

The La Ciénega Case

THE SUSPECTS



Miss Verena Poole
RIGHT-HANDED

Teaches the district school. Boards a week at a time with whoever will.



Anvil Ben Ahrens
LEFT-HANDED

Shoes every horse on the range and hears what is said over the anvil.



Tobias Creel
LEFT-HANDED

Carried a badge here when the county had no courthouse. Never handed it back.



Ewell Crane
RIGHT-HANDED

Took herds north before there were fences, and says the fences ended it.

WHY ANYONE BOTHERED



Barred From the Gather
MONEY

An application turned down without grounds, and no way to work their cattle.



Drift Fence Line
LAND

Nobody agrees where it ought to run, and it has been moved twice at night.



Ruined Standing
PRIDE

Somebody's word stopped being taken on this range, and they know the day.



Unreported Burial
SECRETS

There is a mound past the fence line. The question has never been put.

WHERE IT HAPPENED



La Ciénega **WATER**

Marsh grass and standing water, in a country that has neither elsewhere.



Cañón del Oso **NARROW**

One way in and the same way out, and the bear was only the start of it.



Granite Knob **HIGH GROUND**

Bare rock with no cover for a mile below it, and a wind that never quits.



Alder Sink **LOW GROUND**

Boggy the year round. Cattle go down into it and do not always come out.

WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND



Sprung Wire Cutter **METAL**

The jaws are notched from something a good deal harder than they are.



Dropped Spur Rowel **METAL**

Silver, worn thin along one side, and dropped where no horse went.



Scorched Bill of Sale **PAPER AND CLOTH**

Somebody put a match to the half that had the buyer's name on it.



Frayed Hair Mecate **ROPE AND GUT**

Twisted horsehair. Something took it apart a strand at a time.

THE REPORT

Something went wrong at La Ciénega, and the only honest account of it is the one set down in the ledger below. Work it through, and mind the ledger.

CLUES & EVIDENCE

- Nobody saw Tobias Creel anywhere near Alder Sink.
- You can rule out the drift fence line for every rider who was carrying rope or gut.
- Any rider who was in it to keep a secret was carrying something metal.
- The sprung wire cutter didn't belong to any rider who was in low country.
- Without exception, a rider who was in it for money was carrying something metal.
- Every rider who was in it out of pride was down by water.
- You can rule out the dropped spur rowel for every rider who was in it to keep a secret.
- The unreported burial had nothing to do with Tobias Creel.
- No rider who was right-handed had any stake in the unreported burial.
- You can rule that out: nobody who was up on high ground was in it to keep a secret.
- No rider who was in it over land was right-handed.
- You can rule out La Ciénega for Ewell Crane.

THE GRID

		LOCATIONS				EVIDENCE				MOTIVES			
		CIENEGA	OSO	KNOB	SINK	CUTTER	ROWEL	BILLSALE	MECATE	BARRED	DRIFTLINE	STANDING	BURIAL
SUSPECTS	POOLE												
	AHRENS												
	CREEL												
	CRANE												
MOTIVES	BARRED												
	DRIFTLINE												
	STANDING												
	BURIAL												
EVIDENCE	CUTTER												
	ROWEL												
	BILLSALE												
	MECATE												

CASE 061 · THE LA CIÉNEGA CASE

SUSPECT	LOCATION	EVIDENCE	MOTIVE
Miss Verena Poole	La Ciénega	Frayed Hair Mecate	Ruined Standing
Anvil Ben Ahrens	Cañón del Oso	Sprung Wire Cutter	Unreported Burial
Tobias Creel	Granite Knob	Scorched Bill of Sale	Drift Fence Line
Ewell Crane	Alder Sink	Dropped Spur Rowel	Barred From the Gather

CASE 062 · THE ALDER SINK AFFAIR

SUSPECT	LOCATION	EVIDENCE	MOTIVE
Etta Boyce	Llano Seco	Cut Latigo	Ruined Standing
Halsey Fenn	Nine Mile Flat	Frayed Hair Mecate	Shipping Money
Feliciano Ortega	Antelope Bench	Scorched Bill of Sale	Stolen Credit
Trader Nell Dabney	Alder Sink	Dropped Spur Rowel	Twice-Sold Stock

CASE 063 · THE RINCÓN CREEK RECKONING

SUSPECT	LOCATION	EVIDENCE	MOTIVE
Angus Kerr	Rincón Creek	Dropped Spur Rowel	Drift Fence Line
Etta Boyce	La Ciénega	Sprung Wire Cutter	Broken Handshake
Cyrus Mott	Wire Gap	Lump of Harness Wax	Grazing Lease Dispute
Wire Pete Nash	Widow's Ridge	Scorched Bill of Sale	Buried Kinship

CASE 064 · THE THICKET BOTTOM AFFAIR

SUSPECT	LOCATION	EVIDENCE	MOTIVE
Angus Kerr	Hackberry Tank	Bent Mill Wrench	Public Dressing-Down
Halsey Fenn	Granite Knob	Stiff Rawhide Reata	Drift Fence Line
Anvil Ben Ahrens	Thicket Bottom	Bent Bit Shank	Blotted Brand
Miss Verena Poole	Cañón del Oso	Maguey Catch Rope	Buried Kinship