

Frisko Eddie's Revenge: The Return

A series by Balboa Ron Schweikert

(In last month's episode, on the first leg of their journey, Eddie and Lil had gone to the Horse's Head Saloon, looking for some action. They found it -- in the form of The "Texas Kid" and "Fat Max" with "Dollar Dan" -- the Money Man" there to monitor the action.)

"Fat Max," the ape-looking guy, and "Dollar Dan - the Money Man" spotted Long Beach Lil and the rest of the players as they entered the Horse's Head Saloon. The "Ape-Man" took a bar stool near the entrance door. The other two continued on down the bar for the greetings.

Everyone knew each other (except for Eddie), and they exchanged handshakes. Eddie was introduced then. When he shook hands with the Fat Man, they both smiled and it was friendly. As he shook hands with the Money Man, however, he looked into a pair of steely eyes and he actually felt a little chill.....from his expression, and from his icy hand.

The Texas Kid and Fat Max got on the board then and practiced for a few minutes. The Kid had planned things that way: to give them the advantage -- as the board had just been freshly waxed. Lil and Eddie had practiced when the board was slow.

While the Kid's follower re-waxed the table, the plans for the action were laid out: they would play doubles, starting for \$100 per player. The stake would be placed on the bar (right next to Dollar Dan) before each game.

Lil had arranged for Eddie to play against Fat Max and she would play against the Texas Kid. Just before they started, Lil drew Eddie aside and said: "Now, here's how it's going to work. I don't want you to lag anything but 1's or off the board -- O.K.? I can beat both of these guys and I'm going to shoot my best so they'll recall that. I know you don't understand the strategy here, but just do as I say. We can afford to lose some games if it turns out that way -- all right? No questions now -- that's it and that's that! Let's play."

Eddie was totally amazed now. He was used to playing to win! He figured that Lil knew what she was doing, though; and the plan didn't sound too drastic, so he decided to go along. Eddie and Fat Max took their positions and the game was underway.

Eddie won the toss; it turned up "heads." The first frame was weight-for-weight, and the Fat Man left a deep one in the center for Eddie to lag against. Eddie didn't have to "fake" the first lag -- it went sailing right off the end, due to the fast board.

Lil and the Kid went weight-for-weight on their first frame also, and the Kid left her with a very deep one left-cross, which was near the rail. Lil shot at the weight with

her hammer, gently nudging it off the board. She continued to make several good combos and other perfect shots, which impressed the crowd that had gathered to watch -- as it did the Texas Kid. He remarked to her: "Your shooting is slick as snot-on-a-brass-door-knob, Lil. You're getting better with age!"

At the end of an hour or so, Eddie and Lil were down four games to one. The difference came in Eddie's poor lagging. The Money Man actually had a hint of a smile on his face after they lost the fifth game. He thought he had a pretty good deal going; he could smell blood.

Lil took Eddie aside then and laid out their next move. She told him: "The doubles are over, Champ. I'm gonna arrange things to where YOU take on the Texas Kid solo, O.K.? I want you to win now -- but make it close, O.K.? You can beat this guy, but right now, you and I are the only ones that know that -- and let's keep it that way as long as we can."

She went over to where the Kid and Dollar Dan were sitting. She threw up her arms and said: "We can't beat you guys doubles. I'll make you a deal. I'll either play one of you singles, or I'll walk the board. That's the only way we can continue the action."

Texas Kid turned his head and looked over at Dollar Dan. The Money Man shook his head slowly from right to left and back. The Kid told Lil: "You're too hot today, Lil. No deal."

The Money Man whispered something into the Kid's ear then. He turned back to Lil and said: "Here's how it is, Lil. We either go on the way we are -- or I'll take on that young buck you brought along in some singles action." Lil responded: "I don't like the sound of that -- but let me have a talk with my partner."

Lil was smiling inside as she approached Eddie again. She explained: "You see how slick that came off? The bankroll is riding on you now, Champ. Just put everything together and it'll work out fine. I'll be watching your back, though, just in case." Eddie pondered that last statement as Lil went back to negotiate.

Lil had a regretful look on her face as she told them: "I don't like the idea of this, but we did come to play, so I guess the Kid and Eddie can get it on singles, if it has to be that way. We're down now, so we might as well make this interesting. I'll let my man play you a series of 'best 3 out of 5' for \$2500. How's that?"

Texas Kid looked at the Money Man then, who stared intently into his eyes for a moment. Satisfied, the Man reached for his bankroll and, with a smile on his face, he peeled off \$2500 in \$100 bills and placed it on the bar. He looked hard into Lil's eyes then as he remarked: "You're

on, lady. May the best man win...and my man WILL be the best."

Will the Money Man's man be the best -- or will Eddie prevail? Don't miss the next exciting episode!

SHUFFLIN' SAM

by "Balboa" Ron

