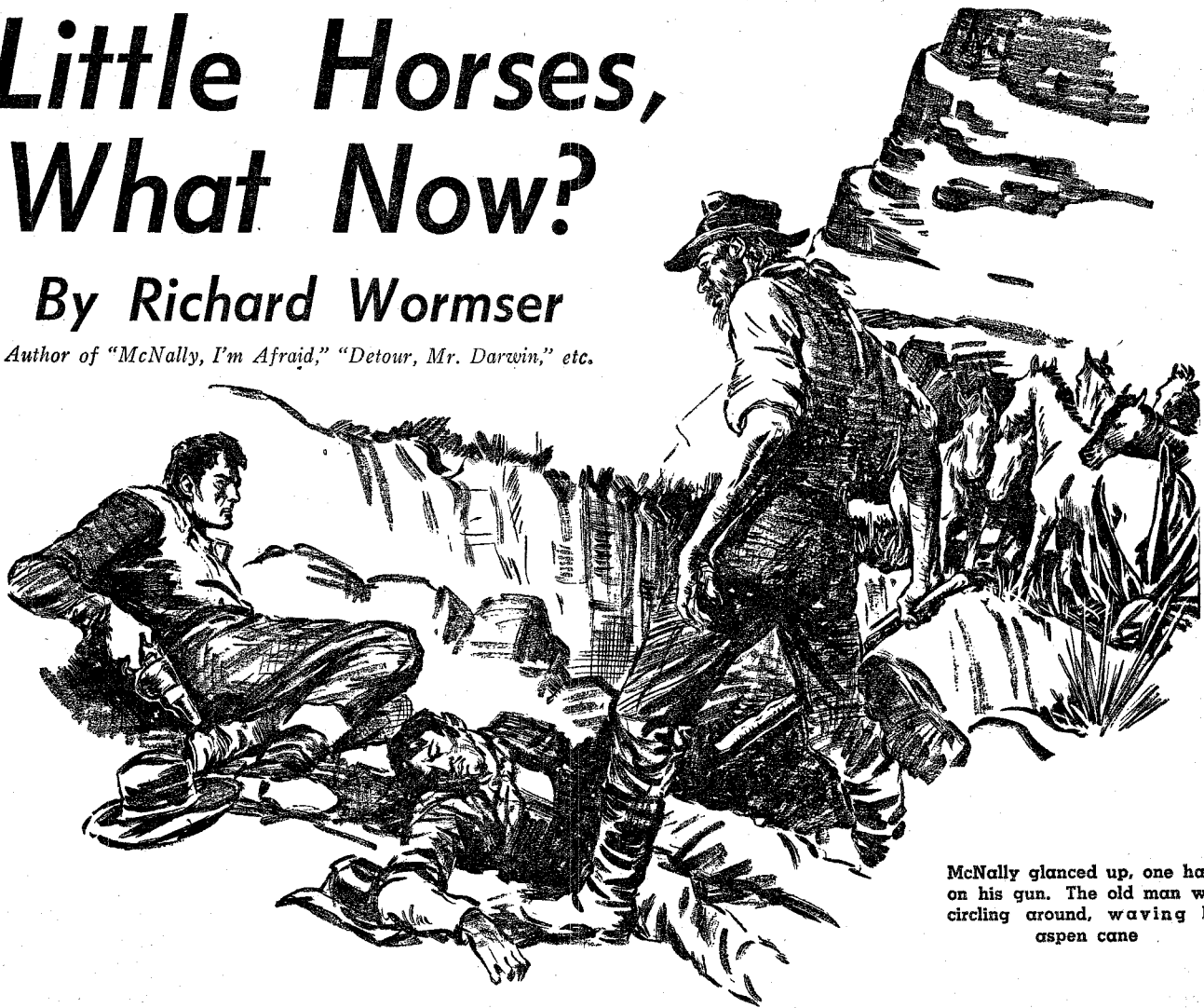


Little Horses, What Now?

By Richard Wormser

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McNally glanced up, one hand on his gun. The old man was circling around, waving his aspen cane

This is a story about how McNally (remember?) herded a merry-go-round on the hoof, and how the merry-go-round broke down. However—it's also about two bottles of Bourbon, an extinct Indian, a crackpot ventriloquist, and an uncuddly woman who didn't think the white man was noble. Take your choice of any or all items

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WHEN McNally pulled into the gas station, the attendant promptly perched a portable air conditioner into the open window of the coupe. Ice cold air flowed out of the white box and over McNally's dripping face and neck. The lean man let it flow, though that much cold on top of that much perspiration would probably give him pneumonia, rheumatism and green-apple colic.

The gas pumper went back into his steel office and brought out a glass of water and a capsule. He broke the capsule into the glass, and handed it to the customer. McNally drank, turning the empty capsule wrapping over in his fingers.

Saloro, he read. *A saline capsule designed to prevent cramps in steel workers, and others employed near furnaces.*

McNally stared out into the desert night. Somewhere behind the filling station a one-lung gas motor chugged, whipping up current for the bright lights of the station; bats and huge moths fluttered under the lights. "Always this hot here?"

The attendant had on a leather-peaked service cap; up till now it had shaded his face, but now he looked up,

McNally saw he was an Indian. "Not so bad in January," the Indian said. "Sometimes gets seventy, eighty at night in January. Nice."

"What do you do in the daytime now, in June?" McNally asked.

"Sweat. You want five gallons gas?"

McNally said: "Fill 'er up."

"Five gallons to the customer. Truck ain't due for two weeks, gotta save gas."

McNally nodded. "Oke."

He leaned back, enjoying the air machine, while the Indian turned the pump on. His brown fingers turned the map over. He was forty miles into the Snake Indian Reserve in southern Arizona. The name of this station was Black Tourmaline. It was only fifteen miles further to Vandie Ricker's trading post, according to the map, but the map itself left a margin for error by putting in a dotted line, and a note: *Make Local Inquiry.*

McNally made local inquiry. "How far to Ricker's?"

The Shoshone said: "Fifteen, twenty miles. You make it in an hour easy. Two bucks."

"Two bucks?"

"Forty cents the gallon. Includes state, federal taxes."

McNally shrugged, and peeled off two one-dollar bills