

WHEN LEGENDS LIVED

**VOLUME TWO
JERICO D. MCCAIN
TEXAS RANGER**

R. C. MORRIS



HELLGATE PRESS

ASHLAND, OREGON

WHEN LEGENDS LIVED

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Published by Hellgate Press

(An imprint of L&R Publishing, LLC)

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Hellgate Press

72 Dewey St.

Ashland, OR 97520

email: sales@hellgatepress.com

Cover and Interior Design: L. Redding

ISBN: 978-1-954163-60-7

Printed and bound in the United States of America

First edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Other Books Written by R.C. Morris:

*The Ether Zone: U.S. Army Special Forces
Detachment B-52, Project Delta*

Don't Make the Blackbirds Cry: A Novel

Tender Prey: A Novel

*Gone to Texas:
Vol. One: Jericho D. McCain, Texas Ranger*

**What Others Are Saying About *Gone to Texas* –
Volume One in the *Jericho D. McCain*,
Texas Ranger series**

“*Gone to Texas* by Raymond Morris is a remarkable work of fiction that harkens back to the ‘lawless west,’ in early Texas, a period that marks the first stage of what will be known in coming decades as the ‘Wild West.’ The hero’s journey begins when Jericho McCain, who has lost his parents and sisters, sets out to find his brother Taylor, a member of the Ranger unit in Texas, but the coming-of-age tale of a young Jericho is more than that. It’s a history of men called to use violence to remedy the acts of violent men. Jericho’s journey to manhood takes place as Texas and Zachary Taylor’s army are fighting the forces of Santa Ana. At the same time gangs of lawless men and Indian tribes ravage the countryside. Because the army of the Union is engaged in war and local law officials are inept, only an elite group of Rangers offer hope of interceding in the violence wrought by evil men.

Morris, a retired Army officer familiar with combat, captures the varied conflicting elements through often spare and stark scenes of violent battles that depict both courage and cowardice. Ultimately, as is the tradition in classic Westerns, Jericho’s story is a tale of honor. His is also a story that celebrates our deeper humanity as depicted in the honorable actions men perform in battle, as well as in the humor they express and the heartfelt emotions they mask in tragic moments. In the end, Jericho is a stronger and more poised man, and a humble hero as well who echoes the noble virtues embraced in traditional Western fiction, values that seem to have taken a hiatus in 21st Century America.”

—H. Lee Barnes, author of *The Lucky*,
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“If you liked the *Lonesome Dove* trilogy, you will love *GTT!*”

—Aaron Gritzmaker, U.S. Army Special Forces,
Texan and an avid Western reader

R.C. Morris

“In reading *Gone to Texas* it became quickly apparent that the author was writing about times, places, and people he identified with and wanted to portray well! I read the entire book, word by word, story by story, in less than two days. Each time I placed a bookmark between pages to take a break, I found myself being pulled back, almost needing to see where Ray was taking me next! His rich descriptions and well woven events are magic to those of us that love westerns! This book is already a hit for me and reminded me too why I have admired and had deep affection for its author for almost forty years!”

—Major Jerry R. Bailey, U.S. Army Special Forces (Ret)

“Powerful, gripping, suspenseful! This heart-warming and inspiring tale of a young man’s survival and success through hardships on the pre-Civil War frontier is a fast-paced, satisfying read. I’ve been a fan of the late Ray Morris’s writing for many years, be it crime novels or military non-fiction. *Gone To Texas* is perhaps his best yet, and will garner him many more fans!”

—Hank Cramer, retired soldier and singing cowboy,
Winthrop, WA

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Prologue

IT'D BEEN JUST PAST noon on their second day out when the searchers found the drover's body. The thing they talked about for years afterward was how it'd been left in exactly the same place as the last one — almost six years earlier. Normally, they would've stopped sooner, it being the hottest part of the day. But they'd wanted to reach the King Tree first, because it was the only substantial shade within twenty-five miles. The King Tree was a giant old oak, the kind usually found a lot farther north. As far back as any of them could recall, it'd marked the four major trails intersecting the region, and provided weary travelers a brief respite during the hot siesta hours.

As they topped the ridge, the rare old tree dominated the parched landscape for as far as the eye could see; its prominence and grandeur unmatched amid the low-growing brush and dwarfed trees. A hard day's ride in any direction would not find another of its kind. Like a majestic ruler, it resided over the arid kingdom, woody arms spread widely as if basking in adoration from lesser, bowing wind-whipped subjects.

Local lore speculated on its origin; perhaps one of the infrequent strong winds out of the Panhandle had carried it there when but a twig or seedling. The constantly shifting grainy soil had probably covered it over during an uncommonly wet season, allowing it to take root despite the intense heat and drought-like conditions that might've killed it altogether. There had been conjecture that an underground stream or spring lay near the surface in that particular spot, allowing a particularly deep tap-

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root to suck life-giving moisture from the crusty earth for more than two hundred years. Disease and termites had taken their toll in recent years and limbs now littered the ground under the once magnificent tree. Black cancerous areas of decay on many of the remaining appendages indicated that more discards would soon follow. Weakened though it was, the old tree was still strong enough to hold the heavy weight that swayed gently in the slight breeze on one of its lower limbs.

From where the horsemen paused on the distant ridge, the swaying object appeared smaller than it actually was; perhaps it was a flag of some sort – or maybe a shirt hung out to air. As the riders slowly approached and the object became more vivid, the impression was that game had recently been dressed-out and hung, out of reach of small animals, to cure. Once closer, what it was suddenly became sickeningly clear.

It was a man. Or once had been.

Hanging up-side down by one foot tied to the low limb, the area of his genitals left an ugly wound were they'd been savagely removed. Nearly all of the body's skin had been peeled away, muscles and sinew left exposed to the elements. Angry clouds of black flies swarmed the quickly crusting blood. A gentle breeze caused the butchered remains to slowly turn, twisting the rope taut, and then reaching its limit, reversing, to slowly unwind. As the corpse turned, empty eye sockets searched the surrounding landscape for rescuers who would arrive too late.

Reaching the tree, the riders formed a semicircle beneath the gruesome sight, sitting in uncomfortably embarrassed silence, each trying to avoid looking into the empty accusing eye-sockets. What couldn't be ignored was the jagged wound slashed along the entire right side of the dead man's face from eye to chin. It

had been almost six years to the day since the last body had been found with that mark. Only two of the older riders had ever seen it, but the others had heard stories through the years. Several riders shifted uncomfortably in their saddles, gazing anxiously at the surrounding landscape and nervously fingering the triggers of their Winchesters.

Foreboding hung heavily in the air and each of them read it in the other's faces. To a man, they all knew who'd done this terrible thing, and they knew with certainty why he'd placed the mutilated body in the old tree where the four trails came together.

He was back – and he'd wanted it found!

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One

*“Captain McCain and Roosevelt Poe? They were the best there was.
Made this wilderness a state, by god! And, a safe place to live.
'Spect they're either dead or laid up in some old soldier's home now.
Somehow, it just don't seem right.”*

– Old timer, 1883

BLUEBONNET HADN'T BEEN A bad choice, Captain J. D. McCain thought as he stepped into the dusty yard of the old ranch house. *At least not at first.*

He felt the instant assault of stifling heat as he left the shade of the porch, ignoring it as he looked around at the meager outbuildings surrounding the main sleeping quarters. Although the sun had dropped in the late afternoon sky, it was still beating down relentlessly onto the baked West Texas landscape. A hot dry breath of air burned his nose as he took the wide-brimmed hat from his head and wiped his brow with a dust-caked shirt sleeve. Almost nothing stirred in the intense heat, and McCain edged back into the shade of the porch. Even there, it was like an oven.

Normally, from dawn to dusk for most of the day – and for most of the days of the year – the residents of Bluebonnet were trapped inside the relatively cool shade provided by their meager dwellings. But two years earlier, the drought had come and the temperatures had climbed steadily upward, drying up watering holes, trout-filled streams, and many springs and wells that had never been known to go dry. Where it had once been only miserable, it was now unbearable.

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“Ready to start, again, Mr. Penny?” he said, glancing over his shoulder.

He and Moses Penny had been working since early morning to finish the dam across the creek running behind the ranch house. His partner, Wilson Roosevelt Poe, had expressed a great deal of mirth at the idea of constructing such a dam in the first place, especially since the creek-bed was dry as a bucket of sand, and had been for almost two years.

“If that ain’t the silliest danged thing I ever seen,” Poe had chided McCain one morning right after they’d first begun the task. “Might as well put three more walls up around that pitiful little hole and we can use it as a pig-pen.” His comments had been followed by the irritating laugh McCain had always found annoying.

“Less talk from you and a little more work might get it done faster.”

As usual in these type exchanges, McCain’s sharp retort had only awakened his antagonist’s combative nature. Poe possessed a quick tongue and had showed it instantly. “Well if you don’t mind my saying so, you two heartaches are the most lamentable looking human beings I’ve ever laid eyes on. Pitiful, simply pitiful.”

One thing McCain had learned about his long-time friend and partner was that as long as he could get a response, he would keep needling. Therefore, McCain had gritted his teeth and remained silent. It’d proven to be in vain anyway, for once again Poe proved relentless.

“I mean, just look at you two. Scratching around in the dirt like a couple of banty-roosters. It pains me to see you come to this, Jericho, it truly does – and you a captain in the Texas Rangers, too. I just pray no one who knows us rides by to see you like this.”

“There’s no shame in honest labor, no matter how humble,” McCain had told him stiffly.

At that, Poe just snorted loudly, mounted his horse and rode off toward the rundown buildings of Bluebonnet, a quarter of a mile away, yelling back over his shoulder as he departed in a cloud of dust, “My back’s been acting up again. You scratch in the dirt like a couple of chickens if you want to. Cook your brains harder than that worthless Sabi’s beans. See if I give a hoot. One of us has got to hang on to a little sanity around here!”

McCain had suffered Poe’s abuse in matters concerning the dam, silently thereafter. Although thinking about the exchange with Poe, and his partner’s lack of contribution around the ranch lately, it still rankled him considerably.

Now, protected from the direct sun by the porch’s overhang as he waited for Moses Penney to join him, he could see his large stallion standing in the shade of the old barn occasionally swatting at a fly with his tail. Otherwise, Grasshopper also stood unmoving in the intense heat. McCain’s hand went instinctively to the tender bruise on his left shoulder – the last place the ornery critter had bitten him. Then, shifting his gaze across the dry land that he and “Rosie” Poe had made such great plans for, he sighed deeply. His face showed little expression, although their tenuous situation with the ranch was none-the-less heavy on his mind.

From a distance, there was nothing striking about McCain. The ex-Ranger wasn’t a particularly big man. In fact, as he grew older he appeared to be growing somewhat smaller. His size didn't matter, for much larger men who stared into his gray eyes often felt as though they were the smaller of the two.

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McCain, solely through the strength of his demeanor and personality, assumed natural authority and control of situations while other self-professed or properly appointed leaders unquestionably followed his orders. Everyone, that is to say, except for his longtime friend, Rosie Poe. Sometimes, even he had to struggle to keep McCain from unconsciously assuming the dominate role in their long friendship.

McCain's well-trimmed beard and thick, shoulder-length hair was nearly snow white, but the eyes which stared out from beneath the large Texas hat were granite gray, and still as clear as the day he'd joined the Texas Rangers. The creases in his face and the backs of his hands were burned as dark as the local Mexicans, appearing as hard as saddle leather. To the casual observer's first glance, except for the ramrod straightness that bespoke of some past regimentation, he appeared rather ordinary. But Captain J.D. McCain, as those who'd served with him could tell you, was anything but ordinary. Those whom he'd served with in the Rangers thought him to be one of the finest field commanders the Rangers had ever produced. Both he and Roosevelt Poe had been famous throughout the territory for the past twenty-five years, well-known from Mexico all the way north to the Cripple Creek gold mines. After retirement five years earlier, they'd quietly slipped into oblivion and most people wrongly assumed they'd died or were laid up in some old soldier's home. The mere thought of that might've disgusted McCain. Roosevelt Poe, however, would've found it quite amusing.

His mind on the unfinished dam, McCain sensed movement behind him, and waited for Moses to join him on the porch. He glanced up as the huge black man approached, grunting thanks as his trusted ranch-hand and longtime friend offered him a

granite dipper of cool spring water. Since the drought had dried up the old well out by the corral, the small walled-in spring located in the kitchen floor was the ranch's only source of drinking water. It had been Poe's idea to build the ranch house around the spring, despite McCain's objections that it was just his partner's laziness speaking and he only wanted a cool place to hang a crock of sour-mash whisky.

However, Poe had been persistent, saying he'd seen one like it in a big hacienda in Mexico, and it'd kept the entire house cool all summer. At last, tired of the bickering, McCain had given in, but never hesitated to point out how Poe had failed to mention all the centipedes, scorpions, and rattlesnakes that seemed to appreciate the coolness of the spring, as well. Water for the stock had to be brought in by wagon from Willow Creek which was about a day's journey west. The makeshift water wagon carried four days supply—five if carefully rationed—and that meant someone had to make the trip at least once a week.

Somewhere behind him, McCain heard the ranch cook, Sebastian Carlos, stirring around to begin the evening meal for their three ranch-hands who'd be returning shortly.

“We best hurry if we want to get that dam finished before supper, Mr. Penny,” he said, as he started off toward the dry creek bed.

Moses Penny had retired as a stock handler for Company B, three years before Captain McCain and Poe. He'd worked as a ranch hand for “Shanghai” Pierce, over near Fort Worth until the two partners bought the Rocking-R. Much to Pierce's chagrin, Penny immediately quit and went to work for McCain and Poe. Moses Penny highly revered Captain J.D. McCain and accordingly obeyed him without question or hesitation.

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Additionally, he liked the way the Captain always called him, “Mr. Penny.” He’d been a virtual shadow of McCain for the past ten years.

The never-complaining Moses loyally followed McCain into the hot afternoon sun once again. “Cap’n, do you think it’s ever gonna rain again?”

“I don’t know, Mr. Penny,” declared McCain, “but if it does, we’ll have that dam ready to catch some water for the next dry spell.”

“I think it’ll rain pretty soon, Capt’n. I feel it in my bones.”

“I sure hope you’re right.”

Unaccustomed to such hard manual labor, especially when combined with the long ride just a few days previous, McCain grunted with discomfort as he stooped to retrieve the battered pick he’d discarded earlier. “If Roosevelt could find it in his heart to lend a hand, we’d probably already have this damned thing done.” He wasn’t feeling any too charitable toward Poe right at the moment.

“Rosie says his back’s ‘acting up’ again,” Moses said, looking downright sympathetic. Then he swung the heavy pick over his head and sank it into the hard rocky earth in the creek bed. “He thinks a little whiskey might help. ‘If whiskey don’t cure it, there ain’t no cure.’ That’s what Rosie says.”

McCain snorted in disgust. “His back always acts up when there’s work to be done,” he retorted, grunting with the effort of a hard swing of his pick. “If whiskey could cure laziness, he’d be a well man today!”

Moses Penny chuckled softly as he labored and McCain glanced up to see sweat dripping off the huge man’s face, glistening against his coal black skin as it ran down the heavy muscles of

his arms and chest. Standing over six-foot-four inches tall, he was a giant for the days—powerfully built and without a doubt, the strongest men McCain had ever known. He'd often said Moses could out-work any man alive, without even half-trying.

The sun was slowly sinking behind a crimson horizon when the two men finished work on the dam and gathered up their tools. As they trudged wearily toward the lighted ranch house, Matt Jennings and Pete Yates, two of the ranch's three hands, rode up and dismounted near the corral. Jennings was a steady, knowledgeable hand whom McCain depended on to keep the other two in line when they were out of his sight. He walked up and squatted in the dust near the porch step where his boss sat.

“Lots of Injun sign out there, Captain.”

McCain watched as his foreman slowly poured tobacco from a cloth bag onto a thin cigarette paper and adeptly rolled it into a perfect cigarette. The foreman struck a match on the seat of his pants with the first try, and lit up. He allowed Jennings a deep drag on the cigarette before acknowledging the remark.

“What kind? War party?”

Jennings frowned and appeared to think about it for a moment. “Don't really know, Captain. Mixed bunch maybe – some breeds surely. Renegade mostly, I'd guess from the looks of their camp-site. Filthy bastards. Ate – crapped – slept – everything in the same place. Looked like about ten of 'em. Could be real trouble though.”

McCain possessed a keen insight into human nature and had an acute ability to read those around him, a fact that had kept him alive long after many of his contemporaries perished in the line of duty. Right then, he knew there was a lot more troubling his top hand.

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“What else?”

Jennings gazed at him for a moment, taking a deep breath. “We ran into Luke Kincade yesterday morning,” he remarked. “He’s the new foreman for Mr. Thompson over at the Circle-T. He had ten drovers with him, all armed to the teeth. Claimed one of their Mexican wranglers was found two days ago hanging in a tree; looked naked as a jay-bird from a distance. When they got close, they could see he was almost completely skinned.”

Jennings scowled with distaste, but continued. “Lived most of the time it was being done to ’em, too, was their guess. Then someone castrated him and burned his eyes out. Real professional job.”

McCain waited patiently, knowing Jennings would get to the real issue sooner or later.

Jennings stubbed out his butt in the dust, spit and looked up. “Face-cut,” he said suddenly. “From here-to-here.” He made a motion against the side of his face with his thumb.

McCain grew very still, barely breathing as he waited. Finally he spoke in almost a whisper. “You think it was Scar.” It wasn’t a question.

Jennings stirred uneasily. “That’s what several of the Thompson crew said when they was telling the story.”

Although McCain’s face showed little change in expression, Jennings sensed he’d hit a raw nerve. He sat quietly, rolling another cigarette as he avoided his employer’s eyes. Jennings had known the Captain for almost two years and had found him to be fair, although sometimes pretty demanding. He’d heard something of McCain and Poe’s history with the Rangers, while working over in New Mexico where he’d worked before coming to Texas. Since starting work for the Rocking-R, he’d

personally had the occasion to observe J.D. McCain during two of his famous outrages. Even though he was a full three inches taller than his boss and out-weighed him by fifty pounds, after witnessing those events Jennings was convinced that he wanted no part of the Captain when he was in one of those foul moods.

While he was sure both Poe and McCain could be dangerous adversaries, most of the things he'd heard had come from Poe, and as with most of Poe's stories, seemed too far-fetched to be believable. He'd also heard a few tales from Moses, but figured the black man was so awed by McCain that he probably added to the yarns just to make McCain seem much more imposing. What Jennings *had* heard in New Mexico though, was the story of a half-breed named Scar and the two old Ranger's relentless pursuit of him for more than a decade throughout the southwest territories. Almost catching up with him on numerous occasions, wiping out his band on several, he'd always seemed to be just one step ahead of them.

During those years, the outlaw Scar had left the remains of butchered men, women, and children, as he slaughtered and raped a path across three states. Each time they'd chased him until his small band had either been killed off by the Rangers, or becoming weary of the chase, had finally fled into Mexico or the territories to hide out. Then, after a few quiet years, Scar would resurface to continue his destructive path. It'd been almost six years since he was last heard of in Texas.

Jennings had also heard the story of one of their encounters with the outlaw six years earlier. McCain and Poe had tracked Scar, four of his renegades, and the woman and two children they had stolen, to a remote canyon just across the river into Mexico. There, they cornered the band, killed the four renegades

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and shot Scar nearly to pieces; only to find when they eventually entered the camp, that the hostage's throats had been cut and Scar had disappeared again. They tracked his blood-trail for three days, winding deeper and deeper into Mexico until at last the trail simply dried up. Twice they were almost caught by the Mexican Rurales and finally had to give up and return to Texas.

McCain sat and pondered the latest troubling development long after Jennings had gone inside. *We were damn fools*, he thought, staring out toward the mountain range to the southwest. They'd convinced themselves their old enemy had surely perished of his wounds in the dry Sierras. Now, McCain knew they'd only kidded themselves. Scar was back. It was going to start all over again and there was nothing he could do about it. Hell, he wasn't even an active Ranger anymore.

It might be worth a ride out to the campsite and take a look though.

Just the thought of even a short ride like that, made him grimace, and his hand instinctively went to a tender spot in the middle of his back. McCain was still stiff and sore from the previous long ride from which they'd just returned, not to mention the latest physical labor of building the dam out back. Still, he thought. That last ride had been necessary.

* * *

Several days earlier Quint "Fish" Fishburn, had returned from personal business in El Paso. McCain, Poe and Moses Penny had been sitting on the front porch as the evening sun dropped, enjoying the meager breeze that periodically blew in their direction. Poe had seen him first, from about a mile away, "Coming like a bat out of hell."

As soon as he'd come into view, Fish had began shouting and waving his arms, but based on the distance and his propensity to stutter when excited, none of the men could remotely make out a thing he was yelling. The tall, lanky Fishburn abruptly brought his horse to a sliding halt in front of the group covering them with a fog of dust and debris, and was instantly out of the saddle like a circus trick-rider, running right up on the porch. He was completely covered with a thick coat of dust. Pointing in the direction he'd come, he'd finally placed his hands on his knees and gulped for air, then stuttered to beat the band as he'd tried to tell McCain what he was so excited about.

“C...Captain, we got t...trouble. Som' bitches are s...stealing our hors...hors...livestock!”

After they'd gotten him calmed down enough to talk, they'd found out that on his way back from El Paso, he'd happened to travel by way of Fort Stockton and rode in from the southeast. That's when he'd first spotted a large herd of horses headed toward the Mexican border. Even from a distance he'd been able to recognize the “Widder-maker.”

Fish had also taken the rare opportunity to return one of the many digs he usually suffered at the hands of Poe. “That big black som' bitch that p...pret near...et o' Rosie up last Spring, hee-hee.”

Poe had scowled real hard at Fish for the slight, but maintained his silence – for once.

“There w..were 'bout a dozen of 'em, Captain,” Fishburn finally stated, more calmly. “Had almost f...fifty of our horses w...with them. Looked like they were headed straight for Vila Ahumada.”

Poe had caught McCain's eye, who said what both of them

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were thinking. “Old man Martinez and his vaqueros again Roosevelt. We should've hanged that old horse thief years ago.”

“Yeah,” said Rosie Poe, with a twinkle in his eye. “Imagine that old thief coming all the way up here to steal back the horses we stole from him in the first place.”

It'd been common practice for years for Texas ranchers to run into Mexico and bring back cattle and horses from Mexican ranchers, and few considered it stealing. They rationalized that the Mexicans had probably stolen them from hard working Texans in the first place. In many cases, they were probably right.

McCain had noticed Poe's sarcasm and stared at him for a moment. “I suppose you just want to let him have fifty head of our livestock, without even an argument from us?” He waited for Poe's answer, and none came. “If you don't want to come, just stay here and look out for the place until we get back.”

“Don't figure you boys could git along without me fer that long,” Poe had answered smugly, spitting at a fly on the step.

McCain just snorted in return, saying, “The cemeteries are filled with men who thought the world couldn't get along without them.”

“Aye God, jist fer that remark, I ought ta' let you go alone and git yerself into a bunch o' misery.” Then, without looking at his partner, Poe slowly got to his feet and said warily, “Oh, I guess not. It has been just a tad boring around here since little Flora left with that gambler.” He placed his hands in the middle of his spine, stretching backward, looking at the others. “All right girls, what are you waiting for? Let's get saddled up 'fore old Jericho busts a gut or something.”

Poe had walked off towards the corral, chuckling to himself.

The four men had rode and slept in the saddle for the next several days, and eventually caught up with the Martinez family about twenty miles inside Mexico. Moses easily found their tracks and had flawlessly predicted the route they'd take back to the Martinez Rancho. When the Mexican raiders crossed the Chonchos River with their herd of stolen horses, they'd found McCain, Poe, Fish, and Moses Penny waiting for them on the other side. The Texans had quietly remained on their horses and waited until half of the riders crossed the river, then rode out of the tall bushes lining the ridge that overlooked the river valley.

The young vaquero riding point had seen them first, shouting, "*Los Tejanos Diablos.*" He'd then turned his horse in terror and spurred to the rear.

Several of the others had attempted to flee as well, but old Martinez and eight of his vaqueros decided to stand and fight. It was the type of fighting the early Rangers had built their reputation on. Poe had led off and the others followed, whooping and spurring their horses straight into the opposing force. Instantly, they were among them, shooting with both hands, emptying their deadly pistols at close range into the disorganized bunch of men. It was over almost before it'd started.

As the echoes faded away, Poe had circled around and quickly checked the bodies. "Looks like old man Martinez escaped again, Jericho," he declared, spitting into the running water as he went about his grisly task. "Ain't so sorry that he did though, cause pretty soon all our enemies'll be gone. It'll be plumb lonely around here after that. 'Sides, I kind of admire the old bastard's gall."

"All right, let's get 'em rounded up and headed north!" McCain had yelled. "That old man will gather up some of his boys and be hot on us if we dally."

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McCain had pushed them hard without rest, until well back inside the United States. Still, Moses Penny rode cover to the rear nearly all the way back to Bluebonnet. They'd recovered all but five of the fifty horses Fish had estimated the raiders drove off, and arrived back at the ranch tired, but in high spirits.

Now, having just received more bad news, McCain rubbed his stiff shoulders once more as he thought about the recent raid into Mexico. *It was a good thing Fish spied them when he did though, otherwise, losing that herd would've been a heavy blow to the ranch. Well, better let Rosie know about the Face-Cutter when he gets back, and plan for the worse.*