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TEX RITTER

A Fawcett Publication

WESTERN

FEB.

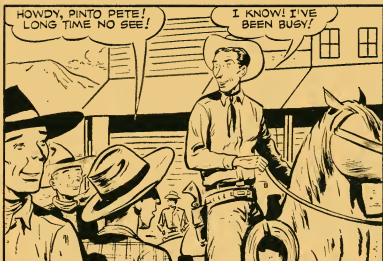
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NO. 15



In this issue: **MURDER IN THE HILLS!**

**PINTO
PETE
NOT
BACKWARD!**





The following outstanding magazines are easily identified on their covers by the words A FAWCETT PUBLICATION.

CAPT. MARVEL ADVENTURES • THE MARVEL FAMILY • LASH LARUE WESTERN • FAWCETT'S FUNNY ANIMALS
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MOTION PICTURE COMICS • TEX RITTER WESTERN • SOLDIER COMICS

Every effort is made to insure that these comic magazines contain the highest quality of wholesome entertainment.

W. H. Fawcett, Jr., President

Tex Ritter

BANG!
BANG!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE
TROUBLE, WHITE FLASH!
WE'D BETTER
INVESTIGATE!

in
**THE STRANGE
FESTIVAL**



BUT AS THE PRAIRIE RANGER, TEX RITTER, TRACKS
DOWN THE SOURCE OF THE TROUBLE...

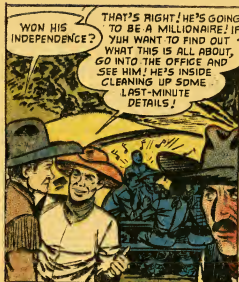


WHY IT'S JUST A PARTY! AND
THOSE SOUNDS WE HEARD MUST
HAVE BEEN THOSE
FIRECRACKERS!

WHAT'S THE IDEA OF
THE FIRECRACKERS,
FELLOWS? THIS
ISN'T THE FOURTH
OF JULY!

MAYBE NOT, MISTER, BUT
THE FOREMAN OF THIS HYPR
RANGH, JUAN JUAREZ, JUST
WON HIS INDEPENDENCE AND
THAT CALLS FOR A REAL
BANG-UP CELEBRATION!





WON HIS INDEPENDENCE?

THAT'S RIGHT! HE'S GOING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE! IF YUH WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, GO INTO THE OFFICE AND SEE HIM! HE'S INSIDE CLEANING UP SOME LAST-MINUTE DETAILS!



I THINK I WILL!



COME IN!
COME IN!

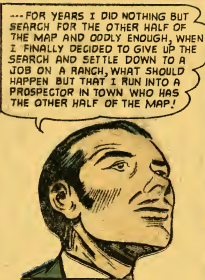


OH, IT IS THE PRAIRIE RANGER! WELCOME TO MY BIG FESTIVAL!

THANKS, JUAN! FROM THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE I RECKON THAT RUMOR I JUST HEARD---THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MILLIONAIRE--- MUST BE TRUE!



LADY LUCK HAS SMILED ON ME AT LAST---AND IT HAPPENED IN THE MOST PECULIAR WAY, TOO! MANY YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS BUT A LAD, AN OLD PROSPECTOR LEFT ME HALF OF A MAP LEADING TO A GOLD MINE IN A HIDDEN VALLEY---



---FOR YEARS I DID NOTHING BUT SEARCH FOR THE OTHER HALF OF THE MAP AND ODDLY ENOUGH, WHEN I FINALLY DECIDED TO GIVE UP THE SEARCH AND SETTLE DOWN TO A JOB ON A RANGH, WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN BUT THAT I RUN INTO A PROSPECTOR IN TOWN WHO HAS THE OTHER HALF OF THE MAP!



THERE HE IS NOW! HANK MILLARD! HE HAS AGREED THAT WE SHOULD PUT OUR SECTIONS OF THE MAP TOGETHER AND FORM A PARTNERSHIP! THAT'S WHY WE ARE HAVING A CELEBRATION!

MILLARD'S A STRANGER TO ME, BUT I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR A LONG TIME, JUAN, AND I WANT TO WISH YOU ALL THE LUCK IN THE WORLD! NOW I'D BETTER BE SHOVING OFF!



I KNOW BEING A PRAIRIE RANGER LEAVES YOU VERY LITTLE TIME FOR RELAXATION, BUT CAN'T YOU HANG AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT?

YOU TALKED ME INTO IT, JUAN!

BUT AS TEX IS EATING SOME OF THE DELICIOUS FOOD...

HOLD ON, FOLKS! THERE'S NO NEED TO GO RUNNING HOME JUST BECAUSE OF THIS DOWNPOUR! MY NEW PARTNER, JUAN JUAREZ FIXED THE BARN UP SO THE PARTY COULD CONTINUE IN THERE JUST IN CASE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED! EVERYBODY HEAD INTO THE BARN NOW!

I'D BETTER BE MOSEYING ALONG! I'LL JUST GO IN AND SAY SO LONG TO JUAN!

THAT'S FUNNY! THERE'S A VERY STRONG ODOR OF GUNPOWDER IN HERE! AND IT SEEMS AS IF IT'S COMING FROM UPSTAIRS!

I THINK I'D BETTER HAVE A LOOK AROUND! IF NECESSARY I'LL CHECK EACH ROOM IN THE HOUSE!

THE ODOR SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM IN HERE!

IT'S THE RANCH COOK---AND HE'S BEEN SHOT TO DEATH!

AND JUST WHAT ARE YUH DOING IN MY ROOM?

FIRST TELL ME WHAT A DEAD MAN'S DOING IN YOUR ROOM?

DEAD MAN? SO THAT'S WHAT YUH WERE DOING KNEELING OVER HIM! WELL, I'LL SEE TO IT THAT YUH DON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

HOLD ON, MILLARD! I'M A PRAIRIE RANGER!

KEEP YORE HANDS WHAR THEY ARE OR I'LL SHOOT!

I WAS ONLY LOOKING FOR MY CREDENTIALS!

THAT'S WHAT YUH SAY, BUT I DON'T TRUST A MURDERER!

IF YUH WON'T BELIEVE ME, PERHAPS YOU'LL BELIEVE THE CHAP BEHIND YOU!



BEHIND ME --- THAR'S NOBODY THAR!



IT WAS AN OLD TRICK, BUT I HAD NO CHOICE!

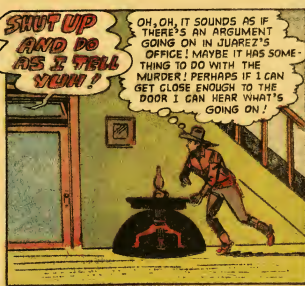


NOW I RECKON I BETTER GET DOWNSTAIRS AND SEE IF JUAREZ MIGHT HAVE SOME IDEA AS TO WHO WOULD HAVE WANTED TO KILL THE RANGH COOK!



SHUT UP AND DO AS I TELL YUH!

OH, OH, IT SOUNDS AS IF THERE'S AN ARGUMENT GOING ON IN JUAREZ'S OFFICE! MAYBE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE MURDER! PERHAPS IF I CAN GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE DOOR I CAN HEAR WHAT'S GOING ON!



NOW THEY'RE TALKING IN NORMAL VOICES AGAIN AND I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING!



WHILE INSIDE...

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, JUAREZ! NOW JUST OPEN UP THAT SAFE AND GIVE US YORE HALF OF THE MAP!

BUT I CAN'T SEE WHAT GODD ONE HALF OF THE MAP WILL DO YOU!



WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT! YUH JUST DO AS YQ'RE TOLD OR YUH'LL TASTE SOME HOT LEAD!



MEANWHILE...

IT'S NO USE! I CAN'T HEAR A SINGLE WORD THEY'RE SAYING! THIS IS JUST A WASTE OF TIME!



EVERYBODY KNOWS JUAREZ IS IN HYAR SO IF HE DOESN'T OPEN THE DOOR, THEY'LL SUSPECT SOMETHING'S WRONG! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, BASCOM?

OPEN THE DOOR AND GET RID OF WHOEVER IS OUT THAR PRONTO, JUAREZ!



AND DON'T FERGET, WE'RE BOTH STANDING RIGHT BEHIND THE DOOR WITH OUR GUNS AIMED AT YUH--IF YUH TRY ANY TRICKS!



I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU TALKING TO SOMEONE, JUAREZ!

WHEN I'M BUSY, TEX, I TALK TO MYSELF!



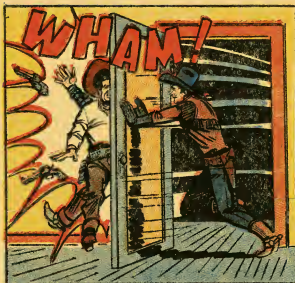
WELL I WAS JUST LEAVING SO I WANTED TO DROP IN AND SAY SO LONG!

THOSE TWO HOMBRES NO DOUBT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE MURDER! THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT I CAN SEE THEM HIDING BEHIND THE DOOR, BUT THE TROUBLE IS IF I MAKE ONE STEP TOWARDS THEM, THEY'RE LIABLE TO OPEN FIRE AND JUAREZ WILL PAY FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE!



WHICH MEANS THERE'S ONLY ONE OTHER WAY TO GET AT THEM!

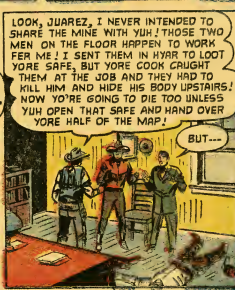
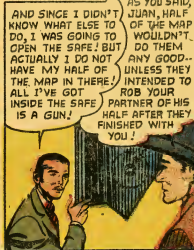




BUT RUNNING INTO TEX RITTER IS LIKE RUNNING INTO A BRICK WALL...



AND AFTER JUAN JUAREZ EXPLAINS...



THERE'S NO SENSE IN TALKING, JUAREZ! YOU BETTER DO AS MILLARD SAID! HERE, GIVE ME THE COMBINATION AND I'LL OPEN THE SAFE!

NOW YOU'RE TALKING SENSE, RITTER! GET MOVING!



TURN TWO TIMES TO THE LEFT AND STOP AT 29, THEN TURN TO THE RIGHT AND STOP AT 25, THEN TURN TO THE LEFT AND STOP AT 4!

MAKE IT SNAPPY!



I'M WORKING AS FAST AS I CAN!



HAVE YOU GOT IT?

I'VE GOT IT, ALL RIGHT!



IT'S A LUCKY THING I REMEMBERED YOUR SAYING THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE SAFE BUT THIS GUN!

NO WONDER YOU ARE A PRAIRIE RANGER! YOU THINK OF EVERYTHING!



IF YOU HADN'T WANDERED IN, EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE WORKED OUT ALL RIGHT!

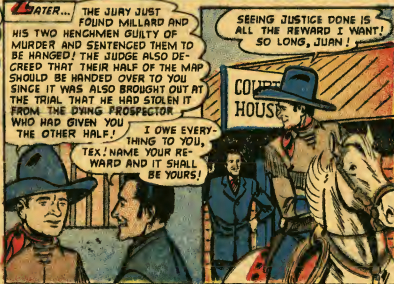
THERE'S ALWAYS AN IF IN THE LIFE OF A BANDIT! WITH THE LIFE OF THE COOK TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR, YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS ARE NOW GOING TO MAKE A ONE-WAY TRIP TO THE JAILHOUSE!



LATER...

THE JURY JUST FOUND MILLARD AND HIS TWO HENCHMEN GUILTY OF MURDER AND SENTENCED THEM TO BE HANGED! THE JUDGE ALSO DECREED THAT THEIR HALF OF THE MAP SHOULD BE HANDED OVER TO YOU SINCE IT WAS ALSO BROUGHT OUT AT THE TRIAL THAT HE HAD STOLEN IT FROM THE DYING PROSPECTOR WHO HAD GIVEN YOU THE OTHER HALF!

I OWE EVERYTHING TO YOU, TEX! NAME YOUR REWARD AND IT SHALL BE YOURS!



SEEING JUSTICE DONE IS ALL THE REWARD I WANT! SO LONG, JUAN!

BUFFALO BULL - "THE TALL TALE OF THE TINY TOURIST!"

THAT'S THE GANG! I RECKON I'LL TELL THEM ONE OF MY FAMOUS TALL TALES AND HAVE SOME FUN WITH THEM!



HOWDY, FELLOWS! IT'S MIGHTY PLEASANT TO BE BACK IN CIVILIZATION AGAIN!

HUH? WHAT?



WHAT DO YUH MEAN, "BACK IN CIVILIZATION"? BUFFALO BULL? WHAR HAVE YUH BEEN... IN JAIL? HA, NA!

JAIL WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH SAFER, FELLOWS!



HUH? JAIL WOULD HAVE BEEN, SAFER? WHAR WERE YUH ANYWAY?

IN THE WILDS OF AFRICA!



WHAT? YUH WERE IN THE WILDS OF AFRICA?

YUP!





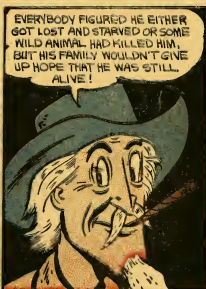
JEEPERS!
WHAT WERE
YUH DOING
THAR?

I WAS SENT OUT TO
LOOK FOR A TOURIST
NAMED DINGLE WHO
HAD DISAPPEARED
A YEAR AGO!

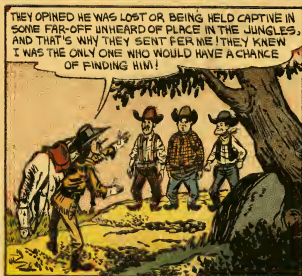


WHAT? THE
TOURIST HAD
DISAPPEARED
A YEAR AGO?

YES, AND THAR HADN'T
BEEN A SINGLE
TRACE OF HIM AND
NOBODY KNEW WHAT
HAPPENED TO HIM!



EVERYBODY FIGURED HE EITHER
GOT LOST AND STARVED OR SOME
WILD ANIMAL HAD KILLED HIM.
BUT HIS FAMILY WOULDN'T GIVE
UP HOPE THAT HE WAS STILL
ALIVE!



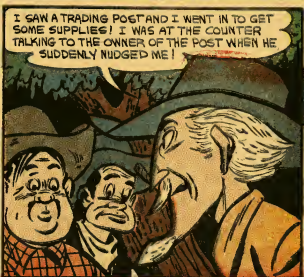
THEY OPINED HE WAS LOST OR BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN
SOME FAR-OFF UNHEARD OF PLACE IN THE JUNGLES,
AND THAT'S WHY THEY SENT FER ME! THEY KNEW
I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WOULD HAVE A CHANCE
OF FINDING HIM!



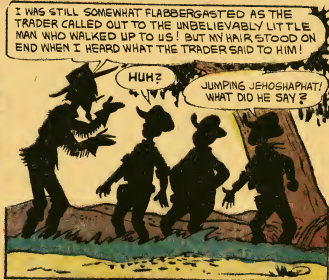
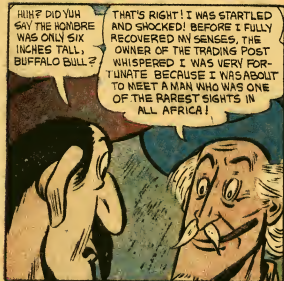
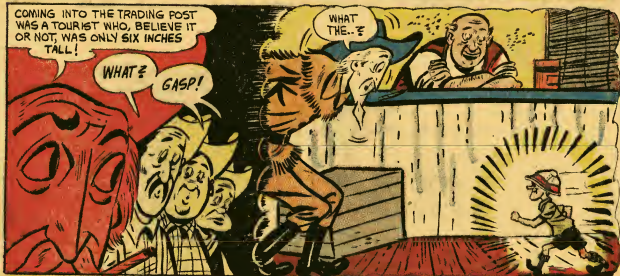
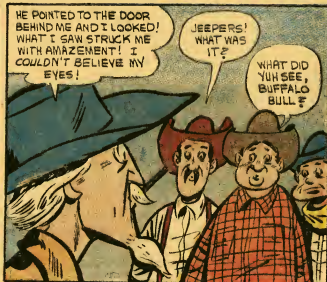
SO I SET OUT TO DEEPEST AFRICA IN QUEST OF
THE MISSING MR. DINGLE! I WANDERED TO THE
REMOTEST PLACES SEARCHING AND SEARCHING!



AFTER WEEKS AND WEEKS OF LOOKING WITH-
OUT ANY LUCK OR EVEN DISCOVERING A SINGLE
TRACE OF HIM, I FINALLY CAME OUT OF THE
JUNGLES INTO A VILLAGE!



I SAW A TRADING POST AND I WENT IN TO GET
SOME SUPPLIES! I WAS AT THE COUNTER
TALKING TO THE ONNER OF THE POST WHEN HE
SUDDENLY NUGGED ME!



AS THE TRADER POINTED TO ME, HE SAID TO THE TINY SIX-INCH TOURIST...



BE A GOOD FELLOW, ED, AND GIVE MY FRIEND HERE THE DETAILS OF THAT DAY SIX MONTHS AGO WHEN YOU TOLD THAT WITCH DOCTOR TO GO JUMP IN THE LAKE!

GASP!

WHAT? ARE YUH TRYING TO TELL US THAT HOMBRE WAS SHRUNK BY AN AFRICAN WITCH DOCTOR BECAUSE HE TOLD HIM TO GO JUMP IN A LAKE?



THAT'S RIGHT! AND IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN ED DINGLE, THE MAN I WAS LOOKING FOR!

I PUT HIM IN A PENCIL-BOX AND BROUGHT HIM HOME TO HIS FAMILY AND THEY GAVE ME A REWARD!

WELL, WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YUH A REWARD, TOO!



THIS IS WHAT YUH GET FER TELLING US A BIG LIE LIKE THAT! MAYBE THIS WILL MAKE YUH SHRINK FROM TELLING SUCH WILD YARNS AGAIN!

BAM **SOCK POW**
 OUCH
 NEEEE
 EYOOOW



EVERY TIME I TRY TO HAVE SOME FUN AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE, I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO PAY FER IT!

RIDING THE RANGE
WITH
TEX RITTER

455 NORTH RODEO DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA



HOWDY, FOLKS.

THIS MONTH I'D LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT A MATTER WHICH EVERY COWHAND KNOWS. HE KIND OF GROWS UP WITH IT, YOU MIGHT SAY! CONCERNS THE PROPER HANDLING OF YOUR RIFLE! MILLIONS OF YOUNGSTERS IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY OWN AIR RIFLES AND THEY HAVE PLENTY OF SAFE AND SANE FUN WITH THEM! BUT THERE ARE ALWAYS ENOUGH MAVERICKS WHO DON'T KNOW BETTER WHO CAUSE TROUBLE IN THEIR TOWNS!

I MEAN THOSE AIR RIFLE OWNERS WHO TAKE TO SHOOTING AT DOGS, CATS AND BIRDS! THOSE BROOKTAILS WHO SHOOT OTHER FOLKS' PROPERTY, TREES, SQUIRRELS AND YES --- EVEN EACH OTHER! THESE HOMBRES JUST DON'T USE COMMON SENSE! THEN THERE ARE THE ONES WHO WALK AROUND WITH THEIR RIFLES COCKED AND READY TO FIRE! THEY'RE THE KIND WHO SHOOT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS WHEN THEY STUMBLE AND THEIR RIFLE GOES OFF! AND THERE'S ALWAYS THE FELLOW WHO NEVER STOPS TO SEE IF ANYONE IS WITHIN RANGE BEHIND HIS TARGET WHEN HE'S SHOOTING!

YEP, THOSE ARE THE HOMBRES WHO MAKE FOLKS THINK NO ONE SHOULD OWN AN AIR RIFLE! BUT AN AIR RIFLE IS A FINE THING FOR A YOUNGSTER TO OWN, PROVIDING HE HANDLES IT SAFELY AND PROPERLY! IF YOU WANT TO LEARN ALL ABOUT PROPER RIFLE HANDLING, OR IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS TO LEARN, JOIN THE JUNIOR SAFETY INSTITUTE! IT'S NOW OPEN TO EVERYONE OWNING A SPRING-TYPE AIR RIFLE! GET DAD INTERESTED, TOO! HE'LL WANT TO JOIN IN THE FUN! YOU'LL LEARN ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT STRAIGHT SHOOTING, SAFE SHOOTING AND REAL DOWN-TO-EARTH MARKSMANSHIP! FOR FREE DETAILS, DROP A LINE TO JUNIOR SAFETY INSTITUTE, SUITE 1900A, 230 NORTH MICHIGAN, CHICAGO 1, ILLINOIS.

REMEMBER, PARTNERS, ANYTHING CAN BE DANGEROUS IF MISUSED! HANDLE YOUR AIR RIFLE PROPERLY! YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF, YOUR FOLKS, AND YOUR COMMUNITY! DO THAT AND FOLKS WILL SAY: "THERE GOES A REAL AIR RIFLEMAN!" TILL NEXT MONTH, PALS, KEEP SMILING AND GOOD RIDING!

YOUR PARD,

Tex Ritter



FUGITIVE

By Clement Good



CLAM O'REILLY wakened from a bad nightmare and there was cold sweat on his forehead, his palms and his back. He groaned and rubbed a hand across his eyes. He sat up and grunted to himself, "There's only one thing to do. I've got to get out of town!"

He got up and padded across to the wash stand in his bare feet. He poured water from the pitcher into the basin and slopped it over his face with his hands. He dried his face with a rough towel, then ran fingers through his curly brown hair, pushing stray locks back from his forehead.

Now he was fully awake and he dressed hurriedly, but silently. His final move was to buckle on his gun belt, heavy with the two holstered Colt .44's. Then he looked out the window. The full moon was bright, but he noted with satisfaction that a dark cloud was sliding toward it. He picked up the lariat hanging from a bedpost and told himself, "Lucky I brought this along with me instead of leaving it on the saddle horn."

He looped the rope over the top edge of a shutter and, when the cloud finally darkened the moon, he slid silently out of the window and climbed down hand over hand from his second story hotel room, being very careful not to scrape or kick his boots against the wall. When his feet touched earth, he deftly flipped on the rope, and the loop came free from the shutter and fell to him. Then he ducked for the shadows as the moon began to edge out from behind the cloud.

By dawn, Clam O'Reilly had put many miles between himself and the boom town named Black Spider City. But he rode on all day, keeping to the hills and crisscrossing streams to throw off pursuit. Wary and dusty, he finally camped at nightfall in a thick pine grove. He ate his supper cold, being too wary

to start a fire.

He was up early, and it was shortly after sunrise that he crossed the state line and entered the town of Great Gopher. Great Gopher seldom had any visitors, so Clam was immediately identified as The Stranger—and after a few of the citizens had tried unsuccessfully to draw him out about himself and his past—as The Mysterious Stranger.

Clam was a strong, silent fellow and he was particularly silent about his reasons for leaving Black Spider City. When people tried to be friendly and talk with him, he would answer in grunts and monosyllables. Some thought him downright rude. Many suspected that he had an evil past and that rumor finally reached the ears of the law.

O'Reilly had one foot in the first step of the General Store when he heard a drawling voice. "I'd like to talk to you, young feller."

Clam turned slowly. He saw a grizzled, powerful man, wearing a star on his chest. He also saw that, although the man hadn't actually drawn a gun, his right hand was hovering significantly near a holster.

"What about?" asked Clam.

"Tell you private in my office," responded the sheriff. "Come along?"

"Sure," said Clam.

The lawman sat at a battered desk and gestured Clam into a chair across from him. Clam remained silent while the lawman filled a crusty corncob pipe, lighted it, and puffed a few smoke rings toward the ceiling.

"Now what I want to know," said the sheriff at last, "is where you came from and why you left there so sudden like."

"That's my business," responded Clam.

"Sure it is. And maybe it's mine. Now there's a rumor going around that you are a fugitive from the law. I don't much hold with rumors.

"I like facts. Want to give them to me?"

"No," said Clam.

The sheriff blew out a cloud of gray smoke. "Well, have it your own way. The law says a man doesn't have to bear witness against himself. Only thing is, with you not talking it kind of looks as if you've got something to hide. And it's my duty to lock you up in a cell until I can check up and find out whether there's anything to the rumors or not. Well, step this way."

The sheriff rose from his chair and pointed toward a barred door at the rear.

"Hey, wait! I don't want to rot in a cell!" exclaimed Clam.

"Well?"

"If I tell you the truth, Sheriff, will you promise to keep it to yourself?"

"I will if it doesn't involve any lawbreaking. Spill it."

"The truth is," said Clam, "that I come from Black Spider City. By a stroke of luck I happened to catch six stage robbers singlehanded. The townspeople made out like I was a hero and were going to hold a big wing-ding in Cattlemen's Hall and the mayor was aiming to give me a medal. And then I found out what they wanted me to do."

"What was that?"

"They wanted me to make a speech! Why golly, Sheriff, my knees knock together right now, just thinking about it. So that's why I sneaked out of town in the dead of night."

A chuckle came from the sheriff. "I know just how you feel, son. I'm not much on speechifying myself. This is the goldangdest story I ever heard about why a man should run away from a place, but it so happens I believe you. You can go about your business and welcome to our town. I'll keep your secret."

"Thanks," said Clam.

But the rumor that Clam was wanted for some terrible crime continued to spread through Great Gopher. And it was embellished

as it grew. Eventually it was reported that he was wanted for murder in Black Spider City and that there was a thousand dollar reward posted for him.

A pair of tough hombres named Luke and Shorty decided that reward would be very comforting in their pockets. After dark, Luke stopped Clam on the street to ask for a match while Shorty slipped up behind and cracked a pistol butt down on Clam's head. Then they threw his unconscious form into a buckboard and headed for Black Spider City. When Clam recovered, he found himself jolting along the stage road with a pistol pointed at his middle. He protested that this kidnaping was all a mistake, that there was no reward out for himself, but the abductors refused to believe him. So Clam lapsed into silent waiting—waiting for a chance to jump Luke, who held the gun on him while Shorty drove.

Luke kept a tireless watch until they reached the outskirts of Black Spider City. Then Shorty let out a whoop and yelled, "Here's where we get our thousand dollars."

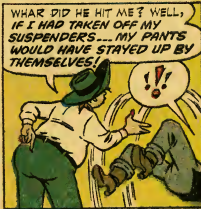
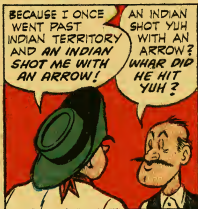
Luke glanced around to get a look at the town and Clam leaped for him. He crashed a hard right against Luke's jaw, knocking him off the wagon into the dusty street. Shorty was drawing a pistol when Clam's fist smashed against his face and he toppled from the wagon seat. Clam braked the wagon and jumped down, just as Sheriff Simms of Black Spider City rode up.

"WELL, well," said the sheriff, looking at the two knocked-out men. "Clam, you've done it again. I just got photos of these two hombres on a couple of circulars yesterday. They're wanted in Texas! You're a bigger hero than ever. You'll have to make a real long speech now!"

Clam O' Reilly groaned.

THE END

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Tex Ritter

in MURDER IN THE HILLS



LET'S GO, WHITE FLASH AND FURY!
I HEAR GUNSHOTS COMING FROM UP
ON TOP OF THIS HILL AND THAT'S
WHERE THE TAYSON SILVER
MINE IS!

YUH CRAZY FOOL!
WE'D ALREADY STOLEN
THE PAYROLL! WHY DID
YUH HAVE TO SHOOT
THE PAYMASTER?

I WANTED TO
ADD THE TENTH
NOTCH TO MY
GUN HANDLE!

TAYSON SILVER MINE
PAYMASTER'S OFFICE



IF ANYONE HEARD YOUR SHOTS,
WE'LL HAVE EVERY PRAIRIE RANGER
ON OUR TRAIL BEFORE WE EVEN
GET OUT OF THE HILLS!



HYAR, YUH BETTER
GIVE ME THAT GUN
BEFORE YUH SHOOT
ONE OF US!

HEY,
GIVE ME
BACK MY
GUN!



I'M THE BOSS OF THIS GANG! NOW
SHUT UP AND DO AS I TELL YUH
OR I'LL PUT A SLUG IN YUH!
YUH'LL GET YORE GUN BACK
WHEN I'M GOOD AND READY!
NOW GET ON YORE HORSE
AND LET'S GO!

SLAP!



BUT AS THE BANDITS RIDE OFF...

OH, OH, SOMEONE DID HEAR THE SHOT!

I CAN'T SEE WHO IT IS BUT I CAN RECOGNIZE THE COSTUME --- IT'S A PRAIRIE RANGER! THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS SEPARATE AND MEET AT THE RIVER! HE CAN'T POSSIBLY FOLLOW ALL OF US!



HEY, TOSS MY SHOOTING IRON BACK TO ME!

WITH THE LAW CREEPING UP ON ME I'M NOT STOPPING TO DIG YORE GUN OUT OF THE MONEY SACK WHAR I TOSSED IT! YUH'LL HAVE TO GET ALONG WITHOUT IT FER THE TIME BEING! NOW GET GOING!

FROM THE LOOKS OF THAT MONEY BAG AND THE WAY THOSE THREE HOMBRES ARE VAMOOSING, THEY MUST BE THE ONES WHO WERE DOING THE SHOOTING! I CAN'T POSSIBLY FOLLOW ALL OF THEM SO THE BEST THING TO DO IS CONCENTRATE ON ONE!

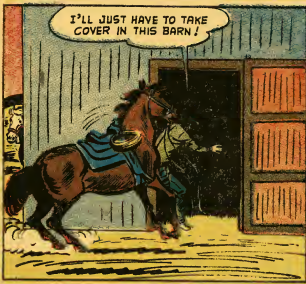


I RECKON FOLLOWING THAT HOMBRE IS AS GOOD AS ANY!



SHORTLY AFTER...

IT'S TEX RITTER! NO WONDER HE'S CATCHING UP TO ME! THAT HORSE OF HIS, WHITE FLASH, IS THE FASTEST STALLION IN THESE PARTS!



I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE COVER IN THIS BARN!



WHOA, WHITE FLASH! I SAW THE HOMBRE RUN INTO THIS BARN!



I KNOW YOU'RE IN HERE AND I'M COVERING THE ONLY WAY OUT, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF AND SURRENDER!

THE ONLY WAY I CAN POSSIBLY GET OUT OF HYAR IS TO CATCH HIM OFF GUARD!



THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK! I'LL LAND ON TOP OF HIM AND KNOCK HIM OUT!

WOOF! WOOF!

BUT FURY'S BARK WARNED HIS MASTER!

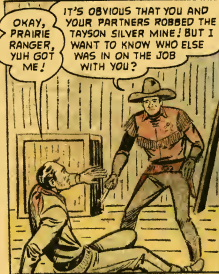


GOOD DOG, FURY!

SWISH!



POW!



OKAY, PRAIRIE RANGER, YUH GOT ME!

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS ROBBED THE TAYSON SILVER MINE! BUT I WANT TO KNOW WHO ELSE WAS IN ON THE JOB WITH YOU?



I'LL TALK WITH PLEASURE! IF THOSE YARMINTS DIDN'T RUN OFF AND TAKE MY GUN WITH THEM, I MIGHT NOT BE IN THIS PREDICAMENT NOW! I'LL GIVE YUH A FULL CONFESSION, RITTER, NAMES AND DETAILS! YUH WRITE DOWN WHAT I TELL YUH AND I'LL SIGN IT!



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THAT DOES IT! NOW AS SOON AS I PUT YOU BEHIND BARS, I'LL SEE IF I CAN'T PICK UP THE TRAIL OF YOUR TWO PARTNERS, CALDWELL AND BURNS!



SHORTLY AFTER...

I SEE YUH MADE IT ALL RIGHT, CALDWELL, BUT WHAT ABOUT DEKES?

HE'S IN PLENTY OF TROUBLE, BURNS! I SAW THE PRAIRIE RANGER, RITTER, CORNER HIM IN A BARN SO I FOLLOWED AND I HEARD DEKES TELL ALL!

DEKES EVEN SIGNED A FULL CONFESSION! IF THE LAW CATCHES UP WITH US NOW, WE'LL ALL SWING FOR THE MURDER OF THE TAYSON CASHIER!

THEN WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY THAT CONFESSION AND THE WITNESS ALONG WITH IT! JUST WHAR DID YUH LAST SEE DEKES?



FOLLOW ME AND I'LL SHOW YUH!

WE'LL MAKE IT SNAPPY! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE DEKES DOESN'T LIVE TO REACH THE JAILHOUSE!



SOON...

THAR'S DEKES NOW!

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT HIM BECAUSE HE'S LEAVING THIS WORLD!



OOF!
BANG!
BANG!

MY PRISONER'S BEEN KILLED!



NOW LET'S FINISH RITTER OFF SO WE CAN FIND THE CONFESSION AND DESTROY IT! START SHOOTING!



BUT BEFORE EITHER BANDIT CAN SQUEEZE HIS TRIGGER...

WE SHOT OUR GUNS AWAY! WE'D BETTER VAMOOSE!

BANG!
BANG!



THOSE MUST BE DEKES' TWO PARTNERS! LET'S GO, WHITE FLASH, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THEIR TRAIL!

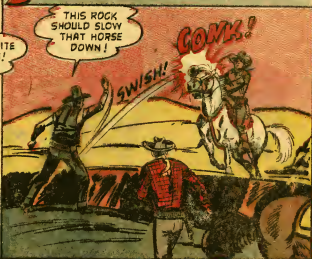


BUT WOULD TAKE NO EFFORT FOR TEX RITTER TO SHOOT THE TWO BANDITS, BUT LIKE ALL TRUE PRAIRIE RANGERS HE PREFERS TO BRING HIS PRISONERS BACK ALIVE, SO THE CHASE CONTINUES THROUGH THE HILLS!



KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, WHITE FLASH! WE'RE CONTINUALLY GAINING ON THEM! AS SOON AS WE CROSS THE CHASM WE'RE BOUND TO CATCH UP TO THEM ONCE AND FOR ALL!

BUT AS TEX REACHES THE EDGE OF THE CHASM...



THIS ROCK SHOULD SLOW THAT HORSE DOWN!

SWISH!
GONG!

AND AS WHITE FLASH REARS UP, TEX FALLS FROM THE SADDLE AND IS KNOCKED OUT!

THAT FALL KNOCKED THE PRAIRIE RANGER OUT! O'MON, CALDWELL, LET'S JUMP BACK ACROSS THE CHASM! THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO SEARCH FER THAT CONFESSION!



ONCE WE FIND IT AND DESTROY IT WE'RE IN THE CLEAR! AFTER ALL, RITTER DIDN'T SEE US COMMIT THE CRIME AND WITHOUT THE SIGNED CONFESSION THEY CAN'T USE THE TESTIMONY OF A DEAD MAN!



BUT AS THE BANDITS REMOVE DEKES' SIGNED CONFESSION FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS PRAIRIE RANGER'S POCKET...

I REMOVED RITTER'S GUNS JUST IN CASE HE COMES TO! HEY, BURNS, WATCH OUT FER THE DOG!



THAT DOG'S GOT THE CONFESSION! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!



HE MOVES SO FAST IT'S HARD TO TAKE AIM!

NEVER MIND AIMING, JUST KEEP FIRING! ONE OF THE BULLETS IS BOUND TO HIT HIM!



BANG!
BANG! BANG!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



DON'T FALL BEHIND, CALDWELL!
WE'VE GOT TO CATCH THAT DOG!
OUR NECKS DEPEND ON IT!

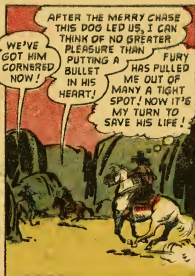
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!



BUT SUDDENLY TEX RITTER
COMES TO AND...

THAT'S
FURY, ALL RIGHT! HE NEVER WOULD
HAVE RUN OFF AND LEFT ME HERE
LIKE THIS IF IT DIDN'T HAVE SOME-
THING TO DO WITH THE CASE WE'RE
WORKING ON! LET'S
GO, WHITE FLASH!

WOOF!
WOOF!



WE'VE
GOT HIM
CORNERED
NOW!

AFTER THE MERRY CHASE
THIS DOG LED US, I CAN
THINK OF NO GREATER
PLEASURE THAN
PUTTING A
BULLET
IN HIS
HEART!
FURY
HAS PULLED
ME OUT OF
MANY A TIGHT
SPOT! NOW IT'S
MY TURN TO
SAVE HIS LIFE!



BUT AS THE PRAIRIE RANGER REACHES FOR HIS
SHOOTING IRONS...

YIPES!
MY GUNS
ARE GONE!

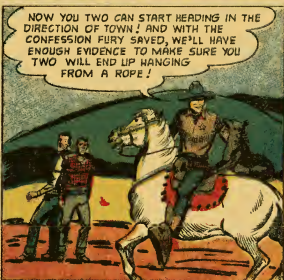


WE CAN'T MISS HIM
FROM HYAR! START
SHOOTING,
CALDWELL!

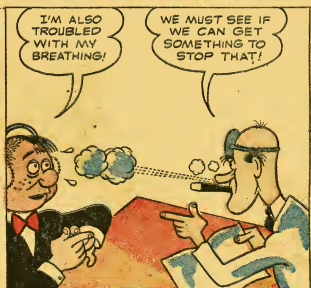
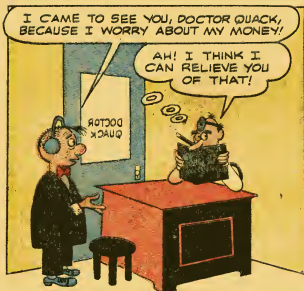


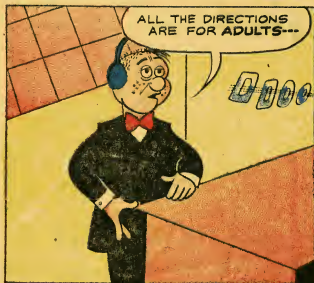
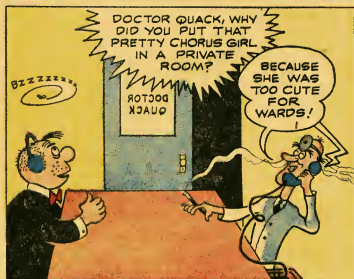
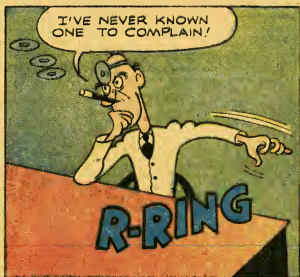
I KNOW THAT WAS A LITTLE TOO CLOSE
FOR COMFORT, FURY, BUT IF IT WILL
MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER,
THESE TWO KILLERS WILL
FEEL WORSE IN JAIL!

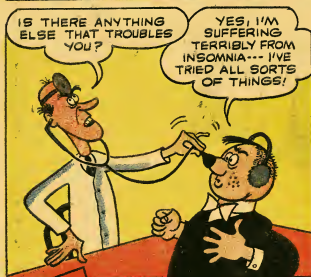
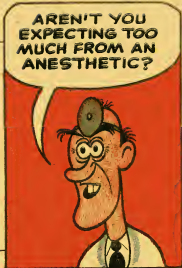
BANG!
BANG!



NOW YOU TWO CAN START HEADING IN THE
DIRECTION OF TOWN! AND WITH THE
CONFESSION FURY SAVED, WE'LL HAVE
ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO MAKE SURE YOU
TWO WILL END UP HANGING
FROM A ROPE!







Tex Ritter

IN THE FIERY FUR MYSTERY

ONE DAY AS THE PRAIRIE
RANGER, TEX RITTER, PATROLS
THE RANGE ...



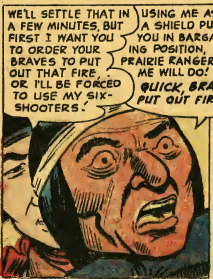
FASTER, WHITE FLASH!
THAT SMOKE SEEMS TO
BE COMING FROM THE
DIRECTION OF BILL
WATTS' TRADING
POST!

IT IS BILL WATTS' TRADING
POST! AND THOSE INDIANS
STARTED THE FIRE!



YIPES! THEY'VE GOT BILL
WATTS TIED TO A TREE AND
IT LOOKS AS IF THEY'RE
GOING TO SCALP HIM!





OKAY, TALL TREE, YOU START TALKING!

EVERY YEAR WE SELL ALL FURS WE TRAP TO BILL WATTS! WHEN TRAPPING SEASON OVER WE BRING FURS TO HIM, BUT THIS TIME ---

...THE SEASON ONLY HALF OVER WHEN WATTS COME TO US AND SAY WE CAN GET VERY GOOD PRICE FOR FURS IF WE TURN OVER WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE CAUGHT! NATURALLY WE AGREE!

WE GIVE HIM ALL FURS AND HE SAY WE SHOULD COME TO TRADING POST NEXT DAY, WHICH IS TODAY, AND COLLECT MONEY!

BUT WHEN WE COME, WATTS DENY EVER TAKING FURS FROM US!

I DENIED IT, BECAUSE I NEVER DID TAKE ANY FURS FROM THEM!



WHEN HE REFUSED TO PAY US FOR FURS HE TAKE, WE TELL HIM EITHER PAY US OR WE KILL HIM AND BURN DOWN TRADING POST! AND THEN YOU ARRIVE, PRAIRIE RANGER!

LOOK, TEX. YUH KNOW I NEVER WOULD PULL A NASTY TRICK LIKE THEY CLAIM I DID!

I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T, BILL WATTS BUT I ALSO KNOW THESE INDIANS AND THEY WOULDN'T MAKE UP ANY SUCH STORY EITHER! NOW TELL ME, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SOMEONE ELSE LOOKING LIKE YOU PULLED THIS TRICK ON THE INDIANS?

WE NO COULD MAKE MISTAKE!



MAN WHO COME AND TELL US HE BILL WATTS HAD SCAR ON WRIST AND ALSO HAVE BAD FOOT, SO WE POSITIVE IT IS BILL WATTS!

BUT I TELL YUH IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ME! I HAVEN'T BEEN UP NEAR THE INDIAN CAMP IN WEEKS!

WE DEMAND JUSTICE!

AND SO DO I!

MEANWHILE---

WE REALLY PICKED UP A TERRIFIC LOAD OF FURS, HYPNO, AND THE BEST PART OF IT WAS THE EASY WAY WE GOT THEM! IF WE EVER TRIED TO STEAL THEM FROM THE INDIANS, WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN KILLED FOR SURE!



BUT WHEN YOU HYPNOTIZED THAT TRADER BILL WATTS INTO GOING UP AND GETTING THEM FER US, IT WAS AS EASY AS EATING APPLE PIE!

YEAH, AND WHEN WATT'S SNAPS OUT OF THAT HYPNOTIC TRANCE I PUT HIM IN, HE WON'T EVEN REMEMBER DOING IT!

I FIGURED THAT THIS OLD HYPNOSIS ACT OF MINE WOULD COME IN HANDY WHEN I DECIDED TO TAKE UP THIS LIFE OF CRIME!

I SURE WISH CURT WOULD GET BACK WITH THE GRUB SO WE CAN EAT AND SHOVE OFF!

WHAT'S THE RUSH, JACK! WHEN THOSE INDIANS ARRIVE AT THE TRADING POST TO GET THE MONEY FER THE FURS AND WATT'S DENIES THE WHOLE DEAL, THEY'LL KILL HIM, LEAVING US IN THE CLEAR!



ALL THE SAME, I'LL FEEL SAFER WHEN WE'RE OUT OF THIS TERRITORY!

HYAR COMES CURT NOW!



MEANWHILE--

I WANT BOTH OF YOU TO PROMISE THAT YOU'LL DO NOTHING SILLY UNTIL I GET BACK! I'M RIDING OVER TO THE PRAIRIE RANGERS' OFFICE TO CHECK THE CRIMINAL FILES TO SEE IF THERE'S AN OUTLAW WHO LOOKS LIKE BILL WATT'S! AFTER ALL ANYONE COULD PRETEND TO HAVE A BAD FOOT!

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, TEX!

TEX FRIEND OF RED MAN FOR LONG TIME SO WILL DO AS HE SAY!



BUT AS TEX RIDES OFF!

HELLO, BILL! WHAT'S GOING ON HYAR! IT LOOKS AS IF THESE INDIANS ARE KEEPING YUH UNDER GUARD!

IT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN, JOE! ANYTHING I CAN DO FER YUH?



NO, I WAS JUST PASSING BY SO I THOUGHT I'D STOP AND SAY HELLO! BY THE WAY, WHAT DID THAT GUY WITH THE BIG EYES WANT? I SAW HIM ENTERING YOUR TRADING POST YESTERDAY!

WITH THE BIG EYES?





YES, DON'T YUH REMEMBER?

SAY, COME TO THINK OF IT, I DO REMEMBER! WHEN HE CAME IN HIS EYES FASCINATED ME SO MUCH I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HIM! BUT THE FUNNY PART OF IT IS I CAN'T REMEMBER A SINGLE THING THAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT!



I WONDER IF THAT COULD HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON! I RECKON I BETTER GO AND TELL THIS TO TEX RITTER RIGHT AWAY!

STAY WHERE YOU ARE! TEX RITTER SAY WE ARE TO WAIT HERE FOR HIM! YOU NOT GOING TO RUN AWAY!



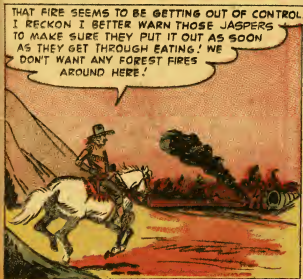
IT WOULD LOOK AS IF I'M TRYING TO RUN AWAY! SAY, WOULD YUH DO ME A FAVOR, JOE? IF I WRITE OUT A NOTE WOULD YUH TAKE IT OVER TO TEX RITTER RIGHT AWAY?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT IF IT WILL HELP YUH I SHORE WILL!

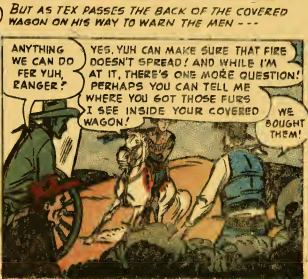


AT THE SAME TIME --

IF I TAKE THE SHORT CUT DOWN THE SIDE OF THIS HILL, I CAN REACH THE PRAIRIE RANGER'S OFFICE MUCH FASTER! THE QUICKER I CLEAN UP THIS MESS THE BETTER IT WILL BE FOR EVERYONE CONCERNED!



THAT FIRE SEEMS TO BE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL! I RECKON I BETTER WARN THOSE JASPERS TO MAKE SURE THEY PUT IT OUT AS SOON AS THEY GET THROUGH EATING! WE DON'T WANT ANY FOREST FIRES AROUND HERE!



BUT AS TEX PASSES THE BACK OF THE COVERED WAGON ON HIS WAY TO WARN THE MEN --

ANYTHING WE CAN DO FER YUH, RANGER?

YES, YUH CAN MAKE SURE THAT FIRE DOESN'T SPREAD! AND WHILE I'M AT IT, THERE'S ONE MORE QUESTION! PERHAPS YOU CAN TELL ME WHERE YOU GOT THOSE FURS I SEE INSIDE YOUR COVERED WAGON!

WE BOUGHT THEM!



HAVE YOU GOT A RECEIPT SHOWING THAT YOU BOUGHT THEM?

SURELY, YUH AREN'T QUESTIONING OUR WORD, DO YUH?



SOME FURS ARE MISSING IN THIS TERRITORY AND MY JOB IS TO CHECK UP ON THEM! I'M NOT SAYING YOU PEOPLE DID ANYTHING WRONG, BUT I'D JUST LIKE TO MAKE SURE!

UNFORTUNATELY I DON'T HAVE A RECEIPT! BUT YUH CAN ASK ME ALL THE QUESTIONS YUH LIKE AND I'LL BE ONLY TO HAPPY TO ANSWER THEM! AND IF YUH'LL LOOK INTO MY EYES, YUH'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THAT I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!

FASCINATED BY THE WEIRD-LOOKING EYES, TEX CAN'T LOOK ANYWHERE ELSE BUT STRAIGHT INTO THEM!

AND IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE THE PRAIRIE RANGER FALLS UNDER HYPNO'S HYPNOTIC SPELL!



THAT'S RIGHT! LOOK INTO MY EYES! I'LL SOON HAVE YUH HYPNOTIZED!



YUH ARE NOW UNDER MY SPELL! I ORDER YUH TO RIDE OVER THE NEARBY CLIFF! YUH WILL START RIDING WHEN I SNAP MY FINGERS!



HE'S HYPNOTIZED, ALL RIGHT! HE'S DOING JUST WHAT HYPNO TOLD HIM TO DO!

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES BEFORE HE RIDES OVER THE CLIFF! NOW LET'S PUT OUT THE FIRE AND GET ON OUR WAY!



AND JUST AS ORDERED, TEX HEADS FOR THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING A THOUSAND-FOOT DROP!



IT LOOKS LIKE THE END FOR THE VALIANT PRAIRIE RANGER!

BUT ALTHOUGH TEX IS HYPNOTIZED, HIS FAITHFUL HORSE WHITE FLASH ISN'T!



WHITE FLASH SAVES THE DAY!



AND WHITE FLASH STARTS TO HEAD BACK IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FLEEING BANDITS, BUT WHAT CHANCE WILL THE HYPNOTIZED TEX HAVE AGAINST THE FLEEING HIGHWAYMEN?

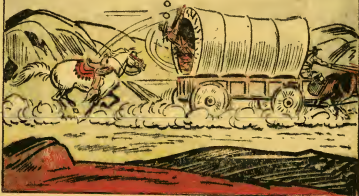


BUT THE SOUND OF THE ROLLING WHEELS SNAPS TEX OUT OF HIS HYPNOTIC TRANCE!

WHERE AM I?
NOW I
REMEMBER!



IT'S PRETTY CLEAR TO ME NOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THE INDIANS AND BILL WATTS! THE QUESTION IS WHETHER I'LL BE ABLE TO CAPTURE THESE BANDITS, AND PROVE IT!



SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE WRONG WITH YOUR HYPNOTIC SPELL, HYPNO! IT'S RITTER AGAIN!

HIS HYPNOTIC SPELL WORKED PRETTY GOOD!

AND JUST TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T WORK AGAIN, I'M GOING TO CLOSE HIS TWO EYES!

NOW I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU TWO!

YOU'RE NOT TAKING CARE OF ANYONE, RANGER! WE'VE GOT YUH COVERED!



BUT THERE'S NO ONE FASTER ON THE DRAW THAN TEX RITTER!

HE UNARMED US BUT WE'RE STILL TWO AGAINST ONE! WE CAN BEAT HIM UP!



THREE CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME!



NOW I RECKON ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TURN THIS WAGON AROUND AND HEAD FOR BILL WATT'S TRADING POST! WHEN THESE VARMINTS CONFESS THEIR SCHEME, PEACE WILL REIGN ONCE AGAIN BETWEEN THE INDIANS AND BILL WATT'S!



SHORTLY AFTER--

NOW THAT TEX HAS PROVEN THE TRUTH TO US, WE WILL NEVER DOUBT YOU AGAIN, BILL WATT'S!

THE SAME GOES FOR ME, TALL TREE! AND WHEN YOU REACH THE RANGER'S OFFICE, TEX, IGNORE THE NOTE JOE HAS FER YUH ABOUT HYPNO! YUH'VE ALREADY SOLVED THE CASE!

OKAY, HYPNO! YOU AND YOUR MEN CAN START MARCHING TOWARDS THE JAIL! AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HOW LONG A MARCH IT IS SINCE YOU'LL BE RESTING IN JAIL FOR A LONG, LONG TIME!



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