

The Lone Ranger
by Ralph Goll

"Sunset Gun"

Number: 2225-1450

Date: 4/25/47

Ranger and Tonto

Tom Manley Straight, 20 - 30
Colonel Rice Straight 60.
Mike Mason Crook - rough, tough, 30.
Slick Howard Crook, slick type, 30/
Captain Yates Straight - 30, 40.
Sergeant Rud Straight, 30.
Lieut. James Straight, 30.
Mr. Hayward Indian agent, 50.
Voice Bit - (Corporal)
Voice 1 Bit
Voice 2 Bit
Voice 3 Bit

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(USUAL OPENING)

Annrc; Among the outposts which the Army maintained in the Southwestern deserts during the 1870's none was more isolated than Fort Fuller. Originally a Spanish stronghold, it was as much a prison as a defense work.

(BUGLES SOUNDING ASSEMBLY IN B.G.)

Within the lofty walls of sun-baked brick, the little garrison now stood two deep, all faces toward the flag. It was time for retreat and the sunset gun.

(BUGLES SOUNDING RETREAT IN B.G.)

On an emplacement above the gate, Fort Fuller's single cannon rolled back into position, charged and ready. Private Mike Mason bent over its breech.

(CANNON SHOT IN B.G. BUGLES STOP)

The colors came down. The garrison broke ranks and one of the men hurried forward to meet Private Mason at the foot of the gun platform.

(STEPS UP)

Slick; Hiyuh, Mike, you old coyote!

Mike; Slick Howard! What are you doing here?

Slick; Just got in from Fort Gray with an escort party. We brought you an Indian agent and that money the Comanches have got coming. Ten thousand in gold.

- Mike; All that dinero for those redskins! If I had any part of it, I'd go over the hill.
- Slick; So would I. I been trying to get a bob-tailed discharge.
- Mike; It'd serve you right if you had to stay here in Dobe Dungeon. Joining the Army was your idea, Slick.
- Slick; It was a good way to dodge the law when we broke jail back East.
- Mike; Humph!
- Slick; What they got you doing, Mike?
- Mike; Everything. I'm the gunner, the ferrier, the whole ordnance corps.
- Slick; Yeah?
- Mike; I hammer out horseshoes all day. I shoot off Old Rusty at retreat. Then I go back to the blacksmith shop and reload cartridges 'till midnight.
- Slick; (Till Midnight? How's that?
- Mike; I'm on extra duty for swiping liquor from the storeroom.
- Slick; Let's grab something worthwhile, Mike. The Comanche's gold.
- Mike; You and your ideas!
- Slick; The Indian agent just tossed that money into his office like so much cormmeal. The place isn't locked and nobody stays there but a young Comanche buck.
- Mike; That's Tall Tree, one of old Chief Iron Claw's sons. We're holding him hostage.

- Slick; We could knife him tonight and h'ist that gold without anybody being wiser.
- Mike; And they call you Slick! We couldn't get out of this hunk of dobe with our skins, let alone the gold and the horses and provisions we'd need.
- Slick; Maybe so.
- Mike; Look at that gate, those walls! A double guard everywhere. They haven't passed anyone out but the scout for weeks.
- Slick; What's the reason?
- Mike; What's the reason for anything in the Army?
- Slick; Maybe we could bury the swag and get it out later.
- Mike; The only place you can hide anything here is behind a dobe brick and that's been tried too often.
- Slick; I hear that some fellow named Manley's going out tonight.
- Mike; He's a civilian scout.
- Slick; If he'd throw in with us --
- Mike; Not him. He thinks he's a second Lone Ranger.
- Slick; Lone Ranger?
- Mike; He's the hombre in the mask who's supposed to go around tossing silver bullets into badmen.
- Slick; Silver bullets! (LAUGHS) Why not gold ones?
(SUDDENLY) Say! That's it! I've got it!
- Mike; You're locoed.
- Slick; Do you work alone in the blacksmith's shop?

Mike; Sure, but what --

Slick; Then I know a way to get that gold out of the fort...
thanks to the Lone Ranger.

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Annrcr; While Slick Howard unfolded his scheme, Colonel Rice, commander of Fort Fuller was in post headquarters conferring on arrangements for the payment of the annuity money. With him was Mr. Manley and the agent, Mr. Hayward.

Colonel; Do you understand your orders, Mr. Manley?

Manley; Sure do, Colonel. I'm to tell Iron Claw to come in tomorrow and get his boy and the money.

Colonel; Also thank him for his patience and express regret that arrival of the annuity was so long delayed.

Manley; I got it.

Colonel; Mr. Hayward, as Indian agent, may have something to add.

Hayward; Nothing, Colonel. But I'm wondering about that money. Is it safe in the agency office?

Colonel; Safer than it was in the mint. This scout is the only man who could possibly get it out of the fort and I'd trust Manley with my life.

Manley; (LAUGHS) Thanks, Colonel Rice.

Colonel; How soon can you start for Iron Claw's village?

Manley; I'll ride soon as the moon's up. That'll get me there at sunup.

Colonel; Very well.

Manley; Anything else?

Colonel; No, that's, Manley.

(STEPS GOING BACK)

Hayward; Luck to you, Manley.

Manley; (BACK) Thanks. Good-bye. Good-bye, Colonel Ride.

Hayward; Good bye.

Colonel; Good bye.

(DOOR OPENS & CLOSES BACK)

Hayward; Colonel Rice, there's an Indian in the orderly room.

Colonel; An Indian, Mr. Hayward?

Hayward; A fellow I picked up on the trail to act as interpreter. He claims to have a message for you. But I don't know --
(HESITATES)

Colonel; Call him in.

Hayward; (LOUDLY) Tonto!

(DOOR OPENS, CLOSES BACK, STEPS COME IN AS:)

Tonto; (COMING IN) You call-um Tonto.

Colonel; What's your message? Did you come from Iron Claw?

Tonto; Me come from white friend. Him say tell-um Colonel that Iron Claw fool pony soldiers last year when him surrender

Colonel; Indeed!

Tonto; White friend say Iron Claw got plenty rifles buried,
maybe five, six hundred.

Colonel; Who is your friend? How does he know this?

Tonto; Me call-um friend Kemo Sabay. Him hear gun runner make
big talk about rifles. Him find-um few in cave. Burn-um
up. Now him look for rest.

Colonel; Anything else to tell me?

Tonto; : No. That all.

Colonel; Very well, you may go.

(STEPS AWAY, DOOR OPENS BACK, CLOSES)

Hayward; I think he's lying, Colonel.

Colonel; I'm afraid not. The Comanches did hide some guns.
They turned in nothing but muzzle-loaders.

Hayward; What do you propose to do?

Colonel; Pray, Mr. Hayward! Pray that Iron Claw will be satisfied
when we pay the annuity and release his son.

Hayward; Why not arrest the chief and send an expedition after
those rifles.

Colonel; That would be suicide!

Hayward; You have a troop of cavalry and a cannon.

Colonel; A cannon that was old before the Mexican War, a troop that
can't move because half the horses have glanders.

Hayward; Then the settlement must be in danger.

Colonel; With five hundred Winchesters, Iron Claw could wipe them out and I'll tell you something else. We have no rifle ammunition except the reloaded cartridges in the men's belts.

Hayward; At least we're safe here in the fort.

Colonel; Safe! If the Indians attacked tonight, our scalps would be drying on their lodge poles tomorrow. We must keep peace!

Hayward; Our scalps! ... (SHUDDERS)

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Anncr; It was the following morning when the Lone Ranger headed for a rendezvous with Tonto. He had been holding his great horse Silver to a walk but when he reached the Fort Fuller trail --

(HOOFS AT WALK)

Ranger; Here's where we turn, Big Fellow.

Anncr; Ahead of the masked man the sand bore no prints of hoofs, boots or moccasins, but there were other marks. He read their meaning instantly.

Ranger; A man crawling along the trail! He's hurt! He needs help! Come on, Silver!

(HOOFS AT GALLOP)

Anncr; A few minutes later the Lone Ranger reined up beside a man who had been attempting to drag his dust-covered body behind a sheltering rock.

(HOOFS STOP AS:)

Ranger; (AD LIBS WHOA'S) (DISMOUNTS) Here, friend, let me help you.

Manley; Water! ... Water! Water, friend.

Ranger; Take it easy. Here's my canteen.

(WATER GURGLING)

Where are you hurt?

Manley; Leg's broken. Horse fell .. broke its leg, too. Had to shoot it. ... Say who are you?

Ranger; You called me a friend a moment ago.

Manley; I'm Tom Manley - scout from Fort Fuller .. and my friends don't wear masks. (EFFORT) Get your hands up.

Ranger; Steady, Manley. You can't shoot me.

Manley; Why not?

Ranger; If my horse didn't kill you, thirst and heat would.

Manley; (BITTER LAUGH) Take the gun.

Ranger; That's better. Now let's get that boot off and fix a splint.

(MANY HOOFS IN B.G., FADING UP)

Manley; That's cavalry.

Ranger; Yes, I see them.

Manley; You'd better light out, mister.

Ranger; No need for that.

(HOOFB UP AND HALT)

Lieutenant; Cover them, men!

Manley; Lieutenant James! Don't you know me? I'm Manley.

Lieutenant; I know you too well. I hoped I'd find you dead as your horse but I see you joined your partner?!

Manley; This road agent my partner? Why he just happened along.

Lieutenant; And being a big hearted bandit, he stopped to give you first aid. Humph!

Manley; I tell you I don't know this masked man.

Lieutenant; Why lie? You passed him the gold and it's there in his bulging saddle bags.

Ranger; You'll find no gold in my saddlebags.

Lieutenant; I arrest you, Tom Manley for murder and robbery. And you, John Doe, for being an accessory after the fact.

Manley; Me - a murderer?

Lieutenant; You're worse than that. When you killed Tall Tree last night and stole the Comanche's gold, you invited the worse Indian massacre in history.

Manley; Th- the gold -- gone?

Lieutenant; Yes.

Voice 1; Lieutenant, that Injun tracker we had with us is missing. He's gone to tell Iron Claw what's happened! Now we can expect the worst.

Ranger; I can't help you as a prisoner. Here Silver!

(HORSE WHINN-Y, HOOFS CLATTERING)

Lieutenant; Get his guns, Sergeant! Grab that horse!

AD LIB: (CONFUSION)

Lieutenant; Halt or I'll fire!

Ranger; No you won't!

(SHOT)

(MOUNTING) Come on Silver!

(HOOFS START HARD)

Lieutenant; My arm! He hit me! Fire men, fire!

(SEVERAL SHOTS)

AD LIB: (CONFUSION)

Lieut; He's escaping! Bring down his horse if you can't hit him!

Voice #2 My rifle's jammed!

Voice #3 Mine misfired!

Voice #2 It's those reload^{ED}/shells!

(FADE OUT HOOFS)

Lieut; Sergeant, take these men's names. They deliberately shot high or held their fire.

Voice # They're troopers, sir. They couldn't shoot a horse like that.

Lieut; Well I - I guess I couldn't either. So forget it. He's gone and we can't kill our crowbaits in a hopeless chase.

Voice 6; Anyhow we've got Manley, sir.

Lieut; Manley, yes. But where's the gold?

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Annrc; A few hours after Tom Manley's arrest, the officer of the day at Fort Fuller strode into headquarters. He opened the door to Colonel Rice's office.

(DOOR OPENS)

Then he stiffened to attention, surprise in his face.

Yates; Captain Yates reporting, sir.

Colonel; (BACK) Oh, it's you .. (WEARILY) Come in.

(STEPS IN)

Annrc; Colonel Rice sat slumped over an untouched cup of coffee. His face was haggard and unshaven, his uniform unkempt. He attempted a smile as Captain Yates halted before him .

(STEPS STOP)

Colonel; Well, Captain?

Yates; About Manley, sir. His leg has been set. He's in the guardhouse.

Colonel; Does he still maintain that he's innocent?

Yates; He does even though he realizes that it'll gain him nothing.

Colonel; As I understand it, Tall Tree was killed between taps and moonrise.

Yates; Yes sir. And Manley was passed thru the gate at moonrise.

Colonel; When was the crime discovered?

Yates; About midnight. The Sergeant of the guard happened to pass the agency office and saw Tall Tree lying in the doorway.

Colonel; He summoned you?

Yates; Yes. Manley was the only man who had left the fort so I sent Lieutenant James and some men to get him.

Colonel; Go on.

Yates; We've searched the fort inch by inch. The gold can't possibly be hidden here.

Colonel; In your opinion Manley's guilty?

Yates; Yes. But his masked friend got away with the gold. If we could run him down --

Colonel; The situation won't permit an extensive search.

Yates; What do you propose to do, Colonel?

Colonel; The only thing possible. I'll commandeer a thousand head of cattle from Rancho Rojo and offer the herd to the Comanches in place of the annuity payment.

Yates; You're risking a courtmartial.

Colonel; That doesn't matter. The Indians need meat more than money.

Yates; Iron Claw won't be satisfied with that. His son is dead.

Colonel; I shall give him the life of a man who was dear as a son to me.

Yates; You mean --??

Colonel; I mean to hang Tom Manley. And Chief Iron Claw, if he chooses, shall set the date of the execution and be a witness.

(BUGLES IN B.G. SOUNDING BOOTS AND SADDLES)

Yates; I'm sorry, sir.

Colonel; He saved my life once... He - but no more of that! Get me that Indian, Tonto.

Yates; Can he be trusted?

Colonel; We have to trust him. He's the only man left who stands any chance of reaching Iron Claw with my offer.

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Annrc; Late that afternoon, the Lone Ranger rode into a long abandoned target range on the edge of the Fort Fuller reservation.

(HOOFS AT TROT)

It was the one place in the neighborhood of the fort that offered cover and the masked man previously had picked it out as a point of contact with Tonto. He found the Indian squatting beside his paint horse, Scout.

(HOOFS HALT, HORSES WHINNY AS:)

Ranger; (AD LIBS WHOA'S) (DISMOUNT) Here ahead of me, eh, Tonto.

Tonto; Ugh. Me look around here. Plenty cannon ball in ground.

Ranger; They were fired in practise years ago. But, Tonto, I have some good news. I found the rest of the hidden rifles.

Tonto; That plenty good. What you do with rifles?

Ranger; Burned them.

Tonto; Comanches know this?

Ranger; Their scouts went to investigate the smoke.

Tonto; Me on way now with message for Iron Claw.

Ranger; What is it?

Tonto; Colonel say tell-um Chief him hang murderer of Tall Tree - give tribe big herd of cattle.

Ranger; Iron Claw can't ask more than that.

Tonto; Me know. Him make war once because government cheat him. Him hide rifles because him expect to be cheated again.

Ranger; Now that I've destroyed those weapons, I mean to see that Colonel Rice keeps his word.

Tonto; Maybe him hang wrong man.

Ranger; I was with Manley when the soldiers captured and accused him.

Tonto; Soldiers think you get-um gold.

Ranger; Then the gold hasn't been found?

Tonto; Soldier look everywhere in fort - and along trail. Not find-um.

Ranger; (WONDERING) How was it taken from the fort. I -

(DISTANT CANNON)

Tonto; Cannon. Soldier fire-um salute.

Ranger; The sunset gun.

(SOLID SHOT FALLS ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~(STRIKE ROCK)

Tonto; (STARTLED) What that!

Ranger; Look Tonto! A cannon ball! Right there!

Tonto; Me see-um!

Ranger; That cannon fired a solid shot!

Tonto; That plenty strange!

Ranger; It's a wonder the old gun didn't blow apart.
(EFFORT) Just a minute, Tonto - let's have a look
at that cannonball.

Tonto; What matter?

Ranger; It made a funny sound when it struck that rock.

Tonto; (EFFORT) Shot got-um flat spot where it hit rock.

Ranger; (EFFORT) And it's - () Tonto, let me take your knife.

Tonto; (EFFORT) Here -

Ranger; (EFFORT) This isn't like other cannon balls. I - ()

Tonto! Look wherev' I've scratched it! It's soft -

Tonto; It gold color!

Ranger; It IS gold! Gold melted into a cannon ball and painted
black! The Comanche Gold!

Tonto; That mean Manly not steal um gold!

Ranger; At least it means that more than one man's involved!
Tonto - deliver your message to Iron Claw, then hurry
back to the fort. Keep an eye on the men who have
anything to do with the cannon or the blacksmith shop.

Tonto; Me savvy! You wait here for crook to come - gettun
gold?

Ranger; No! I might have to wait for days! I have a plan to
force their hands! Now get going!

Tonto; (MOUNTING) Gittun Up Scout!

HOOFS START

MUSIC BURST

Anncr; The curtain falls on the firstact of our Lone Ranger
story. Before we continue with the next exciting scenes,
please permit usto pause for just a moment.

COMMERCIAL

Anncr; After Tonto left to meet Iron Claw, the Lone Ranger
disguised himself as a Mexican peon. Wearing a tattered
serape and a sombrero he shuffled timidly toward the
gat of Fort Fuller until he was challenged from the wall.

Voice; (BACK) Halt! Who goe s there?

Ranger; You may call me, Jose Plutarco Valdez.

Voice; (BACK) Advance and be recognized. (SHOUT) Sergeant of the
guard - post number one.

Sgt. Rud; (FARTHER BACK, COMING IN) Coming. What is it?

Voice; (BACK) There's an old hombre down there at the gate.

SERGEANT: (BACK) Keep him covered and I'll open the peep-hole.

(PEEP HOLE COVER SLIDING OPEN)

Sergeant; What's up, old man? Been chased by Injuns?

Ranger; Buenas tardes, senor. I would wish to speak to Senor El Coronel.

Sergeant; The Colonel's busy. You can say it to me.

Ranger; I would wish the word of someone of great authority.

Sergeant; That someone's me, grandpa. Me, Sergeant Rud.

Ranger; Si, si. I had forgotten. In the army of the Americanos it is Senor el Sergeante who wins the battles. Is true, no?

Sergeant; Is true, yes. I won the Battle of Gettysburg practically single-handed.

Ranger; Senor, I am a poor man and I would wish permission to dig up the old cannon balls on the desert.

Sergeant; Jumping John Rogers! What for?

Ranger; The horseshoer at Ranch Rojo has much need of iron. He would pay me a little.

Sergeant; You can dig up the desert from here to Death Valley for all I care. I hope you strike gold.

Ranger; Gracias, senor.

Sergeant; Say, you can't tote that junk on your back. If you haven't got a burro, I can spare you a couple of dollars to buy one.

Ranger; No, Senor, I do not have need of it. Gracias, mil gracias.

Sergeant; Well, grandpa, keep a tight hold on your scalp.

(FADE FOOTSTEPS INTO MUSIC:

INTERLUDE

Annrc; Lights burned late that night at headquarters as Colonel Rice, Captain Yates and the Indian agent awaited the return of Tonto.

(BUGLE IN B.G. BLOWING TAPS)

Colonel; That Indian should be back now if he's coming back.

Captain; Colonel, have you considered the possibility that he was sent here to spy on us?

Colonel; I'm considering it right now.

Hayward; No spy would have told us about the hidden rifles.

Capt; Don't be too sure of that, Mr. Hayward. He may have told us just enough of the truth to gain our confidence.

Colonel; Well, gentlemen, if he has told Iron Claw how weak we are, we'll never need to hang Tom Manley.

Capt; Under those circumstances all of us might wish we could hang.

Hayward; Here, Captain. Take these things.

Capt; Five cartridges!

Hayward; The other one is still in my revolver. I can't shoot well enough to kill Indians and one bullet is all I need for myself.

Colonel; There's somebody at the door. (LOUDLY) Come in.

(DOOR OPENS, CLOSES)

Sergeant; (BACK) Here's the Injun, sir.

Colonel; Very well, Sergeant. And now, Tonto --

(STEPS IN AND STOP)

Tonto; See-um Iron Claw. Him say you keep promise - him keep peace.

Colonel; Is that all?

Tonto; Him come to fort tomorrow. Him bring ten other Chief. See murderer die. You send-um cattle to Iron Claw camp in one week.

Colonel; It seems strange that he was so easily appeased.

Captain; I doubt that he ever had any Winchesters hidden. Maybe we can avoid commandeering livestock for him.

Colonel; No, Captain. I promised Iron Claw meat and he shall have it even though it costs me my commission, and my life's savings.

Hayward; Colonel, you can count on me to help foot the bill if the government won't back you.

Colonel; Thanks, Mr. Hayward. Say, where's that Indian? He disappeared like a ghost.

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Annrc; Tonto slipped unnoticed out of headquarters. It was just a few minutes later when Mike Mason approached a dark recess near the stables where Slick waited --

Mike; That you, Slick?

Slick; Yeah. I've been waitin' here for an hour.

Mike; I been up in the guardhouse fixing the gallows.

Slick; The gallows? Ugh.

Mike; I heard something up there that you won't like.

Slick; I don't like a lot of things. What's this one?

Mike; Some old Mexican is going to dig up the cannonballs on the target range for junk.

Slick; You sure?

Mike; He come to the gate today. Everyone's talkin' about it.

Slick; We got to do somethin', Mike.

Mike; What?

Slick; Either get rid of the Mexican or move the gold to another place. He'll find it first thing.

Mike; How we going to get out to do it?

Slick; I don't know yet, but I'll get an idea.

Mike; You and your ideas! You're going to brainstorm us right up the thirteen steps.

Slick; Going yellow on me?

Mike; No, but I never figured on us stirring up the Injuns an' sticking Manley with our job. I never liked him, but-

Slick; It was his hard luck.

Mike; (SOTTO) Look! See that shadow against the wall.
It wasn't there a second ago.

Slick; (SOTTO) It's moving. It's a man.

Mike; (SOTTO) He's stopped now. What's he up to?

(BACK, TWANG OF BOWSTRING)

Slick; (SOTTO) What was that, Mike?

Mike; (SOTTO) A bowstring. He shot an arrow.

Slick; (SOTTO) Then it's an Injun.

Mike; (SOTTO) Got a gun?

Slick; (SOTTO) Yeah --

Mike; (SOTTO) He's coming this way now. When he goes
to pass we'll jump him.

(STEALTHY STEPS)

Slick; Grab him, Mike!

Mike; I've got him! Bash his head!

(STRUGGLE, THREE SHOTS)

Mike; Stop shootin', Slick! You'll hit me!

Slick; I'm shootin' to get help. (SHOUTS) Sergeant of the
Guard!

(SHOUTS AND RUNNING STEPS APPROACHING)

Sergeant; (COMING IN) What's going on? Hold it, you fellows!

Mike; (PANTING) We got an Injun for you, Sarge.

(STEPS STOP)

Sergeant; Oh it's you, Mason.

Mike; Me an' Howard. This redskin shot an arrow.

Sergeant; Some of you other men lend Mike a hand. I want to hold a lantern on the Injun.

Tonto; Me Tonto.

Sergeant; Yeah, you're Tonto all right, but I don't get the rest of it.

Tonto; Me not talk now.

Slick; Here's his bow, Sergeant.

Sergeant; Yeah, but what was he using it for?

Mike; You wear chevrons. Figure it out.

Sergeant; Where'd the arrow go, Mike?

Mike; Over the wall, I guess.

(SHOT, BACK)

Voice; (BACK) Sergeant of the Guard! Post Number Eight!

Sergeant; (CALL) What's wrong, Number Eight? What's that gunplay?

Voice; (BACK) I fired at somebody out there by the big cactus.

Sergeant; (CALL) Get him?

Voice; (BACK) I don't know.

(STEPS APPROACHING)

Sergeant; Here comes the Colonel. Attention, men!

Colonel; (COMING IN) As you were. What's the trouble,
Sergeant Rud?

Sergeant; I can't rightly say, sir, but the way it stacks
up this Tonto is a spy.

Colonel; A spy!

Sergeant; He shot an arrow out of the fort. There must have
been a message fastened to it because someone was
waiting outside.

Colonel; Have anything to say for yourself, Tonto?

Tonto; Ugh.

Colonel; Captain Yates, put every man in the fort under arms.
Mount one squad ready to ride for help.

Captain; Yes sir. (FADING BACK)

(RUNNING STEPS FADE BACK)

Colonel; I want a volunteer to reconnoiter all approaches to
the fort.

Sergeant; I, sir.

Colonel; I can't spare you, Sergeant.

Slick; (SOTTO) Here's your chance to get out of the fort,
Mike.

Mike; (SOTTO) My chance!

Slick; (SOTTO) You know the country. I don't.

Mike; I'll go, sir.

Colonel; You, Mason! You never volunteered for anything before.

Sergeant; He captured the Injun, sir. Maybe he's a better man than we figured.

Colonel; Then the job is yours, Mason. Get started immediately.

Mike; Yes sir.

U (STEPS FADE BACK)

Colonel; Lock this Indian up.

Anncr; While Tonto was being locked up, Mike Mason wormed his way across the moon-flooded sands into the old target range.

(NIGHT NOISES)

Mike; (SOTTO) Now if I can just make it to that next bush.

(CRAWLING, PANTING)

Anncr; Cactus needles tore the hands and knees of the treacherous soldier. Sweat streaked his face and the choking dryness of fear was in his throat. Each instant he expected the terrible war whoops of blood thirsting Comanches to shatter the desert silence.

Mike; What's that? ... Nothing ... Just a rock .. () Got to keep my nerve up. () Got to get that gold.
(AD LIB EFFORTS)

(CRAWLING, ADLIBBED)

Anncr; Whipped on by his greed, Mason finally reached a point where he knew from observation the golden cannonball had fallen.

Mike; It's got to be here. Got to be here close.

Anncr; He rose to one knee to study his surroundings and then --

(SUDDEN STRUGGLE, GRUNTS, GASPS, ETC.)

-- a dark form hurtled down upon him from the top of a rock. One hand snatched away his rifle. Another stifled the cry that was just behind his teeth.

Ranger; Now talk. Who are you?

Mike; I -- I'm Mike Mason. Y-You're a - wh-white man.

Ranger; You can be thankful for that.

Mike; What's that on your face? A mask?

Ranger; Does it matter to you? You came here to dig up the Comanche's gold. But you're too late.

Mike; You're an outlaw! You found the gold!

Ranger; It's right over there.

Mike; Then you don't want me. Let me get back to the fort.

Ranger; Mason, we're both going to the fort.

MUSIC: INTERLUDE

Anncr; A big guardroom served as a cell for Tonto and Tom Manley the condemned scout. The Indian was well aware that any moment a nervous sentry might mistake a shadow for a skulking Comanche. He knew too that Slick Howard stood outside the window waiting to shoot him if given an excuse. Still he tried to cheer his fellow prisoner.

Tonto; My friend come soon now, Manley.

Manley; You've said that before, Indian. I don't believe you.

Tonto; Somebody come now.

(DOOR UNLOCKS, OPENS)

Manley; It's Sergeant Rud and the Colonel.

Sergeant; Attention!

(STEPS IN, DOOR CLOSES, LOCKS)

Colonel; Well, Tom, there's been no sign of an attack yet. I almost hoped — (CHOKES)

Manley; Take it easy, Colonel.

Colonel; You know what it means if this proves to be a false alarm and Iron Claw comes in peaceably.

Manley; I know.

Colonel; If you'd help us capture that masked man and recover the gold I might be able to save you.

Manley; Colonel I can't!

Colonel; This is your last chance, Tom.

(KNOCKING ON HEAVY DOOR)

Voice; (OUTSIDE) Sergeant of the Guard!

Sergeant; Now what?

(STEPS BACK, DOOR UNLOCKS, OPENS)

(BACK) Well, Corporal.

Voice; (BACK) We just let Mike Mason in.

Colonel; What does he report?

Voice; (BACK) He brought in a prisoner. Captured his horse too - a big white stallion.

Colonel; Bring the prisoner in at once.

Voice; (BACK) Mike's coming with him now.

(CROWD STEPS UP, COME IN)

AD LIB: (EXCLAMATIONS OF SURPRISE)

Sergeant; Jumping Judas! A masked man!

Manley; That's the fellow who was with me on the trail, Colonel.

Colonel; What's he got in that saddle bag, Mason?

Sergeant; Where'd you find him?

Colonel; Well, Mason, can't you talk and hold a gun on a prisoner at the same time?

Mike; I -- I --

Sergeant; He's got buck fever.

Colonel; What's in that bag, prisoner.

Ranger; The stolen gold, Colonel.

Colonel; What! Then you are guilty, Tom Manley!

Ranger; Take the bag, Colonel. Dump the contents.

Colonel; That isn't money.

(HEAVY BALL DROPPING, ROLLING ON FLOOR)

It's a cannon ball!!

Ranger; A ten thousand dollar cannon ball cast from the half eagles you were going to give to Iron Claw.

(SHUFFLING OF FEET,)

ED LIB: (EXCLAMATIONS)

Colonel; It's black. It smells of powder.

Ranger; It was painted black so it could be hidden among the iron shot beside the cannon. At sunset it was fired over the wall.

Mike; He's lying, Colonel! It's a trick to save Manley!

Ranger; Stand where you are, all of you!

Sergeant; He's got a gun! It was in his shirt.

Colonel; Shoot, Mason! Shoot!

Ranger; Mason's gun is empty, Colonel. I saw to that before I brought him in.

Colonel; YOU brought HIM in?

Ranger; He's been my prisoner right along. He cast and fired that gold ball.

Col; But --

Ranger; I captured him tonight while he was trying to recover it.

Col; But --

Ranger; I never could have brought him into the fort without pretending to reverse our roles.

Col; What about it, Mason?

Mike; I know when I'm whipped.

Col; Then you admit your guilt?

Mike; No use denying it. I made that ball and shot it but
I didn't kill Tall Tree.

Col; If you had a confederate, name him.

Mike; It was all his idea. Him and his ideas!

Col; Name him, Mason, and you may save your neck.

Mike; He's --

(SHOT)

AD LIB: (STIR)

Slick; (OUTSIDE) I'm shot! (GROANS)

Mike; You got him, masked man! You got Slick Howard!
He was going to plug me from that window.

Ranger; For once you've spoken the truth, Mason.

Mike; With me dead, he'd have lied out of killing Tall Tree.

Ranger; Sergeant, you'd better look after Howard. He's hit in
the shoulder.

Sergeant; (FADING BACK) Right.

(STEPS FADE BACK)

Col; Mister, you knew what would happen. You set a trap
for Howard.

Ranger; A man can be the master of circumstance as well as
its victim.

Manley; Does this clear me, Colonel?

Col; It certainly does, Tom. As soon as your leg mends, you'll be back in the saddle.

Manley; Thanks, Colonel.

Col; Don't thank me.

Ranger; Get your horse, Tonto.

Tonto; Me get-um.

(STEPS GO BACK)

Col; By what authority, sir, are you delivering this Indian from custody?

Ranger; He's done nothing except help you.

Col; He communicated information to someone outside the fort.

Ranger; To me.

Col; Then you're the white friend of whom he spoke?

Ranger; I am.

Col; What can you tell me about Iron Claw's rifles?

Ranger; There will be no more Indian wars in this territory. Iron Claw's rifles are destroyed.

Col; Destroyed! By whom?

Ranger; I burned them.

Col; (HEATEDLY) You burned government property?

Ranger; Yes, Colonel. I burned government property. Are you going to hold me under arrest?

Col; (MANNER CHANGING) You destroyed the rifles - so the Indians couldn't use them against us! They had to make peace. You found the men who murdered the Chief's son, and the men who stole the gold. You recovered the gold and saved Manley from execution. By George! I'd certainly LIKE to hold a man like you! I certainly would! I'd like to have you around! Permanently.

Ranger; (LAUGHS) Thank you, Colonel! (MOUNTS) Come on, Silver.

(HOOFS START)

Manley; I guess, Colonel, there are a lot of people who'd like to have him around - permanently.

Ranger; (BACK) Hiyo Silver, Away!

THEME