

No. 27



# TIM HOLT



**STRAWMAN vs. REDMASK**



10c

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HE ONLY SEEMED A BUNCH OF STRAW, CLAD IN A MAN'S GARMENTS—YET A HEART BEAT UNDER HIS BLUE SHIRT—A HEART FILLED WITH OGREO AND THE LUST FOR LOOT!—AND WHEN THE STRAWMAN MET SPARKY AND OFFERED HIM AGON AND AGONY, VENG'N' FACES "LEND AGON, FOR ALL AGON THAT THE CRIMSON CALLED HAD FINALLY MET HIS MATCH IN THE MIGHTY STRUGGLE OF—

**"REDWAX VS THE STRAWMAN!"**

AS DARK SWIRLS ACROSS THE PLAINS COUNTRY, A STRANGE FORCE STRIVES TO LIVE.



ON A COAL-BACK STALLION, THE STRAW MAN GALLOPS ACROSS THE GRASS-LANDS...



# TIM HOLT



DON'T WASTE  
ME SHOOT!  
PULL UP AND  
RAISE YOUR  
HANDS!

IT'S A MAN  
— MADE  
OUT OF  
STRAW!



TOSS DOWN  
THAT BOX—AND  
HURRY IT  
UP!

I'M  
HURRYIN'!



CANTO—A  
SQUAWK??

GET BET  
COMES FROM  
THE BEND!



AM I SEE'ING THING? THAT  
LOOKS LIKE A SCARECROW  
DOWN THERE!



OH! SOME CONFUSION  
WITH A BIRD COMPLEX!  
GOING TO TRY AND STOP  
THIS LITTLE HOLDUP!



I'M NOT GOING TO TRY  
I'M GOING TO DO IT!

BUT AS TIM LEAPS FROM THE SADDLE OF HIS GALLOPING BRONC,  
THE STRAWMAN SEEMS TO TWIST AND BEND AND TIM'S HANDS  
LOSE THEIR GRIP ON HIM.



UG HHHH

# TIM HOLT



NEXT DAY, AS THE ARIZONA-PACIFIC RAILROAD CHUGS TO A HALT—

SOME WHY IN THUNDER DID SOME HONDER TIE THAT COIN THERE AROUND THERE'S NO HOLDUP MEN IN SIGHT.



# TIM HOLT

IN THE TOWN OF BULLET SOME HOURS LATER



AND IN THE TOWN OF BULLET  
BING TONGLES BURN TIM HOLT'S  
EARS.



THAT NIGHT, IN THE BREAKS  
SOUTH OF TOWN...



THE FEATS OF THE STEWAMAN BECAME LEGENDARY IN THE BOY COUNTRY. HE IS DEAD—THAT'S  
THEY!



THE STEWAMAN HAS ONE WEAKNESS! WHETHER HE GOES, SOME OF THOSE STRAWS HE USES TO BRUSH HISSELF WILL FALL OFF! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FIND THEM...



# TIM HOLT

AFTER A SEARCH OF THE ALLEYS AND BACK WAYS OF THE TOWN...



AND THE NIGHT IS FILLED WITH THE STRAW-MAN'S HISSING LAUGHTER.



RETURNING TO THE PARD QUINN SALOON, THE STRAWMAN LETS HIMSELF IN THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW.



REDMASK CUP IS BITTER; NOT ONLY HAS THE STRAWMAN TRICKED HIM, BUT HE HAS DONE IT BEFORE THE ENTIRE TOWN OF BULLET.



HAS REDMASK MET HIS MATCH? IS THE STRAWMAN SO CLEVER, SO UNFOLDING THAT EVEN REDMASK CANNOT DEING HIM TO THIS?



# TIM HOLT

SOME DAYS LATER AS THE BULLET STAGE TRUNDLES DOWN FROM THE HIGH MOUNTAIN COUNTRY...



THE SUREST WAY I KNOW OF TO ROB THE STAGE — STAY AHEAD IN A TRUNK AND KNOCK THEM OUT!



MEANWHILE REDWACK HAS BEEN PATROLLING THE STAGECOACH TRAIL.



HUH — IT'S REDWACK! WHY'D YUH GIVE UP?

HOW'D I EVER CATCH THE STAGEMAN? HE'S TOO SMART FOR YUH!

I COULDN'T TELL THEM I MADE A DEAL WITH THE STAGECOACH COMPANY TO SUBSTITUTE A SPECIALLY PREPARED MONEY BOX.



A BOX WITH A FALSE BOTTOM AND HOLES BORED IN IT! AS THE STAGEMAN RIDES, THE RED MESSAGES WILL SHOW OUT THROUGH THOSE HOLES TO MARK THE TRAIL HE TAKES.



THEY'RE LEADING ME STRAIGHT TO HIS HIDEOUT!



SOMEBODY'S COMMAND?

# TIM HOLT



**REDMASK!** I'VE TRACKED YOU TO YOUR LAIR AT LAST!

HAND TO HAND, REELING ACROSS THE STONE FLOOR OF THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVE, THEIR BREATHS BOILING IN THEIR THROATS, REDMASK AND THE STRAWMAN BATTLE TO THE DEATH.



WITH A CURVING TWIST OF HIS BODY, THE STRAWMAN YANKS FREE AND SENDS REDMASK FLYING.



I'LL FINISH YOU OFF AND PLUM YOUR BODY IN THE RIVER!



TALKING ABOUT THE RIVER—OO TAKE A FLYING LEAP IN IT YOURSELF!

**AAAGH!**



**AAAGH!** I'LL BE CARRIED UNDER THE ROCKS—  
**BROWNED...!**

SOME SWIFTLY BY THE RIVER CURRENT, THE STRAWMAN IS SWIFT BENEATH THE STONE OF THE CLIFF—FROM WHICH THERE'S NO ESCAPE.



CAN'T SAVE HIM! HE'S GONE!

**B**UT IS THIS THE END FOR THE MAN OF STRAW? OR WILL SOME QUIRK OF FATE SAVE HIM WHEN BY ALL THE LAWS OF HONEST MEN HE SHOULD MEET HIS FATE IN A WATERY GRAVE?

*Don't miss succeeding issues of*  
**TIM HOLT**  
FOR THE STUNNING ANSWER TO THE RATE OF THE STRAWMAN!





# TIM HOLT

HULLAM WAS A BAD APACHE HE KILLED AND HE LOOTED AND HIS HAND WAS TURNED AGAINST ALL MEN! WHEN HIS MAD RAGE SCORCHED ON TIM HOLT—EVEN APACHE FOUND HIMSELF IN A TRAP OF DEATH SET BY THE—

**"APACHE KILLER!"**



FRANK  
DOLLE

AN ARMY QUARTERMASTER TEAM CREAKS AND BATTLES ACROSS THE ARIZONA SAGE PLATE INSIDE IT IS A LONG SMOKE GULLER WITH FLY...



PALEFACE TAKE ME SORT DANGER! THEY WILL SHOOT ME— I LET THEM



PALEFACE GUARD SLEEPS IN HOT SUN! DRIVER NOT LOOKING! HE GO—NOW!

# TIM HOLT

AS A RED SHADOW DROPS AND LIES MOTIONLESS, THE WILDON RATTLES ON...



AT A STEADY LOPE, HULAPA MOVES INTO THE HIGH MESA COUNTRY...



SOME HOURS LATER, HE STRIKES WITH THE SPEED AND RUDY OF AN ENRAGED RATTLER...



PALEFACE HUNT THE SABBIT, HULAPA LIKE BATTLE-SNAKE— HE HUNT PALEFACE!

LATER, SOME MILES BEYOND



NOW HULAPA HAVE BONY!

THEN BEGINS A REIGN OF TERROR ACROSS THE ARIZONA TABLE-LANDS— A TORCH IS FLUNG IN THE NIGHT



HOURS, ARE RUN OFF



GUTTURAL LAUGHTER BUBBLES IN THE BRONC APACHE'S THROAT AS HE SEES THE PALEFACE TRACKERS BLINDSIDING HELPLESSLY IN THE SHALE ROCK NEAR HIS MESA HIDEOUT



SILLY PALEFACE! HULAPA KILL THE TEACH PALEFACE HULAPA WEAP BAD MEDICINE! UGH!

# TIM HOLT



# TIM HOLT

LIKE A SHADOW, HULARA HAS COME INTO THE P-H RANCH YARD, AND LIKE A SHADOW, HE LEAVES IT.



PONES HOPEH HALT A MILE BEYOND CORRAL AND MAKE NO NOISE ON MOCCASINS, SO HE COME ON FOOT!

TOWARD DAWN...

STAY AWAY! SURE WILL BE GOOD TO HIT THE HAD AND—MAYBE CHIFFO'S BED—MAYBE UP! AND HE'S GOING!



THIS ROCK—STAMPED WITH BLOOD! MOCCASIN TRACKS, DEEP IN THE GROUND AS IF WHOEVER WORE THEM CARRIED A HEAVY WEIGHT!

THAT DEBEGADE APPROX? HE MUST HAVE TRACED US DOWN OFF THE RIM THIS AFTERNOON. HE'LL TORTURE CHITO TO DEATH JUST TO SATISFY HIS SAVAGE HATE AND CRUELTY!



BY HIGH MOON, HULARA IS HIGH ON AN ARIZONA MESQUITE.



HU! YOU NOT MAN I WENT FOR— BUT YOU PEELEFACE, AND HULARA HATE ALL PELEFACE!



YOUR FRIEND COME FIND YOU, FIND THE TRAP! HE TAKE HIM ALIVE—NOT SPECIAL TORTURE FOR HIM!



HU! HE HEAR HIS BOW'S WHOOP HE COME FAST, GO IN TRAP SURE! WHILE HE WAIT, HEAT KNIFE HE TORTURE YOU UTA.

## TIM HOLT

MOVING WITH THE CALM OF A  
SLUICED BUMA, THE SWINDLER  
ACROSS A CHAIN BY LARIET —



PICKING HIS WAY OVER THE  
BUBBLE-STRAWN AEGASION, TIM  
HURDLES HIMSELF DOWNWARD...



BUT AS TIM HURDLES FORWARD,  
STENT ON FINISHING OFF THE BECKY  
ARCHES WITH HIS FISTS, HIS BOOT  
SLIPS IN THE SMALL HOLE —



KICKING, SHORTING, LUNGING GRABBY AGAINST ROCK LEGS,  
THE LOCK-MADDENED BULL HURDLES DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SLOPE...



# TIM HOLT

AND THEN, AS THE GRANT ANIMAL  
TURNS AND CHARGES AT HIS HEAD  
ONCE, A ROPE SLIPS—JUST SLIPPER!



THOSE MAMMOTH LIPS...



# TIM HOLT

A BASTY BRASS BUT AND  
MULARA SPRINGS BACK WITH  
A SHILL CRY!



FOR A LONG TORTURED MOMENT,  
SEDMARK CLINGS HIS REVOLVER  
—AND THEN TOSSES IT OUT AROUND  
—INTO THE AIR...



AND COMES DOWN IN THE TRAP  
HE SET FOR TIM HOLT!



AS MULARA LEAPS FORWARD TO  
LIFT THE COLT AS SEDMARK  
KICKS HIS SHIRT!



MULARA SHOOTS HIS GUN AS HE  
DROPS SEDMARK—



TIM! YOU  
ARE ANGRY!  
I NEVER KNEW  
THAT WOLVERS  
AND NEAR  
CEASING...

# YOURS ALMOST AS A GIFT!

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WITH YOUR  
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FOR LIMITED TIME ONLY!



# GHOST RIDER

THE

*You HANG A MAN!*  
THE WARDEN GIVES  
THE SIGNAL! YOU  
CUT THE CORD! THE  
TRAP DROPS... CAN  
HE COME BACK  
AFTERWARDS— THE  
ROPE STILL BITING  
INTO HIS NECK, HIS  
EYES STILL BULGING—  
DO YOU RETURN WHAT  
WAS HIS BEFORE HE  
DIED? CAN HE? THAT  
IS THE QUESTION THE  
**GHOST RIDER** WMS  
TO ANSWER IN THE  
CASE OF —

The  
**HAUNTED  
HANGMAN!**



INSIDE A QUIET, LONELY  
MANSION ON THE  
OUTSKIRTS OF A  
MIDWESTERN TOWN,  
AARON BICKEL  
QUARRELS WITH  
HIS DAUGHTER.

DON'T TRY TO STOP  
ME, MARTHA. I'VE  
VISITED YOUR MOTHER'S  
GRAVE NIGHTLY EVER  
SINCE SHE DIED, AND  
NOTHING, NOT EVEN  
WHAT I SEE THERE,  
CAN STOP ME —

FATHER,  
DON'T GO!  
YOUR  
HEART...!

BUT AARON BICKEL  
IS A STUBBORN MAN—

NOTHING CAN STOP ME —  
NOT EVEN THE GHOST OF  
THE MISSING MAN...





*FEAR IS  
FORCING AN  
ANSWER  
THROUGH  
ALPHAVILLE'S  
LIPS. HE  
SUDDENLY  
THE GUY  
SPITS A  
FIERCE  
BOLT OF  
LIGHTNING.*



# TIM HOLT

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE, UNCLE? I'VE BEEN SCOURING THE TOWN LOOKING FOR YOU—



HARRY, WHAT CAN WE DO? FETTER'S HAS KNOWN OF THOSE ABLINDING NIGHTMARES!



SCORRY—LOOK! WHAT CAN JARVIS BE DOING OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS?

MARtha BICKEL AND HER COUSIN, HARRY BICKEL, WATCH JARVIS, THE GARDENER, SCORRY SILENTLY ACROSS THE RAIN-SWEET LAWN.



LATER THAT NIGHT IN JARVIS' ROOM OVER THE STABLE —

I'M SICK OF YOUR SHINING LIPS, JARVIS! YOU WERE FOLLOWING MY UNCLE TONIGHT—I WANT TO KNOW WHY!



HONEST, MR. BICKEL, DON'T—I WASN'T!

I'M GOING TO BEAT THE TRUTH OUT OF YOU, JARVIS!



HELP! HELP!

THOSE CREES—COMING FROM THE WINDOW OVER THAT STABLE—QUICK, SPECTER—FOUL WEATHER HAS DRIVEN FOLK, DEEDS, MINDS, AND THE GHOST BRIDE SHALL BE AN UNINVITED GUEST!



HELP! HELP!

LICKY THE WINDOW'S OPEN—THERE'S NO TIME FOR FORMALITIES!



# TIM HOLT



IN THE DIM LIT ROOM, THE GHOST RIDER'S QUICK FLICKING WHIP IS INVISIBLE.

TAKE THAT—MY GUN! WHO WOULD ASK YOU?

THE GHOST RIDER—AT YOUR SERVICE OR FOR YOUR DOOM, DEPENDING ON WHETHER YOU ARE GOOD OR EVIL.



HENRY GEDLER TALKS FAST AND PERSUASIVELY.

SOMETHING'S BEHIND THESE WALKING ARMCHAIRS OF MY UNCLE'S, SOMETHING EVIL, AND I AM TO GET AT THE BOTTOM OF IT, GHOST RIDER!

A COMMENDABLE SENTIMENT—BUT YOUR PROCEDURE IS RASH, IT IS BEST TO TAKE SUCH MATTERS TO THE L.M.A.—



THE NEXT MORNING—

HATE TO SAY THIS, FOLKS, BUT MESSR WAD, BICKEL'S A BIT TETCHED IN THE HEAD, APPEARS TO ME THEY YOU'D DO BETTER TO VISIT A DOCTOR, INSTEAD OF COMIN' HERE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, REK?

I'D LIKE TO ASK ONE QUESTION, WHAT WAS YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS BEFORE HE CAME TO THIS TOWN, MISS BICKEL?



A PALL IS CAST OVER THE ROOM BY MARTHA BICKEL'S SOLEM ANSWER.

HE WAS A HANDMAN BACK EAST.



MEANWHILE—

TO BE KEPT FROM MY WIFE'S GRAVE BY THE GHOST OF THE MAN WHO GAVE ME MY WEALTH, SUCH IS THE WAGE OF SIN. FORGIVE ME, LISA—I AM A SICK MAN, I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER. TONIGHT WILL HAVE TO BE MY LAST VISIT TO THE CEMETERY.



SOMETHING TELLS ME THE GHOST RIDER HAD BETTER BE AT THE CEMETERY TONIGHT, SING SONG!

SING SONG'S HEAD LUNNET



LATER—

THUNDERATION! THAT IS A WALKING NIGHTMARE!



STAND FAST, MR. BICKEL — I'LL UN-NOOSE YOUR HANGING GHOST!

AHEE!



A SIMPLE BUT CRUEL ILLUSION! SEE, MR. BICKEL — THE "DISAPPEARING ROPE" WAS SUPPORTED IN THE BACK BY A STEEL WIRE! AND YOUR "GHOST" ROSE FROM THE EARTH SIMPLY BY GETTING UP OFF HIS KNEES ON THE SMALL LEDGE BEHIND THE SUMMIT.

MY HEART! MY HEART!



LOOKS LIKE A HEART ATTACK! I BETTER —

HERE'S MY CHANCE! HE'S LOOKING THE OTHER WAY —!



THIS IS ONE WAY TO DEAL WITH A TRICK-HEADING "GHOST"!

AAGGSH!



IMPALED ON THE STAKE THAT HELPED OPERATE YOUR ILLUSION! TELL ME, VILLAIN WHY DID YOU "HOLD" MR. BICKEL?

I'LL HOLD YOU — NOT ME! BUT YOU DON'T, YOU DON'T! YOU DON'T! GET THE ONE WHO GAVE ME MY CUE!



A MOMENT LATER THE GHOSTLY GUY CAME THAT BARKED "BARK" ATTACK WAS HIS LAST

TWO MEN WERE AND THE MURDERY DEEPER EVER. THE ONE WHO GAVE HIM HIS CUE THAT MEANS AN ACCOMPLISH — THE GUY ON LIFE'S SOMEWHERE IN BICKEL'S FOOT — THE NIGHT AND "DART" WITH CRIME, AND I WENT WIFE IS LAY AGAIN...



THEY WERE

QUEST ON THEM CLOSELY SHERIFF — ONE BY ONE, FIND OUT EVERY THING YOU CAN ABOUT THEIR BACKGROUNDS.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, KERRY!

THESE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THE SPOOF'S QUESTIONS...

LOVE MY FATHER?  
YES, AS MUCH AS  
ANY DAUGHTER  
COULD LOVE A  
MOROSE, BROODING  
MAN WHO FRIGHTENED  
ALL HIS SUITORS  
AWAY...!



I GLIMSED FOR  
ARSON BICKEL  
HIGH ON TO FORTY  
YEARS, AND HARDLY  
EYED A KIND WORD  
OUT OF HIM. LOW  
WAGES TOO. WHY  
DID I STAY? I  
DUNNO... IT WAS  
MY LOT IN LIFE,  
I RECKON.

MY UNCLE WASN'T  
A BAD SORT, A  
LITTLE MELANCHOLY—  
YOU HAD TO  
UNDERSTAND HIM.  
I WAS IN THE THEATRE  
BACK EAST BEFORE I  
CAME TO LIVE WITH MY  
UNCLE. I WORKED AS  
A STAGEHAND—



WHAT  
THIN?

COLD DRINKS  
FOR DRY THROATS.  
WITH ALL-DA-DAY  
QUESTION-  
ANSWER!

GOOD  
IDEA,  
SING SOME...  
VERY  
THROATFUL  
OF YOU!

LATER, IN  
SING SONG'S  
LAUNDRY—

YOU DID A GOOD JOB  
DRUGGING THOSE BONES.  
I JUST LOOKED IN AT THE  
REBEL MANSION, AND  
THEY'RE ALL SNORING LIKE  
SINGLES. HURRY, SING SONG—  
WE HAVE MUCH WORK  
TO DO TONIGHT. /



THE CURTAINS ARE STILL TOLLING MIDNIGHT WHEN—  
WITH SUDDEN DIZZYING SPEED—HARRY'S BED  
RIPS UP AS THE CURTAINS?



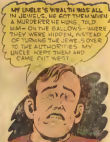
(YAWN)  
WHAT WE BEEN TOLD  
I HAVEN'T SLEPT THIS  
WAY IN— MEY! BRAT'S  
SOUND ON?

I WILL TELL YOU  
WHAT IS GOING ON,  
I HAVE COME FROM  
THE GRAVE TO  
TELL YOU—!



THE BED UP HERE  
HAT DISMEMBERED  
HEAD— (DUN D BY  
A TRICK)





THE BED DESCENDS SMOOTHLY AS THE CONFESSION CONTINUES...

I PLANTED BENTON AT THE CEMETERY. BENTON USED TO WORK WITH ME BACK EAST. HE WAS AN ACTOR. WE WERE SURE WE COULD SCORE THE JEWELS OUT OF MY UNCLE - JARVIS? I WAS WHIPPING HIM THAT NIGHT TO FIND OUT IF HE'D BEEN SPYING.



THE NEXT DAY -



WATER, IN SING SING'S LAUNDRY -



WHEN YOU FIRST HIGN TO SUSPECT GADLER, REX?

SOON AS I HEARD HE'D BEEN A STAG, HAD BACK EAST, WITH THE ROCK DEMO, WHO DIED AT THE CEMETERY, USED THE WORD CLUE, THAT'S THEATER JING, AND SONG. IT TOOK THE TWO MEN TOGETHER IN MY MIND.

THEN HOW COME MY OPERATING BLOCK AND TRICKS TO RAISE BED, AND YOU APPEARING THROUGH HOLE IN CEILING SAWED BY US WITH EVERYONE SLEPT DRUGGED? SLEPT FRIGHTENED HIM INTO CONFESSION? SHOULD HE NOT HAVE KNOWN OF SUCH TRICKS IN THEATER?

YOU'RE RIGHT, SING SONG, THOSE BY THEM - REX'S WOULD'NT HAVE BEEN ENOUGH -



WHAT FINALLY CRACKED HIM WAS THE COLD CLAMBERNESS OF MY HANDS - I NEGLECTED TO TELL HIM THAT THERE WERE PIECES OF ICE INSIDE MY GLOVES...





## THE DEATH TRAIL

The wind whipped his cheek back bare where it had been under the red flannel headband twisted around his forehead. His black eyes saw this side, and his experienced nostrils flared at the sweet, pungent smell of the sage. In his heart a flame of hate was rising, flare against Abner Goodman, the man who had caught him looking to steal, pistol-whipped him, and brought Hester into the paleface fort jail.

Now Hester was free. Miles behind him, along the winding, wavy line of water, mounted across the dark men lay. Daring lightning up at the blue bowl of cloudless sky. They were blue and far-off. They had torn his pants in the little quartermen the wagon taking over to at once and the railroad to way him returned. Hester was possessed the palace of egg, the crystal day. He waited until they made themselves sudden with drink from the bottle the red-headed man had kept in an orange pecker. Then Hester had struck, hard and fast, using the heavy chains that bound his wrists to crash in the skull of one, and then smacking the dead man's gut and slapping the other, who was drunkenly fumbling at his service holster.

It had been light work to strip their bodies of carbons and revolvers and together around his slim waist and broad shoulder. Cutting the harness from their saddles, he had mounted one bareback and made a backseater for the other, leaving him as a spare.

Hester had ridden many miles this day. Even now, though the mesas were forming a black arch under the rays of the setting sun, he still knew he must ride many more. One thing he

had to do before he could get himself free from his trail with this land of the Dragons and paleface forts. He must find Abner Goodman and kill him.

His pride — the hot, savage pride of a Mexican Apache — was flooding his mind with the death for the urge to slaughter. It was a killing madness this fury that rode Hester, sitting as he a soldier and whispering the old tales of the warrior — the killing ways.

He took the Apache horse into a pasture, moving slowly among the water-headed acacia blossoms, and the good tall spikes of the agave grasses. Once he swung down to hack at a barrel with a knife and catch the pulp, to chew it all he rode, standing the best water to pulp — and up the jaw with a heavy rider as Hester.

He made good time, starting the mountains and heading outward through the other side of sandy soil that was ornamented here and there by the yellow flowers of the bitterbrush and the silvery berries of the seedling pines. To his speeding, hate-filled mind came the thought that this was his land, this arid waste of flowers and sand of sudden death and the sweet fragrance of the sage.

The paleface had come into this land where his feet there had lived and fought and died. The palefaces came and built their ranches and raised their herds of steers, and the Apache had been pocketed back into the high hills. He had groined, the palefaces would be out looking for him, but not soon enough to save Abner Goodman from a carbon bullet.

He would be a prisoner to hang the rancher over a sign fire, upside-down, and learn to him



accuse. But he had no time for that. The death he feared was worse of necessity he swift and sudden.

He entered on into the darkness that was flooding the sandy wastes of eastern Arizona . . .

Abner Goodmansawed in the rays of the rising sun and probed blindly for the towel on the ranch house wall. He was reading up for the day ahead, using pump water in a deep basin and a bar of soap made from the rosin of a soap plant.

He was a young man, tall and straight as an Oregon pine, and a heavy Colt hung in a sheath slung about his middle. For seven years he had washed bare, every morning at sunrise, and then gone about his chores, bathing his ranch during every minute of his working hours into something his wife could have pride in.

He could hear the baby crying, and young Abner trying to assuage it with a rattle he had whittled out of soft pine some weeks before. A cluster of pans in the kitchen roof box his wife was washing over breakfast. The smell of frying beans drifted to him.

Abner Goodmansawed in the door and watched his wife a moment, faintly. The woman the best had not withered here. She was young and pretty, a good mate for a man to have in this wild land.

She looked at him, and the young rancher saw the worry in her eyes. He smiled and shook his head. "Don't worry about Hector. He's under heavy guard, on his way back east."

She stirred the beans in the iron skillets and advanced. "I do worry. Ah! That Hector is a bad one. A brown Apache! He won't rest until he gets his back and — kills you!"

Goodmansawed at the table. He frowned slightly. "Lord knows I don't want all that to happen to him. I just wanted to teach him a lesson. If Captain Jack's hadn't happened along at the time, I would have let him go with a pistol-whipping — to teach him to respect property rights."

The woman turned and her eyes showed quick, hot anger. "Captain Jack's was bad enough for him. He couldn't catch him. So he took him away from you, and now Hector blames you for everything that's happened to him."

The rancher shrugged. "Let him come, if he can. He's leaded down with shots right now. He can't hurt me. I'll go about my chores as usual. But I'm hungry as a bear. Better pack me up a good lunch, too. I've got to go up to the west meadow and clean up that ridge. It's all wet with rattlers, and I want to stock that meadow with billies next spring."

The woman advanced again. "You're going up to kill rattlers, Ah?"

The man laughed. "Shucks no. I'll take our pigs up to the wagon and turn 'em loose. Pigs are best at getting an acquaintance for getting rid of rattlers. You know, the pigs kill 'em as easy as greened lightning! Don't know why, but I've seen 'em do it."

"Well be careful."

The woman was looking out across and heard and listened to the man, who was smiling and waving his hands together with his fingers inside his . . .

Hector lay belted down in the hot Arizona sun-light. Far below him, the paleface rancher was climbing down his backboard and doing something to the crate that the wagon carried. Hector suffered as an alkali came to him on the dry air, then raised "Figs!" The crazy paleface was casting pigs, instead of letting them run wild as the Great Spirit had intended! Just one more proof of the paleface's stupidity.

And then Abner Goodmansawed with a blink into his backboard's eyes and whirring to his horses. Like a red shadow, Hector slid down the rock ledge where he lay, and moved on soundless occasions — the barehug mountain of the Apache — along the rock trail that paralleled the trail the rancher was taking.

For an hour, Hector followed the rancher, watching him as he drove the backboard as high into these rocky ridges as he could, then came sliding, the crate and freeing the porcupine that ran on their short legs, grunting and sliding.

Hector shook his head as he stared his carbine forward. Carrying pigs on a wagon then jarring them run free in these rocks. Palefaces were crazy men, all right!

He sighted along the stinging barrel. The paleface was standing with his back to him, looking at the pigs running here and there. Slowly the Apache squeezed the trigger —

Something struck his ankle, something that bit and smarted!

Hector cried out heavily and whirled. A big deer-sized bear rattler was uncoiling, slithering away to the hot rock. There were other rattlers among the rocks, too, snaking themselves. He had become aware of killing the paleface rancher he had just seen there.

His leg burned. He shifted —

Something else struck him there — NO! His hand in his chest, as he reared backward to his still and motionless under the bright sun, a bunch of red-violeting his beaded jacket.

Abner Goodmansawed him like that, a few moments later. He had heard the Apache's rifle barrel, edged with fear. He had heard the shot Hector had fired. He had seen him shift, and had fired himself.

The rancher hunched down, seeing the blood disintegration of the Apache's. "He'd have got me fair between the shoulder blades if a rattler hadn't jumped him! Eh? Hector would I can spare a few snakes — by forcing the part of that rock ridges, to keep my steers out and the rattlers in!"

"After all, a man owes something to the thing that saved his life — even an angry rattler!"

# TIM HOLT

CAUGHT IN AN ABANDONED  
MINE SHAFT—SEALED IN  
WITH LITTLE AIR AND NO  
WATER—THEN SURVIVING  
UNDER THE LETHAL BLAST  
OF A TON OF DYNAMITE—  
THERE SEEMS NO HOPE  
AT ALL FOR ABOLMAREK  
AS HE IS TRAPPED HERE  
TRYING TO RUN DOWN—

THE BANDITS OF  
"BLOODY BASIN!"



SOMEWHERE ON THE SCORCHING SANDS OF AN ARIZONA  
DESERT.



# TIM HOLT



IN CHINNEY GAP SOME HOURS BEFORE DUSK



# TIM HOLT



AT A FAST GALLOP THE GREAT ROLING LIGHTNING RACES OUT OF CHERRY CREEK





STUFFING HIS CAPE INTO THE CHIMNEY OPENING REDMASK BLOCKS THE NATURAL ESCAPE OF THE SMOKE SOON THE LITTLE POT-BELLIED STOVE BELLOWS IS SMOOKING FURIOUSLY.



SOME MINUTES LATER SHERIFF BRADEN ENTERS HIS OFFICE UNWARE THAT A BLACK MENACING FIGURE IS WAITING FOR HIM.





DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE! I SCORED IN TO PROVE THAT TIM HOLT AND CHED AREN'T MEMBERS OF THAT ANDREWS GANG! AND IF YOU WANT I'LL TELL YOU HOW YOU CAN GET—NOT ONE, BUT ALL OF THAT CREDIT!



SO YOU MET HOLT AND VOLUNTEERED TO ACT FOR HIM BY SHOWING ME THESE PAPERS? GIVING HIM A CREDIT CHECK? NOW WHAT?



LET WORD OF IT GET AROUND THE ANDREWS GANG WILL COME IN TO TAKE IT! THEN I'LL Toss THEM INTO THE WELLS, TO THEIR MISERY WHEN I FIND IT I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU AND A POTSHO, AND WE'LL CLEAN THEM OUT!

OUTSIDE THE JAIL, A VOLUNTEER GANG-MEMBER—A MEMBER OF THE BLOODY BASIN GANG—DAVE COMBS...

LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER, A DOZEN GRAY-FACED MEN SURROUND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, AS BLACK MEN ENTER...



DO THEY'RE FIGURIN' ON LAYIN A FINEP FOR US ARE THEY? I'LL TELL SLECK JIM ABOUT THIS! NOW AND THE BOYS CAME INTO TOWN TO SEE THEM HANGERS THIS GAD WAS TALK OF GARD



WE GOT THE MONEY—THE LOOT OF OUR LAST FOUR ROBBERIES! MONEY THAT FREDDY TOMAS STOLE FROM OUR POSSEUT!  
LET'S GO!

HIS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, ROMANS RODE OUT OF TOWN TO FIND CHED...



I'LL WANT CHED'S HELP TO MAINTAIN A LOOKOUT FOR THAT GANG WHEN THEY COME INTO TOWN FOR THAT LOOT!

NOW I MUST HAVE LEFT TIM HOLT'S DEPUTY SHERIFF'S PAPERS IN THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE BETTER GO OVER AND GET THEM NOW. NEVER CAN TELL WHEN THEY MIGHT BE NEEDED...



THUNDERBOLT! SINCE JIM ANDREWS AND HIS MEN MUST HAVE BEEN IN TOWN ALREADY—BECAUSE THOSE GADFLIES ARE BLAME!



NOW I HAVE TO TRACE THEM BLIND, AT NIGHT, AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I CAN DO IT!



ON A HEIGHT OF GROUND REDWAX D-SMOUNTS AND PUTS HIS EAR FLAT TO THE GROUND...

INDIANS USE THIS TRICK TO LISTEN FOR APPROACHING ENEMIES. SOUND—SUCH AS THAT MADE BY HORSES' HOOF—TRAVELS A GOOD DISTANCE UNDERGROUND.



THEY'RE BEING HAID OVER BY NEEDLE BUTTES IN THE BLOODY BASH COUNTRY! IF LIGHTNING CAN LET OUT A NOTCH OR TWO, I CAN GET TO THE FAR END OF THE BUTTES JUST AS THEY DO!



SOME HOURS LATER MOVING IN BARRON HIGHLAND TRAILS, THE CILWICH RIDER COMES DOWN ON A HIND GAFT BEIGHT WITH LAWFIGHT.

SO THIS IS THEIR HIDEOUT? — AN ABANDONED MINE...?



TOO BAD YOU FOUND IT, HORSE! YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE IT ALIVE!



# TIM HOLT

LEAVE HIM HERE. WE GOT THE CRUMMER GAP BANK TO HOLD UP TOMORROW AT NOON. THEN WE'LL PULL STAKES OUT OF HERE, SO WE'LL NEVER NEED THIS NOBODY AGAIN. BLOW IT UP!



FOR HOURS GEORGE CROUCHER IN THE CRASHED WIND SHAFT THEN HE STRAIGHTENS SUDDENLY!



SOMEONE UP ABOVE! ... BUT I CAN'T BREATHE—HE WOULDN'T HEAR ME! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO LET HIM KNOW I'M DOWN HERE ALIVE!

HELPLESS AS THE DYNAMITE BURSTS, GEORGE CROUCHER WAILS THE BLOOD OF THE WIND SHAFTS IN HIS HAIR!



MOMENTS LATER, AS THIN WISPS OF SMOKE RISE FROM THE AIR VENTS OF THE SHAFT...



OH, I AM FOR BEE THEBONES' SACKS FROM THE GROUND!

AN HOUR OF HARD SMOKEING, AND—



I AM LOST IN THESE HILLS—I JUST GOT AROUND LOOKING FOR YOU!

A GOOD THING FOR ME THAT YOU ARE HERE! YOU WERE ABLE TO SEE THE SMOKE FROM THE FIRE I BUILT, BUT MAY LET'S HUNTAL IT FOR CHANCEY GAF THOSE BROTHERS ARE GOING TO KID IT'S BANK TOMORROW AT NOON!

AND SO AS QUICK JIM ANDREWS AND HIS MEN RIDE INTO TOWN THEY ARE MET BY A SOLID SHEET OF HOT LEAD...



GOT EM WHERE WE WANT EM!



GOT EVERY LAST ONE OF EM—THANKS TO YOUR WARRIORS THAT THEY WERE DOWN! AND WE RECOVERED THE MONEY THEY STOLE!

NOW THAT IT'S FINISHED, I'LL BE GOING ON TO CARRY WORD TO TIM HOLT THAT HE'S NO LONGER IN DANGER OF ARREST!



Here it is fellas! send for it **NOW!**

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