



Confessions of a Gunfighter

Tell Cotten

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His Pa gave him the ivory-handled Colt; Ben Kinrich taught him how to use it.

This, in his owns words, is the tale of Rondo Landon.

Rondo is a troubled gunfighter with quite a past. Recognized by his six-gun, he is known for robbing banks, stagecoaches, payrolls, and rustling cows. Now, locked in a jail, it looks like Rondo will be facing a long term prison term, or worse.

But, before that happens, Rondo has a few things to say...

Confessions of a Gunfighter Details

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Author : Tell Cotten

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From Reader Review Confessions of a Gunfighter for online ebook

Brandon Jones says

Lighter version of Little Big Man with just as much fun. Great read.

Lisa C. says

Finally. Someone who can write a decent western. As a fan of the classic western, it's difficult to find well written ones. This author did an outstanding job in writing Rondo's story. I loved the way it was written, as though Rondo was telling the story. You could see the reason why he became an outlaw and what went through his mind. As he grew up, his conscience nagged him until he found the opportunity to change his ways. This book had it all, lots of action and adventure, bad guys who didn't seem that way, rustlers, even some romance. It kept me turning pages late into the night. What a shock it was the author's first novel. Well done.

Rabid Readers Reviews says

"Confessions of a Gunfighter" is a western in the truest sense of the word and yet not what one might think of when one thinks of the white hat vs black hat kind of novels. Rondo is definitely a black hat kind of character. He's rough and ready and we get as complete a story as anyone is able to give about themselves. A question arising in the readers mind while reading Rondo is what would I do in such dire situations? To be honest, this fairly pampered reader cannot imagine facing the obstacles of the old west let alone getting caught up in an outlaw gang but the adventures that ensue are very interesting to read. Adding to the layer of authenticity is that the book is written in a western patter (we are, after all, getting Rondo's story in his own words) that is not so overdone to be contrived but just at that point which puts the reader "on the set" of the story.

"Confessions of a Gunfighter" is an extremely well written and carefully crafted novel. There are key points where it is evident to the reader that a layer has been added to Rondo's character. Good or bad he is a character the reader gradually gets to know and this is, after all, his story. The story-line is very realistic. The reader gets a feeling while reading that everything on that page could, and indeed did, happen at that time. Perhaps gunslingers of the day didn't have the internal checks that Rondo does and the defined lines he won't cross.

Why, you might ask, would anyone admit to the crimes they've committed? For one thing, it's the point of the novel and for another as much as Rondo wants to set things straight it seems a cleansing of sorts for him. The premise of the novel is very credible. Rondo isn't trying to get out of things; he's trying to clear his soul. He knows he will die, whether by hangmans noose or because of the lifestyle he leads and a man must believe in something higher than himself.

Readers sensitive to sex or violence need not fear this novel. There's violence but it's not especially graphically described. This is, after all, a recount of the action and not the reader living it with the character. "Confessions of a Gunfighter" is a perfect read for anyone interested in historical fiction or the western

advance. Wonderful, five-plus star read.

Carl R. says

Tell Cotten's *The Confessions of a Gunfighter* is nearly pastiche, a well-crafted story not only in the tradition of Max Brand and Louis L'Amour, but one that could have been published in their era.

Rondo Landon is a good boy forced to go bad who is fighting to redeem himself. It started when he and his family were forced off their Texas farm by union soldiers during reconstruction. Rondo is driven into the arms of an outlaw gang by events I won't go into here so as not to spoil the story for future readers. Suffice it to say he discovers he has extraordinary talents with a six-shooter. He works hard to hone his skills while he and his outlaw mentor lead their men into a number of robberies over the course of a several years.

What puts Rondo a cut above the other lawbreakers is his conscience. He has rules. He'll rob the rich or a bank, but he won't kill. The idea works for a long time, but it can't go on forever. So, when his mentor turns more savage and a lawman is gunned down, Rondo decides to go straight. It's not easy. His past follows him in the person of a gang member who hates him and a lawman who wants to jail and/or hang him.

Of course, there's a girl. The daughter of a rancher with whom he's taken a job in his effort to join the "straight" world.

It all adds up to a smashing adventure with more than a little philosophy about how codes of honor and morality develop in an environment where honest and stable law enforcement is skimpy and people are forced to formulate their own ad hoc legal systems. It's also an interesting look at that tumultuous period just after the Civil War when many northerners were set on retribution and weren't about to let notions of justice get in the way.

Tell Cotten (Such a great name for a western author, that no PR department could have thought it up) has given us a work that is candy and well as meat and potatoes for a fan of westerns (or any other genre), and I hope he's got others on the way.

Claudette Gabbs says

that was a good story

Fran says

Confessions of a Gunfighter: Tell Cotten

There are many reasons why someone would confess to the crimes they have committed. It is a voluntary declaration made to another person or persons by someone who has committed a crime in which the person

admits he/she has participated. As the novel opens we meet Rondo Landon in prison. Injured and in pain yet willing to explain to those present how his life, circumstances and events led him up to this present point. Without improper influence, hoping that as a result of hearing his story from the beginning something positive might come of it. Facing a long and arduous prison term, our main character begins with his life as a young child living on a farm in Louisiana before the start of the Civil War. Without a mother to guide him and raised by his father along with his Uncle Eliot, this young man learned at an early age that life's road would not be smooth, working the land came with certain rewards and understanding his plight difficult.

Something within this young child causes him to erupt at times and his behavior to deviate from what most would call the norm for kids of any age. When watching the town you might say bully pick on his young cousin the action he takes would result in a strong and strict punishment from his father but an unusual lesson to follow. Without any fanfare or any discussion his father presented him with a gift of a Colt gun. Learning to shoot became his passion and this weapon remained at his side at all times. But, the story is far from told and the end result nowhere near as this young child along with the two men in his life farm the land, take care of each other and then the unthinkable happens. The war is over and those like his Pa or dad who fought for the South would pay dearly for their efforts. Forced to pay heavy taxes to the North for the reparations that needed to be made to their land, the young boy and the two men left their farm and decided to head west to Texas. Offered a position with an outfit in Texas his father hoped that they would make the journey without incident. But, mistakes happen and situations often turn sour and when faced with adversity Rondo learns some hard and fast lessons. Along the way they decide to join up with a wagon train and a wonderful woman, Mrs. Day takes an interest in his Pa and in him. The friendship blooms much to the chagrin of the wagon master. The West is dangerous and traveling meant you risked being attacked or worse by the Indians. As his Pa and Mrs. Day cultivated a friendship one man would cause them to have to leave the wagon train and the end result would be more than tragic. Hearing the voice of Rondo relate the events you hear his words, understand his inner most thoughts and understand his frustrations, anger and fears as he faces life. With a damaged wagon his father and uncle set about repairing it as Rondo is sent ahead to enlist the help of anyone from the wagon train. But something alerts him and he doubles back to find both his father and uncle dead and the wagon burned. An uncontrollable anger wells up within him and the end result for one wagon master would be what most say he deserves. With the help of Mrs. Day he hopes to remain with the train but others have different ideas for this 14-year-old boy who is now on his own.

Where does he go and how we he survive? Related to readers in the first person by the main character you take each journey along with him and understand his goals, the pain and suffering he endures and only you can decide at the end if he is really guilty of all of the crimes that he has been charged with and if he deserves to spend time in prison. Is it the circumstances of his life that led him to become a robber, thief and murderer? Is he really guilty of killing a man or was it self-defense? When we meet him his cousin Yancy has finally caught up with him? So, why hear his story? Did he want to live his life as an outlaw or was ranching in his blood? Living on the farm he learned many lessons up until this point and being gifted the gun a definite plus. So, who do we blame for what happened as a result of not be able to pay the heavy taxes on his farm? Who do we blame for the death of his father and uncle? With his horse Slim, he tells how he ventures ahead, does not look back and teams up with Ben Kin rich and joins forces with this dangerous outlaw who will teach him the things his father did not: How to survive!

So at the age of fourteen he finds himself on the run with only his six-shooter and his horse Slim. When he meets up with Ben Kinrich, a notorious outlaw who offers to take him under his wing and teach him survival skills, he really has no choice. Soon Rondo finds himself working with Kinrich, and as his reputation grows he becomes one of the most wanted men in Texas! Through out the years Rondo met many men, killed the ones who presented a threat to him or those he was close to but never really found himself able to trust anyone until he a gunfighter named Lee whose words resonated through his mind many times. Telling him to trust no one including him were more than just words of wisdom. As time wore on he realized that a life of crime and killing was not what he wanted or who he wanted to be. But, circumstances would often dictate his actions and the end result for many, including Rondo was self- preservation, survival and violence. Learning to scout, shoot, kill at times without remorse until one lawman's death would haunt him for a very long time. Gunfighters did not feel any remorse when they took a life but one as we learn more about Rondo just might have more than just a conscience but an inner fear of what he was turning out to be. Handling Ben Kinrich would prove difficult as some of the situations he put him through were more than just violent and dangerous but beneficial to his goals, not Rondo's. All too often his moods would change, erratic behaviors that most would think would warrant some type of intervention, Ben Kinrich was more than just a dangerous man and at times Rondo wondered if his friendship was real.

As he progresses in his journey Rondo related the many Indian attacks, the fears he had and the fact that one man, Ryan Palmer would stop at nothing to destroy him. Meeting several people, getting jobs on different ranches he befriends some and protects others. His final journey and where he winds up before he turns himself in as we learn at the start of this novel, will certainly surprise you as Rondo takes matters into his own hands, speaks to the judge and his cousin Yancy London and the end result is more than just his confessions but his hope for redemption.

As the final story is told and a decision is made after hearing his words, what led him to become who he was Yancy Landon and Judge Parker make a life changing, altering decision for Rondo. What happens and his final journey you will have to read for yourself. Where he winds up and how one family just might be the answer to his prayers? Read his confession. Understand his reasoning for his actions and realize that this story brings to light what happens when one young man learns the real meaning of lies, deceit, murder, betrayal, loyalty, friendship and hope. Kids today can learn a lot from Rondo as the choices and decisions you make when you are younger often follow you in the future. After reading his confession you decide: GUILTY OR THE HANGMAN! A fast paced story with a strong main character that you just might find yourself cheering for every step of the way. Losing his father and uncle set him on a path of no return. Was he right? Did he have choice? Read this outstanding novel to find out.

Fran Lewis: Reviewer

Let's give this book: FIVE GOLDEN BRONCOS FOR RONDO TO BREAK

Elena says

I loved this book. It was really interesting to see Rondo develop from a green teenager into a savvy gunfighter. I really enjoyed the gunfights and first person narrative. I could really hear Rondo's voice throughout. A really enjoyable read!

Ashley says

Rondo Landon wanted to grow up, own a ranch, and “break broncs”; instead, he became an outlaw. The why and the how of his life as a thieving murdering outlaw are the basis of the Tell Cotton’s debut novel, “Confessions of a Gunfighter.”

I loved this book because it didn’t feel like it was trying to be something it wasn’t meant to be; it was one of those books where everything seemed so natural. The characters felt genuine, the language was appropriate and the plot was plausible. It felt like a memoir more than a western fiction and that, I believe, is exactly what Cotton was hoping for when he wrote the book. The prologue opens up with Rondo Landon sitting in a jail cell, injured, trying to piece together how he ended up there. He ends the prologue sitting down with his cousin Yancy and the judge to confess to his crimes.

The story opens with Rondo, as a young boy, living on a farm with his father and his uncle Eliot who was really more like a brother. As a child Rondo recognizes that he has an anger living inside of him that can be uncontrollable. When his uncle Eliot has a fight with another boy from town, Rondo finds and fires a gun for the first time in order to defend his uncle and break up the fight. The town responds harshly and Rondo can’t explain what happened. His father is then called to fight for the South in the Civil War leaving Rondo and Eliot to work the farm. When his father returns from war he presents young Rondo with an ivory-handled Colt which would remain by his side as his weapon of choice for the rest of his life.

After the war, like many Rebel soldiers, Rondo’s family finds themselves facing troubled times. They lose their ranch because they can’t pay the heavy taxes and decide to pack up and move out west. Along the trail they join a wagon train believing that the journey will be safer if they all travel together. I won’t spoil the details of the book but joining this wagon train turned out to be a decision that would haunt Rondo for the rest of his life. As the story unfolds Rondo provides glimpses into his life, his fears, and the motivation behind his behavior. Was he truly a thieving murderous gunfighter or was he simply a displaced rancher who had learned he had to kill to survive? Is Rondo really a villain or is he a victim of circumstance? Did he have a choice in who he would become or was he forced into his lifestyle? There are moments when you might even sympathize with this murdering western criminal. After all, he was such a child when the tragedies started and with no mother or moral figure to guide him, what is a young boy to do?

There is violence in the story however it is a necessary violence required to define the character and the circumstances that shaped his life. It is not graphic or gory which I appreciate as I don’t read books for graphic bloody violent details. There is also no erotic sexual situations or foul language. It’s a book that adults who are interested in western fiction will love and a book that is still appropriate for teenagers who may enjoy the western cowboy lore of the wild west. It’s a book that can, and will, appeal to a mass audience. It’s an enjoyable read and Rondo is a very well-written character. He’s an anti-hero that you will find yourself rooting for even while being forced to acknowledge his criminal lifestyle.

Michael Thal says

A gunfighter wears his six-shooter low and tied down. If he has the talent he also has “the feeling”. It’s a fury that builds up inside him. He can’t breathe nor swallow. His heart pounds, sweat dampens his shirt, and a wave of cold and hot scoops him up and won’t let go.

In his debut novel, *Confessions of a Gun Fighter*, Tell Cotton brings to us Rondo Landon, a teen living with his father during the post-Civil War era. The story opens with Rondo waking up in a jail cell with a severe gunshot wound to his shoulder. He looks up to see his cousin, lawman Yancy Landon and Judge Parker rattle his cage. As the men sit around the gunman’s cot, Rondo is coerced to tell his story.

Rondo grew up on a farm until Reconstruction people from the North came along, claimed his pa owed back taxes he couldn’t afford, so the Landons invested in a new covered wagon and headed west to Midland, Texas where Pa was offered a job.

With a knack for Western drawl and a talent to put it to paper, Cotton tells Rondo’s story in a novel packed with non-stop action, deceit, and deliverance. Rondo fights Injuns, joins up with legendary outlaw, Ben Kinrich, and hooks up with Texas rancher Craig Tomlin. Through his experiences we watch as Rondo evolves from a hotheaded kid to a man capable of living up to a respectable code of ethics.

Confessions of a Gunfighter is a novel any fan of Westerns will enjoy and thrill any reader interested in the evolution of the human spirit.

Debra Hartmann says

5 Stars and a “Grab Your Six-Shooter” Shout Out!

I was very impressed with this break out novel from Tell Cotten, that incidentally also won “Best Western of the Year” for Solstice Publishing recently. The book is written in first person from the main character, Rondo’s POV. This author seems to have literally used his pen or word processor to open a time portal for us to meet Rondo and then follow him on a journey through his younger years filled with loss and trauma and then his formative years where he is shaped and formed by manipulative men with bad intentions. We begin to understand and feel the pain and suffering he endured as his story unfolds. Leading a book with an anti-hero is risky and can often result in reviews that focus on “hated the main character”...we are supposed to hate the bad guy aren’t we? That is not the case in this book, though Rondo is a “bad guy” sitting in a jail cell when the book opens, as he confesses he also shares what led him to become a robber, thief and murderer. This is a fast paced story with a strong main character that you will undoubtedly find yourself rooting for as his inner fear of the man he was becoming is more and more apparent and clearly sets him apart from your typical old western gun slingers. The reader is challenged by the circumstances described, do you believe Rondo is a bad person or is he a victim of the hard realities of the old west? You decide, I shan’t spoil your adventure with explicit details from the book.

I will tell you that the dimensions of the character are there because Tell Cotten is a talented writer and this

isn't your typical western book. I will also tell you that this book had all of the elements of a good read, it made me feel as it carried an emotional charge through the pages, the imagery drawn from the text was brilliant, archetypal themes (meaning profound parts of human experience) loss, redemption, grief, despair, fear were present and woven skillfully throughout and the expected release of tension that allows closure at the end of the read was exceptional. I am very much looking forward to more books from Tell Cotten and though I don't usually care for western themed books, he may have converted me!

Of note, I like that Tell made this book family friendly by avoiding profanity, sexual situations and while there is some violence, he was careful not to make it too gruesome. I would allow and even encourage my teenager to read this book, appreciating the moral lesson in the power of choices and long term consequences that he could learn from it and the historical value of learning what it was like in those days.

~~~~~ Debra L Hartmann, professional editor, published author, book reviewer for the fun of it...  
<http://www.thebookeditor.com> and come have an AHA moment with us at  
<http://authorshelpingauthors.wordpress...>

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### **Roger Lebeis says**

#### **Great read.**

I enjoy reading Western novel's. Tell Cotton's Writting kept my interest throughout the novel. I was anxious to find out what was going to next.

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### **Kelly says**

4.5 stars. I got this free on Amazon and absolutely loved it. The characters were well fleshed out and I was totally emotionally invested in them. Kept me entertained and reading. Looking forward to reading the rest of the Landon saga! Always happy to find a great new author to read :-)

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### **Steve says**

#### **Excellent Western novel**

Book was well written with interesting well formed characters. Lots of action and it all rang true for gunfighters of that era.

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### **Julie says**

Good book. Really sets the western mood. Characters well thought out, likable.

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## **K.C. Sprayberry says**

Rondo Landon is but a boy when he's orphaned after Indians kill his dad. Yet, Rondo also knows the ways of the post Civil War world, and takes revenge for his dad's death. This sets him on a path of violence, but also gives Rondo a set of rules that eventually brings him out of that life.

Tell Cotton's tale of a reluctant, but most excellent, gunfighter hits home in so many ways. The hero, Rondo, could have gone the way of many of the men who took up the gun for their livelihood, but chose instead to remain true to his upbringing. The folksy tone, western way of speech, and a deep seated belief in right and wrong make this a fascinating story. Once started, this book was difficult to put down for any reason. I highly recommend Confessions of a Gunfighter for any western fan.

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