

# NAT LOVE

## A COWBOY'S LIFE

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Colored by LONNIE MF ALLEN



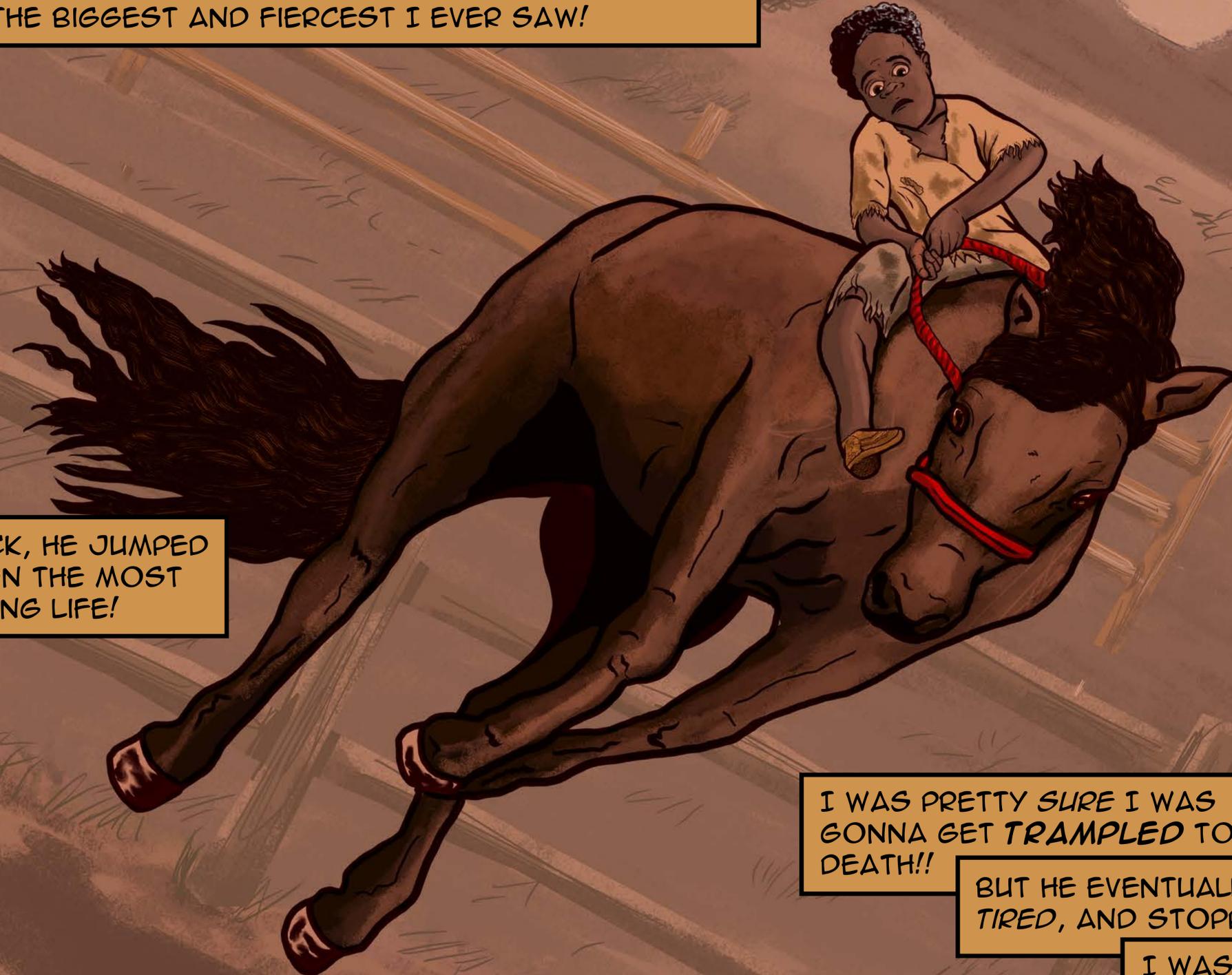
I'MMA TELL YOU, I NEVER FELT MORE *FREE* - THAN WHEN I WAS ON THE BACK OF A HORSE.

SLAVERY ENDED WHEN I WAS JUST ELEVEN. BUT *FREEDOM* IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT THING, AND *SEARCHING* FOR IT MADE ME DO A WHOLE LOTTA CRAZY STUFF.

LIKE *THIS* - TAMING MY NEIGHBORS' HORSES - WITH NO *SADDLE* - FOR 10 CENTS A POP. BUT *THIS* HORSE WAS THE BIGGEST AND FIERCEST I EVER SAW!



SOON AS I GOT ON HIS BACK, HE JUMPED THE FENCE, AND TOOK ME ON THE MOST TERRIFYING RIDE OF MY YOUNG LIFE!



I WAS PRETTY *SURE* I WAS GONNA GET *TRAMPLED* TO DEATH!!

BUT HE EVENTUALLY GOT *TIRED*, AND STOPPED.

I WAS NEVER SO HAPPY TO PUT MY FEET ON THE GROUND!

AFTER SLAVERY - THAT WAS THE HARDEST TIME OF MY LIFE. MY *FATHER* - WHO TAUGHT ME TO READ - HE *DIED*. THEN MY OLDER *SISTER* DIED. THEN HER *HUSBAND* DIED! THEY LEFT BEHIND TWO DAUGHTERS.



MY OLDER BROTHER WASN'T MUCH HELP.

ME AND MY MOM--

WE HAD TO TAKE CARE OF HIM AND MY TWO NIECES.

I GOT A JOB MAKING \$1.50 A MONTH. IT HELPED A BIT.

BUT, THEN I WON A HORSE, IN A RAFFLE!  
THE MAN WHO RAN THE CONTEST OFFERED TO BUY IT BACK FOR \$50!  
THEN HE RAFFLED THE HORSE AGAIN. AND I WON *AGAIN!*  
HE PAID ME ANOTHER \$50 TO GET THE HORSE BACK! SUDDENLY, I HAD *\$100!*  
I WOULD'VE HAD TO WORK ALMOST *FOUR YEARS* TO MAKE THAT MUCH MONEY!  
*AGAIN*, A HORSE BROUGHT ME *FREEDOM!*  
I GAVE MY MOTHER HALF OF MY MONEY, AND IN 1869, WHEN I WAS 15 YEARS OLD, I LEFT TENNESSEE, TO BEGIN A LIFE IN THE WILD WEST.



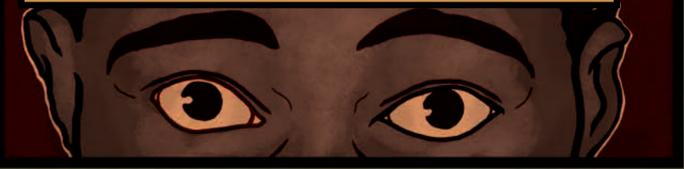
IN DODGE CITY, KANSAS, I MET A GROUP OF WILD COWBOYS (SOME OF THEM **BLACK**). I WAS INTIMIDATED, BUT THEY TESTED ME - IF I COULD BREAK ONE HORSE, I COULD **JOIN** THEM.

I THOUGHT I WAS **READY**, BUT THAT HORSE WAS THE **WORST** I'D EVER RIDDEN! BUT I STILL HUNG ON!

THEY HIRED ME FOR \$30 A MONTH - 20 TIMES **MORE** THAN I WAS MAKING JUST A YEAR BEFORE!



SO, AGAIN, A HORSE BROUGHT ME **FREEDOM**.



PRETTY SOON, I GOT A REPUTATION AS A FEARLESS, GOOD, ALL AROUND **COWBOY**.

BUT SOMETIMES (WITH THE URGING OF **SPIRITS**), I PULLED A LOTTA ABSURD COWBOY STUNTS.



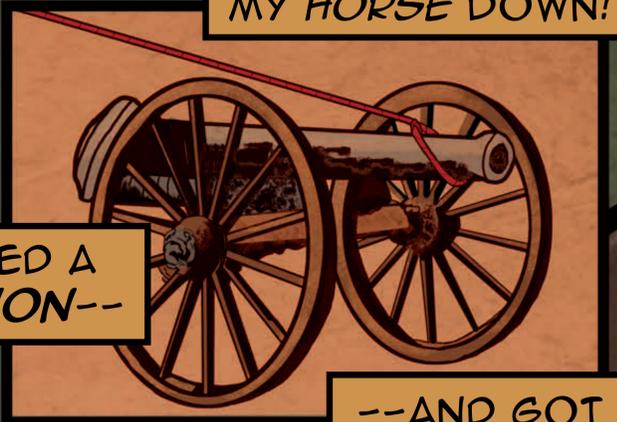
I RODE MY HORSE INTO A **BAR**--

--AND ORDERED HIM A **DRINK**.



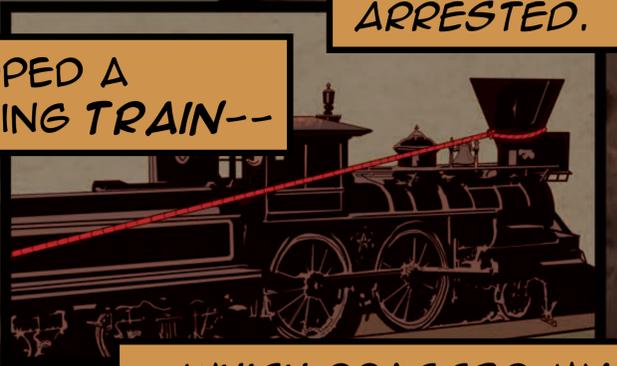
I ROPED A **BUFFALO**--

--WHO DRAGGED MY HORSE DOWN!



I ROPED A **CANNON**--

--AND GOT **ARRESTED**.



I ROPED A **MOVING TRAIN**--

--WHICH DRAGGED MY HORSE INTO A **DITCH**!

MY COWBOY WORK TOOK ME ALL AROUND, EVEN INTO *MEXICO* - SO I BECAME FLUENT IN SPANISH. I ALSO MET OTHER FAMOUS COWBOYS, LIKE *BILLY THE KID*, *JESSE JAMES*, AND *WILD BILL*.

NO LAW WAS RESPECTED IN THIS WILD COUNTRY, EXCEPT THE LAW OF *MIGHT* --

--AND THE *PERSUASIVE QUALITIES* OF THE 45 COLT PISTOL.



BETWEEN CATTLE HERDING TRIPS, I FOUND MYSELF IN *DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA* - WITH LOADS OF OTHER COWBOYS, BORED AS ALL GET-OUT.

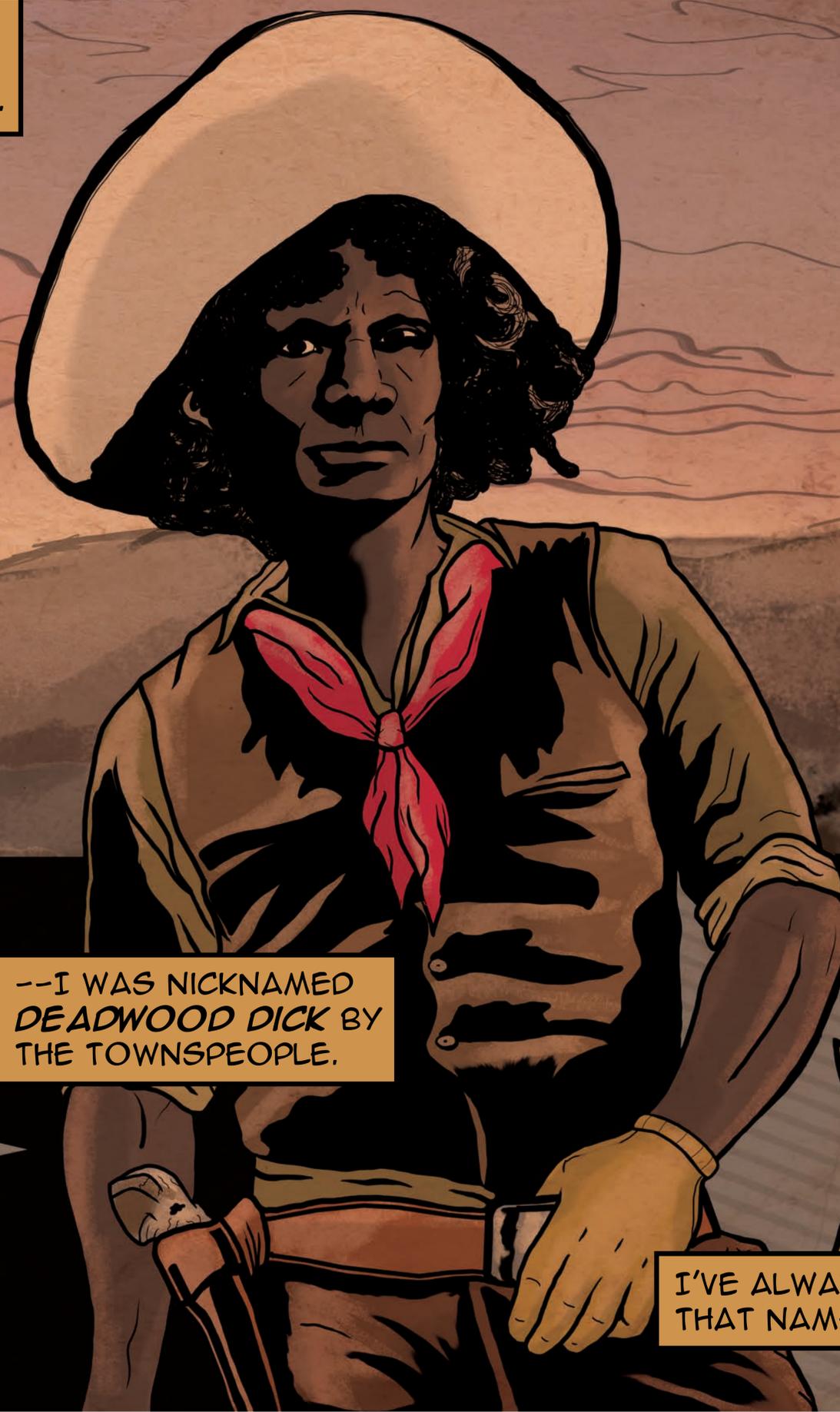
SO, WE PUT ON SOME SHOOTING AND ROPING CONTESTS, FOR A \$200 PRIZE.

I'VE HEARD OTHERS LAY CLAIM TO IT, BUT BECAUSE OF MY EXCEPTIONAL *VICTORIES* THAT DAY--

--I WAS NICKNAMED *DEADWOOD DICK* BY THE TOWNSPEOPLE.

I'VE ALWAYS CARRIED THAT NAME WITH *HONOR*.

THEY CALL ME: *"DEADWOOD DICK"*



ONLY A FEW MONTHS LATER, I WAS OUT RIDING ALONE, AND HEARD A *SHOUT!*

AFTER MUCH SHOOTING, FIGHTING AND RESISTANCE, I WAS TAKEN PRISONER BY THE PIMA (WHO CALLED THEMSELVES THE *AKIMEL O'ODHAM*) AND ARE INDIGENOUS TO WHAT IS NOW ARIZONA.

WHAT CAUSED THEM TO SPARE MY LIFE I CANNOT TELL. BUT I SUSPECT IT WAS PARTLY BECAUSE I HAD PROVED MYSELF TO BE BRAVE, WITH FIGHTING POWERS OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

THERE WERE ALSO MANY AMONG THEM THAT HAD BLACK HERITAGE AS I DID.

I AWOKE TO FIND MY WOUNDS TREATED, AND THAT I WAS *BOUND*--  
--FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE *SLAVERY*.

FOR A MONTH, I WAS THEIR PRISONER. NOT TOO UNPLEASANT, UNTIL THEY SHARED THEIR INTENTION TO MARRY ME OFF TO A TRIBAL LEADER'S DAUGHTER.

ALTHOUGH SHE WAS QUITE ALLURING--

--I HAD OTHER NOTIONS, AND DID NOT WANT TO GET MARRIED UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

AS EVERYONE SLEPT, I STOLE A PONY, AND RODE *100 MILES* TO FREEDOM - AGAIN WITH NO SADDLE.

(ONE MORE HORSE WHO BROUGHT ME FREEDOM.)



IN 1890, THE RAILROADS BROUGHT MORE FOLKS TO THE WEST, AND COWBOY WORK STARTED TO DRY UP. TO US WILD COWBOYS OF THE RANGE, USED TO THE UNRESTRICTED LIFE OF THE BOUNDLESS PLAINS, THIS CHANGE WAS QUITE DISAPPOINTING. SO I BID FAREWELL TO THE LIFE WHICH I HAD FOLLOWED FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS.

I HEADED FOR *DENVER*, WHERE I MET AND MARRIED MY WIFE, AND ACCEPTED A POSITION IN THE PULLMAN RAILROAD SERVICE.

I MISSED THE HORSES, AND THE *ADVENTURE*. BUT THE *TRAINS* BECAME MY NEW HORSES - AND I WAS ABLE TO SEE EVEN MORE OF THE COUNTRY THAN I HAD BEFORE.

I EVEN SURVIVED A TRAIN WRECK IN COLORADO, WHERE THE TRAIN CARS FLIPPED OVER!

MY WORLD DIDN'T WANT ME TO BE FREE. BUT I *FOUND* MY FREEDOM IN THE *WEST*, ON THE BACK OF A *HORSE* - WHERE WE WERE JUDGED BY OUR COURAGE AND HARD WORK.

END.

