

TEX RITTER WESTERN
No. 30

TEX RITTER

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

WESTERN

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

10¢



STAN
CAMPBELL

SAGE-BRUSH

"REACHES A NEW LOW!"

I'M GETTING TIRED OF WORKING ON THIS HYAR RANCH!

AW, YORE ALWAYS GRIPING, SAGEBRUSH!

WELL, THIS TIME I MEAN IT! I OPINE I'LL GO BACK AND WORK FER THE CIRCUS AGAIN!

HUH? YUH WORKED IN A CIRCUS?

YUP! I USED TO BE THE MIDGET IN THE CIRCUS!



GO ON! YORE ALMOST SIX FEET TALL! HOW COULD YUH H.A.V.E BEEN THE MIDGET?



I LIED ABOUT MY HEIGHT!



TRADER TOM

"POUND AWAY"

GIVE ME ANOTHER POUND OF YORE ANT POWDER, TRADER TOM!

SURE!



I'M GLAD YUH LIKE MY SPECIAL ANT POWDER! IT'S GREAT STUFF, ISN'T IT?

YEAH!



WITH THE FIRST POUND I GOT ONE ANT UN-CONSCIOUS!



-- WITH THIS NEXT POUND I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO KILL HIM!



TEX RITTER WESTERN

ATOMIC HOUSE • BADGE OF JUSTICE • BLUE BEETLE • COWBOY LOVE • COWBOY WESTERN
DANGER AND ADVENTURE • FUNNY ANIMALS—KERRY MALGMAN • GABBY HAYES •
HOT RODS AND RACING CARS • LASH LAURE • MONTE HALE • MY LITTLE MARGIE • ROCKY
LANE • SIX-GUN HEROES • SOLDIER AND MARINE • SPACE ADVENTURES—ROCKY JONES,
SPACE RANGER • SWEEHEARTS • TEX RITTER • THE SUSPENSE • TRUE LIFE SECRETS &
TV TELLS—DON WINGLOW of the NAVY • WILLY-RIDDI • ZOO PURMES, NYOKA, JUNGLE GIRL

A CHARLTON PUBLICATION

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

Alfred P. Fitch Executive Editor



The blood-curdling whoops resounding from the hills told **TEX RITTER**, the two-fisted Prairie Ranger, that the Indians were on the warpath! It was up to Tex and his lead-slinging six-guns to save Red Gulch from the menace of **WARPATH VENGEANCE!**

TEX RITTER WESTERN

TEX HAS JUST COME OFF THE TRAIL TO VISIT THE SHERIFF OF RED OULCH WHEN...

LOOKS LIKE A RUCKUS UP NEAR THAT GAMBLING CASINO! RECKON I'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK!

THAT'S SILK BEEDY'S PLACE! HIS THUGS ARE BEATING UP AN INDIAN!



HOLD ON, YOU COYOTES! SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU HOMBRES DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF FAIR PLAY!



KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF THIS, LAWMAN!

EASY--- THAT'S TEX RITTER, THE PRAIRIE RANGER!



ON HEARING THE NAME OF THE FAMOUS PRAIRIE RANGER, THE GUNBLUCKS INSTANTLY DISPERSE!

THAT'S BRIGHT ARROW, THE ONLY TRUCE BETWEEN CHIEF SILVER WATER'S TRIBE AND THIS TOWN! IT WOULDN'T TAKE MUCH TO START SOMETHING!

THIS SPELLS TROUBLE! THERE'S ONLY AN UNEASY TRUCE BETWEEN CHIEF SILVER WATER'S TRIBE AND THIS TOWN! IT WOULDN'T TAKE MUCH TO START SOMETHING!



I'M MIGHTY SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, BRIGHT ARROW! IF YOU WANT TO BRING CHARGES AGAINST THOSE CRITTERS I'LL HELP YOU!

NO WANT HELP OF PALEFACE! INDIAN BRAVE PAY BACK IN HIS OWN WAY!



WHEN HE GETS THROUGH TELLING HIS STORY TO THOSE HOT-HEADED BRAVES, IT'S GOING TO MAKE FOR TROUBLE!

I RECKON SILK OWES US AN EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS! COME ON!



4 MINUTES LATER.....

THAT INJUN COME IN SPOILING FOR TROUBLE! WHEN HE PULLED A KNIFE ON ME, MY BOYS WENT TO WORK ON HIM!



YOU'RE A GOVERNMENT LAWMAN, RITTER! WHY DON'T YOU CHASE THOSE INJUNS OUT OF THERE! EVERYONE IN THIS TOWN IS IN DANGER WHILE THEY CAMP IN THE HILLS!

THEY HAVE A LEGAL RIGHT TO BE THERE, SILK! BESIDES, WE HAVE THE CHIEF'S WORD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO TROUBLE IF BOTH SIDES LIVE UP TO THE TRUCE!



TEX RITTER WESTERN

I DON'T TRUST THE WORD OF ANY INJUN CHIEF! YOU COULD RAISE A POSSE HERE IN A MINUTE TO CLEAN THEM OUT, IF YOU WANTED TO! BUT I RECKON WE'D NEED A PRAIRIE RANGER WITH GUTS TO DO THAT!



NO MAN EVER QUESTIONED MY COURAGE BEFORE, BEEDEY! I RECKON YOU'LL SWALLOW THAT INSULT BEFORE I CLEAR OUT OF HERE!

EASY ENOUGH FOR YOU TO TALK LIKE THAT, KNOWING I AIN'T CARRYING A GUN!



I'M DROPPING MY GUN BELT, SILK! MY FISTS ARE ALL I NEED!

W-WAIT A MINUTE...!



NO NEED TO GET SO EXCITED, TEX! I—I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING!

THEN I TAKE IT YOU'RE APOLOGIZING!



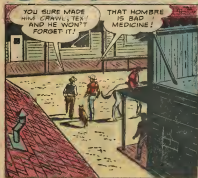
I RECKON YOU MEN ALL KNOW THAT THE INDIANS CUTNUMBER US! WE WOULDN'T STAND MUCH OF A CHANCE IF THAT TRUCE WAS BROKEN! IF THERE'S ANYMORE RUCKUS WITH THE INDIANS, THE SHERIFF AND I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT FIRST!

LET'S GO, TEX!



YOU SURE MADE HIM CRAWL, TEX! AND HE WON'T FORGET IT!

THAT HOMBRE IS BAD MEDICINE!



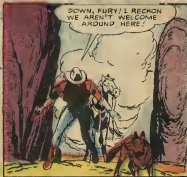
FURY AND I HAVE BEEN ON THE TRAIL SINCE DAYBREAK, AND I RECKON WE CAN USE SOME SHUTEYE! SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!

HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S REST, TEX!

SHERIFF



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN



THEY'RE HIGH-TAILING IT OUT OF---! SAY... THAT'S MIGHTY PECULIAR!

FIRST TIME I EVER SAW INDIANS AROUND THESE PARTS RIDING SADDLED HORSES! LET'S MAKE TRACKS TO THE INDIAN CAMP, WHITE FLASH!



IF THE INDIANS HAVE DECIDED TO GO ON THE WARPATH, THEY---



SUDDENLY... NO MOVE... OR ARROWS GIVE DEATH!

LOOKS AS IF I'M SURROUNDED! IT'S YOUR MOVE, BRIGHT ARROW! I WAS HEADING TO SEE YOUR FATHER, THE CHIEF!



COME! THEY ALREADY HAVE THEIR WARPANT ON! THAT SPELLS TROUBLE FOR RED GULCH!



LATER, AS THE INDIANS GUIDE TEX INTO THEIR STRONGHOLD....

WE FIND WHITE WARRIOR! HE WANT WORDS WITH GREAT CHIEF SILVER WATER!

CHIEF KNOW WHITE WARRIOR, TEX RITTER, MANY SUMMERS! LEAVE US TO TALK, SON OF CHIEF!



THE CHIEF LISTENS!

I HAVE COME TO TALK OVER THE TROUBLES BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE! THE TRUCE MUST NOT BE BROKEN, CHIEF SILVER WATER!

TEX RITTER WESTERN

AFTER TEX EXPLAINS THE DANGERS OF A WAR.....

I KNOW THAT TEX RITTER IS FRIEND OF INDIAN PEOPLE, BUT THERE ARE OTHER WHITES WHO WOULD MAKE WAR! THEY KILL MY BRAVES--ATTACK SON OF CHIEF. MY TRIBE IS RESTLESS!

BUT IF YOU DO NOT WANT WAR, WHY DO YOU SEND YOUR BRAVES TO ATTACK US IN TOWN? LAST NIGHT THEY CAME WITH FLAMING ARROWS!



CHIEF DID NOT SEND WARRIORS TO RED GULCH! WHITE DEVIL KNOWN AS SILK CAME HERE TO BUY OUR LAND! HE SEND SON TO TELL SILK HE NO CAN BUY, THEN WHITE MEN ATTACK SON OF CHIEF!



YOU SAY SILK CAME UP HERE TRYING TO BUY THIS LAND? HMMM... BUT WHY?



SUDDENLY, TEX'S KEEN VISION SPOTS A GLITTERING STONE, AND....

LOOK AT THIS! A GOLD NUGGET!

THERE ARE MANY STONES THAT SHINE LIKE THAT ON INDIAN LAND!



SILK HEARD ABOUT GOLD BEING UP HERE! THAT'S WHY HE WANTED TO DRIVE YOUR PEOPLE AWAY! THIS SHINING STONE IS OF MUCH VALUE TO WHITE MEN, CHIEF SILVER WATER!

IT IS WORTH NOTHING TO MY PEOPLE!



WHEN.....

WHITE DEVIL ATTACK WITH GUN! OTHER BRAVE GO TO HAPPY HUNTING GROUND! ONLY STORMCLOUD ESCAPE!



DEATH TO THE WHITE DEVILS!

THERE WILL BE TROUBLE! BEST TO GO NOW, TEX RITTER!

CHIEF, I'M SURE NONE OF THE MEN-FOLK IN RED GULCH WOULD DO A COWARDLY THING LIKE THAT!



NO MATTER! NO LONGER WILL I BE ABLE TO HOLD MY WARRIORS IN CHECK! ALREADY THEY SCREAM FOR BATTLE! GO QUICKLY--BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

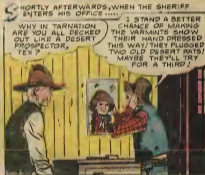
TEX RITTER WESTERN



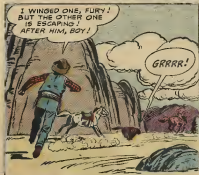
AFTER REMOVING THE STONE THAT HOBBLER WHITE FLASH, TEX RIDES INTO RED GULCH.....



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN

THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU POLEGATS RIDING WITH SADDLES, I HAD A HUNCH ABOUT THIS! NOW START TALKING! YOU PLUGGED THOSE TWO PROSPECTORS, DIDN'T YOU?

IT WASN'T OUR IDEA! SILK PUT US UP TO IT! WE HAD TO DO IT!

HE SENT US OUT TO THE HILLS DRESSED AS INDIANS, WITH STRICT ORDERS TO PLUG ANY WHITE MAN! THEN, DRESSED AS WHITE MEN WE WERE TO SHOOT ANY INJUN WE SAW.

NO WONDER THE INDIANS AND THE MEN 'TOWN GOT STIRRED UP! START WALKING-- WE'RE GOING BACK TO RED GULCH!

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS...

WHAT'S UP, TEX? AIN'T THOSE TWO OF SILK'S BOYS?

RIGHT! THEY WERE OUT PLAYING INDIAN WHEN THEY PLUGGED THOSE TWO PROSPECTORS!

THEY WERE ORDERED BY SILK TO STIR UP TROUBLE BETWEEN THE INDIANS AND US! SEEMS THE INDIANS HAVE GOLD ON THEIR LAND THAT SILK HAS A HANKERING FOR!

WHY, THE ORNERY COYOTE!

GENERAL

IT'S A LIE! I NEVER SENT THOSE MEN OUT DRESSED AS INJUNS! IT'S ONE OF RITTER'S TRICKS! HE'S SELLING US OUT TO THE INJUNS!

YOU'LL GET A FAIR TRIAL TO PROVE IT, SILK! BUT I'M TAKING YOU IN FOR MURDER! PUT OUT YOUR HANDS!

YOU AIN'T TAKING ME NO PLACE, TEX RITTER!

GRRRR!

NICE GOING, FURY! I'LL TAKE OVER NOW!

TEX RITTER WESTERN

D. DON'T HIT ME ANYMORE! I-I DID IT! I'LL CONFESS TO EVERYTHING!

THAT YARMINT WAS READY TO SACRIFICE INNOCENT WOMEN AND CHILDREN SO HE COULD GET HIS HAND ON THE INJUN GOLD!

S UDDENLY.... THE INJUNS! HUNDREDS OF THEM! THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY! IT'S WAR!

IT'S TOO LATE, TEX! I RECKON WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT NOW!

THERE'S STILL A LONG CHANCE I CAN TAKE! EVERYBODY SIT TIGHT- AND HOLD YOUR FIRE!

NO--NO! LET ME GO! THEY'LL KILL ME!

SINCE YOU STARTED THIS RUCKUS, YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOME TALL EXPLAINING!

WAIT, CHIEF! GIVE US A CHANCE TO TELL YOU WHAT REALLY HAPPENED! LOOK-- THESE ARE THE WHITE MEN WHO WANTED WAR BETWEEN US!

S ILK QUICKLY STAMMERS OUT HIS CONFESSION.....

THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE BLOOD SHED BECAUSE OF THESE MEN! OUR PEOPLE CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE! LET US GIVE THESE MEN THEIR JUST PUNISHMENT!

TEX RITTER SPEAKS TRUTH! THERE SHALL BE NO WAR! I SHALL TAKE MY BRAVES BACK TO THE HILLS!

'RAY FOR TEX RITTER!

WHAT HE DID SURE TOOK OUTS!

THE WHOLE TOWN IS SURE GLAD YOU HAPPENED TO MOSEY ALONG THIS WAY, TEX!

I RECKON IT'S ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK OF A PRAIRIE RANGER!

BUFFALO BULL *the lying lion!*

YES SIR, FOLKS, THIS IS QUITE A
 PREDICAMENT IM IN, BUT DON'T
 FRET FER A MOMENT -- THINGS
 WILL GET WORSE AS WE
 GO ALONG!



ONE DAY --

OH, OH, STUFF UP YORE
 EARS, EVERYBODY! HYAR
 COMES BUFFALO BULL!

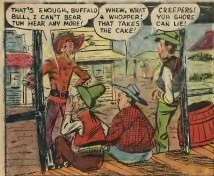
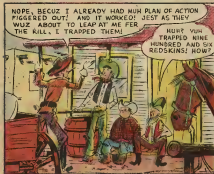
HOLD ON TUM
 YORE EARS, EVERYBODY,
 IT'S GOING TO GET
 MIGHTY WINDY!

HOWDY, PARDNERS! DID I TELL
 YUH WHAT HAPPENED TO ME
 LAST WEEK?

(GROANS)
 HYAR IT
 COMES!



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN

"AND I SAW A HUGE MOUNTAIN LION STANDING ON TOP OF A NEARBY BOULDER--"



HUH? (GULP) A MOUNTAIN LION!



WUZ IT A BIG MOUNTAIN LION?

BIG? HE WUZ GIGANTIC! HE WUZ AT LEAST SIXTEEN INCHES, AND HE KEPT GROWLING AND--



HOLD ON! ARE YUH LOCO? SINCE WHEN IS A SIXTEEN INCH MOUNTAIN LION BIG?

I RECKON YUH DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIGGER--



-- I MEASURED THE SIZE OF A MOUNTAIN LION BY THE DISTANCE BETWEEN HIS EYES!

(GASP!!!)



WEL, THIS CRITTER KEPT SNARLING AT ME AND IT LOOKED LIKE HE WUZ A-GOIN' TO JUMP ANY MOMENT! BUT I WUZ'NT THE LEAST BIT WORRIED! I HAD MY FAITHFUL RIFLE WITH ME!

"I AIMED MUR TRUSTY SHOTGUN AND FIRED RIGHT IN THAT LION'S FACE--"



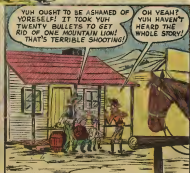
THAR! I RECKON THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

"BUT WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED AWAY, THE MOUNTAIN LION WUZ STILL ON TOP OF THE BOULDER!--"



HUH? (GULP) HE'S STILL THAR!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



Tex Ritter

IN TROUBLE
IN THE
HILLS



YAHOOO...
LEM ZETTER!
STILL AROUND,
YOU OLD
G'LOOT,
EH?

THOSE TRAPPERS
SURE HAVE THEMSELVES
A GOOD TIME WHEN
THEY HIT TOWN TO
SELL THEIR FURS!

HANK
TREMONT!
PUT 'ER
THERE,
HANK!

Wherever TEX RITTER goes in his crime-battling career, FURY - the best pard a man could have - fights alongside his master! But where did Tex find his faithful four-footed pal? That story begins in Larrimer. Once a year, at trading time, the town is filled with the boisterous lone hunters of the mountains...

I'LL TEACH
YOU NOT TO
BANDY WORDS
WITH ME,
RED
REILLY!

RECKON
THINGS ARE
GETTING
OUT OF
HAND A MITE!
I'LL JUST
COOL THE
BOYS DOWN
SOME!

EASY THERE!
LET'S QUIT
THAT!

THIS IS NONE
OF YOUR
FIGHT,
STRANGER!
GET OUT
OF HERE!

Tex is passing the time of day with the owner of a traveling carnival in town and...

YEP, I ALWAYS
COME HERE AT
FUR-TRADING TIME,
TEX! BUSINESS IS
MIGHTY GOOD
THEN!

NO WONDER! TRAPPERS
LEAD A LONESOME LIFE
IN THE MOUNTAINS
ALL YEAR LONG, HARDLY
SEEING A SOUL TILL
THEY MEET HERE AT
THIS TIME FOR
SELLING!



TEX RITTER WESTERN



WE'LL TEACH YOU TO ---
UGH!

I SAID NO FIGHTING --- AND I MEANT IT!



A PRAIRIE RANGER? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US YOU WERE A GOVERNMENT LAWMAN?

YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME A CHANCE!



WE'RE SORRY, RANGER --- RECKON WE JUST GOT KIND OF WILD!

FORGET IT, BOYS! RECKON ALL OF YOU TRAPPERS HAVE COME DOWN FROM THE HILLS, AS USUAL, EH?



ALL BUT BILL SIEGER. HE HASN'T SHOWN UP AT ALL AND NONE OF US LIKE IT! RED MET SIEGER ON THE TRAIL LAST MONTH! HE SAID HE'D BE IN TOWN TO SELL!

EVERYBODY'S WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!



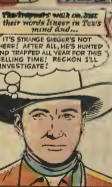
SOME YEARS BACK, A VAMPIRE MURDERED AND STOLE FROM US! WE'RE WONDERING IF IT HAS STARTED AGAIN!

I'M SURE IT HASN'T! YOUR FRIEND SIEGER PROBABLY JUST HASN'T ENOUGH PELTS TO BRING IN THIS YEAR!



BY THE WAY, WHERE IS THIS BILL SIEGER'S CABIN?

DON'T KNOW EXACTLY, BUT IT'S SOMEWHERE UP ON HIGH RIDGE --- ALONG THE OLD TRAIL!



The trappers' talk on just their words linger in Tex's mind and...

IT'S STRANGE SIEGER'S NOT HERE! AFTER ALL, HE'S HUNTED AND TRAPPED ALL YEAR FOR THIS SELLING TIME! RECKON I'LL INVESTIGATE!



Later...

THIS MUST BE THE PLACE! IT'S A TYPICAL TRAPPER'S CABIN, AND THERE'S THE LITTLE CART THEY USE FOR TAKING THEIR PELTS TO TOWN!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



NOTHING IN THE CART EXCEPT A FEW POOR PELTS! BUT IT'S PLAIN FROM THAT HARNESS EQUIPMENT THAT THE CART WAS ABOUT TO BE NITCHED UP!



AND THESE FOOTPRINTS IN THE LOOSE GROUND HERE... THEY GO FROM THE CABIN TO THE CART AND BACK INTO THE CABIN AGAIN! RECKON I'LL JUST HAVE A LOOK INSIDE THAT CABIN!



ANYBODY HOME?... BILL SIEGER?... LEAVING SAGEBRUSH!



OH-OH! I FORGOT THAT MOST OF THESE TRAPPERS KEEP AT LEAST ONE DOG FOR PROTECTION AND COMPANIONSHIP!

GRRR-RR!



I MUSTN'T TRY TO RUN... OR MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENTS - OR HE'LL SURELY COME AT ME!



I'LL STAND STILL AND TALK TO HIM... THE WORDS AREN'T IMPORTANT! IT'S THE SOUND OF A FRIENDLY VOICE THAT COUNTS!

EASY, NOW, BOY. I'M NOT GOING TO HURT ANYONE... JUST CALM DOWN... LET'S BE FRIENDS NOW...



As Tex talks quietly, the dog's growls slowly diminish.

NOW I'LL LET HIM SNIFF MY HAND... LET HIM MAKE FRIENDS...

THAT'S IT, BOY... COME ON OVER! SEE... EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT!



HE'S CALMED DOWN, BUT HE'S STILL WARY OF ME! I CAN MOVE, NOW... BUT SLOWLY, VERY SLOWLY! HE SENSES I'M NOT HERE FOR HARM!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN

BUT WAIT--! MAYBE THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW! HE'S SURE TO BE IN TOWN, SELLING HIS STOLEN FURS! I MIGHT TRY A LITTLE TRICK!



Later, in town, Tex halts beside the traveling carnival owner --

SURE, WE'RE ALWAYS RUNNING CONTESTS -- ROPING CONTESTS, SHOOTING CONTESTS! WE NEVER RAN A KNIFE-TOSSING CONTEST BEFORE, BUT IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, WE'LL PLAY ALONG WITH YOU, RANGER!

THANKS! JUST PUT IT ON THE SAME WAY YOU WOULD ANY OTHER CONTEST!



FOR THE FINAL CONTEST FEAT I WANT YOU TO PUT ON A SPECIAL ONE I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT LATER!

SURE, RANGER! CONTEST NEWS TRAVELS LIKE WILDFIRE! EVERY MAN HANDY WITH A BLADE OUGHT TO SHOW UP FOR IT TOMORROW!



The next day, Tex and Furry stand on the sidelines, watching the contestants --

THERE'S BEEN NO REALLY OUTSTANDING KNIFE-TOSSING SO FAR! LET'S SEE WHAT THAT BIG BRUISER HAS TO OFFER!

RECKON I'LL HAVE A TRY AT WINNING THIS PRIZE MONEY!



The big bearded man tosses his knife and --

BULL'S-EYE!



JUMPING JEHOSEPHAT! THAT'S REALLY TOSSING THEM! THREE IN A ROW!



Then, at a signal from Tex --

THAT SURE IS MIGHTY FANCY TOSSING, PARTNER! AND NOW, FOR A SPECIAL PRIZE! LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN HIT THE TARGET THROUGH THIS PIECE OF GLASS!

JUST SET IT UP!



STAND BACK!



TEX RITTER WESTERN



BULL'S-EYE!
YEEHAW--
NEVER SAW
ANYTHING
LIKE IT!

THAT'S THE
CRITTER
I WANT TO
TALK WITH,
ALL RIGHT!



HOLD ON, THERE, PARTNER!
THAT'S MIGHTY FINE
TOSSEING! ONLY THING
I'VE EVER SEEN LIKE
IT WAS A KNIFE
TOSSED THROUGH
A CABIN
WINDOW!

WH-WHAT?



YES, RIGHT
THROUGH A
CABIN WINDOW
INTO A MAN'S
BACK! BY
THE WAY, SOND
ANY FURK HERE
IN TOWN,
PARTNER?

PRETTY
SMART,
EBB!



SEE HOW YOU
LIKE THIS!



GET MOVING, BRONCO!
GIDDAP!



COME ON, WHITE FLASH!... WE'VE
GOT TO CATCH THAT COWBOY!
IF I WASN'T SURE HE WAS
MY MAN, I AM NOW!

Tex dashes after the fleeing killer, unaware that Fury is following him --



I'LL PICK UP HIS TRAIL, PRONTO!
HE'S NOT FAR AHEAD OF US!

Later, in the hills --



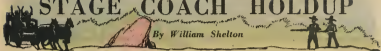
THERE HE GOES--INTO
HIS CABIN! THIS IS THE
END OF THE TRAIL!
FOR HIM!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



STAGE COACH HOLDUP

By William Shelton



CARRYING fifty thousand dollars in gold bullion; the county sheriff, as special guard; the banker, himself; and a nervous fingered shot-gun man, Driver Cliff Gage popped the long bullwhip over the horses' heads. The stage coach groaned and creaked and wobbled under the terrific strain as it labored up the last few yards of a steep hill.

Reaching the crest finally, Gage halted to give the lathered, panting horses a breather. Ahead the road looped in crazy curves down a forty-five degree incline, then rolled out across a flat, dusty, sage-strewn plain, like a buff-colored runner carpet. About a half mile along the straight-away road, a clump of cottonwood trees to the right half hid a huge log house. Smoke curled lazily from a stone chimney. Just beyond the house, the road led straight toward a narrow, rocky ledged chasm. There, a white painted wooden bridge stretched across the gorge, high above the Catamount River, over to the tall brooding mountain-lands beyond.

"Thought we weren't going to hit Bailey's toll house this trip, Cliff!" said Shorty Higgins, shot-gun man, riding the boot alongside Gage. "Old Harrington'll pop a blood vessel when he discovers it!"

Gage, youngish, blue-eyed, glared harshly at his messenger. He spat and brushed powdery dust from his checkered shirt. "I'm runnin' this rig, Shorty. If you or Harrington don't like my route—walk!"

"A mite touchy, I'd say," remarked Shorty, checking the load in his shot-gun. "I ain't aimin' to pry into any of your secrets, Cliff."

Wiping the whitish dust from his face, Gage climbed down out of the boot and, as he started around to the rear of the coach a man's head thrust itself out suddenly from the window of the cab door. A round, pudgy face scowled at him angrily.

"This isn't the route we'd planned on, Gage! What's the meaning of this?" demanded John Harrington, pompous banker of the town of Gold Nugget.

"Change in plans," was all Gage said, testing the big Concord's springs, rear wheel, and the body of the coach. "Nothing for you to be concerned over."

"But you agreed to take the Canyon River road to be certain that we'd escape Big Moose and his outlaw band. You know as well as I do that drifters and gunmen hang out at Bailey's toll-house!" Harrington exploded.

"Big Moose is liable to be anywhere—even on the Canyon River road, Mister Harrington,"

observed Gage quietly, as he started to return up front to check the sweated horses.

Back in his seat once again, Gage's whip cracked, the coach rumbled forward, and then it swayed and jounced down the looping road toward Bailey's toll-bridge house. Reaching the straight-away road, Gage felt Shorty's eyes watching him suspiciously.

"Look," shouted the shot-gun man. "There's old Bailey's sign!" Just ahead, off to the right of the road amidst a clump of dry, dust-covered sagebrush, an old weatherbeaten sign read:

- STOP Pay toll for passage over Bailey's bridge.
- REPAIRS Blacksmith-wheelwright on premises.
- REST Rooms, meals at moderate prices.

No paper currency accepted.
All fees payable in gold.

Harry Bailey, Prop.

When they reached the clump of dusty cottonwoods, Gage reined the horses into a narrow cutoff from the main road, and braked to a halt in a big open yard. Set back a few yards was the big log house. There was a hitching rail at the foot of a long flight of steps leading to a wide verandah. To the left of the main house, pushed back toward the rear, was a small, iron-roofed blacksmith's shop, but neither the clang of metal or the roar of bellows issued from it. There was no sign of anyone about the place.

"Strange," muttered Gage, jumping down from his seat. "Bailey's usually on hand to collect his toll for the bridge, at least." He raised cupped hands to his mouth. "Halloo, Bailey!"

His own voice echoed back dimly.

Harrington's head poked itself out the window. "There's no one here, Gage—drive on, man, while we can!"

"He may be having trouble, he may be sick . . ." Gage started to say, when the verandah door opened slowly and Bailey, tall, angular and gaunt, came down the steps toward him. He looked a little paler than usual, Gage thought.

But Bailey wasn't alone. A tall stranger, with a tight pinched face, followed closely on Bailey's heels. Six-guns hung low on his lean hips, and claw-like hands hovered closely over the protruding butts.

Bailey waved an emotionless greeting. Gage went forward to talk to him but, before he could get the words out of his mouth, Harrington

leaped from the stage cab and stomped toward him.

"What kind of trick are you pulling, Gage?" he gasped hoarsely, his face livid with rage. "Why'd you come to this place?"

"I told you—a last minute change in plans," Gage snapped.

"No!" bellowed Harrington. "I believe you've deliberately led us into a trap!"

Gage started to lunge at the fat banker, but a sudden move from the stranger with Bailey held him back. Gun metal flashed in the sunlight.

Gun in hand, the stranger weaved back away from Bailey. "Just don't anybody move," he rasped. To Harrington, he said: "Git that sheriff out of there, pronto!" And to Gage: "Muzzle that shot-gun monkey up there, or . . ."

The sheriff jumped out of the cab, while Shorty threw his shot-gun down to the ground with a thump.

Three unshaven strangers, wearing brush chaps, hattered wide brimmed hats pulled down over their eyes, ghosted in from the far side of the stage coach, guns gripped tightly in their fists.

A huge man on a horse rode out from where he'd been hiding behind the blacksmith's shop and halted before the group of men.

"Nice work, men," he boomed, surveying the victims hard-eyed.

"Big Moose!" Muttered Harrington.

The outlaw rubbed his chin, grinned evilly. "Not often I get to meet bankers socially, Mister Harrington. Pleased to meet you!"

Harrington cleared his throat nervously. "Y-you won't get away with this, Moose. I'll see you hanged yet!"

"Pah!" spat the huge man. "Big Moose never gets caught. I kind of thought you'd run that bullion out along this route—so we kind of waited for you to come along—see?"

"I hold you responsible for this outrage, Gage!" the banker exploded, but he was cut short by another voice.

"Hey, Moose!" It came from one of the outlaws who'd climbed into the stage cab to get the gold. "The strongbox is bolted to the floor. Can't budge it!"

Big Moose grunted, climbed down from his horse. "I figured it would be too heavy to carry on horse anyway. We're going to take the whole stage coach! Hitch your horses to the rear and climb aboard!"

The men did as they were instructed. Gage watched in silence, as three of them climbed into the cab with the strongbox. Big Moose, himself, took the reins on the driver's seat. Another outlaw sat beside him, holding his six-guns aimed at Gage and the others. Then, the whip cracked and the stage jolted forward with a clatterous roar. In a few seconds it was gone in a cloud of dust, rattling along the main road

toward the bridge, hidden now by the cotton-woods.

"Fifty thousand dollars—and Big Moose is getting away with all of it!" mumbled Harrington; then, turning on the sheriff, he barked, "I demand Cliff Gage's arrest, Sheriff. He was the one who led us into this trap!"

Scooping up his Winchester rifle, the sheriff trained it on Gage. "Circumstantial evidence, Gage—but it might hold. Sure looks like Harrington's right!"

Gage pushed the rifle aside. "Wouldn't want a false arrest charge on your hands, now would you, Sheriff?"

The sheriff, Harrington, Shorty, and even Bailey, stared incredulously at Gage. "What do you mean?" inquired the sheriff.

"Listen, and you'll find out," Gage snapped, cocking an ear toward the bridge.

Then, just as Gage expected, it came—sudden like!

First, the splintering crash of wood snapping like many pistol shots going off one after the other; harsh, terrifying screams from men's throats; the terrible, screeching whinnies of horses . . . growing fainter, fainter . . . as if plunging down into some bottomless abyss. And now only the echoes came bounding back: from the hills beyond.

"They crashed the bridge rail, I know it!" Bailey yelled.

"I figured they would," Gage nodded. "What's the river like this time of year, Bailey—quick!"

"Why, the bed's dried up. Ain't nothing down there but mud this time of year!" Bailey stammered out.

"What's the meaning of all this?" sputtered Harrington.

"The weight of your strongbox bowed my rear axle, Harrington. I was worried it might snap at any moment, and leave us on the Canyon River road like sitting ducks—a hundred miles from nowhere. I knew Bailey had a blacksmith, so I headed here to have the axle propped a bit . . ."

"My smithy ran off when Big Moose swooped down on me and took over," wailed Bailey. "Blinking coyote!"

“I STILL don't understand,” exploded Harrington impatiently to Gage. "So what?"

"Didn't you notice," said Gage quietly, "three outlaws got into the cab. Time they reached the bridge, the extra weight of one man snapped the axle and . . . well, you know the rest."

"That clears you, Gage — c'mon, let's get those critters," said the sheriff.

Gage chuckled. "Gonna be messy—all that mud, but worth it for the reward, eh, Sheriff?"

TEX RITTER WESTERN

RIDING THE RANGE

WITH

TEX RITTER

9172 SUNSET BOULEVARD,
HOLLYWOOD 46, CALIFORNIA



Howdy Folks!

I'm sure mighty happy to be able to write all of you this letter. It makes me feel as if we're all real close pards!

The other day, White Flash and I were moseying along the trail when suddenly a slide of loose rock and dirt came tumbling down right across our path. And, in the middle of it all, I saw an old pard of mine, Windy, rolling head-over-heels and half-covered with the sliding dirt. I managed to get a lariat around him and rushed him into town to Doc Foster, pronto.

Luckily for Windy, he wasn't badly hurt, and looking mighty sheepish, he told us what had happened. Seems he had taken to the hills with a heavy load of gear tied on his saddle. But did he double-hitch his saddle for mountain riding the way all sensible buckaroos do? No, not Windy! He was always one for taking chances and trusting to luck. A single-hitch was good enough for him! So when he tried to go up Steep Bluff, that single-hitch gave way and off he went, gear and all!



I just thought I'd pass Windy's story on to all you pards because it proves what happens when you take chances.

Whether it's swimming in deep water when you're not a good enough swimmer or running around in bad weather without being dressed for it - taking chances doesn't pay! It's just a plumb loco thing to do!

Well, White Flash and I have to get rambling, but we'll be riding your way again real soon. Till then, sharpen up your pencils and drop White Flash and me a line or two. There's nothing I like better than getting letters from my pards all over the country.

Your pard,

Tex Ritter



Tex Ritter

and The Hidden Menace

BRAND TIMMING thought he had found a new way to break the law! But he didn't reckon that the two-fisted Prairie Ranger, TEX RITTER, was out to get him and discover the strange secret of the **HIDDEN MENACE!**

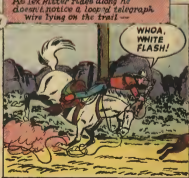


I'VE GOT FURY AND WHITE FLASH AND
AND I SING AS I RIDE TO BUFFALO SPRINGS!
MY OLD GUITAR STRINGS!



As Tex Ritter rides along he doesn't notice a loop of telegraph wire lying on the trail --

WHOA,
WHITE
FLASH!



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN



TEX RITTER WESTERN

YOU'RE RIGHT—THE LINES ARE DEAD! WE GET SO FEW MESSAGES IN BUFFALO SPRINGS THAT I DIDN'T WONDER WHY THERE WEREN'T ANY SIGNALS COMING THROUGH!

THE SHERIFF SAID THE WADDIES WHO CUT THE WIRE WOULD HAVE NO REASON FOR WANTING TO PREVENT AN OUTGOING MESSAGE! BUT MAYBE THEY WANTED TO PREVENT AN INCOMING MESSAGE!

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REASON BEHIND THE WIRE CUTTING, JANE?

YOU SAY NEARLY A MILE OF WIRE WAS TAKEN ... WELL, THE UTE INDIANS IN THIS REGION VALUE COPPER WIRE VERY HIGHLY! THEY USE IT FOR DECORATING THEIR COSTUMES, AND OFTEN PAY HIGH PRICES FOR IT!

IN THAT CASE, THE WIRE WOULD BE A TEMPTING BRIBE—IF THE GANG WANTED THE UTES TO WORK WITH THEM!



INDIANS ARE THE MOST LAW-ABIDING PEOPLE IN COLORADO—BUT IT MIGHT BE SMART TO RIDE OUT TO THE UTE CAMP IN THE MORNING, AND SEE IF TIMMINS HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THEM!

SINCE NO MESSAGES CAN GET THROUGH ANYWAY, TEX, I'LL GO WITH YOU! OTHERWISE, YOU MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE FINDING THE UTES!

Later about ten miles from Buffalo Springs—

FURY SEEMS TO HAVE NOTICED SOMETHING IN THAT CANYON, TEX! WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE IT IS?

HARD TO SAY, JANE! QUIET, FURY! WE'LL SLIP IN FOR A LOOK!

GRRRR!



WAIT UP! IT'S TIMMINS!

THERE'S THAT WADDY WITH THE DOG! SLAP LEATHER, BOYS!

FURY—STAY WITH JANE! COME ON, WHITE FLASH! LET'S CLOSE IN ON THOSE GALDOOTS!

DON'T CROWD ME, HOMBRE! I'VE GOT BUSINESS WITH BRAND TIMMINS!



TEX KILIK WESTERN



DON'T TRY ANY GUN-PLAY, TIMMINS!



IF YOU WADDIES WANT TO LOOK YOUR BEST WHEN YOU REACH THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, YOU'D BETTER START REACHING -- PRONTO!



THE DRY BRAND TIMMINS SEES THE SHERIFF, HOMBKE, IT'LL BE TO GIVE HIM SOMETHING LIKE THIS!



As the outlaws gallop through the canyon--

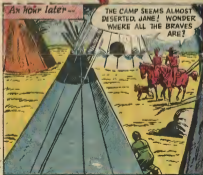
GET BACK, YOU SNARLING CRITTER!

WAIT, FURY! THERE'S NO USE TRYING TO STOP THEM WITHOUT TEX!



WISH WE KNEW WHY THEY'RE DIGGING THESE HOLES, TEX! THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY CONNECTION WITH THEIR PULLING DOWN THE TELEGRAPH WIRE!

IT MUST TIE IN SOMEHOW, JANE! LET'S SEE WHETHER THE UTES HAVE ANY ANSWERS!



An hour later--

THE CAMP SEEMS ALMOST DESERTED, JANE! WONDER WHERE ALL THE BRAVES ARE?



HOW HOLA! IS YOUR TRIBE AT PEACE!

HOW HOLA! WE ARE AT PEACE! OUR PEOPLE ARE OUT GATHERING THIS ROOT WE USE FOR FOOD! WE CALL IT QUAMASH-- AND IT MUST BE CHOSEN WITH GREAT CARE!

TEX RITTER WESTERN

THERE IS A CERTAIN KIND OF QUAMASH THAT IS BAD POISON— DANGEROUS TO LIVESTOCK! THE BAD QUAMASH GROWS IN TWO PLACES— JUNIPER FORK AND CHEYENNE CROSSING!

CHEYENNE CROSSING! THAT'S WHERE WE JUST MET THE GANG— SO IT'S PRETTY CERTAIN THEY WERE DIGGING FOR THOSE DEADLY ROOTS! I'LL GET BRAND AND HIS WADDIES ARE NOW LOOKING FOR A FRESH SUPPLY AT JUNIPER FORK!



THERE WILL BE LEAD WHIZZING CLEAR ACROSS THE COUNTY IF I TANGLE WITH THOSE GALDOOTS, JANE! YOU'D BETTER WAIT HERE WITH FURY!

ALL RIGHT, TEX!



Soon afterward— at Juniper Fork—

THIS TIME WE'RE NOT GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO ESCAPE, WHITE FLASH! THEIR HORSES ARE HIDDEN IN THAT CUBBY OF COTONWOODS— AND IT'S YOUR JOB TO STAMPEDE THEM!



WHINIEEE!

OUR BRONCS ARE RILED UP, TIM! SOMETHING'S WRONG!



YOU'RE DEAD RIGHT ABOUT THAT, HOMBRE!



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ROOTS, TIMMINS— TRY PLOWING UP A FEW WITH YOUR CHIN!



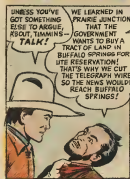
BLAZES! I KNEW WE SHOULD HAVE PLUGGED THAT WADDY THE FIRST TIME!

YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP THE IDEA, PARDNER— BECAUSE THIS IS THE LAST TIME!



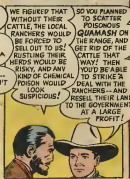
MY HAND!

TEX RITTER WESTERN



UNLESS YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO ARGUE ABOUT, TIMMINS--
TALK!

WE LEARNED IN PRARIE JUNCTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO BUY A TRACT OF LAND IN BUFFALO SPRINGS FOR A WTE RESERVATION! THAT'S WHY WE CUT THE TELEGRAPH WIRE-- SO THE NEWS WOULDN'T REACH BUFFALO SPRINGS!



WE FIGURED THAT WITHOUT THE CATTLE, THE LOCAL RANCHERS WOULD BE FORCED TO SELL OUT TO US! RUSTLING THEIR HERDS WOULD BE RISKY, AND ANY KIND OF CHEMICAL POISON WOULD LOOK SUSPICIOUS!

SO YOU PLANNED TO SCATTER POISONOUS QUAMASH ON THE RANGE, AND GET RID OF THE CATTLE THAT WAY! THEN YOU'D BE ABLE TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH THE RANCHERS-- AND RESELL THEIR LAND TO THE GOVERNMENT AT A LARGE PROFIT!



LAYER...

NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THE TIMMINS GANG BEHIND BARS, TEX-- I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE ROAMING ON...

THAT'S RIGHT, JANE! AS LONG AS OUTLAWS KEEP LOOKING FOR TROUBLE--IT'S A RANGER'S JOB TO STOP THEM!



JEESERS! IF I'D KNOWN EVERYBODY WAS GOING TO LOOK AT ME, I WOULDN'T HAVE WORN MY CONBOY DUDS NMR ON MY VISIT TO 'THE BIG CITY'! I SURE DONT LIKE BEING RUBBERNECKED AT AND BEING ASKED A LOT OF SILLY QUESTIONS!



PARDON ME, BUT AREN'T YOU FROM THE WEST?

(SIGH)
YES, I AM!



WHAT DO YOU DO OUT THERE?

I'M A PAINTER!



A PAINTER, OUT WEST?

YES ---



...I PAINT SADDLES ON ROCKING HORSES!

(ULP!!!)



OLD SMOKEY AFFECTIONATE!



I'LL SEE YUH LATER, OLD SMOKEY! I'M GOING OUT TO THE RACE TRACK!

THAT'S PLUMB FOOLISH OF YUH, YOUNG FELLOW!



WHY?

BECAUSE ALL YUH'LL SEE IS AN AFFECTIONATE RACE!



HUH? AN AFFECTIONATE RACE? WHAT'S THAT?

THAT'S WHAR THE HORSE HUGS THE RAIL ...



...THE JOCKEY HAS HIS HANDS AROUND THE HORSE'S NECK...



...AND YUH KISS YORE MONEY GOODBYE!

(ULPH!!)



