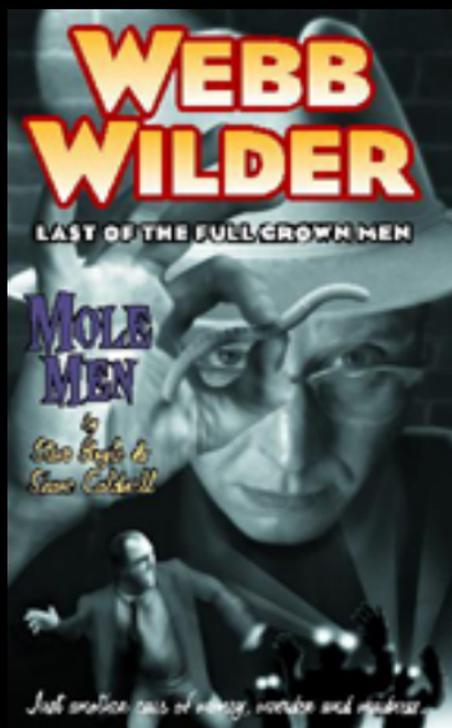


# WEBB WILDER

LAST OF THE FULL GROWN MEN

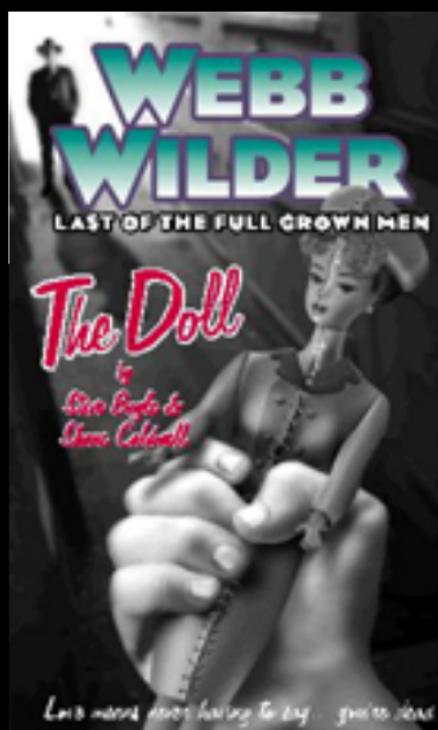


BOOK SAMPLE

“Mole Men”

“The Doll”

“Psychotronic Serenade”



# **Webb Wilder**

**Last Of The Full Grown Men**

**“Mole Men”**

**“The Doll”**

**“Psychotronic Serenade”**

**by Steve Boyle  
& Shane Caldwell**



**Worm Ranchers Publishing**

**Nashville**

# **Webb Wilder, Last of the Full Grown Men “Mole Men” & “The Doll” & “Psychotronic Serenade”**

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the product of the authors' sad imaginations or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual places, events, things or people, living or dead, is totally and unequivocally coincidental. If this resembles your life, don't call us, call one of those tabloid television shows.

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HOUND DOG STUDIO/ELVIS WILSON  
NASHVILLE, TN.

## About the Authors

*Steve Boyle* - Originally from New York and now living in the outskirts of Nashville, Steve watches way too many old film noir detective movies and understands why the French like Jerry Lewis. He has been in the film and television business for over twenty years, winning over thirty regional, national and international awards for his quirky music videos and commercials.

*Shane Caldwell* - Raised on an overabundance of Mad Magazine and sugary breakfast cereals, Shane achieved cult hero status by writing and starring in two popular sketch comedy television series "The Sylvan Brothers Comedy Hour" and "Cuts" -- the latter has won several regional and national television awards. He lives in Nashville and tries to make sure he gets enough riboflavin.



## Mole Men

the strange story of a  
cropduster, Mole Men, a  
worm ranch and a blonde  
named Ruby Falls.

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# Prologue

**I**t was just past dark when the bleary-eyed pilot took off on his monthly strafing run. The night was clear and the full moon made like a giant street lamp throwing an eerie light on the fields below. He had planned on double dusting the back forty even though they had just been plowed and not one seed had been planted. This was a preventive measure, he thought. Sort of posting a warning to any potential six-legged herbicidal maniacs.

He had just finished one lap around the outer edge of his strawberry field and was banking right to come in for a second pass when he saw something moving in a zig-zag motion across the far corner of the property. It was a man. A man in a business suit who ran frantically like he was being chased by the devil himself. He lowered the plane to move in for a closer look. When he did, what he saw shook him to his frazzled core. There were three creatures with slicked heads,

shiny skin and large glowing eyes holding outstretched arms that waved long silvery claws, pursuing their suited prey. Behind them were four more identical beings carrying a long cylindrical object that was lit up like an old Madam Leroux pinball machine and had, at one end, what appeared to be a giant corkscrew. The flier watched in terrified amazement as the three lead creatures closed in on the man who had now tripped and fallen in one of the furrows. The creatures then grabbed the man as the troop with the machine started to catch up. The pilot was so focused on the scene below that he momentarily forgot about flying, only to look up and see a line of trees coming straight at him. Without thinking he pulled back on the stick as fast and as far as he could, barely avoiding the tree tops. He banked left and circled back through a thick cloud of crop dust toward the bizarre happenings below. His mind and heart were in an all-out race imagining what he might see when the dust cleared. Was it a kidnapping? A murder? He didn't know but the suspense was making his hands shake on the controls like a teenage boy reaching second base on a first date. The plane finally broke through the cloud as he looked everywhere for a sign of the attack. But all he saw was a very large, very strange, very ominous mound of dirt where the scuffle had been. The man, the monsters and the machine were gone.

BEST CLASSIFIEDS

page 87

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 please call  
 55-2753.

One wife.  
 5'3", 110  
 years old.  
 the name  
 Sunshine.  
 -5843 with  
 100 reward

### COVERT SERVICES



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# Chapter 1

**I**t was a hot day. Real hot. High noon on an August Tuesday in the less fashionable downtown section of St. Vegas, Florida. It was the kind of day that turned talc into tartar sauce. Whether you were standing or sitting, that wasn't a good feeling. No one knew this better than me, Webb Wilder. Although usually the cool and calm P.I., I was anything but as my six and a quarter frame squirmed uncomfortably in my torn vinyl office chair. My baker's dozen wingtips were propped up on a ring-stained desk that I had picked up at a motel fire sale as I read the midday edition of the *Daily Trombone* and tried to fight off the heat with a broken down air conditioner and a complimentary fan from Ripley's Funeral Home. "We dig you the most and we're the last to let you down." Neither helped much.

I had one hard and fast rule about my office hours. If no one called by the time I finished reading the

noon paper, I bagged the day. I didn't want to waste my afternoons sitting by the phone waiting for suspicious husbands and wives to decide whether or not to call and take a chance on having those suspicions confirmed. Most would be. And most just didn't want to know.

The headline in today's edition read "Not So Rosy for Mr. Posey." The article stated that Lance Murdock, high powered real estate magnate and husband of the former Margaret Posey, daughter of the late congressman Waller Posey, was believed to be having an affair with an unidentified Latino beauty. It was reported the two had left the country for Havana under assumed names. The accompanying photograph of a half-dressed Murdock nuzzling his scantily clad traveling companion seemed to verify the story in scandalous fashion. The *Trombone* had recently criticized the questionable business practices of Murdock, who they mockingly referred to as "Mr. Posey" because of the commonly held notion that his success was entirely due to his wife's money and influence. As I pushed back my wide brimmed Resistol I wondered why a guy who seemed to have it all would risk losing everything for a little on the side. Must be the heat. Makes people crazier than outhouse rats. At the bottom of the page was a short article concerning the area's largest Fire Ant hill, discovered that morning in a strawberry field somewhere in the southern part of the county. The photo of the ant hill also contained an extreme, out of focus close-up of the farm owner, one Delton "Dusty" Norris, an eccentric local character known for his wild imagination and comically bizarre tall tales. He claimed that the mound had been created by a wandering band of subterranean monsters who had used it to bury their victims and were

plotting to take over the world by planting its inhabitants into extinction. An amused police spokesman said that they had, of course, discounted this theory.

Inquiring minds, I thought as I shook my head in disgust. I folded the paper and prepared to end what had been a waste of a morning and head out for “Taco Tuesday’s” at Señor Bob’s Buritto Bungalow. As I was about to toss the paper on the desk and hit the door, the phone rang. The rule was, the paper had to actually hit the desk before I could call it a day. Whoever was calling had made it just under the wire. I paused, letting the the phone ring a few times before finally picking it up. Webb Wilder, last of the full grown men, played by the rules. Or at least, the ones I made for myself.

“Wilder.”

“Webb Wilder?”

“The one and only. What can I do you for?”

“It’s me. Dusty. Dusty Norris. You remember me, don’t you?”

“Yeah. You called me about four months ago when you thought that little black rock you found in your backyard was really one of Big Foot’s kidney stones. You just don’t forget about a thing like that. Matter of fact, I was just reading about you in the. . .”

“Webb, you gotta get out here! You gotta get out here now! They’re comin’! They’re comin’! I seen ‘em! They’re comin’ to get us all!”

“Whoa, put her in neutral. Who’s coming to get us?”

“Mole Men! The Mole Men!”

“Mole Men, huh?”

“From the center of the earth!”

“Is Bigfoot with them?”

“No. It’s worse than that. They’re gonna try to take over. I seen ‘em kidnap a man down there in my field last night when I was dustin’. They sucked him right down into the ground. I got evidence. And it ain’t no ant hill like the papers say. It’s an entrance to them Mole Men’s underground hideout. And I’ll tell you one thing, by God, if them no-eared bastards ain’t stopped, they’ll burrow all over this county, taking livestock, stealing babies and havin’ their way with our women! And then, they’ll bury us all! So you got to come out here! You’re the only one who knows about this kind of stuff!”

He was right. I did possess an extensive knowledge of the paranormal. UFO’s, supernatural beings, bizarre urban legends and the like. But this was out there. Way out there. So was Dusty. I was reluctant to waste my time talking to this nut, but it would be better than spending the afternoon choking down gut bombs at Señor Bob’s. Those tacos were cheap on the front end but you always paid for them later. Besides, I knew what it was like to be a party of one and I didn’t want this fly boy who was wound up tighter than a miser’s fist, to spontaneously combust because no one would listen to him. Even if he was out of his crop jockey mind.

“Okay, Cuz. I’ll come out and look at your little pile of dirt. But do me a favor, will ya? Don’t tell anyone else that I’m on my way out there. I’d hate for this to get around, you know?”

“Oh, don’t worry about that. Nobody’ll know a thing. I’ve already sealed off the area telepathically. I’m like a Jedi, ya know.”

“Well, hang on, Obi-Wan. I’m on my way.”

As I put down the phone, I decided that I had been right. It had to be the heat.



## The Doll

a tawdry tale of  
assassinations,  
psychotic moms and  
a little doll  
torn in two.

---

# Prologue

**N**ight always falls hard on St. Vegas. It fell hardest on The Boneyard, a burned-out warehouse district on the city's east side, where pony sized roaches battled for turf with hordes of giant sewer rats. Foul and forbidding, it served as a dangerous sanctuary for the thieves and junkies hiding in its black holes. This was the kind of place that made you feel like your own footsteps were sneaking up on you. Like a thousand eyes watched you from the deep darkness. Like you were in the wrong place no matter what the time.

It was almost midnight when an empty bottle of Captain Easy was accidentally kicked out of a narrow alleyway by a skulking figure that splashed across the wet street to a black sedan parked in the dim light of a corroded shell of a street lamp. With hands shaking like a drunk with D.T.'s, he nervously tried to fit a key into the driver's side door when a shot was fired behind him. There was a flash and two more cracks of the gun were

heard as he spun around to see a tall man stumbling out of the alley, clutching his chest and staggering toward him. A bloody hand tore at the shirt of the panicked key holder. He watched dumfounded as the wounded fish gasped and fell to the pavement. A third man carrying a smoking gun ran from the alley straight to the car.

“What happened? What the hell happened?”

“He got wise, so I had to plug him. I didn’t have a choice. Now get in the car and let’s beat it out of here before the cops show up. Move!”

The two men jumped in the sedan and squealed away, leaving their victim lying in the street.

As the car drove out of sight, a plainclothes police detective flanked by two uniformed officers, stepped from a warehouse doorway and ran to the scene. They stopped and stared silently at the motionless, blood-soaked body as the detective leaned over and spoke into a still ear.

“I warned you, Wilder. I warned you this would happen.”

He then called over his shoulder to the two patrolmen.

“He looks natural, don’t he?”

“Yeah, Lieutenant. He makes a real good stiff,” laughed one of the cops.

“Too bad he doesn’t look that natural when he’s pretending to be shot,” said the detective standing and nudging the bogus corpse with his scuff-worn wingtips. “Come on, Wilder, get up. Show’s over. They’re gone.”

“What? No curtain call?”

“Curtain call, hell. You’re lucky you made it through the first act. I warned you, if you overdid it, it could blow the whole thing. I’m surprised he bought any

of it the way you were flailin' around out here. Rasputin didn't take that long to die."

"Really? I thought I brought a refreshing note of subtlety to the role," I said picking myself up and removing my soiled overcoat, "Anyway, he got in the car didn't he?"

"Yeah, no thanks to you. He probably heard there were a couple of winos doing 'The Mikado' a few blocks over and wanted to drive down and catch it. I hear it's a much better show than the one you put on here tonight."

"You know something, Dombrowski? You're starting to make me feel unappreciated. I mean, I figured out this whole Louie LeCoat thing for you. I set him up, risking my neck doing it. Then, I roll around in this swamp of a street playin' dead just so your boy Hanlon can drive that nutcase off to the Crossbar Hotel while you go back to the station house and run through a gauntlet of backslappers who'll be thinkin' you're the Polish Columbo. And what do I get? A load of wise from you and your two dates there."

"You ought to feel lucky we let you tag along on this one, Sherlock. It'll make a nice little story for you to tell to those pathetic low lifes who are desperate enough to hire you to find their missing kitty-cats. Plus, you're forgetting who approves P.I. licenses in this town. Your participation in this sting tonight might persuade me to look favorably when yours is up for renewal."

"Great. Will it knock a few bucks off your payola?"

"That's a filing fee," replied Dombrowski indignantly, "and it's legit."

"Yeah? So's Wrestlemania," I shot back as I

folded my topcoat over my arm and adjusted the brim of my Resistol, “Well, boys, nice workin’ with you. It’s been a real slice. In fact, it’s been the whole lousy pie. Don’t take any wooden donuts. Aloha.”

As I turned to walk away, a black and white pulled up beside the lieutenant and his escorts. Mutt and Jeff were piling in the back seat when Dombrowski stopped and called out.

“Hey, Wilder! You want a ride outta here? This ain’t no fun park you’re walkin’ through, you know.”

“No, thanks, Festus. It would kill my rep being seen with you. Even down here.”

“It’s your funeral, tough guy. See you at the morgue,” laughed Dombrowski as the police car screeched off into the night, leaving me alone in a maze of crumbling buildings and looming shadows.





# Psychotronic Serenade

fear the revenge of  
a Canadian ex-baseball  
player, mind control  
and a scrappy  
dog called Sputnik.

---

# Prologue

I couldn't believe it. I'd already walked five miles and I still hadn't seen one sign of civilization. No people, no houses. No phones, no lights, no motor cars. Not a single luxury. The sun was starting to sink and I didn't want to be stuck out here in the middle of nowhere, trying to find my way back, not being able to see my hand in front of my face. I needed a break. It appeared that the light up ahead just might provide one and it was coming from a phone booth.

Sitting in the middle of a gravel parking lot beside a boarded up country store, it was one of those old style stand-up glass booths with an overhead light and a collapsible sliding door. It didn't really matter what style it was, though, as long as the phone worked. I figured if the light was on, it must. I started toward the booth feeling a bit of relief. It was quickly replaced by one that I was being followed. Even though I knew that paranoia was normal in this kind of situation, I was still

going to turn around and look just to ease my mind. It wasn't. About twenty yards behind me, stalking me in stride, was a Doberman.

I decided to forget the phone booth and just try to make it to the store. It was closer and would provide better protection if and when the dog attacked. I stepped up onto the porch and reached for the doorknob as he drew closer. The door was nailed shut. I was going to try and force my way in but before I could draw back a shoulder, another Doberman snaked his head around the right side of the store. Now there were two.

I froze when I saw the second dog. I wasn't sure what to do. If I moved, they might leap, if I stayed still I was a sitting duck. Then, a sharp sound shook an idea into my head. It was a ringing telephone. That was my only option. I'd go for the booth. If I sprinted, I could make it, then I'd call for help. I slowly and carefully started to back off toward the left side of the porch. Both dogs started growling menacingly and I was praying that the ringing phone, which seemed to be getting louder, wouldn't set them off. I had just made it to the edge of the porch and was ready to bolt when I heard something moving above me. I looked up and saw, peering over the edge of the low roof, a third Doberman. Now, I had no choice. I had to make a run for it. My mind raced in a panicked mental conversation. "Don't count down, they'll sense it. Just go. Go as fast as you can. Now!"

As I took off, I could hear them coming close behind me. "Move legs, move! A few more steps and we'll make it." I felt one snap at my pants leg as I threw all my weight forward and dove into the booth. I quickly spun around and kicked the door closed, holding it in place with my foot. The dogs went crazy. They were

barking and growling and slamming themselves at the glass in a blood lust frenzy, and all the while, the phone kept ringing louder and louder. It took me a second to get back some of my composure, when I did I realized that as long as they didn't break through the glass I was safe. Since the phone was ringing I thought I'd pick it up and tell whoever was on the end of the other line that I needed help.

"Hello? Hello!"

"Hello there, Wilder. My boys keeping you company?"

"What?"

"I told you I'd get you, Wilder. I told you. The cops can't hold me. The jails can't hold me. But I'm holding you in the palm of my hand and I'm going to squeeze until your blood runs dry. That's the least I can do for what you did to me. Are you listening, Wilder!"

The voice on the other end belonged to Louie LeCoat. No matter how many times I hung up the phone his maniacal laughter was still coming through the line. I kept my foot pressed tight against the door while the bloodthirsty dogs barked and scratched and pounded on the glass. At this point I hoped I could hold on long enough until someone, anyone would come by and find me. And to make matters worse, I really, really, really had to go to the bathroom.



# Series Synopsis

Mole Men  
The Doll

Psychotronic Serenade  
Attack of the Sub Debs  
Sci Fi Suicide

Songs in the Key of Death

A Shanghai Christmas  
Carnival of Fear

Revenge of the Mole Men  
Say Uncle

Funeral for a Fiend  
Blown Away

### **Series Synopsis**

As a series, WWLOTFGM is faithful to the hard-boiled detective / film noir visions of the 1940's and 1950's, but set in the pop culture world of today. Webb Wilder, as a detective, is a semi-urban hero dealing with characters that are bigger than life and twice as impossible. Webb gets dragged, suckered, or voluntarily dives into situations that seem incredible at first, but logic and luck win out in the end. With all of this intrigue and dark images, "Webb Wilder, Last of the Full Grown Men" is also very funny. Consider if Raymond Chandler had written Philip Marlowe for a hybrid of Andy Griffith, Denise Miller and Humphrey Bogart.

### **Mole Men**

Just another case of money, murder and madness, featuring a cropduster, Mole Men, a worm ranch and a blonde named Ruby Falls. As Webb tries to solve two cases with the same nightmare, he investigates St. Vegas county's largest fire ant hill, has to keep calm under a sultry beauty's "helping hands" and tries to figure out how to eat a worm burger and still be polite.

### **The Doll**

This tawdry tale of attempted assassinations, psychotic moms and a little doll torn in two, shows that no matter how full grown Webb might be, he's still only a man. Barbie's are not Webb's kind of plaything, as a fractured doll drives two mothers to the brink of killing each other's kids -- while the kids try to get married to each other. The final twists turn to the ultimate in greed during the last chapter.

### **Psychotronic Serenade**

A mind is a terrible thing to control as Webb finds revenge from Louie LeCoat, a stung Canadian ex-professional baseball player. Psychotronic engineering reins havoc in St. Vegas, and if Webb doesn't stop it soon, pandemonium is in store for the seventh inning stretch.

### **Attack of the Sub Debs**

When business goes bust, Webb takes on a day job as a substitute teacher. By night, the sweet debutantes of his class roam the city streets as a rough and tough car jacking ring, using the money to fund their underground Internet video network of subversion. The global webcast message of good posture, fine cooking and death to all men, is brought to you by Miss Sally, the sorority house mother and leader of the pack.

### **Sci Fi Suicide**

Some say it's an accident. The police say it was suicide. But Webb feels it's murder as he watches an old friend fry, live on a daily Sci-Fi Soap Opera. It's "All About Steve" as a paranoid group of TV thespians claim innocence as Webb is forced to star in an on-the-air musical of a monstrous master mind.

### **Songs in the Key of Death**

Webb is accused of murdering an obnoxious, piano playing, effeminate, womanizing, self centered, early 1960's has-been teen idol. As Webb bumbles through the case, he discovers he's his own client. The more evidence Webb finds against the real murderer, the more it looks like he did it himself. But did he? Police Detective Deke Dombrowski wraps up this case.

### **A Shanghai Christmas**

Webb is kidnapped, left in the bowels of a shrimp boat and dumped in the hinterlands of coastal New Foundland. As he tries to find his way home, he helps out a small fishing village with their minor mysteries. Rather than pointing Webb to the nearest phone, the villagers embrace him as their Christmas angel and won't let go, when all Webb really wants to do is go home where it's dry and warm and away from these overly grateful superstitious backwater loonies.

### **Carnival of Fear**

A cracked-up carnival psychic trances into badly prosed quatrains, predicting death to his co-workers. Accidents will happen, but when they bring doom, the frightened mystic calls Webb Wilder to find the hidden killer -- not knowing that a killer is hidden within us all.

### **Revenge of the Mole Men**

Wormy is out of jail, the worm ranch is back in business and Lance Murdock is alive and well, as we discover the real brains of this slithering outfit is the former "defenseless widow," Margaret Posey Murdock. Dusty, Ruby, Wormy, Thelma, Murdock and McCreedy, do it again, but this time. . . it's for creeps.

### **Say Uncle**

Webb's Uncle Frank, who offers consolation throughout the series, now gets involved as the quiet side kick on this caper. Webb plays a reluctant body guard to the mob owner of the Blue Pelican night club, who's new wife turns out to be Webb's old flame. In the end, Webb saves the club owner, gets even with his ex and saves the mob some big money, only to find that Uncle Frank has been casing Webb's cases.

### **Funeral for a Fiend**

Webb shows his respects at the funeral of a famous game show host only to find that the “host with the most” is faking his own death. It's Elvis meets Bob Barker as Webb tries to discover what's really behind coffin number three.

### **Blown Away**

Webb wakes to find that he's been under sedation in an asylum, has a wife, a best friend and is a partner in an advertising agency on a small British island on the coast of France. Is this real? Has his detective adventures been the delusion of some fantastic mid-life nervous breakdown? Or is Webb on the burnt end of an undercover CIA caper? Discover how Webb tracks down an old friend who turns out to be no friend to mankind.





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