UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode #43

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11:30 to 12:30 P.M. C.S.T. DECEMBER 15, 1932. THURSDAY

ORCHESTRA: RANGER SONG:

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" ---

ORCHESTRA: QUARTETTE:

ANNOUNCER:

Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers, the wearers of the pine-tree badge, are the men who guard our country's great National Forests - those living reservoirs of forest wealth where the resources are managed and protected for continuous usefulness in the public interest. Each week at this time we have a look-in at the Pine Cone National Forest Ranger District, where Forest Ranger Jim Robbins and his young assistant, Jerry Quick, are on the job. Last Thursday, you remember, Jerry failed to show up for some important work he had been sent out to do. When he returned to the Ranger Station in the evening, he seemed reluctant to explain his absence; and soon after that he disappeared again. We continue now with the story, and as we tune in we find Ranger Jim and his wife, Bess, still wondering why Jerry slipped away so mysteriously a few moments before ---

JIM: Hmmm -- Durned if I can figure it out, Bess.

BESS: I'm sure it must be all right, Jim. Jerry's such a good boy - I can't believe he'd do anything wrong deliberately.

JIM: I'd hate to believe it, too - but absence from official duty without permission, or without a good reason, is a rather serious matter in the Forest Service, and I'm afraid Jerry's in for trouble if he can't give an acceptable explanation.

BESS: He doesn't seem to want to tell where he was today, does he?

JIM: Nope. He shut up like a clam.

BESS: Where do you suppose he went when he slipped out just now?

JIM: I wish I knew. I don't know anything we can do about it just now, though, Bess. -- Let's forget it and talk about something else.

BESS: Yes, let's. -- (PAUSE) Do you suppose Jerry could've fallen in with bad company, Jim?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) I thought we were going to talk about something else.

BESS: Yes, so we were. But I'm so worried about him, Jim.

JIM: Well, I reckon we could find other things to worry about too, if we tried. Most people can find enough to worry about.

BESS: Yes indeed.

JIM: Of course my pet worry is the welfare of our forest. We've sure got plenty to do yet before we can get our forest in the shape we'd like to see it in, Bess.

BESS: Yes, I know.

JIM: We've still got a couple of old burns that aren't producing anything yet - not even enough brush to keep the soil from washing away. I hope we can get those areas planted to trees before many more years go by.

BESS: I hope so, too, Jim. We want all our forest green and growing, as you say so often.

JIM: Yep. -- Well -- we've worked up a pretty good fire protection system with what we have to work on, but I guess there's still room for improvement. -- And we need more facilities to take care of all our visitors -- tourists and recreationists. More of 'em coming up every year, Bess.

BESS: I know. Some day, maybe, our forest will be the best in the country.

JIM: Well, I like to think it's the best in the country already - in spite of all that needs to be done. Of course, you always keep looking ahead, trying to make it better - but you get mighty attached to your forest when you've worked for it as long as we have.

BESS: Yes. It keeps growing on you all the time.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Reminds me of the old settler we ran across from the sage brush country, that pulled up states after he'd tried to scratch out a living without any success for several years. "What kind of country was it you nested in?" we asked him. -- "Well," he says, "it's the most God-forsaken spot on this green earth." -- "How about farming?" we asked him. "Get very good crops out there?" -- "Farmin'?!" he says, "You couldn't grow a green stalk if you set beside it and nursed it twenty-four hours a day." -- "Well," we says, "how about cattle raising? Ought to be good cattle country." -- "Cattle?" he says. "A cow'd walk himself to death huntin' for a blade of grass." -- "Well," we says, "you must have some pretty fine scenery out there anyhow." -- "Scenery! he says. "The country's flatter'n the palm on yer hand. You can look further and see less than any place I know of." -- Then he sat there sorta thinkin' to himself awhile, and pretty soon, - "Doggone," he says, "if I could jest figger out a way to make a livin' out there, I'd sure go back."

(PAUSE)

BESS: I don't see how you can tell jokes tonight, Jim, with our Jerry in trouble, maybe - Maybe something's happening to him right this minute.

JIM: Well, when you're having troubles, maybe that's the time a joke comes in the handiest, Bess.

BESS: I'm sure someone must have been prowling around the Station out there - when Rex started barking the way he did.

JIM: I didn't see anyone - but Rex doesn't usually bark without something to bark at -- that's true.

BESS: Jerry must have heard Rex bark, too. Of course he might've just gone out to investigate, like you did, -- but you'd think he would have said something, if that was it - instead of slipping out without us knowing it.

JIM: Well -- I s'pose it'll all come out in the end - but in the meantime I'd like to know what's going on. If the boy's in trouble, I want to help him - but if he's done something to discredit the Service, it's my duty to see that proper disciplinary action is taken.

BESS: Oh dear. I wish we knew what it was, Jim. I'm so worried about him. -- Where could he have gone?

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

JERRY: (HALF WHISPER) Is that you, Tommy?

TOMMY: (WHISPER) Who is it? -- Jerry?

(FOLLOWING DIALOGUE ALL SOTTO VOCE)

JERRY: Yeah.

TOMMY: Gee! You scared the daylights out of me. - Gosh, it's dark.

JERRY: It sure is. -- Listen, Tommy - did you get it back?

TOMMY: I -- I'm afraid to, Jerry.

JERRY: We've got to get it back - some way. We've got to -- see?

TOMMY: I know, but -- how we gonna do it?

JERRY: I don't know - that's it. How're we going to do it?

TOMMY: You aint told anybody yet, Jerry? You aint gonna tell, now?

JERRY: I said I wouldn't tell anybody, didn't I?

TOMMY: Yeah. -- Gee, I'd sure hate to have our school teacher find out. It'd make Miss Halloway kinda -- feel bad --

JERRY: Mary Halloway? It'd break her heart.

TOMMY: I'm scared, Jerry. Gee, I wish I was a million miles away from here.

JERRY: I'm afraid we're in for some trouble, Tommy. We gotta do something - and darn quick, too --

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

BESS: Oh, dear. Why doesn't Jerry come back? -- I'm so worried, Jim.

JIM: Well, I don't exactly feel joyful myself, Bess.

BESS: If we only knew what it was all about.

JIM: I would have trusted that boy implicitly, Bess. I've always had the feeling I could rely on him, ever since he came up here. -- And he's never been afraid of hard work, and if he made a mistake, he was always willing to admit it, and make it good. -- I was getting to be mighty fond of that boy --

(PHONE RINGS)

BESS: Oh, it's the telephone. It startled me.

JIM: I guess this business has got your nerves kinda jumpy, Bess - (ANSWERING PHONE) Hello - Pine Cone Ranger Station -- Huh?! -- Sometime this morning, you say? -- Yes -- I see -- (SOFTLY) Yes -- I -- I'll be ready -- (HANGS UP RECEIVER) (TO BESS) Bess, the office of the Winding Creek Lumber Company was robbed today.

BESS: Robbed!? Oh, my heavens!

JIM: Some cash was taken out of the drawer this morning -- and Bess, I'm afraid it's going to look bad for Jerry. Al Perkins, the superintendent up at the logging camp knows that Jerry was not on the job today, you know. -- And his disappearing again tonight --

BESS: Oh, but Jim! Jerry couldn't have done a thing like that!

JIM: It looks bad, Bess. -- Somebody just saw a couple of suspicious-looking persons lurking around the edge of the forest, and they're organizing a posse to go out and round 'em up. -- They want me to lead it, Bess.

BESS: You? Are you going, Jim?

JIM: Yes -- I'll -- have to go, Bess. -- (WITH EMOTION) Bess, am I going to have to lead the search for my own young assistant? Am I -- going to have to hunt down my own -- boy?!

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(FADE IN WITH HUM OF VOICES - SHOUTS OF "COME ON, JIM," "ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET GOIN'," "LET'S GO," ETC.) (OFF)

SHERIFF: All ready, Jim?

JIM: All set, boys.

SHERIFF: You know this forest country better'n anybody else around here, Jim. You lead the way.

JIM: All right, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Say -- where's that assistant of yours? Where's young Quick?

JIM: He's not here tonight.

SHERIFF: Not here?

JIM: No.

VOICE: (SLIGHTLY OFF) Bet he's out courtin' the schoolmum. (LAUGHTER)

SHERIFF: Al Perkins says he wasn't on the job today.

JIM: He did? - Listen, boys, where was it they saw those two men?

SHERIFF: Up on the edge of the Forest - beyond the school house.

JIM: All right. Let's head up that way. -- Spread out, you fellows, - and listen here - no shooting unless you have to in self-defense. Get that? --

(SHOUTS OF "ALLRIGHT," "OKAY," ETC., OFF)

JIM: We don't want to have any innocent men shot around here just because they happen to be out at night. -- All right, boys - spread out and we'll work up past the school house --

(FADEOUT WITH HUM OF VOICES)

(BRIEF PAUSE)

SHERIFF: (FADING IN) Who's that? -- Hey you! Who're you?

JERRY: (OFF) What's all the excitement about?

SHERIFF: Blamed if it aint that young Ranger! (SHOUTS) Hey Jim! Jim!

JIM: (OFF) Yo. What is it?

SHERIFF: Here's that young assistant of yours! Young Quick!

JIM: (COMING UP) Yeah? So it is.

SHERIFF: I seen 'im hidin' behind that tree, Jim. What's he doin' out here hidin' behind trees this time of night - that's what I want to know?

JIM: Hmm. - How about it, Jerry?

JERRY: I -- I'm looking after something - some personal business -

JIM: Look here, Jerry. There's been a robbery committed in the village here - sometime this morning -- see?

JERRY: I know -- (RAISING VOICE) Say, listen, fellows - that money's going to be returned - See? I'll stand personally responsible for it's being returned - every cent of it - if there's no questions asked -- see?

(HUM OF VOICES, OFF)

SHERIFF: Yeah? Well, there is so goin' to be some questions asked. How come you know so much about it, young feller?

JERRY: I'm not telling.

SHERIFF: Huh? -- Look-a-here, Jim. Al Perkins says this young feller turned up missing today. I reckon he better tell where he was.

VOICE: (OFF) Mebbe we oughta search 'im!

(HUM OF VOICES)

JIM: Are you going to tell us where you were today, Jerry?

JERRY: I was -- up on the Forest.

JIM: What doing?

JERRY: I can't tell you, Jim. It was - uh - personal business.

SHERIFF: I reckon he knows a durn sight more'n he's tellin', all right. -- Do you know where the money is, young feller?

JERRY: Yes.

SHERIFF: Where is it?

JERRY: I promised it'd be returned, didn't I? You'll have to take my word for it.

(HUM OF VOICES)

JIM: (RAISING VOICE) Boys - seein' as Mr. Quick here isn't ready to answer any questions right now, I suggest we take his word that the money'll be returned, and leave the investigation to the proper authorities.

SHERIFF: I'm the sheriff here, an' I reckon I'm a-goin' to put him under arrest.

JIM: (SOFTLY) I s'pose you should.

(HUM OF VOICES, OFF. SHOUTS OF "HEY THERE;" "WHO ARE YOU?", ETC.)

VOICE: (OFF) Hey there! Look what we found! -- (COMING UP) It's young Tommy Perkins! Found 'im hidin' under a bush!

JIM: Tommy Perkins, eh? Al Perkins', the logging camp boss's son.

SHERIFF: Say, kid - what you doin' out here this time of night?

TOMMY: (SCARED) I dunno.

SHERIFF: Does your pa know you're out?

TOMMY: I dunno.

SHERIFF: This ain't no time for kids like you to be out prowlin' around - with us out here huntin' for the robber, an' everything -

TOMMY: Yes, sir.

SHERIFF: Know anything about this robbery?

TOMMY: Y-yes, sir.

SHERIFF: You do, eh? What do you know?

TOMMY: I -- I -- did it.

SHERIFF: You did it!?

TOMMY: Y-yes sir.

SHERIFF: Listen to that, Jim! The kid says he did it. -- What did you want to do that for, son?

TOMMY: I dunno. I-I'm sorry, Mister. I won't do it again, -- honest.

SHERIFF: I s'pose we ought to put the kid in the lock-up. -- Where's the money, son?

TOMMY: I got it -- right here inside my shirt. I was goin' to take it back - honest I was. - The Ranger - Mr. Quick - he promised he wouldn't tell anybody if I put it right back.

JIM: Oh, so that's it, Jerry, eh?

SHERIFF: Jerry Quick, eh? How did he come to know about it?

TOMMY: He run acrost me tryin' to hide the money up in the woods - an' - an' he said I had to take it right back. - Some of it got lost, though.

SHERIFF: Huh? Where?

JERRY: We found it again, though - finally. -- He was going to bring it back all right, Sheriff. -- You see, the kid didn't realize what he was doing - he'd been reading too many adventure stories or something - he just made a mistake - see? But he knows he was wrong now. Don't you, Tommy?

TOMMY: Y-yes. -- Mr. Quick told me it'd make my ma and pa feel awful bad if they knew what I'd done - an' Miss Halloway, too - the school teacher --

JERRY: Yes, he's one of Mary Halloway's favorite kids in the school, Jim. It'd break her heart if she knew he'd gone wrong.

JIM: I see, Jerry.

JERRY: You see, Jim, the kid's all right at heart. He's a good kid. I - I hated to see him get a wrong start.

JIM: Yes, I see, Jerry.

JERRY: You'll let him go, won't you, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Well, I reckon the company'll be willin' to forget about it - if the money's all there. -- Maybe you'd better let me have that money now, sonny.

TOMMY: Y-yes sir.

JERRY: And you won't let Miss Halloway, or his mother know?

SHERIFF: Yeah, we'll take care of that. Now, we might as well be gettin' back to the office, an' check up on this money here. You better come along with me, sonny, an' I'll see that you get home to your maw.

TOMMY: Yes, sir.

SHERIFF: (RAISING VOICE) Boys, I reckon it's all over. (GOING OFF) You might as well be gettin' back home.

(HUM OF VOICES - FADES OFF)

JERRY: Jim, I'm sorry if I caused you a lot of trouble and worry, but - you see how it was, don't you? It'd be a shame to have a nice kid like that get started on the road to being a criminal. He's a good kid at heart - I know he is.

JIM: Well, Jerry, I guess we can forget about you not showing up on the job this time -- and I s'pose saving a boy from going wrong - I s'pose that'd come under the head of public service.

(FADE OUT)

ANNOUNCER:

Well, folks, it looked for a while like Jerry was in for some trouble, but we're glad to know that even if it was a little unusual, he was living up to the traditions of Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers for public service after all. -- Public Service, in developing and protecting the National Forests in the public interest, in working for the welfare of the communities dependent upon the National Forests - that's the tradition of the men who wear the pine tree badge.

Next Thursday at this same hour, we shall look in again on Ranger Jim and Jerry. Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers comes to you as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service.

er/4:10 P.M.
Dec. 12, 1932.