

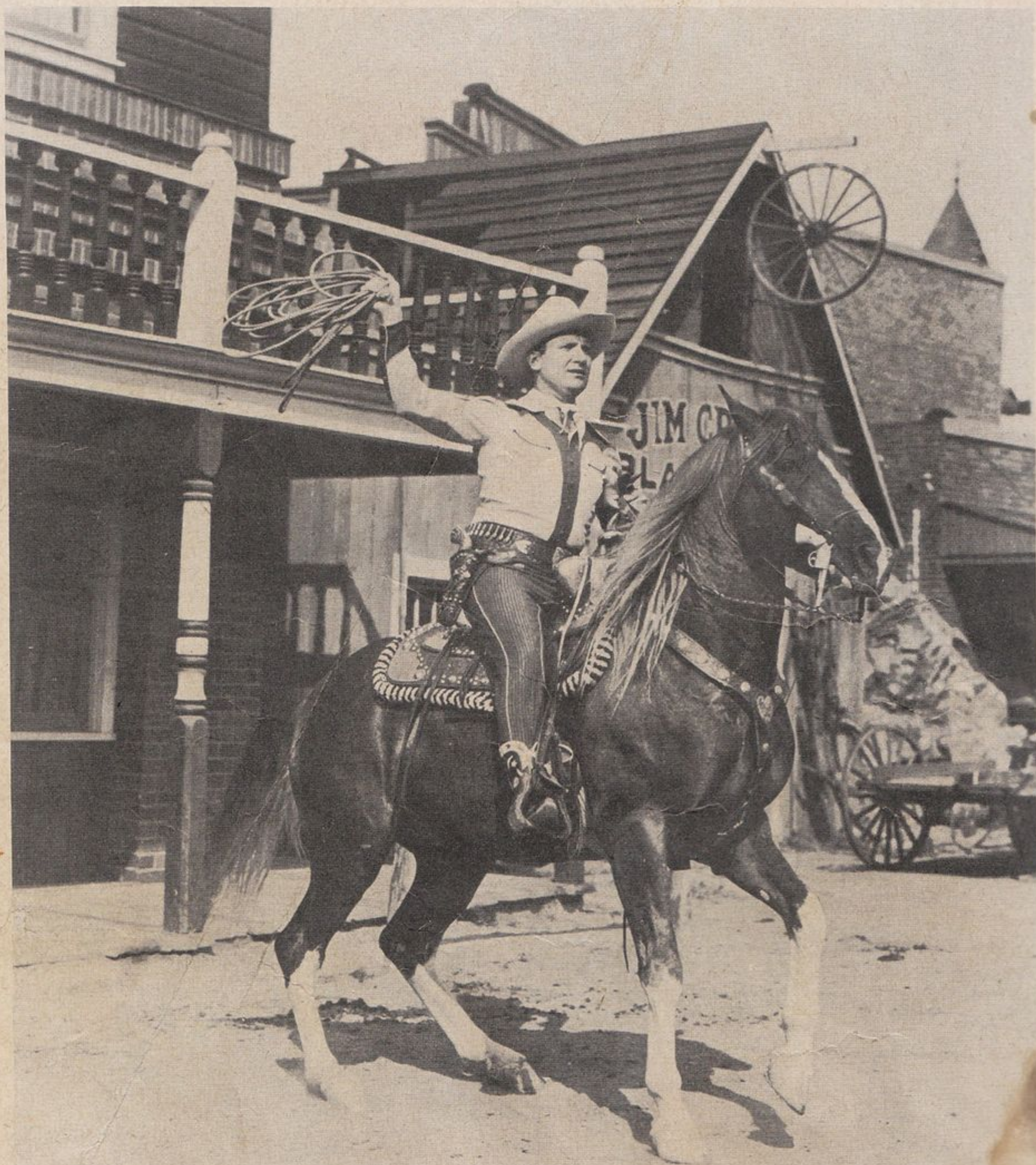
A DELL
10¢
MAGAZINE

JANUARY

GENE AUTRY

COMICS





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Gene Autry and

The RED CIRCLE BANDIT

EARLY ONE EVENING,
GENE AUTRY STOPS
TO MAKE CAMP FOR
THE NIGHT...

WE'VE COVERED A LOTTA
MILES TODAY, CHAMP!
RECKON WE'LL BED
DOWN HERE AN' PUSH
ON TO PINEVILLE AT
SUNUP!

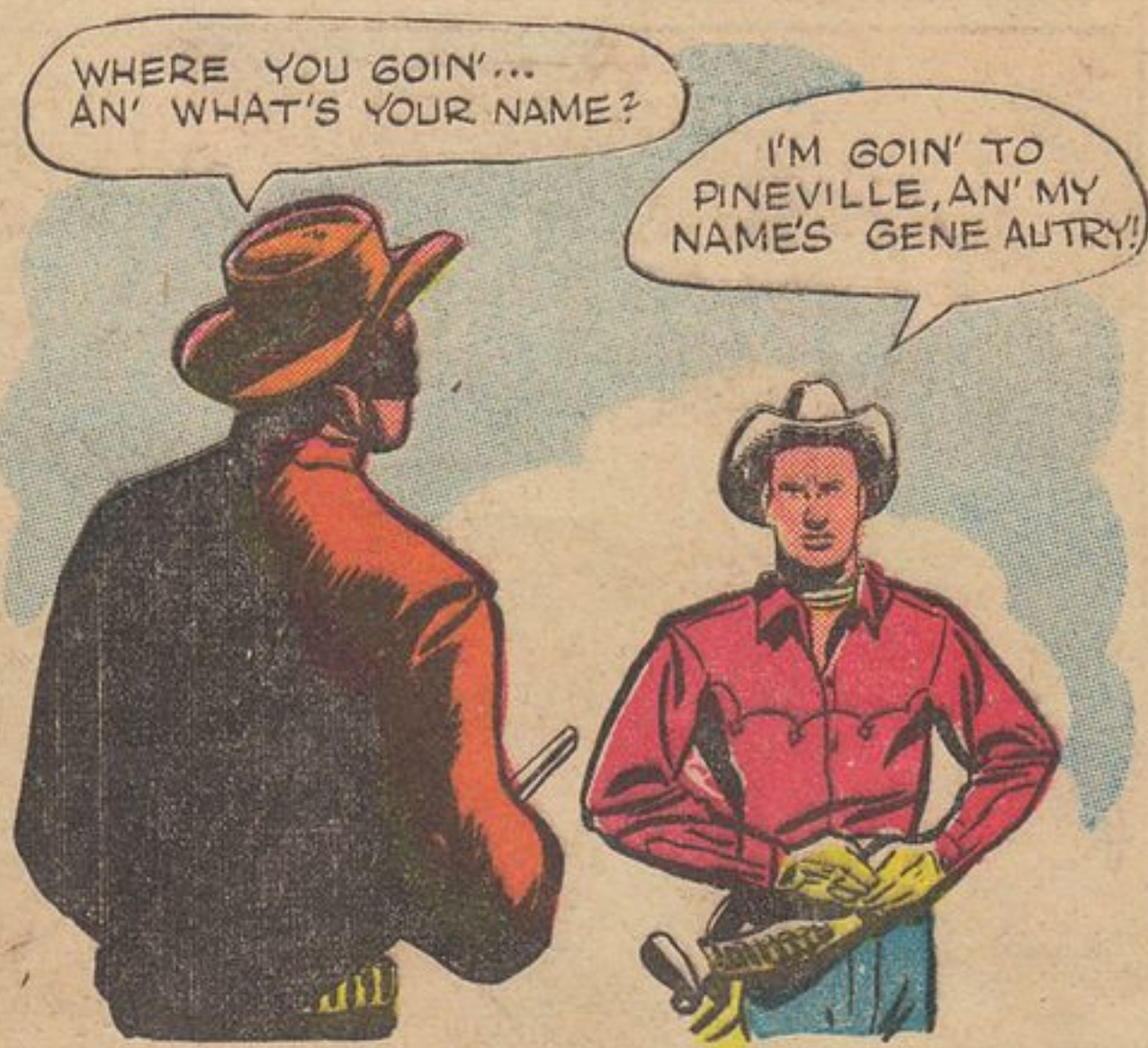
I'LL BE MIGHTY GLAD
TO SEE MY OLD
FRIEND, SHERIFF
GREER, AGAIN!

REACH, MISTER!

WHAT ???



DROP YOUR GUN BELT ON
THIS ROCK! BUT NO TRICKS..
OR I'LL DRILL YOU!

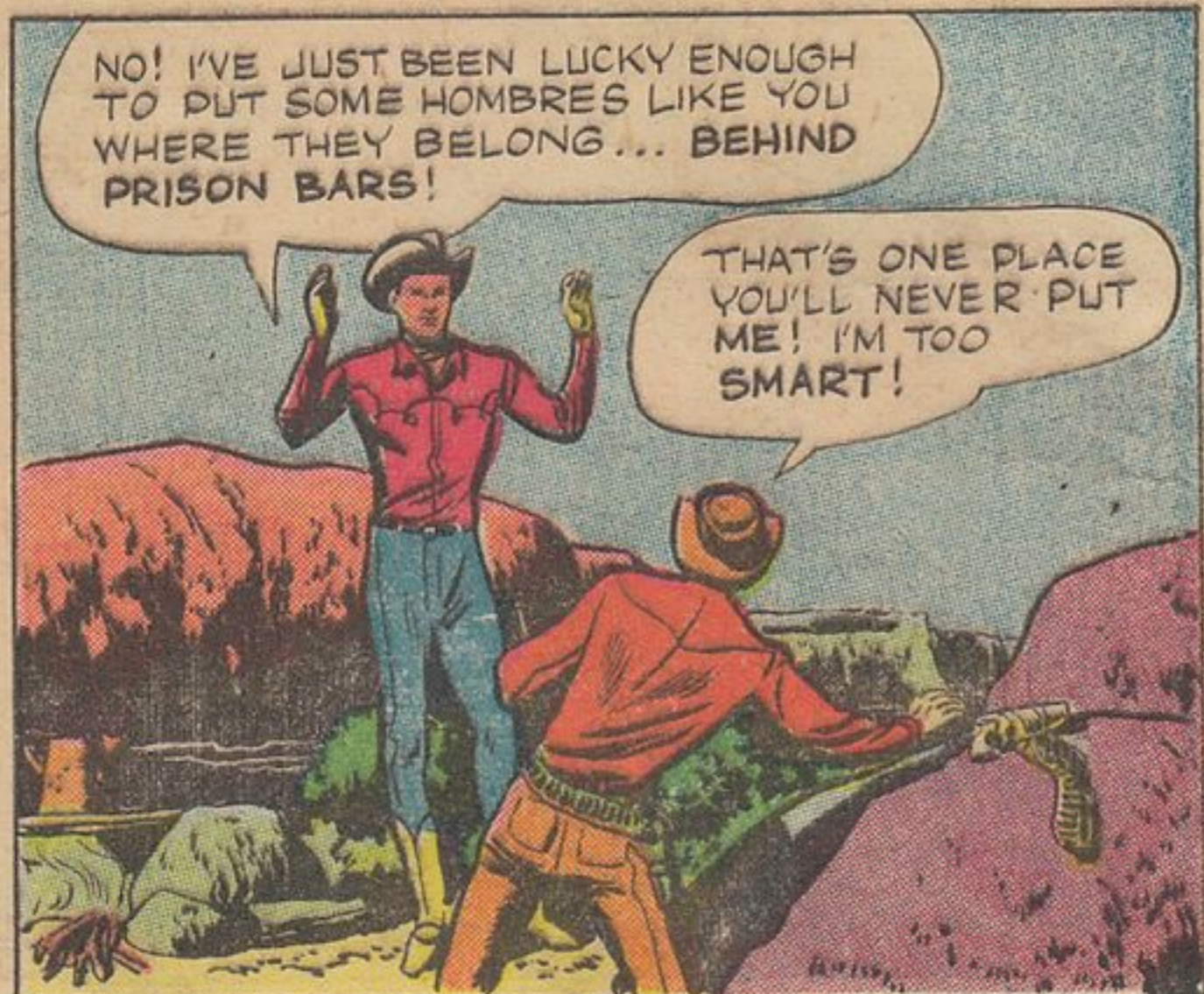


WHERE YOU GOIN'...
AN' WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I'M GOIN' TO
PINEVILLE, AN' MY
NAME'S GENE AUTRY!

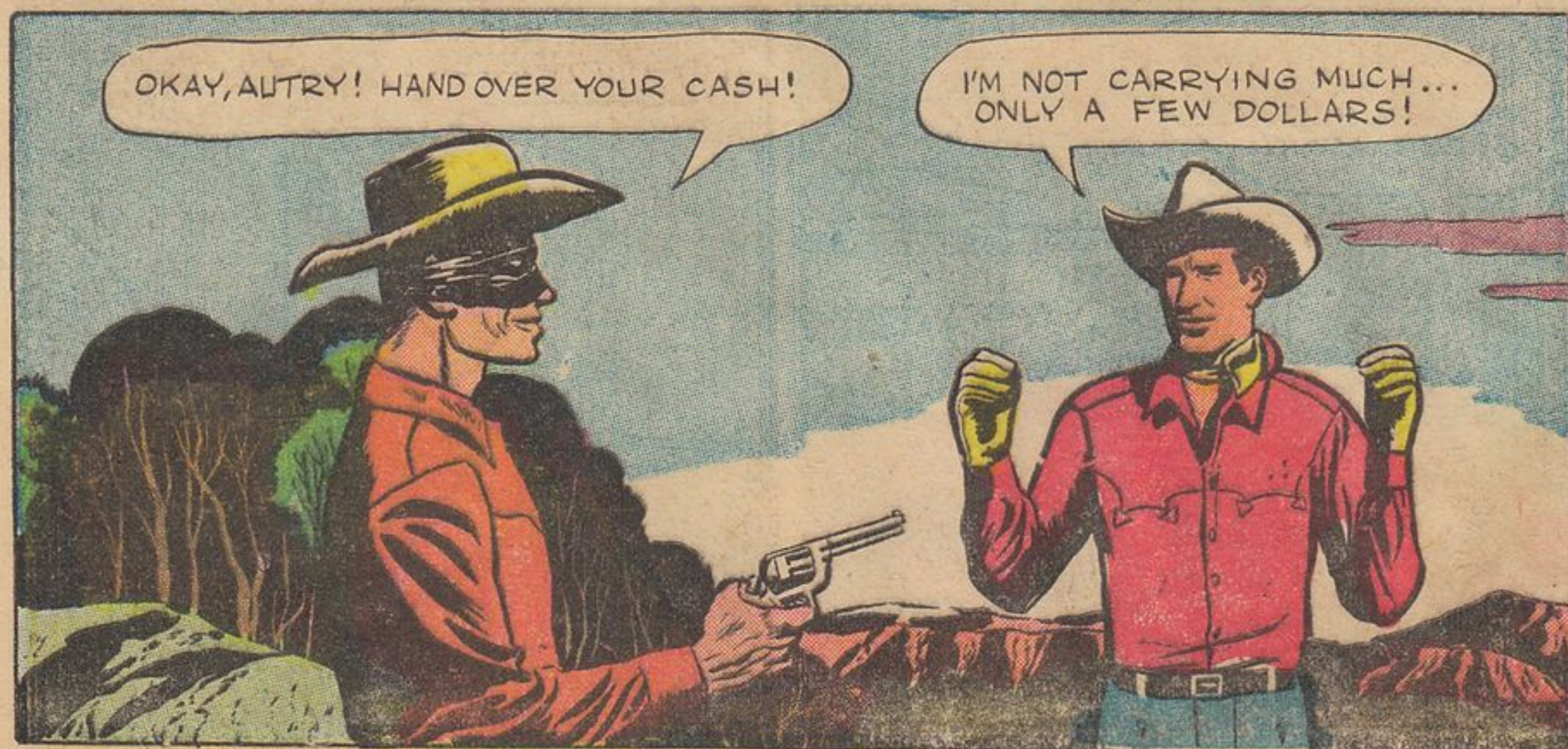


GENE AUTRY! I'VE HEARD
A LOT ABOUT YOU! THINK
YOU'RE A BIG-SHOT
CROOK-CATCHER,
DON'T YOU?



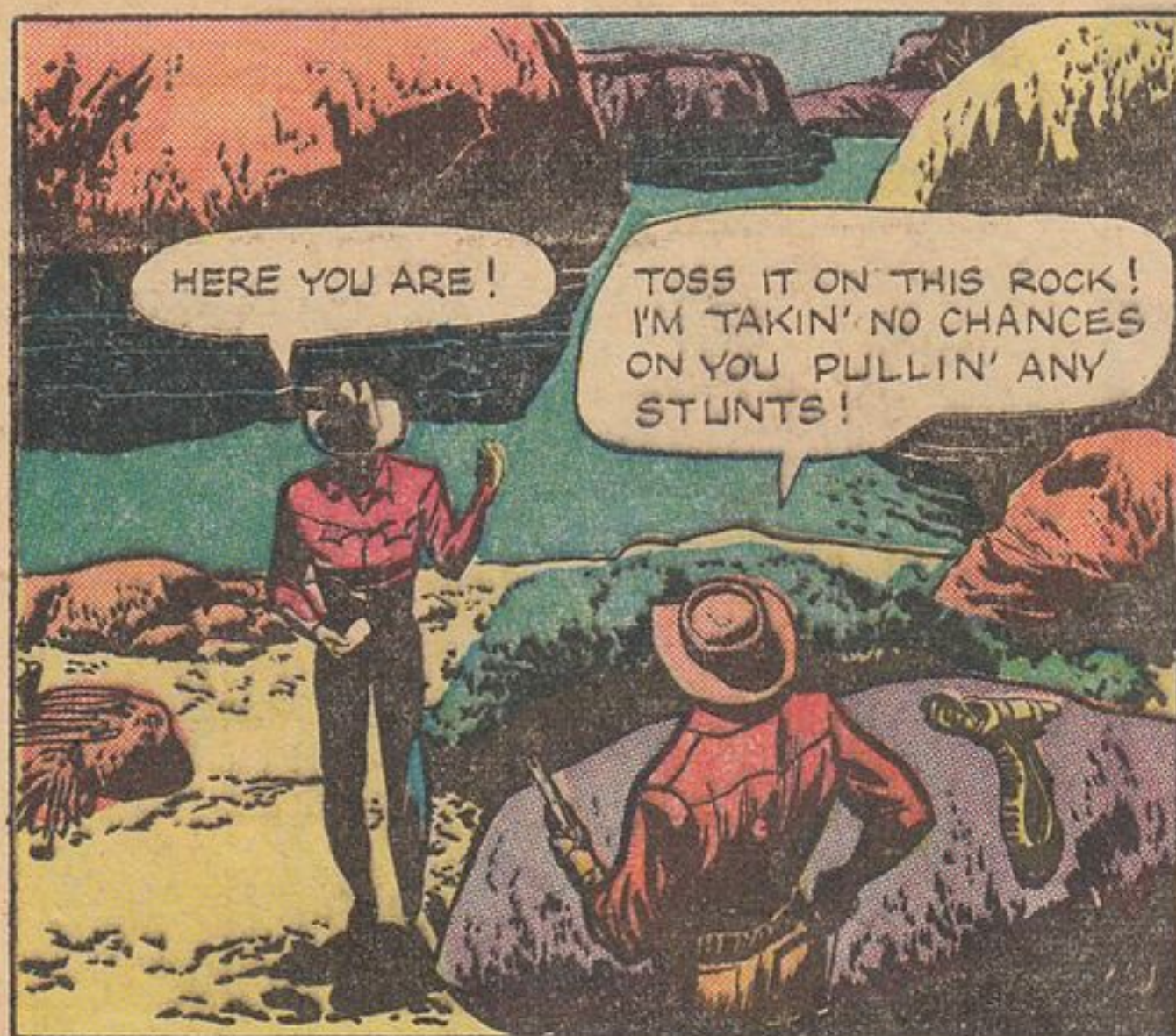
NO! I'VE JUST BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH
TO PUT SOME HOMBRES LIKE YOU
WHERE THEY BELONG... BEHIND
PRISON BARS!

THAT'S ONE PLACE
YOU'LL NEVER PUT
ME! I'M TOO
SMART!



OKAY, AUTRY! HAND OVER YOUR CASH!

I'M NOT CARRYING MUCH...
ONLY A FEW DOLLARS!



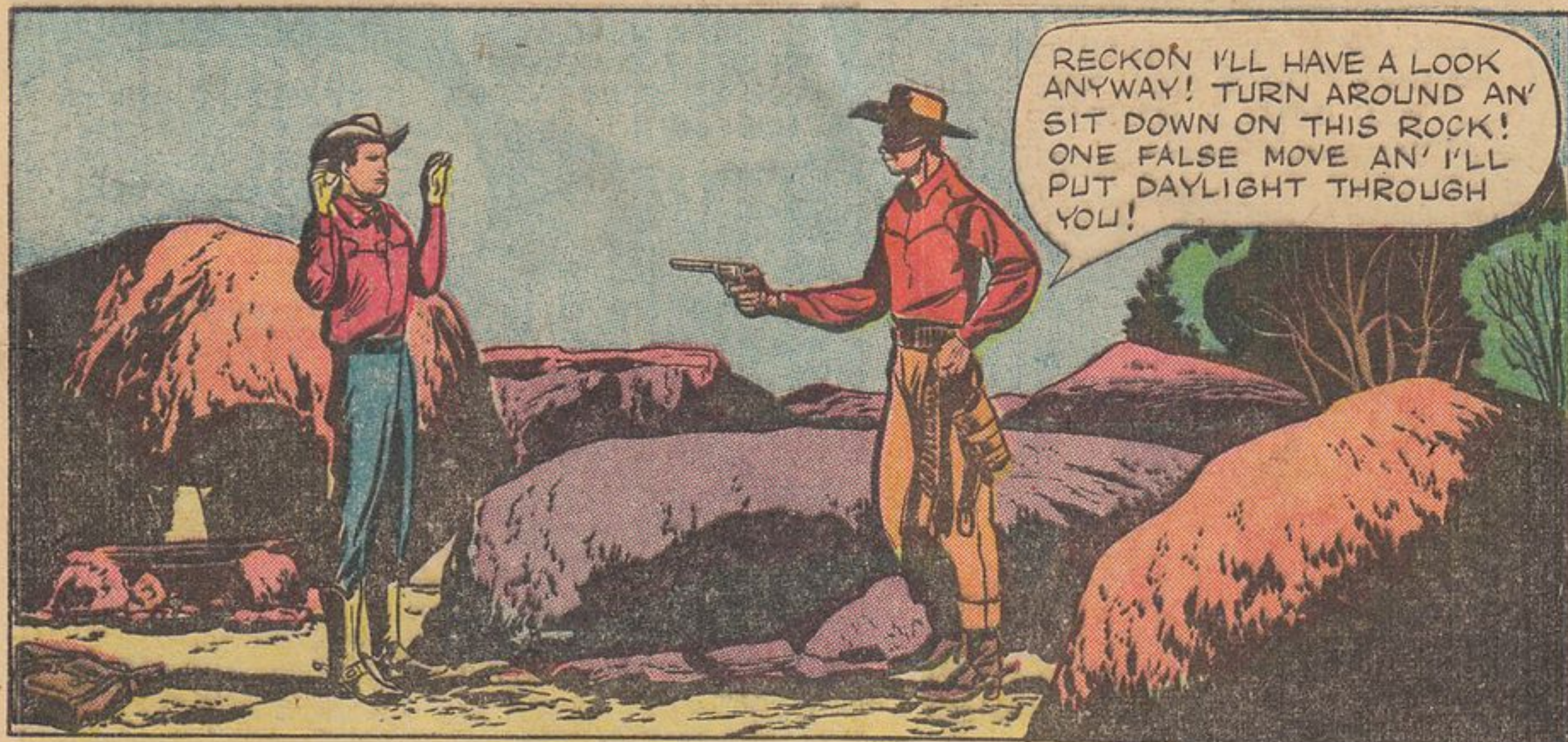
HERE YOU ARE!

TOSS IT ON THIS ROCK!
I'M TAKIN' NO CHANCES
ON YOU PULLIN' ANY
STUNTS!

TWENTY MEASLY DOLLARS!
WHERE'S THE REST O' YOUR
ROLL? IN YOUR SADDLEBAGS?

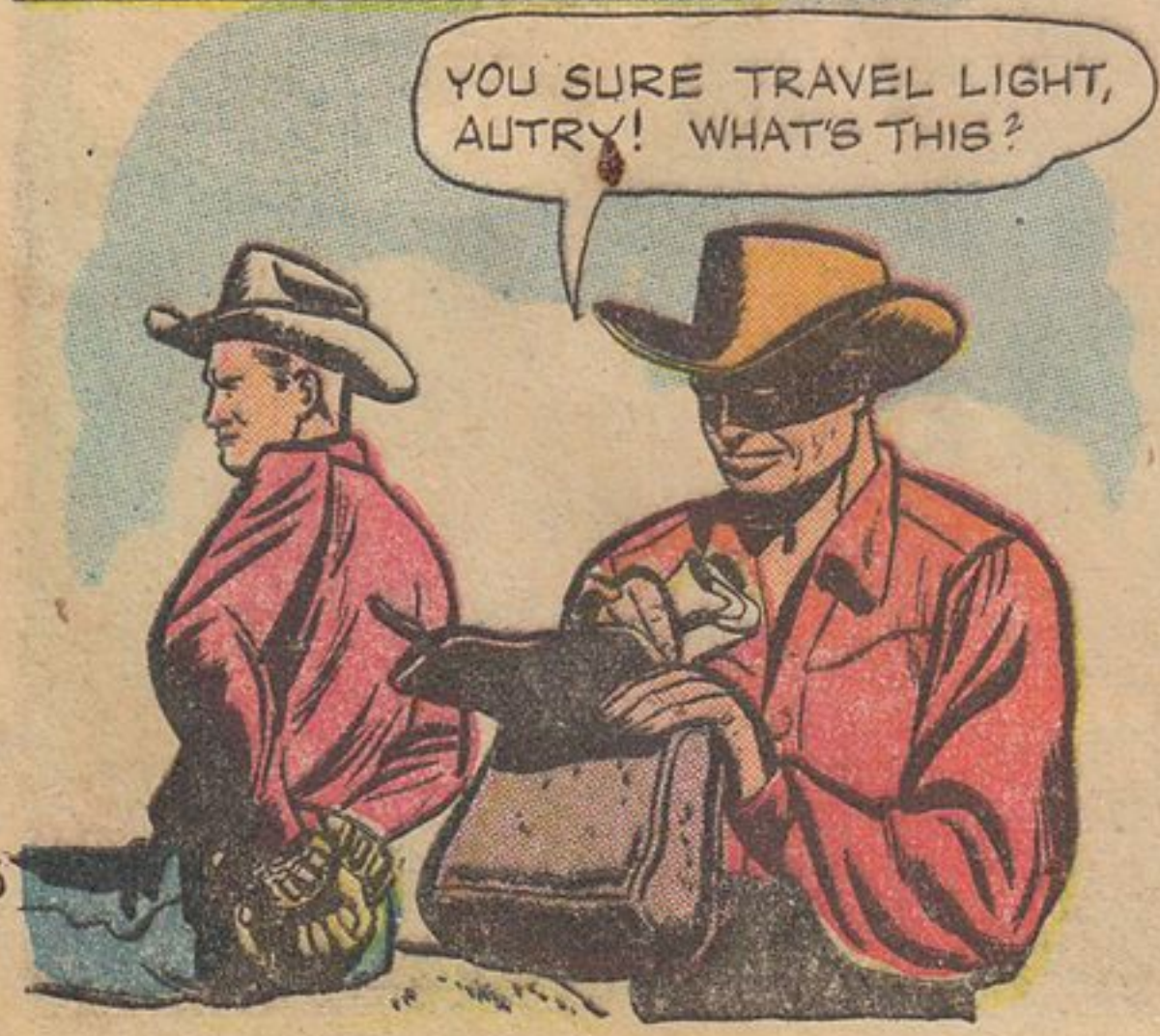


THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT!



RECKON I'LL HAVE A LOOK
ANYWAY! TURN AROUND AN'
SIT DOWN ON THIS ROCK!
ONE FALSE MOVE AN' I'LL
PUT DAYLIGHT THROUGH
YOU!

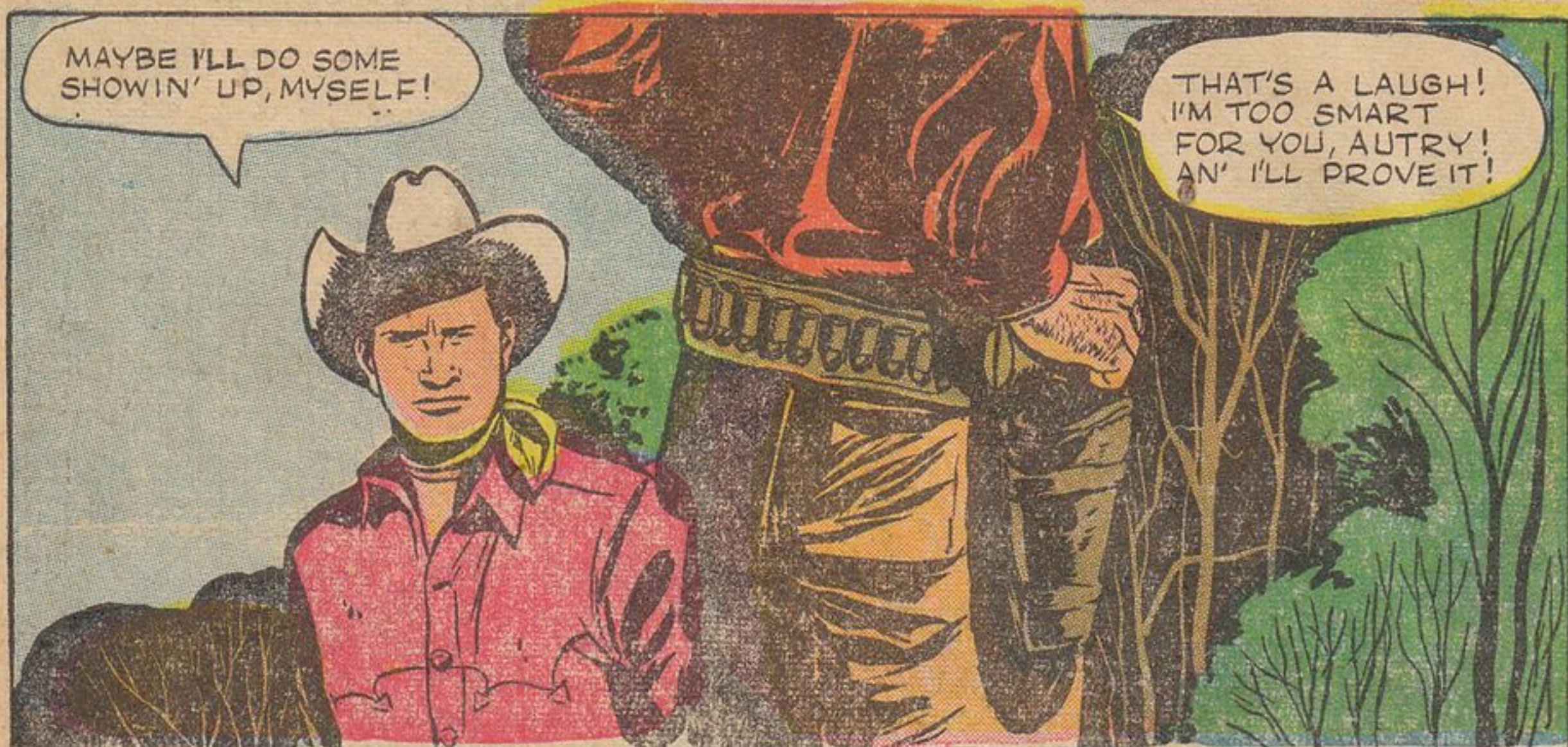
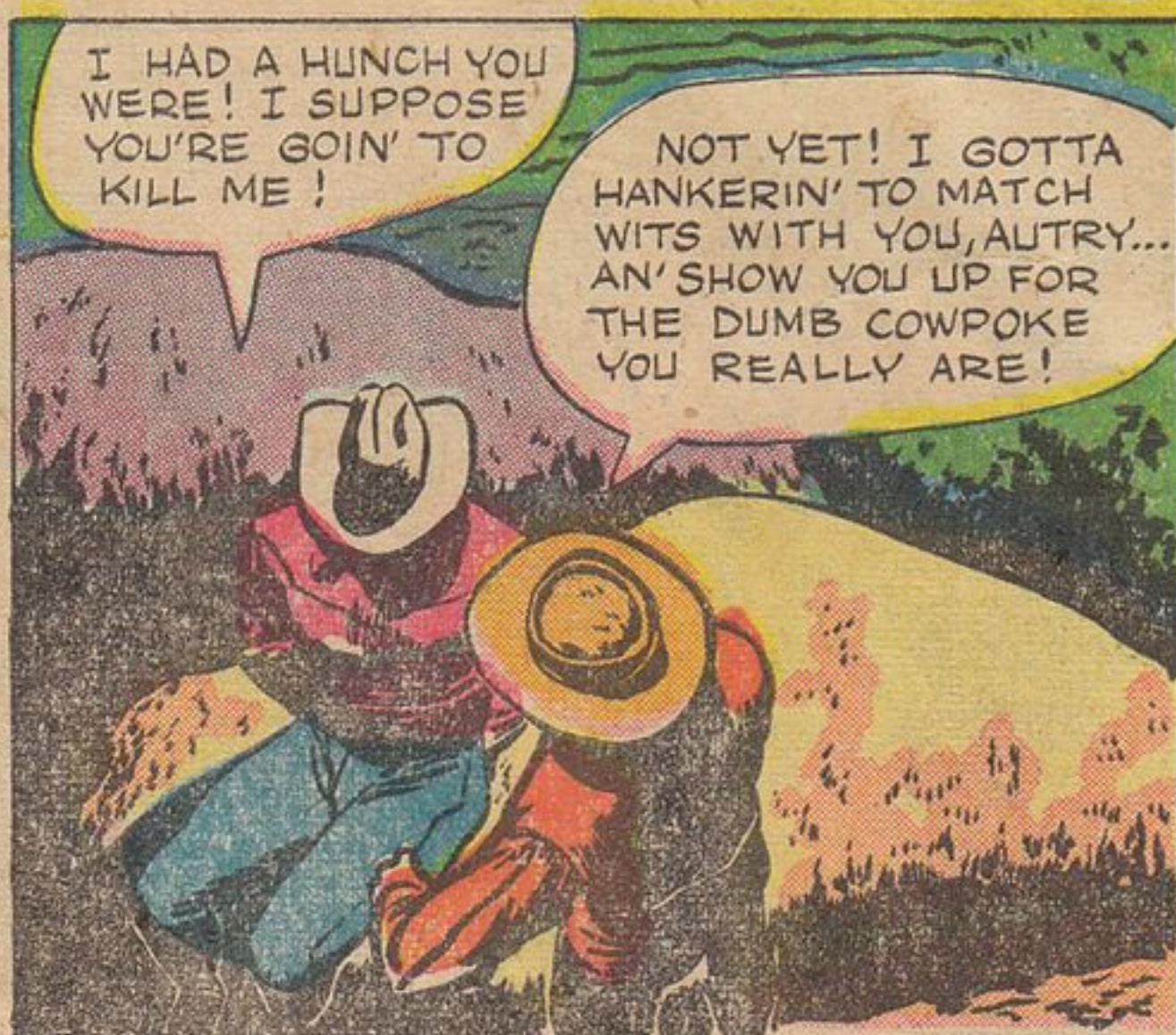
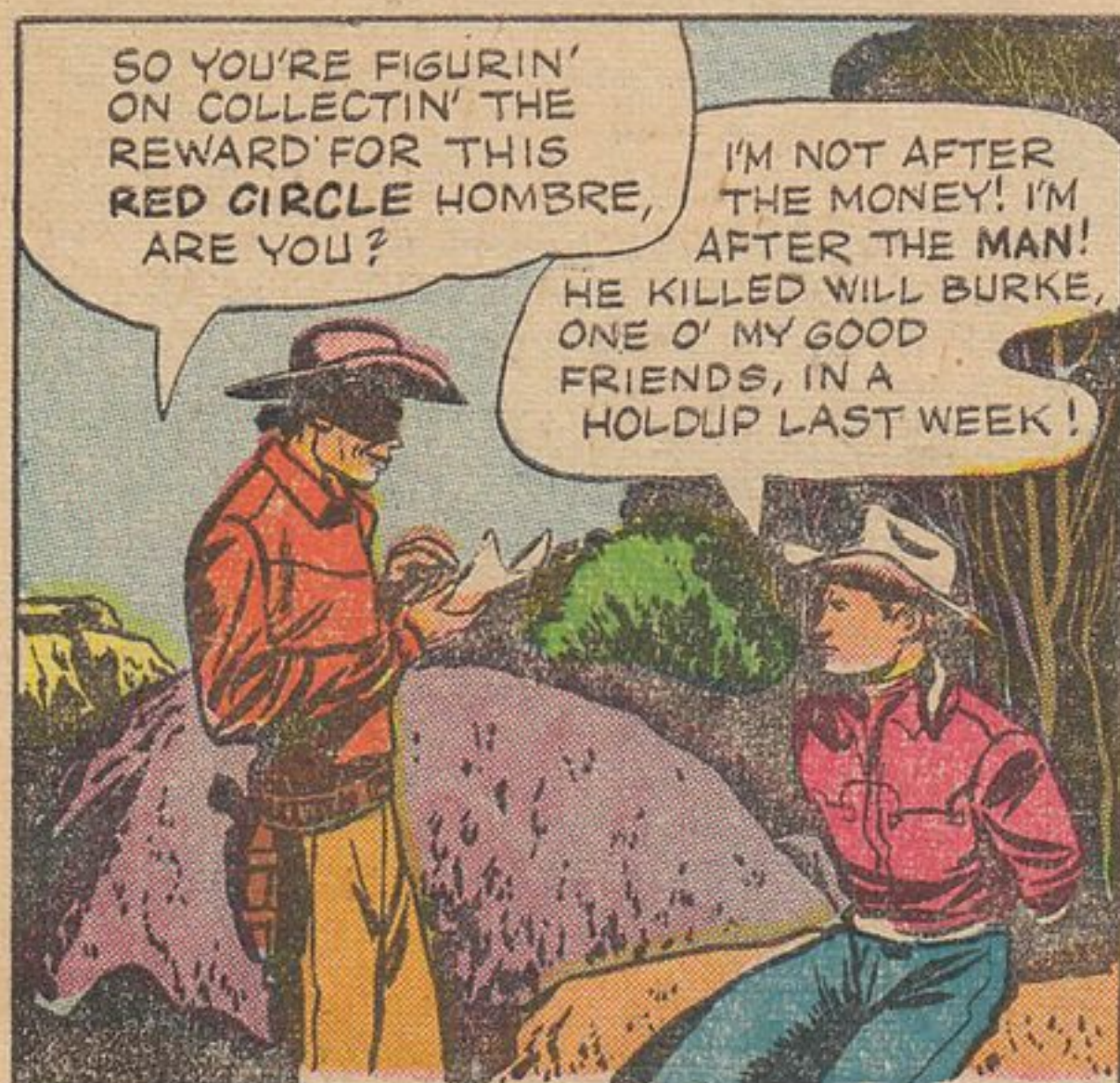
A FEW MINUTES LATER ...



YOU SURE TRAVEL LIGHT,
AUTRY! WHAT'S THIS?



\$1000 REWARD
For Capture of
**THE RED CIRCLE
BANDIT**
DEAD or ALIVE!!!
WA



TO SHOW YOU I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU,
I'LL TELL YOU THAT, BETWEEN
MIDNIGHT AN' SUNUP, I'LL ROB THE
EXPRESS COMPANY OFFICE IN
PINEVILLE! WHAT'S MORE, I'LL GET
AWAY SCOT-FREE!

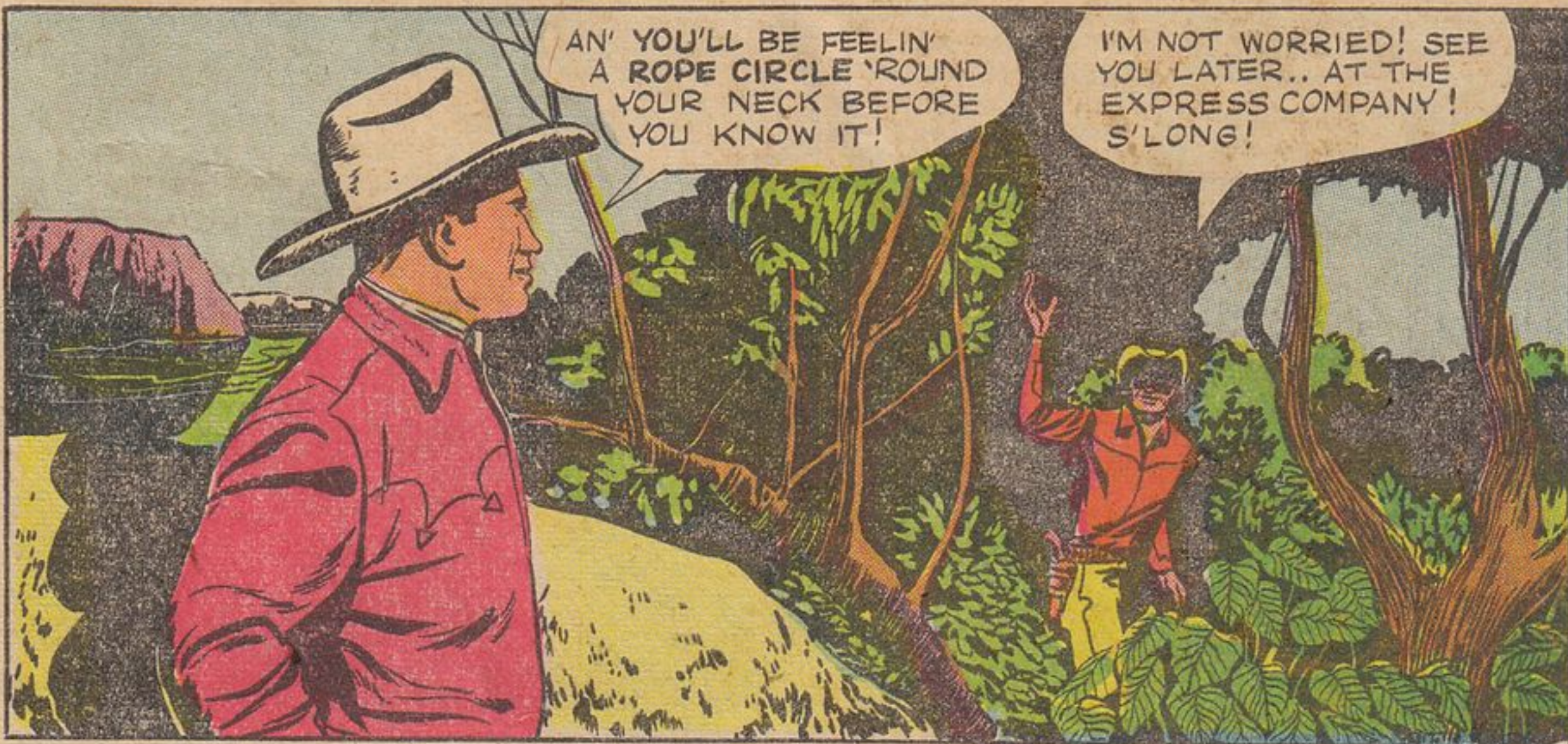


YOU'LL SEE THIS TRADEMARK O' MINE
ON THE EXPRESS COMPANY SAFE!
YOU'LL BE SEEIN' PLENTY O' THESE
RED CIRCLES FROM
NOW ON!

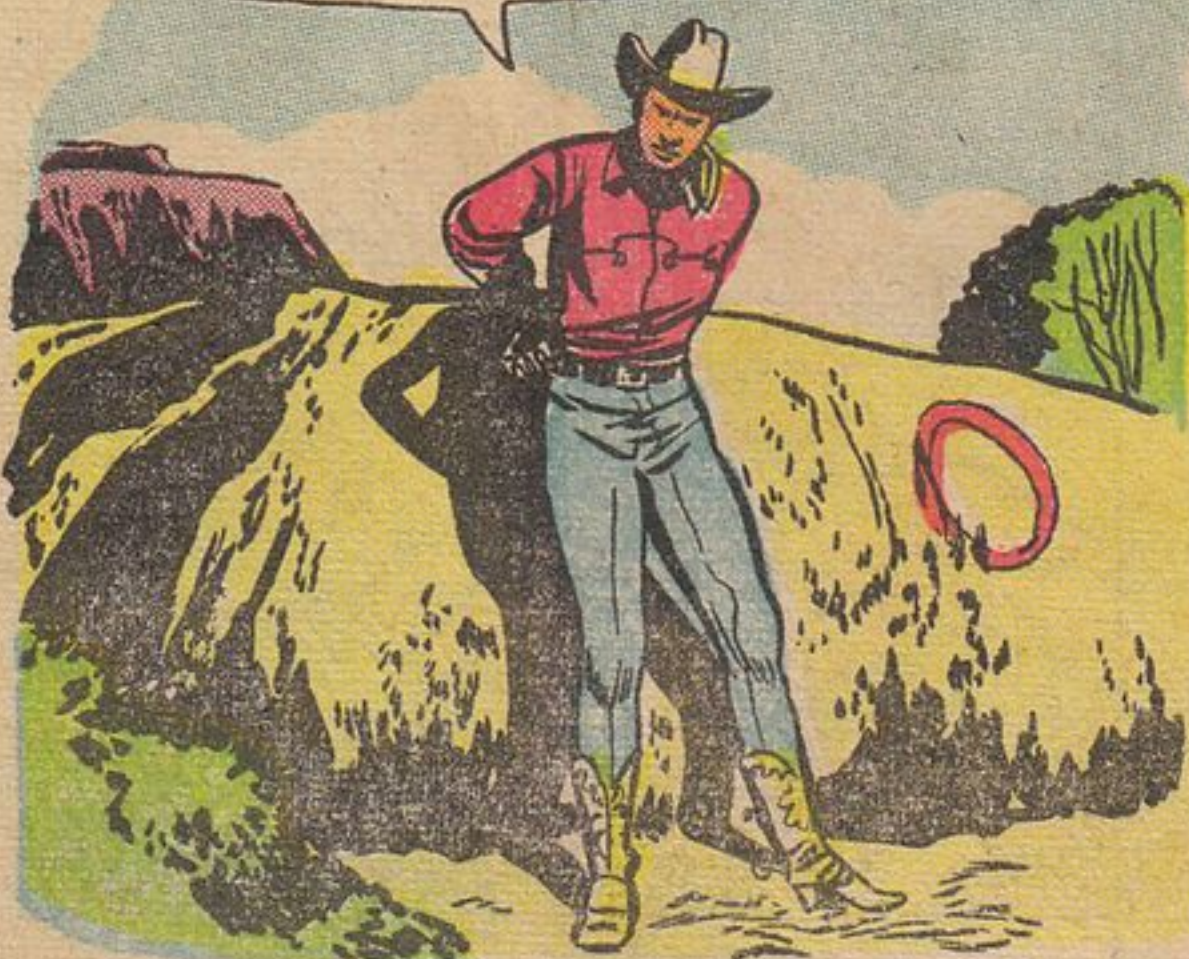


AN' YOU'LL BE FEELIN'
A ROPE CIRCLE 'ROUND
YOUR NECK BEFORE
YOU KNOW IT!

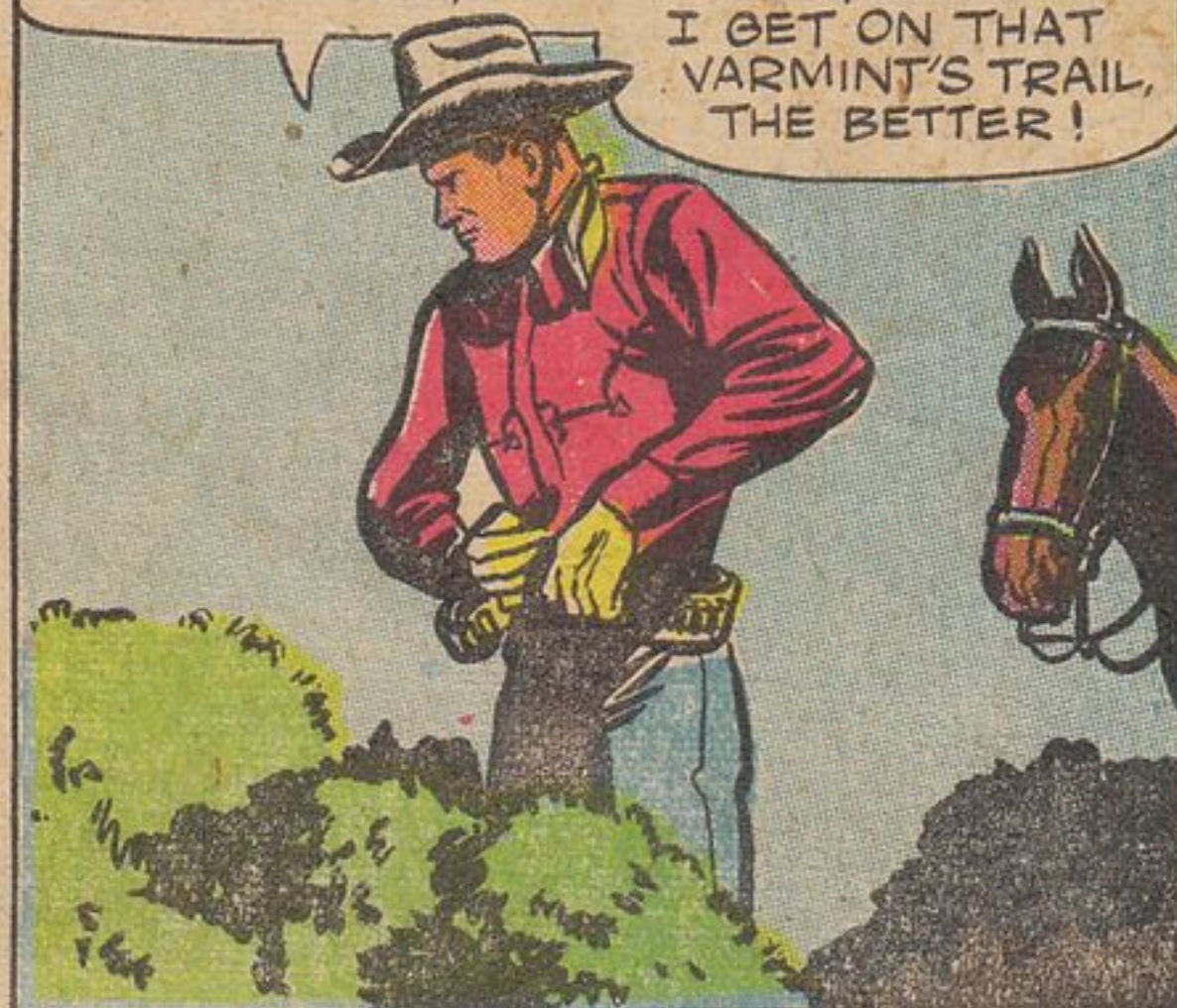
I'M NOT WORRIED! SEE
YOU LATER.. AT THE
EXPRESS COMPANY!
S'LONG!



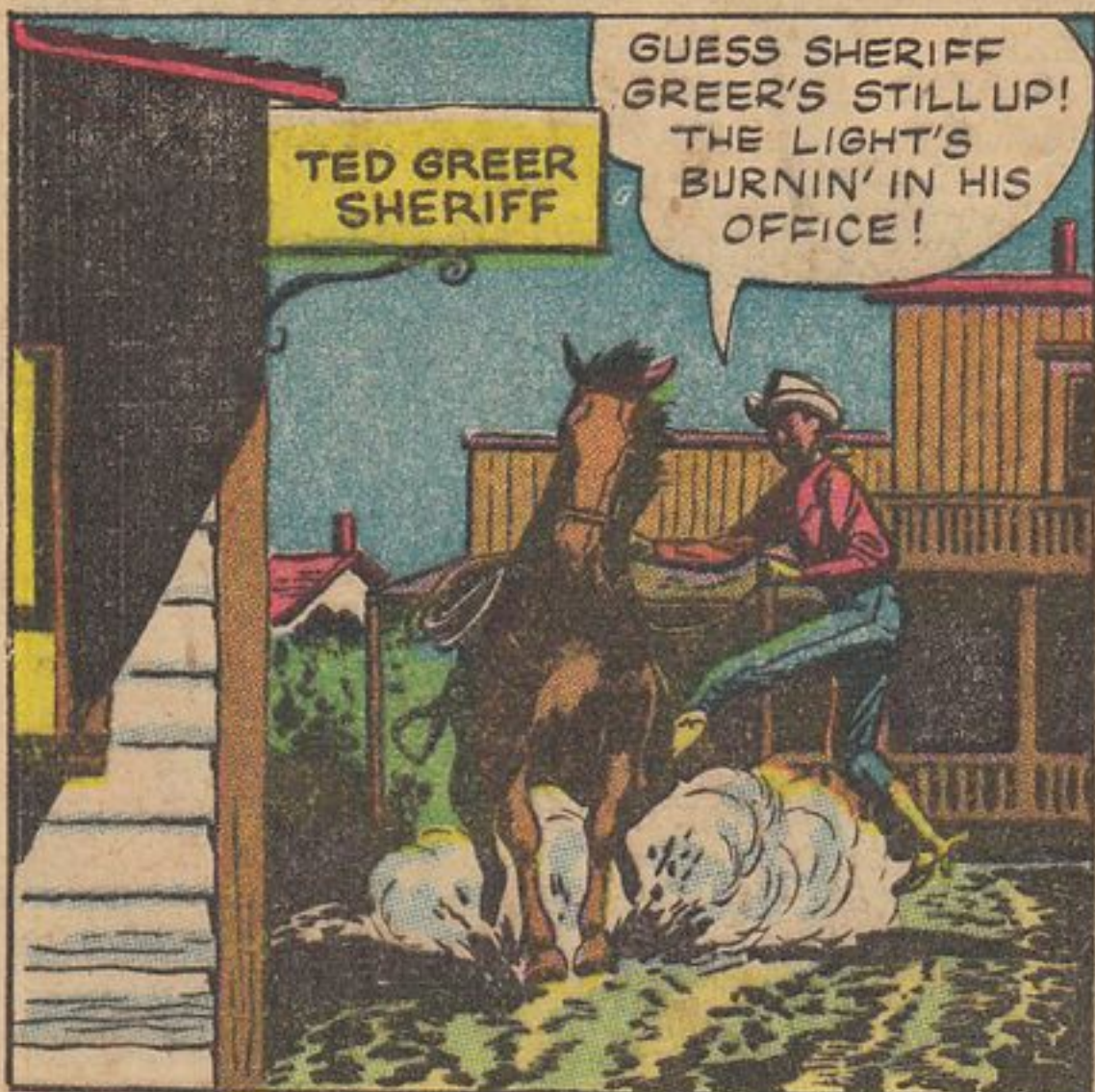
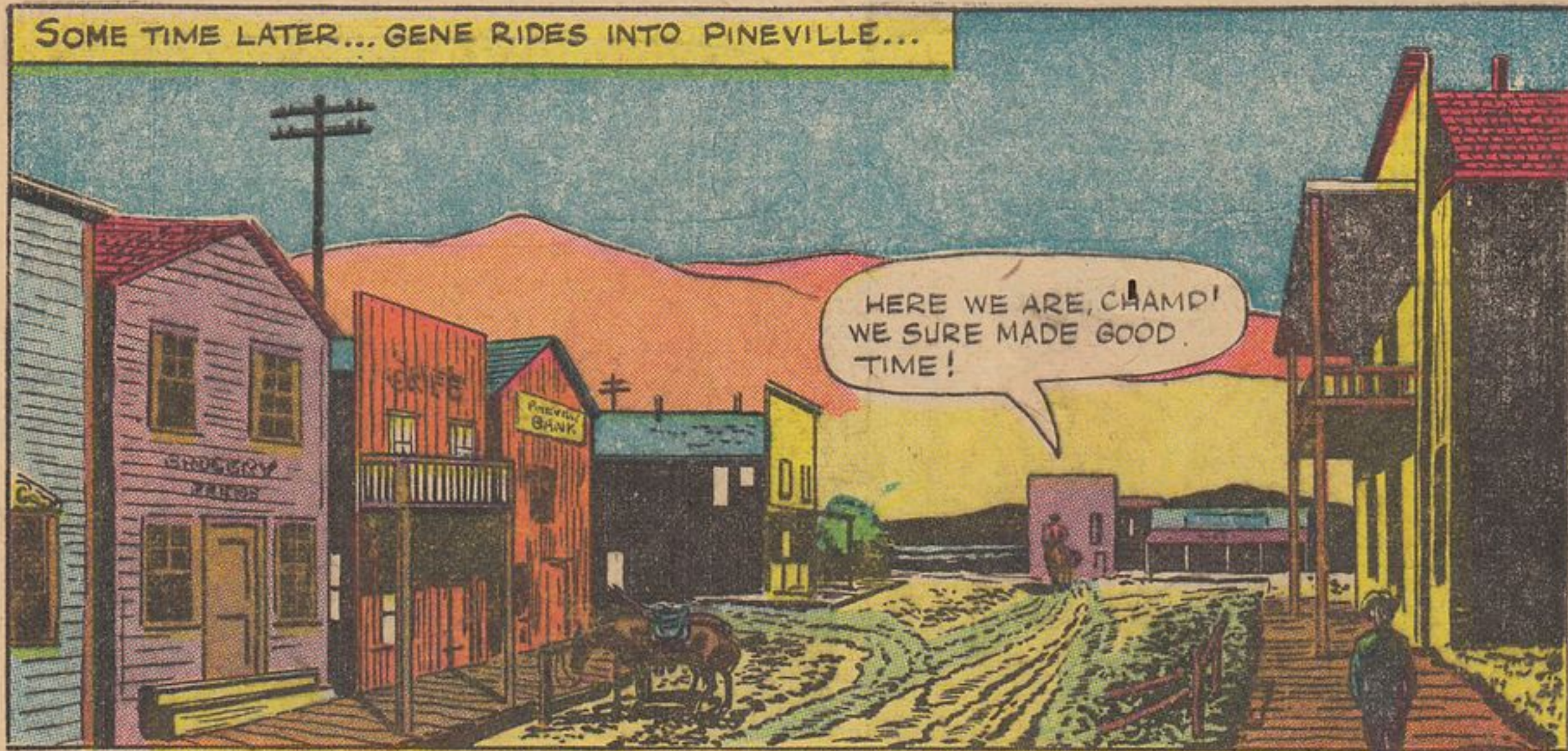
HE DIDN'T FASTEN THIS BELT
VERY TIGHT! I'LL SOON BE LOOSE!

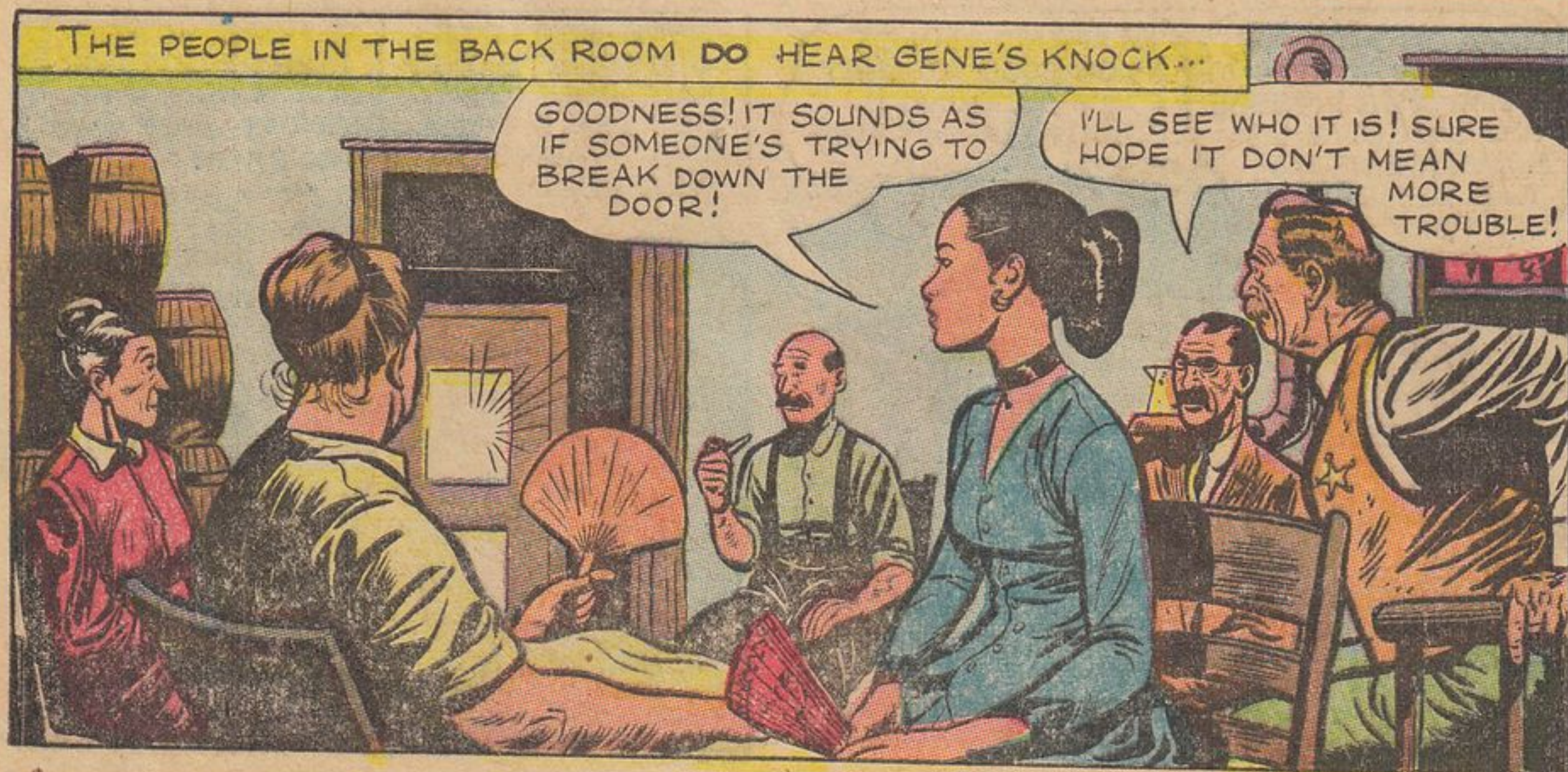


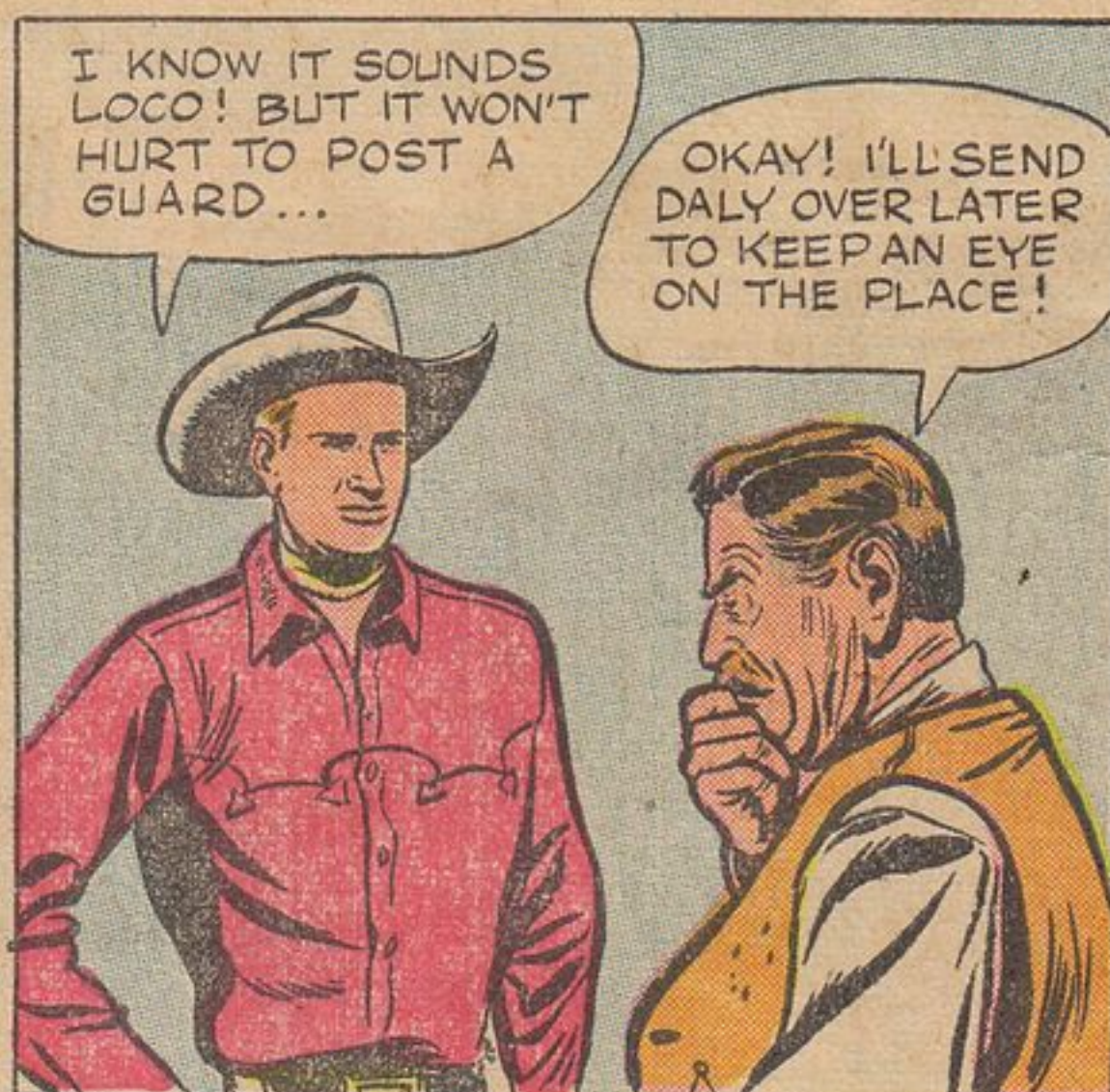
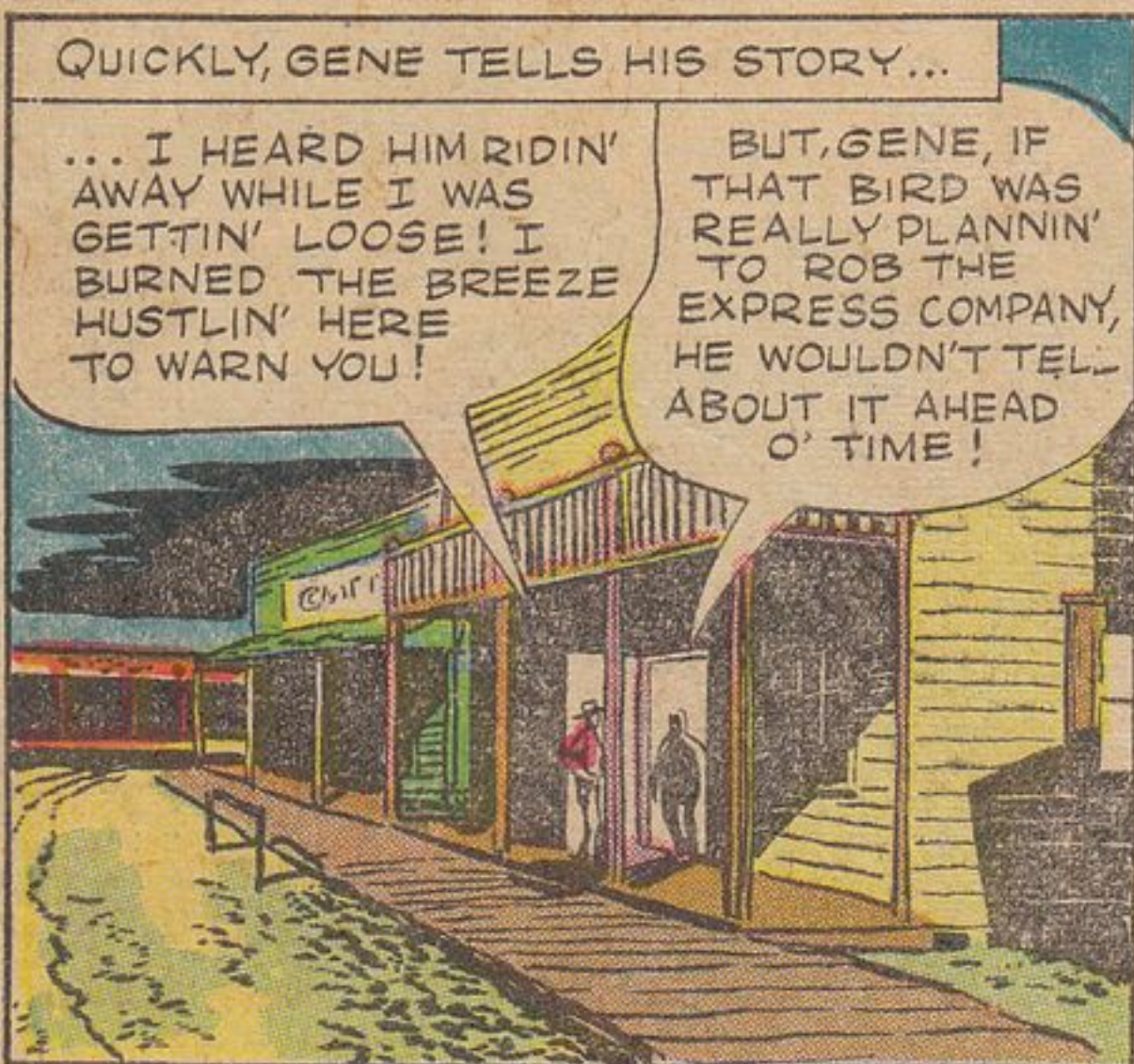
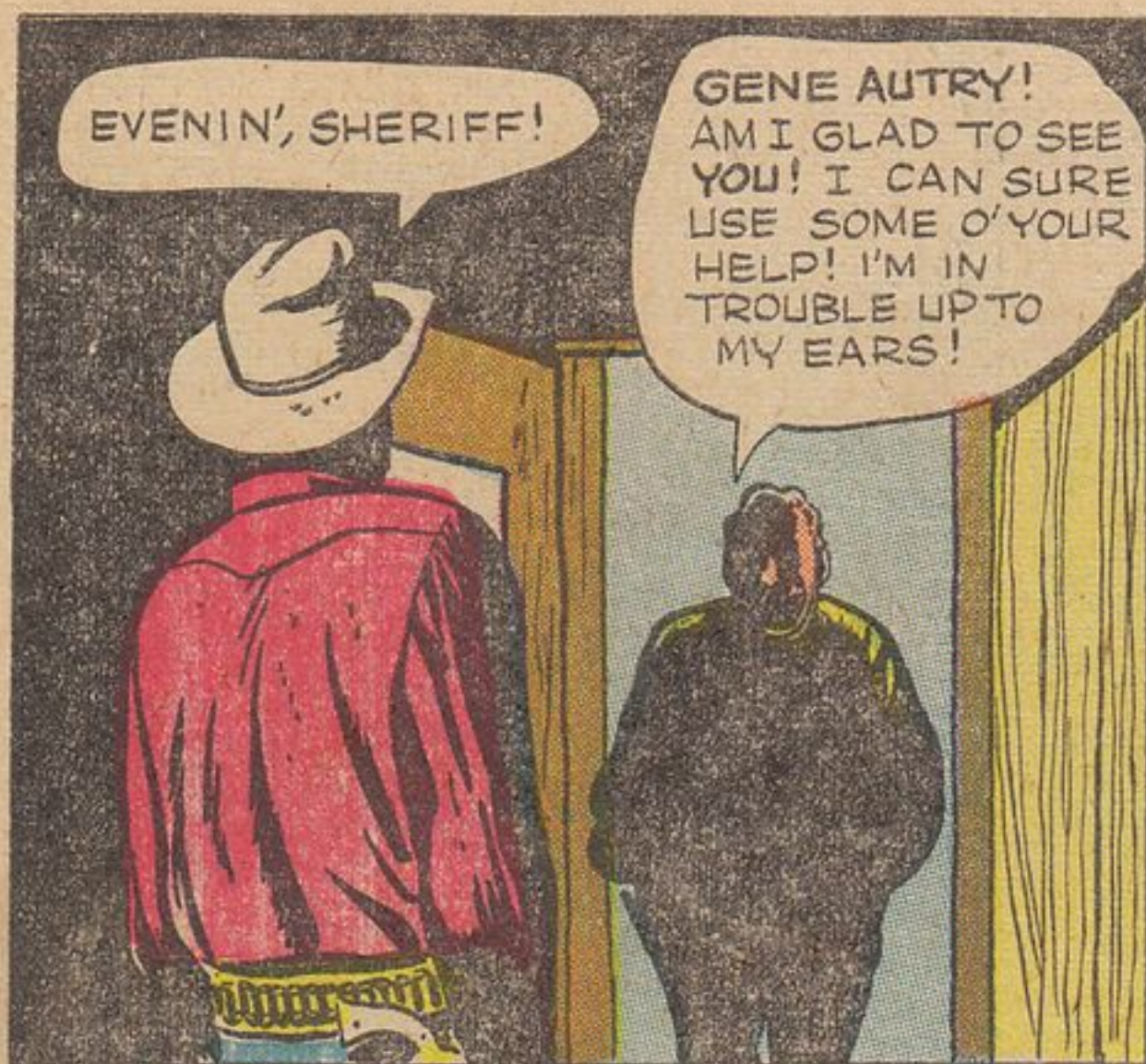
SOON AS I FIND MY GUN, WE'RE RIDIN'
TO PINEVILLE, CHAMP! THE QUICKER
I GET ON THAT
VARMINT'S TRAIL,
THE BETTER!

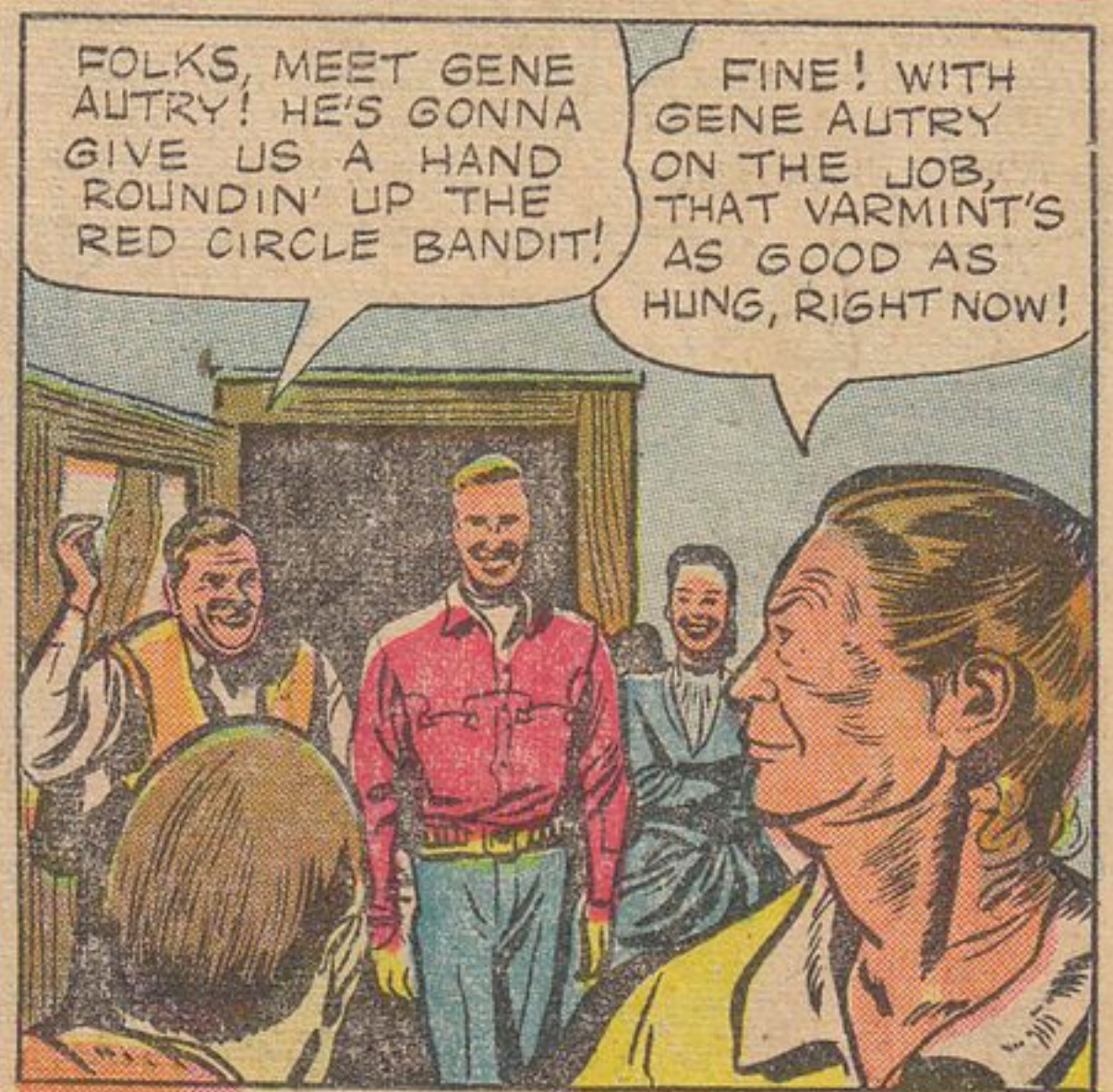
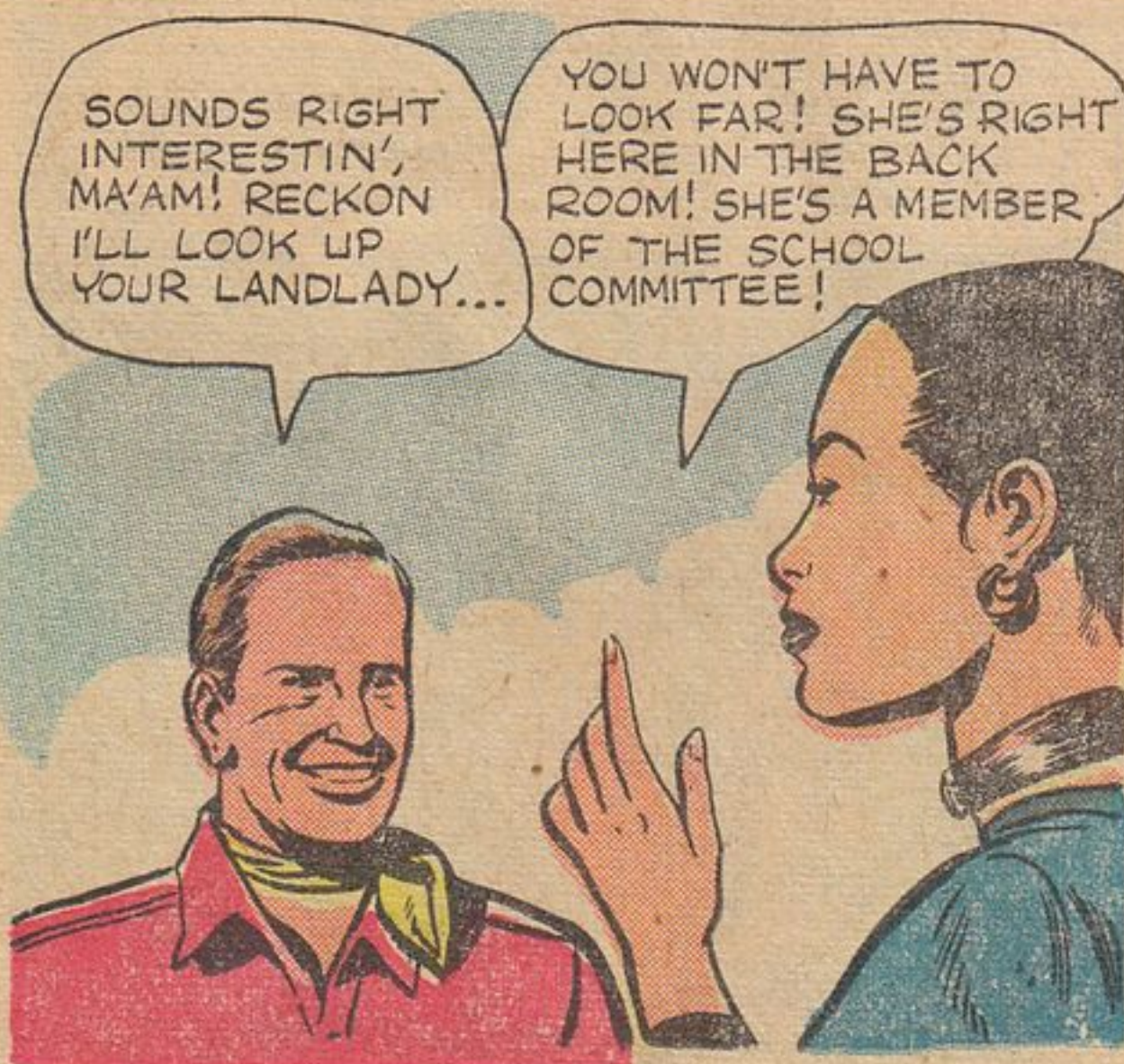
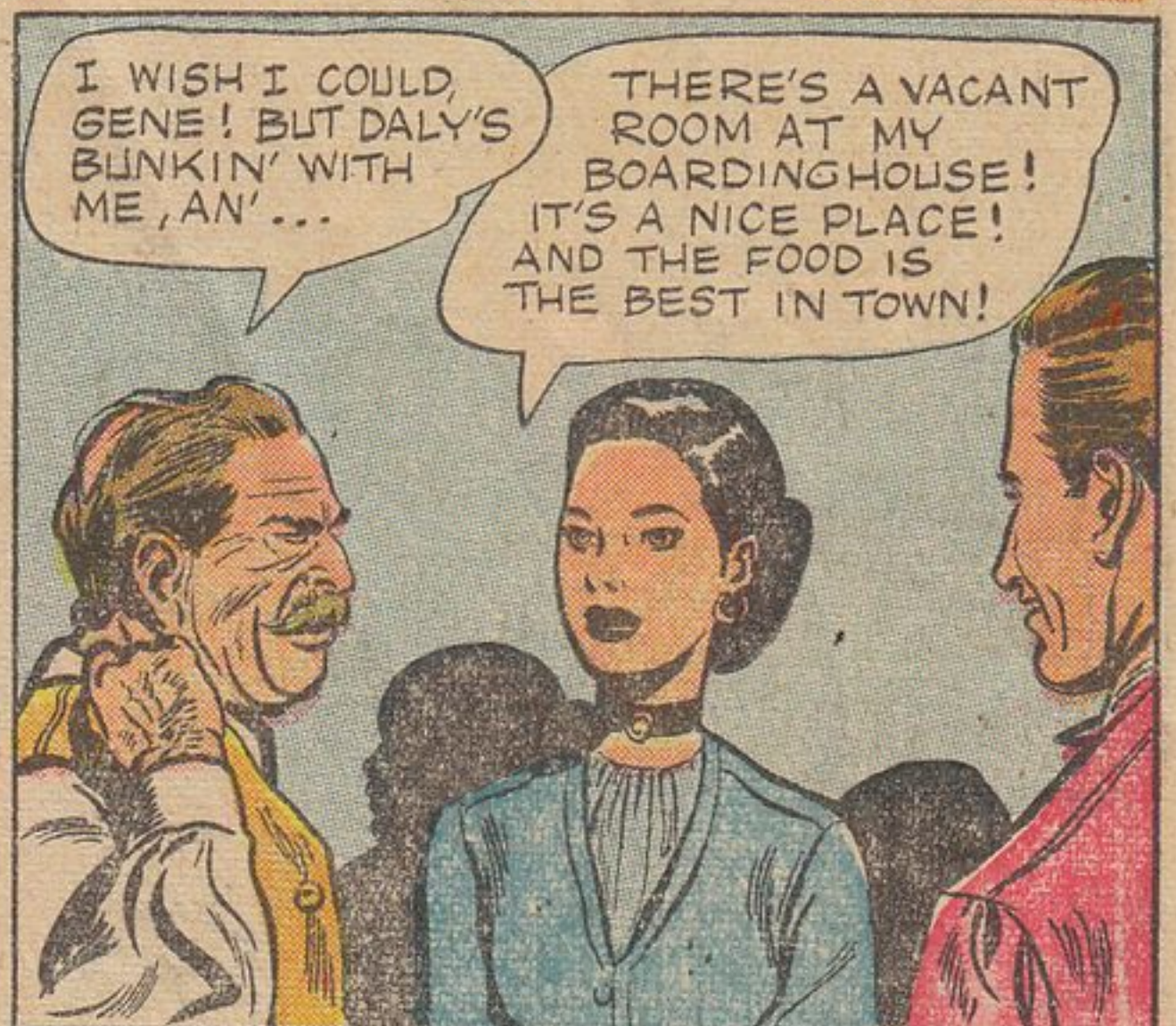


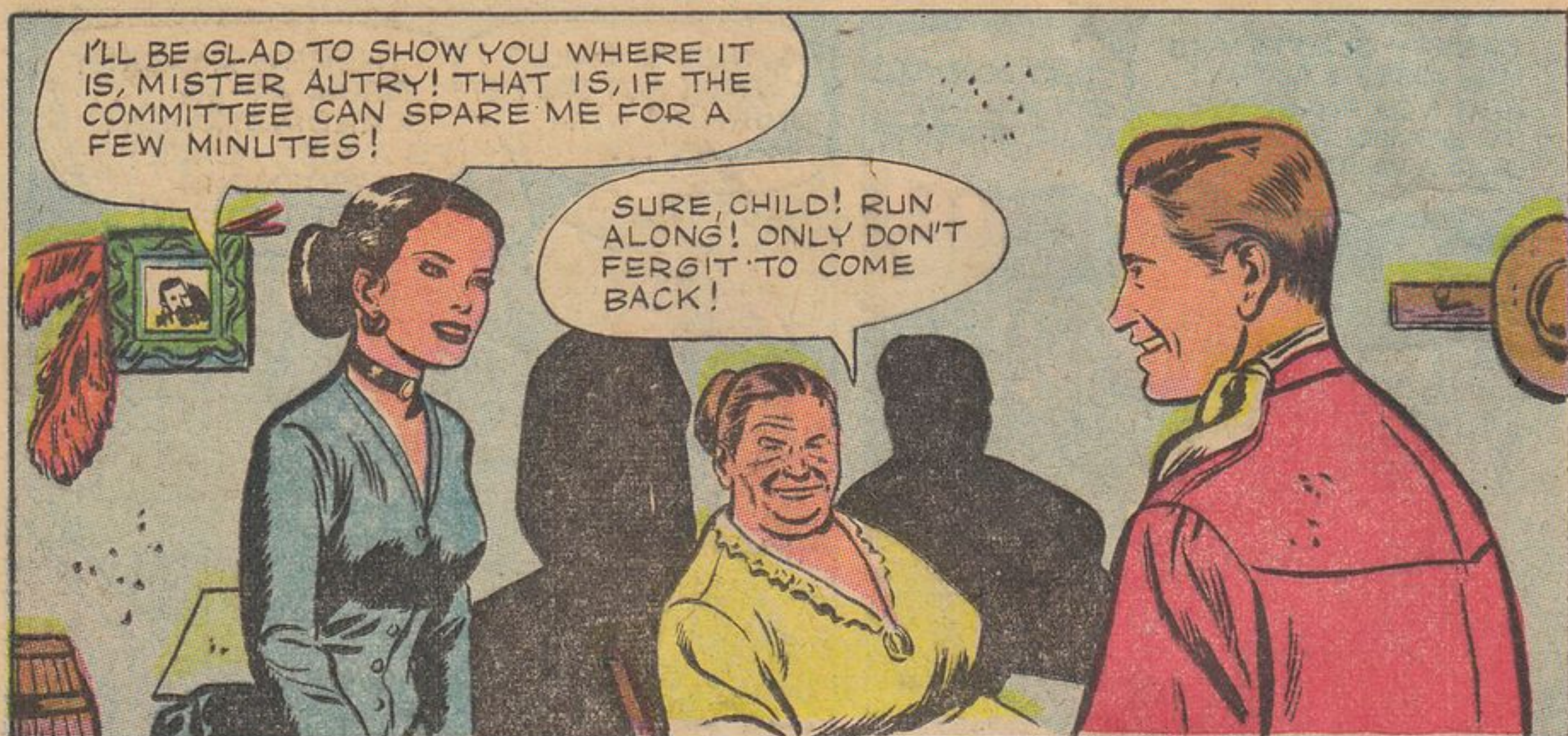
SOME TIME LATER... GENE RIDES INTO PINEVILLE...











A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WHO'S THIS FELLA
JIM, MISS LUCY?

AUNT BELLE'S
BROTHER! HE'S A
STRANGE OLD MAN!
NOT QUITE RIGHT IN
HIS MIND, I THINK!
KEEPS MOSTLY
TO HIMSELF!

HE OFTEN DISAPPEARS FOR
DAYS AT A TIME! AUNT BELLE
NEVER SEEMS TO WORRY,
THOUGH! HE ALWAYS COMES
BACK SAFE AND SOUND!



HERE'S AUNT BELLE'S
HOUSE! YOUR ROOM
IS IN THE FRONT ON
THE SECOND FLOOR!
YOU'LL GET IN ALL
RIGHT! THE
HOUSE IS
NEVER LOCKED!

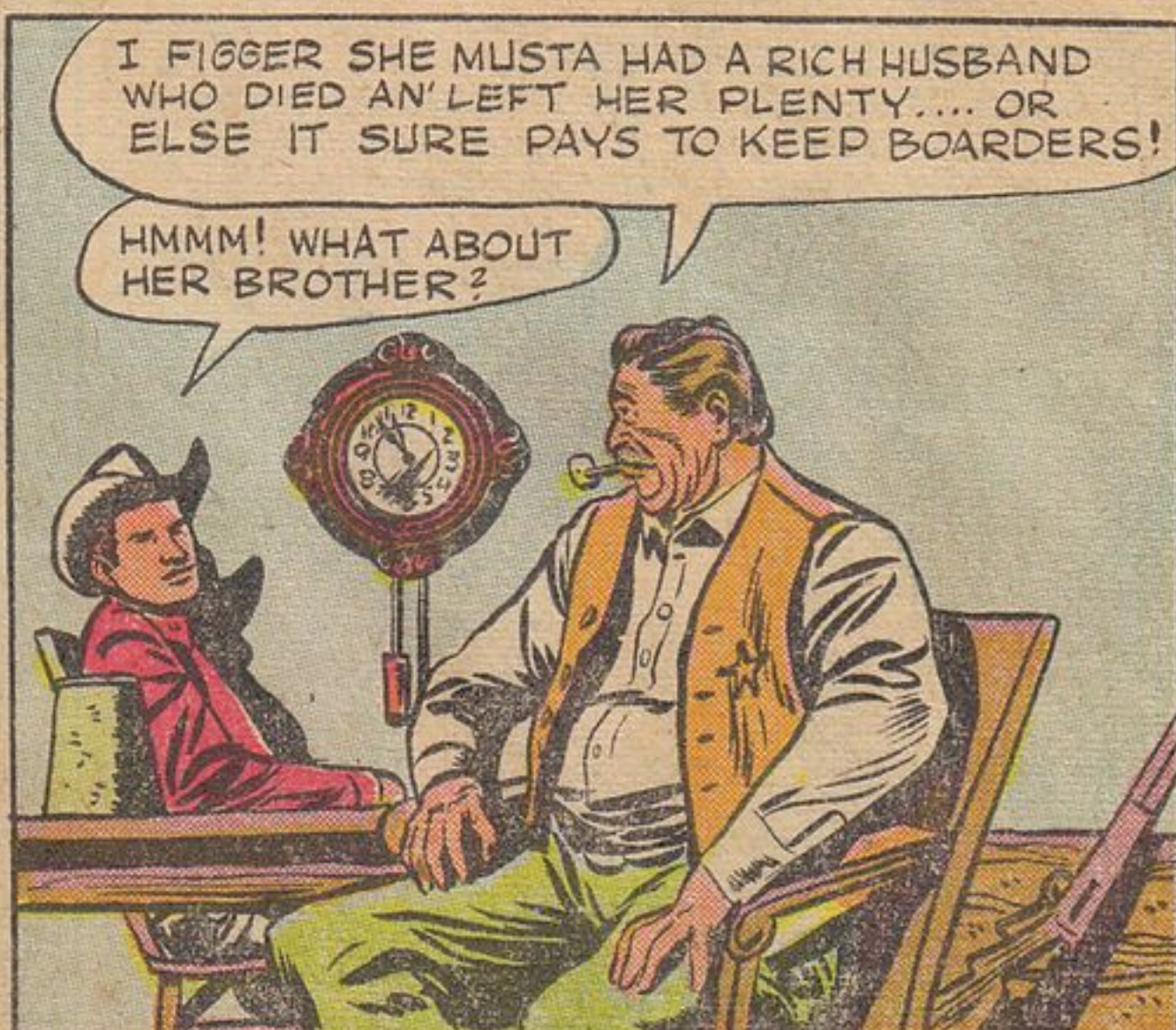
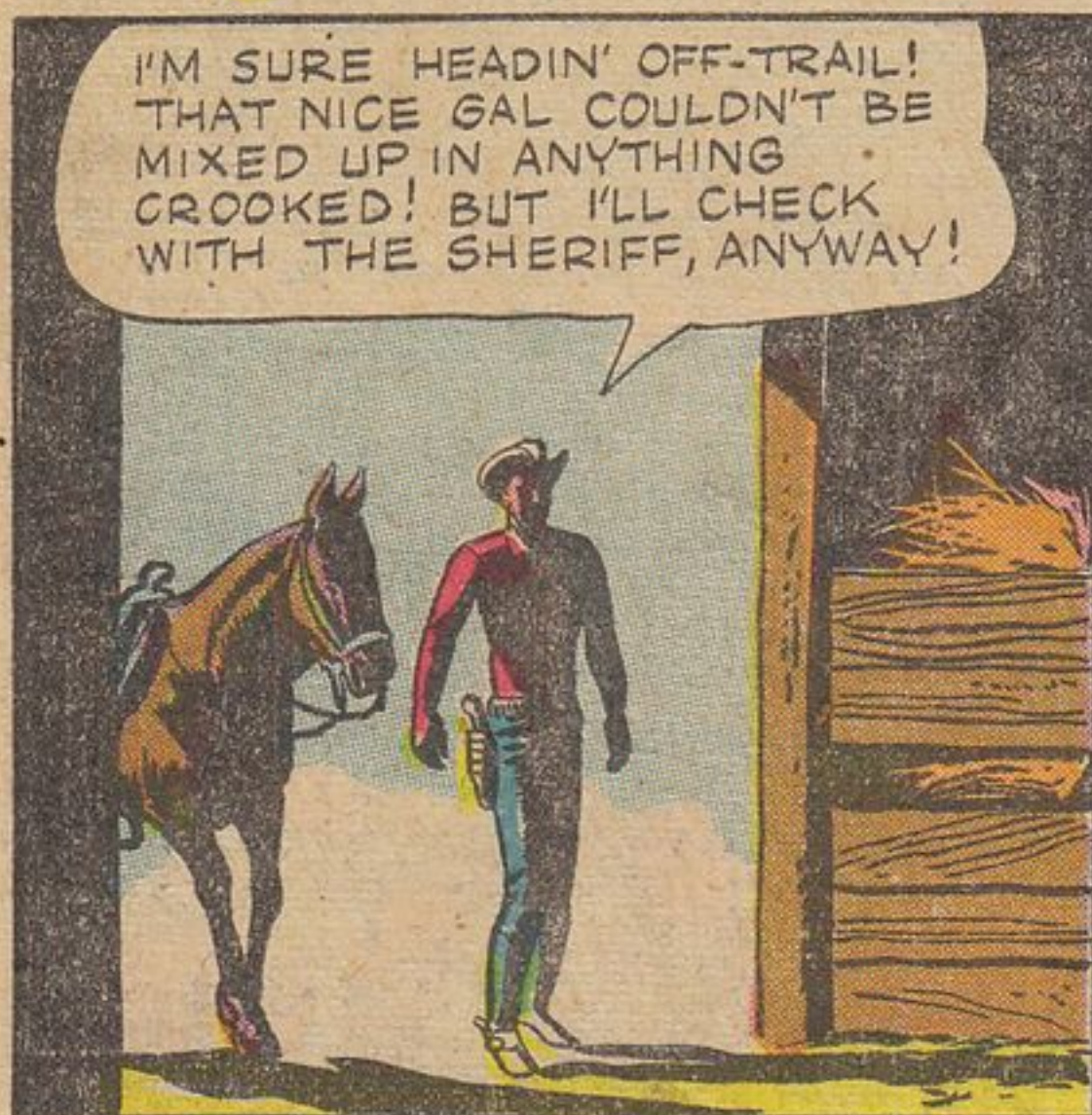
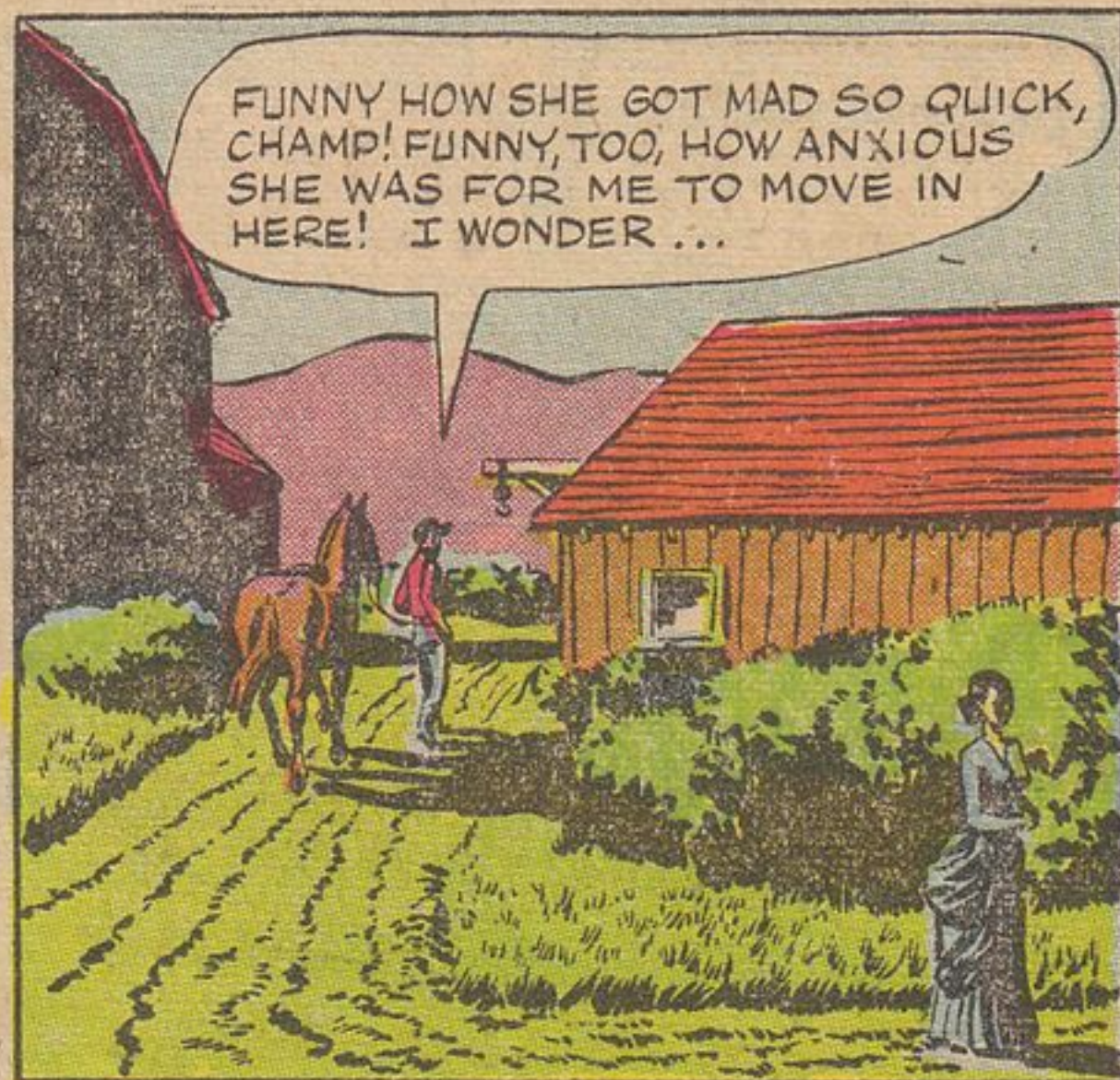
ISN'T THAT KINDA
RISKY?... WITH THE
RED CIRCLE BANDIT
OPERATIN' AROUND
HERE?

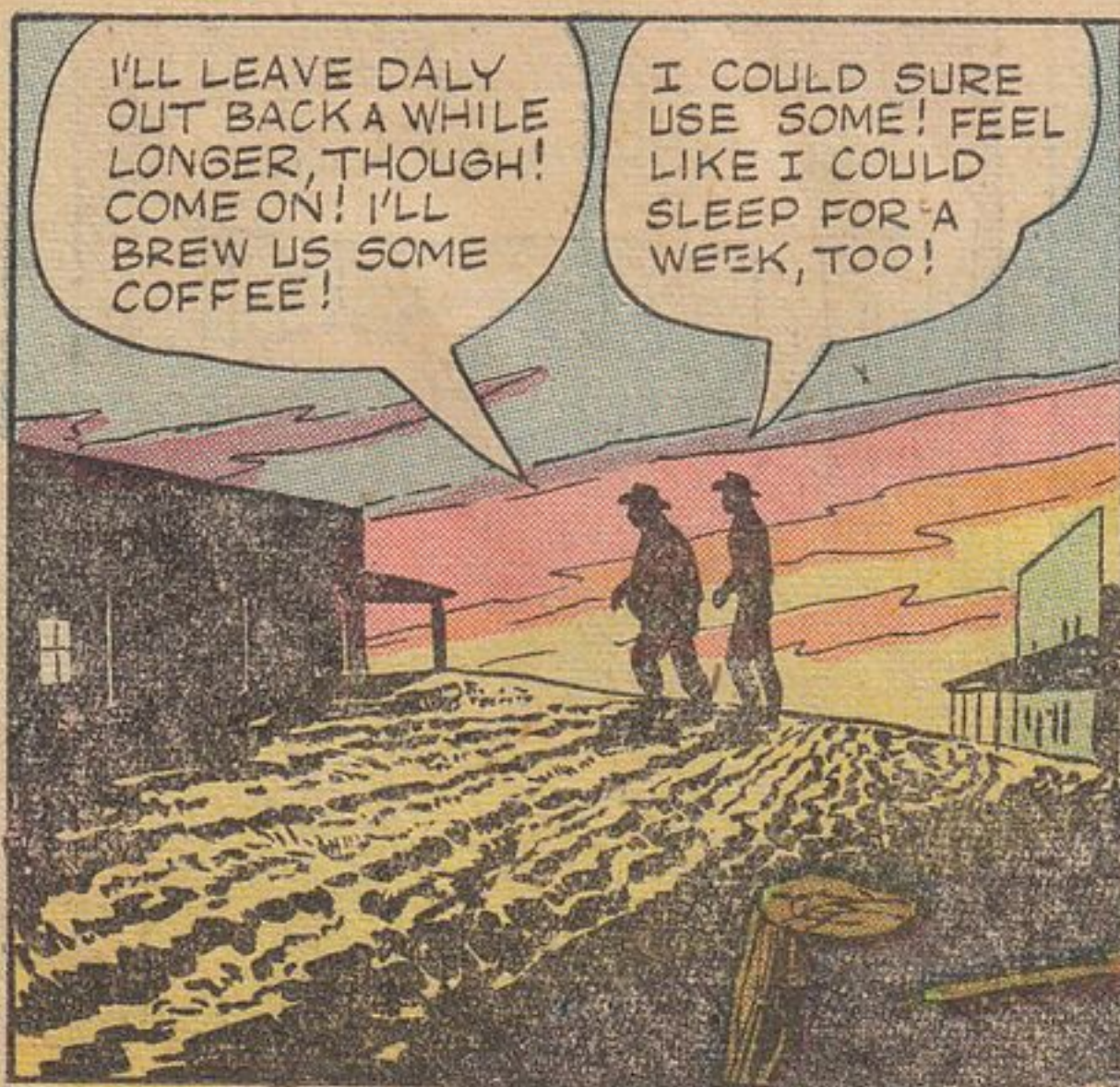
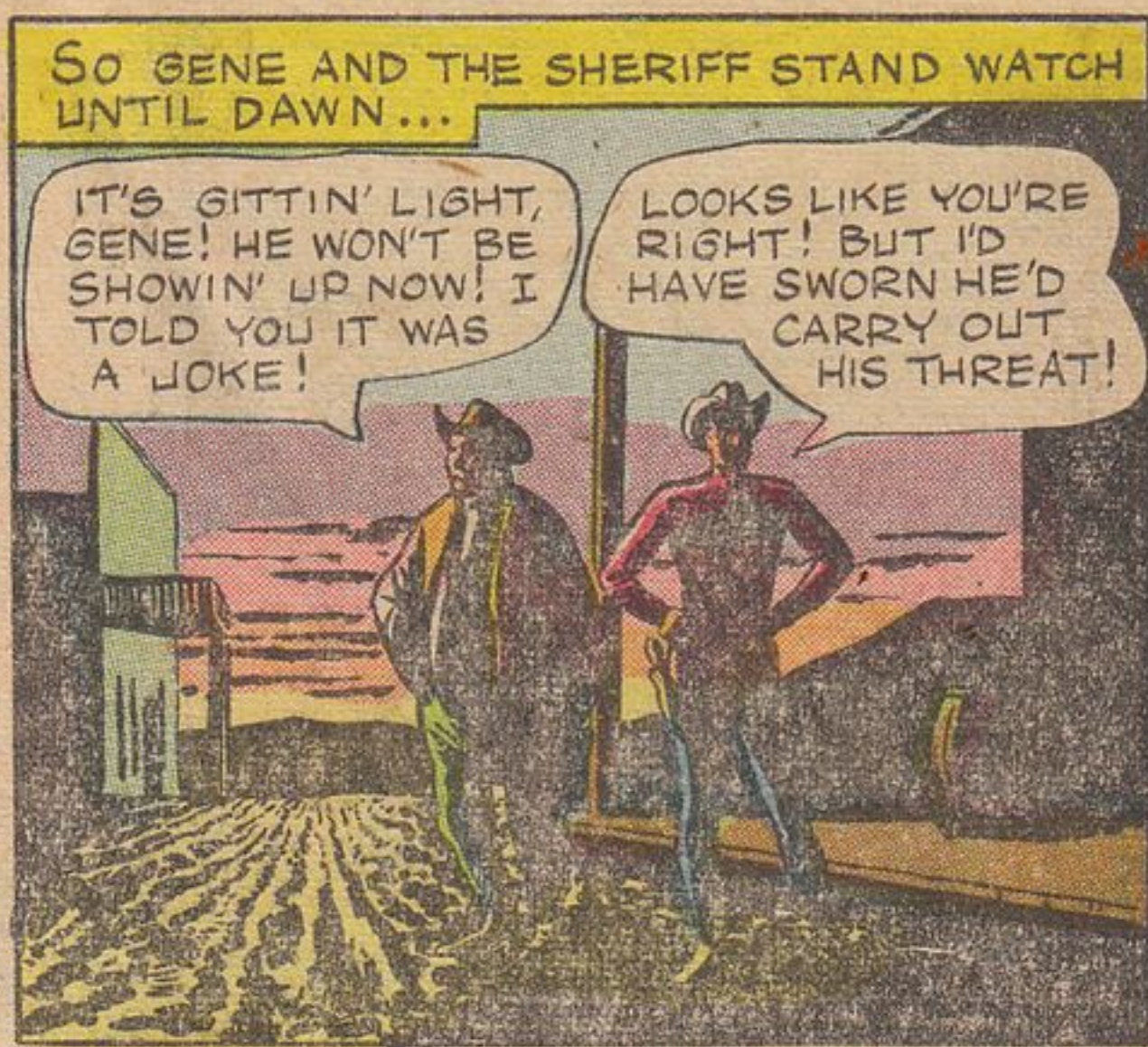
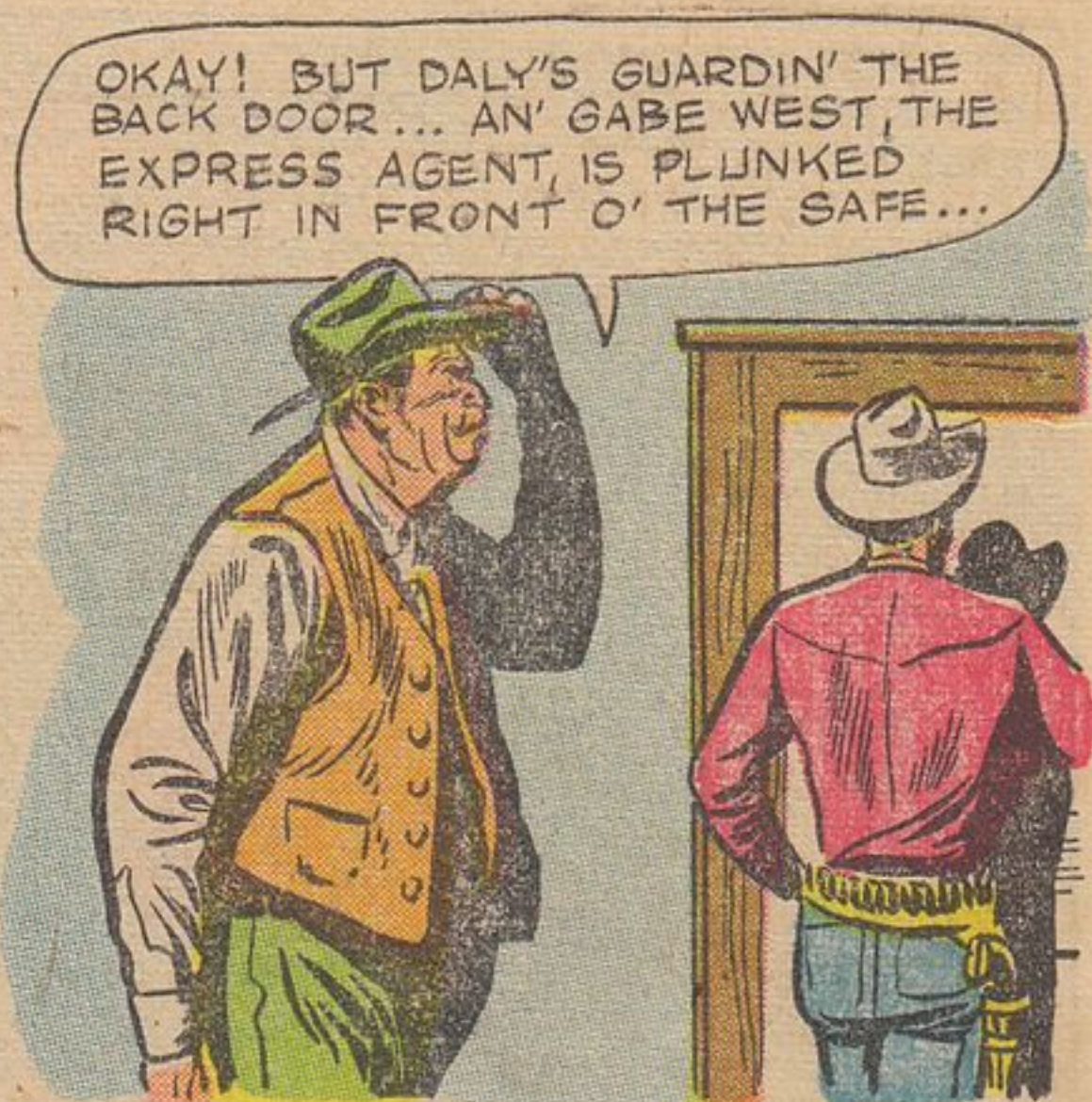
AUNT BELLE SAYS
SHE'S PUT THE
INDIAN SIGN ON
HIM! AND HE'LL
NEVER BOTHER
ANYBODY IN
HER HOUSE!

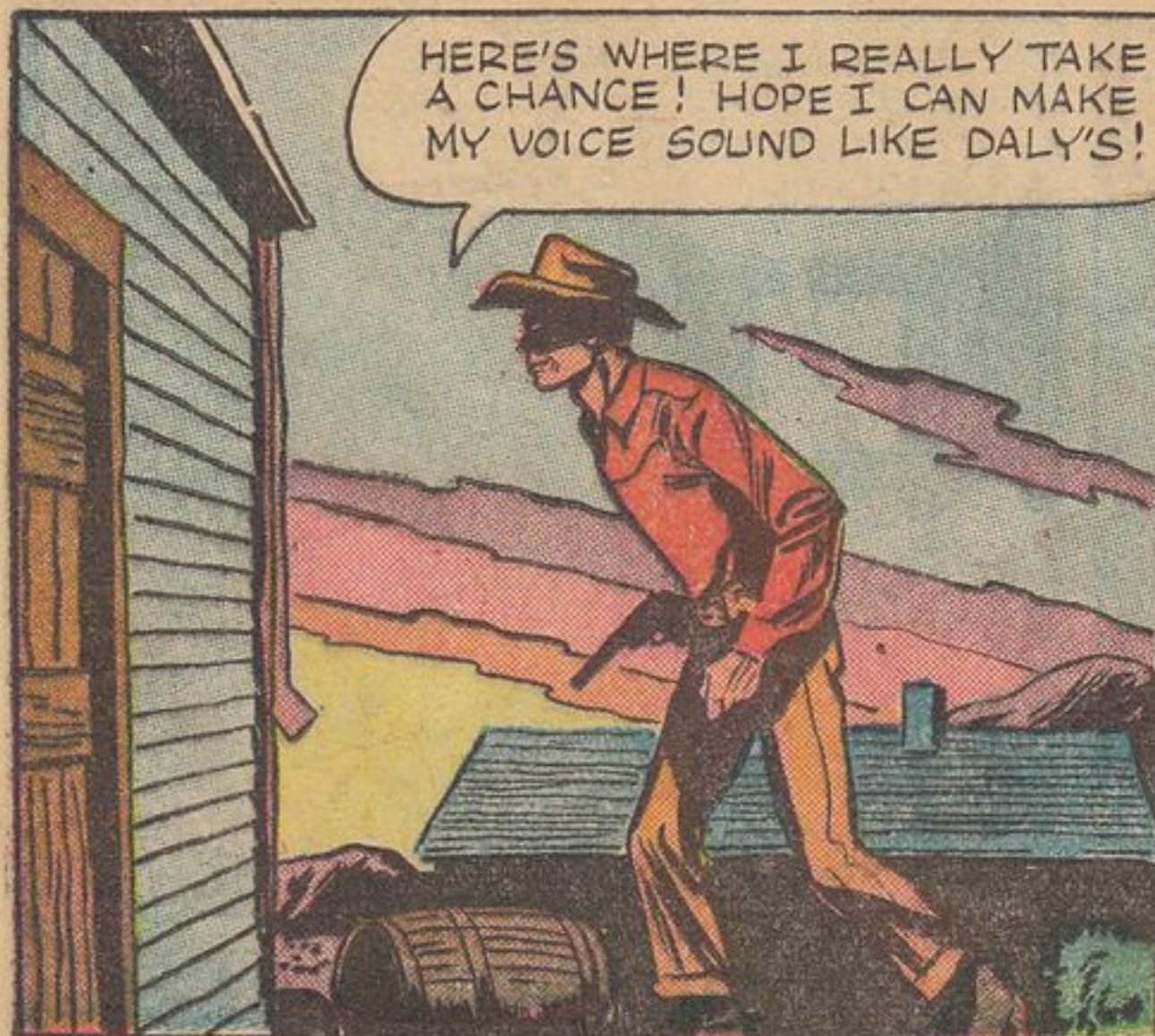
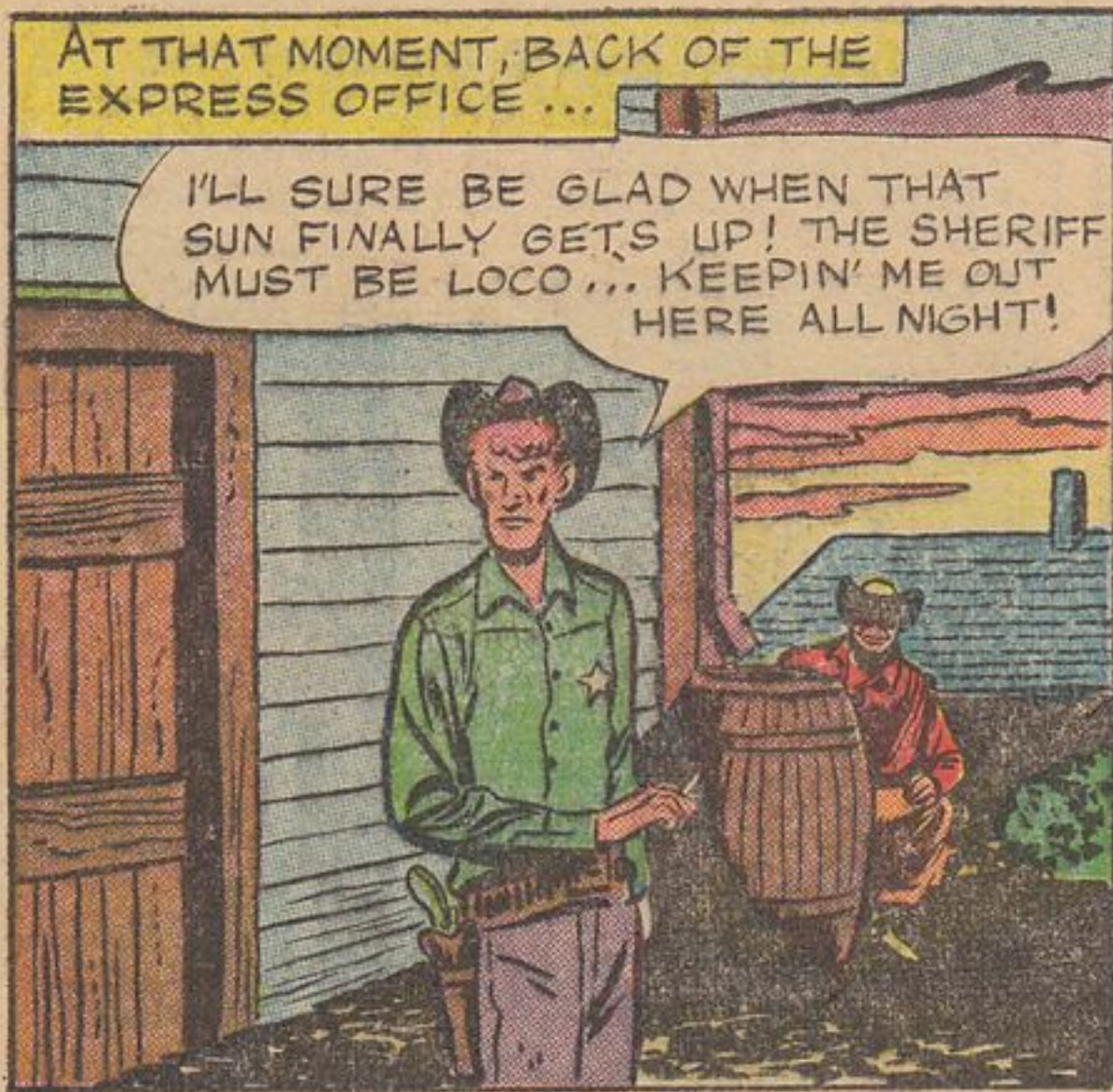
IF SHE'S AS SURE
AS ALL THAT,
MAYBE SHE
KNOWS THE
HOMBRE!

HOW DARE YOU SUGGEST THAT, MISTER
AUTRY! AUNT BELLE'S THE
SALT OF THE EARTH!
I KNOW! I'VE LIVED
WITH HER FOR OVER
A YEAR!

SORRY, MISS
LUCY! I WAS
JUST SORTA
THINKIN' OUT LOUD!







GABE WEST, THE EXPRESS AGENT,
HEARS THE CALL...

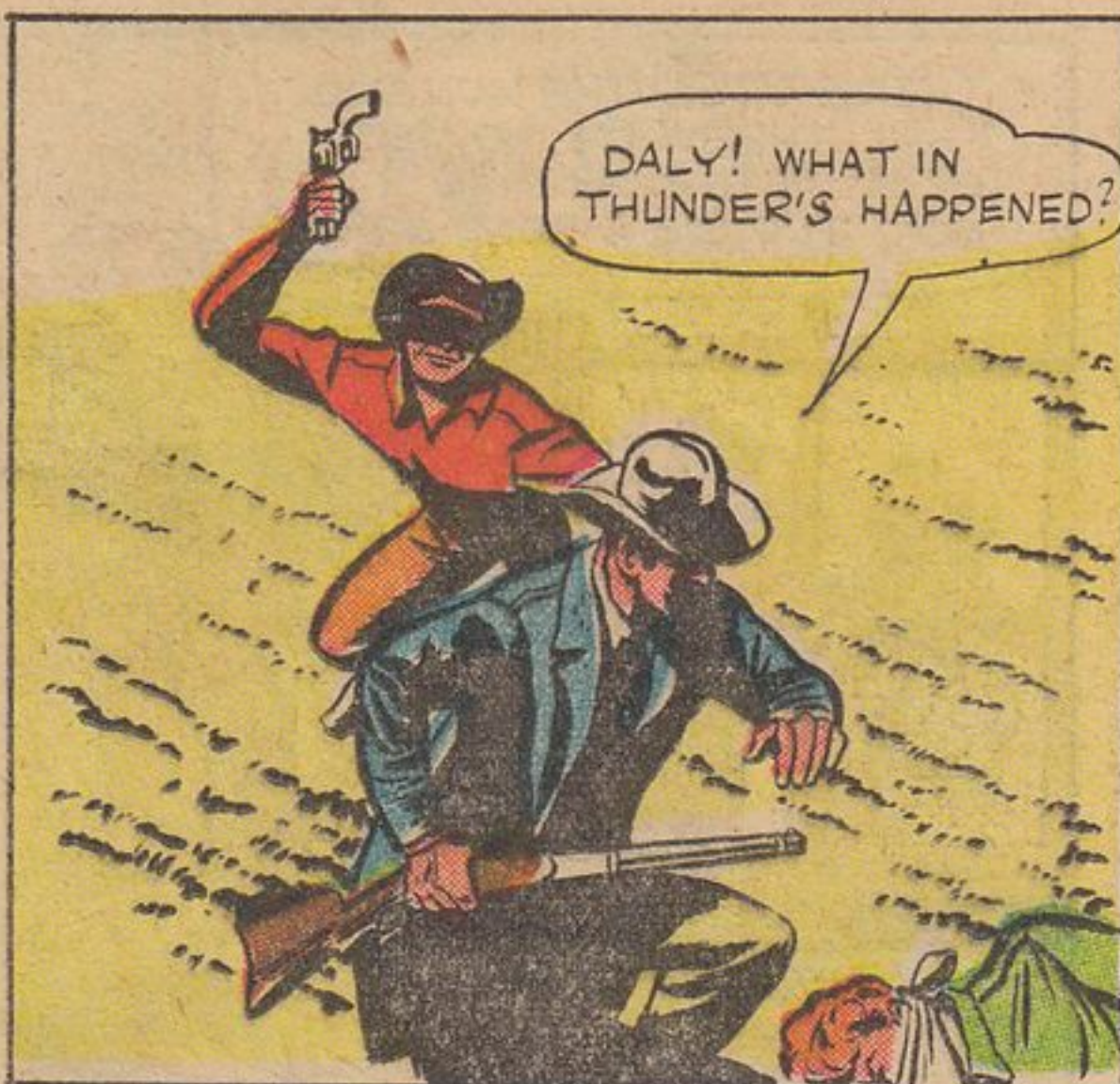
THAT'S DALY YELLIN'!
SOUNDS LIKE HE'S IN
TROUBLE!



I'M COMIN', DALY!



DALY! WHAT IN
THUNDER'S HAPPENED?

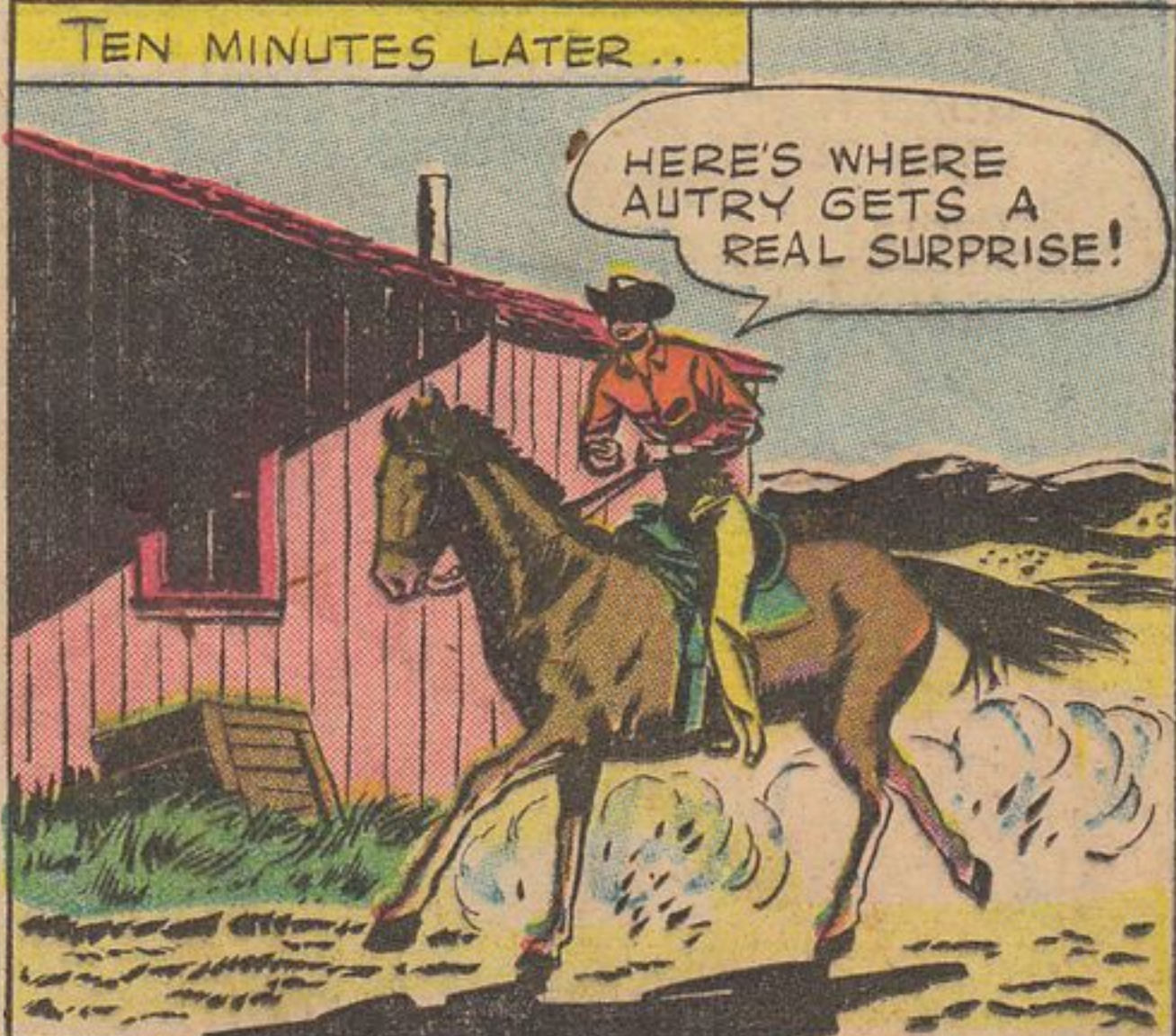


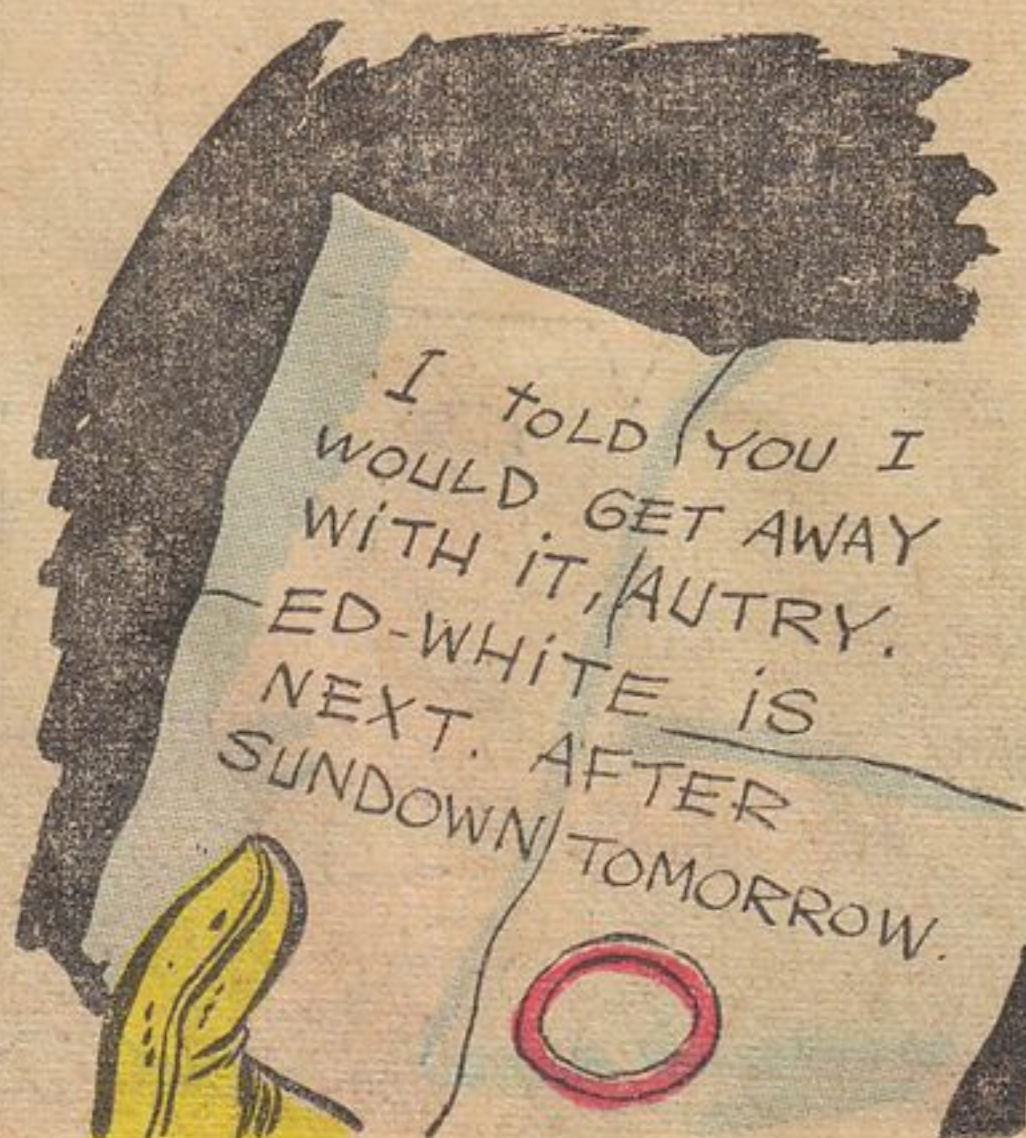
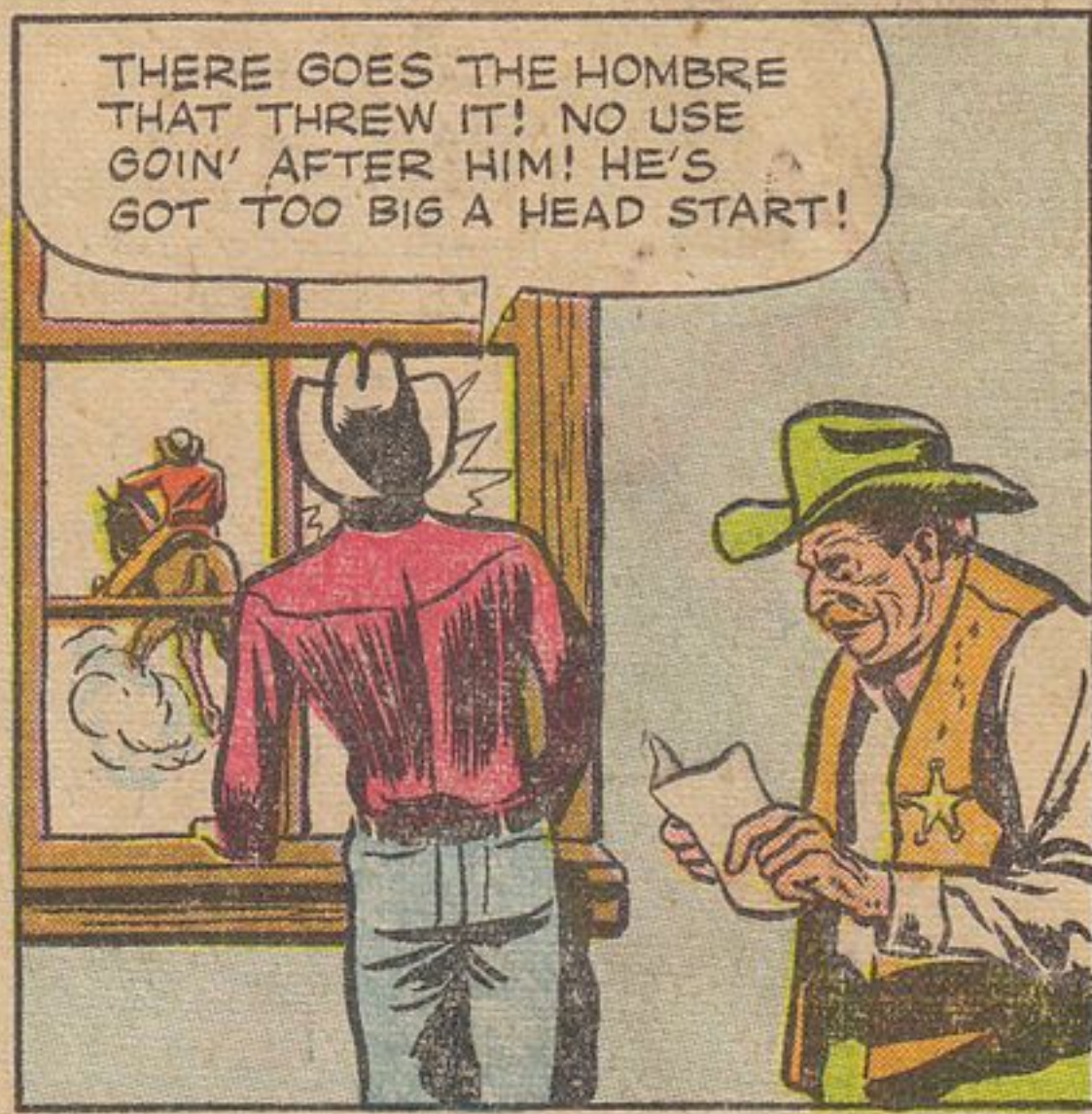
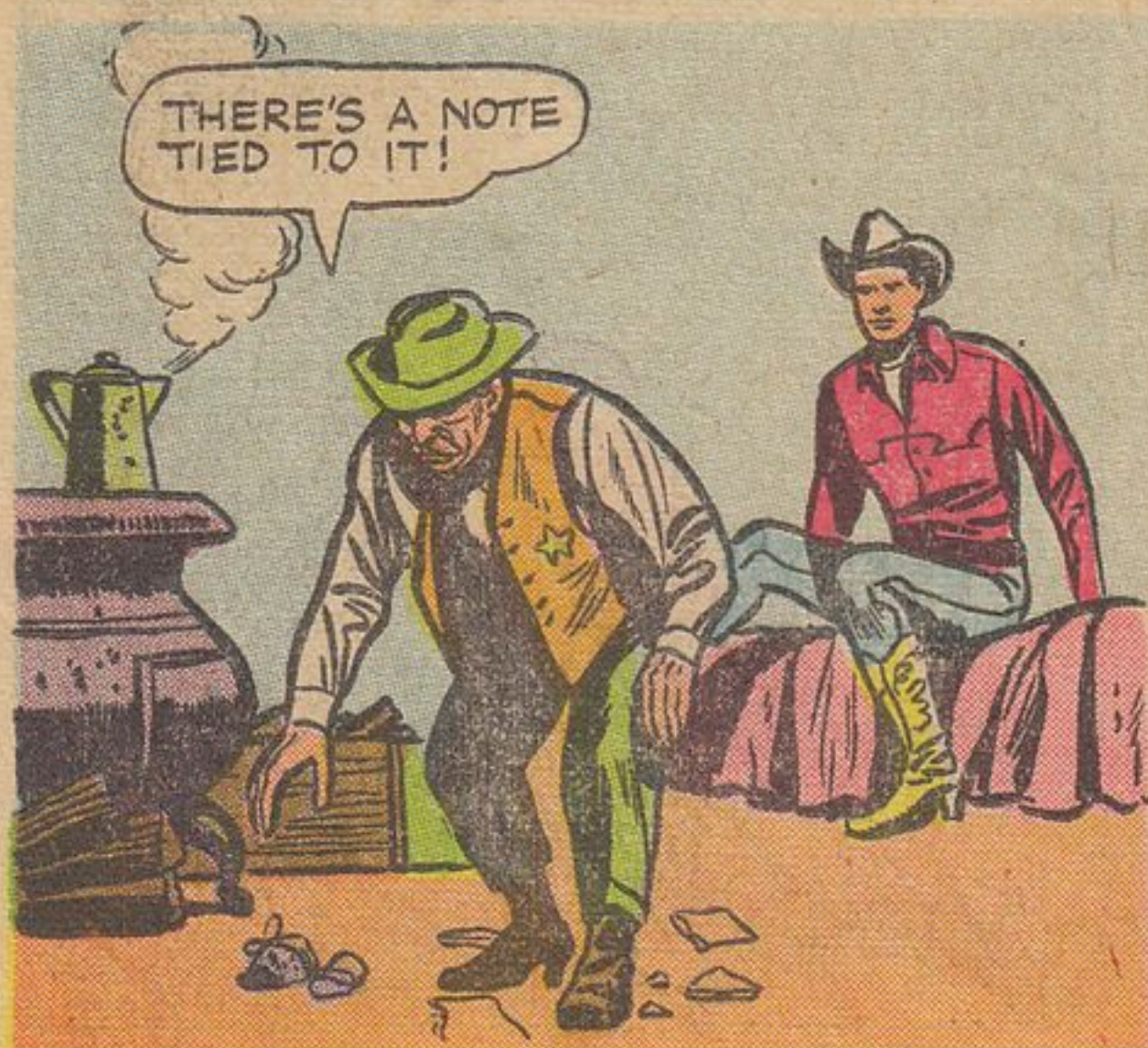
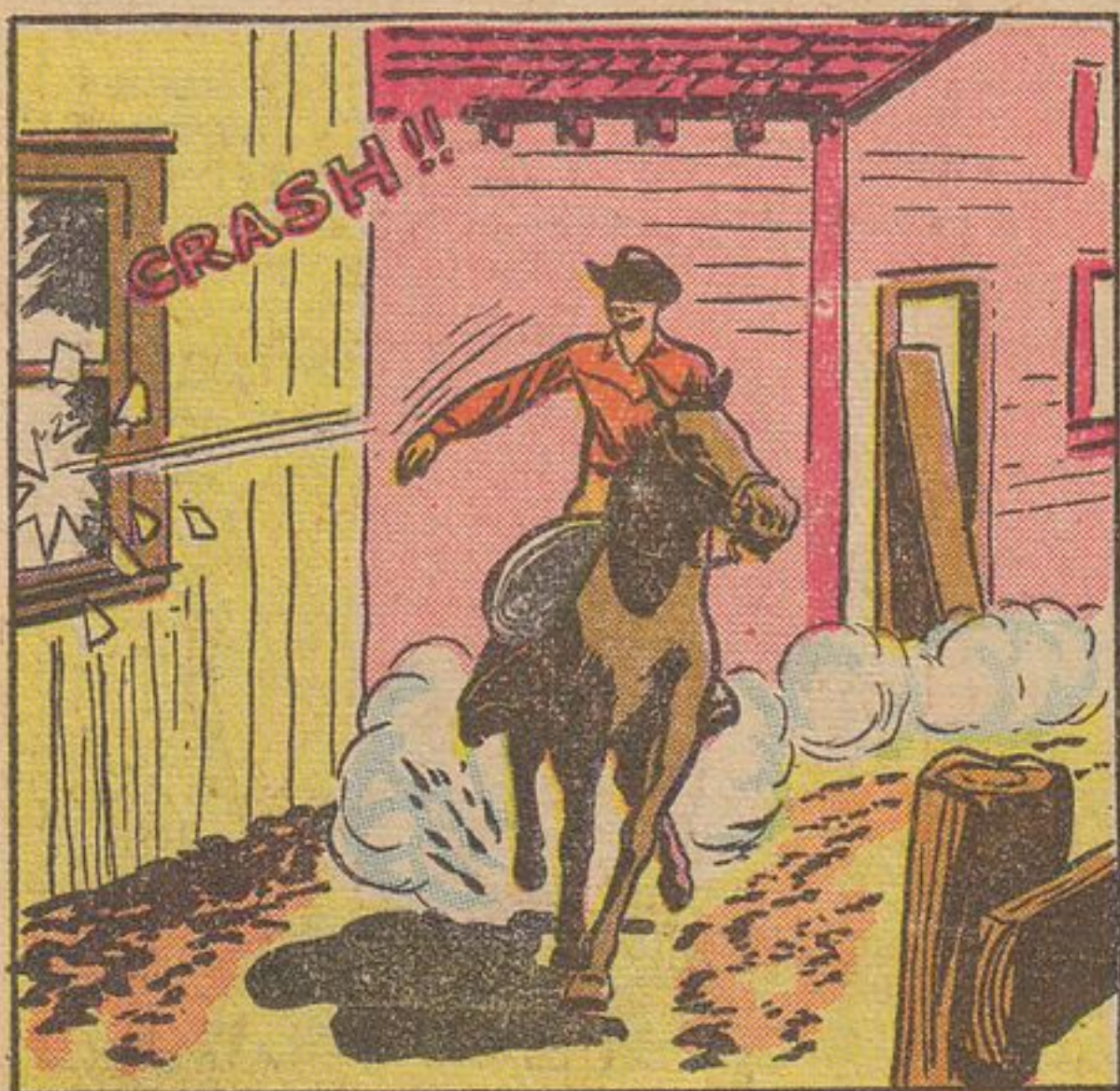
I'LL HAFTA WORK PLENTY
FAST! AUTRY AN' THE
SHERIFF'RE LIABLE
TO COME BACK ANY
MINUTE!

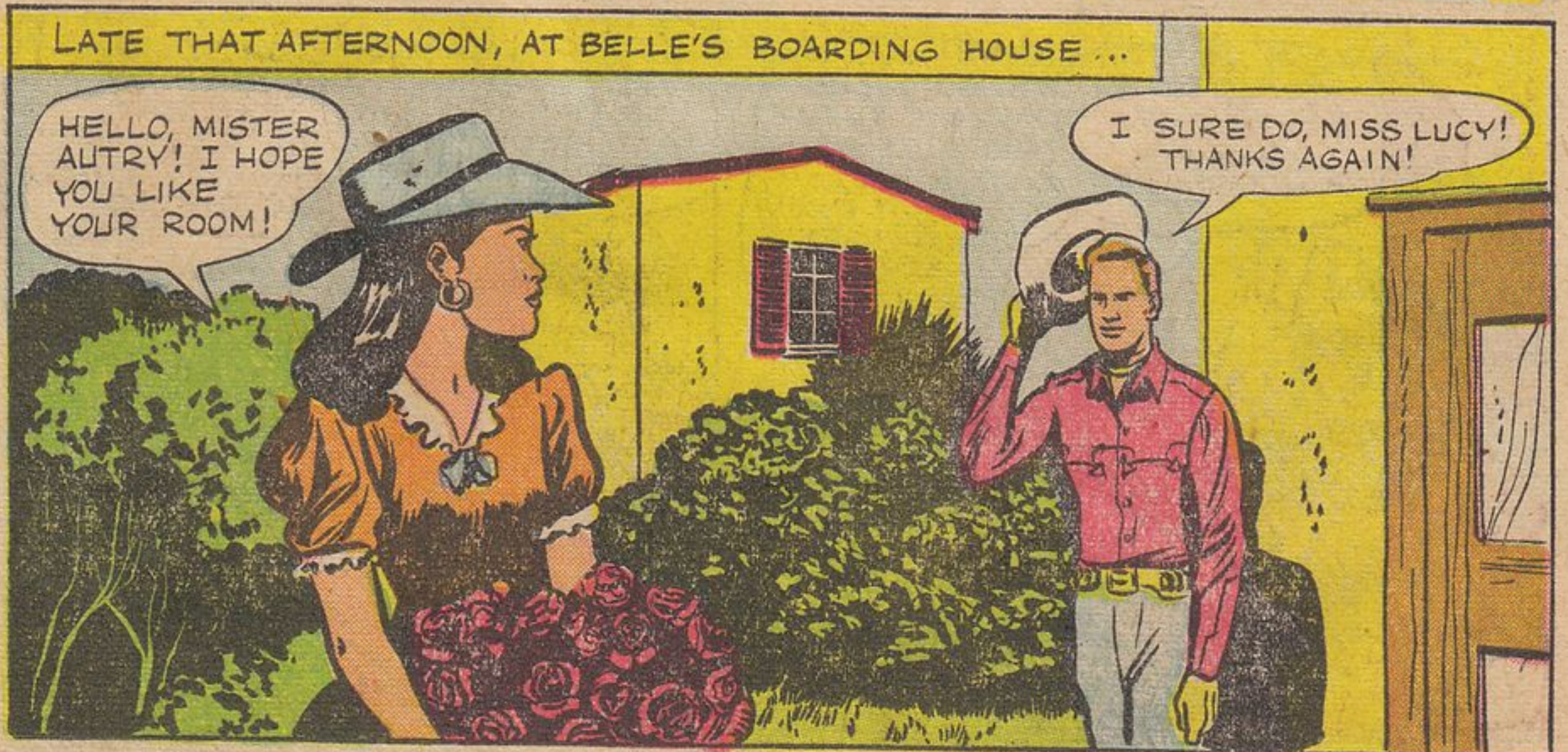
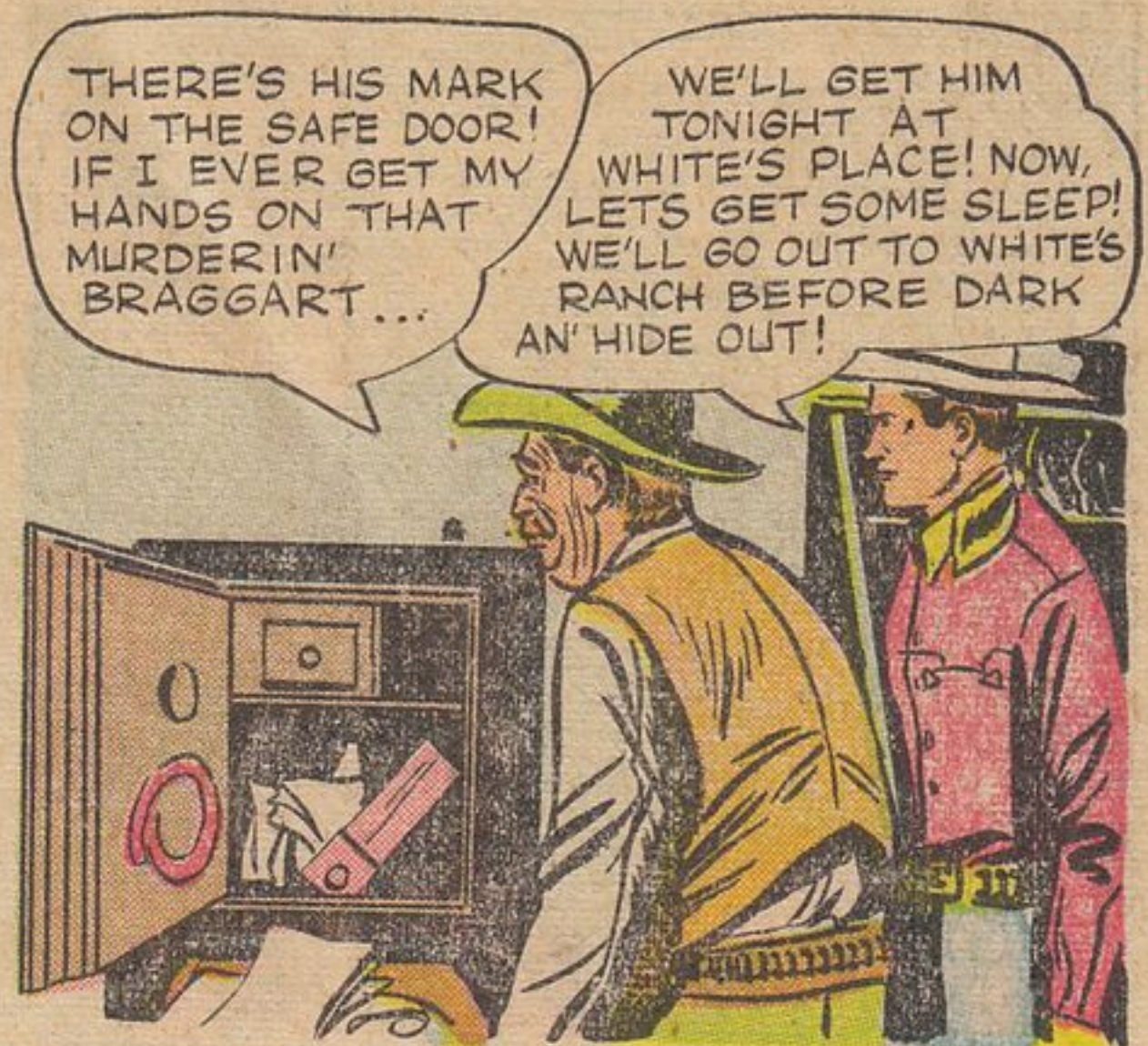


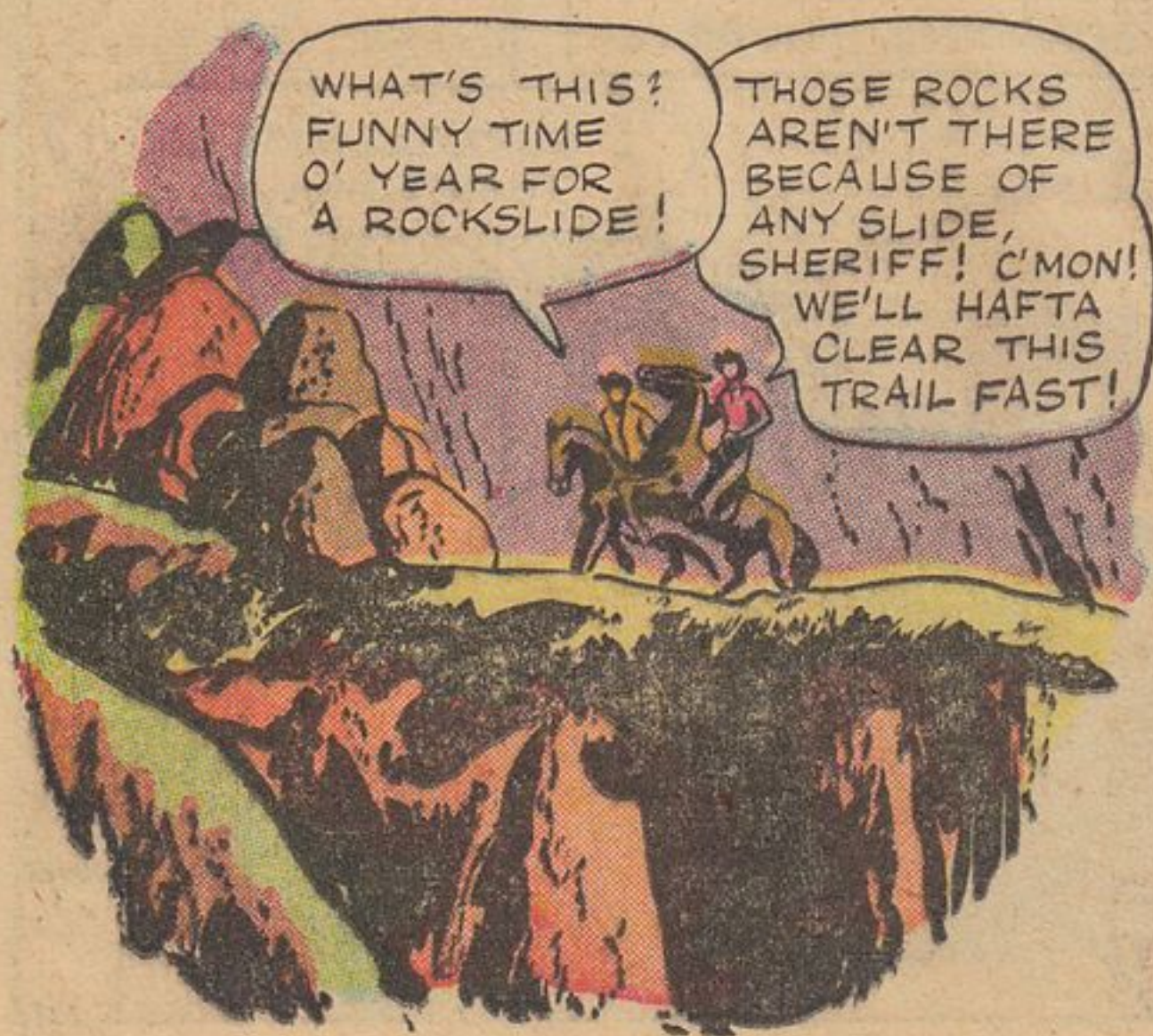
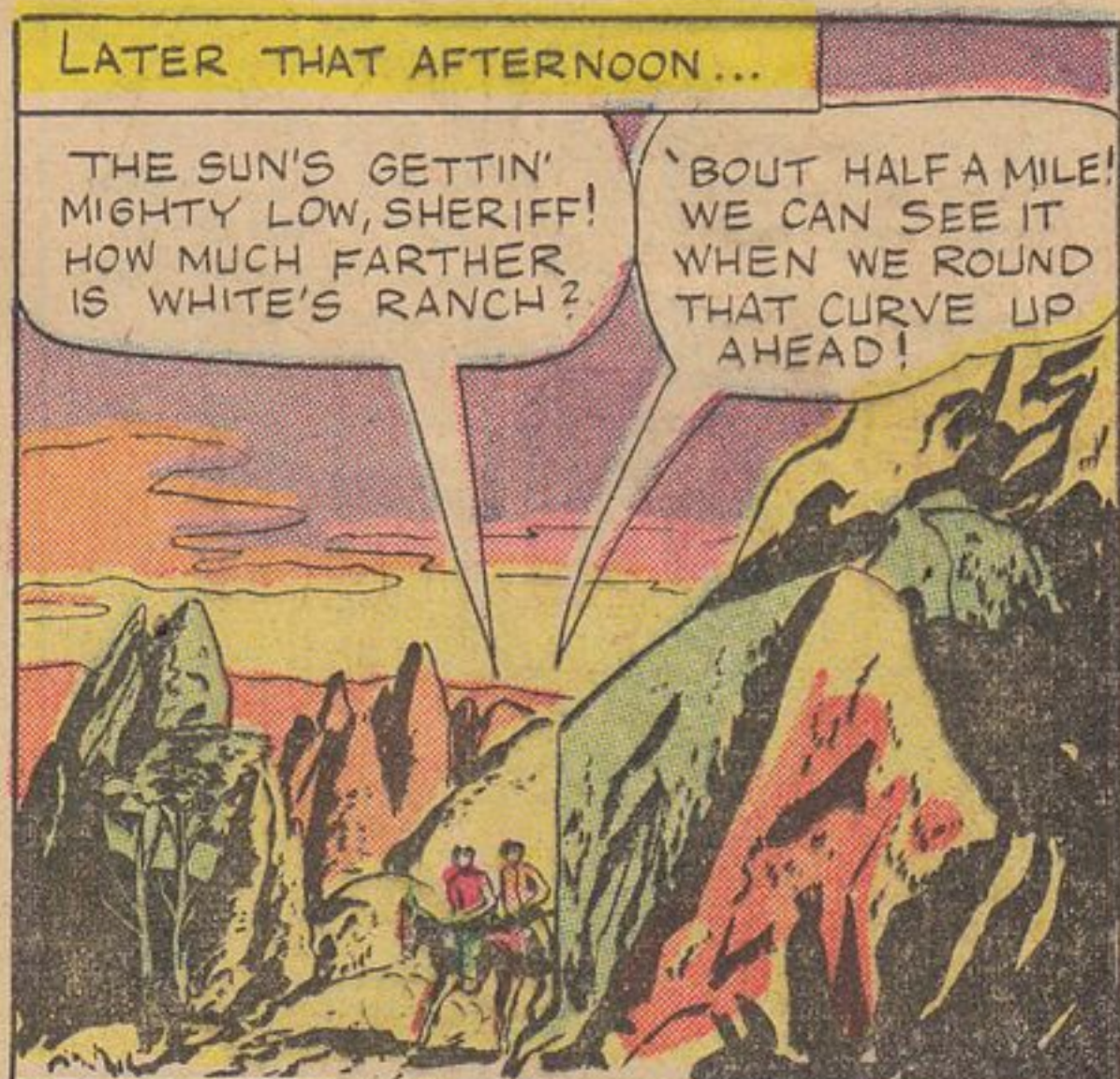
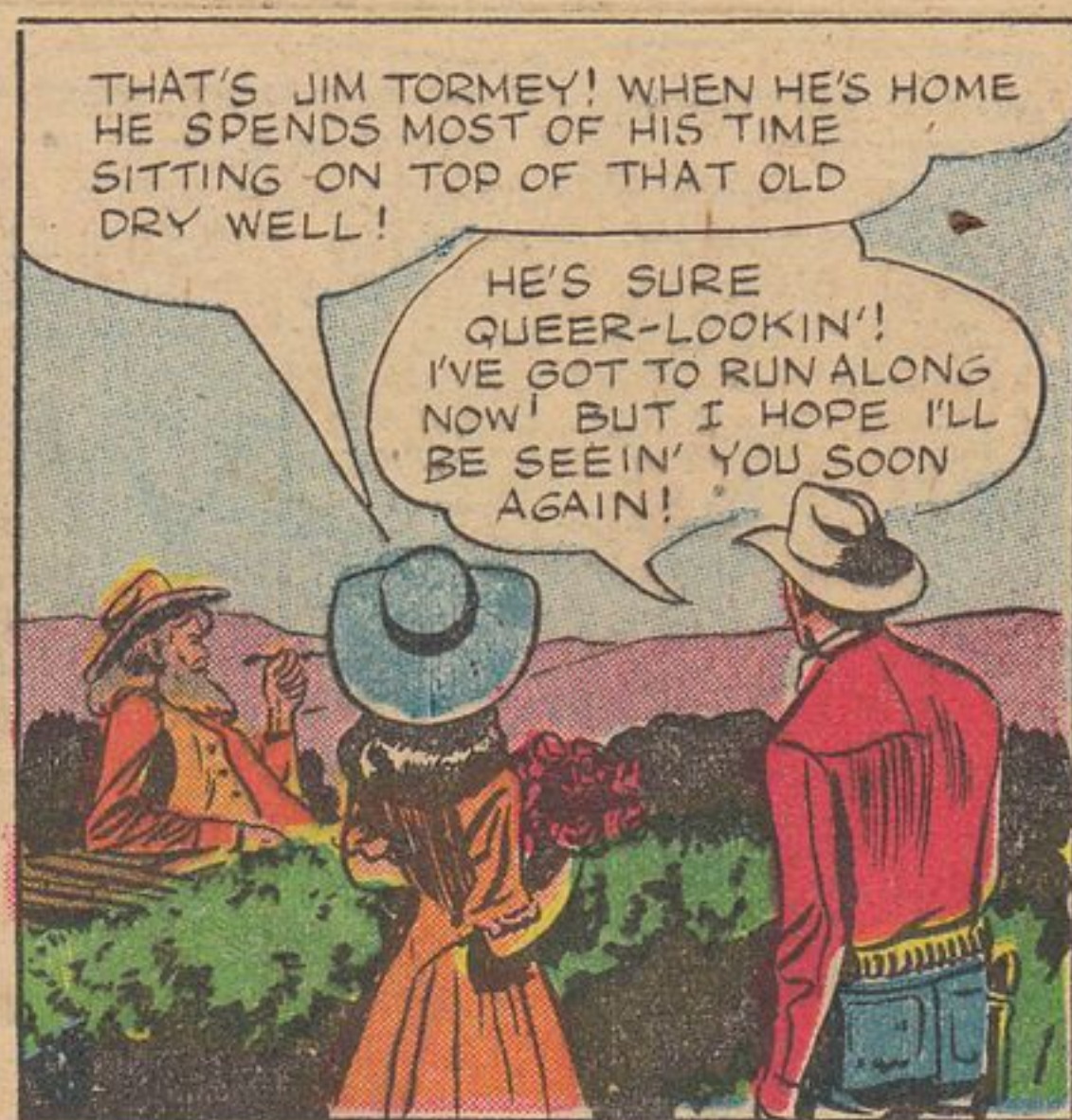
TEN MINUTES LATER...

HERE'S WHERE
AUTRY GETS A
REAL SURPRISE!









AND WHEN THEY FINALLY REACH ED WHITE'S RANCH...

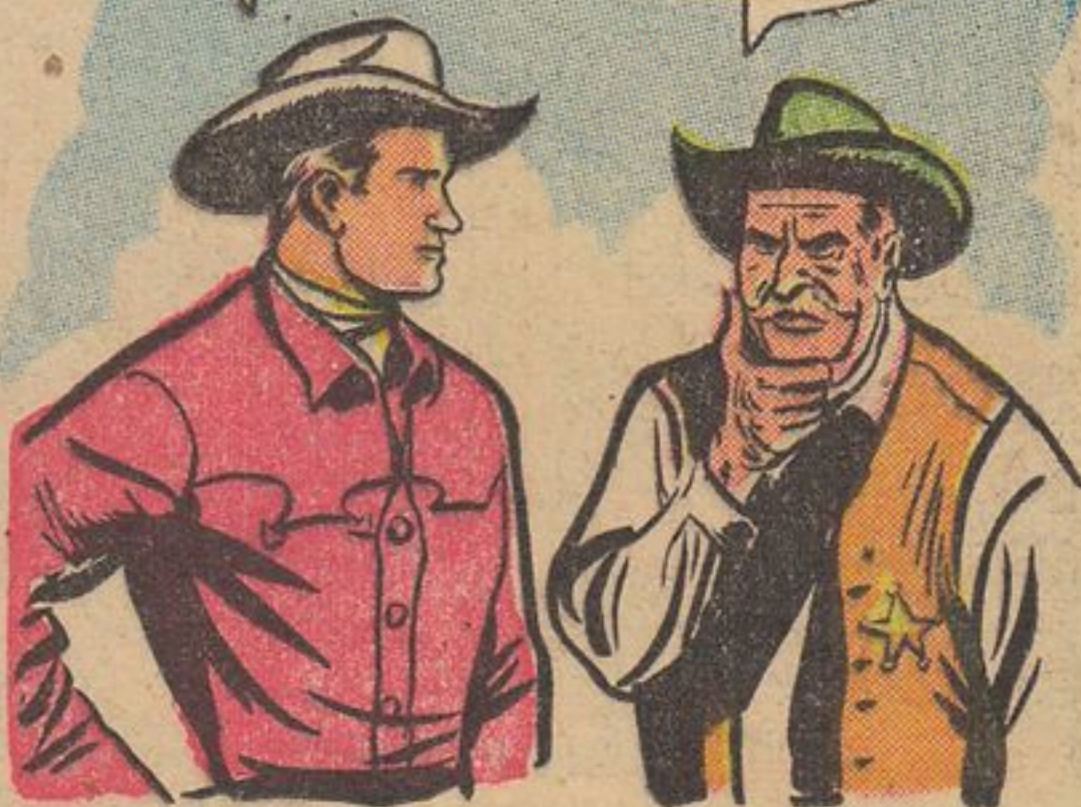
.. THEN HE GUN-WHIPPED ME AN' MADE ME OPEN THE SAFE! BUT HE WOULDN'T TOUCH THE CASH TILL THE SUN WENT DOWN!

THAT VARMINT'S PLUMB KEERFUL TO STICK TO HIS WORD!

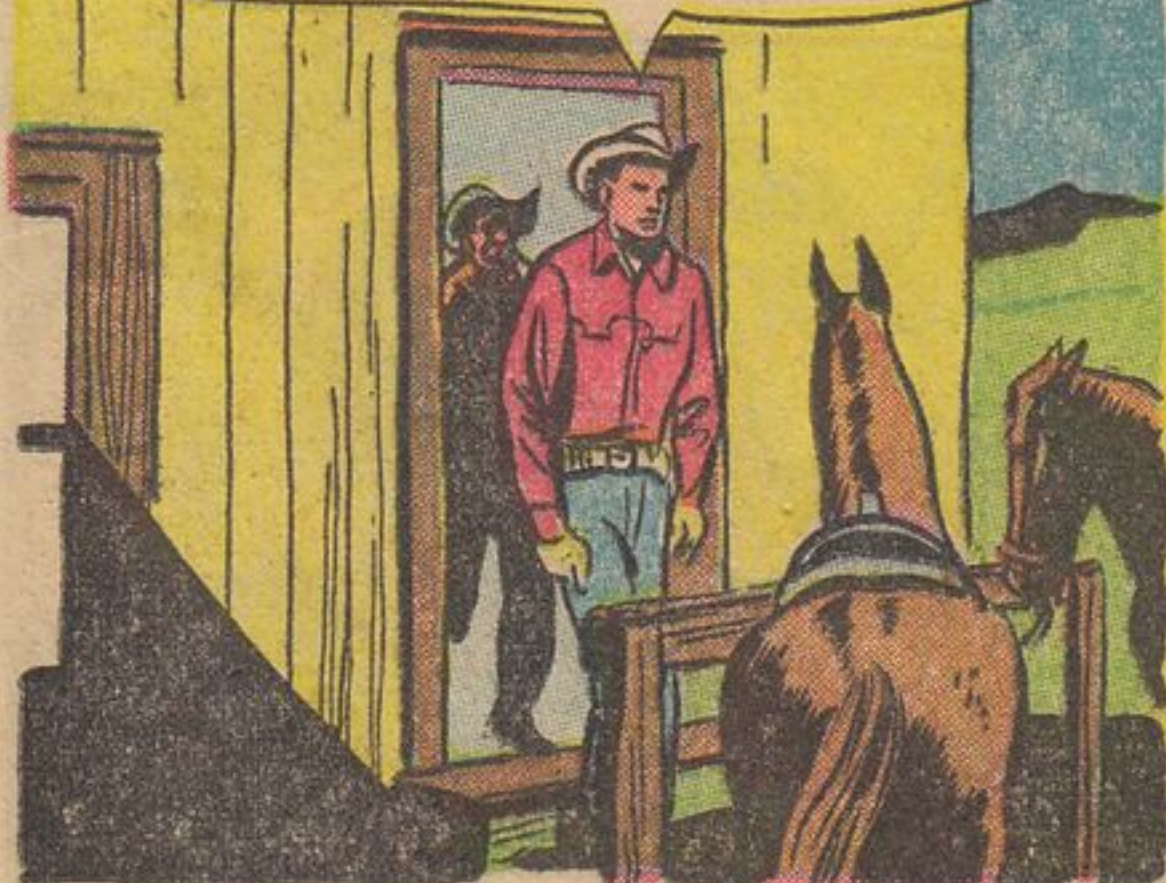


HE'S PLENTY SURE OF HIMSELF! I'VE GOT A HUNCH THOSE TWO THINGS MAY TRAP HIM!

THEY BETTER! I'M GITTING SICK AN' TIRED OF HAVIN' HIM MAKE FOOLS OUTA US!



COME ON, SHERIFF! LET'S HEAD FOR TOWN AN' SEND DOC OUT TO TAKE CARE OF WHITE!

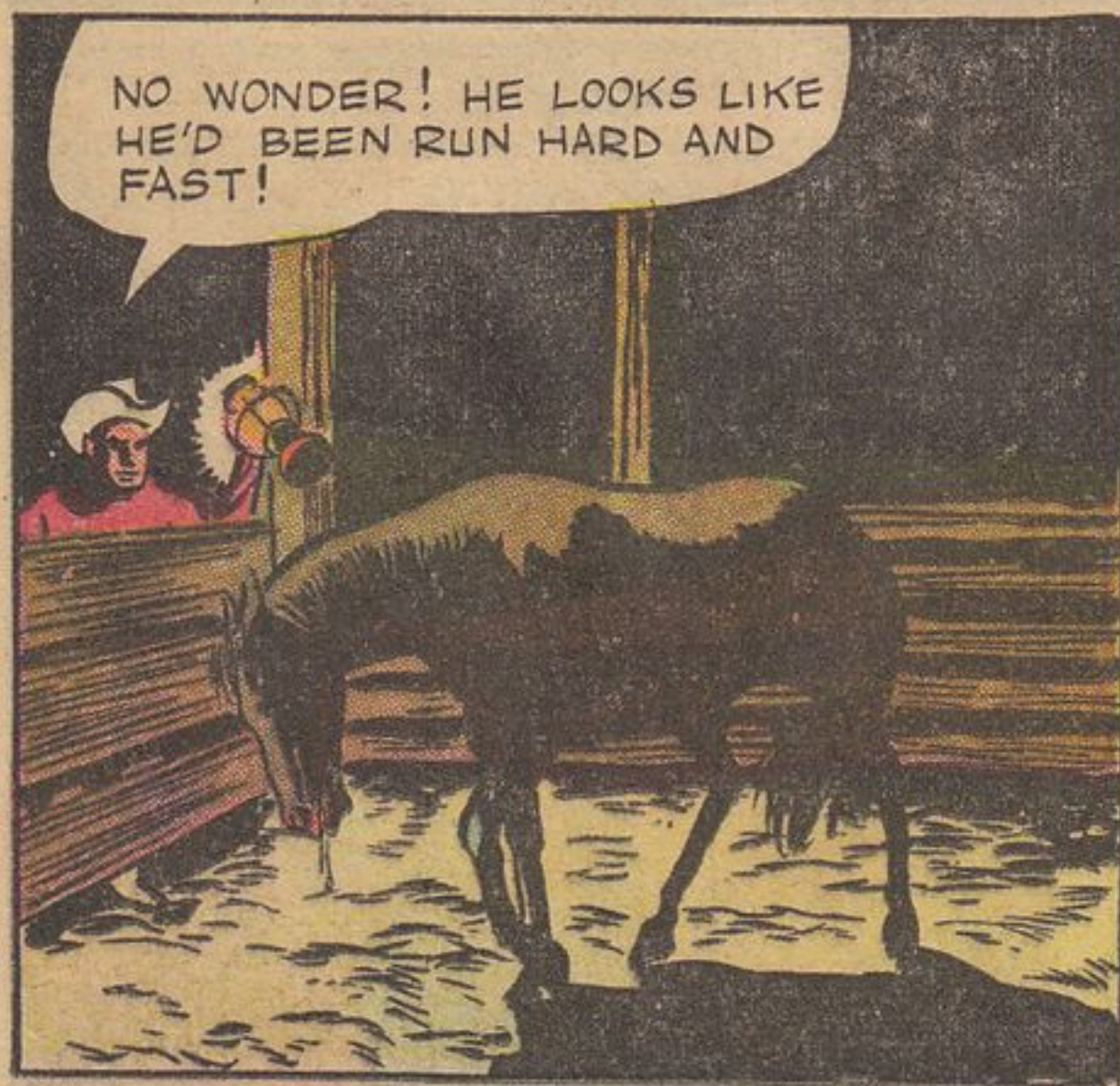


LATER.. AS GENE BEDS CHAMP DOWN IN AUNT BELLE'S BARN...

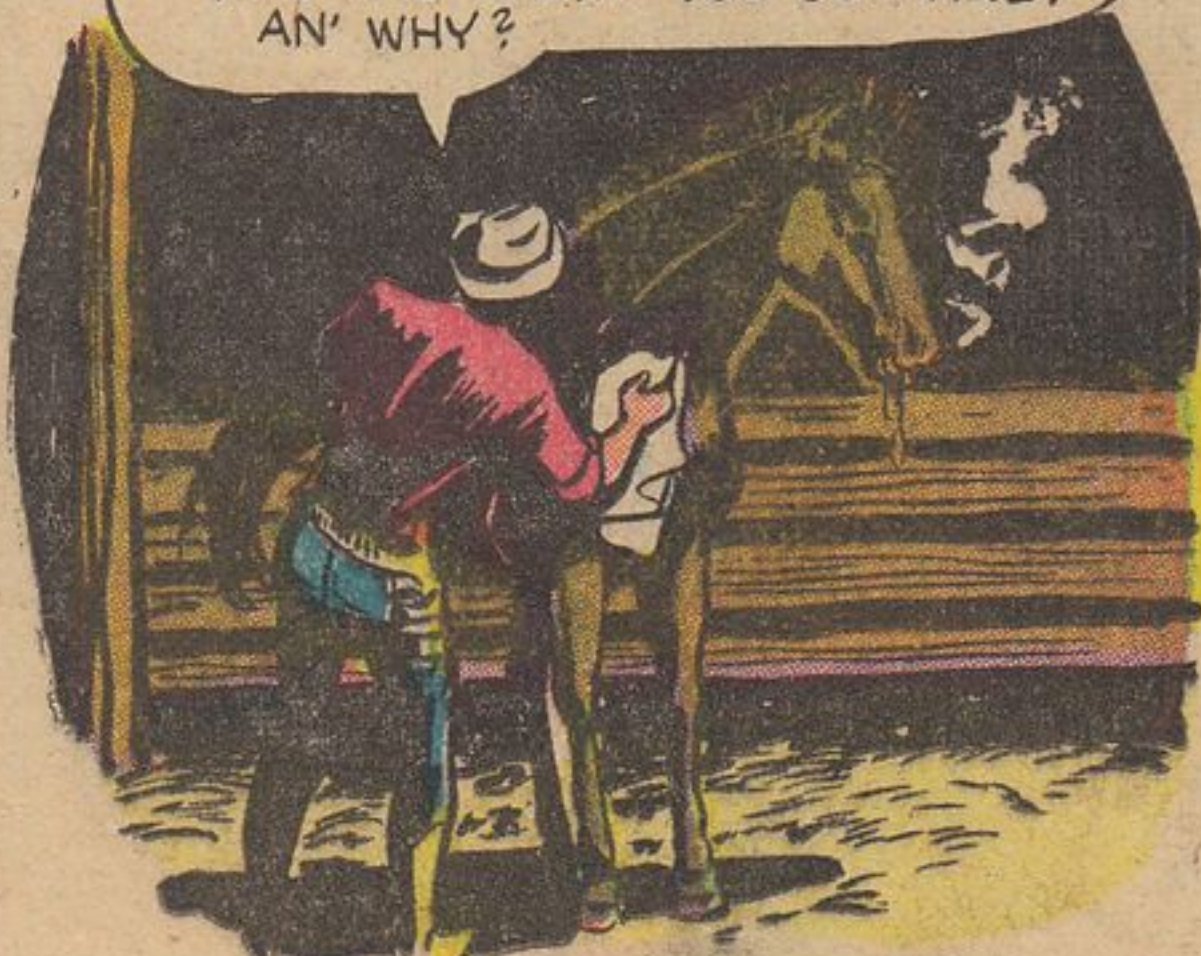
SOUNDS LIKE ONE O' AUNT BELLE'S HORSES IS A MITE UNEASY! RECKON I'LL HAVE A LOOK-SEE!

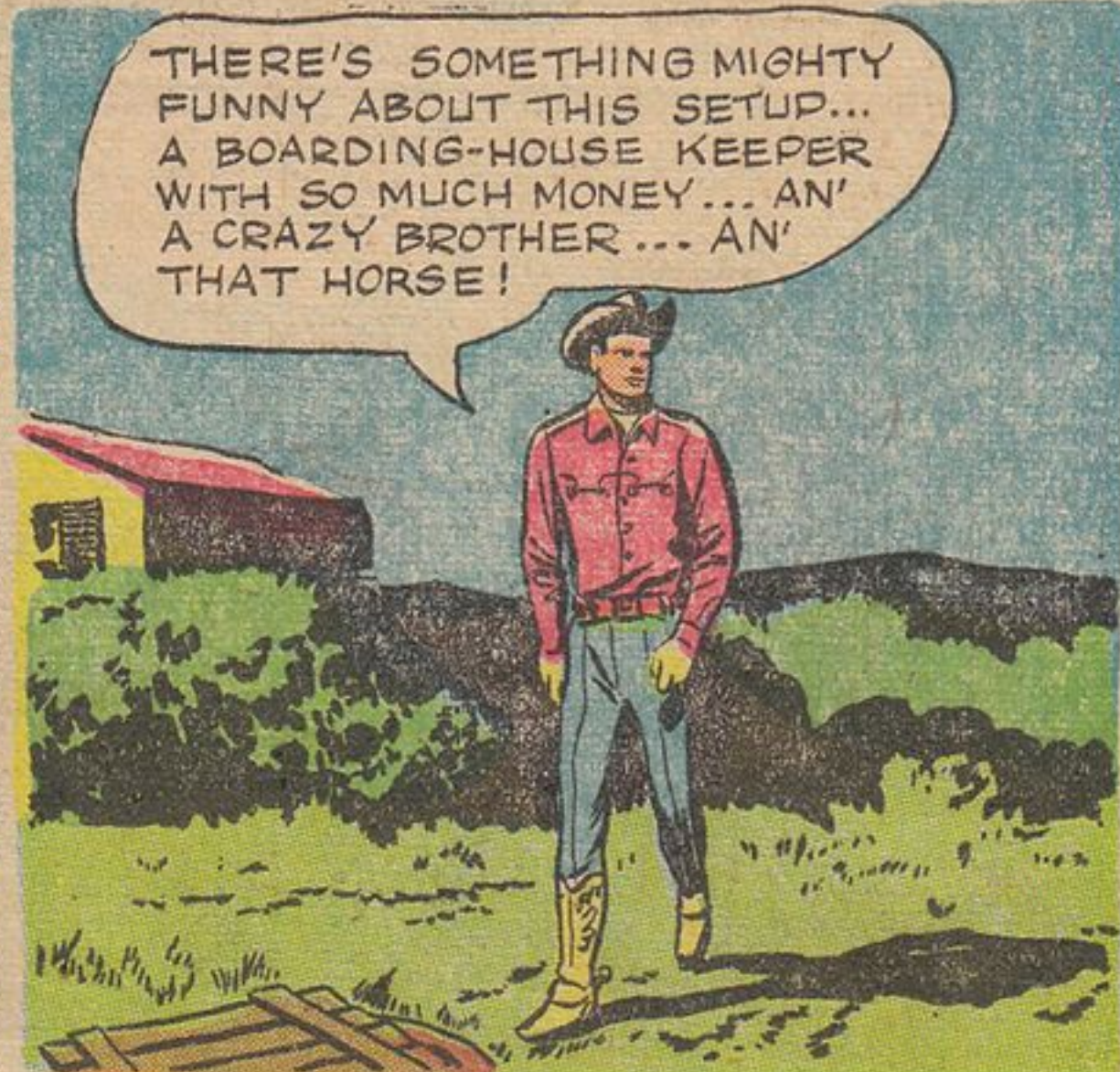
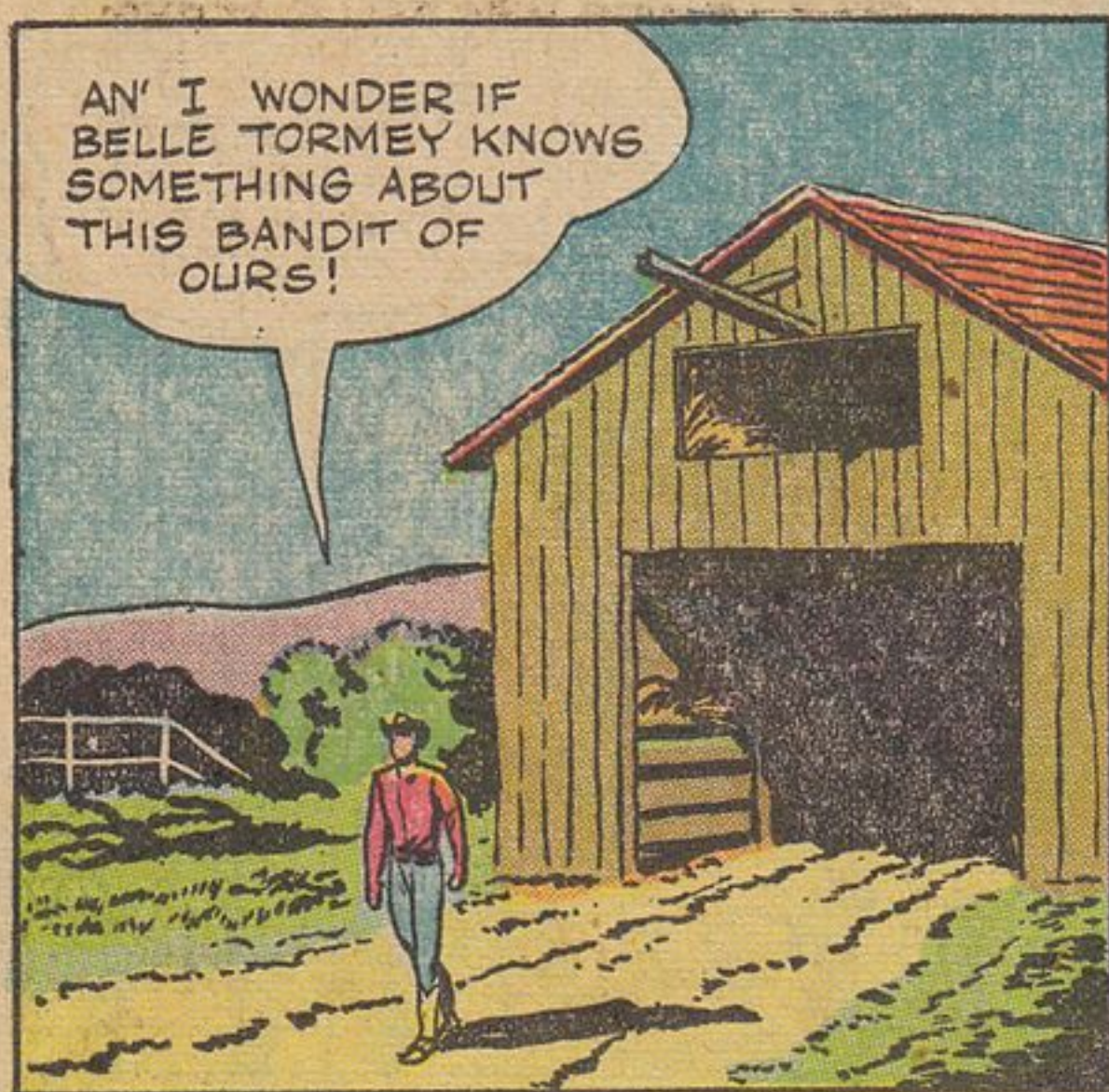


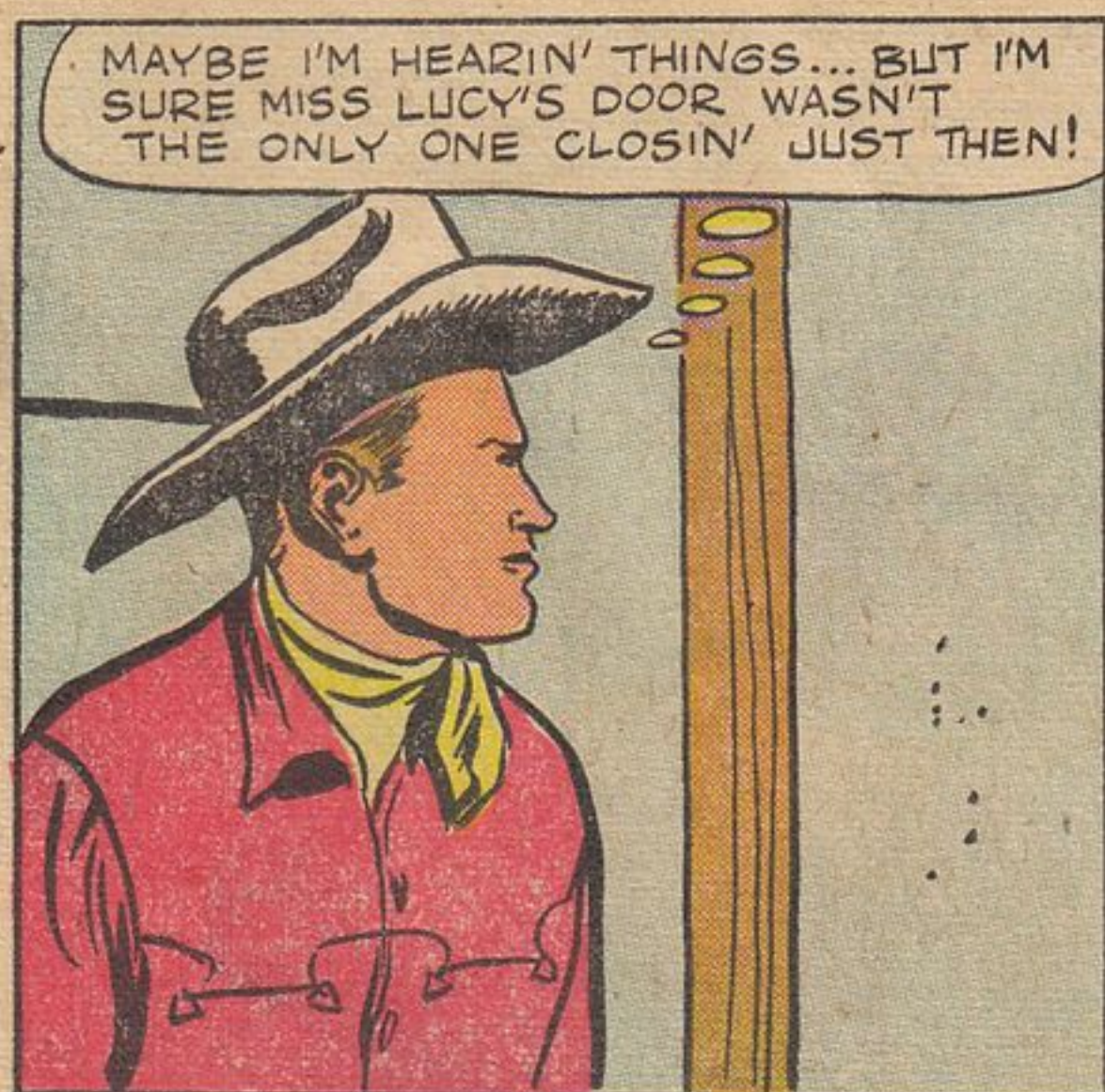
NO WONDER! HE LOOKS LIKE HE'D BEEN RUN HARD AND FAST!



I'LL GIVE YOU A GOOD RUBDOWN! THAT'LL FIX YOU UP! WONDER WHO WAS RIDIN' YOU SO HARD! AN' WHY?





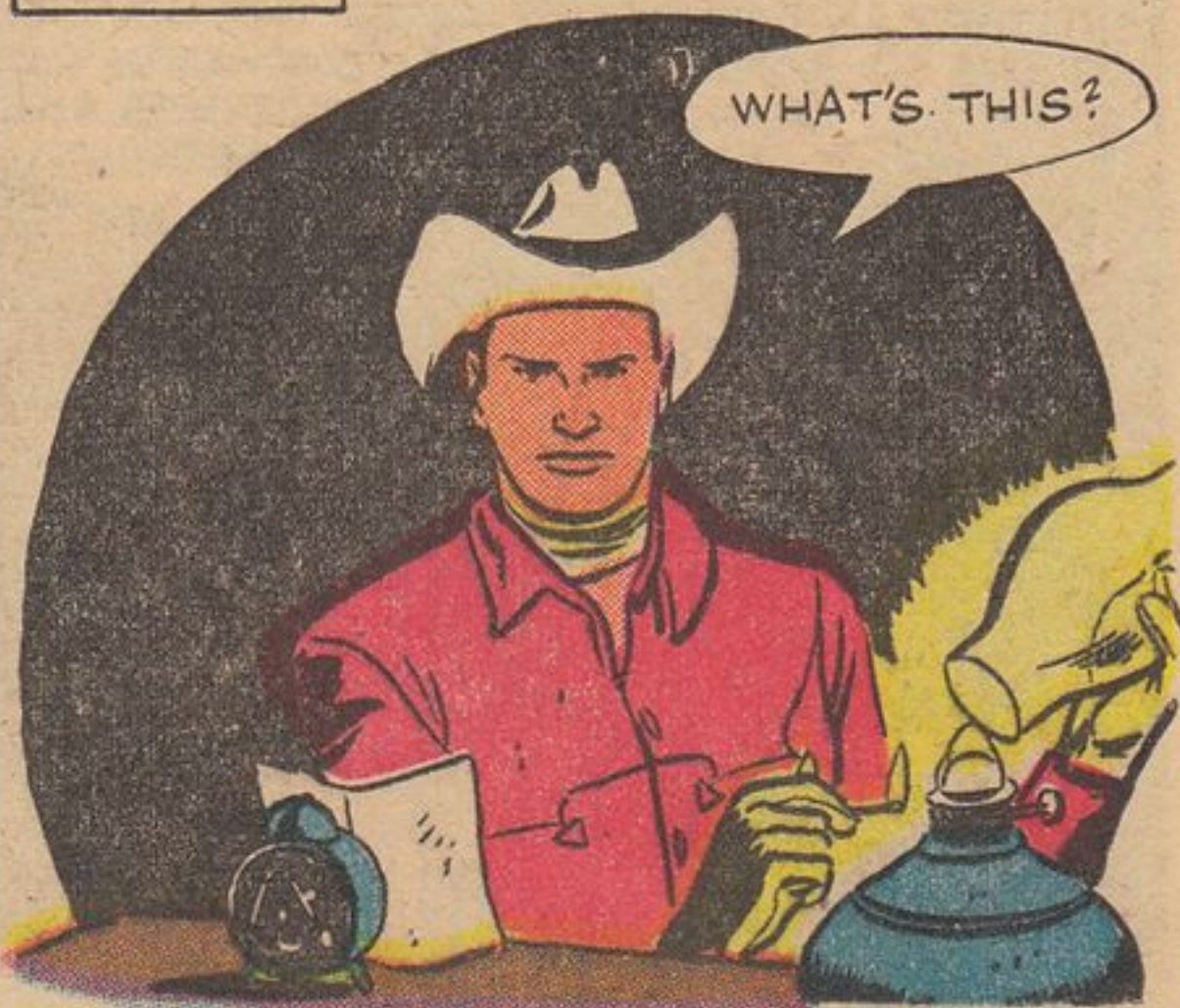


I MUSTA BEEN HEARIN' THINGS!
THAT SNORIN' DOESN'T SOUND
FAKED!



GENE SLIPS QUIETLY INTO HIS OWN
ROOM...

WHAT'S THIS?



THE NEXT MORNING, AT THE
SHERIFF'S OFFICE...

I WON'T BELIEVE IT, MISTER AUTRY!
THAT HORSE MUST HAVE BEEN
PUT IN AUNT BELLE'S BARN TO
THROW SUSPICION ON
HER!

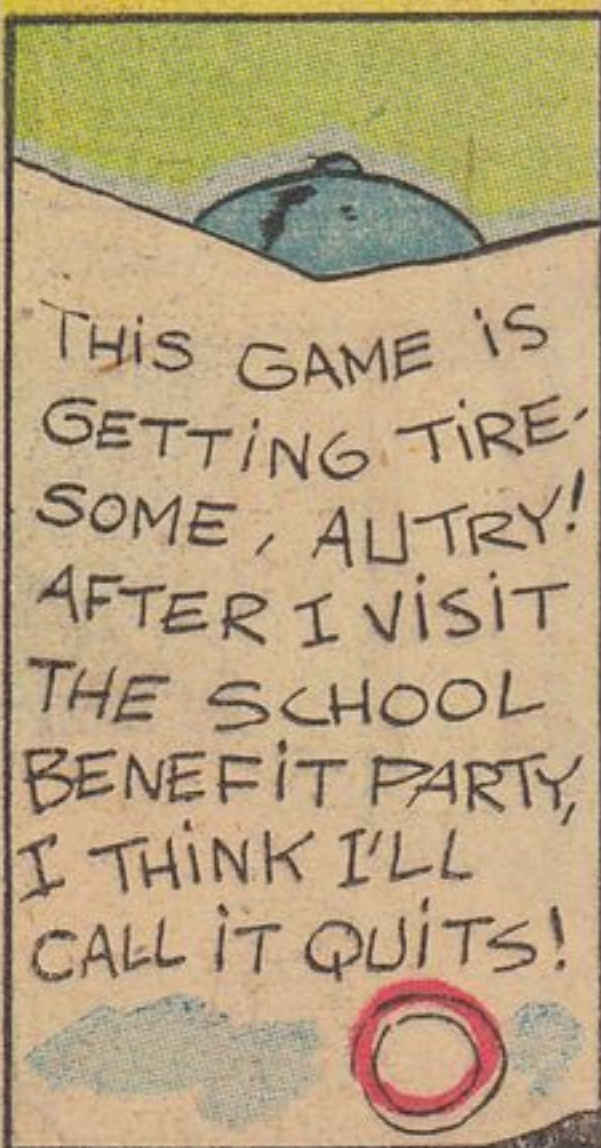


SHE JUST COULDN'T BE IN
CAHOOTS WITH THIS
BANDIT! SHE'S TOO HONEST
AND GOOD!

IF YOU'LL GET HER
AN' JIM AWAY FROM
THE HOUSE LONG
ENOUGH FOR ME
TO SEARCH IT, WE
CAN FIND
OUT FOR
SURE!



THIS GAME IS
GETTING TIRE-
SOME, AUTRY!
AFTER I VISIT
THE SCHOOL
BENEFIT PARTY,
I THINK I'LL
CALL IT QUITS!



YOU CAN DO IT
TONIGHT! AUNT
BELLE WILL BE AT
THE BENEFIT
PARTY, AND
JIM'S GONE
AWAY ON ONE
OF HIS TRIPS!

GOOD! WHILE I DO
THAT, THE SHERIFF
CAN KEEP HIS EYE
ON THE TICKET BOOTH
AT YOUR SHINDIG!

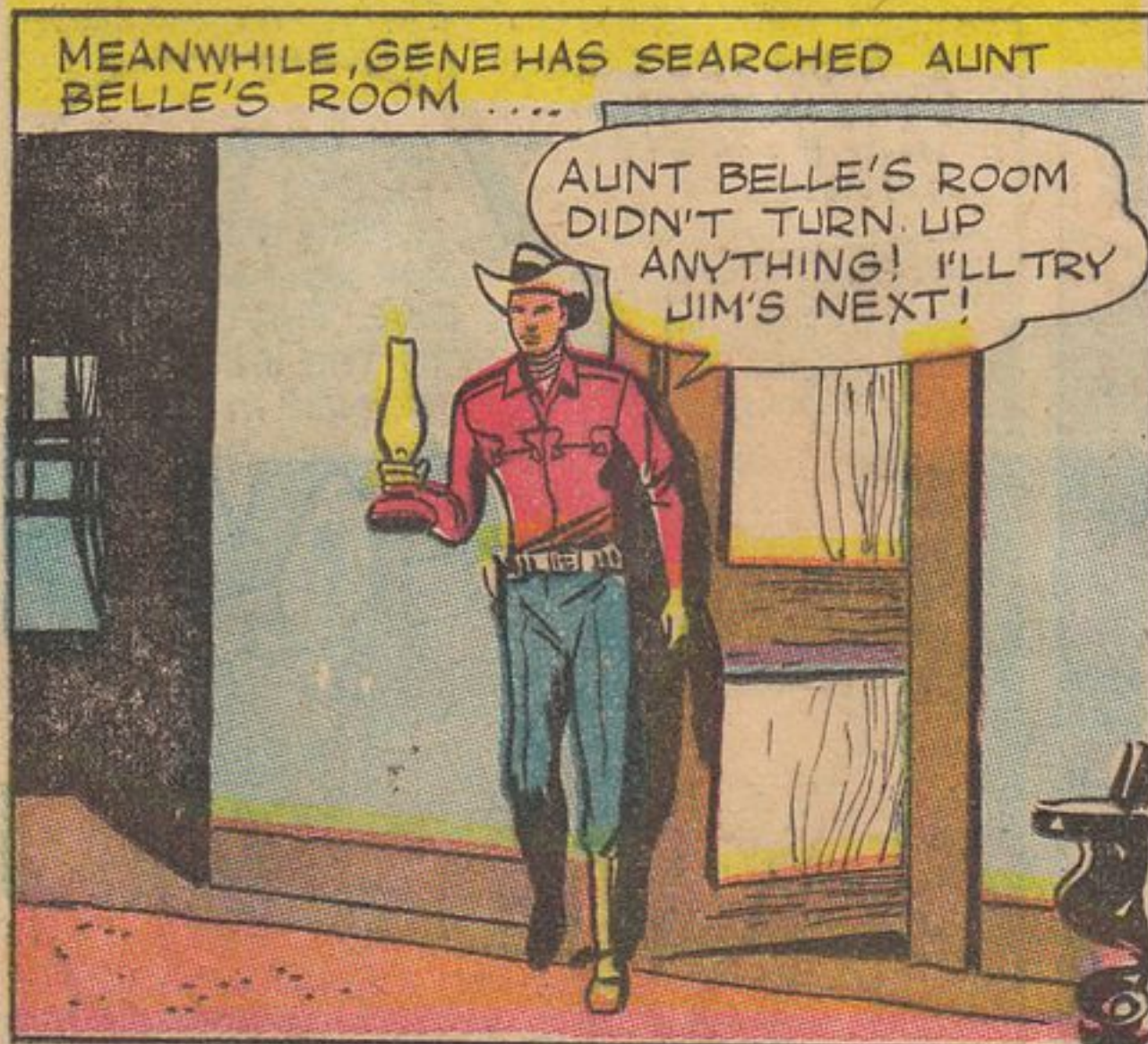
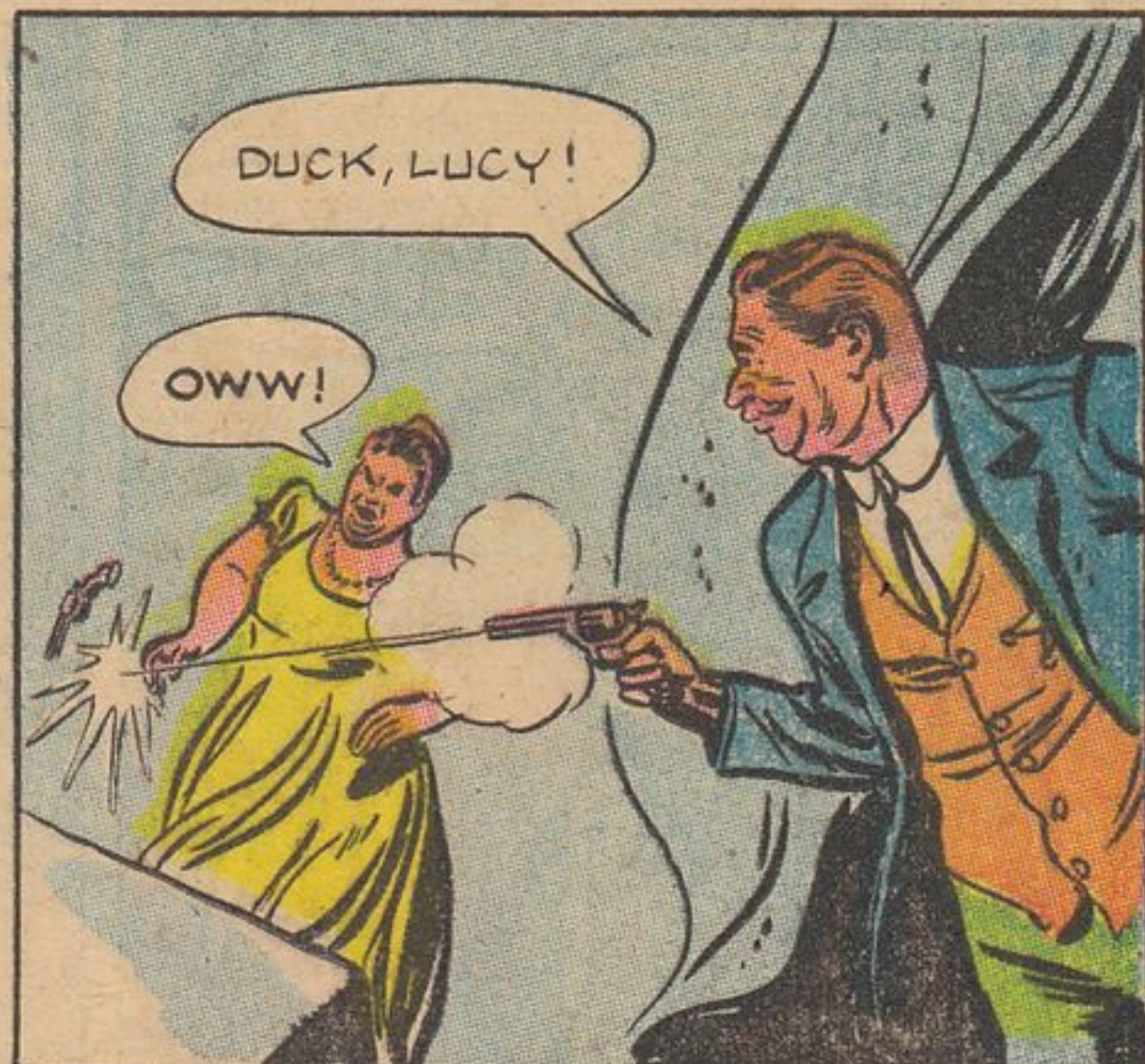


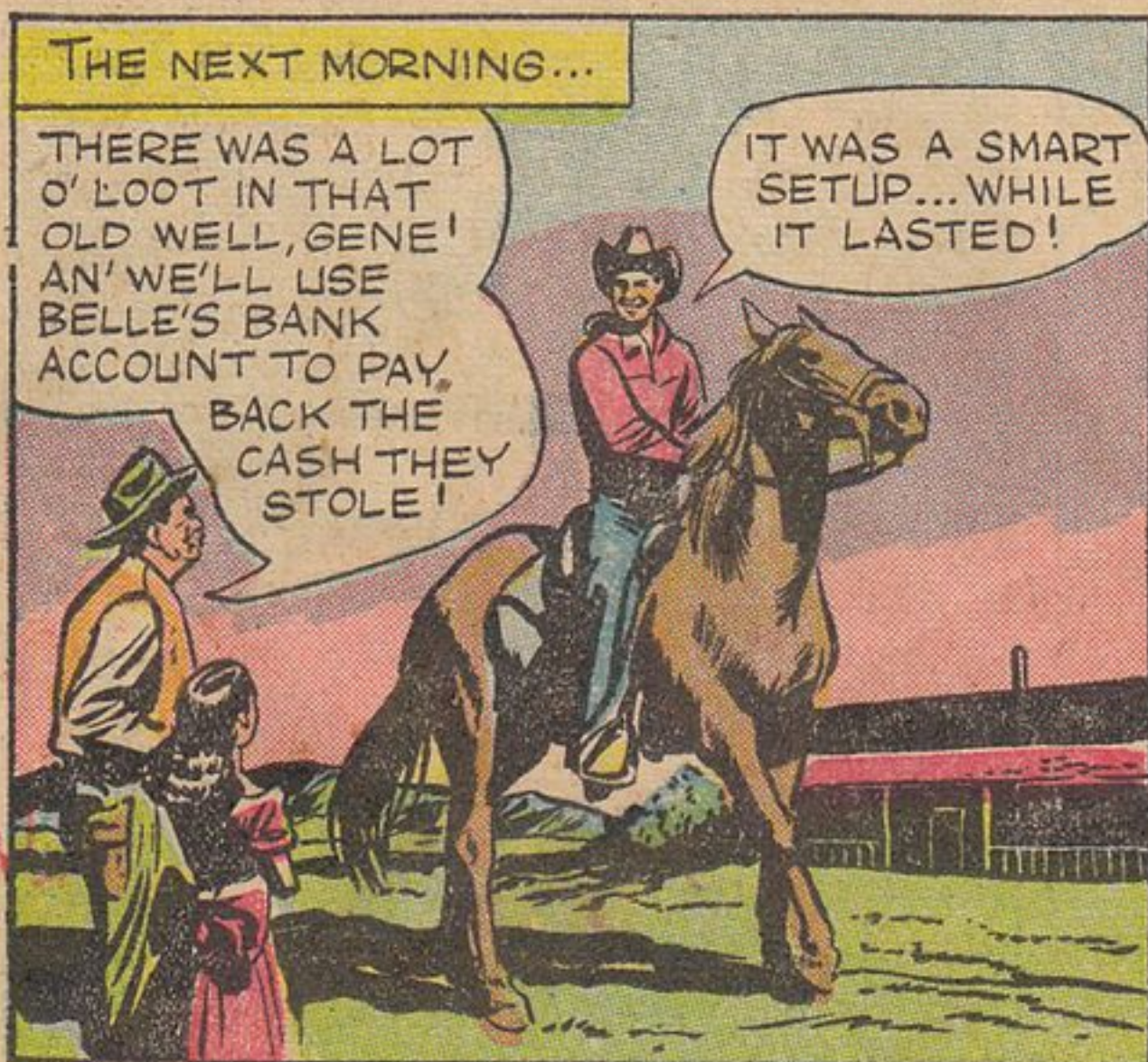
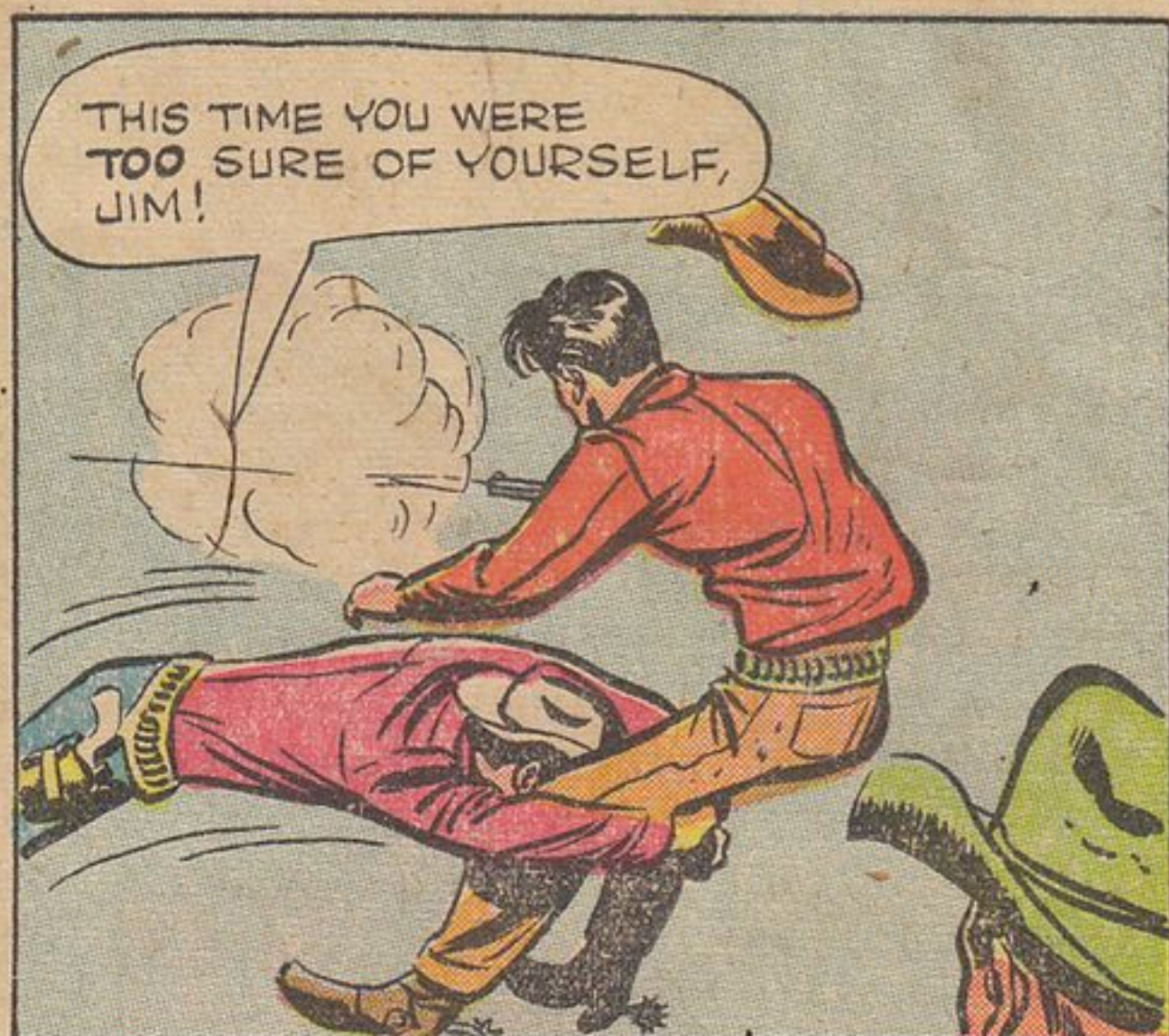
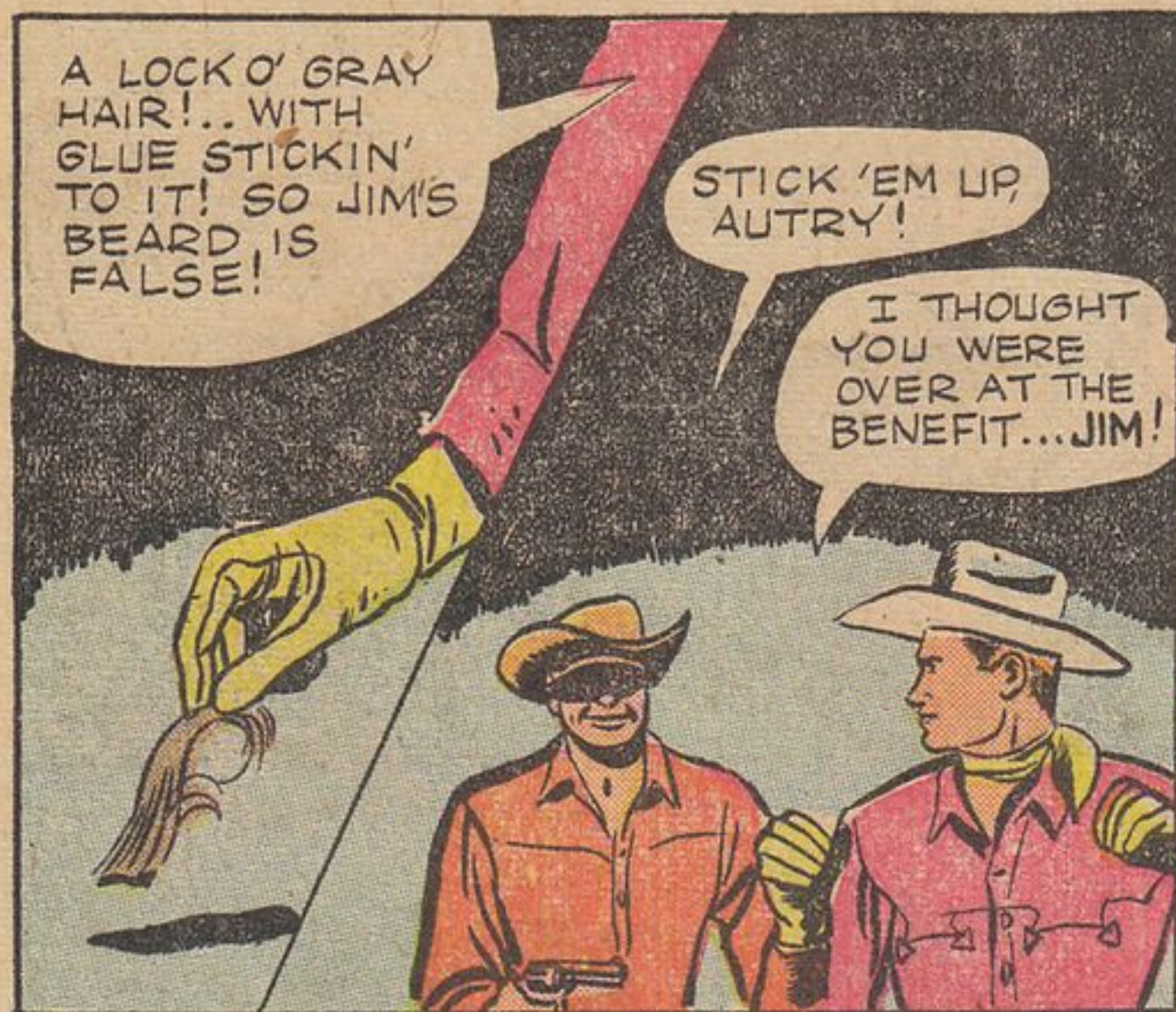
SO... THAT EVENING AT THE BENEFIT
PARTY...

JUST THINK, SHERIFF!
WE'VE TAKEN IN OVER A
THOUSAND DOLLARS!

SHH! HERE
COMES AUNT
BELLE!
WHATEVER
YOU DO, YOU
MUSTN'T LET
ON I'M
HERE!









Although he had been in bed for an hour, Denny was still awake when the loud knock came at the front door. He heard Dad open the door.

"Evenin', Jim!"

"Ed Benton! Great guns! Am I glad to see you! Come in."

Dad's voice was loud and bright and sort of gay. It hadn't sounded like that since the day Mom went away forever and left the two of them alone in the little house. Who was this Ed Benton who had made Dad's voice laugh again? Suddenly Denny remembered. Ed Benton was Dad's old prospecting partner. In the old, happy days, before Mom went away, Dad used to tell exciting stories about his adventures with Ed in their search for gold.

Now Dad and Ed Benton were talking about gold again, and their voices were so loud that Denny could hear every word. Ed was telling Dad about a new gold strike 'way up in the Klondike, wherever that was. He wanted Dad to go with him. And Dad wanted to go, Denny could tell by his voice.

"But there's Denny," Dad said suddenly. "What could I do with him?"

"Take him along—as far as Nome, anyway. You can board him there while we mush on."

"A gold rush town isn't any place for an eight-year-old boy, Ed. Besides, I haven't got the cash to pay board for him!"

"Shucks, Jim, you gotta go! 'Twon't seem like a gold rush without you in on it. You might make a strike, an' you an' Denny'd be in clover from then on!"

Dad's sigh was a long one. "Gold-huntin' days are over for me, Ed. I

can't take chances, now I've got Denny to provide for. Reckon I'm stuck here, till he can take care of himself."

Ed Benton cleared his throat. "Yeah, reckon you are! Well, guess I'd better be moseyin' back to the hotel."

Their voices died away, as they stepped out on the porch. Then, after a while, Dad came back into the house.

Denny closed his eyes and lay very quietly, when Dad tiptoed into the room, bent over him, and tiptoed out again. He heard Dad undressing and the creak of his bed in the next room. Then all was still in the little house.

But Denny couldn't go to sleep. He was remembering the sadness in Dad's voice. If only he could fix it so Dad could go to that Klondike place with Ed Benton. Suddenly he knew what he could do. He would go away! Now! Tonight! Then Dad wouldn't have to take care of him.

Noiselessly Denny slipped out of bed and reached for his clothes. Fifteen minutes later, he was running through fields in the direction of The Ridge. The small blanket roll slung across his shoulders held a clean shirt, a pair of blue jeans, half a loaf of bread, two apples and his slingshot.

He was halfway up The Ridge when his legs began to wobble with tiredness. Stumbling off the trail, he threw himself on the ground, soft with pine needles and leaf mold. He was too tired to open the blanket roll. The night was warm. He didn't need a blanket. Dad wouldn't start looking for him before sunup. By that time, he would be rested and well on his way again.

"Wal, I'll be dingbusted!"

Denny's eyes flew open and looked up into a weatherbeaten face in which keen, blue eyes twinkled under shaggy white eyebrows.

"Howdy, pardner." The old man's voice was pleasant and friendly. "Have a nice sleep?"

"I-I guess so." Denny stood up, wincing as his stiff muscles protested.

"Which way yuh headin'?"

"Uh . . . over The Ridge. To my . . . uh . . . uncle's ranch in the next valley."

The old man pointed up the trail. "My cabin's up yonder. 'Fore yuh git goin', how about me fixin' up a mess o' flapjacks fer us?"

"That would be swell!" Denny cried. "I'm awful hungry, Mister . . . uh . . ."

"Just call me 'Tex.'" The old man started up the trail while Denny picked up his blanket roll and followed. "Speakin' o' names, what's yours?"

"Denny Har . . . just Denny. Are you a trapper, Mister Tex?"

"Nope. Prospector. Found plenty o' gold in my time. Spent it, too. Gotta hunch I'm gonna hit pay dirt again up here one o' these days."

"I wish I could stay and help you look for it!"

They walked several yards in silence. Then Tex said, "Runnin' away, ain't yuh, Denny?"

Denny gulped. Two big tears rolled down his cheeks. Turning, Tex saw them. Flipping a red bandanna out of his hip pocket, he held it out.

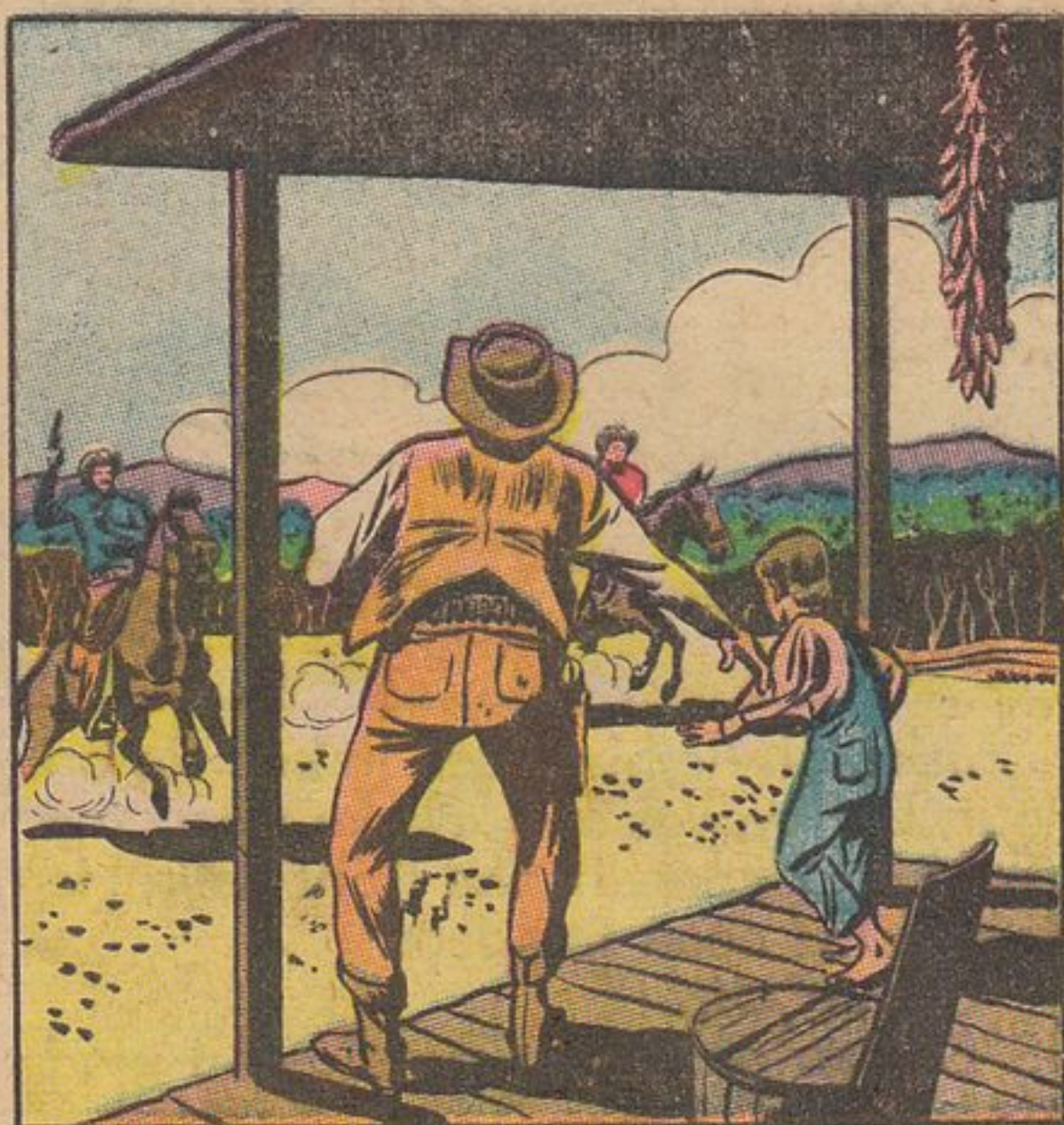
"Here, son. Now pull yoreself together an' come on up to th' cabin. It's around th' next curve."

While he ate the flapjacks, Denny told the whole story, finishing with, "And please don't send me back, Mister Tex. Let me stay here with you and . . ." He stopped as Tex raised a gnarled and silencing finger.

"Hosses!" chirped Tex. "A pair of 'em comin' up th' trail!"

When the riders rounded the curve, Tex and Denny were standing in the cabin doorway.

"It's Dad and the Sheriff!" Denny yelled, ducking back. "Don't let on I'm here!"



Tex reached for the boy's arm to halt him. To Denny's Dad the gesture looked as if the old man were pushing Denny into the cabin to hide him. Jim reached for his gun.

"Jim! Don't! That's old Tex! He's . . ." the Sheriff shouted.

But Jim thought only of Denny's safety. His gun barked. Once. Twice. Nervousness spoiled his aim. The bullets spattered harmlessly against the rock cliff beside the cabin. The Sheriff knocked the gun down before it could speak a third time.

Then Denny rushed out to meet his Dad. As he tearfully explained why he had run away, Denny was surprised to see tears in Dad's eyes, too.

"I'm mighty sorry you heard me talkin' so foolish, son," Dad said. "When I found you were gone this morning, I nearly went out of my mind." Unashamedly, he hugged his son to him. "Gosh, Denny! You're all the 'gold' I ever want!"

"'Tain't all yuh're gonna git, though!" Tex was coming toward them, a grin splitting his face, a piece of rock balanced in the palm of his hand. "Them bullets yun fired at me chipped right into a vein o' the richest gold quartz I seen in many a year. An' here an' now, I'm makin' Denny my pardner. If it hadn't been fer him runnin' away, I'd never made this strike!"

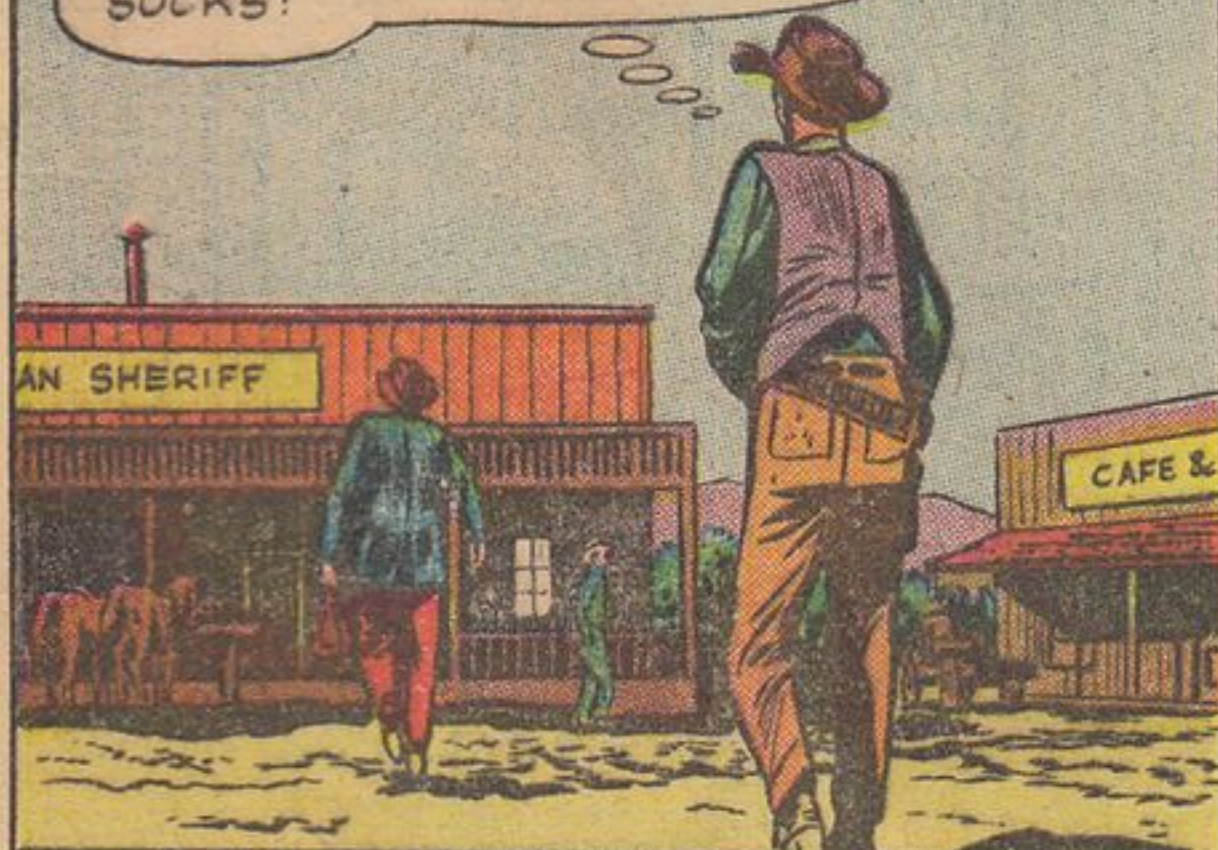
Grumpy's HUNCH

ONE MORNING A STRANGER STEPS FROM THE INCOMING STAGE AT MUD FLATS AND HURRIES TOWARD THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE...



RECKON THAT'S THE HOMBRE THE BOSS TOLD ME TO WATCH FOR! FROM THE HEFT O' HIS CARPETBAG, HE'S GOT THE GOLD WITH HIM!

BUT I'D BETTER MAKE SURE! THE BOSS'D BE SORE IF WE PULLED A HOLDUP AN' DIDN'T GIT NOTHIN' BUT SHIRTS AN' SOCKS!



HE'S GOIN' INTO THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, ALL RIGHT! AN' THE WINDA'S WIDE OPEN! I OUGHTA BE ABLE TO HEAR PLENTY!



GOOD AFTERNOON! I'M HUGH LELAND FROM EL PASO! IS SHERIFF NOLAN IN?

NOPE! HE'S OUTA TOWN! I'M HIS DEPPITY! MY NAME'S GRUMPY WANER! WHATCHA WANT?



I'M ON MY WAY TO THE CROSS-D RANCH TO BUY MISTER DEVLIN'S CATTLE! AND I'D LIKE TO RENT A HORSE OR WAGON...

THEN WHAT'RE YUH WASTIN' MY TIME FER? TH' LIV'RY STABLE'S DOWN TH' STREET!



