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BOOM TOWN BOSS



WITH A FEW HARD-WORKING PARTNERS, BAT LEADS A TRAIL HERD TO THE RAILROAD SHIPPING POINT OF SIOUX FORKS—A LAWLESS, "BOOM TOWN!"

HERE'S WHERE WE'LL HOLD THE HERD TILL I FIND A BUYER, BOYS! WE'RE THE FIRST OUTFIT TO REACH SIOUX FORKS—NO COMPETITION YET!

OUR CRITTERS ARE IN GOOD SHAPE, TOO, BAT! OUGHT TO BRING A TOP PRICE—MEBBE EIGHT DOLLARS A HUNDREDWEIGHT!

YOU'RE ELECTED TO DO THE BARGAINING, BAT! YOU'VE GOT THE GIFT OF GAB—AND LADY LUCK IS SURE SWEET ON YOU!

NOT ALWAYS, WINDY! BUT I'LL DO MY BEST—FOR ALL OF US! I'LL TRY BERT CLYMER FIRST... HE'S THE BIGGEST CATTLE BUYER—BESIDES RUNNING THE CASINO AND TWO DANCE HALLS!

LATER AT BOSS CLYMER'S CASINO...

I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT YOUR BEEF, BAT! YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT ONE OF MY MEN TOOK A GOOD LOOK AT THEM ON THE TRAIL! I'LL BUY THEM!

FOR HOW MUCH, CLYMER?



B. MASTERSON #7-615

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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 PAY YOU **TEN DOLLARS PER HUNDREDWEIGHT!** YOU CAN'T BEAT THAT PRICE ANYWHERE! I'LL COUNT IT OUT HERE—IN **GOLD!**

ALL RIGHT...I'LL TAKE IT, CLYMER! FOR NINE HUNDRED HEAD!

JUST ONE SUGGESTION, BAT—SOMEBODY OUTSIDE MAY HAVE GOTTEN AN EYEFUL OF THIS **SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND!** BETTER USE THE BACK DOOR WHEN YOU LEAVE WITH IT!

THANKS, CLYMER! I'LL BE SEEING YOU AGAIN!

PUZZLING OVER BOSS CLYMER'S DEAL, BAT USES THE BACK DOOR INTO THE ALLEY...

TEN DOLLARS A HUNDREDWEIGHT—THAT'S TEN PERCENT HIGHER THAN THE TOP PRICE I WAS GOING TO ASK! I CAN'T SEE WHY! THIS GOLD ISN'T COUNTERFEIT...

...AND IS BROUGHT UP SHORT BY A LURCHING FIGURE WHICH RINGS AN ALARM BELL IN HIS BRAIN!

SHAY, MISHTER, CAN YOU GIMME A—

BACK UP—OUT OF MY WAY!

THUD!

UGHHH!

GOLD—NEAR TEN THOUSAND, BY THE HEFT!

HANG ON TO IT! WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THIS SUCKER SOMEPLACE!

AT THE END OF THE ALLEY BAT IS DROPPED LIKE AN EMPTY SACK.

NEXT TIME *YOU* GET IN FRONT OF A GUN AND I'LL DO THE SLUGGING! THAT BIRD WAS TOO QUICK ON THE DRAW FOR COMFORT!

YEAH? I HIT HIM IN TIME, DIDN'T I?

BUT, AS THE MATCHLIGHT FLARES...

I'LL KNOW THOSE TWO AGAIN— LONG CHIN AND BIG NOSE! MY GUN'S GONE...

IT IS SOME TIME LATER, HOWEVER, BEFORE BAT'S LEGS WILL FUNCTION AT ALL.

THEY LEFT MY HAT WITH ME... AND POSSIBLY THEY LEFT MY GUN IN THE DUST SOMEWHERE...
UH! HERE IT IS!

REACHING THE MAIN STREET IS A BIG EFFORT...

OH, WHAT A HEADACHE THOSE THUGS LEFT ME! I COULDN'T EVEN CLIMB ON MY HORSE YET... MMMMH!

WHEN THIS "ANVIL CHORUS" INSIDE MY HEAD QUIETS DOWN A BIT— I'LL GET BACK TO THE BOYS ... MMMMH!

FORKS CLARION



SOB! SOB!
SNIFF!

WELL! IT SEEMS I'M NOT
THE ONLY SUFFERER TO-
NIGHT! THAT CRYING SOUNDS
LIKE A GIRL'S...



HELLO, IN THERE!
WHAT'S YOUR TROU-
BLE? IF I CAN HELP—?



GET OUT! THIS IS STILL MY OFFICE!
IF I'D HAD THIS GUN HANDY WHEN
CLYMER'S HOODLUMS WRECKED MY
PRESS, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE...
OH! **YOU'RE** NOT ONE OF
THAT CROWD—!

NO, MA'AM! I'M
JUST A STRANGER
WHO FELL AMONG
THIEVES!



YOU'RE HURT! SIT
DOWN AND LET ME
WASH THAT CUT IN
YOUR SCALP, MR.—!

WILLIAM BARCLAY
MASTERTON—KNOWN
TO MY FRIENDS AS
"BAT"! BUT I CAME
IN TO HELP **YOU**,
MISS—



IT STINGS, DOESN'T IT? AND
I'M GOING TO HURT YOU MORE...
SO I MIGHT AS WELL TALK, TO
KEEP YOUR MIND OFF IT! I'M
SUE BAKER...

OUCH!



I'VE BEEN CARRYING ON THE SIOUX FORKS
CLARION SINCE MY FATHER'S DEATH... THAT
WAS JUST BEFORE BOSS CLYMER TOOK
OVER THE TOWN AND SCARED MOST OF
THE DECENT FOLKS WITH HIS HIRED GUNS!

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PUT COURAGE INTO THE DECENT CITIZENS THROUGH MY NEWS-PAPER—AS DAD WOULD HAVE DONE—EXPOSING CLYMER'S DIRTY BUSINESS, HIS BAREFACED ROBBERIES...AND TODAY BROUGHT THE PAY-OFF! I'M OUT OF BUSINESS--FOR GOOD!



YOU'RE LEAVING TOWN—SELLING OUT—WHEN IT MEANT SO MUCH TO YOU?

WHO WOULD BUY A WRECKED PRINTING PRESS? I'M LEAVING! TOMORROW! I'LL GET A JOB IN SOME OTHER TOWN AS A WAITRESS—



SO YOU'RE BROKE, TOO? HAVEN'T YOU ANYTHING THAT COULD BE TURNED INTO CASH? I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP THERE...

THANKS, BAT MASTERSON—BUT THERE'S NOTHING! N-NOTHING EXCEPT AN OLD, WORKED-OUT GOLD MINE THAT DAD TOOK IN ON A BAD DEBT! (SNIFF!)



SHUCKS! I'VE BEEN PITYING MYSELF LONG ENOUGH! COME INTO MY KITCHEN AND I'LL MAKE YOU A CUP OF COFFEE! IT WILL EASE THAT HEADACHE!

YOU'RE AN ANGEL, SUE! AND I'D LIKE TO TALK A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THAT OLD, WORKED-OUT MINE!



YOU'RE **SURE** IT'S WORKED OUT, COMPLETELY?

WELL—PRACTICALLY! DAD FOUND A NEW VEIN—BUT HE FIGURED IT WOULD PINCH OUT SOON, LIKE THE ORIGINAL VEIN—NOT WORTH PUTTING MORE MONEY INTO DEVELOPING IT! AND I **HAVEN'T** ANY MONEY TO PUT IN...



HOLD ON! I'VE GOT AN IDEA, SUE! I'VE HEARD BOSS CLYMER IS NOTORIOUSLY GREEDY TO BUY UP ANY GOOD-LOOKING MINING PROPERTY HE CAN GET CHEAPLY! MAYBE WE CAN TURN THE TABLES ON HIM!

BUT—HOW, BAT?



PERHAPS WE CAN PARLAY YOUR
NEW ORE VEIN INTO BAIT THAT WILL
TRAP SIOUX FORKS' BIG BOSS!
HERE'S TO LUCK!

HERE'S TO LUCK, BAT!
—BY THE WAY, DID
YOU GET A LOOK AT
THE MEN WHO ROBBED
YOU TONIGHT?

THE THUGS WHO TOOK ME FOR SEVENTY-
TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS—THE PRICE OF
A BEEF HERD I SOLD TO CLYMER? YES!
ONE HAD A LONG JAW, AND THE OTHER
A BIG NOSE! I'D KNOW THEM ANYWHERE!

AND I KNOW THEM ALREADY!
BAT, THOSE WERE THE SAME
MEN WHO BROKE UP MY PRINTING
PRESS—AND THEY'RE BOTH EM-
PLOYED AS BOUNCERS IN ONE OF
CLYMER'S DANCE HALLS!

SO! **THAT** WAS WHY CLYMER
TOLD ME TO USE THE BACK
WAY WHEN I LEFT WITH
MY MONEY—BECAUSE HIS
MEN WERE WAITING THERE
IN THE ALLEY, TO TAKE IT
BACK!

IF YOUR SCHEME—I MEAN **OUR**
SCHEME FOR THE MINE—SHOULD REALLY
WORK, YOU MIGHT GET YOUR MONEY
BACK!

NOW THAT I KNOW IT WAS
CLYMER'S WORK, I MIGHT
INDEED!

LEAVING SUE,
BAT RIDES OUT
TO REJOIN HIS
TRAIL CREW.

BAT, YOU OLD MOSSY-HORN!
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN BUTTING
YOUR HEAD INTO?

A GUN! IT'S
QUITE A STORY,
BOYS!

NEXT MORNING...

SUE BAKER, THESE THREE BOYS ARE MY PARTNERS! THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE TURNS GUARDING YOUR PLACE FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS—UNTIL OUR SCHEME WORKS OUT, OR FAILS!

GENTLEMEN—I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, EXCEPT—THANKS! I'D BE LEAVING THIS MORNING IF IT WEREN'T FOR BAT!



I HAVE ANOTHER PARTNER—WINDY BATES—WHO WON'T SHOW UP IN TOWN TILL HE COMES TO SELL YOUR MINE TO CLYMER... BUT HE OUGHT TO HAVE SOME KIND OF DEED TO THE MINE.

I'D THOUGHT OF THAT, BAT! I'VE FOUND THE DEED THE ORIGINAL OWNER, JIM POLLARD, GAVE DAD!

LOOK! IT'S JUST A BILL OF SALE OLD JIM HAD SOMEBODY WRITE OUT FOR HIM—LEAVING THE NAME OF THE BUYER BLANK! ALL JIM COULD WRITE WAS HIS OWN NAME—AND DAD NEVER BOTHERED TO WRITE HIS OWN IN THE BLANK SPACE!

FINE! WE'LL JUST WRITE IN **WINDY BATES**—AND CLYMER WILL NEVER QUESTION IT!



Bill of Sale
 Through and to
 Jim Pollard
 Through and to
 through and to

TWO DAYS LATER—IN THE CASINO...

MR. CLYMER? I'M WINDY BATES! I'VE GOT A MINE—PRODUCING ORE LIKE THESE SAMPLES—WHICH I HAVE TO SELL QUICK! TAKE A LOOK AND TELL ME IF YOU'RE INTERESTED!

SAMPLES? LET'S SEE THEM!



MMMMMMM... I CAN SEE A **LITTLE** COLOR HERE! HMMMM... THERE'S JUST A BARE CHANCE...



I'LL TAKE THESE DOWN TO THE ASSAY OFFICE, BATES! AN ASSAYER I CAN TRUST... AND IF THE TEST SHOWS ANYTHING WORTHWHILE, WE'LL SEE...

OKAY, MR. CLYMER! I'LL BE HERE!



AT THE ASSAY OFFICE...

YES, MR. CLYMER! IF THE REST OF THE ORE RUNS AS RICH AS THOSE SAMPLES, IT'S WORTH AT LEAST **TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS A TON!**

THAT'S WHAT YOU FOUND IN THE SAMPLES I BROUGHT YOU JUST NOW, PETE? GOLD?



BACK AT THE CASINO...

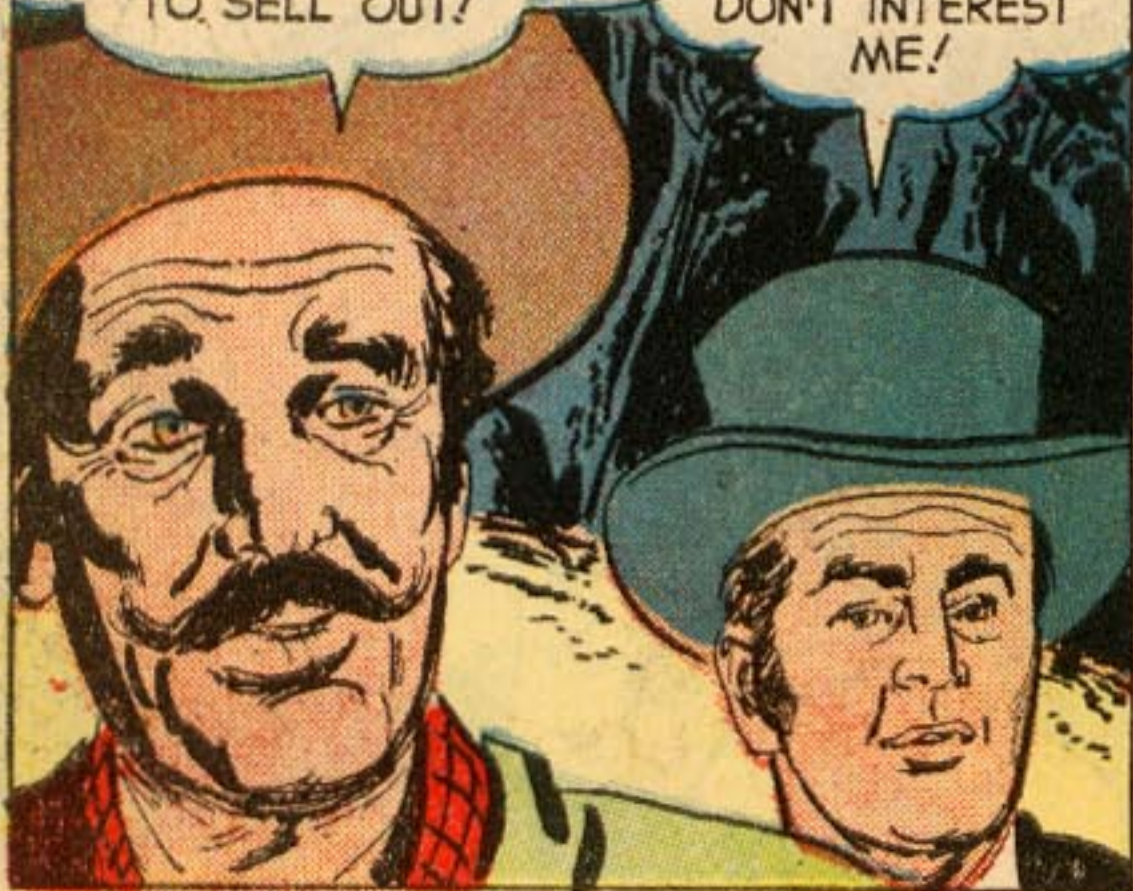
ALL RIGHT, BATES—(PUFF!)—I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR MINE NOW—IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH OF A RIDE!

ABOUT HALF AN HOUR, UP IN THE HILLS, MR. CLYMER! YOU CAN SEE IT AND BE BACK BEFORE SUNDOWN, I RECKON!



I'M NOT TELLING WHAT THEY ARE, BUT I'VE GOT NEEDS FOR SOME READY CASH MONEY IN A BIG HURRY! I'VE **GOT** TO SELL OUT!

YES, YES! I UNDERSTAND THAT, BATES! YOUR REASONS DON'T INTEREST ME!



AT THE MINE...

HERE THEY COME, SUE! WE'LL GET BACK IN THAT OTHER STOPE WHERE WE CAN HEAR AND NOT BE SEEN!

IT'S WORKING, BAT! CLYMER HAS TAKEN OUR BAIT!



HERE—YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF, MR. CLYMER! THAT ORE VEIN IS THE SAME AS THE SAMPLES YOU HAD ASSAYED! YOU CAN **SEE** THE GOLD IN IT!

ALL RIGHT—I'LL PAY YOU EIGHT HUNDRED FOR THE MINE—AND TAKE A CHANCE! MAYBE I WON'T GET MY MONEY BACK!

NOW, MR. CLYMER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR ASSAYER TOLD YOU, BUT I KNOW THIS VEIN WILL PRODUCE MIGHTY NEAR \$2,000 TO THE TON! MY ROCK-BOTTOM PRICE IS EIGHTY THOUSAND DOLLARS—AND I WON'T HAVE FAR TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER BUYER!

HMMM! I SEE YOU'RE NO FOOL, BATES! I'LL **MEET** THAT PRICE!

BE DOWN AT THE CASINO AT NINE O'CLOCK THIS EVENING, BATES, AND I'LL HAVE YOUR MONEY READY FOR YOU! YOU BRING THE BILL OF SALE AND PROOF OF YOUR TITLE TO THE MINE!

I'LL DO THAT, MR. CLYMER! SO LONG!

OH, YOU WERE **GREAT**, WINDY BATES! **EIGHTY THOUSAND—!** IT **WORKED!**

I-UH—YES, MA'AM!

IT'S WORKING—BUT AFTER THE PAY-OFF THE REAL FUN BEGINS! IT'S THE SAME SETUP CLYMER USED TO ROB ME!

AT NINE O'CLOCK THAT EVENING...

THAT MAKES THE EIGHTY THOUSAND—GOLD—FOR YOUR MINE, BATES! YOU'VE BEEN COUNTING WITH ME, I HOPE!

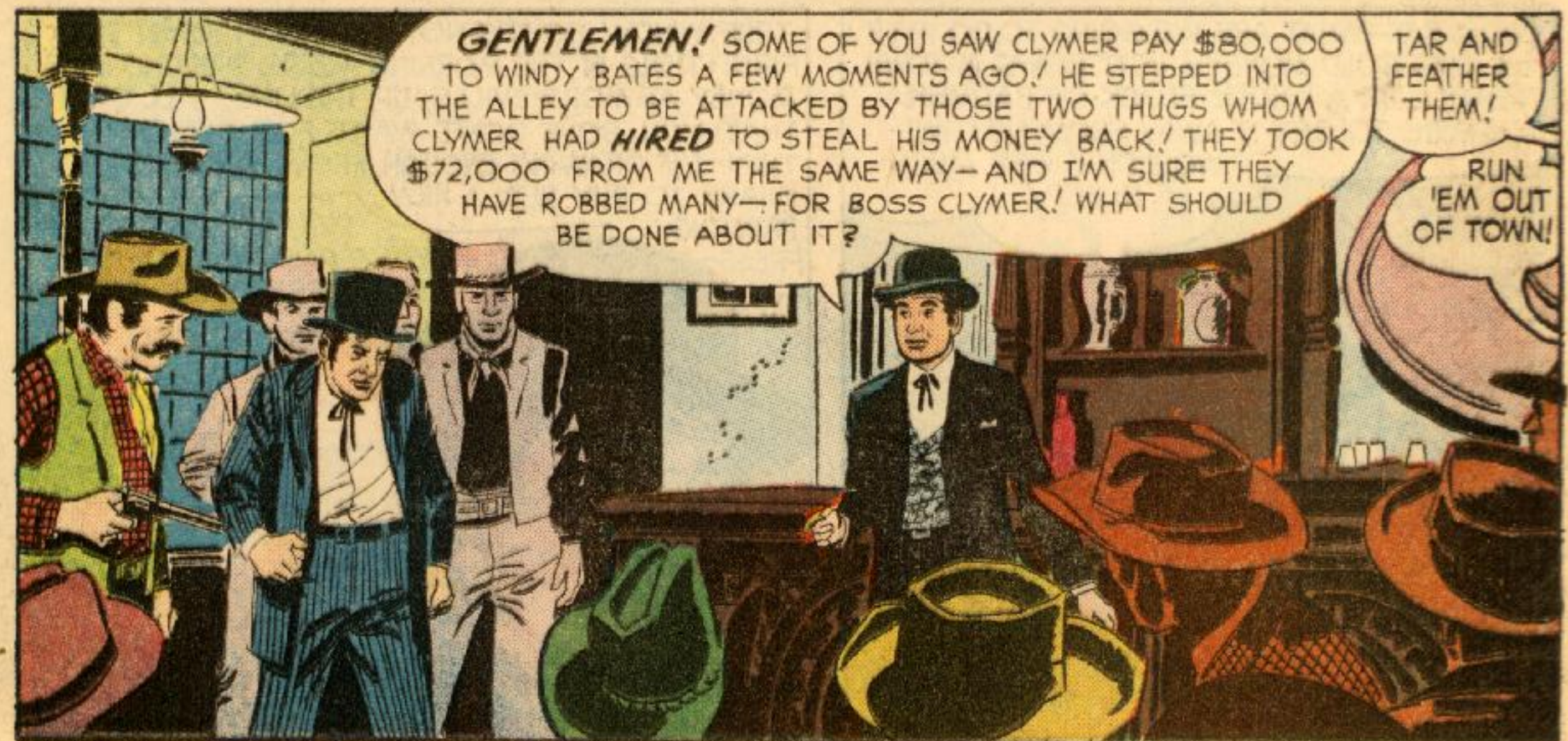
YES, **SIR**, MR. CLYMER—AND SO HAVE THESE GENTS, I RECKON!

JUST A LAST THOUGHT, BATES—SOMEBODY MAY HAVE BEEN WATCHING US THROUGH THE WINDOW! BETTER GO OUT THE BACK DOOR!

I'LL DO THAT, MR. CLYMER!

AS THE BACK DOOR OF THE CASINO CLOSES BEHIND HIM, WINDY IS JUMPED. BUT HE HAS BEEN EXPECTING IT...



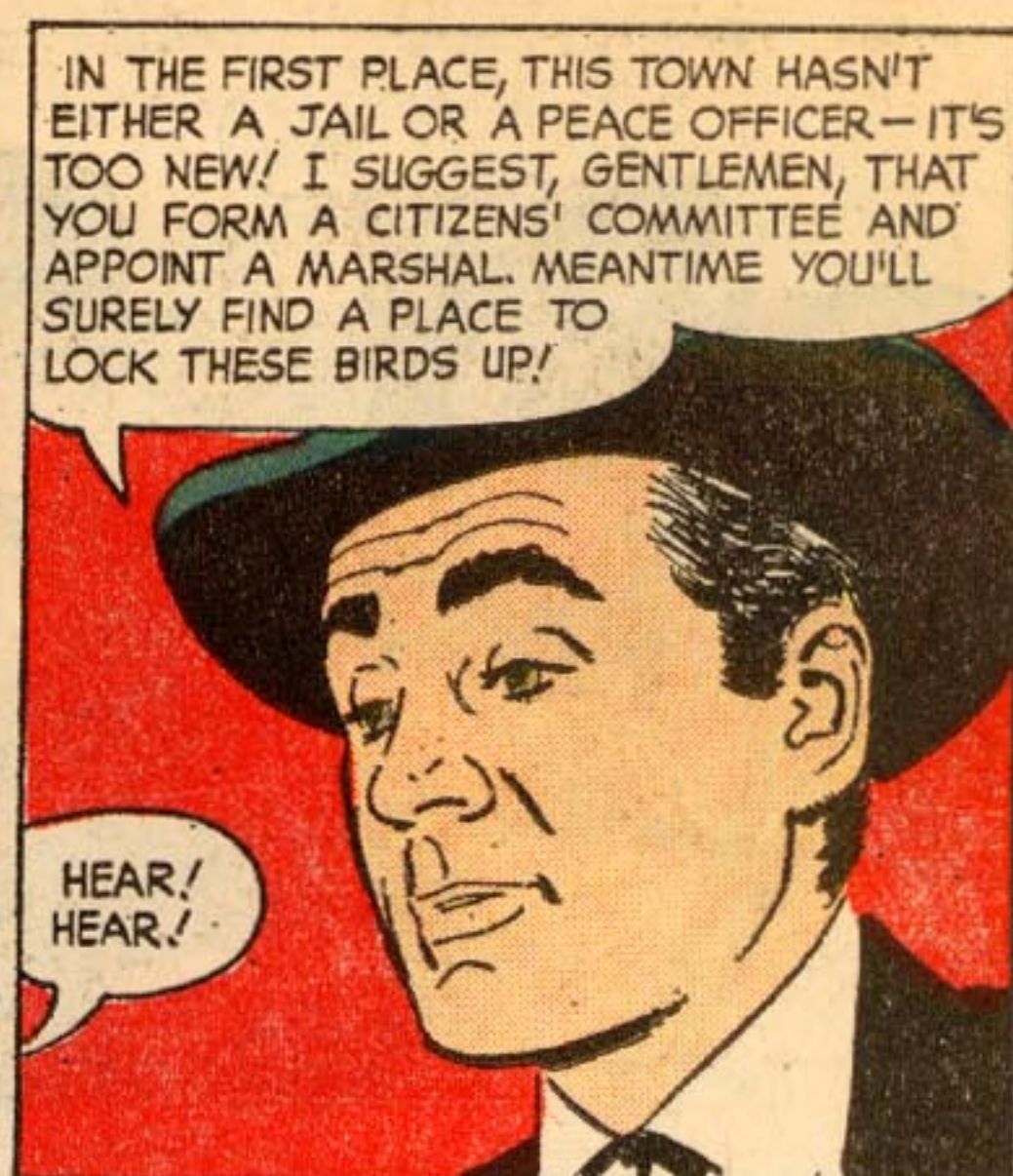




JAIL WOULD BE TOO GOOD FOR YOU, CLYMER!

WAIT, GENTLEMEN! LISTEN TO ME, PLEASE!

QUIET, EVERYBODY! LISTEN TO **BAT MASTERSON!**



IN THE FIRST PLACE, THIS TOWN HASN'T EITHER A JAIL OR A PEACE OFFICER—IT'S TOO NEW! I SUGGEST, GENTLEMEN, THAT YOU FORM A CITIZENS' COMMITTEE AND APPOINT A MARSHAL. MEANTIME YOU'LL SURELY FIND A PLACE TO LOCK THESE BIRDS UP!

HEAR!
HEAR!



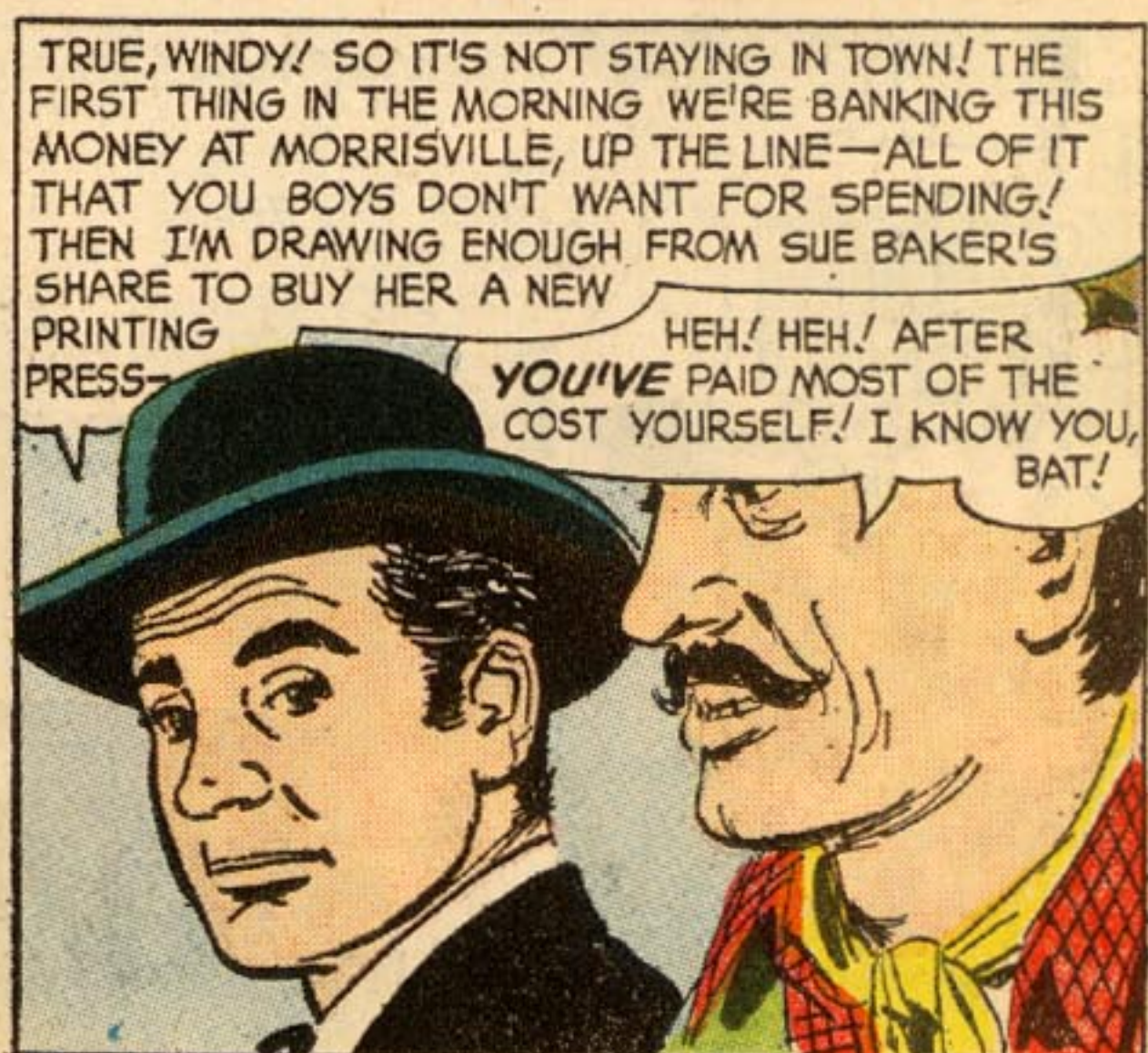
WE'LL DO THAT, BAT! JUST LEAVE THEM TO US!

MASTERSON IS RIGHT! WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE **LAW** IN THIS TOWN BEFORE WE GET ANYWHERE!

ALL RIGHT, BOYS—OUT! THE JOB'S DONE!



LOOK, BAT—WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH ALL THIS GOLD MONEY? IF IT STAYS IN TOWN THERE'LL BE A WHOLE FLOCK OF BADMEN SCHEMING TO GET IT AWAY FROM US! WE WOULDN'T GET MUCH SLEEP!



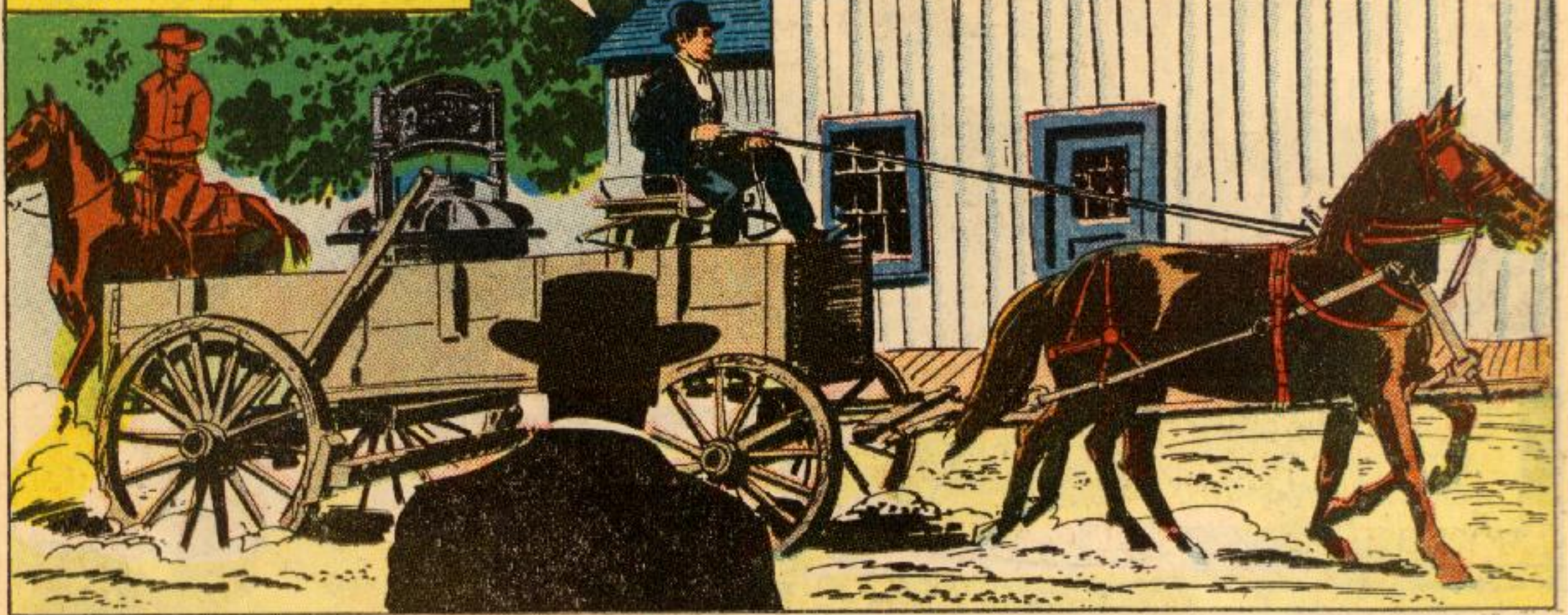
TRUE, WINDY! SO IT'S NOT STAYING IN TOWN! THE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING WE'RE BANKING THIS MONEY AT MORRISVILLE, UP THE LINE—ALL OF IT THAT YOU BOYS DON'T WANT FOR SPENDING! THEN I'M DRAWING ENOUGH FROM SUE BAKER'S SHARE TO BUY HER A NEW PRINTING PRESS—

HEH! HEH! AFTER **YOU'VE** PAID MOST OF THE COST YOURSELF! I KNOW YOU, BAT!

A WEEK LATER BAT RETURNS TO SIOUX FORKS WITH SOME CRATED MACHINERY IN A FREIGHT WAGON...

WELL! IT SEEMS THEY DID TAKE MY SUGGESTIONS SERIOUSLY!

MARSHAL'S OFFICE



YOU SAY I'M UNDER ARREST? FOR WHAT, MARSHAL?

FOR CARRYING A CONCEALED WEAPON INTO TOWN—TRANSPORTING PROPERTY WITHOUT THE OWNER'S PERMISSION—FALSIFYING BUSINESS RECORDS! I GUESS THAT WILL DO FOR A STARTER!



BUT ALL THIS IS CRAZY, MARSHAL! I'M GLAD THE TOWN HAS LAW AND ORDER NOW, BUT—I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND...

YOU WILL—WHEN YOU SEE THE JUDGE!



SUE!—ER—I MEAN, YOUR HONOR, WHAT'S THIS ABOUT MY FALSIFYING RECORDS—TRANSPORTING SOMEBODY'S PROPERTY?

MY PROPERTY, BAT! THE ALMOST-NEW PRINTING PRESS YOU'VE BOUGHT AND HAULED HERE WITHOUT MY PERMISSION—BOUGHT IN MY NAME, BUT MOSTLY WITH YOUR MONEY! YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO DO THAT...

—BUT OH, BAT, I LOVE YOU FOR IT! WINDY BATES TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID, WHEN HE BROUGHT ME MY NEW BANK BOOK FROM MORRISVILLE BANK—WITH A SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLAR DEPOSIT IN IT!

I-I GUESS I'M GUILTY, JUDGE! BUT HOW ABOUT CLYMER AND HIS GANG? YOU DIDN'T PUNISH THEM THIS WAY, DID YOU?

HERE—THIS IS OFF MY LITTLE HANDBILL-SIZE PRESS—TODAY!

UMM! SO CLYMER DUG OUT AND SKIPPED TOWN! I'LL GIVE ODDS HE'LL NEVER BE BACK, EITHER!

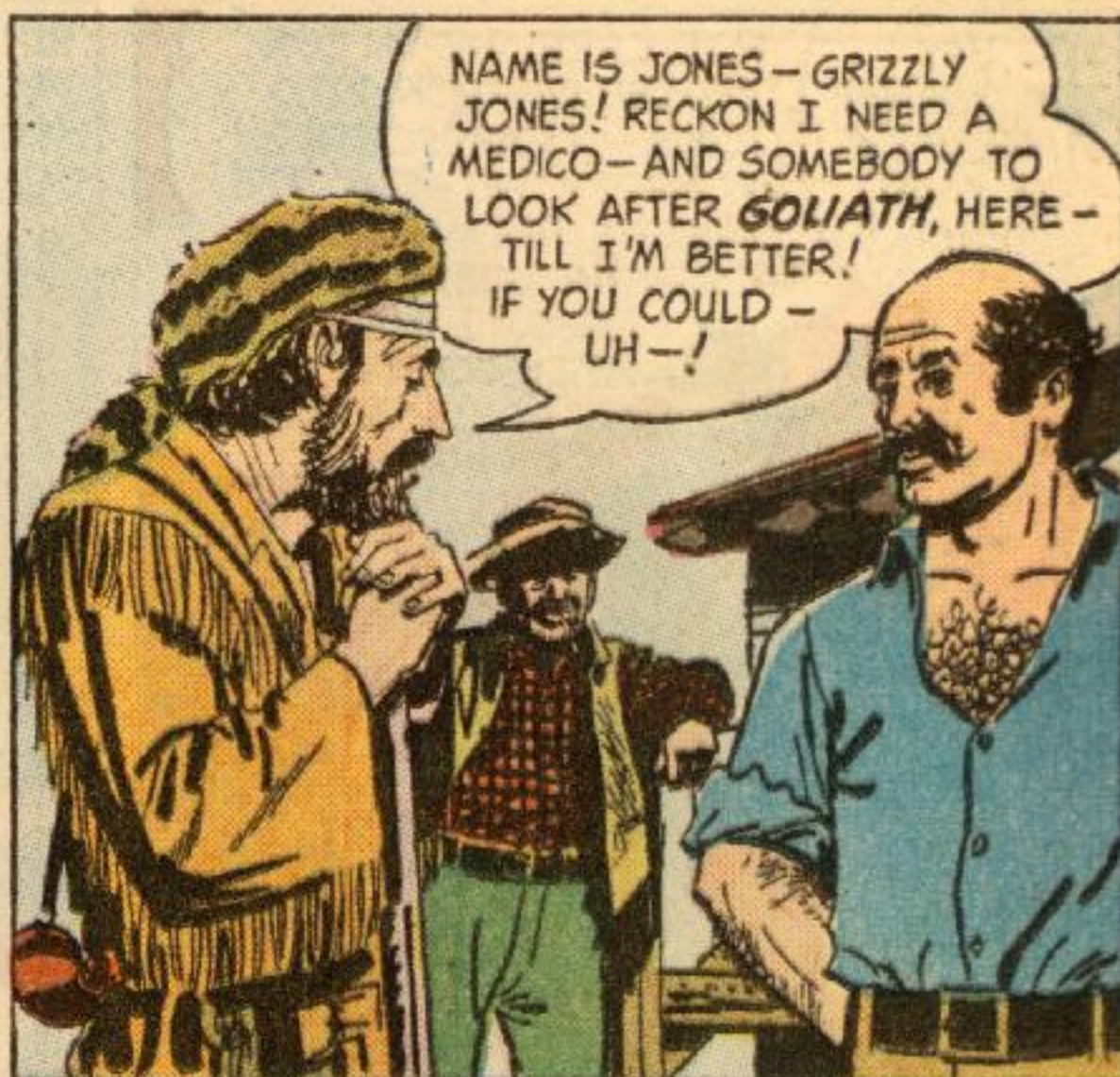
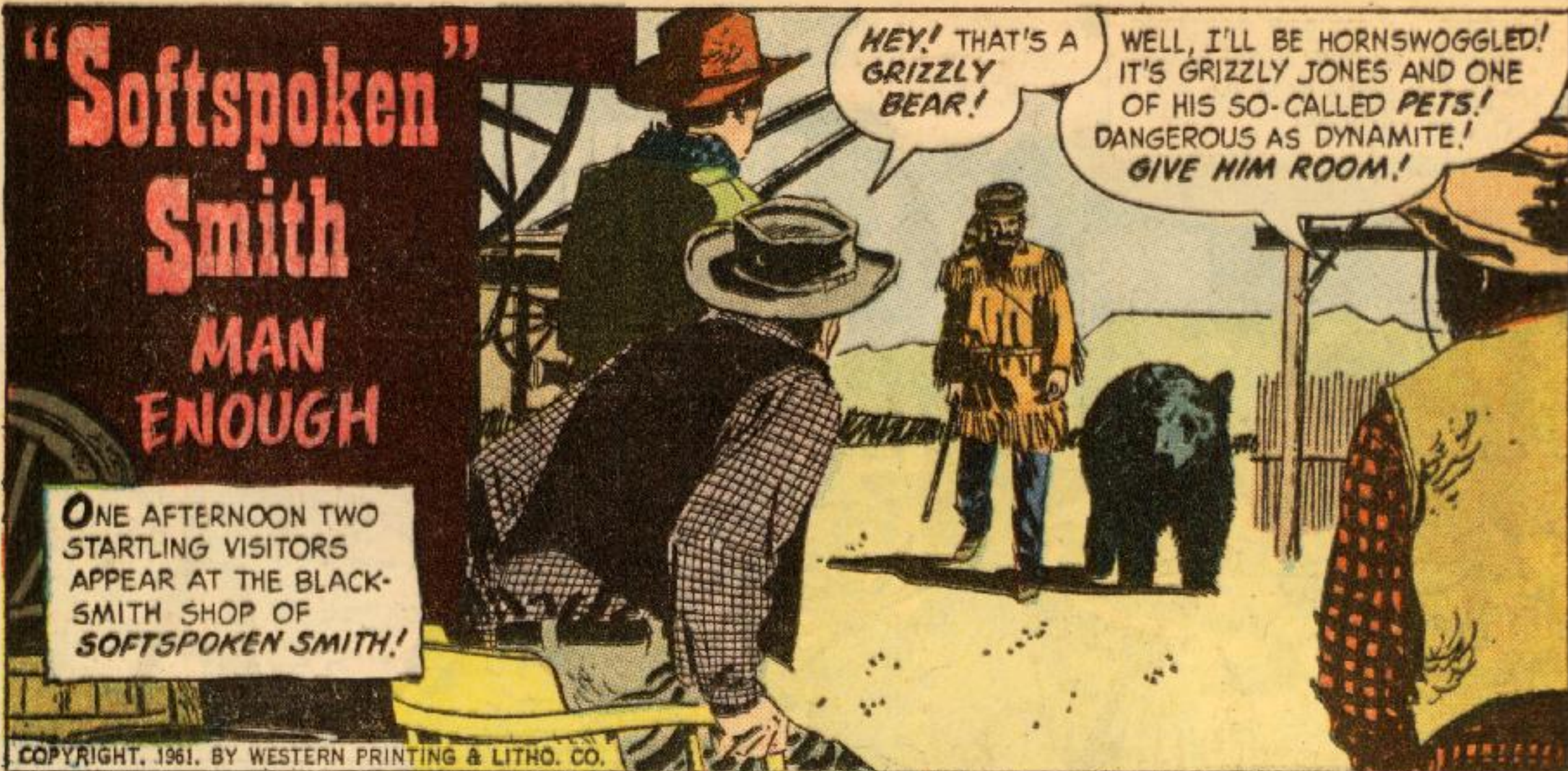


THE END

"Softspoken" Smith MAN ENOUGH

ONE AFTERNOON TWO STARTLING VISITORS APPEAR AT THE BLACK-SMITH SHOP OF **SOFTSPOKEN SMITH!**

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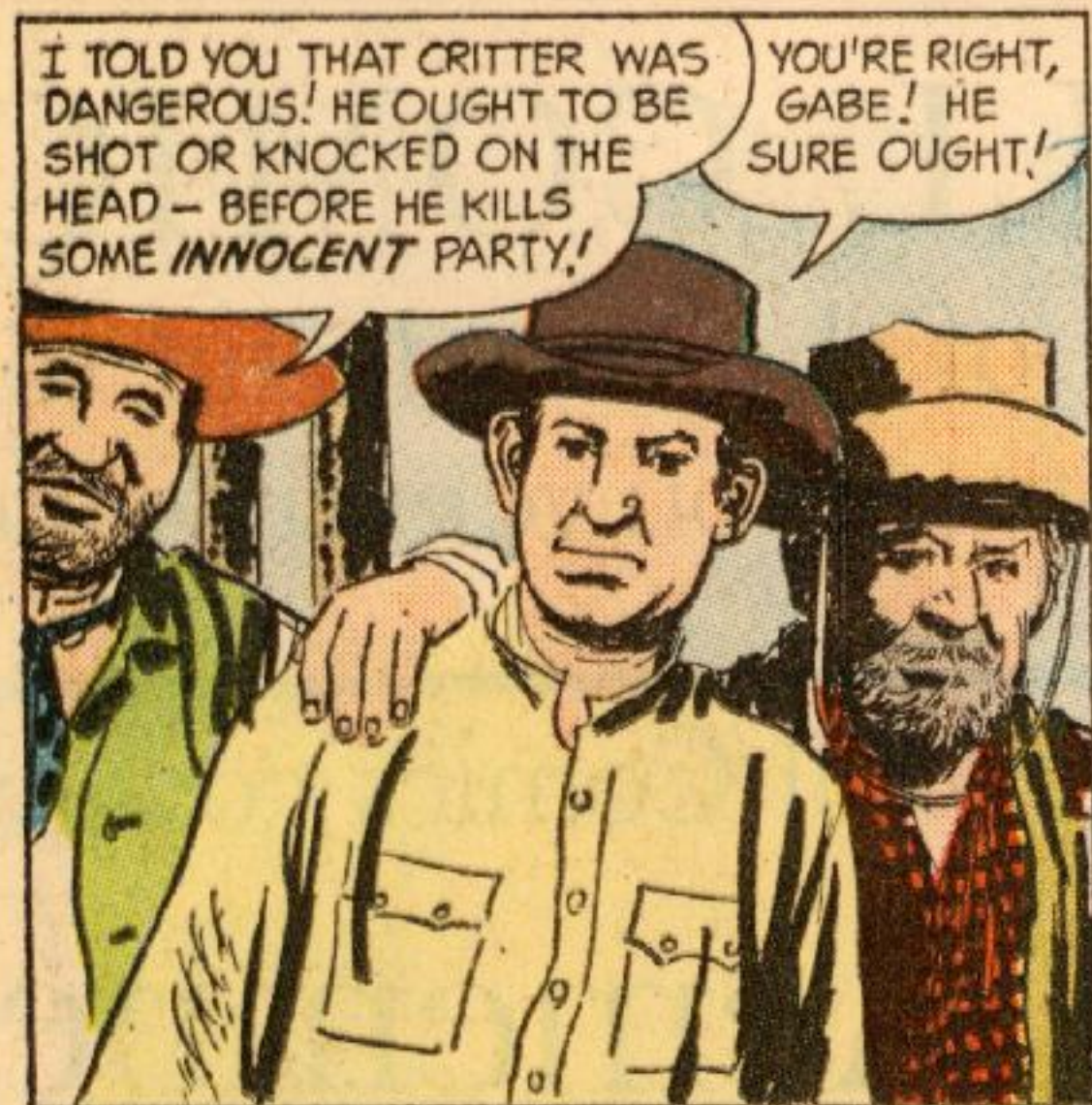


SIT DOWN, MR. JONES!
LET ME HAVE A LOOK
AT YOUR HURT!



IT LOOKS AS IF YOUR
BEAR HAD SWATTED YOU
TOO HARD, JONES! THAT'S
A BAD WOUND—
STARTING TO BE
POISONED!

MMM! NOT GOLIATH'S
FAULT! I HAPPENED—
TO STEP ON HIS TOES—
WHILE WE WERE
WRESTLING... MMMH!



I TOLD YOU THAT CRITTER WAS
DANGEROUS! HE OUGHT TO BE
SHOT OR KNOCKED ON THE
HEAD—BEFORE HE KILLS
SOME *INNOCENT* PARTY!

YOU'RE RIGHT,
GABE! HE
SURE OUGHT!



HERE, MATT! NEXT TO SAM SMITH YOU'RE THE
STRONGEST MAN IN SIGHT! WHACK THE CRITTER ON
THE HEAD, WHILE JONES ISN'T LOOKING! JONES IS
TOO SICK TO HANDLE THAT GRIZZLY,
ANYWAY!—AND IF HE
TURNS UGLY IT
COULD BE A
MASSACRE!



QUIT THAT,
YOU IDIOT!
MATT!

GARRRH!



A LIGHTNING-QUICK SWIPE OF THE GRIZZLY'S PAW SENDS
THE SLEDGE HAMMER SPINNING.

POUFF!

YEOW!

STORY CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGES!



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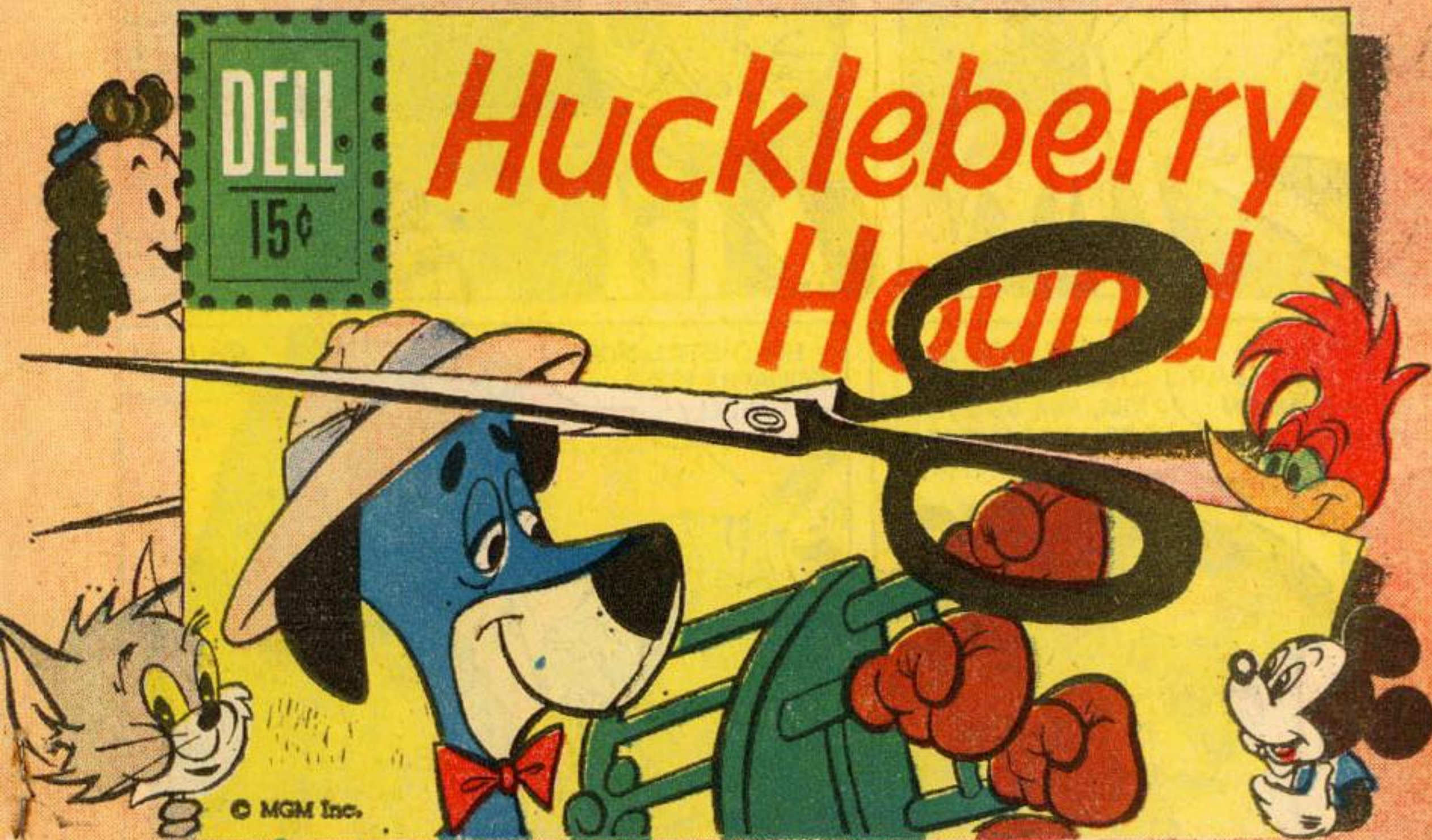
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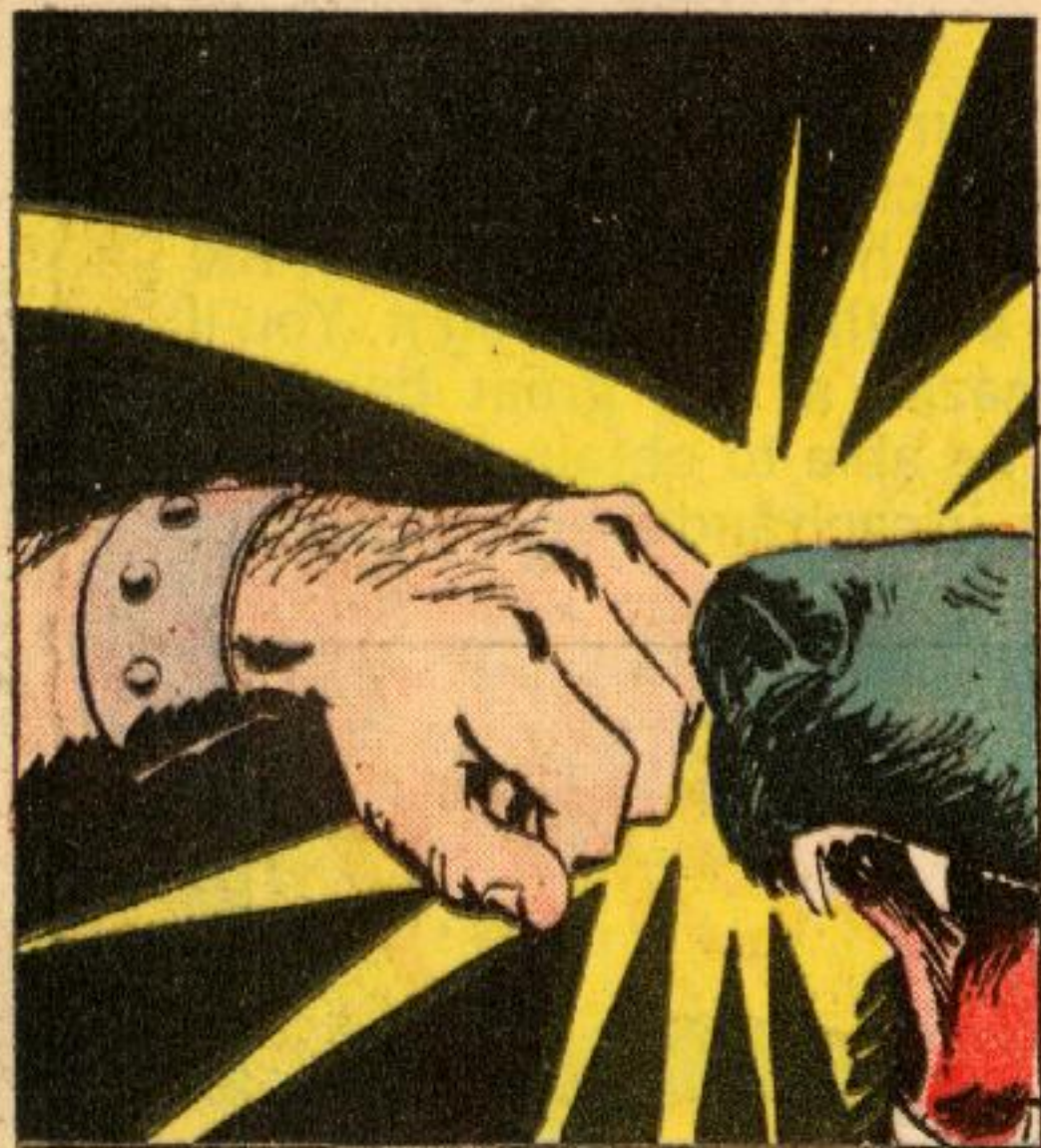
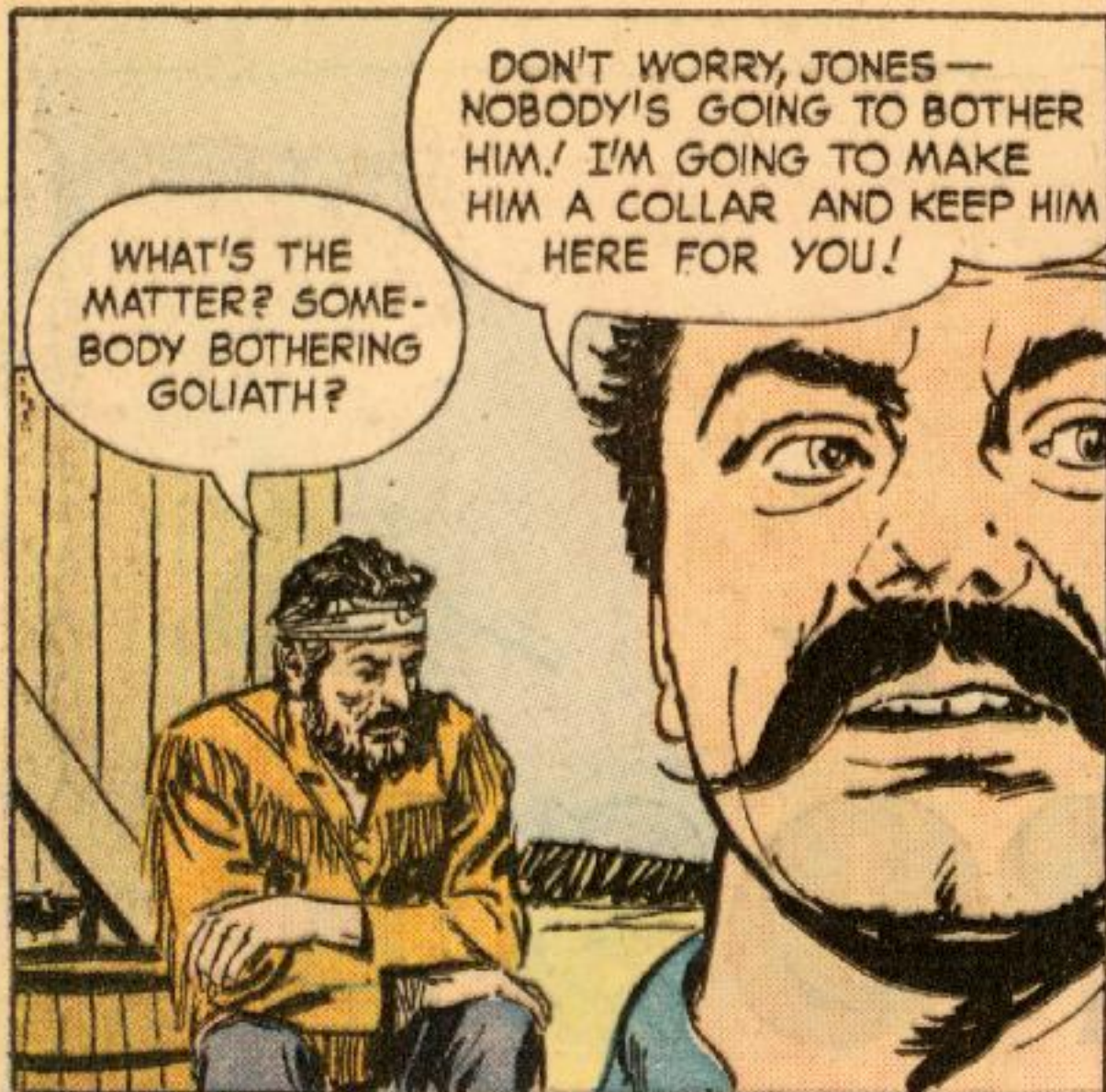
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A HANDFUL OF FINE ASHES FROM THE FORGE MOMENTARILY FILLS THE MONSTER'S EYES AND NOSE.

ALL RIGHT—WE'LL STOP **THAT** FOOLISHNESS!

THERE! IT'S ON, AND YOU'LL GET USE TO IT, GOLIATH!

CLICK

CHAUFF!
AH-CHOUFF!
AH-CHOUFF!

I'M CHAINING GOLIATH TO THIS SPARE ANVIL, JONES—INSIDE, WHERE PEOPLE WON'T BOTHER HIM!

MEBBE THAT'S BEST—THOUGH HE'S NEVER BEEN TIED UP BEFORE!

WE'LL GET ALONG! HERE—YOU CAN SHARE MY LUNCH, FELLOW! NO HARD FEELINGS?

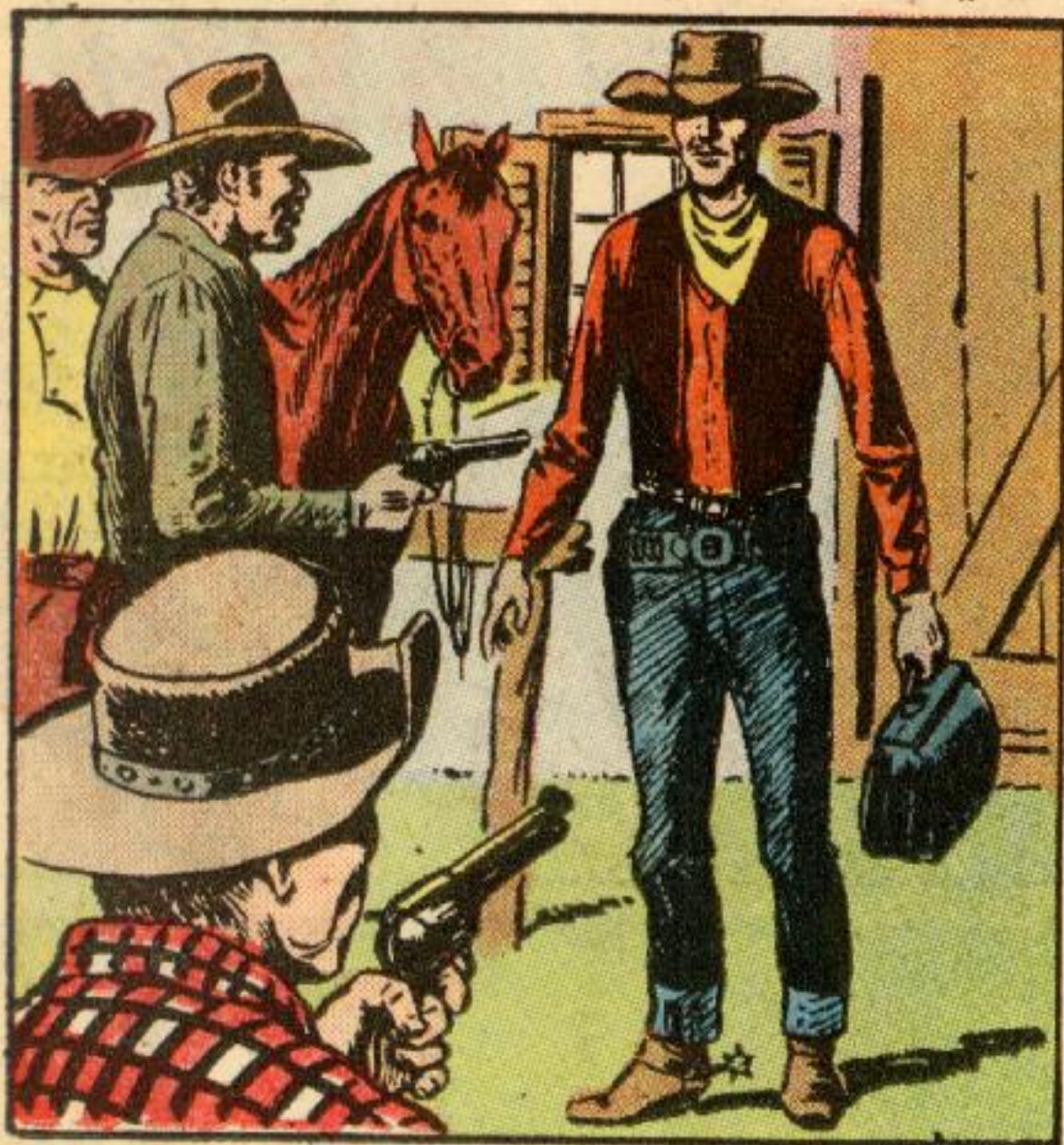
UMPH!

NOW, BOYS, YOU CAN HELP MR. JONES DOWN TO DOC PETERS, BEFORE HE GETS ANY SICKER. DOC WILL FIX HIM UP!

UH-OKEY, SAM! BUT I **STILL** SAY YOU'RE CRAZY TO FOOL WITH A LIVE **GRIZZLY BEAR!** AS CRAZY AS JONES HERE!

HUH-HUH! NOT CRAZY, BOYS—JUST STRONG ENOUGH—AND **MAN** ENOUGH NOT TO BE AFRAID! I RAISED THAT BEAR FROM A CUB—AND I KNOW WHAT IT TAKES!

Outlaw's Error



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Before Red Kelso robbed the bank at Sunday Crossing, he stayed a week in town, casing the place and the country round about.

It made no sense, he thought, to hit a bank and ride out under a hail of bullets. If you weren't gunned down before you cleared town, you'd have a sheriff's posse on your trail afterwards.

Red wouldn't have to outride a posse, to trust his life to the staying powers of a getaway horse. He'd use two horses, and on the second, he'd be as safe and unsuspected as a preacher.

Ringling the preacher in on the robbery had been Red's master stroke. He'd discovered an old circuit-riding parson who lived an easy day's ride from town. The preacher's cabin in lonely Dolomite Canyon would be an ideal place to hide out the first night while the hunt raged. After that, Red could proceed on his way, unsuspected . . .

Holding to his plan, Red slipped out of town the day before his robbery. He bought a horse in a neighboring town. It was a big hammerhead roan that would be readily remembered by anyone who saw it. Only Red was careful not to let any-

one in Sunday Crossing see it. He approached the town by night and staked the horse in an aspen thicket near a river bank. Then he waded the shallow river and walked into town.

He robbed the bank in the early morning as soon as it opened. It was easy. He just put his gun on the frightened cashier and made him open the safe. Then Red scooped up the money, put it in a carpet-bag, and walked out. He walked directly to the hitchrail along the wooden sidewalk and untied a horse. He didn't know whose horse it was. He didn't care. Before robbing the bank, his knowing eyes had run along the horses standing there. He had picked out this particular horse for two reasons. It looked to be fast. And in appearance, this black-and-white, was about as different from the hammerhead roan as any horse could be.

Red was astride the horse and riding before the alarm was sounded from the bank. A few haphazard shots were put in the air, and Red put a few back—and that was all there was to it. Red got clean away, precisely as he had planned.

At the river in the aspen thicket he left his stolen getaway horse, and changed to the horse he had staked out there. He made the change in the riverbed to cover the tracks. Then he gave the stolen horse a slap which sent him running into the woods. Red mounted the hammerhead and rode off in the other direction.

He chuckled to himself. By the time the sheriff's posse had found the riderless horse, he would be far away on a horse no one could possibly mistake for the getaway animal . . .

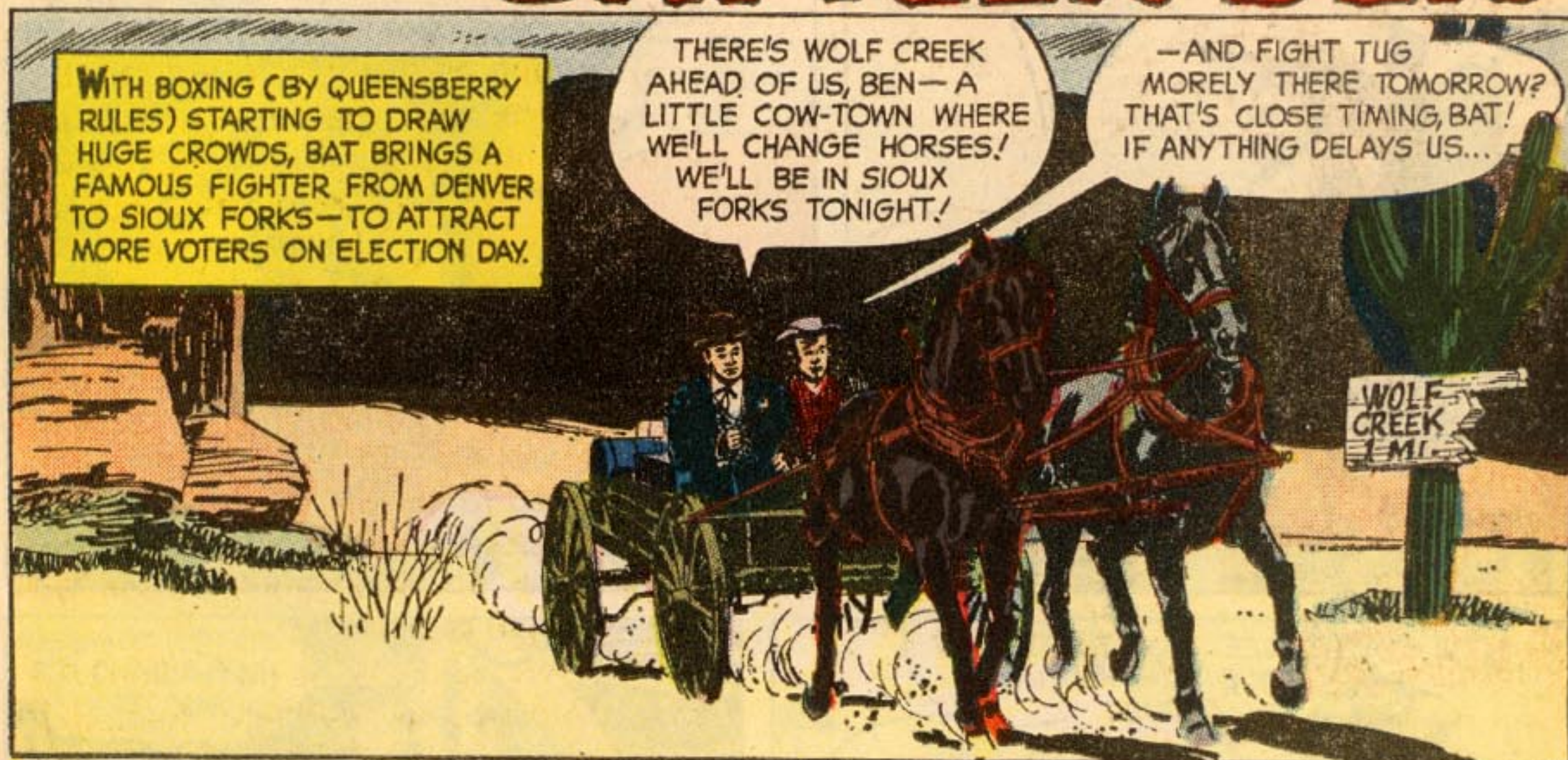
Red arrived with his bank swag at the preacher's cabin, leisurely, and as any traveler seeking shelter for the night.

The sheriff's posse found him there, in the act of knocking at the door. They put him in handcuffs and took the money and headed him back to town.

Dazed and dejected, Red asked, "How did you know to look for me here?"

The sheriff chuckled. "The horse you stole at the hitchrail was the preacher's. He headed for home when you turned him loose. We followed."

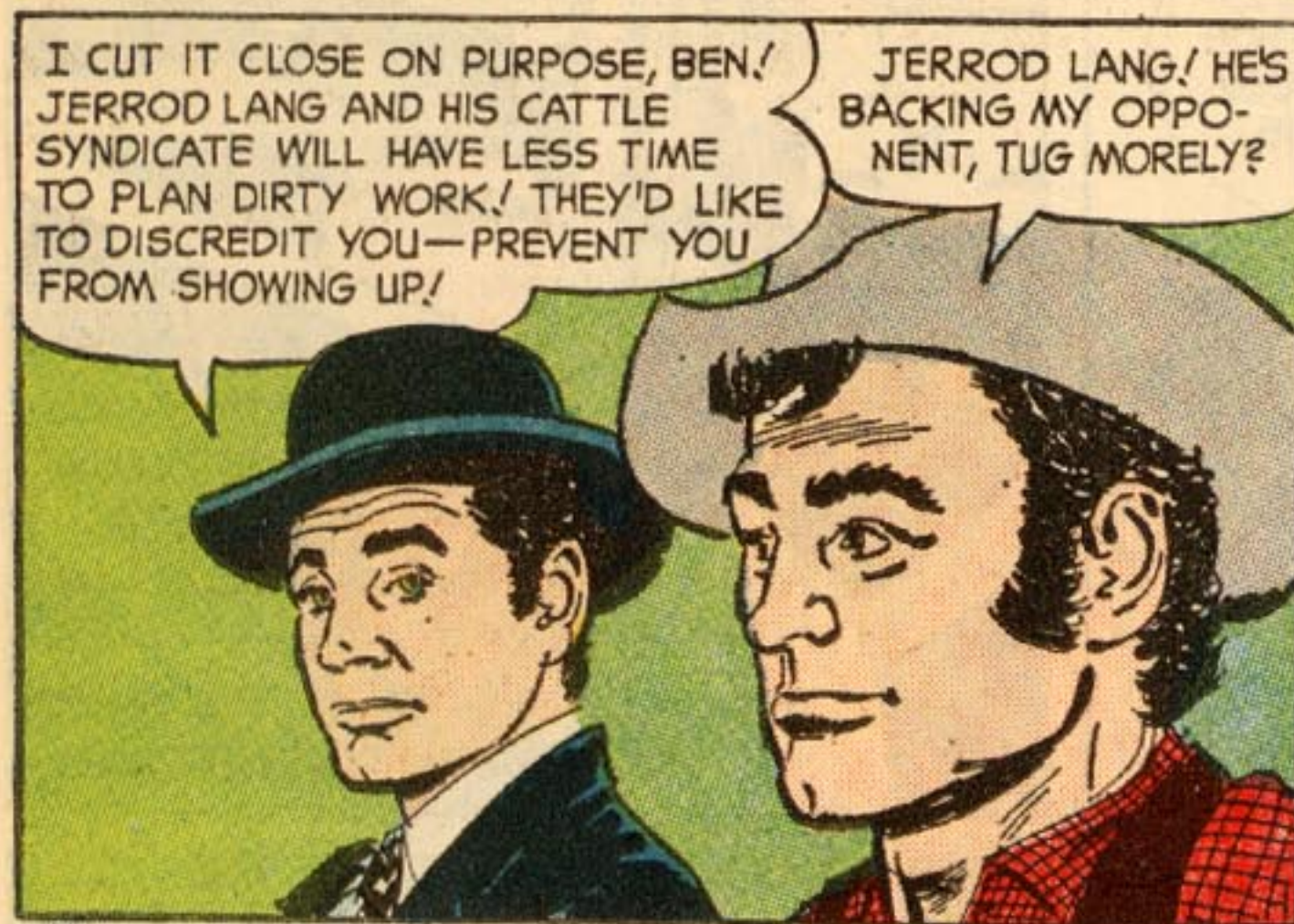
THE GLOVES OF BATTLER BEN



WITH BOXING (BY QUEENSBERRY RULES) STARTING TO DRAW HUGE CROWDS, BAT BRINGS A FAMOUS FIGHTER FROM DENVER TO SIOUX FORKS—TO ATTRACT MORE VOTERS ON ELECTION DAY.

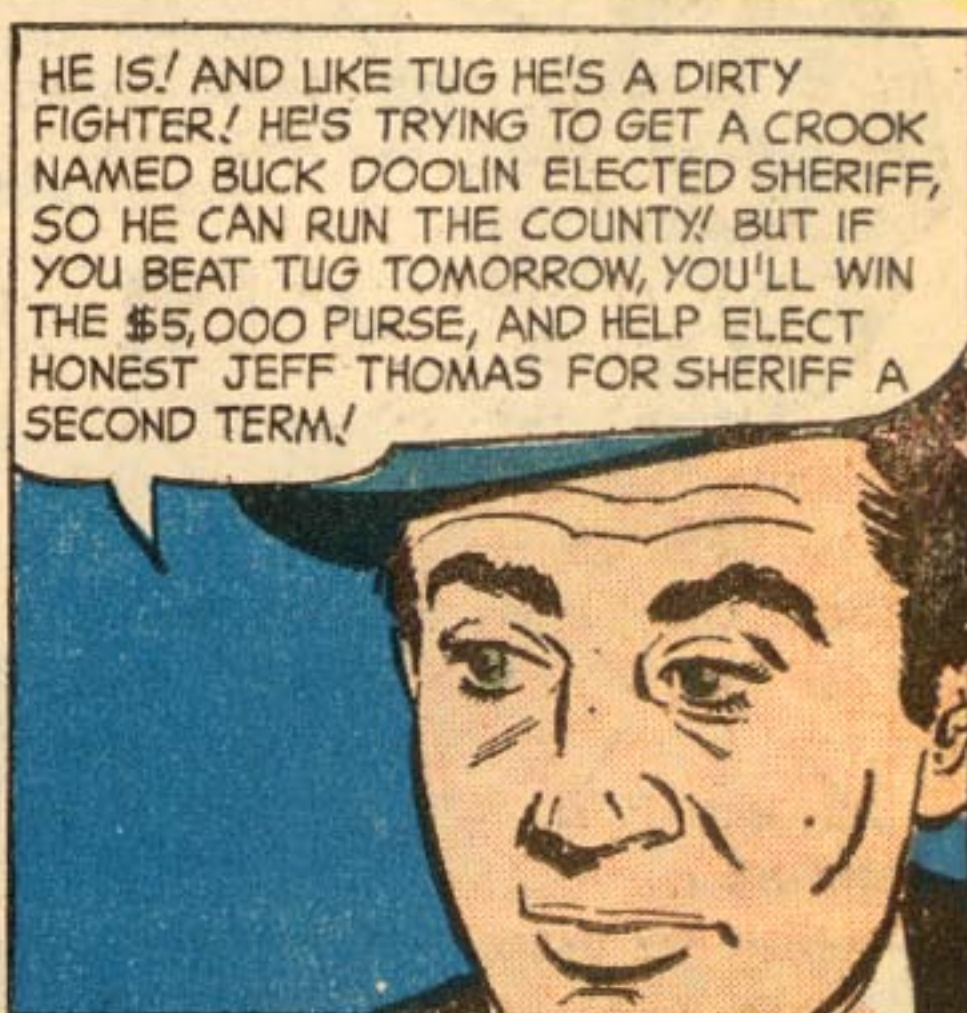
THERE'S WOLF CREEK AHEAD OF US, BEN—A LITTLE COW-TOWN WHERE WE'LL CHANGE HORSES! WE'LL BE IN SIOUX FORKS TONIGHT!

—AND FIGHT TUG MORELY THERE TOMORROW? THAT'S CLOSE TIMING, BAT! IF ANYTHING DELAYS US...

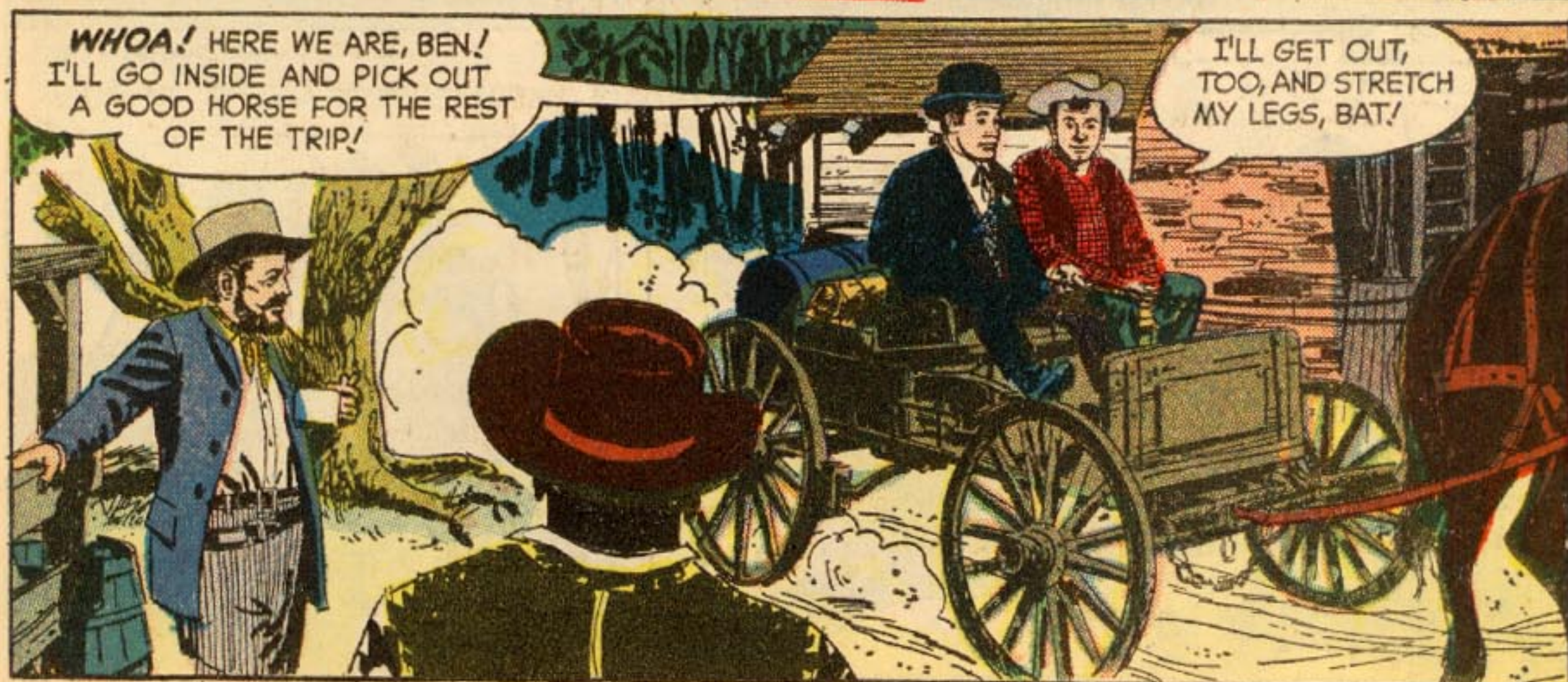


I CUT IT CLOSE ON PURPOSE, BEN! JERROD LANG AND HIS CATTLE SYNDICATE WILL HAVE LESS TIME TO PLAN DIRTY WORK! THEY'D LIKE TO DISCREDIT YOU—PREVENT YOU FROM SHOWING UP!

JERROD LANG! HE'S BACKING MY OPPONENT, TUG MORELY?

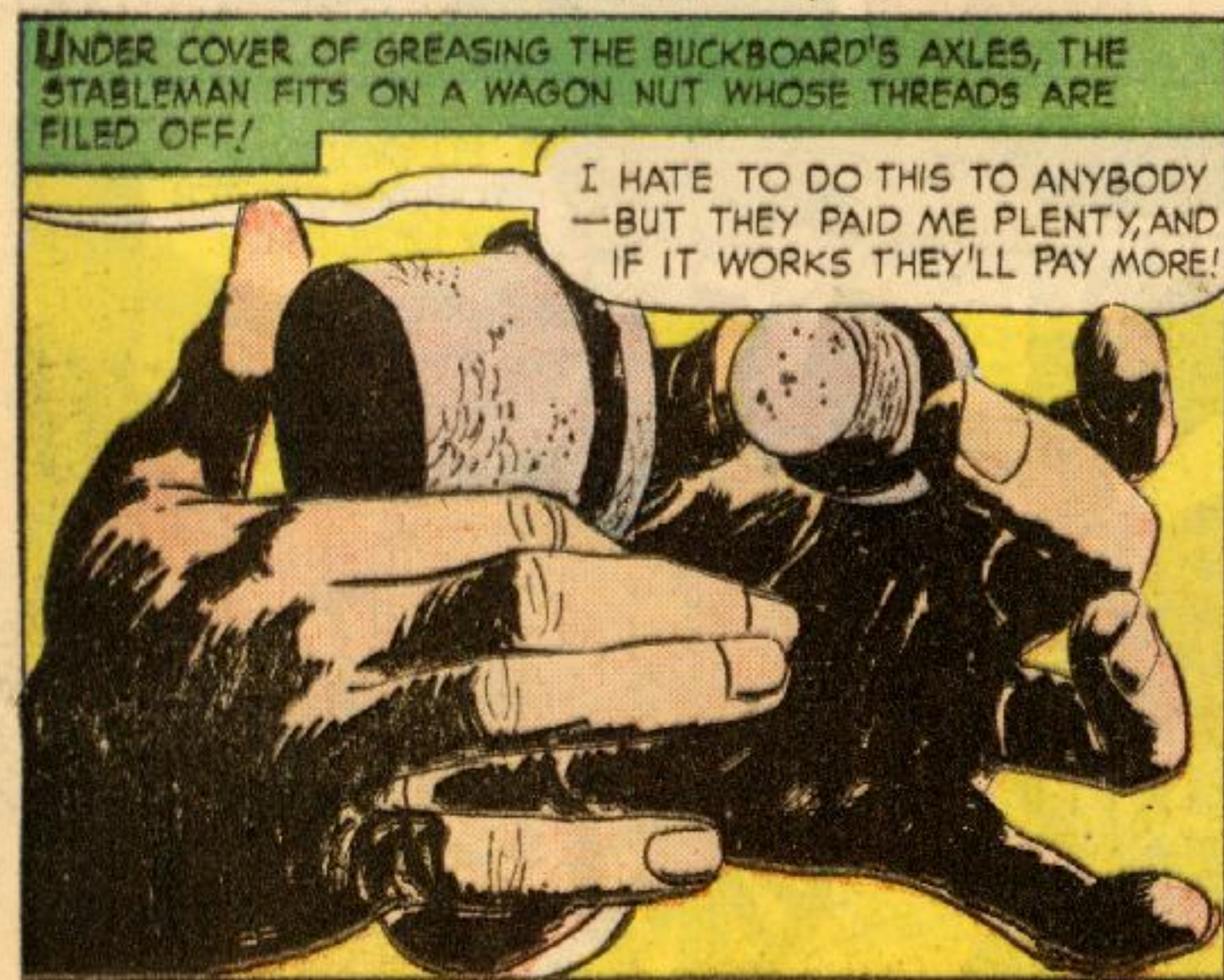
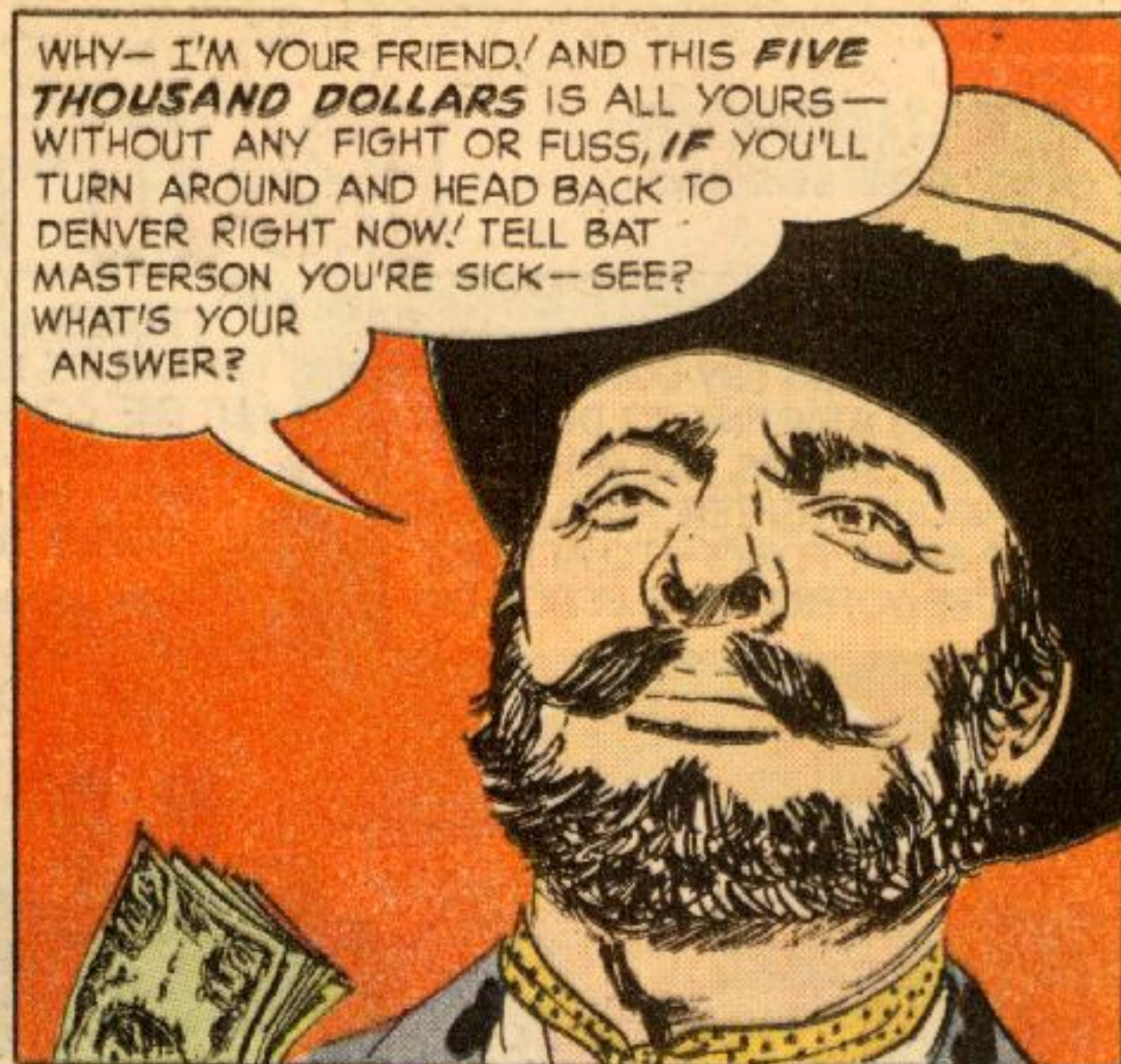
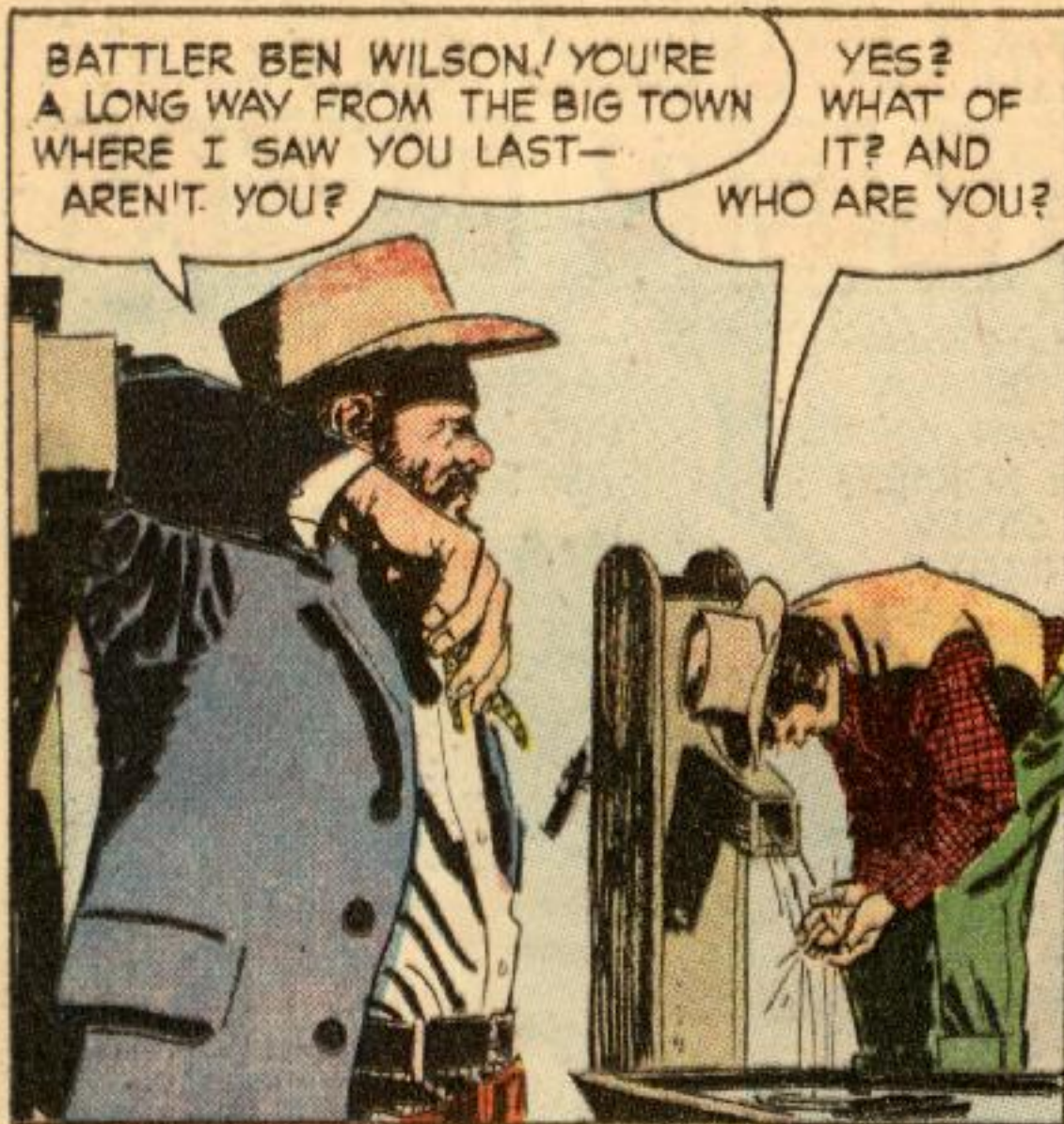


HE IS! AND LIKE TUG HE'S A DIRTY FIGHTER! HE'S TRYING TO GET A CROOK NAMED BUCK DOOLIN ELECTED SHERIFF, SO HE CAN RUN THE COUNTY! BUT IF YOU BEAT TUG TOMORROW, YOU'LL WIN THE \$5,000 PURSE, AND HELP ELECT HONEST JEFF THOMAS FOR SHERIFF A SECOND TERM!



WHOA! HERE WE ARE, BEN! I'LL GO INSIDE AND PICK OUT A GOOD HORSE FOR THE REST OF THE TRIP!

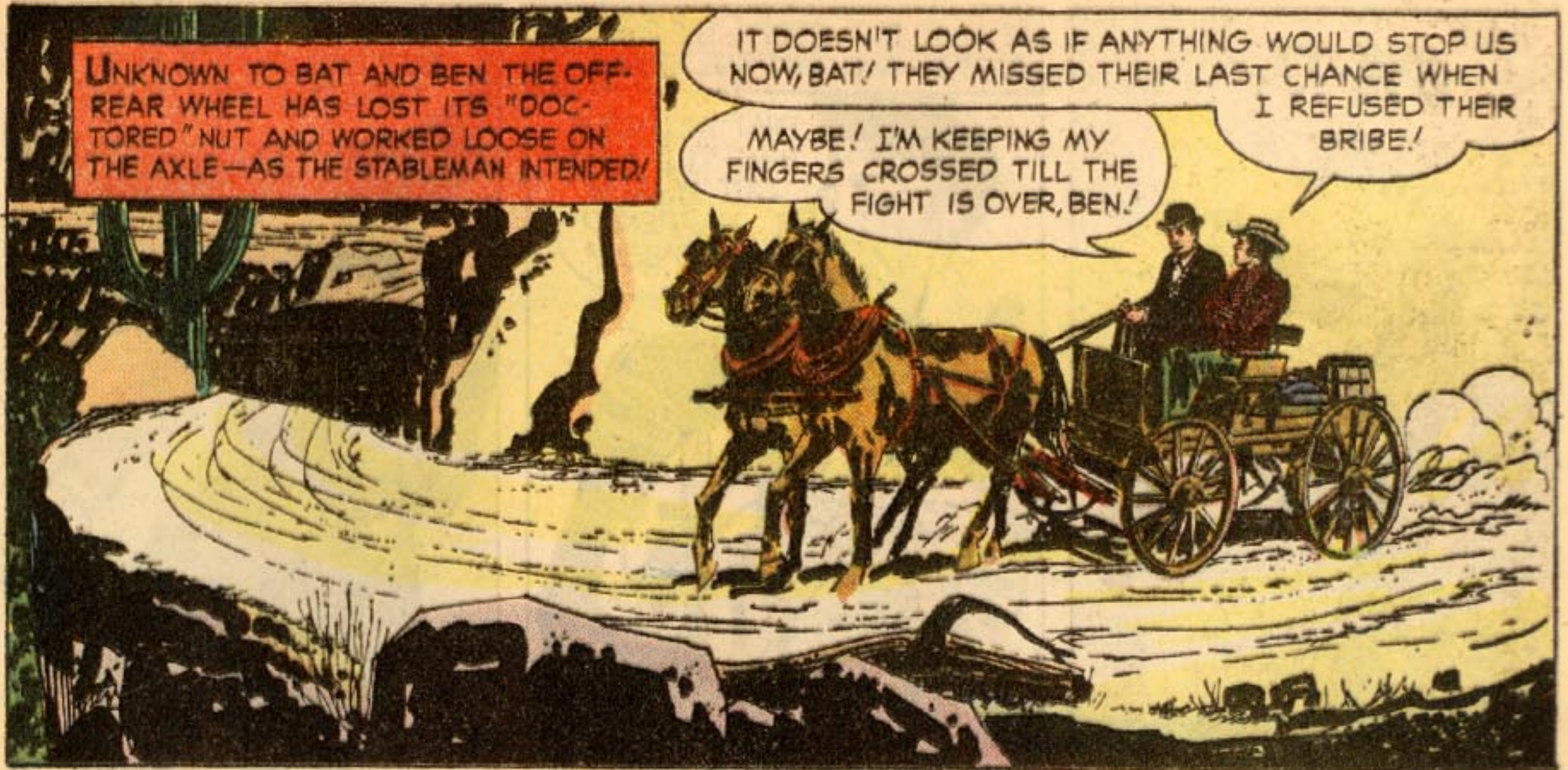
I'LL GET OUT, TOO, AND STRETCH MY LEGS, BAT!



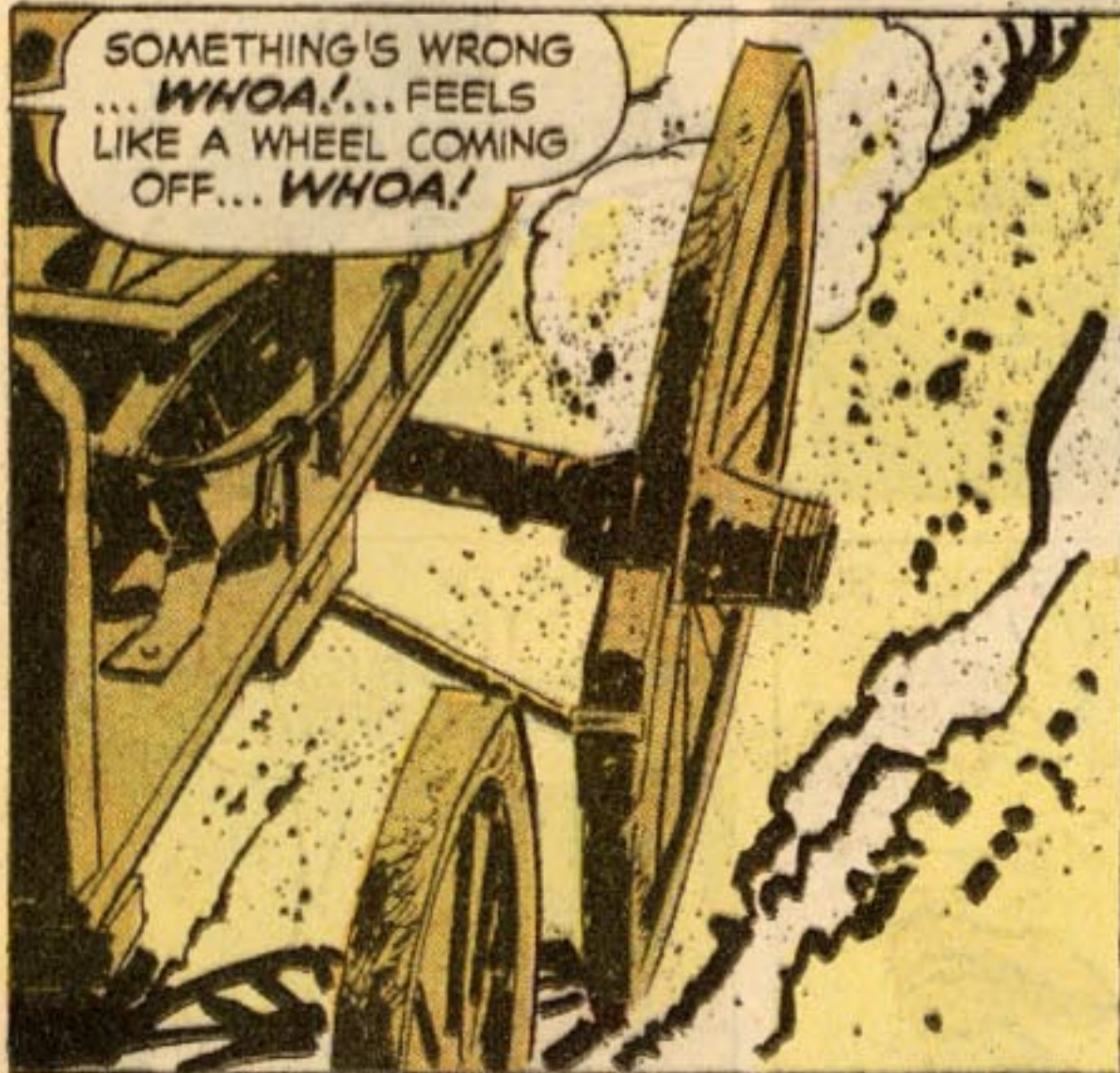
UNKNOWN TO BAT AND BEN THE OFF-REAR WHEEL HAS LOST ITS "DOCTORED" NUT AND WORKED LOOSE ON THE AXLE—AS THE STABLEMAN INTENDED!

IT DOESN'T LOOK AS IF ANYTHING WOULD STOP US NOW, BAT! THEY MISSED THEIR LAST CHANCE WHEN I REFUSED THEIR BRIBE!

MAYBE! I'M KEEPING MY FINGERS CROSSED TILL THE FIGHT IS OVER, BEN!



SOMETHING'S WRONG ... **WHOA!** ... FEELS LIKE A WHEEL COMING OFF ... **WHOA!**



HEY!

BEN!



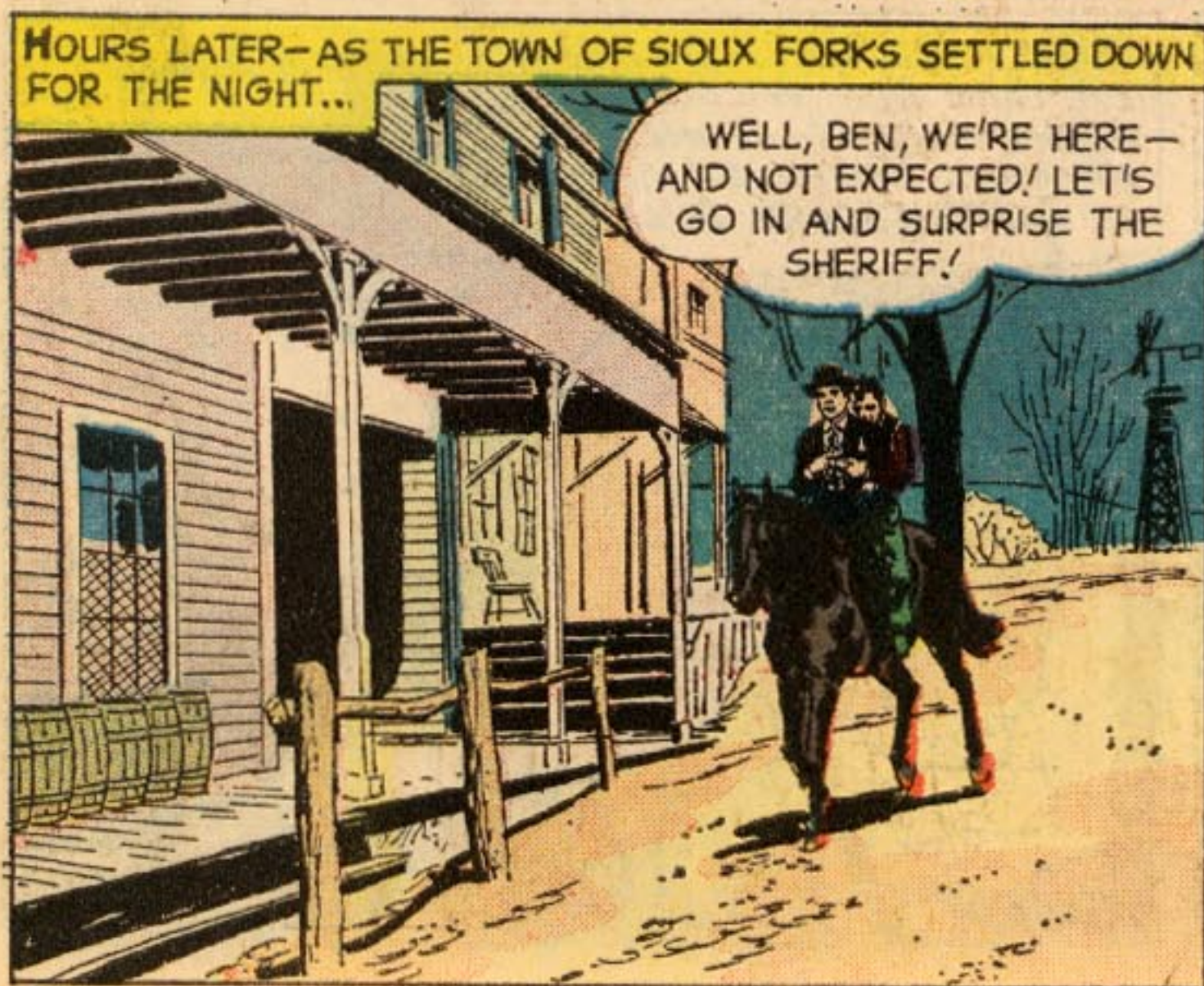
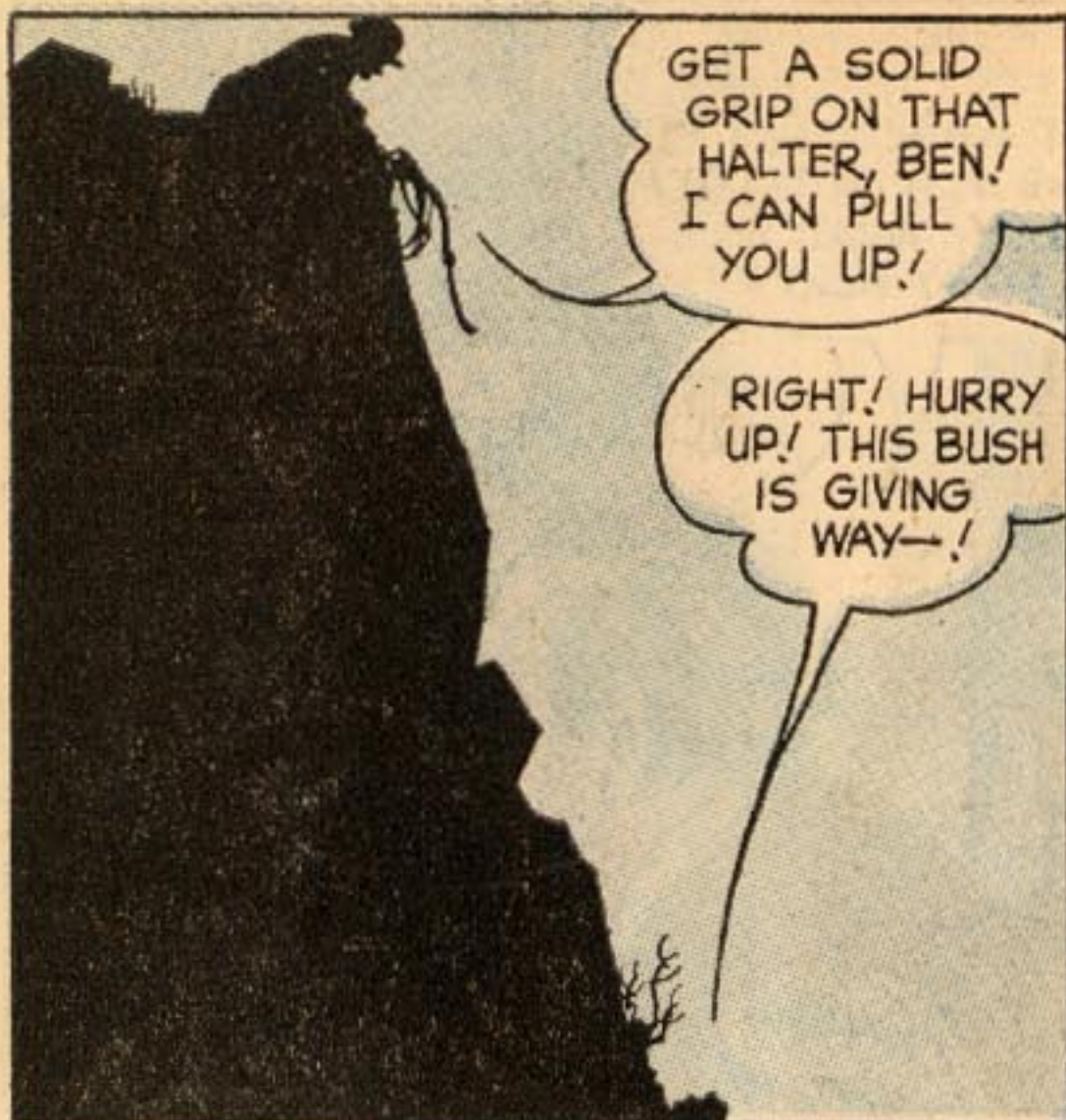
WHOA!
WHOA-UP,
BOY!
SSSS-WHOA!



BAT!
HELP!



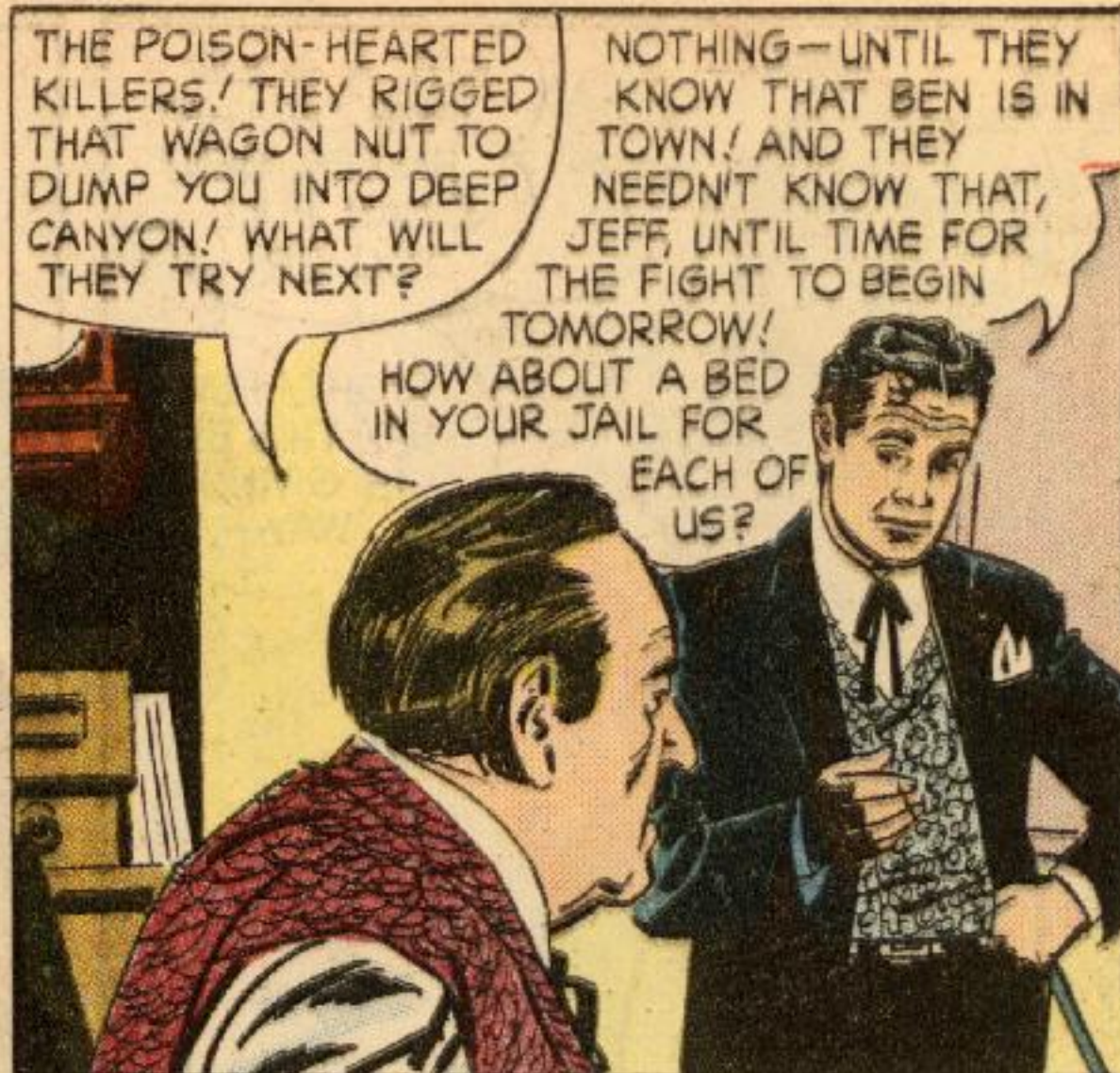






SOMETHING **DID** HAPPEN TO US, JEFF—BUT NOT QUITE THE WAY JERROD LANG'S BUNCH FIGURED IT WOULD! I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT!

THE MAIN THING IS—YOU **BOTH** GOT HERE—IN SPIITE OF THEM!



THE POISON-HEARTED KILLERS! THEY RIGGED THAT WAGON NUT TO DUMP YOU INTO DEEP CANYON! WHAT WILL THEY TRY NEXT?

NOTHING—UNTIL THEY KNOW THAT BEN IS IN TOWN! AND THEY NEEDN'T KNOW THAT, JEFF, UNTIL TIME FOR THE FIGHT TO BEGIN TOMORROW!

HOW ABOUT A BED IN YOUR JAIL FOR EACH OF US?



AT ONE-FIFTY-EIGHT O'CLOCK THE NEXT AFTERNOON...

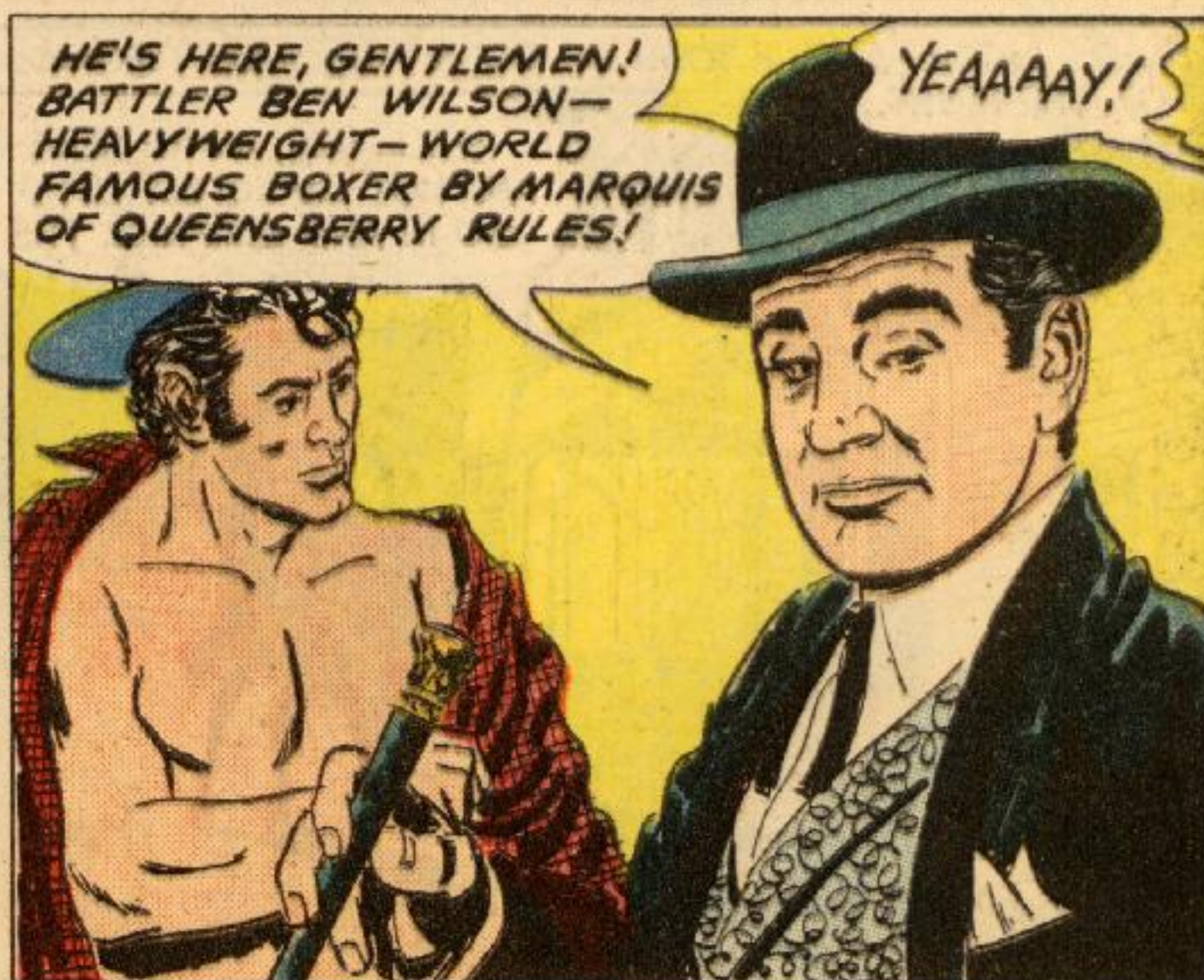
FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, IT IS JUST TWO MINUTES TO THE SCHEDULED TIME FOR THE FIGHT! IF TUG MORELY'S OPPONENT FAILS TO APPEAR, TUG WINS BY DEFAULT YOUR \$5,000!

WHERE'S BAT MASTERSON? HE PROMOTED THIS FIGHT, JERROD!



HERE'S BAT NOW—WITH SHERIFF THOMAS TAGGING ALONG TO PROTECT HIM, MAYBE! WHERE'S YOUR FIGHTER, BAT?

YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW, JERROD?

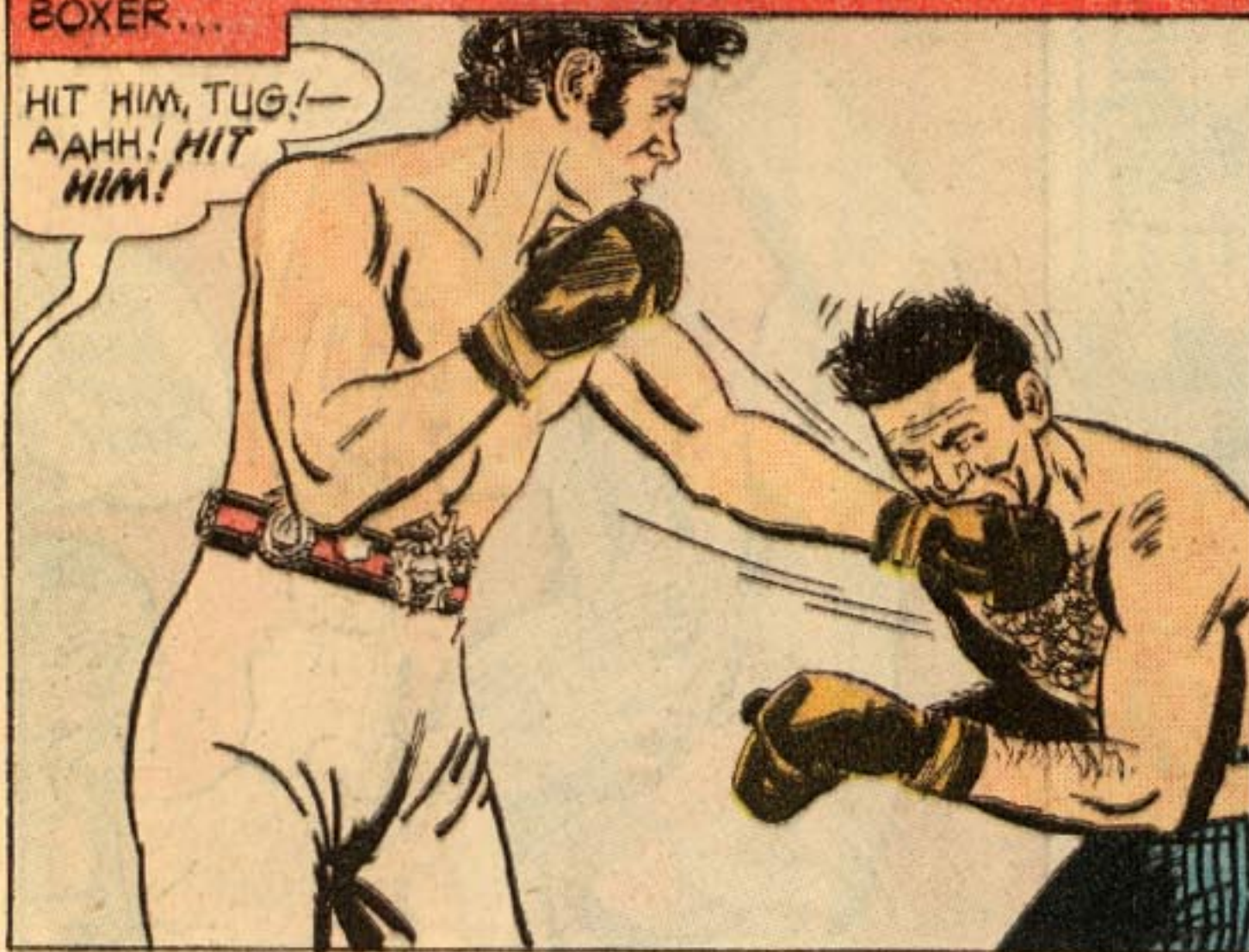


HE'S HERE, GENTLEMEN! BATTLER BEN WILSON—HEAVYWEIGHT—WORLD FAMOUS BOXER BY MARQUIS OF QUEENSBERRY RULES!

YEAAYAY!

FROM THE FIRST, BATTLER BEN SHOWS HIMSELF THE BETTER BOXER...

HIT HIM, TUG!—
AAHH! HIT
HIM!



FOUR ROUNDS LATER...

MORLEY HAS
HARDLY REACHED
HIM TWICE, BAT!

MORLEY'S
A RANGE
BULL, JEFF! HE
CAN TAKE PUNISH-
MENT—BUT THAT'S
ABOUT ALL!

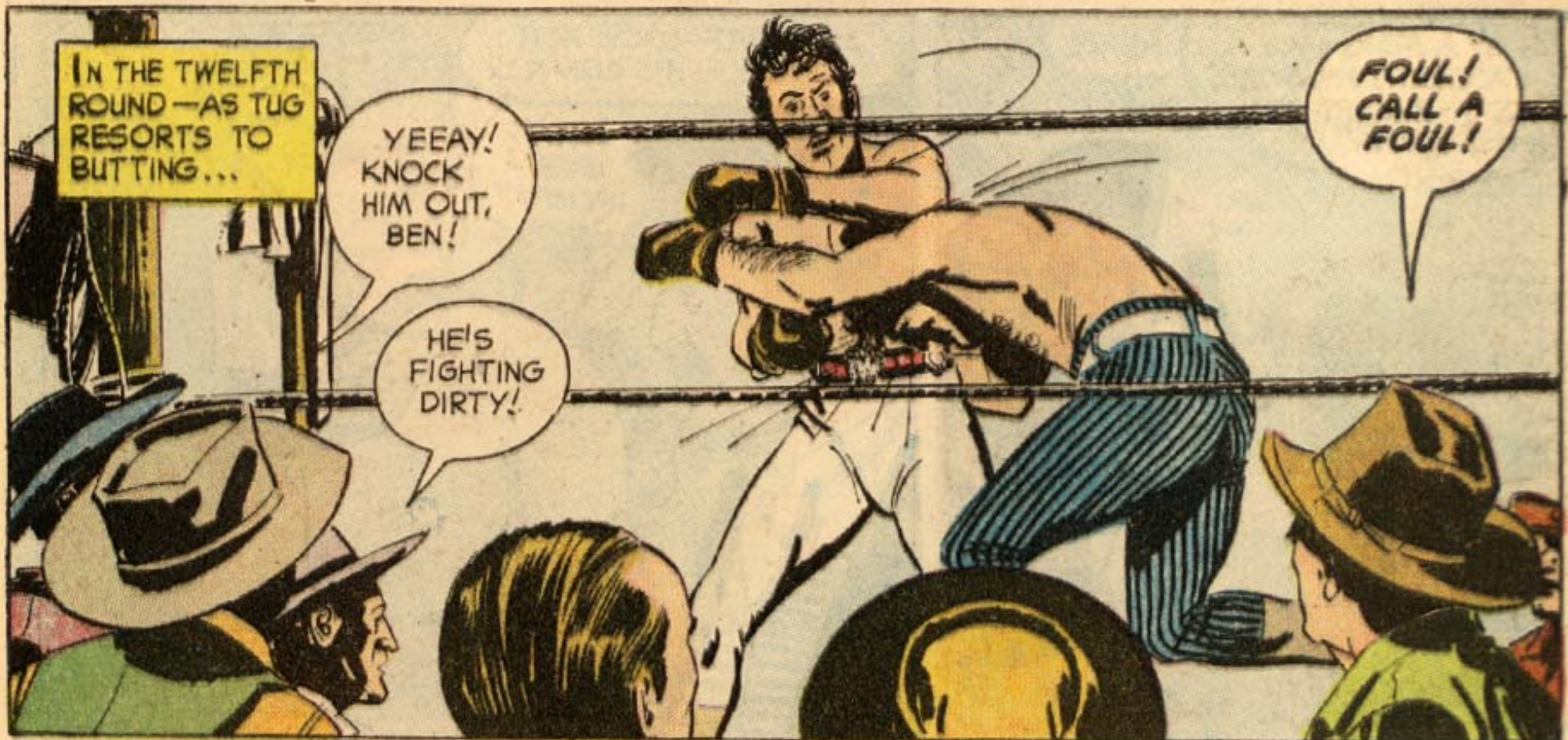


IN THE TWELFTH
ROUND—AS TUG
RESORTS TO
BUTTING...

YEEAY!
KNOCK
HIM OUT,
BEN!

HE'S
FIGHTING
DIRTY!

FOUL!
CALL A
FOUL!



JEFF— LOOK THERE— THE BIRD
WITH THE PAUNCH AND WAXED
MOUSTACHE! NAME'S KILLIAN!
AN OLD TINHORN, TOO CLEVER
WITH HIS FINGERS! WATCH HIM!

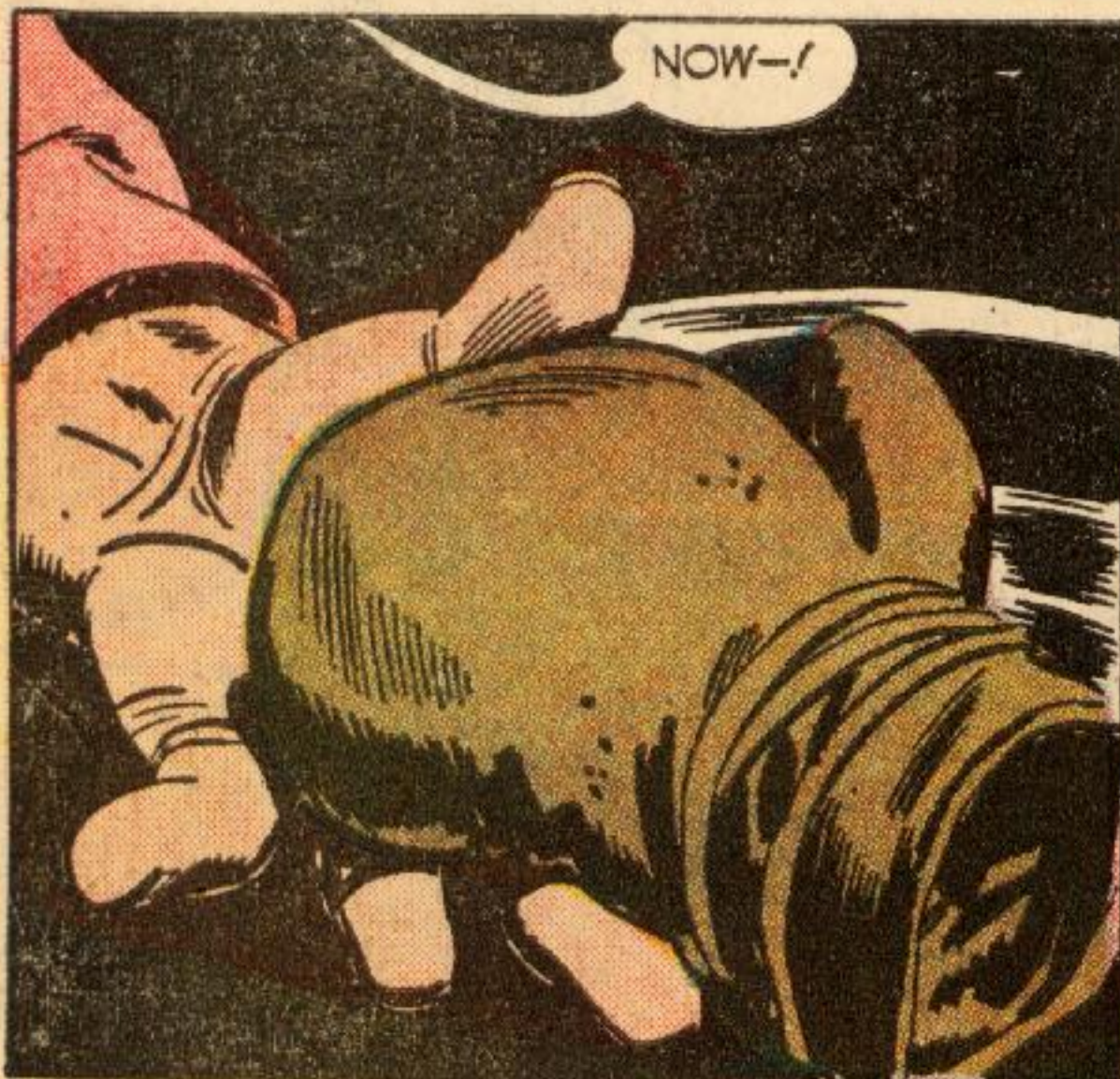
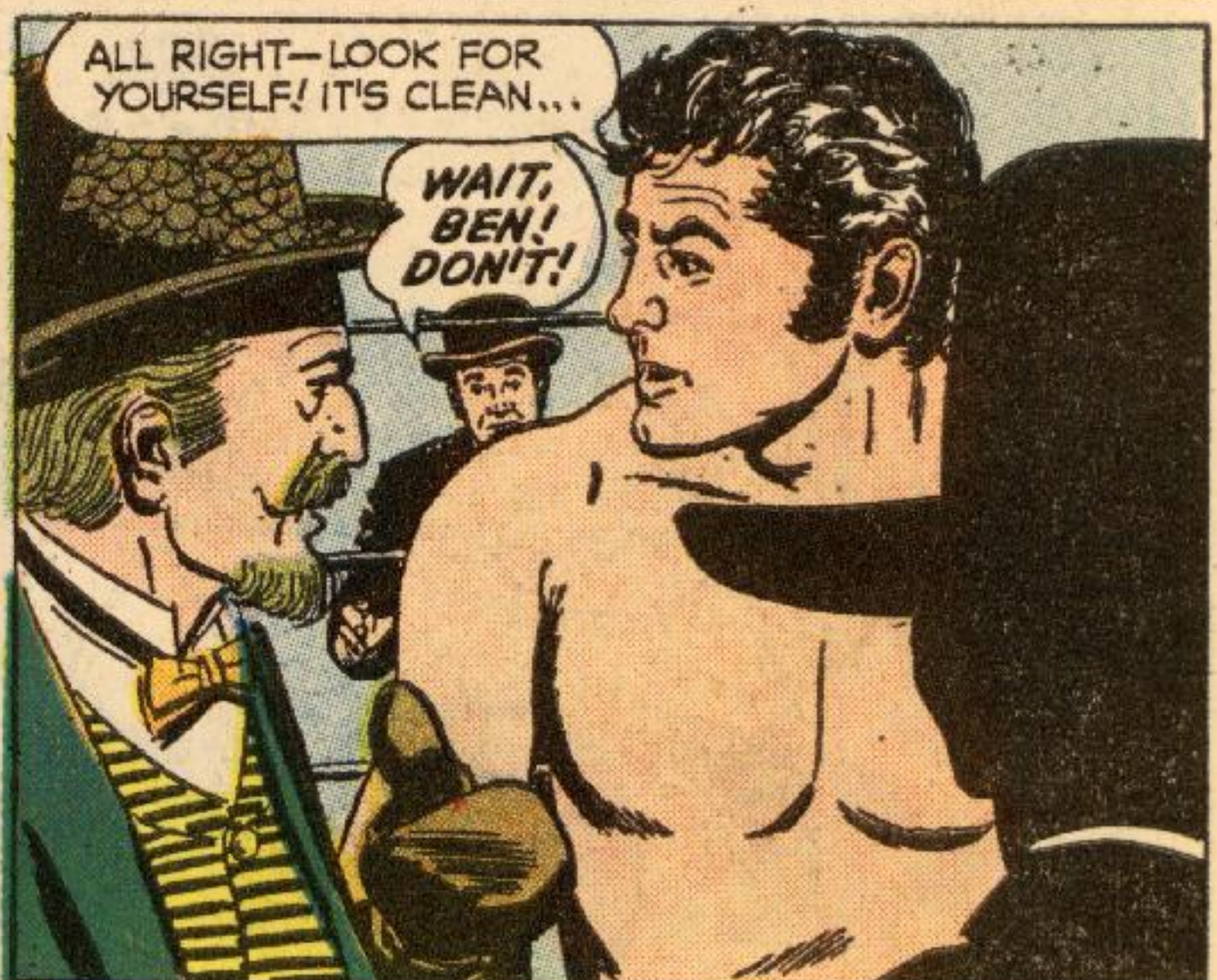
YOU MEAN— HE
MIGHT BE IN
JERROD LANG'S
PAY? BUT HE'D HAVE
NO CHANCE NOW,
BAT!

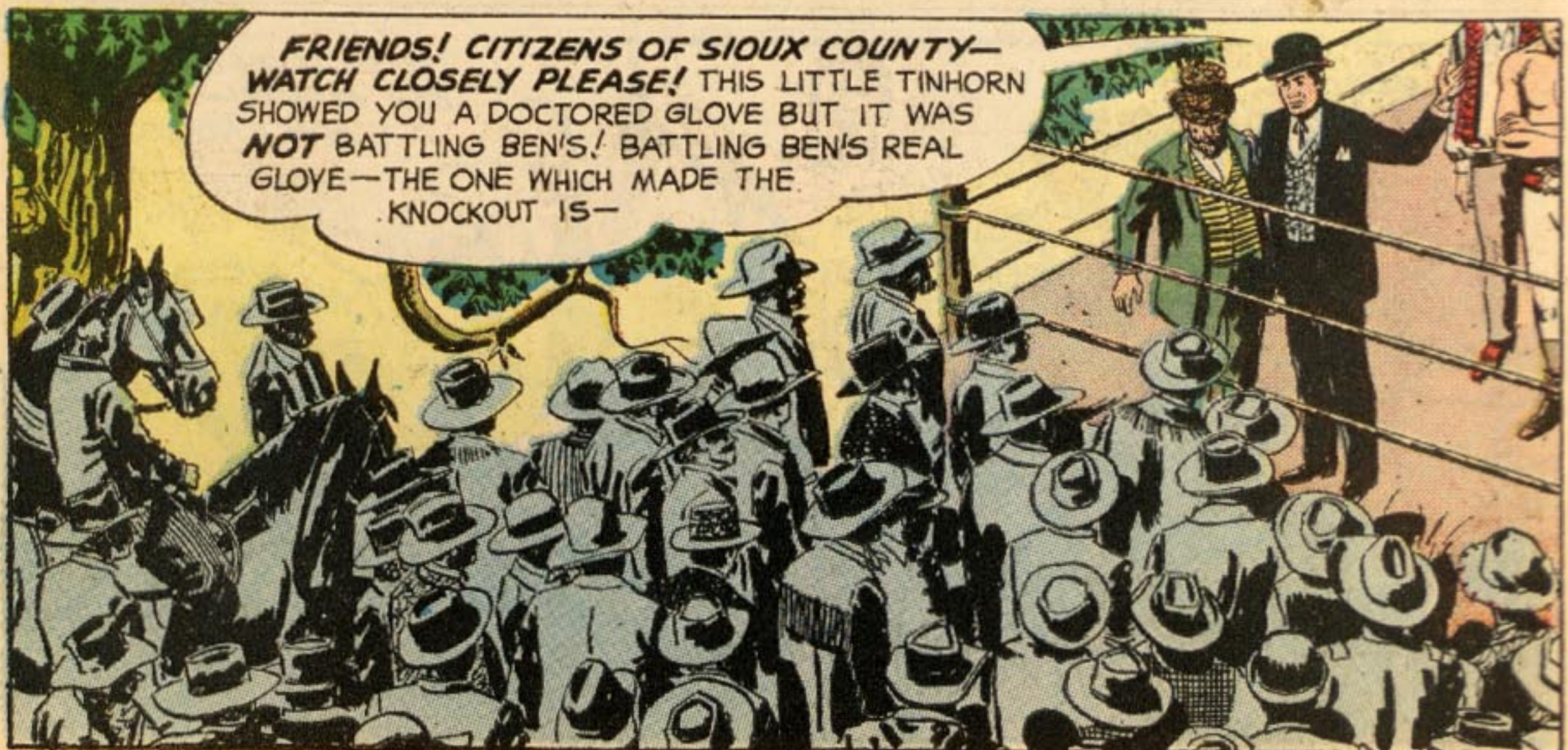


IT LOOKS AS IF
KILLIAN IS A LITTLE
TOO LATE!

YEA-A-Y!
KNOCKOUT!







- IN **HERE!** IN KILLIAN'S FALSE BELLY! LOOK, NOW...



THIS IS THE GLOVE HE TOOK FROM BATTLER BEN'S LEFT HAND! LET THE REFEREE COMPARE IT WITH THE RIGHT GLOVE BEN IS STILL WEARING!



YOU'RE RIGHT, BAT! THESE RIGHT AND LEFT GLOVES ARE THE SAME WEIGHT, COLOR— AND THE LEFT ONE IS STILL DAMP WITH SWEAT INSIDE! THE RIPPED GLOVE IS OFF-COLOR AND **DRY!**



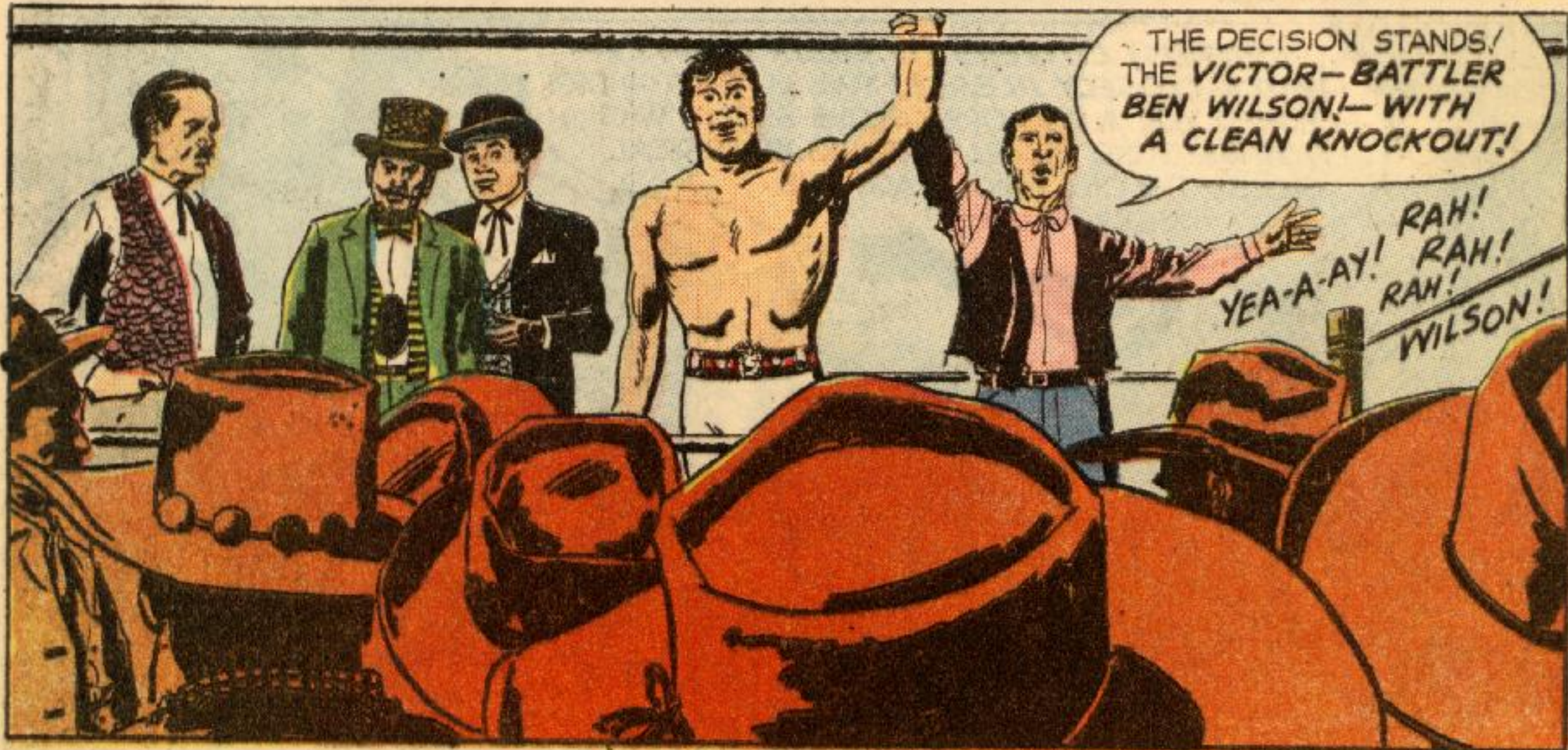
MAYBE **YOU** WERE IN CAHOOTS WITH THAT SLEIGHT-OF-HAND ARTIST, JERROD!

BLAST IT! I NEVER SAW HIM BEFORE!— OUT OF MY WAY!



THE DECISION STANDS! THE VICTOR—BATTLER BEN WILSON!— WITH A CLEAN KNOCKOUT!

RAH!
YEA-A-Y! RAH!
RAH!
WILSON!



ALL RIGHT, KILLIAN—TALK! WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS DIRTY TRICK WITH THE WEIGHTED GLOVE? TELL THE TRUTH, AND YOU'LL GET OFF EASIER!

YEAH? MAYBE I COULD GET SHOT FOR TALKING, TOO!



SLAPPED BY BAT'S SPENT BULLET, LANG'S HORSE SPOOKS!



KEEP BACK! I'LL KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP ME!

YOU RIGGED THAT WEIGHTED GLOVE! YOU OUGHT TO BE—

LANG! YOU SHOT HIM TO SHUT HIS MOUTH!



I'LL STOP YOU, LANG!

BANG!





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THE SKEETER!

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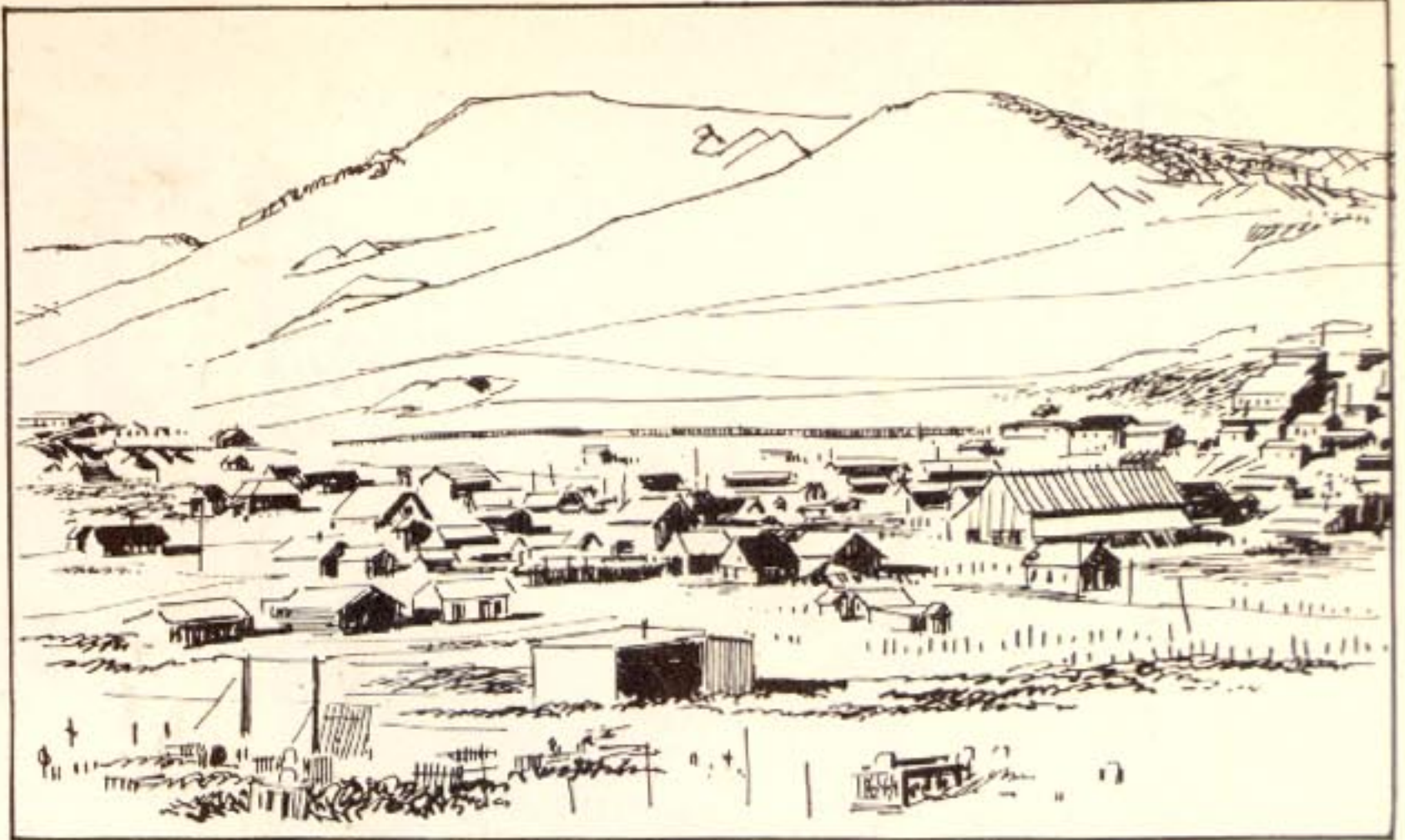
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BAT MASTERSON

ROARING TOWNS OF THE OLD WEST

BODIE, CALIFORNIA



IN 1895, **BODIE, CALIFORNIA**, WAS TWENTY-ODD YEARS OLD, A "ROOTIN', TOOTIN', SHOOTIN'" GOLD-MINING TOWN OF AROUND TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE—LUSTY ENOUGH TO MAKE "THE BAD-MAN FROM BODIE" A COMMON WESTERN PHRASE.



WHETHER THE ORIGINAL "BAD-MAN FROM BODIE" WAS FACT OR FICTION, THERE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN PLENTY OF CONTESTANTS FOR THE TITLE!



MINERS MADE UP MOST OF THE WORKING POPULATION, AND WORKED THE "HIGH-GRADE" ORE WITH HAND TOOLS, CANDLES AND RAW COURAGE.



BURROS PULLED THE TINY ORE CARS DOWN THE LONG, BLACK TUNNELS—WHICH SOMETIMES CAVED IN AND CRUSHED MEN.



BODIE INCLUDED A COLORFUL CHINATOWN OF FIFTEEN HUNDRED PEOPLE, WHO LIVED MOSTLY BY SELLING GOODS AND SERVICES.

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THE ONLY CEREAL IN THE
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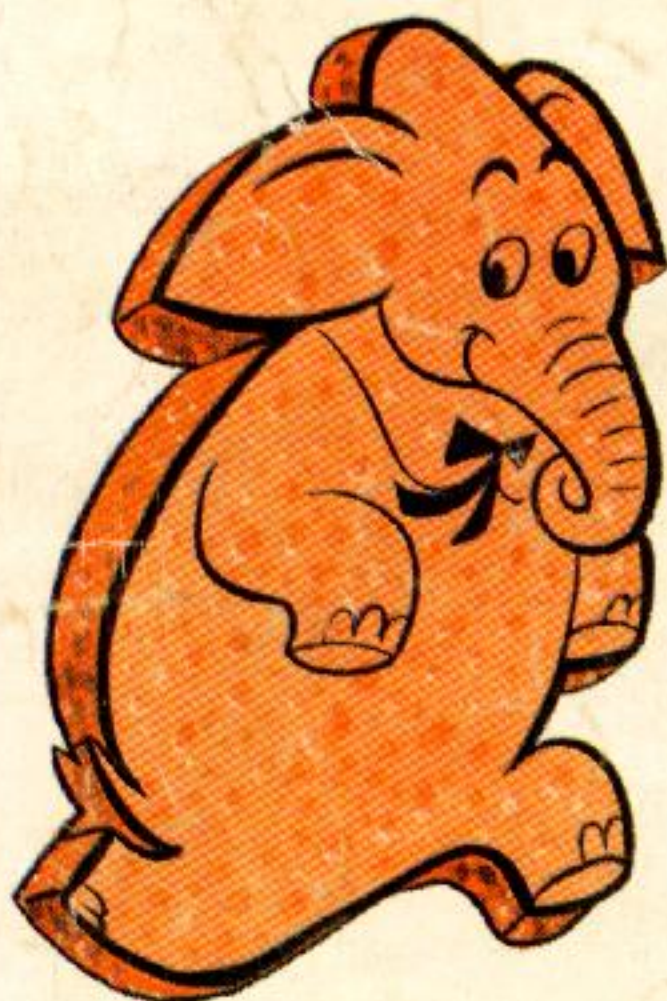


And now — get colorful sponge toys of Twinkles and his friends!

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with one
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PUT 'EM IN WATER



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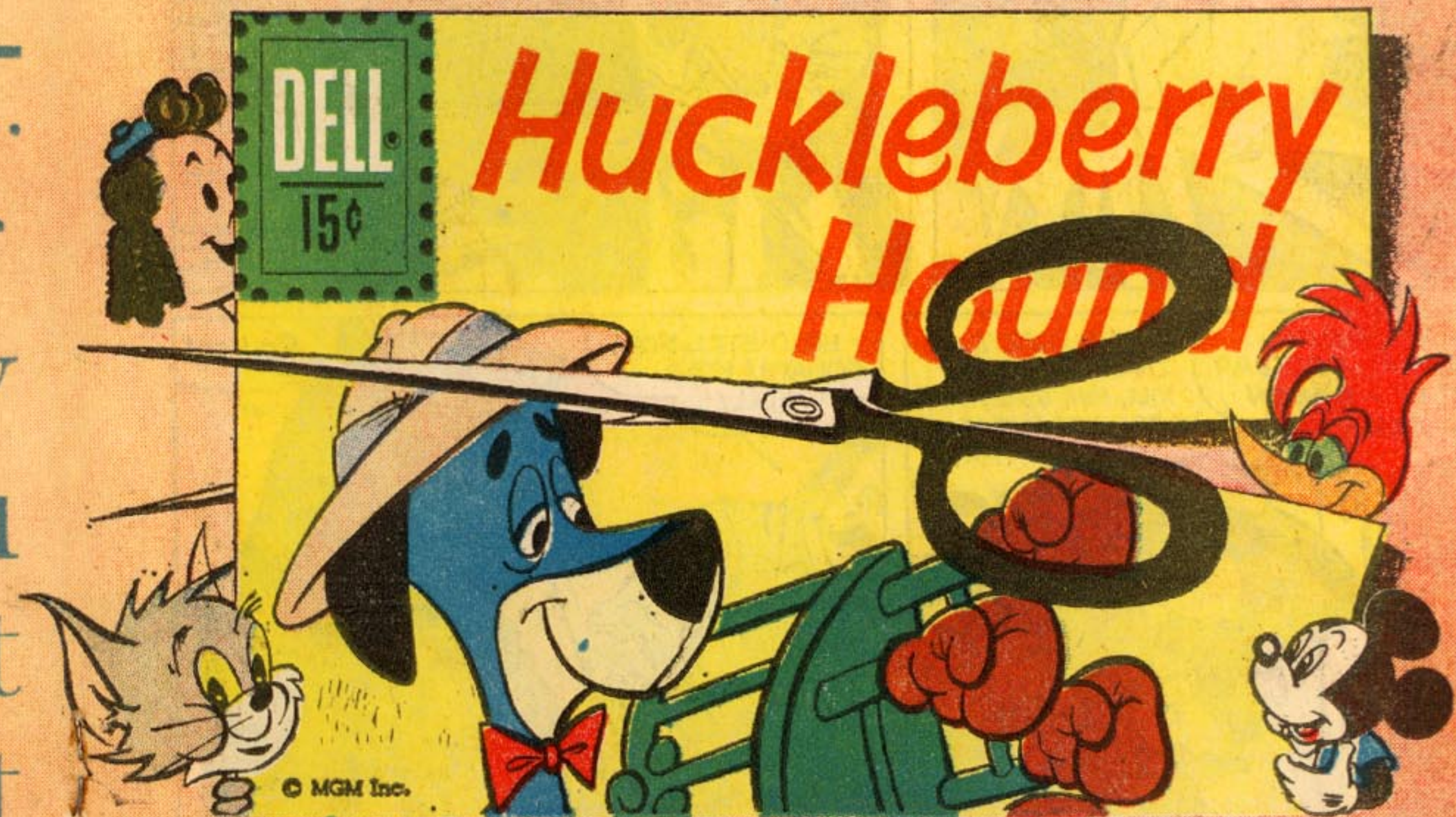
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