

STANCE

It was the morning of May 20th, I left Fort McKavett with ten troopers. We were to scout the area around Kickapoo Spring about twenty miles to the north. We were about ten miles out when I spotted a party of Indians driving a herd of horses. I had the men form a line and charge a dead run at the Indians. Our Spencers set the air of fire and ran the Indians, who seemed shaken by the charge, off and runnin', we captured nine horses. We went on to Kickapoo Spring and bivouacked for the night. Following morning, we headed back to Post with the horses we had captured. We hadn't got far when I spied a party of warriors preparing to attack a small train. We charged again and forced the Indians to flee...we captured five more horses. But those fella's weren't going to be run off so easy. They came up from behind and opened fire on us from long range. We wheeled back around and I turned my little command LOOSE on them...after a few volleys they left me to continue my march in peace.

(Enter SMITH.)

SMITH

I was one of the troopers with Sergeant Stance. He's being too modest. We had a running fight for eight miles with them warriors. Sarge was out front leading way ahead of us, shooting, yelling for us to press the attack. Sarge you something else...

STANCE

This was my fifth successful encounter with Indians in the last two years...this seemed to impress Captain Carroll...he put me in for the medal. On July 24, 1870, I received the Medal of Honor, I wrote the Adjutant General in Washington, I told him, "I will cherish the gift as a thing of priceless value and endeavor by my future conduct to merit the high honor confirmed upon me."

(Looking at medal.)

But ya see, my pride and happiness didn't last long. When we were off duty and went into town we never had to look for trouble it was always waiting on us. A white man by the name of John Jackson, a settler near the fort murdered a FRIEND OF MINE, Private Boston Henry, shot him in cold blood...of course he escaped from the law and then killed Corporal Albert Marshall and Private Charles Murray who was in my company, Captain Carroll's F Company! When they finally caught this man they had a so-called trial, the jury quick set him free.

(A sudden burst of anger.)

That's what it's like to be a colored man in this country. You try to do right, you try to fit in, you try and prove you just like every other man, and for a minute you forget, for a MINUTE you think you like everybody else. FOR A MINUTE YOU THINK YOU EQUAL! Then here it comes, here it comes like death creeping under ya door, a word, NIGGER, a remark, an order! Our just out right MURDER.

(A beat.)