

# GUNSMOKE WESTERN

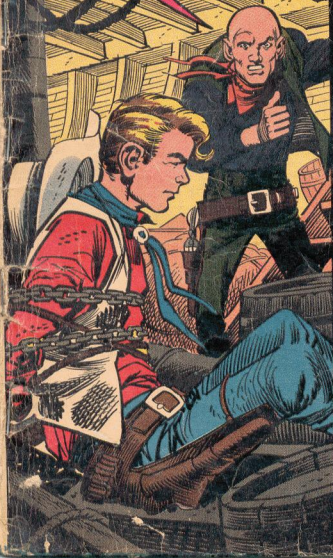
APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY

10¢

54  
SEPT.

## KID COLT, OUTLAW

ON YOUR FEET, KID!  
YOU'RE GONNA JOIN  
**"THE MEN WHO  
VANISH!"**



## WYATT EARP

**"JAIL-  
BREAK  
IN  
DODGE  
CITY!"**



# KID COLT

## OUTLAW

**THE LEGEND OF KID COLT...** YEARS AGO, KID COLT KILLED AN OUTLAW IN SELF-DEFENSE! BUT, BEING YOUNG AND FOOLISH, HE FLED, INSTEAD OF STAYING TO STAND TRIAL! SINCE THEN, HE HAS SPENT HIS LIFE TRYING TO ATONE FOR HIS MISTAKE!

THOSE SHADOWS! THREE MEN, ABOUT TO ATTACK ME! I'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST!

**"THE MEN WHO VANISH!"**

by Stan Lee & Jack Keller

T-382

**E**L RIO WAS ONE OF THE LAST FRONTIERS OF LAWLESSNESS IN THE OLD WEST! IT STOOD ON THE GULF OF MEXICO, A HAVEN FOR EVERY OWLHOOT, DRIFTER, AND FUGITIVE SEAMAN IN THE TERRITORY! AND IT WAS IN THE SPRAWLING, BRAWLING TOWN OF EL RIO THAT ONE OF KID COLT'S MOST AMAZING ADVENTURES BEGAN...

**T**HE KID WHIRLED WITH THE SPEED OF A WOUNDED PANTHER, HIS LEGENDARY TWIN-COLTS BLAZING IN HIS HANDS BEFORE HIS FOES KNEW WHAT HAPPENED!

DROP THOSE GUNS, HOMBRES-- OR TASTE LEAD!

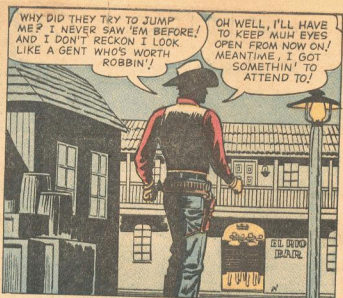
HE'S ARMED!





RUN FOR IT!

THEY'RE RUNNING OFF! LIKE SCARED JACKALS!



WHY DID THEY TRY TO JUMP ME? I NEVER SAW 'EM BEFORE! AND I DON'T RECKON I LOOK LIKE A GENT WHO'S WORTH ROBBIN'!

OH WELL, I'LL HAVE TO KEEP MUH EYES OPEN FROM NOW ON! MEANTIME, I GOT SOMETHIN' TO ATTEND TO!



HOMBRE, I'M LOOKIN' FOR A GENT NAME OF SAM GREY! SEEN HIM AROUND?

NO! AIN'T SEEN HIDE NOR HAIR OF 'IM FOR THREE DAYS!



THAT'S STRANGE! HE WUZ SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE YESTERDAY! I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER FOR 'IM! AIN'T LIKE SAM TO BREAK AN APPOINTMENT!

HE AIN'T THE FIRST JASPER TO VANISH FROM THESE PARTS!

VANISH? WHAT DO YUH MEAN?



NOTHIN'!! DO YA HEAR?? I DIDN'T MEAN NOTHIN'! FORGET IT! I-I GOTTA GIT TO WORK NOW! I'M BUSY!

GIMME A DRINK, CURLY! AND I MEAN NOW!



SURE, CAP'N GROGG! RIGHT AWAY! YES SIR! YOU BET!

THAT HOMBRE WAS ABOUT TO TELL ME SOMETHIN', AND THEN HE GOT PLUMB SCARED SILLY! LOOKS TO ME LIKE THIS SEA CAPTAIN'S GOT SOMETHIN' TO DO WITH IT!



WHY WOULD THAT BARTENDER SAY MEN HAVE "VANISHED" IN THIS TOWN? AND WHERE IS MY OLD AMIGO, SAM GREY? AND WHAT HAS THAT HULKING SEA CAPTAIN GOT TO DO WITH IT?



SEA CAPTAIN! MEN VANISHING! SHORE! I GOT IT NOW! IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT I GOTTA PLAY IT!



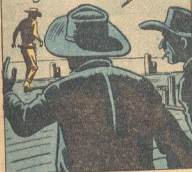
I'LL WALK DOWN THE PIER AGAIN, AND ACT LIKE I'M REAL TIRED! IF I GUESSED RIGHT, IT OUGHTTA HAPPEN SOON!



I WUZ RIGHT! THOSE RANNIES ACROSS THE STREET ARE COMIN' TOWARD ME-- AND IT AIN'T A SOCIAL VISIT!

BUT I'LL LET 'EM PLAY THEIR HAND!

HEY, HOMBRE! WAIT A MINNIT!!



A SPLIT SECOND LATER, ONE OF THE MEN MADE A SUDDEN MOVE, AND DARKNESS ENGULFED KID COLT!

GOOD WORK, HANK! HE'S OUT COLD!

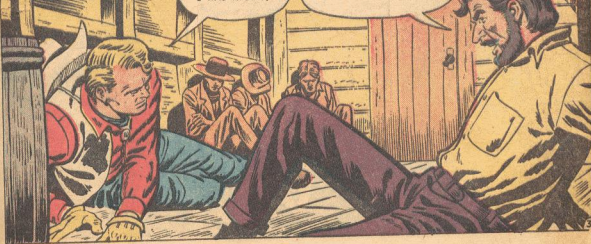
QUICK! LET'S CARRY HIM TO THE SHIP!



LATER, WHEN THE KID AWOKE...

I- I'M IN A HOLD! INSIDE OF A SHIP! I WAS RIGHT!

KID! THEY GOT YOU, TOO! I NEVER SHOULD HAVE WRITTEN YUH TO MEET ME IN EL RIO!







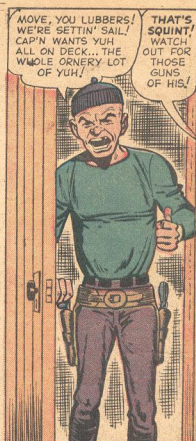
SAM! SAM GREY! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YUH, AMIGO!

TOO BAD WE HADDA MEET HERE, COMPADRE! WE BEEN SHANGHIED! CAPTAIN GROGG SMUGGLES GUNS FROM OVERSEAS TO THE INJUNS, AND THIS IS HOW HE RECRUITS HIS CREW!



I RECKONED AS MUCH! BUT WE GOT A FIGHTIN' CHANCE! THERE ARE FIVE OF US HERE, AND ONLY ONE CAP'N. GROGG!

IT'S NO GOOD, KID! HE HAS A FIRST MATE, TOO--HOMBRE BY THE NAME OF SQUINT! FASTEST GUN I EVER SAW! THEY'RE BOTH ARMED TO THE TEETH, AND WE'RE HELPLESS! NOTHIN' WE CAN DO!



MOVE, YOU LUBBERS! WE'RE SETTIN' SAIL! CAP'N WANTS YUH ALL ON DECK... THE WHOLE ORNERY LOT OF YUH!

THAT'S SQUINT! WATCH OUT FOR THOSE GUNS OF HIS!



NOBODY TELLS ME WHAT TO DO, MISTER! NOW STAND ASIDE!

OH, A TOUGH GUY, HUH?



THIS IS WHAT I DO TO TOUGH GUYS! AFTER A WHILE, THEY AIN'T SO TOUGH ANYMORE!

UGH!



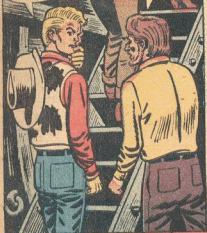
WHY YOU...! I'LL--

DON'T TRY IT, HOMBRE! I'D SHOOT YUH AS SOON AS LOOK AT YUH!

DON'T DO IT, KID! HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS!

ALL RIGHT,  
SAM! I'LL  
WAIT MY  
CHANCE!

PLAY IT SAFE, KID!  
GROGG AND SQUINT  
HOLD ALL THE ACES  
IN THIS DECK!



LISTEN, YUH SCURVY LUBBERS! I'M CAPTAIN  
HERE, AND WHAT I SAY GOES! IF YUH DO YORE  
JOBS, NO ONE WILL GIT HURT... MUCH! BUT  
IF ANY OF YUH TRY ANY TROUBLE, YUH'LL GO  
OVER THE SIDE TO KEEP THE SHARKS COMPANY!

ALL RIGHT,  
SQUINT! PUT  
EM TO WORK!



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THIS IS THE ONLY  
WAY GROGG CAN  
GIT A CREW, KID!  
NO ONE WANTS TO  
SAIL WITH A GUN-  
RUNNER, SO HE  
SHANGHIES HIS  
MEN!

WELL, I RECKON  
THIS IS WHERE  
WE PUT A STOP  
TO HIS LITTLE  
GAME, HERE  
AND NOW!

WHAT  
CAN YUH  
DO,  
MISTER!  
THEY'RE  
ARMED,  
AND WE  
AIN'T!



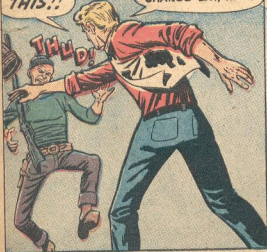
NO ONE IS EVER UNARMED, LONG  
AS HE CAN USE HIS BRAINS! WATCH...

HEY, WHAT  
DO YUH  
THINK YORE  
DOIN'?



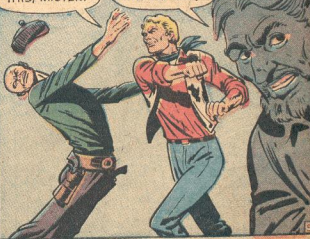
THIS!!

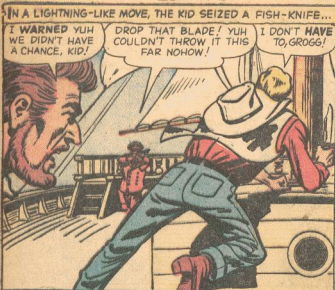
CHARGE 'EM, MEN!



I OWED YUH  
THIS, MISTER!

KID! LOOK OUT!  
THE CAPTAIN!





IN A LIGHTNING-LIKE MOVE, THE KID SEIZED A FISH-KNIFE...

I WARNED YUH WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE, KID!

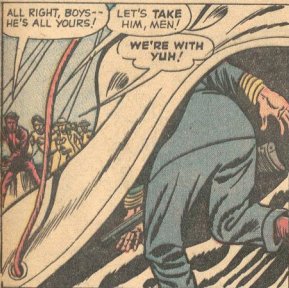
DROP THAT BLADE! YUH COULDN'T THROW IT THIS FAR NOHOW!

I DON'T HAVE TO, GROGG!



THIS IS AS FAR AS I HAVE TO THROW IT!

YUH--YUH CUT THE MAINSAIL!



ALL RIGHT, BOYS-- HE'S ALL YOURS!

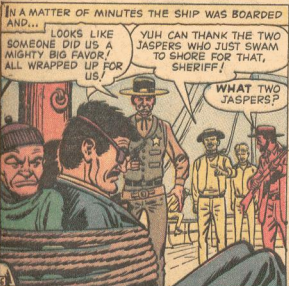
LET'S TAKE HIM, MEN!

WE'RE WITH YUH!



LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER...

LOOK LIVELY, MEN! HERE HE COMES! I'VE BEEN ON GROGG'S TRAIL FOR MONTHS, AND WE'RE GONNA GET HIM NOW! DON'T KNOW WHY HE'S RETURNING, BUT HE'LL BE SORRY HE DID!



IN A MATTER OF MINUTES THE SHIP WAS BOARDED AND...

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE DID US A MIGHTY BIG FAVOR! ALL WRAPPED UP FOR US!

YUH CAN THANK THE TWO JASPERS WHO JUST SWAM TO SHORE FOR THAT, SHERIFF!

WHAT TWO JASPERS?



THIS IS AS CLOSE AS I WANNA GET TO ANY LAWMEN! LET'S MAKE TRACKS, AMIGO!

KID, NEXT TIME WE DECIDE TO GIT TOGETHER FOR A VISIT, LET'S MAKE IT IN CHURCH!

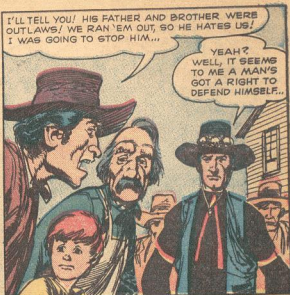
AND SO, CAPTAIN GROGG AND HIS FIRST MATE ANSWERED FOR THEIR CRIMES... AND THE KID--? HE HAD SIMPLY ADDED ONE MORE EXPLOIT TO THE GROWING LEGEND OF ...KID COLT, OUTLAW!

The End



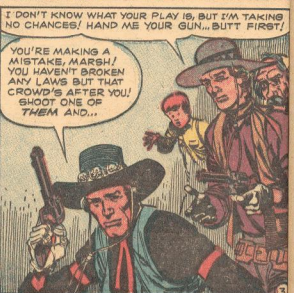
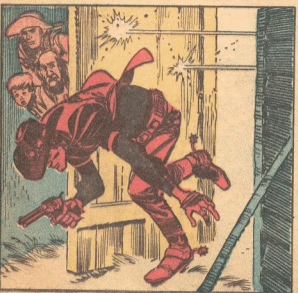
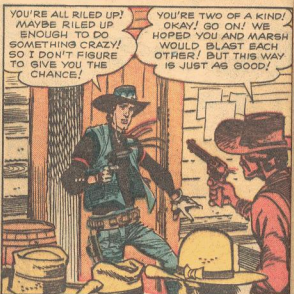
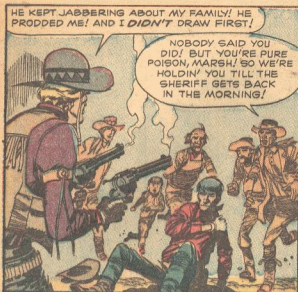
**FOLKS WERE DEAD CERTAIN THAT SOONER OR LATER THE KID AND YOUNG MARSH WOULD FACE EACH OTHER WITH SNARLING .45'S IN THEIR HANDS! BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN A DUEL...  
WHEN GUNSLINGERS MEET!**





THE KID SAID NOTHING...PERHAPS THE TOWNSMAN WAS RIGHT! BUT SOME INSTINCT WHISPERED...STAY!







THEY'D SHOOT ME!  
SO I'LL TAKE CARE  
OF MYSELF! GET  
OVER WITH THE BOY  
AND THE OLD MAN!

YOU'RE A FOOL,  
MARGH! BUT  
HAVE IT YOUR  
WAY!



GRANDPA, WHY DON'T YOU  
DO SOMETHING? HE'S JUST  
AN OWLHOOT! AND ALL  
OWLHOOTS ARE YELLOW!  
YOU TOLD ME!

KEEP THAT KID  
QUIET! I WANT  
TO HEAR IF ANYONE  
TRIES TO SNEAK UP  
ON ME!



MY GRANDPA CAN HANDLE A  
DOZEN LIKE YOU!

YOUR GRANDPA  
TELS A GOOD  
STORY... LEAVE  
IT AT THAT!  
AND KEEP  
QUIET!



JEFF, DON'T!  
HE MIGHT DO  
ANYTHING...

HE... NO!  
GRANDPA,  
YOU'RE SCARED!  
YOU DID FIGHT  
BAD MEN IN  
THE OLD DAYS,  
DIDN'T YOU?



ALL RIGHT! YOU OUT THERE!  
YOU WANT IT LIKE THIS?  
OKAY!

**BLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM  
CLICK**



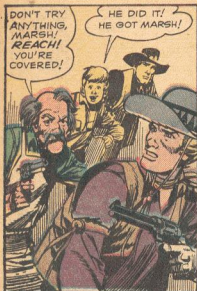
GRANDPA, HE WASN'T  
RIGHT ABOUT YOU, WAS  
HE? YOU DIDN'T JUST  
MAKE UP ALL THOSE  
STORIES?

JEFF, I... YOU DON'T  
UNDERSTAND...



I DID MAKE IT UP! BUT I'M NOT GOIN' TO LET YOU  
THINK YOUR GRANDPA IS A COWARD!





DON'T TRY ANYTHING, MARSH! REACH! YOU'RE COVERED!

HE DID IT! HE GOT MARSH!



YOU CAN'T SHOOT A MAN WITH AN EMPTY GUN, OLD MAN! DROP IT!

EXCEPT THAT THIS GUN *ISN'T* EMPTY! I HAD ONE .45 SLUG! JUST ONE! AND IT'S IN THIS GUN NOW! *YOU* DROP IT!



I SEE! OKAY! I GUESS I LOSE!

YOU BET YOU DO! NOW MARCH! OUTSIDE!



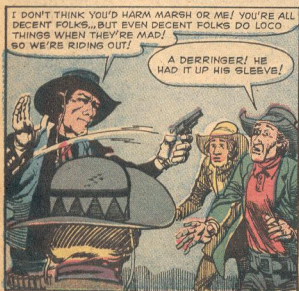
WELL, I'LL BE... THE OLD MAN GOT MARSH!

YES! AND HE DID IT WITH AN *EMPTY GUN*! HE MADE MARSH *THINK* IT WAS LOADED! HE BLUFFED HIM!



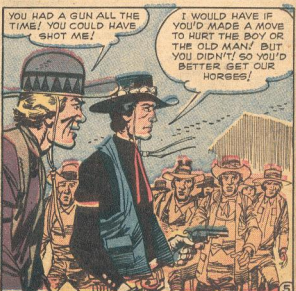
ALL RIGHT! WE'LL TAKE HIM NOW AND THE GUNSMOKE KID, TOO!

I DON'T THINK SO, HOMBRE! AFTER WHAT JUST HAPPENED, I THINK MARSH WILL WANT TO LEAVE THIS TOWN! AND SO WILL I!



I DON'T THINK YOU'D HARM MARSH OR ME! YOU'RE ALL DECENT FOLKS... BUT EVEN DECENT FOLKS DO LOCO THINGS WHEN THEY'RE MAD! SO WE'RE RIDING OUT!

A DERRINGER! HE HAD IT UP HIS SLEEVE!

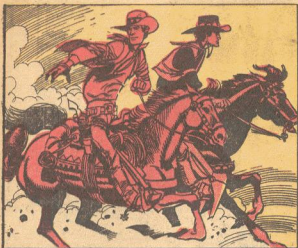


YOU HAD A GUN ALL THE TIME! YOU COULD HAVE SHOT ME!

I WOULD HAVE IF YOU'D MADE A MOVE TO HURT THE BOY OR THE OLD MAN! BUT YOU DIDN'T! SO YOU'D BETTER GET OUR HORSES!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

IN THE EYES OF THE CROWD, THE KID WAS A GUN-MAN! HOW COULD THEY KNOW THE TRUTH? SO NO ONE FOLLOWED LATER...



THERE WAS NO ONE TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND, AT THE END...

WELL, I RECKON THIS IS WHERE WE PART COMPANY, MARSH! I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE GOING BACK TO TOWN! SO GOOD-BYE!

NO, I WON'T BE GOING BACK! ONLY I DON'T GET IT!



YOU RISKED YOUR NECK TO HELP ME! WHY?

BECAUSE I KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE ALONE... AND BECAUSE I WAS THERE WHEN YOU COULD HAVE WRECKED A BOY'S LIFE, AND DIDN'T!

YOUR GUNS ARE .44'S! WHEN THE OLD MAN SAID HE'D SLIPPED A .45 SHELL INTO THE ONE HE COVERED YOU WITH, YOU *KNEW* HE WAS LYING! BUT YOU DIDN'T SAY SO! I SAW HOW YOU LOOKED AT THE BOY!

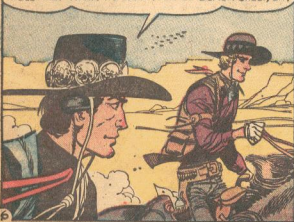


I FIGURE A MAN WHO'D DO WHAT YOU DID SO A BOY WOULDN'T LOSE FAITH IN SOMEONE HE TRUSTED, ISN'T ALL POISON! FOLKS CAN BE WRONG ABOUT A MAN, LIKE THAT TOWN WAS ABOUT YOU! I KNOW!

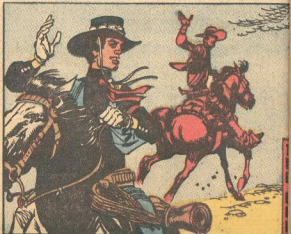


HOW WELL THE KID KNEW! HE, TOO, WAS AN OUTCAST...

I ONLY WONDER WHAT *I'D* HAVE DONE IF THE CROWD RUSHED *ME*! I COULDN'T HAVE FIRED! NOT ON THEM! BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW THAT! MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL THEY THINK WE'RE A PAIR OF BLACK SHEEP, EH?



BUT EVEN BEING AN OUTCAST CAN HAVE ITS COMPENSATIONS...EVEN AN OUTCAST CAN FEEL A WARM GLOW AS HE WAVES GOOD-BYE...TO A FRIEND...





PAGES OF TRUE TALES FROM THE LIFE OF THE WEST'S MOST FAMOUS PEACE OFFICER

# WYATT EARP

FRONTIER  
MARSHAL

I'VE FACED ALMOST EVERY KIND OF DANGER IN MY TIME -- FROM THE MENACE OF A BESERK GUNMAN TO THE MENACE OF A MARAUDING MOUNTAIN LION! BUT RECKON THE MOST TERRIFYING THING A MAN CAN STAND UP AGAINST IS A WILD, UNTAMED, SCREAMING **MOB**! AND THAT WAS JUST WHAT GRIZZLY AND I FACED, NOT LONG AGO, ON THAT FATEFUL DAY AFTER WE HAD CAPTURED **WOLF BARKER**!





CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

NEVER THOUGHT I'D HEAR YOU TALKIN' THAT WAY, GRIZZLY! IT AIN'T FOR US TO JUDGE A MAN'S GUILT! WHEN A MOB MAKES THE RULES, THEN LAW AND ORDER STOPS.

SORRY, MARSHAL—YORE RIGHT! RECKON I'M JUST TIRED!

HEY, MARSHAL—YORE REAL BRAVE SAVIN' ME FROM THE MOB! RECKON THEY'LL GIVE YUH A HERO MEDAL SOME DAY!!  
HAW HAW!

DON'T KID YOURSELF, WOLF. I DIDN'T DO IT TO SAVE YOU PERSONALLY! IT WAS THE LAW I WAS UPHOLDIN', WHICH IS PLUMB WORTH DYIN' FOR!

HE AIN'T EVEN GOT ENUFF DECENCY TO BE GLAD YUH SAVED HIM FROM THE MOB!

I'LL SHOW YUH HOW GRATEFUL I AM— IF I COULD LAY MUH HANDS ON YUH, I'D---

GRIZZLY--  
LOOK OUT!

ALL RIGHT, YUH GOT ME NOW. AND I'M GUILTY AS ALL GET-OUT, SURE I AM! BUT I'LL NEVER HANG! MUH BOYS WILL GIT ME OUTTA HERE... AND WE'LL COME BACK AND REALLY TREE THIS TOWN— JUST WAIT AND SEE!

LET HIM RAVE, GRIZZLY! I'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

I'VE GOT TO RIDE OUT TO THE BAR-Y SPREAD FOR A SPELL, GRIZZLY, BE SURE TO KEEP YORE EYES OPEN HERE TILL I GET BACK!

DON'T WORRY NONE, MARSHAL. I'LL KEEP WOLF BAKER SAFE AND SOUND FOR THE JUDGE NEXT WEEK.

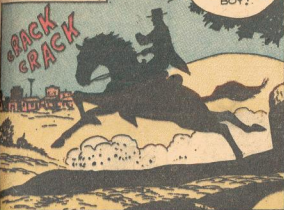


MY CALL AT THE  
BARY ONLY TOOK  
A COUPLE OF HOURS,  
AND SOON I WAS  
HEADING BACK TO  
DODGE, WHEN I  
HEARD THE SOUNDS  
OF GUNFIRE!

SHOOTIN'!  
IN DODGE!  
SOMETHING'S  
WRONG!

LET'S GO,  
JUSTICE--  
STRETCH  
THOSE LEGS,  
BOY!

CRACK  
CRACK



I'LL NEVER  
FORGET THE  
SIGHT THAT  
GREETED ME  
AS I RACED  
FOR THE  
JAIL! THE  
WHOLE SIDE  
OF THE WALL  
HAD BEEN  
BLOWN  
OUT!

THE WALL! IT'S  
DEMOLISHED!  
WHAT HAPPENED?  
WHERE'S  
GRIZZLY?

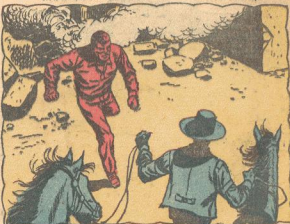
IT'S  
WOLF  
BARKER--  
HE  
ESCAPED!



TWO OF BARKER'S BOYS RODE INTO  
TOWN! ONE OF 'EM STARTED A SHOOTIN'  
RUCKUS IN THE SALOON, SO THAT  
GRIZZLY'D HEAR IT AND COME  
A-RUNNIN'!



MEANWHILE, THE OTHER ORNERLY  
OWLHOOT SNEAKED UP TO THE JAIL  
AND BLOWED OUT THE WALL BY WOLF  
BARKER'S CELL! WOLF WAS OUTTA  
THERE BEFORE ANYONE KNEWED  
WHAT HAPPENED!



AND  
GRIZZLY--  
WHAT ABOUT  
HIM?

THERE HE IS--  
MORE DEAD THAN  
ALIVE!



WOLF'S GUNNIE SHOT  
'IM POINT BLANK WHEN  
HE RAN INTO THE SALOON--  
DIDN'T GIVE 'IM A CHANCE!  
KNEWED HE WAS THE  
ONLY LAWMAN LEFT  
IN TOWN!

GRIZZLY!!  
OLD  
FRIEND!





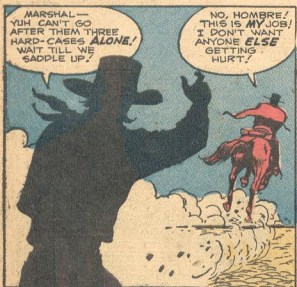
DOC,  
HOW—  
HOW—?

EASY, SON. I'LL DO  
EVERYTHING I CAN  
FOR HIM. BUT  
MEANWHILE, **YOU**  
HAVE A JOB  
TO DO.

**DOC WAS RIGHT!**  
I DID HAVE A JOB  
TO DO! AS I  
TIGHTENED MY  
GUN BELT, I  
FELT DOZENS OF  
EYES ON ME— I  
KNEW WHAT EVERY  
MAN WAS THINKING—  
IT WAS **MY FAULT!**  
IF I HAD **LET**  
THEM HAVE BARKER,  
IT WOULDN'T HAVE  
HAPPENED! I  
HAD TO PROVE  
THEY WERE  
WRONG— I  
**HAD TO!**



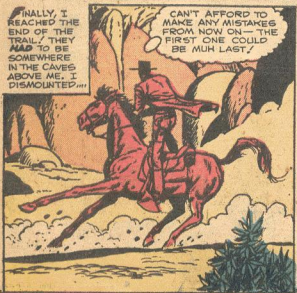
STAND ASIDE, MEN!  
I GOT SOME HARD  
RIDIN' TO DO!



MARSHAL—  
YUH CAN'T GO  
AFTER THEM THREE  
HARD-CASES **ALONE!**  
WAIT TILL WE  
SADDLE UP.

NO, HOMBRE!  
THIS IS **MY JOB!**  
I DON'T WANT  
ANYONE **ELSE**  
GETTING  
HURT!

**IT WASN'T HARD TO FOLLOW THEIR TRAIL!** THEY WERE  
HEADING TOWARD THE FOOTHILLS OF CACTUS RIDGE  
PROBABLY RECKONED NO ONE WOULD DARE FOLLOW  
THEM THERE, FOR IN THOSE CAVES AND GULLIES,  
THREE MEN COULD HOLD OFF AN ARMY! BUT THEY  
WOULDN'T HOLD OFF WYATT EARP.



**FINALLY, I**  
REACHED THE  
END OF THE  
TRAIL! THEY  
**HAD** TO BE  
SOMEWHERE  
IN THE CAVES  
ABOVE ME. I  
DISMOUNTED...

CAN'T AFFORD TO  
MAKE ANY MISTAKES  
FROM NOW ON— THE  
FIRST ONE COULD  
BE MUH LAST!



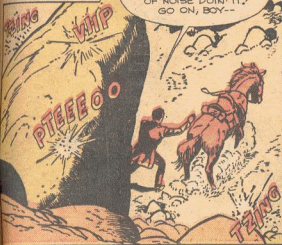
**CRACK**  
**PYONG!**

I  
WAS  
RIGHT—

THEY'RE  
UP ABOVE!

UNDER COVER OF  
AN OVERHANGING  
LEDGE, I WORKED  
OUT A PLAN...

JUSTICE, OL' FARD—  
YOU HEAD IN THAT  
DIRECTION, UP THAT  
PATH-- AND MAKE A LOT  
OF NOISE DOIN' IT.  
GO ON, BOY--



THEY'LL HEAR  
JUSTICE AND RECKON  
I'M RIDIN' HIM-- BY  
THE TIME HE COMES  
INTO SIGHT, I  
SHOULD BE  
'MOST UP  
TO 'EM!



LISTEN!  
THE ORNERY  
FOOL IS RIDIN'  
UP THE TRAIL  
TOWARD  
US!

GIVE 'IM ANOTHER  
FEW MINUTES, AND  
WHEN HE'S REAL  
CLOSE, WE'LL  
GUN 'IM DOWN!

CLATTER-  
CLIP-  
CLOP-  
CLATTER-



NOW!

LOOK--  
IT'S ONLY  
THE  
HOSS!

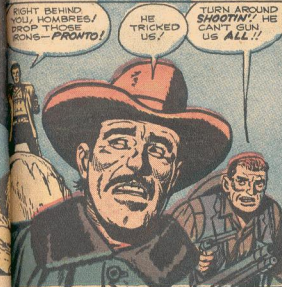
WHERE'S  
EARP?



RIGHT BEHIND  
YOU, HOMBRES!  
DROP THOSE  
RONS--PRONTO!

HE  
TRICKED  
US!

TURN AROUND  
SHOOTIN'! HE  
CAN'T GUN  
US ALL!!



I ALMOST  
HOPED YUH'D  
TRY THAT!

MUH  
HAND!

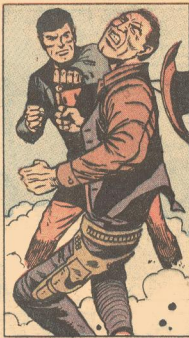
HE- HE  
AIN'T  
HUMAN!

CONGARN  
YUH--  
I'LL GIT  
YUH WITH  
MUH  
BARE  
HANDS!





2 I COULD HAVE SHOT HIM BEFORE HE REACHED ME, BUT WHEN I THOUGHT OF GRIZZLY, WOUNDED BACK IN DODGE, I WANTED WOLF BARKER TO REACH ME / I WANTED TO PUNISH HIM, HAND-TO-HAND.



AND SO WOLF BARKER RETURNED DODGE, THIS TIME WITH HIS TWO PARTNERS ALSO IN CUSTODY. THE TOWNSPEOPLE ALL HELPED WITH THE MASONRY, AND WE HAD A NEW BRICK WALL ON THE JAIL. NO TIME! AS FOR GRIZZLY...



I COULDN'T ANSWER GRIZZLY JUST THEN-- MOSTLY ON ACCOUNTA THE LUMP IN MUH THROAT / BUT SUDDENLY ALL THE DANGERS AND HARSHIPS OF BEIN' A MARSHAL SEEMED MIGHTY WORTH-WHILE TO ME.

# THE SILENT MAN

WHEN young Mrs. Gamp told the Big Falls Ladies Thursday Afternoon Sewing Circle that her widowed great-aunt, Mrs. Augusta Barber was coming west, there was great interest.

At home, later, lawyer Sam Boker listened to his wife's report of the meeting.

"Easterner, eh?" he said. "But why is she coming West?"

Mrs. Boker beamed.

"Mrs. Gamp told us her aunt had a very inquiring kind of mind . . . she's the sort of person who wants to travel and see wider horizons."

"We've got 'em here," Sam Boker rejoined. "But I hope an inquiring mind doesn't mean a prying one."

"What do you mean?"

"There's a difference between the East and our West," Mr. Boker mused. "The West is bigger; it's backward in some ways, but more open-minded in others. We're not nosy out here."

"Anyway," Mrs. Boker said, "she'll probably join the Sewing Circle."

Mr. Boker was still musing. He said, "Well, I hope she knows enough to mind her own business . . . especially about old Lou."

Mrs. Augusta Barber arrived in Big Falls a week later, and immediately justified the hope that she would be, at least, interesting. She was quite formidable. Her first act, after several

days, was to write a letter to the editor of the county's weekly newspaper, outlining all the things she had found wrong with Big Falls and the region in general. It was duly printed, but there were very few comments. In the letter, Mrs. Barber complained of the fact that the street lights in town were old-fashioned kerosene lamps, that the newspaper itself cost five cents more than the one she had been accustomed to reading back home, that mail deliveries were much slower than those back East, and made several other complaints.

Upon her introduction to the Thursday Afternoon Sewing Circle, her views were repeated and in the same strong fashion. The ladies who had hoped, at first, that she would bring a wider view to them, became more and more silent.

"I think I've enlarged their outlook, my dear, don't you?" Her aunt said to Mrs. Gamp as they were driving home in the Gamp buckboard.

"Well . . . uh . . . perhaps you did, Aunt Augusta," Mrs. Gamp stammered.

"A poorly conducted town," Mrs. Barber remarked, glancing about the streets. "All kinds of odd characters lounging about."

"Why they're just cowpokes visiting in town from the various cattle raising spreads," Mrs. Gamp laughed. "They only wear their best clothes when they go to church or town

meeting."

"They look like ragamuffins or tramps," sniffed Mrs. Barber. "See that one, for instance. Why he looks like an absolute hobo!"

"Why that's just old Lou," her niece said, and both women glanced at the middle-aged man. His boots were in fairly ruinous state, his levis were patched in a dozen places, and his wide-brimmed hat would have been no protection at all in a rain-shower. "He's a sort of character, I guess . . . but perfectly harmless."

"Seems to me almost the whole West is made up of odd characters," declared Mrs. Barber.

"Most folks out here are descended from independent-minded pioneers," Mrs. Gamp explained. "We all reckon everyone's got a right to live their own lives the way they choose, provided they don't break the law. And Lou is certainly very law-abiding."

"Hmmm. Well, I think that tidying up your Lou would be a good start toward making this town look better! I'm going to find out more about him!" Mrs. Barber shook her head vigorously. "And then I'm going to see that something's done about it, my dear!"

From several older members of the Sewing Circle, of like mind, she found out that Lou was the last of a big, land-owning dynasty, that he lived in seclusion in a tumble-down man-

CONTINUED

## CONTINUED

sion that belonged to him. She also learned that a big cattle-rancher named Lud Hackett was trying to make a deal with Lou. This involved the idea of Hackett's giving Lou some hundred acres of rocky land and a little cash for his remaining thousand acres of good grass-land. This last item puffed Mrs. Barber up with indignation. Over supper, she complained to Mr. Gamp.

"Henry," she began shrilly. "It's absolutely terrible that nobody's doing a thing to stop that Lud Hackett's taking Lou's land."

"Now take it easy, Aunt Augusta," Mr. Gamp said quietly. "Lou may seem odd and act oddly, but he's capable of taking care of his own affairs."

"Well, I don't think so," Mrs. Barber said. "It's disgraceful that everybody can look on and do nothing about it." She stiffened. "Out East this would never happen . . . we'd do something about it! Henry, you're a friend of Sam Boker's . . . and I hear Mr. Boker is legal representative of Lou's estate. Why don't you speak to him and warn him?"

"Why . . . Sam Boker is in favor of the land exchange, Aunt Augusta," Mr. Gamp said.

"He is!" Mrs. Barber said, incredulously. "Well, then I see it'll depend on me to save the poor man."

On market day, encountering old Lou, Mrs. Barber stepped up to him, bowed formally and said, "Mr. Lou, I must apologize for this, but somebody ought to tell you that Lud Hackett is trying to rob you of good land for worthless land!"

Lou stared at her for a moment silently, in some puzzlement;

then he made a gesture as if tipping his ancient hat, and walked on his way. She followed, imploring him to listen, but he said not a word.

"Well, I never!" Mrs. Barber exclaimed. "Poor man, he's demented. And if nobody else in this town will help him, I will!"

Mr. Gamp warned her against interfering, that evening. But she insisted on him driving her into town the next day, having found out that the formal land exchange was to take place at the deeds office at noon. Unfortunately, she ar-



rived fifteen minutes too late, only just in time to watch big, hulking Lud Hackett, old Lou and Sam Boker come out of the deeds office. Lud Hackett then rode off.

"Too late," Mrs. Barber muttered. "Henry Gamp, I think you deliberately delayed me."

Mr. Gamp chuckled. "That's right, I didn't want you to interfere, Aunt Augusta . . . especially when it meant a chance for somebody in this township to get even with that land-grabbing Lud Hackett!"

Mrs. Barber stared in amazement. "But you and just everybody in this township let Lud Hackett take Lou's land for

worthless . . ."

"Lou didn't get worthless land, Aunt Augusta," Mr. Gamp exclaimed, chuckling.

"Lou may look eccentric, but he isn't crazy . . . in fact he's smart, even if a little lazy. He found out that the old, rocky land of Hackett's had hidden mineral springs under it, good for bottled tonic waters. Lou found out by looking into ancient, forgotten, land-survey books in his old family library. So when Lud Hackett offered him the apparently worthless land, thinking to get the better of the bargain, Lou jumped at the chance. He was too old to work the family grazing land, but with the help of Sam Boker and myself, and others in on the secret, he's going to be able to work those mineral springs!"

Mrs. Barber glanced at the ragged little figure walking next to lawyer Boker, and finally, she smiled.

"I see I was a busybody," she admitted. "And it certainly puzzled me why he never even spoke when I tried to tell him he was giving up good land for bad. I thought he really was crazy!"

Mr. Gamp chuckled again.

"Why, even out East, you folks have a saying that when a man's silent, it's either because he has nothing to say . . . or else because he has too much to say. That might have told you Lou had something to keep quiet about." He stared at Lou and Sam Boker walking into Herb Matten's General Store. "I reckon it's the end of Lou's being ragged. When he comes out of there, he'll look more like the president of an up-and-coming mineral waters company, than old Lou!"



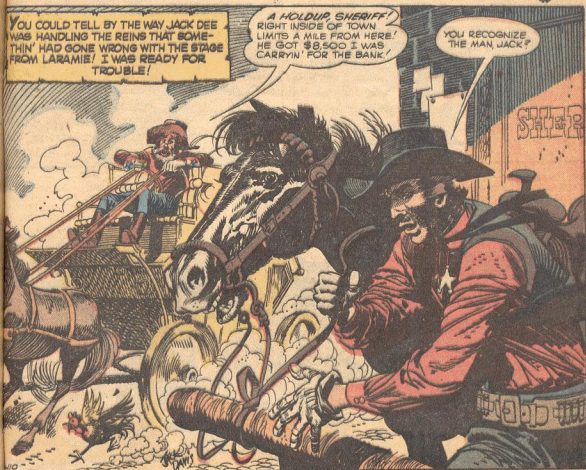
THESE THINGS WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD TAD LENOX BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE IN LIFE HE'D ASKED FOR! I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT TIME LONG FAST AS I WENT IN PURSUIT OF THE RECKLESS DESPERADO! IT WAS MY JOB TO CATCH MY FORMER PAL, BECAUSE I WAS...

# THE SHERIFF!

YOU COULD TELL BY THE WAY JACK DEE WAS HANDLING THE REINS THAT SOMETHIN' HAD GONE WRONG WITH THE STAGE FROM LARAMIE! I WAS READY FOR TROUBLE!

A HOLDUP, SHERIFF! RIGHT INSIDE OF TOWN LIMITS A MILE FROM HERE! HE GOT \$8,500 I WAS CARRYIN' FOR THE BANK!

YOU RECOGNIZE THE MAN, JACK?



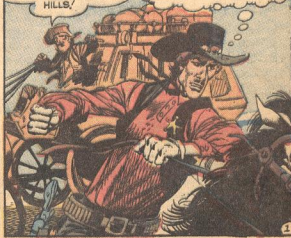
RECKON I KNOW TAD LENOX VELL AS I KNOW YOU, BEN BOYD! THAT KERCHIEF HE HAD IN HIS FACE DIDN'T FOOL ME NONE!

DID YOU SEE WHICH WAY HE HEADED?

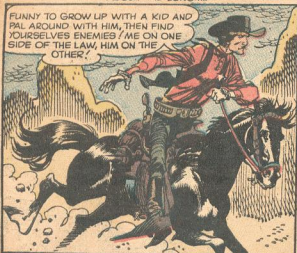


ONLY WAY HE COULD WITHOUT STAYIN' OUT IN OPEN COUNTRY, BEN! HE LIT OUT FOR PIKE TRAIL, INTO THE HILLS!

PIKE TRAIL! TAD'S GETTIN' CARELESS! HE KNOWS THOSE HILLS WERE LIKE A SECOND HOME TO ME, JUST LIKE THEY WERE TO HIM!



I DUG MY SPURS INTO LUCIFER, AND IN THE FOUR MINUTES IT TOOK TO REACH THE HILL TRAIL, I DID SOME THINKING ABOUT TAD LENOX...



FUNNY TO GROW UP WITH A KID AND PAL AROUND WITH HIM, THEN FIND YOURSELVES ENEMIES! ME ON ONE SIDE OF THE LAW, HIM ON THE OTHER!

THINGS FROM BACK IN THOSE DAYS CAME TO ME THEN! I REMEMBERED HOW TAD LENOX WAS KIND OF A SULKY KID, COMPLAININ' EVEN THEN THE WAY NOTHIN' EVER WENT RIGHT FOR HIM...



SEE, BEN, I TOLD YUH I COULDN'T EVER CATCH ANYTHING AT THE POND!

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T FISH FROM THE ROCK LIKE I SAID YOU SHOULD! IT'S DEEPER THERE! THE BASS LIKE SCOOTIN' ALONG THE BOTTOM!

TAD, BEIN' MY NEAREST NEIGHBOR, I HAD TO BE HIS PAL, I RECKON! AND WE'D STAYED PALS, EVEN TEN YEARS LATER...

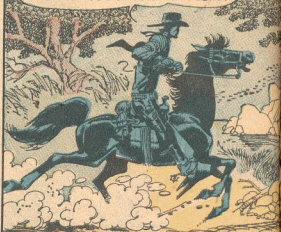


I SURE WISH I HADN'T LET YUH TALK ME INTO GOIN' TO THIS SQUARE DANCE, BEN!

JUST THE SAME, I NOTICE YOU GOT SLICKED UP FANCY FOR IT!

HIS PONY'S TRAIL WAS FRESH AND CLEAR, EASY TO FOLLOW.

BLACKFOOT POND! WE WERE JUST ABOUT 12 YEARS OLD WHEN WE FISHED THERE FOR BASS! THIRTY YEARS AGO! DON'T SEEM THAT LONG!



TELL YOU WHAT, TAD! I'LL GIVE YOU TWO OF MY FISH FOR THREE OF YOURS! I'LL TAKE THE SMALL ONES, HONEST! THEY MAKE SWEETER EATIN'!

I DON'T WANT YORE FISH! I LIKE TROUT BETTER! WE COULD'VE GOT PLENTY OF TROUT UP AT MILLER'S BROOK, BUT YOU WOULDN'T GO THERE!



WE HADN'T BEEN THERE FIVE MINUTES WHEN ME AND TAD MET EDNA MARLEY, COULD BE THAT WAS THE TURNIN' POINT IN THE LIVES OF ALL THREE OF US...



EDNA, YOU REMEMBER MRS. LENOX AND MRS. BOYD, WHO WERE ON THE FAIR COMMITTEE WITH ME LAST FALL! WELL, THESE ARE THEIR BOYS!

GLAD TO MEET YOU, MISS MARLEY! I'M BEN BOYD, AND THIS IS TAD LENOX!

HE TOOK TURNS DANCIN' WITH EDNA...

IVIN' AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE TOWN, I DON'T RECKON WE EVER WOULD'VE MET BUT FOR THIS DANCE.



I'VE BEEN BACK EAST THE PAST THREE YEARS. MA AND PA HAD ME GOING TO SCHOOL THERE, BUT I'M GLAD TO BE BACK AT LEAST, I'M GLAD NOW, BEN!

SO AM I, EDNA. I HOPE YOU'LL LET ME CALL ON YOU!

I'D THINK THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN!



I FELL FOR EDNA RIGHT OFF! I RECKON IT WAS THE SAME WITH TAD...

SHE'S LIKELY TELLIN' HIM THE SAME AS SHE TOLD ME!



EDNA HAD SURE ENOUGH ENCOURAGED TAD TO CALL ON HER, TOO. IT ENDED UP WITH US BOTH COURTIN' HER...

AND THE LOVELY LADY GETS A BOX OF CANDY!



I CAN'T HOLD ANOTHER THING! YOU CARRY IT FOR ME, TAD!

THIS WAS ONE TIME I GOT AWAY OUT AHEAD OF TAD LENOX. I'D DONE A LOT OF EXTRA CHORES TO GET MONEY TO BUY EDNA A RING...

IT'LL BE ANOTHER SIX MONTHS BEFORE I FINISH MY LAW STUDIES WITH LAWYER PHELPS, EDNA!

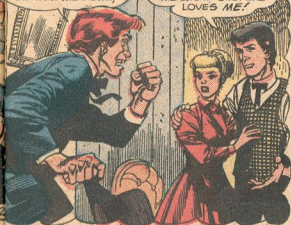
SIX MONTHS ISN'T LONG TO WAIT WHEN YOU LOVE SOMEONE, BEN! I'LL BE PROUD TO BE MRS. BEN BOYD!



TAD CAME BY NOT TEN MINUTES LATER. HE TOOK OUR ENGAGEMENT REAL BAD...

NOTHIN' MATTERS IF YOU WON'T MARRY ME, EDNA! I SWEAR, I'LL GO BAD IF YOU TURN ME DOWN!

I'M SORRY WE BOTH HAD TO LOVE THE SAME GIRL, TAD! BUT I'VE BEEN THE LUCKY ONE! SHE LOVES ME!



TAD TURNED AND STALKED OFF, MUTTERIN' THREATS...

TAD'S VERY BITTER! HE MIGHT GO BAD! IF I MARRY HIM, I COULD STRAIGHTEN HIM OUT, I'M SURE!

THAT'S FOR YOU TO DECIDE, EDNA!



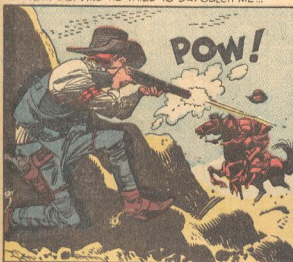


TAD LENOX *DID* GO BAD! FOR NIGH ON TO 20 YEARS, HE'D BEEN AN OUTLAW, WANTED IN SEVERAL STATES...



THIS WAS MY FIRST BRUSH WITH HIM, AND SUDDENLY I STOPPED REMEMBERING THE PAST, 'CAUSE I CAUGHT UP WITH TAD, AND HE TRIED TO DRYGULCH ME...

I FELT BAD ABOUT HOW IT TURNED OUT BUT I HAD MY JOB TO DO...



I'D LEFT MY LAW PRACTICE WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN ELECTED ME SHERIFF TEN YEARS AGO. TAD HAD BEEN THE ONE DARK SPOT IN OUR LIVES...



BEN, I FEEL GUILTY! TAD LENOX MIGHT'VE BEEN DIFFERENT IF I'D MARRIED HIM!

YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL THAT WAY, EDNA! TAD JUST HAD IT IN HIM TO BE BAD, BUT MAYBE THIS WILL BE A LESSON TO HIM. HE'LL COME OUT OF PRISON A BETTER MAN...AND WE'LL OFFER HIM A HELPING HAND! WITH SOME KINDNESS, I RECKON TAD WILL TURN OUT ALL RIGHT!

THE END