

TOMBSTONE PERSONALITIES

JOHNNY RINGO

Johnny Ringo is one of the great enigmas of the western gunfighter myth. While considered one of the fiercest outlaws of the time, there is no documented evidence that Ringo was ever involved in a formal gunfight. Most of his kills were unarmed men. Nevertheless, mostly due to sensationalist literature and especially cinema, Ringo's legend has grown.

Ringo was born in Indiana and his family soon moved to Missouri. He was a cousin of the Youngers and may have had a nodding acquaintance with the James brothers. He was a well read and intellectual man and had possibly attended college. The family moved again, this time to California but along the way, Ringo's father accidentally shot and killed himself while hopping off of a wagon while holding a loaded shotgun. After seeing his sisters and mother to California, Ringo drifted, ending up in Texas.

Ringo was a participant in the Mason County War, a large-scale feud, pitting native Texan Confederate sympathizers against immigrant German and Union loyalists in central Texas. Ringo joined a band of ruffians led by his friend, Scott Cooley, whose adopted father had been lynched by the Germans. Conducting a campaign of terror and retaliation, the gang murdered several local farmers and a local deputy sheriff, brutally scalping the body and tossing it down a well. Ringo's first murder was James Cheyney. Cheyney had lured a fellow gang member to his death and Ringo retaliated, shooting Cheyney in the back while he was unarmed. Ringo, along with Cooley, mistakenly murdered German farmer, Charley Bader, who they confused with his brother, Peter. Cooley and Ringo were soon captured and jailed, escaping after their friends broke into the jail and freed them.

The Mason County War petered out and Ringo moved on to Arizona in 1876. While associated with the Cowboys, he appears to have worked with them only when it suited him.

He may have been present at the Skeleton Canyon Massacre and was definitely involved in some of the large scale rustling raids led by the Clantons below the Mexican border. Ringo was involved in several running battles during these raids and may have killed several Mexicans, adding to his reputation as a bad man. He numbered Cowboy members Curly Bill Brocius and Billy Claiborne among his friends. He was rumored to be Brocius' second in command after Curly Bill assumed leadership of the group.

Ringo was notorious for his mercurial mood swings and would regularly sink into deep depressions, especially when he was drinking. His melancholy seems to be the result of the shame he believed would fall on his sisters if they ever discovered the outlaw's life he was leading. As his mood swings became more frequent, he drank more, sometimes remaining drunk for days at a time and continually threatening to commit suicide.

Despite his nature and his heavy drinking, Ringo was popular with the Cowboys and known to be a loyal friend and true to his word. One anecdote claims Deputy Sheriff Billy Breakenridge had done a small favor for Ringo in the past and Ringo never forgot it. Ringo and a fellow outlaw later robbed several poker players in a Charleston, Arizona saloon. When Breakenridge was sent to arrest Ringo, Ringo asked for a brief respite to get his affairs in order and that he would meet Breakenridge in two days and surrender. Breakenridge reluctantly agreed. True to his word, Ringo arrived at the meeting place and cheerfully placed himself under arrest, earning the gratitude of Breakenridge and his boss, Sheriff John Behan.

Ringo, unlike some of the other Cowboys, kept quiet when in and around Tombstone and avoided the conflict brewing between the Earps and the Cowboys. Three months after the Gunfight at the OK Corral, Ringo and Doc Holliday traded insults and prepared to duel but before they could draw their guns they were separated and fined for brawling. Ringo may have been involved in the murder of Morgan Earp and was a member of John Behan's posse during the Earp Vendetta Ride. With most of his friends dead or disappeared, Ringo began to drink even more than usual.

A swirling cloud of controversy surrounds Ringo's mysterious death on July 14th, 1882. After embarking on a drinking spree that lasted almost a week with his companions "Buckskin" Frank Leslie and Billy Claiborne, Ringo rode off alone, heading for the small mining town of Galeyville. At Coyote Smith's ranch house, Smith's wife saw Ringo passing by and called out to him. Ringo ignored her and rode on. Sometime later, Mrs. Smith heard a single gunshot. The next day, a passing teamster hauling lumber from a local sawmill saw Ringo's body sitting in the crotch of a large Oak tree next to the



road. Ringo was barefoot and had a single bullet hole in his left temple. His pistol had fallen and caught in his watch chain.

Although the official ruling after a brief investigation was death by suicide, there are countless theories that Ringo was murdered and the murder scene was rigged to look like a suicide. Among the roster of potential assassins are Buckskin Frank Leslie, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. Wyatt or Holliday is rumored to have sneaked back into the territory to murder Ringo but neither theory is likely. Frank Leslie was in the area at the time and years later Billy Claiborne accused Leslie of the crime, going so far as to duel with Leslie in Tombstone. Leslie, a bona fide mankiller and duelist, suggested he step down. Claiborne, drunk and out matched, foolishly drew on Leslie and Leslie killed him with a single shot. Whatever the story, Ringo was certainly dead, along with the truth of his passing. He was buried beneath the Oak tree and his grave is still there today.

STR: 3	AGL: 4	MND: 4	RES: 3
Move: 5"	DR: 4	Fate: 3	Vitality: 3
Traits:	Ambidextrous		
	Crack Shot 2		
	Deadeye Shot [] []		
	Dodge		
	Greased Lightning 2		
	Gunplay		
	Lightning Reflexes 1		
	Reputation		
	Scholar 2		
	Wit []		
Equipment:	2 Single Action light pistols (DN 4, ER 8", Fan)		
	Rifle (DN 6, ER 15")		
	Knife (DN4)		

SPECIAL RULES:

DRUNK-Even among the boisterous denizens of the Western Boomtowns, Johnny Ringo's drinking was conspicuous. It wasn't unusual for him to go on binges lasting a week or more. Roll a D6 at the beginning of the game. No re-rolls or modifiers of any kind may be used to modify this roll.

If a 1 is rolled, Ringo is drunk. His opponents add 1 die to their AGL when defending against ranged attacks from him in addition to any other modifiers. However, the dulling of his senses makes him less likely to feel pain or run from danger. Ringo may re-roll one failed die (i.e., dice rolling 1-3) anytime he makes a DR roll while drunk.