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ering line of the Great Retreat. A sense of duty, of loyalty to the order that was passing, placed him there. Certain peculiar qualifications, such as a watch-spring movement of hand to holster, a deadly aim and courage passing ordinary made him a competent inspector, — the most competent in all the Big Country. His name was known from Platte Crossing to the Musselshell.

Of smaller stature than the average man, bowed as to legs through a life on horseback, Original's arresting feature was a chest rounded as a wine tun by the great winds he'd ridden against and the wild, free life of the range. Endurance passing ordinary was spelled by this torso. His head was small by comparison, thatched heavily with coal black hair. A smooth face was all broken into curious sectors by innumerable wind wrinkles. Black eyes had a disconcertingly steady gaze.

Original rode freely but with an occasional eye to the ground for certain tracings and markings, the clay-stained bottom of an overturned pebble, a stalk of Jimson weed still green but broken. Unconsidered trifles such as any one not of the Big Country might very well fail to see, but telling a rounded story to