

1 CHUCK Wagon Tales: Collecting Taxes Out West

2 ANNCR--Pat

3 RANGER--Dan

4 JOHNNY BEHAN--Dave

5 BILLY BREAKENRIDGE Ivan

6 CURLY BILL BROCIUS--Ken

7 JOHNNY RINGO--Kim

8 IKE CLANTON--Moki

9 FRANK MCLAURY--Pat

10 JANIE MCMC

11 BRYCE JACKSON Gregg

12 CHET AHLQUIST Terry

13

14

15 ANNCR American Radio Theater presents a new episode of Chuckwagon Tales,

16 written and produced by Joy Jackson.

17 SCENE 1

18 RANGER Our tale tonight is about "Collecting Taxes Out West."

19 Well the south west. Tombstone Arizona to be precise. There was more going on
20 there than just the fight in the OK Corral.

21 Two years after it was founded, in 1879, Tombstone boasted a bowling alley, four
22 churches, an ice house, a school, two banks, three newspapers and an ice cream
23 parlor, alongside 110 saloons, 14 gambling halls, and numerous dancing halls and
24 brothels. All of these were on top of a large number of hardscrabble mines. The
25 townsfolk were all Republicans, while the folks on the ranches and the cowboys
26 were southern sympathizers and democrats. Needless to say, they didn't get along.
27 Johnny Behan, the sheriff, called his deputy, 35-year-old Billy Breakenridge, into
28 his office.

29 BILLY You wanted to see me, sir?

30 BEHAN Billy, I need you to do something. You've been in the job for a week,

31 now.

1 BILLY That's right. Have I done something wrong?

2 BEHAN You've been doing a fine job. But now, it's time to collect taxes.

3 BILLY Taxes? You pulling my leg. I'm a lawman, not a ...tax...collector!!

4 BEHAN And where do you think the money comes from that pays our salaries,
5 sunshine? How do you think it makes it into our pockets? You think I
6 print it in the back room?

7 BILLY From the bank, I guess.

8 BEHAN If we don't get the taxes, then I--we don't get paid—simple as that. I
9 haven't been able to get a single cent out of all those hombres out in
10 Galeyville.

11 BILLY Galeyville? That's where I have to go to collect these taxes? Galeyville—
12 where most of the rustlers hang out? The Cow-boys?

13 RANGER Nowadays, the word cowboy is very close to the word hero. A man
14 dealing with everything having to do with horses, cows and weather by
15 himself. But that hasn't always been true. Tombstone, Arizona, was, and
16 still is, a mere 30 miles from the Mexican border. Smuggling was
17 frequent—tobacco, alcohol, and above all, cattle. Rustling cattle was a
18 way of life on both sides of the border. Much of the smuggling was
19 carried out by a loosely organized band of friends and acquaintances who
20 teamed up for mayhem and came to each other's aide. The San Francisco
21 Examiner wrote, in an editorial, “Cowboys—the most reckless class of
22 outlaws in that wild country.” In Cochise County, it was a shooting insult
23 to call a legitimate cattleman a cowboy. Cattle herders—yes, ranchers—
24 yes, cowboys—NO.

25 BEHAN Galeyville is full of Cochise County citizens. And they've never paid any
26 taxes.

27 BILLY (STUNNED) You want me...to collect taxes from the Rustlers...to pay
28 for your salary? Why would anyone in his right mind pay for a sheriff,
29 particularly if he's on the wrong side of the law?

30 BEHAN I knew you were bright. No matter what anyone says.

31 BILLY It's suicide!

1 BEHAN Now, now. You are only the third, no, no, the fourth, deputy to do this
2 task.

3 BILLY Yeah, the others were either snuffed out or ran screaming into the sunset! I
4 thought I signed up to keep the peace. Collecting taxes wasn't even
5 mentioned.

6 BEHAN Even Benjamin Franklin collected taxes. He didn't think it was beneath
7 him.

8 BILLY Not from the Cowboys he didn't!

9 BEHAN So, are you too yellow for this? I thought you were too courageous for
10 words.

11 BILLY Aw, hell. I'll do it. But you definitely advertised this job with false
12 expectations. I should have let Wyatt take the job after all.

13 BEHAN I couldn't work with him, not after he stole my girl. I even preferred to
14 work with a Democrat than that piece of low-life.

15 BILLY Yeah, but he could run the risk of being ventilated.

16 BEHAN (SOOTHING) Billy, the citizens in Galeysville are fine folk. Treat them
17 nicely, and they'll be nice with you.

18 BILLY While they are robbing your pocket, and running your stock away.

19 BEHAN Treat them like animals, and that's what you get. It's all in the way you
20 approach them, Billy.

21 BILLY Couldn't I collect taxes from the gamblers here in Tombstone? Surely they
22 haven't paid any taxes.

23 BEHAN Gambling is a 100 percent legitimate business, with business licenses. Of
24 course they pay their taxes. Unfortunately, it doesn't go to paying me.

25 BILLY It doesn't?

26 BEHAN No sirree. That money is directly in support of the schools. Billy, I need
27 your skills as a plainsman to go out to Galeysville, to get past the Apaches.

28 BILLY Yeah, just another problem. I knowed it weren't gonna be a walk in the
29 park.

30 BEHAN There's the Clantons—Finn, Ike, Billy and old man Clanton. They have a
31 ranch a few miles above Charleston on the San Pedro.

1 BILLY (DEPRESSED) Yeah.

2 BEHAN Tom and Frank McLaury have a ranch in Sulpher Spring Valley.

3 BILLY Twenty-five miles east of Tombstone, 4 miles south of Soldier Holes. I
4 been there.

5 BEHAN And then there's Galeyville...

6 BILLY East slope of the Chiricahua Mountains, on the rim of the Sam Simon
7 Valley.

8 BEHAN You'll see lots of citizens there.

9 BILLY Yeah, I bet.

10 BEHAN Or maybe out at Soldier Holes—they hang out there a lot. I'm sure you'll
11 have a lot of fun.

12 BILLY Yeah, just a great time.

13 **MUSIC**

14 **SCENE 2**

15 RANGER Days later, Billy is sitting atop his horse, looking down into the dusty little
16 berg of Galeyville. In 1881, it had 400 citizens. It was a small mining
17 town, with its own smelter, puffing smoke into the air. He was alone as
18 usual. The Apaches were out in the mountains and valleys and committing
19 all kinds of depredations. Billy had been rather busy looking out for them.
20 He got along finely and collected quite a sum of money in taxes from
21 teamsters and ranchers along the way. But Galeyville? The merchants and
22 the saloonmen had no title to the land on which their buildings were, so
23 the taxable property was all personal. There were eleven tough saloons in
24 this burgh.

25 BILLY Well, there it is. Galeyville—400 hard-working “citizens” –how honest
26 they are is debatable. I sure hope this plan of mine works.

27 **SFX** **HOOFBEATS, STOPPING, AND THEN SWINGING DOORS**

28 JANIE Hello there, Dusty! Welcome to Babcock's Saloon and Corral. I'm Janie.
29 Say, I haven't ever seen you before. Can I pour you a drink? To get the
30 dust out of your throat.

31 BILLY No, ma'am. I'm hoping for a little help of another kind.

1 COWBOYS Did you hear that? Called her ma'am.
2 IKE Janie ain't no ma'am.
3 FRANK Cain't believe he said that. Ma'am.
4 IKE (LEERING) What kind of help do yah think he wants, Janie?
5 JANIE Pipe down you sidewinders! Dusty, is there something else I could do for
6 you?
7 COWBOYS (UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER)
8 BILLY (STAMMERING) Uhhh, no ma'am.
9 COWBOYS (UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER)
10 BILLY I'm a-lookin' for Mr. Brocius. Mr. William Brocius.
11 JANIE Pipe down, I said!
12 FRANK He wants Mr. Brocius. Oh-la-la!
13 IKE Mister Brocius!
14 **SFX** **CHAIR SCRAP**
15 RINGO Now, boys, let's not be impolite.
16 IKE Aw, Ringo, we was jest havin' a little fun.
17 RINGO Particularly you, Ike. "The fool thinks he is wise, but the wise man knows
18 himself to be a fool."
19 IKE Don't get him started! He'll be spoutin' that darned Shakespeare stuff all
20 night.
21 BILLY "Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none."
22 IKE Oh, good jumping grief. Two of 'em.
23 RINGO (RESPONDING) "This above all: to thine own self be true.
24 BILLY And it must follow as the night the day
25 Thou canst not then be false to any man."
26 IKE Stop! Stop!!
27 BILLY "I would challenge you to a battle of wits, but I see you are unarmed!"
28 RINGO "There's nothing good or bad but thinkin' makes it so."
29 BILLY "Hell is empty and all the devils are here."
30 IKE Oh, that's true enough. Yes in-dee-dee.
31 JANIE Boys! That does it. My head hurts. He wants to see...

1 COWBOYS (IN CHORUS) Mister Brocius!!

2 RINGO By all means, by all means.. “Though this be madness yet there is method
3 in ‘t.”

4 **SFX** **BOOTS WITH SPURS WALKING**

5 IKE I’ll just relieve him of his shootin’ iron. Wouldn’t do to have him totin’
6 when he sees El Hefe.

7 RINGO (CALLS) Curly, here’s a gent to see you.

8 **SFX** **CHAIR SCRAPES**

9 CB So I gather. Okay, who are you and what do you want?

10 BILLY Mister Brocius...

11 CB Oh, please. That was my father, may he rot in everlastin’... The name is
12 Curly Bill. Who are you?

13 BILLY I’m Billy Breakenridge, Mister....uh, Curly. I’m the deputy sheriff for
14 Cochise County.

15 CB You’re a long way from Tombstone, kid.

16 BILLY I’ve been sent here to collect the taxes.

17 COWBOYS (UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER)

18 CB And what’s that got to do with me?

19 BILLY I want to hire you to go with me as a deputy assessor. To help me to assess
20 and collect the taxes.

21 COWBOYS (UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER)

22 BILLY I’m serious. You know every one here.

23 CB (LAUGHING) Never knew a deputy could be so out and out amusin’.
24 Are you tetched in the head? You know who we are, right?

25 BILLY Oh, yes sir. I’m talking with the head of the Cow-boys. But I was afraid I
26 might be held up and my tax money taken from me if I went alone.

27 CB We wouldn’t do that, would we boys?

28 FRANK (SNARKY) Oh, no. We’re all law abiding citizens.

29 IKE Speak for yourself, McLaury. Us Clantons certainly are!

30 COWBOYS: CAT-CALLS (AD-LIB)

1 CB You want me, me, Curly Bill Brocius to help you collect taxes! Don't that
2 beat all. (LAUGHING)

3 BILLY Will you help me?

4 RINGO Bein' from Tombstone, you must be friends with Wyatt Earp, or his
5 assorted family.

6 IKE (DARKLY) His very sordid family.

7 BILLY No, thank you very much. That whole tribe is too steeped in blood for me.

8 CB Wahl, you must have some kind of hero, to come chargin' out here like
9 this.

10 RINGO I bet it's Wild Bill Hickok. Who'll cover my bet?

11 BILLY You'd be wrong, Now if you mentioned Tom Smith, his predecessor in
12 Abilene, I might agree.

13 RANGER: Tom Smith, Abilene, Kansas—believed in enforcing the law without
14 recourse to firearms. His mission was taming the bad men, cajoling them into
15 obeying the law or accepting the consequences of arrest. He focused on handling
16 things in such a way as to avoid the philosophy of standing-one's-ground, with
17 no duty to retreat.

18 RINGO Not that it helped him much. I heard he was murdered and then
19 decapitated while on duty.

20 BILLY He stands tall, though. It's about trying to be as good as he wanted to be.

21 CB What about your Sheriff? You like him?

22 BILLY It's got nothing to do with the job. He's kind of a dandy. Damned near
23 killed me, when his gun fell out of the holster, and fired a bullet at me. I'm
24 still wearing a crease at my temple.

25 RINGO (CHUCKLING) Boss, he's got an interestin' way o' lookin' at things.

26 CB Certainly does, when he wants me to help collect taxes. By gum, what a
27 joke! I gotta ask—Did anyone put you up for this? I mean, other than the
28 Sheriff?

29 BILLY No, sir. I thought it would be an interesting thing to try.

1 CB I gotta admit, I'm intrigued. We will make every one of these low-down
2 cow thieves pay his taxes. (CONTINUES LAUGHING). But I cain't call
3 you Billy—I'd get confused with the Clanton boy.

4 BILLY Other folks have called me Breck.

5 RANGER It was the perfect approach, one that played to the cowboy's vanity by
6 asking for his protection and not-so-subtly acknowledging that Curly Bill and his
7 pals were perfectly capable of overpowering the deputy and pilfering the taxes
8 anytime they felt like it.

9
10 CB We'll start with you, Frank. I know you got some money in your pocket.
11 Pay the man. You claim to own a ranch with your brother.

12 FRANK Curly! You're really going to do this?

13 CB Look at it this way. You were just braggin' about being law-abidin'
14 citizen. Prove it by paying up.

15 FRANK Okay, okay!

16 **SFX COINS THROWN ON TABLE**

17 FRANK But Curly! This is all I got right now.

18 IKE (WHISPER) Hey, McLaury, we'll get some more, don't worry.

19 CB Tomorrow, Breck, you and me will need to get an early start. I know all
20 the blind canyons and hiding places that jest happen to contain some
21 cattle. Boys, This is going to be so much fun! (LAUGHTER)

22 COWBOYS AD-LIB MUTTERING "Oh, sure," "You'll have a good time, but I'm not
23 so sure about me."

24 **MUSIC**

25 **SCENE 3**

26 **SFX HOOFBEATS,**

27 RANGER True to his word, dawn found Billy and Curly Bill plodding into a blind
28 canyon. Smoke was curling up from a breakfast campfire. Partners Bryce
29 Jackson and Chet Ahlquist were surprised that they had visitors at that
30 time in the morning.

31 **EFX FIRE**

1 BRYCE Son of a gun, Chet! Look who's coming this way out of the mist.

2 CHET Bryce, that cain't be Curly Bill! He don't get up much afore the crack of
3 noon!

4 BRYCE Shore looks like him though. I don't recognize the other dude.

5 SFX HOOFBEATS AND THEN STOP

6 CB & BILLY Whoa. Whoa now, hoss.

7 EFX HORSE NOISE

8 CHET Curly Bill? That really you and not your ghost?

9 CB Yeah, it's me. Although it's kinda hard to tell this early.

10 CHET You're so desperate for one of mah biscuits that you hafta sneak up in the
11 middle of the dark?

12 CB Your biscuits are good, but not that good, you punchy drover.

13 BILLY 'Sides, down in the valley, the sun is already up.

14 CHET And who's this?

15 BILLY Howdy. Name's Billy Breckenridge.

16 CB But I call him Breck.

17 BRYCE Wahl, crawl down off them hosses, and have a cup of joe.

18 CB Thanks. We'll do that.

19 SFX HORSE HOOFS, SQUEAK OF LEATHER; POURING COFFEE INTO METAL
20 CUP

21 CB (SLURP) Oh, that's better. Boys, we're here cuz we got a job.

22 BRYCE (INTERESTED) A job? What kind of a job? Down Mexico way?

23 CB (PROUDLY, BUT MISCHIEVOUSLY) No, not that. Ah'm a deputy
24 assessor!

25 CHET (INCREDULOUS) You're a what?

26 BRYCE Curly Bill, you're joshin' us. Who in his right mind would hire you?

27 BILLY I did. I'm the deputy Sheriff of Tombstone, and it's my duty to collect the
28 taxes for Cochise County. Curly Bill's helping me do that.

29 CHET & BRYCE SURPRISED LAUGHTER

30 CB Yeah, collectin' it from y'all!

31 CHET Curly, this is nuts! I cain't believe what Ah'm hearin'!

1 CB You are law-abidin' citizens, right?

2 BRYCE O'course we are but...

3 CB And as law-abidin' citizens, it is your duty to pay your taxes.

4 BILLY We can't run the county without everyone ponyin' up their taxes.

5 BRYCE But Curly....

6 CB Everyone! Now, I know how many cattle ya got. It's only a little bit on
7 each one.

8 CHET Curly, we ain't got a thin dime between us!

9 CB That's not a problem.

10 BRYCE It's a big problem to us.

11 CB Breck, can you take an order to our banker, Mr. Turner? Would that work
12 for you?

13 BILLY (INCREDULOUS) You mean the Cow-boys have their own banker? (PAUSE)
14 Is Turner in Galeyville?

15 CB Yeah. We keep him real close.

16 BILLY I don't see why it wouldn't work as long as I get the cash before I go back
17 to Tombstone.

18 CB So that way everyone would be square with their taxes. Simple as signin' a
19 piece of paper.

20 BRYCE (DOUBTFUL) I dunno, Curly.

21 CB If you get arrested things would go better if your taxes were all paid up
22 front. Ain't that right, Breck?

23 BILLY Upstanding tax-paying citizens are what the laws are all about. Protecting
24 tax payers..

25 CHET Curly-Bill, this seems like a flim-flam deal to me!

26 CB You ever know me to lie to you?

27 BRYCE Wahl, not when you're sober. But get likkered up like Ringo, and there's
28 all hell to pay.

29 CB Until we get all the cit-i-zens assessed, I promise to lay off the hard liquor.

30 CHET Jeez, you must be serious. Okay, let me sign one of them papers.

31 BRYCE But Chet...

1 CHET We ain't got a dime, you know that Bryce. Until we get these cattle sold.
2 Then we can pay off Turner.

3 BRYCE Okay, okay. I'll sign one too.

4
5 **MUSIC**

6 **SCENE 4**

7 RANGER And so it went, blind canyon by blind canyon, campsite by campsite. No
8 one could refuse Curly Bill's offer, not with the gleam they could see in his eyes.
9 They were not happy with his amusement and laughter, but it was safer than
10 challenging him with a gun.

11 CB That's the last of them, Breck. (Amused) Ah think we touched everyone in
12 the Galeyville area. Not a one got away.

13 BILLY And I assessed all the ranches between Tombstone and here. Thanks for
14 all your help.

15 CB Breck, Ah got a big bang out of bein' a deputy assessor, but Ah wouldn't
16 want to do it for real. You livened up the camp, twisting Ringo's tail with
17 all that Shakespeare. The rest of us cain't compete.

18 RINGO And the rest of us had to stay sober with you around.

19 CB Wahl, mostly sober.

20 RINGO Ah'm glad that we can go back to drinkin'!

21 BILLY Paragons of virtue—all of us.

22 **SFX CINCHING ROPE, CLIMPING UP ON HORSE**

23 CB Breck, you can come back and hang out with us any time.

24 BILLY (WARNING) Next time it might be jury duty. Or an arrest warrant.

25 CB Don't matter. Come visitin' if you get lonely. If only for the Shakespeare.

26 BILLY I admit, Ringo dishes out pretty well for a Texan. Where did he go to
27 school?

28 CB Naw, just what he picked up from the travelin' shows.

29 RINGO Hey, that's a low cut!

30 CB (LAUGHING) And you give me a good laugh.

31 BILLY See you around.

1 CB Adios, mi amigo.

2 BILLY (TO HIS HORSE) Hah!

3 SFX HOOFBEATS

4 MUSIC

5 SCENE 5 EPILOG

6 RANGER BillyI learned one thing about Curly Bill Brocius, and that was he would
7 not lie to him. What he told Billy he believed, and his word to the deputy
8 was better than the oaths of some of whom were known as good citizens.
9 After assessing the town of Galeyville, Breakenridge left there with nearly
10 a thousand dollars tax money. He arrived safely in Tombstone, and was
11 vastly relieved.

12 After that, whenever there was anything to be done in Galeyville or the
13 San Simon Valley, Billy was sent to do it, and he was kept in the saddle a
14 good portion of the time. He always went alone, because he didn't believe
15 in a suddenly picked-up posse. He felt he could depend on himself, but
16 wasn't so sure of anyone else.

17 RANGER Being friends with the Cowboys did not mean that he didn't do the job as
18 Deputy Sheriff. Billy Breakenridge served every warrant outside of Tombstone.
19 He could ride into a den of thieves, and emerge unscathed with stolen property
20 recovered or taxes collected. He was not involved in the fight near the OK Corral,
21 but he believed the testimony by Johnny Behan and others against the Earps.
22 Breakenridge left the Tombstone area in 1883, and spent most of his later years
23 working with the railroads. At the age of 70, he retired, and settled in Tucson. He
24 wrote a memoir called "Helldorado" in 1928. There is a yearly celebration in
25 Tombstone, in October, and they call it ... "Helldorado Days". One of the prime
26 tourist destination is Boot Hill—so called because everyone buried there died
27 with their boots on.

28 Billy died of cardiac arrest in January 1931, in Tucson, Arizona, age 85.

29 MUSIC

1 ANNCR You've been listening to American Radio Theater's presentation of
2 Chuckwagon Tales: Collecting Taxes Out West". It was written and directed by Joy
3 Jackson. It was based on Billy Breakenridge's memoirs, "Helldorado".

4 In our cast you heard:

5 Dan Schindler as the RANGER

6 Dave Liesse as JOHNNY BEHAN

7 Ivan Cury as BILLY BREAKENRIDGE

8 Ken Liesse as CURLY BILL BROCIUS--

9 Kim Turner as JOHNNY RINGO--

10 Michael "Moki" O'Reilly as IKE CLANTON

11 Mary Moore-Campagna as JANIE

12 Gregg Porter as Bryce Jackson

13 Terry Elder as Chet Ahlquist

14 Sound Effects by Penny Swanberg and Marilyn Wilt

15 Music by Kevin McLeod, at [www dot incompetech](http://www.dotincompetech.com) dot Com

16 Engineering by Ron Aley

17 Playback by Joy Jackson

18 Recorded in front of a live audience at Pioneer Hall, Seattle, for Radio Studio 2013.

19

20 I'm Pat McNally, your announcer, whom you also heard as Frank McLaury.

21 This is A. R. T. American Radio Theater.

22