

DELL

Exciting
Adventure

APRIL

10¢

BAT MASTERSON

Bat
discovers
both gold
and danger
in the
same strike!



Gene Barry

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BAT MASTERSON

GOLD FEVER



Having found gold on his property, Bat sells small lots to the highest bidders — and makes a fortune.



His customers, inflamed by the lies of one who did not find gold, drag him out in the street to lynch him!

SHOWDOWN IN DODGE CITY



A gun battle on Front Street finds Bat caught between mistaken peace officers and angry citizens.



In a showdown Bat sides with former Marshal Wyatt Earp against shotguns loaded with buckshot.

GOLD FEVER



IN A COWTOWN DOCTOR'S OFFICE, **BAT MASTERSON** HEARS DESPAIR IN THE WORDS OF THE INJURED MAN HE FOUND ON THE TRAIL TO DEAD HORSE.

I'VE DONE WHAT I CAN FOR YOU, WILL OWENS— BUT ONLY A FIRST-CLASS SURGEON IN A CITY HOSPITAL WILL EVER FIX THAT LEG SO YOU CAN RIDE AGAIN!

THAT MEANS I'M FINISHED FOR ANY GOOD USE, DOC— FINISHED BY THE RUSTLER'S BULLET THAT MIGHT BETTER HAVE PUT ME UNDER GROUND!

NO, DADDY— NO! (SOB!) WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME, RUBY CHILD? WITH ONLY ONE LEG I CAN'T EVER SUPPORT YOU! AND YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO MAKE YOUR OWN WAY!



NO, DADDY! I CAN WORK—I CAN COOK IN A RESTAURANT— TAKE CARE OF US BOTH!

WHAT'S ALL THAT MONEY FOR, MR. MASTERSON?

EXPENSES, WILL— FOR YOUR TRIP TO THE CITY WITH RUBY! AND I WILL PERSONALLY GUARANTEE ALL SURGEON AND HOSPITAL BILLS! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE **TWO** GOOD LEGS WHEN THEY ARE DONE WITH YOU!



I—I—THERE'S NO WAY TO THANK YOU, MR. MASTERSON! YOU WON'T LOSE YOUR MONEY— I'LL PAY YOU BACK IN TIME! BUT, RIGHT NOW, THE LEAST I CAN DO IS TO DEED YOU MY LITTLE, OLD, HARDCRABBLE RANCH, SUCH AS IT IS!



YES! OH, PLEASE ACCEPT IT, MR. MASTERSON! EVEN IF THERE AREN'T ANY COWS ON IT ANY MORE!

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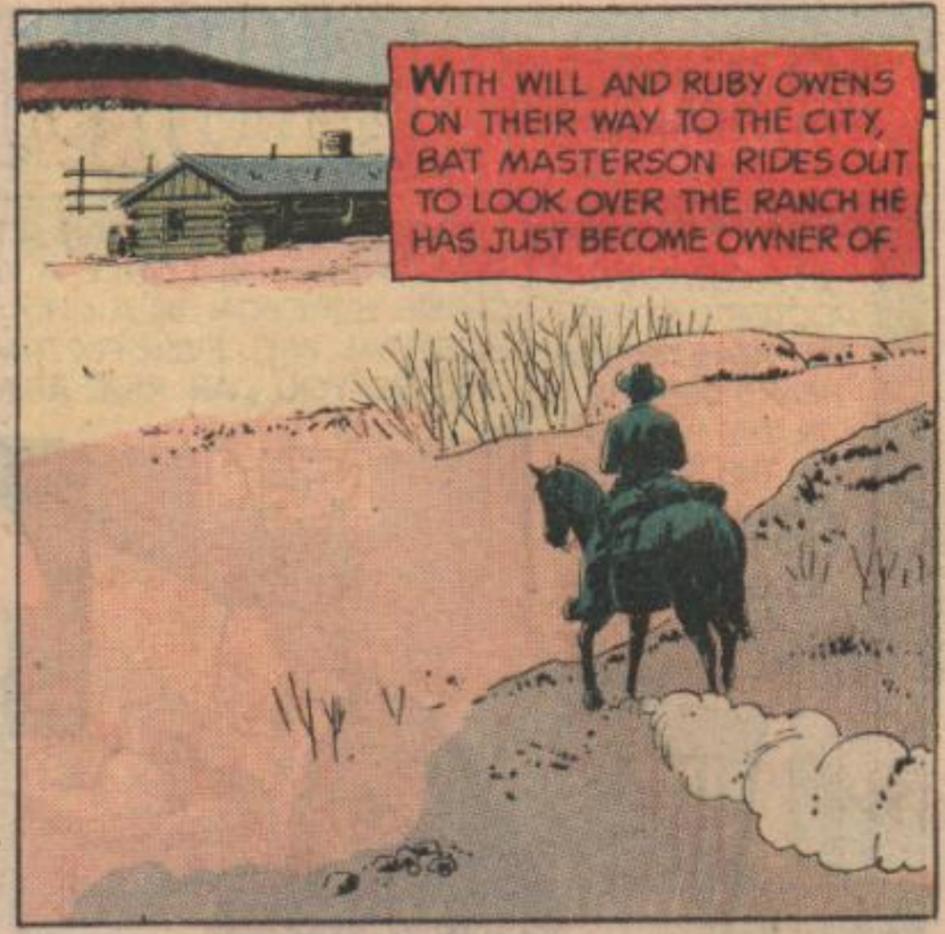
CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us five weeks in advance of the next issue date. Give both your old and new address enclosing if possible your old address label.

I'LL ARRANGE FOR A SPRING WAGON TO TAKE YOU TO THE TRAIN, WILL ...

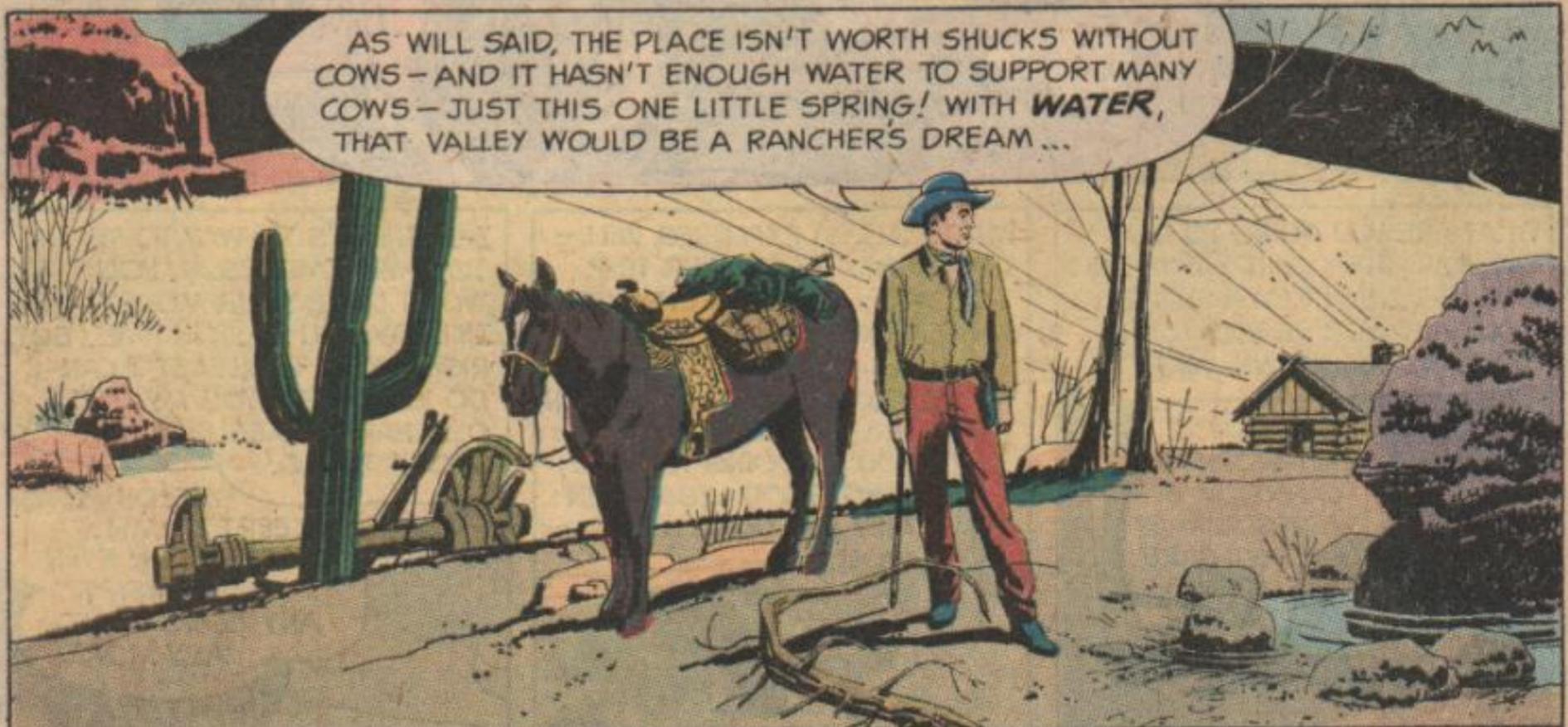
ALL RIGHT, DOC—AND ON YOUR WAY, PLEASE ASK HAMMOND, THE TOWN CLERK, TO COME RIGHT OVER HERE AND MAKE OUT THAT DEED! MAYBE CY SWILLING, THE BARKEEPER, WILL SIGN AS WITNESS!



WITH WILL AND RUBY OWENS ON THEIR WAY TO THE CITY, BAT MASTERSON RIDES OUT TO LOOK OVER THE RANCH HE HAS JUST BECOME OWNER OF.



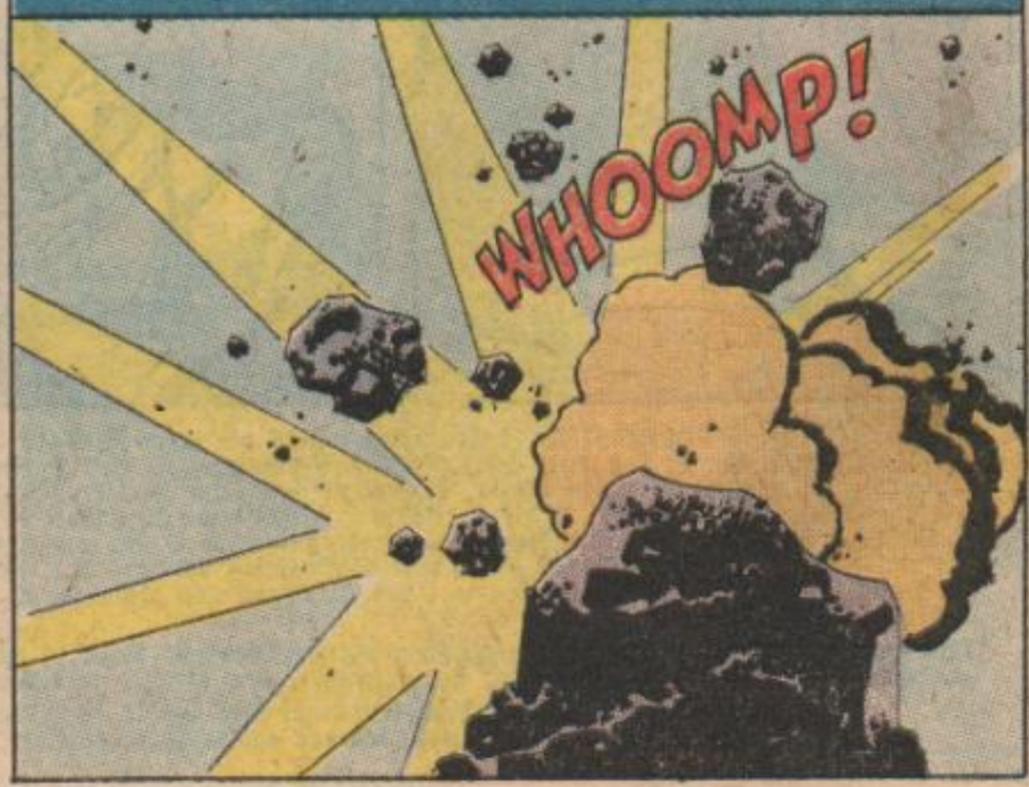
AS WILL SAID, THE PLACE ISN'T WORTH SHUCKS WITHOUT COWS—AND IT HASN'T ENOUGH WATER TO SUPPORT MANY COWS—JUST THIS ONE LITTLE SPRING! WITH **WATER**, THAT VALLEY WOULD BE A RANCHER'S DREAM ...

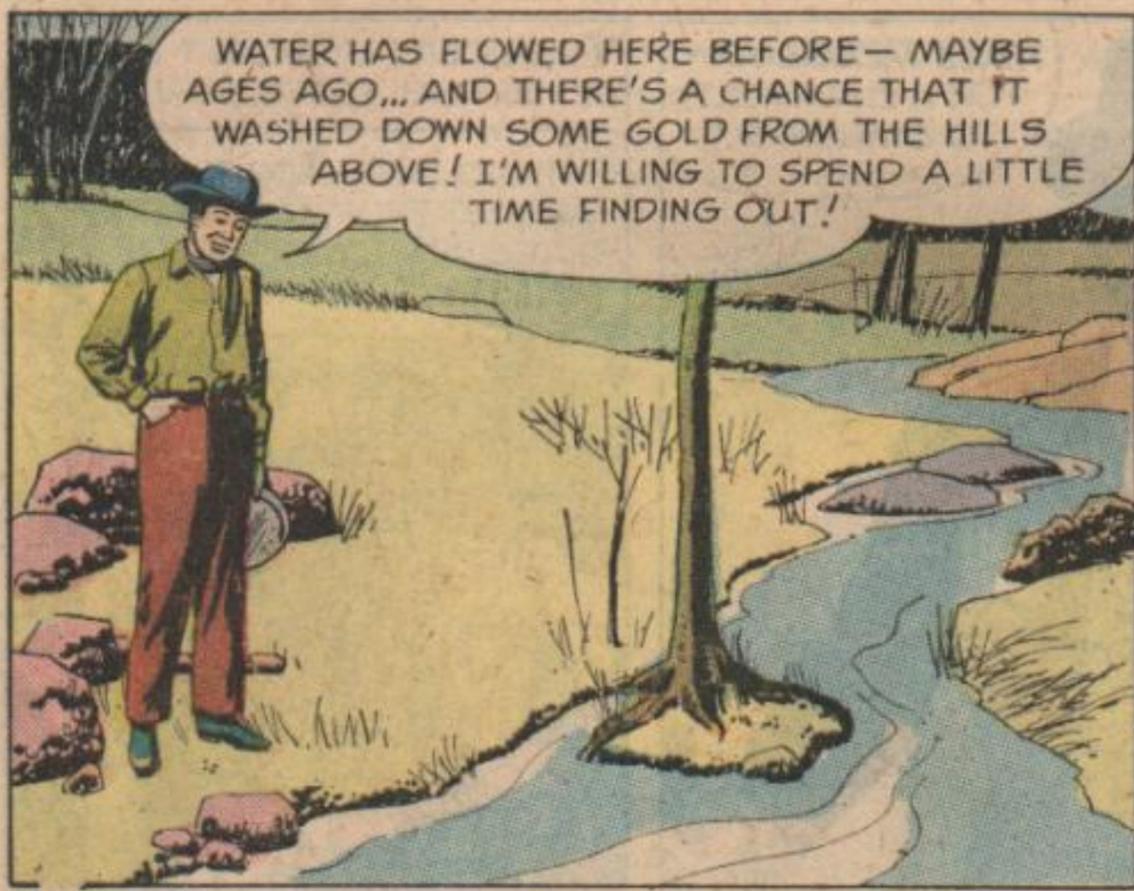


HMMMM! THAT WEATHERED LIMESTONE SHELL IS **DAMP!** I'VE READ HOW MOSES GOT WATER IN THE DESERT BY STRIKING A ROCK,,, I WONDER WHAT **DYNAMITE** WOULD DO HERE?



THE NEXT DAY BAT TRIES A STICK OF DYNAMITE—WHICH SHATTERS THE FACE OF THE LIMESTONE LEDGE.







IN CY SWILLING'S SALOON, BAT QUICKLY GATHERS AN EAGER CROWD.

GENTLEMEN! I AM NOT A MINER - BUT I OWN THE LAND ON WHICH THIS GOLD WAS PANNED! I'LL SELL CLAIM-SIZE PLOTS ALONG THE STREAM TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS! CLAIM NEXT TO "DISCOVERY" STARTS AT THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS! WHAT DO YOU BID?

THIRTY-THREE HUNDRED!

THIRTY-FIVE HUNDRED!

THIRTY-ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS!



-AND SOLD! TWO CLAIMS NEXT TO "DISCOVERY" TO CYRUS N. SWILLING FOR THIRTY-FIVE HUNDRED EACH! DEEDS ARE ALL DRAWN UP BY THE COUNTY CLERK - WITH NAMES READY TO BE FILLED IN - WHO'S NEXT? FOR CASH ONLY!

THREE THOUSAND - FOR A CLAIM NEXT TO SWILLING'S!



TWO HOURS LATER, BAT WINDS UP HIS REAL ESTATE DEALINGS...

FIFTY DOLLARS - FOR THE CLAIM FARTHEST FROM "DISCOVERY?" THAT'S ALL I'M OFFERED? THEN I'M CALLING IT A DAY!



MR. MASTERSON! WHERE - WHERE DID YOU GET ALL THIS?

SELLING PARCELS OF MY LAND! SIXTY-ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND NO CENTS! COUNT IT NOW, PLEASE!



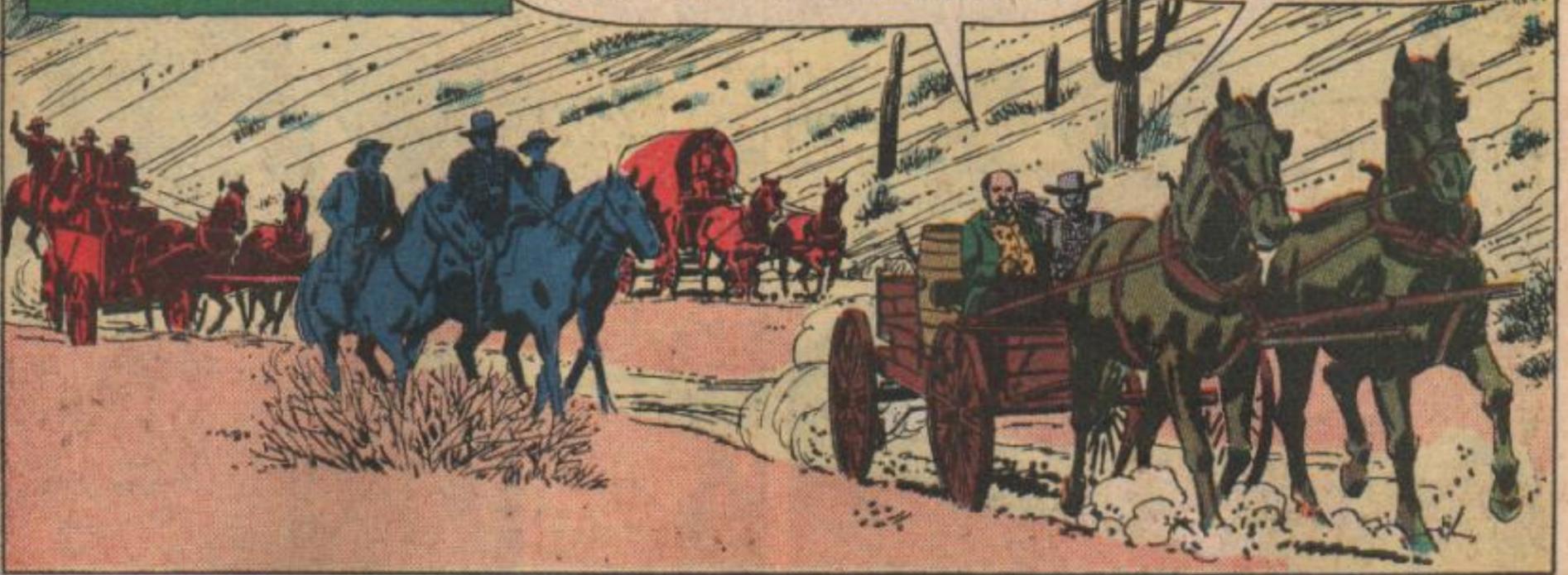
YOU MUST HAVE SOLD EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF YOUR RANCH, MR. MASTERSON!

NO - JUST MINERAL RIGHTS ALONG THE STREAM! I OWN THE REST OF THE LAND AND THE WATER!

EVEN BEFORE BAT MASTERSON LEAVES THE BANK THE MINERS — AND SALOONKEEPER CY SWILLING ARE ON THEIR WAY.

REMEMBER, STUD, YOU'RE GOING TO DIG FOR **ME** — YOU AND "PEELER" WARD! TRY HIDING ANY OF THE GOLD YOU PAN, AND I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE BOUNTY HUNTERS!

OKAY, OKAY, CY! BUT YOU PROMISED US HALF THE TAKE — OVER SEVEN THOUSAND!



ALONG THE STREAM MEN DIG AND WASH DIRT WITH FEVERISH HOPES!

STRUCK ANY GOOD-LOOKING DIRT YET, MAC?

IT'S BLACK SAND NOW, DAVE! I'M GOING TO TRY ANOTHER PAN!



CONGRATULATIONS, MAC! YOU'VE STRUCK IT RICH — ON A HUNDRED DOLLAR CLAIM!

NUGGETS! AND GOLD DUST! MORE GOLD THAN SAND!

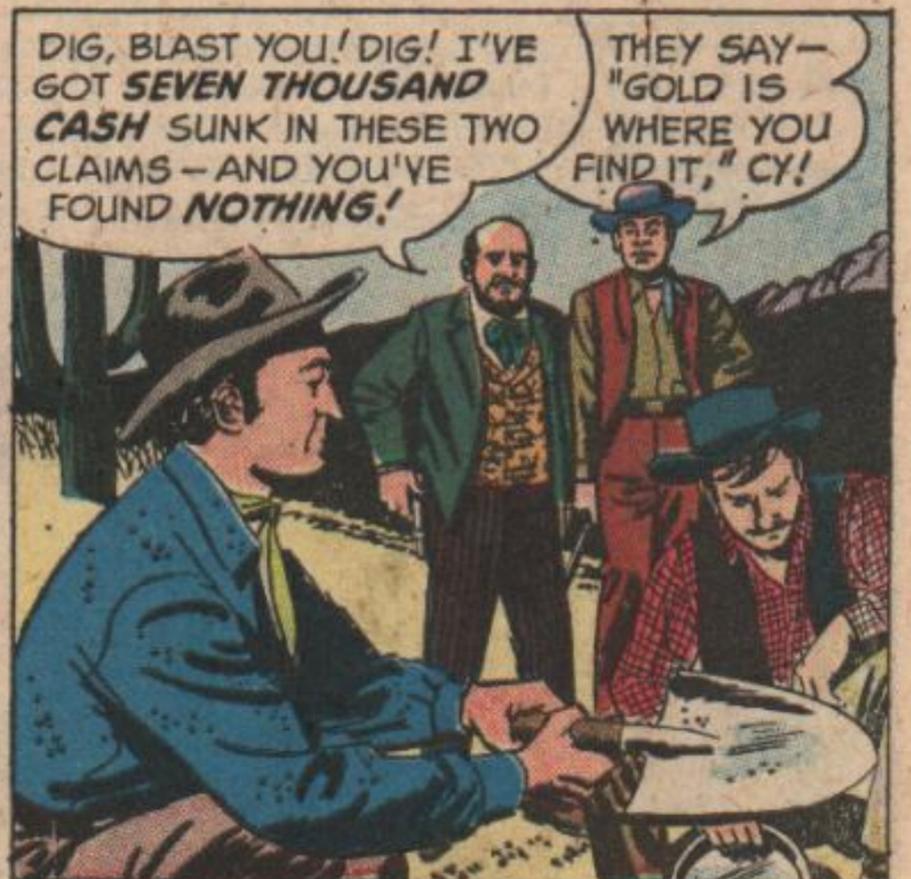


BONANZA! I'VE STRUCK IT RICH! YEEEE-AAAAY!



DIG, BLAST YOU! DIG! I'VE GOT **SEVEN THOUSAND CASH** SUNK IN THESE TWO CLAIMS — AND YOU'VE FOUND **NOTHING!**

THEY SAY — "GOLD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT," CY!





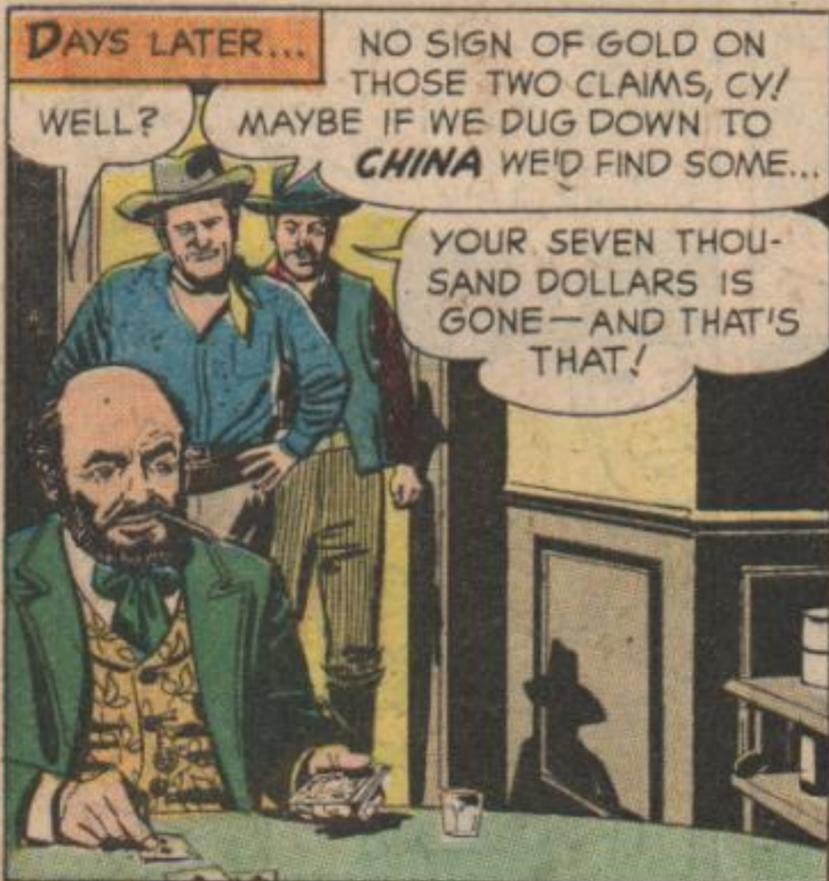
OF COURSE, IT'S EQUALLY TRUE THAT **GOLD** IS WHERE YOU **SPEND** IT! THAT'S WHY I'M NOT A MINER!

BLAST YOU, MASTERSON— IF YOU'VE SWINDLED ME—!



LUCK! IF MY CLAIMS DON'T PAY OFF, IT'S **YOU** WHO'LL NEED THE LUCK!

I HAVEN'T SWINDLED YOU, CYRUS! YOU PAID YOUR MONEY AND TOOK YOUR CHANCE! SO LONG—AND GOOD LUCK!

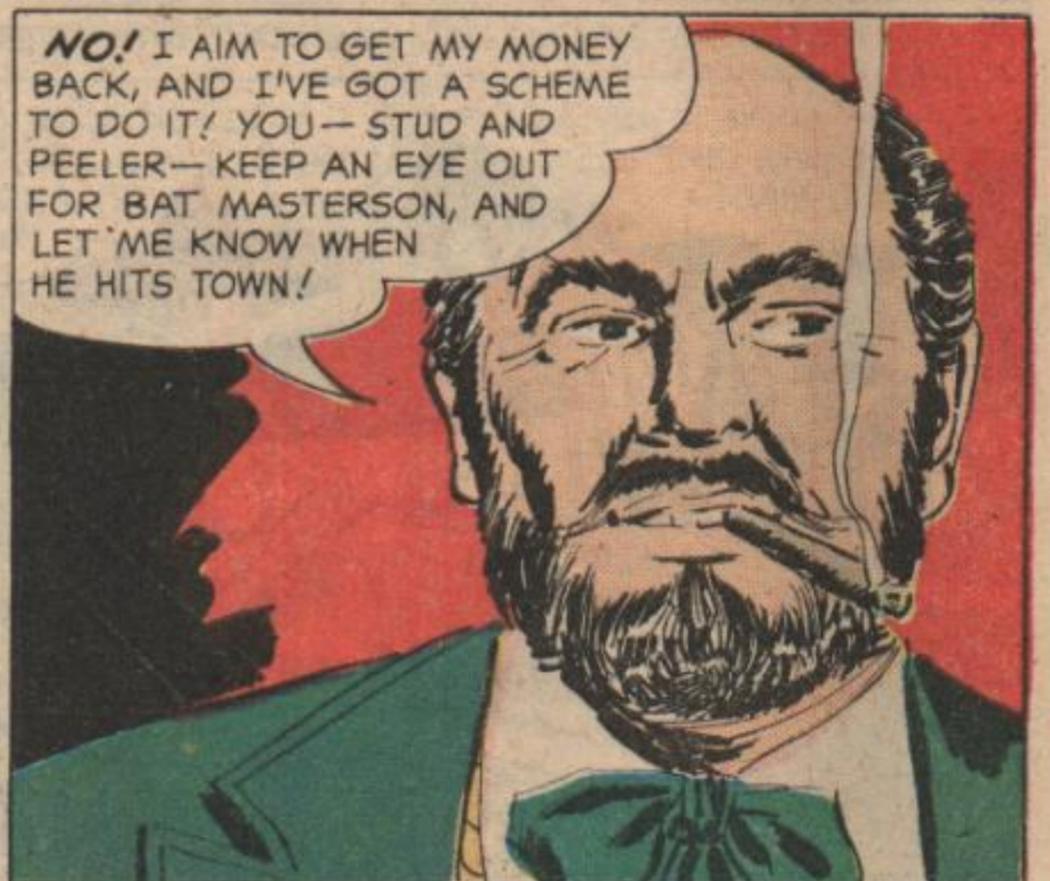


DAYS LATER...

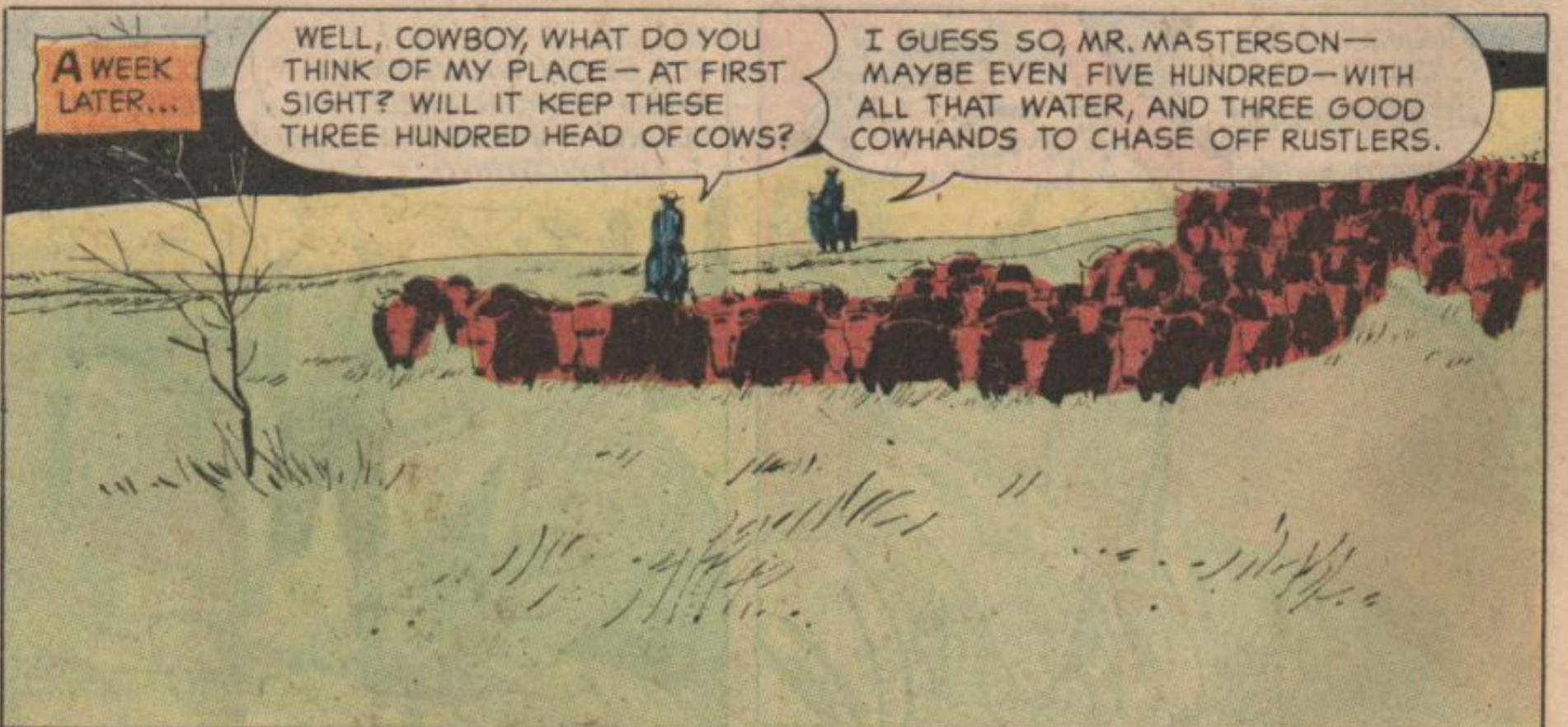
WELL?

NO SIGN OF GOLD ON THOSE TWO CLAIMS, CY! MAYBE IF WE DUG DOWN TO **CHINA** WE'D FIND SOME...

YOUR SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IS GONE—AND THAT'S THAT!



NO! I AIM TO GET MY MONEY BACK, AND I'VE GOT A SCHEME TO DO IT! YOU—STUD AND PEELER—KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR BAT MASTERSON, AND LET ME KNOW WHEN HE HITS TOWN!



A WEEK LATER...

WELL, COWBOY, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY PLACE—AT FIRST SIGHT? WILL IT KEEP THESE THREE HUNDRED HEAD OF COWS?

I GUESS SO, MR. MASTERSON—MAYBE EVEN FIVE HUNDRED—WITH ALL THAT WATER, AND THREE GOOD COWHANDS TO CHASE OFF RUSTLERS.

CHANGING INTO FRESH CLOTHES, BAT HEADS FOR TOWN...

IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS SINCE WILL OWENS ENTERED THE HOSPITAL ...AND THE LAST REPORT ON HIS BROKEN LEG WAS GOOD! HE'LL BE COMING HOME SOON— BECAUSE I'VE GOT A JOB FOR HIM!



... WHERE HIS ARRIVAL IS QUICKLY NOTED.

THERE HE IS—BAT MASTERSON, DERBY HAT, CANE AND ALL! I'LL TELL SWILLING!



GOOD! TELL HIM THE TOWN CLERK, HAMMOND, WANTS TO SEE HIM AND THEN HUSTLE BACK HERE! PICK UP "PEELER" WARD ON YOUR WAY, STUD!



MR. MASTERSON, HAMMOND, THE TOWN CLERK WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU AS SOON AS YOU CAN SPARE A MINUTE... SOMETHING ABOUT THE LOTS YOU SOLD ON THE OWENS RANCH, I RECKON!

SO CY SWILLING IS STILL HOPING TO GET HIS MONEY BACK FROM ME? ALL RIGHT, STUD! I WAS GOING TO SEE HAMMOND ANYWAY!



THERE HE GOES, CY! REMEMBER, BAT IS FAST WITH A GUN! HOW DO WE TAKE HIM?

ALIVE—UNLESS HE DRAWS ON US! GIVE HIM A COUPLE OF MINUTES WITH HAMMOND, FIRST!



IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE...

HELLO, HAMMOND! I HEAR YOU WANTED TO SEE ME ABOUT SOMETHING!

WHY—HELLO, MR. MASTERSON! I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU— BUT I HAVEN'T ANY SPECIAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS...





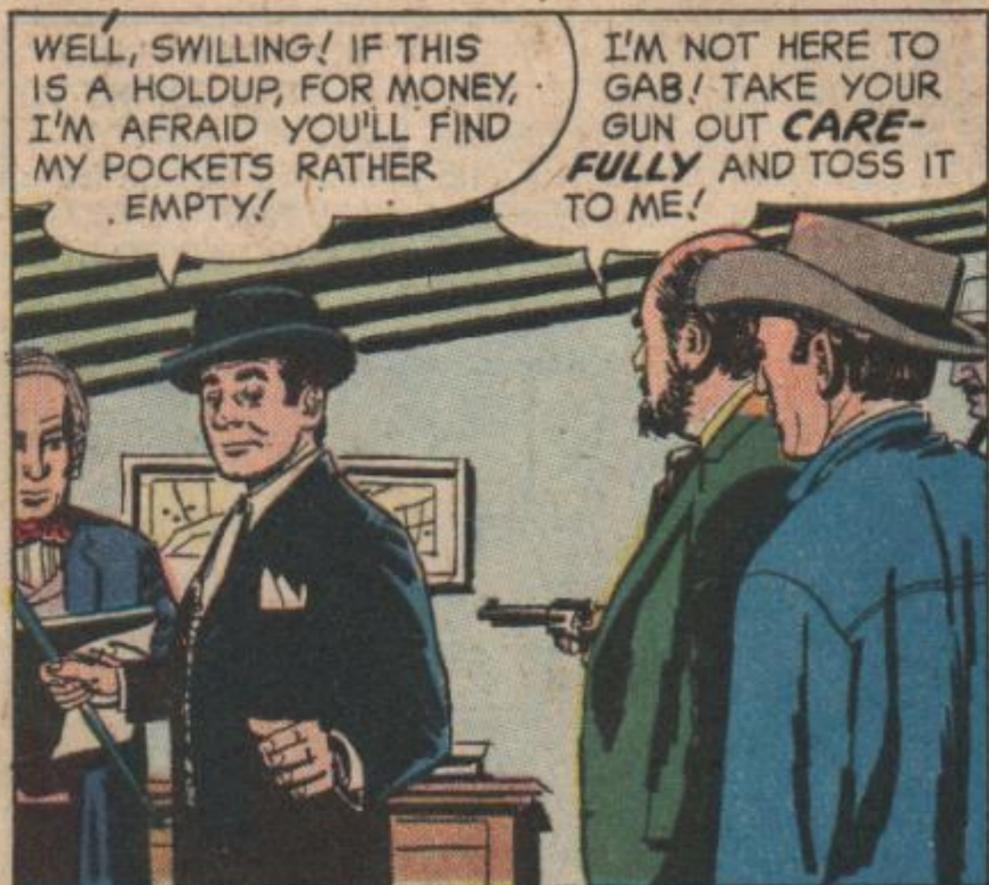
WELL, I NEED YOUR SERVICES, HAMMOND... I'D LIKE TO MAKE OVER MY RANCH—THE ONE OWENS DEEDED TO ME— TO A **PARTNERSHIP**— CONSISTING OF WILL OWENS, HIS DAUGHTER RUBY AND ME!

I SEE... I'LL GET OUT THE RECORD BOOK WITH OWENS' DEED, TO REFER TO, AND THEN DRAW UP THE NEW ONE!



HERE IT IS, MR. MASTERSON! I'LL—

PUT YOUR HANDS UP, MASTERSON— AND TURN AROUND SLOWLY! YOU'RE COVERED BY **THREE GUNS!**



WELL, SWILLING! IF THIS IS A HOLDUP, FOR MONEY, I'M AFRAID YOU'LL FIND MY POCKETS RATHER EMPTY!

I'M NOT HERE TO GAB! TAKE YOUR GUN OUT **CAREFULLY** AND TOSS IT TO ME!



NOW, WHAT?

WATCH!

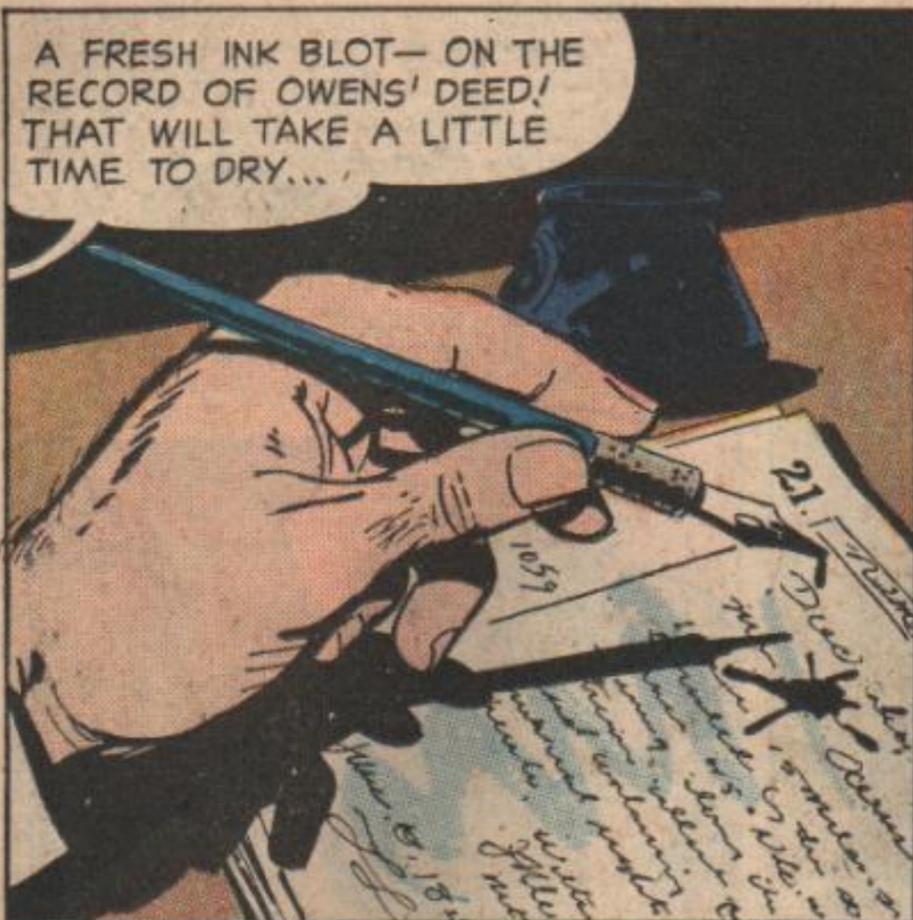


YOU — **MURDERER!**

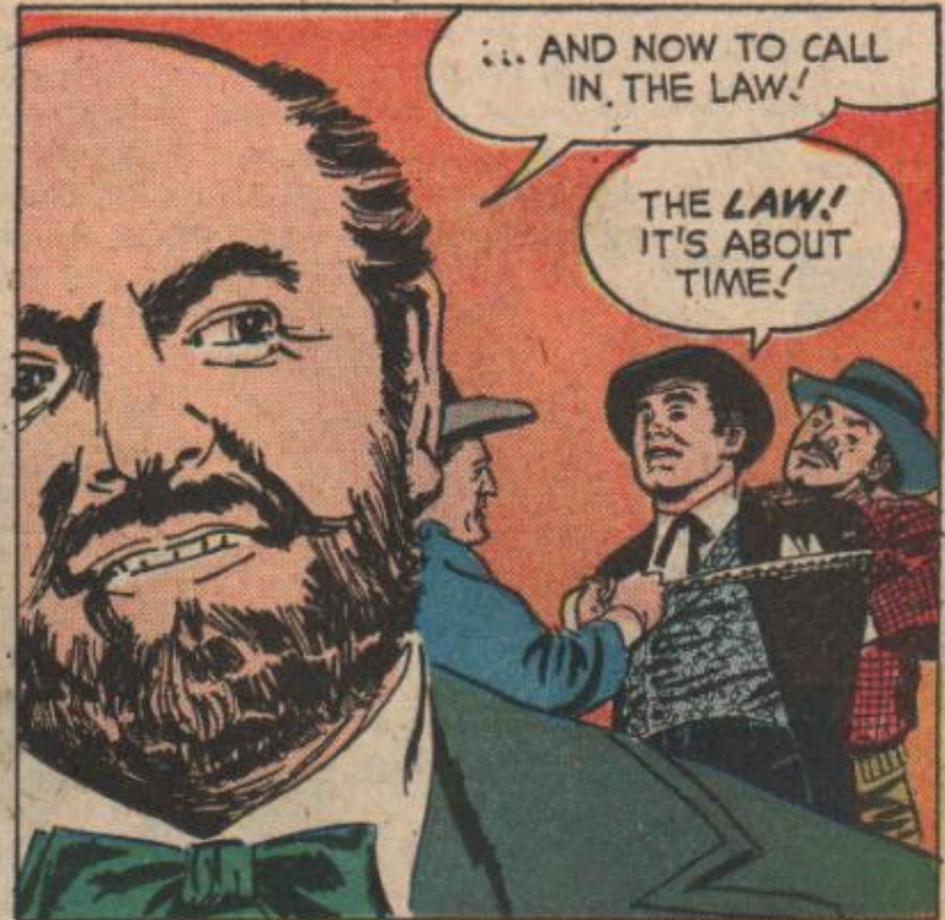
BANG!
BANG!



WRONG, MASTERSON! **YOU'RE** THE MURDERER— AS WE THREE WILL TESTIFY! — NOW, TIE HIM UP, BOYS!



A FRESH INK BLOT— ON THE RECORD OF OWENS' DEED! THAT WILL TAKE A LITTLE TIME TO DRY...



... AND NOW TO CALL IN THE LAW!

THE LAW! IT'S ABOUT TIME!



SWILLING! WHAT WERE THOSE SHOTS?

MURDER! BUT WE'VE GOT THE MAN— **BAT MASTERSON!** HERE, SHERIFF!

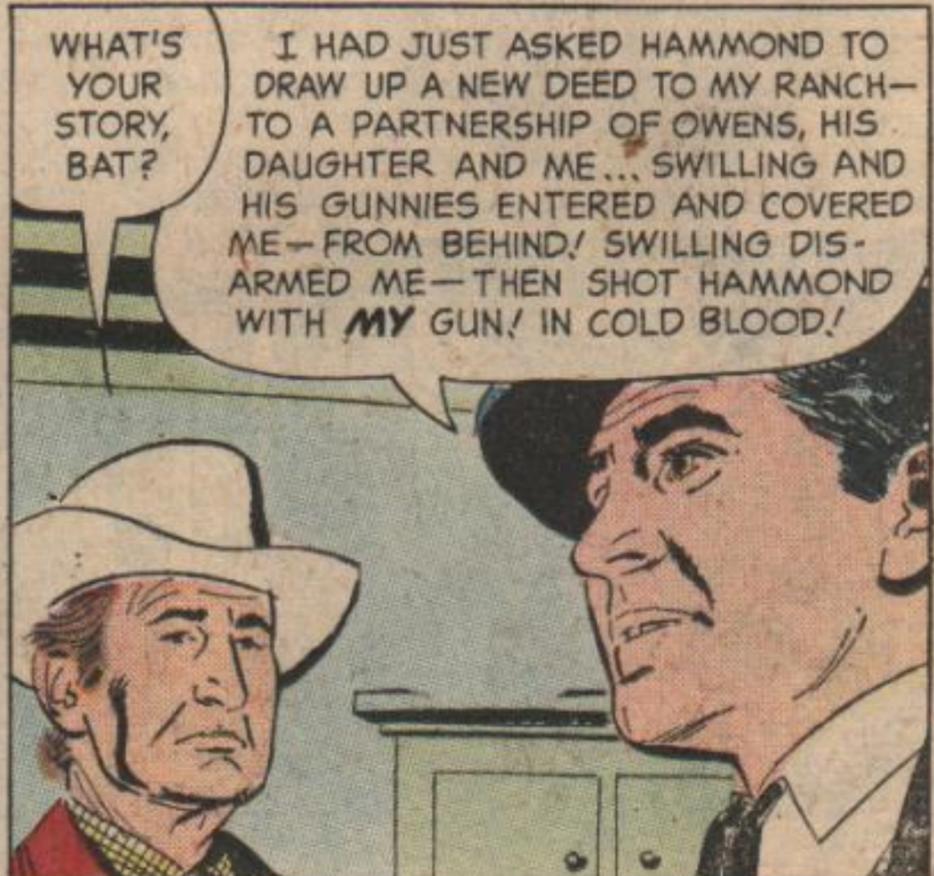
BAT MASTERSON! WHO DID HE KILL?



HAMMOND— SHOT TWICE! BUT WHY—?

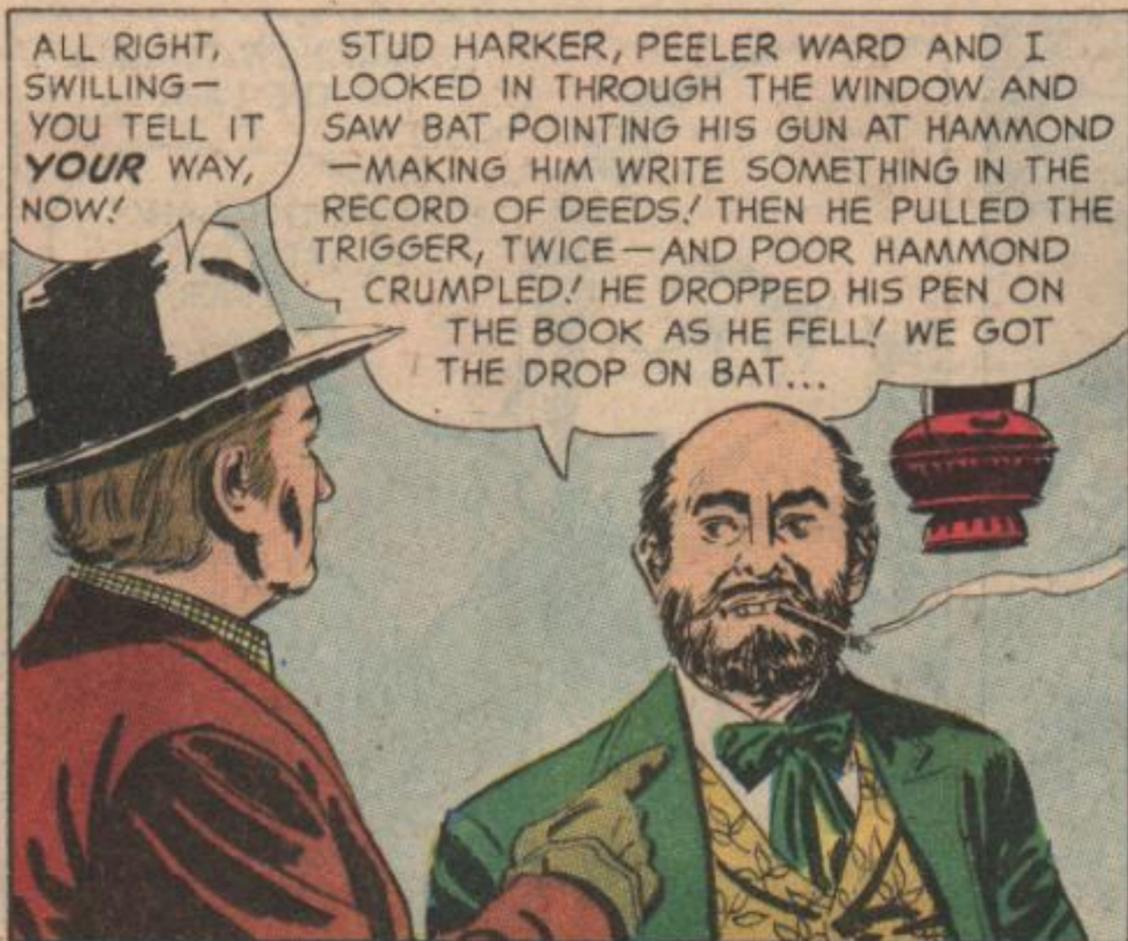
I THINK I CAN MAKE A GOOD GUESS, SHERIFF!

YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN GUESS, SWILLING! **YOU** SHOT HAMMOND!



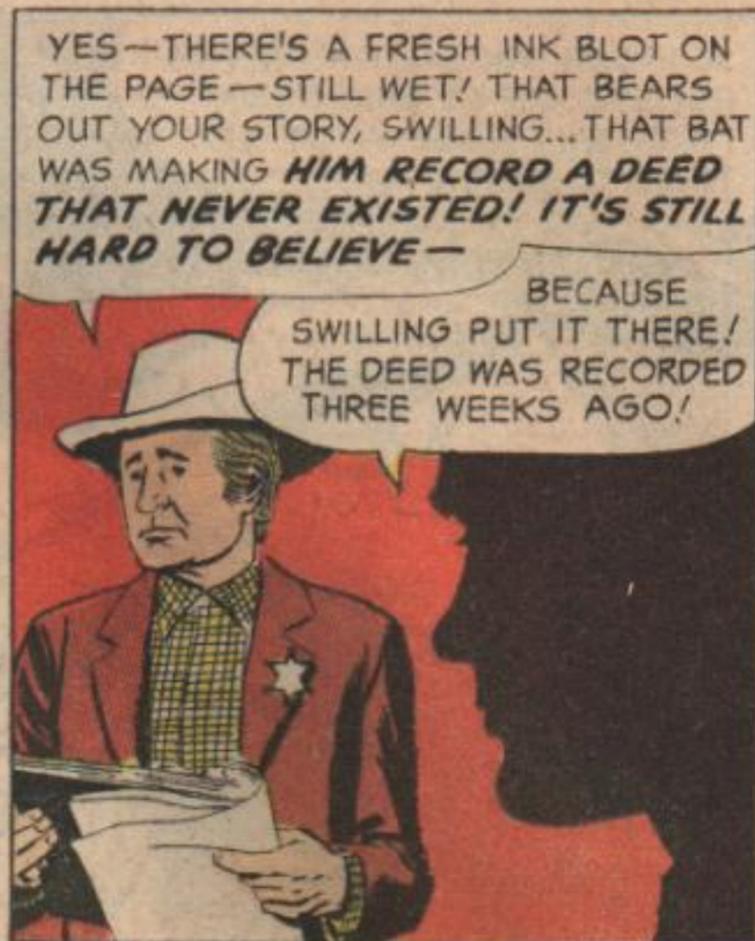
WHAT'S YOUR STORY, BAT?

I HAD JUST ASKED HAMMOND TO DRAW UP A NEW DEED TO MY RANCH— TO A PARTNERSHIP OF OWENS, HIS DAUGHTER AND ME... SWILLING AND HIS GUNNIES ENTERED AND COVERED ME— FROM BEHIND! SWILLING DISARMED ME— THEN SHOT HAMMOND WITH **MY** GUN! IN COLD BLOOD!



ALL RIGHT, SWILLING— YOU TELL IT **YOUR** WAY, NOW!

STUD HARKER, PEELER WARD AND I LOOKED IN THROUGH THE WINDOW AND SAW BAT POINTING HIS GUN AT HAMMOND —MAKING HIM WRITE SOMETHING IN THE RECORD OF DEEDS! THEN HE PULLED THE TRIGGER, TWICE—AND POOR HAMMOND CRUMPLED! HE DROPPED HIS PEN ON THE BOOK AS HE FELL! WE GOT THE DROP ON BAT...



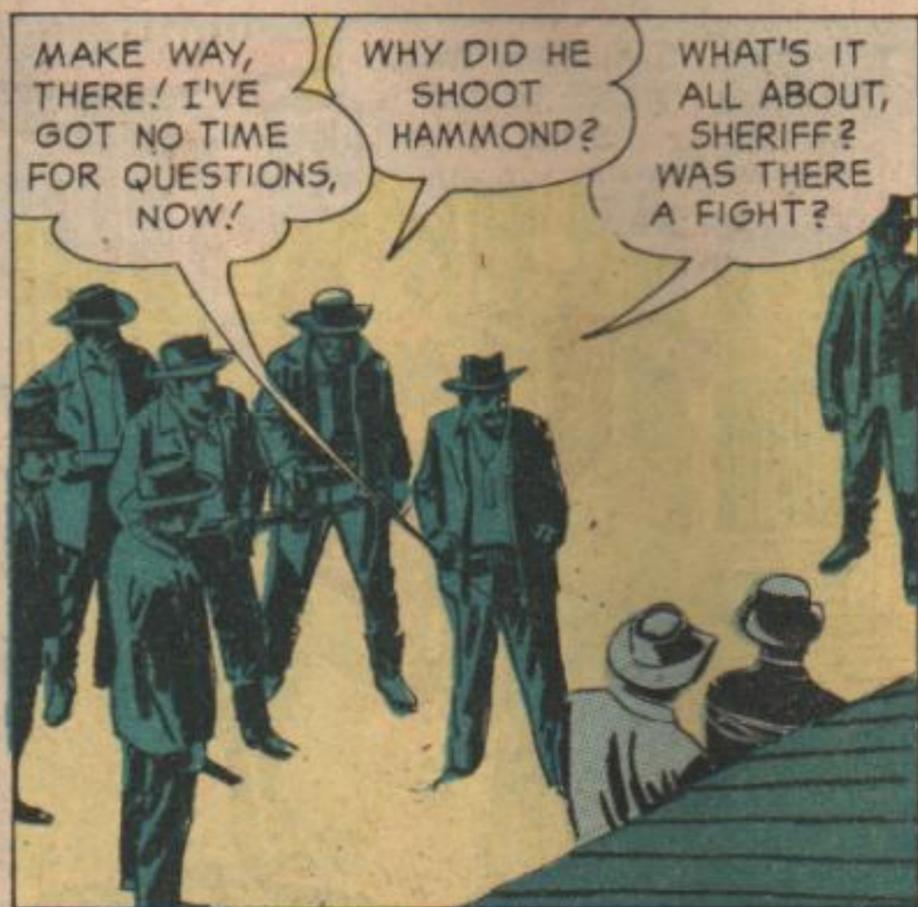
YES—THERE'S A FRESH INK BLOT ON THE PAGE—STILL WET! THAT BEARS OUT YOUR STORY, SWILLING... THAT BAT WAS MAKING **HIM RECORD A DEED THAT NEVER EXISTED!** IT'S STILL **HARD TO BELIEVE—**

BECAUSE SWILLING PUT IT THERE! THE DEED WAS RECORDED THREE WEEKS AGO!



I CAN'T TELL BY LOOKING AT DRY INK HOW LONG AGO IT WAS WRITTEN BUT I KNOW **WET** INK WHEN I SEE IT! I'LL HAVE TO LOCK YOU UP, BAT, ON THE EVIDENCE OF THESE THREE MEN! SORRY, BAT!

SO AM I, SHERIFF! I COULDN'T BE SORRIER!



MAKE WAY, THERE! I'VE GOT NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS, NOW!

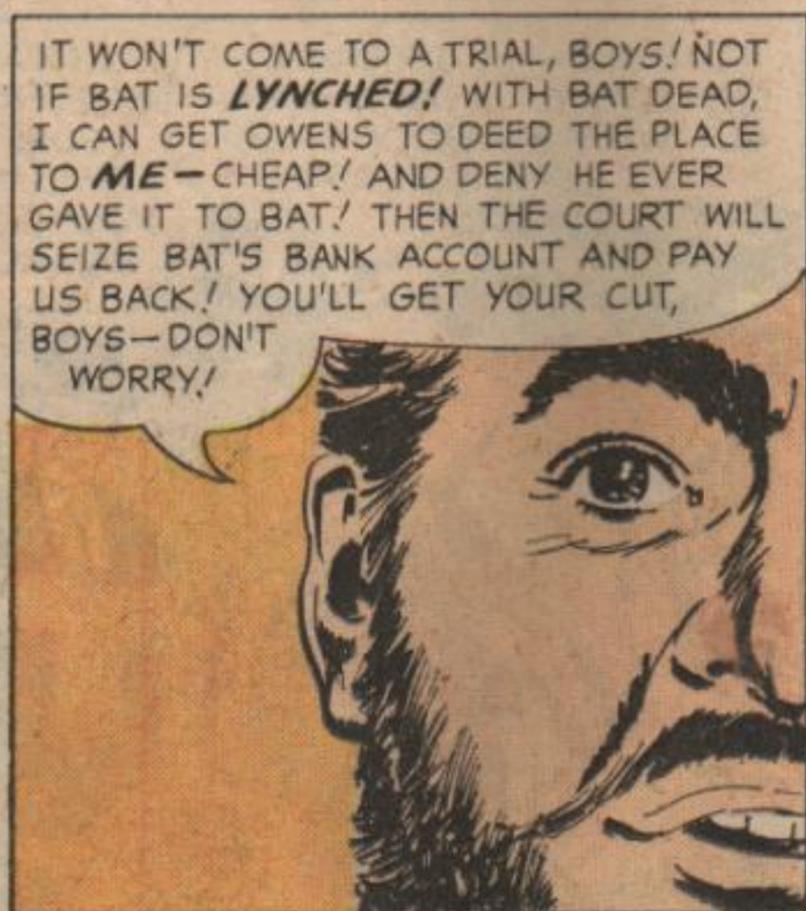
WHY DID HE SHOOT HAMMOND?

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, SHERIFF? WAS THERE A FIGHT?



LOOK, CY—WHAT'S THE DEAL BEHIND THIS SHENANIGAN? YOU'VE GOT SOME SCHEME TO MAKE MONEY OUT OF IT, BUT HOW? WE'VE GOT A RIGHT TO KNOW!

OWENS WILL COME BACK AND TESTIFY THAT HE **DID** GIVE BAT THAT DEED—IF IT COMES TO A TRIAL...

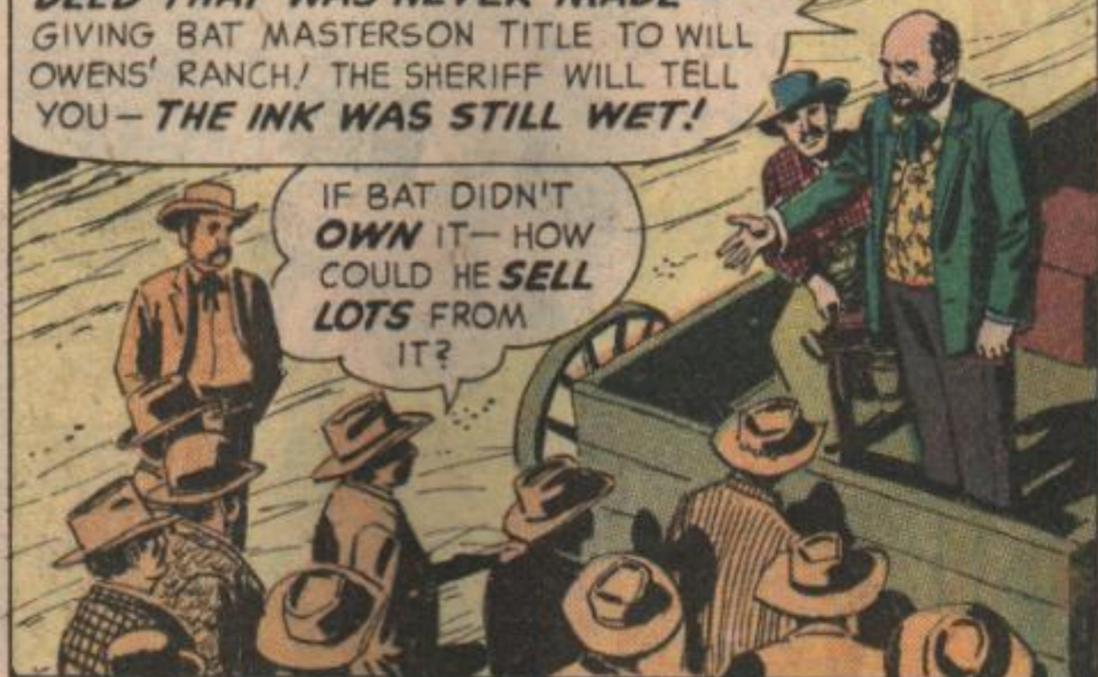


IT WON'T COME TO A TRIAL, BOYS! NOT IF BAT IS **LYNCHED!** WITH BAT DEAD, I CAN GET OWENS TO DEED THE PLACE TO **ME—** CHEAP! AND DENY HE EVER GAVE IT TO BAT! THEN THE COURT WILL SEIZE BAT'S BANK ACCOUNT AND PAY US BACK! YOU'LL GET YOUR CUT, BOYS—DON'T WORRY!

OUTSIDE THE JAIL THE CROWD GROWS, AS SWILLING TELLS HIS MADE-UP STORY.

WE SAW HIM! WE'LL ALL THREE SWEAR TO IT—BAT MASTERSON FORCED POOR HAMMOND TO RECORD A DEED THAT WAS NEVER MADE—GIVING BAT MASTERSON TITLE TO WILL OWENS' RANCH! THE SHERIFF WILL TELL YOU—THE INK WAS STILL WET!

IF BAT DIDN'T OWN IT—HOW COULD HE SELL LOTS FROM IT?



THAT'S IT, NEIGHBORS! HE **COULDN'T**—NOT LEGALLY! HE TOOK US—YOU AND ME—FOR MORE THAN **SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!** I RECKON HAMMOND ASKED TO SEE THE DEED SO HE COULD RECORD IT!..



... BUT ALL POOR HAMMOND SAW WAS THE **MUZZLE OF BAT'S GUN!**—WHAT DOES A SWINDLER AND A KILLER LIKE THAT DESERVE? A TRIAL WHERE A SLICK TALKER MIGHT GET HIMSELF FREE? HE SLICK-TALKED US—



MOVE ASIDE, SHERIFF! WE'RE TAKING MASTERSON OUT TO HANG HIM, NOW! AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIRE ON YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS!

I'LL FIRE—AT ANY ATTEMPT TO FORCE THIS DOOR! NOBODY'S GOING TO LYNCH A PRISONER OF MINE! GET BACK, SWILLING—!



LYNCH HIM!

YE-A-AY!
GET A ROPE!





GET THAT SHOTGUN—AND HIS KEYS!

KLUNK



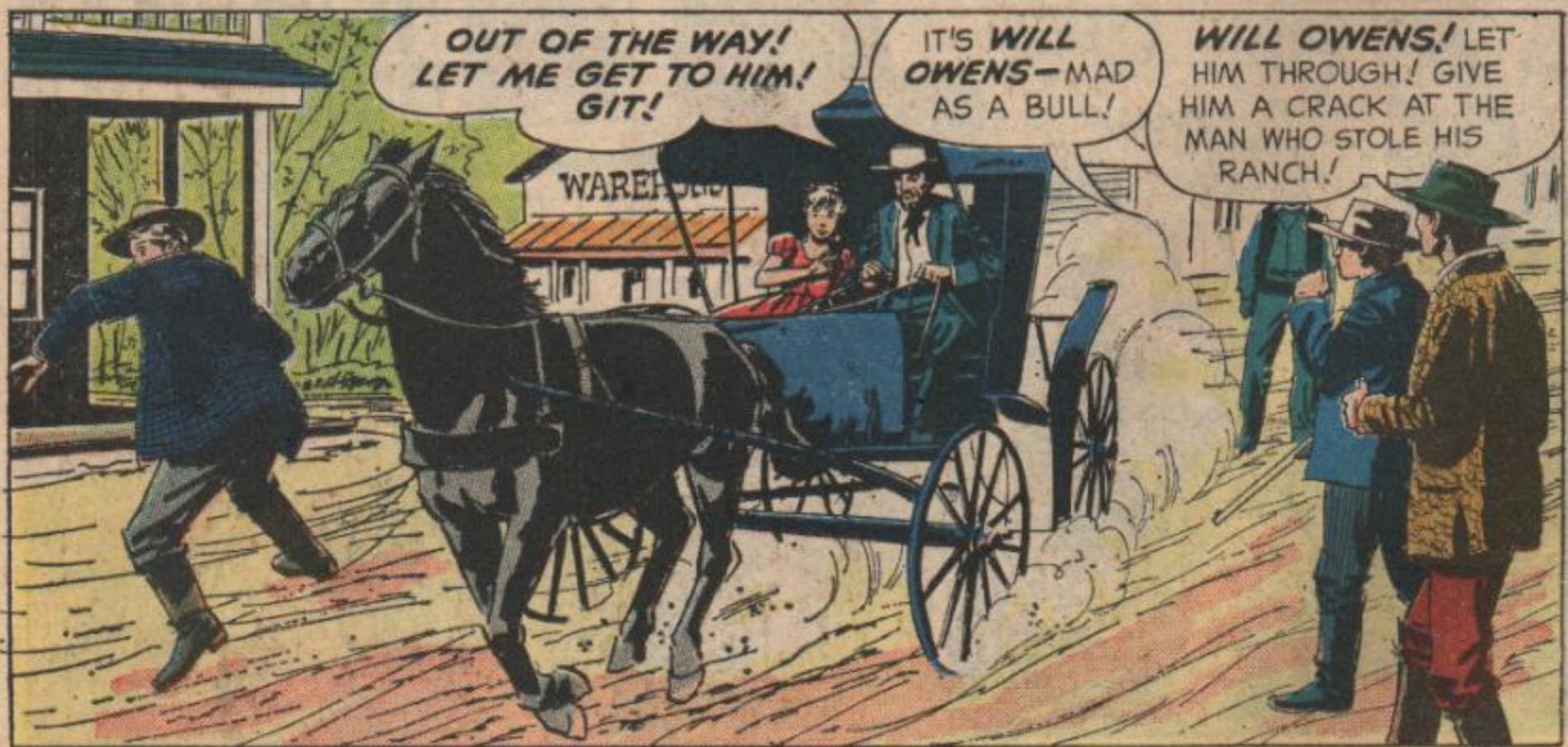
WITH THE SHERIFF KNOCKED OUT, THE MOB MAKES SHORT WORK OF SEIZING BAT AND DRAGGING HIM OUTSIDE.

STRING HIM UP! RAISE UP A WAGON POLE—IN THE STREET HERE!



DADDY! THAT'S BAT MASTERSON! THEY'RE HANGING HIM! OHHH!

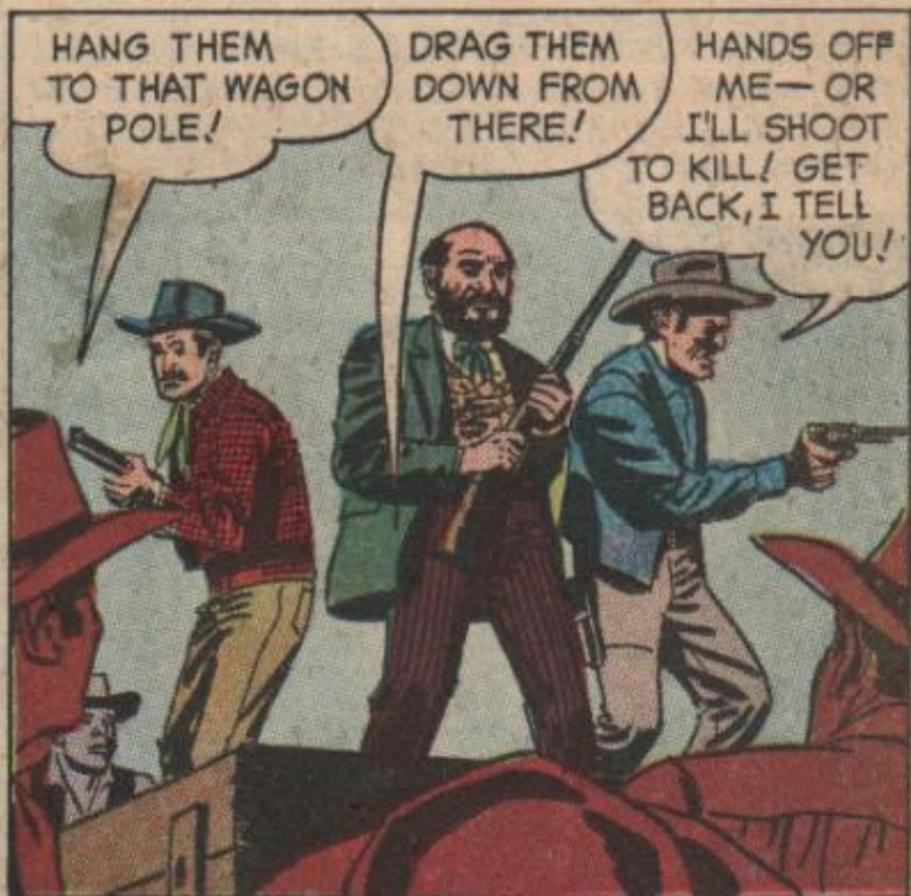
HANGING HIM—NOT IF I CAN STOP THEM, RUBY!



OUT OF THE WAY! LET ME GET TO HIM! GIT!

IT'S WILL OWENS—MAD AS A BULL!

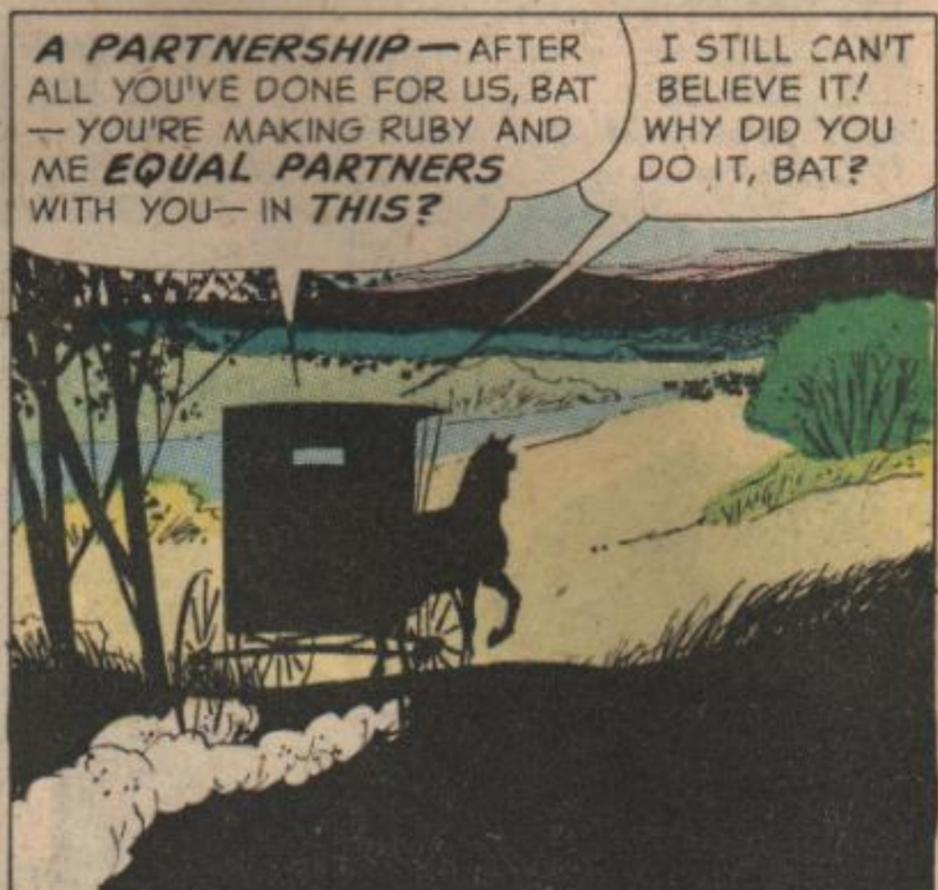
WILL OWENS! LET HIM THROUGH! GIVE HIM A CRACK AT THE MAN WHO STOLE HIS RANCH!





WE'VE GOT THEM— AND WE'RE TAKING THEM TO JAIL! THE SHERIFF AND I!

THAT'S RIGHT, NEIGHBORS! THERE'LL BE **NO LYNCHING**— EVEN OF **REAL MURDERERS!** NOW, MAKE WAY!



A PARTNERSHIP— AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR US, BAT— YOU'RE MAKING RUBY AND ME **EQUAL PARTNERS** WITH YOU— IN **THIS?**

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WHY DID YOU DO IT, BAT?



WELL, I ADMIT I COULD HAVE KEPT IT ALL FOR MYSELF... BUT I'M NOT A MINER OR A CATTLEMAN! I'D RATHER BE A SILENT **PARTNER** HERE, AND LET YOU FOLKS EARN MONEY FOR ME! I'M SELFISH ABOUT IT!

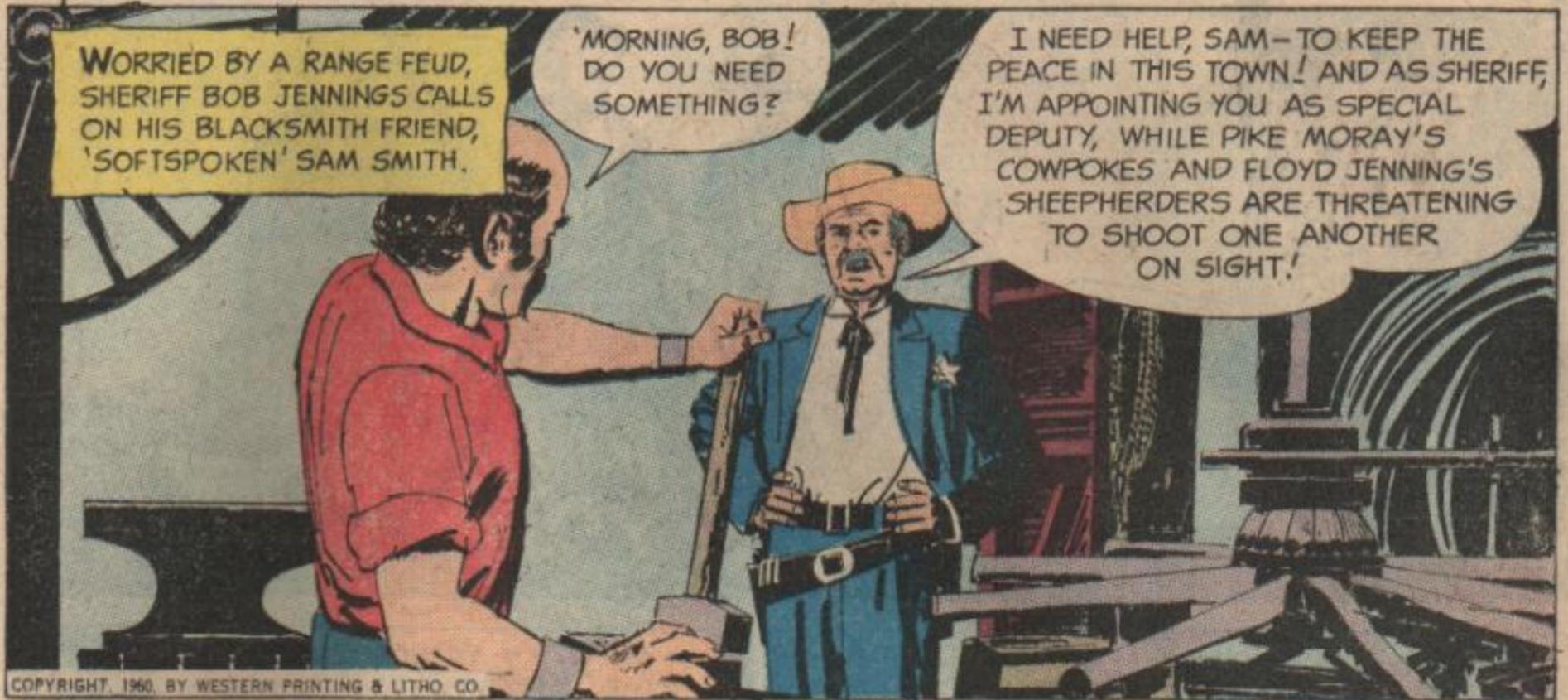


SELFISH! THAT'S WHAT **YOU** SAY, BAT— BUT DADDY AND I KNOW BETTER!

THE END

"Softspoken" Smith

THE DEPUTY



WORRIED BY A RANGE FEUD, SHERIFF BOB JENNINGS CALLS ON HIS BLACKSMITH FRIEND, 'SOFTSPOKEN' SAM SMITH.

'MORNING, BOB! DO YOU NEED SOMETHING?

I NEED HELP, SAM—TO KEEP THE PEACE IN THIS TOWN! AND AS SHERIFF, I'M APPOINTING YOU AS SPECIAL DEPUTY, WHILE PIKE MORAY'S COWPOKES AND FLOYD JENNING'S SHEEPHERDERS ARE THREATENING TO SHOOT ONE ANOTHER ON SIGHT!

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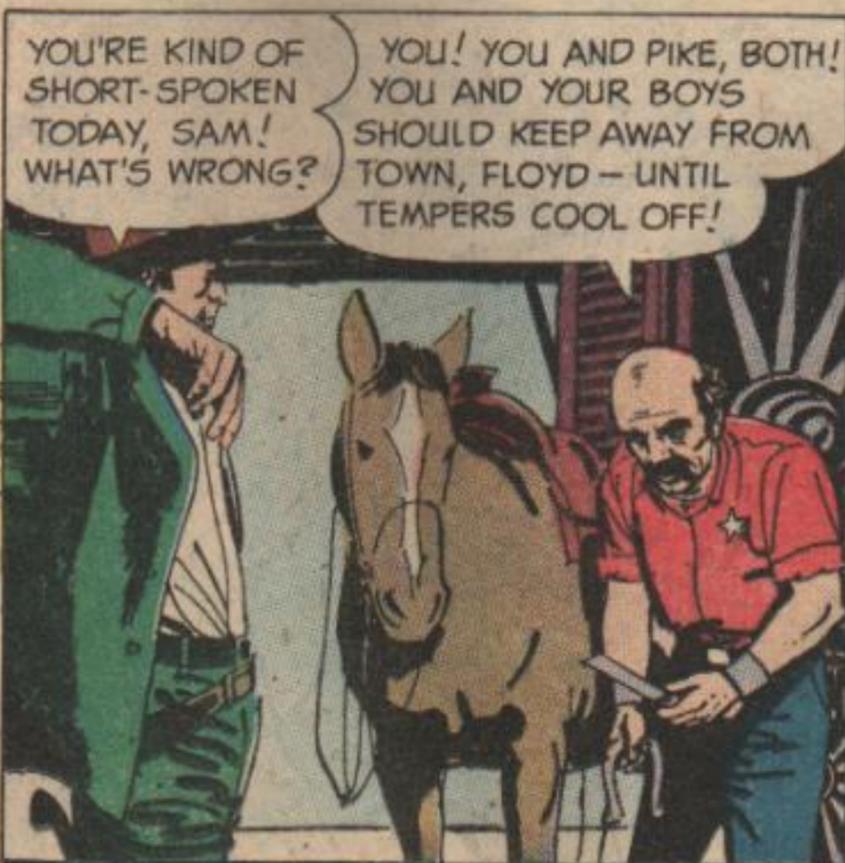
ALL RIGHT, BOB—BUT I WON'T WEAR A GUN! I'M A MAN OF PEACE!

THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU, SAM! YOU'LL HAVE PEACE—IF YOU HAVE TO TWIST A GUNFIGHTER'S ARM TO GET IT! MORE POWER TO YOU!



'MORNING, SAM! THESE TWO HORSES NEED SHOEING—IF YOU'VE GOT TIME!

I'VE GOT TIME, FLOYD... PROVIDING YOU GET OUT OF TOWN AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED!



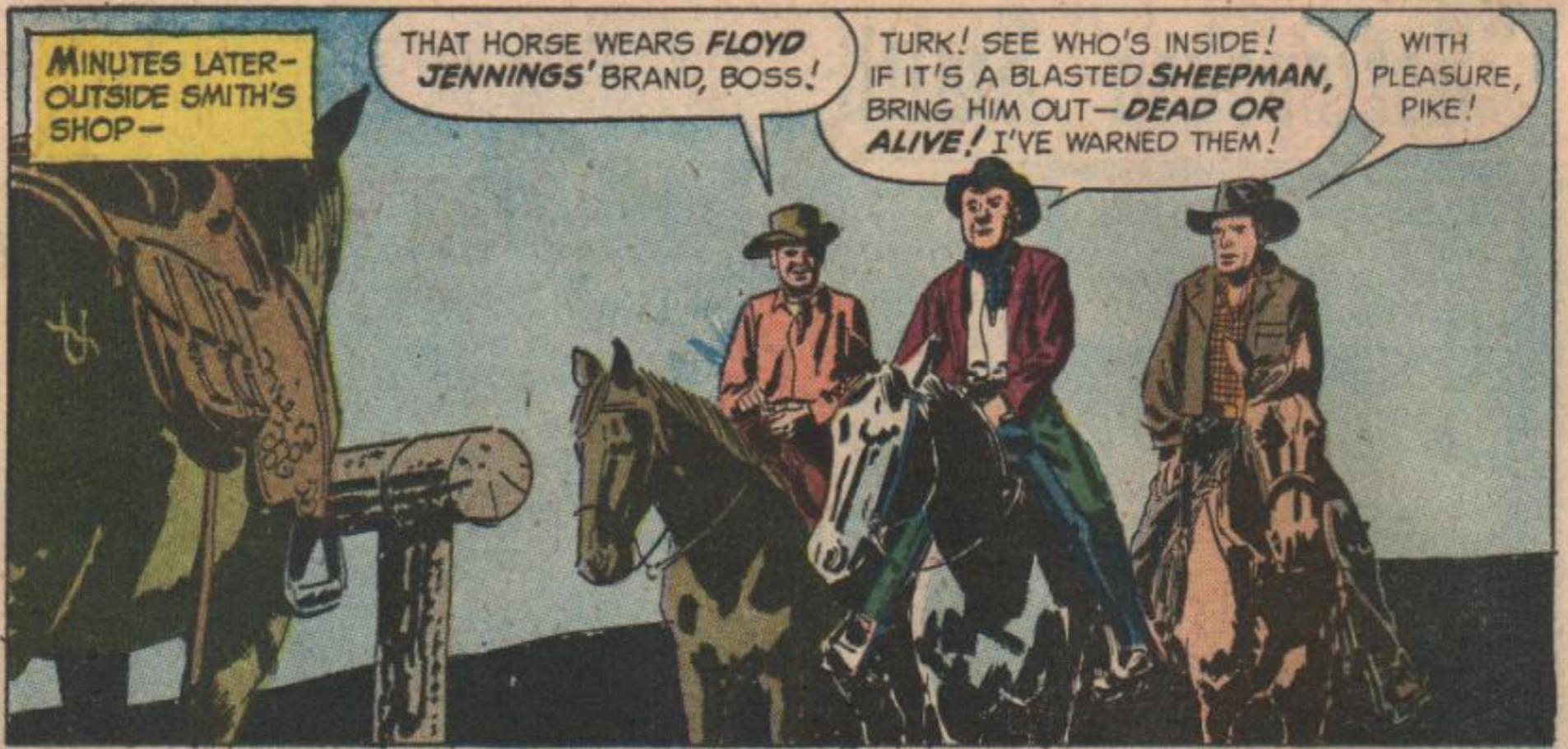
YOU'RE KIND OF SHORT-SPOKEN TODAY, SAM! WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU! YOU AND PIKE, BOTH! YOU AND YOUR BOYS SHOULD KEEP AWAY FROM TOWN, FLOYD—UNTIL TEMPERS COOL OFF!



I KNOW, SAM! THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT THESE HORSES IN MYSELF, AND KEPT MY BOYS IN CAMP! I FIGURED I COULD DODGE TROUBLE QUICKER THAN THEY COULD!

HUMPH! IS THAT WHY YOU'RE PACKING A GUN, FLOYD?



MINUTES LATER—
OUTSIDE SMITH'S
SHOP—

THAT HORSE WEARS *FLOYD
JENNINGS'* BRAND, BOSS!

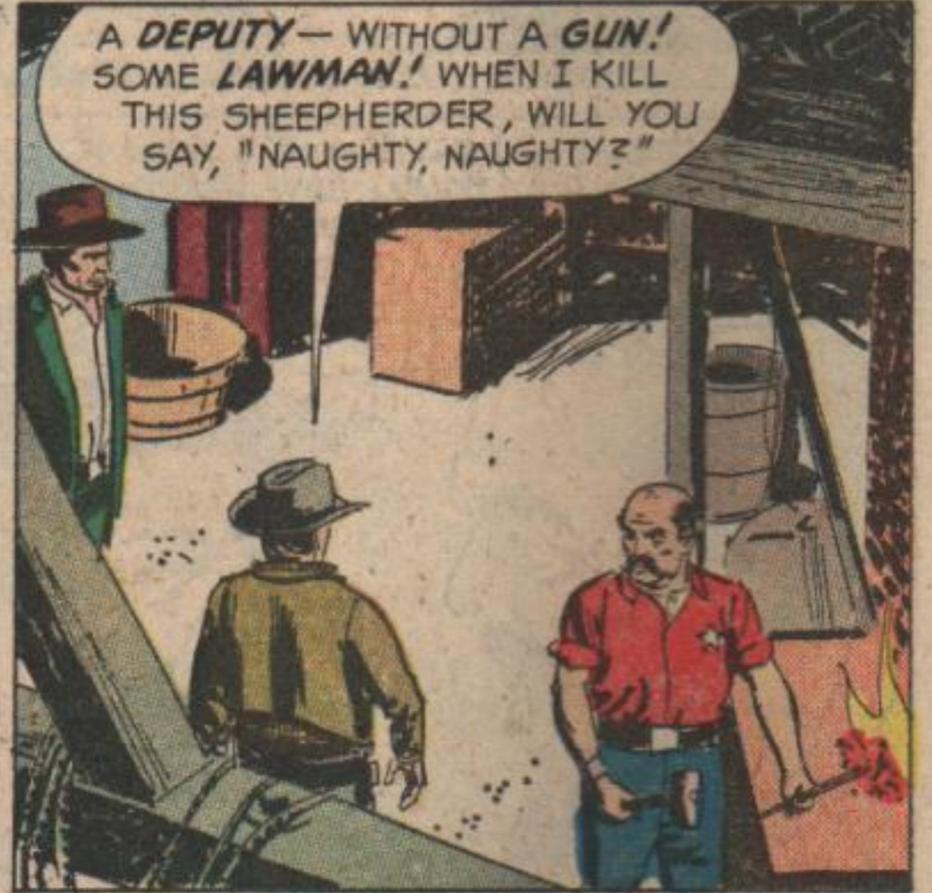
TURK! SEE WHO'S INSIDE!
IF IT'S A BLASTED *SHEEPMAN*,
BRING HIM OUT—*DEAD OR
ALIVE!* I'VE WARNED THEM!

WITH
PLEASURE,
PIKE!



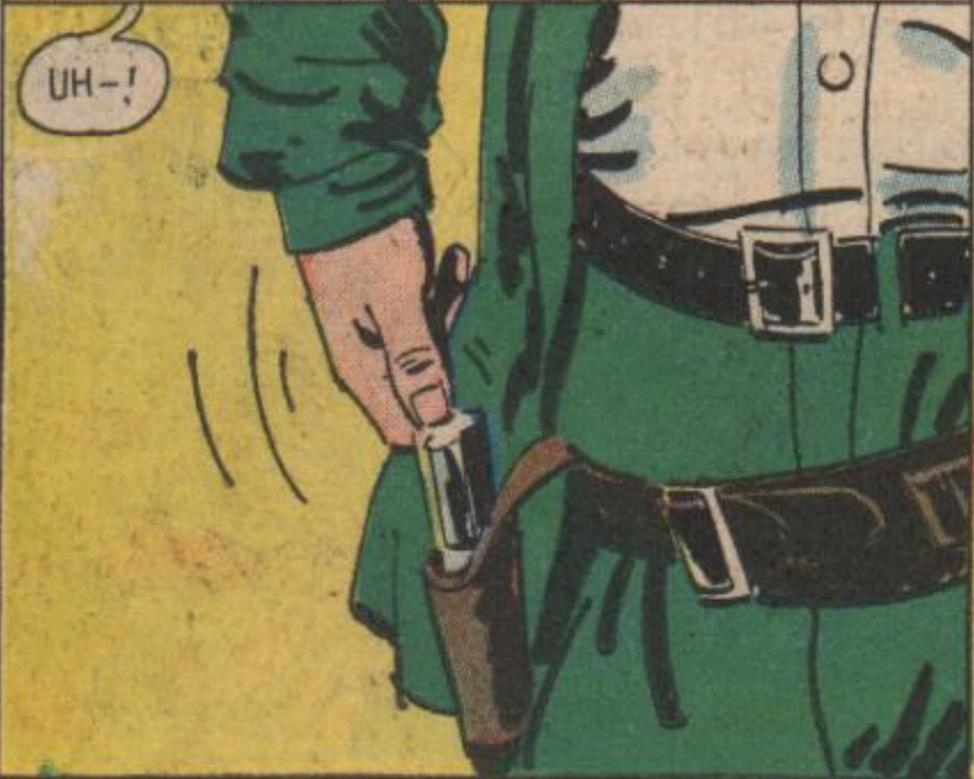
JENNINGS! DRAW—OR
START CRAWLING TO ME
ON YOUR BELLY, YOU
SHEEP HERDING—

GET OUT, TURK!
I'VE BEEN DEPUTIZED
TO KEEP THE PEACE!



A *DEPUTY*— WITHOUT A *GUN!*
SOME *LAWMAN!* WHEN I KILL
THIS SHEEPHERDER, WILL YOU
SAY, "NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY?"

IN THE MOMENT THAT TURK BOWEN'S EYES ARE ON
SMITH, JENNINGS SEES HIS ONLY CHANCE TO LIVE—
BUT HIS GUN STICKS!



UH—!



OWK!



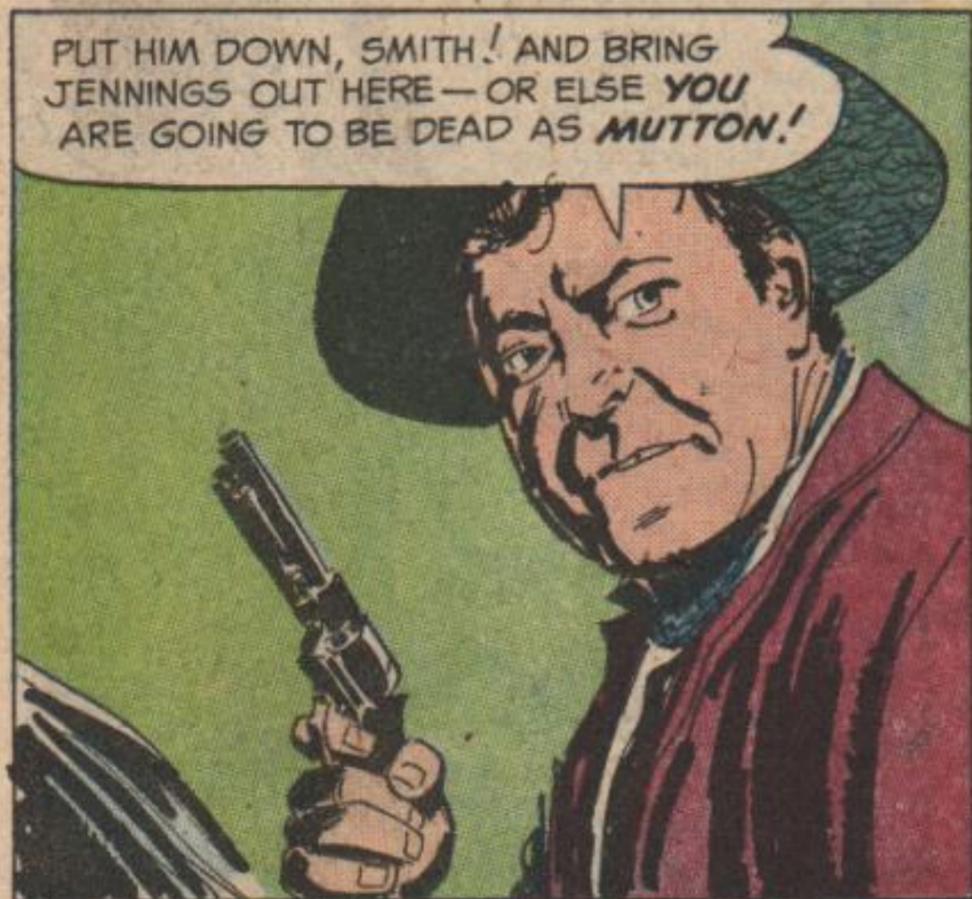
TURK! YOU GOT HIM?

UHH (GASP!)

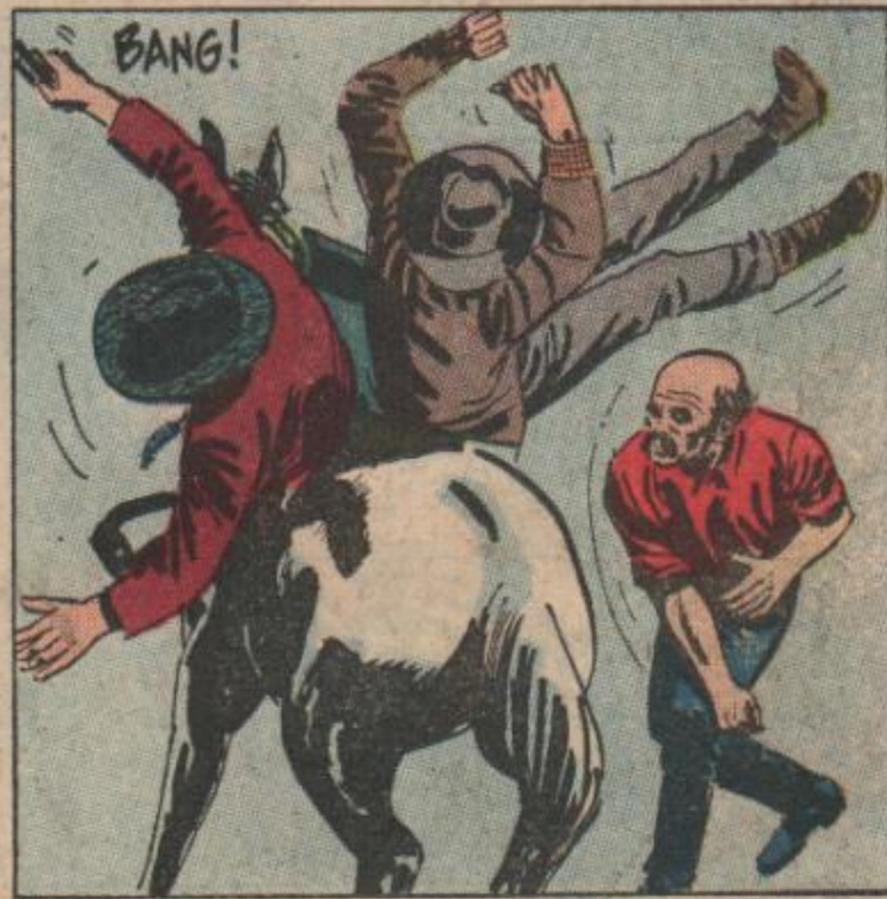


TURK! THAT SHEEP-HERDER SHOT HIM?

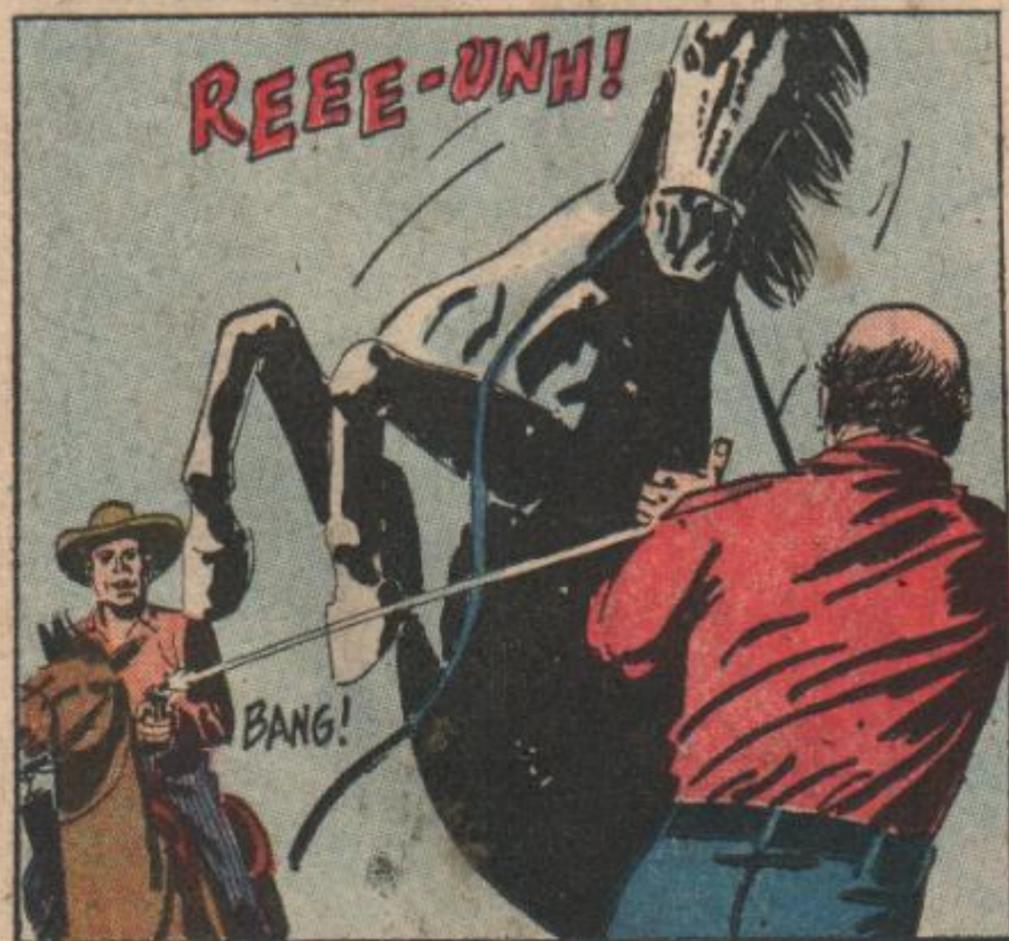
NO, PIKE! YOUR FOREMAN WINGED JENNINGS — AND I'M TAKING HIM TO JAIL FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE! TURK IS JUST OUT OF BREATH!



PUT HIM DOWN, SMITH! AND BRING JENNINGS OUT HERE — OR ELSE YOU ARE GOING TO BE DEAD AS MUTTON!



BANG!



REEE-UHH!

BANG!



YEOW! I'LL KILL YOU — LET GO!



YOU HEARD HIM, SMITH!
LET GO—
OR I'LL—!

UNKHH—
(GULP!)

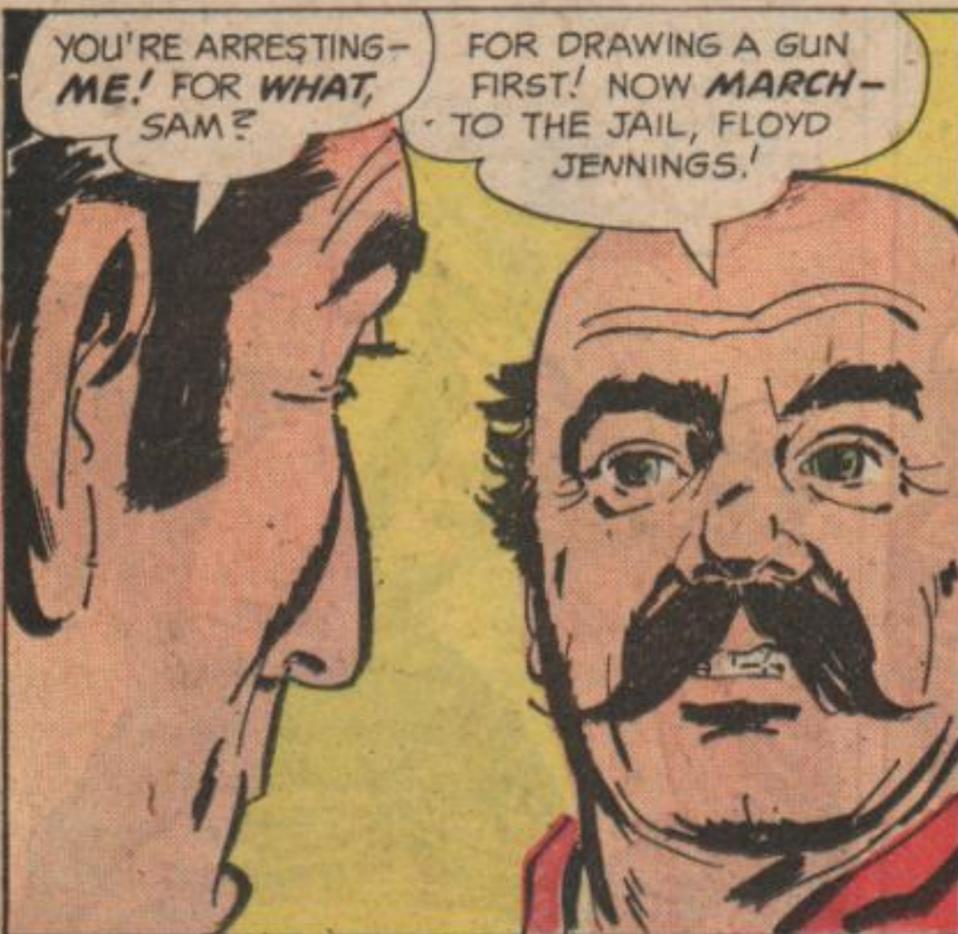


JENNINGS! COME OUT HERE!
I'VE GOT THEIR GUNS!



YOU HANDLED THEM **ALL ALONE?** SAM SMITH, YOU'RE BETTER THAN THREE SHERIFFS! ARE YOU TAKING THEM ALL TO JAIL?

ONLY TURK—
AND YOU, JENNINGS!



YOU'RE ARRESTING—
ME! FOR **WHAT,** SAM?

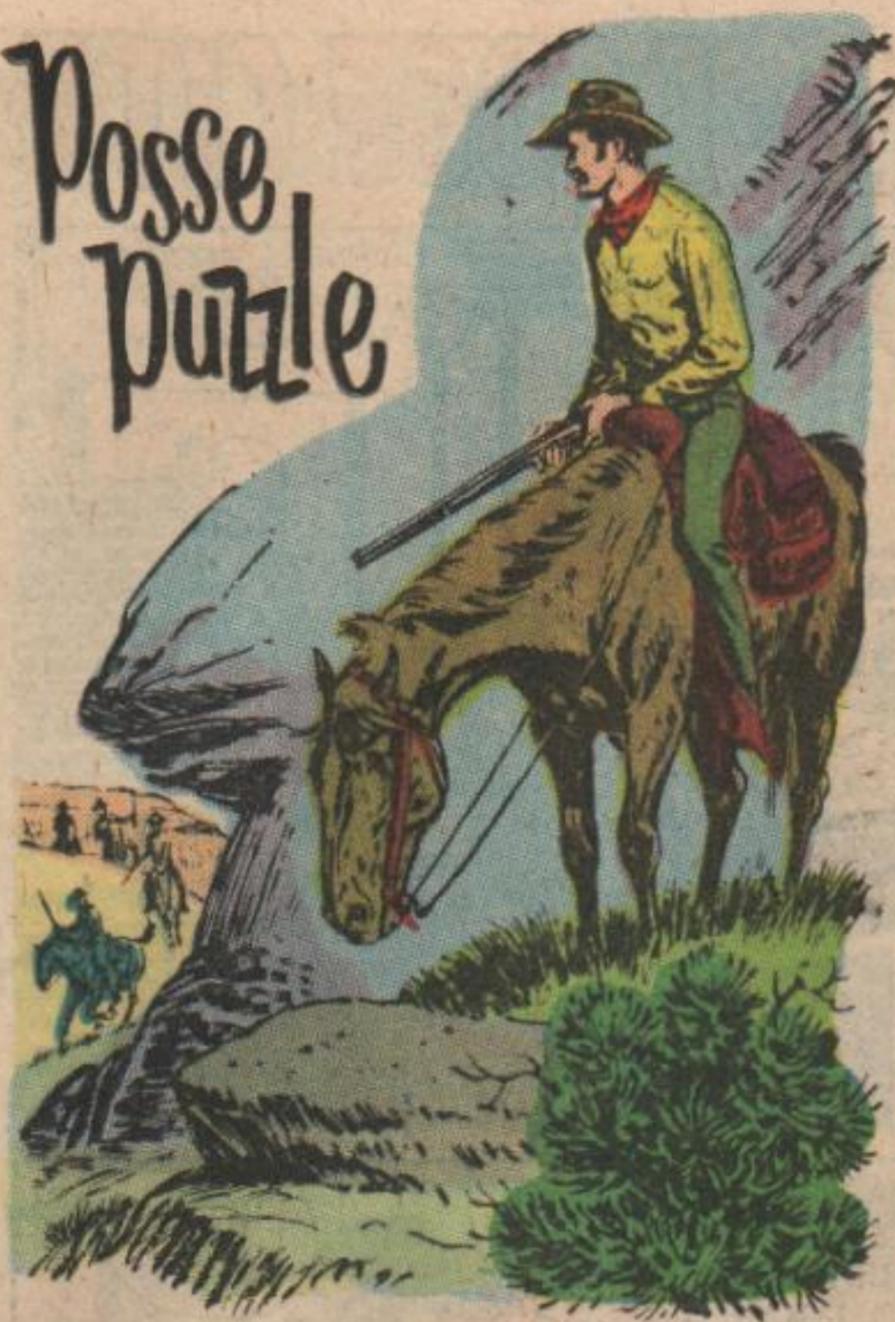
FOR DRAWING A GUN FIRST! NOW **MARCH—**
TO THE JAIL, FLOYD JENNINGS!



WELL, THAT ENDS THE WAR—
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!
COWBOY, WE JUST GRABBED
A GRIZZLY BEAR BY THE
TAIL WHEN WE BUCKED
SOFTSPOKEN SAM!

A WHOLE **PACK**
OF GRIZZLY
BEARS WOULD
BE MORE LIKE
IT, BOSS!
STARTING NOW,
I'M FOR **PEACE!**

Posse Puzzle



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From his perch high in the rimrock, Red Scanlon watched the sheriff's posse ride out of town. Red had the money with him from the stagecoach hold-up. He also had a bullet wound which needed pampering. About two days' rest was what he needed—two days to let the wound start healing before he started his hard ride for the Mexican border.

The sheriff's posse would never let him get that needed rest. Sheriff Osgood had the keen nose of a hound when it came to sticking on a trail. The sheriff would track him down, Red knew, as surely as starvation follows a long drought.

Red made a desperate decision. The safest place in a hurricane is in the calm, dead middle of it—and the safest place to hide out during the fury of this manhunt might just be in the middle of it too.

Red waited until the last hard-riding straggler of the posse was out of sight in Dynamite Canyon, then he turned his tired bronc down the thin mountain trail in the direction of town.

The early night haze obscured his pas-

sage as he rode into town. But likely there wouldn't have been a gun set against him anyway. All those big enough to carry guns had ridden out of town with the posse.

Red Scanlon rode to a house at the edge of town where Sheriff Osgood lived. He rode boldly into the yard and stepped from the saddle. He knocked at the door. To the young and pretty woman who opened it, he made no bones about his intention.

He pulled a gun from holster and held it on her closely. "You're having a guest while your husband's out with the posse. He'd never think of looking for me in his own house. It'll take him two days to comb those mountains. By that time I'll be rested up and gone. . . ."

Red made a little miscalculation. He was still at the sheriff's house when the sheriff returned. Red saw him coming through the window. In animal fury, he put his gun on the girl again, and said, "Do just like I tell you if you want to live. I'll hide in the other room. You greet your husband just like everything was all right. Put your arms around him and kiss him and hold him there till I get out the window, and get a head start on my horse. Do it right, or I'll gun you both."

Red was in the other room, with his gun out, waiting, when the sheriff entered. He smiled with grim satisfaction as he heard the girl following instructions. He heard her footsteps as she rushed into his arms. "Oh, my darling!" she cried. "My darling, darling husband—I worried so about you when you were away—"

There was more in this same affectionate vein, and Red stepped to the window and let himself out.

He let himself out squarely into Sheriff Osgood's hands. He had been tricked! While the girl had continued to talk, the sheriff had tiptoed out the door and around the house with his gun.

"And in case you're wondering how I figured it out," he told Red with a hard grin, "this girl isn't my wife. She's my sister who's keeping house for me while my wife's away visiting her folks. She gave me the nod to the window while she called me husband."

Showdown in DODGE CITY



IN THE WAITING ROOM OF THE TOPEKA RAILROAD STATION, BAT MASTERSON TAKES HIS OLD FRIEND AND FORMER CHIEF, **WYATT EARP**, INTO HIS CONFIDENCE.

HELLO, BAT! I HEARD YOU WERE WAITING FOR THE TRAIN! BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

BUSINESS— FOR A FRIEND, WYATT! READ THIS TELEGRAM!



YOU KNOW DAVE SMALL, IN DODGE CITY, WYATT... THIS SAYS MAYOR WEAVER, WHO OWNS A RIVAL SALOON, PUT DAVE IN JAIL ON A **COOKED-UP CHARGE!** DAVE WANTS **ME** TO GET HIM OUT!

UMMM! WEAVER'S A SLICK ONE— RUNS THE "LAW-AND-ORDER PARTY,"— SO CALLED FOR WHAT HE CAN MAKE! HE CAN'T BEAR COMPETITION!

BAT, HERE'S **ANOTHER** TELEGRAM FOR YOU— JUST CAME IN! FROM DODGE!

MORE BAD NEWS?



HMMM! IT'S FROM ANOTHER FRIEND OF DAVE'S —AND MINE! HE SAYS THAT WEAVER'S MARSHAL, JACK PARROTT, IS PLANNING A "WELCOME PARTY"— SINCE THEY FOUND OUT DAVE SENT FOR ME! WELL... THIS TRAIN WILL GET ME INTO DODGE AFTER DARK...

SAY THE WORD AND I'LL GO ALONG WITH YOU, BAT!

I KNOW YOU WOULD, WYATT— BUT I THINK I CAN HANDLE PARROTT! THANKS ALL THE SAME! THERE'S MY TRAIN WHISTLING!

WELL, LET ME KNOW IF YOU GET IN A TIGHT SPOT!

THAT EVENING, AS BAT'S TRAIN PULLS INTO DODGE, ITS HEADLIGHT PICKS OUT MARSHAL PARROTT AND A PAIR OF DEPUTIES WAITING OUTSIDE THE CALABOOSE.



THERE'S THE "WELCOME PARTY"—HOLDING OPEN THE DOOR OF THE JAIL FOR ME—SO TO SPEAK! I THINK I'LL SPEAK FIRST!

BUT BAT GETS OFF BEFORE THE TRAIN STOPS MOVING AND TAKES COVER BEHIND THE RAISED TRACKS...



PARROTT! I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU!

BAT MASTERSON!

IT'S HIS VOICE!

HE'S GOT THE DROP ON US!



DUCK—
IN HERE!



GET HIM!— BEFORE
HE CAN SHOOT! HE'S
PURE POISON
WITH A GUN!



THEY'RE AIMING HIGH!
I'LL FIRE A FEW SHOTS
TO HELP THEM LOCATE
ME...

PING!
ZING!



I'LL BE GONE BEFORE THEY
CATCH ON! AND SHOOTING
HIGH LIKE THEY'RE DOING, IS
GOING TO BRING SOME
ANSWERS FROM ACROSS
THE STREET!



THE PROPRIETOR OF THE LONG
BRANCH, "CHALK" BEESON, DIVES
FOR HIS OPEN SAFE, AS WILD
BULLETS FROM ACROSS THE
STREET COME THROUGH.

YEOW! WHAT ARE
THOSE CRAZY FOOLS
AIMING AT? YOU,
BEESON?

WHO KNOWS?
I'M NOT
TAKING A
CHANCE!

KRAANN!

PING!



IN HOOVER'S WHOLESALE LIQUOR
STORE, PATRONS DIVE FOR COVER!

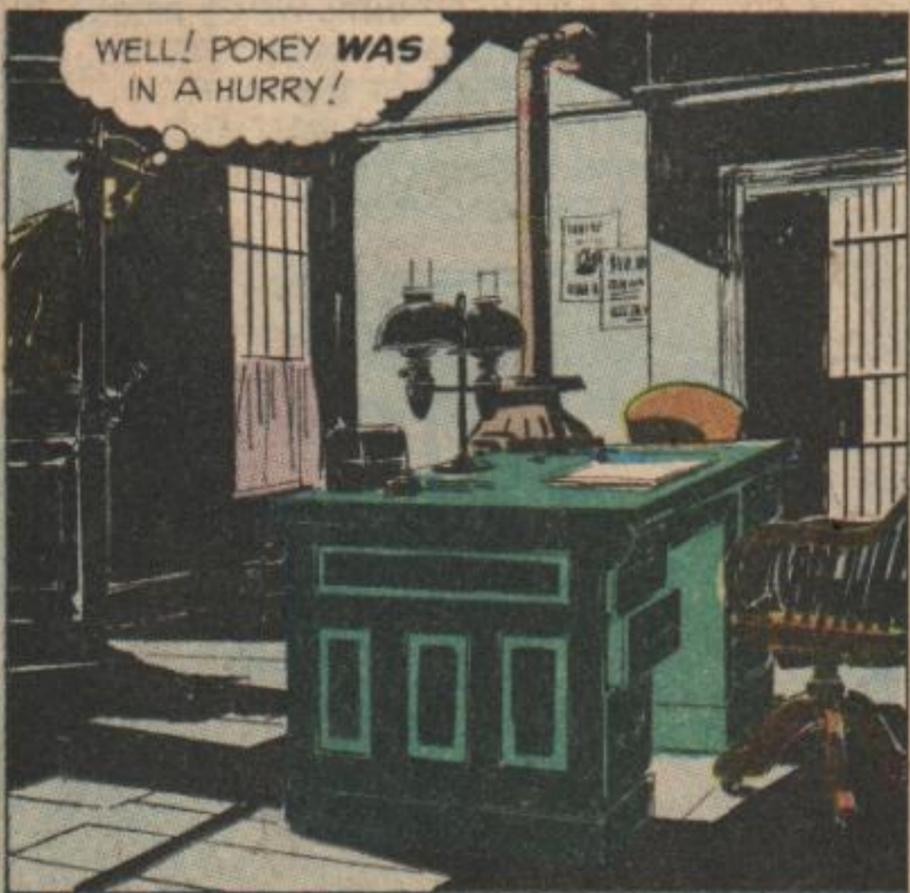
YI! HIT THE
FLOOR,
BOYS!

SOME DIZZY
GALOOT IS
ON A TEAR!

PING!

ZING

TWANG!





BAT! WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE?

A WELCOME PARTY FOR ME, DAVE! ONLY—IT TURNED INTO A FREE-FOR-ALL! WHILE IT'S GOING ON, YOU AND I CAN STEP OUT!



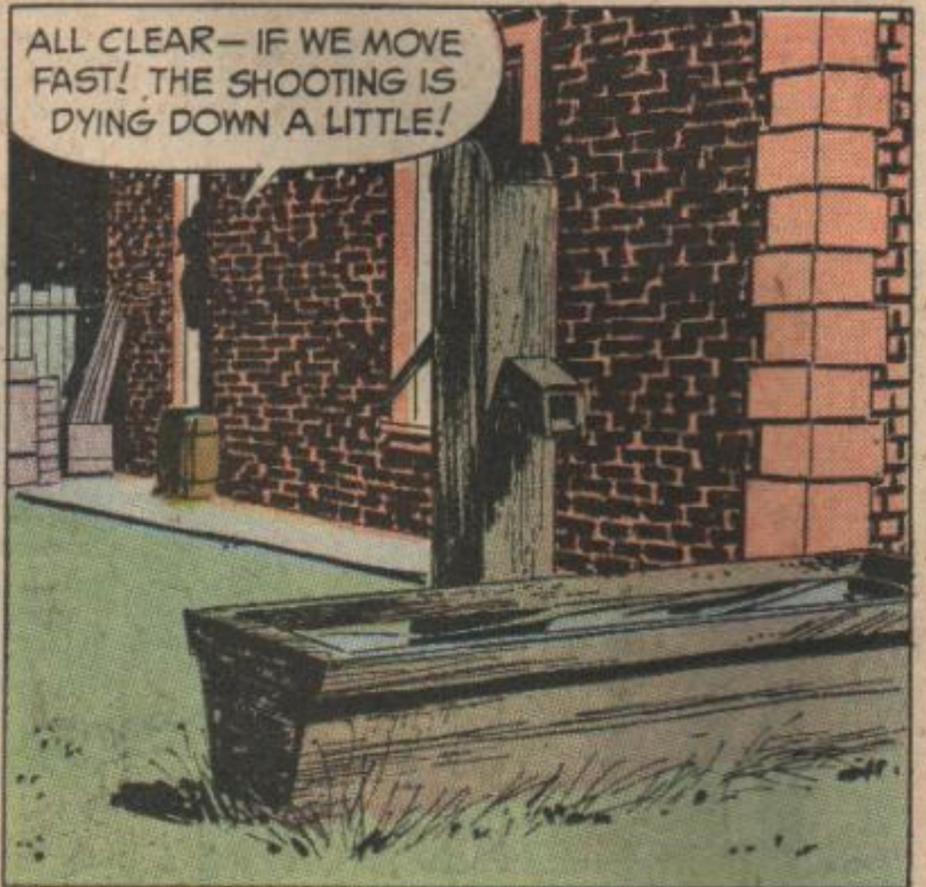
LET SALLY BLAINE OUT FIRST, BAT! SHE'S MY SINGER AND MUSICIAN— WHO DREW ALL THE TRADE AWAY FROM WEAVER'S SALOON!

BEAUTIFUL! I DON'T WONDER SHE DID!



MR. MASTERSON, I FEEL GUILTY — CAUSING ALL THIS TROUBLE FOR DAVE...

MISS BLAINE, I SHOULD CALL YOU A DELIGHTFUL DISTURBANCE: THE KIND THAT BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN GOOD MEN AND THE WORST IN BAD MEN! WEAVER **HAD** TO LOCK YOU UP!

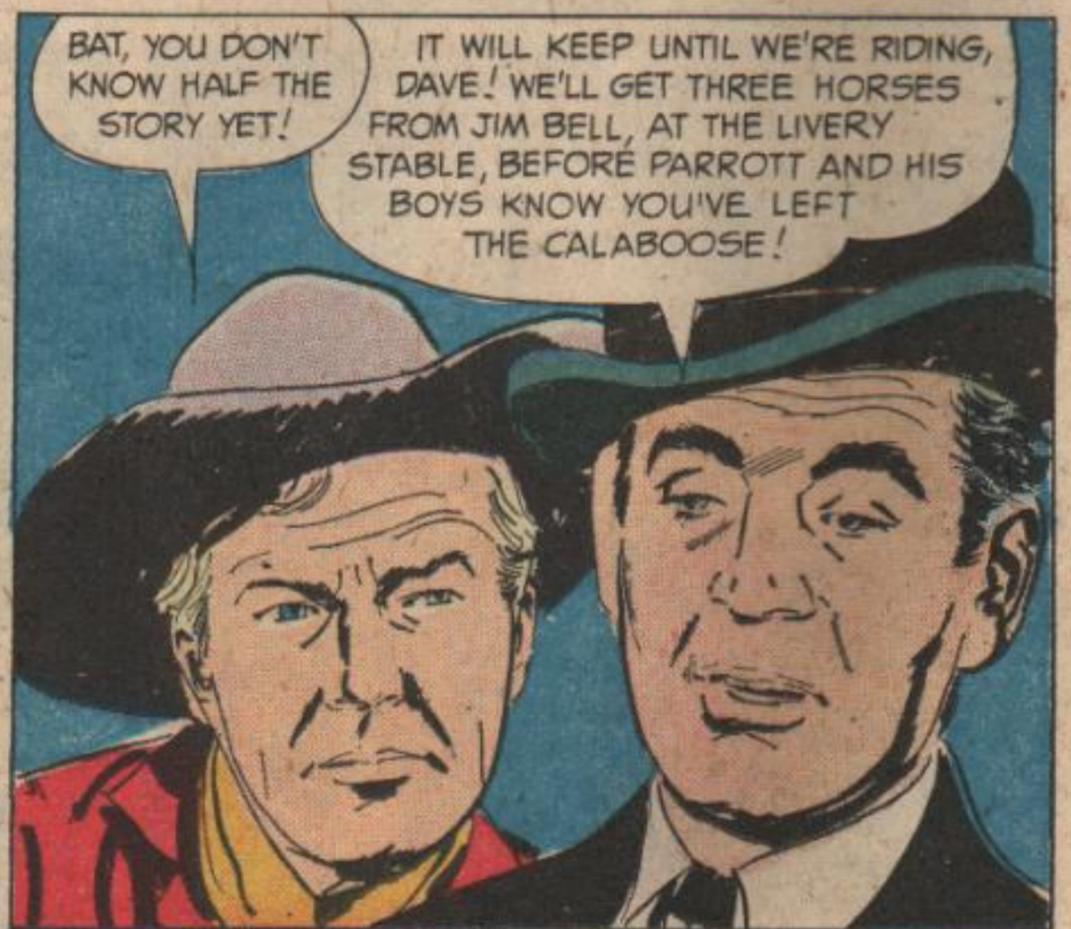


ALL CLEAR— IF WE MOVE FAST! THE SHOOTING IS DYING DOWN A LITTLE!



DAVE GOT A ROTTEN DEAL, MR. MASTERSON!

PLEASE! I'M JUST "BAT" TO MY FRIENDS!



BAT, YOU DON'T KNOW HALF THE STORY YET!

IT WILL KEEP UNTIL WE'RE RIDING, DAVE! WE'LL GET THREE HORSES FROM JIM BELL, AT THE LIVERY STABLE, BEFORE PARROTT AND HIS BOYS KNOW YOU'VE LEFT THE CALABOOSE!



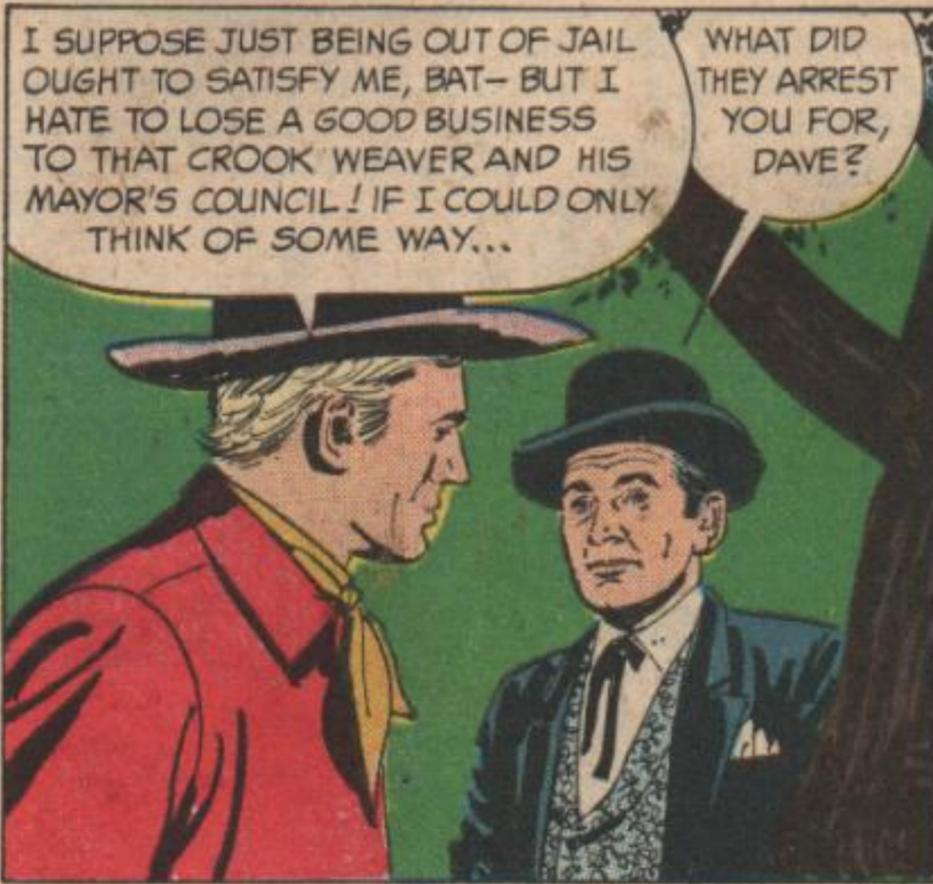
LOOK, BAT—SALLY CAN'T GO KITING OFF IN THE CLOTHES SHE'S WEARING! WE CAN STOP AT HER BOARDING HOUSE... MRS. BLYE WON'T TELL!

ALL RIGHT, DAVE! WE'LL GO BY THE BACK WAY!



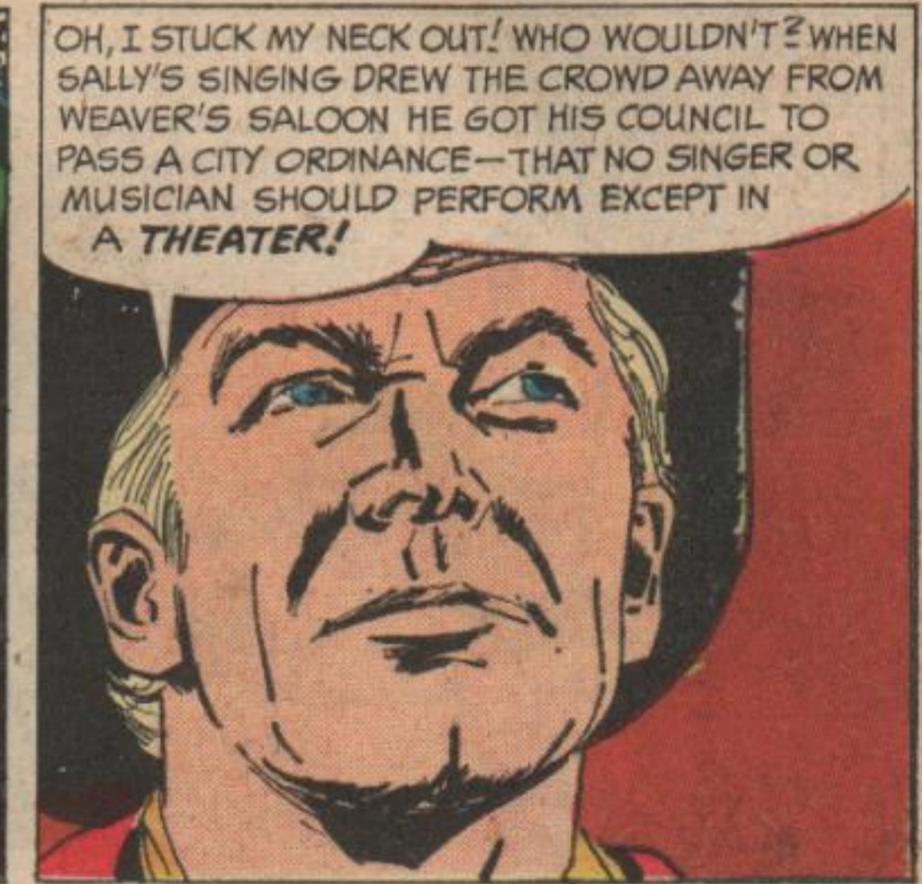
SALLY, CHILD! I **KNEW** THEY COULDN'T KEEP YOU IN THAT AWFUL JAIL!

SHHH! THEY DON'T KNOW YET THAT I'M OUT! HELP ME PACK, MOTHER BLYE!



I SUPPOSE JUST BEING OUT OF JAIL OUGHT TO SATISFY ME, BAT— BUT I HATE TO LOSE A GOOD BUSINESS TO THAT CROOK WEAVER AND HIS MAYOR'S COUNCIL! IF I COULD ONLY THINK OF SOME WAY...

WHAT DID THEY ARREST YOU FOR, DAVE?



OH, I STUCK MY NECK OUT! WHO WOULDN'T? WHEN SALLY'S SINGING DREW THE CROWD AWAY FROM WEAVER'S SALOON HE GOT HIS COUNCIL TO PASS A CITY ORDINANCE— THAT NO SINGER OR MUSICIAN SHOULD PERFORM EXCEPT IN A **THEATER!**



YOU AND SALLY **DEFIED** HIM?

NOT TILL WEAVER STUCK A **THEATER** SIGN OUTSIDE HIS SALOON AND HIRED SOME MEXICAN GUITAR PLAYERS! THEN I PAINTED A **THEATER** SIGN FOR MY PLACE! SALLY DREW THE CROWD BACK, OF COURSE... BUT THE MARSHAL WALKED IN AND ARRESTED US FOR RUNNING AN **UNLICENSED THEATER!**



PERHAPS MAYOR WEAVER HAS OUTSMARTED HIMSELF, DAVE! I'LL WORK ON THAT IDEA AS WE RIDE!

I SURE WISH YOU LUCK, BAT... HERE COMES SALLY!



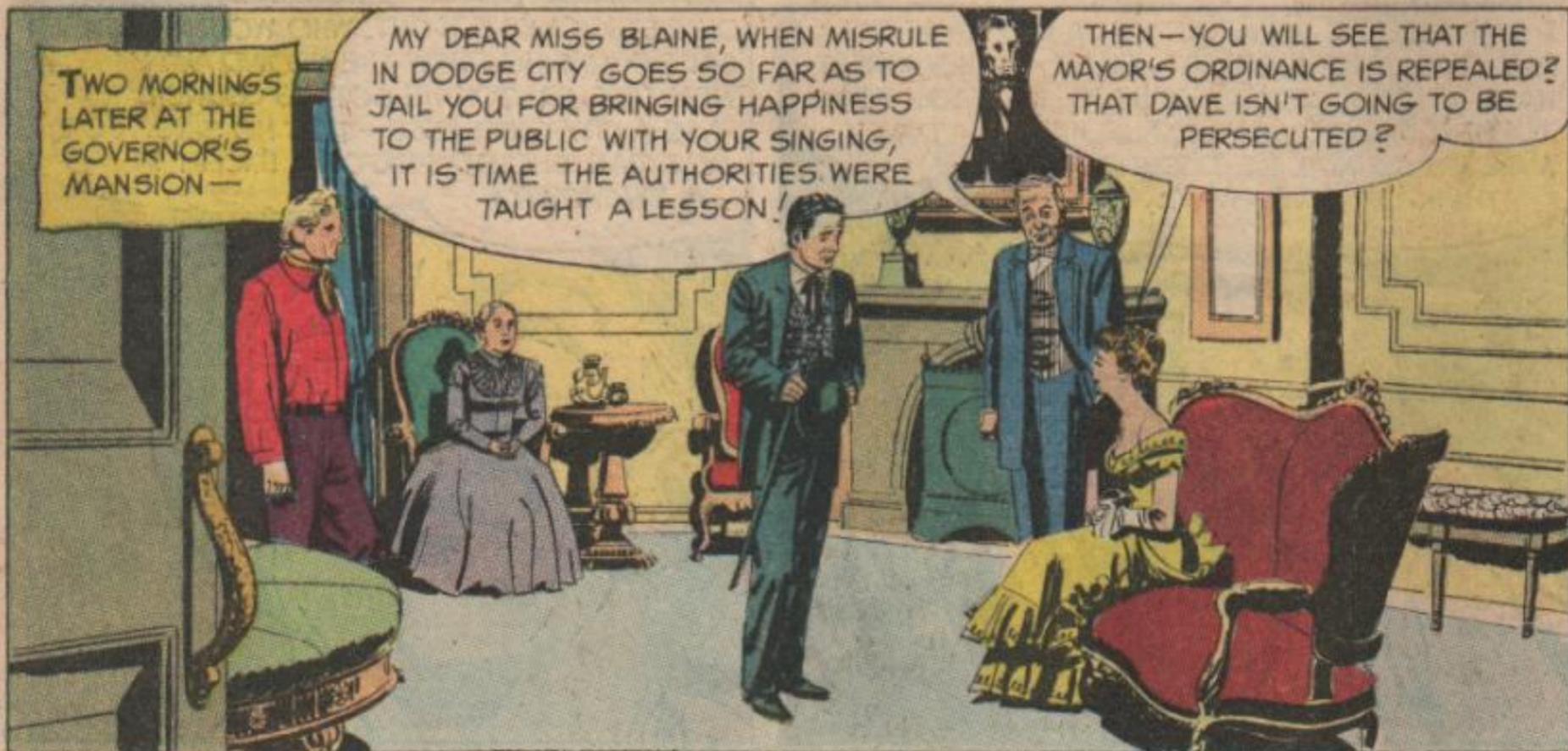
LATER--

WHERE ARE WE HEADING, BAT? YOU'VE GOT SOME SCHEME IN MIND?

YES, DAVE! WE'RE TAKING A TRAIN AT GREENSBURG...



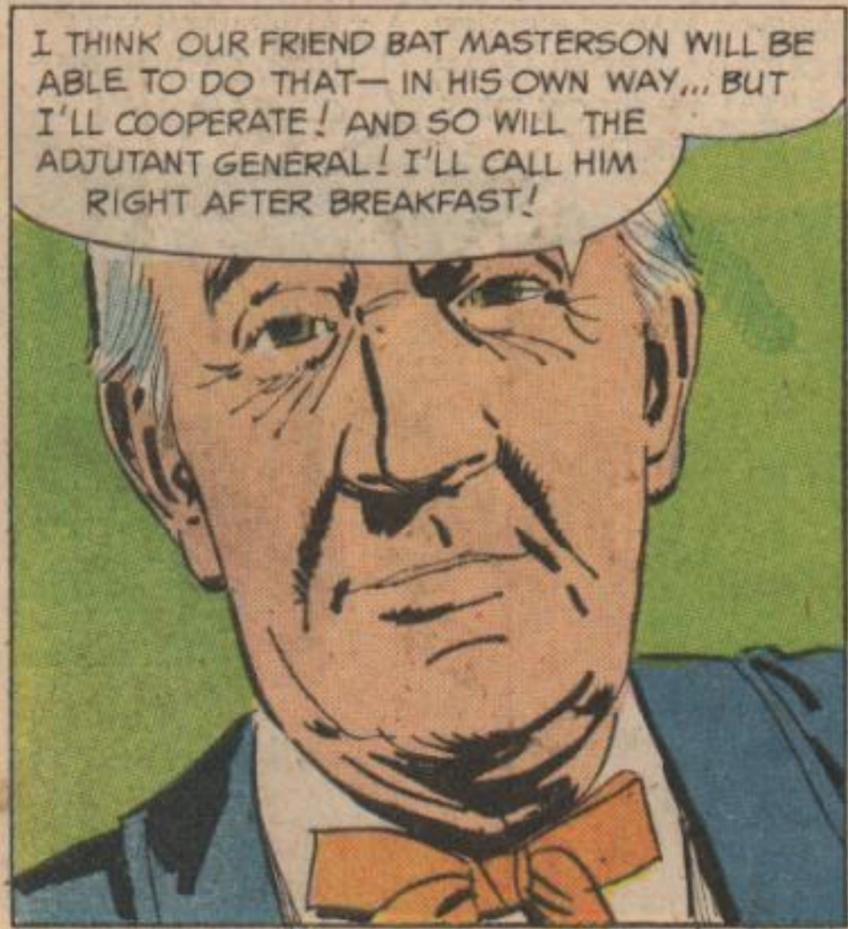
TOMORROW WE'LL BE IN TOPEKA ... AND THE NEXT DAY, I HOPE, WE'LL BE **EATING BREAKFAST** WITH THE **GOVERNOR** OF KANSAS! HE'S A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE! EVEN IF HE WEREN'T, SALLY'S CHARM WOULD WIN HIM OVER TO OUR SIDE!



TWO MORNINGS LATER AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION—

MY DEAR MISS BLAINE, WHEN MISRULE IN DODGE CITY GOES SO FAR AS TO JAIL YOU FOR BRINGING HAPPINESS TO THE PUBLIC WITH YOUR SINGING, IT IS TIME THE AUTHORITIES WERE TAUGHT A LESSON!

THEN—YOU WILL SEE THAT THE MAYOR'S ORDINANCE IS REPEALED? THAT DAVE ISN'T GOING TO BE PERSECUTED?



I THINK OUR FRIEND BAT MASTERSON WILL BE ABLE TO DO THAT— IN HIS OWN WAY... BUT I'LL COOPERATE! AND SO WILL THE ADJUTANT GENERAL! I'LL CALL HIM RIGHT AFTER BREAKFAST!



I ONLY WISH THAT I MIGHT BE THERE PERSONALLY— TO SEE THE FUN!

YOU'LL HEAR ABOUT IT, ANYWAY, GOVERNOR! ALL OF KANSAS WILL, TOO!

THAT SAME AFTERNOON, BAT LOCATES WYATT EARP.

BAT! COME AND SIT DOWN WITH US, IF YOU'VE GOT TIME! YOU'VE MET THESE BOYS — TEXAS JACK VERMILLION, JOHNNY MILLSAP, JOHNNY GREEN AND DAN TRIPTON — STRAIGHT SHOOTERS AND READY FOR ANYTHING!

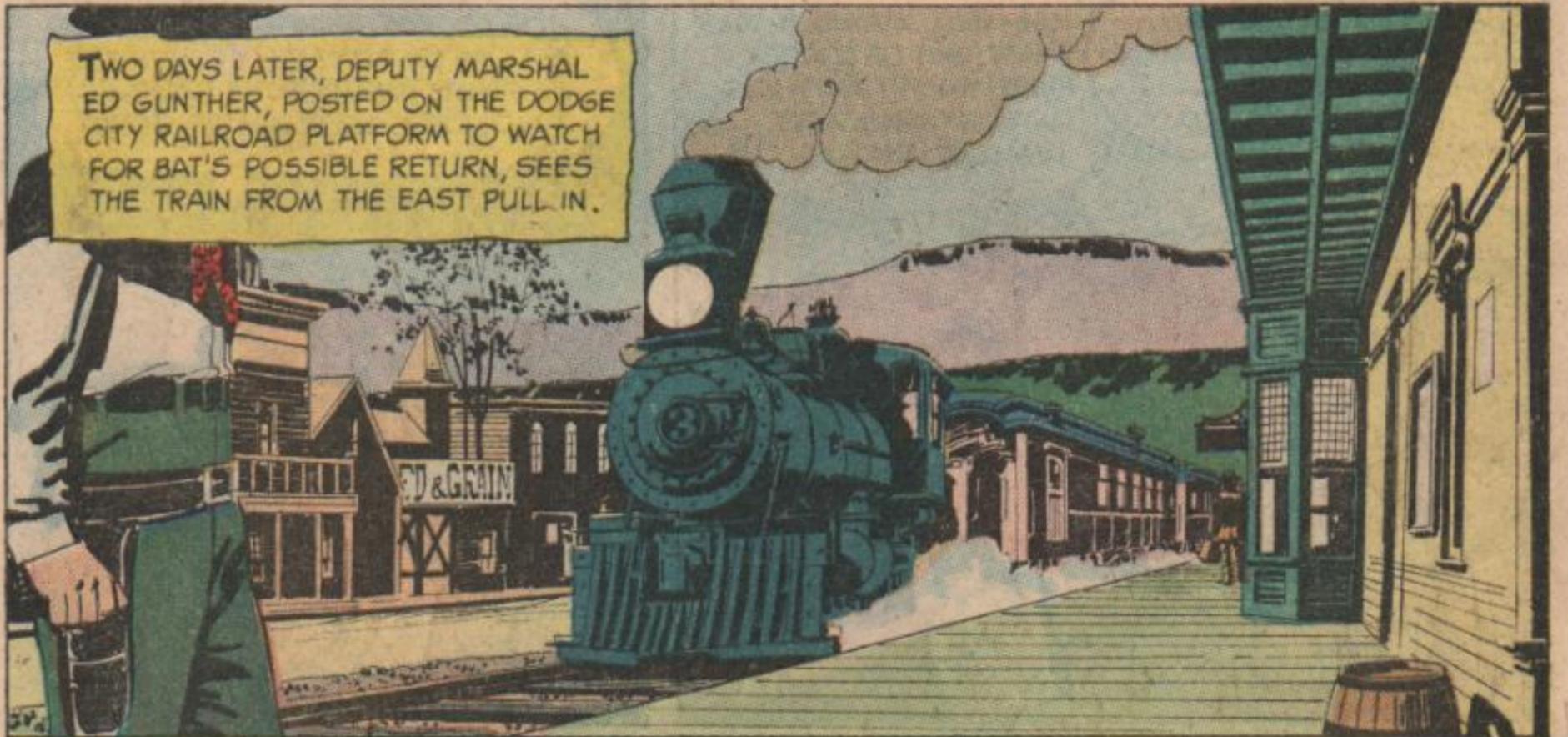
HELLO, WYATT! — GENTLEMEN! EXCUSE AN INTERRUPTION?

YES — I KNOW THEM ALL, WYATT! AND I THINK I HAVE A GAME IN MIND THAT ALL OF YOU WILL ENJOY! IT'S A LITTLE RISKY, BUT —

LET'S HEAR ABOUT IT, BAT! LIFE'S BEEN GETTING A BIT DULL LATELY!



TWO DAYS LATER, DEPUTY MARSHAL ED GUNTHER, POSTED ON THE DODGE CITY RAILROAD PLATFORM TO WATCH FOR BAT'S POSSIBLE RETURN, SEES THE TRAIN FROM THE EAST PULL IN.

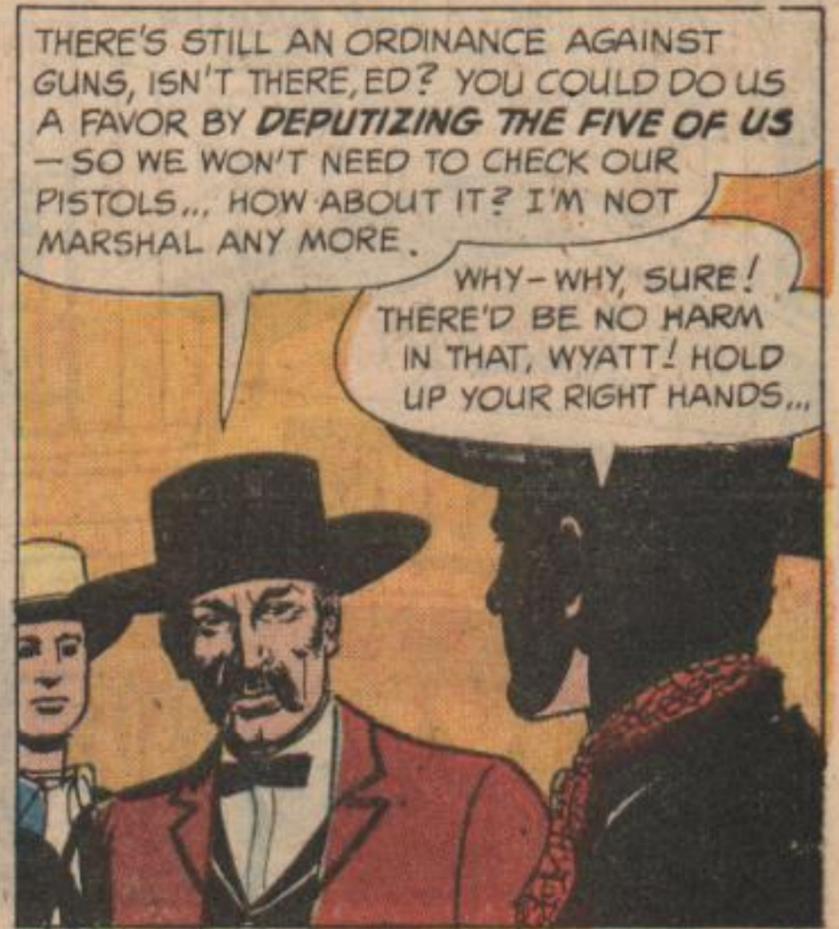


HELLO, ED! WAITING FOR SOMEBODY?

WHY — UH — **MARSHAL EARP!** WELCOME BACK TO DODGE! THE PLACE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE YOU LEFT HERE! I WAS WATCHING FOR BAT!

THERE'S STILL AN ORDINANCE AGAINST GUNS, ISN'T THERE, ED? YOU COULD DO US A FAVOR BY **DEPUTIZING THE FIVE OF US** — SO WE WON'T NEED TO CHECK OUR PISTOLS... HOW ABOUT IT? I'M NOT MARSHAL ANY MORE.

WHY — WHY, SURE! THERE'D BE NO HARM IN THAT, WYATT! HOLD UP YOUR RIGHT HANDS...



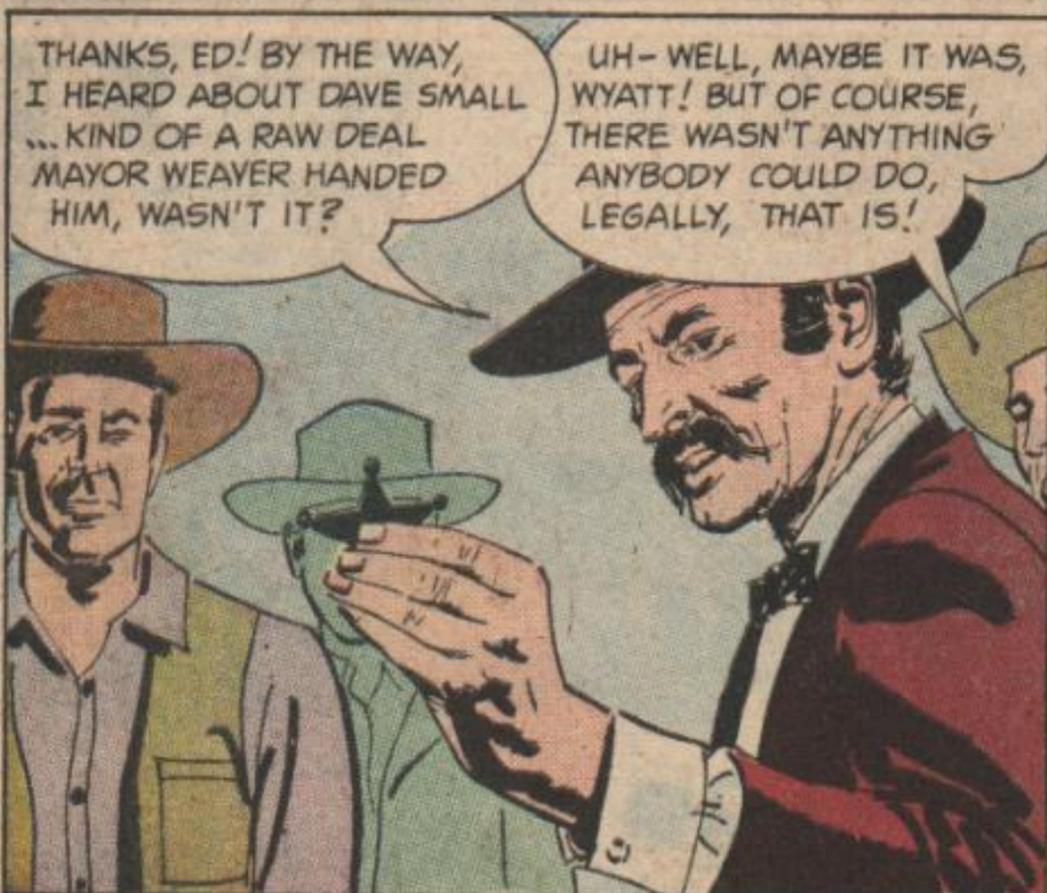


COME, SALLY— AND GENTLEMEN! WE'LL STEP ACROSS QUICKLY TO THE LONG BRANCH — THE BACK ROOM — UNTIL WYATT HAS THE STAGE SET FOR US!

OH, BAT, I HOPE NOBODY IS GOING TO GET KILLED!

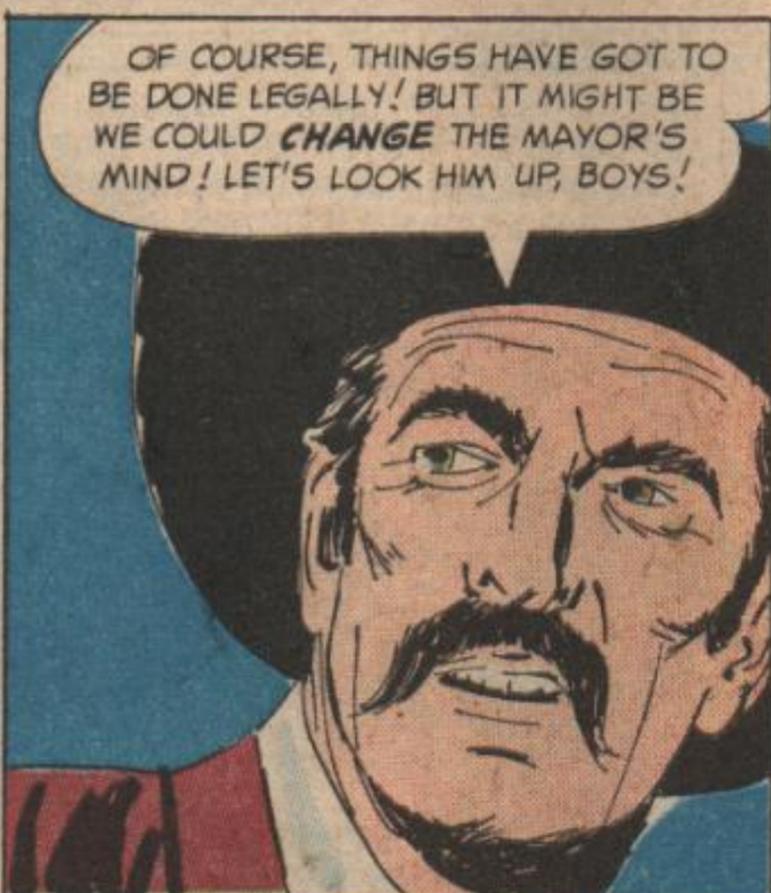
ALL ABO-O-OARD!

BORROW MY **BADGE?** WHY-UH— I GUESS THAT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT, TOO, WYATT!



THANKS, ED! BY THE WAY, I HEARD ABOUT DAVE SMALL ... KIND OF A RAW DEAL MAYOR WEAVER HANDED HIM, WASN'T IT?

UH— WELL, MAYBE IT WAS, WYATT! BUT OF COURSE, THERE WASN'T ANYTHING ANYBODY COULD DO, LEGALLY, THAT IS!



OF COURSE, THINGS HAVE GOT TO BE DONE LEGALLY! BUT IT MIGHT BE WE COULD **CHANGE** THE MAYOR'S MIND! LET'S LOOK HIM UP, BOYS!



WHAT'S THIS— A **NEW THEATER?** IT USED TO BE THE **ALAMO SALOON**— WEAVER'S SALOON!



AY, AY, AY, AY! CANTA Y NO LLORES!

BUT THAT ISN'T EXACTLY **THEATER** MUSIC, IS IT, BOYS?

SOUNDS LIKE A **CANTINA** TO ME, WYATT!

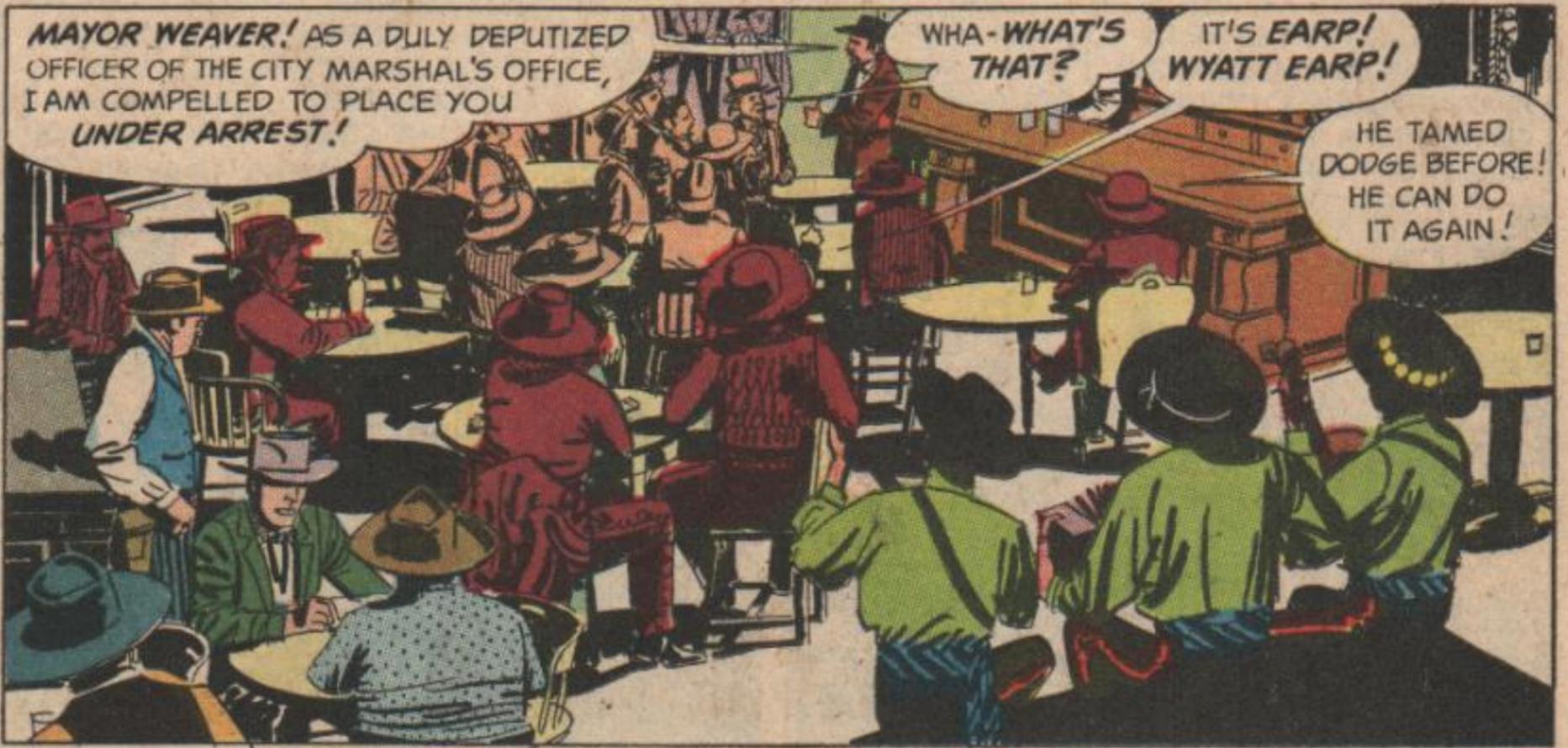


I THOUGHT SO! IT'S STILL A **SALOON!** SOME JOKER MUST HAVE NAILED THIS SHINGLE UP!



COME ON, GENTS! THE CITY ORDINANCE AGAINST MUSIC EXCEPT IN **THEATERS** WILL HAVE TO BE **ENFORCED!**

HAW, HAW! WE'LL DO IT, WYATT!



MAYOR WEAVER! AS A DULY DEPUTIZED OFFICER OF THE CITY MARSHAL'S OFFICE, I AM COMPELLED TO PLACE YOU **UNDER ARREST!**

WHA-WHAT'S THAT?

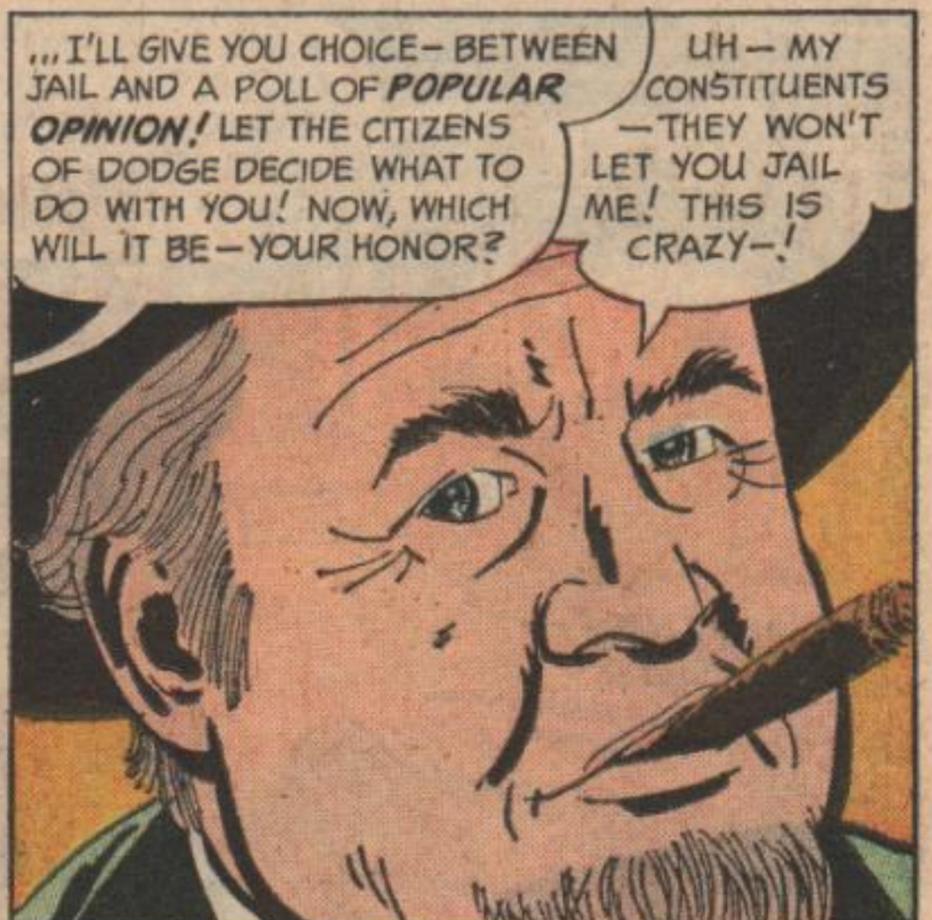
IT'S EARP! WYATT EARP!

HE TAMED DODGE BEFORE! HE CAN DO IT AGAIN!



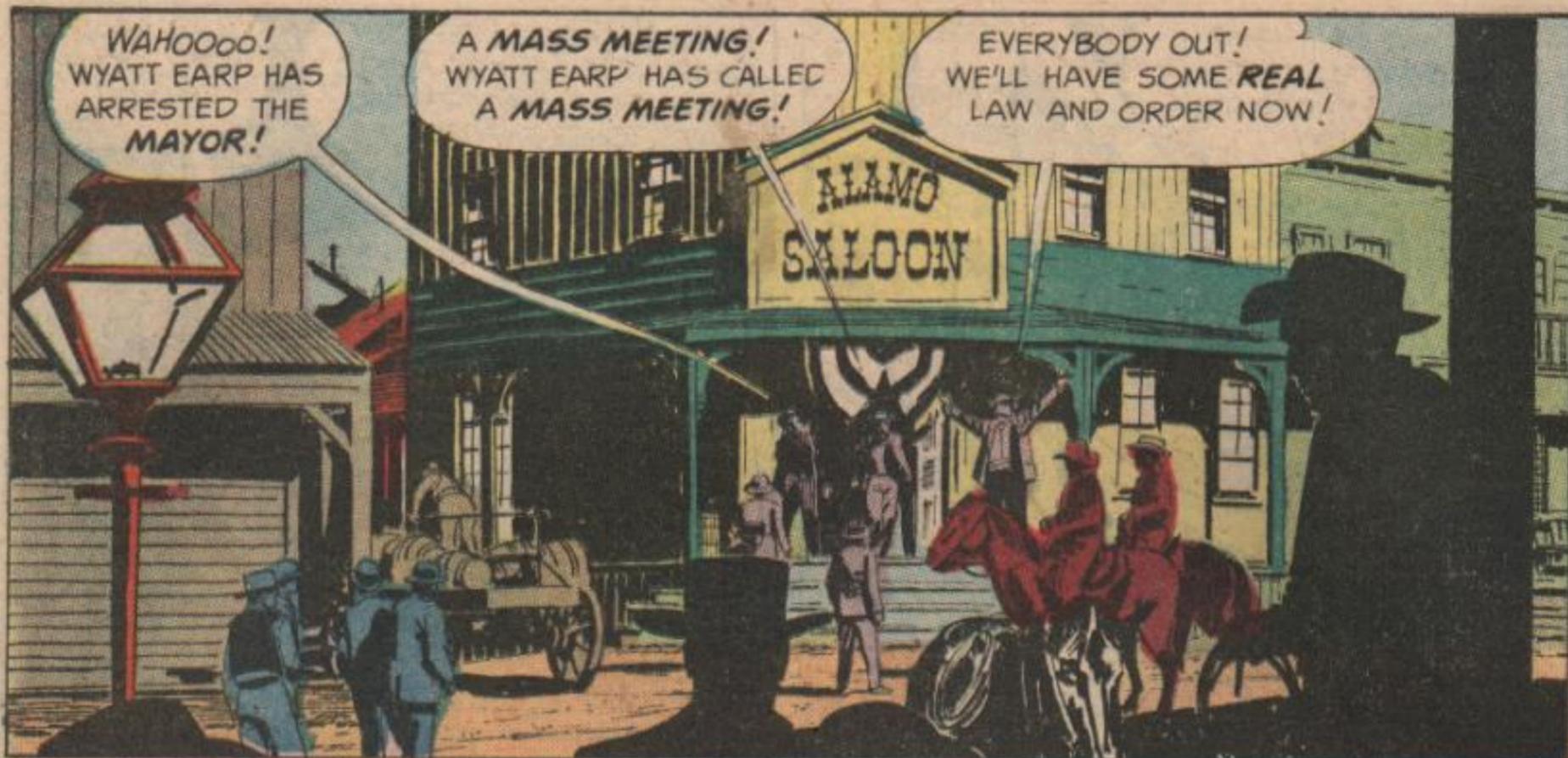
EARP, IF THIS IS SOME CRAZY JOKE—

I REGRET, IT'S NOT A JOKE, MAYOR! THIS SALOON IS **NOT** A THEATER, AND YOU'VE VIOLATED A CITY ORDINANCE BY EMPLOYING **MUSICIANS** HERE! ORDINARILY I WOULDN'T HESITATE TO JAIL YOU—BUT, SEEING YOU **ARE** THE MAYOR!



... I'LL GIVE YOU CHOICE— BETWEEN JAIL AND A POLL OF **POPULAR OPINION!** LET THE CITIZENS OF DODGE DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU! NOW, WHICH WILL IT BE—YOUR HONOR?

UH— MY CONSTITUENTS —THEY WON'T LET YOU JAIL ME! THIS IS CRAZY—!



WAHOOOO!
WYATT EARP HAS
ARRESTED THE
MAYOR!

A MASS MEETING!
WYATT EARP HAS CALLED
A MASS MEETING!

EVERYBODY OUT!
WE'LL HAVE SOME REAL
LAW AND ORDER NOW!



MARSHAL! WYATT EARP IS
BACK AND HE'S **ARRESTED**
MAYOR WEAVER IN THE
ALAMO! HE'S GOT A
BUNCH OF GUNFIGHTERS
TO BACK HIM!

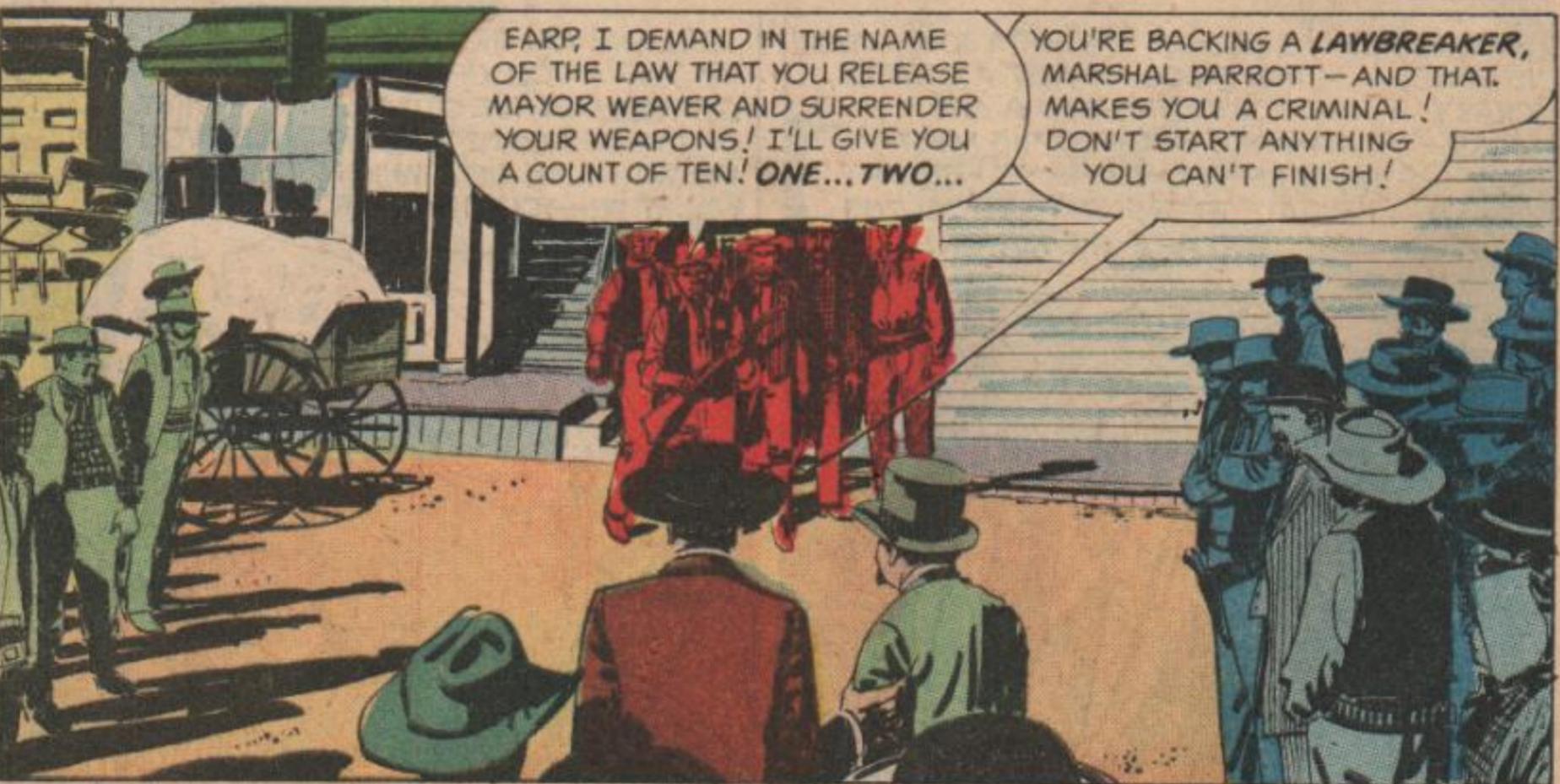
WYATT EARP TAKING
OVER? NOT IF I
CAN HELP IT! GO
ROUND UP YOUR
BUNCH - ALL MY
DEPUTIES!



WYATT EARP!
YEA-A-AY!
WHERE'S
MARSHAL
PARROTT?
YEE-HOO!

WELL, GENERAL,
THAT SOUNDS
LIKE OUR CUE!
SHALL WE GO OUT
AND JOIN
THE PARTY?

WHENEVER
YOU SAY,
MASTERSON! -
IF YOU THINK
IT'S SAFE FOR
MISS BLAINE!



EARP, I DEMAND IN THE NAME
OF THE LAW THAT YOU RELEASE
MAYOR WEAVER AND SURRENDER
YOUR WEAPONS! I'LL GIVE YOU
A COUNT OF TEN! ONE... TWO...

YOU'RE BACKING A **LAWBREAKER**,
MARSHAL PARROTT - AND THAT
MAKES YOU A CRIMINAL!
DON'T START ANYTHING
YOU CAN'T FINISH!



BAT! IT'S **BAT MASTERSON!**

MAYOR WEAVER! BEFORE MARSHAL PARROTT TRIGGERS HIS SCATTER-GUN, AT DEPUTY WYATT EARP, LET ME POINT OUT THAT SOME OF THE BUCKSHOT WILL CERTAINLY HIT YOU!



SIX... SEVEN ... EIGHT...

MARSHAL, THERE'LL BE NO SHOOTING! NOT NOW! I WILL CALL ON THE GOVERNOR TO SEND THE MILITIA AND DECLARE **MARTIAL LAW** IN DODGE CITY!

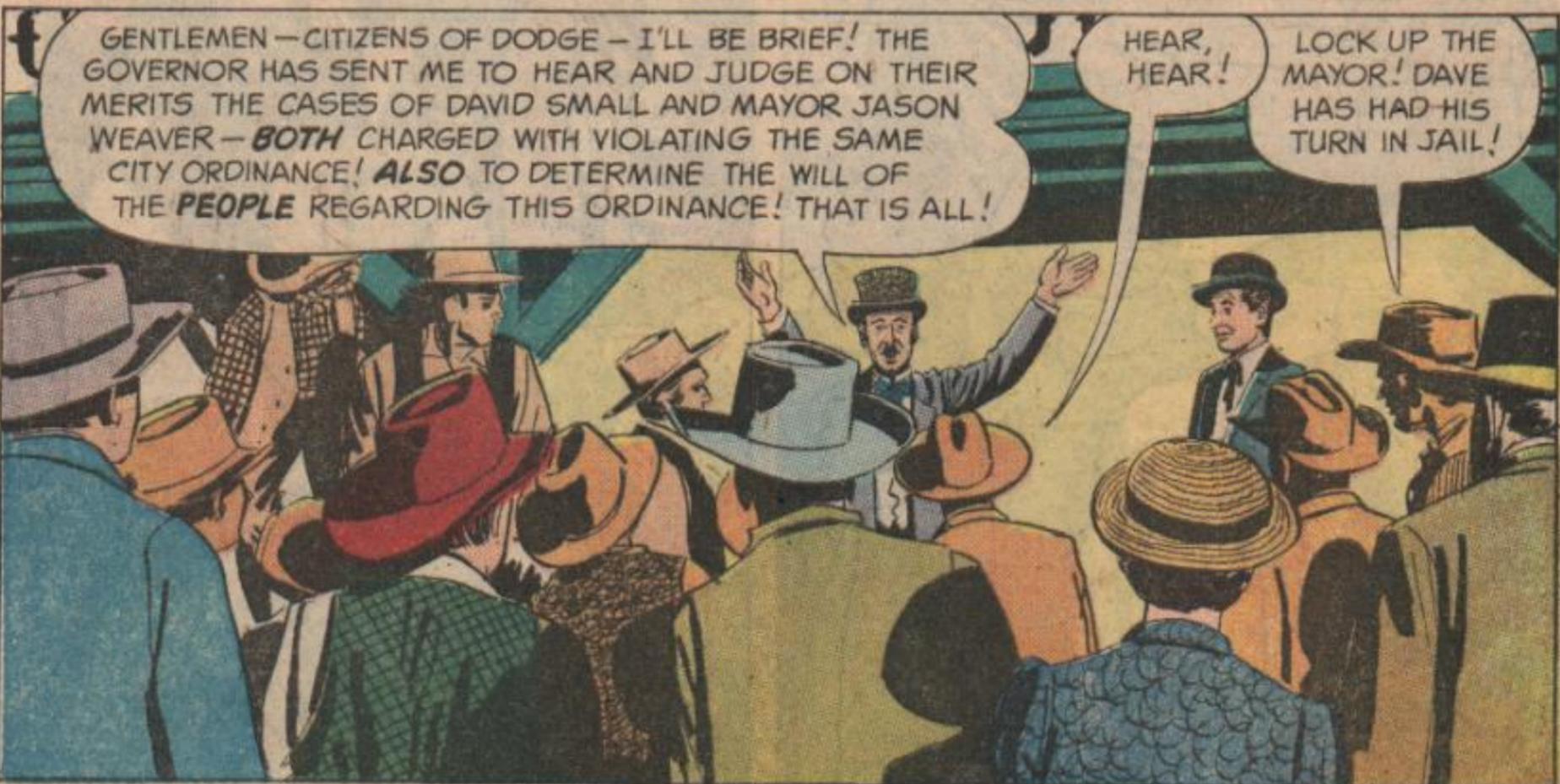


THEN THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS OUTRAGE WILL BE PUNISHED AS THEY RICHLY DESERVE!

WE'RE ONE JUMP AHEAD OF YOU, MAYOR!



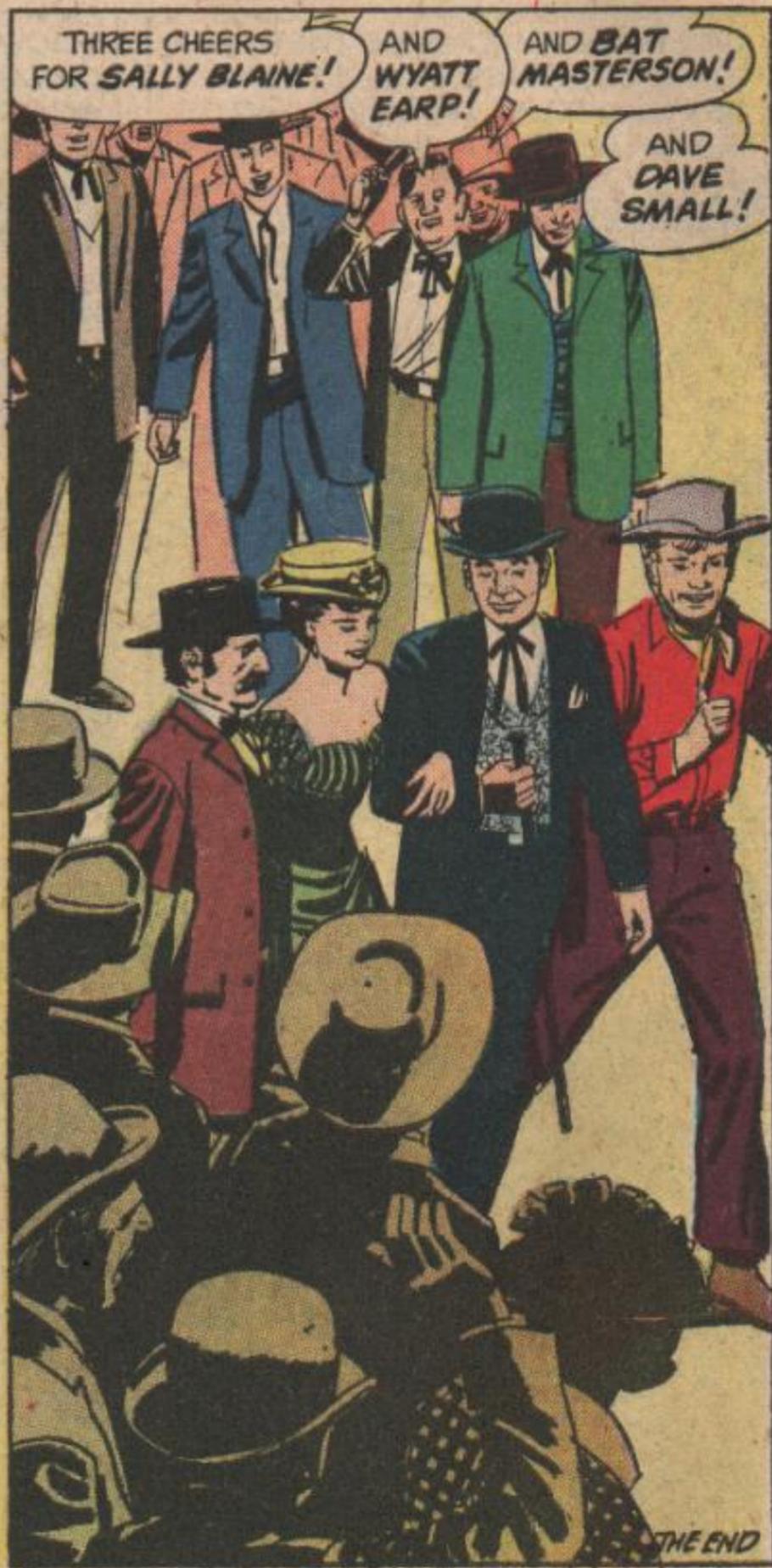
ALLOW ME, GENTLEMEN, TO INTRODUCE COLONEL THOMAS MOONLIGHT, THE **ADJUTANT GENERAL!** THE GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVE!



GENTLEMEN - CITIZENS OF DODGE - I'LL BE BRIEF! THE GOVERNOR HAS SENT ME TO HEAR AND JUDGE ON THEIR MERITS THE CASES OF DAVID SMALL AND MAYOR JASON WEAVER - **BOTH** CHARGED WITH VIOLATING THE SAME CITY ORDINANCE! **ALSO** TO DETERMINE THE WILL OF THE **PEOPLE** REGARDING THIS ORDINANCE! THAT IS ALL!

HEAR, HEAR!

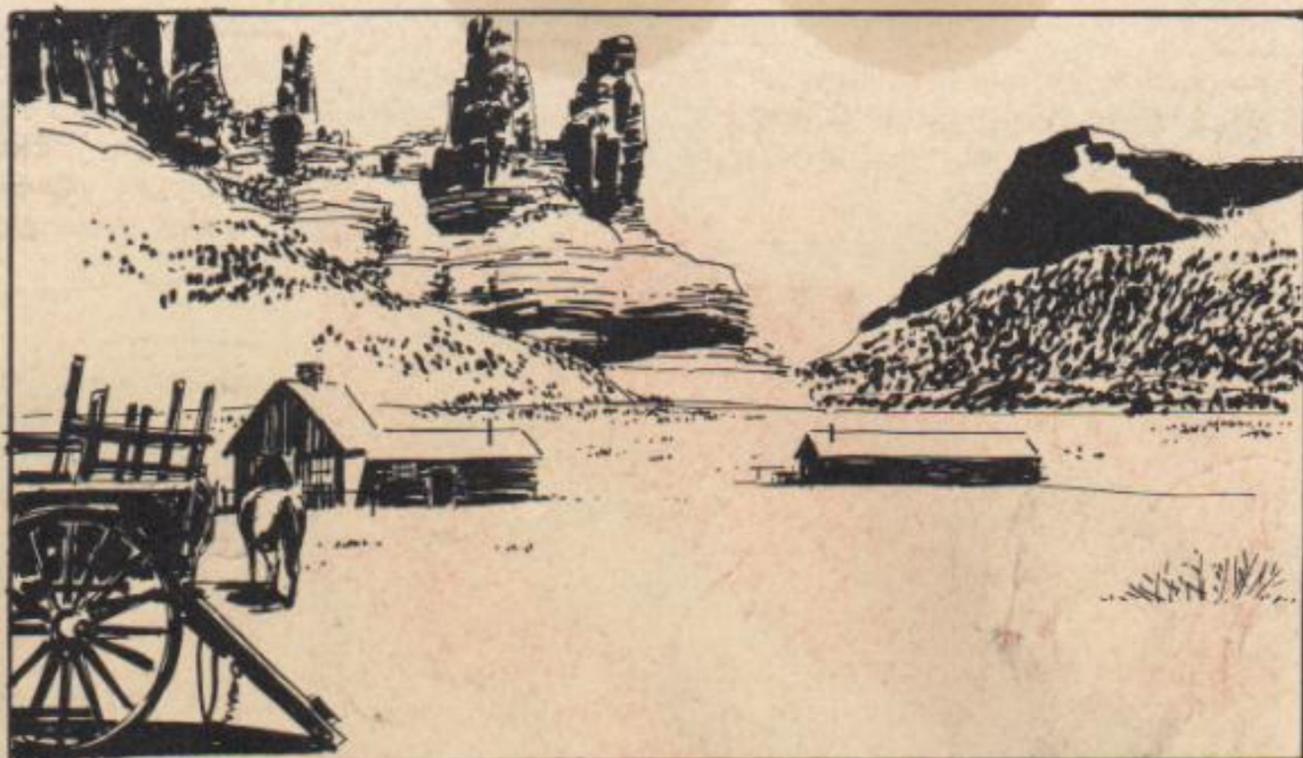
LOCK UP THE MAYOR! DAVE HAS HAD HIS TURN IN JAIL!



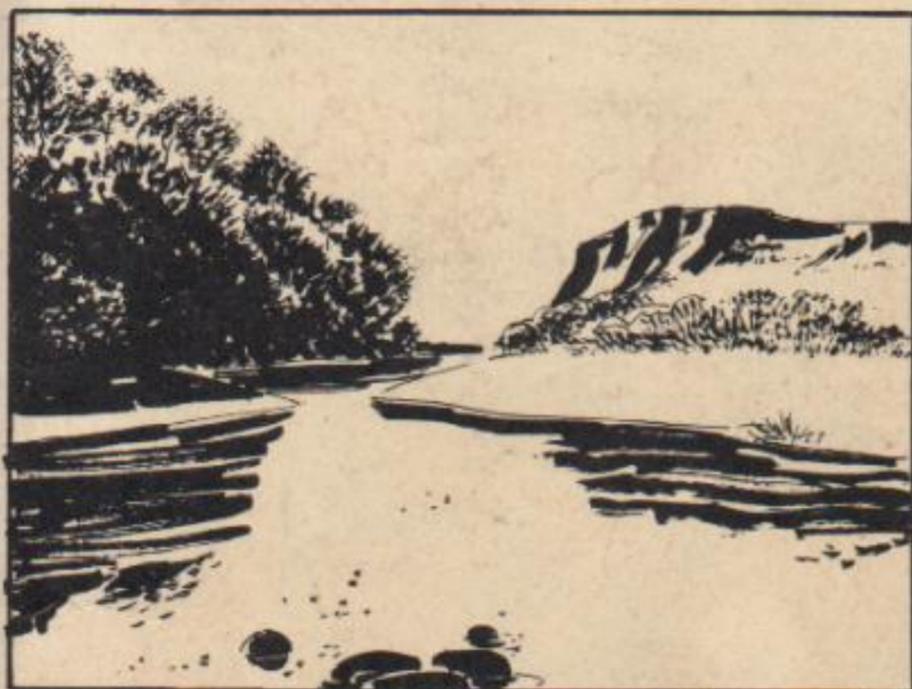
BAT MASTERSON

LANDMARKS OF THE OLD WEST

THE HOLE-IN-THE WALL



THE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL IS A DESOLATE, CLIFF-RIMMED BASIN IN NORTHERN WYOMING WHERE JOBLESS COWBOYS WHO HAD TURNED OUTLAW DEFIED EVERY POSSE SENT AGAINST THEM.



IN ANCIENT TIMES THE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL WAS A LAKE, SURROUNDED BY FORESTS, BUT LITTLE BY LITTLE ITS OUTLET WORE A NOTCH IN THE RETAINING CLIFFS.



IN TIME THE OUTLET NOTCH BECAME A DEEP AND EVER-DEEPENING GORGE, AND THE LAKE'S LEVEL SANK LOWER AND LOWER AS ITS WATERS RUSHED ON THROUGH.



IN THE PAST CENTURY THE LAKE BECAME DRY AND ONLY THE CREEK REMAINED, THE DEEP GORGE BECAME A GATEWAY THROUGH WHICH HUNTED MEN PASSED TO HIDING.

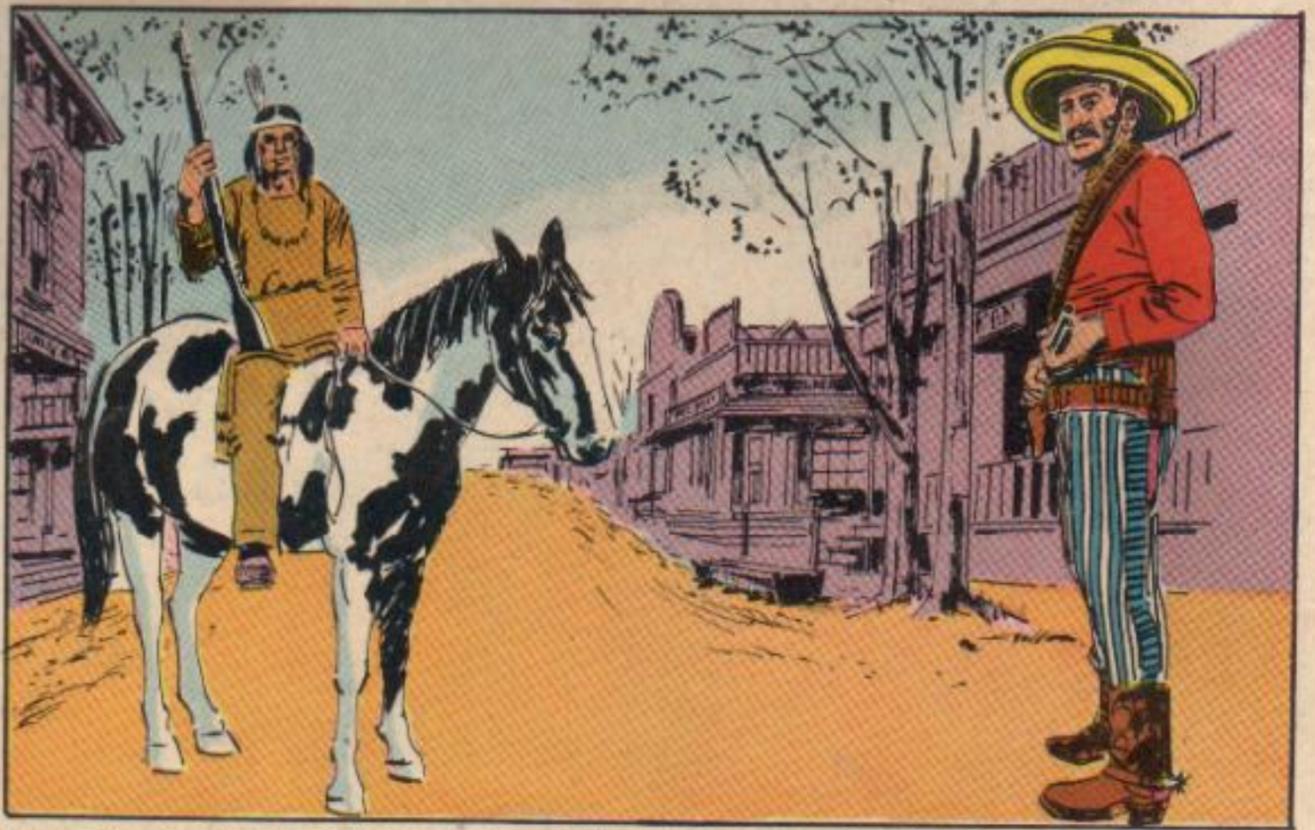


CAVES AND TUNNELS WORN IN THE CLIFFS BY THE ANCIENT LAKE WATERS NOW SHELTERED OUTLAW SENTINELS AND MADE THE PLACE A RUSTLERS' FORTRESS.

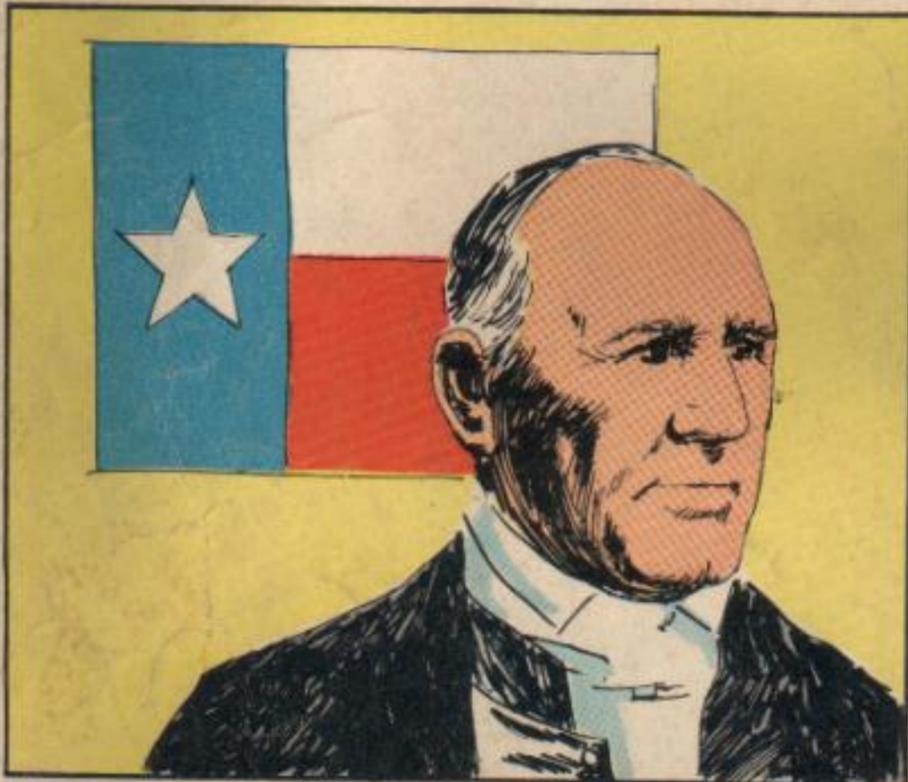
BAT MASTERSON

ROARING TOWNS OF THE OLD WEST

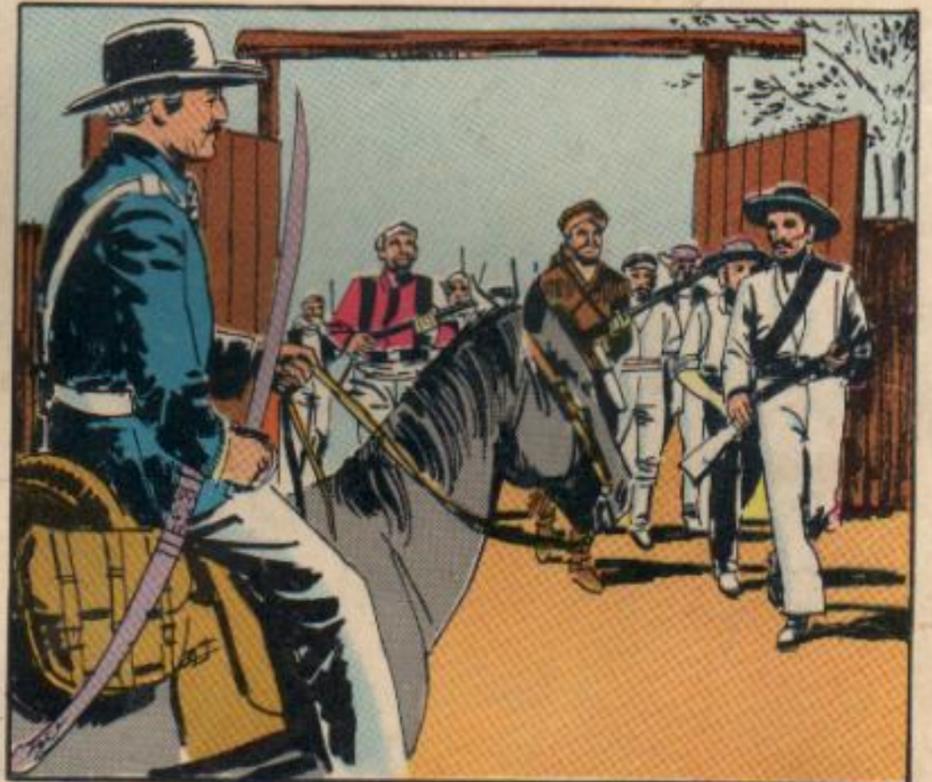
AUSTIN, TEXAS



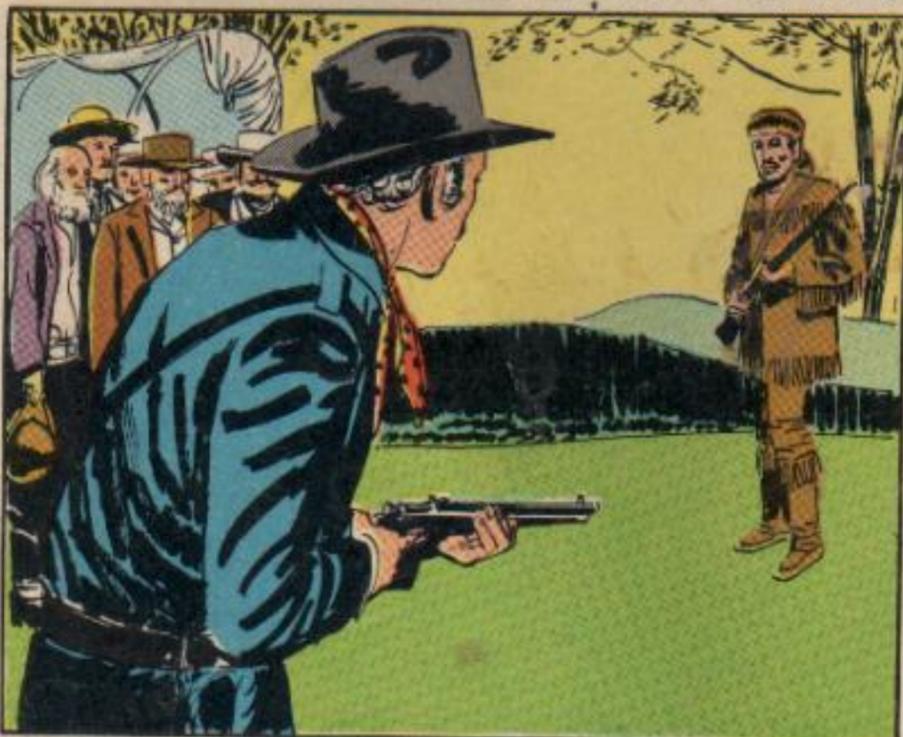
IN 1837 A MEXICAN ARMY AT SAN ANTONIO WAS POISED TO ATTACK AUSTIN, CAPITAL OF THE NEW-BORN TEXAS REPUBLIC... INDIANS WERE RAIDING CLOSE BY.



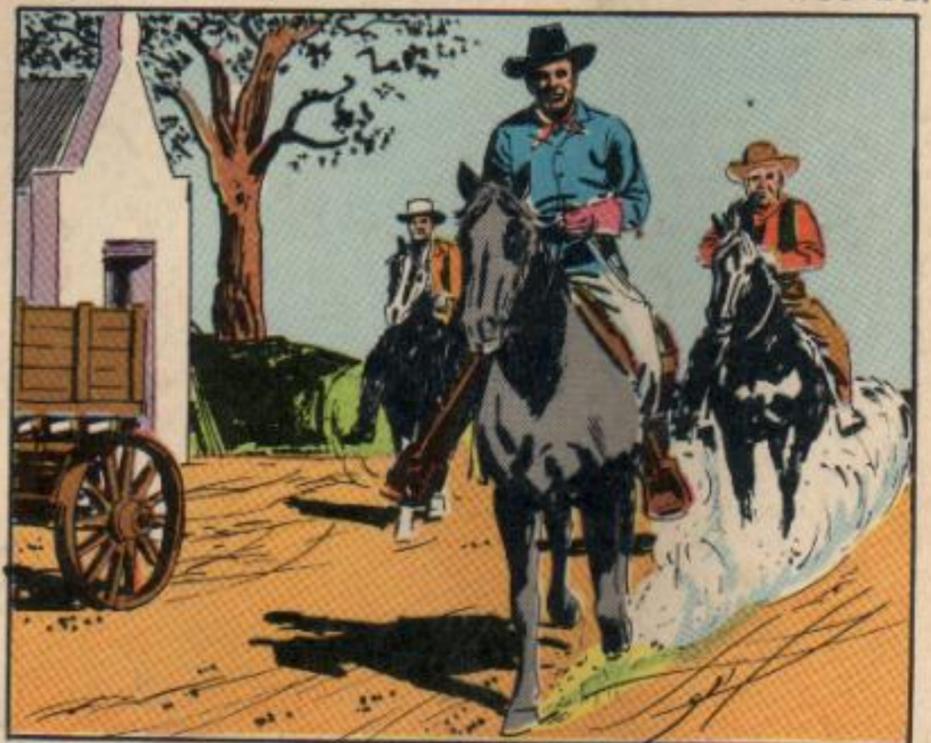
IN THIS EMERGENCY, PRESIDENT SAM HOUSTON MADE THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON, TEXAS, HIS TEMPORARY CAPITAL AND ORDERED STATE RECORDS MOVED THERE.



BUT-AUSTIN'S BUSINESSMEN, CITIZENS AND NEIGHBORING FARMERS, FEARING AUSTIN WOULD NEVER AGAIN BE THE CAPITAL, HAD COL. MORTON GUARD THE RECORDS.



THE PLAINSMAN, DEAF SMITH, BROUGHT PRESIDENT SAM HOUSTON'S ULTIMATUM, AND WAS CHALLENGED TO A DUEL BY COL. MORTON... DEAF SMITH WON!



LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER THE DUEL, PRESIDENT HOUSTON, DEAF SMITH AND ONLY NINE OTHER MEN RODE INTO AUSTIN UNOPPOSED AND REMOVED THE STATE RECORDS.