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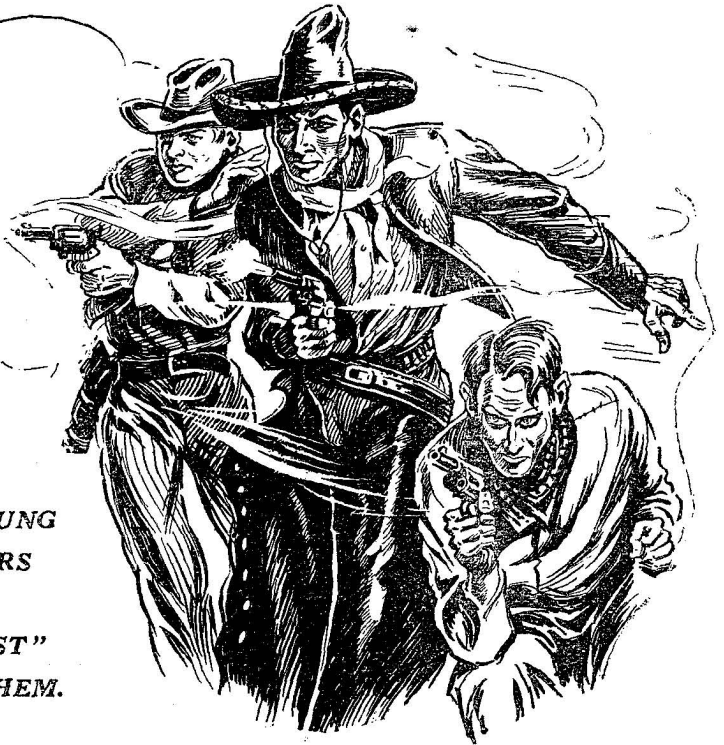
The PILOT 2^D



*The shed held his
guilty secret - and the
key had stuck in the lock...*

They were three hard-riding, clean-hitting young cowboys—but they fell foul of the crookedest marshal in the West, and he forced them to become . . .

The Outlawed THREE



THREE YOUNG
'PUNCHERS
WITH
THE "WEST"
AGAINST THEM.

"LYNCH 'em!" That deep-throated roar echoed in Dan Oak's ears as he stood looking out of the little barred window of Bullwhacker's gaol-house, his rugged face dark and set. Tom Redway sat on the edge of a bunk, idly swinging his legs.

"Are they coming, Dan?" he muttered. Big Dan Oak shook his head. In front of the calaboose was a yard, fenced off from the street. Outside the fence, a crowd had gathered, not a dozen yards from the little building. On a bench in the yard sat Yuba Bill, the gaoler, with a shotgun across his knees. He chewed tobacco and ejected streams of tobacco juice, unmoved by the clamour.

"Not yet, Red!" answered Dan, over his shoulder. "And I guess there won't be any lynching unless the marshal gives the word. Marshal Hall has got this town in his pocket." He tried to keep his voice even, but the anger within him made it sound rasping. At thought of the marshal of Bullwhacker, his fists clenched. If only he had given the ruffian all he had asked for when he had had the man in his power only a few hours before!

That had been when, together with Kid and Red, his companions at the Rojo Ranch, owned by the cowboys' uncle, old Sam Oak, they had burst in on the lynch-mad marshal just as he was forcing Sam to sell him the ranch at the point of the gun.

Dan gritted his teeth. Ever since Kid had found a goldmine, up in the mesa territory on old Sam's ranges, Hall had been after the ranch. He had tried to trick Sam into selling it, then, when that failed, he had planned to take it by force. Last night, a gunman—whom the cowboys shrewdly suspected to be either Hall or one of his men—had skulked up to the ranch and shot down the old ranch-owner in cold blood. While Kid Byrne had set off on a thirty-miles dash to the nearest doctor, Dan and Red had stayed behind to tend the wounded man. And then Marshal Hall had struck!

Riding at the head of his posse, he had come to the ranch and arrested Dan and Red for the attempted murder. And now old Sam lay a-dying, while Hall's men waited for Kid's return to the ranch, and Dan and Red raged in their cell at the gaol-house, listening to the roar of the lynch-mad crowd.

"I—I guess I don't care a heap, if only Kid keeps clear, and looks after old Sam and pulls him through!" muttered Red.

"You said it!" agreed Dan. A big cowman, in a stetson hat and goatskin chaps, stood by the gate and brandished a six-gun in the air.

"Lynch 'em!" he roared. "You hear me, you galoots? You know what them young firebugs have done—shot up old Sam Oak, their own uncle, at the Rojo Ranch! Have 'em out and string 'em up!"

A roar came back from twenty throats, and there was a surge of the rough crowd at the gate.

"Open this gate, Yuba!" shouted the big puncher.

Yuba Bill squirted tobacco-juice and shook his head.

"Forget it, old-timer!" he answered. "I guess there ain't going to be no lynching here. Them young firebugs is gaol'd here to be taken over to Parksville for trial, and I'll say that the marshal won't stand for no lynching!"

A deep growl from the mob outside

answered. There was a clatter of hoofs along the street, and the crowd made way for a horseman who rode up. It was Hardfist Hall, marshal of Bullwhacker.

He pulled in at the gate, and Yuba rose at once from the bench to admit him. Hardfist rode into the yard, and there was a surge of the mob after him.

The tall, black-bearded marshal of Bullwhacker swung round at them. His hand dropped on the butt of a six-gun at his belt.

"Beat it, you 'uns!" he rapped tersely. "Shut the gate, Yuba!"

Unwillingly, growling, and grumbling, the Bullwhacker crowd backed out again. Yuba shut and bolted the gate. The marshal threw his reins over a post and strode to the door of the timber building. Yuba produced a long, iron key and unlocked the door.

The gaol at Bullwhacker was a rough-and-ready building. It had four strong walls of pinewood, a roof of corrugated iron, a plank floor, and only one cell; the gaoler's cabin standing separate. The door that was now flung open, gave admittance to the cell where Dan Oak and Tom Redway were imprisoned.

As the sunlight streamed in, and the tall figure of the marshal appeared in the doorway, Dan turned from the window, and Red jumped up from the bunk. Both the boys clenched their hands, their eyes gleaming at Hardfist Hall. But if they had thought for a second of making a desperate dash to escape, they forgot it the next moment. Behind the marshal, Yuba had his shotgun ready—and outside the gate the mob murmured and surged. Hardfist smiled grimly.

"I guess you're safer inside!" he said. "If them guys get a hold on you, you'll go up so quick to the branch of a cottonwood it sure will make your heads swim."

Dan and Red made no answer. They eyed the marshal of Bullwhacker warily as he stepped into the cell. Yuba, at a sign from him, shut the door, and then went back to his bench, where he resumed chewing tobacco and watching the crowd outside the gate.

Hardfist Hall stood leaning on the door, regarding the two boys with an intent gaze under his knitted, black brows. They returned his steady gaze defiantly.

"I guess I've come here to talk turkey!" said Hardfist, breaking the silence suddenly. "I got you two cinched; and I guess it won't

be long before Kid Byrne is juggled along with you. I've left three men at the Rojo Ranch to watch for him, and they'll sure get him. The three of you are booked to be taken to Parksville, to stand trial for the murder of old Sam Oak!"

"You doggoned coyote!" said Dan. "You figure that any jury in Arizona will listen to that? Old Sam is our uncle, and—"

"And you stand to get the ranch when he passes in his checks!" sneered Hardfist. "And from what I hear, gold has been found on the Rojo Ranch at last. I'll say it's a clear case."

"Old Sam ain't dead yet, neither!" said Red. "He's sure hard hit by that skulking coyote that shot him up in the dark last night, but he ain't dead, by long chalks, and if the doctor gets to him, I guess he'll pull him through."

Hardfist laughed. "You can forget that, Red!" said Dan Oak quietly. "That lobo-wolf don't mean the doc to get to old Sam, if he can stop it! He figures that he's got his claws on old Sam's land at last."

"Now you're shouting!" said Hardfist Hall coolly. "I tried to buy the ranch from old Sam, fair and square, and he wouldn't sell! But I'll tell all Arizona I'm getting the Rojo Ranch and the gold strike in the mesa—and that's what I've come here to talk about. One of you—I reckon it was Kid Byrne—struck gold up in the mesa—the old mine that's been lost for forty years—"

"And I guess it's likely to stay lost for another forty, Hardfist, before you get your hands on it!" said Dan.

"That's what I'm coming to!" said the marshal of Bullwhacker. "Old Sam has got his, and the ranch comes to you three boys. I guess it won't help you a whole heap when you're found guilty of shooting-up your uncle—"

"No jury would find us guilty, and you know it!" snapped Dan.

Hardfist laughed again. "Judge Lynch's jury don't wait for a lot of evidence," he said significantly. "I guess I'll put my cards on the table. I'm holding back that mob outside. Put me wise where to lay my hands on the gold in the mesa, and I'll see you safe to Parksville to stand a fair trial. Keep your mouths shut, and I stand aside and let Judge Lynch go ahead! How long do you

reckon that mob will take to pull this calaboose down when they know that I've ridden out of town with my men to look for the Jadson gang?"

Red breathed hard.

"So that's the game?" he said.

"That's the game!" said Hardfist. "I'm going to have that mine in the mesa. Old Sam's gone—and I guess that mob outside will put paid to his three nephews. Who's going to stop me?"

Dan Oak trembled with suppressed rage.

"I've got you cinched," went on Hardfist coolly. "You better come across while you got the breath to talk! Put me wise about the goldmine, and I'll ride you safe to Parksville. Keep it close, and at sundown this very day I'll let all Bullwhacker know that I'm taking the trail of the Jadson gang—and as soon as I've ridden out of town, you know what will happen here. Take your choice. I'm telling you that's my last word!"

"You doggoned thief!" said Dan. "It was you that shot up old Sam, I'm figgering, and I'd hang on the highest cottonwood in Arizona afore I'd let you get your thieving hands on old Sam's mine."

"Me, too!" said Red.

Hardfist held up his hand.

"Listen!" he said.

From the street came a deep roar:

"Have 'em out! Lynch 'em!"

Red shivered slightly, and the marshal smiled grimly as he noted it. Dan's eyes were on the marshal, almost wolfishly. If he only had a weapon! He clenched his hands convulsively.

"You got a few hours to chew it over!" said Hardfist Hall. "Make up your minds by sundown, or—"

He broke off as Big Dan, with flaming eyes, made a spring. Instantly he whipped the six-gun from his belt.

But Red grasped his comrade by the arm and dragged him back in time.

Hardfist's eyes were gleaming over the lifted gun. But he lowered it, with a curt laugh, as Red dragged the enraged Dan back.

"Chew on it!" he said, and threw open the door and slouched out.

The door slammed. Yuba turned the key in the lock. The boys were left alone again.

"He's got us!" muttered Red. "He's sure got us by the short hairs, the doggoned lobo-wolf!"

"He ain't got Kid yet!" muttered Dan.

Red nodded. There was still a gleam of hope in that. In silence they listened to the deep, threatening murmur of the mob outside the calaboose.

KID BYRNE rose in his stirrups, shaded his eyes from the sun-glare with the brim of his stetson, and gazed across the barren plain. He was riding by the side of the doctor's buckboard, clattering and bumping over the rough trail. Doc Baker, in a red shirt, hat on the back of his untidy head, unshaven chin, and a pipe in the corner of his mouth, did not look much like a medical man. But he was a good doctor, and the only one for thirty miles around Bullwhacker.

Doc Baker was driving at a good speed; but, to the Kid's impatience, the buckboard seemed

to crawl at a snail's pace. Now, looking across the barren, sun-baked plain, he could see the Rojo ranch-house in the far distance—a speck against the dark mass of the Mesa Mountains.

"I guess I'll ride on, doc, and put them wise that you're coming," said the Kid.

Doc Baker nodded.

"Sure!" he assented. "And I won't be long after you, Kid. We've sure been burning the wind, and I guess Red and Dan will be surprised some to see you back so soon."

Kid gave his bronco a touch of the quirt, and dashed ahead of the buckboard.

Swiftly as the doc was driving, the clatter of the buckboard soon died away in silence behind the Kid. Weary to the bone himself, he drove on his flagging steed with unsparing hand. In a cloud of dust, he galloped on. But as he reached the Rio Rojo, and rode up the river-bank to the ranch, he was surprised to see no sign of Dan or Red.

Surely they were not sleeping; they could not be sleeping, with old Sam lying at death's door, while they waited for him to ride back with the doctor from Parksville. Yet there was no sign of them; no eager faces looking from the veranda of the rancho. As he drew nearer to the building he knew that anyone inside must hear the clatter of his horse's hoofs and know that he was coming. Yet neither Dan nor Red looked out to greet him.

Puzzled, the Kid dashed up to the ranch and pulled in his weary bronco. He slipped from the saddle, threw the reins over a post, and tramped up the steps of the veranda.

"Dan!" he called. "Red!"

There was no answer. The door of old Sam's room, opening from the veranda, stood wide, the sunlight shining in.

Kid Byrne strode in, his eyes fixed on the still figure on the bunk. There lay old Sam Oak as he had left him the night before—bandaged, white, unconscious. The old rancher had not stirred through the long hours. But where was Dan? Where was Red? Why had they left him? What had happened at the Rojo Ranch during his ride to Parksville for the doc?

The Kid caught his breath. Something had happened. Dan and Red would not have left the old rancher if they could have helped it. His thoughts ran to Hardfist Hall, the man he suspected of having fired that murderous shot in the dark.

"Dan!" the cowboy called again in a choking voice. "Red!"

But only the echo of his voice answered him. He paused a moment to look down on the old rancher, lying there so white and still. Then he turned, and as he turned a sharp command fell on his startled ears:

"Stick 'em up!"

He spun round, to face a levelled six-gun, with the face of Jake Sanders, the marshal's man, grinning over it.

Kid clenched his hands.

Sanders had stepped out of the doorway of the adjoining room, gun in hand.

"Jake Sanders!" breathed the Kid.

"You said it!" grinned Jake. "Keep 'em up! I guess I ain't honing to spill your juice, Kid Byrne; but the marshal's orders is to take you, dead or alive!"

From the doorway of the rancho kitchen two more burly figures appeared—Mustang Dave and Euchre, each with a six-gun in his hand.

Kid gritted his teeth as he realised the trap into which he had fallen. They had heard his horse, they had seen him coming, and they had backed out of sight to let him walk fairly into their hands.

Slowly the Kid raised his hands above his head. His eyes burned at the marshal's men.

"Where's Dan Oak and Red?" he muttered thickly.

"Where you'll soon see them," grinned Jake, "and that's in the gaol-house at Bullwhacker!"

"In gaol!" The Kid stared blankly. "What for?"

"You don't know a thing!" jeered Jake. "I guess there ain't much doubt that you and your pals shot up old Sam last night—"

"What!" panted the Kid, amazed.

"You're charged with murder, the whole bunch of you!" said the marshal's man. "Old Sam ain't passed in his chips yet, but I guess he ain't fur off it. The marshal got Dan and Red early, and he left us here to watch out for you, Kid Byrne, and I reckon we got you, too! You're going to Bullwhacker, tied on your cayuse, to join your two side-kicks! Keep 'em up!" he added threateningly, as the Kid made a movement.

"It's a frame-up!" said the Kid in a choking voice. "Bill Hall's hand is in this! It's the goldmine in the mesa that the doggoned coyote is after—"

"Quit chewing the rag!" said Jake curtly.

"Take him by the arms, you 'uns, and walk him out to his cayuse! I guess the marshal will be plumb glad to see him when we ride him into Bullwhacker!"

"You said it!" grinned Mustang.

Held on either side by the two roughnecks, Kid Byrne was marched out on the veranda and down the steps into the yard, Jake following behind, gun in hand. The Kid was choking with rage. Mustang and Euchre lifted him to the saddle of the bronco. They roped his hands behind his back, and roped his feet under the horse. Then Jake Sanders holstered his gun.

"I'll get the hosses from the corral—" he said. He broke off, and stared round at a sound of clattering on the trail. "Search me! That's Doc Baker's buckboard from Parksville! Say, is that where you was gone when we missed you from the ranch, Kid Byrne—to get the Doc from Parksville to old Sam?"

Mustang whistled.

"I guess the marshal ain't honing for old Sam to get no doctoring!" he muttered, and the three roughnecks exchanged significant glances.

Kid's eyes flashed.

"You doggoned polecats!" he panted. "You ain't stopping the doc from getting to old Sam—and him next door to death—"

"Shut up, you!" snarled Jake. "I guess no doc ain't wanted here, not without the marshal says so. Hold on, you 'uns—I guess we got to send that doc on the home trail afore we beat it."

With a rattle and a clatter in a cloud of dust, Doc Baker drove through the gateway and pulled up in the yard.

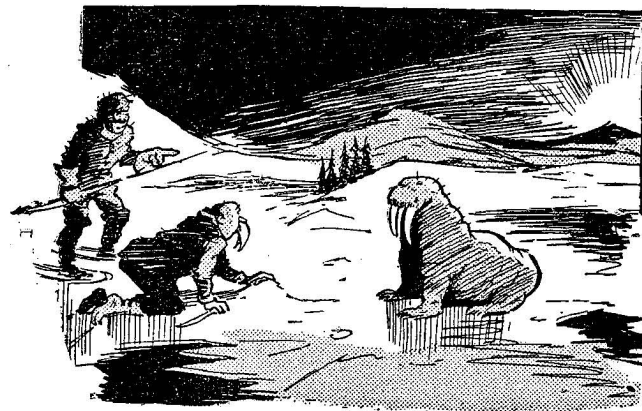
Doc Baker stepped down from the buckboard. He pushed back his stetson and wiped sweat and dust from his brow. Then, as his eyes took in the scene in the yard, the doc stared blankly—at Kid Byrne roped in the saddle of his bronco and the three roughnecks of Bullwhacker standing round the Kid, but eyeing the doc furtively.

"Say, what's this game?" asked doc. "What you got Kid Byrne hog-tied that-a-way for, you guys?"

"Marshal's orders, doc!" said Jake Sanders. "Him and his two pardners is charged with shooting up old Sam Oak last night, and they're arrested—"

Doc Baker drew a long, sharp breath. For an instant his keen steel-grey eyes shot a glance at the bound Kid. The Kid almost choked.

"Doc! You wouldn't believe that!" he stammered. "You wouldn't believe that Dan or Red or me'd lift a finger agin the old man



'SN(ICE)
TO
MEET
YOU!

"Lucky you've
got them whiskers,
Bill—he thinks
you're one of his
pals!"

what's looked after us since we could walk—that we'd have died for—"

"Believe it!" snapped Doc Baker. "Believe nothing! Ain't you rode thirty miles to Parksville, and thirty back, to bring me to the old man? I guess that don't follow up shooting him none. Jake Sanders, you lying gopher, where'd you get that story from? You know it ain't true."

"I know they're charged with murder and hooked for the gaol-house," answered Jake sullenly. "You ain't standing agin the orders of the town marshal, I reckon!"

Kid's eyes were on the doc. Doc Baker was a medical man—but in Tontine County, Arizona, any man was likely to pack a gun and to know how to use it. And well the Kid knew that the doc did pack a gun and was as swift and sudden on the draw as any puncher or roughneck in the section!

"You said murder!" said doc slowly. "But old Sam ain't dead—Kid's brought me here to tend him—"

"I guess he's as good as gone up the flume, doc!" said Mustang. "You don't want to worry any about him."

"And just why don't I want to worry any about my patient, and me a medical man, come thirty miles to tend him?" said the doc grimly.

He glanced at the Kid again.

"I'm powerful sorry to see you fixed that-a-way, Kid! But you can bank on it you'll come through—no jury in Arizona is going to hurt you."

"I guess I can take what's coming to me," said Kid Byrne. "So long as you tend old Sam and pull him through—"

"Leave that to me." The doc made a stride towards the veranda steps. Jake Sanders and his associates exchanged a quick look, and jumped into his path, taking up positions one on either side of the door. The doc halted, his eyes glinting at them.

"Stand aside!" he rapped. "Are you letting me go in to my patient?"

"Not so's you'd notice it, doc!" drawled Sanders. "Your best guess is to beat it, and beat it pronto. There's your buckboard—jump in and hit the horizon."

"Marshal's orders?" gritted the doc. "Why, you dirty skunk, I wouldn't let the President of the United States stand between me and my patient. Get out of my way, you!"

Jake's gun slid into his hand. "I'd sure be sorry to burn powder on you, doc, and you the only medical man in the section," he said ominously. "But you got to beat it."

Doc Baker stood with one hand driven deep in his trousers pocket, facing the marshal's men. The Kid, bound on the bronc, looked on breathlessly. The doc was still cool, though his eyes were glittering.

"Put it plain!" said Doc Baker crisply. "You're keeping me away from my patient—that's agin the law."

Jake kept the gun at a level. "You uns cinch him and put him in his buckboard," he said. "Tie him down to the seat, and set the cayuse going! I guess he'll find his way back to Parksville soon or late. You lift a finger, doc, and—"

Bang! The sudden roar of a six-gun interrupted the marshal's man. Jake Sanders gave a fearful yell and staggered back, the revolver falling from his hand. For a moment he staggered helplessly, then he collapsed on the ground.

The doc's left hand was still in his pocket. But in that hand was the six-gun he had fired—through the cloth. It was not the first time that Doc Baker had shot from the pocket. But the next second the gun whipped out into sight, and was aimed at Mustang and Euchre. "Stick 'em up, you!" snarled the doc.

Euchre reached for his gun. The doc fired without an instant's hesitation, and the marshal's man staggered back with a bullet in his right arm.

"You want yours, Mustang?" snapped the doc. His smoking gun looked the roughneck in the face. Mustang Dave's hands shot up above his stetson.

Doc Baker glanced down at Jake. He lay senseless. Euchre was staggering against the veranda, white as chalk, his right arm hanging helpless



"Stand back, Doc Baker!" rapped one of the roughnecks guarding the door. "I guess Sam Oak don't need no doctor where he's going!"

They meant to make sure old Sam died so that the gold-mine on his ranch could be seized by their rascally boss!

"I guess," said Doc Baker, "that no guy in Arizona is keeping a medical man away from his patient! Nope."

"Doc!" gasped the Kid breathlessly. "Doc, you're sure a white man! I'll say you're a whole team, and a cross dog under the wagon! I'll tell a man!"

"You, Mustang! Let that boy loose!" rapped the doc.

"Agin the marshal's orders—" stuttered Mustang. But at the gleam in the doc's eyes over the gun, he jumped to obey.

Kid Byrne was cast loose. He slid from the bronc, panting with relief. He was free again—free to help his comrades.

"Hog-tie that guy!" said the doc, and the Kid, with a grin, took the rope and bound Mustang to the fence. The marshal's man did not resist.

Doc Baker slid his gun back into his pocket. "You'll keep a medical man away from his patient will you?" he said grimly. "I guess not—I sure guess not! Kid, I reckon your best guess is to beat it while the going's good."

"You said it, doc! But—old Sam—" faltered the Kid.

"I reckon you can leave him to me! I'll sure get him moved to my house at Parksville, as soon as I can fix it!" said Doc Baker. "He ain't safe here with the marshal's bulldozers cavorting around. I got three patients now instead of one." The doc grinned. "But I'll sure see to old Sam first."

Doc Baker tramped up the veranda steps and went into old Sam's room. Euchre sagged down against the wall, groaning. Jake Sanders had not stirred. Kid Byrne followed the doc and stood waiting at the doorway. He was free again, and he was thinking of his comrades in the gaol-house at Bullwhacker. But he had to know about old Sam.

It seemed an age to him before the doc came back to the door. His face was grave.

"Don't say he's gone up?" muttered Kid huskily.

"Gone up nothing! I guess he's hard hit—plumb hard, but he's as tough as hickory. He ain't going to get on his feet agin for months to come, but if I get him to Parksville, where I can tend him, he's going to pull through. And that's what I'm going to do, Kid!"

Kid Byrne grasped his hand. "Pull him through, doc! That's all I ask! That's all that Dan and Red would ask! And, look here, doc, there ain't a lot of dollars at the Rojo Ranch, as I guess you know, but—"

"Aw, can it!" snarled the doc. "Who's talking about dollars, you young gink?"

"I guess, doc, that you get more work than pay," said Kid, with a grin. "And I sure know you don't squeal none. But I'm telling you, we've struck it rich on old Sam's land, and if we ain't got dollars, we've got what's as good. Look at that, doc, and take it back to Parksville with you."

Doc Baker stared at the gleaming nugget that the Kid jerked from his pocket—the nugget he had found in the river-cave up in the mesa.

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated the doc. "You've struck gold on the Rojo Ranch at last?"

"You said it—and I guess that's what Hardfist Hall is after," said the Kid. "And there's a heap more where I raised that nugget, doc, and I want you to take it to pay for old Sam. I'm telling you it's the richest strike in Tontine County, and we're sure raising big money when we get through with Hardfist."

He forced the nugget into doc's hand. Doc Baker nodded and slipped it into his pocket.

The Kid stepped into the room and gave the old rancher, still unconscious, a last look. Then he went back to the yard. He was free to think of his comrades now. He picked up the gun that Jake Sanders had dropped. The doc was already bending over Jake, giving him the attention he sorely needed. He was too busy to give the Kid more than a brief nod as he mounted and rode away on a fresh horse picked from the corral. The Kid was weary—wary to the bone—but he was hardly conscious of it. Old Sam was left in good hands; that was a weight off his mind. His thoughts were concentrated now on his comrades, in the grip of Hardfist Hall. He was going to help them out—if he could. With a hard, set face, the Kid galloped away on the trail to Bullwhacker.

HARDFIST HALL leaped to his feet with a gasp of astonishment. The marshal of Bullwhacker could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw Kid riding up Main Street. From the open doorway of his office the marshal watched the rider in amazement. He had left three men at the Rojo to watch and wait for the Kid, and he had had no doubt that they would get him when he came back to the ranch. And here he was, riding up Main Street in Bullwhacker—riding into his enemy's hands!

From the direction of the calaboose, at a distance down the street, a deep murmur came. The crowd was still there, and increasing in numbers, as the afternoon waned. But it was to the marshal's office that Kid Byrne was riding, and he pulled rein outside. Sitting in the saddle, he met the marshal's grim stare. And, as other eyes fell on him,

(Continued overleaf.)

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there was a shout along the street, and men began to gather round, eyeing the Kid as he sat in the saddle, amazed to see him there.

"The Kid was cool as ice. He knew, only too well, that he was taking his life in his hands in riding into the cow town. But his comrades were there, and he had come. And he was packing a gun now.

"I guess I've moseyed in to chew the rag with you, marshal," said the Kid evenly. "You've got my side-kickers, Dan and Red, in the gaol-house, haven't you?"

"You said it!" agreed the marshal. He gave a glance round at the gathering crowd. Some of them were his own range-riders—the toughest bunch in Arizona. Some of them were his official deputies. And they were all round the Kid, sitting so calmly on his bronc in front of the marshal's office.

"What's the charge agin my friends?" asked the Kid quietly.

"Murder!" rapped the marshal. "You can wash that out," said the Kid, almost casually. "First of all, it's a dog-goned lie that Dan or Red shot-up old Sam, and no guy knows it better'n you. Second to that, old Sam ain't dead, and Doc Baker, of Parksville, says that he's going to pull through."

The marshal's eyes snapped. "So you got the doc to him?"

"Sure!"

"You been back to the ranch, then?" The Kid nodded coolly.

Hardfist stared at him, puzzled. "I left three men there——" muttered the marshal.

"I guess you'll find them there, if you look," drawled the Kid. "But I ain't come to chew the rag about that. I'm after my friends. You got them corralled on a charge of murder—and there ain't no murder. Old Sam's in a good man's hands, and he's going to live. I want to see my friends, Hardfist."

"You're sure going to see them, Kid Byrne!" said the marshal of Bullwhacker grimly. "You can put your last cent on that. Light down from that cayuse and give your-self up to the law!"

Kid's teeth clicked shut. "And what's the charge agin me?" he asked.

"Same as agin your side-kickers. I reckon you was all in it," said Hardfist. "You getting off'n that cayuse?"

"Not so's you'd notice it," said the Kid. There were more than twenty men around the rider now. The marshal made a sign to them.

"Seize that guy!" he barked. "He's arrested in the name of the law!"

The Kid laughed again. "The law?" he said. "I guess you got the law in your pocket in this burg, Bill Hall!"

The Kid's eyes flashed round at grim faces. "I guess there's plenty of time for a rookus if you're honing for one. You listen to me, Bill Hall. You got my friends, and you aim to get me, too; and I guess you're banking on a rope and a branch to see you clear to old Sam's mine up in the mesa. I'm telling you to forget it. I'm asking you, Bill Hall, to mosey along to the gaol with me, here and now, and let my friends out, and I'm saying it will be a good thing for you."

Hardfist gave a harsh laugh. Some of the roughnecks gathered round the Kid grinned; others stared at him. Hands were already dropping on the butts of guns.

"I'm putting it to you, fair and square, Bill Hall," the Kid went on evenly. "Let up on this game, Hardfist! If you want me and my friends for a fair trial, I guess you know where to find us. We ain't beating it off the Rojo land now we struck a goldmine there. We'll ride into Parksville and give ourselves up to

the sheriff, if he wants. But you ain't getting by with a lynch game! I'm jest asking you, will you mosey along to the gaol and let my friends out to ride with me for Rojo?"

The Kid spoke calmly, casually, but his hand was on Jake Sanders' six-gun in his pocket.

"I guess you've said your piece, Kid," said Hardfist Hall, "and now you can pack it up. It's you for the gaol-house!"

"That your last word?" asked the Kid. "Sure!"

"Then—that's mine!" And, swift as lightning, Kid Byrne whipped the gun from his pocket and fired point-blank at the marshal of Bullwhacker.

Bang! The roar of the six-gun was followed by a startled roar from the roughneck crowd. There was a surge forward, but the Kid's smoking gun swayed round, and there was a backwards surge. Hardfist Hall went over backwards and crashed on the floor of his office.

"Back, you coyotes!" snarled the Kid, as the mob roared round him.

He dashed the spurs into his horse's flanks, and the bronco reared and cavorted. The crowd scrambled back from lashing hoofs. The marshal of Bullwhacker raised himself on an elbow, and his voice came shrieking: "Seize him! Shoot him down! Shoot!"

With a jingle of bridle and spurs, a crash of hoofs, the Kid rode down the street. His reins were bunched in his left hand, the six-gun smoked in his right. Hands grasped at his bridle—grasped at his horse—grasped at the Kid. Over the gun, his eyes blazed.

Three times roared the six-gun. It was neck-or-nothing now, for the Kid, and he fired fast as he spurred his bronc.

Twice more he fired. Yelling men reeled to right and left from the tearing bullets and the lashing hoofs. Guns roared, fired wildly. But the crowd parted before the galloping horse and the roaring six-gun, and Kid Byrne dashed at mad speed out of the cow town, out on the open prairie trail. He rode hard, riding for his life, leaving Bullwhacker in a maddened roar behind him!

On Kid alone depend his two pals' hopes of rescue—and Kid is a hunted man, liable to be shot on sight by any who set eyes on him! Read next week how he returns to Bullwhacker—a lone cowboy against a town of gunmen—and fights against overwhelming odds to help his comrades in distress.



Nothing Doing!

Fixtures and Forecasts for all the Soccer Leagues, Saturday, October 26th

Home teams are named first. Teams in capital letters are those selected by our experts to win; both teams in small letters indicates a forecasted draw.

ENGLISH LEAGUE.

DIVISION I.

- ARSENAL v. Preston North End.
- Birmingham v. Portsmouth.
- BLACKBURN v. Everton.
- CHELSEA v. Bolton Wanderers.
- Grimsby Town v. MIDDLESBROUGH.
- Leeds United v. Aston Villa.
- Liverpool v. Huddersfield Town.
- MANCHESTER CITY v. Brentford.
- Stoke City v. Derby County.
- SUNDERLAND v. Sheffield Wednesday.
- WEST BROMWICH v. Wolverhampton W.

DIVISION II.

- BLACKPOOL v. Hull City.
- Bradford v. MANCHESTER UNITED.
- BURY v. Plymouth Argyle.
- DONCASTER ROVERS v. Barnsley.
- Leicester City v. Tottenham Hotspur.
- NORWICH CITY v. Burnley.
- Nottingham Forest v. Charlton Athletic.
- SHEFFIELD UNITED v. Port Vale.
- Southampton v. Fulham.
- SWANSEA v. Newcastle United.
- WEST HAM UNITED v. Bradford City.

DIVISION III. (NORTHERN).

- CARLISLE v. Accrington.
- DARLINGTON v. New Brighton.
- Gateshead v. Chesterfield.
- HALFAX v. Barrow.
- HARTLEPOOLS v. Southport.
- Mansfield v. CHESTER.
- OLDHAM v. York.
- Rotherham v. LINCOLN.
- TRANMERE v. Stockport County.
- WALSALL v. Crewe Alexandra.
- WREXHAM v. Rochdale.

DIVISION III. (SOUTHERN).

- Aldershot v. READING.
- BRIGHTON v. Notts County.
- BRISTOL CITY v. Southend United.
- COVENTRY CITY v. Gillingham.
- Exeter City v. Luton Town.
- MILLWALL v. Northampton.
- Newport County v. Bournemouth.
- QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS v. Bristol Rovers.
- SWINDON v. Cardiff City.
- Torquay v. CRYSTAL PALACE.
- WATFORD v. Clapton Orient.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE.

DIVISION I.

- AIRDRIEONIANS v. Third Lanark.
- Arbroath v. DUNFERMLINE.
- Clyde v. RANGERS.
- DUNDEE v. Ayr United.
- HEARTS v. Albion Rovers.
- Kilmarnock v. ABERDEEN.
- Motherwell v. Celtic.
- PARTICK THISTLE v. Hibernians.
- Queen's Park v. St. Johnstone.
- Queen of the South v. Hamilton.

DIVISION II.

- Brechin City v. St. Bernards.
- Cowdenbeath v. DUNDEE UNITED.
- EAST FIFE v. East Stirling.
- Edinburgh City v. MONTROSE.
- FALKIRK v. Alloa.
- FORFAR ATHLETIC v. Stenhousemuir.
- King's Park v. MORTON.
- LEITH ATHLETIC v. Dumbarton.
- ST. MIRREN v. Raith Rovers.