

# RAW, Medium and WELL-DONE

*"My dear crumb", says Flutterbutt, twirling his goatee, "you must be mentally incapacitated."*



**By TOM THURSDAY**

*Why sweat yourself to death punchin' cows when you c'n make easy money, 'thout worryin' 'bout thuh law none? How? Ask Professor Flutterbutt!*

**W**ELL, pals, I hope things are breaking better for you than they did for Professor Ambrose Flutterbutt, the Psychic Medium and Marvel. Not wanting to keep you in suspense, I'll report now that the hero of this soap

opera is Horse Tooth Harrigan, the smarty of the first part.

In case you don't know me, as General Custer remarked to Sitting Bull, I'm Freckle-Puss Perkins, manager of the sideshow with McGimmick and O'Gaff's Wild West Circus and Freak Hippodrome, a ten-wagon mud show that opened the season at Homicide Center, Arizona. Though I have personally booked the regular flock of freak attractions from all parts of the world—see the outside banners—it's Old Man McKeezo who hires Professor Flutterbutt.

"The kid show is dead," remarks the deep-thinking boss. "It needs new life. Get the idear outta your thick skull that all cowboys and rangers are dopes. They crave variety. Professor Flutterbutt will give 'em variety. These Western bean-heads are sick of looking at Fat Girls, Bearded Ladies, and Snake Charmers. This Flutterbutt yamneck will lay 'em in the cactus."

"Yeah," says Horse Tooth Harrigan, "but I never knew Captain Kidd had a brother." The Old Man lets that go over his head.

"This guy can actually talk to the dead," goes on the boss. "Very marvelous, indeed."

"So what?" says Horse Tooth. "I been talking to the dead for years, right from the bally-stand. What's more," steams up Horse Tooth, "I knew that bum years ago when he was high-pitching *Dr. Alonzo Quimm's Diamond Hair Hoister and Dandruff Killer*. That was almost ten-year ago and his name was then Jake McGonigle. He makes out that he don't know me, but the big flounder-head borreys ten bucks from me and promptly forgets same."

"You are nuts," says the boss, politely. "Professor Flutterbutt is a college man."

"Dartmouth or Deer Lodge?" snorts Horse Tooth.

"Shut up," sniffs the Old Man, and stomps down the midway.

I take Horse Tooth to one side, and say, "Are you kidding about that new jerk?"

"Kidding, your Uncle Jesse James!" snaps Horse Tooth. "I could spot him by the scent alone. He was smooth-shaven when I knew him. Now he has a goatee and a set of whiskers. But I'd recognize that jail bait if he was disguised as Tecumseh."

Professor Flutterbutt has his "studio" at the end of the tent, partitioned off with canvas sidewalls

and very private. His admission charge is two-bits a head or even half-head. On the opening night he packs the towners in like fancy clothes in a chorus gal's trunk. The paying patrons are cowboys, rangers and what have you on the rancho. Homicide Center is a typical Western stage-stop, with outlaws, in-laws, and a fine flock of mother-in-laws. The sheriff is the main mugg and he does his own collecting in the gambling joints and dancehalls.

**C**URIOS as to Professor Flutterbutt's act, me and Horse Tooth duck around to his outside wall and cock two sets of extra-large ears. In his lecture, which we can hear plainly, the professor breaks down and confesses that he was gifted from birth with positive psychic powers. With the aid of his "spirit guide"—some tramp entitled Little Big Eyes—he claims he can contact the next world, wherever that is. However, he insists that the audience must remain pin-drop quiet, otherwise Big Little Eyes will get sore as hell and refuse to do his stuff.

Well, after filling the ears of the customers with ten minutes worth of granulated cactus and saddle oil, the professor lowers his voice and gets very confidential. He states that his spirit guide is working on a system to reproduce real money, and that the system should be fully developed within the next few days. In other words, the guide will duplicate any coins or bills that the audience cares to lay upon the table. For instance, if some dope—pardon, customer—places a dollar bill on the table, the spirit will promptly duplicate it with another, making two bucks instead of one.

"Boy," whispers Horse Tooth, "ain't that some oatmeal, huh? Why, the crooked crocodile should get a load of buckshot in the pants!"

"That's a trick I want to see," I says. "If it works, he can put all the banks and U.S. Mints in the poorhouse. What's the gimmick?"

"It's the old apcray," says Horse Tooth. "Sure, he'll take a few days to spring the gag, then *blooey*—hail and farewell!"

"What d'yer mean," I ask, "hail and farewell?"

"Wait and see," says Horse Tooth. Then he grabs me by the arm, and whispers, "Quick; he's doused the lights! Let's breeze in and watch the louse operate."

Lifting the sidewall canvas, we sneak into the studio, unobserved by anyone. It's almost as dark

as black ink in a coal mine.

“Now, good people,” says the professor, “I want to impress upon your minds that there is nothing avaricious about this business of reproducing money. It is merely a demonstration of a great psychic power on the part of my spirit guide, Little Big Eyes. That being understood, I will now ask some person in the audience to place a small coin upon the table.”

A quarter hits the table with a *bing* and the professor says, “I thank you for your faith and confidence.”

“Listen to the ape!” whispers Horse. “Boy, what a line; what a line!”

“Now,” continues the professor, “before continuing with this scientific demonstration it will be essential to have the proper atmosphere. In order to attain this, we must all sing some old and sentimental songs. All right; what shall we sing?”

Some cow waddie suggests “Who Scalped Osceola In the Moonlight?” The professor holds up his hands in horror. “Such a song is not attuned to the spirit world. I suggest that we sing, ‘The Cowboy’s Last Lament.’ That is a grand and soothing melody, one that I’m sure Little Big Eyes will approve.”

THE audience lets out with a vim and a large dose of vigor and kills the song with voices from whisky-soprano to gin-basso. When the outrage against good singing has subsided, the professor flops into a trick trance and asks his spirit guide if he chances to be floating around in the neighborhood. This is the cue for Little Big Eyes to answer through the large trumpet hung directly in back of the professor. But the guide fails to report, and is probably off in space, playing around with a blonde angel and half-pickled to boot.

“It is apparent,” intones the professor, “that we have not acquired the correct atmosphere. I’m afraid more singing will be necessary. I suggest we all sing, ‘My Mother Was a Lady.’”

“I doubt it,” whispers Horse Tooth. “No lady could have a son-of-a-witch like him!”

The boys murder that one and, when it is over, the professor again asks his spirit pal if he is in the vicinity. Much to everyone’s amazement the trumpet lets go with a few well-bred squawks and squeaks, after which the guide remarks that he’s ready to get down to business. Then the professor asks Little Big Eyes if he would be so kind and

generous as to duplicate the two-bits on the table. Shortly after a clink is heard on the table, indicating that the guide has listened to papa.

“Lights!” snapped the professor. Just as we duck out of the tent I notice another quarter beside the first one. I don’t know what happens later but soon the customers troop out with puzzled expressions on their maps.

Horse Tooth Harrigan stops the guy who contributed the first two-bits and asks a few potent questions.

“Did the professor give you the other quarter?”

“Shore did, pard,” says the lad, slapping his hairpants. “It’s wunnerful; ain’t it? Whut’s the use of herdin’ steers when yuh kin git money like-a thet?”

“Listen, fellow,” I horns in, “why didn’t you put five bucks on the table, instead of two-bits? Then you would have had ten bones.”

“Yeah; I know. If I hadda, I woulda hadda. S’long, pard.”

“Coming back tomorrow night?” asks Horse Tooth.

“Shore am! The peffessor says we gonnah have a meetin’ every night this week and work the guide kinda easy-like. He says if Little Big Eyes suspects we are greedy fur gold he might run away and nevah come back. Wal, see yuh tomorrer!”

Ten minutes later Professor Ambrose Flutterbutt strolls out of the tent. He’s puffing a very vile cigarro and it stinks to high heaven and low hell.

“Smell anything?” sniffs Horse Tooth. “I never knew we was in skunk country.”

“If you chased yourself,” woofed the professor, “there would be one skunk left.”

“Lemme at that burglar!” snorts Horse Tooth, hauling back a right fist.

“Peace, gents; peace,” I says.

“Then tell that blue-ribbon crook to pay me back that tenner he borreys from me ten-year ago!”

Flutterbutt twirls his well-waxed goatee a moment, then remarks, “My dear crumb, you must be mentally incapacitated. We do not mix in the same social circles. Well, what can you expect from a guaranteed guttersnipe?”

“Gimme ‘at ten bucks!” howls Horse Tooth, trying to break away from my grasp. “Them Civil War whiskers and Buffalo Bill goatee ain’t fooled me none! You may have picked up a load of five-and-ten buck words since I saw you last, but you and me was born on the same side of the tracks. I’d

know you if you was disguised as Wild Bill Hickok. And you better gimme 'at ten!"

"Disgusting and revolting," says the professor and walks away briskly.

"Look," I says to Horse Tooth, "are you positive that that beezark is Jake McGonigle?"

"Hell, yes. If he ain't Jake McGonigle, then there ain't a cow in Texas. And the only difference between that bum and Captain Kidd is that the cap done his thieving on the water."

**N**EXT night Flutterbutt holds his second seance or meeting. He has mostly the same audience, with some new chumps added. However, the meeting is a floperoo, meaning no dice. Little Big Eyes, his spirit guide, must have been off on a tour of the other planets, seeing what they had in the line of redheads, blondes and brunettes. He goes through the usual hokus-jokus motions, such as having the customers sing solemn ditties, but the guide refuses to give him a squeak out of the trumpet.

Finally, the professor asks to be excused claiming that some loon in the audience must have peevd Little Big Eyes and made him sore.

"What's up his goatee now?" I asks Horse Tooth, when the meeting let out.

"He's just putting out the sucker bait," says Horse Tooth. "When he gets the boobs all a-flutter, he'll bump 'em. He'll spring a fast one, and then blow. Wait and see!"

"You mean he has an ace in the hole?"

"Ace—hell. He's got the whole deck! But if it's what I *think* it is, I'll have a few aces in holes m'self!"

Comes the third night. The usual bunch, with more added, walks into Flutterbutt's boob-haven. Again he goes through the magic motions. This time Little Big Eyes seems to be in much better humor. When two of the cowpokes drop four-bits each on the table, they are duplicated. When the lamps are lighted, the table has two bucks, instead of one.

This demonstration in easy money gets the customers all excited. Why work for a living when dough comes out of no place for doing nothing? One guy yells to the professor, "Hey, pardner, how about puttin' ten dollahs on that table?"

"Sorry," says Flutterbutt, "but you gentle folks must realize that my guide is a highly sensitized, moral and ethical spirit. If he suspected that we

were money crazy, he would leave us forever. However," goes on the professor, "if you all will assemble here again tomorrow night, I shall make an effort to talk to my guide and gain his good graces."

The next night is another floperoo. Although the boys sing the sweetest songs, old Little Big Eyes won't give them a tumble. But the fifth night is the ant's sugar. Flutterbutt really gets the lads hopped up proper. He asks three of the boys to place cartwheel silver dollars on the table. When the lamps are lighted, each buck has been duplicated with another, courtesy of Little Big Eyes.

The fifth and final night is the coyotes' howl.

**"M**Y GOOD friends," begins the professor, "I trust I have given you a good demonstration of my ectoplasmic powers. And now I have some exceptionally good news for you. Last night, after you had left, I got in touch with my spirit guide and had a heart-to-heart talk with him. I told him what a fine, upstanding bunch of real gentlemen you were, and I informed him that you were all public-spirited and against liquor, women, and all types of wrong doing. In brief, my good friends, I told my guide that, if he would be kind enough to duplicate your twenty-dollar gold pieces, placed upon this same table, that you would use the money for noble and charitable purposes."

"As for me," goes on the professor, "I ask nothing in return. I am able to live on the small admission fee you pay at the door. What's more, I glory in the work I am able to do. Ah, my good friends, you cannot realize the satisfaction I receive from doing work that advances science. What greater glory does a mortal man want than the knowledge that he is helping his fellow man? Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and other great men, were happy to help the world's progress. I am glad to be in their class!"

The professor pauses for stage effects. Then he goes on, "I assume you gentlemen have all brought your twenty-dollar gold pieces for duplications?" This is greeted with a chorus of "Yes's!" from the audience. The lamps go out and me and Horse Tooth sneak under the sidewall, as usual.

"Now, my good friends," gloops on Flutterbutt, "I suggest that we all sing 'Silver Threads Among the Gold.' My guide seems to like that old favorite and I want you folks to sing it with much fervor and eclat. As soon as we have finished singing the

first verse, step up and place your twenty-dollar gold pieces on the table. All ready, my good friends; start singing!”

They butcher the first verse and, at the end, the sound of metal hits the table in a rainfall of clinks.

“Now the chorus, gentlemen,” begs Flutterbutt. “That’s it, gentlemen—*louder!* Put your heart and souls into it. *Louder!*”

The boys almost knock the roof off with their singing. When it is over, not a sound was heard, and they sat in the total darkness for half a minute.

“I guess it’s up to me to light the lamps,” says Horse Tooth Harrigan.

“What d’yer mean,” I says, “up to you?”

“Watch,” he buzzes, “the fun is about to commence to begin!”

A few seconds later the lights flood the tent. Professor Ambrose Flutterbutt is not among those present. The smart smick has scooped up what was on the table and has departed hence and also thither. He did this while the customers were singing.

I figure that we’d have to quell some fine, Western riots, when the little lads found they had been flim-flammed.

**H**ORSE TOOTH goes to the front of the platform, in front of the table, and holds up his hands for attention.

“Well, folks,” says Horse Tooth, “I hope you are all glad that you listened to me last night!”

My ears begin to buzz and my eyes start to pop. What the Sam Houston was Horse Tooth yapping about? Whatever it was, he never let me in on it!

“Yore darn tootin’, we are!” yells several cowboys. “Thanks, pardner!” adds a guy in the

rear. Horse Tooth stands there and grins broadly.

“Twenty-dollar gold pieces,” goes on Horse Tooth, “don’t never grow on cactus plants. So you better take yours and run home, before someone tries to remove your hairpants and spurs. That’s all, gents!”

Ten minutes later I corral Horse Tooth in front of the bally-stand and whinny for some inside information.

“What’s the gaff?” I says. “Tell papa!”

“You mean you didn’t get the angle?” he asks, with the greatest of innocence. “It was as simple as falling off a greased pig!”

“Not from where I stood,” I says. “I thought the professor got away with all them gold pieces!”

“Well,” says Horse Tooth, “he *did* scoop something off that table, but if he can spend it, I’m a bowlegged giraffe.”

“So?”

“So, last night I got the boys together, gave them the lowdown, and when we got finished with the frame, the professor was the picture. To each one of the boys who was gonna slap a gold piece on the table I give something cute.”

“Continue.”

“It was a lead and zinc disk, same size as a twenty-dollar gold piece,” says Horse Tooth. “So when the professor calls for the dough, all he gets are the disks. Not bad, huh?”

“Where’d you get the disks?”

“Oh, I had ‘em in my trunk for years. They were advertisements, from back East. One side says *Present this to your grocer and receive a free cake of Everclean Soap*. The other side says, *Good luck to everybody*. Not bad; huh?”

“Nope,” I admits, “not bad!”

(THE END)