

## **Crawford vs. Clark**

### **Script**

The scene opens with Crawford, Gallaher, and Dimon in the parlor of the Free State Hotel. Crawford and Dimon are seated. Gallaher is at the window looking at the scene outside. Gallaher turns to Crawford and Dimon.

**Gallaher:** It's looking like things are getting pretty grim out there. Brockett and Hamelton and some others just tried to make their way in here. The Judge and the Marshal wouldn't let them through.

**Dimon:** It's not safe to go out right now. These bad feelings between you and Clarke have been festering for weeks. Now it looks like this particular powder keg's going to explode. You're in a lot of danger, George.

**Crawford:** It's not just me. Clarke wants all of us out of here. Surely, you haven't forgotten that chair that Brockett walloped you with.

**Dimon:** How could I forget? I've still got a bump on my head as a reminder. Look, maybe we should just leave town until this whole thing settles down.

**Crawford:** And leave the town to the likes of Clarke. I don't think so.

*(At this point, Captain Anderson walks in escorted by William Campbell)*

**Campbell:** Captain Anderson, these are the gentlemen who are seeking protection by staying here. Clarke and his ruffians have threatened their lives.

**Captain Anderson:** Are you sure it's not the other way around? From the document that I read this morning, Montgomery and his men would like to see just about every citizen of Fort Scott dead. He wants to hang me from the highest tree in Bourbon County and put all the soldiers to death. He's already killed one soldier this week.

**Campbell:** I read the same document and he wants me out of the territory in six days. But what does that have to do with these gentlemen.

**Captain Anderson:** For one thing, these three were about the only gentlemen in town not listed on the document. Also, it was my understanding that Mr. Crawford has been trading messages with Montgomery.

**Campbell:** Captain, I do not believe those allegations. I know Crawford to be a man of good character and he is not the type of man to do business with Montgomery or his ilk.

*(Their conversation is interrupted by a knock on the door. The hostess goes to answer it. She opens the door and then says to Campbell)*

**Hostess:** Mr. Campbell, the Judge and the Marshal are here.

**Campbell:** Show them in.

**Hostess:** Please come in. Can I take your coats and hats?

**Judge Williams:** No, thank you we won't be staying long.

*(Campbell, Captain Anderson, Crawford and the rest all greet the Judge and the Marshal as they enter the room.)*

**Judge Williams:** Mr. Crawford, you have got some powerful enemies out there. I nearly took a bullet for you.

**Crawford, Gallaher and Dimon** (*in unison*): What?

**Judge Williams:** Mr. Brockett held a gun at my chest demanding that I get out of the way so that he could take you prisoner. Marshal Little and I stood firm.

**Crawford:** That took a lot of courage. I owe you my life.

**Judge Williams:** There's been too much violence already. Captain Anderson, I believe the town should be put under martial law until the troublemakers leave. I had assumed with the army's presence that the horse stealing, violence, and other atrocities would cease. But it hasn't, it's only increased.

**Marshal Little:** In fact, from what I understand, some of the soldiers have been helping out with the raiding.

**Captain Anderson:** I'm afraid that's true. I only recently discovered this myself. I do intend to punish those involved.

**Marshal Little:** I believe that you'll find some of your errant soldiers over at the Western Hotel. I saw them headed that way with Brockett.

**Captain Anderson:** I will deal with them after we resolve this crisis. Now, Crawford, what about these allegations of you trading messages with Montgomery?

**Crawford:** It's not true.

**Judge Williams:** Clarke claims to have caught a Mr. Potts in the act of carrying messages between you and Montgomery.

**Gallaher:** Clarke's a liar. Just where is this Mr. Potts anyway? Has anyone in town seen him?

**Marshal Little:** It's my understanding that Brockett shot him after he confessed.

**Crawford:** Than it's my word against Clarke's.

**Campbell:** Captain, I have known Mr. Crawford for a while now and have always known him to be honest and of good character.

**Marshal Little:** George and I are good friends despite our political differences. He is always working to bring both parties into town government. I simply cannot believe that Crawford is involved with Montgomery.

**Captain Anderson:** It's not my duty to judge anyone. I'm just here to keep the peace and protect people from violence.

*(Another knock on the door. The hostess goes to the door and asks who it is.)*

**Messenger** (*from outside the door*): I've got a message for George Crawford.

**Campbell:** Let him in but be ready for anything. *(Captain Anderson and Marshal Little draw their guns as the maid opens the door. The messenger steps in.)*

**Messenger:** Which one of you is Crawford.

**Crawford:** I am. I'll take it *(He reads it.)* It's from Hamelton. It's addressed to Mr. Gallaher, Mr. Dimon and myself. It says "Gentlemen-You are very respectfully invited to leave town in twenty-four hours".

**Dimon:** Look, maybe it would be wise to leave town for a while. Just until this thing settles down. It's better than seeing more people get killed.

**Gallaher:** A lot of other people have left town. No offense, Captain, but the army hasn't been very effective at keeping the peace.

**Crawford:** You can leave if you want and I won't try to stop you, but I'm staying. If we leave now than men of violence will have won the day. We should not just abandon our town to violence. Radicals from both sides are creating this atmosphere of fear and hatred, but the majority of the citizens here are good people who want to live good and productive lives despite their political differences. We should not let fear and violence govern our lives. We must stand firm against it. *(He takes the message and crumples it and hands it back to the messenger).* You can take this back to Hamelton, Clarke, and Brockett and tell them I am not leaving. I do not exchange messages with horse thieves"

*(Except for the last line, the above speech made by Crawford is fictional, but are the sentiments that he would have had since the Free State men decided to stay and take on all comers. Within a couple of days all of the accusations and machinations of the Border Ruffians were exposed and the majority of them ended up being the ones who left town.)*