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MOEBIUS 8

JEAN GIRAUD WITH JEAN-MICHEL CHARLIER



◆ MISSISSIPPI ◆
R I V E R

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MOEBIUS 8
MISSISSIPPI RIVER

with special thanks to Steve Alexandrov, Philippe Charlier, JB Johnson & Ed Murr

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MOEBIUS 8

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

OTHER MOEBIUS GRAPHIC NOVELS — WITH STAN LEE

THE SILVER SURFER: PARABLE

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GONE WITH THE WIND, REVISITED

In 1979, Moebius and Jean-Michel Charlier found themselves embroiled in a business argument over their popular western series **Lt. Blueberry**, with their French publisher Dargaud. As a result, the two creators decided to temporarily halt their work on Blueberry and create a new series. This is how, and why, **Mississippi River** was originally serialized in **Metal Hurlant** (the comics magazine co-founded by Moebius) in 1979.

Once again, Charlier and Moebius proved prophetic in their experiment with the then traditional format of the classic high adventure story. Unlike almost any other comparable book of the period, **Mississippi River** is a totally anti-heroic story. None of the characters exhibits any noble emotions for any length of time and everyone ultimately proves ready and willing to betray anyone else, provided that it is in his or her own interest.

Cutlass himself, though resourceful, cuts a far less heroic figure than Blueberry. He has neither the moral sense of the battered cavalry lieutenant, nor his genius in desperate situations. Cutlass's plans backfire more often than not, and only blind luck or momentum seem to help him to stay alive. He is, and ultimately remains, a loser. Today, we would call such a story "grim", and only Moebius's artful representation of a Louisiana sun-drenched by day, shadow-draped by night, saves the book from being dark in look as well as style.

For ten years, **Mississippi River** remained a one-shot book in Charlier and Moebius's biography. However, before his untimely death in '89, Charlier wrote one more Jim Cutlass story entitled "The Nights of New Orleans". That story is now being drawn by young French artist Christian Rossi, whose previous graphic novel, **Lea**, The Confessions of Julius Antione (in collaboration with Serge Letendre) was recently published in English.

So maybe there's still a chance that Cutlass will win after all!

Heh!

Jean-Marc & Randy Lofficier

GIR

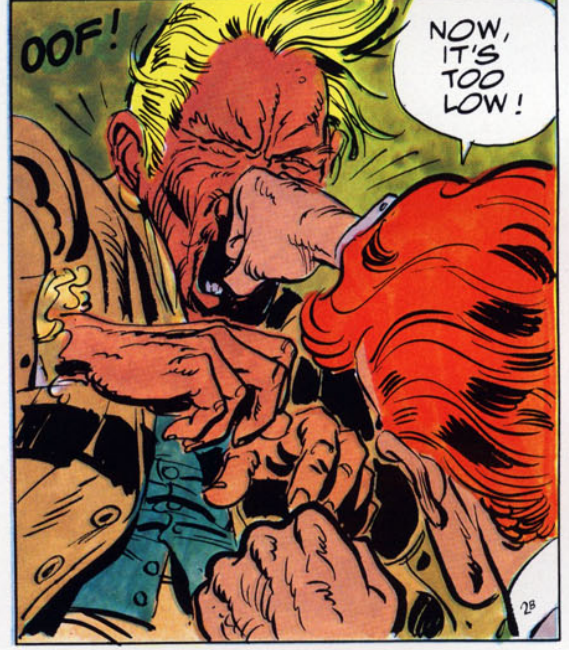
I'M
AFRAID YOU'RE
GONNA HAVE T'
TRUST ME FOR TH'
NEXT HAND,
MISTER PLAY-
FAIR ...

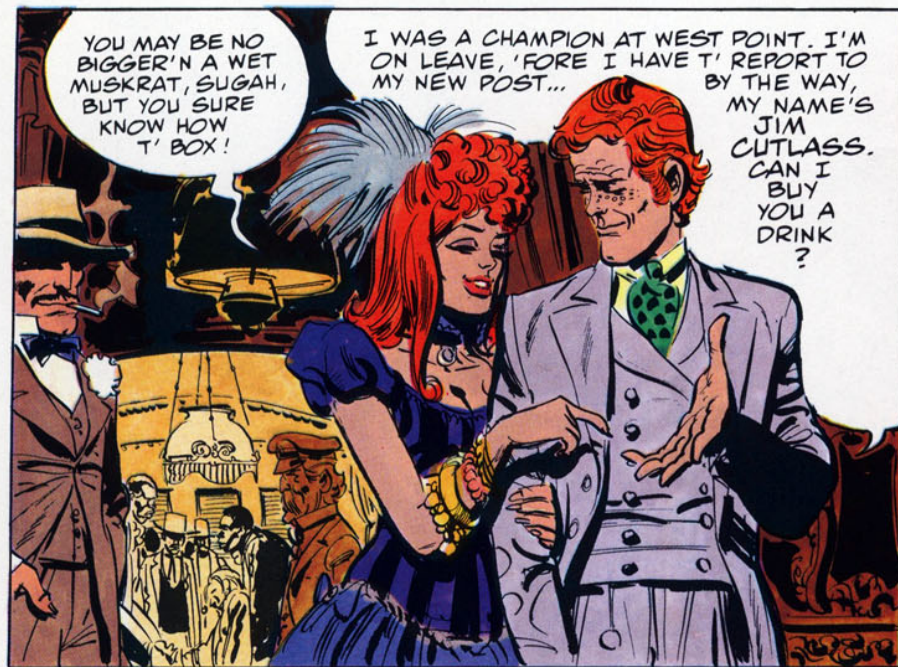
WHY
DON'T
WE JUST
CALL
THIS
ROUND
A DRAW,
INSTEAD
?

SORRY,
PAL,
BUT I
AIN'T
ARMED
!

NOT
EVEN A
TOOTH-
PICK!

WHATTA
I NEED A
GUN
FOR?





YOU MAY BE NO BIGGER 'N A WET MUSKRAT, SUGAH, BUT YOU SURE KNOW HOW T' BOX!

I WAS A CHAMPION AT WEST POINT. I'M ON LEAVE, 'FORE I HAVE T' REPORT TO MY NEW POST...
BY THE WAY, MY NAME'S JIM CUTLASS. CAN I BUY YOU A DRINK?



AIN'T NO ONE ELSE EVER NOTICED THAT PLAYFAIR CHEATED?



JOHNNIE'S SO GOOD THAT NO ONE COULD CATCH 'IM IN TH' ACT! AN' HE'S BEEN KNOWN TO SHOOT THOSE WHO DID-- ALWAYS IN "SELF-DEFENSE"!



YOU COULD 'VE WARNED ME BEFORE, DARLIN'!

IT'S TIME YOU FIGGERED THAT ONE OUT, SUGAH! JOHNNIE'S MY FRIEND, AN' MY PARTNER. OR WAS, 'CAUSE AH'M DUMPIN' 'IM NOW! WELL, THANKS FOR TH' DRINK, AN' SO LONG!



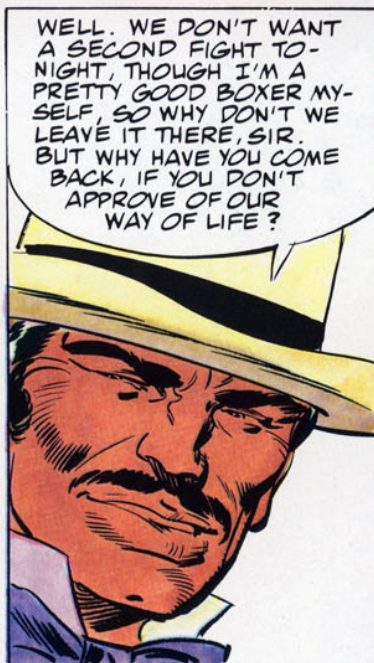
SO LONG, DARLIN'! WHY DIDN'T ANYONE WARN ME 'BOUT PLAYFAIR 'FORE WE PLAYED?

'CAUSE EVER SINCE YOU CAME ABOARD, YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED BENDIN' OUR EARS 'BOUT YOUR DAMN LINCOLN!



WE DON'T CARE MUCH FOR 'IM AN' 'IS YANKEE FRIENDS IN THESE PARTS!

I WAS BORN IN TH' SOUTH, SIR, AN' THAT MAKES ME MORE PROUD T' SHARE MR. LINCOLN'S IDEALS!



WELL. WE DON'T WANT A SECOND FIGHT TO-NIGHT, THOUGH I'M A PRETTY GOOD BOXER MYSELF, SO WHY DON'T WE LEAVE IT THERE, SIR. BUT WHY HAVE YOU COME BACK, IF YOU DON'T APPROVE OF OUR WAY OF LIFE?



YOUR FAMOUS SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY! I JUST LEARNED 'BOUT AN INHERITANCE IN NEW ORLEANS, WHICH MIGHT GIVE ME ENOUGH MONEY T' QUIT TH' ARMY!

AN INHERITANCE? IS THAT SO?



AN UNCLE I NEVER MET LEFT ME HIS LAND...

ANOTHER OF BAS ROUGE'S TRICKS!

HELP!
THE SLAVES STABLED UP FRONT FREED THEMSELVES AN'RE TRYIN' T' ESCAPE!

ALL THIS'S THANKS TO YOUR GODDAMN LINCOLN AN' 'IS WRETCHED THEORIES! THE DEVIL TAKES 'IM!



WHO'S HE?

DON CLAY! THE SLAVES B' LONG T' HIM. THEY WERE TRYIN' T' MAKE THEIR WAY UP NORTH, BUT CLAY CAUGHT UP WITH 'EM.



ON THE FORE-DECK, THE REBEL SLAVES ARE HOPELESSLY OUT-NUMBERED...

PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS, YOU FOOLS, OR WE'LL SHOOT EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU DOWN LIKE DOGS!

C'MON, BOYS! YOU AIN'T GOT A PRAYER! GIVE UP, AN' I SWEAR, ONLY BAS ROUGE'LL BE PUNISHED!



NEVER!



BUT SOME SLAVES SURRENDER, AND...

BAS ROUGE! HE'S JUMPIN' INT' TH' WATER!

THE SPOTLIGHT!
HURRY!

NEVER!

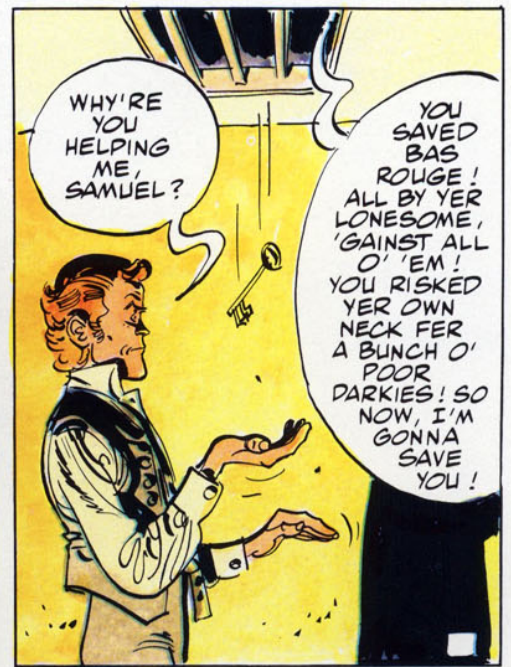
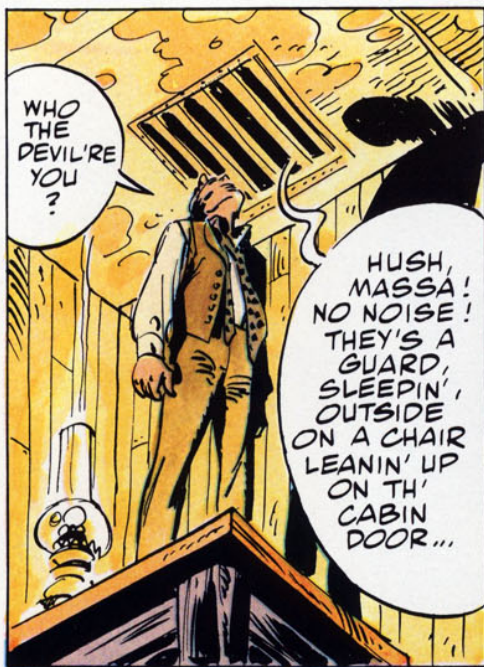


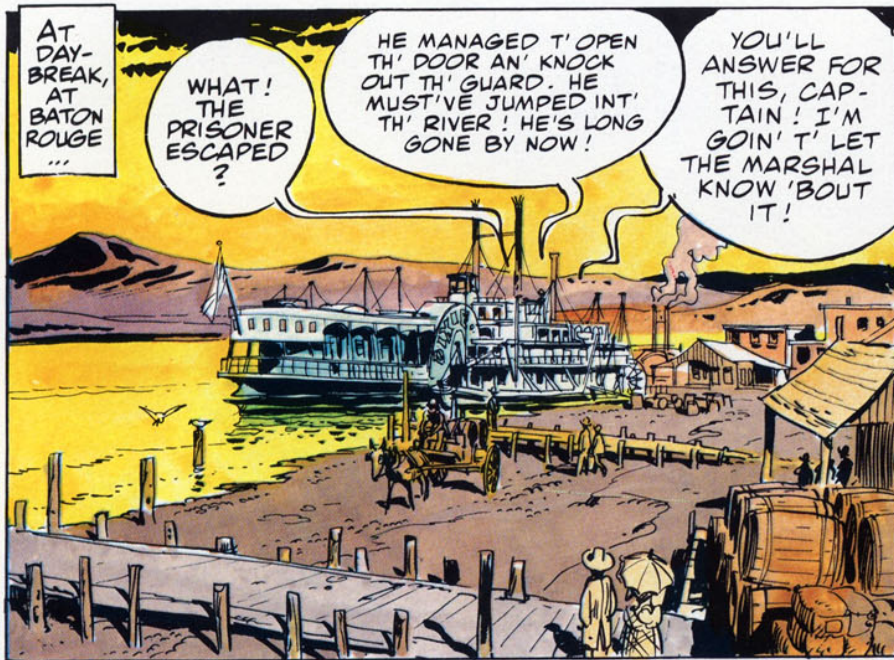
DAMN! LET ME THROUGH! THAT SON-UVABITCH IS MINE! I'M GOIN' T' GET RID OF 'IM ONCE AN' FOR ALL!



TOO BAD FOR TH' LOSS, BUT THAT SWAMP RAT'S ALREADY CAUSED ME ENOUGH GRIEF!







AT DAY-BREAK, AT BATON ROUGE ...

WHAT! THE PRISONER ESCAPED?

HE MANAGED T' OPEN TH' DOOR AN' KNOCK OUT TH' GUARD. HE MUST'VE JUMPED INT' TH' RIVER! HE'S LONG GONE BY NOW!

YOU'LL ANSWER FOR THIS, CAPTAIN! I'M GOIN' T' LET THE MARSHAL KNOW 'BOUT IT!



WHERE'RE YA GOIN', LULU BELLE?

AH'VE HAD IT WITH YOU, JOHNNIE! AH'M LEAVIN'! AH'VE FOUND ME A JOB HERE! YOU! BOYS! BRING ME MY TRUNK!



CARRY THAT T' TH' FLAMINGO!

ALL THIS'S FER JUST ONE LADY? SHE MUST CHANGE CLOTHES A AWFUL LOT!

IT SURE DO WEIGH A TON! YES, SIR!



AN HOUR LATER, IN A ROOM AT THE FLAMINGO ...

JOHNNIE'S SURE T' COME RUNNIN' AFTER ME. HOW BORIN'. THERE'S GONNA BE A RUCKUS...

EXCUSE ME...



Y...YOU!

I WANTED T' LEAVE SOONER, BUT YOU WEREN'T DRESSED, AN' A GENTLEMAN ALWAYS SPARES A LADY'S MODESTY... TOO BAD, TOO!



MY DRESSES! WHAT'VE YOU DONE WITH MY DRESSES?

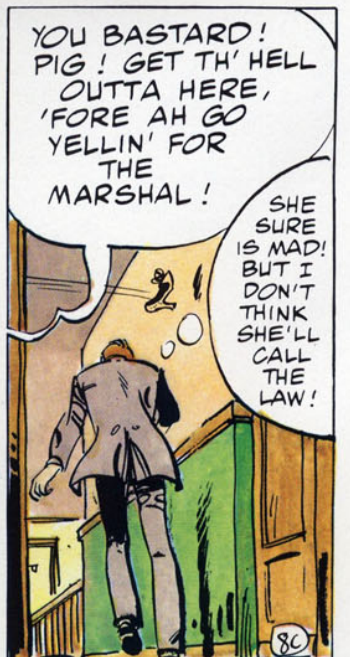
I HAD T' THROW 'EM AWAY T' MAKE ROOM! BUT HERE, I'LL GIVE YOU TWICE WHAT THEY'RE WORTH!



TRY AN' UNDERSTAND, DARLIN'! IT WAS EITHER THAT, OR JUMPIN' INTO TH' RIVER. AND I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU THAT I'M NOT REAL FOND OF

WATER ...

HEY!



YOU BASTARD! PIG! GET TH' HELL OUTTA HERE, 'FORE AH GO YELLIN' FOR THE MARSHAL!

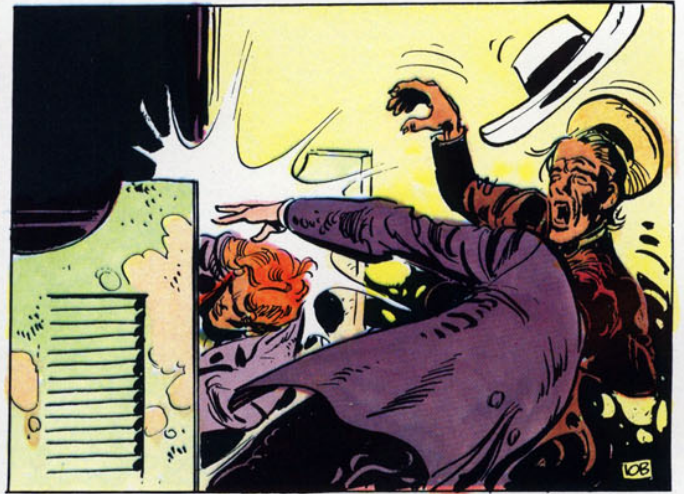
SHE SURE IS MAD! BUT I DON'T THINK SHE'LL CALL THE LAW!

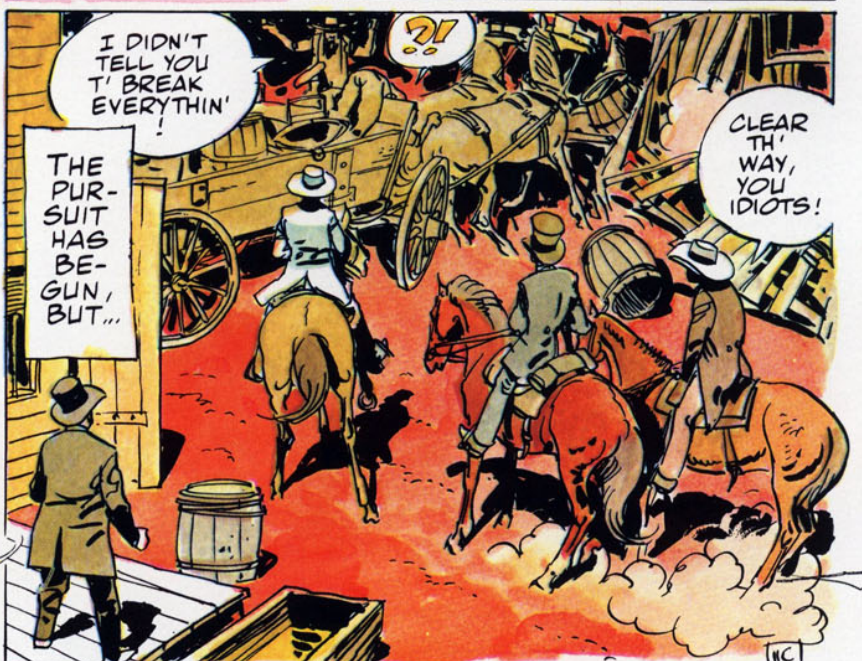
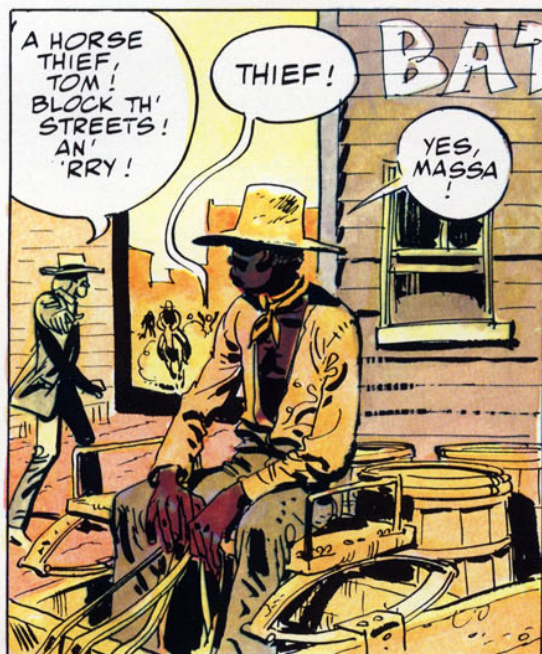
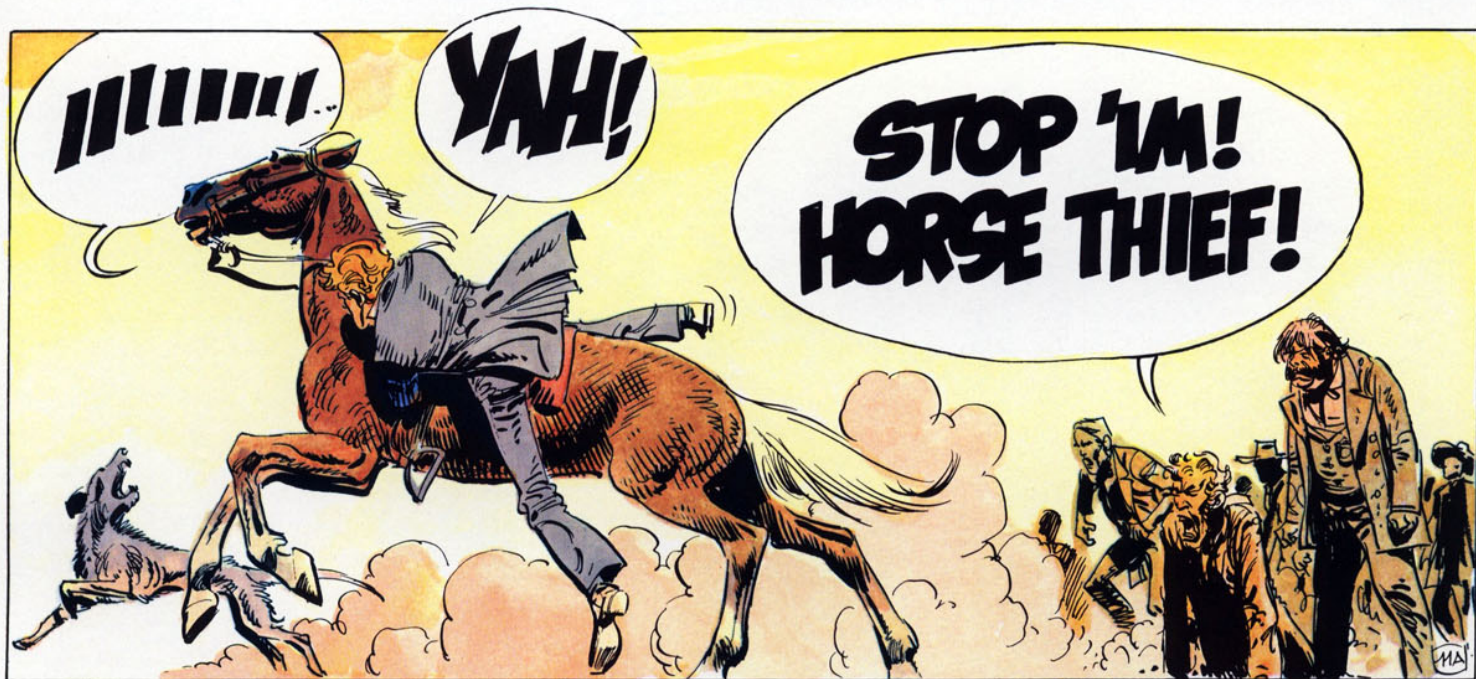


NOBODY MOVE!

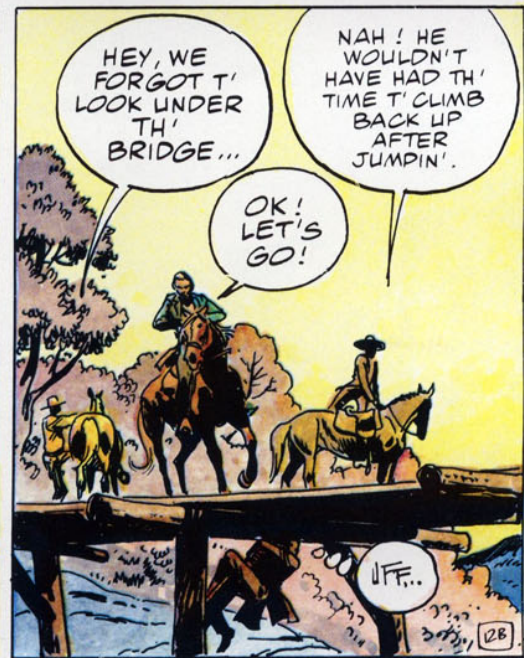
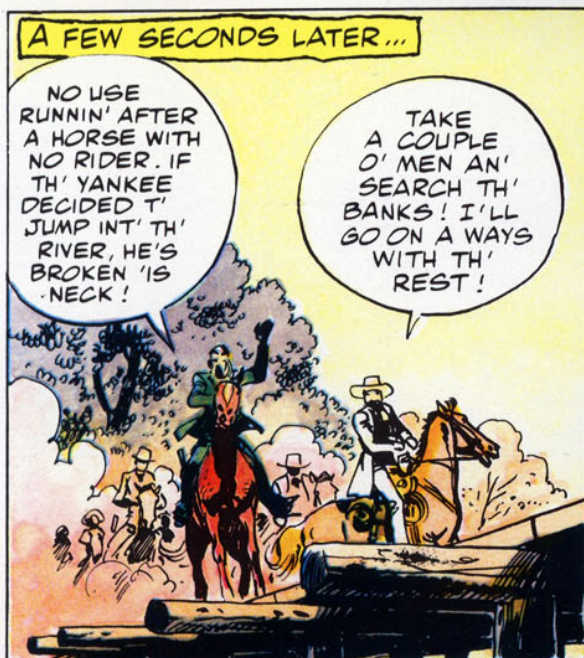


WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, CUTLASS THROWS HIMSELF BACKWARDS AGAINST THE SWINGING DOORS, KNOCKING DOWN THE TWO NEWCOMERS...

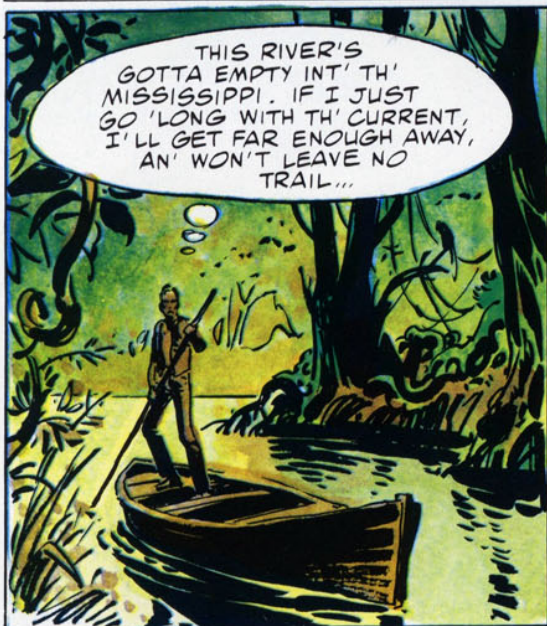




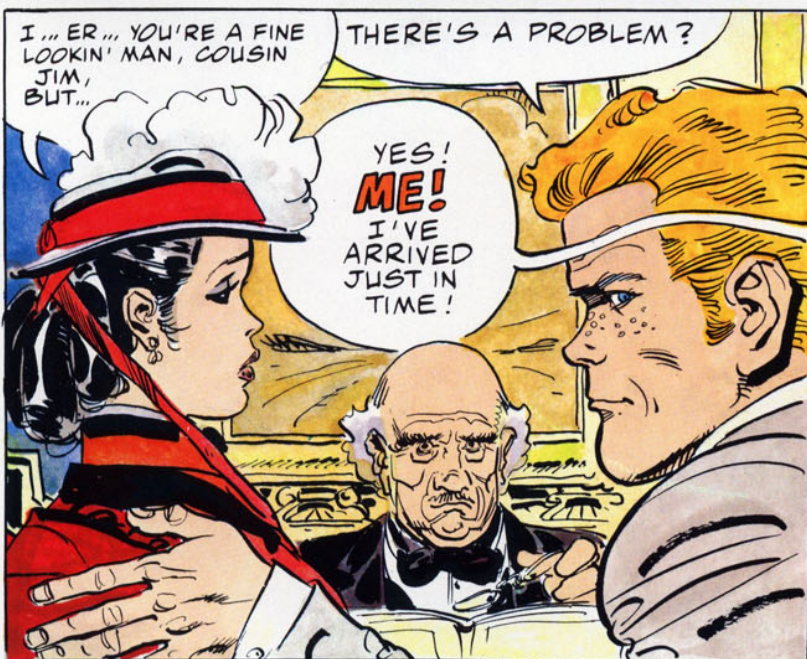
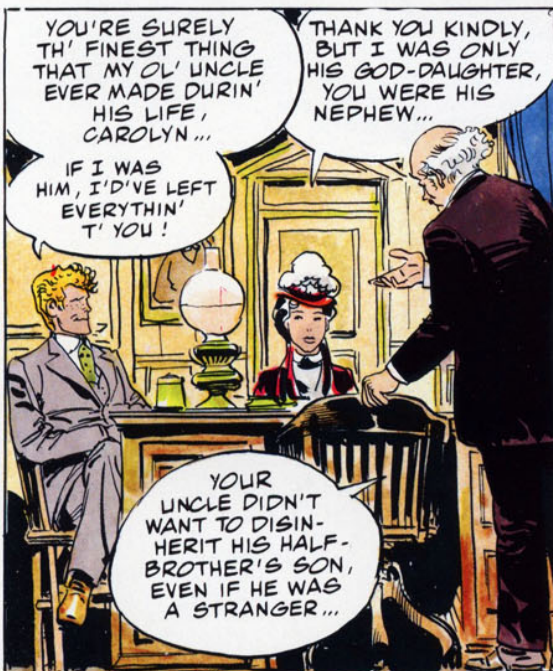
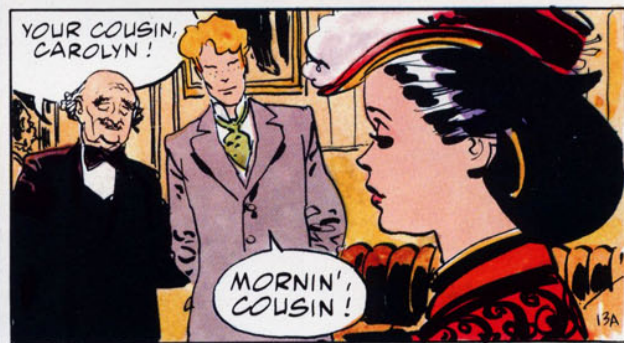
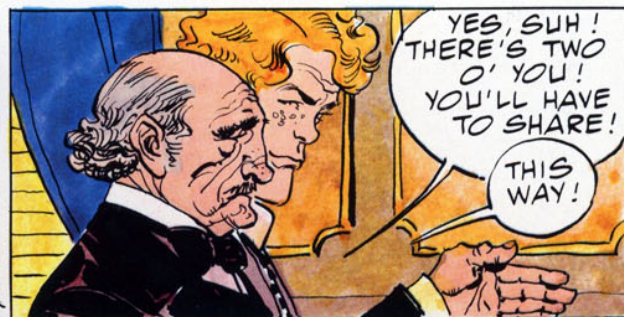
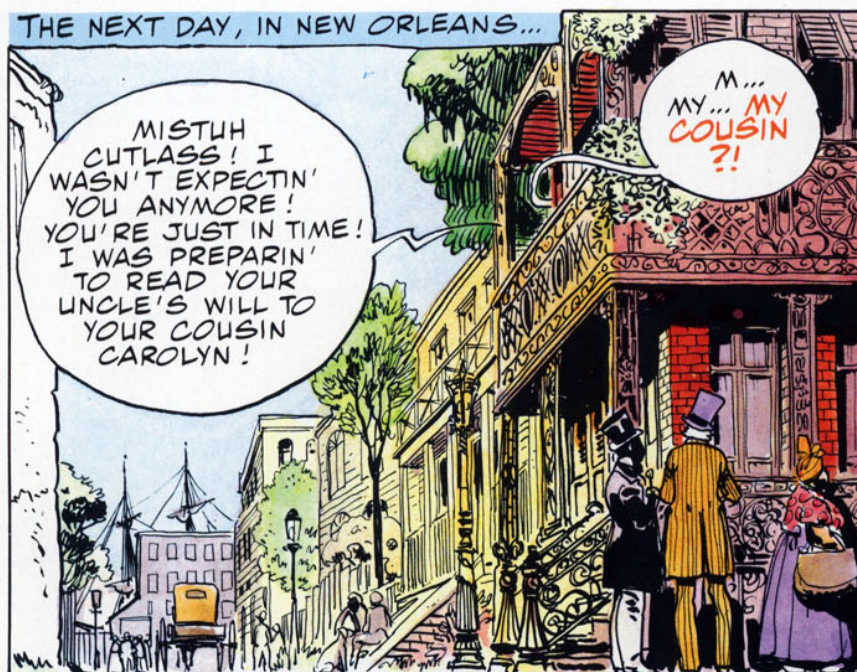
SOON, CUTLASS REACHES THE EDGE OF TOWN...

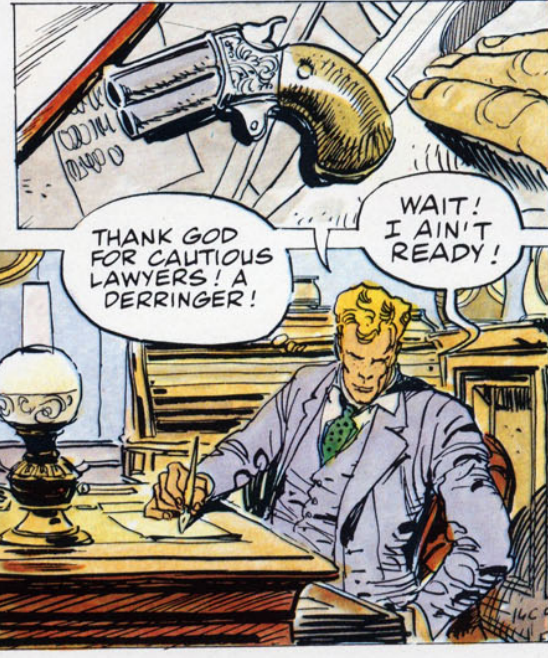
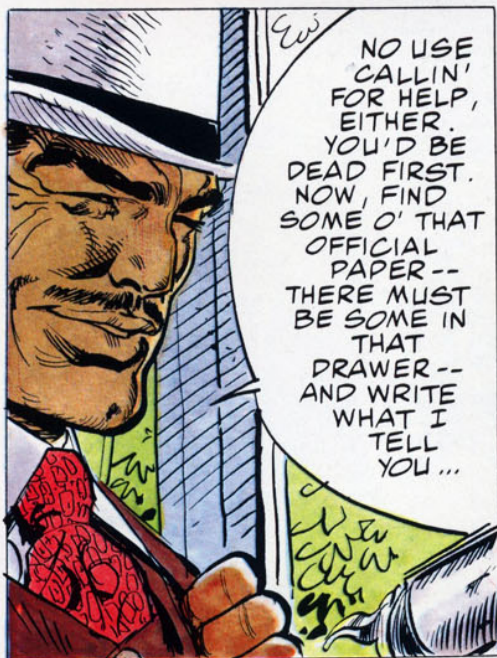
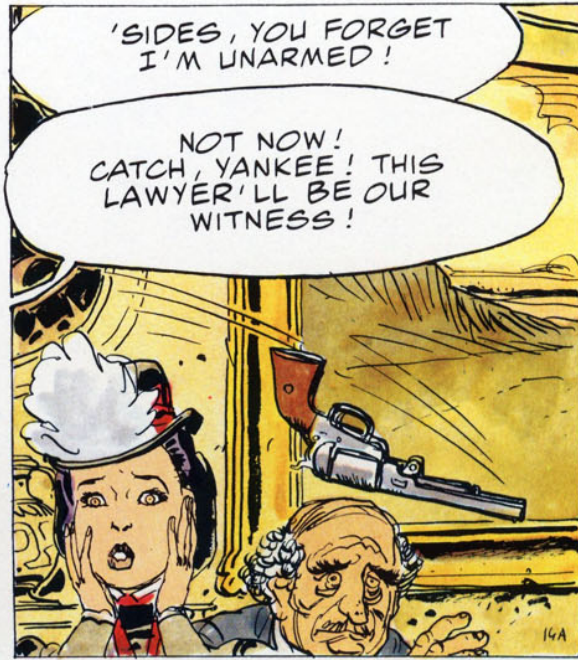
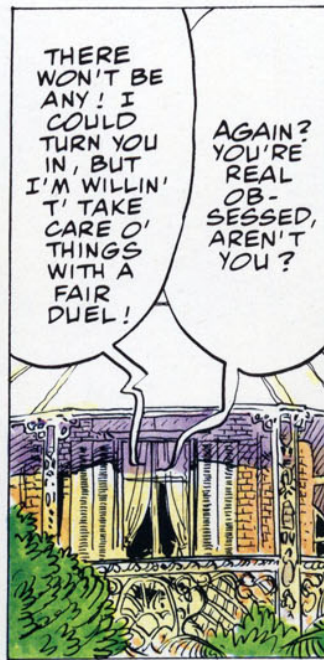


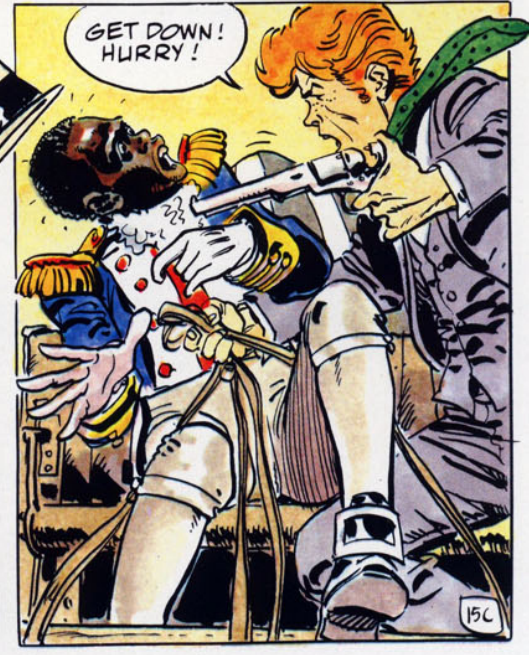
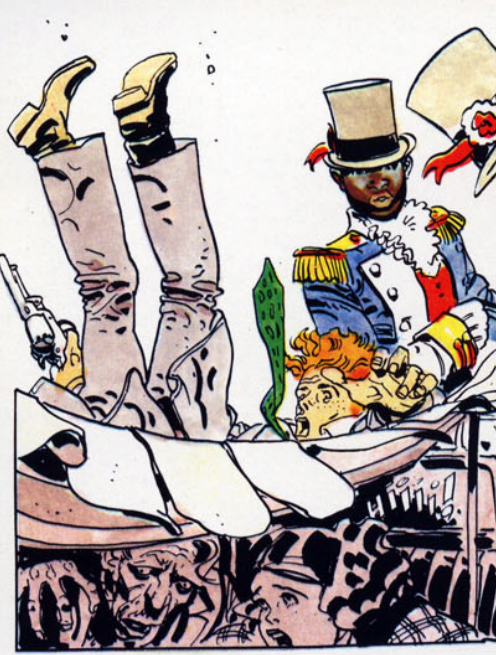
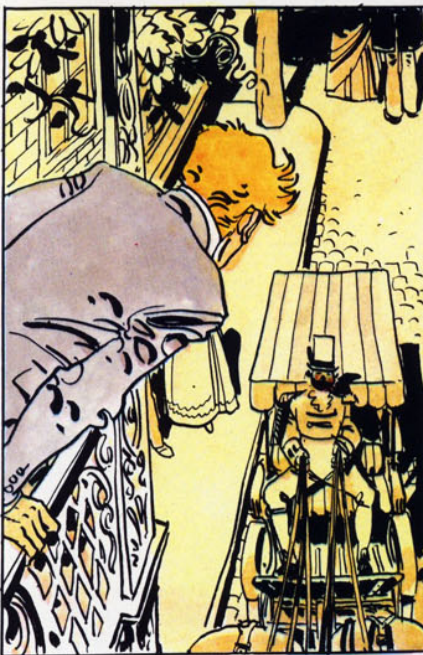
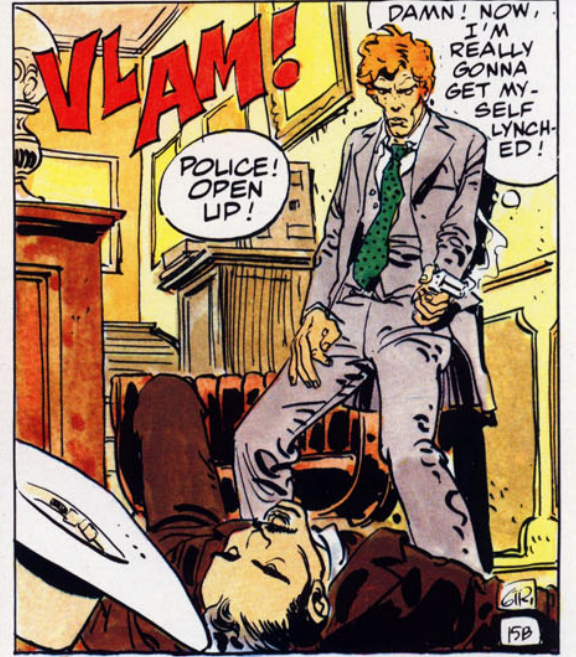
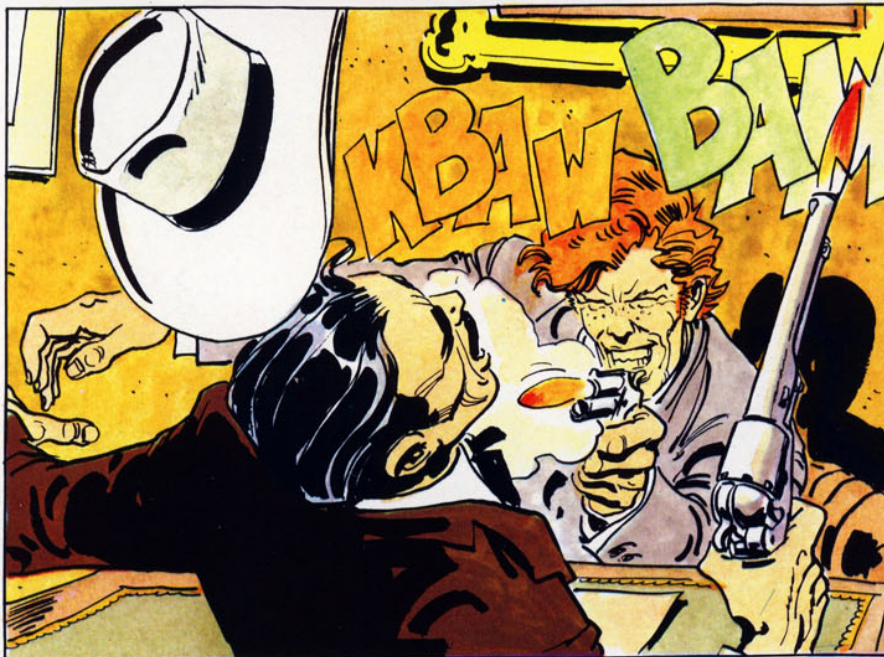
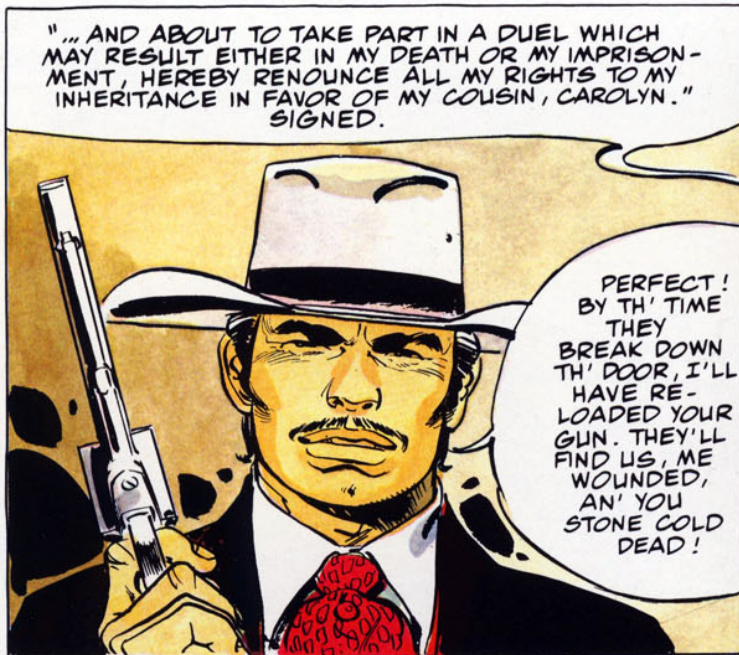
THAT NIGHT, ON A STOLEN BOAT...



THE NEXT DAY, IN NEW ORLEANS...



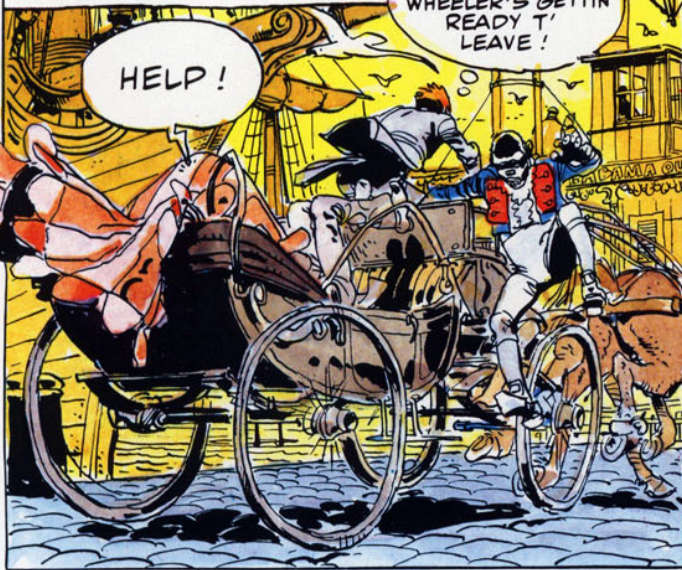




THE CARRIAGE HEADS TOWARDS
THE DOCKS AT BREAK-NECK
SPEED...

LOOKS LIKE
A PADDLE-
WHEELER'S GETTIN'
READY T'
LEAVE!

HELP!



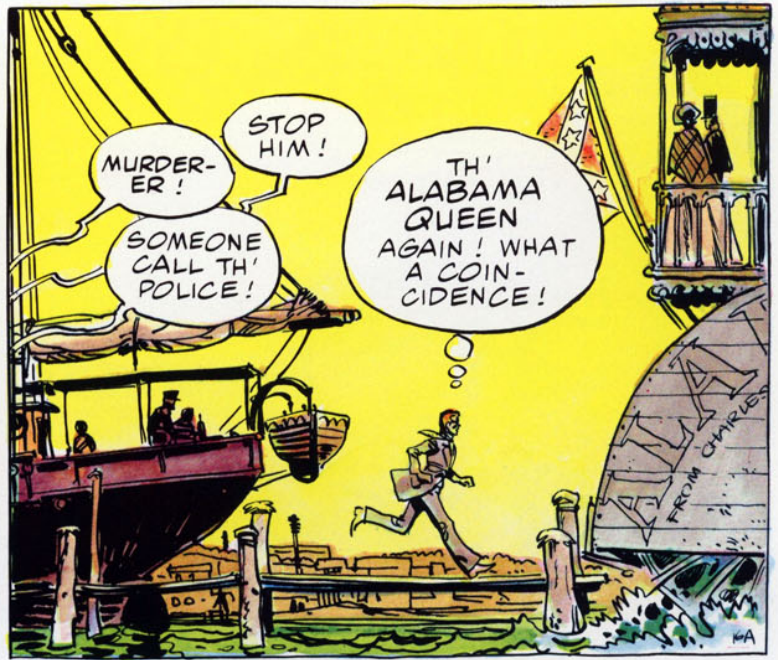
(1) BARCO-CASINO.

MURDER-
ER!

STOP
HIM!

SOMEONE
CALL TH'
POLICE!

TH'
ALABAMA
QUEEN
AGAIN! WHAT
A COIN-
CIDENCE!



PHEW!
MADE
IT!



NOW
FOR TH'
BRIDGE!

LEMME
THROUGH
!



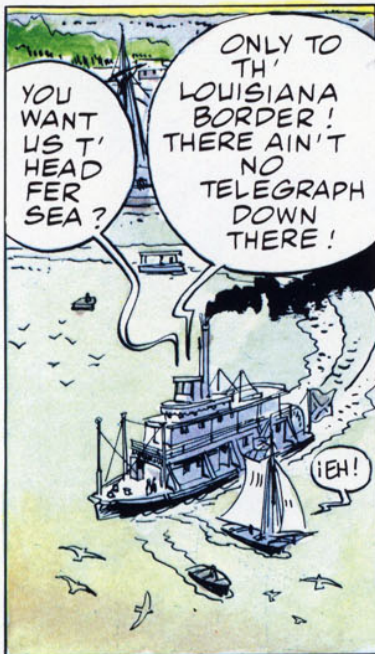
WHAT TH'... ? NOT YOU AGAIN!

FULL SPEED AHEAD,
SKIPPER! NOT UPSTREAM
EITHER, WE'RE GOIN'
DOWN! HURRY
UP, OR
YOU'RE
DEAD!



YOU
WANT
US T'
HEAD
FER
SEA?

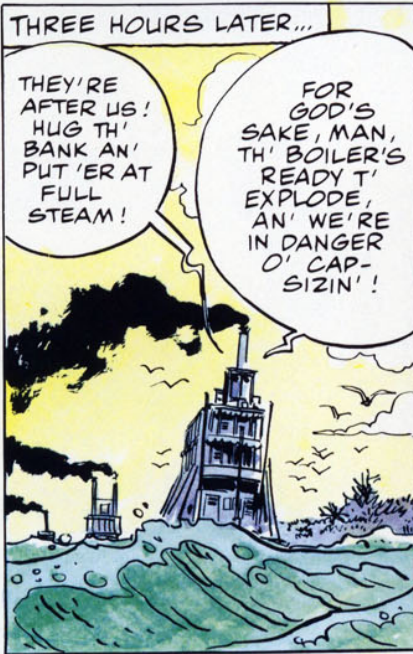
ONLY TO
TH'
LOUISIANA
BORDER!
THERE AIN'T
NO
TELEGRAPH
DOWN
THERE!



THREE HOURS LATER...

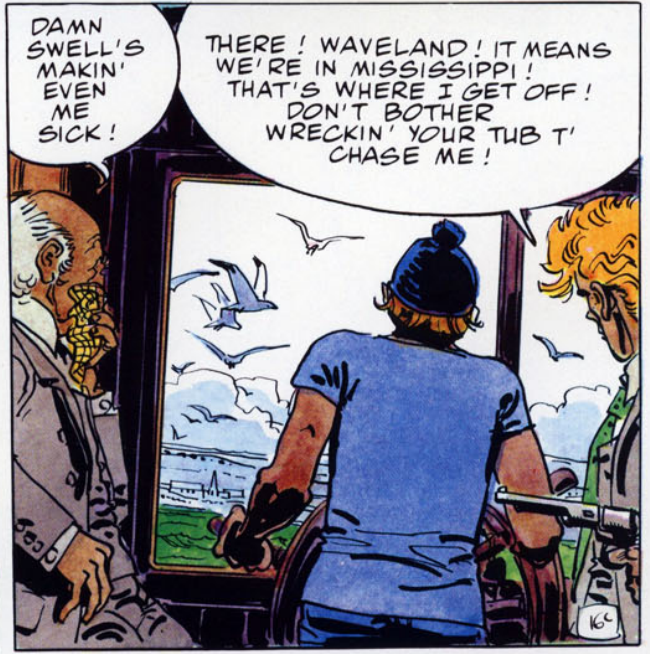
THEY'RE
AFTER US!
HUG TH'
BANK AN'
PUT 'ER AT
FULL
STEAM!

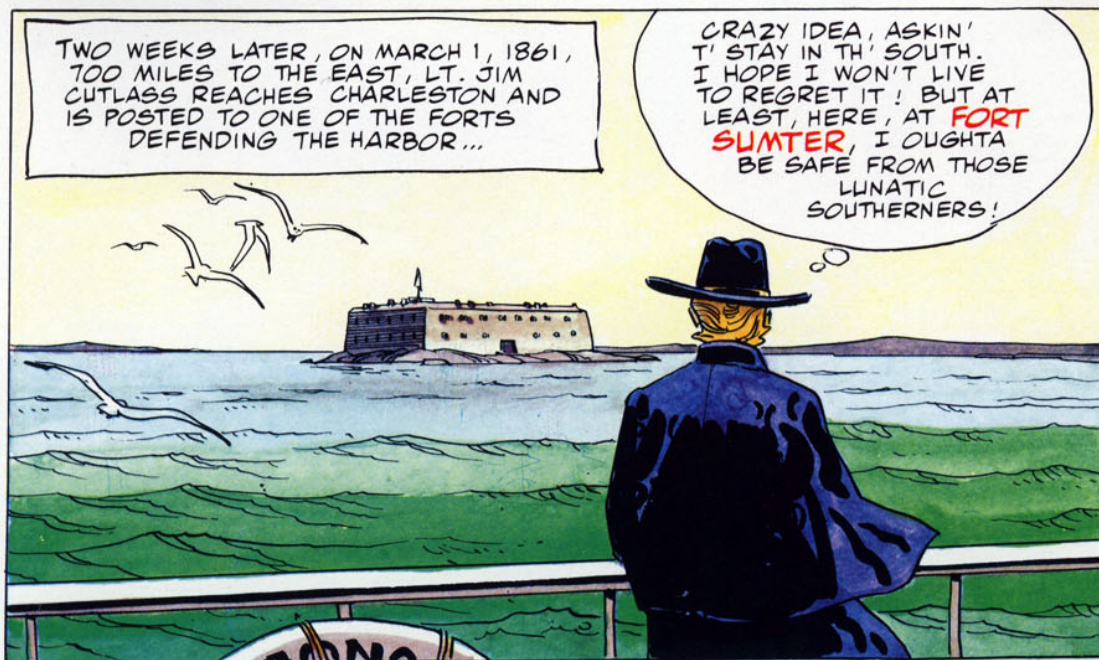
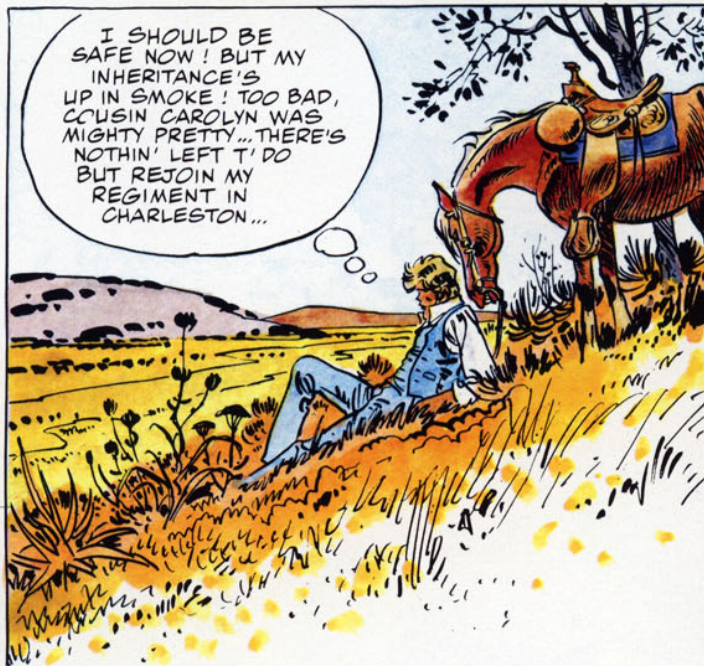
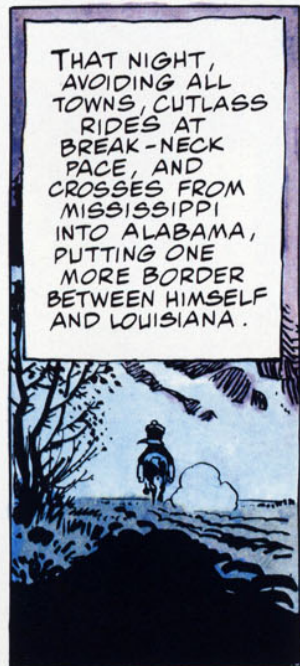
FOR
GOD'S
SAKE, MAN,
TH' BOILER'S
READY T'
EXPLODE,
AN' WE'RE
IN DANGER
O' CAP-
SIZIN'!



DAMN
SWELL'S
MAKIN'
EVEN
ME
SICK!

THERE! WAVELAND! IT MEANS
WE'RE IN MISSISSIPPI!
THAT'S WHERE I GET OFF!
DON'T BOTHER
WRECKIN' YOUR TUB T'
CHASE ME!





HOWEVER, A MONTH AND A HALF LATER, ON APRIL 12, 1861, THE CURTAIN WOULD RISE ON A TRAGEDY THAT WOULD LAST FOR FOUR YEARS AND COST THE LIVES OF OVER 600,000 PEOPLE...

WHEN THE CONFEDERATE CANNONS FIRED THE FIRST SHOTS OF THE CIVIL WAR ON FORT SUMTER!



FOR TWO DAYS, THE FORT WAS BATTERED BY A DELUGE OF FIRE AND LEAD. EVENTUALLY, ITS COMMANDER, MAJOR ANDERSON, HAVING SPENT ALL HIS AMMUNITION, WAS FORCED TO SURRENDER. HE WAS ALLOWED THE HONORS OF WAR, AND HE AND HIS 81 MEN WERE PERMITTED TO LEAVE ON A UNION SHIP...

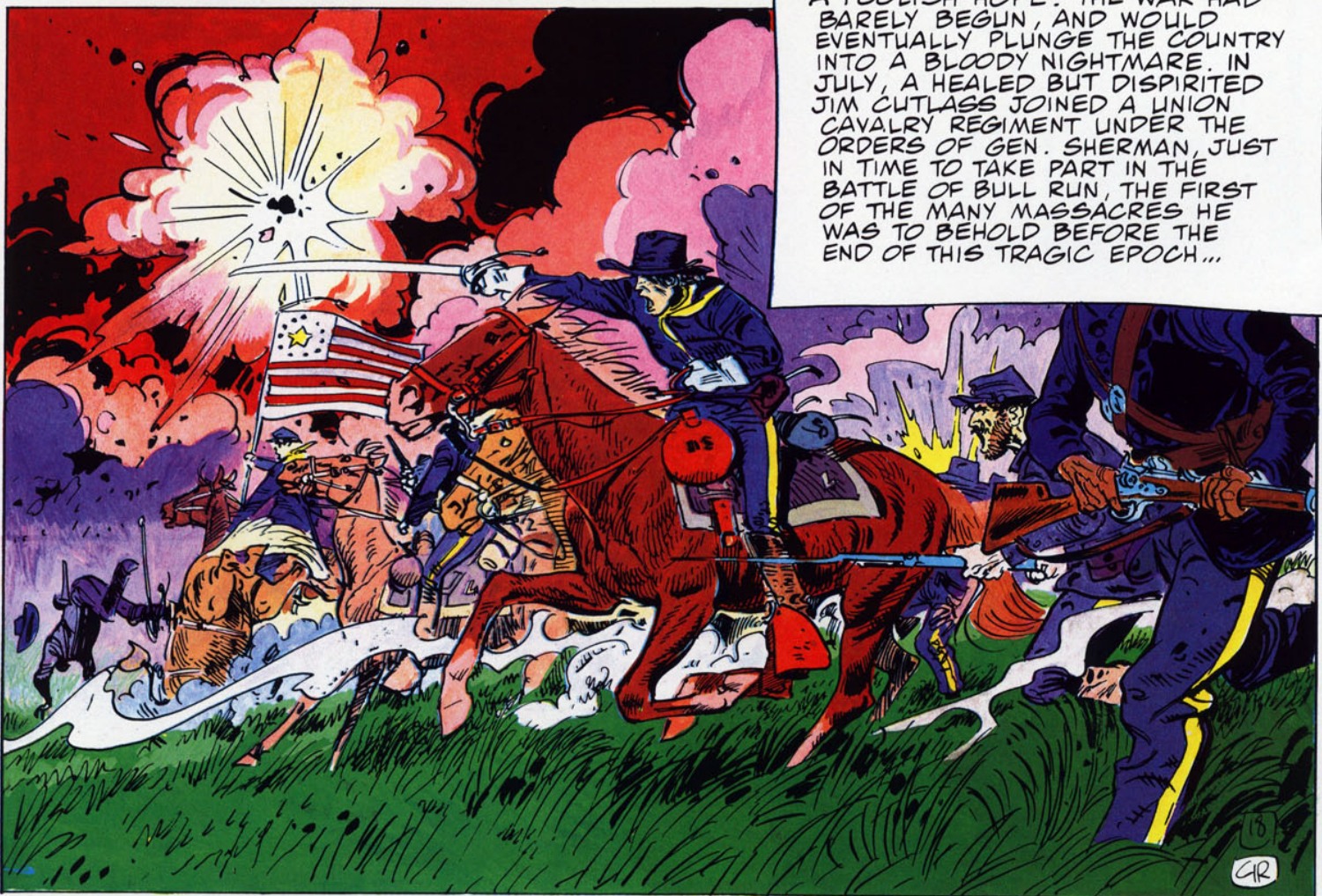


WITH THEM, THEY TOOK THE FIRST CASUALTY OF THE WAR...

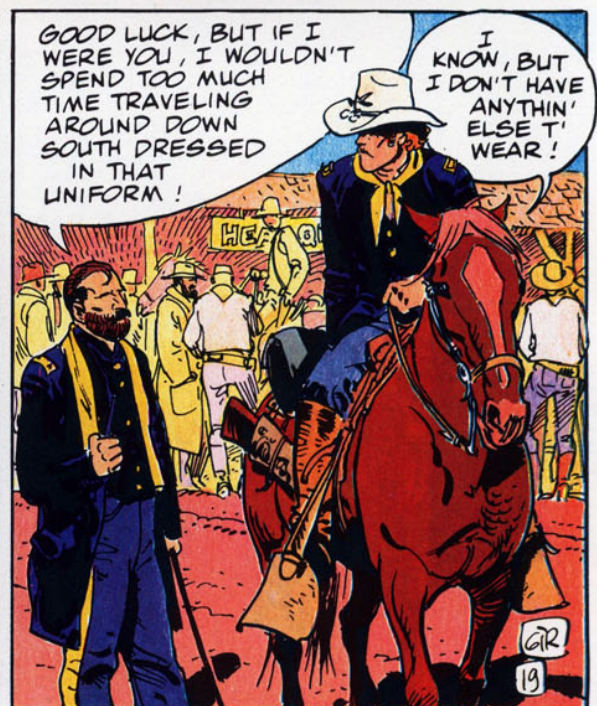
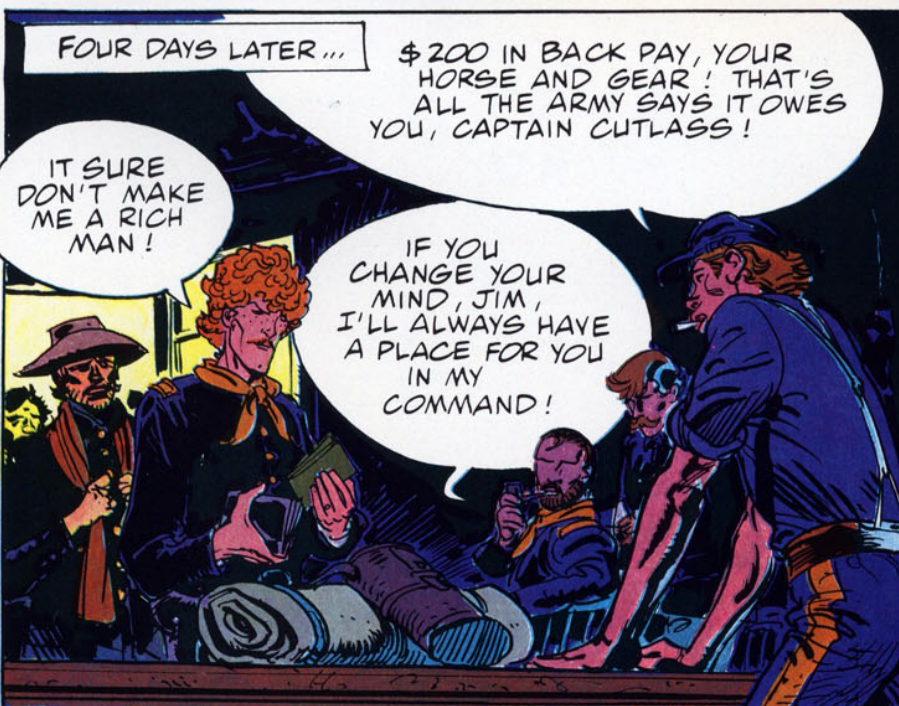
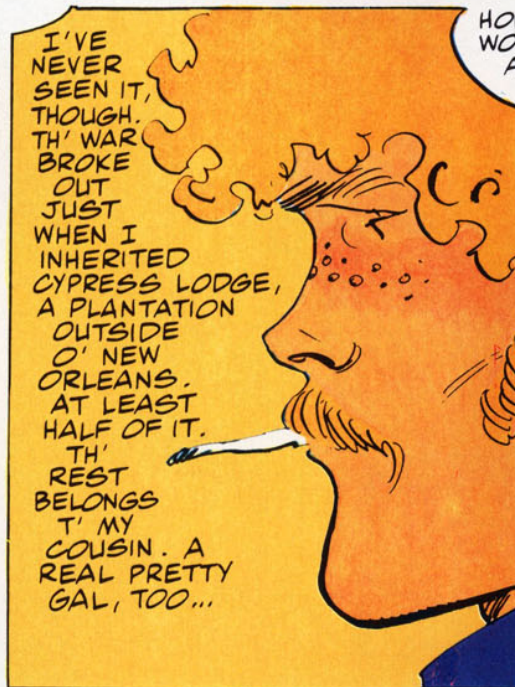
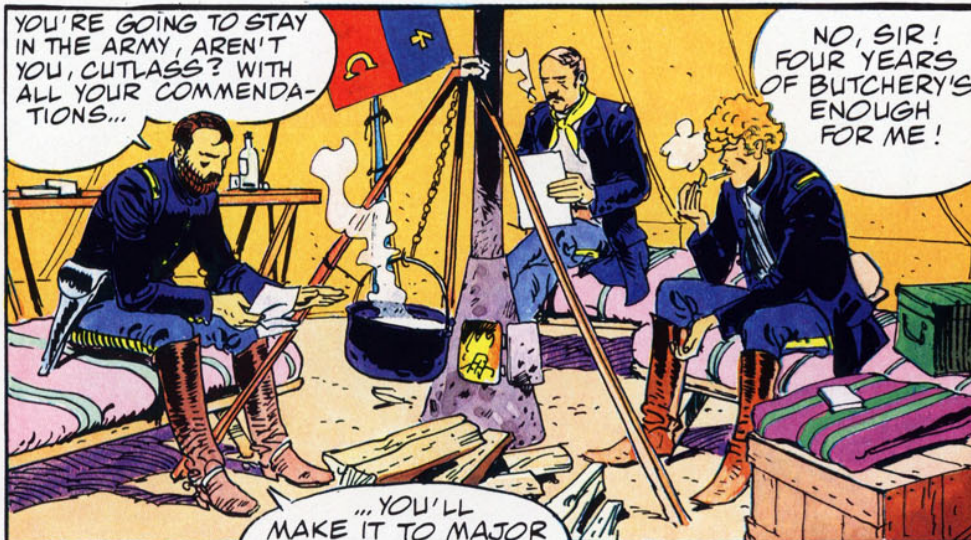
I'LL BE DAMNED IF THOSE MADMEN DIDN'T WIND UP GETTIN' ME AFTER ALL! BAH! AT LEAST, BY TH' TIME I'M UP AN' ABOUT, TH' WAR'LL BE OVER!

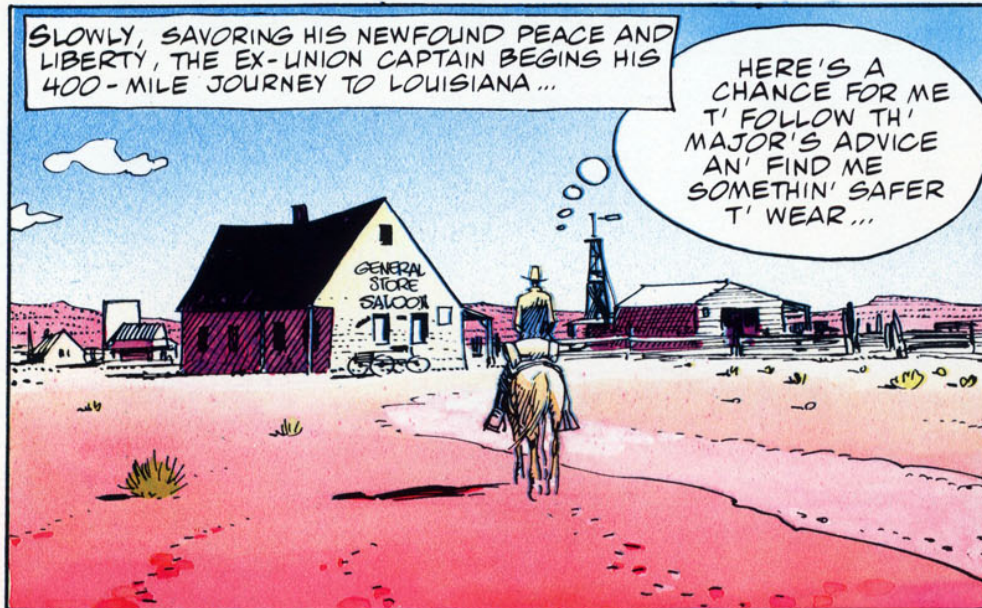


A FOOLISH HOPE! THE WAR HAD BARELY BEGUN, AND WOULD EVENTUALLY PLUNGE THE COUNTRY INTO A BLOODY NIGHTMARE. IN JULY, A HEALED BUT DISPIRITED JIM CUTLASS JOINED A UNION CAVALRY REGIMENT UNDER THE ORDERS OF GEN. SHERMAN, JUST IN TIME TO TAKE PART IN THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN, THE FIRST OF THE MANY MASSACRES HE WAS TO BEHOLD BEFORE THE END OF THIS TRAGIC EPOCH...



ON APRIL 9, 1865, LEE SURRENDERED TO GRANT. ON APRIL 26TH, JOHNSON SURRENDERED TO SHERMAN. FOR CUTLASS, IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A LONG, BORING PERIOD OF INACTIVITY...





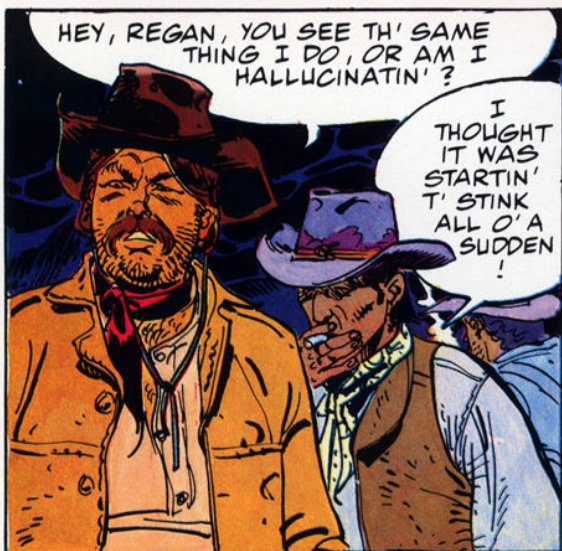
SLOWLY, SAVORING HIS NEWFOUND PEACE AND LIBERTY, THE EX-UNION CAPTAIN BEGINS HIS 400-MILE JOURNEY TO LOUISIANA...

HERE'S A CHANCE FOR ME T' FOLLOW TH' MAJOR'S ADVICE AN' FIND ME SOMETHIN' SAFER T' WEAR...



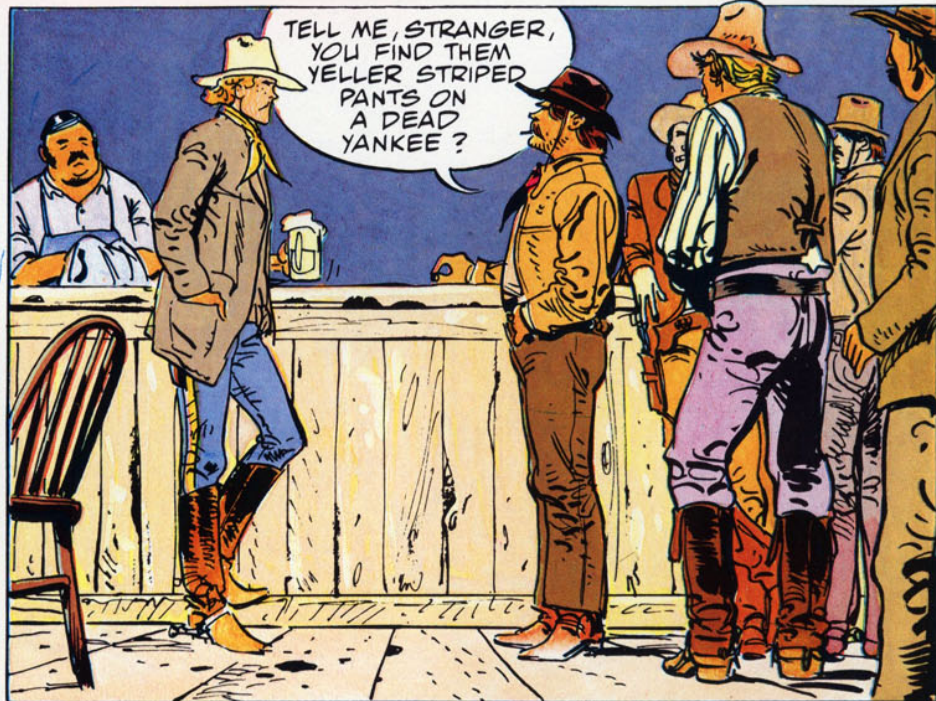
THAT'LL DO JUST FINE! YOU SURE YOU AIN'T GOT NO MORE PANTS?

SORRY, SUH, BUT WITH TH' WAR AN' ALL, WE'RE OUTTA SO MANY THINGS...

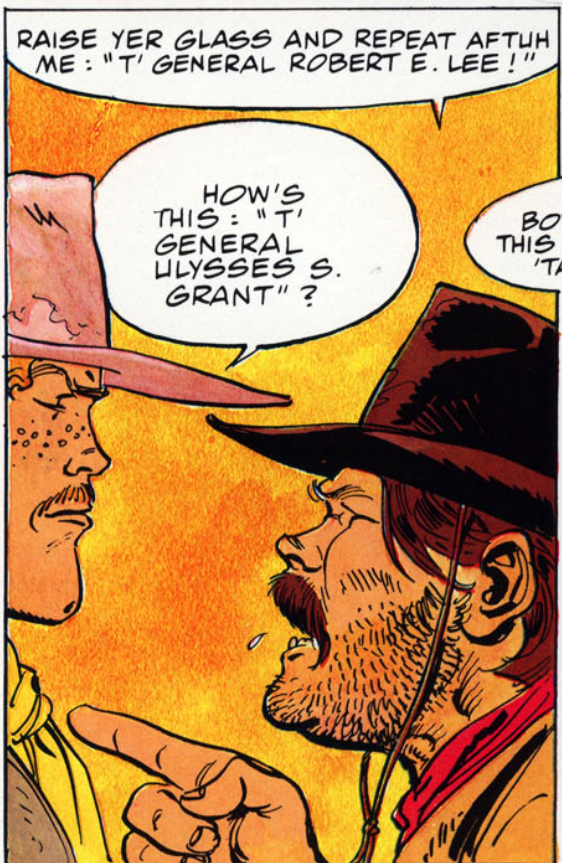


HEY, REGAN, YOU SEE TH' SAME THING I DO, OR AM I HALLUCINATIN'?

I THOUGHT IT WAS STARTIN' T' STINK ALL O' A SUDDEN!



TELL ME, STRANGER, YOU FIND THEM YELLER STRIPED PANTS ON A DEAD YANKEE?



RAISE YER GLASS AND REPEAT AFTUH ME: "T' GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE!"

HOW'S THIS: "T' GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT"?

CRIMINY, BOYS! LOOKS LIKE THIS FELLA AIN'T TOO 'TACHED T' 'IS NECK!

HELL!

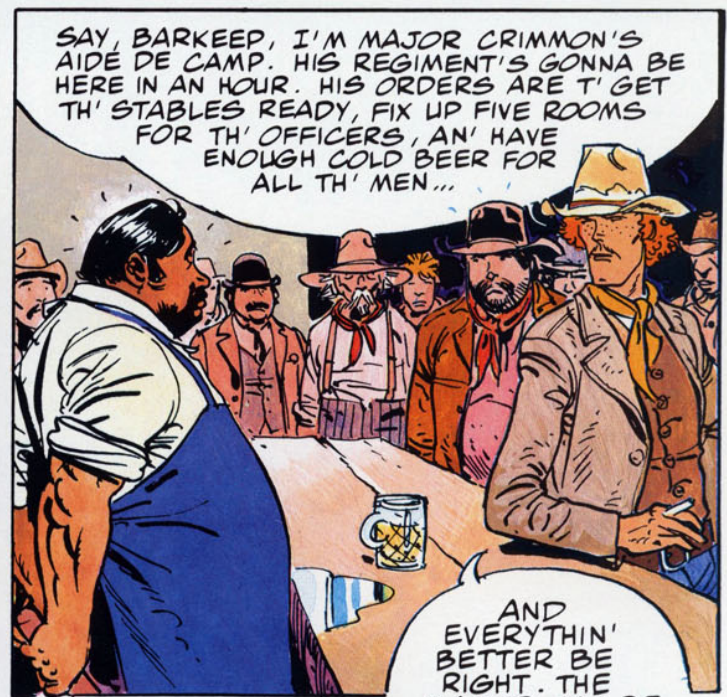
YOU SAID IT! GET 'IM, DON!





C'MON, Y'ALL DON'T WANNA GET RILED OVER SUCH A STUPID THING!

WHY, I'M GONNA... GONNA... GRRR...



SAY, BARKEEP, I'M MAJOR CRIMMON'S AIDE DE CAMP. HIS REGIMENT'S GONNA BE HERE IN AN HOUR. HIS ORDERS ARE T' GET TH' STABLES READY, FIX UP FIVE ROOMS FOR TH' OFFICERS, AN' HAVE ENOUGH COLD BEER FOR ALL TH' MEN...

AND EVERYTHIN' BETTER BE RIGHT. THE MAJOR CAN BE REAL BAD-TEMPERED!



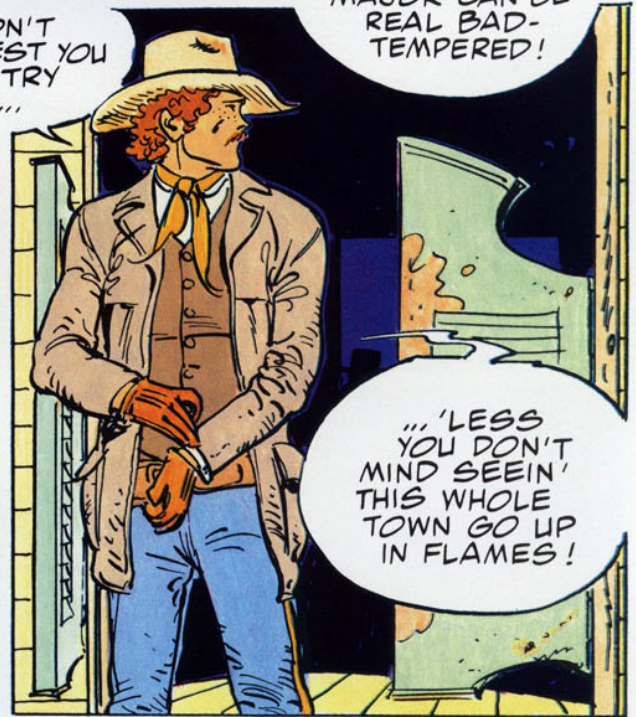
HE'S BLUFFIN'! LET'S TAR AN' FEATHER 'IM AT LEAST!

HOLD ON A MINUTE, BOYS! IF TH' FELLA'S TELLIN' TH' TRUTH, I DON'T WANT MY SALOON...

I DON'T SUGGEST YOU BOYS TRY IT...

WHY DON'T WE HOLD ONTO 'IM 'TIL TH' TROOPS GET HERE?

YOU COWARD!



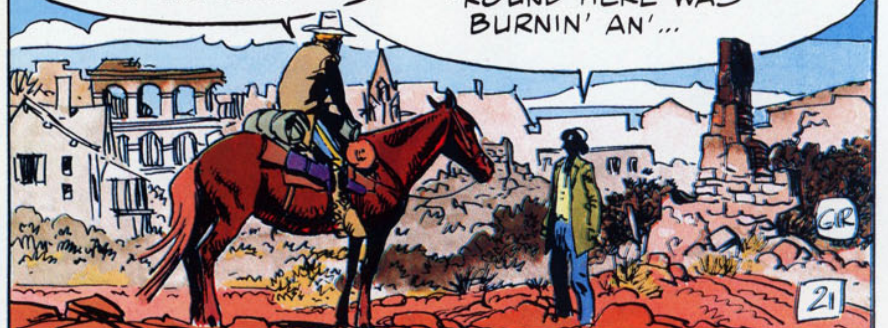
... 'LESS YOU DON'T MIND SEEIN' THIS WHOLE TOWN GO UP IN FLAMES!



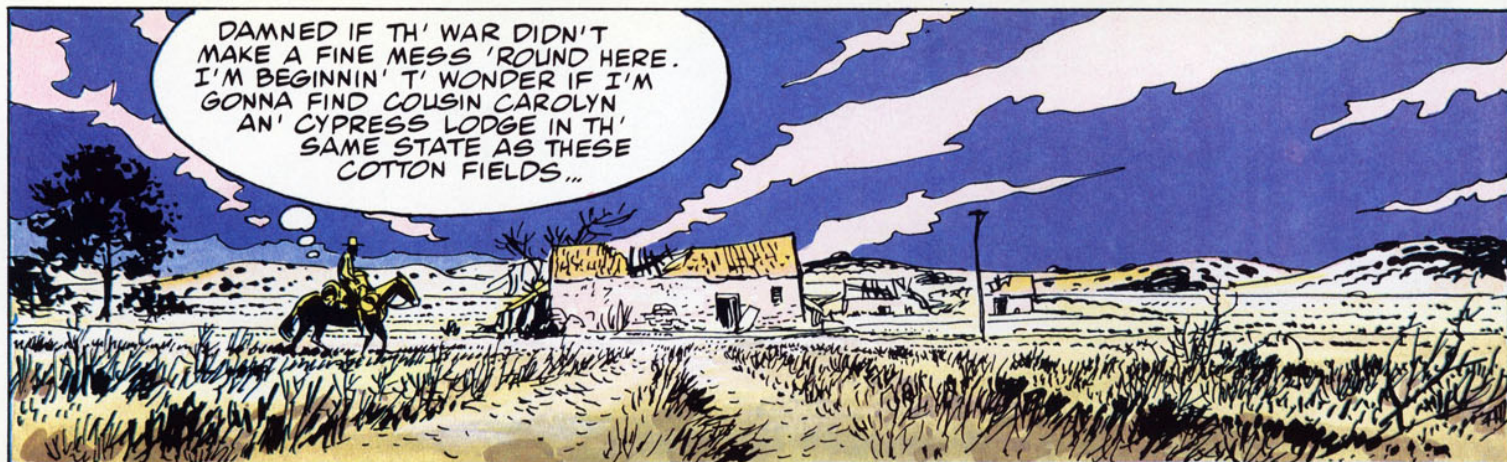
IT'S GONNA BE MIGHTY INTERESTIN' IF IT'S LIKE THAT ALL TH' WAY T' NEW ORLEANS!

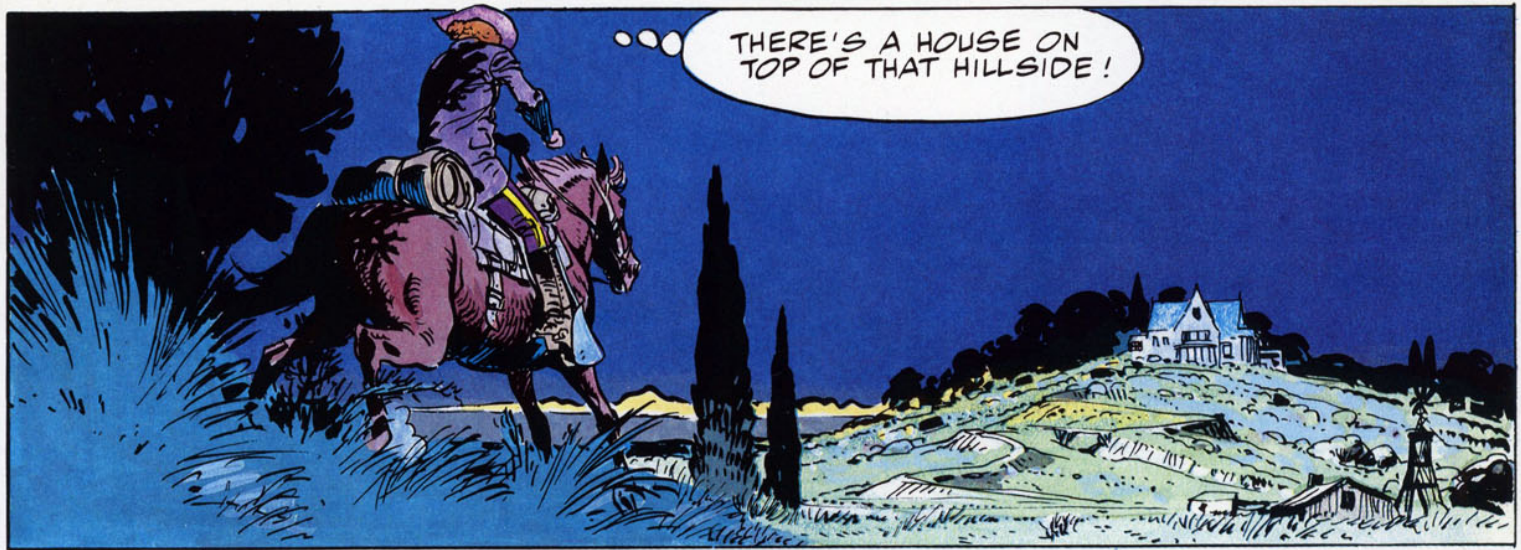
SO, AVOIDING THE TOWNS, WHERE THE REMAINS OF HIS UNION UNIFORM MIGHT ATTRACT UNPLEASANT ATTENTION, CUTLASS FINALLY ARRIVES IN NEW ORLEANS...

CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I MIGHT FIND MR. BEAUREGARD, TH' LAWYER?



HE'S DEAD, MISTAH! HIM AN' HIS WHOLE FAMILY WAS KILLED THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN TH' UNION TOOK TH' CITY. IT SURE WAS A SIGHT! EVERYTHIN' 'ROUND HERE WAS BURNIN' AN'...





THERE'S A HOUSE ON TOP OF THAT HILLSIDE!



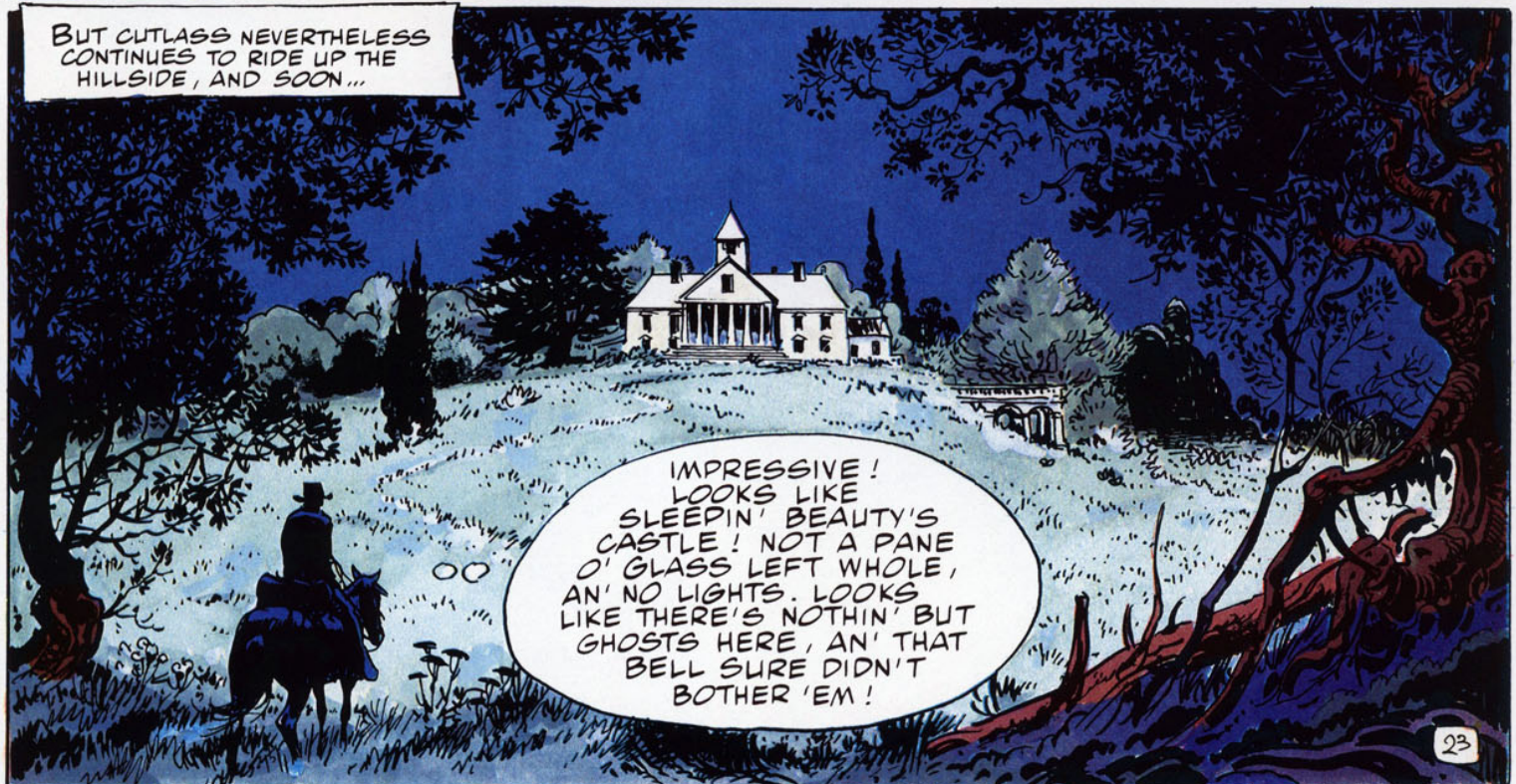
LOOKS LIKE THE FIELDS WERE BURNED AN' THEN LEFT FALLOW!

AN' WITHOUT ANY SLAVES T' PLANT AN' HARVEST, IT'S GONNA BE A HELLUVA JOB T' GET STARTED!

DONG
DONG
DONG



A BELL! WELL HIDDEN, TOO! I MUST'VE SET OFF SOME KIND O' ALARM BY CROSSIN TH' BRIDGE! JUST TH' KIND O' NOISE T' WAKE TH' DEAD!



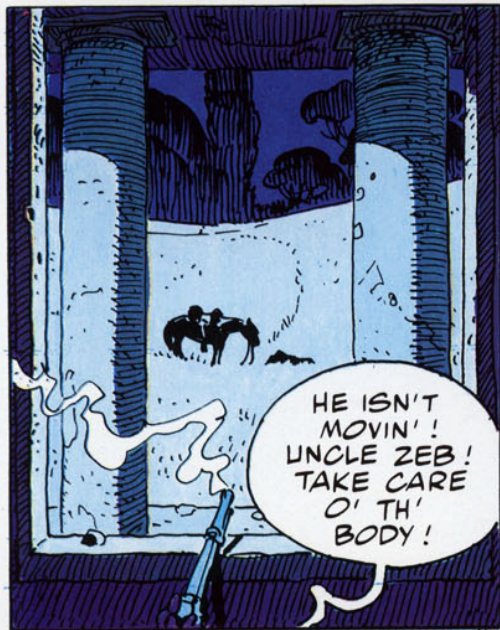
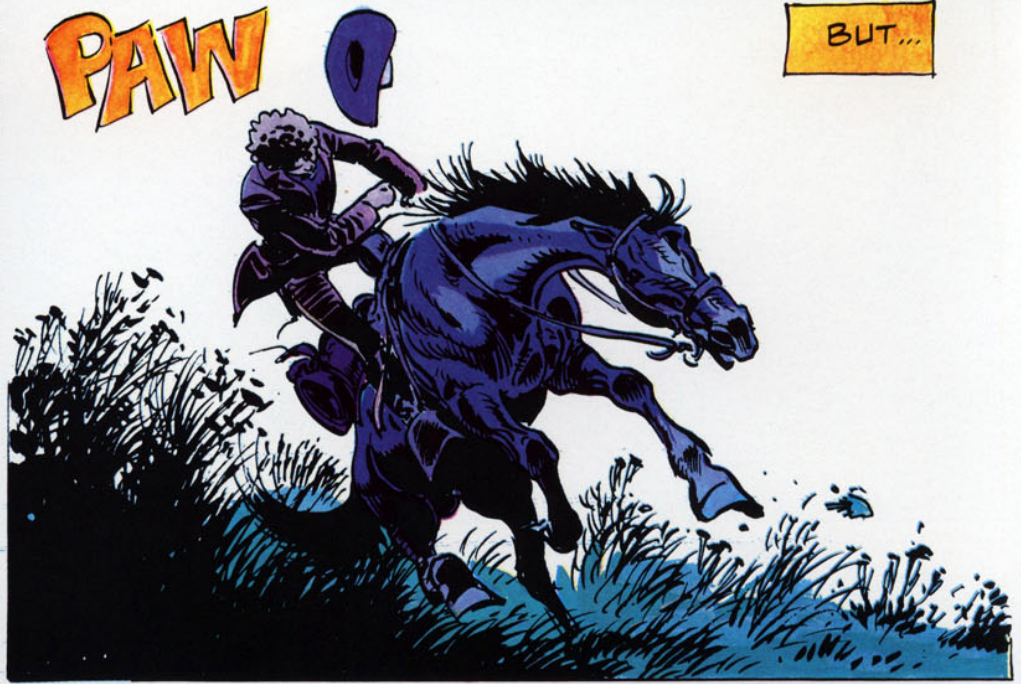
BUT CUTLASS NEVERTHELESS CONTINUES TO RIDE UP THE HILLSIDE, AND SOON...

IMPRESSIVE! LOOKS LIKE SLEEPIN' BEAUTY'S CASTLE! NOT A PANE O' GLASS LEFT WHOLE, AN' NO LIGHTS. LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NOTHIN' BUT GHOSTS HERE, AN' THAT BELL SURE DIDN'T BOTHER 'EM!

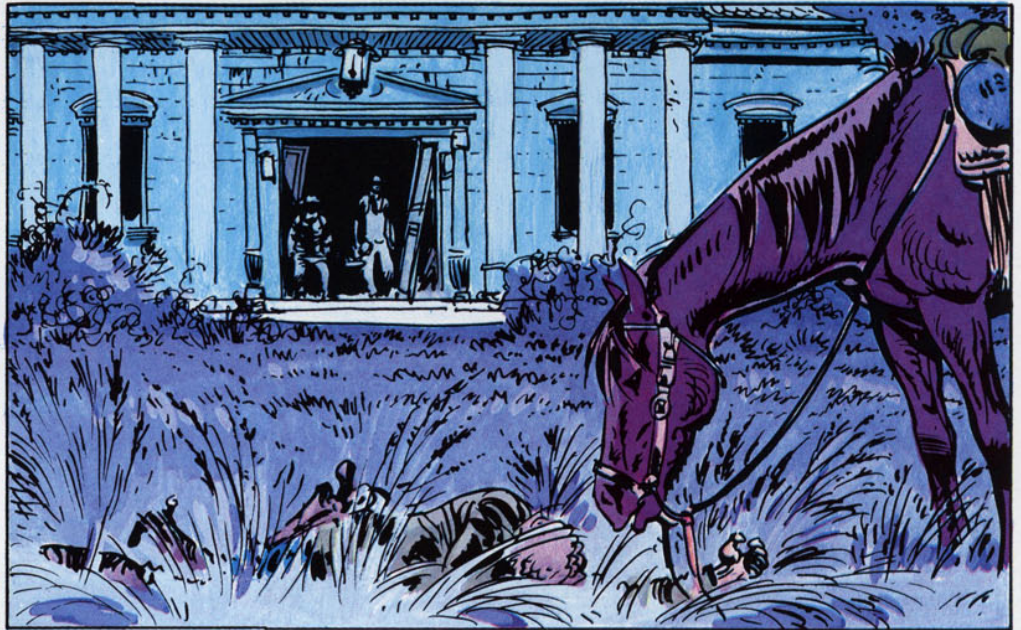


PAW

BUT...



HE ISN'T
MOVIN'!
UNCLE ZEB!
TAKE CARE
O' TH'
BODY!



I'VE GOT A BAD FEELIN'
'BOUT THIS!

SO DO I, JEREMIAH!
THIS'LL BE TH'
THIRTEENTH. A REAL
UNLUCKY
NUMBER!



YOU GOT
THAT
RIGHT, OL'
MAN! DON'T
MOVE AN'
DON'T MAKE
ANY
NOISE!

LORD A'
MIGHTY! THA'S
TH' FIRST TIME
MISSY EVER
DONE
MISSED
ONE!

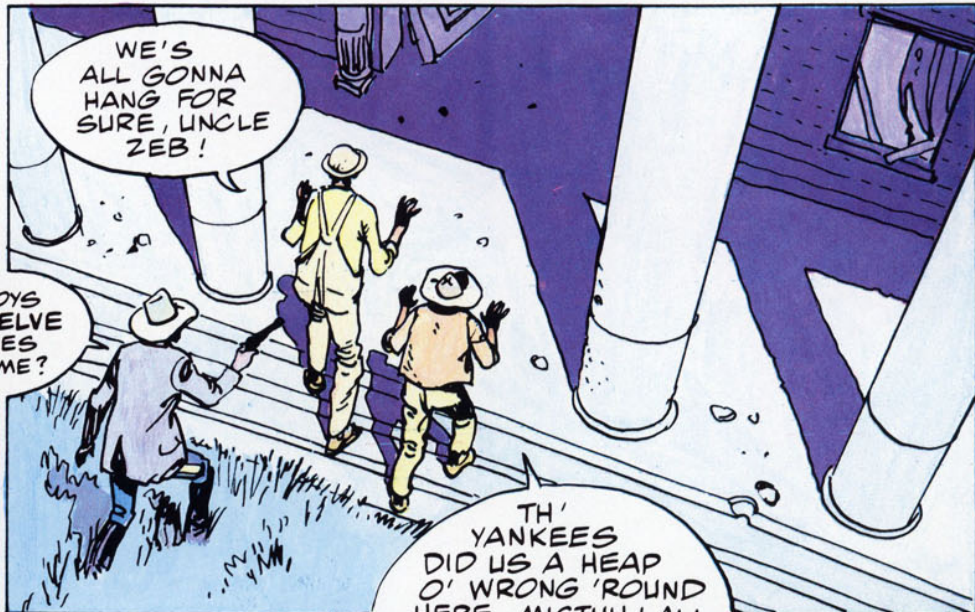
OOOH!

MISSY WHO? CAROLYN?
LOOKS LIKE I'VE WOKE UP
SLEEPIN' BEAUTY AFTER ALL!
MOVE! I'VE GOT A THING
OR TWO T' SAY T' THIS YANKEE
KILLER!



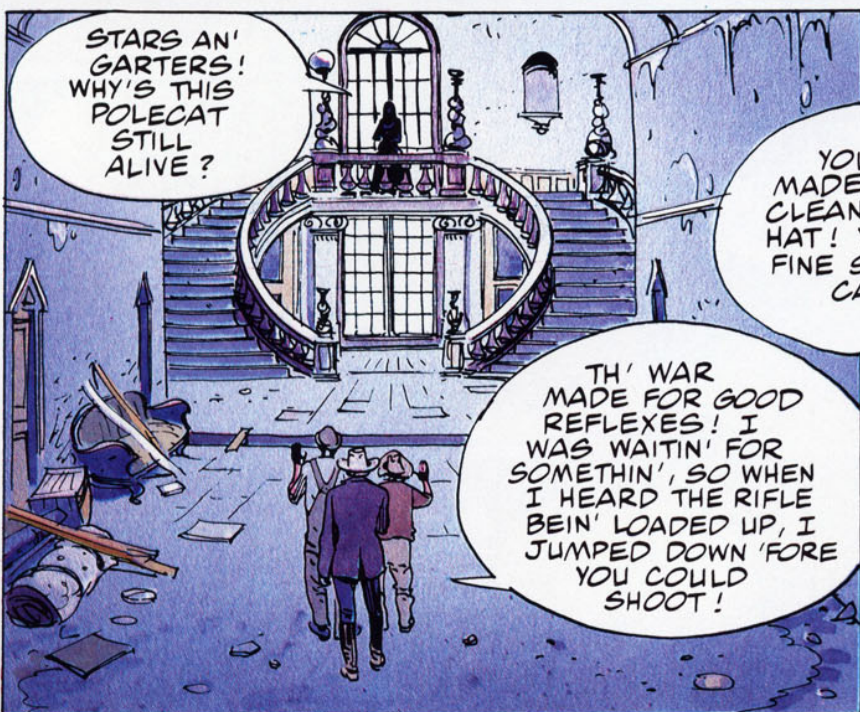
YOU BOYS
SHOT TWELVE
YANKEES
'FORE ME?

WE'S
ALL GONNA
HANG FOR
SURE, UNCLE
ZEB!



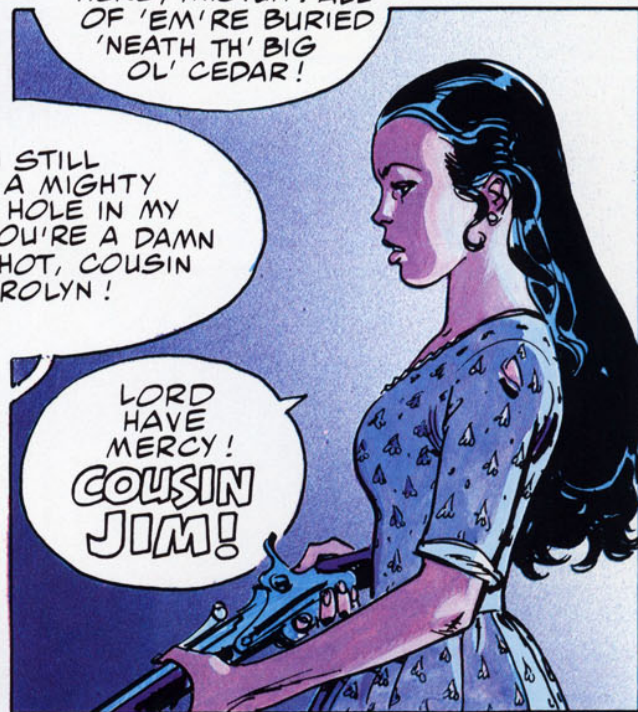
TH'
YANKEES
DID US A HEAP
O' WRONG 'ROUND
HERE, MISTUH! ALL
OF 'EM'RE BURIED
'NEATH TH' BIG
OL' CEDAR!

STARS AN'
GARTERS!
WHY'S THIS
POLECAT
STILL
ALIVE?



YOU STILL
MADE A MIGHTY
CLEAN HOLE IN MY
HAT! YOU'RE A DAMN
FINE SHOT, COUSIN
CAROLYN!

LORD
HAVE
MERCY!
**COUSIN
JIM!**



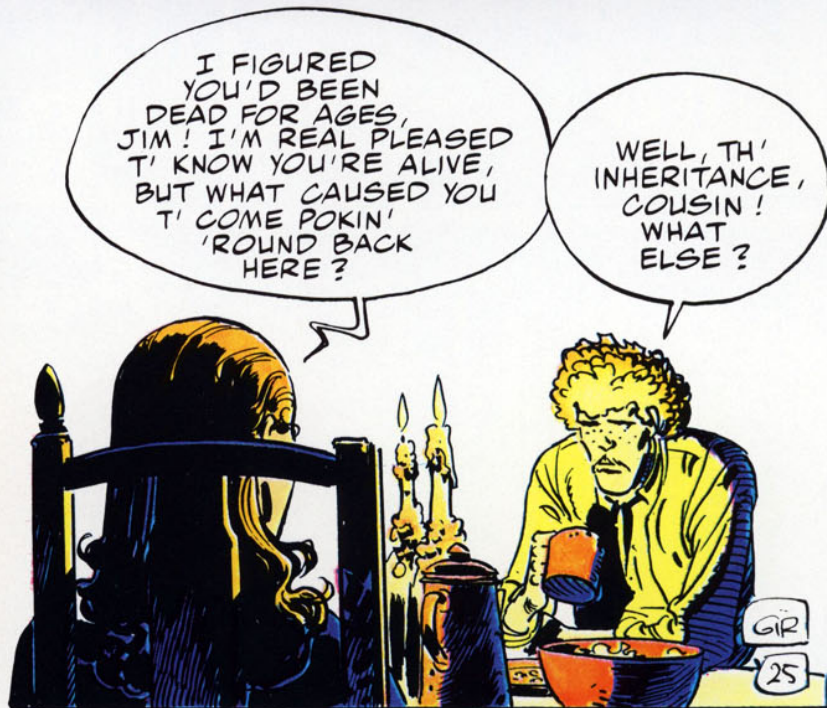
SORRY
'BOUT TH' MENU,
JIM, BUT WE'VE
BEEN LIVIN' ON TH' LI'L
BIT JERIMIAH AN' ZEB'S
BEEN ABLE T'
GROW...

COMPARED
T' TH' SLOP IN TH'
ARMY, THIS
MEAL'S A REAL
FEAST!



I FIGURED
YOU'D BEEN
DEAD FOR AGES,
JIM! I'M REAL PLEASED
T' KNOW YOU'RE ALIVE,
BUT WHAT CAUSED YOU
T' COME POKIN'
'ROUND BACK
HERE?

WELL, TH'
INHERITANCE,
COUSIN!
WHAT
ELSE?

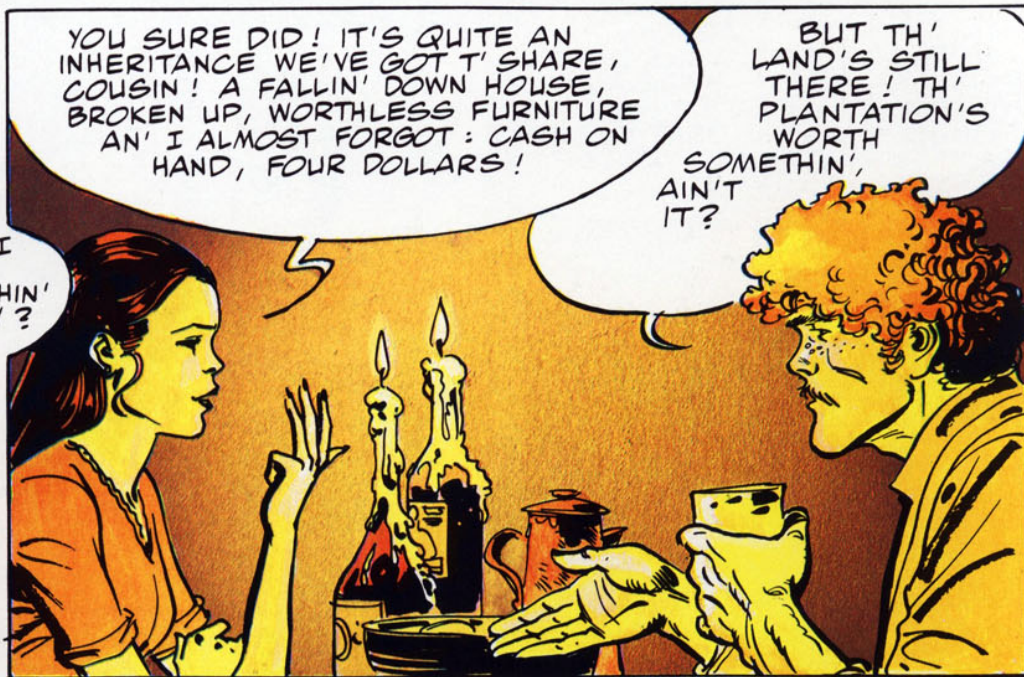




HA! HA!
HA! HA!
THAT'S A
REAL
GOOD
ONE!

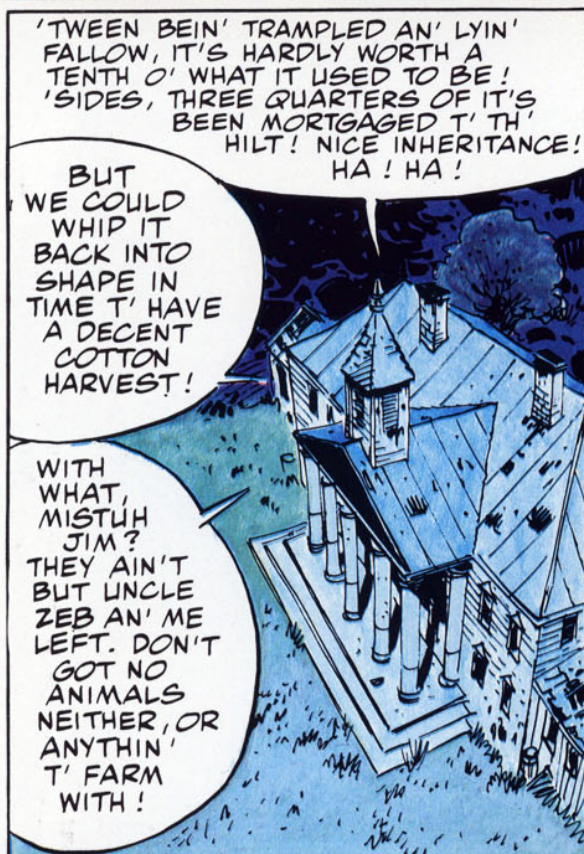
AIN'T THAT
TH' TRUTH,
MISS
CAROLYN!

DID I
SAY
SOMETHIN'
FUNNY?



YOU SURE DID! IT'S QUITE AN
INHERITANCE WE'VE GOT T' SHARE,
COUSIN! A FALLIN' DOWN HOUSE,
BROKEN UP, WORTHLESS FURNITURE
AN' I ALMOST FORGOT: CASH ON
HAND, FOUR DOLLARS!

BUT TH'
LAND'S STILL
THERE! TH'
PLANTATION'S
WORTH
SOMETHIN',
AIN'T
IT?



'TWEEN BEIN' TRAMPLED AN' LYIN'
FALLOW, IT'S HARDLY WORTH A
TENTH O' WHAT IT USED TO BE!
'SIDES, THREE QUARTERS OF IT'S
BEEN MORTGAGED T' TH'
HILT! NICE INHERITANCE!
HA! HA!

BUT
WE COULD
WHIP IT
BACK INTO
SHAPE IN
TIME T' HAVE
A DECENT
COTTON
HARVEST!

WITH
WHAT,
MISTUH
JIM?
THEY AIN'T
BUT UNCLE
ZEB AN' ME
LEFT. DON'T
GOT NO
ANIMALS
NEITHER, OR
ANYTHIN'
T' FARM
WITH!

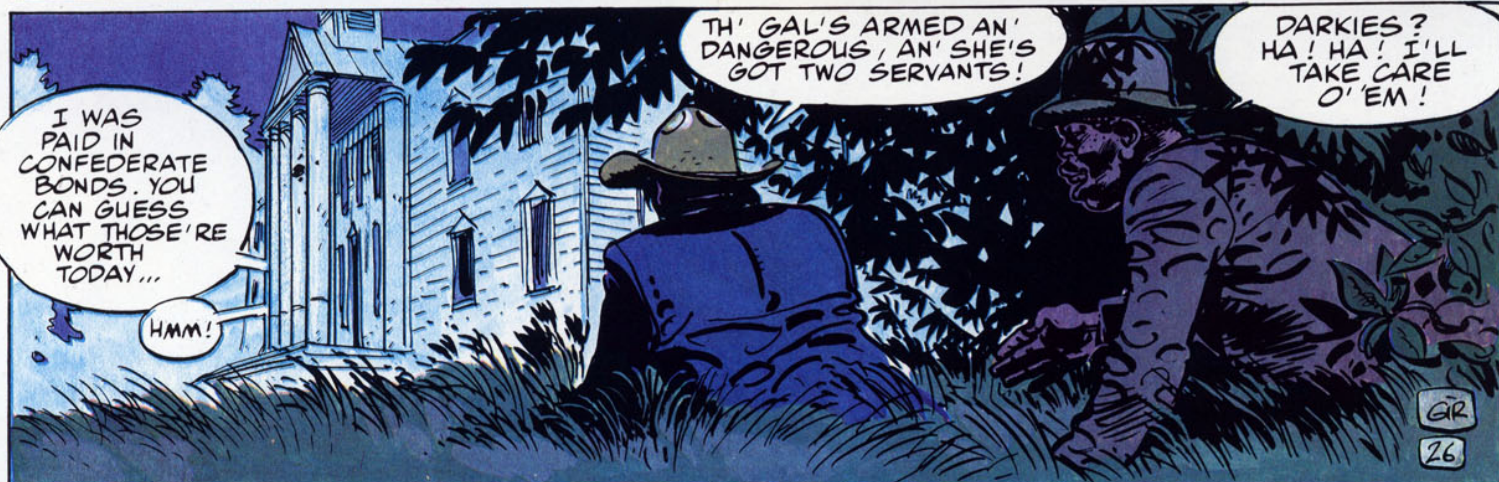


HOW'D
CYPRESS
LODGE
FALL INTO
SUCH A
STATE?

IT'S THANKS T'
YOUR YANKEE
FRIENDS, JIM
CUTLASS! FROM
TH' BEGINNIN' O' TH'
WAR, WE WERE LEFT
WITH A PILE O'
COTTON WE COULDN'T
SELL, 'CAUSE O'
TH' BLOCKADE. IT
ROTTED ON TH' DOCKS,
A MIGHTY BIG LOSS
FOR US
PLANTERS!



THEN, TH'
TAXES DOUBLED,
AN' MORE, 'CAUSE
O' OUR WAR EFFORT.
LATER, EVER 'THIN'
WE GREW WAS TAKEN
BY TH' ARMY, AN'
WHATEVER THEY
DIDN'T TAKE, I GAVE,
WILLINGLY! THAT WAS
MY WAY O' FIGHTIN',
SINCE I COULDN'T
GO AN' SIGN
UP!



I WAS
PAID IN
CONFEDERATE
BONDS. YOU
CAN GUESS
WHAT THOSE'RE
WORTH
TODAY...

HMM!

TH' GAL'S ARMED AN'
DANGEROUS, AN' SHE'S
GOT TWO SERVANTS!

DARKIES?
HA! HA! I'LL
TAKE CARE
O' EM!

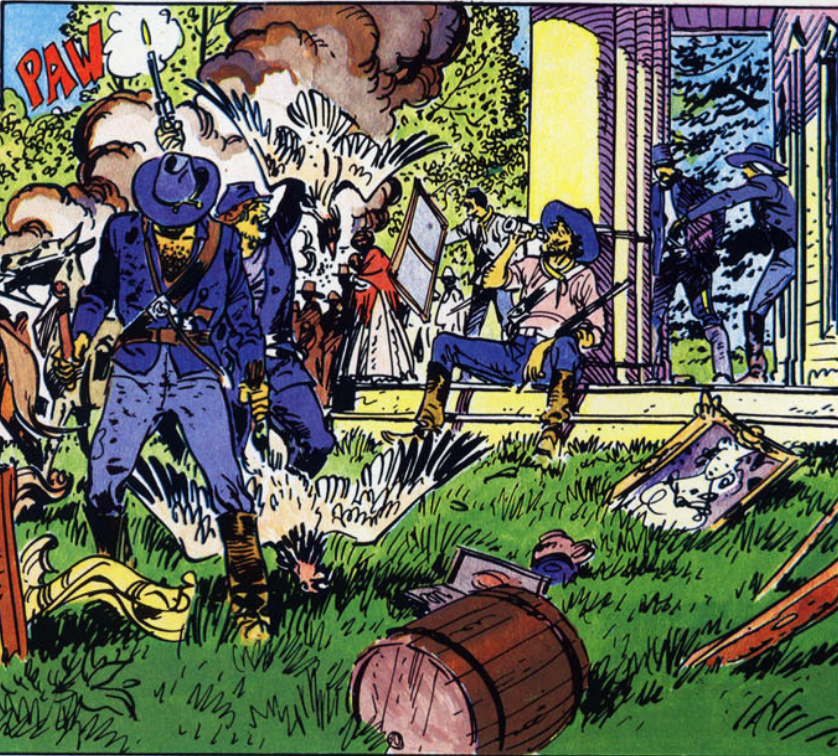
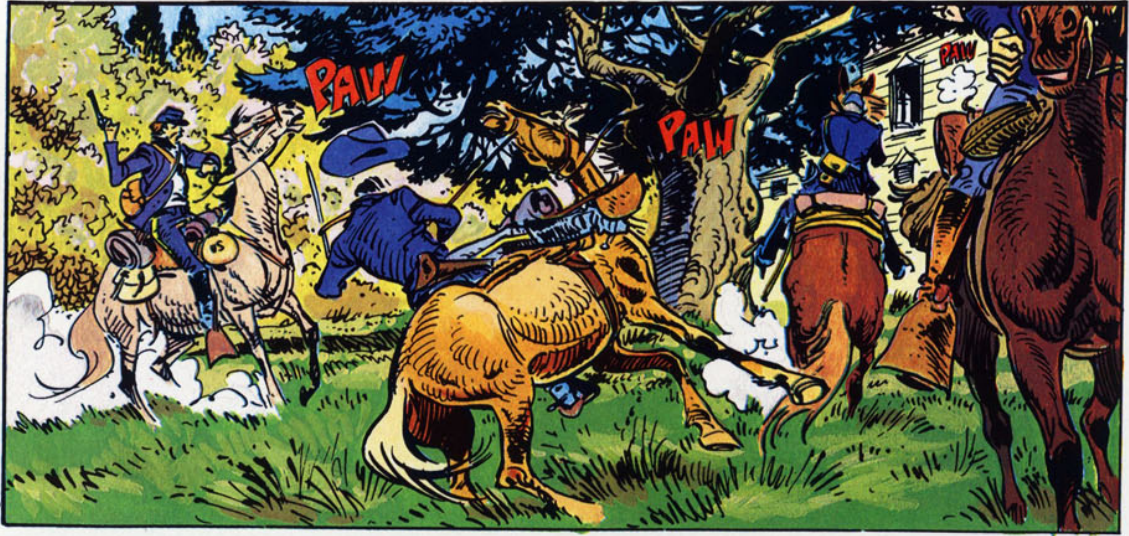
BUT MOSTLY, IT WAS TH' YANKEES! JUST 'FORE THEY TOOK NEW ORLEANS, A COLUMN O' RAIDERS(*) ATTACKED US...



(*) ONE OF THE TACTICS EMPLOYED BY THE UNION WAS TO DISPATCH POWERFULLY-ARMED CAVALRY COLUMNS DEEP BEHIND CONFEDERATE LINES IN ORDER TO CREATE THE MAXIMUM DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.

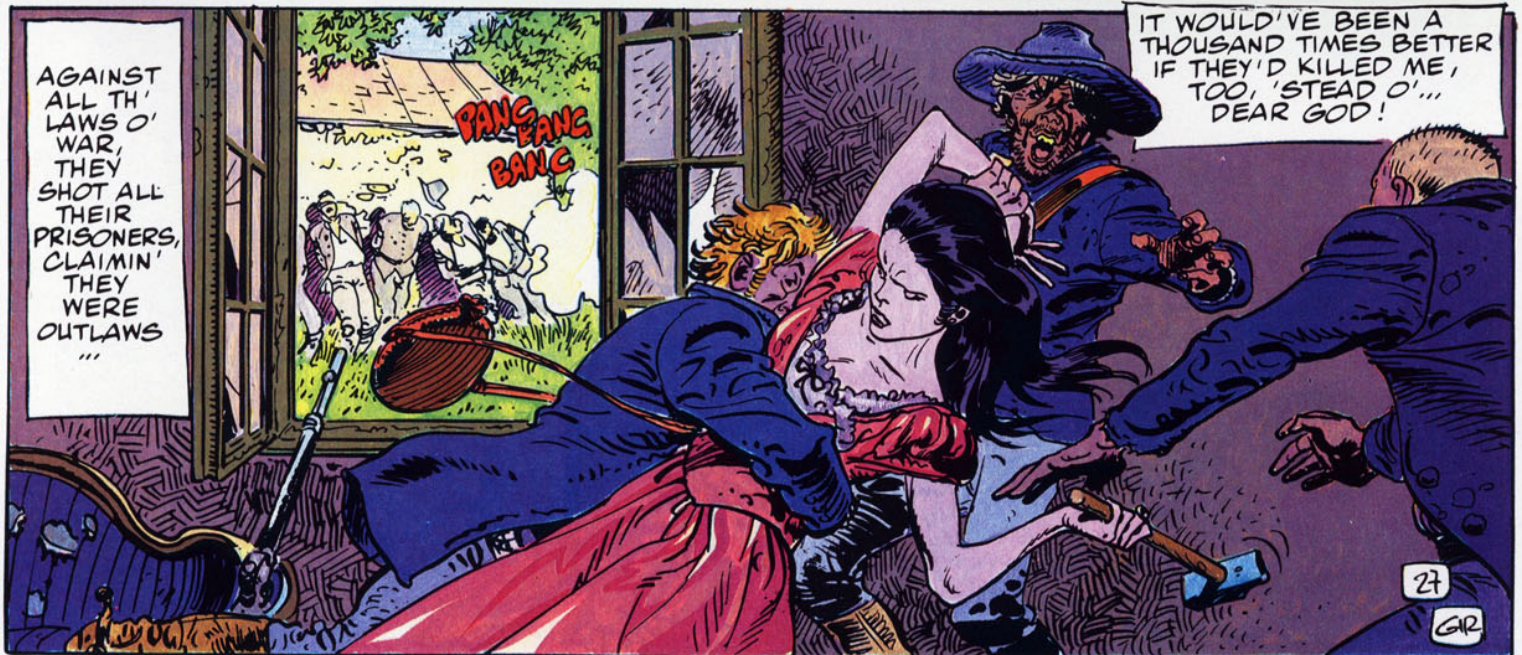


THEY WERE NO BETTER 'N ANIMALS! WITH TH' HANDFUL O' PEOPLE STILL HERE, I TRIED T' DEFEND CYPRESS LODGE FROM THOSE MONSTERS -- WE KILLED A GOOD NUMBER OF 'EM, TOO -- BUT IN VAIN ...



IN REPRISAL, THEY DESTROYED OR STOLE EVER' THIN'. THEY COULD! THEY TOOK OUR LAST MULE, AN' EVEN TH' SCRAWNIEST CHICKENS! THEY RAN OFF MY LAST SLAVES, AN' TORE TH' CROPS OUT DOWN T' TH' ROOTS!

AGAINST ALL TH' LAWS O' WAR, THEY SHOT ALL THEIR PRISONERS, CLAIMIN' THEY WERE OUTLAWS ...

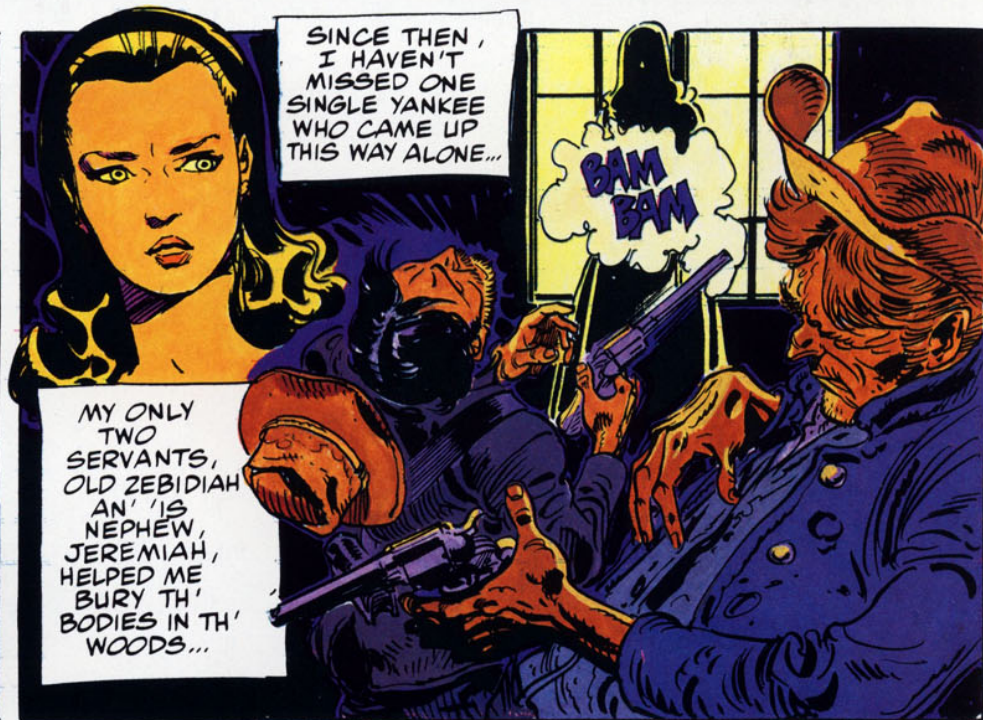


IT WOULD'VE BEEN A THOUSAND TIMES BETTER IF THEY'D KILLED ME, TOO, 'STEAD O'... DEAR GOD!



CAROLYN!
CAROLYN!

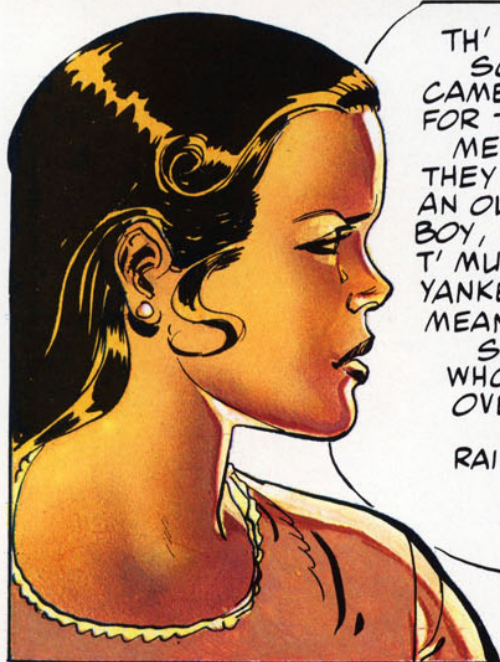
I HAVEN'T
STOPPED WONDERIN'
HOW I SURVIVED
SUCH A NIGHT-
MARE! TH' ONLY
THING THAT KEPT
ME FROM TAKIN'
MY LIFE IN
SHAME WAS
MY HATRED
AN' MY
DESIRE
FOR
RE-
VENGE
!



SINCE THEN,
I HAVEN'T
MISSED ONE
SINGLE YANKEE
WHO CAME UP
THIS WAY ALONE...

MY ONLY
TWO
SERVANTS,
OLD ZEBIDIAH
AN' 'IS
NEPHEW,
JEREMIAH,
HELPED ME
BURY TH'
BODIES IN TH'
WOODS...

BAM
BAM



TH' FEW TIMES
SOMEONE
CAME LOOKIN'
FOR TH' MISSIN'
MEN, I HID.
THEY ONLY FOUND
AN OLD MAN AN' A
BOY, NOT TH' TYPE
T' MURDER PROUD
YANKEE SOLDIERS!
MEANWHILE, TH'
SCALAWAGS
WHO'D TAKEN
OVER FOR TH'
UNION
RAISED TH'
TAXES
AGAIN...



T' KEEP 'EM FROM TH' JOY O' EVICTIN' ME,
I'VE HAD TO KEEP MORTGAGIN' TH' LAND,
'TIL CYPRESS LODGE WAS
ALMOST TOTALLY BANK-
RUPT! THIS IS TH'
END, JIM!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT!

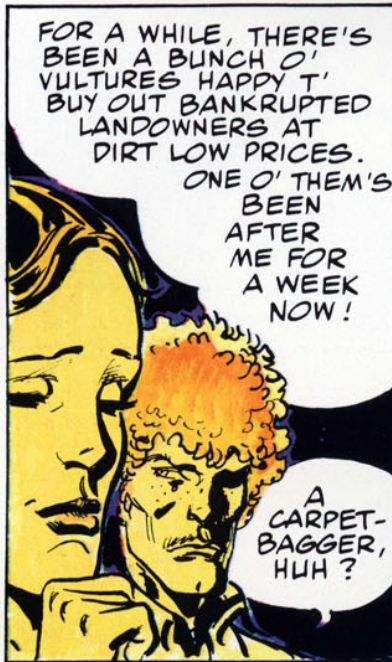


YOU'D BETTER!
WITHOUT
TOOLS, SEEDS,
OR HELP,
ALL'S WE CAN
GROW
HERE'RE
WEEDS!



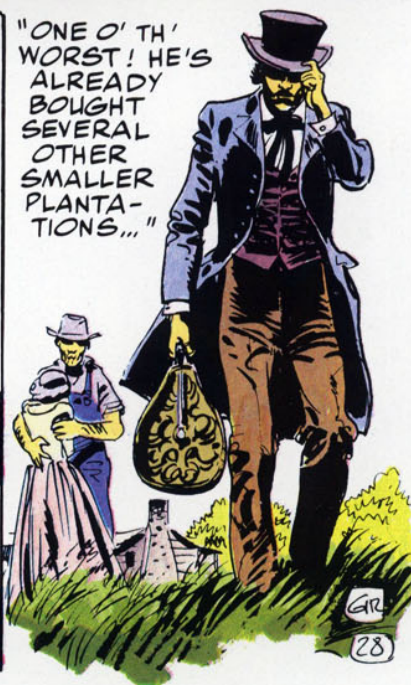
HMPH!

IF I SELL OFF TH'
PLANTATION,
MAYBE
THERE'LL BE
ENOUGH
LEFT OVER T'
BUY YOU A
TICKET
NORTH!



FOR A WHILE, THERE'S
BEEN A BUNCH O'
VULTURES HAPPY T'
BUY OUT BANKRUPT
LANDOWNERS AT
DIRT LOW PRICES.
ONE O' THEM'S
BEEN
AFTER
ME FOR
A WEEK
NOW!

A
CARPET-
BAGGER,
HUH?



"ONE O' TH'
WORST! HE'S
ALREADY
BOUGHT
SEVERAL
OTHER
SMALLER
PLANTA-
TIONS..."



MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD MUCH CHANCE O' FINDIN' A BUYER OTHER-WISE...

HOLD ON THERE, COUSIN! YOU CAN SELL OFF YOUR SHARE T' THAT BUZZARD IF YOU WANT, BUT I PLAN ON KEEPIN' MINE!



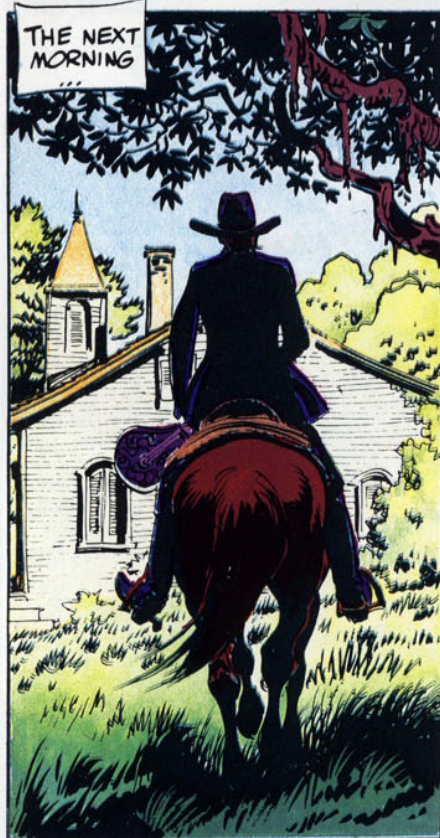
WE AIN'T JUST GONNA LET OURSELVES BE PUSHED OFF WITHOUT TRYIN' SOMETHIN' ARE WE?

GO ON AN' TRY, JIM, BUT I'VE 'BOUT HAD IT! YOU'D BEST THINK 'BOUT TH' THOUSANDS O' DOLLARS YOU'RE GONNA NEED T' GET THIS PLACE RUNNIN' AGAIN! G'NIGHT AN' SWEET DREAMS!

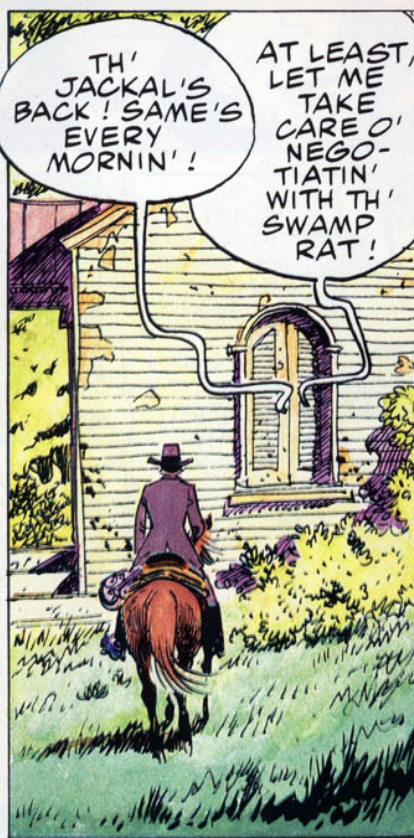


POOR CAROLYN! WONDER WHAT'S GOT INTO HER, T' MAKE 'ER GIVE UP SO EASY? THAT KIND O' GAL DON'T... 'LESS SHE'S COOKIN' UP SOME SORT O' SCHEME...

I FIXED UP ONE O' TH' LEAST BAD ROOMS, MISTUH JIM. YOU'D BEST KEEP A GUN NEXT T' YOU. UNCLE ZEB SAYS THERE'S A MESS O' SNAKES HANGIN' 'ROUND THIS HOUSE!



THE NEXT MORNING



TH' JACKAL'S BACK! SAME'S EVERY MORNIN'!

AT LEAST, LET ME TAKE CARE O' NEGOTIATIN' WITH TH' SWAMP RAT!



ABSOLUTELY NOT! FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE TH' ONE THAT FOUGHT FOR TH' WRONG SIDE AN' BETRAYED 'IS HERITAGE!



YOU'RE FORGETTIN' A COUPLE O' THINGS, JOHNNIE. ONE, THERE'S BEEN A WAR, AN' TWO, I WAS ON TH' WINNIN' SIDE, WHICH YOU'VE GOTTA ADMIT, DOES GIVE ME A COUPLE OF ACES!



WHAT ABOUT MY TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS?

SO, LISTEN REAL GOOD TO WHAT I'M SAYIN'! EVEN YOUR SCALAWAG FRIENDS WON'T DARE TOUCH ONE OF TH' HEROES OF SHERMAN'S ARMY. MY ADVICE TO YOU IS, STAY CLEAR OUT OF HERE THAT'LL SPARE YOU SOME MIGHTY SERIOUS TROUBLES!

NOW, GET OUT!



SORRY, BUT I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY PARTNER!

YOU HEARD TH' LADY. WE'LL KEEP IT AS A LOAN T'GET TH' PLANTATION UP AN' RUNNIN' AGAIN!

WHAT?

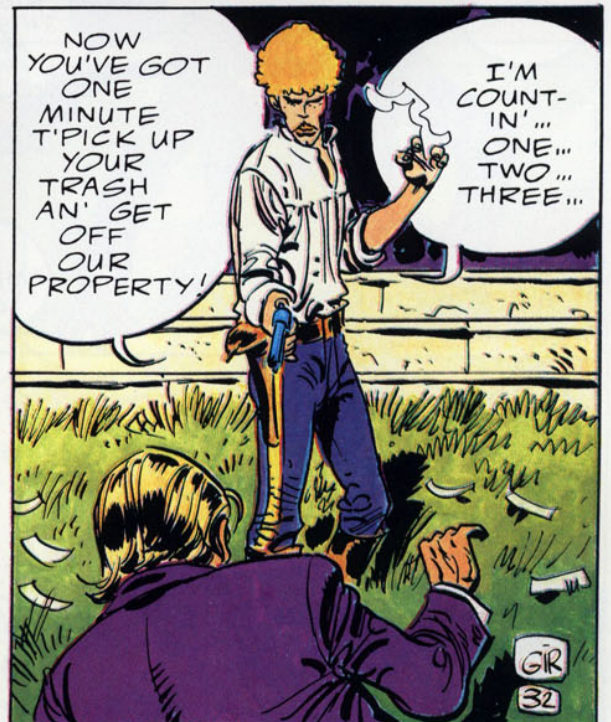


DON'T WORRY, WE'LL PAY YOU INTEREST! YOU HAVE MY WORD AS AN OFFICER AN' A GENTLEMAN!



I AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE WITHOUT MY MONEY, YOU THIEF!

DID YOU SAY "THIEF"?



NOW YOU'VE GOT ONE MINUTE T'PICK UP YOUR TRASH AN' GET OFF OUR PROPERTY!

I'M COUNT-IN'... ONE... TWO... THREE...



YOU'LL PAY FER THIS, CUTLASS! AN' AS FER TH' BITCH, I'LL STILL GET HER LAND FOR NOTHIN'! AN' HER AS A BONUS!

YOUR MINUTE'S UP, JACKAL!

NO! DON'T!

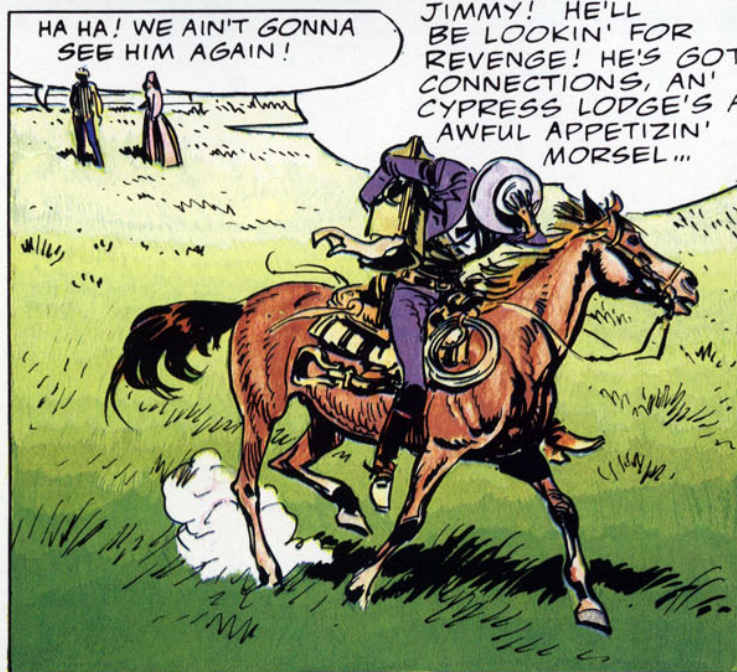
STOP!



PAW PAW PAW

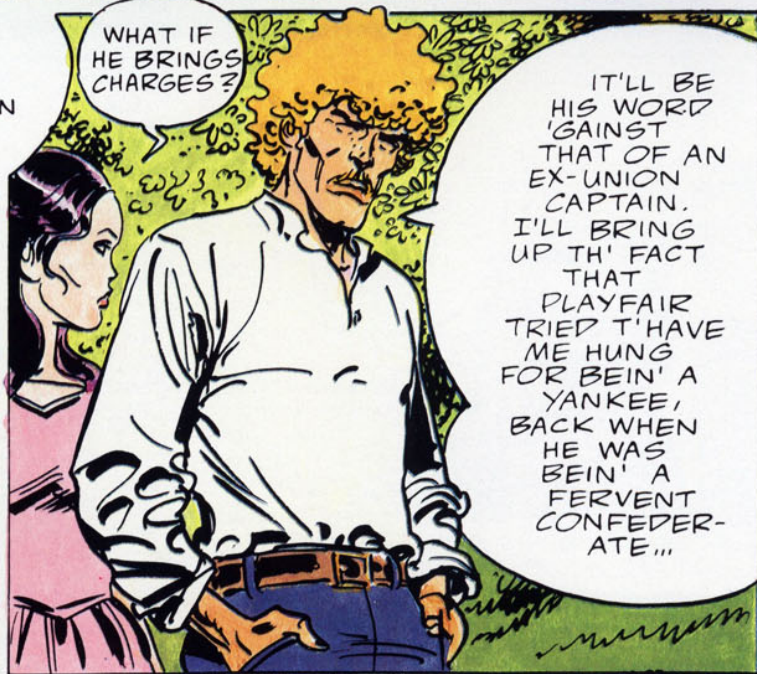


DON'T FORGET YOUR HAT!



HA HA! WE AIN'T GONNA SEE HIM AGAIN!

I'M LESS SURE 'N YOU, JIMMY! HE'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR REVENGE! HE'S GOT CONNECTIONS, AN' CYPRESS LODGE'S AN AWFUL APPETIZIN' MORSEL...



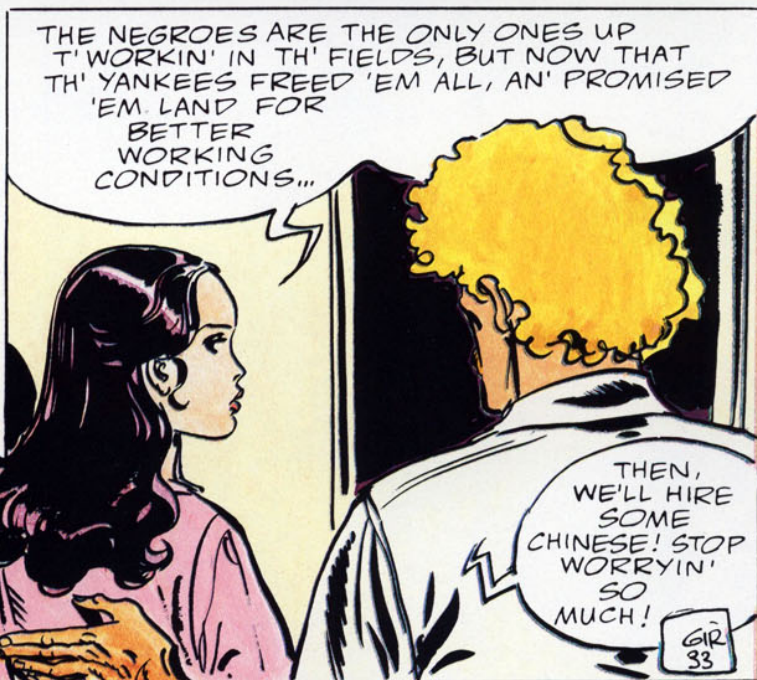
WHAT IF HE BRINGS CHARGES?

IT'LL BE HIS WORD 'GAINST THAT OF AN EX-UNION CAPTAIN. I'LL BRING UP TH' FACT THAT PLAYFAIR TRIED T'HAVE ME HUNG FOR BEIN' A YANKEE, BACK WHEN HE WAS BEIN' A FERVENT CONFEDERATE...



I'LL CALL ON SHERMAN HIMSELF IF I HAVE TO. 'SIDES, WE'LL PAY 'IM BACK, BUT MEANWHILE, WE'VE GOT ENOUGH T'BUY US SOME TOOLS, SEEDS, AN' ANIMALS!

YEAH? WHAT ABOUT FIELD HANDS?



THE NEGROES ARE THE ONLY ONES UP T'WORKIN' IN TH' FIELDS, BUT NOW THAT TH' YANKEES FREED 'EM ALL, AN' PROMISED 'EM LAND FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS...

THEN, WE'LL HIRE SOME CHINESE! STOP WORRYIN' SO MUCH!

THAT NIGHT, IN NEW ORLEANS...

CUTLASS?
DID YOU SAY
CUTLASS?
WELL, WELL,
WHAT A
SURPRISE!

HE SAYS
HE OWNS
HALF TH' PLANTA-
TION! WITHOUT 'IM,
TH' LI'L BITCH WOULD'VE
GIVEN IN. BUT NOW,
THEY'VE GOT MY
MONEY, AN' AS
LONG AS THAT
BASTARD'S
THERE...

PRECISELY! ACCIDENTS
HAVE BEEN KNOWN
TO HAPPEN. YOU
KNOW WHAT'S TO
BE DONE...

THE NEXT
MORNING...

SEND A
SUMMONS
TO CUTLASS? BUT
WHAT FOR? YOU CAN'T
PROVE THAT THEFT OF
\$2,500! I CAN'T VERY
WELL PROSECUTE HIM,
HE WAS A HERO
IN SHERMAN'S
ARMY...

ALL I'M
ASKIN' YA,
JUDGE,
IS THAT
YA GET
'IM
'T
COME
HERE!

HE'LL
BE ON 'IS
GUARD, BUT
I'VE GOT AN
IDEA. JUDGE
BARTLETT
OWES ME...

I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND SOMETHIN' IN
THAT CODE* OF YOURS IF YA TRY! C'MON,
JUDGE, YA CAN'T SAY NO! NOT

AFTER ALL
THOSE
JUICY
DEALS
I'VE LET
YA IN
ON!

BUT
WHAT'LL I
SAY TO HIM?

I DUNNO, APOLOGIZE FER
TROUBLIN' HIM! BUT IT
WON'T COME T' THAT,
B' LIEVE ME! NOW, STOP
ASKIN' SO MANY
QUESTIONS
AND
DO IT!

WELL!
HARUMPH! I
LIKE YOUR
LITTLE GAMES
LESS AND LESS,
PLAYFAIR!

LATER...

THERE'S
ONLY ONE ROAD
'TWEEN CYPRESS
LODGE AN' NEW
ORLEANS. TH' MAN'S
AN EX-UNION
CAPTAIN...

NO WORRY 'BOUT
US MISSIN' 'IM! WE'LL
SKIN 'IM LIKE A RABBIT, AN' HE'LL
BE GONE WITHOUT A TRACE!

* THE NAPOLEONIC CIVIL CODE WAS
ADOPTED IN LOUISIANA IN 1825.

WATCH OUT
FER TH' GAL.
SHE'S
DANGEROUS,
AN' SHE'S
ALWAYS GOT
A RIFLE
BY HER
SIDE!

STOP WORRYIN', PLAYFAIR!
I'VE GOT THIRTY MEN, AN'
A TERRIFIC PLAN WORKED
OUT, AN' I'LL TAKE CARE
O' TH' GAL
M'SE'F! SHE'LL
BE AS GEN'LE
AS A
LAMB!
HA!
HA!

THAT AFTERNOON, AT
CYPRESS LODGE...

tingdingling

HERE'S
TH' LIST O'
GOODS THAT TH'
PLANTATION
NEEDS. WE'LL...
TH' ALARM
BELL! MAYBE
IT'S JERE-
MIAH?

I
DOUBT IT!
HE AN' ZEB
AVOID
SETTIN' IT
OFF!

A VISITOR!
USUALLY THAT AIN'T
GOOD NEWS!

HE'S
WEARIN'
A BADGE!
IT'S A
DEPUTY
MARSHAL!



A SUMMONS! THEY WANT ME IN NEW ORLEANS FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNIN'! WHAT'S SO URGENT, MARSHAL?

AIN'T NONE O' MY BUSINESS! BUT IT'S IN YOUR OWN INTEREST T'BE ON TIME!

AN' BE CAREFUL, THE ROADS'RE PLENTY DANGEROUS, 'SPECIALLY AT NIGHT!



THANKS FOR TH' WARNIN'!

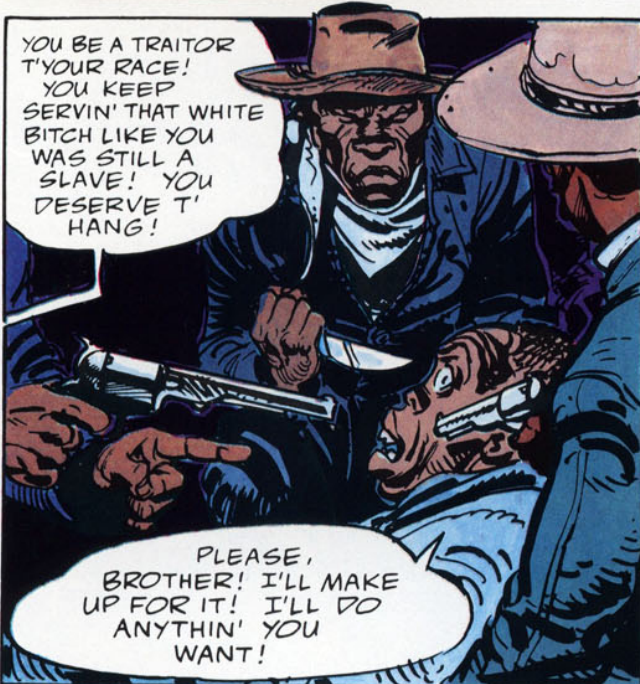
JEREMIAH'LL GET YOUR BAG READY! JEREMIAH! WHERE TH' DEVIL'S THAT BOY NOW?

DON'T MAKE NO NOISE!

SWEET JESUS!

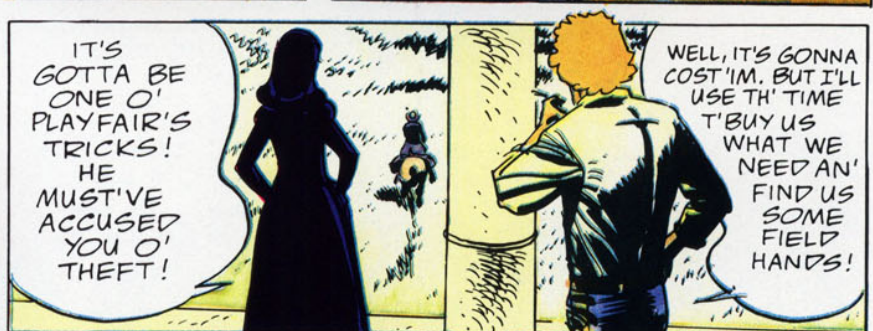


MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE PLANTATION...



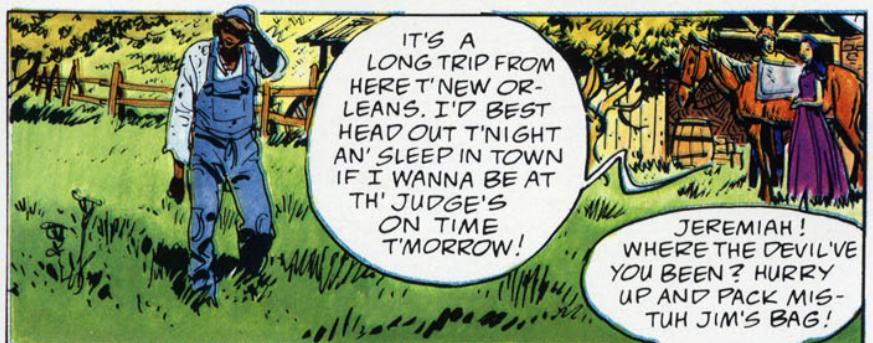
YOU BE A TRAITOR T'YOUR RACE! YOU KEEP SERVIN' THAT WHITE BITCH LIKE YOU WAS STILL A SLAVE! YOU DESERVE T' HANG!

PLEASE, BROTHER! I'LL MAKE UP FOR IT! I'LL DO ANYTHIN' YOU WANT!



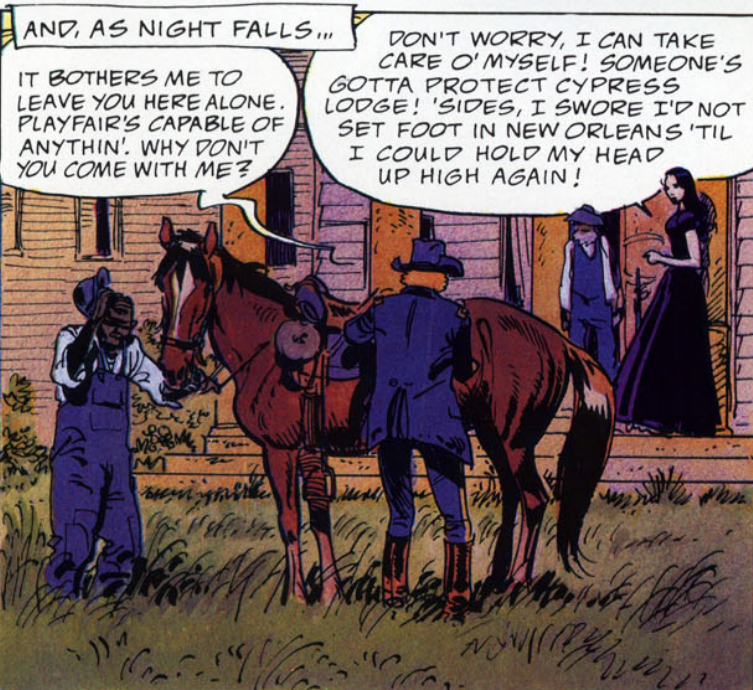
IT'S GOTTA BE ONE O' PLAYFAIR'S TRICKS! HE MUST'VE ACCUSED YOU O' THEFT!

WELL, IT'S GONNA COST 'IM. BUT I'LL USE TH' TIME T'BUY US WHAT WE NEED AN' FIND US SOME FIELD HANDS!



IT'S A LONG TRIP FROM HERE T'NEW ORLEANS. I'D BEST HEAD OUT T'NIGHT AN' SLEEP IN TOWN IF I WANNA BE AT TH' JUDGE'S ON TIME T'MORROW!

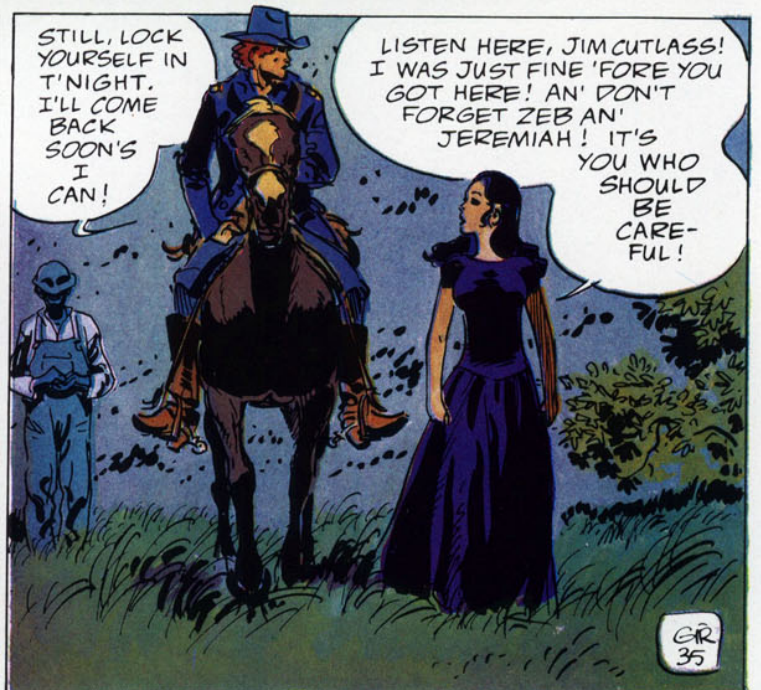
JEREMIAH! WHERE THE DEVIL'VE YOU BEEN? HURRY UP AND PACK MIS-TUH JIM'S BAG!



AND, AS NIGHT FALLS...

IT BOTHERS ME TO LEAVE YOU HERE ALONE. PLAYFAIR'S CAPABLE OF ANYTHIN'. WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH ME?

DON'T WORRY, I CAN TAKE CARE O' MYSELF! SOMEONE'S GOTTA PROTECT CYPRESS LODGE! 'SIDES, I SWORE I'D NOT SET FOOT IN NEW ORLEANS 'TIL I COULD HOLD MY HEAD UP HIGH AGAIN!

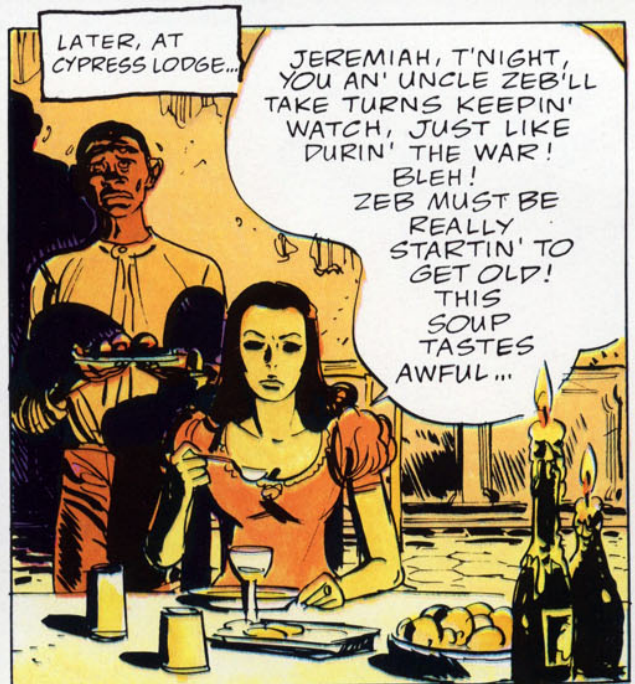


STILL, LOCK YOURSELF IN T'NIGHT. I'LL COME BACK SOON'S I CAN!

LISTEN HERE, JIM CUTLASS! I WAS JUST FINE 'FORE YOU GOT HERE! AN' DON'T FORGET ZEB AN' JEREMIAH! IT'S YOU WHO SHOULD BE CAREFUL!



THERE'S 'R BOY! GALLOP ON AHEAD AN' LET TH' OTHERS KNOW, JOEY, BUT DON'T LET 'IM SEE YOU! LORDY! IT SURE PAINS ME T'KILL A UNION CAP'N, BUT YANKEE 'R NOT, HE'S STILL A WHITE PIG...



LATER, AT CYPRESS LODGE...

JEREMIAH, T'NIGHT, YOU AN' UNCLE ZEB'LL TAKE TURNS KEEPIN' WATCH, JUST LIKE DURIN' THE WAR! BLEH! ZEB MUST BE REALLY STARTIN' TO GET OLD! THIS SOUP TASTES AWFUL...



MEANWHILE, AT THE KING CREOLE, ONE OF NEW ORLEANS' MOST NOTORIOUS SALOONS...

WELL, IF IT AIN'T THAT OL' BUZZARD, JOHNNIE PLAYFAIR!

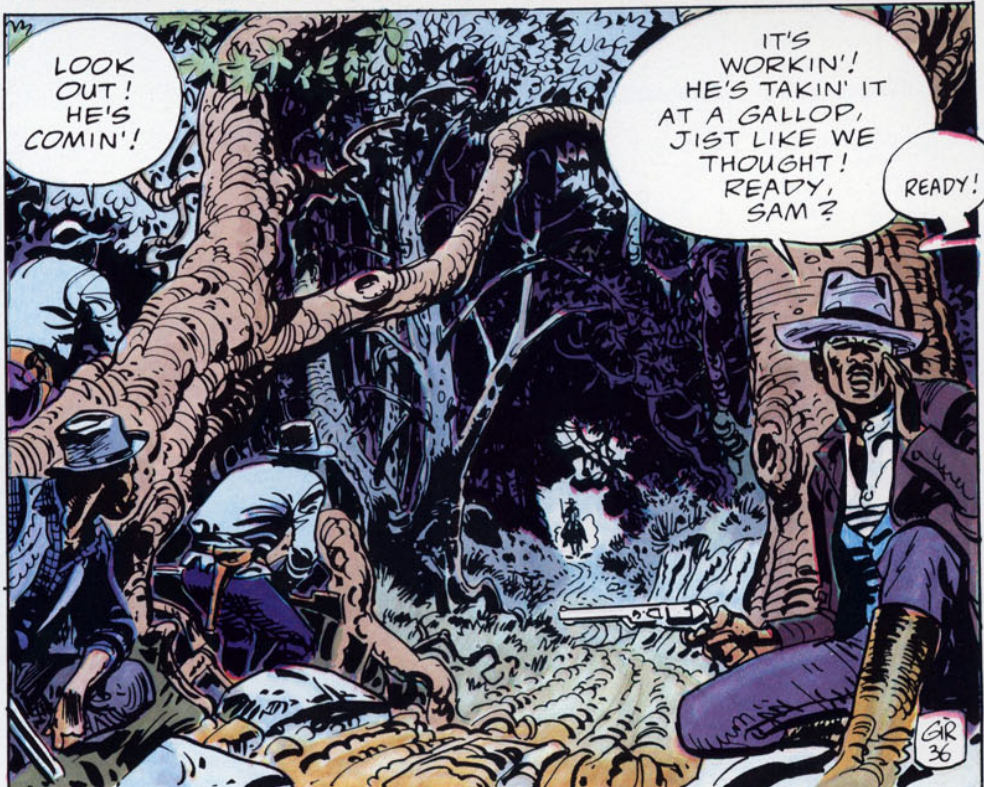
YOU COME T'FLEECE YOUR FLOCK, LIKE IN TH' GOOD OL' DAYS? THOUGH, IT SURE LOOKS LIKE BUSINESS'S BEEN BOOMIN' FOR YOU!

T'NIGHT'S MY LUCKY NIGHT, GEN'LEMEN! LEAVE ME A LI'L TIME T'DINE WITH THESE LOVELY LADIES, AN' I'M ALL YOURS T'PLAY KILLER POKER 'TIL DAWN!



JUST THEN...

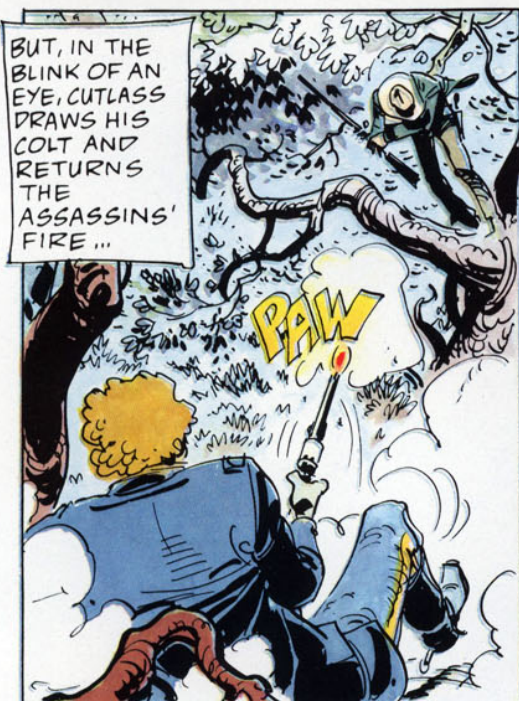
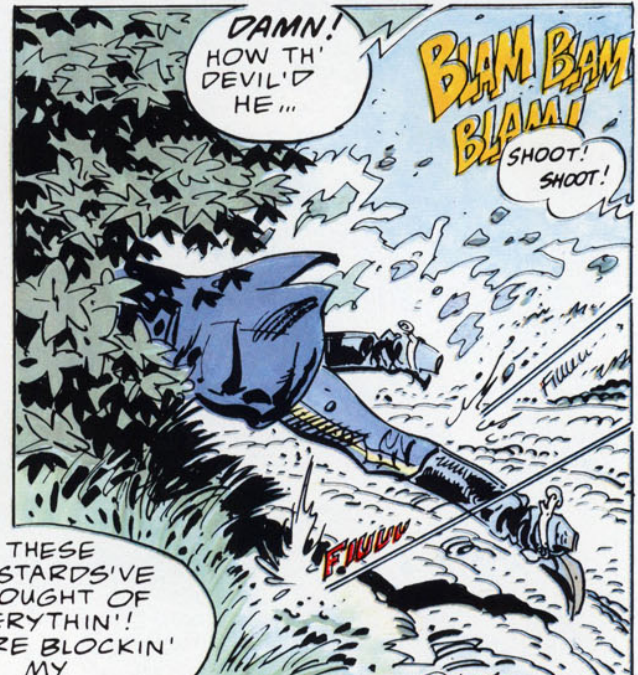
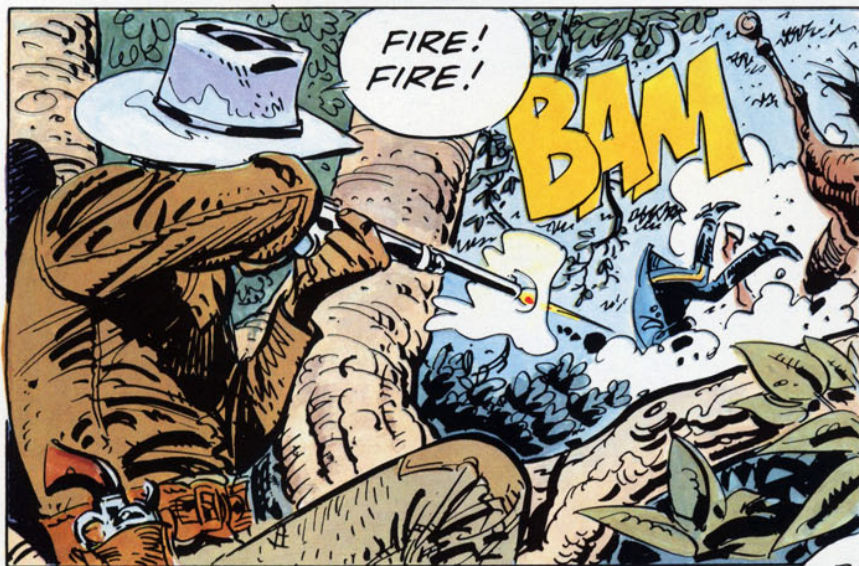
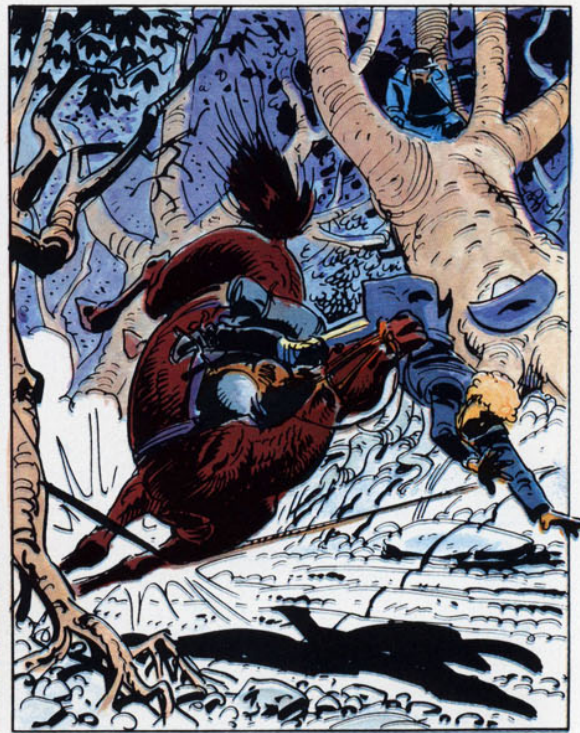
THIS PLACE WAS MADE FOR AN AMBUSH! AIN'T NO OTHER ROAD EITHER. BEST TO TAKE IT AT A GALLOP AND KEEP MY HAND ON MY COLT!



LOOK OUT! HE'S COMIN'!

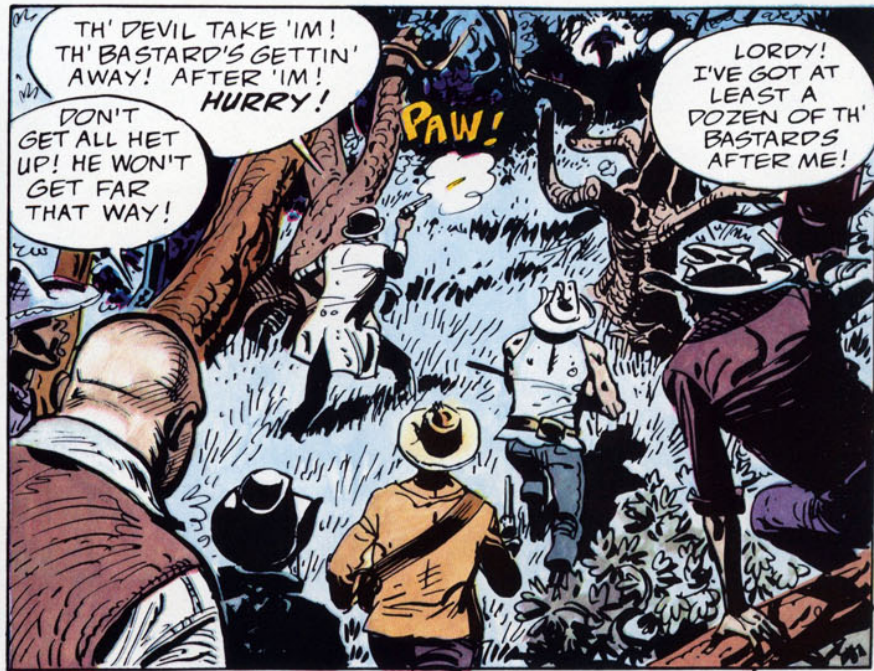
IT'S WORKIN'! HE'S TAKIN' IT AT A GALLOP, JIST LIKE WE THOUGHT! READY, SAM?

READY!





HELL!
THESE TWO
ALMOST
GOT
ME!

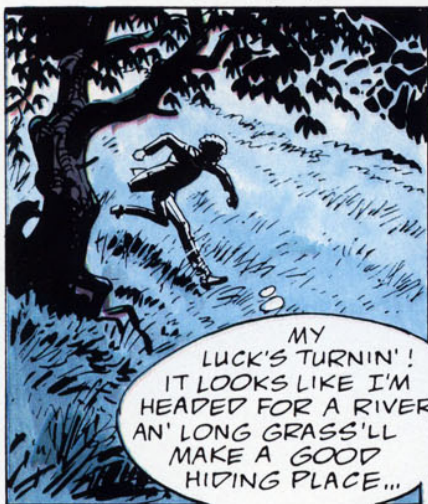


TH' DEVIL TAKE 'IM!
TH' BASTARD'S GETTIN'
AWAY! AFTER 'IM!
HURRY!

DON'T
GET ALL HET
UP! HE WON'T
GET FAR
THAT WAY!

LORDY!
I'VE GOT AT
LEAST A
DOZEN OF TH'
BASTARDS
AFTER ME!

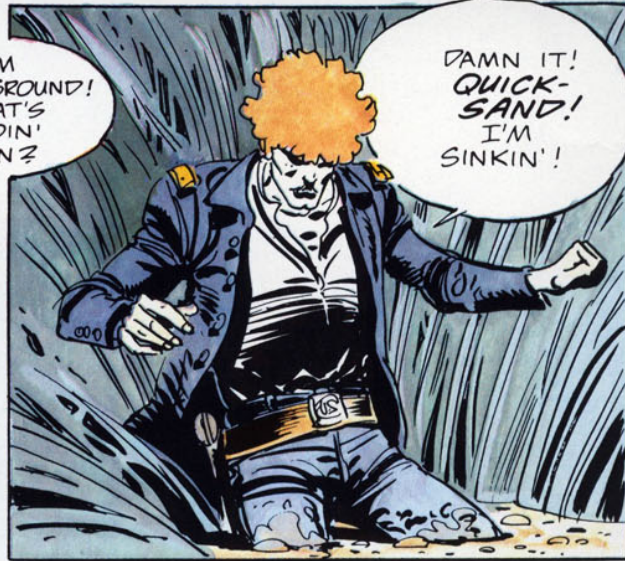
THE MANHUNT CONTINUES FOR
UNRELENTING MINUTES...



MY
LUCK'S TURNIN'!
IT LOOKS LIKE I'M
HEADED FOR A RIVER,
AN' LONG GRASS'LL
MAKE A GOOD
HIDING PLACE...



I'M
GAININ' GROUND!
WH... WHAT'S
GOIN'
ON?



DAMN IT!
**QUICK-
SAND!**
I'M
SINKIN'!



WATCH
OUT
FER TH'
SWAMP!

GET
BACK!

LORDY! TH' YANKEE'S RUN STRAIGHT INTO IT!



AIN'T NO
WAY T'GO ON
WITHOUT
RISKIN'
FALLIN'
IN!

DON'T
MAKE NO
NEVER MIND! TH'
SWAMPS'LL DO OUR
WORK FER US!



HELL! I'M SINKIN' FURTHER
IN! NOW I KNOW WHY TH'
BASTARDS DIDN'T FOLLOW
ME! BUT IF I DON'T GET MY-
SELF LOOSE, I'LL BE SUCKED
UNDER IN LESS'N AN
HOUR!

TH' YANKEE'S DONE FOR!
LET'S HEAD BACK. WE'VE GOT
BETTER THINGS T'DO, LIKE
BURYIN' OUR OWN, AN' GETTIN'
RID O' 'IS HORSE! SOMEONE
MIGHT PASS BY ALONG TH'
ROAD...



THEY'RE LEAVIN'! NO
USE CALLIN' THEM, THEY'D
JUST KILL ME OFF QUICKER!
BUT I AIN'T GONNA LET MY-
SELF BE SWALLOWED UP
BY THIS STINKIN'
PIT O' MUD...

I'VE
GOTTA
FIGURE
SOME-
THIN'
OUT,
AN'
FAST!

MEANWHILE, AT CYPRESS LODGE...

HEY, JEREMIAH! MIDNIGHT'S
COME AN' GONE!
IT'S TIME FER
YOU T'STAND
GUARD!

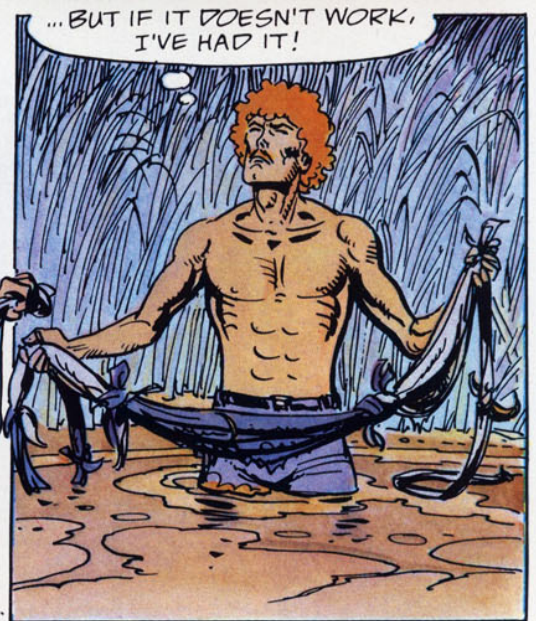
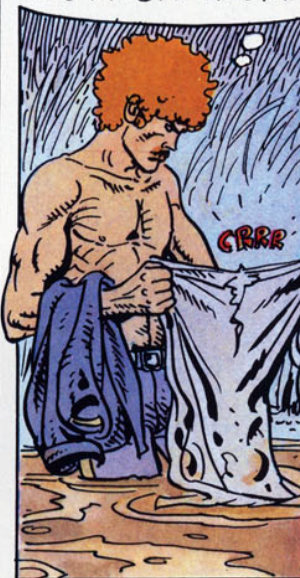
SURE,
UNCLE
ZEB!



I'LL WAIT AN
HOUR. THAT'LL
GIVE UNCLE ZEB
TIME 'NOUGH
T' OUT LIKE A
LIGHT...

THEN,
I'LL TAKE
CARE O' MISSY
CAROLYN! WIT'
THAT SLEEPIN'
DRAUGHT I PUT
IN 'ER SOUP,
SHE MUST BE
SOUND
ASLEEP!

IT'S AN OLD TRICK...



...BUT IF IT DOESN'T WORK,
I'VE HAD IT!



INCH BY
INCH, WITH
ALMOST
SUPER-
HUMAN
EFFORTS,
CUTLASS
MANAGES
TO FREE
HIMSELF
FROM THE
ENGULF-
ING
SAND...

HOORAY! I
DID IT! NOW, I'VE
GOTTA PULL MYSELF
OUTTA THIS
QUAGMIRE REAL
CAREFUL!



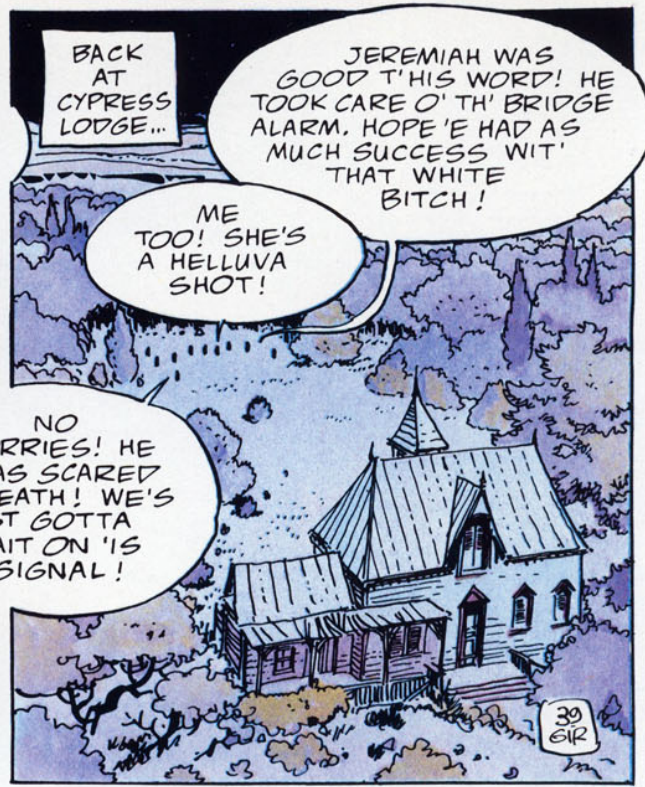
I
MADE
IT!

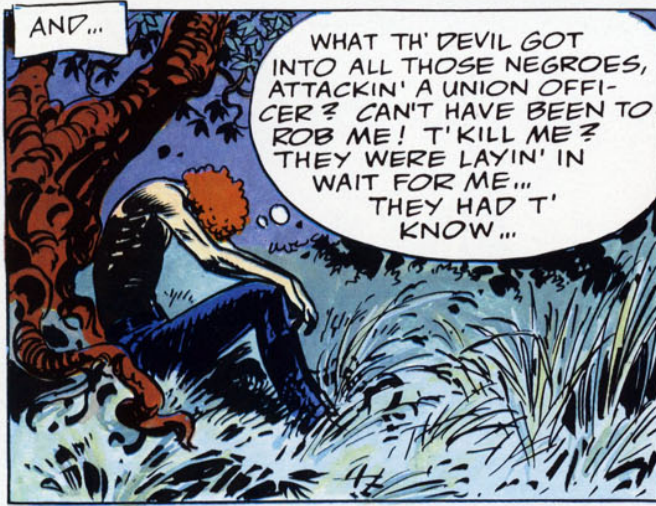
BACK
AT
CYPRESS
LODGE...

JEREMIAH WAS
GOOD T'HIS WORD! HE
TOOK CARE O' TH' BRIDGE
ALARM. HOPE 'E HAD AS
MUCH SUCCESS WIT'
THAT WHITE
BITCH!

ME
TOO! SHE'S
A HELLUVA
SHOT!

NO
WORRIES! HE
WAS SCARED
T'DEATH! WE'S
JUST GOTTA
WAIT ON 'IS
SIGNAL!





AND...

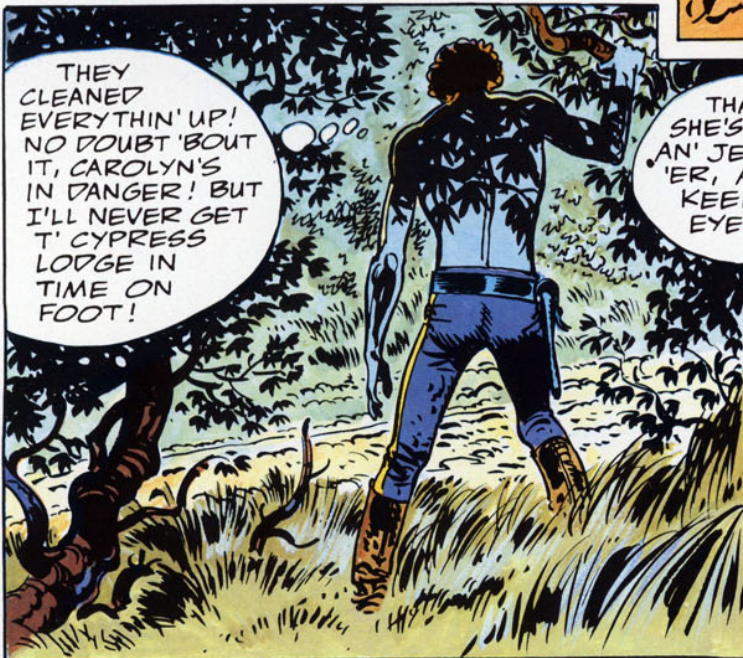
WHAT TH' DEVIL GOT INTO ALL THOSE NEGROES, ATTACKIN' A UNION OFFICER? CAN'T HAVE BEEN TO ROB ME! T' KILL ME? THEY WERE LAYIN' IN WAIT FOR ME... THEY HAD T' KNOW...

A WINDED CUTLASS FINALLY REACHES THE ROAD...



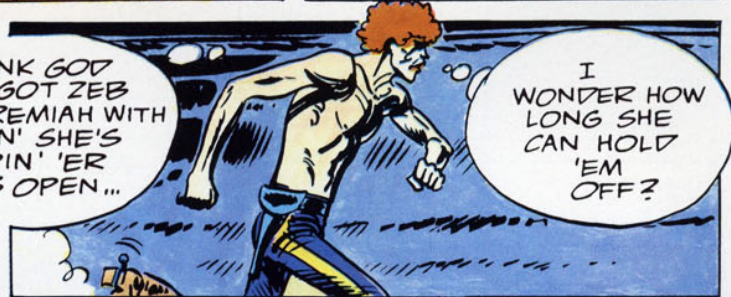
CAROLYN! OF COURSE! THEY'RE GONNA ATTACK HER TOO!

LORD, I'M DAFT! THEY LURED ME AWAY T' KILL ME EASIER, WHILE THEY ATTACK TH' PLANTATION! IF THAT BASTARD PLAYFAIR'S BEHIND ALL THIS, I'LL MURDER 'IM!



THEY CLEANED EVERYTHIN' UP! NO DOUBT 'BOUT IT, CAROLYN'S IN DANGER! BUT I'LL NEVER GET T' CYPRESS LODGE IN TIME ON FOOT!

THANK GOD SHE'S GOT ZEB AN' JEREMIAH WITH 'ER, AN' SHE'S KEEPIN' 'ER EYES OPEN...



I WONDER HOW LONG SHE CAN HOLD 'EM OFF?



AT CYPRESS LODGE...

WHY TH' HELL'S THAT DAMN FOOL NOT SIGNALIN' ME?

PATIENCE.



UNCLE ZEB'S FIN'LY ASLEEP! ALL'S I GOTTA DO NOW'S GET MISSY'S GUN... PO' MISSY!

DEAR LORD, PLEASE F'GIVE PO' JEREMIAH'S TREASON!

DAMN! CAN'T OPEN MISSY'S DOOR! SHE'S LOCKED 'ER-SELF IN!



MEANWHILE...

I CAN'T GET ... MUCH FARTHER ... I ... HEY! HOOF-BEATS! ARE THEY COMIN' BACK?

JUST THEN, HALF-A-MILE AWAY...

BLAST THAT WHEEL FOR BREAKIN'! NOW WE WON'T GET T' NEW ORLEANS 'TIL DAWN!

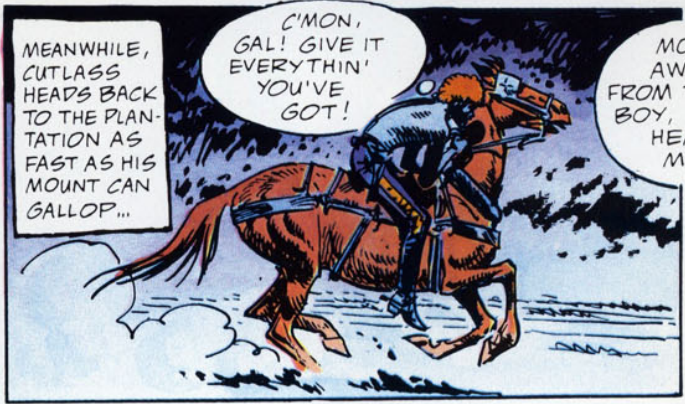
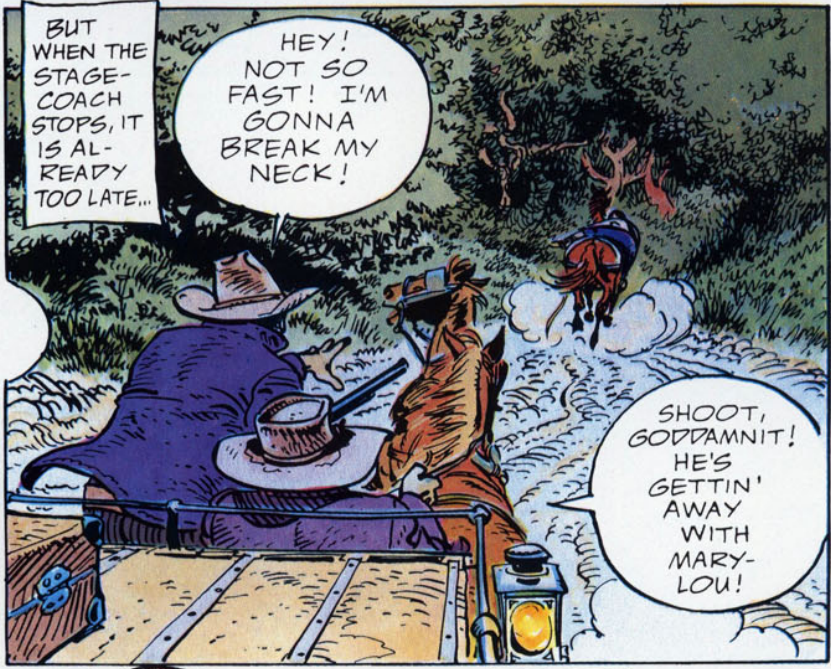
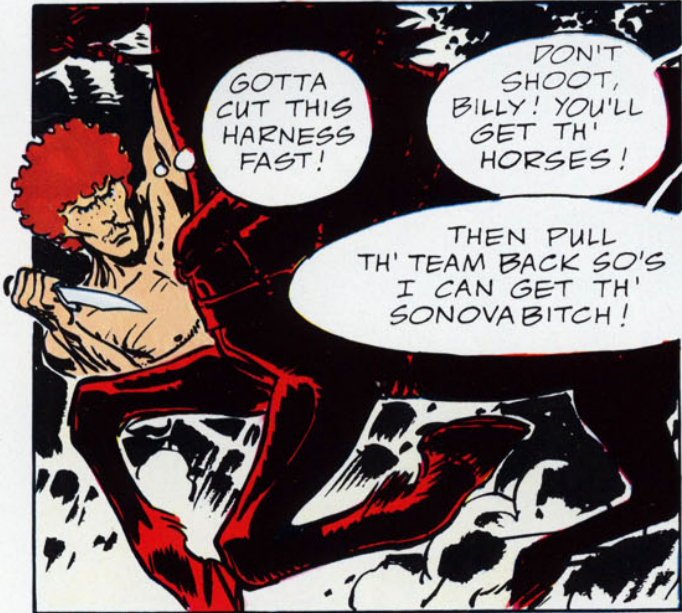
IF YOU'D DRUNK A LI'L LESS RED-EYE BACK T' BARRETT'S CREEK, YOU WOULDN'T'VE HIT THAT ROCK AN' NO THIN' WOULD'VE HAPPENED!

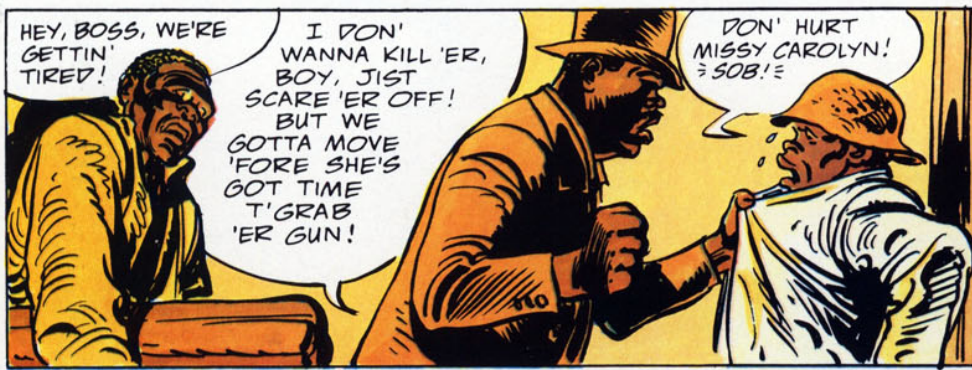


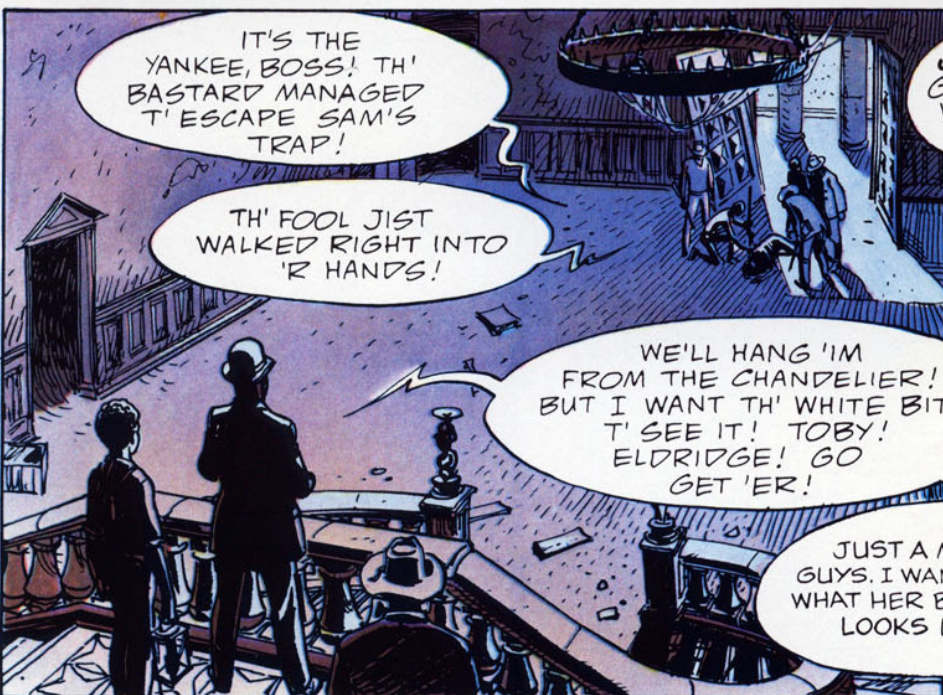
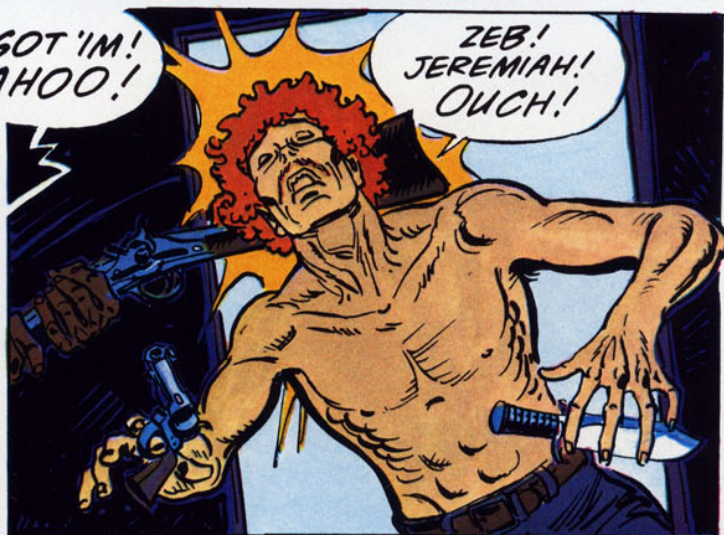
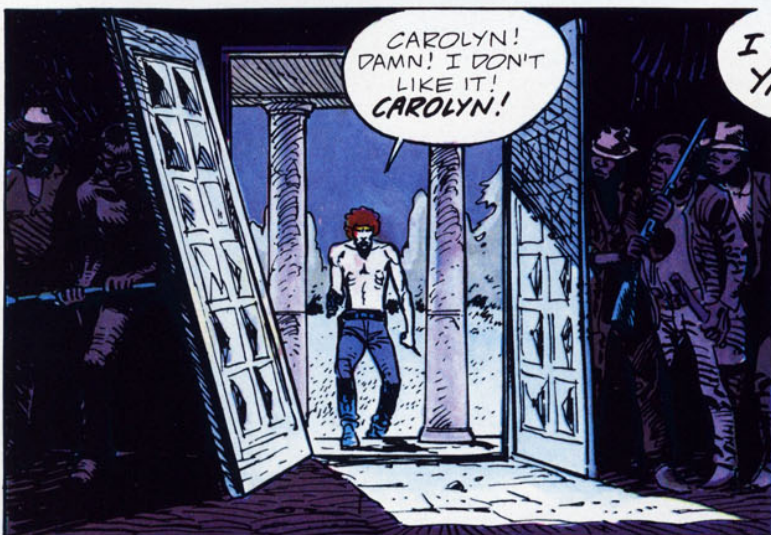
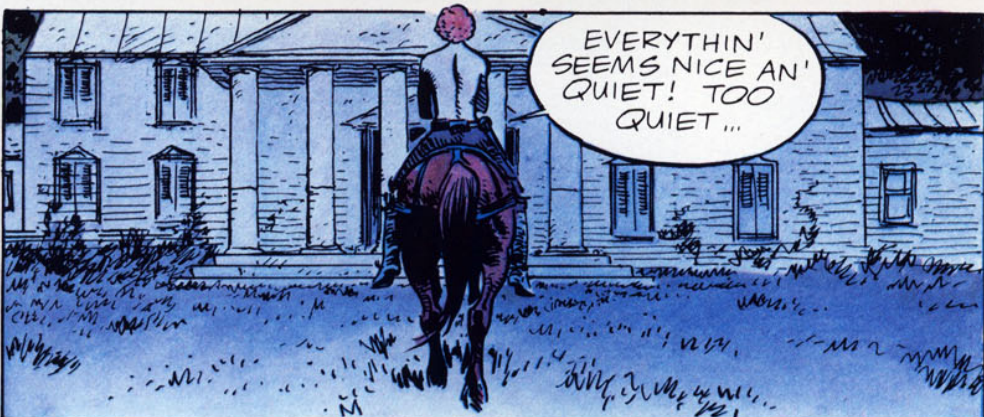
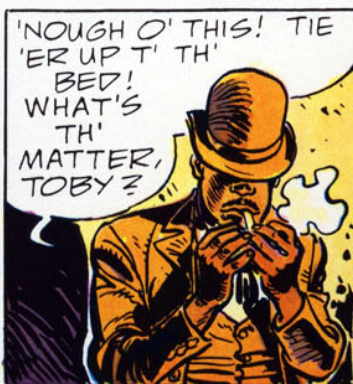
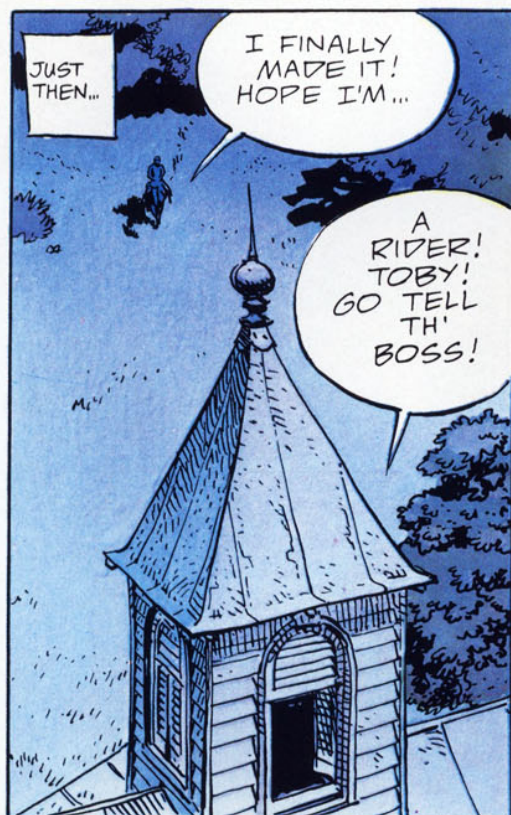
WITH TH' WAY I LOOK, AN' EVERYONE'S SO NERVOUS THESE DAYS, THERE'S EVERY CHANCE THEY'D SHOOT ME DOWN 'FORE I COULD EVEN UTTER A WORD, SO...

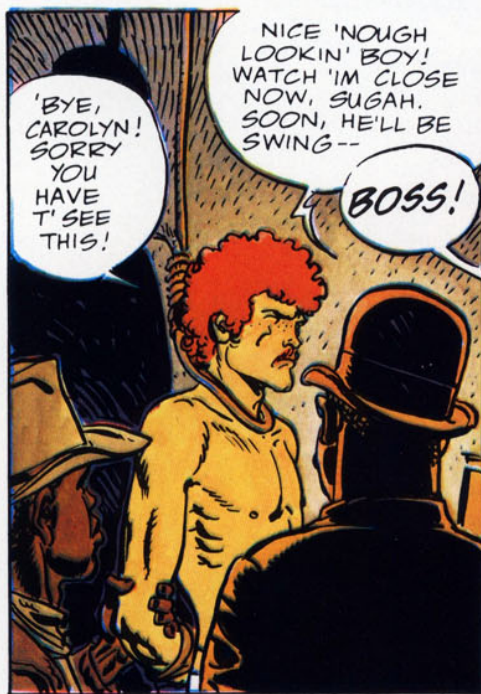


WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, CUTLASS SLIDES BETWEEN THE TWO LEAD HORSES...









'BYE, CAROLYN! SORRY YOU HAVE T' SEE THIS!

NICE 'NOUGH LOOKIN' BOY! WATCH 'IM CLOSE NOW, SUGAH. SOON, HE'LL BE SWING--

BOSS!



?

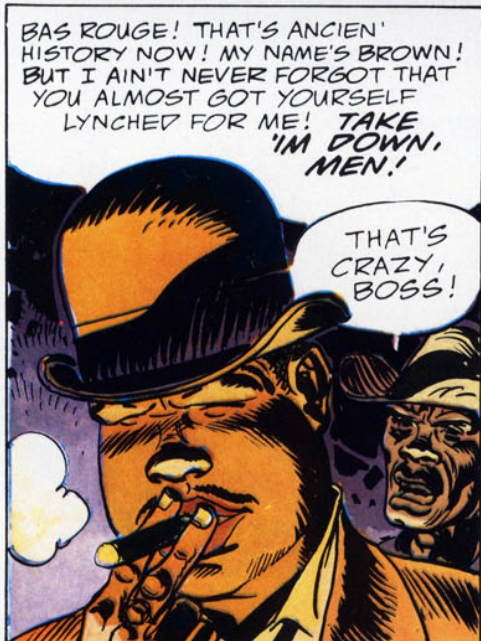
I REC' NIZE THIS HERE FELLA! IT'S TH' YANKEE FROM TH' ALABAMA QUEEN. FROM JIST 'FORE TH' WAR!

WHAT?



THEN I OWE YOU MY LIFE! YOU STOPPED THAT BASTARD CLAY FROM SHOOTIN' ME IN THE BACK!

I DID MORE'N THAT! I FOUGHT T' ABOLISH SLAVERY FOR FOUR YEARS! SO, YOU'RE BAS ROUGE?



BAS ROUGE! THAT'S ANCIEN' HISTORY NOW! MY NAME'S BROWN! BUT I AIN'T NEVER FORGOT THAT YOU ALMOST GOT YOURSELF LYNCHED FOR ME! TAKE 'IM DOWN, MEN!

THAT'S CRAZY, BOSS!



SOON'S HE'S FREE, HE'S GONNA RUN T' GET TH' ARMY, THEN WE'LL BE TH' ONE'S DANCIN' FROM A ROPE!

I WON'T SAY ANYTHIN'! FREE TH' WOMAN TOO!

SOON AFTER...

CALM DOWN, COUSIN! TH' REAL MIRACLE'S WHAT HAPPENED 'TWEEN THIS FELLA AN' ME SO LONG AGO!

JIM! OH, JIM! YOU GOT HERE JUST IN TIME! IT'S A MIRACLE!



I KNOW HOW T' JUDGE A MAN! CUT THAT DAMN ROPE, AN' UNTIE TH' GAL!

LONGER THAN YOU KNOW, CUTLASS!

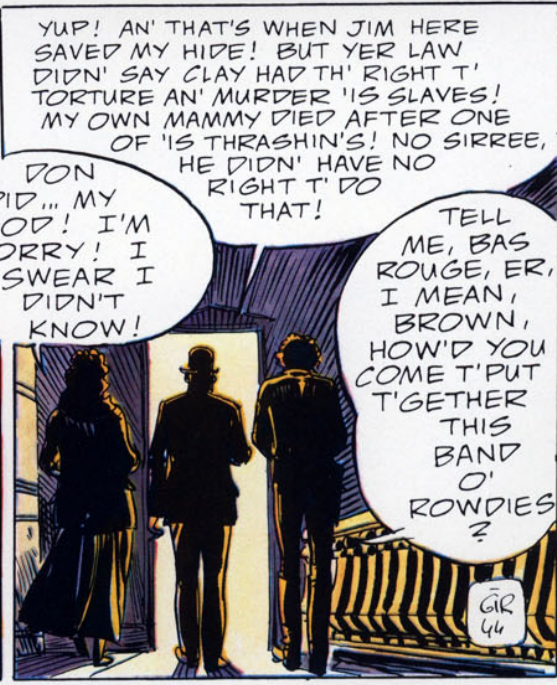


EVER'THIN' STARTED WHEN THE BOYS AN' ME WERE SLAVES AT CYPRESS LODGE. CAROLYN'S GUARDIAN WAS A DECENT FELLA, AN' EVER'THIN' WAS FINE 'TIL HE DIED. THAT'S WHEN TH' GAL'S FIANCE STARTED GIVIN' ORDERS 'ROUND HERE, AN' IT ALL TURNED SOUR. LIFE 'NEATH THAT FELLA WASN'T NO BED OF ROSES...

DON CLAY, HUH?

YUP!

WHEN HE ESCAPED AN' TOOK ALL TH' OTHERS, DON WENT AFTER 'EM LIKE TH' LAW SAID!



YUP! AN' THAT'S WHEN JIM HERE SAVED MY HIDE! BUT YER LAW DIDN' SAY CLAY HAD TH' RIGHT T' TORTURE AN' MURDER 'IS SLAVES! MY OWN MAMMY DIED AFTER ONE OF 'IS THRASHIN'S! NO SIRREE, HE DIDN' HAVE NO RIGHT T' DO THAT!

DON DID... MY GOD! I'M SORRY! I SWEAR I DIDN'T KNOW!

TELL ME, BAS ROUGE, ER, I MEAN, BROWN, HOW'D YOU COME T' PUT T'GETHER THIS BAND O' ROWDIES?

"LET'S SIT DOWN. MY STORY'LL TAKE A SPELL. WHEN I 'SCAPED FROM CLAY, THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING ON MY MIND: HEADIN' NORTH! TH' WAR BROKE OUT, AN' I JOINED UP WITH A BLACK BATTALION ..."



I BROUGHT A LI'L SOMETHIN'. IT'LL MAKE TH' STORYTELLIN' GO SMOOTHER! WHERE WAS I? OH, YEAH! SO THERE I WAS, IN TH' 21ST INFANTRY, BUT TH' YANKEES NEVER THOUGHT O' US LIKE REAL SOLDIERS. WE WAS ONLY GOOD FOR DIGGIN' TRENCHES AN' FIXIN' UP TH' ROADS AN' RAILROADS. ALMOST WORSE THAN PICKIN' COTTON 'NEATH CLAY! D'YOU HAVE ANY GLASSES LEFT 'ROUND HERE?

"TH' YANKEES MADE US SOME REAL FINE PROMISES O' WORK AN' LAND, BUT AFTER TH' WAR, ALL'S THEY WOUND UP DOIN' WAS SENDIN' US BACK SOUTH FAST AS THEY COULD, WITH NOTHIN' BUT TH' CLOTHES ON 'R BACKS! HA! THOSE YANKEES SURE WAS DIRTY BASTARDS!"



I'LL GO ALONG WITH THAT!



HERE, OUR OL' MASTERS WERE 'FRAID O' US, AN' RUN US OFF, WHILE TH' AUTHORITIES WAS READY T' LET US STARVE T' DEATH. T'SURVIVE, WE STARTED STEALIN', A LI'L HERE AN' THERE ...

WHAT KIND OF PROTECTION?

A CARPETBAGGER, TRYIN' T' SQUEEZE EVERY LAST CENT OUTTA TH' SOUTH!



TH' TROOPS STATIONED HERE NEVER CAUGHT UP WITH YOU?

BAH! THEY GOT PLEN'Y T'DO ROUNDIN' UP THEIR DESERTERS AN' TH' REBELS THAT AIN'T READY T' ACCEPT TH' WAR'S OVER! 'SIDES, WE'VE GOT PROTECTION ...



WHEN A PLANTER LIKE MISSY CAROLYN HERE REFUSES T' SELL, HE SENDS US 'ROUND T' SCARE 'IM GOOD. IN EXCHANGE, WE GET PAID AN' PROTECTED ...



SO THAT'S WHY YOU GO 'ROUND KILLIN' MEN AN' RAPIN' WOMEN!

I SURE AIN'T PROUD O' IT, BUT WITH NO JOBS AN' NO LAND, WHAT ELSE CAN FOLKS LIKE US DO? 'SIDES, THEM PLANTERS DESERVE WHAT THEY GET! BUT, IN YOUR CASE, I'M SORRY!

HE'S SORRY! HA!

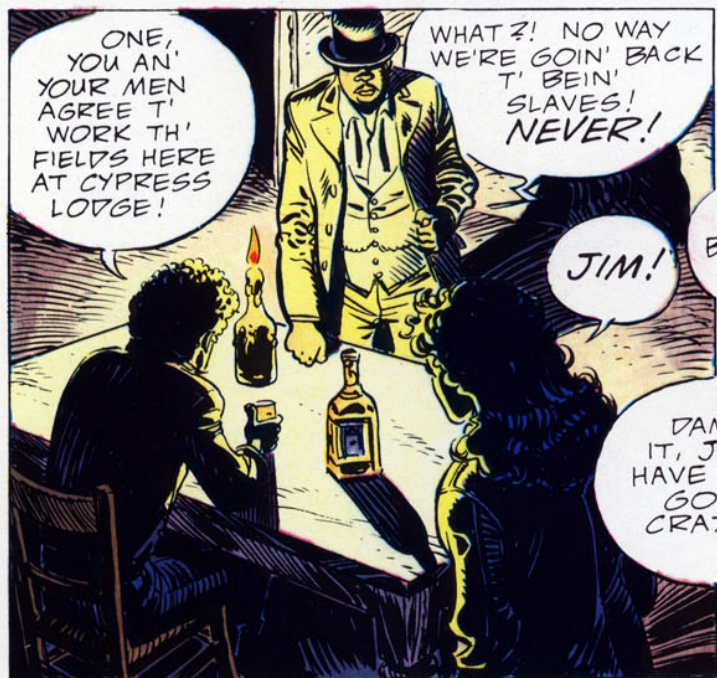


STOP SQUABBLIN'! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

WE'RE ALL IN A MESS HERE. US, 'CAUSE O' CYPRESS LODGE, AN' YOU, BROWN, 'CAUSE SOONER OR LATER, JOHNNIE PLAYFAIR, WHO'S YOUR CARPETBAGGER FRIEND, IS GOIN' TO DROP YOU, AN' YOU'LL ALL HANG. MY PLAN CAN GET US ALL OUTTA TROUBLE!



I AIN'T SAYIN' WE'LL GO 'LONG WITH IT, BUT I'M IN'ERESTED IN WHAT YOU'VE GOT T'SAY. LET'S HEAR IT!



ONE, YOU AN' YOUR MEN AGREE T' WORK TH' FIELDS HERE AT CYPRESS LODGE!

WHAT? NO WAY WE'RE GOIN' BACK T' BEIN' SLAVES! NEVER!

JIM!

THAT'S BETTER!

DAMN IT, JIM! HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY?



WHO'S TALKIN' 'BOUT SLAVERY? IT'LL BE A PARTNERSHIP. Y'ALL'LL GET ONE QUARTER O' THE LAND!



WHAT'S YOUR SECOND THING?

TWO, YOU AN' YOUR FRIENDS SIGN COMPLETE CONFESSIONS, LAYIN' OUT ALL TH' DETAILS O' PLAYFAIR'S PLAN!



LISTEN HERE, WHITE BOY. I DON' KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SCHEMIN' UP, BUT YOU'D BEST BE REAL CONVINCIN'!

HERE'S WHAT I GOT IN MIND...



LATER...

IT'LL BE TOUGH, BUT I THINK HE'LL CONVINCE 'EM!

OH, SURE!



I BET THEY'RE PLANNIN' HOW T'SLIT OUR THROATS FIRST CHANCE. WITH A SPECIAL TREAT FOR ME!

CALM DOWN, CAROLYN! DON'T YOU SEE THAT...



CALM DOWN? WHEN YOU WANT ME T' AGREE T' LIVE IN TH' MIDST O' A GANG O' MURDERERS!

ARE YOU CRAZY? AN' AS FAR AS GIVIN' 'EM MY LAND...

FINE! THEIR SHARE'LL COME OUTTA MINE!



BUT, FOR GOD'S SAKE, LISTEN! TH' WORKERS WE'VE BEEN DESPERATE T' FIND HAVE MIRACULOUSLY FALLEN INTO OUR LIVES!

I'D RATHER SEE 'EM LYNCHED! I'LL NEVER FORGET HOW THEY ALMOST...



WOULD YOU RATHER GO AN' LIVE IN TOWN? I'LL STAY HERE AN' WORK WITH 'EM ON MY HALF O' TH' PLANTATION...

THEY WON'T CAUSE NO TROUBLE! IT'S THEIR ONLY HOPE O' LEAVIN' A LIFE O' CRIME!



THE BOYS ACCEPT YOUR OFFER, CUTLASS! HERE'S TH' SIGNED CONFESSIONS, WITH X'S FOR THEM THAT DON'T KNOW HOW T'WRITE. BUT WE EACH GET A PIECE O' LAND FOR OUR OWN!

LIKE I PROMISED! I THINK THIS'S A GOOD DEAL FOR ALL OF US, BROWN!

NOW, I'VE GOTTA GET AN HOUR OR TWO OF SLEEP! T'MORROW'S GONNA BE A BIG DAY!



THE NEXT MORNING...

WHO'S THERE?

PUT AWAY YOUR ARTILLERY, IT'S ONLY ME! I'M GOIN' INTO TOWN. IF YOU STILL WANNA MOVE, I'LL TAKE YOU!



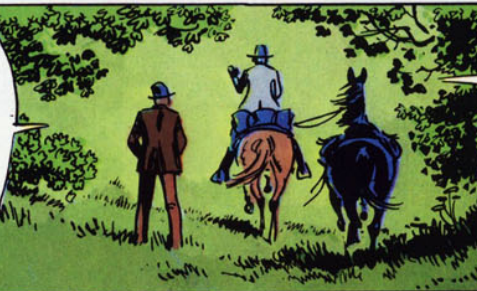
ABANDON CYPRESS LODGE T'THOSE SAVAGES? NEVER! I'M STAYIN'! WITH SOMEONE SNEAKY AS YOU, I'VE GOTTA KEEP MY EYES OPEN!



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF REPAIRIN' T' TAKE CARE OF! I'LL BRING BACK TOOLS AN' SEEDS, ALONG WITH A WAGON AN' A COUPLE OF MULES!

TIMOTHY, ONE O' TH' BOYS I NEVER QUITE TRUSTED, TOOK OFF LAST NIGHT. THERE'S A CHANCE HE'S GONE TO WARN PLAYFAIR...

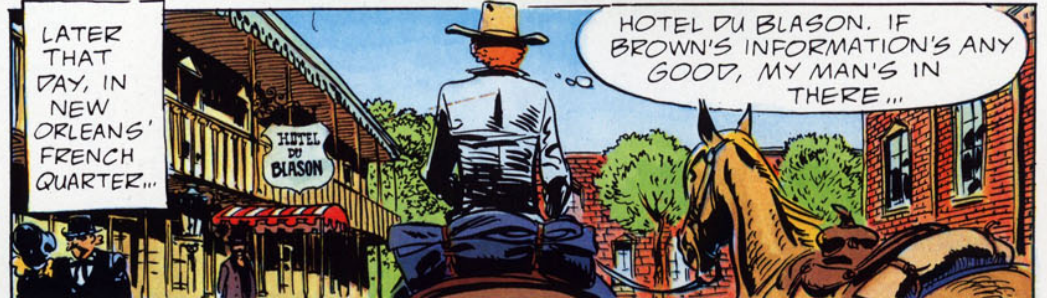


O.K.! I'LL BE DOUBLY CAREFUL! I'M TURNIN' CYPRESS LODGE OVER T' YOU! WATCH OUT FOR CAROLYN! BYE!



WE'LL DO FINE. YOU'RE TH' ONE BEST WATCH OUT!

?



LATER THAT DAY, IN NEW ORLEANS' FRENCH QUARTER...

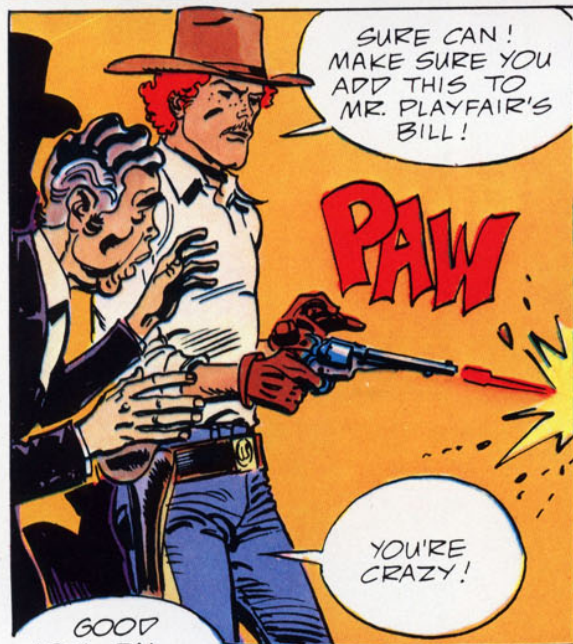
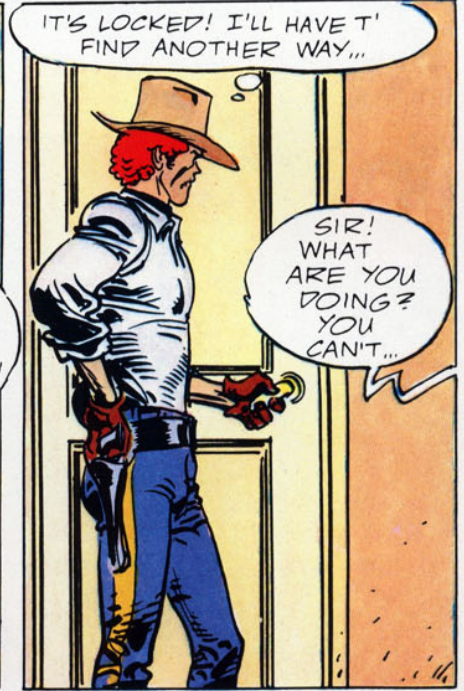
HOTEL DU BLASON. IF BROWN'S INFORMATION'S ANY GOOD, MY MAN'S IN THERE...

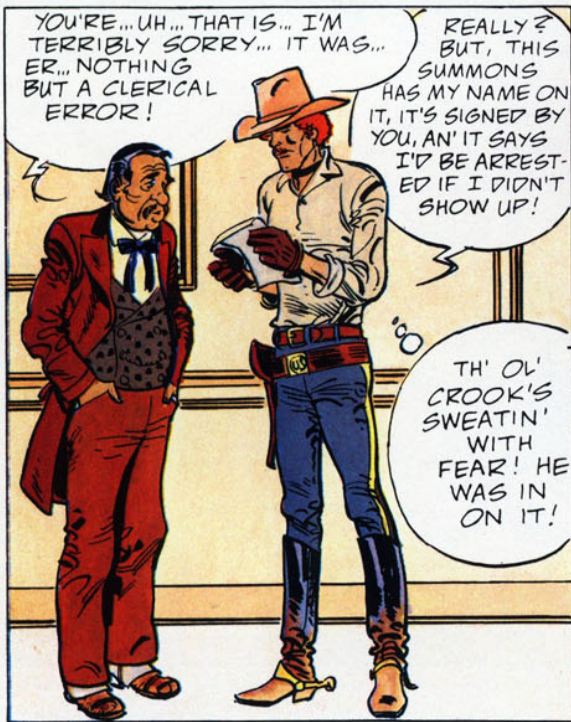
MR. PLAYFAIR? YES, SIR! HE'S STAYIN' HERE, ROOM TEN. BUT HE'S TAKIN' A LI'L NAP JUST NOW, WHO SHOULD I SAY WANTS T' SEE 'IM?



DON'T WORRY 'BOUT THAT! I WANNA SURPRISE HIM!

LET 'ER





YOU'RE... UH... THAT IS... I'M TERRIBLY SORRY... IT WAS... ER... NOTHING BUT A CLERICAL ERROR!

REALLY? BUT, THIS SUMMONS HAS MY NAME ON IT, IT'S SIGNED BY YOU, AN' IT SAYS I'D BE ARRESTED IF I DIDN'T SHOW UP!

TH' OL' CROOK'S SWEATIN' WITH FEAR! HE WAS IN ON IT!



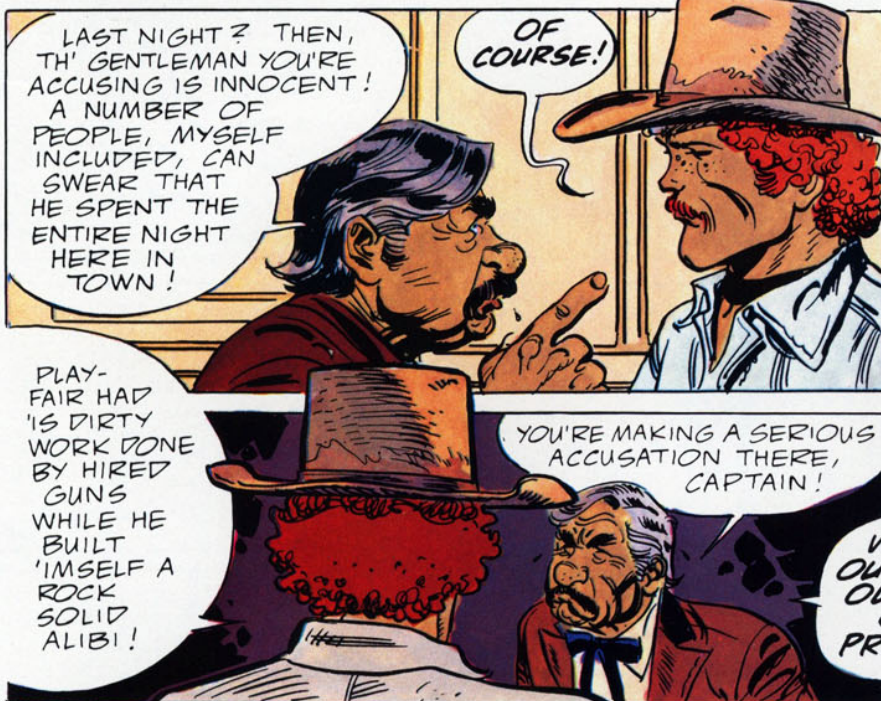
A REGRETTABLE MISTAKE! PLEASE ACCEPT MY PROFOUND APOLOGIES! YOU'VE PUT YOURSELF OUT FOR NOTHING!

DON'T THINK THAT, JUST TH' OPPOSITE! I'VE COME T' SWEAR OUT A COMPLAINT!



A COMPLAINT? AGAINST WHOM?

AGAINST JOHNNIE PLAYFAIR, PROFESSIONAL GAMBLER AN' CARPETBAGGER, FOR ATTEMPTED BLACKMAIL, CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY, AN', SINCE LAST NIGHT, ATTEMPTED MURDER!

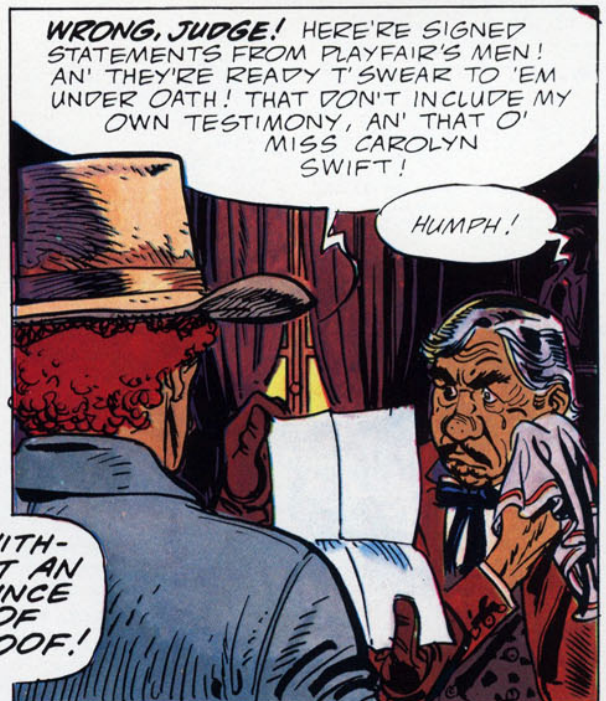


LAST NIGHT? THEN, TH' GENTLEMAN YOU'RE ACCUSING IS INNOCENT! A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, MYSELF INCLUDED, CAN SWEAR THAT HE SPENT THE ENTIRE NIGHT HERE IN TOWN!

OF COURSE!

PLAYFAIR HAD 'IS DIRTY WORK DONE BY HIRED GUNS WHILE HE BUILT 'IMSELF A ROCK SOLID ALIBI!

YOU'RE MAKING A SERIOUS ACCUSATION THERE, CAPTAIN!



WRONG, JUDGE! HERE'RE SIGNED STATEMENTS FROM PLAYFAIR'S MEN! AN' THEY'RE READY T' SWEAR TO 'EM UNDER OATH! THAT DON'T INCLUDE MY OWN TESTIMONY, AN' THAT O' MISS CAROLYN SWIFT!

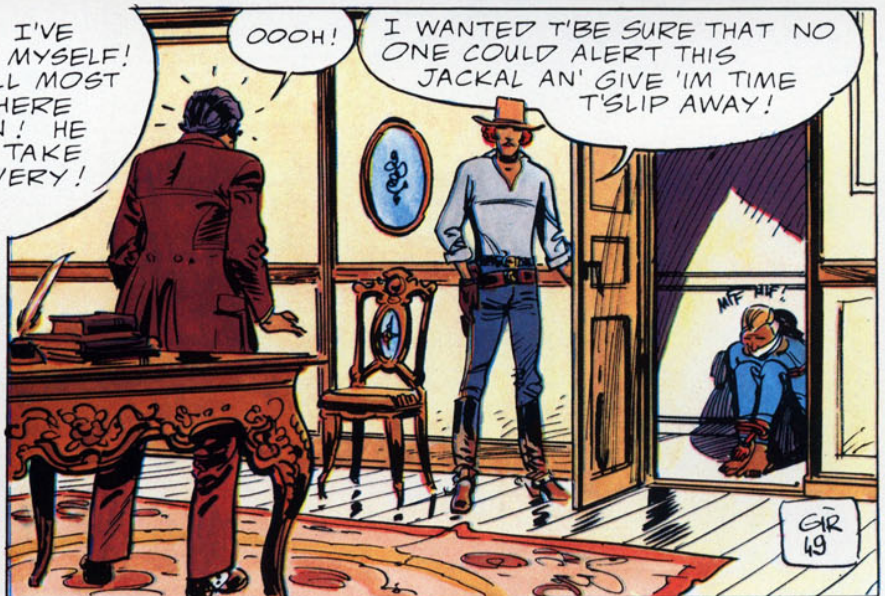
HUMPH!

WITH-OUT AN OUNCE OF PROOF!



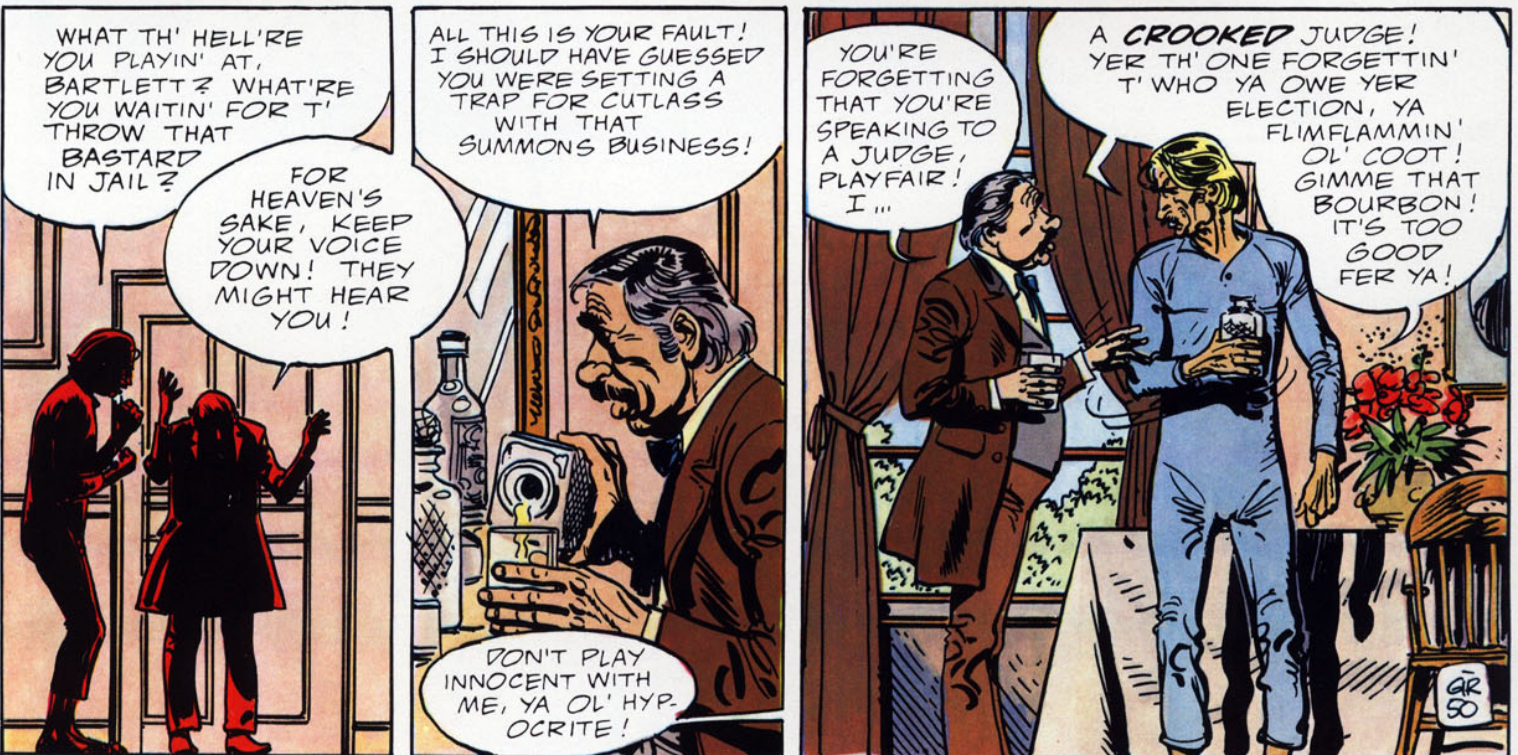
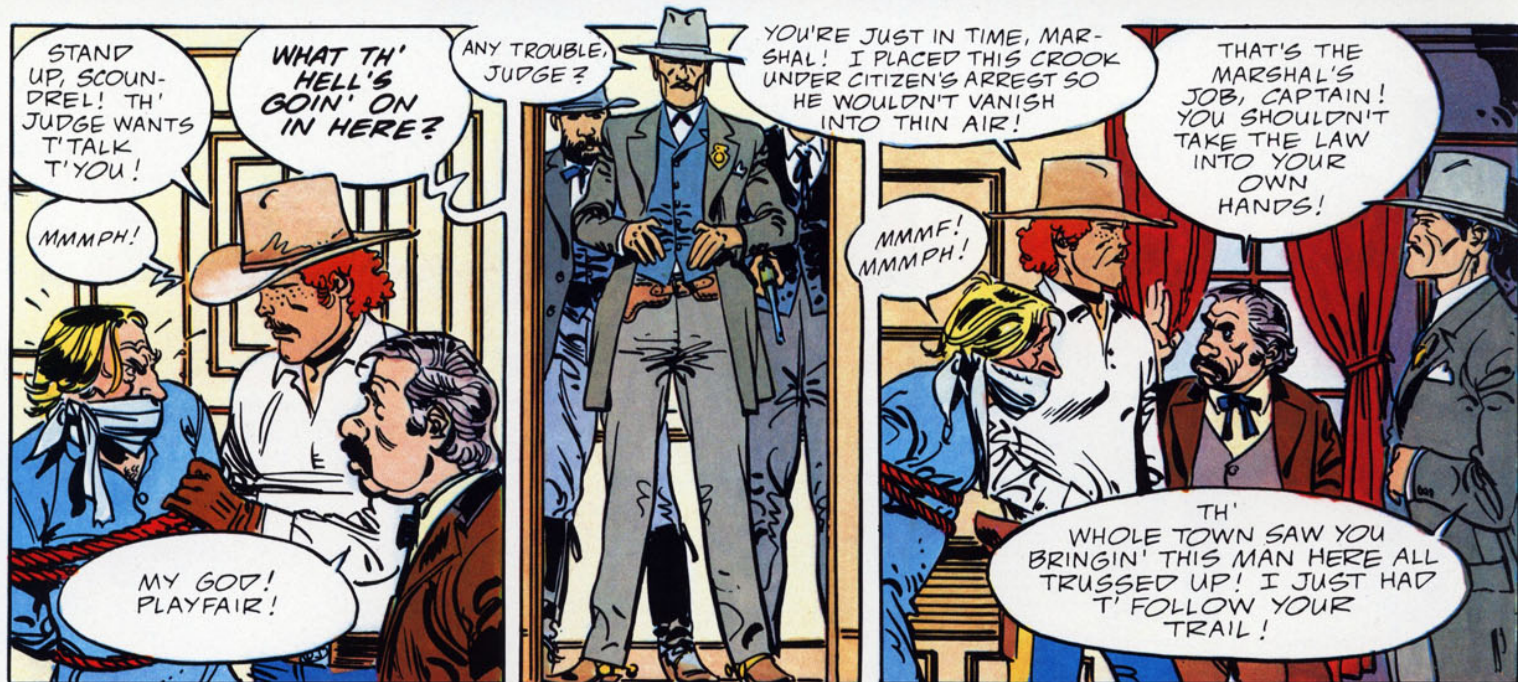
WELL, ER... I'LL CERTAINLY SEND THE MARSHAL... HE'LL... UH... INTERROGATE THE SUSPECT AND... UH...

NO NEED, JUDGE! I'VE BROUGHT 'IM HERE MYSELF! AN' TH' MARSHAL'LL MOST LIKELY GET HERE SOON! HE CAN TAKE DELIVERY!



OOOH!

I WANTED T'BE SURE THAT NO ONE COULD ALERT THIS JACKAL AN' GIVE 'IM TIME T'SLIP AWAY!





FOR GOD'S SAKE, BE SERIOUS! THAT TROUBLEMAKER, CUTLASS, HAS DAMAGING PROOF AGAINST YOU! I'LL CREATE A HORRIBLE SCANDAL THAT WILL DRAG US BOTH DOWN!

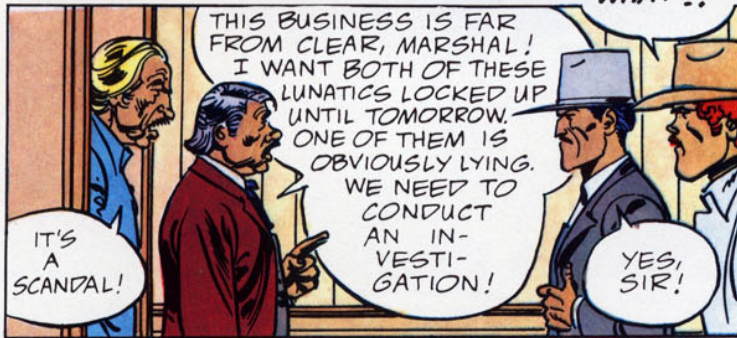
DON'T TAKE ON SO, JUDGE! I'VE GOT A PLAN! HERE'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO...

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THAT WILL DO, 'PLAYFAIR!

I PROTEST! IT'S A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE! I DEMAND T'BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY!

WHAT?!



THIS BUSINESS IS FAR FROM CLEAR, MARSHAL! I WANT BOTH OF THESE LUNATICS LOCKED UP UNTIL TOMORROW. ONE OF THEM IS OBVIOUSLY LYING. WE NEED TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION!

IT'S A SCANDAL!

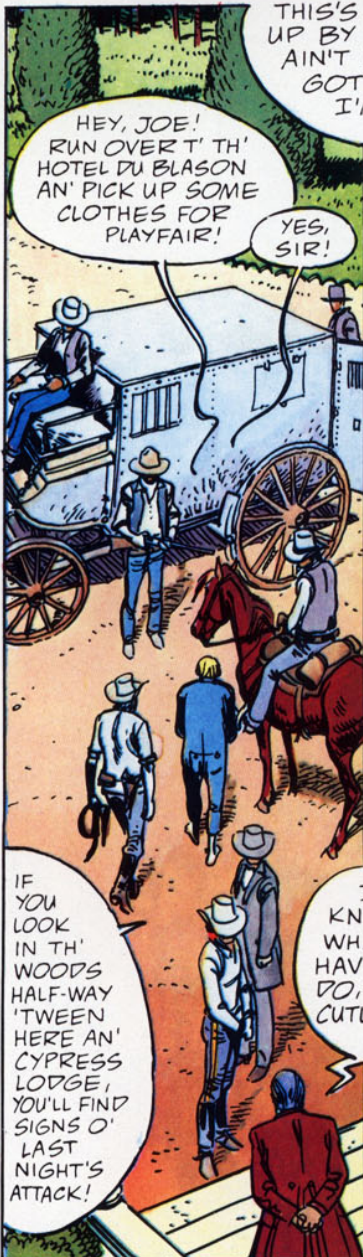
YES, SIR!



HEY! JUST SO THERE'S NO MISTAKE, I'M TH' VICTIM IN THIS BUSINESS, AN' I...

JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED, CAPTAIN!

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO! IT'S JAIL FOR YOU!



THIS'S AN ODIOUS PLOT COOKED UP BY THAT REPROBATE! I AIN'T DONE NOTHIN'! I'VE GOT WITNESSES TOO! I'M INNOCENT!

HEY, JOE! RUN OVER T' TH' HOTEL DU BLASON AN' PICK UP SOME CLOTHES FOR PLAYFAIR!

YES, SIR!



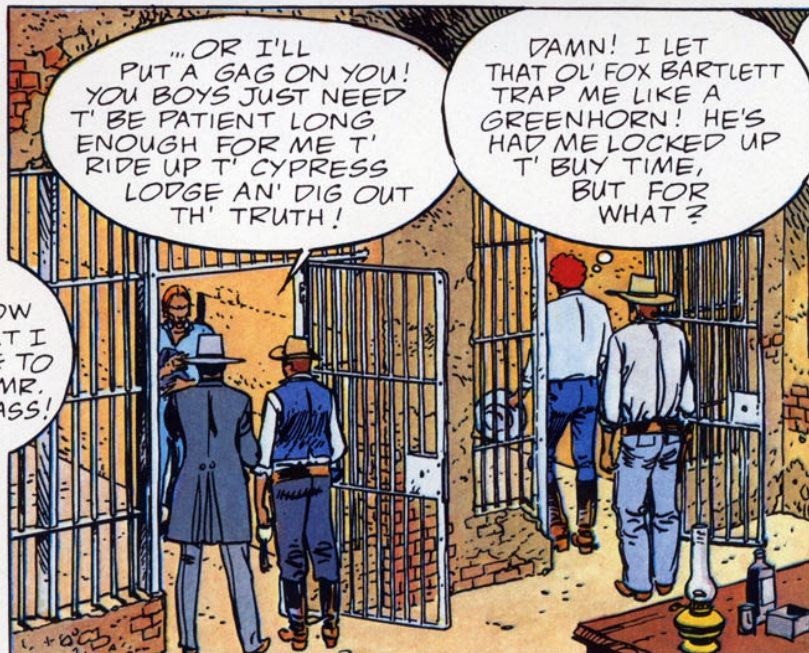
THEN, YOU'VE GOT NOTHIN' TO FEAR FROM JUSTICE, MR. PLAYFAIR! MEANWHILE, I WANT BOTH OF YOU UNDER LOCK AND KEY!



AN HOUR LATER, AT THE WEST SIDE PRISON...

YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, CUTLASS! I AIN'T MIXED UP WITH NO GANG O' DARKIES! IT'S ALL A PLOT SO'S YOU CAN KEEP MY \$2,500!

SHUT UP, PLAYFAIR!



...OR I'LL PUT A GAG ON YOU! YOU BOYS JUST NEED T' BE PATIENT LONG ENOUGH FOR ME T' RIDE UP T' CYPRESS LODGE AN' DIG OUT TH' TRUTH!

DAMN! I LET THAT OL' FOX BARTLETT TRAP ME LIKE A GREENHORN! HE'S HAD ME LOCKED UP T' BUY TIME, BUT FOR WHAT?



PLAYFAIR AN' HIM MUST'VE COOKED SOME-THIN' UP IN 'IS OFFICE... GOOD LORD! I KNOW WHAT IT IS, SURE AS IF I THOUGHT OF IT, MYSELF! THEY'RE GONNA GET RID O' ME, HERE AN' NOW!

IF YOU LOOK IN TH' WOODS HALF-WAY 'TWEEN HERE AN' CYPRESS LODGE, YOU'LL FIND SIGNS O' LAST NIGHT'S ATTACK!

I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO, MR. CUTLASS!

AS NIGHT FALLS, CUTLASS'S APPREHENSION GROWS...



SUPPER, THEN LIGHTS OUT, BOYS! SLIP YOUR EMPTY BOWLS THROUGH TH' BARS!

T'MORROW, BARTLETT'LL BE FORCED TO LET ME OUT. IF SOMETHIN'S GONNA HAPPEN, IT'LL BE T'NIGHT...

HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED T'GET ANY SLEEP WITH THAT DARN LAMP BURNIN'?



INSOMNIA, HUH? O.K., PLAYFAIR, WE'LL MAKE DO WITH THE L'I'L LANTERN!

YUCK! THIS CHOW'S INEDIBLE!

AN' THAT BUSINESS WITH TH' LAMP'S MIGHTY PECULIAR. BUT TH' DARKNESS MIGHT HELP ME OUT SOME!



MEANWHILE, IN TOWN...

IT'S AWFUL RISKY, BOSS! YOU'VE GOTTA CROSS OVER A WALL, AN' TH' GUARDS'LL BE MAKIN' ROUNDS...

ONE O' TH' GUARDS WORKS FOR US. THERE WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE IF YOU DO EXACTLY AS YOU'RE TOLD. YOU'RE T'ACT AT EXACTLY TWO O'CLOCK...



LATER...

WHAT'S GOIN' ON? I CAN BARELY KEEP MY EYES OPEN, AN' ALL TH' OTHER PRISONERS'RE SNORIN' T'BEAT TH' BAND! TH' FOOD MUST'VE BEEN DRUGGED! LUCKY I HARDLY TOUCHED IT!



LISTEN T' THAT SNORIN'! EVEN PLAYFAIR'S SLEEPIN' LIKE A BABY. LIGHT THAT LAMP BACK UP, TOM, I CAN'T SEE A THING.

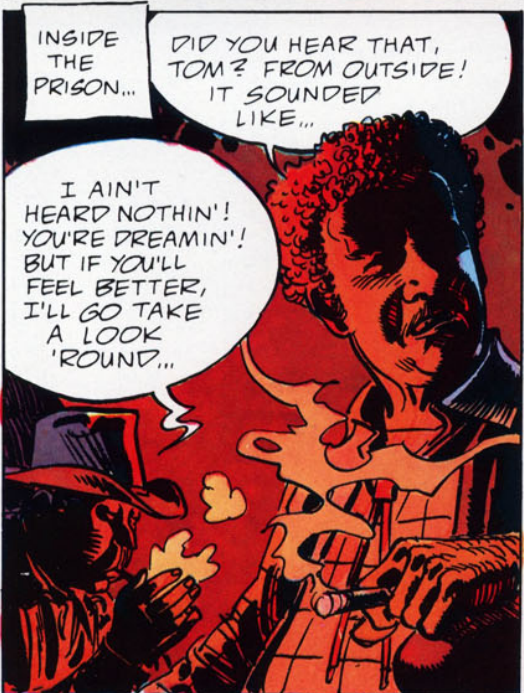
NAH! IT'LL WAKE 'EM UP! FOR ONCE WE'VE GOT A L'I'L PEACE AN' QUIET, LET'S CATCH A FEW WINKS OURSELVES!



MEANWHILE...

DONG DONG

IT'S TIME! TH' CELLS'RE JUST BEHIND THIS WALL. I NEED TH' THIRD FROM TH' LEFT!



INSIDE THE PRISON...

DID YOU HEAR THAT, TOM? FROM OUTSIDE! IT SOUNDED LIKE...

I AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN'! YOU'RE DREAMIN'! BUT IF YOU'LL FEEL BETTER, I'LL GO TAKE A LOOK 'ROUND...



AT THE SAME TIME, IN CUTLASS'S CELL...



GIR 52



WHAT'S THAT
RUSTLIN'
NOISE?



A WATER
MOCCASSIN!



MARSHAL!
HELP!
A
SNAKE!



A SNAKE? FOR LORD'S
SAKE, WHERE?
WHERE?

IN
MY CELL!
ON TH' COT!
HURRY!



BUT...

WHERE'S
THIS
SNAKE?
YOU
DREAMIN'
OR SOME-
THIN'?



IT WAS
A WATER MOCCA-
SIN ATTACHED T' A
CORD. SOMEONE
LOWERED IT, THEN
PULLED IT BACK UP
THROUGH TH' WINDOW!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED, BUT IT DIDN'T
WORK, THAT'S FOR SURE!



THERE YOU ARE! DID
YOU SEE OR HEAR
ANYTHING STRANGE
OUTSIDE?

LISTEN
T' ME, DEPUTY! SOME-
ONE SLIPPED A SNAKE
THROUGH TH' WINDOW! IF I
HADN'T BEEN HIDIN' 'NEATH MY
COT, AN' MADE IT LOOK
LIKE I WAS ON IT...

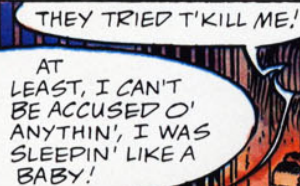


I CIRCLED TH' WHOLE BUILDING,
AN' I DIDN'T
EVEN SEE A
MOUSE!

SHUT
UP!

WE
CAN'T GET
ANY SHUT-EYE
WITH ALL THAT
RACKET!

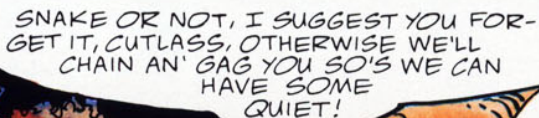
IT'S THAT
CUTLASS, CAUSIN'
TROUBLE
AGAIN!



I THINK IT WAS A
TRICK T'STEAL YOUR GUN
AN' ESCAPE!

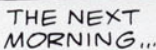
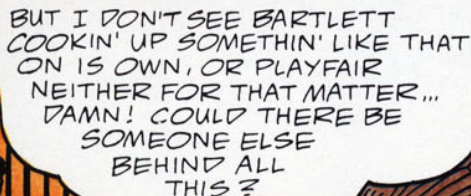
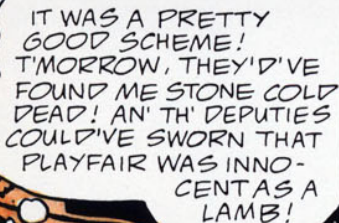
THIS
BOY SURE IS
SUSPICIOUS--
AN' SMART!

DEPUTY!
HELP! THERE'S
A SPIDER IN
MY CELL!
HA! HA!



TH'
REST O'
YOU, GET
BACK T'
SLEEP!

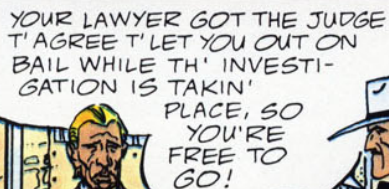
HE'S
IN WITH 'EM!
HE HAD T'VE SEEN
TH' KILLER
WHEN HE WAS
OUTSIDE!



SO THERE
YA ARE,
MARSHAL!
HAS THE
JUDGE
SEEN MY
LAWYER?

FIRST THING THIS MORNIN'.
AN' IT DON'T LOOK TOO
BAD FOR YOU;
MORNIN' TOM!
ANY PROBLEMS?

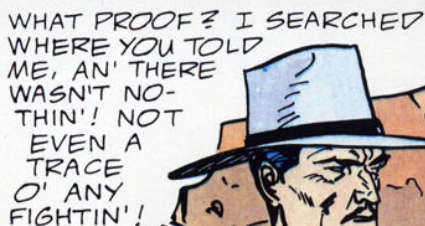
HOWDY,
MARSHAL!
NOPE, NO
TROUBLE



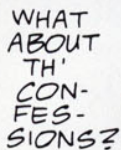
PLACE, SO
YOU'RE
FREE TO
GO!

GOOD!

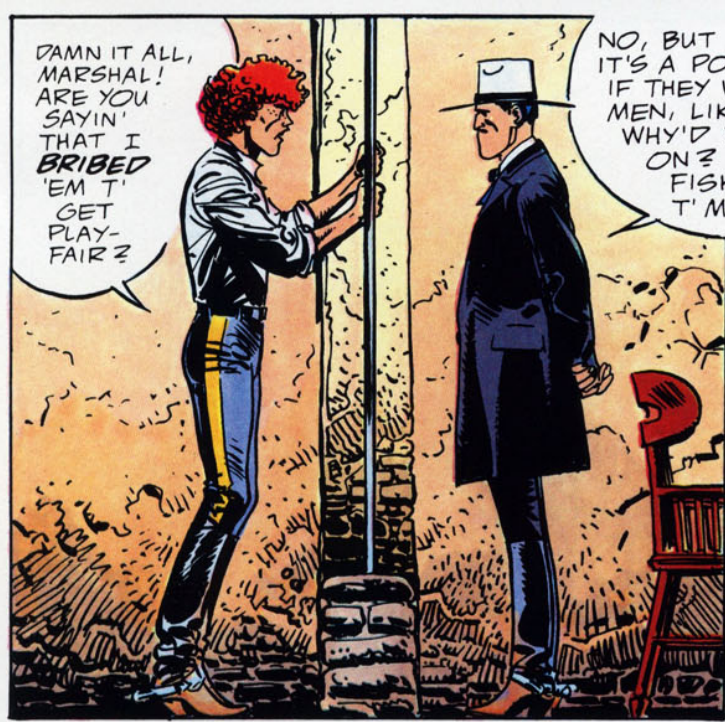
WHAT?
IN
SPITE
O' ALL
TH'
PROOF
I GAVE
YOU?



OF COURSE! HIS
BUDDIES HAD
MORE'N
ENOUGH
TIME T'
CLEAN UP
TH' EVI-
DENCE!



THESE MEN
ARE ALL WORKIN'
FOR YOU,
CAPTAIN.
THEY'D BE
WILLIN'
T' SIGN
ANYTHIN'
UNDER
THOSE
CONDITIONS!



DAMN IT ALL, MARSHAL! ARE YOU SAYIN' THAT I BRIBED 'EM T' GET PLAYFAIR?

NO, BUT I'M SAYIN' THAT IT'S A POSSIBILITY. 'SIDES, IF THEY WERE PLAYFAIR'S MEN, LIKE YOU SAY, WHY'D YOU HIRE 'EM ON? SEEMS FISHY T' ME...



DAMN IT!

ANYWAY, YOU'D NEVER FIND A JURY ANYWHERE THAT'D TAKE A BLACK MAN'S WORD 'GAINST A WHITE MAN'S, NO MATTER HOW MANY BIBLES HE SWORE ON!



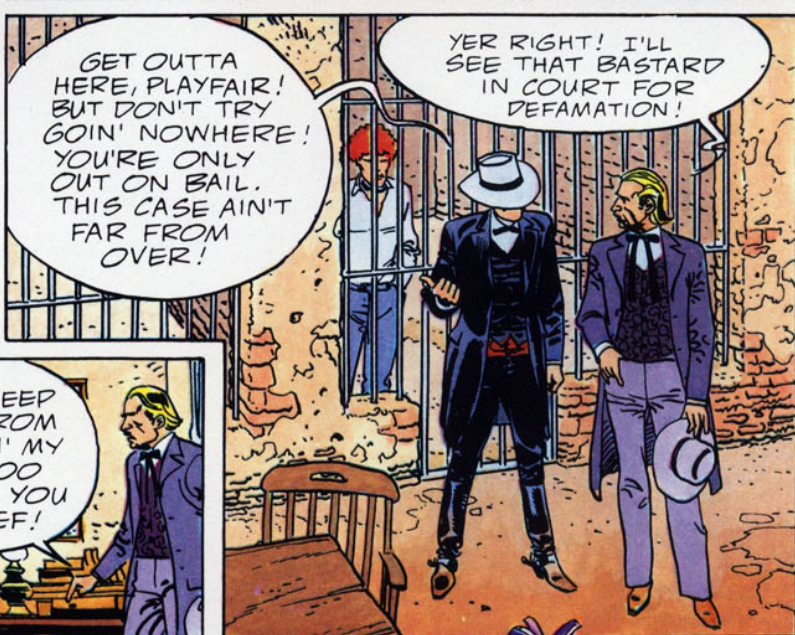
ON TOP O' THAT, UNDER QUESTIONIN', THEY ALL DENIED SIGNIN' ANY SUCH THING!

WHAT?



THEY MUST'VE BEEN TERRIFIED O' BEIN' ARRESTED, BUT WHAT ABOUT MY COUSIN'S TESTIMONY?

NOPE! SHE DENIED EVER'THIN' TOO!



GET OUTTA HERE, PLAYFAIR! BUT DON'T TRY GOIN' NOWHERE! YOU'RE ONLY OUT ON BAIL. THIS CASE AIN'T FAR FROM OVER!

YER RIGHT! I'LL SEE THAT BASTARD IN COURT FOR DEFAMATION!



WHAT? CAROLYN? NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WHAT'S HAPPENIN'? MARSHAL, WHY ON EARTH'D I INVENT SUCH A STORY?

TO KEEP ME FROM GETTIN' MY \$2,500 BACK, YOU THIEF!



I WANNA SEE THAT SKUNK BARTLETT RIGHT NOW!

CALM DOWN, CAPTAIN! I'M GONNA LET YOU GO TOO, BUT IF I WAS YOU, I WOULDN'T GO BOTHERIN' TH' JUDGE. HE MIGHT SLAP YOU BACK INSIDE!



AN HOUR LATER...

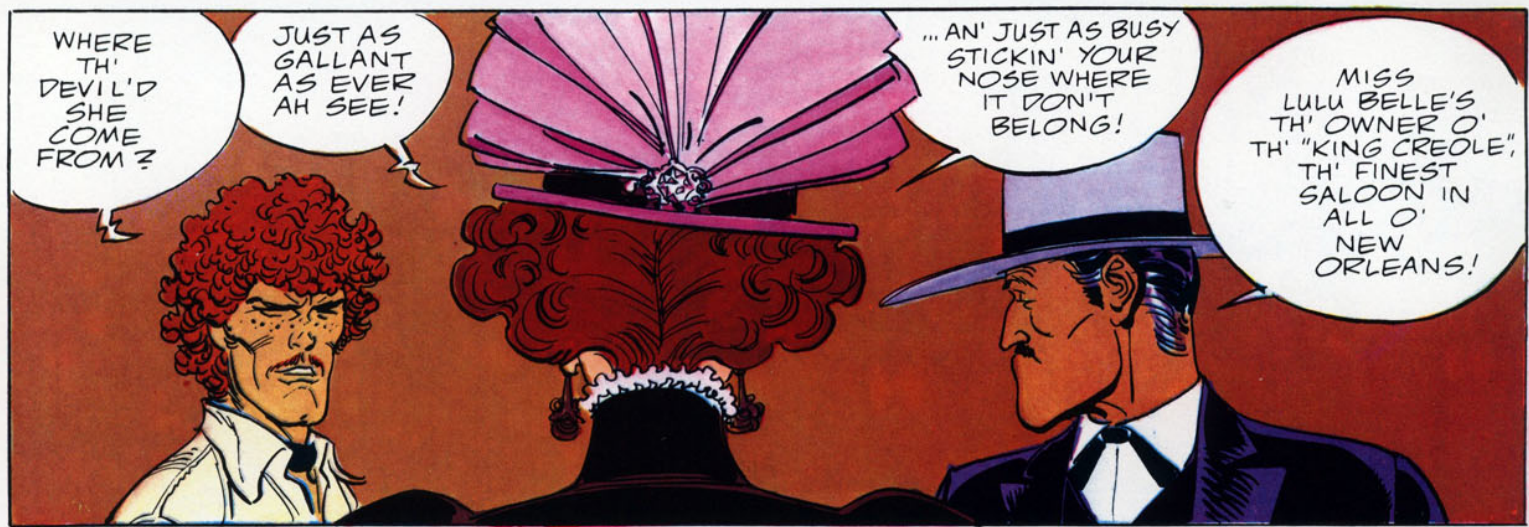
NO QUESTION 'BOUT YOU STAYIN' IN TOWN, GOT IT? I DON'T WANT NO MORE TROUBLE 'TWEEN YOU AN' PLAYFAIR!

I'VE GOT MORE URGENT BUSINESS, MARSHAL! FIRST, I WANNA KNOW WHO PAID THAT SWAMP RAT'S BAIL!



AH DID!

WELL, I'LL BE! LULU BELLE!



WHERE TH' DEVIL'D SHE COME FROM?

JUST AS GALLANT AS EVER AH SEE!

... AN' JUST AS BUSY STICKIN' YOUR NOSE WHERE IT DON'T BELONG!

MISS LULU BELLE'S TH' OWNER O' TH' "KING CREOLE", TH' FINEST SALOON IN ALL O' NEW ORLEANS!



I CAN SEE THAT FROM HERE! PLAY-FAIR'S YOUR PARTNER?

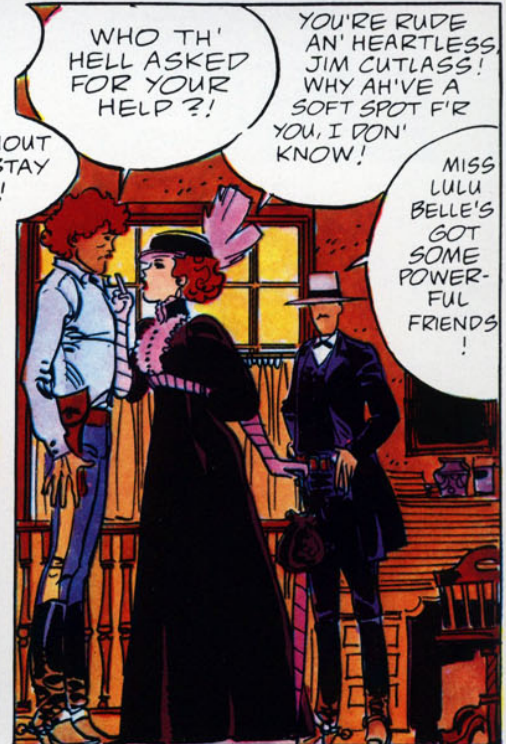
NOTHIN' 'TWEEN ME AN' THAT PITIFUL CREATURE FOR AGES, SUGAH, BUT AH'VE GOT A KIND HEART, AN' WHEN AN' OL' FRIEND'S IN TROUBLE...



I'D SAY YOUR "KIND HEART" WILL WIND UP COSTING YOU A BUNDLE THIS TIME, LULU BELLE!

DON'T GO COMPLAININ', SUGAH, AH PAID YOUR BAIL TOO!

YEP! WITHOUT HER, YOU'D STAY IN STIR!



WHO TH' HELL ASKED FOR YOUR HELP?!

YOU'RE RUDE AN' HEARTLESS, JIM CUTLASS! WHY AH'VE A SOFT SPOT F'R YOU, I DON' KNOW!

MISS LULU BELLE'S GOT SOME POWERFUL FRIENDS!



LIKE JUDGE BARTLETT MAYBE? I BET HE'S GOT 'IS OWN IDEAS 'BOUT WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, I'M GONNA FORCE 'IM T'SHOW ME 'IS HAND RIGHT NOW!

STOP! DON'T DO IT, SON!

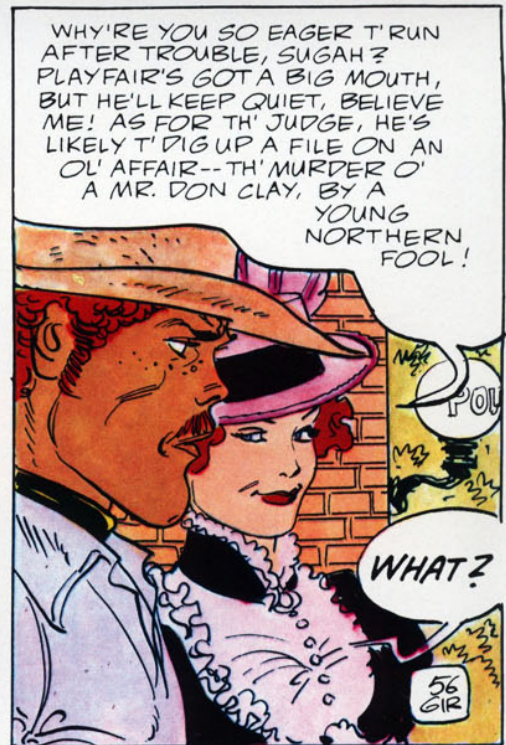


GET OUTTA TOWN, CUTLASS! GO BACK AN' TAKE CARE O' CYPRESS LODGE AN' YOUR COUSIN! IT'S THAT OR JAIL! GOT IT? AN' NO BAIL NEXT TIME!

LET ME HANDLE THIS, MARSHAL!

AH'LL TAKE HIM, MARSHAL!

GIVE ME YOUR ARM, YOU HOT-HEADED SOLDIER BOY!



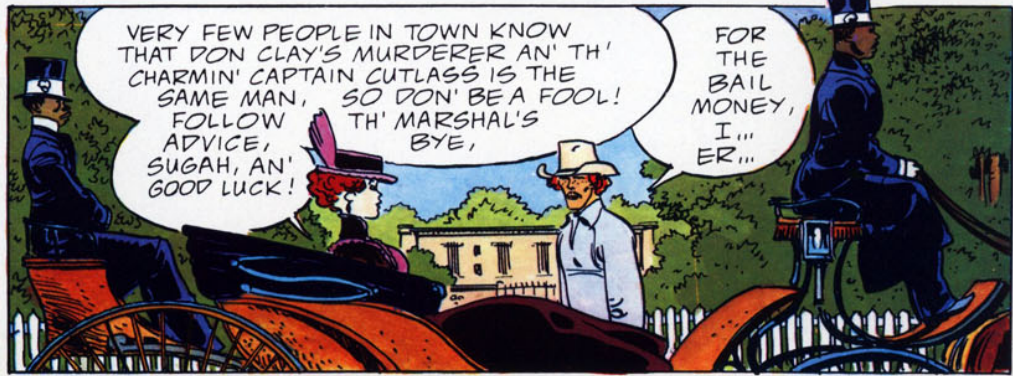
WHY'RE YOU SO EAGER T'RUN AFTER TROUBLE, SUGAH? PLAYFAIR'S GOT A BIG MOUTH, BUT HE'LL KEEP QUIET, BELIEVE ME! AS FOR TH' JUDGE, HE'S LIKELY T'DIG UP A FILE ON AN OL' AFFAIR--TH' MURDER O' A MR. DON CLAY, BY A YOUNG NORTHERN FOOL!

WHAT?



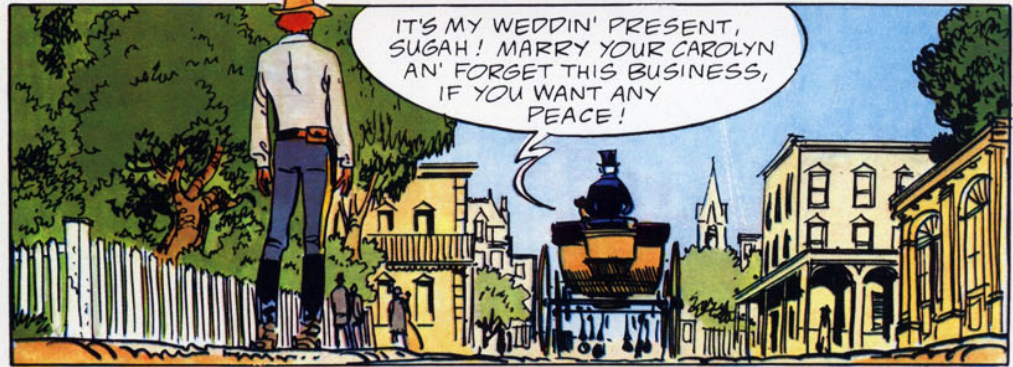
THAT WAS
IN SELF
DEFENSE!
THAT
FILTHY
BASTARD
WAS
PREPARIN'
T'
MURDER
ME!

CAN YOU PROVE
IT, SUGAH? YOU
RAN AWAY, RIGHT?
AS FAR AS
EVER'ONE ELSE'S
CONCERNED, YOU
KILLED DON!
HIM BEIN' A
MURDERIN'
BASTARD'S NO
EXCUSE, 'SPECIALLY
FOR A SOUTHERN
JURY!



VERY FEW PEOPLE IN TOWN KNOW
THAT DON CLAY'S MURDERER AN' TH'
CHARMIN' CAPTAIN CUTLASS IS THE
SAME MAN, SO DON' BE A FOOL!
FOLLOW
ADVICE,
SUGAH, AN'
GOOD LUCK!

FOR THE
BAIL
MONEY,
I...
ER...



IT'S MY WEDDIN' PRESENT,
SUGAH! MARRY YOUR CAROLYN
AN' FORGET THIS BUSINESS,
IF YOU WANT ANY
PEACE!



MEANWHILE

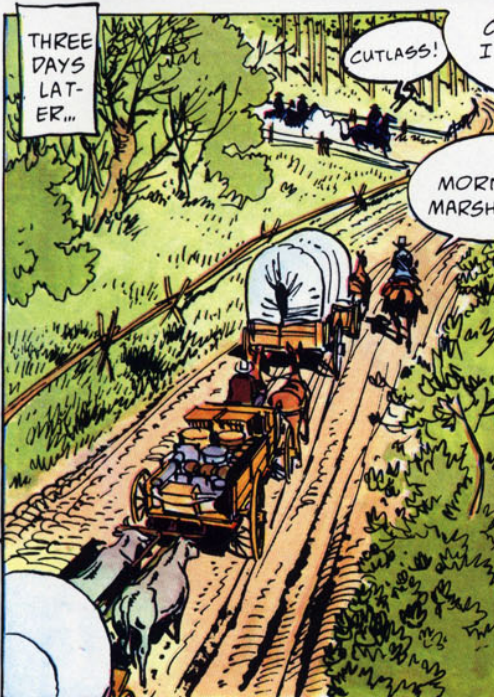
THAT YANKEE
BASTARD OUT-
WITTED TH'
SNAKE TRICK!
THIS TIME,
I'LL TAKE
CARE O' HIM
MYSELF...

NO! YOU'RE AL-
READY IN TOO DEEP,
AN' CUTLASS'S TOO
SMART! IT'S BETTER
YOU DISAPPEAR FOR
A WHILE! GIVE 'IS
SUSPICIOUS NATURE
ENOUGH TIME T'COOL
DOWN, SO HE ISN'T
SO VIGILANT--
NEXT TIME!

DISAPPEAR?
BUT WHAT
ABOUT
THE BAIL
MONEY?



BAH! I TOOK CARE
O' THAT WITH BARTLETT!
AS FOR CUTLASS,
WE'LL GET 'IM YET,
BUT ANOTHER TIME,
AN' ANOTHER
WAY!

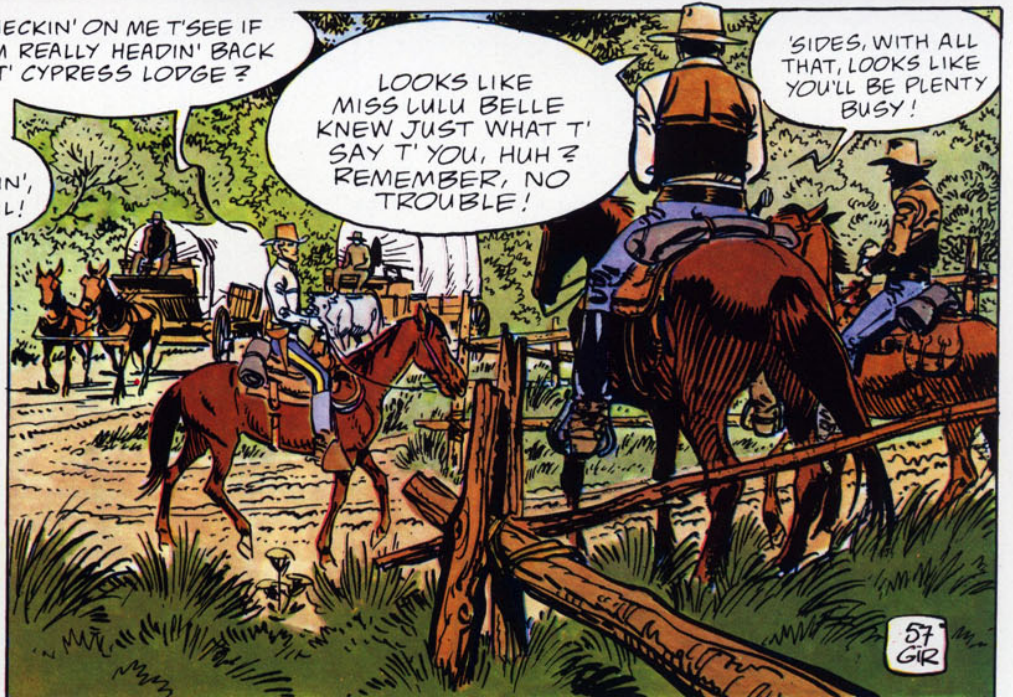


THREE
DAYS
LAT-
ER...

CUTLASS!

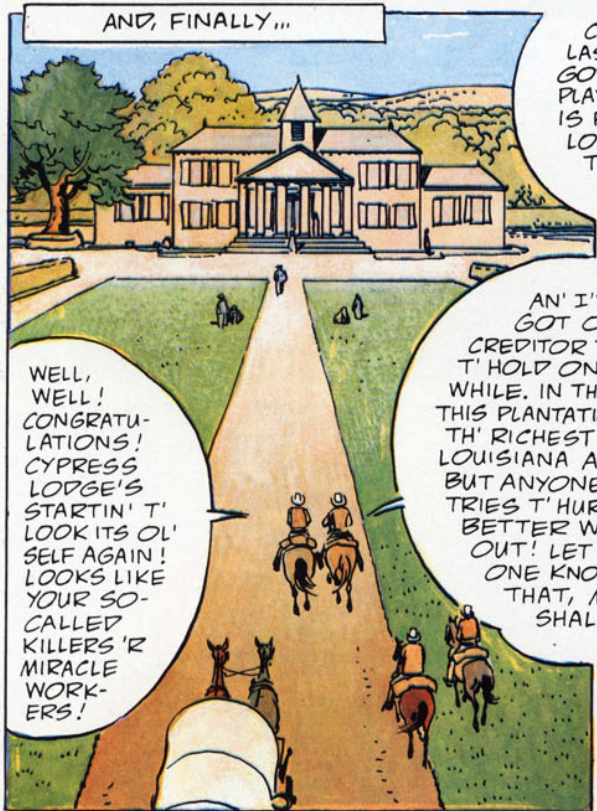
CHECKIN' ON ME T'SEE IF
I'M REALLY HEADIN' BACK
T' CYPRESS LODGE?

MORNIN',
MARSHAL!



LOOKS LIKE
MISS LULU BELLE
KNEW JUST WHAT T'
SAY T' YOU, HUH?
REMEMBER, NO
TROUBLE!

'SIDES, WITH ALL
THAT, LOOKS LIKE
YOU'LL BE PLENTY
BUSY!

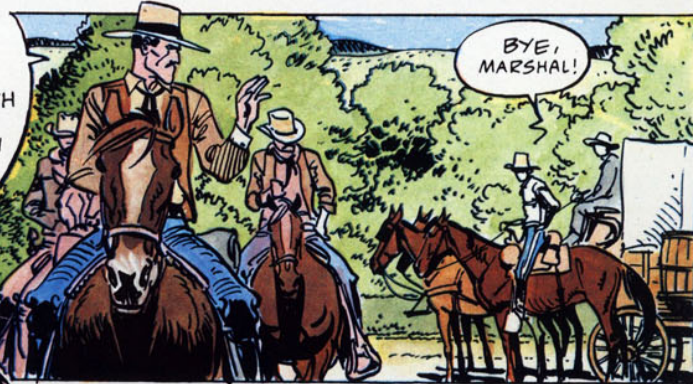


AND, FINALLY...

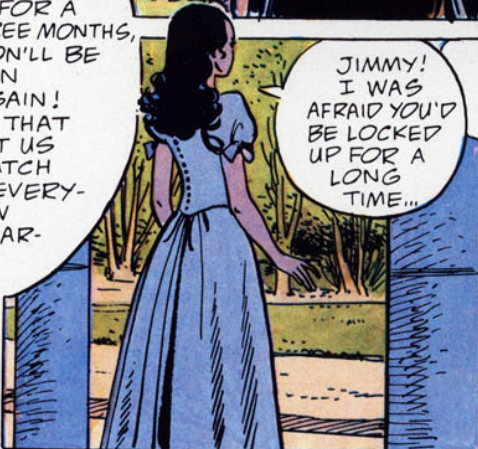
WELL, WELL! CONGRATULATIONS! CYPRESS LODGE'S STARTIN' T' LOOK ITS OL' SELF AGAIN! LOOKS LIKE YOUR SO-CALLED KILLERS 'R MIRACLE WORKERS!

AN' I'VE GOT OUR CREDITOR T' AGREE T' HOLD ON FOR A WHILE. IN THREE MONTHS, THIS PLANTATION'LL BE TH' RICHEST IN LOUISIANA AGAIN! BUT ANYONE THAT TRIES T' HURT US BETTER WATCH OUT! LET EVERYONE KNOW THAT, MARSHAL!

COUNT ON ME, CUTLASS! BUT YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' T' FEAR. PLAYFAIR'S GONE, WHICH IS POOR LULU BELLE'S LOSS! I'LL LEAVE YOU T' YOUR PRETTY COUSIN NOW! SO LONG!

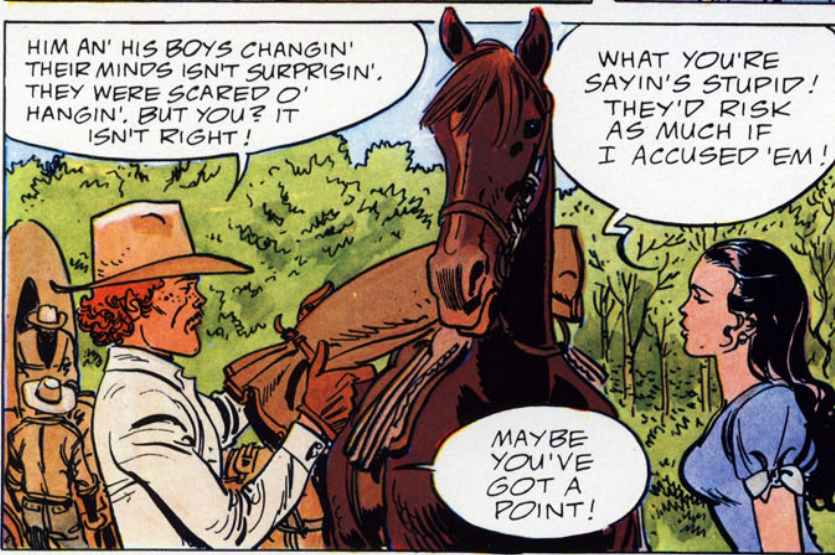
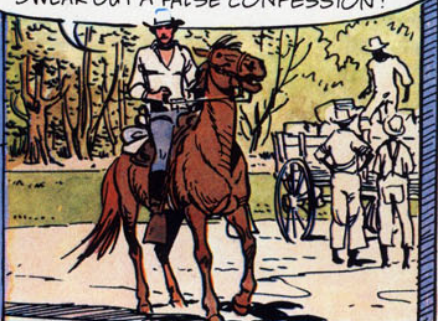


BYE, MARSHAL!



JIMMY! I WAS AFRAID YOU'D BE LOCKED UP FOR A LONG TIME...

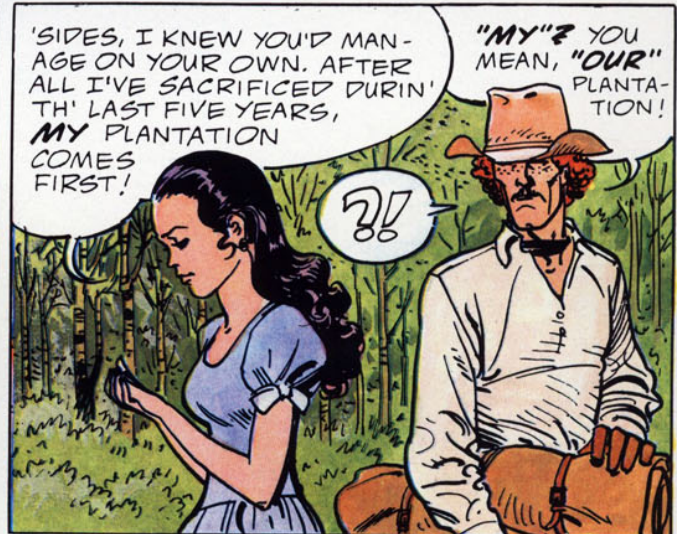
I'VE GOTTA ADMIT YOU DIDN'T DO MUCH T' HELP, CAROLYN! TELLIN' TH' MARSHAL THAT I GOT BROWN T' SWEAR OUT A FALSE CONFESSION!



HIM AN' HIS BOYS CHANGIN' THEIR MINDS ISN'T SURPRISIN', THEY WERE SCARED O' HANGIN'. BUT YOU? IT ISN'T RIGHT!

WHAT YOU'RE SAYIN'S STUPID! THEY'D RISK AS MUCH IF I ACCUSED 'EM!

MAYBE YOU'VE GOT A POINT!



'SIDES, I KNEW YOU'D MAN-AGE ON YOUR OWN. AFTER ALL I'VE SACRIFICED DURIN' TH' LAST FIVE YEARS, MY PLANTATION COMES FIRST!

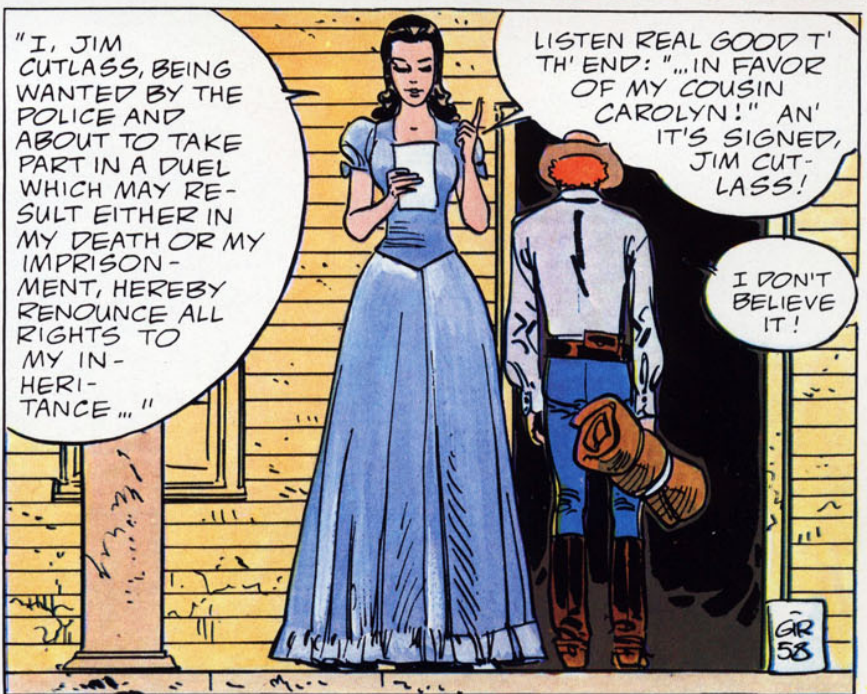
"MY"? YOU MEAN, "OUR" PLANTATION!

??



NO, "MY" PLANTATION, JIM! YOU FORGOT THAT PAPER YOU SIGNED WAY BACK AT TH' LAWYER'S OFFICE, JUST 'FORE YOU SHOT DON CLAY. RIGHT AFTER YOU RAN OFF, I TOOK IT FROM 'IS OWN HAND!

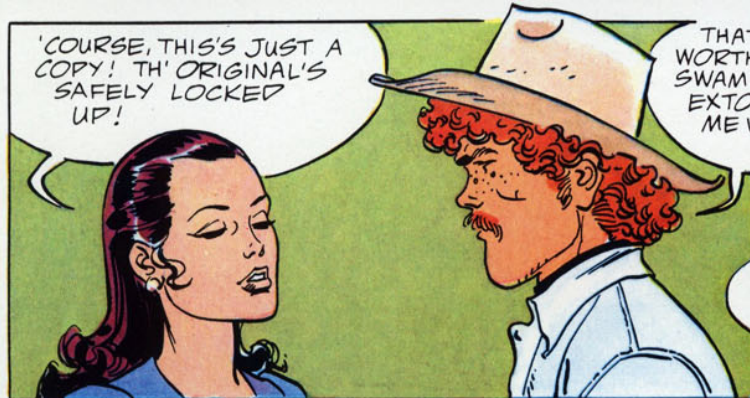
WHAT?!



"I, JIM CUTLASS, BEING WANTED BY THE POLICE AND ABOUT TO TAKE PART IN A DUEL WHICH MAY RESULT EITHER IN MY DEATH OR MY IMPRISONMENT, HEREBY RENOUNCE ALL RIGHTS TO MY INHERITANCE..."

LISTEN REAL GOOD T' TH' END: "...IN FAVOR OF MY COUSIN CAROLYN!" AN' IT'S SIGNED, JIM CUTLASS!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!



THAT PAPER'S WORTHLESS! THAT SWAMP RAT CLAY EXTORTED IT FROM ME WITH THREATS!

AN' HOW'RE YOU GOIN' T' PROVE IT?



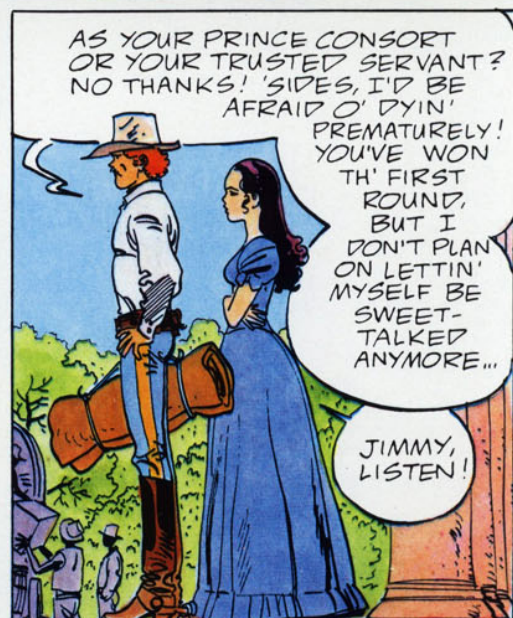
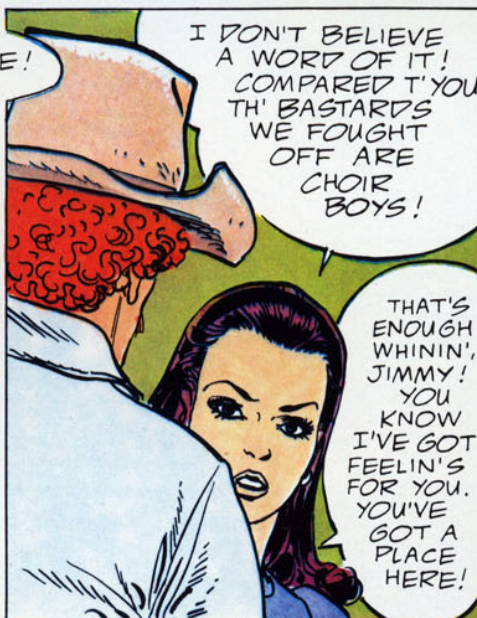
COMPARED TO YOU, TH' SNAKE THEY THREW AT ME TH' OTHER NIGHT WAS CUDDLY AS A KITTEN! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU REALLY TOOK ME FOR A RIDE!



PLEASE!

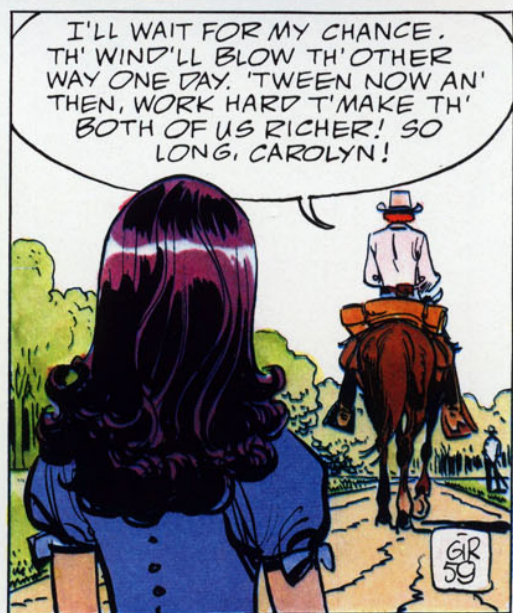
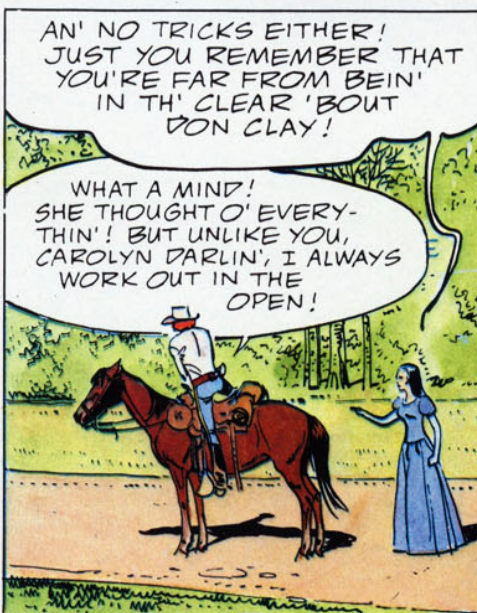
I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT! COMPARED T' YOU, TH' BASTARDS WE FOUGHT OFF ARE CHOIR BOYS!

THAT'S ENOUGH WHININ', JIMMY! YOU KNOW I'VE GOT FEELIN'S FOR YOU. YOU'VE GOT A PLACE HERE!



AN' NO TRICKS EITHER! JUST YOU REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE FAR FROM BEIN' IN TH' CLEAR 'BOUT DON CLAY!

WHAT A MIND! SHE THOUGHT O' EVERYTHIN'! BUT UNLIKE YOU, CAROLYN DARLIN', I ALWAYS WORK OUT IN THE OPEN!



THERE'S ALWAYS A PLACE FOR YOU AT CYPRESS LODGE, JIM! YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WELCOME! BUT GIVE UP YOUR FOOLISH HOPES!

JIM!

TWO WEEKS LATER...

WELL, LOOK WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN!

WHY, IF IT AIN'T THE LAND OWNER!

I'LL BE! CUTLASS'S BACK, SMELLING OF DOUGH AND DRESSED LIKE ROYALTY!

AND NOT PROUD EITHER! HA HA!

SOON AFTER...

TAKE YOU BACK? I'LL BE DARNED! IT SEEMS I "FORGOT" TO SEND IN YOUR LETTER OF RESIGNATION! GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, JIM! SIT DOWN AND HAVE A CIGAR...

THANK YOU, SIR!

YOU COULD'VE JUST WAITED RIGHT THERE FOR US. WE'RE HEADING OUT FOR LOUISIANA IN THREE DAYS!

AND YOUR PROPERTY IN THE SUN? DID IT MELT AWAY?

IT'S PROSPERIN', SIR! MY DEAR COUSIN'S TAKIN' CARE OF IT. BUT BE ABLE T'WATCH IT FROM CLOSER BY!

CYPRESS LODGE WAS TRANSFIGURED, AND BENEATH A FALSE AIR OF TRANQUILITY, QUICKLY PROSPERED. AS CUTLASS HAD PREDICTED, THE PLANTATION, ITS FIELDS CULTIVATED BY BROWN AND HIS EX-OUTLAWS, MANAGED BY THE FIRM BUT FAIR HAND OF CAROLYN, WAS WELL ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING THE RICHEST IN LOUISIANA...

BUT DARK CLOUDS WERE GROWING OVERHEAD, AND NEW AND TRAGIC STORMS THREATENED...

...BUT, AS KIPLING ONCE SAID, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY!

THE END

