HOPALONG CASSIDY
STARRING WILLIAM BOYD

WHEN HOPALONG CASSIDY DISCOVERS A FORTUNE IN GOLD HIDDEN BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND, TWIN RIVER'S FAMED FIGHTING SHERIFF HAS TO DO SOME OF HIS BEST DETECTING WITH HIS WITS AND FISTS TO BATTLE HIS WAY OUT OF BORROWED TROUBLE!

HOPALONG CASSIDY is based on the character originated by CLARENCE E. MULFORD

I'll put the money I get for the gold in the bank for you!

I shore am powerful grateful to yuh, Hoppy!

Howdy, Hub!

Hopalong: So yuh got my note! Now I don't have to worry about my gold nuggets!

I was hoping yuh'd take it to the assay shop in Twin River fer me while I go looking fer more!

Sure, Hub, if that's what you want!

Later, when Hopalong reaches Hub Webster's shack in the hills......

Now don't go digging up Hub's front yard, Topper!

Clop, clop...

Gold? That's right! I discovered a small fortune! But I was afraid to ride through the hills with it by myself!

Oh, there you are! I see you're digging again!

I don't know where you got this habit of digging! Every time I leave you alone for a moment, you get busier than a gopher burrowing a hole in the ground!
WHERE'S TOPPER?
I SUPPOSE THAT HORSE
OF MINE RAN OFF SOMEWHERE
IN THE WOODS
AND IS DIGGING TO HIS HEART'S
CONTENT!

I'LL HELP Yuh FIND
HIM!

THERE
HE IS!
MEBEE
HE FOUND
SOMETHING!

YOU'RE RIGHT, HUB!
HE DID FIND SOMETHING...
OPEN IT UP
A BIG CHEST!
AND SEE WHAT'S
IN IT!

IT'S FILLED!
WITH GOLD!

WHOSE GOLD
DO Yuh OPINE
IT IS, HOPALONG?
AND WHY DID HE BURY IT
OUT HYAR IN THE HILLS?

THE ONLY
WAY I
FIGURE IT
IS THAT
SOMEONE
ELSE BESIDES
YOU HAS DISCOVERED
GOLD AND LEFT IT HERE FOR
SAFEKEEPING!

WHAT DO Yuh
AIM TO DO
WITH IT?

PUT IT BACK
WHERE WE
FOUND IT!
THAT'S THE ONLY
HONEST THING
tO DO!

I SHORE
AGREE WITH
Yuh ON THAT,
HOPALONG!

I RECKON
IT'LL BE AS
SAFE AS
EVER NOW!

STOMP!
STOMP!
SIX GUN HEROES

I'd better be going if I want to get your gold to the assay shop before it closes! All right, Hopalong!

Meanwhile, in the Twin River Assay Shop...

Don't make a sound! This is a holdup!

One yap out of you and it'll be your last! Now hand over your gold and money!

That's all we want to know! Quick, Hanscom, drag him into the back room and clean out the safe!

Everything's in the S.S.-safe in the back room!

In the back room, eh?

Oof!

That's a good idea, Wilks!

I used to work in an assay shop till I figured it was easier and more rewarding to go around robbing them!
THAT'S HOPALONG CASSIDY, THE SHERIFF! AWW, THAT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! HE COULDN'T HAVE SEEN ANYTHING AND HE DOESN'T KNOW ME! I DON'T COME FROM THESE PARTS!

WHERE'S HODGES?

HE HAD TO GO VISIT HIS SICK OLD AUNT, I'M TAKING OVER FOR HIM!

I SEE!

I CAN TAKE CARE OF YUH!

FEW MINUTES LATER...

WHY, I DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY CASSIDY LOOKED AT ME! I WAS AFRAID HE HAD GOTTEN WISE SOMEHOW!

C'MON, HANSCOM! WE'VE GOT TO GIT! AFTER WE HIDE THE GOLD, WE HAVE ANOTHER JOB TO FILL!

LOOK AT THE HAUL, WILKS! IT'S EVEN MORE THAN WE GOT WHEN WE ROBBED THE ASSAY SHOP IN BROKEN BOW CORNER!

LATER...

I CAN'T HELP THINKING I'VE SEEN THAT ASSAY CLERK BEFORE!

HOLD EVERYTHING! I KNOW WHERE I SAW HIS FACE! HE'S AN OUTLAW! I RECEIVED HIS PICTURE FROM THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE ABOUT A YEAR AGO! I'VE GOT IT SOMEWHERE IN MY DESK!
HERE IT IS! FOSTER WILKS--WANTED FOR ROBBERY! HE MUST HAVE BEEN HOLDING UP THE ASSAY SHOP WHEN I WALKED IN!

I MUST GET RIGHT OVER! HE'S PROBABLY GONE! BUT I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT HE DID TO POOR HODGES!

WILKS HAS GONE! BUT WHERE'S HODGES? MAYBE HE'S IN THE BACK!

THERE HE IS! AND THE SAFE'S BEEN CLEANED OUT!

TAKE IT EASY, HODGES! I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN A MOMENT!

I SHORE AM GLAD TO SEE Yuh, HOPALONG! TWO VARMINTS HELD ME UP!

TWO OF THEM! SO WILKS HAS AN ACCOMPLICE!

THEY TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD! I'LL BE RUINED IF I DON'T GIT THAT GOLD BACK!

I'LL DO MY BEST, HODGES!
IT'LL BE GETTING DARK SOON! THAT'LL MAKE IT HARD TO PICK UP THEIR TRAIL EVEN IF I KNEW WHERE TO START LOOKING!

WAIT! I HAVE A HUNCH! O'MON, TOPPER! WE'RE GOING TO THE HILLS!

I'M PROBABLY MIXING UP TWO THINGS THAT HAVEN'T ANYTHING TO DO WITH EACH OTHER, BUT I HAVEN'T ANYTHING ELSE TO WORK ON!

SOON, IN THE HILLS.....

THERE'S HUB WEBSTER'S SHACK, BUT WE'RE NOT STOPPING, TOPPER! I WANT YOU TO FIND THAT SPOT YOU DUG UP THIS AFTERNOON!

TOPPER DOESN'T DISAPPOINT HOPALONG....

GOOD BOY, TOPPER! THAT'S THE SPOT!

THIS DIRT WAS DUG UP ONLY A SHORT WHILE AGO! I'M BEGINNING TO THINK MY HUNCH ISN'T SO WILD!

HERE'S THE CHEST! IN ANOTHER MOMENT, I'LL FIND OUT IF I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK!
HERE'S THE LOOT WILKS AND HIS PARTNER STOLE FROM HODGES! I RECOGNIZE IT BY HUB WEBSTER'S SACK! THOSE THIEVING VARMINTS MUST HAVE ROBBED A DIFFERENT ASSAY SHOP PREVIOUSLY AND HID THE GOLD HERE, TOO!

THEY PROBABLY INTEND TO HIDE ALL THEIR LOOT HERE UNTIL THEY PULL ONE OR TWO MORE JOBS AND THEN BEAT IT ACROSS THE BORDER! WELL, THERE'S GOING TO BE A CHANGE IN THEIR PLANS!

I'M GLAD HUB'S SACK IS LARGE! THE REST OF THE GOLD WILL FIT RIGHT INTO IT!

I'VE GOT ALL THE GOLD OUT! BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE THE CHEST EMPTY! I'M GOING TO LEAVE A NOTE IN IT!

THIS SHOULD HELP ME CAPTURE THOSE TWO OWLHOUNDS!

I'LL CLOSE THE CHEST AND PUT SOME DIRT ON TOP AS IT WAS BEFORE, AND GET OVER TO HUB'S SHACK!

SHORTLY AFTER.... I GIT YUH, HOPALONG! AFTER THEY READ THE NOTE, THEY'LL COME HYAR!

RIGHT! I WROTE THAT YOU ACCIDENTAL-LEY CAME ACROSS THE GOLD AND THAT YOU'RE HOLDING IT UNTIL THE RIGHTFUL OWNERS CLAIM IT!
I figured this would be the best way to catch them with the goods! If I waited for them in the woods, they might have spotted me and run off!

They'll be here any second now! I'd better hide under your bunk now that you know what to do!

Shore!

This must be the shack like it says in the note! It's the only one out there!

We're shore lucky, a dumb, honest hombre found our loot! If some fellows like us stumbled on it, we'd never git it back!

Knock, knock!

A FEW MINUTES LATER....

It's Wilks all right! Are yuh the hombre that found our gold?

That's our sack over there. C'mon, Hanscom, let's git it and go!

Wait! I reckon I ought to git a reward!

That wasn't a very generous reward you had in mind for Hub! But I have a nicer one for you, a comfortable prison cell!

Yuh want a reward, eh? All right, take a dose of lead!

That's my cue!

It's Cassidy!
WE'RE NOT IN JAIL YET!

GOOD WORK, HANGCOM!

SHOOT HIM! PRONTO!

NO, NO! YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

YOURE NOT SHOOTING HOPALONG WHILE THERE'S LIFE STILL LEFT IN ME!

OOF! BANG!

GIT OUT OF THE WAY, YUH OLD FOOL!

YOU'RE GOING TO BE SORRY YOU HIT THAT OLD MAN!

OOF!

HE DUCKED OUT OF THE WAY!

YIPPEE! YUH KNOCKED BOTH THEM CROOKS GOLD!

YES, THANKS TO YOU AND ALSO TOPPER. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR HIS DIGGING, I NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN WHERE TO LOOK FOR THESE OUTLAWS! AFTER I PUT THEM IN JAIL, I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM AN EXTRA PIECE OF SUGAR!

ZOW! UGH!
SIX GUN HEROES

LAME BRAIN
LEM

GOOD EXCUSE!

GOSH, I HAVE Tuh WASH ALL THESE HOSSES THIS MORNING! (Yawn!) JEST WHEN I FEEL SO LAZY, TOO!

I JEST DON'T FEEL LIKE WORKING!

THE BOSS ISN'T AROUND! I'LL LIE DOWN HYAR AND TAKE IT EASY!

(GRRRR) COME HYAR, LAME BRAIN!

I JEST DON'T FEEL LIKE WORKING!

(GRRRR) HOW COME YUNH AIN'T BUSY WORKING?

ER, ER...

---- I DIDN'T KNOW YUNH WUZ WATCHING!

THE BOSS!

OH, MAN!
JOHN Parker looked up from his bed at his tow-haired young son. Impatiently, the rancher's hand plucked at the quilt that covered him. Even this slight movement brought a throbbing pain to the leg that lay tightly bound in splints beneath the quilts.

"I—I wish I could go with you, Tim," John Parker said. "But this blamed leg probably won't heal up for a month! And it'll be another coupla of months before I can straddle a bronc agin!"

Tim Parker smiled eagerly at his father. "Listen, Pa," he said. "You don't have to worry about a thing! I can ride herd on that bunch of mavericks in my sleep. I'll have them up to the depot by tomorrow noon and turn them over to the cattle agent there! We'll have the money for your doctor's bills... and your installments to the bank sure as blazes! Just to make sure, I'll ride Midnight Boy!"

"Midnight Boy?" The rancher shook his head determinedly. "You will not, Tim," he frowned. "That ornery cayuse is plumb pizen! If it hadn't been for his throwing me, I'd never have gotten my leg broken at all. And you've never been able to ride him. No, sir!" He shook his head again. "The horse you're riding when you take the herd to the depot is old Sal. Sha may be slow, but at least you can stay on her!"

His father's word was law! Two hours later, as Tim Parker rode out of the Circle P home spread, pushing eighty head of cattle before him, he was riding the old dun mare—Sal. But as he rode along at an easy lope, keeping the stragglers in, Tim kept thinking of Midnight Boy. There was a horse! Big, glossy, jet-black, fast as chain lightning and as spirited as a month-old colt.

But the black stallion was too spirited. The few times that Tim had tried to ride him, he had been promptly thrown. And it was because of Midnight Boy that his father had his leg broken and it was now up to Tim to haze the herd to the railroad depot to turn them over to the cattle agent there.

Riding along beneath a clear blue sky with the red-backed cattle moving easily before him, Tim began to whistle. Even old Sal was trotting with more than her usual amount of energy.

It was then that the three riders came out of the little clump of oak that stood by the cattle trail.

Straight toward young Tim they rode, moving in a ground-covering canter. They were dressed in heavy sheepskin jackets, and their battered slouch hats were pulled down in front, shading their unshaven faces. Each of them carried a carbine in a saddle holster, and a Colt strapped to his thigh. The lead man, black-haired and hatchet-faced, raised his hand.

"Howdy, son," he began in a flat, hoarse voice. "Can you tell us... which is the best route to Craw's Junction?"

Tim Parker scratched his straw-colored hair, thinking.

"Well," he said, "just keep going the way you are, till you come to the coach road. Follow that right—until you come to a fork. Take the left turn, and stay with it all the way. I'd show you, except that I'm taking this herd to the railroad... and I'm all alone."

For the first time, the lead rider grinned. "All alone, eh?" he repeated. Suddenly, his visage grew grim, and his broad hand slapped down toward his thigh and came up with a steady-held revolver. "That's too bad because we're taking your herd, boy. And we're taking your hoss, too, just to make sure you don't follow us! Hear me? Get off... pronto!"

Tim tensed in the saddle! The man was not fooling, and the gunsels behind him were ready to draw, too. They were common rustlers, bad hombres—and he had fallen into their trap! But he could not give up the herd. It would be the ruin of the Circle P ranch!

"No!" he muttered defiantly. "You can't
have them! They're all we've got... and you're not getting them!"

The outlaw kneed his horse closer to the dun mare. He leaned over threateningly. "No? Can't have them?" Suddenly, his face twisted, and his heavy arm came about, slashing with the gunbutt against the side of young Tim's face. The boy tried to duck, but it was futile! He felt a stunning blow against his cheekbone. Reeling away, he slid down the side of the mare, smumping against the ground. In a daze, he heard the outlaw mutter, "That takes care of him! Let's get moving for the stage line, boys. Put a rope on his mare and we'll take her along. Lonnie! Just in case he wakes up, he won't be able to follow us!"

Lying there, head throbbing, Tim watched the rustlers move away, hazing the mavericks before them. Soon they were just tiny spots in the distance.

Dizzy, he rose to his feet, one hand clutching his aching temple and cheek!

The herd gone—stolen! And there was no chance of getting help, no way to cut off the outlaws, since they had taken old Sal with them. Unless—Tim's fists suddenly clenched! There was a way, if he could get back to the ranch in time!

Squaring his shoulders, he turned toward the ranch. It was about three miles away. Three miles of rolling prairie land. He began to jog, each step sending a shaft of pain lancing through his head. Gradually, the soreness began to lessen, and his strides became longer. He had to get back to the ranch on time!

Soon the ranch buildings were in sight! Tim did not swerve toward the main house, where he knew his father was asleep. Instead, he ran straight toward the corral. There, restless and pawing the earth in his stall was the great black horse, Midnight Boy! It was only a few weeks ago that John Parker had traded all the other horses in his string, intending to buy some fresh broncs soon. Now with Sal gone, the black horse stood alone.

Tim raised a slender hand to the stallion's shiny neck. Always high-spirited, the bronc threw his head back in pretended alarm. "Take it easy, Midnight Boy," the youth said. "I've got to get to the sheriff at Craw's Junction fast—and there's just one way for me to do it. You're the way!"

Moving carefully, he dropped a saddle blanket across the horse's back, and smoothed it out so there was no crease to cut the glossy side. Midnight Boy kicked nervously at the stall. Quickly, Tim put a halter on him and then slid a high-cantled western saddle across his back. No time to waste now. He strained hard, tightening the cinch strap. Then he led him outside, patting his side soothingly. "One foot in the stirrup... easy, boy... easy!"

With a sudden spring he vaulted into the saddle, legs gripping, hard. Midnight Boy did not hesitate for a second. As he had so many times before, he sprang forward and began to crow-hop in great, ground-covering leaps, twisting sharply. For a few seconds Tim was able to hold on, clutching desperately at the reins. But then he lost his seat, and a final high lunge by the bronc sent him hurtling off through the air!

For a dizzying, spinning moment, he was falling, and then he landed—hard!

Groggy, he scrambled to his feet. Waves of pain were shooting through his head again, and there was the salty taste of blood in his mouth. He swallowed. Midnight Boy had quieted down and was standing a few yards from him, ears flattened back, a triumphant malice in his big eyes. Tim Parker twisted his shoulders, lowered his head, and started toward the bronc.

"Listen," he mouthed thickly. "The ranch depends on my getting to the sheriff on time! I'm riding you, Midnight Boy—and this time you... won't... stop... me!"

Again he held the rein in his hand. Again his scuffed cowboy boot found the stirrup and again he swung his right leg over the saddle. This time the black horse seemed to know that the showdown was at hand! Springing high in the air, he twisted about violently in an effort to dislodge the boy at once. But, fighting with every muscle in his body, Tim managed to cling to his back!

Finally the bucks became less and less violent and the boy knew that he had mastered the bronc! He reined him hard out of the corral and spurred him across the prairie. "Let's move, boy!" he husked. "We're heading for Craw's Junction!"

As they raced across the level plain at top speed, Tim knew that they would get there in time to warn the sheriff—that there would be time to round up a posse and cut off the rustlers before they could cross the state line. The herd would be saved! Knowing this, he grew excited about it. And somehow he had the feeling that Midnight Boy was excited about it, too... for the big black horse was galloping as never before.

THE END
I just made a discovery! When you're in the newspaper business, you should stick to reporting the news, not trying to make it!

In Gravel's Gap, the town next to Rock Head Territory... All right, boys! We've got the varmint all tarred and feathered! Now let's run him over to the jailhouse!

Look! The drumbeater's getting away! C'mon! Let's get after him!
HURRY MEN! HE'S HEADING FOR THE HILLS! WE WANT TO CATCH HIM BEFORE HE REACHES ROCK HEAD TERRITORY!

SHORTLY AFTER --- HE'S SO FULL OF TAR AND FEATHERS, HE CAN'T SEE WHERE HE'S GOING! IN ANOTHER FEW MINUTES, HE'S GOING TO FALL RIGHT OVER THAT CLIFF! IF WE WANT TO CATCH HIM, I RECKON WE OUGHT TO GO TO THE BOTTOM AND WAIT FOR HIM TO FALL!

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA! LET'S GO!

MEANWHILE IN THE HILLS, THE REPORTER, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF ROCK HEAD TERRITORY'S ONLY NEWSPAPER, BURNETTE'S BUGLE, HUNTS FOR NEWS!

MAYBE IF I SHOT A BEAR, I'D HAVE SOMETHING INTERESTING TO WRITE ABOUT IN MY PAPER?

HEY! THERE GOES A BEAR NOW!

I'LL BRING HIM DOWN WITH ONE BULLET, SO I WON'T RUIN THE SKIN!

BANG!

I MISSED!

JUMPING BUTTERBALLS! I STARTED A LANDSLIDE!

A TALKING BEAR! IT'S A GOOD THING I DIDN'T SHOOT HIM! I'LL MAKE A FORTUNE WITH HIM AT THE COUNTY FAIR!

HELP!

BUT SMILEY DIDN'T MISS THE HILLSIDE AND ---
Thank's fer starting that landslide, stranger! Another few steps and I'd have fallen over the cliff!

Drat it, you're human!

Of course, I'm human! What's wrong with that?

I couldn't make any money exhibiting yuh at the county fair! I thought yuh were a talking bear!

Are yuh all there in the head, stranger?

You're a fine one to talk! What are yuh doing in that outfit?

Oh... er... I'm a medicine man and I'm trying out one of my new products!

It's an awful peculiar-looking product!

But, just then...

That's why we didn't find him below! That pile of dirt saved him from falling over! C'mon! Let's get him now!

Get me out of here and I'll explain later, stranger! It's a matter of life and death!

Life and death! Maybe I'll get a story yet! Cut off the trail! My horse is there!

Giddap, ring eye! Let's head for Burnett's busle office where we can get this man's story in private!
THE REASON THOSE VARMINTS WERE AFTER ME WAS BECAUSE THEY WERE TRYING TO STEAL THE PATENT TO MY NEW DISCOVERY—THE DIGBY DRUMMOND GENUINE HAIR GROWER!

A GENUINE HAIR GROWER! I ALWAYS THOUGHT THERE WAS NO SUCH THING!

OF COURSE THERE IS! WHY JUST TWO WEEKS AGO I WAS AS BATH AS A CUCUMBER!

THIS IS GOING TO BE ANY NEXT ISSUE OF BURNETTE'S BUGLE, SMILEY, UNLESS YOU PAY ME THE HUNDRED DOLLARS YOU OWE ME!

WHERE WOULD I EVER GET A HUNDRED DOLLARS BETWEEN NOW AND TOMORROW AT FIVE?

DON'T FRET, SMILEY! YOU DID ME A FAVOR, SO NOW I'M GOING TO DO YUH ONE IN RETURN! I'LL SHOW YUH HOW YUH CAN MAKE MUCH MORE THAN A HUNDRED DOLLARS BEFORE TOMORROW!

IF YUH PRINT A STORY ABOUT MY NEW HAIR GROWER AND PAY MORE PAPER GUARANTEES IT'S GENUINE, I'LL GIVE YUH ONE HALF OF EVERY SALE I MAKE!

THAT SURE IS SWELL OF YUH, DIGBY! I'LL GET OUT AN EXTRA! AND WHAT'S MORE, I'LL PUT THE STORY ON PAGE ONE!

THERE! THE LAST PAPERS OFF THE PRESS.

MIRACLE DISCOVERY OF THE CENTURY!

Digby Drummond, discoverer of a genuine hair grower, is in Rock Head Territory for one day only to demonstrate his product. On sale all day at Burnette's Bugle Office! Only one dollar a bottle! The Burnette's Bugle guarantees perfect satisfaction or your money back!
SIX GUN HEROES

I'M GOING OUT TO DISTRIBUTE THE PAPERS!

GOOD! IN THE MEAN-TIME, I'LL PREPARE SOME MORE BOTTLES OF HAIR GROWER!

SOON--

I'LL TAKE A BOTTLE!

TAKE IT EASY, FOLKS! I HAVE ENOUGH HAIR FOR EVERYONE!

GIVE ME TWO BOTTLES!

WOW! LOOK AT THE WAY THESE WADDIES ARE RUSHING TO BUY THIS HAIR GROWER! THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR TWO HOURS! I'LL BE WORTH A FORTUNE WHEN I GET MY SHARE OF THE PROFITS!

I WANT ONE, TOO!

WELL, I GOT RID OF ALL BUT ONE BOTTLE! THIS WAS THE BEST SALE I EVER MADE! THAT NEWSPAPER STORY DID THE TRICK!

HOW ABOUT MY SHARE, DIGBY?

LET'S GO INSIDE!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, DIGBY, AS LONG AS I GET WHAT'S COMING TO ME!

AT THE SAME TIME, ALL AROUND ROCK HEAD TERRITORY--

HAIR GROWER! YIPES! I GOT SOME ON ONE OF MY EYEBROWS, AND NOW I'VE ONLY GOT ONE EYEBROW!

THIS IS NO HAIR GROWER! IT'S A HAIR REMOVER! I ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED A LITTLE ON MY SHEEP DOG AND NOW HE'S NAKED!

SINCE I'M BALD, THIS HAIR BEARD AND HANDLEBAR MUSTACHE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY PRIDE AND JOY! NOW I'VE GOT NOTHING!
While in the Burnette Bugle Office.

I'd like to pay off Banker Watson as fast as possible, Digby! So give me what's coming to me! All right, Smiley! But remember, you asked for it!

CRASH!

Ngarr's what's coming to you!

UGH!

His hair is beginning to go and so am I!

As Smiley recovers—

That dirty faker has gone with my hair— I mean with the wind, but I'll catch up to him!

As soon as he is!

You guaranteed that hair grower! Now we want our money back or we'll rip you and your office to shreds!

Jumping butterballs! I have to catch Digby before they catch me, or I'll not only lose my hair, but my hide, too! I'll head for the hills! Maybe I can give them the slip running up one of the slopes!
SIX GUN HEROES

There's the phony medicine man now!

I trapped him by starting a little landslide before...

—I reckon I can do the same again!

BANG!

But once again, Smiley's aim is as true as a tall tale at a liar's convention!

Yipes! The bullet's heading back fer me instead!

Help! I started a landslide in the wrong place!

That was close! I'll have to try again!

Ha, ha! That'll take care of him! Now I can take my time getting out of hyar!

I reckon I'd better not take it easy hyar come the rock head rannies I swindled!
SIX GUN HEROES

DID YOU SEE SMILEY BURNETTE, A FAT NEWSPAPER MAN?

Hey! What's that? Durned if I know!

Hey, look! That fat cowpoke caught Digby Drummond fer us!

A hundred dollars! Yippee! Now I can pay off banker Watson, and have a terrific story fer my paper, too! As another great writer, Shakespeare, said, "All's well that ends well!"

I don't mind losing the paper as much as I mind having innocently let you cheat my friends and neighbors!

He cheated us, too, with the help of Smiley Burnette! Let's join forces!

Hey, what's that? Durned if I know!

He cheated us, too, with the help of Smiley Burnette! Let's join forces!

That's a good idea!

I reckon my best bet is to go into hiding!

A hundred dollars! Yippee! Now I can pay off banker Watson, and have a terrific story fer my paper, too! As another great writer, Shakespeare, said, "All's well that ends well!"

Follow the adventures of Smiley Burnette in his own magazine, Smiley Burnette Western and in Six-Gun Heroes!
AH, THIS COLD WATER SHORE LOOKS GOOD! I'M POWERFUL THIRSTY!

HA, HA, YUH SHORE GOT A SHOWER, TEN GALLON TEX! DO YUH WANT SOME SOAP? HA, HA!

WWHOSH HUH... OOPS!

(SPLUTTER) OH, YUH OPINE IT'S FUNNY DO YUH? (GRA)

WIPE THAT SMILE OFF YORE FACE OR I'LL KNOCK IT OFF! AW, YUH DON'T SCARE ME!

OH, NO? LISTEN, IF I HIT YUH ONCE, IT'LL BE LIKE THE NAME OF A SONG!

Huh? IF YUH HIT ME, IT'LL BE LIKE THE NAME OF A SONG?

THAT'S RIGHT... "PLOP GOES THE WEASEL"!

HA, HA, YUH SHORE!
From the hillcrest that separates the two stretches of flatlands known as Twin Plains, a band of killers swoop down to plunder the rich shipments of Wells Fargo stages. Rocky Lane, the fighting marshal, rides into this inferno of crossfire and sure death in his quest for...

The Disappearing Outlaws!
THIS HOUSE OVERLOOKS THE TWIN PLAINS AND IS JUST ABOVE A NARROW DIVIDE THAT LINKS BOTH PLAINS! WHO LIVES THERE?

AN EX-WELLS FARGO GUARD WHO IS A BLIND, DEAF MUTE: THE RESULTS OF GUN WOUNDS SUFFERED WHILE ON A RUN YEARS AGO: HIS NAME IS LIT HOWARD!

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, ROCKY! LIT'S PLACE IS A PERFECT LOOKOUT SPOT! THE SHERIFF TRIED THAT AND STAYED WITH LIT FOR WEEKS WATCHING THE AREA, BUT THE OUTLAWS NEVER CAME!

THEN THEY WERE INFORMED!

Perhaps, or it might have been coincidence: Diamond County's lawmen have other things to do, that is why Wells Fargo has asked you to take over this particular job! Our stage is due out now, so good luck, Rocky!

Thank you, Sir! I'll do my best to corral those disappearing outlaws!

LATER, AS ROCKY AND THE WELLS FARGO STAGE RIDE THE ARID TRAIL OF ONE OF THE TWIN PLAINS -

Look, Rocky! Some hombre is wounded up ahead!

Keep your gun's ready! It might be a trick!

This poor hombre is really wounded!

As Rocky dismounts to aid the wounded man...

Take care of the stage guards, boys, two of yuh stay here to help me cover Rocky Lane and get the gold shipment!

Too bad we had to wound that hombre to make the great Rocky Lane fall into our trap!
IF YOU'RE MEAN ENOUGH TO SHOOT A STRANGER IN THE BACK, LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN TAKE THIS!

OOOOGH!

BEFORE THE OTHER OUTLAWS CAN RECOVER FROM THEIR SURPRISE —

SORRY, I HAVE TO HIT YOU, OLD HORSE, BUT I KNEW YOUR REACTION WOULD FRIGHTEN THE OTHER HORSES AND UNSEAT THEIR RIDERS!

SLAP!

TAD, Y'LUH KEEP THOSE SHOOTING IRONS ON THE STAGE GUARDS, WHILE I STOP THAT FIGHT!

POW! SMACK!

AFTER THE OUTLAWS RIDE AWAY —

LOOK, ROCKY IS COMING TO!

I MUST WHISTLE FOR BLACK JACK!

SHALL I SHOOT HIM?

NO! JUST TIE HIM AND THE OTHERS UP! SHOOTING'S TOO QUICK FOR THE CRITTER!
ROCKY WHISTLED FOR HIS HOSS AND THE CRITTER CAME AND STARTED TO CHEW ON HIS ROPES! HE'LL HAVE HIM FREE IN A FEW SECONDS!

GOOD OLD BLACK JACK!

ROCKY AND HIS FLEET STEED RACE OVER THE SANDS OF THE PLAINS, FOLLOWING THE HOOFPRINTS OF THE OUTLAWS' HORSES!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, ROCKY AND BLACK JACK CUT ACROSS THE NARROW DIVIDE IN THE HILLCREST THAT LINKS THE PLAINS.

THEM RODE THROUGH HERE, AND ARE HEADING FOR THE TOP OF GORGE MOUNTAIN! I CAN JUST SEE THE LAST HORSE!

THEM MUST HAVE A CLEVERLY HIDDEN HIDE-OUT SOMEWHERE IN GORGE MOUNTAIN!

S O O N-- THERE ARE THE HORSES, BLACK JACK! BUT THE OUTLAWS HAVE DISAPPEARED! THERE ARE NO FOOTPRINTS OF DISMOUNTING RIDERS UP HERE, SO THAT MEANS WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING EMPTY SADDLES!

THEM HORSES NEVER STOPPED IN THEIR RUN TO PERMIT THEIR RIDERS TO DISMOUNT, OR THAT, I'M CERTAIN!

WE WERE FOOLED JUST AS THE SHERIFF WAS BY THE DISAPPEARING OUTLAWS! LET'S GO, BOY! WE'RE HEADING FOR TOWN!
I TRAILED THEM TO GORSE MOUNTAIN, BUT I HAVE A HUNCH THERE'S SOMETHING OUT-OF-PLACE ALONG THAT HILLCREST, SHERIFF, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO PUT MY FINGER ON IT!

REACHING THE RUNAWAY WAGON, ROCKY MAKES A DARING LEAP!

THAR'S A RUNAWAY WAGON HEADING THIS WAY!

THAT'S LIT HOWARD IN HIS BUCKBOARD! HE CAN'T SEE OR HEAR! HE'LL BE KILLED!

WAIT! THAT COW-POKE IS GOING TO TRY TO STOP THEM!

THAR GOES LIT, NOT KNOWING HOW CLOSE HE CAME TO DEATH!

WHOA, BOYS! TAKE IT EASY!

LATER--

YUH SHORE SAVED LIT'S LIFE, ROCKY! ALTHOUGH HE'LL NEVER KNOW ABOUT IT!

LATER--

SIX CUN

SO YUH DIDN'T SUCCEED IN TRACKING THEM DOWN, EITHER, ROCKY?

I'VE SEARCHED THAT AREA WITH A FINE TOOTH COMB, ROCKY! I SAY, SOME OF THE BOYS AND I ARE RIDING OUT THAT WAY COME MORNING, WITH RANCHER COLLINS' PAYROLL! WANT TO COME ALONG?

THANK'S, SHERIFF! I WILL!

THAT FELLA IS CALMING THOSE HOSSES DOWN AS IF THEY WERE KITTENS!

WAS THAT HIS SEEING-EYE DOG WITH HIM, SHERIFF?

YES! THE FEW TIMES LIT HAS COME TO TOWN FOR PROVISIONS, THAT DOG HAS SHOWN KILLER INSTINCTS! HE'S A VICIOUS ANIMAL, ONE OF A KIND! SEEING-EYE DOG! BECAUSE OF THIS, FOLKS HAVE COME TO CALL LIT, 'THE WOLF MAN'!
THE NEXT MORNING ---

The Collins ranch is about two miles from here, Rocky! Wells Fargo uses the Brother Plains for their run 'cause the Sister Plains crosses Collins grazing grounds! Look! That's lit sitting on his porch!

SIX GUN HEROES

ON OUR RETURN, SHERIFF, I'M RIDING THE BROTHER PLAINS! I'M STILL PUZZLED ABOUT THAT AREA!

SUDDENLY.....

Here they come, boys! Put yore masks on and then stampede Collins' cattle at them!

Colling' cowboys must be loco firing their guns! They're stampeding the herd!

Quick, Sheriff! Turn your horse to the left and ride for the hillcrest!

Collins' men! They're outlaws!

Those hombres aren't roll you're carrying in your saddle bag! Ride ahead of me, Sheriff, before they shoot your horse from under you! That seems to be their aim!

I got the Sheriff's hoss! Now I'll cut through the herd and grab his saddle bag! OWWW! My wrist!

Just be thankful I don't shoot to kill! Now I'd better reach the Sheriff before he's trampled under!
SHERIFF, YOU'RE WOUNDED!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, ROCKY! JUST MY HAND!

TAKE CARE OF THAT HAND, SHERIFF! I'M RIDING AFTER THOSE OWLHOOVES!

I WISH I HAD ME A HOSS ROCKY, BUT BOTH OF US CAN'T RIDE ONE HOSS. IT WOULD SLOW US UP! (GOOD HUNTING!)

WE'VE BETTER RIDE CLOSE TO THE HILLCREST SO THAT THE SHRUBS ALONG HERE WILL SCREEN US FROM ABOVE!

THE OUTLAWS' HORSES PRINTS LEAD INTO GORGE MOUNTAIN AGAIN, YET THE BLOOD SPOTS THAT DOT THE PLAINS ALL THE WAY DOWN SEEM TO STOP HERE AT LIT'S SHED! I'M POSITIVE THAT IF I RIDE AFTER THOSE HORSES, I'LL FIND MYSELF FOLLOWING EMPTY SADDLES AGAIN!

WHY WOULD SOMEONE BUILD SUCH A TALL, WIDE SHED? BUT THE STRANGEST PART IS THAT THIS SIDE FOR A WIDTH OF FOUR FEET, HAS BEEN BUILT OF PARTICULARLY STRONG TIMBER!

A FEW SECONDS LATER --

BLACK JACK! I'VE GOT IT!

THAT SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN DISTURBING ME ISN'T ON THE BROTHER PLAINS AS I THOUGHT! IT'S RIGHT HERE ON THE SISTER PLAINS AND IT'S LIT'S SHACK!

TAD CUT THROUGH THE HERD AND GIT THAT SADDLE BAG FROM THE SHERIFF'S HOSS!

I GOT ONE OF THE CRITTERS, BUT THAT DOESN'T BRING BACK TWO OF MY BEST DEPUTIES! I'LL NOT REST, ROCKY, UNTIL THAT BAND SWINGS FROM A TREE!

Owwh! MY ARM!

FORGET YORE ARM AND GRAB THE SADDLE BAG!
THIS SHED IS MUCH SMALLER FROM THE INSIDE THAN FROM THE OUTSIDE DIMENSIONS! THAT MEANS, THAT THERE IS ANOTHER ROOM AT THE SIDE OF THIS SHED!

THERE IS A ROOM ON THE OTHER SIDE. I CAN TELL BY THE HOLLOW SOUND! THERE ISN'T AN ENTRANCE FROM HERE AND IT EVIDENTLY DOESN'T OPEN FROM OUTSIDE!

I MIGHT BE RIDING MY HUNCH TOO HARD, BUT THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MEN DISMOUNTING WITHOUT LEAVING TRACKS, AND THIS PLACE HAS TOO MANY PECULIARITIES THAT AROUSE MY CURiosity!

SAGEBRUSH AND TUMBLEWEEDS! ONLY A MASTERMIND COULD HAVE DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED THIS!

THIS GROUND LEVEL LOWERS THE DOOR LIKE A DRAWBRIDGE; THE OTHER PUSHES THAT CEILING ROOF FAR OUTSIDE! AS THE MEN RIDE BY, SOMEONE IN HERE OPERATES THOSE LEVERS! THE MEN GRAB THE RINGS AND ARE BROUGHT INSIDE WHILE THEIR HORSES ARE STILL IN MOTION; A MATTER OF SECONDS!

IS LIL HOWARD THE GENIUS THAT DESIGNED THIS OR IS HE JUST A FRONT?
NOT A FRONT, MARSHAL ROCKY LANE! THE LEADER!

YOU COULDN'T RECOGNIZE ME BECAUSE YOU'RE BLIND--OR SUPPOSED TO BE, LIT HOWARD!

SUPESED IS CORRECT! AND I'M NOT LIT HOWARD! I ASSUMED THE WELLS FARGO GUARD'S IDENTITY AFTER I KILLED HIM TO FURTHER MY PLANS! I KNOW YOU, MARSHAL, BECAUSE YOU WERE THE ONE WHO CAPTURED MY BROTHER, WOLF BARRET!

THEN YOU'RE MEC BARRET, MECHANICAL GENIUS, CRIMINAL, AND MURDERER! BUT YOUR BLIND ACT ALMOST COST YOU YOUR LIFE YESTERDAY!

YOU MEAN THE RUNAWAYS! YOU FORGET I'M NOT DEAF AND THE FOLKS WERE LETTING ME KNOW OF YOUR PROGRESS! IF I HAD BEEN IN DANGER, I WOULD HAVE ACTED, LANE!

NOW THAT YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED, MARSHAL, I SHALL LET MY BROTHER'S DOG TEAR YOU APART SINCE MY BROTHER CAN'T HAVE THE PLEASURE: GET HIM, FANGS!

I'VE GOT TO GET A HOLD ON THIS KILLER BEFORE HE RIPS MY SHOULDER!

COME ON, FANGS! I'LL HELP YOU FINISH HIM OFF!

THANKS, BARRET! YOU INTENDED TO SHOOT ME, BUT INSTEAD YOU HIT THE DOG!

BANG!

WHACK!
SIX GUN HEROES

SHOOT HIM, YOU FOOLS! HE'S TOO QUICK ON HIS FEET! I CAN'T GET A BEAD ON HIM!

YOU WOULD SHOOT A MAN IN THE BACK, BARRET!

I'M GOING TO CHOKE THE LAST BREATH OUT OF YOU, LANE!

HE HAS A GRIP LIKE IRON!

IF I DON'T LOOSEN HIS HOLD IN ANOTHER SECOND...I'LL CHOKE!

GATHERING ALL THE RESERVE STRENGTH HE CAN MUSTER, ROCKY LANE DISENGAGES THE CRIMINAL'S STRANGLEHOLD!

SWOOSH!

SMACK! BOP!

NOW I'LL JUST WAIT UNTIL ONE OF THESE CRITTERS COMES TO, THEN I'LL HAVE HIM TIE HIS CRIME BROTHERS UP AND MARCH THEM TO THE SHERIFF AND JAIL!

FOLLOW FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ROCKY LANE IN ROCKY LANE WESTERN AND IN SIX-GUN HEROES!
OH, MY MOTHER WARNED ME NEVER TO GO OUT ON A LIMB!