

*A U.S. Deputy Marshall from Lordsburg, New Mexico investigates a gruesome murder of a young couple on their ranch near the U.S.-Mexico border. All the locals immediately assume the murders were committed by Mexican border-crossing raiders or bandits but the officer does not believe it, and investigates....*

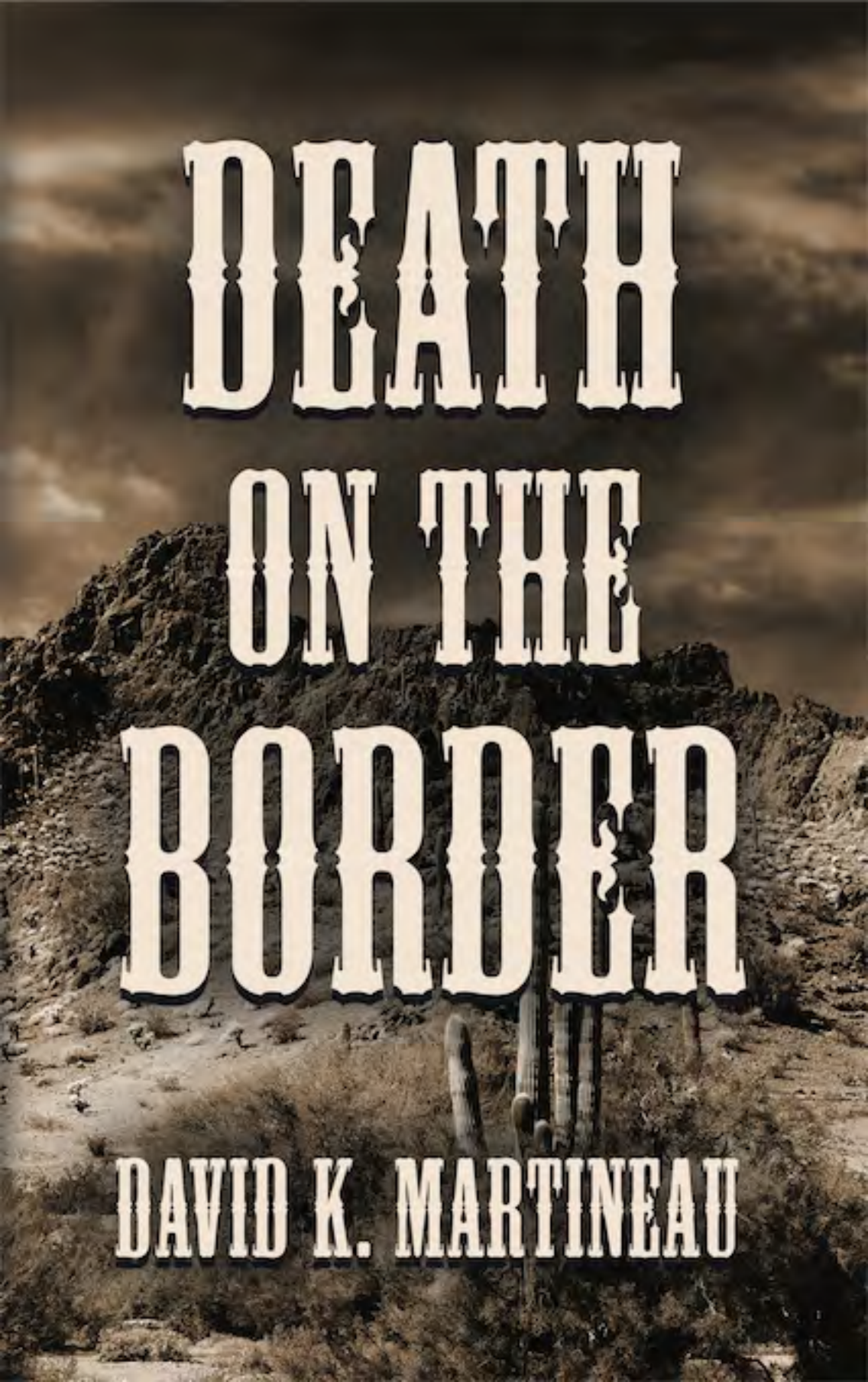
**DEATH ON THE BORDER:  
A Western Mystery Novel**

by David K. Martineau

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**DAVID K. MARTINEAU**

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First Edition

## **Books by David K. Martineau**

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# **Death on The Border**

## **Chapter 1**

Deputy US Marshal Arturo B. Saenz, commonly known as Art Saenz, sat at his desk with his feet comfortably propped on the top of his desk reading the Western Liberal Newspaper of Lordsburg, New Mexico. On the first page, he found an article about a local murder, and read the first few lines, which immediately caught his attention, then quickly brought him to a state of rage.

“Bullshit,” he bellowed while pounding his fist on the desk. “That’s not what happened.”

Sitting at his desk across from Deputy Marshal Saenz, facing him across the small office room they shared, was Deputy Sheriff Andrew Farnsworth.

“What in blazes are you talking about?” he queried.

“Did you read this article about the murder of that young couple, the Parkers down on the Double Adobe Ranch? It says that a band of Mexican raiders committed the crime! Why does everyone around here always blame the Mexicans

for everything that happens? I know it has only been a couple of months since Pancho Villa and his raiders devastated Columbus, New Mexico, but that doesn't mean that every little crime committed on our side of the border must be a similar event at the hands of Mexicans! Regular Americans still break the law, especially out here in the bootheel of New Mexico."

Deputy Sheriff Andrew Farnsworth and Deputy Marshal Art Saenz shared an office with three cells, on Main Street, in Lordsburg, around the corner from the railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad. They were good friends, and although their respective law enforcement duties were different, they liked to discuss cases between them. This custom provided a different perspective, a different set of eyes to analyze each case, and sometimes they even shared duties on specific cases, if the areas of responsibility for their two different law enforcement agencies overlapped. The Sheriff's responsibilities pertained to local crimes, with a strict area of geographic responsibility, outside of which, the Sheriff had no jurisdiction. He worked under the Sheriff of Grant County, Herbert J. McGrath. The US Marshal service, on the other hand, was concerned with certain federal crimes, court matters, and transportation of federal prisoners. It also had an element of responsibility in crimes which transcended international

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borders, serious crimes on Indian reservations, and most importantly, the US Marshal service had no jurisdictional limitations. Deputy US Marshal Saenz worked under the US Marshal for the State of New Mexico. The two law enforcement officers shared office space with cells, thus cutting down on the expense of each having to have separate office spaces. It was also most convenient to cover each other, when one of them was out of the office.

Lordsburg was in southern Grant County, which had its County Seat in Silver City. This was quite impractical and a nuisance for the southern portions of the county, which had to travel an inordinate distance to Silver City for access to county facilities and services, including the Court, which Deputy Marshal Saenz serviced. There was recent talk in Santa Fe, the State Capital, of splitting off the southern portion of Grant County into a new county, to be called Hidalgo County, and to designate Lordsburg as the County Seat of the new county, but this was only talk so far.

Lordsburg was first founded as a railroad town along the Southern Pacific line, in 1880. It was named after a railroad supervisor Delbert Lord, who chose the site to create a town halfway between El Paso, Texas and Tucson, Arizona. Lordsburg is located very close to the boundary



between the new states of New Mexico and Arizona, each having attained statehood only four years before, in 1912. The town was at a strategically important crossroads of the east-west and south-north travel routes. The stage coach and railroad route between the eastern portions of the United States and California ran through Lordsburg, as did the south to north mining trail known as the Janos Road, from Janos, Chihuahua and the Santa Rita del Cobre mines, near present-day Silver City, New Mexico.

Deputy Marshal Art Saenz, was over fifty years old, and he realized that he was looking at the tail end of his career, but was still going strong. He was five feet nine inches tall, brown hair with a few gray hairs mixed in, and wore a western droopy moustache. He weighed about 190 pounds and was a product of the bi-cultural, wild, and lawless border area. He was born in Mesilla, Confederate Territory of Arizona (today Mesilla, New Mexico), on 1 Jul 1861. The Southern halves of Arizona and New Mexico were annexed by the Confederate President Jefferson Davis, as a Confederate Territory, and an Arizona Ordinance of Secession was signed by the people of now southern Arizona and New Mexico, assembled in convention in Mesilla, on 16 Mar 1861. Shortly thereafter the citizens of Tucson, Arizona Territory ratified the action indicating their desire to become part of the new

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Confederate Territory. The Confederate Territory of Arizona only lasted a brief period, as Brigadier General James Henry Carleton and his California Volunteers recaptured Tucson in June of 1862, after which the whole area again came under control of the Union forces. General Carleton and the California Volunteers had been assembled in California and sent through Arizona and New Mexico, as far east as El Paso along the Rio Grande, to rid the entire area of Confederate forces, and halt their plans to develop the area as a Confederate stronghold. Along the way to New Mexico, Carleton's forces encountered and clashed with the Chiricahua Apache members of the bands of Cochise and Mangas Coloradas, who had recently experienced the treacherous deaths of members of Cochise's family, at the hands of Lieutenant George Nicholas Bascom, at Apache Pass, near what would soon become Fort Bowie. Bascom's actions gave rise to the Apache wars in the area. So, you can easily see how young Art Saenz was raised in an atmosphere of cultural struggles between Mexicans and Americans, Southern States versus Northern States, and Apaches versus Americans.

These influences affected his personality. In his early twenties Art Saenz, fully fluent in Spanish and English, joined the U. S. Army, as a cavalry private, and served his entire four-year enlistment in the border area.

Some people raised along the border felt “torn between two cultures,” Mexican and American. Not Art Saenz. He felt doubly blessed, equally comfortable in the Mexican culture, and the American southwest. He loved his Mexican heritage, and his American western frontier culture. He treasured both parts of his life, and derived extra strength from having them both. He did not care much for people who could only speak Spanish, nor those who could only speak English, thinking that both were missing important cultural aspects of life. He felt that he possessed a much better and wider understanding of people and life, due to his dual culture.

Art had experienced and learned a lot, during his military service. In May of 1883, Private Art B. Saenz was serving as a Cavalry Trooper in the 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and assigned to the US Army forces being assembled at John H. Slaughter’s San Bernardino Springs Ranch, in the very south-eastern corner of Arizona, along the US-Mexico border. This force was being assembled and organized under General George Crook (that was the first major Crook border-crossing chase after Geronimo), to cross over the border into Mexico, in pursuit of Apaches who had left the San Carlos Reservation, under Geronimo. Tom Horn, an associate of Chief Scout Al Sieber, was in the force, attached to one of the pack trains as a

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packer or mule-skinner. Trooper Saenz was also attached to this pack train, which followed the main body closely, transporting supplies and ammunition on mules.

The Apache bands being followed into Mexico included several influential Chiricahua Chiefs: Geronimo, Chato, Chihuahua, Nana, Naiche, Juh, Loco, Bonito, Mangas, Zele, and Ka-ya-ten-nae (who later declared that he was a Mexican Apache, having been born and raised in the Sierra Madre Mountains stronghold). In addition to General Crook's main body, there was a significant Apache Scout force, led by Captain Emmet Crawford, Lieutenants Charles B. Gatewood and James O. Mackay, Chief Scout Al Sieber and his Deputy Archie McIntosh, and scout-guide-interpreters Mickey Free, Severiano and Peaches. The scout force also included a group of about 190 Indian Scouts, mostly Apaches from various Apache tribes, plus a few Yumas and Mohaves thrown into the mix for good measure. General Crook was a firm believer in the use of Apache Scouts to track Apaches, and relied heavily on them. Regular Cavalry Troops and Pack Trains could not move as fast as the Apaches did, and could only be successful if accompanied by a force of Apache Scouts, who could operate independent of the main body and pack trains.

General Crook's force left San Bernardino Springs Ranch on 1 May 1883, and crossed into the Mexican State of Sonora. With the Scout force leading the way, the force moved south to the Bavispe River. The force followed the Bavispe River further southeast, past the towns of Bavispe, Bacerac, Huachinera, and on to Tesorababi (which no longer shows up on maps). The troopers noticed that many properties in the area had been abandoned by the Mexicans, due to fear of the Apaches, who freely raided among the Mexican populations and ranches for cattle, horses and other supplies. Local Mexicans were loath to go up into the Sierra Madre Mountains, since Apaches used that area to hide from both Mexican and American soldiers and ranchers. At the suggestion of the Chiricahua guide Peaches (he was actually a White Mountain Apache, but married to two Chiricahua women and had lived for a long time with the Chiricahua), General Crook diverted his force away from the Bavispe River and headed southeast up into the heart of the Sierra Madre mountains, generally following a tributary to the Bavispe up to its source, near the continental divide, between the Mexican States of Sonora and Chihuahua. High in these mountains between Sonora and Chihuahua was a favorite location used by Apaches for centuries, which was remote, inaccessible, and well-suited as a hiding place from which to raid Mexican ranchers from Sonora and Chihuahua. High up in this area

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Crook's force ran into the band of Chiricahua Chief Chato. His band had an American prisoner, a six-year-old child named Charlie McComas, who had been captured previously by a raiding party of Chiricahuas south of Silver City, New Mexico. When the advance scouts ran into Chato's encampment, shooting erupted. This caused one of Chato's warriors to bash in Charlie's head with a rock. Little Charlie McComas' body was tossed into some bushes and not found by the American attackers. The story of what happened to the McComas boy did not come to light until much later, narrated by a Chiricahua Warrior, Jason Betzinez, who heard it from an eyewitness, Ramona Chihuahua, one of Chief Chihuahua's daughters. At about the same time, a group of five Mexican captives being held by the Chiricahua Apaches were released or escaped, and joined General Crook's party. The Chiricahuas had hoped to trade them to the Mexicans for Apaches being held as prisoners of the Mexicans.

Chiricahua Apaches began to come into Crook's camp high in the Sierra Madre to talk. Crook informed them that he intended to either fight with them or bring them back to the United States. Little by little, warriors began to come in, along with women and children, agreeing to return with Crook. Even Geronimo came into Crook's camp, on 22 May, and agreed to gather

up his people and return to the United States with the American soldiers. First Chato, then Chihuahua, then Ka-ya-ten-nae agreed to surrender. Soon Naiche (the second son of the legendary Cochise) and Loco also agreed, followed by Nana and Bonito. By 28 May all major Chiefs had agreed to surrender and return to the reservation, except for Chief Juh and his band, which never returned. At least 374 Chiricahua Apaches, including warriors, women and children, had agreed to return.

On 30 May 1883, General Crook broke camp and started for home. He had agreed to allow Geronimo to gather up the remainder of his people, and travel on their own back to the border, to join the Apaches who accompanied General Crook back to the reservation. Crook and his men, accompanied by Apaches, travelled along the eastern side of the continental divide, down the Sierra Madre Mountains onto the Janos Plains, in Chihuahua. From there they went northwest, crossing back into Sonora, then on to cross the international border back into Arizona at the San Bernardino River, and on to Silver Springs, Arizona, where they met General Crook's soldiers who had stayed behind at the border, arriving there 15 Jun 1883. A group of Chiricahua leaving Mexico went from Chihuahua north to the US Border. They crossed the border into New Mexico, and from there went west along

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the Gila River, to the San Carlos Reservation. Chiricahuas from Mexico began to arrive at the San Carlos Agency in early June 1883. The main body arrived 23 Jun 1883, and smaller parties of Apaches continued arriving for months thereafter. Chato and his band arrived in February 1884, and Geronimo and his band finally arrived 25 Feb 1884. The last party of Chiricahua Apaches did not arrive until 15 May 1884, completing the return of the Apaches who had been hiding in the Sierra Madre, except for Juh and a few others who continued to run wild in the Sierra Madre, but their raiding potential and danger to Americans was greatly reduced. Trooper Art Saenz followed closely behind General Crook's forces with pack mules and supplies, throughout that military action in Mexico.

Art Saenz remembered all his travels and experiences in Mexico, and applied the lessons learned to his life. After his military service, Art Saenz took up residency in Lordsburg, dabbling in local law enforcement and cattle ranching.

As a boy of Mexican ancestry growing up in the Territory of New Mexico, Art Saenz had experienced minor prejudicial behavior, like being called a "greaser", or a "spick". He could easily handle these indiscretions by the white cowboys around him. He did not run into real racial prejudice, until his military service. In the



Cavalry, he saw that some Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and Officers felt genuine superiority toward not only Mexicans, but also toward Apaches and black soldiers. He saw and experienced how such prejudiced Americans treated Mexicans, Blacks, and Apaches, really all Indians not just Apaches, as second-class citizens. In many cases, those prejudiced Americans thought that the Mexicans, black soldiers, and Apaches were less intelligent, and of a lower class of human beings than the Americans were. Even though the term “Americans”, was really a mixture of European races. However, not all NCOs and Officers felt that way. There were many of them, particularly those who worked with black “Buffalo Soldiers”, Americans of Mexican ancestry, and Apache Scouts, who admired their skills, humility, and ability to live in less-than-desirable conditions, such as in the U.S. Cavalry. Art considered that the military men who worked with pack mules, were also of a more egalitarian nature, seeing first hand that a man’s ability to work with stubborn animals, like mules, under difficult circumstances, was not influenced by his racial background. Many of the Officers who worked with Apache Scouts, also valued their skills and abilities, and genuinely admired and liked them.

After working closely with the pack mule trains, and Apache Scouts, Art realized that he

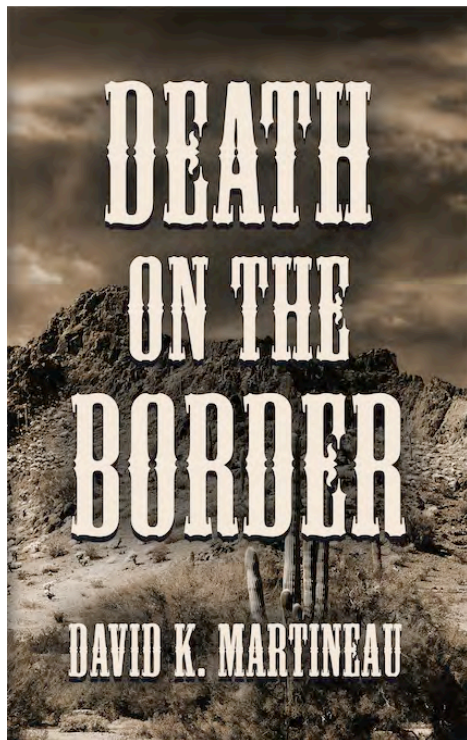
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was every bit as valuable a human being as anyone else in the military force. He also realized that the black soldiers and Apache Scouts were valuable assets in the U.S. Cavalry, and that a man's racial heritage was something to be appreciated and admired, not something to hold against him. After that, Trooper Art Saenz began to develop an appreciation for all heritages, and an ever-increasing sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

On the strength of his military experience and law enforcement activities afterwards, at age 31 he was hired by the United States Marshals Service as a Deputy Marshal. He liked the fact that the mission of the Marshals Service was federal, not just local nor restricted to a small jurisdiction. The U.S. Marshals Service was responsible for providing federal judicial security, securing and transporting federal prisoners, executing federal court orders, and assuring the safety of endangered government witnesses. The Marshals Service dealt with national crimes, not local ordinances; and it was involved in international affairs and cross-border operations. By August 1896 Deputy Marshal Saenz found himself working under Edward L. Hall, U.S. Marshal for the Territory of New Mexico.

Deputy Marshal Art Saenz was single. He always pictured himself marrying someone and

raising a family, however, he had not yet got to that stage in life.



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