

Kwan in the West *(Chapter 1)*

Kwan was taught a Kunfu style of combat by his father a Kunfu master. His style was a combination of Karate and taekwondo.

Taekwondo originated as a martial art called Taekkyon or Subak that was developed by the Hwarang, an elite group of young noblemen in the Shilla Dynasty. Taekkyon was a combination of armed and unarmed techniques, including foot fighting and some hand skills.

Karate finds its origins in China. It was developed under the name Kung-Fu and later, throughout extensive cultural and economic exchanges with the Ryukyu Kingdom – present-day Okinawa – it developed into a martial art known as Tode or Te, the ancestor of Karate.

The Karate taught him powerful attack strikes. The taekwondo style taught him defensive moves. By the time he was an adult, he was superior to even his father, but never took advantage of it out of respect.

He led a relatively peaceful life. No need to be aggressive. Just keep a low profile and only use his martial arts to defend the weak or himself.



During the 1700's, Korea was experiencing a relatively peaceful existence.

The Joseon Dynasty was in power.



I would call the period the era of stupid hats.

The area he was living in was not peaceful though. There were roving gangs of thieves and villains. He just ignored them until one day he was walking with his sister to a market to buy food for his mother to cook their evening meal. He was accosted by too many at one time and he was seriously wounded and his sister was kidnapped.

It took him several months before he was able to regain his strength. He was determined to find his sister and deal with her kidnappers.

He knew several of the attackers. He followed a group of three into an old warehouse. Watching from a hidden alcove, he saw them set up a table and begin gambling. He was not a match for the dozen that attacked him, but three were well within his combat skills.

He leaped across the warehouse floor and jumped right on top of the middle of the table. Mahjong pieces went flying in all directions. Several head kicks later, all three were knocked unconscious. When they came to, all three were tied to chairs lined up in a row. His intent was not to kill them, at least not yet. He needed information. He approached the one on the right end. Asking direct questions got him nowhere. In fact they were snickering and telling him he was in big trouble. We won't tell you anything, even if you torture us. He got in front of the one who had spoken up. Apparently he was the boldest of the three. He took out a knife and placed it on the side of his cheek. How would you like to be disfigured for life? You can do what you want, but I will still not say anything. He moved the knife down to his crotch

area. How about living life as a eunuch? The guy suddenly went silent. Kwan made a cutting motion near the area and the guy fainted. Two balls down and four to go he said. He actually never touched the guy. Just the threat was enough. He moved over to the second guy. Unaware that nothing had really happened to his buddy, he was much more forthcoming with information. His sister had been sold off to a human trafficking ring. They operate what they referred to as reverse Shanghaied. Young American woman kidnapped in the states would be shipped off the Shanghai for various nefarious reasons. His sister had been tapped to be sold off to Americans.

Having gotten the information he needed, he left the three. None were eunuchs but they would never kidnap any more Korean women. A quick slice to the throat accomplished that. Kuan did not want his pals to know who did this. The authorities would just think it was a rival gang. I surmised that anyone who would kidnap his sister didn't deserve to live.

Kwan was not without resources. He had a modest accumulation of money and had a rudimentary understanding of Chinese. He lived close enough to the border between the two countries that he had picked up the language. This would help him considerably when he arrived in San Francisco a month later.

Upon arrival, he was just herded along with a bunch of China men thought to be one of many looking for work building the railroad. That was not his intent. He needed to stay in San Francisco and try to find out where his sister had been taken. He had a faded photograph taken a while before that still showed how beautiful she was. He hoped someone would recognize her and give him a lead.

San Francisco Harbor 1700



I don't recognize this. Where is the Golden Gate Bridge?

Oh, that's right, it wasn't built until 1933.



He found a small rental room and paid for one month. The proprietor was a Chinese woman perhaps in her late 50's. She ran a small shop below his attic bedroom. At first, she was skeptical of him, but after a week she felt different. Especially when she saw how he conducted himself. He kept his room spotless, always making the bed after he rose and often brought her fresh fish, meat, and vegetables from the local markets. They began an easy alliance. He would bring the food items and she started cooking his evening meals.

One such evening, a couple thugs appeared in her shop demanding protection money. Kwan just happened to be returning from the market. He immediately sized up the situation. His Chinese had improved substantially and he informed the two guys that she already had protection. Oh ya! From who? That is from whom, if you knew correct grammar.

Author's note:

I am not sure which is correct grammar myself.

Kwan conducted a symphony of Kung Fu moves that resulted in both assailants being kicked out of the door and landing on their rear ends in the dusty street.

Yu Ming, the older Chinese landlady was not too happy. She said you only angered those hoodlums. They will return with a vengeance. Don't worry, I have some friends that will help me.

During his initial excursion around the waterfront, he had encountered a Kung Fu training school. He was told not everyone could be a member. You had to go through a try out. When he defeated all the regular students, he was immediately accepted. The Kung Fu master recognized his ability and they soon became good friends. Just like with his father, he didn't challenge the master. No good would come from humiliating him in front of his students.

Talking with his new found friend, he got information about the local gangs. There were two rival gangs. He decided it would be good for him to meet the leader of the gang who tried to extort protection money from Yu Ming. He brought two of his fellow students with him.

San Chu was the name given to the leader of one of the triad gangs. Along with the normal immigrants, a faction of Chinese criminals also immigrated to America. These were spin offs from the Chinese triads that controlled the criminal element back in Shanghai.

Kwan entered the building where he lived. He was confronted by several guards that were quickly dispersed. He approached the desk where San Chu sat. I have a proposition for you. You can see how easy we broke through your defense. I can teach you some techniques that will make you stronger and will aid you in overcoming your rivals. San Chu took out a gun from his desk drawer. What makes you think I need your help? Kwan looked around and surveyed the room. He saw an ashtray sitting on an adjacent table. San Chu was pointing the gun at Kwan, but the next second it was knocked out of his hand by the spinning ashtray as Kwan flung it with pinpoint accuracy.

San Chu was stunned by this move. Kwan did not embarrass him further. He knew that would not achieve his goal. I will teach your associates moves like this without the need of weapons. As you know, the local police don't like gangs using guns.

San Chu was not so arrogant to take offense at this offer. He realized that this was an opportunity to raise his status. OK, China man, I will accept. Kwan said, I am Korean, not Chinese. All you gooks look alike to me. This will not be the first time he hears this phrase.

I only have two requests for this service. #1, leave Yu Ming's shop alone. No more extortion threats. #2, he produced the photo he kept of his sister. I need to know where this girl was taken.

San Chu's gang members looked at the photo. One of them said he recognized girl. She was sold at an auction to an American rich dude. Do you know where she was taken.? We heard that he was a rancher from Arizona. Other than that, we don't know more.

The only Arizona city established in the 1700's was Tucson. That was Kwan's next destination. Getting there would not be an easy ordeal. It would be a 900 mile journey across hostile Indian territory.

Kwan in the West (Chapter 2)

Kwan inquired around because he thought he needed a guide to help him get to Tucson. There were no maps to show him which direction to go. At least none known to him. This is how he ended up with Johnny Two Shoes. Kwan thought that because Johnny Two Shoes was an Indian, he would be invaluable as a guide since he was going to cross hostile Indian territory. Johnny two shoes was a half breed. His mother was an Indian and his father was Chinese. So Kwan thought he was a good choice knowing some Indian dialect along with Chinese. To be truthful, he would have been better off just blindly heading east by himself. Johnny had been named by his mother's tribe. He always carried a second pair of shoes with him because he was afraid of going barefoot.

Kwan bought a mule to carry their pack. They headed out in a north eastern direction. This was really stupid because Tucson was very far south. Kwan

did not know that at the time.

It took them three days, but they arrived in what today is called Lake Tahoe.

The only people they found there were the Washoe tribe. They had been living in the area for at least 10K years.



Even the name ‘Lake Tahoe’ is from the Washoe, or at least it’s origin is before we garbled it up. The word ‘Tahoe’ is the result of a mispronunciation of the first two syllables of the Washoe’s word – Da ow a ga – which translates to “edge of the lake.” The Washoe people are the original Tahoe locals. Kwan was mesmerized by the beauty of this place. There was nothing like it back in his home country. Even though his purpose of coming to America was to find his sister, he didn't regret experiencing this journey.

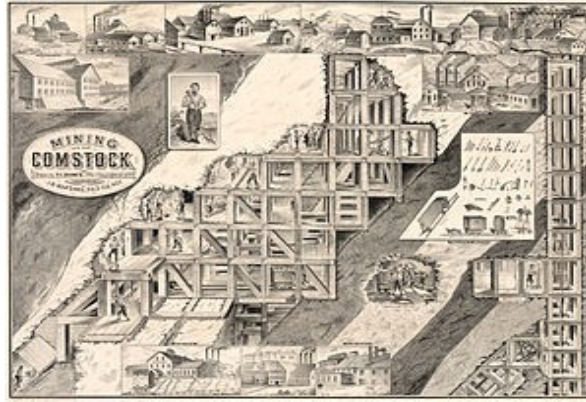
Author's note:

A local legend claims that the lake's 900-foot-deep waters off South Shore are the burial place of mob victims from the 1920s to the 1950s.

The next leg of their journey found them in Virginia City.

Author's Note:

Virginia City wasn't founded until 1859 with the discovery of the Comstock Lode silver mine. I created a fictitious scenario to enhance the drama of my story.



After arriving in Virginia City, both Kwan and Johnny Two Shoes were famished and thirsty. They went in the first bar they found. They went up to the bar and ordered some drinks. I was surprised when I was served. Many establishments looked down on foreigners, especially Asian.

We finally started heading in the right direction. Tucson was south east from Virginia City.

Johnny Two Shoes and I headed out. Two weeks and lots of dusty trails later we arrived in an area that is presently Las Vegas. Another two days trek and we made it to the mighty Colorado River. This was a welcome sight after weeks in the dry desert. To continue our trek, we needed to cross this river. At this period in time, the Colorado was flowing very rapidly. We walked south along the bank until we found a big tree that had fallen almost across.

This looked like the only opportunity we had to get across. We had to abandon our mule. Sorry Joshua, (that is the name we gave him) I think you will not have a problem surviving in this area. In fact, years later a town called Oatman, is a tourist attraction because of all the wild donkeys running free.



Johnny Two Shoes said he would go first. The tree was wide enough to walk on except at the very end. It became a very narrow. He had his second pair of moccasins tied around his neck. As he got almost to the end, he lost his balance and his shoes fell into the river. Not thinking straight, he reached for them and fell into the raging water. He quickly disappeared from Kwan's sight. There was nothing he could do. Sadly, he traversed the log himself and made it to the other side without incident. He didn't know if Johnny Two Shoes lived or had drown. At any rate, he was now in Arizona with no mule and no guide. Tucson had to be south east from his current position. He followed the river quite a ways hoping he would find his friend. It didn't happen. He knew the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. After a couple days travel along the river he needed to start going east again. It didn't take long before he ran into serious trouble. A band of Indians on horses spotted him. It was his unfortunate luck that they were Comanches. Most other tribes were not as fierce. He had no where to hide. They surrounded him and poked their spears at him. They could have just shot him full of arrows but that was not their nature. They felt they should terrorize him first. As each

approached him with a spear Kwan grabbed the spear and pulled him off of his horse. Even with knives, none were a match for his Kung Fu defense. After several attackers were rendered unconscious, they finally shot him with some arrows. None were fatal, but it did impede his ability to defend. Finally subdued, they tied him to one of the spare horses and hauled him off to their camp.

Kwan in the West
(Chapter 3)

Caught by the Comanches, he thought his fate had been decided. He would die here in this desert before he accomplished his goal. The Indians were going to bury him in the dirt with only his head sticking up and smear honey all over face including his lips eyelids and ears. Soon the ants would come for their feast. He suspected it would be a slow agonizing death. The chief had witnessed his former bravery. Let's give him a chance. Let him do the "Run of Death" instead. They would fire arrows far out into the distance. When he reached the arrows, they would start their chase. Kwan was pleased with this switch. He slowly walked to the arrows and when he got there, he picked up all three and broke them in half. Then he took off running. There was not many places to hide. He came upon a recessed space with brush covering most of it. He crouched down hidden from the pursuing men. When the first one jumped over the hole, he jumped up and caught him from behind. Up on the back of the horse, he took one of the three arrow heads and jammed them into the riders neck. The rider fell off. He also took his rifle, turned around and shot the other two approaching riders. The other Indians who had been watching were stunned by this move, but soon took up the chase. Kwan was still outnumbered and losing ground. He came to a cliff high above the roaring Colorado river. He reversed direction and his horse was shot from under him. He was also shot in the side. He took off running fast and when he reached the cliff he leaped out as far as he could. Down and down he went landing in the river. Fortunately it was deep enough that he didn't get killed hitting the river bottom. The river swept him rapidly down stream away from danger. Well, away from the present danger, but not out of danger. The Indians pursued on horseback. If they spotted him their arrows would finish the job. He grabbed on to a floating log. Keeping his head as low as possible and ducking below the surface he avoided detection.

Now he was wounded and without a horse. He found a place where the water slowed down and he dragged himself out. He started following the river south. He didn't know how far he was from Tucson, but that was a direction he needed to go. Two days later, out of water and food, he once again thought this was the end. Over the next rise he spotted another Indian camp. With no other options, he figured he might as well take his chances. Lucky for him, it was not a Comanche camp. They would have killed him on the spot. Barely able to walk much further, he strolled as boldly as he could into the camp. If this was his fate, he would accept it. He passed out as he reached their campfire. When he awoke a day later, the first face he saw was that of Johnny Two Shoes. Am I dreaming was his first thought. As it turned out, these were his people. An Indian girl, perhaps in her mid-twenties attended to his wounds and gave him water and food. Two days later, he was almost as good a new.

He was brought before the chief. Johnny Two Shoes interpreted for him. He thanked the chief for his care. The chief said you are welcome, but I need you to do something for me. My daughter here lost her husband in a war party fighting the Comanche. Our customs forbid her from marrying another brave. I want you to take her as your wife, since your customs are different from ours. He started to protest saying he didn't need a wife. Johnny Two Shoes shook his head back and forth. You cannot refuse the chief. This is a great honor he has bestowed upon you. If you refuse this is a terrible insult. Kwan had no choice but to accept. The chief also gave him a horse. In the Indian culture, this was even more valuable than giving a squaw.

He has swapped his male guide for a woman guide. He really didn't know how to react to her. She seemed perfectly happy to go along with him. Johnny Two Shoes said her name was Willow. He thought this was appropriate seeing that she was willing to bend to these new circumstances. Maybe when he reached his destination, he can explain to her that she is free to go where she wants. For now, he just had to feel content to be alive. Johnny Two Shoes decided to stay with his people. He said I was better off with her than him. In the future that would prove to be true. She was well versed on living on the Sonoran desert. In the beginning, our communication was just sign language. She did not know Korean, Chinese, or English. I did

not know her native tongue. She was a Quechan native. They had survived in the area of current day Yuma for centuries. Traveling along the Colorado was her idea and I agreed. It wasn't until we were almost into Mexico that we turned east.



Home of the **Quechan (pronounced Kwuh-tsan) Indians**, Fort Yuma-Quechan Reservation is located along both sides of the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona. The reservation borders the states of Arizona, California, Baja California and Mexico.

Willow knew how to trap small animals, fish, and where to look for water. An experience I was lacking. As the days went on, I was glad that she had accompanied me. Our communications improved. She started to learn some words in English and I started to learn some words in Quechan. That language was close to what they spoke in the Andes in South America. That kind of makes sense. They probably migrated north to settle around the Colorado. I still did not think of her as my wife. At night, I would bunk down alone, but when I woke, she was always by my side. I wondered if she thought I was gay. I just did not want to take advantage of her, still thinking when I reached Tucson, I would let her go her own way.

As we turned east, water became more scarce and besides avoiding hostile Indians, we were close enough to Mexico to encounter Mexican bandits that roamed up and down the border. In fact, that was what happened to us the following week.

We had been careful to check out our next path. Over a rise, we would look out as far as we could to see to make sure it was safe. That did not always work because they were some long stretches we had to traverse without any places to hide. That is what happened. We were overtaken by bandits.

Kwan did his best to fight them, but once again he was outnumbered. They were both taken prisoner and brought to the bandits camp. Kwan was tied to a tree and Willow was ushered into the leader's tent. It didn't take a genius to figure out what his intentions were. Willow wasn't a timid woman. Being the chief's daughter, she had endured years of various combat training. Then her husband was killed. Instead of fighting off the bandit leader, she pretended to want him. Nothing like appealing to a man's ego to get him to drop his guard. As he approached her, her eyes said yes, yes as she reached to loosen his belt. Instead, she withdrew a large knife that was strapped to his side.

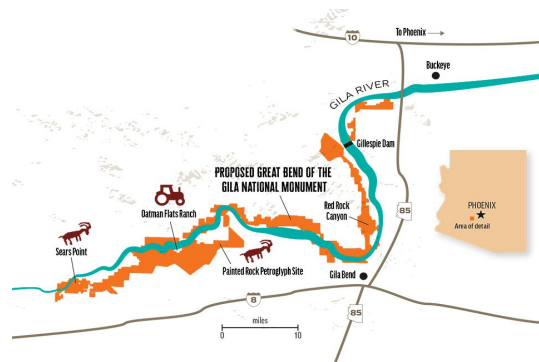
Kwan was feeling really depressed. It seems he can't protect any of the woman in his care. One of the bandits approached Kwan. He had a hot poker that he had used to tend the campfire. Kwan wasn't sure what he was going to do with it, but it didn't look promising. Just as he reached within striking distance, a knife penetrated his throat. Willow had freed herself from the leader's grasp and left him bleeding out on the tent floor. Kwan's respect for her reached new heights. I guess she has some moves of her own. She pulled out the knife she had thrown and cut Kwan free. The other bandits had been too busy drinking and hadn't seen what went down until it was too late. Kwan and Willow each jumped on a horse and scattered the rest. Before the bandits could regroup, they were far away.

Willow had kept the knife she had taken from the bandit leader. Kwan tied it to a long limb. Still no guns in their possession, they were up on one horse and a formidable weapon. This would prove advantageous the next evening. Kwan knew that she had saved his life instead of the other way around. He no longer wanted to ignore her feminine charms. At least it quelled her worry that he was gay. Sometime in the night, a black panther visited their dying fire. Grabbing the crude spear, he pierced the panther's hide. The next morning, Willow was wearing a silky fur coat. She knew where to find salt in the desert. The salted meat would sustain them for weeks. Has anyone ever tried panther jerky?

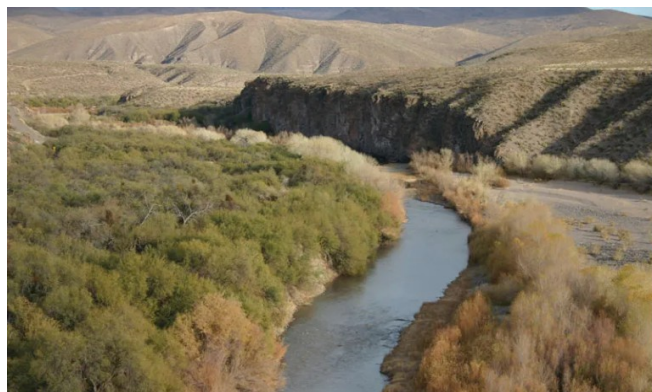
Author's note: There have been black pather sightings in Arizona, but they are rare. They are actually just black coated jaguars.



After their scary meeting with the Mexican bandits, they altered their course a little more north. Willow said she knew of a river valley with a nice stream. This would be present day Gila Bend. When they arrived, it was indeed a beautiful sight. A good chance to cool off, wash off the dessert grime and replenish their water supply. Willow had fashioned some animal skins to hold water. Kwan was getting more appreciative of his “wife” each passing day.



Author's note: When traveling to Tucson, I have often avoided Phoenix traffic and drove through Gila bend instead. The route they were traveling is close to Interstate 8's location today.



The river takes a northerly turn and heads towards Phoenix.

Anybody know what this is taken from the Gila Bend River?

Next destination: Oro Grande



Kwan in the West

(Chapter 4)

We didn't go to Oro Grande. That is in California. Instead we headed toward Casa Grande. It is a Spanish word that means 'great house.' The Casa Grande is a 4-story, 11-room structure. It was built around 1350 C.E. and was abandoned about 1450 C.E. It is made of a material called "caliche," which is a type of soil found in the Sonoran Desert. Caliche is a mixture of clay, sand, and calcium carbonate.

Another woke change: "CE" in time stands for "Common Era," which is a secular way of saying "Anno Domini" (AD) and is used to denote years after the birth of Jesus Christ, without explicitly referencing Christianity; essentially, "CE" means the current era, similar to "AD" but considered more religiously neutral.

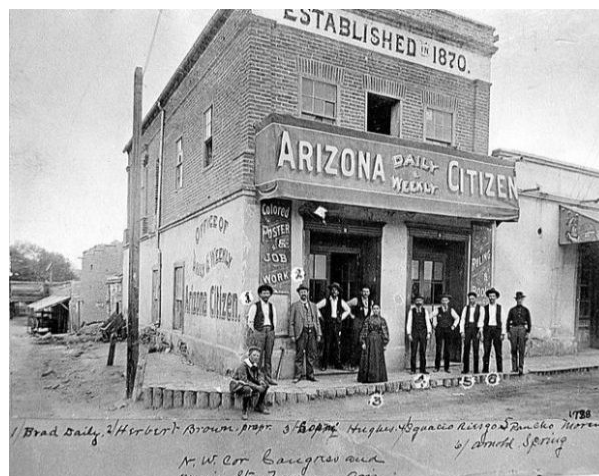


Traveling from Phoenix to Tucson on I10, you pass right through Casa Grande.

In the late 1700s, a mission was built by the Spanish missionaries.



Tucson had remnants of a town by then. Mostly, the locals were farmers and ranchers. The downtown area had a general store, a church, a livery with a blacksmith, and of course a saloon with hotel rooms above. Kwan expected



to face more discrimination being an Asian with an Indian wife. He was pleasantly surprised when he asked for a drink and a couple nights stay in the

hotel. The proprietor was courteous and friendly. He guessed that the local folks were too busy making a hard living to participate in that kind of bigotry. This was a good chance to ask about his sister. He took out her picture and showed it to the man. Do you recognize this girl, she is my sister. Yes, that is Mrs. Steinman. She is married to one of the richest ranchers around these parts. He owns a spread 5 miles out of town due east. Kwan didn't expect to get lucky this soon. After their long journey, he and Willow needed some rest. There would be plenty of time to investigate tomorrow. It had been more than a year since she was abducted. The next morning they headed east toward John Steinman's ranch. Kwan did not know what to expect. Why was his sister married? Was she forced into it or was there something else to the story.

Willow and Kwan rode their horses to about a mile away from the ranch fence. They hid the horses and tied them to some trees. They walked the rest of the way on foot. They came upon the biggest house Kwan had ever seen. Startling white against the Tucson desert dirt. Off to the right was a barn. They slipped under the barbed wire and made their way to the barn. Inside was a young cowboy tending to some horses. Kwan made a silent approach and soon had the cowboy in an arm lock around his neck. One false move and your neck will break. What do you want? I am looking for John Steinman, the man who abducted my sister. I don't know what you are talking about. John Steinman is one of the finished gentlemen to grace the earth. Kwan did not see Steinman approach from behind. Let my cow hand Rowdy go, I don't look kindly on ruffians accosting my help. Kwan said, I don't take kindly to those who abducted my sister. Steinman did have the drop on Kwan and was pointing a shotgun at him. The next thing Steinman knew, someone had placed a knife at his throat. Willow came through again. Steinman kept his gun pointed at Kwan. You must be Kwan. That's right, I came here to free my sister. Your sister is already free. Kwan was puzzled by this statement. This situation is what is called "A Mexican Standoff", although no Mexicans were involved. Just then Kwan's sister, Ahrin, arrived in the barn. Everyone drop their weapons, there must be some misunderstanding. Kwan released Rowdy from his grip. He signaled Willow to remove the knife from Steinman's throat. Steinman lowered his weapon.

Ahrin related this story of her ordeal. When she arrived in San Francisco, she was in a group of Chinese girls slated to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. John Steinman just so happened to be in San Francisco on a business venture. He abhorred this kind of practice. He bid high enough to buy all of the girls. They would have been sold off to a brothel. He gave each one a bankroll and told them they were free to go. If any wanted to work for him at his ranch, he would hire them as maids or cooks. None of the other girls wanted to leave San Francisco. Ahrin, being Korean, did not fit in well with the other Chinese girls. She took Steinman up on his offer. On their journey east, they became fond of each other and instead of being a maid or cook, she got married and became the Queen of the ranch. She said, I sent off news of my safety back to Korea. I guess you never got my letter since you started your journey to rescue me. She told Kwan how much she enjoys taking care of the livestock and even learning to ride a horse. Oh, there is one other bit of news. She instructed Rowdy to fetch Rosita. When she came in, she was carrying a two month old baby. Kwan, meet your niece.

Kwan was both shocked and elated at the same time. He was relieved that his sister was no longer in danger. Now you need to tell me your story of how you ended up married to an Indian princess. She was just an enthralled by his tale as he was with hers.

Later, over dinner of the finest steak Kwan ever tasted, they enjoyed more conversation mixed with Korean, English, and Apache. To Kwan's delight, Ahrin had made a batch of kimchi. How did you know how to make that? Our mother taught me. Do you think when you guys were practicing your Kung Fu, that we women were idle? Kwan realized he did not know too much about woman. Not an uncommon trait for most men. Now that Kwan knew his sister was settled and safe, he wondered what to do next. Willow provided the answer. She wanted to return to her tribe and check on her father and other kin. Kwan also wanted to head back west. Maybe there was some adventure lying in wait for him in San Francisco or the gold rush to Alaska. John Steinman set them up with two sturdy horses and a pack mule. They had enough provisions to not have to worry about water and food. He also gave them a map showing the safest route to avoid hostile Indians.

Their trip back to the Willow's tribe was uneventful until they reached the camp. They found death and destruction. The Comanches had raided the camp. Willow's father had been killed. Johnny Two Shoes was alive, but seriously hurt.

Kwan's Revenge

Kwan in the West *(Chapter 5) Kwan's Revenge*

Johnny Two Shoes told Kwan what had happened. Thirty or more Comanches had swarmed down on the unsuspecting Apaches. Sure they had lookouts watching the hills, but they must have been silently taken out. There was no warning at all. Johnny had been knocked out by a tomahawk and would have been killed if another body had not fallen on him shielding him from view and a sure death. When he came to hours later, the devastation is what you are seeing now. Some of the braves had retreated to the forest along with some of the woman. They were not cowards. No good would have come if they had stayed and been slaughtered along with the rest. Willow, no stranger to violence and as the chief's daughter took over as leader. We need to find those who had survived and decide where we should go as a group. There is strength in numbers, no matter how little remained. Kwan said that is a good plan to start. Go into the forest and find as many as are still alive and willing to fight. I don't think many will have the heart to fight such a formidable enemy. You told me that the Comanches in all the years you remembered, never ventured this far west and south. That means these might be an advance group looking to expand their territory. I have an idea that might dissuade them from staying and bringing more. I am willing to listen to your idea, but I don't want any more of my kin to be slaughtered. Trust me on this. I will stay with Johnny Two Shoes while you find the others. He is not stable enough to move just yet. Send me a signal when you have found a safe area and we will join you.

John Steinman had given Kwan two more valuable assets beside the pack mule. He had given Kwan a spy glass to check danger in the distance and a Kentucky long rifle. This was a rifle developed in Germany and brought to

Pennsylvania by German immigrants. It had a small bore, but also had revolutionary grooves in the barrel that caused the projectile to spin as it left the chamber. This greatly reduced wobble and improved accuracy. A man sized target could easily be hit from 200 yards away.



While Willow was looking for the rest of her tribe. Kwan followed the invaders tracks as he came over a rise, he spotted their camp. Using the spy glass, he surveyed the camp. A short distance from the camp was some rising cliffs with a narrow canyon through it. He remembers walking through this same canyon before he arrived at the Apache settlement. His plan was formed at that moment. He would return and describe his ideas to Willow and the rest of her tribe.



Kwan was not a student of warfare. He was kind of a history buff though. He remembers reading about the 300 Greeks who held off 1 million Persians at the Gates of Thermopylae. AKA “The Gates of Hell”. They drew their enemy into the gates where the large numbers where reduced to a stream. The Greeks, far superior in hand to hand combat held them off for days.

A legend from Japan was also among his collection of history stories. When Japan was being modernized by a weak Emperor, a band of Samurai fought off annihilation by employing a similar strategy. In both cases, the two groups ultimately lost their lives but at an enormous expense to their enemy.



Kwan's plan was much less risky. No direct confrontation was part of it and he felt no one of Willows tribe would die.

He meet with Willow and explained his plan. Johnny interpreted for the rest of the tribe.

Everyone agreed this was a brilliant plan. I won't give away the details. You will have to follow it as it unfolds. He did need some preparation. Johnny, do you know how to shoot a rifle? Yes I do, in fact I am somewhat of a sharp shooter. Good, we are going to need one now. He showed Johnny the long rifle he had brought. Put some man sized target over on the ridge about 150 yards away. See if you can hit it. Johnny loaded the rifle, aimed and hit just low and to the right. It seems the sites are a little off. I moved some dial for up and left and fired again. He hit right in the middle. Good, that should work.

Kwan told them about where the camp was and what he was going to do. Willow said that is crazy. I told you I didn't want any more of my tribe to die. You have to trust me on this. It isn't as risky as it sounds. Besides, I am not part of your tribe. I won't comment on that remark. You had better come

back or I will kill you. A mixed message for sure. Their relationship bond was as strong as any. Further reinforced by all the danger they faced and survived. I promise you a peaceful life after this.

The next day was spent checking how many bows, arrows, and spears were left. Lots of weapons were left at the ambush site. The Comanche had their own superior weapons, no need to downgrade. That is OK, these were going to be good enough.

They waited until early afternoon. The Comanche camp was relaxed. There were no dangerous enemies near them. Or so they thought. Willow led the 10 able warriors left in condition to fight around the Comanche camp and positioned themselves on each side high on the cliff over looking the narrow canyon. At the end of the canyon, a pile of brush was built up.

Now it was Kwan's turn to run his gambit. He was relying on two things. The leaders pride and the speed of the horse Steinman had given him. Actually three things. He needed Johnny Two Shoes to make sure no Comanche was left alive.

He began his run:

Kwan in the West
(Chapter 6, Final)

Kwan used his spy glass to check out the camp. He saw the Comanche chief tending to his horse. It looked like he was adding some war decorations, feathers and such. Maybe a tribute to his recent victory. This was perfect. Kwan made his approach hidden by a corpse of trees only 20 yards from the camp center. He burst out of the woods rapidly closing the distance. Johnny Two Shoes had told him about making coup. This was a common thing among Indian fighters. If you could touch an enemy without killing him and get away, it earned you much acclaim. Johnny had given Kwan a wooden tomahawk that was not lethal. He had it stuck behind in his belt. The Comanche chief looked up more surprised than in fear. Here was an Asian man coming at him screaming foreign words without any apparent weapon.

Kwan had taken a cue from the Samurai. Only his yells were in Korean. The chief was so startled that he let go of his horse. Kwan bopped him on the head with the tomahawk stunning him. He then put a noose around the horse and pulled him along with his galloping steed. The Comanche chief finally regained his wits and started yelling profanities at his tribal warriors. This was the ultimate insult. Getting hit was one thing, but having someone steal his war horse without so much as a scratch was unbearable. Go after him. He grabbed a spare mount and took up the pursuit. Kwan headed for the canyon entrance. He let the group catch up a little so they would not be too far behind. The canyon was long enough to hold the entire line of Comanche warriors, but too narrow for them to ride abreast. As he got close to the end, he motioned for the women to start the fire. He was quick enough to burst past the quickly growing fire storm. Not so for the band chasing him. They had to halt their progress. It was then that the Apache warriors started picking them off with arrows from above. Trapped, the chief ordered a retreat. A group of women piled more brush at the other end and lit it on fire. Now the Comanches were trapped in the canyon with both sides blocked. Kwan ordered them not to kill the chief. After all the others were dead, they surrounded the chief and tied him to his horse. He was led back to an empty camp. Where were the guards he left? Johnny Two Shoes had done his job. He had been positioned in some trees up on a hill about 150 yards from the camp center. His rifle resting firmly on a log. All five guards left had been watching their fellow warriors chasing Kwan. Johnny started with the closest warrior to him. Pow, he was down. Now the second. The others heard the noise, but could not fathom what was happening. They turned around and saw their fellow guards just fall to the ground. Frozen with uncertainty, this is just what Johnny had hoped. He dispensed with the remaining without difficulty. He hobbled into the camp still recovering from his former injuries. He noticed two tents that had been sealed shut. Thinking this might be a trap, he approached cautiously. He heard worried voices from inside in his native language. He quickly opened both flaps and called out for them to come out. They were safe now. Men and women came out from both tents. They had been captured to be used as slaves. They praised Johnny as their savior.

Just then Kwan, Willow, and the rest of the fighters returned with the chief in tow. They wanted to put him in the honey pit and let the ants do their thing.

Kwan said no. I think we should give him the same chance he gave me. "The Run of Death". He asked for 3 volunteers. Three of the braves who had lost the most relatives stepped forward. Same rules. They fired arrows off into the distance. The Comanche chief walked to the arrows and took off running. He wasn't as resourceful as Kwan. They caught up to him and beat him to death with their real tomahawks.

That evening, back at their former home, it was a mixed celebration. Mourning for the dead, but happy for their victory. They needed to choose a new chief. Women were still second class even though Willow was the former chief's daughter. Kwan was out of the question. He was a foreigner. There were other potential candidates, but Johnny Two Shoes was the unanimous choice. He took the honor without hesitation. He knew that Kwan and Willow were the real heroes, but tradition must be held. He never dreamed he would have this honor. He vowed to live up to the title.

So Kwan said he must leave now. He had other plans and will take Willow with him. She said OK, but we must first remain here until our child is born. Kwan was just as surprised as most fathers. A big smile came to his face. It shall be as you command my princess.

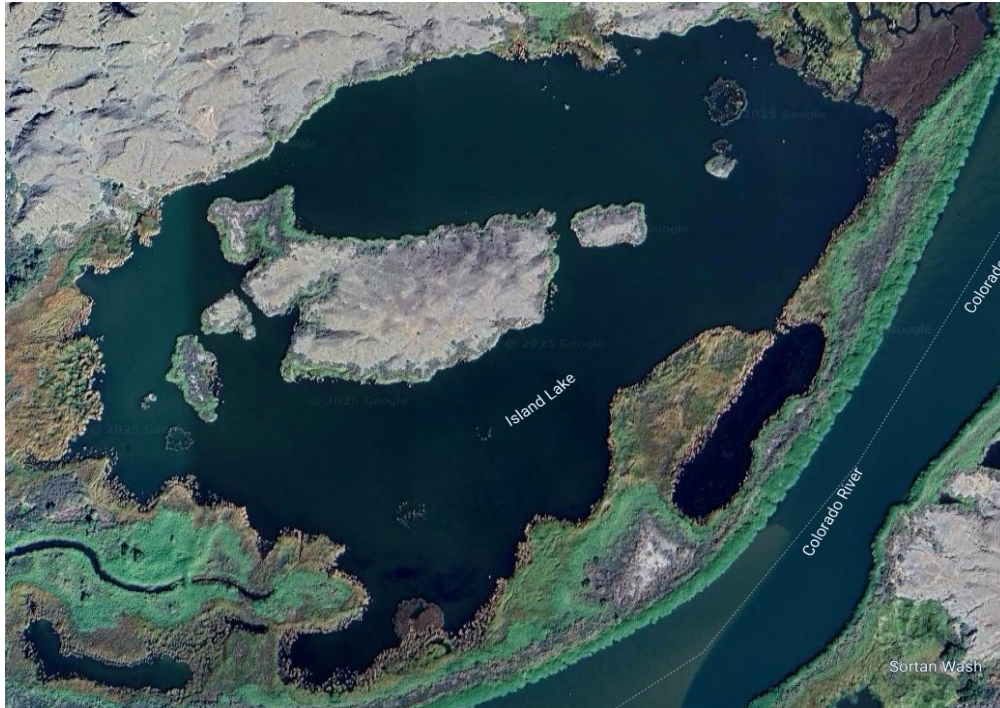
During the seven months it took for Willow to deliver a healthy baby girl, Kwan experienced a peace like he had never felt before. Except for possible warring neighbors, the life of the Indian was idyllic. Hunt in the day for fresh fish and game, return to a warm camp fire to eat and relax in his tepee with his beautiful wife. During the day, the women would craft beautiful pottery and woven baskets. They also fashioned all the clothes for the warriors and themselves. Kwan forgot about heading for San Francisco. Why leave paradise? They named their daughter Kwanee. A suitable compromise.

One time Kwan and Willow were canoeing along the Colorado near Picacho Peak. This was a formation named by the indigenous Indians. Very strange in that Picacho in Spanish means Peak. So in English this is called Peak Peak.



In that particular section of the Colorado, the river slows down considerably. Many back water lagoons and lakes had been formed by back flows. They had been camped on the west bank. That evening a group of wild donkeys wandered by. Kwan was sitting near the campfire and one of the donkeys approached him. He was surprised to see his first pack mule. He and Two Shoes had named him Joshua. Joshua must have remembered the apples Kwan had treated him to on their journey from San Francisco. Kwan produced another wild apple and fed it to him. A short distance away, a bevy of female donkeys were waiting in the wings. Seems like Joshua had indeed survived and had a whole harem. The female donkeys did not know that mules could not usually reproduce. Mules are an offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. Their chromosomes did not let the eggs mature.

In the early morning, Kwan and Willow paddled their canoe a couple miles down the Colorado. He noticed a strong back flow of water going off to the east bank through dense reeds. Using a long knife he had formed in the past months, he started hacking the reeds away to make a channel. The blade was kind of like a machete. Something he had learned how to make back in Korea. After a quarter mile, he broke through the reeds and found a large lake with a big island in the middle. This is a real place about 20 miles north on the Colorado from present day Yuma. He asked Willow, are you thinking what I am thinking? I believe so, she answered. This would be an ideal place to set up our tribal camp. Well hidden and protected on all side by the surrounding water. No war party could ever surprise us again. They would need an armada of canoes to attack us. Something easily defended against.



So this is where Willow's tribe reestablished their camp and new home.

Johnny Two Shoes was required to take a wife. Any of the young maidens would have been honored to be chosen. The privileges of wife of the chief were many. Johnny was not the most handsome guy, but he was smart. He chose a middle age unmarried maiden, kind of plain, but with a warm nurturing personality. She was a good match for him. Both the younger maidens and young bucks were secretly pleased with this choice. That left more couples closer to the same age to marry.

Kwan had sent word to his sister via a courier detailing what had transpired in the past years. He was pleased when she showed up one day at their camp with her husband and young daughter. John Steinman was on another business trip to San Francisco. Kwanee was growing up fast. She had an amazing ability to pick up languages. She spoke Korean to her dad of course, but she also forced Willow to learn Korean. This perplexed Willow to no end. Kwanee easily learned Apache from the other Indian kids. She talked to the Indian children in Apache and to Two Shoes in English. Willow was a Quechan native. This group is a sub group to the larger Apache nation. Their languages were similar. When Ahrin arrived, the two cousins immediately took to each other.

During his time living among the Indians, no warring tribe ever attacked the Apaches again. He and Willow had another child, a boy this time. They named him Willan.

The cast of characters:

I should have put these in the first chapter for a visual connection.

Ahrin



This could be either Ahrin's Son'
Kwanee, or Willan



Kwan



Willow



Kwan in the West
(Epilogue)

I always like to write an epilogue. Sometimes to clarify some information, explain why I chose this particular topic, or comment on what is fiction and what is not. When I inject some of my own experiences into the story, I want to make a note of that too.

I had been thinking of David Carradine, the actor who had played in the TV series Kung Fu as Kwai Chang Caine. He was a mild mannered man in the west with an awesome kung fu style. He also played the villain in the movie “Kill Bill”. He died in some bizarre manner involving strangulation during the sex act.

I thought a story about an Asian roaming the old west was a good backdrop.

When starting out these stories, I only have an inclination where they might take me. I also watched a movie called Shanghai Knights where Jackie Chan ventured out west to track down his princess sister who have been kidnapped. So that gave me another direction for my plot.

I stole some scenes from the movie “Lonesome Dove”. Captain Call was captured by the Comanche and threatened with the ant honey pit. The chief offered him the “Run of Death” which he took. He escaped close to what I wrote about Kwan.

The part about taking coup was taken from the recent Yellowstone series. John Dutton's son found the organization's leader behind the killing of his father and whacked him on the head as a warning not to bother any more of his family.

Most of the story takes place along the Colorado river bordering California and Southern Arizona. The climate along this stretch is very pleasant and mild. The journey across the Sonoran desert toward Gila Bend and Tucson is arid and dry. Very dangerous to travel that way.

The section of the story relating the discovery of Island Lake was taken from trips I made to Picacho Peak State park camping with my brother, his wife, and my wife. We did float down the Colorado and kayaked through the reed channel. It always reminded me of the first time I rode the African Queen at the Disneyland jungle cruise. I fished in Island lake and hooked something big but lost it. It could have been one of the giant 8 foot carps that can be seen floating in the lake while standing on the Island hill top.

In the night, my wife and I got up to pee in the willows along the bank. I saw several wild donkeys walk by and a coyote. I never mention this to her. There were no caterpillars present so she felt safe. She was afraid of caterpillars.

My wife and I did visit the town of Oatman and saw many wild donkeys roaming the town streets. My wife asked me if we could eat the donkeys. The Chinese are never at a loss to get a free meal. This is not meant as an insult. It is just a fact and part of her culture. For many years, the Chinese were burdened by an oppressive government. Food was scarce and especially meat was hard to come by. Any free game was a welcome addition to the family meal.

The End