

BLOOD FOR POSTERITY

Written by

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(C) 2020

Western, photographer, pool cue, restroom

FADE IN:

**EXT. ALLEY - DAY**

Clothes hang from a line attached to the brick wall of a tenement. Underneath them sits a row of four outhouses.

MATHEW BRADY (58), bespectacled and unkempt in a rumpled suit, with a tuft of white chin hair, comes into view.

**SUPER: DENVER, COLORADO - 1891**

The door to outhouse 3 opens. A MAN (31), still tending to his trousers, emerges. Thin, baby-faced, wearing a derby.

MATHEW  
Hello, William.

The man smiles. He feigns looking around for this "William."

MAN  
Good day, kind sir. I do not know  
this William whom you seek, but I  
dare say I ain't that fella.

Mathew breaks into a warm, tight-lipped smile.

MATHEW  
You know, kid, my assistant never  
misses a trick. She said you'd head  
back East eventually. I missed you  
by half a day in New York.

MAN  
Do I know you? We been introduced?

MATHEW  
It's becoming the worst kept  
secret. Stagecoach drivers from the  
territories keep spreading it.

The man smirks. He exhales a sigh of defeat.

MAN  
Hello, Mathew. You know, I really  
like those pictures you done of the  
Presidents. Especially that one of  
my friend, President Hayes.

MATHEW  
You know, I read Garrett's book  
with a great deal of interest.

MAN

What do you want, Brady?

MATHEW

A photograph, of course.

MAN

Ha ha, no can do there.

The man gazes at his adversary quizzically.

MAN (CONT'D)

You ain't got nothing better to do than to track me clear across the country? For what, a photo?

MATHEW

I'm an old man, kid. Not much time left. I did some portrait work in Kansas City on the way here. By the way, Frank Dalton says hello.

Mathew extends his hand.

MATHEW (CONT'D)

And seeing as I've traveled all this way for nothing, I suppose I'll have to settle for the story. I promise you your secret is safe with me. And if you ever change your mind? My studio is ready.

The man touches his hand to his lips.

MAN

Gentleman's agreement?

**EXT. SALOON - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

A ramshackle establishment next to a stable on a dusty road.

**SUPER: ACME, NEW MEXICO - 1881**

**INT. SALOON - DAY**

The door swings open. A solemn man with a thick moustache and star on his lapel enters. This is sheriff PAT GARRETT (31).

JOSEPH ANTRIM (19), stocky, with a jovial air, leans over the pool table. He eyes his opponent, then lines up a shot, and goes two cushions to pocket the eight ball.

His OPPONENT slams the butt end of the cue into the floor.

                                OPPONENT  
                         Dammit, Antrim! You just ain't no  
                         fair, now is you?

Garrett, at the bar, turns when he hears the name "Antrim."

The pool player angrily slams a bill down on the table.  
 Antrim scoops it up. He waves the cue in the air.

                                ANTRIM  
                         I dare say it's my lucky cue. Never  
                         let it leave my sight. Though you  
                         could stand with some practice.  
                         Hold my turn - goin' to the privy.

Antrim heads toward the door, carrying the cue stick. He and  
 Garrett lock eyes. Looks of recognition.

**EXT. SALOON - OUTHOUSE - DAY**

Garrett opens the outhouse door, gun pulled. It's empty. He  
 starts toward the rear, when he hears the sound of footsteps.

It's the well-manicured Deputy JOHN POE (30).

                                POE  
                         Clifford just rode in on his way to  
                         Roswell. Says the kid passed him on  
                         the trail, heading toward Sumner.

**INT. OUTHOUSE - DAY**

Poe drops his trousers and squats.

**EXT. SALOON - OUTHOUSE - DAY**

Antrim's leaned up against the back of the outhouse, cue in  
 hand. He hears twigs snap under the fall of boots.

Garrett creeps slowly past the side of the structure, his gun  
 drawn. He reaches the back when...

Antrim jumps out and in a fell swoop takes a vicious swing  
 with the butt end of the cue to the back of Garrett's head.  
 The Sheriff cries out, and falls to the dirt.

Antrim gathers himself. He slides the cue through the  
 vertical handle, horizontally across the door. The door  
 shakes, but doesn't open. Poe POUNDS from inside.

**EXT. MAXWELL RANCH - DUSK (FORT SUMNER, NEW MEXICO)**

A sprawling brick and stucco structure off a wide dirt road.

Garrett and Poe ride up to the main entrance. They spot one of the outlaws' horses. They dismount... and wait. TWO FARMHANDS walk by... Garrett motions at them with his gun.

ANTRIM (O.S.)

Leave 'em alone, Pat. He's gone.  
Won't be coming back anytime soon.

Antrim walks into view, his gun trained on Garrett.

GARRETT

Hello, Joe. Guess I should arrest you for assault on an officer of the law, now shouldn't I?

ANTRIM

Yeah, I'm awfully sorry 'bout that.

GARRETT

Why'd you do it?

ANTRIM

Needed a head start on you.

GARRETT

No, Joe... why'd you do it?

ANTRIM

He's my brother.

GARRETT

That ain't meant squat before.

ANTRIM

He's New Mexico. He's the folk hero. I ain't measured up to that. Never will. So he's gotta keep on. I coulda rode out with him. But I'd rather run him some interference.

GARRETT

Tell me where he's headed. And I'll go easy on you. Cut a deal.

Antrim holsters his weapon and extends his arms, palms up.

ANTRIM

You do what you need to do, Pat. But I ain't just saved him. I saved you, too. You rode with him.

Garrett closes his eyes.

ANTRIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 You don't have it in you to kill  
 him any more than I do. He's your  
 brother, too. Just let him go.

Garrett opens his eyes. He rubs his chin with his hand.

GARRETT  
 I'll need a body.

Antrim lowers his arms and takes a step back.

ANTRIM  
 Jeez, I don't know what I -

Garrett draws his pistol and fires.

**EXT. ALLEY - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)**

Henry McCarty, a/k/a William Antrim, a/k/a William H. Bonney,  
 a/k/a BILLY THE KID, stands before Mathew Brady, forlorn.

BILLY THE KID (MAN)  
 There's a man in my grave. Next to  
 Charlie and Tom. But it ain't me.  
 As far as the census is concerned,  
 you're looking at Joseph Antrim.

Mathew puts his notepad back in his pocket.

MATHEW  
 Kid... I -

BILLY THE KID  
 Someday. Someday I'll go on the  
 record. Set everything straight.  
 But today? Today ain't that day. I  
 appreciate you stopping by, Mathew.  
 You have a good day, now.

Billy ambles away, whistling a sad, haunting tune.

**SUPER: Billy the Kid was reported shot by Sheriff Pat Garrett  
 on July 14, 1881. There were rumors he survived. Ollie  
 "Brushy Bill" Roberts claimed to be the notorious outlaw, and  
 told his story to an attorney a year before he died in Hico,  
 Texas in 1950. And the legend continues...**

FADE OUT.