

"THE WORST BOY AT BORSTED!" —AMAZING REVELATIONS OF A REFORMATORY BOY'S LIFE—INSIDE

The PILOT 2^D

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EVERY FRIDAY.



"That hole in the ice," Jim heard his pursuers say;
"he must have drowned!"

The Outlawed THREE



HARDFIST HALL, marshal of the cow town of Bullwhacker, swore under his breath. Looking from the window of his office in Main Street, he watched a little crowd reading a notice stuck on a wall opposite. That bill was headed, in big letters:

"500 DOLLARS REWARD!"

And there followed a description of Dan Oak, Tom Redway, and Kid Byrne—the Outlawed Three.

There were plenty of roughnecks in Bullwhacker who would have been glad to rope the hundred dollars by cinching the cowboy outlaws. But Hardfist could see that those who were reading that bill were mostly grinning. A remark floated across to him from a long limbed cowman.

"Hardfist won't never catch that bunch."

"You said it!" agreed his companions; and they lounged on their way down the street.

Hall gritted his teeth under his black beard. He reckoned that the puncher was right—he would never cinch the Rojo cowboys. He had framed them on a charge of shooting their uncle, old Sam Oak, and got them outlawed; but he had never been able to find their hide-out up in the Mesa Mountains.

It was as deeply hidden as the lost goldmine of the mesa—which they had found, and the secret of which they kept. Failure after failure had dogged the steps of the marshal of Bullwhacker—and now old Sam Oak, at Doc Baker's cabin in Parksville, was mending, and when he was up again, what was going to happen?

The Outlawed Three were hunted for their lives—but old Sam would run the mine, and it would be gone for ever from Hardfist's greedy grasp.

A burly roughneck came up the street and tramped into the office. It was Jake Sanders, the marshal's right-hand man. The marshal of Bullwhacker gave him a nod.

"Kick that door shut, Jake!" he said. He crossed the office and closed the inner door. "I guess I don't want no guys to hear the piece I got to say." He paused, leaning his elbow on his desk, and fixed his eyes on Jake. "We got to nit Parksville to-night, feller, and you want to pack a gun."

Jake looked uneasy.

"What's the lay-out, boss?" he asked.

"We got to get through," said the marshal, in a low voice. "We ain't got Dan and Red and Kid—I'll say they've beat us to it. Old Sam Oak their uncle, will be up next week from what I hear. And I'll say they've put him wise where to look for the lost mine."

"Sure!" assented Jake.

"Doc Baker's pulled him round, after that lead he stopped one night at the Rojo Ranch, months ago," said Hall, his voice still low. "I guess it was too dark that night for the guy to put his lead where he wanted it."

"And you a dead shot too, marshal!" said Jake.

Hardfist gave him a fierce look. Even to his confederate, he had never owned that the man who had shot up old Sam Oak that dark night at Rojo. But he let the remark pass.

"Old Sam's going to stop one to-night that the doc won't mend!" he said.

Sanders breathed hard.

"Forget it, marshal!" he said. "Shooting a sick man in his bunk, and in the doc's house, and all Parksville ready to pull guns at a word from the doc! You're sure loco!"

"You got cold feet!" sneered Hardfist. "I've given the place the once-over, and I got it all out and dried. I'll get the doc talking at his door, while you get to old Sam's window. There ain't nobody else in the shanty except the black cook. It'll be easy."

Jake Sanders shook his head. He was the marshal's man, and had backed his play in many a desperate game. But Jake had his limit, and the marshal had reached it.

"I guess you can count me out, Bill Hall!" he said stubbornly. "They got you beat, and you got to chew on it. You're just plumb loco to figure on such a game as that!"

Hardfist's eyes blazed at him.

He was in a desperate mood—the mood of a gambler in bad luck, throwing double or quits. There was desperate risk in what he had planned, but it was the last chance for the lost mine of the mesa. He stood for the law in Bullwhacker and he had used the law to aid him in his fierce pursuit of the golden lure—he had added treachery to treachery, crime to crime—and now at the finish defeat faced him. All went for nothing if old Sam lived.

"You doggoned' geck!" said Hall, between his gritted teeth. "You want to stand trial for shooting up Dave Tutt at the Red Dog? You gold-darned coyote if you throw me down in this. I'll park you pronto in the calaboose—and I guess you won't quit except to go up at the end of a rope. Chew on that, you dog-goned skunk!"

Jake's hand slid an inch or two towards the gun at his hip. But he did not touch it.

"You said it, marshal!" he muttered at last. "I'll say I'm ready to ride."

The sunset was red on the prairie as the marshal thudded away at a gallop on the trail to Parksville, Jake Sanders riding sullen and silent at his side. Every now and then the ruffian stole a sidelong glance at Hall's hard, savage face.

But as they rode, in deep gloom, through a belt of post-oaks, Hall became suddenly aware that his companion had dropped behind. The marshal checked his bronco.

A fierce oath left his lips. There came a thudding of hoofs—off the trail. Under cover of the darkness, Jake had deserted him, and was riding away across the prairie.

Hardfist's eyes burned. He swung round his bronco and rode furiously in pursuit. Jake, if he got clear, would never be seen in Bullwhacker again—but the marshal swore savagely that he should not get clear.

A gleam of moonlight came up over the post-oaks. It revealed a hard-riding figure, bending low in the saddle, to the marshal's savage eyes. Hardfist's gun-hand came up.

Crack, crack, crack! Three times he fired in less than as many seconds.

A yell came back from the gloom—a fall, and a groan. A riderless horse dashed away, with swinging stirrups, over the shadowy prairie. The moon was hidden again behind the clouds.

In the darkness the marshal of Bullwhacker rode on to Parksville—alone!

OLD Sam Oak stirred uneasily in his sleep.

It was long past midnight. All was silent in the cabin, in the straggling street of Parksville.

Doc Baker, weary from a long round, was sleeping soundly. Occasionally, through the silence, came a snore from Black Louie's room. Once or twice hoof-beats echoed from the rugged street.

Sam Oak was dreaming—a dream of old days on the Rojo Ranch, where his three nephews had worked with him, before they had found the lost mine of the mesa, which, instead of fortune had brought them tragedy.

In his dream he saw them—the handsome Kid, burly, rugged Dan, plump little Red—the three who had stood by him through thick and thin, and whom he had hoped to make rich when the long-lost mine in the mesa was found.

Then into his dreaming came the hard, grim, black-bearded face of Hardfist Hall, and the old rancher stirred in his sleep, his hand slid to the six-gun under his pillow.

He awoke!

It was partly that evil vision of his dream, perhaps; but partly a faint sound that awakened him. He lifted his head from his pillow, and stared round the shadowy room. Through the wooden shutters a bar of moonlight fell, and old Sam started and his heart beat, for he knew that meant that the shutter was opening.

For a moment Sam Oak stared and listened. Then his wrinkled hand closed hard on the butt of the six-gun. He was almost well from his wound now; in a few more days he would be up and doing. The mine—the lost mine of the mesa—would be his; and, though his

nephews were outlawed, Hardfist was defeated in his fight for the gold of the mesa.

The old rancher's tanned face set grimly as he watched the bar of moonlight widen at his window. His finger was steady on the trigger of the Colt.

The wooden shutter swung open with a creak. There was no glass in the window. The shutter open, a stotson hat was thrust in. The head under it was bent to listen.

Not a sound, not a movement, came from old Sam in the bunk. For a long minute the stotson remained motionless. Then it moved, as a long-limbed figure stepped in over the low sill. Clear moonlight fell into the room, but it did not reach so far as Sam's bunk, which lay in shadow.

Clear in the moonlight stood a brawny figure, and a hard-bitten, black-bearded face glimmered in the light. A hand, grasping a revolver, was half raised, as Hardfist Hall stared about the room—seeking!

Then old Sam stirred. His arm came up, and the moonlight caught the barrel of his six-gun. But even as the marshal of Bullwhacker saw it, the six-gun roared. The brawny figure lurched, the Colt clattered on the floor, and there was a heavy crash that shook the building as Hardfist Hall went down with a bullet through his body.

DOC BAKER leaped from his bed. "Doggone my cats!" gasped the six-gun doctor of Arizona. Through the silent cabin the roar of the gun rang and echoed like thunder.

Doc tore his door open. The shot had come from old Sam's room, and he leaped across the living-room to Sam Oak's door on the other side. His gun was in his hand as he rushed in.

But his gun was not needed. The flood of moonlight from the open window showed the burly figure of the marshal of Bullwhacker prone on the floor, a Colt lying a few feet from his nerveless hand. Old Sam sat up in bed, grinning over a smoking gun.

"Sam!" panted the doc. "O.K., doc!" grinned the old rancher. "I'll say that's Bill Hall, and I'll tell a man he came here to finish what he started at the Rojo Ranch, and he sure has slipped up on it a few!"

Doc Baker dropped on his knees beside the wounded man. His slim, deft fingers bared the wound, and he started a little. Hardfist Hall gave a groan. His tanned, bearded face was white in the moonlight. His voice came husky:

"Doggone that old stiff! I guess I got mine, doc!" He groaned again.

"I guess you got what you've asked for, Bill Hall!" said the doc. "If you've anything to say, you got ten minutes to cough it up!"

A deep groan from the marshal of Bullwhacker. Death he could face—he was no coward! More bitter was defeat. It had been the last throw of the dice, and it had gone against him. Twenty years of hard riding and hard fighting, to fall at last to the shooting of a sick man—shot down like a prowling coyote of the night!

He groaned. The grin died off old Sam's face.

"If you got yours, Bill Hall, I guess I got to try hard to forgive you," said the old rancher. "You been a hard man, Hall, and a bad man. You framed and outlawed three good lads what never harmed you; but you got yours, and I'll say that washes it out."

Doc Baker rose from the side of the groaning marshal. There was a strange look on his face.

"I guess I'll wake old Louie and send her to get the sheriff," he said. "Mebbe it'd ease your mind, Hall, to talk a few afore you hit the high spots."

Hardfist made no answer. He shut his teeth on a groan, and lay silent as the doc left him.

SHERIFF WEST stood and looked down at the marshal of Bullwhacker. There was angry scorn in his tanned face, only repressed by the thought that Bill Hall lay dying.

A candle sputtered on the table, glimmering on old Sam's wrinkled face as he sat hunched

in bed with his blankets wrapped round him. Hardfist Hall lay where he had fallen. The doc had bandaged his wound, stopping the flow of blood; he had placed a cushion under the marshal's head.

Doc's face was serious and grim. The marshal, scanning him, read no hope there. The six-gun doctor, in his red shirt and leather trousers, did not look much of a medical man; but Hardfist knew that he was as good a doctor as any in Arizona, or all the West. And he had told Hardfist that he had ten minutes if he wanted to talk, and of those ten, six or seven had already elapsed.

But the hard-fisted bully of Bullwhacker lay silent. Dared he face what was coming without easing his mind—without undoing, so far as he could, the evil he had wrought? His lips stirred.

"I'm going up, doc?"

"You stopped a .45 bullet at six-foot range, Bill Hall! What you figure?" snapped the doc. "You got time to talk if you want, and hyer's the sheriff to take it down. I guess it won't hurt you to talk none. If you lived you got to stand for breaking into this cabin to kill a man. But I'll say that if I was in your boots at this hyer minute I'd set it right about the Rojo cowboys."

"You said it!" muttered Hall. "You sure said it! I guess I'll clear my mind afore I quit!"

The sheriff dropped at a bench at the table and took pen in hand.

"You got a confession to make, I guess I'll put it down, and the doc can witness it!" he said.

Again there was a brief silence. Then the marshal of Bullwhacker's voice came low and husky:

"I framed Dan and Red and Kid! It was I shot-up old Sam Oak that night at the Rojo Rancho! I framed them on it to get them where I wanted them. They was sure innocent, and never knowed a thing till they found the old geck shot-up. I'll sure set it right all I can!"

Old Sam's face lighted up as he heard. He knew it—only too well he knew, as the doc had always believed, that it was Hardfist who had fired that shot in the dark.



The wooden shutter over the window swung open with a creak, and then a brawny figure stepped over the low sill. Old Sam Oak, lying very still in bed, made no sound, but his hand tightened on his gun-butt.

Sheriff West wrote it down. He knelt beside the marshal and placed the pen in his rough hand. Bill Hall signed the confession, and his hand dropped heavily. Doc Baker, with an inscrutable face, added his signature as a witness.

"I guess that lets out the Rojo cowboys, sheriff!" said the doc.

"I'll say it does," answered Sheriff West. "and if you're wise to their hide-out, I guess you want to get them word that they ain't outlaws no longer."

"I guess I can put a letter where they'll find it," said the doc. "It won't be long afore they're put wise."

Sheriff West nodded. He folded the paper, placed it carefully in his pocket-book, and the latter in his pocket.

"I guess that goes on the records," he said. "I'll tell you, Bill Hall, if you lived, you'd be an outlaw like you made them cowboys with your frame-up. But you got yours, and that lets you out."

The sheriff tramped heavily from the room and went out of the cabin. Hardfist turned his face on the cushion. An outlaw—as he had made the Rojo cowboys, whose outlawry was now washed out by his confession! A hunted life, if old Sam's bullet had not cut it short!

He listened to the heavy tramp of the sheriff dying away up the rugged street. Doc Baker stood listening also, a faint smile playing on his tanned face.

"Where'd you leave your cayuse, Bill Hall?" asked the doc, when there was silence again.

"Aw, doc, what'll his cayuse matter now, and him passing in his checks!" muttered old Sam.

"Passing in nothing!" grunted the doc. Bill Hall's eyes turned on him.

"Who said the geck was passing in his checks?" snapped the doc. "I told him he had ten minutes to talk, if he wanted—and he sure had, and more! I never told him he was passing in no checks."

Hardfist gave a panting cry. "Doc! Doggone you, you been stringing me along?" he panted.

"You been stringing yourself along!" snarled the doc. "Sam, you old geck, you sure forgotten how to shoot while you been lying here sick! You sent a bullet between two of that piccan's ribs, and it went clean! I guess he ain't damaged a whole lot."

"Doggone you!" hissed the marshal of Bullwhacker.

"I never said you was going up! If you figured you was, it was your own funeral! If the sheriff knew, you'd go straight from here to the jug, Bill Hall, to stand trial for trying to kill a man under my roof. But that wouldn't have set the Rojo cowboys right. You got them framed—you got them outlawed—and you'd have kept your teeth clamped on the truth, you ornery piccan! Now you've confessed the truth, and the sheriff's got it at his office!"

Doc Baker shrugged his shoulders at the glare of hate and rage from the marshal of Bullwhacker.

"I'm sure letting you off light, Hall! I'm giving you a chance to barn the wind, you piccan! Get on your cayuse and hit the quickest trail out of Arizona!"

He leaned over the marshal of Bullwhacker and helped him to his feet. Hardfist stood unsteadily. There was a twinge of sharp pain from his bandaged wound. But he knew now that it was not as he had believed—he was going to live!

Relief was swallowed up in bitter rage. His shaking hand groped at his belt. Doc Baker kicked away the Colt that still lay on the floor where it had fallen.

"Forget it, Hall!" he snapped. "You dog-goned lobo-wolf, I'm giving you a chance, and I guess I'm a bonehead to do it—but that bit of writing in the sheriff's office sets Kid Byrne and his pards right—and I'll say I'll let it go at that! You can back a bronco, Bill Hall, and you got time to ride clear afore you're hunted—and if you got any boss sense in that cabeza of yours, I guess you'll ride a straight trail after this and make good! Your game's up here."

A minute more, and the doc stood in his doorway, watching the brawny figure that tottered away in the moonlight.

Hardfist was gone! The clatter of a horse's hoofs, ringing back from the silence of the night, told that he was in the saddle, and hitting the trail.

Doc Baker slammed the door.

"KID BYRNE!"

Kid did not hear the muttered words. He did not see the haggard, bearded face that peered at him from the rocks on the bank of the Rio Rojo, high up in the heart of the mesa.

The hot sun of Arizona blazed down on the rocky hills; on the great canyon where the Rojo River rolled down to the plain. Up the rugged canyon the Kid came, on foot; and the haggard man hidden by the rocks crouched lower, while his hand gripped convulsively the butt of the six-gun at the holster in his belt.

"The Kid!" breathed Hardfist Hall.

It was more than a day since the strange scene in old Sam's room at Doc Baker's. Hardfist Hall, once marshal of Bullwhacker, his word law in the rough cow town, was a fugitive—hunted as Dan and Kid and Red had been hunted by him and his side-kickers.

A hurried visit to his ranch for what he could carry off in haste, was all he had time for before pursuit was at his heels. He was hunted—for the sheriff of Parksville was riding the prairie in search of him; and in his own town of Bullwhacker, where he had ruled the roost so long, he could not have ridden in safety.

Hardfist had camped high up in the hills; his plans undecided. To burn the wind out of Arizona, to seek safety across the border in Mexico; that was what prudence dictated.

But it was vengeance, rather than safety, that was in the mind of the desperate man whose plotting had brought him to ruin. Vengeance on the Outlawed Three, who had baffled and beaten him—and perhaps even yet the gold of the mesa!

Luck was his way. At the sound of approaching footsteps in the silent canyon, he touched his horse with a soothing hand to keep the cayuse quiet, peered out from behind the rocks and saw—the Kid! He drew the six-gun from his belt and waited.

Up the canyon came Kid Byrne, and unless he stopped he would come within easy shooting of the rocks that hid his enemy.

Hardfist's eyes blazed over his gun!

Then, as he watched, Kid Byrne turned and swung into a narrow, steep ravine that split the high, rocky wall of the great canyon. Hardfist gritted his teeth with rage. He rose, his gun-arm lifting—but the Kid had disappeared under the rock arroyo, though the marshal could still hear his tread ringing on the stones.

He thrust the gun back into his holster and stepped from his cover. Well he knew the arroyo into which Kid Byrne was clambering. Well he remembered how, long weeks ago, he had met up with the Kid high up the ravine above the waterfall and flung him, as he believed, to his death in the falling waters.

How the Kid had escaped death then he did not know—but he had escaped, and when Hardfist had seen him again, it had been with the golden nugget in his hand; the gleaming gold that revealed that the lost mine of the mesa had been found.

Was it in that rocky ravine that the Outlawed Three had their hide-out? Hardfist had searched it again and again during his long hunt for the outlaws, and discovered—nothing! Was it in that ravine that the lost mine lay?

He had suspected it, and combed it for a sign of gold—in vain! Yet why was the handsome Kid clambering up those steep rocks? Hardfist reckoned that he was aiming for his hide-out, and with the caution of a trailing wolf, he crept in pursuit.

Twice he sighted the Kid's stetson bobbing among the rocks up the steep arroyo. Twice he was tempted to take a pot-shot. But he refrained. Once he had trailed the Kid down, it would be sure shooting—and he could not afford to take chances.

Keeping in cover of the rugged rocks, creeping like a panther, he trailed the Kid up the ravine. If the wary Kid looked back he

saw no sign of the man who trailed him. He halted at length on the steep bank, where the waterfall came thundering down. Hardfist, crouching behind a boulder, watched him from a distance—and again his gun came up.

Standing there against the glistening of the sheet of water that dropped twenty feet and more from above, the Kid was a good mark.

But even as his finger was pressing the trigger, the Kid suddenly vanished from his sight. Hardfist held back the shot, leaped to his feet and stared blankly. He could not believe his eyes. A second ago Kid Byrne had been standing in his view—now he was gone; and it was into the sheet of falling water that he had plunged and disappeared.

Hardfist stared at the rushing torrent, half-expecting to see the Kid's body come whirling down. But he saw only the glistening waters, dotted here and there with driftwood from the upper hills. Where was the Kid?

He crept on, at last, and stood on the spot where the Kid had stood, by the edge of the thundering waterfall. The truth, never suspected before, was dawning in his mind.

Twenty times, hunting for the Outlawed Three, he had traversed that rugged arroyo



Even as the marshal pressed the trigger of his gun, Red's hand jerked, and the heavy gold nugget shot across the cave and crashed in Hardfist's black-bearded face. The burly marshal staggered, his foot slipped, and then he stumbled over the slippery rock to plunge into the raging waterfall.

and passed the waterfall—never had he dreamed that a human being could plunge under it and live. But he knew now—and he knew that he had found the hide-out of the Outlawed Three.

There must be some hollow in the rocky cliff, some cavern, back of the falling water, and they had found it, and that was where they camped and hid.

Hardfist stood, with the thunder of the waterfall in his ears. And as he stood there came a sharper sound through the crash of the waters.

Clink! Clink! Clink!

It was the sound of a pick on hard rock.

Who was wielding a miner's pick in the hollow under the cliff—and why?

Hardfist knew—only too well he knew now. The lost mine—the lost mine of the mesa! It was here, hidden by the waterfall!

The Outlawed Three were mining gold—the

gold he had so long and fiercely sought. Hardfist's teeth set hard under his black beard. He wrapped his six-gun in his neck-scarf to keep in dry from the water, and ducked under the torrent as the Kid had done.

For a moment, blinding water, swamping in heavy masses; then he stood under an arch of rock on a rocky shelf. Through the sheet of falling water came a glimmer of the sun—but that was not all the light. There was a glare of a pine torch, stuck in a crevice of the cavern wall—a glow from the red embers of a camp-fire.

Dripping with water, Hardfist unwrapped his gun, and gripped it as the voice of Kid Byrne came ringing to his ears, ringing in a happy shout that woke the echoes of the cave.

"DAN! Red! Jump for joy!" roared the Kid.

Dan Oak ceased to handle the pick, and stood leaning on it. Red was scraping earth from a gleaming golden nugget, but he ceased, and his plump face was turned on the Kid.

Kid Byrne threw aside the blanket he had thrown over his head to pass under the waterfall. He waved his hand, he shouted, he brandished a slip of paper, and his comrades stared at him, amazed. The Kid, usually so quiet and cool, seemed to have gone out of his senses.

"Say, what's biting you, Kid?" asked Red.

"You gone loco, ol'-timer?" grinned Dan.

"You old piccan!" yelled the Kid. "I got the news! Look!" He waved the paper in the air. "I'll tell you, this hyer is in the doc's fist! He sure left us this billy-doo, the doc did, under the rock in the lower canyon, what we use for a post office since that lobo-wolf Hardfist got on to our post office in the old cottonwood. And what'll you guess the doc's got to spill?"

"Old Sam up agin?" asked Dan eagerly.

"Yep, old Sam's up, and next week he'll be out and riding. But that ain't all!" shouted the Kid. "Lissen, you guys! Hardfist Hall got at Sam in the doc's cabin, and old Sam threw lead at him, and the doggoned piccan, figuring that he was going up, confessed—"

"Confessed?" gasped Red.

"And I'll tell all Arizona!" roared the Kid, his voice awakening every echo of the deep cavern stretching into the cliff behind the waterfall. "I'll tell the world Sheriff West is after that lobo-wolf, and Hardfist is an outlaw now, and we're clear! You get me? Here it is in the doc's fist, and we're free to ride the trails, free to ride into Parksville—and I'll say that we're going for our hosses and hitting the trail to see old Sam, pronto!"

"Search me!" breathed Dan.

He leaned on the pick, almost overcome by the news. Red still held the nugget in his hand, but he had forgotten it. It weighed over a pound of solid gold—but he forgot it!

"And where's Hardfist now?" asked Dan, at last.

"Burning the wind for the border, I reckon," said the Kid. "He's cooked his own goose, and I reckon we're through with Hardfist."

"Forget it!" rasped a bitter voice.

The Rojo cowboys started, and spun round. Against the glimmering gleam of the waterfall stood the brawny figure of the marshal of Bullwhacker, on the rock shelf at the side of the cave entrance, the red torchlight playing on his hard, haggard, black-bearded face, gleaming on the levelled barrel of his six-gun, on the fierce, merciless eyes that blazed over the barrel.

The gun covered the Outlawed Three; Hardfist's finger was on the trigger. Only the Kid was packing a gun, but he did not attempt to pull. The death-shot would have sped instantly had his hand gone to his belt, and he had no chance. The three gazed at the startling, unexpected apparition—reading the merciless hate and vengeance in the black-bearded face.

"I got you!" went on Hardfist Hall, his voice coming like a snake's hiss from his black beard. "By the great horn spoon, I got

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THE BLACK MONK

(Continued from page 378.)

against the grey stone. Slowly and imperceptibly it crept up; still Chief Warden Lazenby waited for the dawn.

No one saw his figure suddenly vanish from that lofty post. No one heard the stifled cry for help that came momentarily from his lips.

With the approach of dawn, a bitter wind came creeping over the heather, sighing like a soul in torment.

Chief Warden Lazenby was a powerfully built man, but in the grip of the unseen assailant, who had seized him from behind in a ju-jutsu hold, he was helpless. He twisted his head frantically in an effort to get rid of the cold, firm hand clamped across his mouth.

Then suddenly he felt himself being swung round; had a fleeting glimpse of a cowed, cloaked dark figure with upraised fist. He saw the blow coming to him, and tried to turn his head to dodge the fist. But he was caught full on the point of the chin, and, with his head snapping back, went into unconsciousness, knocked out by that one perfectly timed upper-cut.

The Black Monk caught him before he fell, and laid him on the ground. Then, working swiftly, he bound the warden's feet and hands together with the girdle of his monkish robe, and gagged the unconscious man with a handkerchief.

When Lazenby came-to, it was to find himself staring into the dark, magnetic eyes of the monk. But gone were the monk's cloak and cowl; he was wearing now the dark blue uniform that had formerly clothed Lazenby himself. The warden's greatcoat was still on

him as a protection against the cold, but underneath he was stripped to his shirt and pants.

Fascinated, he watched the monk make up his face with the aid of the contents of a flat, oblong tin. As his senses cleared, he saw, to his amazement, that the monk was gradually building up his face into a likeness of the warden's own rubicund countenance; and when, finally, the monk added a false clipped moustache that was an imitation of Lazenby's own, the disguise was complete. In the half-light of dawn, it was an almost perfect copy of the warden's countenance.

Twenty minutes later, a police patrol at the crossroads stopped a car which appeared suddenly out of the gloom. A man in blue uniform, with a peak cap, peered through the window.

"O.K., boys! It's me, Chief Warden Lazenby. I've got James Garvin, but there won't be any hanging. I found him in the quarry crushed to death. Somebody must have parked this car for him there, ready for his getaway, but the poor devil crashed just as he was getting to it."

Instinctively the police turned their eyes to the back of the car.

"I put him in a sack I found there. He isn't exactly pretty to look at. Just telephone to the governor, will you, and tell him what's happened. Say I'll be along in ten minutes."

As one of the constables raced for the inn that stood at the crossroads to phone the message, the car swung to the right and began to climb the hill. Slowly its rear light flashed from view.

Lighter and lighter grew the dawn sky. Already the birds were beginning to stir uneasily in the trees, and their first faint twitterings could be heard. The prison gates swung open. The warden on duty stepped forward and nodded to the man at the wheel. The car went on. Then heavy gates clanked to—

Twenty minutes later, the car reappeared at the gateway. The warden on duty there hastened out.

"I've seen the governor, and he's let me off duty for the night," reported the uniformed man at the wheel. "Hurry up with those gates. I want to get home!"

The light was spreading in the east. As the sun rose over the moor and lighted up the great walled-in space of Grimstone Prison, a warden coming off duty passed the shed beneath the execution chamber. As he did so, his eyes, trained to observe every detail, noticed instantly that the doors of the shed were wide open.

He stopped and turned back. As he approached the shed, he halted, paralysed—horror-stricken.

There, from the end of a rope, something dangled—and that rope came through the open trapdoor from the gallows above!

The Spider would send no more men to their deaths.

The warden, recovering himself, snatched his whistle with trembling fingers from his tunic pocket and gave three long blasts. Then he went rushing into the shed.

Lying on the floor was a black cloth. Automatically the warden stooped, picked it up, and looked at it. Suddenly a cry escaped from his lips.

"The monk!" he shouted. "The Black Monk!"

In his hand was the long, black, hooded cloak that the man who had rescued James Garvin had worn.

Two of the men on the Black Monk's list of victims have paid the penalty for their crimes—who will be the next? Don't miss the thrilling adventures of the Black Monk in next Friday's "PILOT."

THE OUTLAWED THREE

(Continued from page 385.)

you fixed! Make a move, and you won't make another!"

They stood as if transfixed. Only Red's plump fingers gripped convulsively the golden nugget in his hand.

"I got you, and I got the mine! I beaten you to it at last!" Hardfist's savage face gloated. "I guess you get yours here and now, and I guess there's enough gold here to square all the law in Arizona, and see me clear! Doggone you, you got it coming to you!"

He gloated over his triumph. The lives of the Outlawed Three were at his mercy; at long last he had them where he wanted them! In the very hour of their relief and joy, when they knew that they were no longer outlaws,

when life lay bright and unclouded before them, their enemy had hunted them down, and their lives were his to take!

His finger pressed the trigger to send forth the stream of death, and even as it rose, Red's hand jerked. The golden nugget shot like a bullet across the cave and crashed in the black-bearded face.

Hardfist staggered, and his gun jerked up, roaring as it jerked. The bullet crashed on the cavern roof, bringing down a shower of chips of rock. The burly marshal staggered on the narrow rocky shelf, and his foot slipped on the edge.

The Kid, swift on the uptake, was reaching for his gun. But his gun was not needed. One wild effort the marshal made to recover his balance as he stumbled over the edge of rock—and failed! The brawny figure splashed headlong into the water, and disappeared into the fall. One choked cry came back—

choked before it was fairly uttered—and the marshal of Bullwhacker was swept away in the thundering waters.

The Kid relinquished his gun. He passed his hand over his brow.

"Search me!" he muttered. "Red, I'll say you've saved our lives—and I'll say Hardfist has got his! He sure has got his!"

He rushed from the cave, under the curtain of falling water, Dan and Red at his heels. Out in the open, in the blazing sunlight, they scanned the rushing torrent below the waterfall. A stetson hat spun away on the waters, but of Hardfist Hall there was nothing to be seen.

Deep down in the rocky bed of the torrent was all that was left of the hard-fisted marshal of Bullwhacker—and it was a nugget of the gold that he had so long and fiercely sought that had dashed him to his death!

"SAY, old Sam!" yelled the Kid.

It was weeks later. Old Sam Oak sat in his rocker on the veranda of the Rojo Ranch and grinned happily at the three riders who dashed up from the Bullwhacker trail. Dan and Kid and Red—once the "Outlawed Three"—now carefree and happy as larks! They cavorted up to the veranda, whooping and waving their stetsons.

"What's the noos, boys?" asked old Sam, grinning down at them over the rail.

"They elected a new marshal in Bullwhacker to-day!" chuckled Dan.

"And they got a good man this time!" grinned Red.

"What's his name?" asked old Sam.

"His name," chuckled the Kid, "is Sam Oak! And I'll tell all Arizona we ain't got no trouble coming from the marshal of Bullwhacker!"

THE END.

It's good-bye to "The Outlawed Three"—and welcome to "G-MEN OF THE RANGES," our gripping new Western story of a young ranch-owner who swears to wipe out the modern cattle-rustling rucketeers of the West!



Flaming six-guns, the scream of hot lead, and the thunder of galloping hoofs! Who will ride the trail with Johnny Romar and the G-Men of the Ranges, sworn to stamp out the Chicago gangsters who have muscled-in on the rustling racket in the cattle-country of the West? Hold your horses, everyone, and get ready for new reading thrills in . . .

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