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Presents A Western Adventure:

A stylized illustration of a Western landscape. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, with a large, bright sun or moon in the center. The ground is a dark brown, textured surface. Several tall, dark green saguaro cacti with red and orange vertical stripes are scattered across the scene. In the center, a silhouette of a cowboy on horseback is visible, facing away from the viewer. To the right, a smaller silhouette of a person stands in the distance. The title text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

The Devil
comes to
Swan Guich

The Devil comes to Swan Gulch

Or

“Four Horsemen and a funeral”

A Western RPG Adventure

Gagmen Show 14

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Introduction

This game adventure was designed using Boot Hill Second Edition

rules (written by Brian Blume and Gary

Gygax), which means it is easily compatible with later editions of Boot Hill by TSR. As a western adventure, it should work with any other game system that uses a western motif. As always, feel free to change or add anything to make the game work for you and your group. While we wrote the adventure with classic westerns in mind, please add more or less edge to the story to make it fit your own style.

Theme/Setting

Swan Gulch is a lonely mountain town in the southern Utah Territories, just west of the Rocky Mountains along the border of the Arizona Territory. While the town is home to less than a hundred, it serves as a hub for travelers heading west. Thanks to the stage stop (which has always kept the town busy with travelers), the new telegraph (which has helped keep the town connected to the outside world), and the arrival of the railroad, commerce for the ranchers in the area has



dramatically increased. This sleepy little town has become quite the bustling hub, however not without attracting some of the less than desirable elements of the old west. The remote location of the town makes it an ideal hideout, attracting many outlaws to camp in the surrounding area, which makes them very hard to find. Consequently, any crimes committed in the town could take weeks to prosecute, so the town sheriff has taken it upon himself to dispense “frontier justice” from time to time.

Plot



Arriving in Town

The party will arrive in town early in the morning when the streets are still fairly empty. On the outskirts of town they will come across Sheriff Hill, who is sitting outside his office whittling. He will greet the party and offer to show them around Swan Gulch’s Main Street, and point out the newest buildings.



As they reach the bank, its front doors will be kicked open as a man with a mask, a bag of money, a gun, and a wild look in his eyes runs out the front door. The Sheriff will order the man to drop his gun, and ask the party to stand back. The man will make some rather wild gestures and some disconcerting grunting noises. Eventually, he will fire off a shot, causing the sheriff to draw and shoot him dead. When the sheriff unmasks the man, he will identify the robber as Eusia Perkins, a shifty drifter that came to town a week before.

Sheriff Hill will apologize for making the Group witness such horrific events, and offer to send them to the “Dead to Rights” Saloon. Once in the saloon they should meet with Caldonia Polk, the owner of the saloon and the head dancer. If any of the players stay with the body Sheriff Hill will advise against it, but leave them to it. Doc Tippen will happen along to take care of the body. If he is asked, the doctor will make a few educated guesses about things happening in the town that may be a little confusing. Doc Tippen will be in a hurry to get the body off the street and to the undertakers, as the Bank manager, Lowell Riffle, will be outside complaining about bank

robbers and what his bank looks like with a dead body out front.

Rumor Table for Swan Gulch (D10)

1	The Rider killed and ate everyone in the town of Dust Swallow.
2	Indians are vicious savages and would kill you without hesitation.
3	Lady Caldonia is a secret service agent for the union.
4	Mr. Riffle has plans to steal all the towns money and go to Bolivia.
5	The Ute Indians are friendly traders and wouldn't hurt a fly.
6	The Riders are dangerous outlaws but they all have a price on their heads.
7	Seems like there has been a lot of bank robberies over the last few years.
8	Doc Tippen seems to know a lot about everything.
9	Sheriff Hill has killed over a dozen outlaws trying to rob the bank.
10	There is gold in them there hills!





So what do y'all do 'round here fer fun?

Miss Polk knows how to treat weary travelers; at the saloon the party should witness many exciting events, including a poker game, a can-can dance by Miss Polk herself, a good old fashioned bar room brawl, and maybe even a few good drinks. The party should feel comfortable, and perhaps take time to meet a few of the other characters from town and the surrounding area. The consensus the group should gather from the town folk should be that everyone loves the sheriff, and he is darn near unbeatable on the draw.

The night should be almost perfect until Aileen Schlegel, the daughter of Isiah Schlegel, bursts through the bar doors. She will frantically request help, and then lead the doctor and whoever will follow her out to her wagon, where her father lies, bloody and unmoving. Isaiah has been shot several times and has lost quite a bit of blood, and Doc Tippen will try to attend to him as quickly as possible, but after a few moments will declare him dead. Aileen will claim they were attacked at their ranch by a group of desperados known as the Four Riders. They are being led by a devious Hispanic bandit known as "Scratch", and they were last seen



headed for Swan Gulch. Sheriff Hill will point out that Scratch has a price on his head and whether they like it or not, "The Devil is coming to Swan Gulch."

Here come the Bad Guys



The Four Riders are a gang of the toughest hombres and raiders the west has ever seen, but they have never traveled this far north. These riders were the original enforcers for the Comancheros, but were pressed out because they were considered too dangerous. They now travel the west looking for quick profits from small towns. A gang of around ten small-time outlaws and outcasts that prefer the strength in numbers follow the riders from town to town to share in the profit.

When the gang reaches a town, they usually line up on the outskirts and wait; it doesn't take long for the town folk to notice that they have arrived. The Gang then sends

their two fastest two men to run through the town to draw fire. The remaining gang watches for gun smoke and flashes to determine where the town defenders are placed. The four riders then lead the rest of the gang in, targeting anyone that could be a problem. The plan is so efficient that the Gang crushes resistance quickly, allowing them to loot the town for whatever they need. Many towns will put all their valuables into a stack in the main street so the gang will take what they want and leave.

The riders have been known to burn a town down if they encounter too much resistance. Over the years, myths and stories have followed the rider from place to place claiming that they have supernatural powers, that they are the bringers of death, or that buzzards will mark the approach of the riders. However, these are only stories; The Gang is in reality simply a group of heartless killers. They should be feared, but not because of any magical possibilities, instead they should be feared because of their natural disposition and evil habits.



If the players try to scout the gang out before the attack, they will find the gang camped less than four hours ride out from the town. They will be standing around several small campfires with a freshly slaughtered cow from Schlegel Ranch lying nearby. Every member of the gang distrusts their cohorts, and each sleep with a gun or knife ready. There will be two lookouts on duty at all times throughout the night, one up high on a rock or small mesa, and the other walking around the outskirts of the camp. The horses are half unbridled in a makeshift rope corral, and they should have close to twice the horses needed, as they change them out day-to-day.

It's the last thing they would suspect! (Or, Killing people in their sleep)

Occasionally, you may be faced with an aggressive party that wants to attack rather than be attacked. It can be effective to launch a preemptive strike on the enemies, but in this case it may be like sticking your head in a beehive. Presuming none of the players heed your advice (which they usually won't) and go after the gang before they get

to town, the only townsfolk that are likely to help are Doc Tippen and Sheriff Hill. With such a small group the party will be grossly outnumbered, but the players may have a plan.



It's up to you, as the Game Master, to play this on the fly; just be familiar with the Riders gang and basic tactics. Taking on the

gang all at once could be fatal to the group, but a sneaky plan that takes out the gang quietly one-by-one could be effective. It would definitely prevent bloodshed back at the town, and if they succeed

you could continue the story from the party in "The End is Here!"

Stand Yer Ground or Run Fer the Hills!

Because of the looming threat of attack, "Doc" Tippen will call a town meeting to convince the town to take action. Sheriff Hill will argue that he can easily handle the outlaws with only a few well-placed men with rifles. With rumors about the gang flying around, Doc is confused with true and false



information and will advise everyone that the



best idea is to flee town. Lowell Riffle will endorse the Sheriff's plan and say a few inspiring words reminding

the citizens how the sheriff's courage has saved the town in the past.

The players should feel compelled to either help the town or to convince the townsfolk to abandon the town in order to rob it themselves. With the town in danger of being attacked, the party will hopefully help defend the town and become heroes. If the party decides not to help, or if they plan on robbing the town themselves before they leave, then jump ahead to "Hands in the Cookie Jar."

Should they stand and fight, the townsfolk will join in with rifles along the roof and windows to help defend their town. The sheriff will try and talk everyone out of joining in, claiming it is too dangerous, but he is actually afraid that once they stand up for themselves they may no longer need him. As a storyteller, try not to overplay his fear of people getting hurt, but rather to his genuine concern for the community. The sheriff will

take charge of the defense and try to place himself in a secured position while making it seem that he is risking his life at every turn.

The End is here!

The riders will approach the town from the eastern edge and stop just on the outer edge. Two riders on fast horses will dash through the main town street, trying to draw fire. "Suzy Six-Finger" will use her specially modified long rifle begin picking off the rooftop gunman. The gang will slowly start riding into town, gunning down anyone that puts up a fight. Scratch is an expert with a knife, and will take out four men along the boardwalks, clearing out any defenders in close combat. Meanwhile, Pete Lunger and Hungry Jack will gun down the close range opposition with the rest of the gang.

The riders will stay close together, so if the party follows the sheriff's plan; it is likely they will get killed along with most of the town. The best tactic would be to break up the group and lure them into a trap. By breaking up the group the party and townsfolk can take on smaller groups at any





During the party the Sheriff will drug a member and take him to the bank, where he will gag and tie his victim. The sheriff will plant a gun

one time. If the group insists on following the sheriff, then the best chance to win the battle require an advantage over the outlaws, a secret weapon like an old cannon or a Gatling gun. Be warned, however, that an escalation of weaponry does not always equal winning; often it will make things more complicated later on. You have been warned.

loaded with blanks and a bag of many on the party member. He will leave their legs free, and attach a gag under a mask. In this way the sheriff plans to make his hostage appear to be robbing the bank. The Sheriff will raise the alarm through town, and then call out his hostage, with the intention of gunning him down in the street. In this way, the sheriff

Conflict

Heroes to Villains (Get a Rope)

If the group stays and wins against the gang of riders, then the town will hold a celebration to honor the heroes of the town. The sheriff will play along with the rest of the town and enjoy the party. Doc Tippen will try and befriend the group and offer any medical attention that he can provide. Caldonia Polk will offer drinks on the house, presuming her saloon is still standing.



hopes to implicate the party, and then arrest them as outlaws.

It might add drama to the story if you place an nNPC in the party; if you do, then the sheriff could succeed in killing his victim without any consequences to the party. Alternately, the group could help the NPC escape, which would implicate the group even further while making the sheriff appear to be the hero he wants to be.

Good Guys on the Run

The sheriff will gather up a posse to chase down the group, and Doc Tippen will volunteer to join up. There are lots of hiding places and rocky chasms in the area, perfect to hide out in.

A good place to steer the party would be the Schlegel Ranch; they should remember that the ranch is currently empty, and realize it would be a nice place to hold up for the night. If you would like to give the player characters a chance to make a friend for later, Aileen Schlegel could still be trying to tend the ranch. If the ranch is ignored, they could choose to hide in one of the many different canyons or chasms that surround the area.

“Injuns!”

To the west and north lies Indian Territory. The Ute tribes lie to the north and are generally aggressive, causing quite a scare to anyone that runs into them. Ute braves travel on horseback and hunt in the rocky mountain ranges, but come down from the mountains if an opportunity arises. The Ute Indians have made many attacks against the settlers in the northern area, though in the beginning they were a peaceful people.



The last of the Paiute and Navajo Indian tribes lie to the west and south. Both tribes are generally peaceful to traders but have been tricked and attacked by settlers so they can be unpredictable. The Paiute predominantly travel on foot and live in brush huts, while the small bands of Navajo skirt the southern canyon areas and may attack if provoked. Despite this, they are far more hospitable than the Utes to the north. In either case, the Indians could be a source of concern for the PC's, and should be dealt with accordingly. The west and south are



also very difficult desert terrain to get through, with snakes, lizards, and little water in every direction.

Indian Brave (stats may vary by tribe)

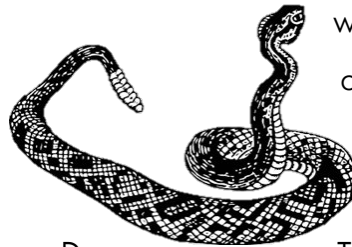
SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+15	87%	14	65%	KN (Average); 9R (Slow)

Random Desert Animal Encounter

D6	Animal	SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Attack Type
1	Scorpion	+4	95%	3	95%	Poison
2	Tarantula	+2	90%	3	95%	Poison (non-lethal)
3	Rattlesnake	+9	90%	6	85%	Poison
4	Mountain Lion	+15	70%	16	65%	Claws Teeth
5	Coyote	+6	20%	14	60%	Claws Teeth
6	Javelina (Boar)	+12	75%	18	65%	Tusks

The Showdown with Sheriff Hill

In the end the sheriff and his posse will catch up to the players and pressure them to come out unarmed. The sheriff has every intention of shooting the group on sight and



will try to draw them out of hiding. If the players can somehow talk to Doc Tippen, they can likely explain a great deal of what has been happening in Swan Gulch. If Sheriff Hill is exposed he will deny everything, but if the evidence becomes overwhelming then he will try to run away. The sheriff is no fool and knows if he is outnumbered, he will try to implicate Lowell Riffle if at all possible.

The Super Happy Fun Ending (Riding off into the Sunset)

This ending should involve be at the Schlegel Ranch, with the sheriff gunned down perhaps as he was trying to sneak attack one of the party. The corrupt banker, Mr. Riffle, should be arrested. Doc Tippen should adopt Aileen Schlegel and bring her back into town to get a proper education. Perhaps one of the PC's could become a replacement sheriff, temporarily until they can find a new one. And the town of Swan Gulch can find prosperity.

Hands in the Cookie Jar

Should the party flee the town before the outlaws arrive, or if they decide to rob the bank themselves, or perhaps if your game



simply goes a different direction, this scene can be used to put the story back on track. As the party approaches the bank, or while on the way out of town, they hear a scuffle coming from the bank. A gunshot rings out and Sheriff Hill bursts out of the bank carrying two carpetbags. The Sheriff and Lowell got into a disagreement about how to spit up and steal the town's money, so the Sheriff ended the argument with a bullet. He

may try to talk his way out a confrontation with the group, but will most likely bolt for his horse and skedaddle out of town. If the players stop him or chase him down and return the money, they will be made heroes by the town. Otherwise they are free to ride off with their ill-gotten gains, forging a new legend of the West.



Characters

SPD = Speed; BRV = Bravery; STR = Strength; ACC = Accuracy; Weapon obvious



Sheriff Samuel "Red" Hill

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+2	65%	11	60%	DAR6 (Average); 2SG (Slow)

A big fish in a small pond, the sheriff came out to the west to stake his claim to fame by becoming a legend in his own time. His tall stature and slim body make him an imposing figure. As a small time deputy in Virginia, he read dime novels and dreamed of coming out west to become the great hero he knew he was, and finding his fortune. Red never left the area until he was

thirty-five, soon after his wife and child died in childbirth. He traveled to the town of Swan Gulch and took up the then vacant job as sheriff. While he aspires to be a great western hero, he has yet to achieve it. He has conspired with Mr. Riffle, the Bank manager, to keep the town under their control through the use of fear, fake bank robberies, and controlling the money.



"Doc" William Tippen

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
0	55%	10	70%	1SG (Slow)

The town doctor/dentist/barber, a young man, with many ideas about helping people, Doc graduated from Harvard Medical School, and was drawn to the wild frontier. Swan Gulch was the furthest he had been from home, and since the town didn't have a doctor, he was invited to stay. He is confused by recent events in town, but is certain that it is all for the good of the community. After examining one of these would-be bank robbers, he has noticed peculiar marking around the hands, which he may share if asked. He is willing to go the extra mile to help out any of his friends in the community.



Lowell Riffle

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
0	40%	9	25%	2D (Average)

Bank Manager of the Swan Gulch Bank, Riffle with knows that while the town is small it has the potential to grow. His fancy clothes and pencil thin mustache are a dead giveaway that he is from back east. Not long after he arrived in Swan Gulch, the sheriff asked him for advice on dealing with a town drunk. The two came up with a way to eliminate undesirables in the town while bolstering both of their reputations. By staging the bank robberies, the Sheriff could act the hero and convince the people that the town is safe, while Riffle his bank look almost impregnable. His goal is to eventually incorporate the town and take over as mayor. Lowell dreams of eventually becoming governor or even president.



“Lady Caldonia” Polk

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+2	75%	10	65%	2D (Average); 2SG (Slow)

The Bar Keep and owner of the Dead to Rights Saloon, Caldonia was a dancehall girl back in Kansas City before coming out west. She saved her money and worked her way out west to build and run her own Saloon. Caldonia feels that she has worked hard for what she has and doesn't owe anybody. Caldonia acts aloof and swears she is of royal blood, though she has no accent, jewelry, or papers to prove anything; despite the lack of evidence, the towns folk still humor her by calling her being “Lady Caldonia”. She keeps a Derringer strapped to her thigh and a shotgun under the bar at all times; just because she looks nice doesn't mean she's dumb. Despite her success, Caldonia regrets never starting a family. Still, she is happy with her life, and the town's folk love her. While she is friendly with almost every resident of Swan Gulch, Caldonia is a little leery of young Doc Tippen; he just seems too young to really know anything.



Aileen Schlegel

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+12	40%	8	55%	None

Aileen is the new owner of Schlegel Ranch after the tragic death of her father (Isaiah) by a band of outlaws. She is a tomboy and was raised almost entirely by her father. She is a hard worker and diligent in all her household chores, and her curly ebon hair is usually twisted in knots and tangles, though her dress is clean and pressed. Aileen dreams of fancy clothes and living in a big city like Paris, but she has no clear concept of geography or where things are located in the world. Her education has fallen short also; she has a rudimentary reading and writing skill, but has never picked arithmetic. She has always tried to make her father proud and will continue to do so even after his death.





The Four Riders

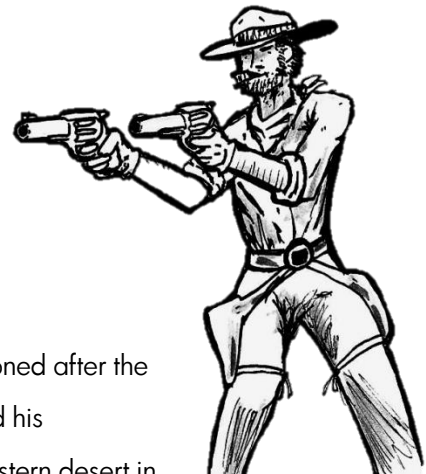
"Hungry Jack" Joaquin Malo

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+9	98%	11	65%	2SG (Slow)

Jack was the child left at a Spanish mission down in South America, but his natural bronzed complexion has long faded to ashy beige. He left the mission as soon as he turned thirteen and joined up with a small gang, learning the lessons that can only be taught by a hard life. He robbed, murdered, and shot his way through to Mexico, where he met up with Scratch. Jack is always eating but never seems to gain a pound; he says "it's just hard livin'", but it's actually due to a tapeworm a tapeworm he picked up while traveling through South America. As a symptom of his questionable health Jack's eyesight has been failing, so lately he sticks with a scattergun as a favored weapon. Jack rides a black horse named Hambruno.

"Pete Lunger" Peter Hollingsbeck

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+15	95%	10	90%	2x DAR6 (Average)



Peter was a confederate soldier in the civil war who felt disillusioned after the surrender at Gettysburg. Pete turned to drinking, which only exacerbated his tuberculosis. Like many that contracted the sickness, he turned to the western desert in the hopes of drying out his cough. With his ability to handle a gun, and strangers reaction to his confederate uniform (the only clothes he could afford), he quickly turned to a life of crime. When he met Scratch and his gang, they were well on their way to riches, and he felt inclined to join them. Even with the sickness, his reflexes are outstanding and his draw is legendary. He rides on a white horse, named Triumph.



Hector "Scratch" Sanchez

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+15	83%	15	75%	2xKN (Average); DAR6 (Average)

The leader of The Riders, Scratch is a close combat expert and a master of knife fighting. He spent many years boxing in Mexico City and learning the art of knife fighting, which scarred his face. The scar reminds Scratch to never show mercy to an enemy. He is brutal in combat and always fights to the death. He rides a shimmering red horse named El Famélico.



Suzannah "Suzy Six-Finger" Lanning

SPD	BRV	STR	ACC	Weapon
+12	90%	12	97%	Modified BR (Slow) with Scope and speed load

Suzy is a deadly shot with her long rifle; she is known to take a fly's wings off at two-hundred yards. Young Suzy was raised by her father, a fur trapper and skinner, and would help stalk their different prey. She has always been a natural with firearms, but especially the long rifle. Her slow and steady aim is perhaps the most deadly in the west. Because of the unique rifle she carries, she must make her own ammunition in order to use it. Her father passed away when she was fifteen and she was taken in by a Cheyenne Indian tribe; however the tribe was soon slaughtered by U.S. Army troops. She was forced back into a "proper" way of life, taken back to Chicago for a proper education, and placed in an all-girls school. She was constantly teased because of her manly mannerisms and the extra finger on her left hand. Suzy has hated her nickname ever since, and will shoot anyone who says it in her presence. She ran away and found a new way of life as an outlaw, and soon met up with the Riders. She rides a pale blond horse, named Calamity.



Details

This is getting Weird (or, I hate westerns, now what?)

Westerns not your thing? Or, you like the story but don't have Boot Hill (or similar game)? The easy part of westerns is how well they can be spliced into other adventures or how easily they can be added to with no real confusion. All this was proven in many western films and television shows, but none so bluntly as "The Valley of Gwangi" (1969) when cowboys get to fight dinosaurs. For you Firefly fans, we know you understand how westerns have a certain universal appeal. So let's just throw a few alternative ideas and let you run with them.



As a supernatural thriller, you could use Call of Cthulhu and make the Sheriff an ancient evil ready to rise to power. Or, if you want to make it even more intense, make him the actual devil (or a demon) who is in town preying off of the fear and admiration of the town. As a fantasy adventure, you could make the riders an Orc horde, while the Sheriff could become a soul sucking Incubus pretending to be the town's protector. In a Star Trek game, the group is an away team sent check out a small settlement, which then loses contact with the ship; again the riders could be some kind of creatures or aliens, but the rest would stay the same. If it were in Rifts, we suppose everyone in power armor would be dead and the rest would play out the same. In Toon, just make everyone a pie-fighter instead of a gunfighter and have the sheriff just gives everyone atomic-wedgies, or ship them off to Kukamonga.

The story itself is all about the twist in which the heroes and villains are; an interesting story change might be that the Riders are the actual protectors of the town and the PC's side with the sheriff before realizing it. Perhaps the sheriff has been getting rid of different townsfolk and keeping contracts with them (similar to the contract from Faust), keeping the devil motive. This could lead to a long term mystery while you run other adventures out of Swan Gulch. As usual we leave it to your discretion to add or take away what you feel will work for your group.

