

Reasons Not to Assault a Ranch Woman

By Welda McKinley Grider.

Illustrations by Ronald B. Coleman.

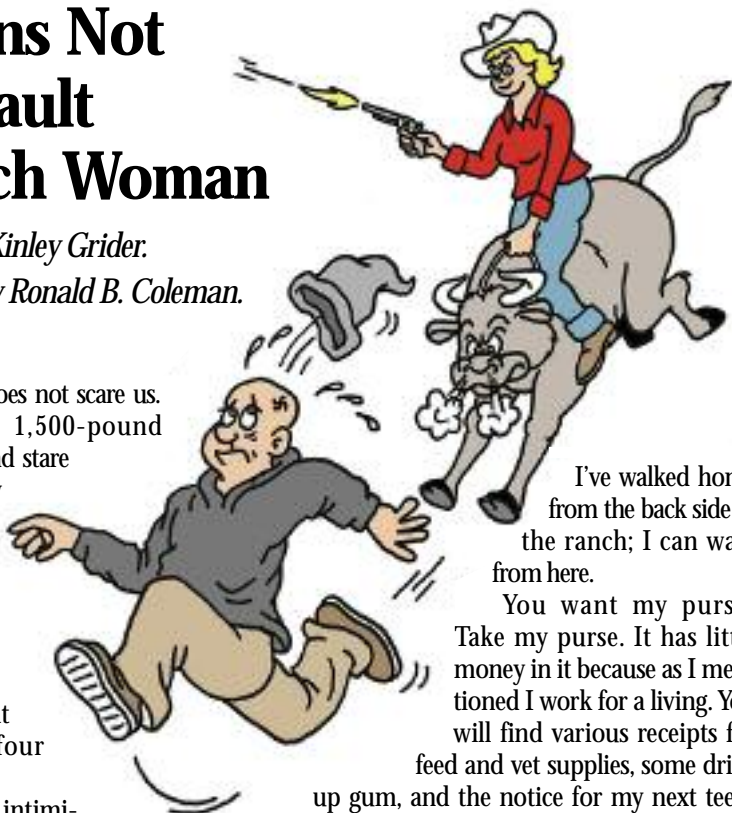
Violence does not scare us. We ride 1,500-pound horses and stare down an alley full of mad, snot-slinging cows that weigh over 800 pounds. We've held down calves that outweigh us four times.

Don't try to intimidate us. Most of our husbands stand a head and shoulders taller and outweigh us by a hundred pounds and we aren't scared of them, so why would we be frightened by someone who can't keep his pants up?

Every time we work cows, our husbands threaten us if we don't get out of the gate. They threaten us if we don't stay in the gate. We are pretty much not impressed by threats. Plus, if you get much closer, we may give you some threats of our own to consider and be able to back it up.

Don't wave that knife at me, boy. I castrate when we brand, throw the "mountain oysters" on the fire *and* eat them, dirt and all. You probably don't want to go there.

Don't threaten to steal my pickup. I work for a living so I have insurance. The chances of you being able to drive a standard are next to none and there is no spare.



I've walked home from the back side of the ranch; I can walk from here.

You want my purse? Take my purse. It has little money in it because as I mentioned I work for a living. You will find various receipts for feed and vet supplies, some dried up gum, and the notice for my next teeth cleaning. The only "drug" you will find is something that is either aspirin or a calf scours pill, but it's been in there so long I've forgotten which it is.

Don't threaten to hurt me. I may look old and fragile to you but I can ride horseback for 12 hours, with nothing to eat or drink. I have been kicked, bucked off, run over and mucked out. I've had worse things happen to me in the corrals than you have experienced in the little gang wars you've been through and still cooked supper for a crew.

You may whip me, son, but you'll be a tired, sore SOB in the morning and, yes, I will remember your face because I am used to knowing which calf belongs to which cow. I'll also remember which direction you went and what you were wearing because I've tracked many a cow with less information than you've given me.

You are not going to scare me with that little "Saturday Night Special" when I have a .38 in my boot. You need not think I won't shoot you. I've shot several coyotes and numerous rattlesnakes. I put down my horse when he broke his leg and shot my pet dog when he killed some sheep. Don't think I won't consider you a rabid dog and go on my way. ■

Welda McKinley Grider was raised by a ranch woman and knows many more. She would pity the thug who tried to rob them. She lives in Carrizozo, N.M.