNDON

Written by
Michael Joiner

Michael@WhatTheHellCreative.com
917-370-1146

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. OAK BAR - AFTERNOON

A shot glass full of whiskey sits undisturbed.

A deafening volley of GUNSHOTS followed by the SOUNDS of wood SPLINTERING, glass SHATTERING, and bullets WHIZZING.

One last GUNSHOT rings out and the shot glass explodes.

COLT (O.S.)
Now that's a shame.

INT. CANTINA - AFTERNOON

Bullet holes riddle the walls. Broken glass litters the floor. Acrid smoke hangs in the air.

JOHNNY COLT, 25, lean and given to panache, hides behind a large wooden door standing slightly ajar.

FRANKIE HERNDON, 27, crouches next to Colt. Moves with confidence and grace.

Together, they're two men with more courage than looks, more looks than luck, and more luck than smarts.

It's Butch and Sundance -- without the charm.

Colt checks his revolver.

COLT
How many bullets you got left?

Frankie doesn't bother to count.

FRANKIE
Enough to get myself killed.

EXT. CANTINA COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

A large sunbaked wall surrounds the cantina with just an open patio between.

TITLE: "ARGENTINA, 1881."

BEHIND THE WALL

An Argentinian Cavalry unit of sixty soldiers frantically reload.

EL CAPITANO, 35, tall and wispy, stands atop the stone wall. Fans himself with his hat.

EL CAPITANO
(broken English)
Hola, Bandidos. You are surrounded!
And I am so very hot.

CANTINA

Frankie and Colt strategize out loud.

FRANKIE
We stay in here--

COLT
--We die in here.

FRANKIE
We go out shooting--

COLT
--Could catch 'em by surprise--

FRANKIE
--Could even reach the horses.

COLT
Whelp. Beats jail.

Colt pushes his gun barrel against the door. Nudges it open.

CANTINA COURTYARD

El Capitano freezes as the door CREAKS.

EL CAPITANO
Ah, Bandidos, are you coming out?

CANTINA

Sunlight streams into the open doorway. Colt hugs the wall.

Frankie shakes his head at their predicament.

Colt stiffens.

COLT
 (whispers)
 I know you blame me for this.

Frankie tries to keep his head in the game.

FRANKIE
 Ain't you got enough to worry about
 right now?

COLT
 Tell me I'm wrong.

FRANKIE
 (looks him in the eye)
 You're wrong.

Colt holds his stare for a moment, then turns away,
 satisfied. It doesn't last.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 Course that's nothing new.

COLT
 (explodes)
 I knew it!

FRANKIE
 Argentina was your idea.

CANTINA COURTYARD

El Capitano and his men listen -- puzzled at the ANGRY VOICES
 coming from inside the

CANTINA

The argument RAGES.

FRANKIE
 We got no business down here.

Colt gestures to two saddle bags on the floor.

COLT
 These bags of gold say otherwise.
 (proudly)
 I told you the banks were ripe.

FRANKIE

You also told me the law's scarce
and the army's busy fighting
rebels.

COLT

It was in all the papers!

FRANKIE

(gestures outside)
They don't seem to be reading the
same papers.

COLT

(dismissive)
You ready to die or you wanna air
your lungs some more?

They lock eyes. Frankie spits on the ground. Argument over.

COLT (CONT'D)

Aim for the top man's hat.

FRANKIE

What?

COLT

Juarez. I shot the Marshall's hat
plum off his head and he turned the
whole posse around.

Frankie looks at Colt in disbelief.

COLT (CONT'D)

Same thing could happen here.

FRANKIE

You made that part of the story up.

Colt is stunned. Searches his memory. Scratches his head.

COLT

Really? Seemed real when I spun it.

Frankie ignores him. Throws one of the saddlebags across his
shoulder.

Colt does the same with the second bag.

CANTINA COURTYARD

El Capitano puts his hat back on. Slides his saber from its
sheath. His men take aim.

In the background, a thin WHISTLING SOUND can just barely be heard, but it quickly grows louder --

CANTINA

Colt and Frankie vault out of the doorway, pistols raised.

THE WHISTLING SOUND SQUEALS -- ear-splitting.

El Capitano looks into the air. Shock registers on his face.

He recognizes the SOUND -- too late.

Colt and Frankie rush into the courtyard --

And a huge cannonball EXPLODES -- blowing Colt and Frankie back inside the Cantina.

IN THE COURTYARD

SCREAMS. SHOTS. BOOM! A second cannonball EXPLODES.

BEHIND THE WALL

The Soldiers turn to see

A ragtag band of REBELS running across the open field.

The Soldiers panic. Some race for their horses. Others mount a counter-attack. They all forget about Johnny and Frankie.

CANTINA

Only the The wooden door remains standing.

A cloud of swirling smoke and dust pours from the gaping hole where the front facade used to be.

Colt and Frankie dig out from under the debris.

Frankie looks around. The boots of El Capitano stick out from under a large slab of the wall that's been blown down.

FRANKIE

That worked out better than I
thought it would.

Colt WHISTLES, and two horses trot across the courtyard.

COLT
See, Argentina was good for us.

They toss the saddlebags over their horse and mount up.

COLT (CONT'D)
Damn. This story will beat hell out
of the readers.
(trying out a title)
"The Argentina Ambush."

Colt glances down at his saddlebag.

COLT (CONT'D)
Course, I'll be leaving out the
bank robbery.

Colt turns his horse, Frankie moves up alongside.

FRANKIE
I would. For the youngins.

COLT
Race ya back home.
(to his horse)
Git.

Colt snaps the reins. His Horse streaks off.

Frankie follows close behind.

The large wooden door finally falls to the ground with a
CRASH.

SLAM TO TITLE:

"THE SIX-GUN ADVENTURES OF JOHNNY COLT AND FRANKIE HERNDON"

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ARIZONA LANDSCAPE - EVENING

Flat, empty space. Red streaks paint the sky as the sun drops low.

EXT. WALLACE LOEBS' HOUSE - EVENING

A three-room-house smack dab in the middle of nowhere.

A large WOODEN CROSS stands in front of the house.

ROSE LOEB, 56, sits on her porch. HUMS a good-time spiritual.

She looks up. Sees a vertical blip in the distance.

Rose stands. Squints.

The blip takes shape: A man on a horse.

ROSE
(calls out)
Someone's coming.
(turns to the door)
Wallace?

WALLACE LOEB, 60, weathered by time and sun, emerges from the house. He carries a Bible.

The STRANGER rides up to the wooden cross. His jet black Thoroughbred stamps at the ground.

The Stranger's face remain hidden by shadows and a dark hat pulled low. He is large. Broad shouldered, dressed in a long black frock coat.

ON THE PORCH

Rose smiles.

ROSE
Welcome.

The Stranger remains silent.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 Are you thirsty? We have water
 'round back for your horse.

The cross CREAKS in the wind.

Wallace steps in front of Rose.

WALLACE
 Can we help you?

THE STRANGER
 Wallace Loeb?

WALLACE
 You seem to have me at a
 disadvantage, friend.

Wallace places his Bible on the railing. Moves to the edge of
 the porch.

THE STRANGER
 Colonel Wallace Loeb?

Wallace tenses.

WALLACE
 I haven't been Colonel in some
 time. I prefer Brother over rank,
 these days.

ROSE
 Did you serve with Wallace?

The Stranger ignores her.

Annoyed, Rose raises her voice.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 Here. Come closer so we can have a
 look at you.

THE STRANGER
 Sister, run get this man his rifle
 and some dry shells.

WALLACE
 Now see here--

The Stranger pulls a shotgun out from under his coat. Aims it
 at the couple.

Rose GASPS.

THE STRANGER
I'll damn her where she stands.

Wallace pulls Rose close.

WALLACE
(whispers)
Do as he says.

ROSE
What's going on?

Wallace tightens his grip.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Who is he? Say, who are ya?

Wallace pushes Rose inside the house.

WALLACE
Get me my gun.

Rose rushes inside.

Wallace steps down off the porch.

The Stranger turns in his saddle. Peers up at the red sky.

THE STRANGER
Sky's as bloody as yer hands.

WALLACE
What do you want here?

The Stranger reaches out. Rocks the cross back and forth.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
You called me Colonel. Did I know
you during the war?

Rose steps back onto the porch with a rifle and box of shells.

Wallace takes them.

THE STRANGER
Load it.

Wallace and Rose exchange a look. More than fear passes between them.

Wallace slips a shell in place.

WALLACE
Mister, I don't know who you think
I am.

The Stranger simply cocks his shotgun.

Wallace sags. Already defeated.

Rose reaches for the Bible.

ROSE
Please. Leave us be.

Wallace loads his rifle, then, drops it to the ground.

WALLACE
The war was so long ago. I swore
never to fire a gun again.

Wallace walks back toward the porch.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
You should be on your way.

Rose holds the Bible in front of her face and looks skyward.

ROSE
Praise be --

BANG!

A bullet rips through the Bible and blows out the back of
Rose's head.

WALLACE
Rose!

Wallace turns to see the Stranger holding a smoking revolver.

Rose's lifeless body hits the porch with a SICKENING THUD.

Wallace dives for his rifle.

In one fluid motion, the Stranger holsters his revolver and
aims his shotgun.

Wallace brings his rifle up. FIRES wild. The bullet BORES
into the cross.

Wallace, crazed, aims again --

WALLACE (CONT'D)
She was a God-fearin' woman.

THE STRANGER

She was fearing the wrong thing.

The Stranger unleashes both barrels.

BOOM-BOOM!!!

Wallace is blown back up onto the porch.

The Stranger slips the shotgun into its saddle holster.
Nudges the horse toward

THE PORCH

Wallace and Rose lie side by side. The bullet-torn Bible
FLAPS in the wind.

The cross CREAKS.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Colt and Frankie look like a million bucks. Clean shaven,
hair trimmed and dressed in suits. In the vernacular of the
day, the boys are looking mighty dapper.

ERASTUS BEADLE, 45, is seated between them. His manner is
rough and tumble, but everything else about him screams
refinement - even his well-groomed muttonchops.

ERASTUS

(a toast)

Welcome back to civilization.

Colt and Frankie scan the room. The finest restaurant in all
of New York.

FRANKIE

Here, here.

Wine glasses CLINK. The men drink. Glasses go down.

Frankie tears into his steak.

Colt, just as eagerly, catches the eye of an elegantly
dressed WOMAN, 24, sitting at the next table.

ERASTUS

Tell me about Argentina.

Frankie shovels steak in his mouth.

FRANKIE

Hot.

Erastus turns to Colt for a little more detail.

COLT

Real hot.

Colt glances back over to the Woman.

COLT (CONT'D)

Rebels. Gold. A big stand-off.

FRANKIE

Real big stand-off.

Colt smiles at the Woman. She blushes.

ERASTUS

Sounds exciting.

FRANKIE

(a mouthful of steak)

It was a fine adventure.

COLT

Make one helluva story.

Erastus lights up.

ERASTUS

Indeed. That's one of the reasons I was so happy to get your telegram.

Erastus reaches for a leather satchel under his chair.

ERASTUS (CONT'D)

A lot has happened while you boys were away.

Colt winks at the Woman.

COLT

The women got prettier.

Erastus places the satchel on his lap. Slips on a pair of wire-rimmed glasses.

ERASTUS

Yes, well, I suppose that's what they do. But I was alluding to the fact that you two gentlemen have become the stars of Beadle and Adams publishing.

Frankie finally looks up from his plate.

ERASTUS (CONT'D)

Ever since Will Bonney got himself killed.

FRANKIE

The Kid's dead?

ERASTUS

As dead as that steak. Mr. Pat Garrett made it so.

Colt lets out a shrill whistle.

ERASTUS (CONT'D)

As I was saying, between the Kid's misfortune, and Wyatt and Doc shooting up Tombstone, cowboys are more popular than ever. None more so than you two.

Erastus reaches into his satchel and pulls out

INSERT - DIME NOVEL

The lurid cover is a splash of bold color showing two illustrated cowboys with six-guns blazing.

The Top of the page **READS:** "BEADLE & ADAMS PUBLISHING."
Underneath, the **TITLE READS:** "JUSTICE IN JUAREZ."

And under it in small type: "The Six-Gun Adventures Of Johnny Colt and Frankie Herndon."

ERASTUS

The public's eating it up.

COLT

Hot fire!

Frankie turns to face Erastus.

FRANKIE

When a publisher says stars, what does that mean in dollars?

Erastus wipes his mouth. Slides the satchel over to Frankie.

Frankie rummages through the satchel. Smiles wide.

ERASTUS

Now, that's just for starters.
There'll be plenty more as long as
you boys keep having your little
adventures.

COLT

Oh, we've got a gift for that.

ERASTUS

And for putting 'em down on paper.
Some scribblers just don't have the
flair. Take Wyatt -- you don't
recant a story like his and call it
"Gunfight at Fly's Photography
Studio." A real storyteller takes
certain liberties with the facts
and such.

COLT

Gin it up.

Erastus nods.

ERASTUS

You boys are natural born paper
scratchers.

Frankie pulls a handful of envelopes from the satchel.

FRANKIE

What's all this?

ERASTUS

Fan mail. You boys have what you
might call an adoring public.

Colt raises his glass to Frankie. They toast. Erastus takes
his glasses off.

ERASTUS (CONT'D)

There is just one more thing.

Erastus pulls a second, smaller stack of envelopes from his
jacket's inside pocket.

COLT

More fans?

Erastus tosses the stack on the table.

ERASTUS

Threats. Challenges, mostly.

Frankie grabs the letters. Flips through them. His jaw tightens.

Colt goes back to flirting with the patronage.

ERASTUS (CONT'D)

(to Frankie)

I wouldn't lose any sleep. Comes with the territory.

Frankie throws the bundle of threats to Colt.

FRANKIE

How come you gotta write so much about your damn shooting skills?

Colt keeps staring at the Woman.

COLT

'Cause I'm that damn good.

AT THE NEXT TABLE

The Woman stands up to leave. She walks slowly past Colt, her eyes never leaving his.

COLT

(to Frankie)

You worry too much.

(to Erastus)

Now if you'll excuse me, my adoring public awaits.

Colt walks away. Sidles up to the Woman. Slips an arm around her waist.

ERASTUS

He's a prickly one.

FRANKIE

That's one way of puttin' it.

Frankie pockets the stack of threats. Concern crosses his face.