

TOUGH TIMES  
IN  
GRUBVILLE

A Harbison Mystery

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James R. Wilder

Tough Times in Grubville

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With much encouragement from my friends, I authored *Terror Near Town* in 2017 with Chet Harbison, one of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, as the main character. Returning from the Spanish-American War he arrives at home to find there have been some suspicious deaths in his hometown of Grubville, Missouri.

If you haven't read it yet, I highly suggest you do so before starting this sequel.

Two of my favorite westerns of all times are John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* and *Monte Walsh* directed by cinematographer William A. Fraker. The first, released in 1953 (the year I was born) stars Jimmie Stewart, John Wayne and Lee Marvin. The second is a 1970 "sleeper" with Lee Marvin in the title role, with Jack Palance as his best friend. Although my list of great westerns could fill pages, these two are significant. The first resembles the old west the way many of us envision it. The second portrays, I believe, what life was really like.

In that movie Monte Walsh is witnessing the fading of an era. He's proud of what he has accomplished but deep down, he knows the old days are gone.

Although *Tough Times in Grubville* takes place in a different era, Chet Harbison is facing the same problems as Monte Walsh—modernization. Smoke-belching automobiles and improved roads are just a means for undesirables to enter the sanctity of country life. The world is changing, and it's changing way too fast for Chet as he tries to adapt.

In *Tough Times in Grubville*, the Chet Harbison we knew in *Terror Near Town* is thirty years older. Chet, who has feigned many forms of modernization, especially the automobile, is thrown into the realization that "the good old days" are through. The banks have closed as the Great Depression hits hard and he is forced to wear a deputy's badge in order to survive. His investigations include murder, cattle rustling, moonshining, speak easies and gangsters. I hope you enjoy the read.

Jim Wilder, Author  
*Tough Times in Grubville*  
*Terror Near Town*