

DELL
A DELL COMIC
MARCH - MAY

10¢

Johnny Mack Brown

comics



Wild HORSES



Herd of wild horses still range the rugged terrain of such western states as Wyoming, Nevada, and Oregon. Horse wranglers, who

hunt the herds, claim the wild horse is more intelligent, has more endurance, and is faster than domestic animals.



Many a cowboy, left afoot, through negligence, or because his horse was injured, has caught himself a new mount by hiding near a waterhole and roping a wild one when the band came to drink.



Usually, he had to throw and "tie down" the wild animal before he could mount. Then he had to win the "contest" that followed, or again he left afoot, this time without rope and saddle, and possibly injured.



One of the oldest and most effective methods of capturing wild horses is still being used. A rider herds the wild band into a tame bunch,

where more riders lay hidden. The entire herd is then driven to a brush-concealed corral

Johnny Mack Brown and THE GHOST STAGECOACH

THERE'S SOMETHING
OVER THERE BEHIND
THAT YUCCA TREE.
REBEL! LET'S HAVE
A LOOK!

JOHNNY MACK BROWN,
ON HIS WAY TO LATIGO
TO VISIT A SHERIFF
FRIEND, PAUSES ...







WELL, SOME FOLKS THINK SHE
LOOZY OTHERS JUST SAY SHE'S
MYSTERIOUS! HIL GEE, NAOMI
CAME TOWN LAST MONTH
AFTER TH' DEATH OF HER DAD,
OLD BULLWHIP TEARLE!



FOR YEARS, OLD BULLWHIP
DROVE TH' ONLY STAGE IN
THESE PARTS! YESSIR,
WE SURE MISS HIS RICKETY
OLD CONCORD SINCE IT PLUNGED
INTO OCEANIC
SEWER!



FOLKS FISSER SOME OALHOOT
PLUGGED TH' OLD MAN, SORRED
TH' STAGE AN' DUMPED 'EM BOTH
IN TH' RIVER! BULLWHIP'S BODY
AINT NEVER SEEN FOUND!

AND THAT'S
WHEN HIS
DAUGHTER
CAME TO
TOWN, HUH?



RIGHT, JOHNNY! AN' SHE SURE
ACTS MIGHTY PECULIAR! ALWAYS
TALKIN' ABOUT SEENIN' A
PHANTOM STAGE ROLLIN'
ALONG TH' SAME TRAILS
HER DAD ONCE DROVE!

PHANTOM STAGE?
HMM, SHE
MUST BELIEVE
IN GHOSTS!



I AINT HEARD OF NOBODY ELSE
SEENIN' TH' GHOST STAGE, BUT
NAOMI SAYS IT'S WHITE AN'
PULLED BY A SPAN OF
WHITE HORSES!

SOMEBODY
BETTER TELL
NAOMI TO
STAY
IN
OUT OF
THE SUN!



OH-OH, SPOONIN'
OF TH'... ER,
WHY HULLO,
NAOMI, COME
RIGHT IN!











I'M SENDIN' THIS HORSE BACK HOME! NAOMI BORROWED IT FROM THE SHERIFF SO SHE COULD MEET THE STAGE!

BUT NAOMI'S THE SPOOKY DAUGHTER OF OLD BULLWHIP TEARLE! I'VE HEARD OF HER AND —



SUREBERRIN' CATRICH, LOOK! SMOKE'S COMIN' FROM THE DIRECTION OF MY RANCH!

WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR? LET'S GO!



DO YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE THAT OLD BULLWHIP'S COME BACK TO HAUNT ME?

NOT UNLESS YOU BELIEVE IN **SHOOTIN' BEGONS**. WHY WOULD HE WANT TO HAUNT YOU?



I DUNNO, UNLESS IT'S BECAUSE I SOLD HIM THAT OLD WORTHLESS MINE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF SHADOW MOUNTAIN!

BUT DIDN'T BULLWHIP KNOW IT WAS ALL PLAYED OUT?



SURE HE DID! BUT HE SAID HE WANTED TO DO SOME **EXPERIMENTIN'** IN IT! I LET HIM BUY IT FOR A SONG!

I CAN'T SEE HOW THAT MAKES YOU A TARGET FOR **SHOOTIN' BEGONS**! HOLEROCK!



NOR CAN I! BUT I'VE HAD TROUBLE APRENTLY!

SAY, LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE OUTBUILDINGS IS ON FIRE!



PRESENTLY...

MORE WATER!
— HURRY!

WHAT'S THE USE?
THE BUNKHOUSE
IS A GONER!
RIGHT, BOSS?

YEAH, JUST KEEB
THE FISS FROM
SPREADIN' TO THE
OTHER BUILDINGS,
MEN!

FROSTY
FARROW,
WHAT
HAPPENED?



SOME BEARDED
OLD GEEZER
SNUCK IN HERE
AN' SET A TORCH
TO TH' BUNKHOUSE!

I GOT A LOOK
AT HIM MISTER
HOLBROOK! TO
SWABER IT WAS
OLD BULLWHIP
HIMSELF... OR
HIS GHOST!



BULLWHIP'S DEAD!
EVERYBODY KNOWS
THAT... HOLD ON,
WHO'S YOUR FRIEND,
HOLBROOK?

I'M JOHNNY MACK
BROWN!

WELL, JOHNNY,
MEET MY
FOREMAN,
FROSTY
FARROW!



BROWN AND
I JUST SAW
TH' PHANTOM
STAGE!

DO TELL!
AN' TH' GIRL,
TOO...
NAOMI
TEARLE...
I'LL SET!



HEY, WHAT'S
THE IDEAR?

GRAB HIM,
MEN! DON'T
LET HIM GET
AWAY!







HANK, WHERE TH' DICKENS HAVE YOU BEEN? DO YOU SEE ANYTHING OF A STRANGE CORBY SWIMMIN' LOOSE?

SURE DID, BOSS! I SEEN A JASPER HUSK-TAILIN' IT TOWARD THE OLD SINKHOLE!

THAT'LL BE JIMMY MACK BROWN! LET'S GO, BOYS!



I'LL STAY HERE AN' KEEP MY EYES SKINNED — IN CASE HE ENBAKS BACK!

OHAY HANK?



GLUB! GLUB!
I... GLUB!

QUIET, YOU WILDOS!



LISTEN IN A FRIEND! YOU'VE GOTTA TRUST ME! MAKE FOR TH' LEAVIN' SOUTH OF HERE! MY SISTER'LL BE THERE IN A FEW MINUTES!

YOUR SISTER?

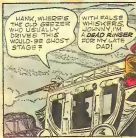


STICK CLOSE TOHER AN' YOU'LL BE SAFE! STAYING HERE IS LIKE SITTING ON A POWDER KEG! BELIEVE ME!

OHAY PARTNER! BUT I'VE GOT MY OWN REASONS FOR THROWIN' N WITH YOU!











When she heard someone ride up, Mary Noland listened for a moment, then went back to clearing up the breakfast dishes. "Must be one of the boys back from the range," she murmured.

Then, still humming a tuneless song, she returned to her plans for Saturday's visit to town. With that cattle money, she told herself, I can get Mack Ritter to send for one of those new stoves, and at least—

An insistent knocking on the kitchen door interrupted her thoughts.

She wiped her hands on her apron and opened the door. Standing there, hat in hand, was a tall, lean stranger, a man with small dark eyes and a short knife scar across his chin.

"Sorry to trouble you, Ma'am," he said, with a ghost of a smile. "But I was wanderin' if you could direct me to Dave Noland's ranch, the Circle-N?"

"Why, this is the Circle-N," Mary replied.

"It is?" The man's smile spread. "Then maybe you could tell me where I could find Mister Noland?"

"He's out on the range right now, with the men."

"I see." The man glanced around the barnyard and toward the bunkhouse. "Maybe I can talk to the foreman then? Or someone else? I'm lookin' for a job."

Mary shook her head. "I'm sorry, but they're all out on the range right now. Perhaps if you—"

"You mean they're ALL gone? There isn't ANYone around I can talk to?"

"No, I'm afraid they're all away. Of course, if you want to ride out—"

Mary's sentence hung in mid-air, unfinished.

The stranger had drawn his gun!

"This's even better than I hoped," he said slowly.

"But, I don't understand," Mary gasped, backing into the kitchen as the man stepped inside.

"Don't move any farther, lady!" he snapped suddenly, pushing the gun forward, slamming the door shut with his boot. "I've come a long way for that money, and I'm not squeamish about shootin'—even a woman!"

"The money?" Mary's hand went to her throat. "But how did you—?" She stopped too late.

"Don't worry, lady," the man said, studying the kitchen. "I know all about it. Saw your husband collect that money in Abilene, and I followed him out here. I know he only got back last night, so the money's here someplace."

"But it's all we have!" Mary protested. "After eleven years of work, this is the first year we'll show a profit! For eleven years we've—"

She paused, chilled by the cold, hard look in the man's eyes. Then she heard the hammer on his gun snap back.

"Lady," he said, "I'm leavin' here with that money if I have to tear this place apart! WHERE IS IT?"

"Dave hid it," Mary said desperately. "My husband—he hid it. I don't know where, really I don't!"

The stranger stared at her. "Wives ALWAYS know where the money is." He looked around the kitchen again. "And it's probably right in here, if I know women. I'll have a look first. Then, if I don't find it myself," he added, turning to glare at Mary, "you'll tell me."

"I won't!" Mary shouted. "I won't!"

"We'll see!" The man moved to a corner cupboard. "I'll give you five minutes to think it over, while I take a look around!"

Mary's fright vanished in a surge of anger as the man began pulling her

precious cups and bowls and pitchers from the cabinet, peering inside each, then smashing them on the floor.

Then, as he reached for the beautiful hand-painted cookie jar which had belonged to her grandmother, Mary abandoned all caution. Remembering the triangular gong outside, the traditional signal for food or emergency, she took a deep breath—and raced for the door.

But he was there before her.

Lounging insolently, almost casually, against the door, he smiled as she stopped herself just in time, hand to her mouth. "Goin' somewhere?"

He took a step toward her, still smiling. "Think it's time we had a little talk, lady?" Mary backed away, terrified now.

The stranger shifted his gun to his left hand. Then, before Mary knew what was happening, he smacked her cheek, hard. Stunned and frightened, yet furious, she ducked instinctively as he swung again.

"No!" she screamed. "Don't hit me again—I'll tell! You can have the money! I'll tell! Please!"

He leaned back against the stove. "That's better. But no tricks now—or I'll use the butt end of this gun on you next time, 'stead of my hand!" He straightened up, his voice cold. "Now! Where is it?"

Still holding her cheek, Mary nodded toward the front parlor. "In there. A loose board in the floor."

"After you!" The stranger waved his gun to emphasize the order, then followed her into the front room.

"There!" she cried, pointing to a loose plank, its warped end sticking up above the floor level. "Under there!"

Kneeling, the man grasped the board and pulled it loose with one tremendous jerk. Then, standing, he used his boot to shove the plank straight up in the air and over, backward.

But the narrow, gaping hole was empty.

"Why you—! Nothin' there! Nothin' but the ground underneath!" Face twisted in anger, the stranger whirled on Mary, menace flashing from his eyes. Slowly, deliberately, he brought his gun

up.

"No!" Mary shouted. "It's there, I tell you!" Stepping up beside him, she pointed down. "Back there, under the end. Under the floor. Just reach back and you'll feel it—a little tin box!"

Excited now, the man knelt and, gun still pointed up at Mary, reached back under the flooring with his free hand. . .

When Dave Noland burst into the room less than an hour later, his wife was sitting calmly in her rocker. In her hand was a gun, pointed at the stranger, expertly trussed and stretched out on the floor at her feet.

"Mary!" he shouted. "I heard the gang and came just as fast as I—MARY! What's happened?"

Smiling, his wife handed him the gun. "You can take over now. I've got to get back to work."

"But, but—who is he?" Dave pointed to the stranger. "What's been goin' on?"

"He saw you get the cattle money in Abilene, Dave, and followed you here. Then, when he found me alone—well, he thought he could make me tell where it was hidden."

"Poor Darlin'! Where DID you hide it, by the way?"

"It's in the cookie jar." Mary bit her lip. "At first, I was so frightened I decided to tell him where the money was."

She frowned. "But when he smashed up all my cups and bowls and reached for grandma's beautiful cookie jar—well, I just knew I had to do something!"

Dave nodded at the scowling stranger. "So you told him it was under that ol' loose plank?"

"Yes," Mary smiled. "But he didn't find what he was looking for!"

Dave Noland's face lit up. "Why, that's where I put—"

"A rat trap!" Mary agreed. "It snapped right down on his fingers—and did he yell! That's when I kicked the gun from his hand and hit him over the head with it. And while he was unconscious, I roped him up!"

"But how did you ever think of usin' the rat trap?"

Mary looked up at her husband with an impish grin. "I don't know—it just seemed sort of appropriate, for him!"







LATER, IN CACTUS CITY...

CAFÉ

YOU SEE, MISTER BROWN,
I WAS DONE OLD 'ER ONE
DAY WHEN IT BROKE DOWN AT
DRY SKULL! TO WHILE AWAY
THE TIME, I DO A ROUGH SKETCH
OF THE TINY DESERT AND THE
LITTLE TOWN BEHIND IT!
LATER I MADE A
PAINTING FROM
THE SKETCH!



HERE THEY
COME! WE'LL
DUCK INTO THE
CAFÉ BY TH' BACK
WAY AND SEE WHAT
TH' ARTIST FELLER'S
GOT UP HIS SLEEVE!

IT'S LUCKY
WE TOOK TH'
FEAR BACK
FROM TH'
COUNTY
SEAT!



SO, BEING OUT
OF FUNDS, I
TRADED THE
PAINTING TO
MISS JANE
FOR SOME
MEALS!

I STILL DON'T SAVVY
WHAT THIS HAS GOT
TO DO WITH THE
TOWN VANISHIN'!



HI, MISTER VAN
DOLBE! COFFEE'LL
BE HOT IN A JIFFY!

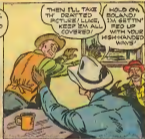
HELLO, MISS JANE!
UH, THERE'S THE
PAINTING ON THE
WALL, MISTER
BROWN!



IT'S A GOOD
PICTURE OF
THE MESSIN'
TOWN OF DRY
SKULL, IF I DO
SAY SO MYSELF!

HYM, VE'RY GOOD,
EVEN TO THE
ELEPHANT EAR
GROUND BEHIND!
I'M BEGINNING
TO SAVVY WHAT
YOU'RE GETTIN' AT!







SAFED

WELL, I RECKON THAT'S ODD SKILL SURE ENOUGH, VAN SOLBE! YOU PICTURED YOUR SCENERY FROM THE VERY ANGLE, EXCEPT YOU WERE CLOSER!

THAT'S RIGHT! GOOD DISTANCES ARE DECEIVING ON THE DESERT!



SEE? THERE'S ELEPHANT EAR HILLS BACK OF BEHIND THE TOWN! THAT'S WHY THE BASSALS DON'T WANT THE POLICE OR DISPLAY IT AS A DEFINITE LANDMARK!



BUT WHERE'RE THE RAILROAD TRACKS WHICH WERE HERE WHEN I MADE THE SKETCH?

THEY'RE MILES AWAY FROM HERE! AND THE SHIFTER BANDS HAVE SEIZED ALL SIGN OF WHERE THE TRACKS USED TO BE!

I RECKON BOLAND AND HIS BUNNEN PLANTED THE DEPTO SIGN AT THE SITE OF THE NEW TRACK, JUST SO FOLKS'D THINK THE TOWN HAD DISAPPEARED!

BUT I DON'T GET IT! WHY?



I DUNNO! IT TOOK A HEAP OF MEN TO MOVE THE NARROW-GAUGE TRACKS SO FAR IN ONLY ONE WEEK! BUT THEY MUST REALIZE THEY CAN'T HOLD THE TOWN FOREVER!... EVEN A DESERT SCENERY DOES LOOK ALL ALICE!



OH, OH, THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, VAN SOLBE! 'HWH' OPERATIONS!

GREAT SCOTT! THAT WLD WASTN' THESE BEFORE! IT MUST BE A NEW STRIKE!





THE DEAD MAN'S HAND

HEY, SENOR HAMMOCK, THE SUN SHE IS PEERING OVER THE MOUNTAINS! TIME TO WAKE UP!

YOU KNOW WHAT THE SHERIFF SAY? HE THROW YOU IN THE CALABOOSE, IF HE CATCH YOU SLEEPING LIKE A HOUND DOG IN THIS GROVE!

Z-Z-Z...
BLUB!

UGH... FAUGH! SO IT'S YOU, TACO, YUH LITTLE RAGAWUFFN! WANDOSE!

WHAT MAKE YOU SO LAZY, SENOR? EVER BODY WORK BUT YOU? EVEN TACO... I FETCH WATER FOR THE NUGGET CAFE!

HE WORK? SURE, I'VE GOT TOO DANGED MUCH WEIGHT T' TOTE AROUND, FOR THAT, TACO!

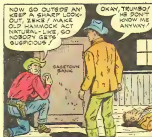
THAT'S WHAT I TELL THE SHERIFF, BUT HE SAY YOU A NO-GOOD LOAFER... THE TOWN NERK-DO-NOTHING!

NEER-DO-WELL, AM I? WHY I WAS HUNTIN' NUJNS AN' CATCHIN' OWLHOOTS WHEN THE SHERIFF WAS A BABE-IN-ARMS!

CATCH OWLHOOTS?... YOU? HOW THE SHERIFF SAY YOU GOULDN'T CATCH COLD IN A BARREL OF ICE WATER!











Wild HORSES

Wild horses still roam the more rugged parts of the West because many are too smart to be captured. The old trick of herding a band into a box canyon, from which there is no

rider and mount

Finally, thirst, hunger, and fatigue win over spirit, and the wild one permits the rope to circle his neck.



escape, fails because the wily old stallions leading the bands know the country they range better than the horse wranglers chasing them.

The famous Palomino stallion, Desert Dust, who ranged the Red desert of Wyoming for years, defied all ordinary methods of capture until a horse wrangler finally brought an airplane into use to get him.

Sometimes, when all else fails, the "walk down" trick is used to capture a fine stallion, like Desert Dust, wanted for breeding purposes.

To do this, a rider follows the desired animal day and night at a slow pace, allowing him neither food, water, nor rest. At specific intervals, the rider is relieved by a fresh



