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*Dramatic Publishing*



**THE BIG GUNS:  
or Whose Little Lily Is She?**

Comedy / Western  
A Radio Play  
In Two Acts

By  
ANDREW J. FENADY  
and  
DUKE FENADY

Based on the award-winning novella  
by  
ANDREW J. FENADY  
Owen Wister Award Author  
published in  
*Western Writers of America  
Roundup!*

“Great stories of the West from today’s leading Western writers.”  
*Roundup!*



**Dramatic Publishing**

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(THE BIG GUNS: or Whose Little Lily Is She?)

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DITTO

## Authors' Notes

Rather than “Edward Raymond Collins” any other name—including the actual name of the actor playing the part—may be used in the Radio Play.

Also, instead of Palmdale Radio Theatre of the Air—the name of the producing entity—e.g., Peggy Webber’s California Artists Radio Theatre—may be employed for the production.

Curtain may rise at opening and close at end of “broadcast”—or: “Broadcast” set already may be on darkened stage when doors open for audience entrance into theater—with 1930’s-50’s music emanating from speaker on stage.

As in the good old radio days, an actor or actress may play several parts—more so than if it were a stage play.

The authors would prefer using both endings, but if the production company would prefer not—so be it.

## Authors' Musical Note

The music, including “Lorena,” “Shenandoah,” “Sweet Betsy From Pike,” “My Darling Clementine,” etc., are in public domain and also can be substituted for the Dorsey—Miller—Goodman-type music mentioned near opening of Act One.

And, please, we may be optimistic, but do allow time for laughs.

A.J. Fenady

Duke Fenady

# **BIG GUNS: or Whose Little Lily Is She?**

A Radio Play in Two Acts

## CHARACTERS

BOOTH VOICE (CHUCK PRATT) (voice only) – male  
RAYMOND EDWARD COLLINS – principal male  
TRIO OF MUSICIANS (optional) – male / female  
SOUND EFFECTS (two) – male / female  
ACTOR LOUIE – male  
LILY / JANETTE – principal female  
JOE – male  
DRIVER'S VOICE (SHORTY) – male  
SHERIFF BROKER BAKER – principal male  
BIG JOHN – principal male  
READY JOHN – principal male  
DEACON ADDERLY – male  
CLERK – male  
JESS COURTLAND – principal male  
MACINTOSH – male  
REGGIE – male  
MAGUEY – male  
DUTCH MASTERS – principal female  
ABIGAIL – principal female  
OLIVIA – principal female  
BENTNOSE BASCOMB – principal male  
SCHEMER SCROGGINS – principal male  
MAN – male  
VOICE – male  
2ND VOICE – male

## ACT ONE

*(The HOUSELIGHTS are on as audience enters and is seated.)*

*The stage is dark, but even in darkness: Radio station circa the 1930s-'40s-'50s is discernable.*

*ORCHESTRA MUSIC in B.G.: Dorsey—Miller—Goodman-type, then:)*

BOOTH VOICE (CHUCK PRATT) *(in humorous vein)*. Calling Mr. Collins, calling... Mr. Raymond Edward Collins—eminent writer, producer, director and sometimes star. This is Chuck Pratt your humble engineer on this 6th day of June, 1941. And this is to inform you that the studio audience has arrived, and as usual, is breathlessly awaiting the sonorous sound of your voice to favor them with an introduction to this evening's radio production.

*(STAGE LIGHTS GO UP clearly revealing: Radio station. The three walls (actually no walls are necessary) —covered by drapes—except for one padded door stage center.*

*There are a couple of tables with mikes and loaded with SFX equipment. More equipment on floor nearby.*

*There is a line of three or four standing microphones, downstage.*

*A sign above control booth—"ON THE AIR." The sign is not now lit.)*

PRATT/BOOTH VOICE *(cont'd.)*. Mr. Collins, we go on the air in less than eight minutes but not without your Napoleonic leadership. Mr. Collins, calling...

*(Over this:*

*RAYMOND EDWARD COLLINS enters, script in hand. COLLINS is dressed in Western garb but not to the extreme.)*

COLLINS. I hear you, Mr. Pratt, and lay off that Napoleon stuff. He was short, I'm tall.



PRATT/BOOTH VOICE. Just kidding, Mr. Collins, and...

COLLINS (*casually*). And you're fired, Mr. Pratt.

PRATT/BOOTH VOICE. Again?

*(COLLINS smiles, waves him off, and walks downstage toward the audience, with script still in hand, but does not read from it as he addresses the onlookers without use of microphone.)*

COLLINS. Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to the studios of the Palmdale Radio Theatre of the Air and this evening's special presentation; and it is special because instead of our usual dramatic program, tonight we are paying tribute to those present-day cowboy heroes of screen and radio. Yes, Gene and Roy and Hoppy, the Lone Ranger and all the other current riders of the purple sage—and we're not forgetting the lovely ladies who tamed the men who tamed the Wild West.

*Over this—enter the CAST and CREW of the radio show with scripts and dressed in cowboy and cowgirl regalia somewhat more flamboyant than COLLINS.*

*Some sit on the chairs lined up and check their scripts—others—crew people, move toward the SOUND FX table (NOTE: If possible, a trio, or so, of musicians) —and check their equipment.*

COLLINS (*cont'd.*). And here come the radio ranch hands of tonight's Western presentation, complete with appropriate wardrobe. But we've asked them to hitch their horses outside. They're not exactly barn broke—the horses, not the ranch hands.

PRATT/BOOTH VOICE. Four minutes to airtime, Mr. Collins.

COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Pratt. Ladies and gentlemen, you'll hear more about our lusty Western, entitled "THE BIG GUNS: Or, Whose Little Lily Is She?" as we go on the air. This is a humorous Western, so your laughter is welcome as we go along, but please refrain from criticism until *after* the show.

ACTOR LOUIE. Excuse me, Ray. I'd like to make a slight change in one of *my* lines... (*Points in script.*)

COLLINS. Do it just as we rehearsed, Louie, only better.

ACTOR LOUIE. *Oui, mon Capitaine!*

*(The attractive actress portraying LILY (JANETTE) is standing nearby. Her wardrobe includes calf-boots and mid-thigh denim skirt.)*

JANETTE/LILY. I was going to ask about changing one of my lines, but I guess I won't.

COLLINS. Don't. Uh, Janette, since rehearsal it seems that either your legs are getting longer or your skirts are getting shorter.

JANETTE/LILY. You said there'd be pictures taken afterwards, so I changed into this. You think it's OK?

COLLINS. Only as long as you stand in the front line.

*(She smiles, nods and sashays away.)*

ANOTHER ACTOR/JOE. Where would you like me to stand, Boss?

COLLINS. Out of focus.

JOE *(shrugs—walks away)*. I had to hand him a punch line.

PRATT/ BOOTH VOICE. One minute to air, Cowboy Collins.

COLLINS. Ladies of the sound effects, are you ready?

*(They smile and sound off with HOOF BEATS, STAGECOACH NOISES and GUNSHOTS.)*

*NOTE: If LIVE MUSIC is used for production—harmonica—guitar—and fiddle, or whatever...*

COLLINS. What about our hundred-piece orchestra?

*(MUSICAL SOUNDS emanate from the trio.)*

PRATT/BOOTH VOICE. Twenty seconds.

COLLINS. Actors, clear your throats...and your septums.

*(Actors do so.)*

PRATT/BOOTH VOICE. Ten seconds, niner, seven, fiver, four, three, two, one.

*(The “ON THE AIR” SIGN LIGHTS UP.)*

*(THEME MUSIC UP, then out over speech.)*

COLLINS. Good evening, listeners everywhere—and welcome to the Palmdale Radio Theatre of the Air. This is your host Raymond Edward Collins. Tonight we deviate from our weekly dramatic presentation to bring you a story of the Old West, but a different sort of a story— A tale with a twist. A rootin’, tootin’, six-shootin’, wing-ding of a Western as you can most likely tell from the title—“THE BIG GUNS: Or, Whose Little Lily Is She?”—the adventures and misadventures of two cattle barons and most especially of a beautiful young lady in search of...well, here to tell you all about it is Sheriff Broke Baker.

*(MUSIC... Western flavor—and SOUND FX... stagecoach rattling to a stop.)*

DRIVER’S VOICE. Whoa—whoa there, m’ beauties! We’re here, folks! Somewhat late, but earlier’n usual.

*(Actor portraying SHERIFF BROKE BAKER moves closer to one of the microphones—NOTE: in the olden, golden days he would have been played by Chill Wills.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Long-legged, trim-waisted, and high-pocketed, she was tired and dusty from the ride, but still she was the prettiest thing ever to step off a stagecoach in Hot Rock.

Two men were there waitin’ for that stagecoach—Big John Bender and Ready John Roades. They’d been partners until five years ago when they had that fight. Nobody ever found out how it started, but everybody knew how it ended—both men battered and bloody on their bellies, suckin’ wind.

They split everythin’ down the middle. Horses. Cattle. The ranch, right down to the last keg of nails—and each one still ended up with a bigger spread than anybody else in Arizona.

Big John and Ready John hadn’t spoken a word to each other ever since. But here they were standin’ a few feet apart pretendin’ they were lookin’ in opposite directions, while the passengers debarked from the Overland stage.

*(SOUND FX... street noises—pedestrians—horses’ hooves—footsteps on a dusty street.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES) *(cont’d.)*. Big John walked over toward the driver as the little man hopped off the coach.

BIG JOHN. You're three hours late, Shorty. Why the hell do they call it the noon stage?

SHORTY. They had to call it somethin'.

BIG JOHN. Yeah, well, Shorty, you got something aboard for me?

SHORTY. Nope.

READY JOHN. Something for me?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John come up and inquired.

SHORTY. Nope.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Big John and Ready John glared at each other, then back at Shorty.

READY JOHN. Look here...

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John frowned.

READY JOHN. ...I got a telegraph saying there'd be something aboard this stage for me.

BIG JOHN. So did I.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Big John added.

SHORTY. I ain't sayin' you didn't.

BIG JOHN. Then go through the baggage and mail, you half-bit, and find out what it is.

SHORTY. Big John, I know everybody and everything aboard my stage—and I'm tellin' you there's nothin' for either of you.

LILY. Oh, yes there is.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...The girl's voice interrupted. The two big men turned and looked at her. Damn, she was pretty. And there was somethin' familiar, more than somethin'. Those dancin', blue eyes and generous mouth. Even the voice. Yeah, mighty familiar.

LILY. I sent those telegraphs...to both of you.

BIG JOHN. Why?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Big John asked.

READY JOHN. Yeah, why?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John added.

LILY. For the same reason I came here.

READY JOHN. Why?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John asked again.

BIG JOHN. Yeah, why?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Big John added this time. She looked at them for just a bit and smiled.

LILY. To find out which of you two sons of bitches is my father.

*(B.G....REACTION WALLA.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES). The other passengers and some of the townsfolk heard what she said. She said it plain enough for everybody to hear. The womenfolk were outraged and took a step back. The menfolk were interested and took a step forward. Big John cleared his throat.

BIG JOHN. Are you Lorena's daughter?

LILY. I am.

READY JOHN. Let's go someplace more private.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John suggested.

LILY. All right, Daddy.

READY JOHN. Don't call me Daddy.

LILY. Well, one of you sure as hell is.

READY JOHN. Not me.

BIG JOHN. Me either.

READY JOHN. Let's go someplace more private.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John repeated. The two men flanked the pretty girl, and the three of 'em walked away amid the whispers and upraised eyebrows of the citizens of Hot Rock.

*(B.G....faint WALLA-WALLA—footsteps approach.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES). It was then that Deacon Adderly walked up to me and started stammerin'.

DEACON ADDERLY. Sh-Sheriff, did...did you hear that?

SHERIFF. I ain't deaf.

DEACON ADDERLY. Well?

SHERIFF. Well, what?

DEACON ADDERLY. We can't have a situation like that in a decent community like this.

SHERIFF. You're forgettin' somethin', Deacon.

DEACON ADDERLY. What? What?!

SHERIFF. Who made this here community decent in the first place.

DEACON ADDERLY. Well...

SHERIFF. Well, your fantail. Hadn't been for Big John and Ready John and their guns, Hot Rock 'ud still be an outlaw town and you and them other decent donkeys 'ud still be hidin' your ears under your blankets.

DEACON ADDERLY. And you're forgettin' you're a public servant, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. Anytime you want this star you can take it and...

DEACON ADDERLY. Now, Sheriff, let's not either of us say something we'll regret.

SHERIFF. You say whatever you want, Deacon; me, I'm goin' to do a little drinkin'.

*(MUSIC...strains of "LORENA"—FX...footsteps.)*

LILY. To whose place are we going?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...The pretty girl inquired as they walked down the main street of Hot Rock.

BIG JOHN. Well, not to his.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Big John responded.

READY JOHN. And not to his.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John confirmed while they walked on. By now, word of the unexpected arrival had ricocheted all over town. People were even leanin' out of windows watchin' as the trio entered the La Paloma Hotel and Ready John informed the clerk.

*(SOUND FX...boot and footsteps—MUSIC OUT.)*

READY JOHN. We want to rent a room.

CLERK. Who do...uh, who does?

BIG JOHN. We do.

CLERK. You want to register...in three names?

READY JOHN. No, you moron.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John glared.

READY JOHN. Register it in her name. We'll only be here a few minutes.

CLERK. I understand.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...The clerk smiled.

BIG JOHN. No, you don't.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Big John said as he lighted a stogie.

CLERK. Anything you say, Big John. And what is the...lady's name?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Big John and Ready John both looked to the lady.

LILY. Lily. Just...Lily.

CLERK. Very good, Miss...Lily. Room six.

*(FX...footsteps.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES). The two men and “just...Lily” started to walk away.

CLERK. Any luggage?

READY JOHN. Send someone down to the depot to pick it up.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). ...Ready John said without looking back.

BIG JOHN. And “do not disturb.”

*(SOUND FX...footsteps. MUSIC... “LORENA”—SOUND FX...door opening and closing—MUSIC FADES.)*

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Inside Room Six, Lily removed her hat and gloves and turned toward the two men.

LILY. Well, here we are.

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Big John took a deep puff from his stogie.

READY JOHN. Big John, you got another one of those ceegars?

SHERIFF (NARRATES). Big John nodded and handed over a stogie.

LILY. I'll take one, too.

BIG JOHN. To smoke?

LILY. Light me.

*(SOUND FX...match striking.)*