

TOTW Hangman's Reel

Hangman's Reel may be unique in that it's the only four-part tune written to save a fiddler. It's rare any time that a four-part tune becomes a popular old-time tune.

Hangman's Reel is often associated with Whitetop, Virginia fiddler Albert Hash (1917 – 1983), though he said he learned it from a recording of a Texas fiddler, Bill Northcut (1935- 1992).

Tune Archive reports via Judy Hyman it may have been a tune from the British Isles or from a French-Canadian tune called Reel du Pendu, popularized by the famous fiddling of John Carignan (1916 – 1988). History and samples are discussed in this video with [Kerry Blech](#) (Bill Northcut clip at 3:36).

Albert related one such story of a Canadian prisoner to Wayne Erbsen that you can read [here](#). Wayne admits to embellishing the story over the years. Documentation of any of these hanging stories is nebulous at best. [Other stories](#) are told about the hanging tune Calahan/The Last of Calahan which come from different locations. And another in this vein: [Last of Callahan history](#). It's an enormous challenge to sort out the real facts.

A thorough write-up of The Reel of the Hangman was covered by Tony Spadaro, RIP, The Old Woodchuck many of us remember. Lots of information and music to glean here: [The Reel of the Hanged Man \(Le Reel du Pendu\)](#).

[Albert Hash's Hangman's Reel](#)

[Bill Northcutt's Hangman's Reel](#)

[Jean Carignan](#) (1916 – 1988), Reel du Pendu (Hangman's Reel) (astounding skill here!)

[Tania Elizabeth, French Canadian fiddler](#), Reel du Pendu

[Kirk Sutphin & friends](#)

[Josh Turknett](#)

[Hangman's Reel from Scotland and Shetland](#)

Now here's my favorite by Chris Coole, portraying its richness and intricacy:

[Hangman's Reel played in a lowered pitch](#).

Here are some of the many enjoyable posts of Hangman's Reel on BHO.

[Dan Levenson](#)

[Tom MacKenzie](#)

[Lone Star String Band](#)