

SUSPENSE

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MAGAZINE



THE HAUNTED HILLS

JOHNNY McKay clung to the big sandstone rock that balanced precariously on the rim of the thousand-foot drop. Below him, gleaming white in the sunlight, were the talus rocks that formed the floor of a long, narrow canyon. The sweat came out in beads on his tanned forehead. The muscles of his straining arms were loosening. His fingers began to slip.

He whispered frantically, "This is the end—unless I can get a foot on that rimrock—pull myself up over the edge!"

For a wild moment, he hung between life and death. Then his right foot swung upward, caught at a bit of red rock, and fell away. The downward swing of his foot almost jerked his fingers from their tiny hold. *One more slip like that and I'll fall,* his mind told him.

Johnny threw his leg upward. This time it caught the red sandstone rock projection and held. He used it as a lever to drag himself over the rimrock. As he moved upward, he felt something loosen in his pocket and drop out. Casting a glance behind him, Johnny saw the little, twisting, turning rabbit's foot falling toward the talus rocks.

"My lucky piece," he panted. "That means my luck's plumb run out!"

Carefully he dragged himself to safety, visibly trembling, the cold sweat beading forehead and lips. He knelt there, grasping the root of a dwarf pinon, trying to get back the cold nerve that had stood him in good stead in the past. He thrust a hand back, dragged out a red neckerchief, and mopped at his face. He stood up and walked on shaking legs away from the rimrock toward the safer width of the trail.

Johnny McKay was a young prospector. With pick and spade, he had dug a path from the rim of the Mogollons in Arizona, up beyond the Medicine Bow hills and westward into the Uintas. Now, overlooking the Red Desert in the distance, he was moving through an Indian-ridden range of hills, where legends told of scalping parties that rode the midnight winds, of lost groups of scalped mountain men loping along with fur packs slung across their shoulders and long rifles in their hands. Ghosts! Fabulous ghosts, all of them, running by night over

the land where their blood had been spilled.

A wry smile caught and twisted his mouth. "Reckon I'm prime bait fer such as them, too," he said, remembering the rabbit's foot and the four-leaf clover and the other luck symbols with which he crammed the pockets of his buckskin jacket and leggings. He was as superstitious as a redskin, Johnny McKay was. He crossed his fingers and knocked wood and never looked at the moon over his shoulder. A prospector for gold and silver needed all the luck he could hoard. Johnny McKay never spilled any of that luck.

He had been close to death back there, hunting the rim-rock for telltale signs of gold . . . without any luck. *Luck!* The word made Johnny's lips curl. He had bought luck charms from Comanche and Kiowa medicinemen, from trading-post men, from prospectors he had met anywhere from Taos to the Milk River. He thrust a hand into his pocket, pulled out a torn four-leaf clover. It lay in two halves. A bright penny with the words GOOD LUCK stamped on it went rolling and bouncing, to drop over the edge of the cliff, in a gleam of red sunlight.

The rabbit's foot was gone! The clover was ripped apart! The penny had disappeared! A cold chill ran up Johnny's back. It was beginning to look bad, with all his luck charms suddenly gone or ripped apart.

Darkness was throwing black paint across the rocks. He muttered, "If I was a Wasatch or Sioux Injun, I'd make tracks out of here, plumb fast. The signs are all against me!"

A Wasatch brave had told him, on the lower slopes of the Uintas, as he was preparing for his climb, "Not go there! Bad spirits! Ghosts dance devil dance in hills on night of full moon. Spirits come take living people—take them away to never-never land!" Johnny had listened with thudding heart. For a moment, back there under the pines, with the beady eyes of the Wasatch brave watching him, he had let panic flood him. But he had shrugged it off. There had been gold float in the canyon far below. It looked promising. Johnny McKay would dare ghosts where there were signs of gold.

He knew that gold did not select the places where it could be found. Sometimes a man had to go into haunted hills to find it. Just the same, Johnny threw an eye upward at the silver orb of the moon rising over the rim of the horizon, as the crimson ball of the setting sun lowered beyond the jagged edges of the Uintas.

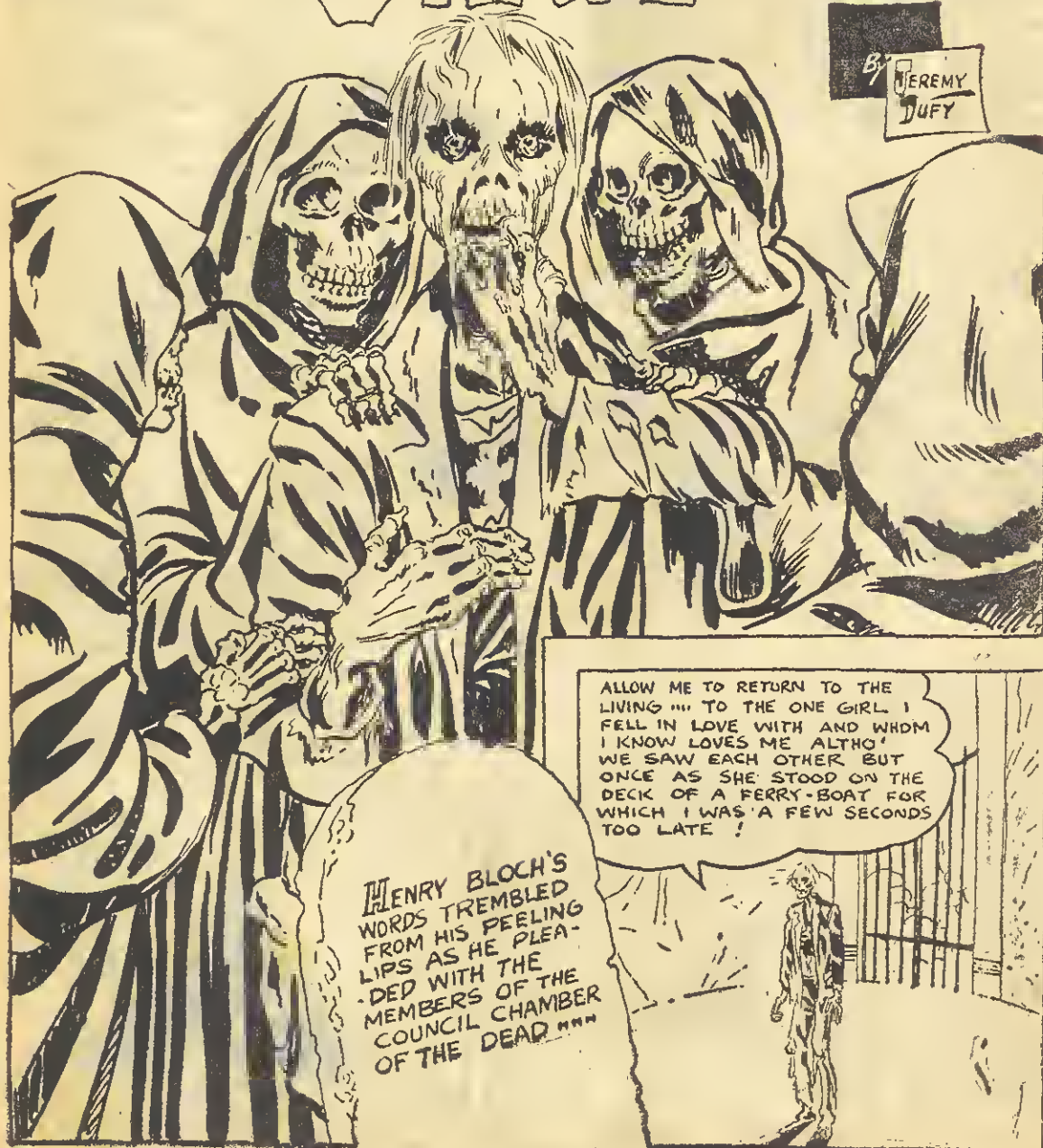
He climbed upward, tools and pack across a shoulder. He was following an old Indian path that rose at queer angles and sharp curves around the boulders near the trail. Now he could barely see the path gleaming in the moonlight as the sun sank swiftly. Darkness threw a cloak over the mountains

(CONTINUED ON INSIDE BACK COVER)

ON HIS TIME OF LIVING HE HAD MET THE LOVE OF HIS SHORT LIFE BUT BRIEFLY, AND IN THE FEW DAYS OF LIFE LEFT TO HIM HAD NEVER GOT THE OPPORTUNITY OF CONFESSING HIS LOVE TO THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL OF HIS DREAMS, AND NOW THAT HE WAS A ROTTING CORPSE LONGING FOR THE HAPPINESS WHICH HAD BEEN DENIED HIM, HE BEGGED TO RETURN TO THE LIVING WITH ~~HER~~

Love from the GRAVE

By JEREMY DUFF

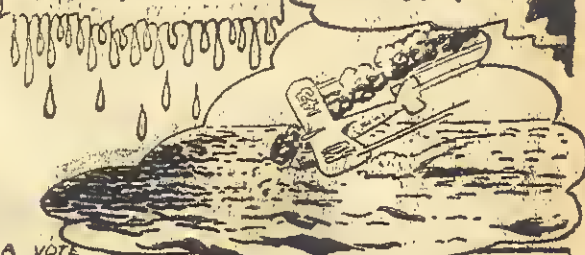


WE LOOKED INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES,
AS THE RIVER SEPERATED US ---
--- TO PART FOREVER! MY REMAINING
FEW DAYS OF LIFE WERE MADE MISER-
ABLE BY THE MEMORY OF THAT MOM-
ENT --- TORTURED BY A LOVE I
WOULD NEVER REALIZE IN THE WORLD
OF THE LIVING!



LIKE A FORLORN
WAVE BEATING ON
A HAGGARD CLIFF,
THE PLEA OF THE
DEAD, BUT YEARN-
ING LOVER CON-
TINUED RELENT-
LESSLY FOR HENRY
BLOCH'S DREAM
OF LOVE STILL
BLOOMED STRONGLY
IN HIS COLD STILL
HEART!

TOO SOON, DEATH
CUT ME DOWN, WHEN
THE ENGINE OF MY
PLANE BLEW UP ---
--- NOW, I ASK TO
GO BACK, BACK
AMONG THE LIVING
TO FIND THE GIRL
I LOVE, AND LEARN,
IF HER LOVE, I
WOULD HAVE HAD
IN RETURN, I AM
OWED THIS, AT
LEAST!



AND THE COUNCIL CONFERRED --- AND A VOTE
WAS TAKEN ---

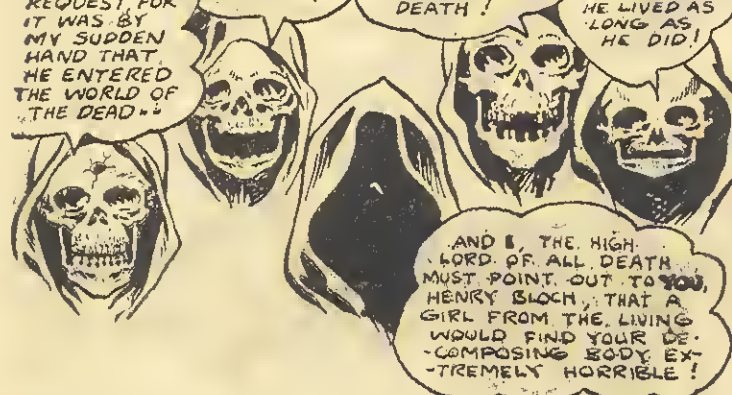
I, VIOLENT
DEATH, WOULD
GRANT THIS
BEINGS
REQUEST FOR
IT WAS BY
MY SUDDEN
HAND THAT
HE ENTERED
THE WORLD OF
THE DEAD ---

I, SENILE
DECAY, FAVOR
HIS PLEA, FOR
I PITY HIS LOT,
DYING SO
YOUNG!

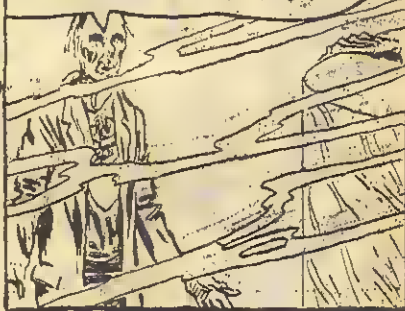
NOT I, DEATH
OF DISEASE, I
THINK, HE SHOULD
BE THANKFUL
HIS BODY WAS
NOT TO SUFFER
A LINGERING
DEATH!

I, CHILD-
DEATH, THINK
HE SHOULD
BE THANKFUL
HE LIVED AS
LONG AS
HE DID!

I WILL RETURN TO MY WATERY
GRAVE IF HER LOVE, OF WHICH
I FEEL SO SURE, CAN NOT
ENDURE THE SIGHT OF MY
DECOMPOSITION --- OH!
LORDS OF DEATH, PLEASE
HAVE PITY, GIVE ME MY
CHANCE. I BEG YOU!



AND I, THE HIGH
LORD OF ALL DEATH
MUST POINT OUT TO YOU,
HENRY BLOCH, THAT A
GIRL FROM THE LIVING
WOULD FIND YOUR DE-
COMPOSING BODY EX-
TREMELY HORRIBLE!



ONCE MORE
THE WEIRD
COUNCIL
CONFERRED,
FOR THEY
WERE BEINGS
OF COMPASSION
AND NOT THE
DREADED
PHANTOMS
THE LIVING
BELIEVE
THEM TO
BE ---
A VOTE
WAS AGAIN
TAKEN AND
IT WAS
DECIDED ---

WE GRANT YOUR REQUEST! BUT
ONLY TO THE GIRL WILL YOU
APPEAR AS WHEN YOU WERE
ALIVE. HOWEVER, IF SHE
GROWS TO LOVE YOU, YOU
WILL BE GRADUALLY RE-
VEALED TO HER IN THE
ROTTING DECAY THAT
IS YOURS NOW!



AS YOU CHANGE, SHE TOO WILL
CHANGE! IF SHE STILL LOVES
YOU, AND IS WILLING, SHE
CAN RETURN WITH YOU TO THE
WORLD OF THE DEAD!



AND SO HENRY BLOCH CAME BACK TO HAUNT THE LIVING FOR THE GIRL, HE, A DEAD MAN WOULD WOOL. THERE WERE MANY DEFEATS FOR HIM AS LOVELY YOUNG WOMEN SUD- DENLY SCREAMED TO FIND THE HORRIFYING APPARITION THAT WAS HIS PUTRIFYING BODY CONFRONT THEM-

PLEASE WAKE UP, I BEG YOU, LOOK INTO MY FACE! IT IS THE ONLY WAY I HAVE OF FINDING OUT IF YOU ARE SHE WHOM I LOVE!

OH-H-H-



NO! NO! SHE'S NOT THE ONE! I HATED TO FRIGHTEN HER, BUT SHE SEES ME AS A DECOMPOSING CORPSE!



ALWAYS, ON THESE HAUNTING VISITATIONS, HENRY BLOCH WOULD FIND THAT IF THE LADY COULD SEE THE EYE-LESS SOCKETS AND THE ROTTING FLESH OF DEATH A CORPSE AND NOT A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN THEN SHE WAS NOT THE ONE



SO THE SEARCH WENT ON SEEMING HOPELESS! AND THEN ONE, ONE NIGHT AFTER LONG HOURS OF STAND- ING IN A DARK ALLEYWAY STARING AT PASSING FACES- HENRY BLOCH FOUND HER

HURRY ON MARIE! IT'S QUITE LATE!

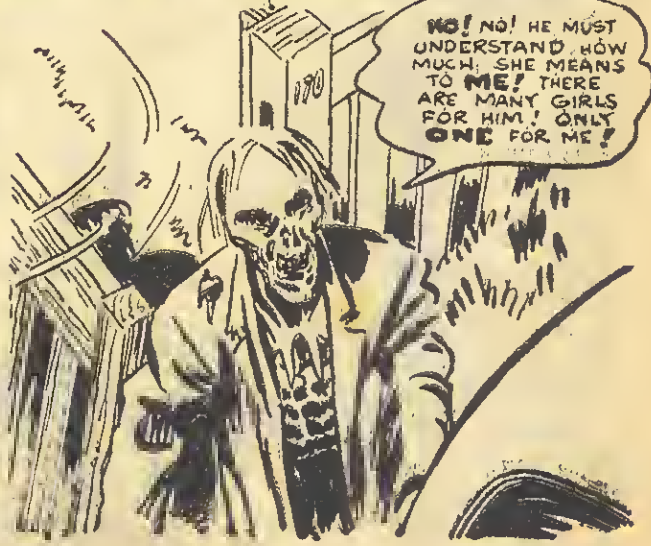
SHE'S LOOKING AT MY FACE AND SHE'S NOT AFRAID!



SHE IS THE GIRL! SHE SEES NO HORRIBLE CORPSE AND NOW SHE'S TRYING TO REMEMBER WHERE SHE SAW ME BEFORE!

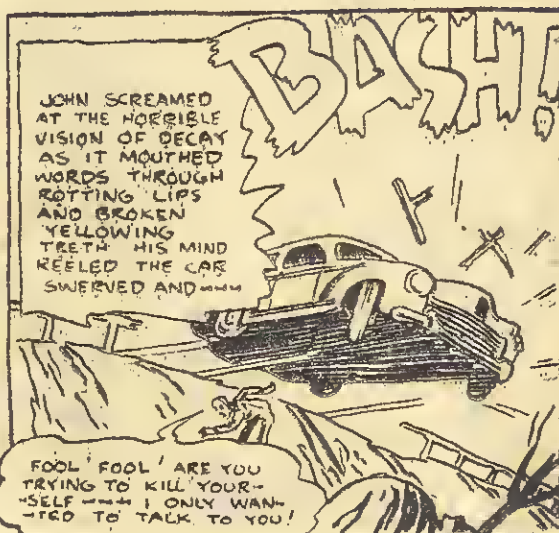
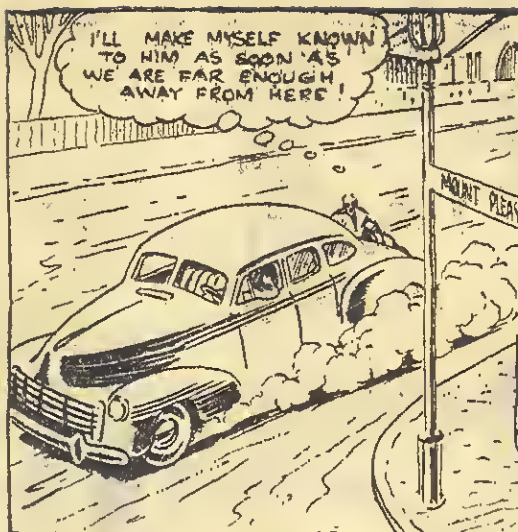


HENRY BLOCH
FOLLOWED
THE COUPLE
TO HER HOME
AND
AS HE
LISTENED
AT THE
WINDOWS
HE HEARD
WITH HOPE
IN HIS CRU-
MBLING
HEART, HER
UNCERTAINTY
WHEN MARRIAGE
IS PROPOSED
BY A LIVING
MAN—YOUNG
HANDSOME!



AS JOHN EDWARDS LEFT MARIE'S HOUSE WITHERING FEET FOLLOWED CLOSE BEHIND...

AND AS THE YOUNG MAN ENTERED HIS CAR THE APPARITION CLUNG TO THE BOOT... AN EERIE PASS-SENGER WAS RIDING WITH HIM AS HE DROVE OFF...



THE SILENCE FOLLOWING THE TERRIBLE DIN OF REND-ING METAL BROKEN ONLY BY THE SPIN-NING MISS OF THE NOW USELESS WHEELS... FILLED HENRY BLOCH WITH REMORSE AND FEAR FOR HIS RIVAL...

HE WATCHED AS ANOTHER CAR ARRIVED AND TWO MUSKY YOUNG MEN GOT JOHN FROM THE WRECK...



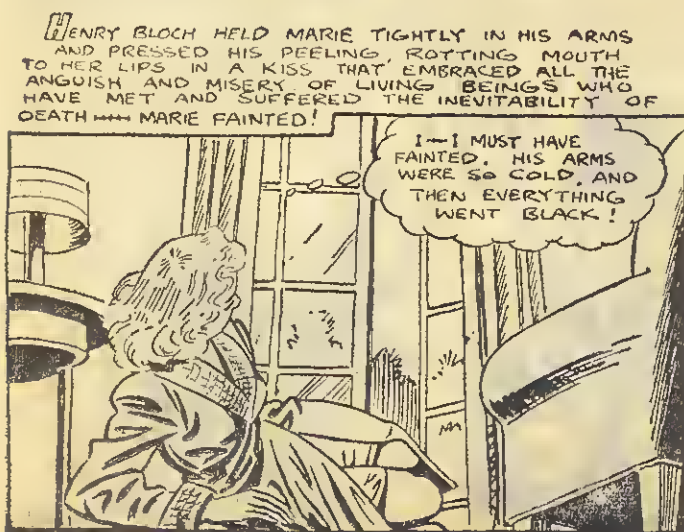
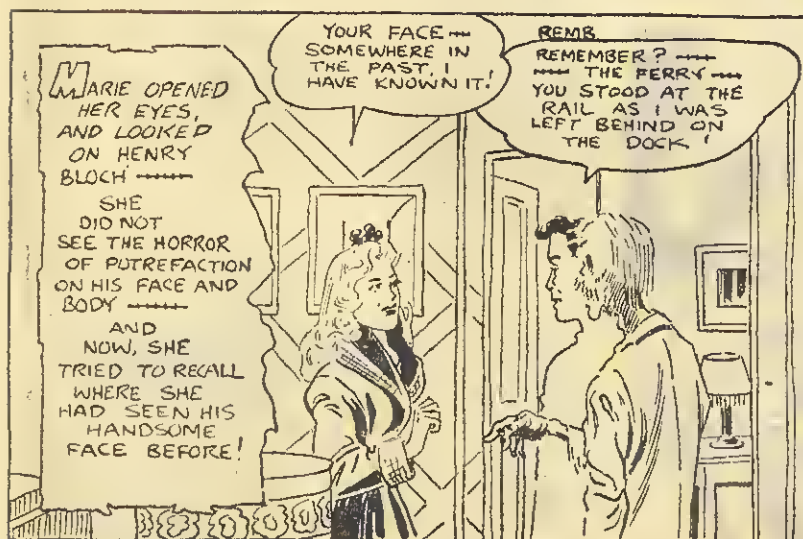
SWEET, SWEET WORDS... IF ONLY I WERE ALIVE! I DIDN'T MEAN IT TO HAPPEN THIS WAY, BUT THIS IS MY CHANCE TO WIN MARIE AND WIN HER!



JOHN EDWARDS
WAS
ON HIS WAY
TO HOSPITAL

HENRY BLOCH
WAS THANK-
FUL THAT
HIS RIVAL WAS
NOT DEAD
AS HE WALKED
DOWN THE
ROAD TO
THE HOUSE
WHERE MARIE
WAS

HE
LOOKED
DOWN AT HER
FOR A LONG
TIME FROM
THE WINDOW
AS SHE LAY
ON THE
DIVAN



NEXT DAY
MARIE LEFT
FOR THE
SEACOAST
WHERE SHE
HAD PLANNED
HER VACATION.
ALWAYS
WITH HER,
WATCHING
OVER HER,
WAS AN
UNSEEN
TRAVELLER.
THE ROTTING
THING THAT
HAD ONCE
BEEN A
MAN—
HENRY
BLOCH!



ONE MORNING, SOON AFTER, ON A
SECLUDED SPOT OF THE BEACH
WHERE MARIE WAS BASKING ALONE,
HENRY BLOCH CAME.

YOU! THEN YOU
ARE REAL! AND
NOT JUST A DREAM!

IT WAS THE ANSWER
TO A DREAM
FOR ME. A DREAM
THAT HAD SPANNED
ETERNITY!



I'VE NEVER
FORGOTTEN YOU! I'VE
SEARCHED FOR YOU
A LONG TIME—
I HOPE YOU
WON'T SEND ME
AWAY FROM YOU!

NO—I
WON'T!



AND SO THEIR ROMANCE
BEGAN AND THE HOURS
LENGTHENED INTO DAYS.
HENRY BLOCH WAS
THE PERFECT AND
ATTENTIVE LOVER.
MARIE'S CONSTANT
COMPANION.
THEY WERE INSEPARABLE, AND MARIE'S
LOVE FOR THIS DEAD
MAN FLOWERED!

I'VE BEEN
SO HAPPY
WITH YOU,
HENRY!



I AM GLAD
MARIE!
BUT THE SEA
MAKES ME
SAD. IT MAKES
ME THINK OF
— BUT
NEVER MIND
THAT, I

OH, HENRY
LET'S GO FOR
A SWIM, PER-
HAPS WHEN
YOU FEEL THE
EXHILARATION
OF THE WATER
IT WON'T
SADDER YOU
AT ALL!

ALL
RIGHT,
MARIE



MARIE WAS
NEVER AWARE
OF THE UGLY
PUTREFACTION
THAT WALKED
BESIDE HER
SINCE THEY
HAD MET. THESE
TWO BEINGS
FROM
DIFFERENT
WORLDS.
BUT HENRY BLOCH
SO MUCH IN LOVE
WAS HE, THAT
HE TOO HAD
ALMOST FOR-
GOTTEN. ONLY
THE SEA RE-
MINDED HIM
OF HIS BODY!

COME ON
HENRY, I'LL
RACE YOU
BACK!
BET I WIN!

I'LL TAKE THAT BET!

UGH! HOW
THE SEA-
WATER
POURS THRU
THE BONES
AND CAVES
OF MY
BODY!



OH! YOU'RE
GOING TO WIN
HENRY—

I'VE WON THE
RACE BUT LOST
MY HEART!



IT WAS THEN AS MARIE AND HENRY BLOCH RAN UP ON THE BEACH, THAT SHE WONDERED ABOUT HER STRANGE LOVER FOR THE FIRST TIME! FOR SHE SAW THE DOG ON THE BEACH SUDDENLY RUN, WITH ITS TAIL BETWEEN ITS LEGS WHINING IN TERROR!

HENRY DARLING! THAT POOR LITTLE DOG RAN FROM YOU TERRIFIED! WHY?

IF ONLY I COULD TELL YOU, MARIE! OH! IF ONLY I COULD!



I DON'T CARE, DEAREST, FOR I LOVE YOU AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!



MARRY ME MARIE! WILL YOU? TODAY?

YES! YES I LOVE YOU!



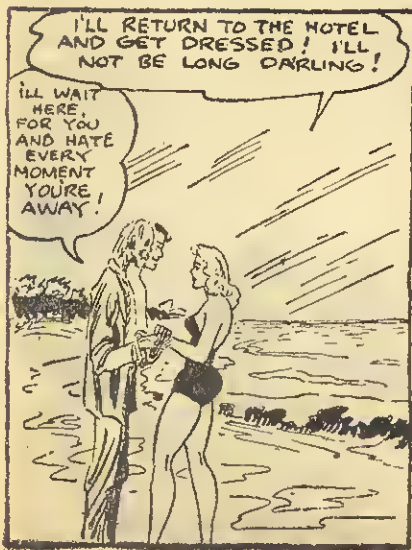
YES! LET'S WASTE NO TIME ALL LIFE STRETCHES BEFORE US AND WE'LL BE SO HAPPY!

LIFE!



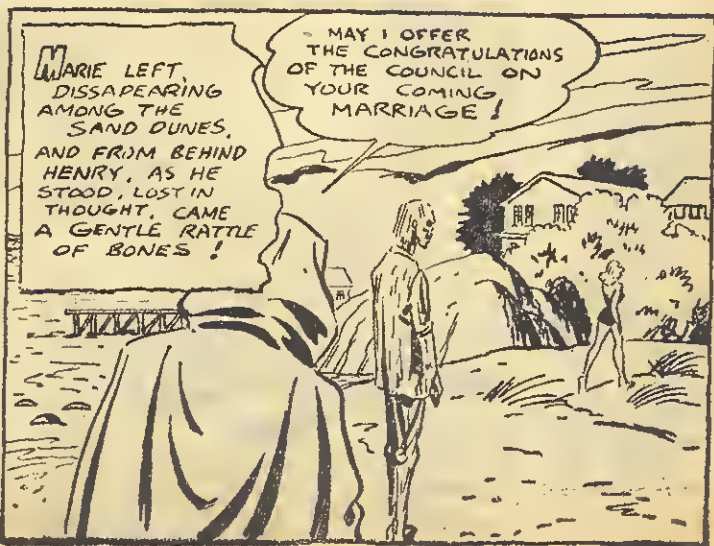
I'LL RETURN TO THE HOTEL AND GET DRESSED! I'LL NOT BE LONG DARLING!

I'LL WAIT HERE, FOR YOU AND HATE EVERY MOMENT YOU'RE AWAY!



MARIE LEFT, DISAPPEARING AMONG THE SAND DUNES, AND FROM BEHIND HENRY, AS HE STOOD, LOST IN THOUGHT, CAME A GENTLE RATTLE OF BONES!

MAY I OFFER THE CONGRATULATIONS OF THE COUNCIL ON YOUR COMING MARRIAGE!

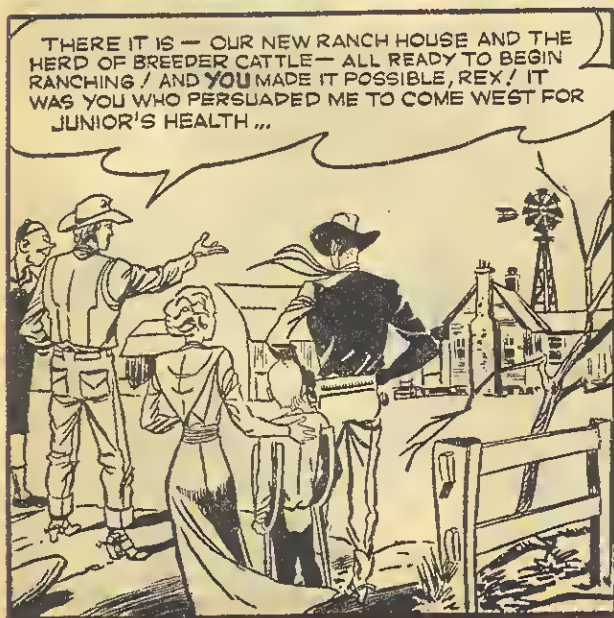
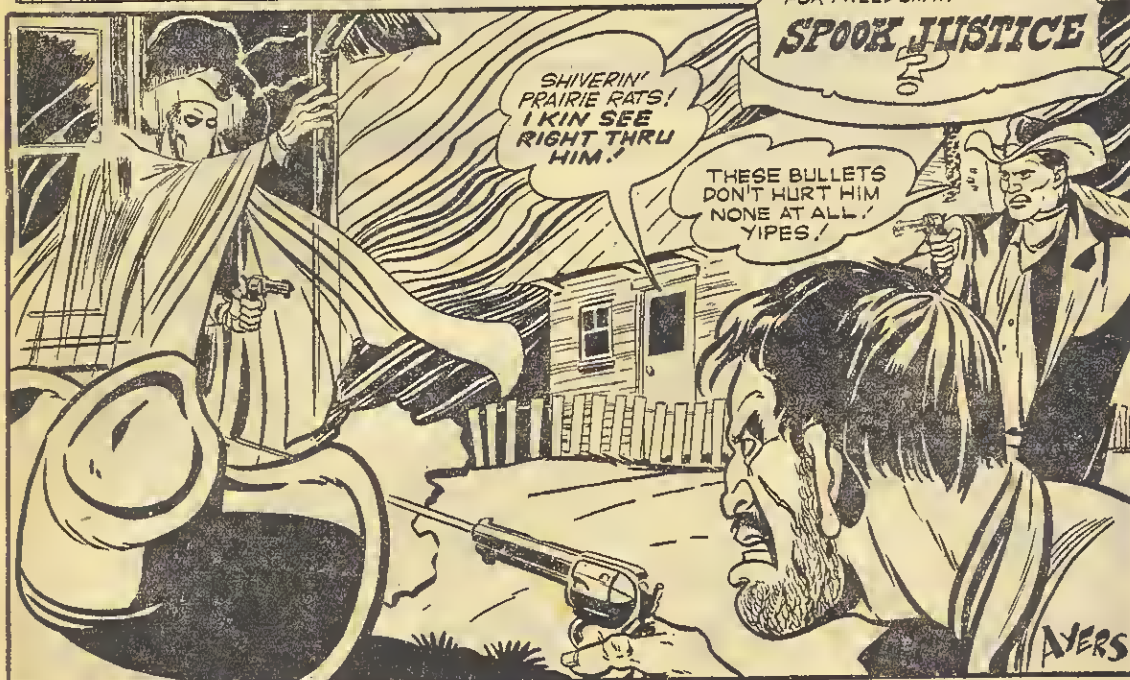


The GHOST RIDER

WE KNOW THAT THE GHOST RIDER IS REALLY REX FURY, A FLESH-AND-BLOOD MAN — AND WHAT A MAN!

BUT — TO THE ENEMIES OF JUSTICE, THE GHOST RIDER APPEARS AS A GHOSTLY, FEARFUL FIGURE, SOMETIMES WITHOUT A HEAD, SOMETIMES WITHOUT A BODY, SOMETIMES TRANSPARENT! HOW DOES HE DO IT? WHAT IS THE SECRET METHOD WITH WHICH THE GHOST RIDER STRIKES A BLOW FOR FREEDOM IN —

SPOOK JUSTICE



YES—BEGINNING A NEW LIFE AS A RANCHER IS GOING TO BE A HARD JOB FOR REX FURY'S FRIEND, SAM HARBERG.

AND THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT EVEN HARDER!

RIGHT THIS MINUTE, WATCHING FROM A HILL OVERLOOKING THE HARBERG RANCH...



WAL, JEB COLE, SPIKE O' EVERYTHING WE DONE, IT SHORE LOOKS LIKE THET NEWCOMER, HARBERG, IS ALL SET UP TUH START OPERATIN'!

MESSE. BUT WE AIN'T DONE **EVERYTHING** YET!

I JEST DON'T COTTON TUM THESE NEW RANCHERS COMIN' IN HYAR RIVALIN' ME AN' HORNIN' IN ON THUH GRAZIN' LAND. IT'S DOWNRIGHT ON-HEALTHY FER ANYBODY TUH COMPETE WITH JEB COLE — AND AFORE I'M THROUGH, THET DUDE SAM HARBERG'S GOIN' TO FIND IT OUT!



LET'S GIT, BOYS. WE'RE COMIN' BACK TONIGHT — **SHOOTIN'!** A LITTLE VIGILANTE RAID TUH SHOOT UP THUH PLACE AN' KILL SOME CATTLE WILL SCARE HARBERG AWAY AN' BE A WARNIN' TUH OTHERS!



SO, JEB COLE AND HIS GUN-RIDERS, COLD HATRED IN THEIR HEARTS, GO BACK TO THEIR OWN RANCH TO PREPARE FOR THEIR MIDNIGHT TERROR. BUT—LET'S NOT FOLLOW THEM YET. NO, LET'S WAIT ON THAT HILL FOR A LITTLE WHILE TO SEE ...

BUT THESE RIDERS NOT BE FRIENDLY, NO WANT WISH GOOD LUCK OUR FRIEND, SAM — ONLY WANT TO LOOK-SEE AND RIDE AWAY, NO GOOD!

JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN THINKING, SING-SONG. THESE MEN WERE UP TO NO GOOD. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THESE PARTS WHO DON'T LIKE STRANGERS — THEY WANT THE COUNTRY ALL FOR THEMSELVES.

HMMM / THESE TRACKS ARE PRETTY FRESH, SING-SONG. FOUR RIDERS CAME UP THIS HILL, WATCHED DOWN ON US, AND THEN TURNED RIGHT BACK AGAIN. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?

ME SUSPICIOUS, REX. IF FRIENDLY, THEY COME RIGHT DOWN AND SAY HELLO-HOWDY-DO LIKE NICE WESTERN NEIGHBORS—YES?

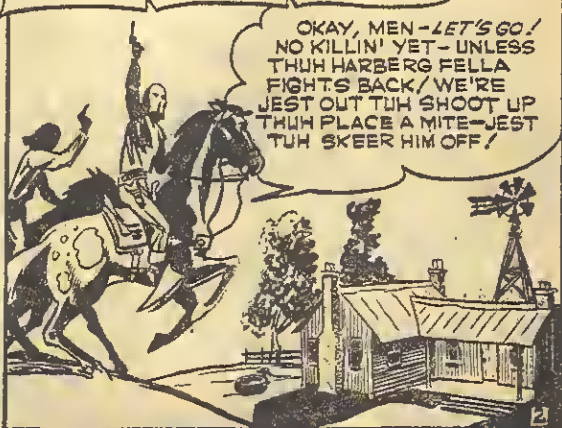


OLD CHINESE PROVERB SAY: "KEEP EYE ON HIM WHO KEEP EYE ON YOU!"

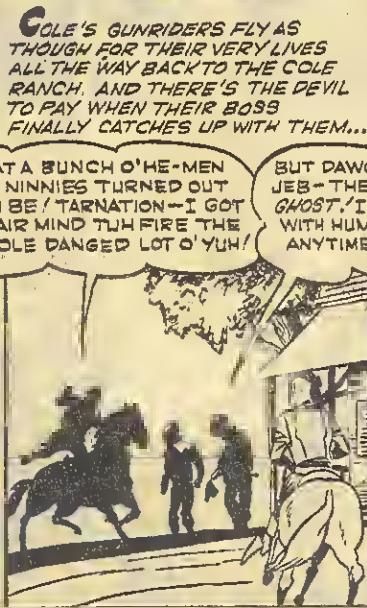
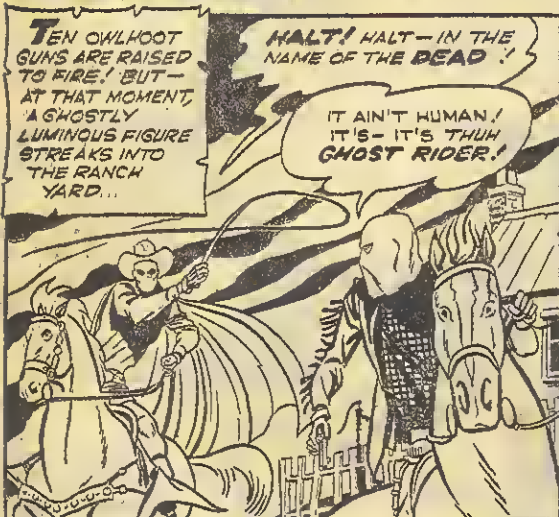
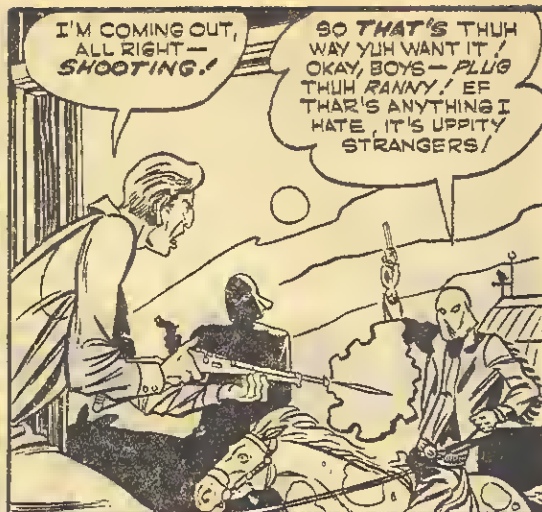
AND THERE ARE WAYS TO KEEP AN EYE ON WHOEVER IT WAS WHO MADE THOSE TRACKS...



MIDNIGHT! ON THAT SAME HILL OVERLOOKING THE HARBERG RANCH —



OKAY, MEN—LET'S GO! NO KILLIN' YET— UNLESS THUH HARBERG FELLA FIGHTS BACK! WE'RE JEST OUT TUH SHOOT UP THUH PLACE A MITE—JEST TUH SKEER HIM OFF!



AN'-LIKE YOU AN' ME - HE CAN'T DIGEST NO **BULLETS!** NOW, WE'RE GOIN' BACK THAR TOMORRY NIGHT AN' WIPE OUT THET HARBERG FAMILY FER GOOD - AN' YOU VARMINTS IS GOIN' TUH **FIGHT-ORI'LL KNOW WHY! GIT IT?**

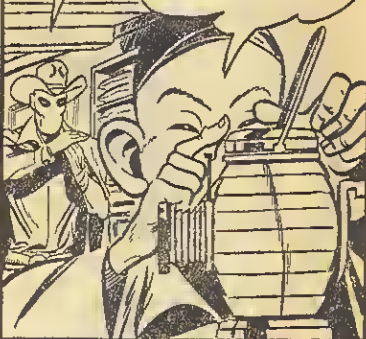
YEAH, YEAH - WE GIT IT, JEB! THAR AIN'T NO GHOSTS... I THINK...

BUT JIST TUH MAKE **SURE** THUH GHOST RIDER DON'T BOTHER US TOMORRY NIGHT, I'M SENDIN' CAL, GUSH AN' FAT OUT AS A **DECOY SQUAD** TUH TRICK THUH GHOST RIDER OFF TRAIL WHILE WE'RE RAIDIN' THUH HARBERGS! YUH GUYS BE READY TUH RIDE FUST THING TOMORRY NIGHT, HEAR?

MEANWHILE, IN THE BACK ROOM OF SING-SONG'S LAUNDRY...

NOW, WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THAT?

SCIENCE EXPERIMENT, REX. REVERSE PRINCIPLE OF "CAMERA OBSCURA." SEE? IN THIS CHINESE LANTERN BOX ARE MANY CANDLES WITH MIRRORS TO CONCENTRATE THEIR LIGHT...



NOW - WITH MAGNIFYING GLASS IN FRONT - WE **PROJECT** ON WALL ANY PICTURE WE DESIRE / OBSERVE - ENLARGED DRAWING OF HONORABLE ANCESTOR / VELLY NICE, YES? MEBBE I CALL THIS INVENTION A **PROJECTOR!**

WHY, THAT'S A **WONDERFUL** INVENTION, SING-SONG...



...AND I BET IT'LL COME IN REAL HANDY IN MY OPERATIONS AS THE GHOST RIDER! HMMMM...

MOST EXCELLENT! SING SONG VELLY HAPPY TO BE OF HELP. DOES THE GHOST RIDER RIDE TOMORROW NIGHT, TOO?



YES, I'M GOING TO PATROL THIS WHOLE AREA. I EXPECT MORE TROUBLE FROM THOSE HOODLUMS WHO RAIDED SAM HARBERG'S PLACE TONIGHT. NO, SING SONG, THE GHOST RIDER WON'T BE CAUGHT NAPPING...

NEXT NIGHT, THE DECOY SQUAD SETS OUT...

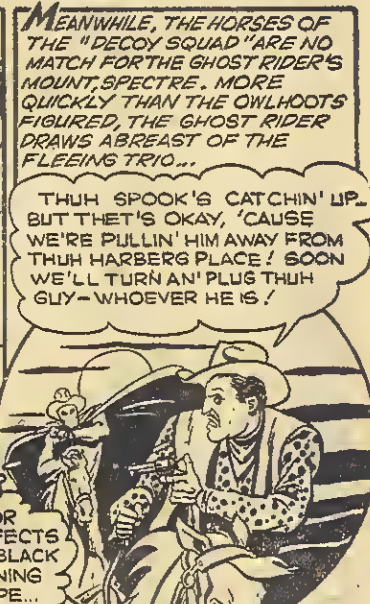
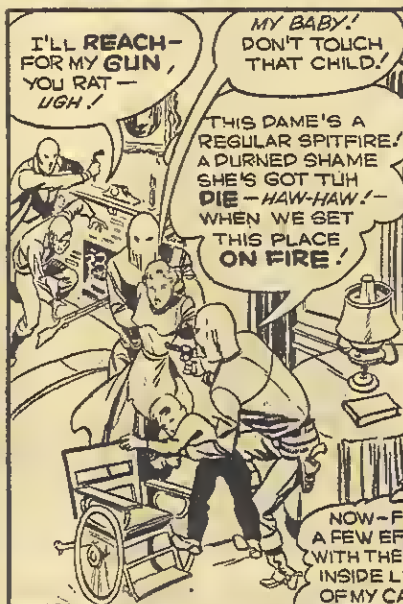
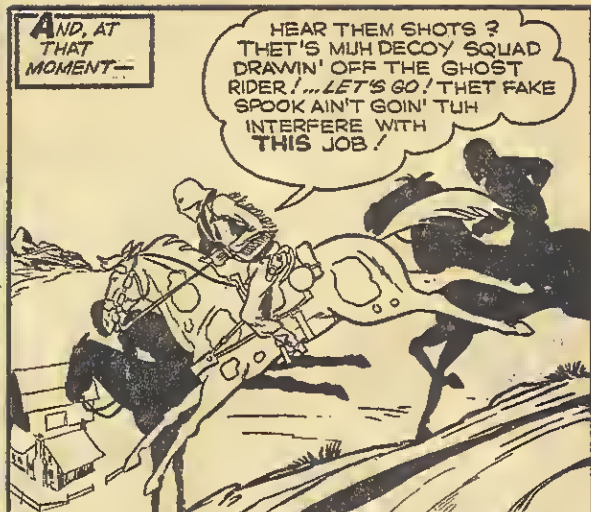
OKAY - HYAR GOES! THEM SHOTS OUGHTA BRING THUH GHOST RIDER, EF HE'S AROUND!

YEAH - GULP! THAT OUGHTA BRING HIM / SKEERED, FAT?

NAW, I AIN'T SKEERED / THAR AIN'T NO GHOSTS -

I KEEP TELLIN' MUHSELF!





AND, AT THAT MOMENT—

HEAR THEM SHOTS? THEH'S MUH DECOY SQUAD DRAWIN' OFF THE GHOST RIDER!... LET'S GO! THEH FAKE SPOOK AIN'T GOIN' TUH INTERFERE WITH THIS JOB!

MEANWHILE, THE HORSES OF THE "DECOY SQUAD" ARE NO MATCH FOR THE GHOST RIDER'S MOUNT, SPECTRE. MORE QUICKLY THAN THE OWLHOOTS FIGURED, THE GHOST RIDER DRAWS ABREAST OF THE FLEEING TRIO...

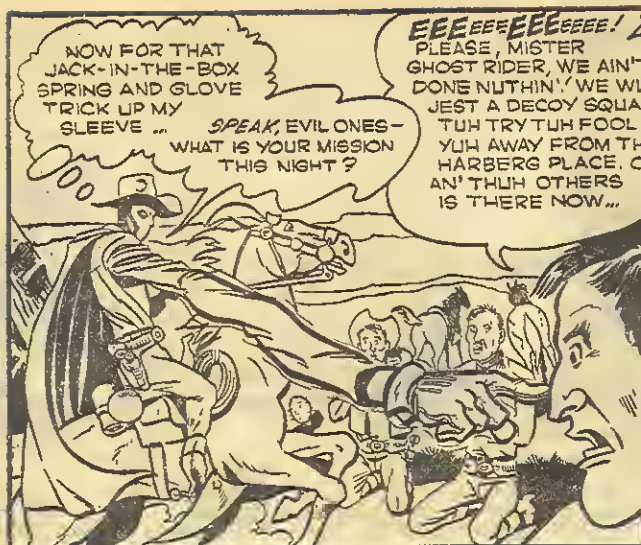
THUH SPOOK'S CATCHIN' UP... BUT THEH'S OKAY, 'CAUSE WE'RE PULLIN' HIM AWAY FROM THUH HARBERG PLACE! SOON WE'LL TURN AN' PLUS THUH GUY—WHOEVER HE IS!

NOW—FOR A FEW EFFECTS WITH THE BLACK INSIDE LINING OF MY CAPE...

THE GHOST RIDER COMMANDS—HALT!

YEEFOW! THIS TIME—NO BO-BO-BO-BODY! YESSIR, I'M STOPPIN' JUST LIKE YUH SAY, S-S-SIR! PUHLEASE DON'T SPOOK ME, SIR!

COLE'S WRONG—THIS THING AIN'T HUMAN!



NOW FOR THAT
JACK-IN-THE-BOX
SPRING AND GLOVE
TRICK UP MY
SLEEVE ...

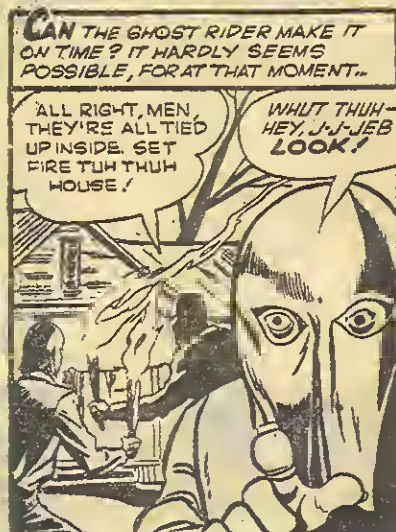
SPEAK, EVIL ONES—
WHAT IS YOUR MISSION
THIS NIGHT?

EEEEEEEEEEEEE!

PLEASE, MISTER
GHOST RIDER, WE AIN'T
DONE NUTHIN'. WE WUJ
JEST A DECOY SQUAD,
TUH TRY TUH FOOL
YUH AWAY FROM THUH
HARBERG PLACE. COLE
AN' THUH OTHERS
IS THERE NOW ...



THUNDER! IF
ONLY I CAN GET
THERE ON TIME!
UP,
SPECTRE!



CAN THE GHOST RIDER MAKE IT
ON TIME? IT HARDLY SEEMS
POSSIBLE, FOR AT THAT MOMENT...

ALL RIGHT, MEN,
THEY'RE ALL TIED
UP INSIDE. GET
FIRE TUH THUH
HOUSE!

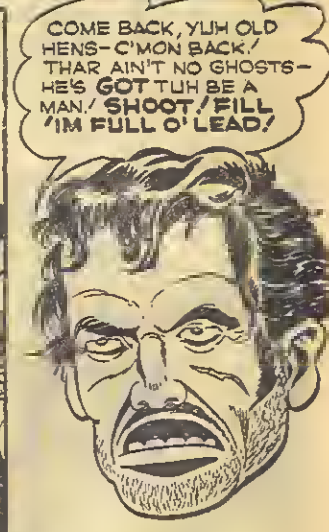
WHUT THUH—?
HEY, J-J-JEB—
LOOK!



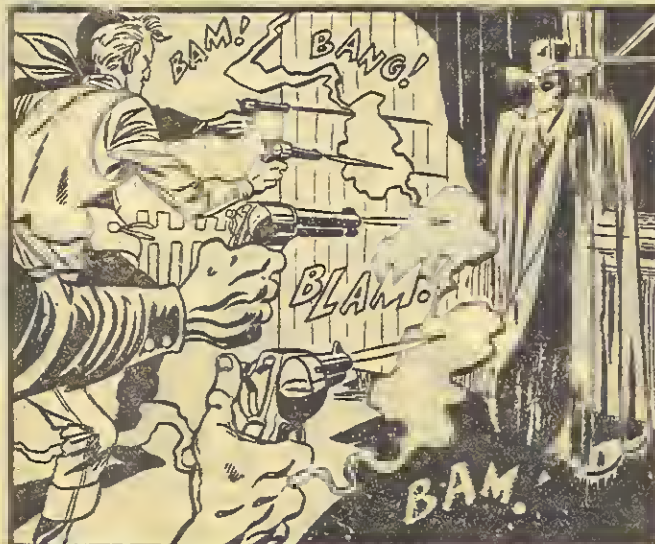
IT'S—IT'S
THUH
GHOST
RIDER!

LET'S GIT
OUTTA HYAR!

AN'-AN I KIN
SEE RIGHT
THRU HIM!



COME BACK, YUH OLD
HENS—C'MON BACK!
THAR AIN'T NO GHOSTS—
HE'S GOT TUH BE A
MAN! / SHOOT / FILL
'IM FULL O' LEAD!



BAM! BANG!

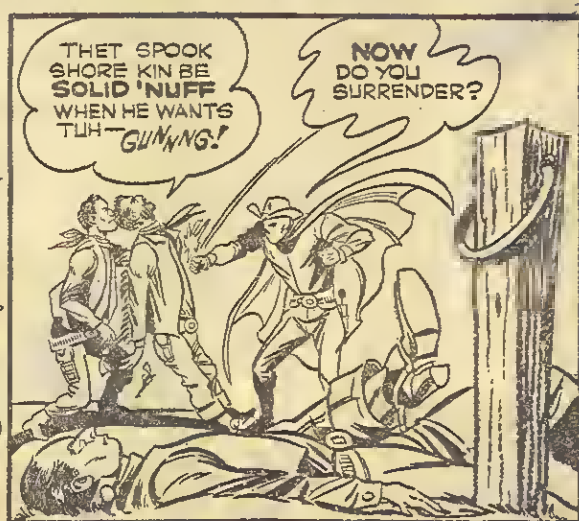
BLAM!

BAM!



WE SHOT EVERY BULLET
WE OWNED—AN' STILL
THE GHOST RIDER AIN'T
EVEN MOVED! IT AIN'T
HURT HIM NONE
AT ALL!

HOLY
JUMPIN'
JEHOSAPHAT!
LOOKIT HIM—
I MEAN "IT"—
NOW! WHY,
IT'S—IT'S—!



THE SAGA O' SAGEBRUSH SAM



BACK IN TH' WILD AN' WOOLY WEST,
THAR LIVED ONE SAGEBRUSH SAM.
HARDER'N BONE, TOUGHER'N STONE,
HE WUZ ONE ORN'RY MAN...



NOW SAM HE ALWUZ DID RIGHT WELL,
KILT FIFTY MEN, AT LEAST,
TILL ONE DAY, HE UPAN' MEETS,
A SALESMAN FROM TH' EAST...

THIS CRITTER'S SELLIN' ZIPPERS.
FIRST SAM HAD SEEN OF ONE.
SO HE SEWS TH' DURN CONTRAPTION,
TO TH' HOLSTER OF HIS GUN...



THEN FIXED IN TH' LATEST FASHION,
SAM STALKS DOWN INTA TOWN,
AN' FACE TO FACE HE COMES,
WITH A BAD MAN NAMED MCGOWN...

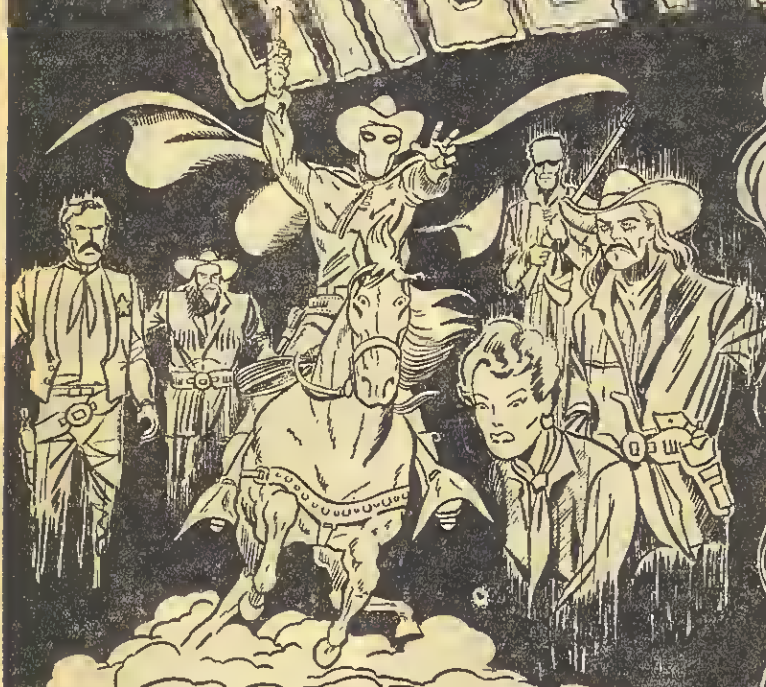


MCGOWN, HE MOVES TO GIT HIS GUN,
SAM REACHES FER HIS IRON.
THEM BULLETS START TO SAIL ABOUT,
A' WHISTLIN' AND A' SIGHIN'...



C. W. Winter

the GHOST RIDER



THIS IS THE TALE OF THE GHOST RIDER—

A MAN BORN TO THE WEST! A MAN WHO HATES EVIL AND THE DEATHS AND ROBBERIES AND LOOTINGS THAT THE BANDITS AND OUTLAWS OF THE OLD WEST LEFT IN THEIR RUTHLESS PATH! A MAN TRAINED BY THE GHOSTLY HANDS OF THE MEN WHO MADE THE WEST SAFE, AND WHO GAVE THEIR OWN LIVES THAT OTHER MEN MIGHT LIVE!

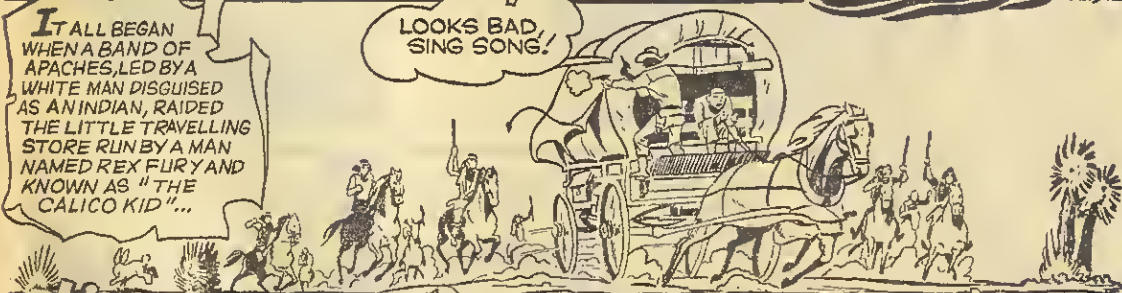
WILD BILL HICKOK... PAT GARRETT WHO KILLED BILLY THE KID... CALAMITY JANE... KIT CARSON, WHO KNEW THE INDIANS AND THEIR WAYS...

THIS, THEN, IS THE STORY OF HOW THE GHOST RIDER WAS BORN AND GREW, UNTIL THE LEGENDS OF HIM IN THE NIGHTS AROUND THE LONELY CAMP-FIRES SWEEPED LIKE A COLD BREEZE DOWN THE SPINES OF THOSE WHO FEARED THE LAW...

DICK AYERS

IT ALL BEGAN WHEN A BAND OF APACHES, LED BY A WHITE MAN DISGUISED AS AN INDIAN, RAIDED THE LITTLE TRAVELLING STORE RUN BY A MAN NAMED REX FURY AND KNOWN AS "THE CALICO KID"...

LOOKS BAD, SING SONG.



THEY HAVE US SURROUNDED! ONE MORE CHARGE AND THEY'LL RUN RIGHT OVER US....!



ALTHOUGH REX FURY FOUGHT LIKE A MAN DEMENTED, THE APACHES PROVED TOO MUCH FOR HIM...



I'LL TAKE PLENTY OF YOU WITH ME... WHEN I GO...

KILL! KILL!

YOU! BART LASHER! A WHITE MAN A RENEGADE KILLER!



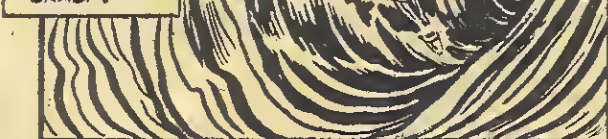
YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, FURY! ESPECIALLY FOR A U.S. MARSHAL!

TAKE THIS HOMBRE TO THE DEVIL'S SINK!

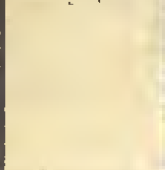


OH!!!

LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER, IN THE ROCK HILLS OF THE BADLANDS, REX FURY AND SING SONG ARE FLUNG INTO THE ROARING WHIRLPOOL OF THE DEVIL'S SINK! NO MAN HAS EVER EMERGED ALIVE FROM ITS WATERY GRASP!



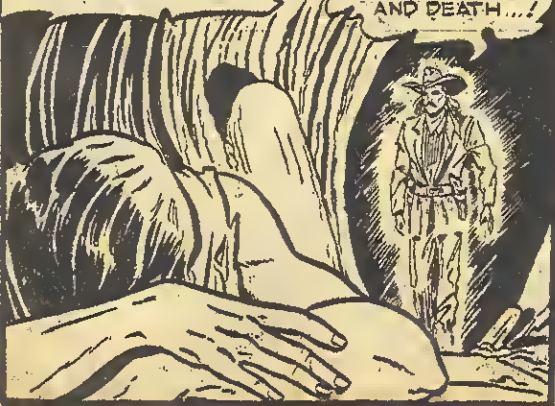
DEEPER AND DEEPER IN THE VORACIOUS WATERS SPIN THE TWO MEN... DRAGGED ALONG BY THE MAD CURRENT... BATTERED ON ROCKS... LUNGS BURSTING FOR AIR... UNTIL SUDDENLY THE WATERS RELEASE THEIR GREEDY GRIP...



GOT TO... REACH THAT ROCK LEDGE... REST... REST AND AIR... FOR MY LUNGS...



FACE DOWN, REX FURY LIES AS ONE DEAD. HE DOES NOT SEE A GLOWING NIMBUS OF LIGHT, OR THE MAN WHO STEPS OUT OF IT...

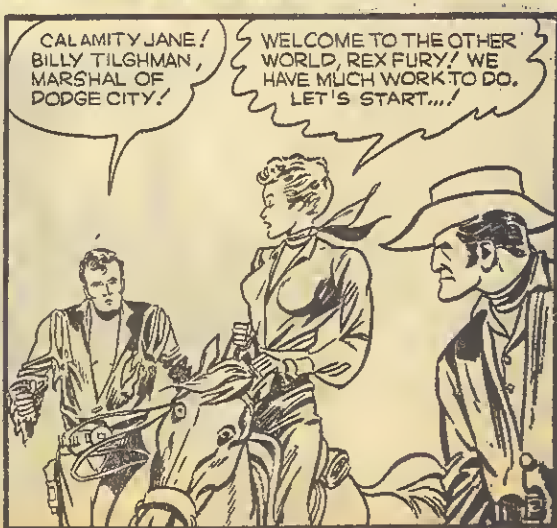
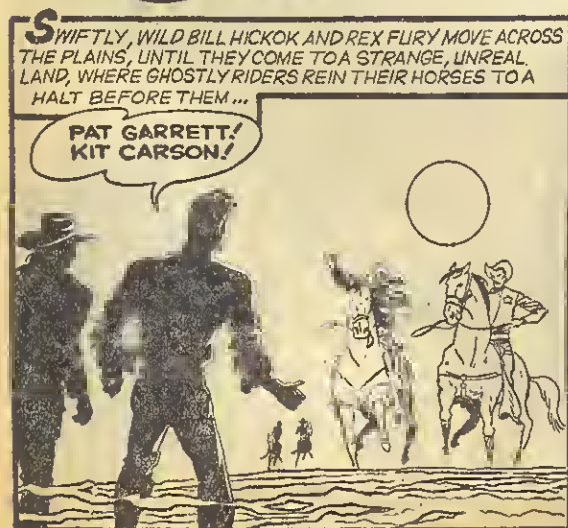
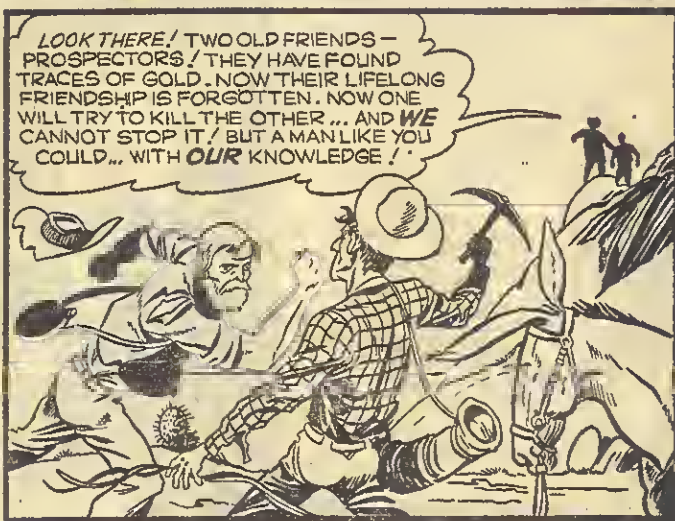
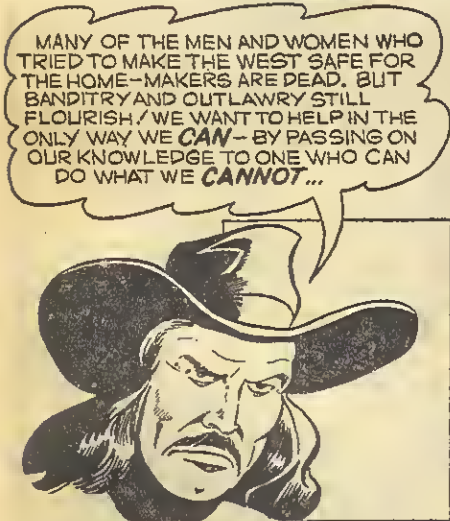
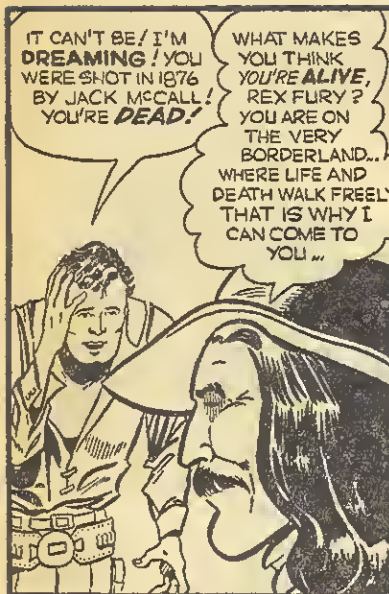


HE IS FAR GONE... ALMOST DEAD! HE IS ON THE VERY BORDERLINE BETWEEN LIFE... AND DEATH...

REX FURY! AWAKE! OPEN YOUR EYES...

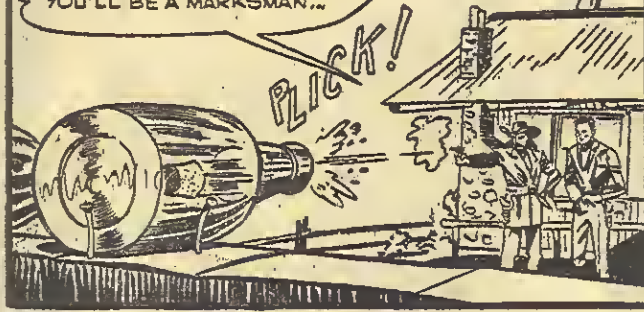


HUH? WHAT...? SAY... I KNOW YOU. YOU'RE WILD BILL HICKOK! BUT - YOU'RE DEAD! DEAD!



THE FIRST LESSON - WITH SIXGUNS - IS TAUGHT BY A MASTER OF THE TRADE - WILD BILL HICKOK!

WHEN YOU CAN DRIVE THE CORK INTO A BOTTLE AT FIFTY PACES, YOU'LL BE GOOD, REX - YOU'LL BE A MARKSMAN...



PRACTICE / CONSTANT PRACTICE / ALWAYS KEEP AT IT, AND YOU'LL NEVER MISS! ... THAT'S IT ... A FIRM GRIP... EYES FIXED ON YOUR TARGET! A GENTLE RELEASE OF THE HAMMER... WRISTS SET FOR THE RECOIL ...

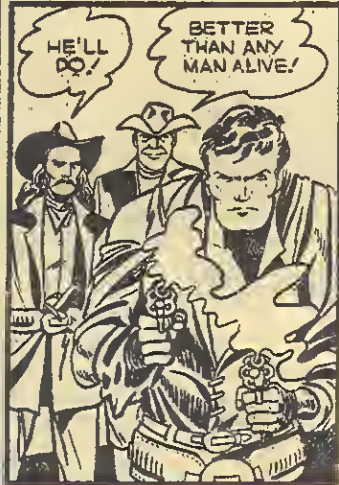


FOR SPEED OF DRAW- BILLY TILGHMAN!

I STOOD IN FRONT OF A BIG MIRROR - HOUR AFTER HOUR! I WATCHED MYSELF AS MY HANDS DREW OUT MY GUNS... CUT OUT EVERY UNNECESSARY MOVE! KEPT MY EYES COLD... NEVER REVEALING THE MOMENT WHEN I WOULD GO FOR MY COLTS ...



Hour by hour, Rex Fury's hands gather the magical speed and accuracy of the gunhands of Wild Bill Hickok and Billy Tilghman...



Riding the prairie with Calamity Jane... learning the finer points of rifle fire...

KEEP YOUR MUZZLE STEADY... WATCH THE SHADOWS MOVE ALONG YOUR BARREL WHEN YOU HAVE NO TIME TO LINE UP YOUR SIGHTS...

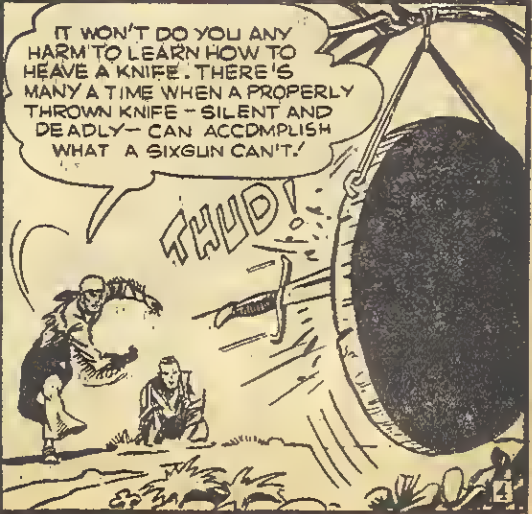


AND THEN KIT CARSON TAKES REX FURY UNDER HIS WING...

YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO HIDE YOUR TRACKS... INJUNS CAN SEE A BLADE OF GRASS THAT'S BEEN MISPLACED...



IT WON'T DO YOU ANY HARM TO LEARN HOW TO HEAVE A KNIFE. THERE'S MANY A TIME WHEN A PROPERLY THROWN KNIFE - SILENT AND DEADLY - CAN ACCOMPLISH WHAT A SIXGUN CAN'T!



DON'T LAUGH AT AN INDIAN BOW AND ARROW, EITHER. THEY MAKE MIGHTY FINE WEAPONS. I'VE SEEN INDIAN BUCKS DRIVE AN ARROW PLUMB THROUGH A BUFFALO!



SWIFTLY THE SKILL OF A MOUNTAIN MAN CAME TO REX FURY. SOON HE COULD RISE FROM A MOTIONLESS BRUSH, TOMAHAWK FLASHING AS HIS PRACTICED HAND THREW IT WITH DEADLY ACCURACY...



ONE THING YET REMAINS! YOU MUST HAVE A HORSE — A STREAK OF SWIFTNESS TO CARRY YOU ACROSS THE TRACKLESS PLAINS...

WHERE WILL I FIND SUCH A HORSE?

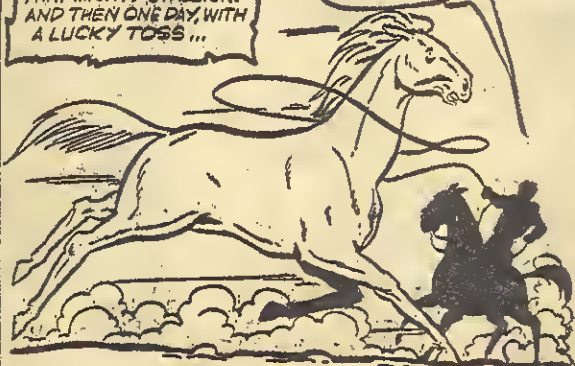


THERE, REX FURY! LOOK THERE!

I SEE HIM! I SEE HIM! A SILVER STALLION! A GIANT — WITH THE SPEED OF THE WIND!

FOR ENDLESS DAYS, IT SEEMS TO REX FURY HE RIDES HORSE AFTER HORSE TO EXHAUSTED STAGGERS UNDER HIM, TRYING TO OVERTAKE THAT MIGHTY STALLION. AND THEN ONE DAY, WITH A LUCKY TOSS...

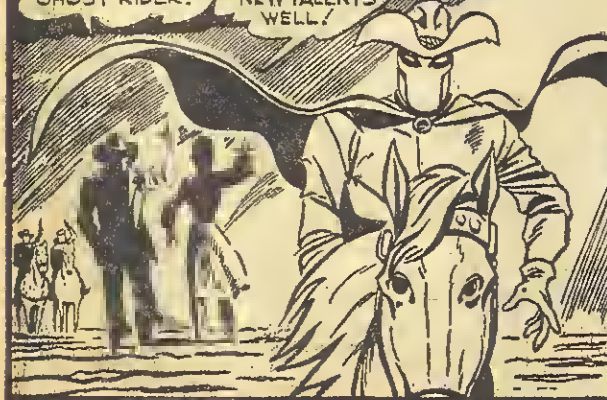
I CAN NEVER CATCH HIM... NEVER! AND YET... I MUST! MY ROPE... FALLING AROUND HIS NECK! I'VE GOT HIM!



WILD BILL HANDS REX FURY CLOTHES AND A HAT, AND A MASK TO COVER HIS FACE. AND SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE GHOST RIDER COMES TO LIFE...

GOOD LUCK, GHOST RIDER!

USE YOUR NEW TALENTS WELL!

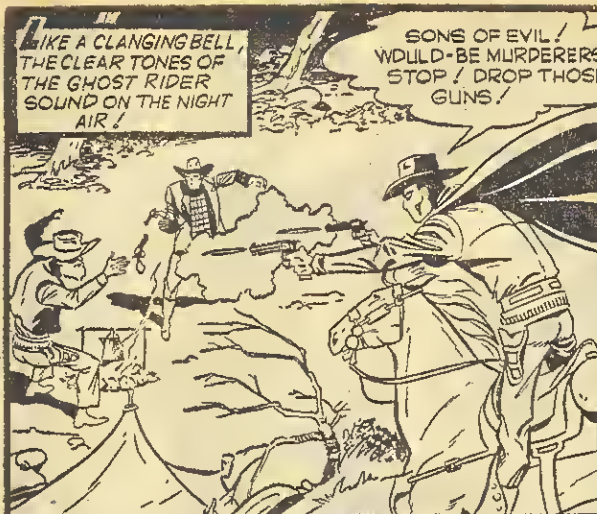


SOME HOURS AFTER SUNSET, THE GHOST RIDER COMES UPON A LONELY CAMPFIRE...

HE'S GOIN' TO KILL ME. RECKON I'D BETTER KILL HIM FIRST!

THE SKULKIN' COYOTE! HE'S FIXIN' TO SHOOT ME IN THE BACK!





LIKE A CLANGING BELL,
THE CLEAR TONES OF
THE GHOST RIDER
SOUND ON THE NIGHT
AIR!

SONS OF EVIL!
WOULD-BE MURDERERS!
STOP! DROP THOSE
GUNS!



YOU WOULD KILL
EACH OTHER FOR
GOLD THAT IS
NOT GOLD?

HUH?
NOT GOLD?

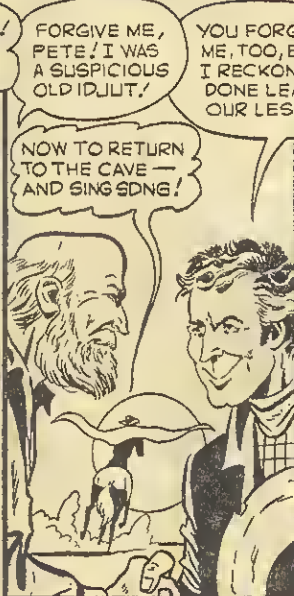
WE FOUND IT
TWO WEEKS AGO!



LOOK THERE! YOUR
GOLD IN THE EMBERS
OF YOUR CAMPFIRE!
IT TURNS **BLACK**!
IT IS NOT GOLD—
BUT **IRON
PYRITES!**

THUNDERATION!
IRON PYRITES!
THAT'S **FOOL'S
GOLD!**

THAT'S **US**,
ED—A COUPLE
OF FOOLS!



FORGIVE ME,
PETE! I WAS
A SUSPICIOUS
OLD IDJIT!

YOU FORGIVE
ME, TOO, ED!
I RECKON WE'VE
DONE LEARNED
OUR LESSON!

NOW TO RETURN
TO THE CAVE—
AND SING SONG!



AND, A LITTLE LATER, WITH
DAZED SENSES AND WHIRLING
BRAIN, REX FURY FINDS
HIMSELF STAGGERING UP
OUT OF A DEEP SLUMBER...

DID I DREAM ALL THAT? OR
DID IT REALLY HAPPEN? I MUST
KNOW! I MUST LEARN THE
ANSWER....!



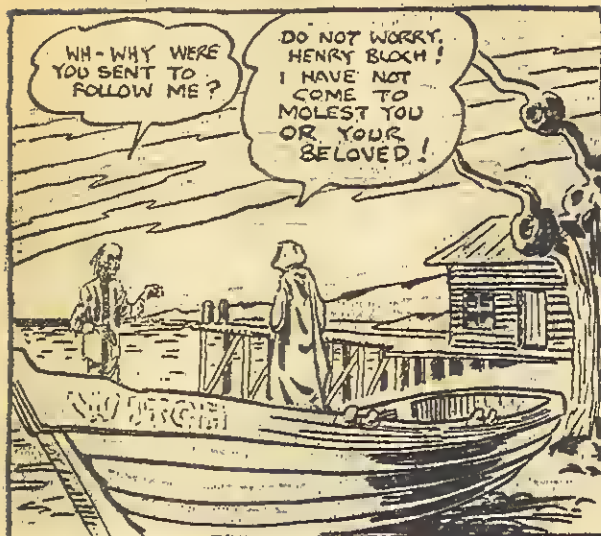
FOLLOWING THE SECRET
PATH BESIDE THE UNDER-
GROUND RIVER WHICH HE
LEARNED FROM WILD
BILL HICKOK, REX FURY
SOON FINDS HIMSELF
OUTSIDE THE CAVE...
WHERE A GREAT STALLION
SEEMS TO BE WAITING
FOR HIM...

SPECTRE! ALIVE!
YOU'RE NO DREAM,
AT ANY RATE! AND
I CAN MAKE THE
COSTUME THAT THE
GHOST RIDER IS TO
WEAR... AND TAKE UP
THE CAUSE OF LAW
AGAINST THE EVIL-
DOERS WHO SEEK
ONLY TO KILL
AND ROB...

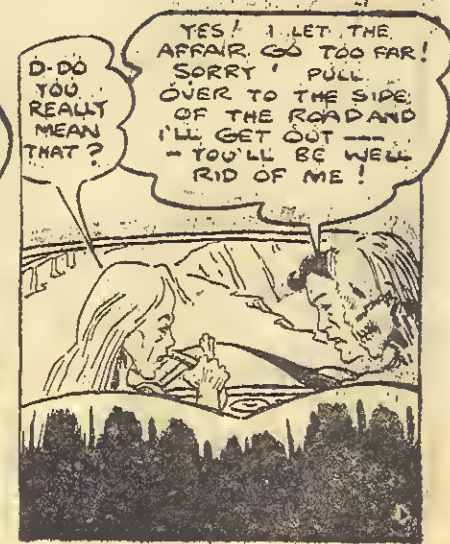
THUS
CAME THE
GHOST RIDER
TO HAUNT THE
TRAILS FROM
TEXAS TO
MONTANA,
FROM
MISSOURI
TO KANSAS.
HIS STATURE
GREW WITH
EVERY TALE
OF HIM, UNTIL
EVEN HARDENED
CRIMINALS SHOOK
WHEN RUMOR
SAID HE WAS
RIDING THE
MIDNIGHT
WINDS...



FASTER, SPECTRE,
FASTER! THERE'S WORK
TO BE DONE TONIGHT,
BEFORE THE SUN
COMES UP....!



THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE DEAD HAD BARELY LEFT WHEN MARIE RETURNED FROM THE HOTEL WITH THE CAR SHE HAD HIRED. THEY STARTED OFF AND HENRY BLOCH'S WORM EATEN HEART SICKENED AS



THE CAR STOPPED BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. FOR A MOMENT THE TWO SAT SILENTLY.

HIS WORDS HAD CUT DEEP. FOR MARIE HAD BELIEVED AS HE HAD WISHED HER TO !



THEN YOU'VE DECIEVED ME, CALLOUSLY, I HAVE NOT MEANT ANYTHING TO YOU, HENRY !

YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON I THOUGHT YOU WERE, I'VE CEASED LOVING YOU !



AND AS HER LOVE FOR HIM VANISHED MARIE REGAINED THE APPEARANCE OF ONE OF THE LIVING !

AND THEN SHE SAW HENRY BLOCH AS HE REALLY WAS - THE WORM-EATEN FLESH, THE JUTTING BONES - A LONG DEAD CORPSE !



PLEASE FORGIVE ME MY DARLING ! GOODBYE FOREVER !



THE DEAD LOVER STEPPED OUT OF THE CAR AND CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. HE WALKED AWAY BROKEN HEARTED BACK TO HIS WATERY GRAVE LONELY AND GREY AND COLD !

I HAVE LOST ! BUT AT LEAST SHE IS SAFE AND WILL BE HAPPY WITH JOHN EDWARDS !



THE END

(CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER)

and shed a wet mist that came and sat on the rocks and bit through his buckskin jacket

Johnny McKay was determined to keep on. He would beat these haunted hills and the wet dampness and—the ghosts—if it took his last bit of courage! Somewhere up here, close to the rimrock, was the mother vein of that float he had found down below on the canyon floor

He walked steadily for an hour. The wind moaned fitfully in the pines. Silver moon light gleamed all around him. Here and there, he caught the glow of foxfire where the low-hanging mists sheltered the rocks and their clinging shrubs. His nerves were unsteady. His hands moved restlessly. Throwing back his head, he looked up at the tree-laden hillside.

Johnny McKay halted. A bit of whiteness was up there—*moving!*

The mist and the moonlight fathered a cold spasm in his muscles. He dropped to a knee, felt for his rifle. And then, with a grim chuckle, he relaxed. The whiteness was moonlight on the broad wet leaves of a bush, caught at an odd angle.

He tramped on, following the trail, head down.

Suddenly, there came a sound so vicious, so unearthly, that his hair lifted under his coonskin cap. It whispered and moaned and shrieked. And in front of him—

"Jumpin' Jehosephat!" Johnny cried.

A man was standing on the trail. A man who was nearly naked except for Indian leggings and a strange black cross marked on his chest. His arms were upraised and his mouth was black, like some sort of bottomless pit.

"Yeeaaaagggghhhleeeeeooooo"

It was a scream of agony torn out of the silvery figure on the trail. The arms writhed, twisting. The figure took a step, and then another.

Johnny felt his paralysis drop from him. His memory shouted at him. *The Wastach brave told you all about the ghosts up here! Ghosts that come for living men and take them to the never-never land!*

Johnny whirled and ran. He threw his tools one way and his rifle another. He heard the pounding, echoing beat of feet thudding along the trail after him.

He ran on, up a rocky slope, across a flat, mist-laden stretch of ground. On either side of him big boulders stood like gigantic cannonballs. As Johnny turned to go up a narrow pathway between two of the largest boulders, he felt hands catch at his shoulders. His feet went out from under him. As he fell, his head whacked hard on the stone trail. . . .

Johnny McKay opened his eyes to hot sunlight. He lay face down on a yellowish rock that moved as he twisted upright. Memory returned—a memory of drumming feet and hands catching at him . . . of falling.

A lowhanging ocotilla shrub, growing from the side of the hill, had fastened its spiny branches in the fringes across the shoulders of his buckskin jacket. In the darkness, they had felt like human hands—the hands of that silvery man he had seen back yonder!

Johnny laughed in shame. "Spooked by a plant! Doggone, reckon I'm as scarey as a new-born baby!"

If the hands had been only ocotilla plants, perhaps the silvery figure—he stopped suddenly in his thinking. He bent and picked up the yellowish rock that had cradled his face during the night as he lay unconscious.

"Gold!" he whispered, staring at it. His eyes went up the rock trail, opened wide. "A thick, solid vein of gold! Great gila monsters! If I hadn't been runnin' from that ghost I'd never have seen this!"

Exultation beat in his chest. He had made a strike! A strike that would make him rich beyond his wildest wish! And he had found it after he had lost his luck charms, after everything seemed against him, after all the worst "signs" that a human could have!

Maybe, he thought, this luck business is overworked. Maybe a man is his own good or bad luck—and things like rabbit's feet and clovers have nothing to do with it!

He was walking back down the path where the silvery man had chased him last night. He heard his footsteps echoing across the rocks. He was walking in a natural bowl that reflected sound as a mirror reflects light. *He had heard the echoes of his own running feet, and imagined them the running feet of the silvery man!*

And then the last bit of superstition fell away from Johnny McKay. For he was looking at a vein of white rock, shaped like a man—that in the moonlight and the mists he had fancied lived and ran. And the screams he had heard had been the wind moaning in the rocks, as it moaned even now.

Beyond the "silvery man," the trail ended abruptly, as though a giant's knife had sliced away the stone. Below, a thousand feet, lay talus rock and boulders. If he had walked past that "silvery man" in the mists last night—he would be dead now.

Sighing, staring up at the blue sky, and feeling how good it was to be alive, Johnny McKay said, "The next rabbit's foot I see—I'm going to throw as far away as I can!"

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ARROW"**

**STRAIGHT
ARROW**

**the
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