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The Baron of Arizona

By Samuel Fuller

Gentlemen, to the state of Arizona.

To Arizona.

That's good, Governor.

The state of Arizona.

I kind of like the sound of it.

I'm glad I lived to see this day.

- Mr. Griff?

- No, thank you, Governor.

- Mmm. Choice Havanas.

- I'll smoke this one.

Well, you must have something very special there.

- Very special.

- Are you writing any more books, John?

No. That was just a sideline with me.

I've been working with the Department of Interior all these years.

A friend of mine gave me this cigar.

A celebration for him too.

His 30th wedding anniversary.

Gentlemen, I'd like to propose a toast...

to a real lover of Arizona -

to my friend...

James Addison Reavis.

The man who called himself the Baron of Arizona?

Yes. He will always be a part of the Arizona legend.

Were it not for him, perhaps you gentlemen...

would not have formed your senatorial committee on statehood...

as fervidly as you did.

Oh, yes. I remember that cheap swindler.

Swindler? Yes.

But cheap?

Oh, there was nothing cheap about James Reavis.

You only remember what you read in the papers, Mr. Reynolds.

But I don't understand, Mr.

Griff. Uh, he's your friend?

Yes.

I always thought you were bitter enemies.

On the contrary, Governor...

it was a challenge to have
such a man as an adversary.
He put up a most magnificent
fight against the government.
What on earth made him dream
up such a fantastic swindle?
Ambition.

Wasn't he a clerk in the Santa
Fe land office at one time?

Yes, he was...

and it infuriated him that
ignorant people inherited land...

because the United States
recognized Spanish grants.

So he decided to steal
Arizona with forged documents.

Didn't he spend many
years perfecting his plan?

Yes. Many years.

He studied ancient records
and learned to forge them.

He studied languages.

He adopted the manners of
a gentleman of culture...

knowing all these things
were necessary to his scheme.

He created a man called Miguel de Peralta...
the first Baron of Arizona.

He was now ready to put his plan in motion.

One rainy night in 1872...

just outside Phoenix-

- Pepito Alvarez?

- Yes.

There is a girl living
here by the name of Sofia?

Yes!

She was left with you
when she was one year old.

I am James Reavis from the
land office in Santa Fe.

Come in, Mr. Reavis.

Ooh.

Arizona.

For months it did not rain here.

Oh, thank you.

You mind? Mmm.

Mmm.

Uh, would you like a good Havana?

- I do not smoke.

- Oh.

Mr. Alvarez, uh...

the government of the United States is a very fair government.

You know that.

It recognizes Spanish titles to land grants.

- Do you know what a land grant is?

- Yes.

Well, it seems that back in 1748...

the King of Spain gave

to Miguel de Peralta...

a grant of land in America.

- Did you ever hear of Peralta?

- No.

He was the first Baron of Arizona.

Baron? In America?

Yes. And according to the

laws of this country...

his direct descendant is the

rightful heir to the Peralta grant.

The heir?

Oh, yes. That means that the person...

related to him today...

owns all that land.

What has this to do with Sofia?

Her real name is Sofia de Peralta.

Here are the papers to prove it.

You, uh -

You make family for Sofia with these papers?

Read it.

I do not read.

Well, according to these papers,

she is the last of the Peraltas.

- Sofia?

- She's singing Dolores to sleep.

Who is Dolores?

This is, uh, Estrelita, Dolores's sister.

- Ah.

- I make family for Sofia too.

But not so good for her like these papers.

Ah. Call the lucky little mother.

Sofia!

Sofia!

To Reavis, this undernourished child...

was the basis of his claim

to establish an empire.

He knew it would not be

difficult to convince her...

that she had noble blood.

I suppose it stunned

this, uh, Pepito Alvarez.

Yes. But he was happy for the child.

Reavis took them from their adobe

shack to his home in Santa Fe...

where he lost no time in

molding her into a baroness.

- Good morning.

- Good morning.

You are Miss Loma Morales, unmarried...

a teacher from Las Vegas College.

Eh, Pepito, this is Miss Loma Morales.

- Mr. Alvarez.

- Loma?

What kind of name is that?

Loma means a hill.

I was born in Yucca Loma.

Were the terms in my letter satisfactory?

This is the child, Sofia de Peralta.

She is a baroness.

Do you wish the position as her governess?

The child showed promise.

Loma taught her how to walk...

sit, curtsy...

eat and listen.

And while Sofia learned how to write...

Reavis was writing in his own fashion-

writing on a stone the

foundation of a false claim...

that would stun a nation.

You all remember that

inscription on the rock.

"I have marked this stone

the heart of my grant...

"awarded to me by Ferdinand

VI, King of Spain...

"on December 20, 1748.

"I, Miguel de Peralta, Baron of Arizona...

take possession on this

day, August 12, 1750. "

Read to me again. Again?

Read to me?

- Where did you get this book, Sofia?

- In your room.

You must never take what is not yours.

Yes, sir.

Sit down here beside me.

Once upon a time...

there was a little princess...

who had royal blood in her veins.

But no one knew it except a prince...

who spent many years in many lands...

looking for her.

It is very pretty.

Sofia.

Sofia?

Happy birthday, Baroness.

The Colorado will be your private Riviera.

Every day will be a holiday.

New Year's in the Painted Desert.

Christmas in the Gila Valley.

And Thanksgiving in the Pine Timber.

And the Grand Canyon -

the Grand Canyon will be your play yard.

That's a real birthday present,

Sofia, from the United States.

Over 113,000 square

miles - as large as Italy-

and it's all yours -

every mile, every foot, every inch.

I promise you this birthright, Sofia.

Are you going away for a long time?

There are many important documents to

gather so that you can inherit all this.

Can't you do it here?

I'm afraid it's not that simple.

Then I do not want it!

What did Aristotle say of dignity?

He said, "Dignity consists...
not in possessing honors,
but in deserving them. "
- And?
- And I shall try to deserve them.
Good. You and I must never
lose our bearings, Sofia...
not even for an instant.
You must have dignity. Only peasants cry.
I know, but I want to go with
you! I want to go with you!
I want to go with you!
- I want to go with you!
- You are Sofia de Peralta, Baroness of Arizona.
Say it!

I:

- I am Sofia de Peralta...
Baroness of Arizona.
He then established
evidence of Sofia's birth...
and falsified records...
creating for her an entire
family of noble blood-
the family of one Miguel de Peralta.
And before the ink certifying them was dry...
he falsified the existence of her parents...
and carefully arranged to have
them properly laid to rest.
Having provided Sofia with
the necessary ancestry...
he sailed for Spain to
complete his worldwide forgery.
He had only one more act to perform-
falsification of the
original land grant book...
of Ferdinand VI...
which was in the
well-guarded archives-
the biblioteca in the monastery of Alcántara.
- The Father Guardian will see you now.
- Oh, thank you, Brother.
- Have you come for a short visit?
- I have come to stay.

Oh, uh, forgive me, Father.
I mean I
- I would like to stay very much.
Hmm. But why have you chosen our order?
Well, I have made careful survey, Father,
and from the little I know of your order...
I feel very much attracted to it.
There is much to prove
before you can join our order.
After all, you must admit
we know nothing about you.
Charity commands us to accept
you on your face value...
but for practical purposes, you will
have sufficient time to prove yourself.
By the time you are through
with your novitiate...
we will know more about you.
Oh, Brother Anthony, welcome
to the library of Alcántara.
I'm Brother Gregory, the
custodian. May I assist you?
Oh, thank you, Brother Gregory.
This is our scriptorium...
where we study and do
most of our spiritual work.
It's very interesting.
We have a fine collection of
books which you will enjoy.
The scribe room...
where our experts copy
and illuminate manuscripts.
The illumination is magnificent.
And the calligraphy!
The repair room...
where we strengthen and sew bindings.
- Is this for sewing the bindings?
- Yes, that's right.
- And the, uh, press?
- Yes, the press.
Uh, those are cakes of ink.
Yes, we make our own ink...
and have not changed the
formula in five centuries.

And this is our biblioteca.

This is where we preserve
our ancient books...

and, uh, priceless records.

Oh.

You are surprised to find them chained?

I can understand.

But to remove a book is strictly forbidden.

- But surely no one would dare.

- Well, who knows?

Once a rare book collector acted
rather strangely in this cell...

and we were compelled to summon
the civil police from Seville...

to investigate him.

The Mazarin Bible...

the first work of Gutenberg printed in 1450.

- I thought it was in two volumes.

- You're right, Brother Anthony.

Christopher Columbus's son

borrowed the second volume...

and, uh, never returned it.

The books and, uh, records are listed.

- You're welcome at all times.

- Thank you, Brother Gregory.

He lost no time stealing

ammonia from the infirmary...

and milk and meal from the kitchen.

He mixed a solution and tried it out.

He had to make sure he could remove the ink.

He rubbed the surface of

the page with pumice...

to smooth the irritated grain.

That night he gathered his equipment

and hurried to the biblioteca...

to forge the Peralta

grant in the 1748 volume.

This was his first major catastrophe.

But he never admitted defeat.

For months he practiced ancient penmanship.

For months he made attempts

to enter the biblioteca...

while the others were asleep.

But he failed.

One day, however...

he conceived a simple

but most effective plan...

of gaining entry into the

biblioteca where he could work.

In his cell, he deliberately

left a sample of his penmanship.

- Brother Anthony, did you write this?

- Yes, Father.

I'm assigning you to the library

to assist Brother Gregory.

- I prefer field work.

- You've been here three years.

You're a hard worker, but

your talent would be wasted.

- But, Father, I - - I

suggest you go to the library.

Yes, Father.

And this is our biblioteca...

where we preserve our ancient

books and priceless records.

- To remove one of the

books - - Brother Anthony.

Yes, Father. The books

and documents are listed.

Will you get the land grant

records of 1748, please?

Yes, the binding must be repaired.

I wonder what condition the other copy is in.

No, you may keep the keys.

Brother Gregory is ill,

but will be well tomorrow.

You are custodian of the library for tonight.

When Brother Paul has finished repairing

the binding, be sure to return the book.

Yes, Father Guardian. Oh, Father Guardian.

Yes?

Is there another copy

of such a valuable book?

The 1750 volume. It was written here.

But the Marquis de Santella has it.

He is secretary to the king.

Are you ill?

No, Father.

I was just thinking of the book.
I understand your concern
for ancient documents...
but do not despair.
They're well preserved
in his castle near Madrid.
Oh, I came here to the archive...
to seek peace within myself, Father.
You are tempted to run away.
I am not for this kind of life, Father.
Others have been tempted too.
Meditate.
We shall talk tomorrow.
You know how it is, Father. There are
so many reports, so many complaints.
But in your case, we came just
as soon as we were notified.
I'm glad you came today. I -
Oh, Brother Anthony!
Brother Anthony!
Brother Anthony!
Brother Anthony!
I did not think he would run away.
Run away? The wagon. He has
taken our horses and wagon.
- We'll bring them back.
- That's not the way.
He would not speak to me for
fear I would inspire him to stay.
Yes, he did appear frightened.
As I was telling you, Father...
your complaints finally
brought official action.
Tomorrow all holes in the
mountain roads will be filled...
even those beyond the Roman Bridge.
Some wine, Father.
Your horse is dead,
Father, your wagon firewood.
I found you
- me, Rita.
I'm not a monk, Rita.
To escape police, I had to wear this robe.
Who are you?

A wanderer, like Cain,
looking for a woman of my own.
I tell you, she was beautiful...
but I told her that a Spanish
promise is like a Spanish pepper.
It burns whoever tastes it.

- Here's a hat.

- Oh, thank you, Angie.

- And here's a coat.

- Ah.

- I think this will fit you.

- Ah, thanks.

What's the matter? Aren't you gonna
finish the stew I made for you?

- Oh, certainly, Angie. It's excellent.

- It's your horses.

Two years ago in Madrid I was
dining with royalty one night.

One of them said that no amount of washing...
could turn a gypsy white.

- I accused him of insulting the gypsies.

- You said that to a nobleman?

I spit in his face and
received 20 lashes on my back.

That pig of a nobleman was
the Marquis de Santella.

Santella? Secretary to the king?

He's a pig. He prays
every night to the devil.

- He's rich.

- I know, and I have a plan.

In his house is much gold. I
know exactly where it is hidden.

But I need help, and we can
all share in that great wealth.

- It's too dangerous.

- She is right.

A thief never takes chances.

We can get that gold.

- Then why do you need us?

- I told you, I have a plan.

As it is, they chase us like
dogs from one province to another.

Madrid!

The marquis would order half
of Spain to hunt us down.
Does a girl make decisions for you?
She has a man's shrewdness.
A shrewd woman would
know when to trust a man.
Well, why should we trust you?
We don't know who you really
are or... where you come from.
Tomorrow you leave our camp!
I told you to leave tomorrow!
Take me with you. I want to go with you.
I will not be in the way.
I will be good to you.
I will be very friendly.
- Perhaps.
- You will take me?
Yes.
Yes, I can see you in
Paris, London, America...
everybody bowing to you,
treating you like a lady.
But you'll marry one of your own...
and have many dirty-faced children.
No, no, no, no, no.
But you can't leave your people, Rita.
They depend on you. They listen to you.
I hate them.
Oh, Rita, you're like a rich
curtain before a doorway...
of wild, wonderful miracles.
There is no longer a curtain.
Each band is a sin...
and I want to confess them all to you.
You make it very hard to refuse.
I've known many women, but with you
it's different. With you I'm afraid.
Is it true what you said? That no
washing will turn a gypsy white?
It takes money.
It's all yours. Money I've saved,
stolen, hidden from the others.
I hate living in the woods like an animal...
people spitting at me and

treating me like a mongrel.

- It's not enough for what we both want.

- Then we shall get more.

The Marquis de Santella has much gold.

Enough to dress you in fine gowns

and take you far away from here.

Anything! Anything you say! Only

promise you'll take me with you.

I don't understand Rita.

Last night...

she said it was too

dangerous to go to Madrid.

Today she says we go to Madrid.

Mm-hmm.

I don't like this moving around all the time!

It makes me feel like a vagabond.

Where is the tall gypsy? The

one with the lovely beard.

Ah, Marquesa, I see a

rich, fat man in your life.

My husband is not a fat man.

The Marquis de Santella is a handsome man.

Oh, yes, Marquesa, he is beautiful.

It was because of me that

he permitted this party.

Unless you bring me the tall gypsy

at once, I'll have you driven off.

No, wait. I thought I

saw him go into the house.

No. He's in the woods...

making a love potion for you.

- I think he's in the house.

- No.

He's waiting for you in

the woods. He told me.

What are you doing here?

The gypsy girl told me

that you would be here.

She lied. She's jealous.

And so am I.

Last night you promised you'd

spend every moment with me tonight.

We must be cautious. Your husband.

I love my husband, but I'm bored with him...

and his musty, old books.
Only a fool would waste
his time on old books...
when he has a beautiful, young woman to love.
Please, don't leave with the others.
Stay here in Madrid so
we can be together often.
It's too dangerous here.
I'll meet you near the fountain.
I'll go first. You follow.
Promise?
I promise.
I've known many women...
but with you, I'm afraid.
But he never kept the
rendezvous with the Marquesa...
because he had more important things to do.
He now was ready to come out into the open.
Sofia was traveling in Europe.
He wrote her to meet him in Paris.
- How do you like Paris?
- Is good, but I like Arizona better.
Aha. And, uh, Sofia?
In there, counting the hours.
- And Loma?
- Helping her with the dresses.
Pepito, the Bonaparte sails
from Le Havre next week.
Book a passage and reserve the bridal suite.
We go home!
Bridal? You married? You?
- Not yet.
- Now, you tell me everything.
What you do, where you go, how you live...
how you send so much money.
You found a senorita in Spain,
huh? At a bullfight maybe.
- No, I found her outside of Phoenix.
- Huh?
I'm going to marry Sofia.
Mr. Reavis...
is good all you do for
Sofia, for me - is good -
but is only right for a man to take

a woman as wife when he loves her.

- Don't you believe that I love her?

- I do not mean it that way.

But, uh, she's not a girl now.

She's a woman.

You don't know Sofia as woman.

I know her better than
anyone else in the world.

But you cannot put together cake to iron...
or a girl to an old man.

- Old man?

- Well, uh -

Well, why not leave the decision up to her?

Yes. She has a good head.

- We leave it

to her. - Uh-huh.

Is she still singing Dolores to sleep?

Call the lucky little mother.

Call her.

Sofia.

Sofia.

Well, aren't you happy to see me?

I cannot see you for the tears.

Are my cheeks flushed?

You can't see in the dark.

I'm so excited.

Did you notice my necklace?

You sent it from Mexico.

- And the comb - do you
remember? - From Sevilla.

The one I like best is

- is the music box from -
From, uh, Madrid.

Sofia, how does it feel
to be a woman of dignity...

and

- and beauty?

Why don't you ask how it feels to be lonely?

You too?

All my life, I've known two men:

the one who came out of the
rain in the long black cape...

the other one who is always in my dreams.

Sofia...

am I too old for your affections?

Too old?

I am grateful to have

learned in all my travels...

what so few women ever learn:

how to recognize love.

I could never explain why...

but...

it would fill my heart if

you would become my wife.

Oh, I've

- I've wanted it this way...

ever since I realized what I wanted.

Oh, Sofia, Sofia.

I have know many, many women...

but with you...

I'm afraid.

Hey, that's a pretty fancy carriage.

Well, now we'll see what a baron looks like.

Come in.

- I am the Baron of Arizona.

- Howdy, Baron.

I'm Miller, Surveyor General.

Oh, may I present, Mr. Miller, my wife,

the Baroness Sofia de Peralta-Reavis.

How do you do, Baroness? Um -

We wish to claim full recognition

of the Peralta land grant.

There's, uh, been quite a lot of excitement

in town since your man told us you were coming.

Royalty is something new in Arizona.

Our agents have collected the necessary

copies of all certified documents.

The royal decree signed by Ferdinand VI.

The history of the Peraltas.

The petition.

Are you sure the metes and bounds

i- in this location are, uh -

- I am.

- But there must be some mistake.

Why, this grant, uh -

Why, i-it takes in practically

the entire territory of Arizona.

It does take in the territory.

It also includes all
mineral rights, all rivers...
all grazing ground.
I'd advise you to investigate
this claim at once, Mr. Miller...
for you are living on our land.
Good day, sir.
According to your records of 1750...
a stone marker would
prove a definite location.
And evidence that Peralta
actually took possession.
Well, maybe.
This is pretty wild country around here.
There is no stone.
If you say so, Mr. Miller.
Mr. Miller! Mr. Miller! Mr. Miller!
Peralta. Peralta. Peralta!
This man Reavis claims to own everything...
from the smallest shack
to the capitol in Prescott!
If the land belongs to him, the
sooner the people know it, the better.
Why? So they'll be saved court costs?
Mr. Secretary, we're whipped.
Gentlemen...
because of the Peralta grant...
the New Mexico-Arizona boundary...
has just been altered.
Congress has refused the
territory of New Mexico...
admission as a state to the union...
until the Reavis bounds are clarified by us.
Well, Griff, what about the
signatures on these documents?
This is a good Havana...
but very often a fine wrapper
conceals inferior tobacco.
You're the greatest expert in the country.
Are these papers forged?
I think so. Now, now, now, don't get excited.
Why should a land office clerk
finance a child's education...
when he could have bought the

grant from her for a few dollars...

and claimed it for himself?

- Why did he marry her?

- Well, why?

To protect himself.

As long as a true Spaniard

inherits the land...

he knows the government

will not violate the treaty.

Gentlemen, it has the stench of swindle.

The signatures on these

papers appear authentic...

but they're still only copies.

Well, Griff, what do you suggest?

To examine the original source

upon which this claim is founded -

in the monastery of Alcntara in Spain.

Come in.

- Sir, the president

of- - I am occupied.

Not too occupied to see

Gunther of Southern Railroad.

Say!

Well!

I've sent word to you more

than once to come to my office.

Your manners are as impossible, sir...

as your chances to continue

operating in Arizona.

Say!

What do you know about that?

You're not going into the railroad business

too, are you? Now, see here, Reavis -

- Baron. - Baron.

I want you -

Your lawyer told you that I hold the

threat of stopping, by injunction...

all railroads trespassing our land.

He advised you to capitulate.

- It's interesting, isn't it?

- Yes.

Since I don't want to impede progress...

- I'm permitting you to advance me \$50,000.

- Fifty thousand?

As a first installment for
an immediate quitclaim deed.
Just the amount I was going to
offer you for my right-of-way.
Well, in that case I shall remove
you from the trespassers list.
Thank you, Baron. Thank you.
Oh, Baron...
how about buying an interest
in some of your mineral rights?
How much of an interest?
Oh, a hundred thousand as a starter.
That's not a very interesting start.
Uh, Mr. Gunther...
I understand that you own that
magnificent mansion outside of Phoenix.
That's right.
Well, now that would be a very
interesting down payment...
on some of my mineral rights.
Baron, you've got yourself a house.
I'm a landowner. We all are.
- We want to know where we stand.
- In my private office without an appointment.
Just a moment. Let's not have any
violence, at least not till I get my story.
I'm McCleary of the New York World. If you
don't mind answering a few questions, Baron.
Is it true you're collecting thousands of
dollars in revenues, rents and royalties...
even before your claim has
been recognized in any court?
Would a railroad advance me a penny...
if there were a question
regarding the validity of my claim?
Not if I know those railroads.
This is Gunther of Southern Railroad.
Mr. Gunther, are you paying me
for right-of- way through my land?
Well, uh, yes.
Why don't you wait till the government
recognizes his claim officially, Mr. Gunther?
And be forced to pay
him an impossible figure?

That would be poor business foresight.
If I were you, men...
I would settle right now for what he demands.
Why don't all of you gentlemen
listen to the railroad man?
That's why he's so rich.
Baron, my publisher, Mr. Pulitzer,
wants me to write you up...
as the man who changed geography.
- This is only the beginning.
- This is sufficient for me.
Nothing is sufficient for
anyone who can change geography.

My dear, I -
I've just bought a private
railroad car for us.
We'll go all over our
territory sometime next month.
Oh, let's not go anywhere for a long
time. I've so many wonders to get used to.
This is our first real home.

Anything you say, my dear.
Is it unladylike for a baroness to -
to shout to everyone that
she loves her husband?
Never mind everyone. Just shout it to me.

- Well, I did it.
- You sure nobody was home?
- No, nobody was home.
- Tom.
- It's wrong.
- He's just a lot of fancy words.

That little explosion'll
scare him right out of town.
Don't worry, Carrie. We
ain't gonna lose our home.
- I oughta turn you in to the sheriff.
- Pa!

He can't take the law into his own hands.
It ain't up to him to scare the baron
outta here. It's up to the government.
Hank, nothing'll stop me from
tangling with you if you get in my way.
You just got a room in town,

that's all. You got nothing to lose.

We got everything.

Did you ever read it?

I thought you might like a copy.

- My name's Griff.

- My library is complete.

How do you do, Mr. Griff?

- Cigar?

- Thank you.

Writing books is a sideline.

I'm with the Department of Interior.

Oh? What exactly is your job, Mr. Griff?

Not a very pleasant one, sir.

I expose falsified wills,
ancient manuscripts and, uh...

Spanish land grants.

I can understand the government's
reluctance to part with Arizona.

I am prepared for a thorough
investigation of all documents.

But I don't appreciate the
inference of falsification of papers.

I've never yet met a claimant who
appreciated my presence in a case.

Griff. Hmm.

Come to think of it, your name is familiar.

I heard of you when I was a clerk
in the land office at Santa Fe.

Frankly, didn't you read my book?

I really don't recall it.

I've just returned from Spain after following
your trail from Mexico City to Madrid.

- Surprised?

- On the contrary.

I'm pleased with your energy.

I hope that your investigation
proved interesting.

Interesting enough for another book.

Oh. When you write it, send me a copy.

Your penmanship was truly a masterpiece.

A work of art.

This is a good Havana, sir.

But it's a pity your claim is a bad
cigar wrapped in a rich Spanish leaf.

Good day.

Oh.

It's autographed.

- How do you do?

- How do you do?

May I present Mr. John

Griff of Washington, D.C.

My wife, the Baroness Sofia de Peralta

- Reavis.

How do you do, Mrs. Reavis?

Forgive me. This is very important.

Mr. Reavis...

during the investigation

of your wife's parentage...

did you go to the Guadalajara cemetery?

Yes, Mr. Griff, I did.

And that is where her

father and mother are buried?

Yes, it is.

Mr. Martinez.

Is this the man?

S.

Is he the one who told you he was looking for
the tombstones of Pedro and Maria de Peralta?

S.

Is he the one who paid you to cut
words on two unmarked tombstones...

in the Guadalajara cemetery?

He pay me to cut flowers and

keep the grave nice and beautiful.

Martinez, you know the

seriousness of perjury?

What is "perjury"?

Did you see this man today?

I see him. Eleven years ago.

He were looking for Peralta family.

- You told me he bribed you.

- What is "bribe"?

Poor devil. I can understand

what happened and why you did it.

It won't do you much good.

Mr. Griff.

You think my husband is a fake?

Mr. Griff, look at me.

Tell me, am I a fake?
I felt a sense of guilt.
Don't let their resentment
disturb you, Sofia.
It's wrong.
Something is wrong.
I never want to come here again.
I mean it.
You must accept certain terms, Sofia.
Perhaps I'm not proud
enough to accept such terms.
I forbid you to speak like that.
I remember when you
forbade me to eat raw sugar.
Then remember that you are a baroness.
Now compose yourself.
Sit down, my dear.
How do you do, sir?
How do you do, Baron?
May I present Mr. Richardson,
Secretary of the Interior.
My wife, the Baroness Sofia de Peralta
- Reavis.
- An honor, Baroness.
- On our part, Mr. Secretary.
- Won't you sit down, sir?
- Thank you.
Well, sir...
we've had our best agent
investigating your claim...
for six tedious months.
Well, I have implicit faith in the
integrity of our Washington experts.
We can't afford delay, Baron.
It's costing the people too much.
And you leave us no alternative...
but to make good on the multitude
of land titles we've issued.
Well, I'm certain the government
findings will be fair...
and I shall abide by their
official confirmation or denial.
How much is the barony worth to you?
That's a difficult figure

to reach, Mr. Secretary.
As you are well aware...
there are treasures of
unmined gold and silver...
and, uh, the rich grazing land and -
A most difficult figure to reach.
Well...
the United States is prepared
to pay you \$25 million...
for the purchase of the territory of Arizona.
I regret that we must
decline your offer, sir.
What do you expect?
Recognition of the Peralta grant.
Baroness. Baron.
Do you remember the day you
sobbed like a little peasant?
I did not want Arizona.
I wanted to be with you.
But I promised you your birthright, Sofia.
Now it's yours, all of it
- every mile, every foot, every inch.
What is it you really want?
And not only that, but my father
was the first white American...
to pitch a tent in Phoenix.
Since I was eight years old
I helped him plant and plow...
until we got enough to buy our own
piece of land from the government.
And then this fella comes along who says he's a
- a baron...
whatever that is...
and every time I try talking
plain horse sense to him...
he told me to settle with one of his clerks.
Well, I'm gonna settle
with this baron himself.
There's your chance,
Lansing! There they come!
Clear the road.
"Clear the road. " Next we'll have
to pay you to breathe this air.
Reavis, you think the government'd sell

us land that doesn't belong to them?
No. And any man who speaks like
that is a traitor to his country.
Citizens of Arizona...
we don't want your homes
or shops or livestock.
Then why are you trying to scare us
into paying for what's already ours?
I have terrorized no one.
I don't want to hurt you.
I want to help all of you develop Arizona
into the richest barony in the world.
That ain't for America. That's for Europe.
We ain't slave workers,
and you ain't our king.
No.
But I am the Baron...
and what goes with the barony must
and will be recognized by all of you...
just as it was recognized 10 minutes
ago by the United States government.
We heard you forged them papers.
There will be all kinds of rumors.
Why don't you go to the surveyor
general's office right now?
There's a man there who can
straighten you out on this matter.
He's from Washington.
He just offered us \$25 million for our land.
But I turned him down. I'm
not interested in money.
I'm interested in land and its development.
What if we don't have the money to pay
you? What if we don't have the money?
What'll you do?
I shall evict you.
James!
I feel like Caesar's wife
before he was murdered.
You've sacrificed much, but the effort'll
be worthless if something happens to you.
I saw the faces of those people today.
They hate us. They're afraid of us.
Once you were afraid of me. Remember?

I was never afraid of you.
I loved you the instant you gave
me the second piece of candy.
But I'm not happy to be the Baroness.
That's because you still feel
a sense of unnecessary guilt.
Why must we have all the land?
It would take me days to cover the
acreage around this house alone.
I don't want a dead baron.
I want a live husband.
Oh, I know only peasants cry, but I -
I love you, I love you,
I love you, I love you!
You ain't takin' my farm away from me!
You'll have to shoot me also.
"James Addison de Peralta-Reavis...
"and Sofia de Peralta Reavis...
"husband and wife...
versus the United States of America. "
The plaintiffs ask the government
to confirm their title...
to the territory of Arizona.
This is the most unusual case
in the history of land claims.
Every spectator has land at stake and -
I paid the Baron \$4,000.
Do I get my money back?
I don't want to be compelled
to have you arrested...
but this is now a federal court...
and while you have the
sympathy of the government...
I will tolerate no further disturbance.
Is that clear?
Has the government any legal proof
exposing my claim as a forgery?
No.
Has the government any evidence
to prove the ancestry...
of the Baroness Sofia
de Peralta-Reavis false?
The government has not.
Have you any proof to

discredit the Peralta claim?

No.

Your Honor, I accuse the government
of casting a cloud of suspicion...
on the integrity of my wife, the
Baroness Sofia de Peralta-Reavis.
I accuse the government of encouraging
mobs to violate our privacy...
and to make attempts on our lives.
I accuse the government of costing us
the hatred, suspicion and distrust...
of the people living on our land...
by the deliberate delay of
the recognition of our claim.

I accuse the government of violating the treaty
of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsen Purchase.
And I demand that the government,
according to its own law...
legally, officially and permanently
confirm the title to the Peralta land grant.

Is the government prepared
to question witnesses?

No, Your Honor.

Don't you even wish to
question the plaintiffs?

No, Your Honor.

This sudden move of the United
States being on the defense...
has come as a complete surprise.
At this moment we are unprepared to
establish evidence that will prove...
that the original Baron of
Arizona, Miguel de Peralta...
was a mythical gentleman created
by the fertile brain of Mr. Reavis.
Because the government is the defendant...
it is essential that this proof
be produced as quickly as possible.
It shall be presented as soon
as we are ready, Your Honor.
Let the Court point out that
if this proof is not valid...
the United States of America...
will be compelled to surrender

Arizona to the plaintiffs.
We understand the gravity of the situation.
Why, even at this moment we are awaiting
reports that will prove the grant...
and all the papers colossal forgeries.
We shall prove that the woman
known as the Baroness of Arizona...
inherited an utterly
fictitious and fraudulent title.
We shall prove that her husband,
James Reavis, is a fake...
a forger, a swindler and a thief.
Yes?
Up to now, I fought my husband all the way.
Poor showing for a wife, isn't it?
I was on your side. I felt sorry for you.
I did not like the thought of taking away
your land, even if it does belong to us.
I tried to erase the barony
and all it represented.
But now I can think of
nothing but my husband.
In this room he was publicly
accused of being a fake...
a forger and a swindler.
I will not tolerate such charges,
not even by the government.
My husband is not a fraud. He is
not a swindler. He is not a forger.
I have nothing to offer him
except my love and my faith in him.
And if it's fight you
want, it's fight you'll get!
No one calls my husband a thief!
Well, Your Honor, is the
land ours, or isn't it?
We've got a little business to settle, Baron.
And we've made sure nobody would disturb us.
Now, this fella Griff's all right,
but we believe he's telling the truth.
We got an idea you're going to outsmart him.
And that's really got us worried.
And if we don't have the proof, it means Arizona's
handed over to you like a shot of bourbon.

- You heard what the judge said.
- But we don't wanna see it go that far.

Is this the vanguard of
the vigilante committee?

Maybe.

Maybe we don't like your kind scaring
people into giving you money...

just so they can hang onto
land that's already theirs.

That's very interesting. I'm touched
by your public spirit, gentlemen.

What do you propose I do about it?

We ain't like the others
who want to lynch you.

That won't help the government much.

You know a lot of fancy words,

Baron. We heard you in court today.

Just write a confession that it was
all a mistake about the land grant.

That'll make it easier for everybody.

Start writin'.

How old was she? Are you an American citizen?

- How old was she?

- Are you a good American?

- How long you been in this country?

- You got your citizenship yet?

- I warned you against such tactics!

- They put words in my mouth!

I do not know what they want!

To me, he's the Baron, she's the Baroness.

Mr. Alvarez...

you will forgive the
government for annoying you?

Yes. Yes, Mr. Griff.

I'm sorry. You know how it is.

Right.

Unfortunately, this case is gonna take time.

Reavis knows I know he forged the documents.

He also knows it will
be difficult to prove it.

Very difficult.

But what I don't like about this
is the feeling of mob justice.

That means people will be killed.

You remember once before...

we walked like this near
my little adobe shack, huh?

- Mm-hmm. -

Long time ago.

And you remember that night?

For months it did not rain in Phoenix.

It was so dry, one could not even spit.

And then it rained

- a miracle.

Then you knock on the door

- a great miracle.

The rain brought life to the
earth. You brought life to Sofia.

But it is not your fault...

people call you a fake...

'cause that miracle in
the rain was one big lie.

What are you talking about?

I, uh

- I know all the time Sofia is not a Peralta.

- What?

- It is true.

But I checked with everyone. They
said she was abandoned with you.

- They all said she was illegitimate.

- No. She did have her mother and father.

But there was a reason why I
could not let anyone know this.

What reason?

She has Indian blood in her.

I promised her people before
they die I tell no one.

So she will be like other girls, you know.

It make it easier for

Sofia when she grow up...

when she get married.

I promised them I take good care of Sofia.

She will eat good and

learn and be a fine woman.

But I am poor.

And always Sofia, she has
nothing but the pigs and the mud.

Nothing.

And then you came...
and I made my plan.
- You made a plan?
- Yes.
But I did not think it would mean
fights and shootings and lynchings...
and taking land from people.
I did not think this.
I think it would mean
good chance for Sofia...
to have everything I could not give her.
So I lie!
I do not say you have found the wrong child.
I say nothing.
Ohh. I do not sleep.

I:

- I'm sick inside.
But all the time I say to myself...
"Pepito, this is good for Sofia. "
Oh, but now I know it's wrong.
It's wrong.
It is because of me that Mr. Griff
say your writing on the paper is false.
It is because of me he
say Sofia is not a Peralta.
He is a smart man.
I will go to him and make a stop to all this.
I will make a stop to people getting hurt.
I will tell him it is not you...
but me who is the fake.
Well, I'm -
I'm sorry for what I did to you...
my friend.
You're leaving, hmm?
Yes.
Pepito told me about myself.
Did he?
Is that why you're going away?
No.
Then it's because of what I am.
- That's not why I'm leaving.
- Then what is it?
I'm a fake.

Pepito told me you had
blamed yourself for his fraud.
- Did he say that?
- Yes.
You don't understand.
He had a reason for lying.
It was for you.
I have no reason. It's for myself.
Your eyes look sick. You've been crying.
I don't want you to feel
guilty because of me.
Oh, good heavens, Sofia.
I spent years developing your
mind, and yet you're unable to -
to grasp what I'm saying.
I tell you, I'm a forger.
The whole scheme is one big fraud.
There never has been a Peralta.
I created the family out of my own mind
and faked it with ink in the records.
I married you because it was part of
my scheme, not because I loved you.
Well, I'm ready for your contempt...
and your disgust.
Take a good look at me.
Take a good look at your husband.
Now you know why I'm leaving.
I don't want you to go.
Sofia, look, we have over \$500,000. We
can go to Europe. They'll never find us.
Let's not have any illusions,
James. We're guilty, both of us.
You may go. I'll take the
money back to the people.
Now you're having illusions.
I am Mrs. James Reavis...
and one of us must have the
dignity to accept punishment.
One of us must have the
dignity to recognize love.
I'll always love you.
Nothing can change that.
You still want me?
I'll want you until the day I die.

It is not death, it is dying that alarms me.

It is not your crime, it's
your weakness that alarms me.

Arizona.

Seems so small.

You suddenly seem so great.

Now I know what I was looking for-
a woman who would love me for what I am.

No man can live without that.

No man can ask for more.

- This will make you feel better, dear.

- Thank you.

None for me, Loma.

Mrs. Reavis.

- You sent for me?

- Yes, Mr. Griff.

I, uh

- I have a statement to make.

Strangely enough, I was on my way to see
you when Mr. Alvarez came to my office.

Oh.

Mr. Griff, you were right.

My claim is a bad cigar
wrapped in a rich Spanish leaf.

I am guilty of the criminal act of forgery...
with intent to defraud the
government of the United States.

My wife is innocent of
any part in the conspiracy.

And Loma Morales and Pepito Alvarez...
believed my story of her ancestry.

They are blameless.

That's very interesting, Mr. Reavis.

Excuse me a moment.

Troy.

Your Honor.

Ladies, will you please be seated?

What is this?

The court of private land
grant claims is now in session.

- What?

- This is quite an occasion, Mr. Reavis.

One of historical significance.

This federal court has been

granted the permission...
to sit wherever and whenever it wants...
and we've decided to hold
court here in your home...
to avoid a mob riot in a public hearing.
Mr. Reavis, we have legal proof...
that will indict, convict and
sentence you to the penitentiary.
Proof? My forgery is flawless.
Remember this?
The 1748 volume of the Spanish land grants.
I must admit this is the finest
example of forgery I've ever seen.
Now, we had the ink on this page analyzed.
It contains the tannin acid of oak.
No, that's impossible.
I made that ink myself.
And the monks haven't changed
their formula for over 500 years.
A monk named Brother Paul came to
Alcantara from the north of Spain.
He brought his own ink.
Every word on this page was
written by him with his own ink...
except this account of the grant awarded
to Peralta by King Ferdinand of Spain.
This was written with ink which had no oak.
You used the ink made in the
south when you forged this page.
You didn't need my confession, did you?
No, not now.
Will it be a
- a long prison term?
It's according to how much money
you return to the landowners.
The lavish manner in which
you spent the money...
will determine the years
of your imprisonment.
There's all the money.
I'm tired. I need a rest.
Father Guardian told me to meditate.
I should have listened to him that night.
The court cannot guarantee the rest...

but you'll have sufficient time to meditate.

Well, I will help you gather up all

my records and receipts and papers.

You'll need them. They're at my office.

Mr. Alvarez, I'm going to

request leniency for you.

Frankly, Your Honor, I don't see

criminal intent in his conspiracy...

just ignorant devotion and sentiment.

Are you ready?

Loma...

I've never thanked you for

all you've done for Sofia...

the influence you've had on her.

I'm -

I'm grateful.

Court is now adjourned.

- Are you ready, Mr. Griff?

- Yes.

By the way, Mr. Reavis...

did you read my book?

It was my bible.

The land in Arizona don't belong to no baron!

It belongs to you and me! We paid for it!

We paid for it with money, and

we paid for it with our hard work!

Now, maybe these government

men mean all right...

but I'm sayin' it takes 'em too long to act!

We gotta do somethin' now!

There's only one thing about

this case I can't understand.

What's that?

After devoting so many years to

this scheme, what made you confess?

I fell in love with my wife.

Get that sign down!

The Baron is comin'! The Baron is comin'!

Joe, I don't like this quiet.

Yeah.

Funny. I never seen this square

so empty this time of night.

Quick!

This'll learn ya! You don't take

land that don't belong to ya!

Hoist 'im!

- James!

- Go on and hang me, you stupid idiots!

Hang me, and the land'll

never be proven yours.

Go on and hang me!

What's the matter?

Haven't you got any brains?

Isn't there one man among you

with sense enough to realize...

that once I'm dead you'll

never be able to prove anything?

Ask the government man. He'll tell you.

That's why he was with me

- to question me, to save your property.

You know the law.

Tell 'em what'll happen if they hang me.

Tell 'em what'll happen to their land!

- What's lynchin' got to do

with provin' the land is ours?

Hang me, and you hang your ranches

and farms and shops and mines.

Hang me, and you'll never give

Griff a chance to get at me.

He can't try a dead man. I've got to be alive

if you want to prove that the land is yours.

I've gotta answer questions.

I've gotta identify documents.

I've got to be legally cross-examined

by the United States government.

What do I have to do to pound

it into your thick skulls?

Hang me, and you hang

all your claims with you!

Go on! Hang me!

I thought I told you to leave me.

Get in.