

Walker vs Clarke Script

Narrator: The scene begins in northern Bourbon County. Sheriff Samuel Walker of Douglas County, who is also a Deputy U.S. Marshal, has been ordered by Governor James Denver to arrest Montgomery for robbing, plundering, and generally disturbing the peace. As the scene begins, Walker presents his warrant to Montgomery and his men.

(Sheriff Walker enters from the left and Montgomery and his men enter from the audience's right)

Walker: James Montgomery, I have an order here for your arrest on the charges of murder and theft.

Raider No. 1: (*stepping between them*) You're going to have a hard time serving that order, Sheriff, because just about everyone here supports Montgomery.

Raider No. 2: That's right; a lot of us would've been run out of our homes if it weren't for him.

Raider No. 3: I'll bet those pro-slave ruffians are behind that warrant. They'll do anything to stop the rightful revenge against them—even make up orders.

Walker: Now, how do you think they're behind this?

Raider No. 1: Well, what's stopped them from killing innocent men? At least our side gives justice where it is due—to the guilty.

Raider No. 2: The point is that Montgomery is a real hero around here and if you try to arrest him there will be some trouble.

Walker: I have not heard anything here to keep me from upholding my duty and taking you in Montgomery. You can come peacefully...or otherwise

Montgomery: Sheriff Walker, haven't you been driven and hunted by the Ruffians?

Walker: They've tried things in my territory if that's what you mean, but--

Montgomery: (*interrupting*) And aren't you a free state man at heart and mad as Hades about those innocents slain on the Marais des Cygnes.

Walker: (*impatiently*) Of course I am, Montgomery. However--

Montgomery: Arresting me, Sheriff, may serve you now, but not in the end. In exchange for my freedom, I'll give you the names of some of the men in Fort Scott who helped plot that heinous massacre. Then you can serve real justice around here.

Walker: (*looks around at the faces of men.*) All right but fair warning, Montgomery -- let the law serve justice here from now on.

(Walker, Montgomery, and the raiders leave.)

Narrator: With Walker now on Montgomery's side, they proceed to obtain writs for three pro-slavery ruffians. One of them, George W. Clarke, was responsible for driving many Free-State settlers out of their homes in Linn County in 1856. Montgomery was among those driven out. Montgomery loathes Clarke to this day.

On Sunday, May 30, about one o'clock, as Fort Scott citizens were enjoying themselves as become a Christian community, a body of from fifty to seventy-five men, fully armed, rushed into town and surrounded the principle dwellings of the place...it was Sheriff Walker and posse from Douglass County in pursuit of three men, Clarke, Dr. Carter, and Mr. Hill, charging them with complicity in the late horrible murders on the Marais des Cygnes...Montgomery was recognized as being in Walker's posse.

(Scene opens with several townspeople on sidewalk in front of Free State Hotel. Among them and out of sight under the stairs are Marshal Smith and Lt. Shinn. Walker, Montgomery and crew enter the scene from the audience's right. The sight of these armed men shocks the townspeople, and the commotion causes Marshal Smith to emerge and make his way to the front and stand before Walker. Montgomery and his men fan out, some standing upon the nearest stairs and some step off the sidewalk to stand on the lawn, being careful not to block the audience's view.)

Smith: What's the meaning of this? Who are you and what do you want?

Walker: I am Sheriff Samuel Walker and I am here to serve writs for the arrest of three men, G.W. Clarke, B. F. Hill, and Dr. Carter. They are wanted for complicity in the foul murders of five men on the Marais Des Cygnes.

Smith: I am the law here in Fort Scott...(Pause to survey the scene) but if you are proceeding legally, I will cheerfully assist you in the performance of your duties.

(Clarke quietly emerges from upstairs doorway on Swords side of HS-1 with a gun and begins to walk downstairs)

Walker: Here are the writs I have to serve. I have come down here at the suggestion of Governor Denver, and accept your assistance in this manner.

(A townspeople points to Montgomery and whispers something to Smith. When Clarke begins to speak, Smith will exit and walk to rear of building, signaling Lt. Shinn to walk to the front. When Shinn arrives, he will take his place at the foot of the stairs.)

Walker: (to Clarke) Clarke, get down here, you're under arrest.

Clarke: (stopping at fourth step) What am I to be arrested for?

Walker: Complicity in the murders at the Marais Des Cygnes. Here is a copy of the writ signed by Justice Hudson of Mapleton.

Clarke: Let me see that writ. (Walker hands him the writ and he studies it intently) This is not a genuine writ. There is no such Justice of the Peace in the county. I'm not coming with you. (Turns to walk upstairs)

Walker: Colonel Clark, you know me. I have not time to trifle. Unless you lay down your arms and surrender yourself into my custody, I will order these men to fire!

(Clarke turns to survey the scene, remaining defiant. He crumples the writ and begins to climb again.)

Walker: Cock your rifles and take aim, Men! The choice is yours, Clarke.

(Clark stops to face his firing squad. Townspeople can leave the scene or shout support for Clarke to stay.)

Clarke: (finally lowers his gun) You have got me, Walker, I will surrender, but only on the condition that I be placed in the custody of Lt. Shinn until the Governor arrives.

Lt. Shinn: That sounds like a fair arrangement, does it not, Sheriff.

(Clarke steps down stairs to hand weapon over to Shinn)

Walker: I suppose that's acceptable and now with Clarke in custody we will serve writs on Carter and Hill.

(Marshal Smith and Dr. Carter emerge from porch between stairs)

Lt. Shinn: Mr. Hill is no longer in town, but here is Dr. Carter. I will personally place him into custody along with Colonel Clarke.

Walker: Here is Dr. Carter's arrest warrant, Lieutenant, along with that for Mr. Hill. Should he return, I will expect it to be served as well.

Smith: Wait a moment, Sheriff. I have a writ of my own to serve upon James Montgomery who was recognized as being a member of your posse.

Walker: (hedging) I do not think that Montgomery is with me. Even if he were, that writ would be difficult to serve as most of my posse are Montgomery's supporters.

Smith: Then I will search for him, and make the arrest myself.

Montgomery: (steps forward) That won't be necessary, I am James Montgomery and I'll place myself into Sheriff Walker's custody

Walker: And I will see that he is tried before Judge Cato... in Lawrence.

Smith: Since you are a sworn officer of the law, I will relinquish Montgomery to your custody.

(All parties now exit the field, except for Jones who continues reporting the event.)

The charge placed upon General Clark is unjust as he has not been out of town for the last three months. Because his innocence is well known, he and Dr. Carter were released almost immediately. We have heard that Sheriff Walker released Montgomery a few miles out of town and told him he could stay and fight it out if he wanted.