“On the spring evening in 1887 that he arrived in Tahlequah, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, U.S. Deputy Marshal Dan Maples was fatally shot in the chest by an unknown assailant hiding in dense brush. ... Within hours of receiving the telegraphed news of [the accused killer’s] death, hundreds of newspapermen across the country began creating fantastical, unsubstantiated, and often absurd stories about the deceased ‘notorious outlaw and terror of the Indian Territory’ who ‘possessed a deadly hatred for Deputy Marshals.’”

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