

FRONTIER GENTLEMAN
APRIL 8, 1958
"THE POWDER RIVER KID"
TRANSCRIBED BY B.J. GEORGE

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* There seem to be only two kinds of people in Montana Territory... the good and the bad. Sometimes it's had to tell which is which.

[Theme music begins]

ANNOUNCER: *Frontier Gentleman*. Herewith an Englishman's account of life and death in the West. As a reporter for the *London Times*, he writes his colorful and unusual stories. But as a man with a gun, he lives and becomes a part of the violent years in the new territories. Now, starring John Dehner, this is the story of J. B. Kendall... *Frontier Gentleman*.

[Musical bridge]



KENDALL: *(Narrating)* I was on my way back to Fort Benton on the Missouri River when I reached Helena. And there I was lucky enough to receive an offer of transportation in a wagon. So, I sold my horse and we set out on the Mullan Road. My companion, or... bull whacker as he called himself, was a leathery, stringy chap who might have been fifty or seventy... It was hard to tell. His name was George Scales. And he seemed more than happy to have someone to talk to.

[Horses pulling the wagon across the dirt road]

SCALES: Yes sir, I was one of the first out to the California gold rush. Went out with my father in forty-nine. *(Spits)* Now, how old would ya figure I am, boy?

KENDALL: Well, I~

SCALES: Fifty-eight, fifty-eight. Wouldn't think it, would ya? *(Spits)*

KENDALL: Well... I~

SCALES: Fifty-eight. Never had a sick day in my life. Been married three times, buried two. The third got took by Apaches down in Arizona Territory. Heh-heh, I pity the poor son-of-a-gun Indian that's hooked up with her. Boy, she was the *meanest* piece of calico you ever set eyes on. That was a lucky day for me. You ah... are you married?

KENDALL: No, no, I~

SCALES: You take my advice, boy... Hey, what you say your name was?

KENDALL: Kendall.

SCALES: Kendall. You ain't kin to the Brown County Texas Kendall's, are ya?

KENDALL: No~

SCALES: No, come to think of it there, their name wasn't Kendall. It was Fridgen... Now how come you figure I missremembered that? Now what was we takin' about?

KENDALL: Well, I-I'm not quite sure.

SCALES: Now you take my father. Eighty-six years old two weeks back. I'm takin' him home to bury 'em.

KENDALL: (*Showing sympathy*) Oh, I'm sorry.

SCALES: Oh, ain't a thing for sorrow. All got to go up to Salt River sometime. Old buzzard's been out in California better'n thirty years. (*Spits*) That ain't no place for a man to sack his saddle, so last trip out, I said, "Pa, I got to take you back to Kentucky, 'cause when you bite the dust, it ain't fitt'n you do it in this place." That's what I said.

KENDALL: Oh, ah, I see.

SCALES: Yeah, we got us a place in Kentucky. Figure he ought to rest comfortable there.

KENDALL: Well, did he die on the way, ah... on the way from California?

SCALES: Heh-heh-heh. If he did, it's since you got on back in Helena. No-ho-ho, the old buzzard ain't dead yet, he's asleep in the wagon.

KENDALL: Ohh.

SCALES: Eats and sleeps, ain't much else to do, I guess. Heh-heh. Old buzzard. Deaf as a post. When he wakes up, you just say hello, smile at him and he'll think that's just fine, just fine. (*Coughs and clears his throat*) Oh, ya want a chaw?

KENDALL: No, thank you.

SCALES: (*Spits*) You don't talk much, do ya?

KENDALL: Ah... no, I suppose not.

SCALES: What's your business?

KENDALL: I'm a newspaper correspondent.

SCALES: (*Suspicious*) Writer?

KENDALL: Yes.

SCALES: Hmm. (*Spits*) Newspaper feller, huh?

KENDALL: Yes, that's right.

SCALES: Oh... Had me a run-in with one o' your kind back in sixty-two, or maybe t'was sixty-three. I was a mule skinner with Major McCleave down in Apache country. You ever been down there?

KENDALL: No.

SCALES: Mean, purely mean country. Ain't fittin' for nothin'~

PA: *(Calling out from inside the wagon)* Hey... sonny...

SCALES: Ha-ha-ha. Hey, the old buzzard's woke up. *(Yells back to his Pa)* Everything's fine, pa.

PA: 'em ungry.

SCALES: *(Yelling)* Oh, you ain't never nothin' but, Pa. Got a way to go yet, Pa. Hey! This here's Mr. Kendall, he got on in Helena.

PA: Yeah?

KENDALL: *(Speaking somewhat loud and pronounced)* How do you do, Mr. Scales?

PA: Huh, huh.

SCALES: It don't matter what you say, just talk good and loud.

KENDALL: Yes. I ah... I understand you're going back to Kentucky.

PA: *(Mumbles)* Umph yeh gumph dumph ohumphs...

KENDALL: What is he saying?

SCALES: Heh-heh, no tellin'. *(Yells back to his pa)* You go on back to sleep, you old buzzard, I'll tell ya when it's time to eat.

PA: Ugha umpha...

SCALES: Heh-heh. He's goin' to do it. Guess he didn't like you.

KENDALL: Oh?

SCALES: Pa meets a stranger, he'll talk your ear off. Talk ingest man I ever seen. If he don't take to ya, he does what I tell 'em. Like as not he'll keep his mouth shut now 'till you get off in Benton.

KENDALL: I'm sorry.

SCALES: Oh no cause, no cause, mister. Man can't help what he is. I just hope *you* ain't like that sheep-killing dog of a newspaper feller I was tellin' you about. Huh, I sure did sharpen my hoe on him. Ha-ha. *(Spits)*

KENDALL: Well, whatever he did, I assure you, I'll be very careful not to make the same mistake.

SCALES: *(Disapproving) Newspaper fellers, hm! (Spits)*

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* At midday we stopped for our meal. Scales, senior and junior, kept up an extraordinary conversation, during which time I was completely ignored. The pair reminded me a little of Dickensian characters, a certain gentleman and his aged parent. After his food, the aged parent clambered back into the wagon and presumably went back to sleep as continued on our way. An offering of tobacco mellowed Scales somewhat and I felt that possibly I might be forgiven for my... my sin by association. It was late that afternoon when we saw the three riders. They were halted by the side of the road.

[Wagon travels over the dirt road]

SCALES: If'n you know how to use that gun of yours, Kendall, you better be ready to reach.

KENDALL: You think they're outlaws?

SCALES: Man's boned-seasoned. He don't take chances, not in these parts.

KENDALL: It looks as though one of them is hurt.

SCALES: Well, that's a fact... and... Well, I'll be a whey-belly stump-sucker. Ha. A woman. One's a woman, look at that. If that don't beat all. *(Yells out to the horses)* Whoa... whoa there. Whoa. *[The wagon comes to a halt] (Scales yells out)* Hey... hey, you got trouble?

[Three horses come riding up to the wagon]



DORA: Haven't got any medicines, have ya?

SCALES: No. Got some whiskey.

DORA: It's my husband... he's hurt kinda bad

BILL: Oh, it ain't nothin', I tell you, Dorry. Just let me rest awhile, we'll get on.

JACK: You ain't gonna make it, Bill.

BILL: Shut up. *(Calls out to Scales)* Mister, I'll buy your whiskey, that'll fix me.

DORA: No such thing. It isn't whiskey you need. *(Pleads to Kendall and Scales)* Either of you gents know about doctoring'?

SCALES: No, ma'am.

KENDALL: Well, I know a little. Not much.

DORA: Let him take a look, Bill. Jack, here, come on, give him a hand down.

[Jack helps Bill down off of his horse]

SCALES: You know, Kendall, I got a feeling I know that feller. *(Bill groans out in pain)* I ‘ve seen ‘em, but I ain’t sure where.

KENDALL: Why don’t you bring your whiskey out, Mr. Scales. He looks as if he could use it.

SCALES: Huh, alright.

[Kendall and Scales climb down off of the wagon and walk over to the three strangers]

DORA: Here, get your jacket off, Bill.

BILL: Easy, woman, *(Groans in pain)* now take it easy.

JACK: Oh, man, that sure looks wicked.

KENDALL: You’d better sit down. There’s a rock over there. Come along. *[They slowly scuffle over to the rock]*

BILL: *(Groans)*

KENDALL: When did this happen?

DORA: Three days ago.

KENDALL: And did you get the bullet out?

DORA: No.

BILL: I’m alright, I tell ya. Just let me rest.

KENDALL: You’re not alright. That’s gangrene, the shoulder and arm. There’s a doctor in Helena, it wouldn’t take you more than three hours to get there.

BILL: We ain’t going to Helena, mister, we’re going to Fort Benton.

KENDALL: But that’s over a hundred miles. You’ve already got a fever. If I were you, I’d~

BILL: You ain’t me.

DORA: Oh, Bill, he’s right. Now, please, let’s go back.

BILL: No!

KENDALL: *(Sighs)* I think I could remove the bullet, but that won’t help.

BILL: You ain’t no doctor.

SCALES: *[Walks on over to join them]* Here, pour some of this panther juice in your gizzard. Cure everything from the rattles to... *(Looks down at Bill’s wound)* no, it ain’t gonna cure *that*.



JACK: Give me the bottle. *[Takes the bottle from Scales, walks over to Bill, and pulls out the bottle's cork]* Take a good big slug, Bill.

SCALES: Hey, don't I know him someplace?

JACK: Not likely to, mister.

SCALES: I ain't never forgot a face, I swear I seen his... Mind if I ask your name?

BILL: I'm obliged for your whiskey... *(Groans as he gets up)* we'll be moving on.

JACK: Oh, Bill. What good is it gonna do, you're sick. You can't ride all that way. Now, do like he says, let's go~

BILL: Dora, you heard what I said. *(Groans)* Come on, now. *[Takes a couple of steps, then falls to the ground]*

DORA: Oh, Bill!

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* He'd fainted. We carried him to the wagon, put him inside. The aged parent woke up, smiled pleasantly at the newcomers and watched with interest as the wife and the one called Jack, did what they could to make the wounded man comfortable. I felt a tug at my sleeve... Scales drew me away from the wagon. *[The pair walk away from the wagon, out of earshot]*

SCALES: *(Somewhat whispered)* I know him, I remember. I know who he is, I never forget a man's face. Only difference now, he ain't got that mustache he used to wear. The Powder River Kid, Bill Logan, that's who!

KENDALL: *(Unaware)* Oh?

SCALES: Oh, ain't you got no savvy? The *Powder River Kid*! He's wanted in more territories than even the James Boys. Why, I've seen the posters. There's two thousand dollars reward for him dead or alive. *(Pauses)* Well, what do you say? Make pretty good sharin's, huh? Mooey dinero. Thousand for you, thousand for me.

KENDALL: Of course, his wife and his friend might have something to say about that.

SCALES: Then we shoot 'em! Sure... shoot 'em now, then we take the Kid on into Benton and collect.

KENDALL: I don't think he'll live that long. Not without a doctor.

SCALES: Who's talking about alive? Posters say "'live or dead'". Come to think of it, we would be better off if we shot 'em. Might be a sackful of trouble. I seen him draw once. Down in Virginia City it was. He fanned two men down so quick he had his gun back in the holster afore they hit the ground.

DORA: *(Calls from the distance)* Mister?

KENDALL: Yes... Coming. *[Kendall and Scales walk back to the wagon]*

SCALES: *(Talking quietly and quickly)* Other feller's getting out of the wagon, too. We gonna kill 'em?

KENDALL: Nooo. *[They reach the wagon]*

DORA: He's still unconscious. Mister... you said you could take out the bullet. Maybe it would do *some* good.

KENDALL: There's too much poison. He's got one chance and that's to take him back to Helena.

DORA: This you wagon, Mr. Kendall?

SCALES: No, ma'am, it's mine, George Scales.

DORA: Mr. Scales, I'll pay you two hundred dollars if you'll turn around, take us back to Helena.

SCALES: Well now, that's a mighty attractive offer.

JACK: I don't know, Dorry. Bill said~

DORA: I don't care what he said. Right now he's dying.

BILL: No I ain't! *[Walks over to join them]* Mister, my wife offers you two hundred to take me back to Helena. You let me rest awhile in your wagon 'till I'm fit to ride the other way, I'll make it *three* hundred.

SCALES: That's fair... yes sir, that's a fair deal. Ha-ha-ha. I'll do that. Make yourself to home. The old buzzard's my Pa, if he talks at ya too much, just beller good and loud, "go to sleep you old buzzard."

BILL: You ride in here with me, Dorry. Jack, stay on your horse.

JACK: Sure, Bill, just take it easy.

SCALES: All right boys, let's bamoose!

[Musical bridge. The wagon travels down the road as thunder cracks in the distance]

SCALES: Yeah, be getting some rain by and by.

KENDALL: Yes. Might be an idea to camp pretty soon.

SCALES: Ha-ha. Bet the Powder River Kid thinks so. This trail ain't the softest. Hey, how long you figure 'till he hangs up his hat?

KENDALL: I don't know... But I wouldn't worry about it.

SCALES: I ain't worrying. But been doing some thinking. How come you suppose he don't want to go back to Helena?

KENDALL: Somebody's after him... I imagine.

SCALES: That's my guess. And if *somebody's* a U.S. Marshal, and that Marshal finds him afore the Kid dies, you figure maybe we'll have to cut another share on the reward?

KENDALL: A fine legal point.

SCALES: Well, I ain't gonna worry. *[Thunder continues off in the distance]* Dark comin' on. Hey, there's a likely looking clearing up the road. Yeah, I got to feed the old buzzard. *(Scales calls out to the oxen)* Hyah! Hyah! *[Cracks the whip]* Geehup. Har!

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* After the supper, I walked away from the camp to a rise overlooking the Missouri. There were flashes of lightning in the east and you could see the outline of heavy, black clouds. But there hadn't been any rain yet. I stood for about ten minutes smoking my pipe... then I heard steps behind me.

DORA: *[Walking up to Kendall]* Scales said you came up this way.

KENDALL: How's your husband? *[Coyotes howl off in the distance]*

DORA: Well, I think the fever's worse. Will he make it?

KENDALL: I'm not a doctor.

DORA: You don't have to be.

KENDALL: You should have gone back to Helena.

DORA: He couldn't, he was afraid to. Scales knows who he is, doesn't he? You know.

KENDALL: Yes.

DORA: There's been a Marshal trailing us for six months. He caught up with Bill in Helena. My brother Jack helped him get away and we hid out in town for three days.

KENDALL: Well, why didn't you get a doctor?

DORA: Oh, he wouldn't let us. There's a reward. Bill was afraid a doctor would try and collect... just like your friend wants to.

KENDALL: He is pretty obvious, isn't he?

DORA: Oh... Man's luck runs out... the coyotes start a-snapping for the leavings. Me and Bill was on our way to Benton before the Marshal caught up with him. We figured on going back east.

KENDALL: Hm. Were you and your brother both working with Logan?

DORA: No. And Bill hasn't done anything wrong since we was married. Mister Kendall, I... I'll tell you a

straight thing. I haven't been what a man like you'd call a decent woman. Most of my life I, I been a wild one. But not since Bill.

KENDALL: I wish I could help, Mrs. Logan.

DORA: I... I really come to ask you to... I... I saw it done once before with a man's leg that got like Bill's arm. They cut it off.

KENDALL: Yes, I thought of that. It's too late, the poison's in his shoulder. It wouldn't do any good. *(Pauses)* I'm sorry.

DORA: A... a preacher out in Utah married us. He'd never heard of the Powder River Kid. *(Pauses)* He thought we was nice folks. Well, I... I better get back to the camp.

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* I went with her. Jack was with Logan in the wagon. Scales' father was sitting on his haunches by the camp fire, sucking on a piece of root candy and whittling a sliver of wood. He rocked back and forth humming to himself. Scales leaned against a tree, ruminating on a piece of tobacco. He beckoned me.

[Thunder roars in the distance as Kendall walks over towards Scales. The camp fire is crackling and Pa continues humming.]

SCALES: What'd she want?

KENDALL: She wanted me to cut off his arm.

SCALES: *(Spits)* That's a woman for ya. You aim to do it?

KENDALL: No. Wouldn't do any good. Probably kill him.

SCALES: Sure wouldn't think he was a gun slinger would ya? Not now you wouldn't. Sick and whimpering like a dying pup.

KENDALL: You think we could go on tonight?

SCALES: Not on this trail, with rains coming, nos sir. 'Sides, the old buzzard don't like traveling in the dark.

BILL: *(Crying out in pain from the distance)*

SCALES: Ahhh, I hope he don't keep that up all night. None of us will get any shuteye.

[Kendall walks over towards Dora and Bill as Pa continues humming and Bill cries out in angry.]

DORA: Oh now lie back. Lie back, honey, it'll be better~

KENDALL: *[Steps closer]* Anything I can do, Jack?

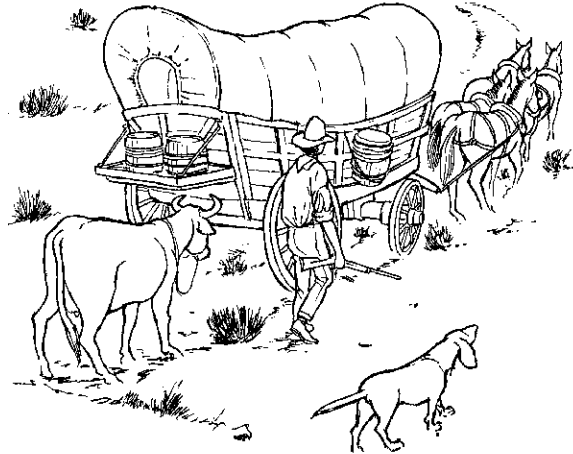
JACK: No. He's sick to the head right now. Don't even know Dorry.

[Bill continues moaning in pain while Dora tries to comfort him.]

JACK: *(Continuing)* Dorry says you know about us. We figured so. I think you're all right, Kendall. My sister does too. But I want to tell you not to start thinking about that reward.

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* A few minutes later it began to rain. And continued intermittently all through the night. But the dawn was clear and bright. It took the combined efforts of oxen, horses and men to take the wagon back onto the trail. The wheel had sunk nearly hub deep in mud. But as the sun rose we were on our way northward again. Bill Logan was no longer delirious, but in the grayness of his face I knew that he didn't have long to live. It was in the early afternoon that his wife called out to me.



[The wagon rolls along the trail]

DORA: Mr. Kendall?

KENDALL: Yes?

DORA: Will you come back a minute?

KENDALL: All right.

SCALES: Maybe he's dead, huh?

KENDALL: Maybe. *(Kendall grunts as he moves into the back of the wagon)*

DORA: He wants to talk to you.

BILL: Dorry, go on up with that bull whacker, what I got to say is private.

DORA: *(Whispering to Kendall)* Make him stay quiet. *[Dora climbs up to the front of the wagon]*

BILL: Come over closer, will you? *(Bill pauses as he waits for Kendall to come along side of him)* Is the old man asleep?

KENDALL: Ah... yes.

BILL: Now listen, I'm finished. There ain't no doctor nor nothing's going to help me now. I feel it. Now I never asked a favor of no man in my life, I'm asking one now.

KENDALL: What is it?

BILL: There's a reward for me. It ain't much, only two thousand, but it'd mean somethin' for Dorry. They ain't going to pay no reward for a man that's died natural like. Or if they do like as not it'll go to that Marshal feller for starting me off. I want you to fix it so Dorry can get it.

KENDALL: Well, how?

BILL: You fill me full of lead.

KENDALL: *(Surprised)* Shoot you?

BILL: Yeah, shoot me.

KENDALL: No.

BILL: I'd trust you... You see I-I trust you to give the money to Dorry.

KENDALL: Ah, you're out of your head.

BILL: No, no, no, no, mister I ain't... last night, b-but not now. It's the best I can do for her. She's a good woman. Now let me give her something for she don't have to go back to what she was.

KENDALL: *(Hesitating)* I can't kill you.

BILL: You got a right to. Look, I'm wanted, Kendall. I've done more killings than I can remember. It ain't a wrong thing for you to do. You could say I was trying to escape...

KENDALL: I-I can't.

BILL: If'n I draw on you?

KENDALL: It doesn't make any difference. We both know you wouldn't shoot. I'm sorry.

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* I don't think he felt very much pain after that. He just drank Scales' whiskey and talked quietly to his wife. He died, just before the sun went down.

[The wind blows softly as Dora cries and Jack tries to comfort her]

SCALES: Well, I guess he's dead now.

KENDALL: I think so.

SCALES: You figure she'll wanna take him into Benton, or bury him right here?

KENDALL: I don't know.

SCALES: Sure does seem a shame and a sin to see that reward go up in smoke.

KENDALL: *(Getting an idea)* Perhaps it doesn't have to.

SCALES: How you mean? How come?

KENDALL: I could ride back to Helena. Wouldn't take more than a few hours.

SCALES: What good would that do?

KENDALL: Well, I'd take him back with me.

SCALES: Yeah?

KENDALL: All you have to do is to see that they don't try to stop me.



SCALES: Listen, boy, for a thousand dollars nobody's going to stop you. The old buzzard's still spry enough to hold a gun. I just have to tell him who to point it at is all. *(Pauses)* Hey, ah... how do I know you'll come back?

KENDALL: Well, I imagine you'll just have to take my word for it.

SCALES: Hmm. *(Spits)* Ain't never trusted a newspaper feller yet, but I guess there ain't no choice.

KENDALL: I give you my word of honor. I'll come back.

SCALES: All right. *[They both get down and step around to the back of the wagon]* Aw, Curry's in there too. Why ain't goina be nothing to it. *[Scales pulls out his pistol and pulls back its hammer]* All right, Curry, you keep your hands high. Both of you get over t'other side of the wagon. The Powder River Kid's going back to Helena.

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* Scales shouted instructions to his father, who disarmed the dead man and Curry, then held a gun steady, a smile on his old face, head nodding approvingly. I took Logan's body out of the wagon and tied it onto a horse. And just before I rode away I saw Mrs. Logan watching me... crying. A soundless, terrible cry.

I must have traveled ten miles into the night before I found the courage to, to do what I had to do. I led the horses off the road, tethered them and took down Logan's body. He looked peaceful.

[The wind blows softly as Kendall takes a couple of steps, then stops. He pulls back the hammer on his pistol]

KENDALL: Forgive me, Logan. *[One by one, Kendall fires four shots]*

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* I delivered the body to the Marshal in Helena... and collected two thousand dollars reward for the capture and killing of Bill Logan, alias the Powder River Kid. Then I took the horses and rode back to where I'd left the wagon.

[Musical bridge]

SCALES: Did you get it, boy? Did you get the money?

KENDALL: I got it.

JACK: *(Warning)* One of these days I'm gonna catch up with you, mister.

KENDALL: Get on your horses. You too, Mrs. Logan... Go on.

JACK: One of these days...

[They get onto their horses and ride off]

SCALES: *(Laughing)* Heh-heh-heh-heh. Heh-heh. That was fine, boy, fine. Now come on, let's divvy up.

KENDALL: Afraid not, Mr. Scales. I've got some bad news for you. You are getting nothing.

SCALES: *(Confused)* What?

KENDALL: Exactly. *[Kendall clicks the hammer on his gun]* Drop your gun or the old buzzard's going to loose his son.

SCALES: Ahh. *[Scales drops his gun to the ground]* I might have known. Just like to other one... a stinking, no good, low down newspaper feller~

KENDALL: Goodbye, Mr. Scales. It's been a most *unpleasant* association.

[Musical bridge]

KENDALL: *(Narrating)* I took Logan's horse and caught up with Mrs. Logan and her brother a little further along the Mullan Road. I gave her the two thousand dollars and together we rode on into Fort Benton... Montana Territory.

[Musical bridge]

ANNOUNCER: *Frontier Gentleman* was written, produced and directed by Antony Ellis and stars John Dehner as J. B. Kendall. Featured in the cast were; Joe Kearns, Paula Winslowe, Larry Dobkin, Barney Phillips and Robert Rudie. Music was composed and conducted by Wilbur Hatch.

[Theme music plays]

ANNOUNCER: Join us again next week for another report from the *Frontier Gentleman*. John Wald speaking. This is the CBS Radio Network.

The End

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