

The Grave Train Robbery

A 6 page brief comic by Michael Lagacé
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*Can anything go right on the
wrong side of the tracks?*

Page 1

Panel 1

EXT. PRAIRIE FOREST – JULY, 1910 – LATE EVENING

Four men ride horseback along a trail cutting through a forest. Each of them has a pack strapped to the back of their horse; a tent, clothes, et cetera. The sky is clear, and while night is looming, it isn't yet dark.

Bigger and meaner than the others, BOOTH (36) is the leader of the group, and rides out front. He wears a black cowboy hat and a bandana around his neck, ready to be pulled up to conceal his identity. He has a pistol on either hip and a dark, cutthroat scowl.

HORN (29) is the next biggest in the group, a similar black cowboy hat and bandana, but he also wears more typical cowboy clothes than the others. He carries a single pistol at his hip and a rifle across his lap.

BAILEY (32) prefers not to wear a hat, letting his long wild hair go free. His bandana rests around his neck, pistol on each hip, and a rifle strapped to his pack.

STANLEY (25) is the newest and youngest member of the group, more timid than the others, with far less experience in their dealings. He carries a single pistol, and a small one at that.

STANLEY

I can still see their faces! Lord, what a thrill, I've never done nothin' like that before! What a haul!

STANLEY

We did good, didn't we fellas!

STANLEY

So what's next, huh? Another train? A bank? Hell, I think we could take Fort Knox, don't you?

STANLEY

Huh, fellas?

Panel 2

Bailey and Horn look away from Stanley shamefully.

STANLEY

Why's everyone so quiet?

Panel 3

Booth shoots Stanley in the chest, killing him and knocking him off his horse.

Panel 4

Booth holsters his gun. Bailey looks his way.

BAILEY

You didn't have to kill him.

BOOTH

You mean "we" didn't have to kill him. And yes, "we" did.

BOOTH

You knew what this was from the beginning. We're a gang of three, not four. All we need is someone to watch the horses when we're workin'. Anyone can do it, so why pay him! It's a great idea, almost wish I'd thought of it first!

Page 2

Panel 1

Booth gives Horn a dirty look, and Booth reaches for his gun again, a threat.

HORN

Mort wasn't going to kill you, you know.

BOOTH

He should have. Now he's rotting in Begger's Canyon for tryn'a cut me out. You want to rot with him?

Panel 2

Booth perks up in his saddle, distracted by a sound in the distance. Dark clouds suddenly roll in. Horn and Bailey are reluctant.

BOOTH

Didn't think so.

BOOTH

Besides, that was years ago! Let bygones be bygones, and --

BOOTH

Eh, y'hear that, boys?! What luck, two trains in one day! Let's go!!

Panel 3

Booth gallops away toward the sound, leaving the other two behind. They look at each other uneasily.

Panel 4

EXT. PRAIRIES — TRAIN TRACKS — SAME

Dark clouds have settled overhead, sending crackles of lightning down below. Booth gallops out of a cutline to intercept the train as it comes out of a dark mist. Behind him are Horn and Bailey. They all have their bandanas pulled up over their nose and mouth.

BOOTH

H'yeah! H'yeah!!

Panel 5

Booth catches up to the train and jumps aboard between cars.

Page 3

Panel 1

Horn and Bailey are riding beside the each other. Horn is holding onto Bailey's horse's reins, and since Booth's horse is empty, Horn has his sights set on grabbing him too. Bailey is preparing to jump aboard the train, shouting.

BAILEY

I don't like this! The horses are spooked, I can't get close enough!

HORN

It's just the storm! Hurry up, you don't want Booth to come lookin' for you!

Panel 2

INT. TRAIN — 3RD PASSENGER CAR — SAME

As Bailey crawls onto the train, we see Booth making his way up the empty passenger car toward the front. His pistols are drawn and he's ready for anything.

BOOTH

What took you so long? Come on, get your sack out. We'll make our way to the front.

Panel 3

INT. TRAIN — 2ND PASSENGER CAR — SAME

They reach the next car, and we see there are a few passengers scattered around the car now. They are all men, dirty and gritty, sitting upright and unmoving, face forward. A flash of lightning outside. Booth stands in the doorway dominantly, while Bailey, with his sack out, stands behind him, unnerved.

BOOTH
Alright! Listen up! This here's a robbery!

BOOTH
Any of you wanna get yerself shot, go ahead! Got plenty for all of you!

Panel 4

Booth marches onward toward the engine, guns drawn, hardly paying attention. Bailey approaches the first passenger, sack extended. The man does not move, his hat is low in the front, covering his face.

BOOTH
Those a' you who don't wanna get shot, hand over your money, jewels... everything you got!

Panel 5

Bailey looks at the man suspiciously, annoyed by his lack of cooperation.

BAILEY
That means you too, old man.

Panel 6

Booth looks back over his shoulder at Bailey.

BOOTH
Anyone that wants it the hard way, just shoot 'em. We don't got time to waste.

BOOTH
I'm going to stop the train.

Page 4

Panel 1

Bailey pulls his gun out and holds it to the man's head, lifting the man's hat with the barrel.

BAILEY
You hear that, old man?

BAILEY
Boss says I can --

Panel 2

Close up of Bailey, eyes suddenly wide open.

BAILEY
?!

Panel 3

Bailey stumbles backward, into the next seat over.

Panel 4

Bailey turns to look at the man sitting in the seat that he's stumbled into.

Panel 5

We now see what Bailey's been seeing, that the man has a bullet hole right in the middle of his head.

Panel 6

Bailey recoils in terror as the man comes to life, turning his head to face him.

BAILEY
No...

Panel 7

Bailey is smothered by the dead men, each of them with a bullet wound somewhere. We cannot see Bailey underneath.

Page 5

Panel 1

INT. TRAIN - 1ST PASSENGER TRAIN - SAME

Booth walks through the next passenger car. Again, dead men are scattered among the seats, but Booth doesn't notice. They do not move.

BOOTH
Weren't you listening?! This is a robbery! Hand over your money!

BOOTH
Fine, we'll see how tough you all are once this train stops!!

Panel 2

INT. TRAIN - 2ND PASSENGER CAR - SAME

From somewhere underneath the pile of men, Bailey's hand emerges.

Panel 3

Bailey scrambles to his feet and rushes back the way he came, towards the third car.

Panel 4

EXT. TRAIN - SAME

Bailey reaches a door going off the train, where Horn is riding beside holding the reins of all three horses. Horn is shocked by Bailey's utter terror.

BAILEY
Help me! For God's sake, help me!!

BAILEY
It's... it's... them!!

Panel 5

Bailey is pulled back into the train against his will.

BAILEY (SCREAMING)
Nooooo!!

Panel 6

INT. TRAIN – 1ST PASSENGER TRAIN – SAME

Booth reaches for the door to the conductor's car.

Page 6

Panel 1

INT. TRAIN – ENGINE CAR – SAME

Booth walks into the engine car and sees THE CONDUCTOR (35) with his back to the doorway.

BOOTH
Alright, stop the train! This is a robbery!!

CONDUCTOR
Oh is it...?

Panel 2

The Conductor turns around, revealing himself to Booth, whose jaw drops. The Conductor is gray, decaying, a bullet hole in his head. A gruesome being. Lightning flashes.

CONDUCTOR
That's always how it was with you, wasn't it?
Taking what ain't yours?

BOOTH
...

Panel 3

Close up of Booth, terrified.

BOOTH
Mort...!?!

Panel 4

Horn stops with the horses and watches the train chug away into the distance.

CONDUCTOR (SFX)
Hahahahahahahahaaa!!

The End