

(C O P Y)

Cheyenne, Wyoming,

April 22,

Dear Bob:-

I received your letter this morning. Accept my congratulations on your appointment as U. S. Attorney.

I wrote to you from Antelope in order that you might tell Boies that I was all right. The name "Penrose" was not very favorably known in that part of Wyoming, as he was supposed to be the surgeon of the stockmen and to have had charge of the poisoned pills for administering to cattle thieves, and for poisoning springs and flour. This idea originated when the wagons of the stockmen were captured and my outfit containing several bottles of tablets of bichloride of mercury for washing wounds was opened. You may remember that each tablet has "poison" printed on it. For this reason I did not like to address a letter to anyone of this name, and what I wrote to you was very uncompromising, because the mail is often opened and I did not want to say anything that might offend any of the citizens of Johnson County. I have seen no Philadelphia papers and consequently do not know what they say. All stories, however, about this fight and about me are untrue, for this reason. The cattle thieves control certainly one and probably two countries. They are all Democrats, and the Democratic papers of the state have been siding with the rustlers for political reasons. There is but one member of the Associated Press in Cheyenne and I think in Wyoming, and he is editor of the Cheyenne Leader, a Democratic paper which has sided with the thieves for the last month. All the Republican editors have been obliged to leave the seat of war for fear of being shot. They are openly threatened. There is one staying here

now, afraid to return to Buffalo. For these reasons all your news is one-sided, and the bulk of it is absolutely false. The statements that I had made a confession, etc. etc., are as untrue as that I am "a high-toned Englishman of 35." I expected arrest in Douglas and prepared for it before entering the town.

We left Cheyenne by special train on the afternoon of April 5th, and reached Casper, the railroad terminus, at 3 the following morning. There were altogether 52 men, 3 wagons, and about 75 horses. Casper is about the same style of town as Rawlins, and all the country through which we travelled is like that north of Rawlins - perhaps more cut up by washouts and ravines. We rode around Casper before sunrise and escaped all observation. The second day out we struck a very tough blizzard which lasted a day and night. It made the roads very heavy with snow. On the third night we reached Tisdale's ranch, about 80 miles north of Casper. The telegraph wires had been cut by some one as soon as we left Cheyenne and all communication with the north was shut off. We were travelling in a little-used train - not even used by mail carriers. I reached Tisdale's ranch 12 hours after the main band, having been delayed by the poor condition of my horse. The road up to there had been comparatively safe. The main body determined to leave Tisdale's ranch on Friday night, April 8th, and push on during the night for Buffalo - 150 miles north of Casper. The three wagons were directed to push on for Buffalo as fast as possible the next day. My horse was completely played out, and I was told to start with the wagons the next day and make Buffalo alone, which I could have done in three days. It would have taken the wagons five days. They said that the road would

be perfectly safe for me because I was unknown. There were also left behind a reporter with a sore arse and a ranchman, Davis, who had been driven from the country last Xmas. His horse had also given out. We three held a council of war next morning and decided that travelling with the unguarded wagons would be unhealthy. We consequently let them pull out and we waited at the ranch. The next day several people came in, all armed and scared. They told us that two men had been killed, and a ranch burned 15 miles north of us. The following day we struck across country to the east, expecting to strike the road running between Douglas and Buffalo. Douglas is 60 miles east of Casper, and from each town a road runs to Buffalo. We travelled 30 miles over very rough bad lands and spent the night at Davis's ranch. There were four hands on the ranch. Each fellow had to stand guard for two hours during the night, and slept with six shooter and rifle all together in the log house, along with two young child. The next day we heard that 75 men had marched from Buffalo and had the stockmen corraled. The wagons were captured and one driver shot. It would have been damn if we had been with the wagons. I saw no good in going on to Buffalo under those circumstances, and determined to strike for Douglas, about 100 miles southeast. My horse was no good, so I lifted a buckboard from Davis. The reporter still had a very sore arse and being unable to ride, said that he would take the mail coach for Buffalo. The mail passed ten miles from Davis's ranch. Davis shaved himself for disguise, but was afraid to risk travelling over 100 miles of country where he was known and marked. So I pulled out alone with a young girl of 17 years, who was naturally so scared she could not eat. We left at

2 P.M., and made forty miles over damnable country to the Ogalala ranch, which we reached at 9 that night. Davis's foreman also left him, with his wife. There were several solitary horsemen around on hill tops, but if they had any suspicions they were probably quieted by the presence of women. The foreman had a rifle on his lap and I carried a shotgun loaded with buckshot. (I have always considered this the best household weapon). The next day there was another blizzard with eight inches of snow, and I stayed at the ranch as Dr. Green from Fort McKinney. During the day Davis came riding in but we did not recognize each other. I heard here for the first time that I had been arrested with the rest of the stockmen by the United States troops, and that I was the author of the poison pill scheme. This caused great indignation among the cowboys, of whom there were 25. Of course I shared this indignation, for it is certainly a damned outrage to poison springs and flour in order to get rid of a few cattle thieves. I left the next morning alone and went forty miles to Brown Springs. I passed through one rustler camp in which there were three men armed with six shooters and rifles. They asked me if I was Dr. Green from Fort McKinney - God knows how they found it out - and I lifted twenty cents worth of chewing tobacco from them. I spent the night at the roadhouse at Brown Springs, and the next day went for Douglas, which was forty miles southeast. There were fifty rustlers collected at Douglas prepared to march north in case they were needed, and as I approached the place I began to fear that I might be recognized. Before this I had been only looking out for getting shot and had become used to the idea. I reached Douglas at 3 P.M. and found the sheriff - a son of a bitch - named Campbell, standing at the outskirts of the town and watching

the road north. He had received a telegram that morning from Buffalo to arrest me, and he recognized me from having seen me in Cheyenne. He followed me to the livery stable, around which about fifteen armed rustlers were loafing. No one said anything to me and I unhitched my horse and put him in a stall, and then walked across the street to the Bank, the president of which - Colonel Richards - I knew. The sheriff and gang followed and stood outside the Bank and then the sheriff came in and arrested me. He said that he arrested me for the murder of Champion and Ray, and I told him that I had left the stockmen before these men had been killed. He did not believe this and put me in the jug, an iron cage with several compartments, in one of which was a shit house. I was searched to my book, and even shit paper taken from me. When you meet a man in the jug you should never ask him what he did to get there, but "what do they say you did?" I had two pals - one was a "speculator, in for hurting a nigger", and the other was a young fellow "in for breaking a window." I afterwards found out that the "speculator" was a gambler in for shooting a nigger through the heart, and the other fellow was in for burglary. The sheriff told me to keep away from the windows for fear I would get shot through them and that there was a mob outside the jug. He also sent for a carpenter and had a new lock put on and the outer door strengthened. The fellow who was in for murder said that he would like to know if they would lynch him if they came in after me. Their ideas were not calculated to make my stay in the jug agreeable. They refused to allow me to telegraph to Philadelphia or to communicate with any one outside, or to see a lawyer. I would be in there still if I had not seen Colonel Richards before being arrested. They gave

us for grub scraps from the sheriff's table, without a knife, fork, spoon, or plate. It was served in a basket. We, fortunately, had plenty of chewing tobacco and a pack of cards, and we played pedro and seven up through the bars. My two pals were damn good fellows; and I insisted that a snap judgment should not be made against a gentleman just because he was unfortunate. Jeff, the murderer, said that it was only out on a sage brush flat that a sheriff would dare treat gentlemen as we were treated. He had the clap and asked my advice about it. He also told me that he would like to bugger the burglar if he would only wash himself. The burglar was an effeminate young fellow who slept in the shit house and was naturally dirty.

After I had been in here thirty hours a special engine ran into Douglas with U.S. Marshall Rankin - whom you met here - aboard; and five minutes afterward I was on my way to Cheyenne. Rankin had a writ of habeas corpus and had me out of the jug before anyone in town knew that he was there. They picked out Rankin in Cheyenne because he don't stand any nonsense, though, of course, it was out of his sphere. I am now in Rankin's "custody." This is my safest position because I can not be taken to Johnson County without first having a hearing here.

I am in first-rate health; weigh 180 lbs. I expect to have no trouble from this business, because I was left behind before any of the depredations were said to have been committed. It seems to me that neither side need talk much about the law. The stockmen found that they could not preserve their property by the law, and were obliged to use other methods; and when the sheriff of Buffalo went out to "arrest" them, he

carried a black and a red flag, opened fire on them as soon as they came in sight, and shot one man even after they had surrendered to the troops. The reporter whom I left at Davis's ranch was caught and put in the jug at Gillette. One man with the wagon lost a leg, and the others have spent ten days in the jug at Buffalo. Davis has not yet been heard from, but is supposed to be travelling around disguised as a woman. The other fellows are expected here under military protection to-morrow. They will be kept under arrest at Fort Russell.

As I look back on the business I think that I have gotten out about as well as could be expected. I would certainly have been killed if I had gone with the wagons, or had continued alone on the Casper road. It is very hard for a fellow in civilization to realize the state of things in this part of Wyoming. The ringleaders and most of the public officers are criminals who are "wanted" in other states, and no one can remain neutral. He must either join them or leave the country. Everyone is armed with one or two six shooters buckled outside the overcoat, and with a rifle or shotgun. The country is more thinly settled than that between Rawlins and Lander; I must have seen several hundred antelope and a good many deer. The mistake which the stockmen made was in under-rating the courage and numbers of other rustlers. They were surrounded by three hundred of them before they knew what was up.

If this letter appears too long for you, you know what you can do with it - the same thing which Mary did with the rose. It is not an official communication and is not for newspaper use. I expect Dick and Barringer here to-morrow.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Charles B. Penrose.