

## Bend of Trail - CAS™ Shoot

# A Train Robbery & Turkey Creek Canyon Shootout, Starring Sam & “Black Jack” Ketchum

Can you outshoot the most notorious members of the “Hole in the Wall” Gang?

**We’re slingin’ a lot of lead this month to halt the train robberies and corner the gang. They’ve already robbed the Colorado and Southern Railroad one time before on the grade between Des Moines and Folsom, New Mexico in September, 1897...and now they’re tryin’ the same thing again. We’ll stop it now and then pursue the gang to the ends of the earth!**

No sooner had the transcontinental railroad been finished and some spur lines connected, when gangs of outlaws descended from the hills to rob them. All the gangs had their own methods: the James Gang, Butch Cassidy, and Sam Ketchum. The “Hole-in-the Wall” Gang often mounted the engine from horseback or from the front coach, held the engineer and fireman at gunpoint and forced them to stop where the rest of the gang waited with horses for a quick getaway. It’s July 11, 1899, and a group of deadly outlaws is stopping the train again. Once before on September 3, 1897 at the same place, Twin Mountain, the southbound Denver-Fort Worth Express of the Colorado & Southern railroad had been robbed by Thomas ‘Black Jack’ Ketchum and his brother Sam.<sup>1</sup> Accounts differ as to

who was actually in the gang that day in 1899, but all will later agree that Sam Ketchum was a main character along with Elzey Lay, Harvey Logan, and Will Carver. By this time, the gang had perfected their technique for

“blowing” a safe, unlike the time Butch Cassidy and the gang made an express car into a flat car by using too much dynamite and lofted thousands of dollars into the air, which floated down with other debris. However, this time a hard-headed trainman stood in their way.



Tom “Black Jack” Ketchum strikes a dashing pose for this photographer but was later arrested, tried, convicted, and hanged in 1901 in Clayton, New Mexico

By some accounts,, Harvey “Kid Curry” Logan and Sam had boarded earlier in Trinidad, Colorado. They left the coach and climbed over the tender into the engine. It was 11 pm. Horses stood just to the side of the tracks as the engine stopped. Elza Lay was assigned to guard the engineer and fireman and as usual struck up a congenial conversation with them while they stood with hands raised.<sup>2</sup>

Sam, Logan and Deaf Charley Hanks as well as “Black Jack” according to some witnesses, stood at the Adams Express Car and ordered the messenger to, “Open up, or we blow you up.” The employee yelled back, “Then blow and be damned!” The messenger kneeled down, opened the safe, and removed its contents. He hid them under some sacks in the car and relocked the safe. The outlaws started smashing at the lock and riddling the express car with

holes, while the messenger laid on the floor with his arms over his head. Within minutes the lock gave way and Logan grabbed the pale-faced clerk and said something like, “I oughta blow your damn head off for giv-

ing us all this trouble!"<sup>2</sup> He dragged the clerk outside and the crooks set the heavy charge of black powder. The safe blew, but when the gang entered the car with bandanas across their face to protect from the sulfurous fumes, they found the safe empty. Despite having a six-shooter pointed at his face, the clerk insisted that the contents were taken off the train at the previous stop. For a moment, it looked like the clerk had breathed his last...but then Logan cursed and shouted for the gang to mount up and leave before a posse came after them. In their frustration, they poured lead into the coaches and the engine while petrified passengers lay on the floor. As the bullets ricocheted around inside the cab of the locomotive, the engineer noted from his watch that the robbery attempt had lasted an hour.

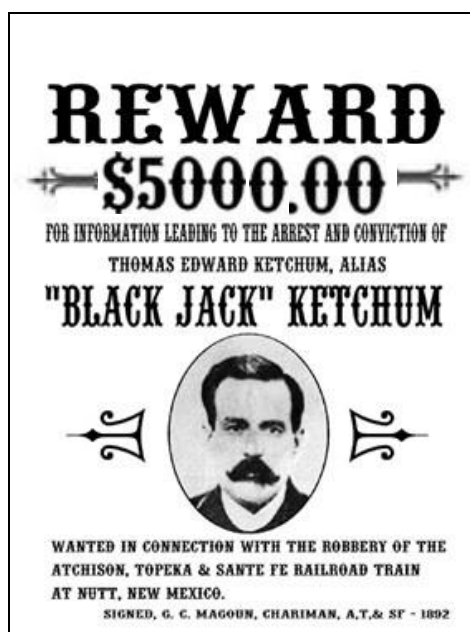
The train pulled into Trinidad at full throttle, whistle blowing and bell clanging. A 7 to 15 man posse including W.H. Reno, special agent for the railroad; Sheriff Edward Farr of Colorado, and Deputy U.S. Marshal, W.H. Love quickly formed. A black powder bag had been found by the tracks. The brand was the same as had been used by Butch Cassidy's gang in the past. Photos were dispatched by Pinkertons and three of the crooks were positively identified.<sup>2</sup> The chase was on. With the aid of trackers and an informer, the posse tracked the crooks to Turkey Canyon (or Turkey Creek Canyon) near a cave. Some accounts have the outlaws firing first, dropping members of the posse in an ambush. Others say that the posse ambushed Elzy Lay at a spring early in the morning, after which a gunfight lasted all day and into the evening.<sup>2,3</sup> In any case, during the battle, Elzy was shot though the shoulder and chest, but the bullets passed through without hitting any vitals. Carver, using by all reports, a 30-40 rifle (perhaps a new Winchester 1895 lever action?) with smokeless powder and jacketed bullets, fired at the lawmen from some distance, and killed Sheriff Farr, shooting through a small tree. Posse member Love was wounded and later died. Reno was wounded. Another posse volunteer was killed. The remaining posse members couldn't locate the rifleman's position

because of the lack of smoke and withdrew from the front line, waiting for reinforcements. As the day progressed and the firing subsided, the wounded outlaws, helping each other, made their way up the draw to their horses and scattered.<sup>3</sup> Lay, seriously wounded, was arrested at a ranch a short time later and stood trial. He was sentenced to incarceration in the Santa Fe territorial prison. He survived and didn't die until decades later during the 1930's in Los Angeles, California. Sam Ketchum was caught while wounded but died of blood poisoning during his brief jail time, while Logan, Carver and at least one other crook (maybe Black Jack Ketchum) escaped. Will is said to have rejoined Butch Cassidy in Texas.

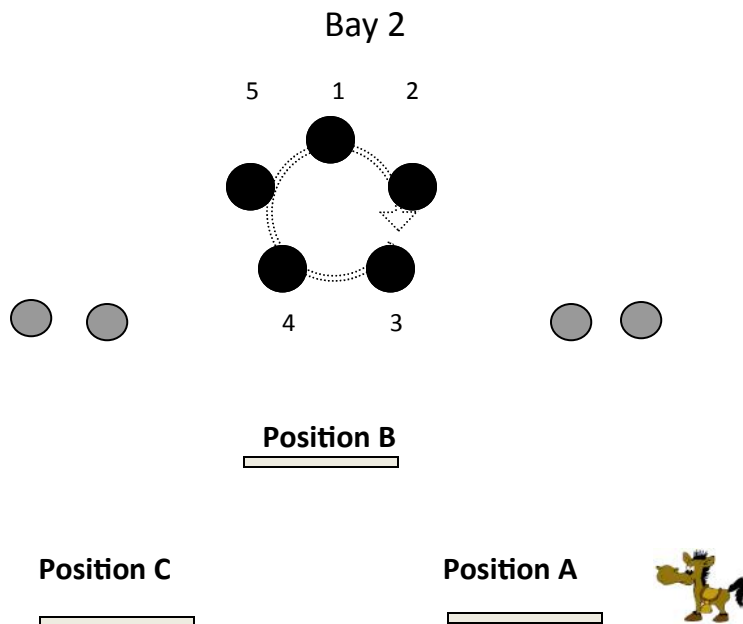
Some say that Tom "Black Jack" Ketchum was part of the robbery, but left the gang after an argument about the proceeds or lack thereof.

In any case, Black Jack showed up in the same spot on the tracks to Folsom approximately one month later and attempted to rob the same train by himself. The train conductor, Frank Harrington, recognized Ketchum and welcomed him with a blast from a shotgun.<sup>4</sup> The shot shattered Black Jack's arm and he escaped, but only briefly. He was found not far away by pursuers, and his arm had to be amputated.<sup>5</sup>

Ketchum did live to stand trial and although he was undoubtedly guilty of countless charges of robbery, murder, and mayhem during his career of crime, (once a posse pursued him for break-in and burglarization of a store and post office, and he killed most of the posse who pursued him) he stood trial for none of those charges. He was found guilty of "Felony Assault on a Railroad Train." He was hanged in Clayton on April 26, 1901. The law under which he was sentenced was later judged to be "unconstitutional."<sup>4</sup>



1. <http://users.hal-pc.org/~berrys/Sam%20Ketchum.html>
2. Horan, James D. *Desperate Men*. Doubleday. 1949, 1962
3. Bell, Bob Boze. *Classic Gunfights, Vol 1.*, Tri Star-Boze Publications, 2003.
4. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Ketchum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Ketchum)
5. Bell, Bob Boze. *Bad Men, Outlaws, and Gunfighters of the Wild West*. Tri Star-Boze Publications, 1999.



**Scenario 1**

**10 Pistol, 10 Rifle, 2 Shotgun**

Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 10 rounds is held at Cowboy port-arms. Shotgun is staged on the Horse.

The Ketchum Brothers and “Kid Curry” Logan are bad medicine. They rode as part of the “Hole in the Wall Gang” with Butch Cassidy. They had robbed the Denver –Fort Worth Express just two years ago. Now they are tryin’ it again. The train is slowing, and there are horses by the tracks. This looks like a train robbery!

When ready, say,

**Not this time, Ketchum!**

At the buzzer, with your Rifle from Position A, engage the 5 targets with continuous sweep in clockwise direction, beginning with Target number 1. No Double Taps. Make Rifle safe on the Horse. Knock down the 2 shotgun targets ON THE RIGHT. Make Shotgun safe. Move to Position B, and engage the targets with pistols in a continuous sweep just like you did with the rifle. You do NOT need to use all the Shotgun targets.

**Scenario 2**

**10 Pistol, 10 Rifle, 4+ Shotgun**

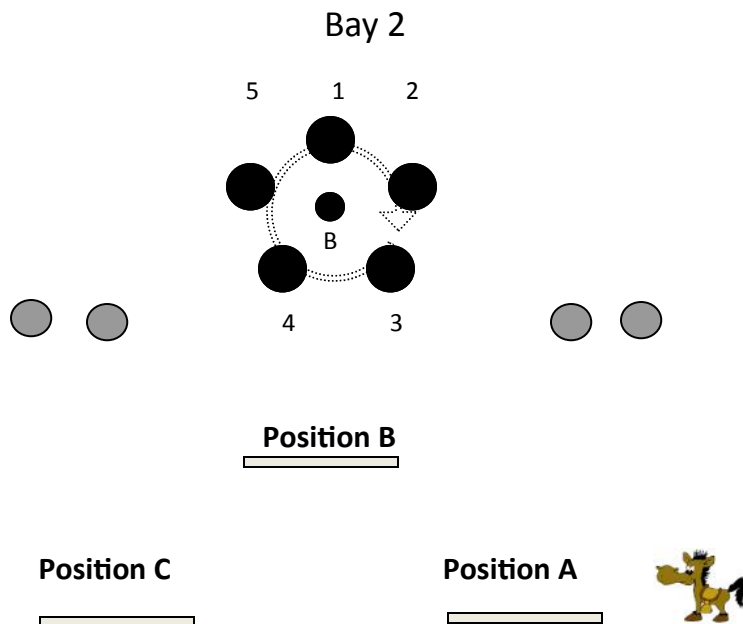
Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 10 rounds is staged on the Horse. Shotgun is staged in your hands.

They blew the safe in the Express Car. Not finding the loot they were looking for, they have started filling the train with lead.

Start at Position C (shotgun at port arms) When ready, say:

**This time we’re shootin’ back!**

At the buzzer, knock down the two shotgun targets ON THE LEFT. Make Shotgun safe on the Horse. Retrieve rifle and engage the five rifle targets in any order. No Triple Taps! Make Rifle safe on Horse. With your Shotgun, from the Horse, knock down the two right targets. Make Shotgun safe on Horse. Move to Position B. With your Pistols, engage all targets in any order. No Triple Taps!



### Scenario 3

#### 10 Pistol, 10 Rifle, 2+ Shotgun

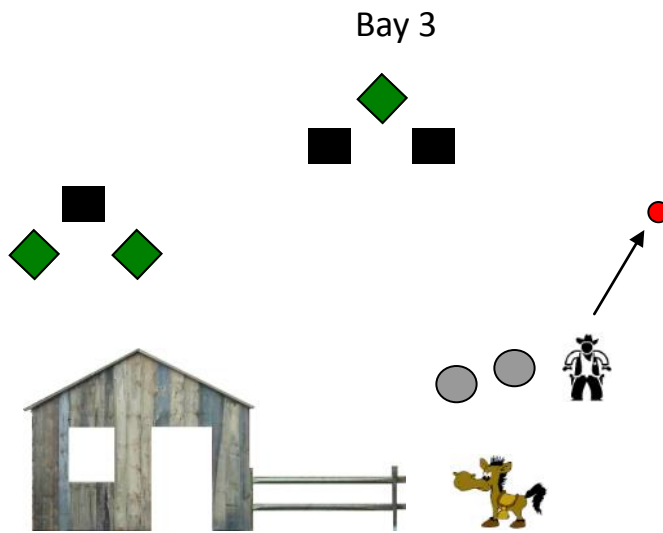
Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 10 rounds is pointed down range. Shotgun is staged on the Horse.

You've picked up the gang's trail, and helped by an informer at a local ranch, you come to the mouth of Turkey Creek Canyon. The posse has tracked the gang to the canyon, up near Cimarron. You had a feeling those buzzards would hole up in one of these caves or hollows. As dawn breaks, Elzy Lay and one of the other of the bad 'uns appear.

When ready, say,

#### **POUR IT TO 'EM BOYS (AND GIRLS!)**

At the buzzer, with your Rifle from Position A, engage the 5 targets with one continuous sweep in clockwise direction, beginning with Target number 1. No Double Taps. You MAY then engage target B for a five second bonus. In any case, after the initial 5 rounds with the rifle you may engage the targets in any order with the rest of your rifle rounds. No Double Taps! Make Rifle safe on the Horse. Knock down 1 shotgun target ON THE RIGHT and 1 shotgun target ON THE LEFT. Make Shotgun safe. Move to Position B, and with your pistols, engage the targets in a continuous DOUBLE TAP sweep, beginning with Target 1 and proceeding in a clockwise direction. DO NOT ENGAGE target B with your pistols! You do NOT need to use all the targets at all times.



#### SCENARIO 4

**10 Pistol, 10 Rifle, 2+ Shotgun**

Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 10 rounds is staged on the Horse. Shotgun is staged on the horse.

Well, after a day of shootin' back and forth, it's kind of a standoff of sorts. Two or three of our lawmen are out of action and there are only about half of us left. We can't even see some of those outlaws. However, we aren't giving up. We'll just keep shootin' and wait for reinforcements.

Start at rail with your hands held up in surrender position facing your posse (away from the targets). When ready, say:

**We're not giving up!**

At the buzzer, turn toward the targets, retrieve your rifle. Engage the three rifle targets from the horse, in a 2-6-2 sweep beginning from either end. Make Rifle safe. With Shotgun knock down both round targets. Make Shotgun safe. Move to doorway and with Pistols engage pistol targets in a 2-6-2 sweep. You do NOT need to use all the targets.

#### SCENARIO 5

**10 Pistol, 9 Rifle, 3+ Shotgun**

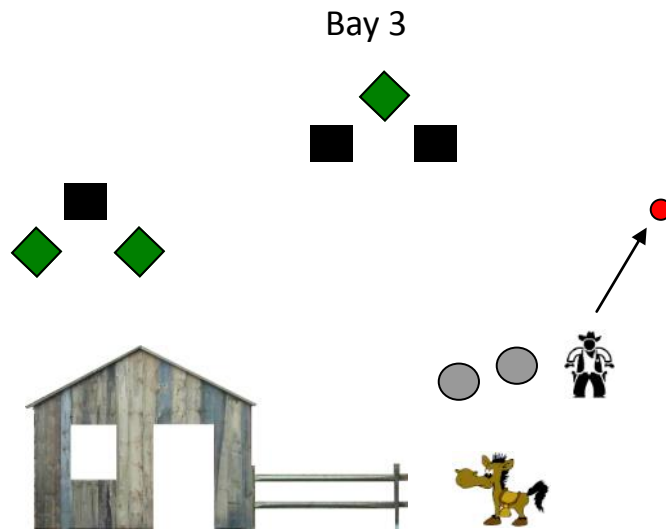
Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 9 rounds is staged in your hands. Shotgun is staged on the Horse.

There are more shots going into the canyon than coming out. At least two, maybe three of the gang are wounded. The tide is turning.

Start at Horse with hands on the Horse. When ready, say:

**Blackjack and the Gang are Done For!**

At the buzzer, engage the rifle targets with 9 rounds in a Triple Tap Sweep, starting on the leftmost target. Make Rifle safe. Engage the popper and bird with your Shotgun, followed by one knock down target. Missed poppers aren't counted but must be Engaged! Make Shotgun safe and move to the doorway. Engage the Pistol targets with 10 rounds starting on the leftmost target. No Triple Taps.



### SCENARIO 6

**10 Pistol, 10 Rifle, 2+ Shotgun**

Pistols loaded with 5 rounds each and holstered. Rifle, loaded with 10 rounds is staged on the Horse. Shotgun is staged in your hands.

Just when you think victory is in sight, you hear the sound of horses up at the head of the canyon, and the clattering of hooves. Those slippery Ketchums have crawled into the saddle are limpin' away.

Start at rail with your Shotgun at Cowboy Port Arms

#### **They're gittin' away!**

At the buzzer, you may engage the popper and bird OR the two knock down targets. If the BIRD is hit, a 5 second bonus is earned, and no further shotgun targets need be engaged. If the Bird is engaged, but missed, you must make it up by hitting one of the knock down targets, but the 5 second bonus is earned anyway. ALTERNATIVELY, you may simply knock down the 2 stationary targets, but there is no bonus if you decide not to engage popper and bird. Make Shotgun safe. Retrieve your rifle, and FROM THE RAIL, engage the rifle targets in a continuous Nevada sweep starting from the LEFT end. No double taps! Make Rifle safe. Move to the Doorway, and with your pistols engage pistol targets with a continuous Nevada Sweep starting from the RIGHT end. No double taps!