

The Lord Will Provide

(2nd draft)

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO BLACK RANGE LANDSCAPE - MORNING

A storm brews at the top of the 13,000 foot mountain range. In the valley, it's a crisp, spring day.

INT. LAS VEGAS CHURCH - MORNING

BAP! BAP! BAP! Making repairs, FATHER JONAH (35) hammers on the leg of a church pew. CRACK, the head of the hammer splinters off and hits the floor, WHACK. Jonah's tall and rugged looking with salt and pepper hair. He's wearing a long, black jacket with white collar and black trousers.

BETSY (30) his wife, walks up behind him. She's a pretty gal with a slightly weathered complexion.

BETSY

Jonah, later on I'm going to go to Lambert's with Widow Mckensey.

JONAH

The store, do we need anything?

BETSY

Not really, but I was thinking of ordering a new pair of shoes from New York.

JONAH

Sweetheart, you know we can't afford that right now. We really can't afford anything. We should feel blessed that the town makes sure we get all the food and necessities we need to get by.

BETSY

I know, but it's only a pair of shoes. Do you know when the last time I bought shoes was?

JONAH

I do. But we won't see any pay from the church for another two months, if the stagecoach doesn't get held up again. And there hasn't been much need for any side work lately. I'm sorry, but now isn't a good time. Things will change. The Lord will provide.

BETSY looks extremely disappointed.

BETSY

And what if a side job comes along?
Can I get a new pair of shoes then?

JONAH

Maybe. We'll just have to wait and
see about that.

BETSY

One will...I just know it.

JONAH

(chuckling)
Yeah, well how would you know that.

BETSY

Maybe I'll make a pact with the devil.

JONAH

(angry)
Betsy, that's blasphemy. Don't say
something like that.

BETSY

All I want is a new pair of shoes.

JONAH

And for a pair of shoes you'd turn
your back on the Lord? To seek help
from the devil is the same as praising
him.

Betsy stomps away. Jonah waits until she is gone then he
removes a yellow parched Lambert's catalog from his tool
box. He thumbs through the pages.

JONAH (CONT'D)

(mumbling)
Shoes.
(beat)
What we need is some new tools.

EXT. LAS VEGAS MAIN STREET - MORNING

The street is bustling. It's a melting pot of well dressed
confidence men, china-men, gunslingers and cowpokes. The
town is built in a modern style with painted wood and carved
railings.

From the edge of town comes the SYNCHRONIZED THUMPING of
horse hooves hitting the ground, they ease from a cantor to
a slow walk.

Gunslinger and notorious outlaw, JOHNNY RINGO (28) moseys
into town on a horse that looks like it's been rode plum

hard. He's a tattered looking dude with squinty eyes, the lines on his face are like crisscrossing railroad tracks.

Stopping in front of the general store, he gets off the horse while cautiously looking around. He wraps the reins to a nearby post. Hanging low around his waist is a quick draw rig that brags of two, double action, Scholfield revolvers.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Betsy, WIDOW MCKENSEY (63) and several other TOWN FOLK gather as the SNAKE OIL SALESMAN (48) starts his routine.

SNAKE OIL SALESMAN

Yes sir ladies and gentlemen, this elixir cures whatever ails you. From a cough to a skin irritation, it'll clear it right up. Hell, you can even use it to get rid of those stubborn food stains on your shirt.

Ringo passes by and rubs his gritty hands on the Snake Oil Salesman's jacket to leave behind a dark stain.

RINGO

See how it works on that stain. That there's about two weeks and four-hundred miles of hard riding.

WIDOW MCKENSEY

My gracious!

BETSY

(whispers to herself)
Side job!

INT. SALOON - MORNING

It's crowded with the run of the mill BAD GUYS. Tobacco smoke hangs thick in the air. Piano music plays loudly. Scantly clad PROSTITUTES tease the patrons.

Ringo is seated at the poker table with three other men.

COWPOKE #1 (19) sits across from Ringo. He's a tall, husky kid smoking a stogie and missing the index finger on his left hand.

COWPOKE #2 (52) is a deathly thin, dirty looking man, and when he grins all that shows are the few rotten teeth left in his mouth. He deals two cards face down to each man. He wears a beaten holster with single action ball and cap revolver.

COWPOKE #3 (37) quickly folds his cards. He's a large man with some table muscle and a long, ugly scar running down his cheek.

COWPOKE #3
Shoot....I fold!

Three community cards are dealt face up. Ace of spades. Ace of diamonds. Jack of spades.

Ringo glances at his cards, as if he needs reminding that he's got an ace of hearts and a two of clubs. He slams a shot of whiskey.

RINGO
Ten dollars.

Cowpoke #2 looks at his cards and tosses them to the middle of the table.

COWPOKE #2
Fold.

Cowpoke #1 looks at his cards to find a king of spades and queen of spades.

COWPOKE #1
Raise you twenty five dollars.

He draws a deep hit from the stogie and on exhale makes a smoke ring.

RINGO
Raise huh. Well, I'll see you.

The next card to hit the table is an ace of clubs.

COWPOKE #1
I bet it all... That's three hundred dollars.

RINGO
I'll see your raise with a re-raise.

Cowpoke #1 pulls a few rolled up bills from his pocket.

COWPOKE #1
It ain't gonna be that easy. I'll see that raise!

The river card is laid. It's a ten of spades.

RINGO
Ha! Pot's mine.

Ringo SLAPS his cards to the table top.

COWPOKE #1

Shoot... Four aces... Not bad mister.

Ringo grabs at the pot of money.

COWPOKE #1 (CONT'D)

But not so quick. I got me a once
in a lifetime royal flush.

He tosses his card on the table and bellows a huge laugh.

RINGO

Mister, how many times you ever seen
somebody get four aces in a four
handed poker game?

COWPOKE #1

Well it doesn't happen often... Now
does it? But how many times you
ever seen someone get four aces, and
the other guy has a royal flush in a
four handed poker game.

RINGO

Never, in my life.

COWPOKE #1

Exactly!

RINGO

Exactly. That's why I say you're a
cheatin' dog.

Without warning, Ringo slaps leather and Cowpoke #1 is staring
down the throat of a Schofield revolver.

In return, Cowpoke #2 moves quickly to draw on Ringo, but
Ringo responds with lightning fast instincts and flips out
his other pistol, KABOOM! He fires without even looking at
Cowpoke #2.

The chest of Cowpoke #2 spits blood everywhere. The force
causes his chair to skid about six feet back and slams his
motionless body against the bar. ONLOOKERS duck and run for
cover.

EXT. HOLE IN THE WALL SALOON - SHORTLY

A SALOON PATRON bursts through the swinging doors and runs
up the street.

SALOON PATRON

Mayor, mayor...

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The MAYOR (50) is a dandy of a man. He's short, bald and round. Seated at his desk, he's almost hidden behind a mound of paper work. He looks over the top toward the commotion.

SALOON PATRON

Mayor

(beat)

It's Johnny Ringo... He's shootin' up the saloon.

MAYOR

The devil himself... Here in our town?

Horrified, he stands abruptly with eyes widened.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

FATHER JONAH (35) kneels before the cross.

MAYOR

Jonah, we need you. Johnny Ringo is in town and shootin' up the saloon.

JONAH

Ringo, when did he get into town?

Without hesitation, Jonah nods and grabs his bible. Together they head for the door.

MAYOR

Just this morning... And already he's causing trouble. Hopefully, you can help him to redeem his ways.

INT. HOLE IN THE WALL SALOON - SHORTLY

BARTENDER

Look it. We don't want no trouble around here, so you're gonna have to give me your gun mister.

RINGO

(chuckling)

Like hell I am. Who's gonna make me?

The saloon doors swing open as the Mayor and Jonah enter.

MAYOR

He is.

The Mayor points to Jonah.

RINGO

(laughing)

A preacher... What's he gonna do?

MAYOR

Mr. Ringo, it's in our town's manifesto that we attempt to reach out to lost souls, such as yourself. You know. Help them to see the light.

RINGO

And what, have him put me to sleep with his preaching? Mayor, there ain't no redemption for a soul the likes of mine.

Ringo pulls his revolver. KABOOM! Blood sprays out from the Mayor's arm, he collapses to the floor and SCREAMS with pain. Blood spews from between his fingertips.

RINGO (CONT'D)

What you ought to do preacher man is leave right now and go get the sheriff before I shoot you too.

Jonah holds up the bible and slowly moves to within an arms length of Ringo. He reaches up to remove the white paper collar from around his neck and slowly pulls back his coat.

JONAH

Sheriff huh. Well, that would be me too.

RINGO

(beat)

Hey, I've heard of you. You're that preacher who's the sheriff too.

(chuckles)

RINGO (CONT'D)

Is it true you ain't never lost a gun fight?

Jonah stands fast and quiet.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Well, look at you.

(beat)

You look like dried up horse dung that's been trampled over by a stampede of buffalo.

(beat)

You armed?

JONAH

Only with the power of the Lord.

RINGO

That's it, that's all you got? Some gibberish about the power of the Lord!

JONAH

Whatever I need, the Lord will provide.

As if on cue, Betsy rushes into the saloon while holding a bible and a cross. She walks directly toward Ringo.

BETSY

In these words, I place my faith.
In these words, I place my soul. In these words, I place my body.

(beat)

Mr. Ringo, I ask you to flee the evil desires of your ways, and find the righteousness of the Lord. I ask you to...

Ringo fights back a smile.

RINGO

Lady, shut the hell up! The preacher and me are gonna finish this.

(beat)

Tomorrow. High noon. In the street.

Ringo starts to leave, then pauses.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Oh preacher, since the Lord provides you with whatever you need...

(beat)

He better provide you with a goddamn gun because you're going to need it more than you do that there book of yours.

Ringo slowly backs out of the swinging doors.

EXT. LAS VEGAS MAIN STREET - HIGH NOON

Ringo is standing in the middle of the street. He's squared-off for a fight. The sun is burning bright, the WIND BLOWS up a curtain of dust and a lone tumbleweed rolls past.

Walking slowly, Jonah arrives to stop about ten feet from Ringo while holding a gold crucifix in his hand.

RINGO

Well, I see you brought your cross.
I sure in hell hope you brought your
gun too... Preacher. Sheriff.
Whatever.

JONAH

I told you Ringo...

RINGO

Yeah, yeah yeah, the Lord will
provide.

Jonah nods in affirmation then slowly raises the crucifix
above his head. The sun disappears and dark clouds start to
form, the sky RUMBLES.

Ringo looks up at the sky, then he stares at Jonah.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Looks like we're gonna have a bad
storm. Too bad you won't be around
much longer to feel the cooling
raindrops dribble off your face.

Ringo pulls his pistol and slowly takes aim.

KABOOM! A lightning bolt shoots down from the sky to hit
the crucifix, it bends and shoots straight at Ringo. Another
LOUD KABOOM!

Ringo flies about fifteen feet backward, PLOP, his carcass
hits the dried up street. He twitches uncontrollably. Small
puffs of smoke drift up from his clothes, the hair on his
head smolders.

The skin and muscle on one side of his face has turned into
a dripping, liquefied mess. His teeth are broken and
blackened. He struggles desperately to breathe.

Just as suddenly, the sun returns and there's the shadow of
a man hanging over Ringo's body. The shadow is clearly that
of a tall, thin man wearing a stovepipe hat.

Ringo struggles to raise his head. In his last agonizing
breath, he sees the man. Ringo's burned and melted face
turns into sheer horror.

RINGO (CONT'D)

You... You're the damn undertaker
too! Hells bells preacher man, that
just ain't right!

His head drops in the dirt. His breathing stops.

Jonah bends down and starts taking Ringo's measurements. The Mayor runs over, his wounded arm hanging in a sling. He starts handing Jonah money.

MAYOR

Let's see... That there's ten dollars
for preachin' at him...

(beat)

Ten dollars for lawin' at him and
ten dollars to bury him.

The Mayor pauses. Jonah locks eyes with him and stares real hard.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah and I almost forgot. There's
hundred dollars for the bounty on
his head. So, what do you got to
say to that?

Jonah smiles.

JONAH

(blissful tone)

Well, the Lord has provided.

Like a bat out of hell, Betsy hurries over and snatches the money from Jonah's hand. She runs away waving the bills high in the air.

BETSY

Woo-hoo-oo... I'm a goin' shoppin'.

Jonah's face is APPALLED.

JONAH

(sarcastically)

Uh, and the devil taketh it away.

The Mayor kind of shrugs then walks away.

FADE TO BLACK:

BETSY (V.O.)

Let's see... A new dress... Some
makeup... New shoes... Oh, new shoes!
The Lord surely provided today!

THE END