

Tex Pistol This Dude is Dangerous

"Make up as many lies as you like — just don't tell 'em where I am!"

And with that, Tex Pistol slammed the phone down.

It had taken the reporter months to track him down, and dozens of messages via the bush telegraph. It was only luck that he'd rung the general store the very day Tex had rode in for his monthly supplies, and now it turned out he was a man of fewer words than the neon cowboys that winked down on Queen and Willis Streets.

There was one unavoidable fact though — the man who made 'The Ballad of Buckskin Bob' with its epic Frankie-goes-Bonanza sound was no ordinary cowboy. This man was a city slicker gunslinger humdinger

of a singer ... and not bad on the banjo, either. Word around town says he played every damn instrument on the waxing of his tune, including the fiddles and gunshots, plus he sang the choirs of backing vocals. Whew. No flies on Tex.

At first, all the reporter had on Mr Pistol were myths. But the song itself was no myth, it reminded him constantly as it stared up from its permanent position on his turntable. I'll start with the record, he thought. But Pagan, the people responsible for making it "go vinyl" were saying nothing; their man Trevor de Clean would only grin and shake his head. "I don't want to mess with Tex," he'd say.

What about the tunes themselves? 'Buckskin Bob', the reporter knew, had over the years been pirated by dickheads and legionnaires who'd long since paid for that mistake. Perhaps 'Winter', on the B-side



of the 12", provided the strongest clue. There were all those complaints a few years ago when some radio station in the central North Island had played it excessively, and always at midnight. Apparently some secret signal beaming out to the Rangitikei, or so the legend went.

But when the reporter travelled to the hinterland, the man behind the Utiku general store and post office would only say, "He comes in once a month to pick up his supplies and the British soccer results. Doesn't say much except his farewell phrase, 'Anything less than a V8 is a compromise.' Strange dude."

So the reporter had come to a dead end. He called the store occasionally, on the off-chance that he might glean some more information. The day he struck Tex himself in the store, he'd thought he'd struck it lucky. But all Tex would reveal was

his reasons for putting 'Buckskin Bob' out: "All these posing capguns like the Art of Noise, 'I Wanna Be a Goddam Cowboy', even Duane Eddy whorin' himself ... hell, I just hadta get 'Bob' down off the shelf to show 'em how it's done."

That's true, the reporter thought afterwards — if only the Louis L'Amour readers out there got the chance to hear 'Buckskin Bob', they'd know what saddle blisters really felt like. But now he was left with one great song and the two silent legends of 'Bob' and Tex. Maybe it was best left that way, he reasoned as he sung along to the ballad one more time:

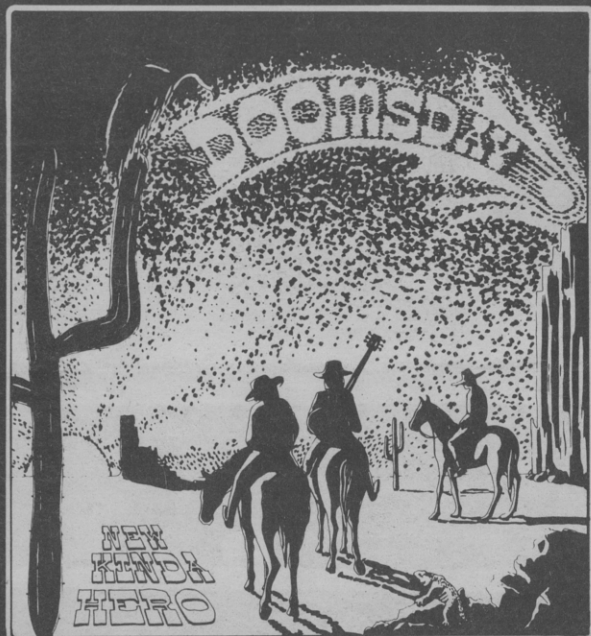
"Buckskin Bob, rest on your laurels, there's a place for heroes like you ..."

Behind the credits of a thousand drive-in movies

Your name lives on, in this here song." CB

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