

1 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR
2 The Jeffords Matter

3
4 Written by Michael Wheeler
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13 **CAST:** **ANNCR**
14 **JOHNNY**
15 **LEE ROWAN - Federated Life**
16 **ETTA STONE - Editor/Reporter**
17 **SHERIFF**
18 **CORONER**
19 **GOAT**
20 **BALDWIN JEFFORDS**
21 **ANNABELLE JEFFORDS**
22 **HENRY - Farm Hand**

23
24

25

1 ANNCR From Seattle - Live!
2 SFX TELEPHONE RING -- PICKUP
3 JOHNNY Johnny Dollar.
4 LEE (FILTER) Mr. Dollar, this is Lee Rowan with Federated
5 Life.
6 JOHNNY (ON THE MAKE) Well, hello Miss Rowan. What
7 can I do for you today?
8 LEE (FILTER) Now, Johnny.
9 JOHNNY You name it, sweetheart and if it's in my
10 power—
11 LEE (FILTER) You can start by answering me a question.
12 JOHNNY A pop quiz? All right, I'm game. Fire
13 away.
14 LEE (FILTER) What would you say about a man who files
15 three double indemnity claims on three wives
16 in a nine year period.
17 JOHNNY I'd say he's bad luck. You'd better not
18 marry him.
19 LEE (FILTER) I wasn't planning to.
20 JOHNNY Good! Then there's still hope.
21 LEE (FILTER) Johnny! Please!
22 JOHNNY Alright, alright. If you insist --business
23 before pleasure.
24 LEE (FILTER) I'm looking at this file and I just can't
25 bring myself to write the check. The police
26 have closed the case; the coroner ruled the
27 death an accident but I just don't buy it.
28 I don't believe in bad luck.
29 JOHNNY Neither do I, it's bad luck.
30 LEE (FILTER) Johnny, would you mind coming over here and
31 taking a look at this file.

1 JOHNNY Lee, I thought you'd never ask. Cancel all
2 your appointments and hold your calls. This
3 could take the whole afternoon.

4 MUSIC OPENING THEME - FADE FOR

5 ANNCR Live from Historic Pioneer Hall in Seattle,
6 Washington, American Radio Theater proudly
7 presents the man with the action packed
8 expense account -- America's fabulous free
9 lance insurance investigator, --

10 JOHNNY Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.

11 MUSIC EXPENSE ACCOUNT THEME

12 JOHNNY From special investigator Johnny Dollar to
13 Miss Lee Rowan, Federated Life Assurance
14 Company, Hartford Connecticut: The
15 following is an accounting of my
16 expenditures in connection with my
17 investigation of the Jeffords matter.
18 Expense account item number one, a dollar
19 and a quarter -- cab fare to your office.

20 SFX DOOR OPENS

21 LEE Come in, Johnny.

22 SFX FOOTSTEPS, CHAIR SCRAPE, RUSTLE PAPERS

23 (UNDER)

24 JOHNNY So what's the scoop, Lee? Who's our merry
25 widower and how did he manage to come up on
26 your radar?
27

1 LEE His name is Baldwin Jeffords. His wife,
2 Melissa died in a farm accident a few weeks
3 ago. He came up on my radar, as you put it,
4 because I remembered a pretty large payout
5 we made to him just a few years ago.
6 Another accidental death, that time it was a
7 car crash.

8 SFX PAPER RUSTLE

9 JOHNNY Well, let's see -- you've got the police
10 report here. The Sheriff says there are no
11 signs of foul play. And the Coroner ruled
12 the death accidental. Cars crash. Accidents
13 happen.

14 LEE You know I used to work for Monumental Life?

15 JOHNNY Yeah, I remember

16 LEE Well, that name - Baldwin Jeffords - it's a
17 little unusual. I thought I remembered it
18 from back when I worked for Monumental, so I
19 did some checking and I was right.
20 Monumental paid an accidental death claim on
21 a Mrs. Baldwin Jeffords eight and a half
22 years ago. Somehow that Mrs. Jeffords
23 managed to pull a radio into the bathtub and
24 electrocute herself.

25 JOHNNY Radios don't make the best tub toys. Three
26 accidents - three dead wives. It does have
27 an aroma.

28 LEE I'm going to put a hold on paying this claim
29 for now, Johnny. I want you to head on down
30 to Mississippi and see what you can find
31 out.

32 MUSIC BRIDGE

1 **JOHNNY** Expense account item number two - a hundred
2 twenty four dollars and fifty cents - air
3 fare to Biloxi, where I rented a car --
4 item three - twenty five dollars -- and
5 drove seventy miles or so to Jolene, a tiny
6 backwater that seemed out of place in the
7 twentieth century. If I didn't know any
8 better, I'd say they only just removed the
9 hitching posts on Main Street last week.
10 Come to think of it, I don't know any
11 better. (CONTINUES)

12 **SFX** DOOR OPENS - BELL

13 **JOHNNY** My first stop was the town newspaper - The
14 Jolene Gazette, established 1853 according
15 to the sign.

16 **ETTA** Oh! Excuse me.

17 **JOHNNY** I found myself literally face to face with a
18 twenty-something blonde who seemed to be in
19 a hurry.

20 **ETTA** I was just on my way out.

21 **JOHNNY** So I see.

22 **ETTA** I mean, I'm closing the office.

23 **JOHNNY** (DISAPPOINTED) Oh. In the middle of the
24 day?

25 **ETTA** Well, when you're editor, publisher, and the
26 only reporter you sometimes have to close
27 the office in the middle of the day to cover
28 a story.

29 **JOHNNY** So you are the Jolene Gazette?

30 **ETTA** (SMILE) Etta Stone. Pleased to meet you
31 Mr.-

1 JOHNNY Dollar. Johnny Dollar. I was hoping I could
2 look through some of your back issues. Is
3 there someone else who could help me?
4 ETTA I'm afraid not. This shouldn't take very
5 long, though. I'll probably be back in an
6 hour or so.
7 SFX FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING ON PAVEMENT
8 SHERIFF Afternoon, Miss Rosetta. Mister.
9 JOHNNY Rosetta Stone?
10 ETTA My parents had an offbeat sense of humor.
11 (UP) Good afternoon, Sheriff. What can I do
12 for you, today?
13 SHERIFF Oh, nothing in particular. Introduce me to
14 your friend here.
15 ETTA All right. Sheriff Hardin, this is Mr. ---
16 Dollar, is it?
17 JOHNNY Johnny Dollar, Sheriff. I was going to
18 check in with you for my next stop.
19 SHERIFF Well, now you won't have to. Estill Hardin
20 - Sheriff Hardin. I couldn't help noticing
21 your car over there what with the rental
22 tags and all. It's kind of a matter of
23 pride with me that I keep track of the
24 comings and goings here in Jolene. What
25 brings you to our fair city, Mr. Dollar?
26 JOHNNY I'm an insurance investigator, Sheriff.
27 ETTA Insurance investigator?
28 JOHNNY My ID.
29 SHERIFF Hmmmm. Hartford, Connecticut.
30 JOHNNY That's right.
31 SHERIFF Long way from home.
32 JOHNNY I go where the winds carry me.

1 SHERIFF So what kind of insurance are you
2 investigating here, Mr. Dollar?
3 JOHNNY It's a double indemnity case. A woman named
4 Melissa Jeffords was apparently killed in a
5 farm accident a few weeks ago.
6 SHERIFF That's right. Tragic loss! A terrible
7 accident. Her husband is all tore up over
8 it.
9 JOHNNY She was the second Mrs. Jeffords to die in a
10 tragic accident in three years. Doesn't
11 that strike you as a little odd, Sheriff?
12 SHERIFF It's a family ridden with sorrow.
13 ETTA Do you have any reason to believe that it
14 wasn't an accident, Mr. Dollar?
15 JOHNNY Only the coincidence. And a suspicious
16 mind. I was hoping that a look through your
17 newspaper archive and a chat with the
18 Sheriff here might shed some light on the
19 matter.
20 SHERIFF I don't think I can help you any, Mr.
21 Dollar. It was a accident, pure and simple.
22 Miz Jeffords fell out of a loft and landed
23 on a harrow.
24 JOHNNY And that's all there is to it?
25 SHERIFF (ANNOYED) What do you want me to say? One
26 of the farm hands found her body lying
27 there. The railing was broke. The Coroner
28 said it was a accident. When the Coroner
29 says it's a accident, it's a accident and
30 that's good enough for me.
31

1 JOHNNY Well, Federated Life still has some
2 questions and I'm here to look for the
3 answers. Is that all right with you,
4 Sheriff?

5 SHERIFF It's a free country. But don't you be
6 harassing Mr. Jeffords or any of his family.
7 They've been through enough already.

8 JOHNNY I'll have to speak with him--

9 SHERIFF Speakin's one thing, harassing is another.
10 Just you be sure you don't cross the line.
11 Good day to you, sir. Miss Stone.

12 SFX FOOTSTEPS LEAVING ON PAVEMENT

13 JOHNNY Well, how do you like that?

14 ETTA Let's step back into my office for a second.

15 JOHNNY What about that story you were going to
16 cover?

17 ETTA The Garden Club can wait.

18 SFX FOOTSTEPS - DOOR CLOSES - BELL

19 ETTA Mr. Dollar, do you have any idea what you're
20 getting into here?

21 JOHNNY What do you mean?

22 ETTA Baldwin Jeffords all but owns this town.
23 Half the men in the county work in his
24 factory. The other half are farmers who
25 couldn't scratch out a living if his bank
26 didn't lend the money to raise their crops
27 every year.

28 JOHNNY I see. What's the deal with the Sheriff?

29 ETTA His brother-in-law is a foreman at the
30 factory.

31 JOHNNY Uh-huh. How about the Coroner?

32 ETTA Doc Woodford? He's a veterinarian.

1 JOHNNY A veterinarian?

2 ETTA County Coroners are elected in this state.

3 JOHNNY Well, at least they didn't elect a

4 longshoreman.

5 ETTA Would you care to guess who Doc Woodford's

6 largest paying client is?

7 JOHNNY Don't tell me.

8 ETTA Baldwin Jeffords raises a fair amount of

9 cattle on his estate. He also owns some

10 race horses. Race horses require a lot of

11 expensive TLC, you know.

12 JOHNNY Jeffords doesn't sound like a man who's hard

13 up for cash.

14 ETTA I wouldn't think so. His family has

15 practically owned this whole county for

16 about as long as anyone can remember.

17 JOHNNY Well, that knocks out one of the most likely

18 motives in a double indemnity case.

19 ETTA I can't say anything about motive, Mr.

20 Dollar, but I've had my own suspicions about

21 Baldwin Jeffords for a long time.

22 JOHNNY Suspicious?

23 ETTA His first wife died under unusual

24 circumstances.

25 JOHNNY Yes, that was one of the things I wanted to

26 look up in your archive.

27 ETTA Molly Jeffords taught at the high school

28 here in Jolene. She was the advisor for the

29 school paper. She encouraged me to go to

30 college and study journalism.

31 JOHNNY I see.

1 **ETTA** She was one of my favorite teachers, Mr.
2 Dollar and she was a friend. I don't
3 believe she accidentally pulled a radio into
4 the bathtub. She didn't even like radio.
5 **JOHNNY** (FADING) Well, let's have a look at those
6 back issues.
7 **ETTA** (FADING) They're over here.
8 **JOHNNY** (NARRATING) The back issues of the
9 newspaper weren't a lot of help. There was
10 a pattern of sorts. The Coroner and Sheriff
11 investigated all three deaths - if you can
12 call what they did investigating - and all
13 three were ruled accidents. Other than my
14 suspicions, I didn't really have much to go
15 on. I decided to have a talk with the
16 Coroner anyway.
17 **GOAT** (BRAYS)
18 **CORONER** Now, calm down, Jimmy, this won't hurt none.
19 **GOAT** (BRAYS)
20 **JOHNNY** Dr. Woodford?
21 **CORONER** Be with you in just a minute, son. Doggone
22 it, Jimmy, hold still!
23 **SFX** **MINOR SCUFFLE**
24 **GOAT** (BRAYS)
25 **CORONER** Aha! Gotcha. Now, swallow this, you ornery
26 cuss. (PAUSE) There, that's better now,
27 isn't it?
28 **GOAT** (BRAYS)
29 **CORONER** Goats! They'll eat just about anything they
30 can get hold of but try to get 'em to
31 swallow their medicine and you can just
32 about forget it.

1 JOHNNY So I see.

2 CORONER Don't believe I've had the pleasure, Mister-

3 JOHNNY Dollar. I'm an insurance investigator, Dr.

4 Woodford, looking into the death of Mrs.

5 Baldwin Jeffords.

6 CORONER Oh, yes. Missy Jeffords. Nasty business.

7 She fell out of a loft onto a harrow. Cut

8 her up pretty bad. At least it was quick.

9 JOHNNY Did you conduct a formal inquest?

10 CORONER No need for that, Mr. Dollar. The body was

11 found just below the loft. Part of the rail

12 had come loose and was laying on the floor

13 beside her. It was pretty obvious what had

14 happened.

15 JOHNNY Did the railing break?

16 CORONER No, it looked like some nails had worked

17 loose. If she slipped and fell against it -

18 it wouldn't have taken much.

19 JOHNNY You don't think it had been tampered with?

20 CORONER No, sir. Not me. About the only thing

21 unusual about it at all was the way she was

22 dressed.

23 JOHNNY Oh, how was that?

24 CORONER Well, seeing as she was in the barn I would

25 have expected her to be wearing riding

26 clothes or maybe dungarees.

27 JOHNNY But she wasn't?

28 CORONER No, she was dressed up like she was planning

29 on going into town - a nice dress, some

30 jewelry, perfume.

31 JOHNNY That doesn't sound like she intended to be

32 working in the barn.

1 CORONER No, sir, it sure doesn't. It's pretty
2 evident what killed her but I have no idea
3 what she was doing up in the loft dressed
4 like that. I don't reckon we'll never know.

5 MUSIC BRIDGE

6 JOHNNY (NARRATING) I had almost decided to wrap it
7 up and go home. Cars crash, accidents
8 happen. What was it the Sheriff said? If
9 Doc Woodford calls it an accident, it's an
10 accident. But the doctor had some doubts.
11 I don't think he even realized he had them
12 but he had them. It wasn't much to go on
13 but Melissa Jeffords wasn't dressed
14 correctly to be in that loft. I decided it
15 was at least worth a conversation with her
16 husband. I drove out to the Jeffords Estate
17 and found myself in front of an impressive
18 antebellum mansion. (CONTINUES)

19 SFX DOOR KNOCK - DOOR OPENS

20 JOHNNY I was a little surprised when a smartly
21 dressed, gray haired woman answered the
22 door.

23 ANNABELLE Yes?

24 JOHNNY Good Afternoon, ma'am. My name is Johnny
25 Dollar. I was hoping to have a few words
26 with Mr. Jeffords. Is he in?

27 ANNABELLE May I ask what it's about?

28 JOHNNY I'm here on behalf of Federated Life. It's
29 in regard to his recent loss.

30 ANNABELLE Oh - well -- yes of course. Do come in,
31 please. Let's step into the parlor here.

32 JOHNNY Thank you.

1 ANNABELLE Have a chair, Mr. Dollar. Make yourself
2 comfortable. I'm Annabelle Jeffords --
3 Baldwin's mother. I'm afraid he's not here
4 at the moment.

5 JOHNNY Oh. Well--

6 ANNABELLE He told me he was going to the factory but I
7 saw him picking flowers before he left. I'm
8 pretty sure he was going to the cemetery.

9 JOHNNY Well, I certainly wouldn't want to intrude
10 on that.

11 ANNABELLE He's been out there every day since - well,
12 it was a truly horrible accident. Melissa
13 was such a lovely girl. It was a closed
14 casket funeral, you know.

15 JOHNNY No, I didn't. I'm sorry to hear that.

16 ANNABELLE Such a shame.

17 JOHNNY Mrs. Jeffords, can you tell me anything
18 about the circumstances of the accident that
19 killed her?

20 ANNABELLE Circumstances? Why, what do you mean? She
21 fell from the loft but nobody saw it
22 actually happen.

23 JOHNNY No, of course not, but as I understand it,
24 the accident happened sometime around mid-
25 day. Do you know, did anyone see her or
26 speak to her before that?

27 ANNABELLE She and Baldwin had breakfast together that
28 morning but then he went to the factory. I
29 was - indisposed - I didn't see her at all
30 that day until... (PAUSE)

31 JOHNNY Who discovered the body?

1 ANNABELLE One of the grooms found her - Henry
2 Metcalfe. It was just terrible. He was
3 really shaken by it.

4 JOHNNY Do you think I could speak with him?

5 ANNABELLE I suppose you could but I believe he went
6 into town this morning. -- Mr. Dollar, why
7 are you asking all these questions?

8 JOHNNY It's my job, ma'am. I'm an investigator.

9 ANNABELLE Investigator? Mercy! Just what in the
10 world do you think you're investigating?

11 JOHNNY It's purely routine. But I'm sure you know
12 this is the second accidental death claim
13 your son has made in a relatively short
14 time. Under the circumstances it's company
15 policy to conduct an investigation.

16 ANNABELLE Well, I can assure you there is nothing to
17 investigate. No one had any reason to want
18 to harm Melissa, certainly not Baldwin. He
19 was hopelessly in love with her.

20 JOHNNY I'm sure I can wrap this up pretty quickly.
21 I just need to do a few interviews and it
22 would help if I could have a look at the
23 scene of the accident - enough to file a
24 report. If you wouldn't mind showing me
25 where it happened..

26 ANNABELLE (FADING) Very well, Mr. Dollar. Come with
27 me. I'll take you to the barn.
28

1 JOHNNY (NARRATING) I didn't learn much from the
2 accident scene. The loft railing had
3 already been replaced with a sturdy new
4 one. Two weeks after the fact, I knew the
5 chances of my finding any new physical
6 evidence were mighty slim. That made the
7 interviews more important than ever. I had
8 returned to my hotel and was about to call
9 the factory to see if Baldwin had actually
10 gone there when-

11 SFX TELEPHONE RING - PICKUP

12 JOHNNY Johnny Dollar.

13 ETTA (FILTER) Mr. Dollar, this is Etta Stone.

14 JOHNNY (PLEASED) Miss Stone! How did you know I
15 was staying at the Magnolia?

16 ETTA (FILTER) I'm a reporter, remember? And a pretty fair
17 detective, myself. Besides, the Magnolia is
18 the only hotel in town. Where else would
19 you stay?

20 JOHNNY You have clearly mastered the art of
21 deductive reasoning, Miss Stone.

22 ETTA (FILTER) Oh, Miss Stone sounds so formal. Please,
23 call me Etta.

24 JOHNNY Alright, then, and I'm Johnny. What can I
25 do for you, Etta?

26 ETTA (FILTER) Could we possibly meet, somewhere? I have
27 some information that I think may be useful
28 to your investigation.

29 JOHNNY Did we miss something in the archives?

30 ETTA (FILTER) No, this is new and it puts Melissa
31 Jeffords' accident in a whole different
32 light.

1 JOHNNY Well, do you know of a place with decent
2 food and a little privacy? I'd love to buy
3 you dinner.

4 ETTA (FILTER) How about Doodles'? It's a little roadhouse
5 out on Parker's Mill Road near the county
6 line. The food is nothing special but it's
7 a good place to meet someone if you want to
8 avoid prying eyes. It gets a little rowdy
9 on weekends but through the week there's not
10 much of a crowd.

11 JOHNNY That sounds good. Shall I pick you up?

12 ETTA (FILTER) No. I'll meet you there in, say forty-five
13 minutes?

14 JOHNNY Alright, it's a date.

15 JOHNNY (NARRATING) Doodles' was a quiet place.
16 Two men in overalls sat at the bar drinking
17 beer and there was a young couple on the
18 other side of the dining room. They were
19 focused on each other so we pretty much had
20 the place to ourselves. Etta was busting to
21 tell me about her "scoop".

22 ETTA I had a call this afternoon, Johnny. This
23 is a small town and news travels fast. Your
24 looking into the accident -- The call was
25 from - well, she asked me not to use her
26 name, but she was a close friend of Melissa
27 Jeffords.

28 JOHNNY (SMILE) An unnamed source?

29 ETTA A reliable source.

30 JOHNNY So, what did your source have to say?

31 ETTA Melissa Jeffords was getting ready to file
32 for a divorce.

1 **JOHNNY** Are you sure of that?

2 **ETTA** On the day she died she had an appointment
3 with a lawyer over in Pendleton. She was
4 going to sign the papers that very
5 afternoon.

6 **JOHNNY** The friend told you this?

7 **ETTA** She gave me the name of the attorney, too -
8 Owen Webster. I called him to confirm what
9 she said.

10 **JOHNNY** And?

11 **ETTA** He declined comment -- attorney-client
12 privilege. Johnny, I'd bet you a hundred
13 dollars what she says is true.

14 **JOHNNY** That's not the picture Annabelle Jeffords
15 painted for me. She said they were madly in
16 love - that Baldwin goes to the cemetery
17 every day.

18 **ETTA** What would you expect her to say? That they
19 argued constantly? That she and Melissa
20 didn't get along?

21 **JOHNNY** What else can you tell me about the family?
22

1 **ETTA** Well, as I said before, the Jeffords have
2 been around here running things for as long
3 as anyone can remember. Baldwin's father
4 nearly lost everything when the market
5 crashed in twenty-nine. There were rumors
6 that he killed himself but it was all hushed
7 up. Somehow Annabelle managed to keep the
8 factory going until the war came along.
9 That's about the time Baldwin took over.
10 During the war, they converted over and got
11 a big contract making coffins for the Army.
12 A lot of our own local boys came home in
13 those coffins but the war was very good to
14 the Jeffords. (CONTINUES)

15 **SFX** FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING

16 **ETTA** Uh, oh. Don't look now but we've got
17 company.

18 **SHERIFF** Mr. Dollar, I thought I made myself clear to
19 you this morning.

20 **JOHNNY** What are you talking about, Sheriff?

21 **SHERIFF** You've been out to the Jeffords place making
22 all kinds of wild accusations and threats.

23 **JOHNNY** Who told you that?

24 **SHERIFF** Never you mind about that. I warned you not
25 to be harassing the Jeffords and you didn't
26 listen. I think it's about time you pack up
27 your carpet bag and head on back to
28 Connecticut.

29 **JOHNNY** Are you riding me out of town on a rail,
30 Sheriff?

31 **SHERIFF** If that's what it takes.

1 JOHNNY Fine. I have all I need anyway. I'll just
2 report that I wasn't able to finish my
3 investigation but that there's sufficient
4 evidence to deny the claim.

5 SHERIFF What are you talking about?

6 JOHNNY This whole situation stinks and if you were
7 any kind of real lawman, you'd know it.

8 SHERIFF Now, you listen here--

9 JOHNNY No, you listen, Sheriff. If Baldwin
10 Jeffords wants that insurance money, he's
11 going to have to sue for it and Federated
12 has an army of lawyers. He may win
13 eventually but it'll cost him thousands of
14 dollars and take years.

15 SHERIFF Why, you low down--

16 JOHNNY And, of course, in a civil suit we can make
17 him testify.

18 SHERIFF (CHOKED COUGH)

19 JOHNNY I'm going to get to the truth one way or
20 another, Sheriff, sooner or later. And
21 later is just fine with me. Rest assured,
22 though, I'll make it a point to let Mr.
23 Jeffords know exactly why the claim is being
24 delayed.

25 SHERIFF (EXASPERATED) Alright, alright! Finish
26 your blasted investigation if it will make
27 you happy. But make it quick, you hear me?

28 JOHNNY Sooner is fine, too, Sheriff. And the
29 sooner the better.

30 MUSIC BRIDGE

31

1 JOHNNY (NARRATING) I figured it was about time I
2 had that conversation with Baldwin Jeffords
3 so I drove back out to the estate. This
4 time I called ahead to make sure that he
5 would be home.

6 BALDWIN I don't understand, Mr. Dollar

7 JOHNNY Not to put too fine a point on it, Mr.
8 Jeffords, but two double indemnity claims in
9 six years looks a little suspicious. Three
10 of them in nine years, even more so.

11 BALDWIN Just what are you getting at?

12 JOHNNY I think it's possible that your wife was
13 murdered.

14 BALDWIN And you think I did it?

15 ANNABELLE This is outrageous!

16 JOHNNY You wouldn't be the first husband to profit
17 from his wife's death. You're the logical
18 choice.

19 BALDWIN Mr. Dollar, I loved my wife. I've loved all
20 of them. It just seems that I'm not meant
21 to have any lasting happiness.

22 JOHNNY You're saying your marriage was a happy one?

23 BALDWIN Of course it was.

24 JOHNNY Lying to me doesn't help your credibility,
25 Mr. Jeffords.

26 BALDWIN I don't know what you've heard or where you
27 may have heard it, Mr. Dollar, but I assure
28 you I am not lying. It's true, Melissa and I
29 were going through a rough patch but we were
30 working it out.

31 JOHNNY Did you know your wife was getting ready to
32 file for a divorce?

1 **BALDWIN** That's a lie!

2 **JOHNNY** It's a fact.

3 **ANNABELLE** Who told you that?

4 **JOHNNY** She had a meeting with a lawyer the
5 afternoon she was killed. That's why she
6 was dressed up. Your Coroner noticed it but
7 he had no reason to think it might be
8 significant.

9 **BALDWIN** Doc Woodford said it was an accident.

10 **JOHNNY** And Sheriff Hardin took a pass on making any
11 real investigation. Or was he was just
12 deferring to a - benefactor? I've seen the
13 reports he made in all three investigations.
14 None got more than token scrutiny.

15 **BALDWIN** Mr. Dollar, if anything sinister happened in
16 any of those cases, I'd want to know about
17 it. Do you honestly think the Sheriff
18 looked the other way because he thought I
19 might be involved?

20 **JOHNNY** Look at it from where I'm standing. What do
21 you think?

22 **SFX** **TELEPHONE PICKUP - DIALING**

23 **BALDWIN** Well, let me put your concerns to rest. I
24 loved my wives and if anybody-- Hello,
25 Sheriff Hardin?

26 **ANNABELLE** What are you doing, dear?

27

1 **BALDWIN** I've got a Mr. Dollar here from the
2 insurance company. (PAUSE) No, he's not
3 harassing me. But he seems to think you've
4 done a poor job of investigating Melissa's
5 death - and Amy's and Molly's as well.
6 Estill, if you've ever held back because you
7 thought I was involved - well, if you have,
8 you've done me a great disservice.

9 **ANNABELLE** Baldwin-

10 **BALDWIN** It may be too late to make any difference
11 but I'd consider it a personal favor if you
12 would re-open all of those cases. (PAUSE)
13 Yes, I'm completely serious. Thanks,
14 Estill.

15 **SFX** TELEPHONE HANG-UP

16 **BALDWIN** There, Mr. Dollar. Satisfied?

17 **JOHNNY** (SIGHS)

18 **ANNABELLE** Baldwin, you didn't have to do that. Are
19 you out of your mind?

20 **BALDWIN** Don't be silly, mother. I have nothing to
21 hide. I want the truth as much as Mr.
22 Dollar does - maybe even more.

23 **MUSIC** BRIDGE

24

1 JOHNNY (NARRATING) It was quite an act, calling the
2 Sheriff, asking him to reopen the
3 investigations. Or was it? I still liked
4 Baldwin Jeffords for the murder but I just
5 wasn't sure. I needed to think about it so
6 I drove out to Doodle's for a cold beer -
7 that's expense account item fourteen, half a
8 buck. I was still nursing it when a man in
9 overalls and a plaid shirt walked up
10 (CONTINUES)
11 SFX CHAIR SCRAPE
12 JOHNNY pulled out a chair and sat down across the
13 table from me. He sat there for a moment,
14 expressionless. I stared back.
15 JOHNNY (IN CHARACTER) Won't you join me? Have a
16 seat. (PAUSE) What can I do for you, Mr. ?
17 HENRY The question is, what can I do for you?
18 JOHNNY Okay. I'm listening.
19 HENRY I saw you out at the Jeffords place earlier.
20 You want to know what really happened to Miz
21 Jeffords, is that right?
22 JOHNNY That's right.
23 HENRY You work for the insurance company.
24 JOHNNY I do.
25 HENRY If Miz Jeffords didn't die by accident, the
26 insurance company would stand to save some
27 real dough, wouldn't it.
28 JOHNNY That's why I'm here.
29 HENRY So, if there was -- say -- an eyewitness --
30 would there be any kind of reward?

1 JOHNNY Well, you have to realize that an
2 uncorroborated eyewitness who stands to gain
3 from his testimony isn't much use in court.
4 HENRY I can't help it if I'm the only one who was
5 there besides Miz Jeffords and the killer.
6 JOHNNY Killer?
7 HENRY She was pushed.
8 JOHNNY By who?
9 HENRY That information will cost you.
10 JOHNNY You'd have to be willing to swear an
11 affidavit. And you might have to testify in
12 court eventually, too.
13 HENRY How much?
14 JOHNNY I'd have to check with the home office.
15 Maybe a few hundred.
16 HENRY A grand.
17 JOHNNY That's a lot of money.
18 HENRY How much are they paying you?
19 JOHNNY Look, I can give you a coupla hundred on my
20 own authority. A thousand bucks - I'll have
21 to get it approved. Where can I reach you?
22 SFX CHAIR SCRAPE
23 HENRY Don't worry about it. I'll get back in
24 touch with you, assuming I don't get a
25 better offer first.
26 JOHNNY That's a dangerous game, mister.
27 HENRY These are dangerous times.
28 JOHNNY At least take my card. I'm staying at The
29 Magnolia.
30 HENRY Of course you are, Mr. Dollar. Where else
31 would you stay?
32 MUSIC BRIDGE

1 **JOHNNY** I placed a call back to Hartford first thing
2 the next morning. You were in a meeting so
3 I left a message and went out to have
4 breakfast, that's expense account item
5 seventeen, a buck and a half. Then I went
6 back to my room to wait for your return
7 call. It must have been a long meeting. It
8 was almost lunchtime--

9 **SFX** **TELEPHONE RINGS - PICKUP**

10

1 JOHNNY Johnny Dollar.

2 ETTA (FILTER) Johnny, I've got another scoop for you and
3 this could be really big.

4 JOHNNY What is it?

5 ETTA (FILTER) I've just learned the Sheriff is at the
6 Jeffords estate right now. There's been
7 another accidental death.

8 JOHNNY Do you know who it was?

9 ETTA (FILTER) I don't have confirmation yet but I think it
10 was one of the farm hands, a man named Henry
11 Metcalfe.

12 JOHNNY The man who discovered Melissa Jeffords'
13 body.

14 ETTA (FILTER) That's right.

15 SFX DOOR KNOCK

16 JOHNNY Can you hold on just a second? There's
17 somebody at the door.

18 SFX DOOR KNOCK - INSISTENT

19 SHERIFF (OFF) Mr. Dollar?

20 ETTA (FILTER) I need to get out to the Jeffords estate.

21 JOHNNY To interview the Sheriff?

22 ETTA (FILTER) Among other things, yes.

23 SHERIFF (OFF) Mr. Dollar?

24 SFX DOOR KNOCKING

25 JOHNNY You won't find him there, Etta.

26 SFX DOOR OPENS

27 ETTA (FILTER) What do you mean? Why not?

28 JOHNNY Because he's right here. Hello, Sheriff.

29 ETTA (FILTER) I'm coming over.

30 SFX CLICK - HANG UP PHONE

31 JOHNNY Sheriff Hardin. What can I do for you?

32 SHERIFF Do you recognize this, Mr. Dollar?

1 JOHNNY My business card. It's a little soggy.
2 SHERIFF Yes. It was floating in a pond.
3 JOHNNY Floating?
4 SHERIFF In the pocket of a man named Henry Metcalfe.
5 Henry was a groom out at the Jeffords'
6 place. Miz Jeffords found him floating face
7 down in the pond early this morning.
8 JOHNNY Five foot nine, sandy hair, freckles?
9 SHERIFF That's him. How did you happen to know him?
10 JOHNNY I met him last night. We had a beer
11 together at Doodles'.
12 SHERIFF You just may have been the last person to
13 see him alive, then, Mr. Dollar.
14 JOHNNY I doubt it, Sheriff. You don't really think
15 this was an accident?
16 SHERIFF Doc Woodford is still examining the body
17 but, yeah, it looks like it was.
18 JOHNNY That wasn't a chance meeting we had last
19 night, Sheriff. Metcalfe offered to sell me
20 information about Melissa Jeffords' death.
21 SHERIFF Information? What did he say?
22 JOHNNY That it was no accident. He saw her pushed
23 from that loft.
24 SHERIFF Pushed?
25 JOHNNY He was an eyewitness.
26 SHERIFF Well, who pushed her, then?
27 JOHNNY He didn't say. We hadn't come to terms. I
28 was waiting for a call back to okay the
29 money.
30 SHERIFF Won't do us any good now.

1 JOHNNY No, but it ought to be enough to convince
2 you to re-open the investigation into
3 Melissa Jeffords' death.

4 SHERIFF I already did. Baldwin called me last night
5 and asked me to. I was going to start going
6 over everything again this morning but then
7 I got the call about Metcalfe.

8 SFX TELEPHONE RING

9 JOHNNY That's probably Hartford now.

10 SHERIFF (FADING) Take your call, Dollar. I'm going
11 back to my office to think.

12 JOHNNY (NARRATING) One thing was certain: Melissa
13 Jeffords' death was no accident. I suppose
14 that, technically speaking, my job was
15 already done. There was enough evidence to
16 stand up at trial if Federated denied the
17 double indemnity. But finding the killer
18 would be a much better way to close the
19 case. I was wondering how to do that when I
20 got another call from the Sheriff inviting
21 me over to his office.

22 SHERIFF Mr. Dollar, I'm a big enough man to admit it
23 when I've been wrong and I've been wrong
24 about you from the get-go.

25 JOHNNY Sheriff?

26 SHERIFF You have to understand - I never had any
27 reason to suspect Baldwin Jeffords. His
28 family has been important people in this
29 county since - well, since before it even
30 was a county.

31 JOHNNY And that put him above suspicion.

1 SHERIFF Well - yes. That and the fact that I've
2 known him my whole life. I'm still having
3 trouble with the notion that he could have
4 had anything to do with it but I'm willing
5 to take a closer look. But let me ask you
6 one thing.

7 JOHNNY Shoot.

8 SHERIFF If Baldwin is guilty, why in the world would
9 he ask me to re-open the investigations, Mr.
10 Dollar?

11 JOHNNY It might surprise you to know that I'm not
12 quite sure about Baldwin Jeffords myself.

13 SHERIFF But who, then? And why?

14 JOHNNY I don't know, Sheriff. But it doesn't seem
15 like Jeffords needed the insurance money and
16 if he just wanted out of his marriage - -
17 well divorce may be painful but it sure
18 beats the electric chair.

19 SHERIFF Well, now I'm stuck with four open cases -
20 two of 'em stone cold. It's been nearly ten
21 years since Molly Jeffords died.

22 JOHNNY Let's concentrate on the present. You may
23 never prove who killed the first Mrs.
24 Jeffords but odds are, if we can find Henry
25 Metcalfe's killer we'll have our man.

26 SHERIFF We don't even know for sure yet that Henry's
27 death wasn't an accident.

28 JOHNNY After what I've told you -- you don't really
29 believe it was?

30 SHERIFF No, I don't suppose I do.

31 SFX TELEPHONE RING -- PICKUP

1 SHERIFF Sheriff Hardin. - Hello, Doc. - What? -
2 Blunt force trauma, you say? - Okay, thanks.
3 SFX TELEPHONE HANGUP
4 SHERIFF I've got to go, Mr. Dollar.
5 JOHNNY The Jeffords estate?
6 SHERIFF Yeah.
7 JOHNNY Mind if I ride along?
8 SFX FOOTSTEPS UNDER
9 SHERIFF Sorry, this is official business.
10 SFX DOOR OPEN _ SLAM SHUT
11 JOHNNY The next time I saw the Sheriff he was
12 hauling Baldwin Jeffords out of the back of
13 his squad car - in handcuffs. Jeffords had
14 a bewildered, broken look about him as the
15 Sheriff hustled him into the county jail.
16 ETTA Johnny, I can't begin to tell you how
17 grateful I am for what you've done. Without
18 you putting pressure on the Sheriff, Baldwin
19 Jeffords would have gotten away with killing
20 all three of his wives - and Henry Metcalfe
21 too.
22 JOHNNY It's pretty remarkable. A few hours ago we
23 had nothing but suspicion and a dead man's
24 allegations. Now we have a victim, a murder
25 weapon and the killer all wrapped up in a
26 tidy package.
27 ETTA You don't seem very happy.
28 JOHNNY It's too neat. Metcalfe has a bump on his
29 head the size of a goose egg, no water in
30 his lungs and the murder weapon - a tire
31 iron from Baldwin Jeffords' own car - turns
32 up in the weeds fifteen feet away.

1 **ETTA** Jeffords knew Metcalfe was about to spill
2 the beans. He killed him in a panic.

3 **JOHNNY** Leaving the murder weapon at the scene?

4 **ETTA** He put the body in the pond so it would look
5 like Metcalfe drowned, right? Who knows,
6 maybe he heard something and got scared.
7 So, he tossed the iron into the weeds
8 thinking he could come back for it later.

9 **JOHNNY** It is possible Metcalfe was attempting a
10 shake down. Jeffords probably wouldn't take
11 kindly to that.

12 **ETTA** Doc says he was killed the night before. If
13 Jeffords threw that iron into the weeds at
14 night, he'd never find it again in the dark.
15 We're just lucky the body was found before
16 he had a chance to retrieve it the next
17 morning.

18 **JOHNNY** I suppose. Still - I'd feel a whole lot
19 better if he confessed.

20 **ETTA** Oh, come on, Johnny. The case is solved.
21 The killer is in jail. You've saved the
22 insurance company a lot of money. You
23 should relax a little and celebrate.

24 **JOHNNY** (NARRATING) So we did. We celebrated well
25 into the night but my heart wasn't in it. I
26 still had misgivings I just couldn't shake.
27 Nevertheless, come the next morning I was
28 packing up to leave.
29

1 SFX TELEPHONE RING - PICKUP

2 JOHNNY Johnny Dollar.

3 ETTA (FILTER) Johnny, you're not going to believe this.

4 JOHNNY Etta?

5 ETTA (FILTER) I'm calling from the Sheriff's office. He
6 just released Baldwin Jeffords.

7 JOHNNY Released? Why?

8 ETTA (FILTER) The Sheriff sent that tire iron over to the
9 State Police lab for analysis. They found
10 fresh fingerprints on it.

11 JOHNNY Well, that should clinch the case.

12 ETTA (FILTER) They weren't Baldwin's fingerprints.

13 JOHNNY What?

14 ETTA (FILTER) They belonged to his mother. There's a
15 warrant out for her arrest.

16 JOHNNY His mother?

17 ETTA (FILTER) Yes!

18 SFX DOOR KNOCK

19 JOHNNY Can you hold on a second? There's somebody
20 at the door.

21 ETTA (FILTER) I need to get back to the office, Johnny,
22 and write this up. You're not leaving, now?

23 JOHNNY No, I suppose not.

24 ETTA (FILTER) Good. I'll talk to you later, then.

25 SFX DOOR KNOCK

26 JOHNNY Alright. Goodbye.

27 SFX TELEPHONE HANGUP - FOOTSTEPS - DOOR OPENS

28 JOHNNY (SURPRISED) Mrs. Jeffords!

29 ANNABELLE Step back, Mr. Dollar.

30 JOHNNY If you shoot me with that you'll have a
31 rough time making it look like an accident.

1 ANNABELLE You know, I could have. Before you came and
2 stirred things up, Sheriff Hardin could have
3 found me standing over your dead body with a
4 smoking gun in my hand and I still would
5 have convinced him you committed suicide.
6 JOHNNY Suicide -- like your husband?
7 ANNABELLE My husband? Why, how very clever of you,
8 Mr. Dollar. Yes, Edwin was the first. How
9 in the world did you ever know that?
10 JOHNNY I didn't. Call it a lucky guess. But why?
11 ANNABELLE Simple mathematics. I hated to do it but we
12 needed the insurance money.
13 JOHNNY And Henry Metcalfe?
14 ANNABELLE You know why Henry Metcalfe.
15 JOHNNY Yes, of course. But Melissa and the others -
16 - you didn't need the money when you killed
17 them.
18 ANNABELLE No, I didn't. I wasn't thinking about the
19 money at all. The truth is I just didn't
20 like them, Mr. Dollar.
21 JOHNNY You didn't like them?
22 ANNABELLE Not one of them was good enough for my son.
23 Oh, I tolerated them as long as I could but,
24 one by one, they had to go. I thought I was
25 being clever - always making it look like an
26 accident. It wouldn't do to have Sheriff
27 Hardin poking around looking for a killer,
28 would it? So I always made sure it looked
29 like an accident. I see now, that was a
30 mistake.
31 JOHNNY Mistake?

1 ANNABELLE Accidental death. If it hadn't been for
2 those double indemnity clauses you never
3 would have come here. But you did. You came
4 and you've ruined everything.

5 JOHNNY (NARRATING) As the old woman spoke, I edged
6 closer.

7 ANNABELLE You know I'll probably get the electric
8 chair for this but they can only execute me
9 once. You don't cost me any extra, Mr.
10 Dollar. So before I go, I'm going to have
11 the satisfaction of seeing you dead.

12 JOHNNY I could see in her eyes she was about to
13 pull the trigger. I could only hope that her
14 reflexes were those of an old woman. I
15 swung hard!

16 SFX SMACK - GUN SKIDS ALONG FLOOR

17 ANNABELLE Oh!

18 SFX LIGHT SACUFFLE

19 JOHNNY She put up a pretty good fight for a woman
20 her size but it only took me a few seconds
21 to subdue her, a few minutes later she was
22 safely locked in the county jail - locked up
23 in the same cell that her son had occupied
24 only a few hours before.

25 ETTA What I don't understand is why she framed
26 Baldwin for the murder of Henry Metcalfe.
27 He's her son. Why not frame someone else?
28

1 **JOHNNY** Because Baldwin was the easy sell. She knew
2 when the Sheriff re-opened the cases it
3 would come out that none of his wives died
4 by accident. He was always the obvious
5 suspect. You thought so; I thought so. So
6 did the Sheriff. It ultimately came down
7 to a simple choice of who would go to
8 prison.

9 **ETTA** She killed three women because they weren't
10 good enough for her son and then threw him
11 to the wolves to save her own skin. That's
12 some kind of motherly love.

13 **MUSIC** **BRIDGE**

14 **JOHNNY** (NARRATING) Would it surprise you to know
15 that Baldwin Jeffords hired the best defense
16 lawyer in the state to defend his loving
17 mother, so there's at least a chance she
18 won't get the electric chair? For my part -
19 - well, since Federated is off the hook for
20 that double indemnity claim, my final total
21 of six hundred forty seven dollars and fifty
22 cents is an absolute bargain. Yours Truly,
23 Johnny Dollar.

24 **MUSIC** **END THEME**

25 **ANNOUNCER** **CREDITS**

26