

Held hostage

Did you hear about the cattle-napping case near Socorro, N.M.? And no, I'm not talking about a herd of cows taking a mid-afternoon siesta.

It seems that a handful of cattle were kidnapped and held for ransom. That the thieves were caught is no big surprise as they have to go down in history as some of the dumbest crooks ever. Even dumber than the guy who stole a police cruiser because he saw 911 stickers on it and thought it was a Porsche.

I've heard of babies being kidnapped, diplomats, drug kingpins and even authors being nabbed, but those cattle-nappers must have been so dumb they had to be watered twice a week. Everyone knows authors don't have any money. But until now I've never heard of cows being kidnapped. The case was simple to solve because the gang of cow thieves lived on a neighboring ranch.

I suppose the crooks, who seemed to be just a few clowns short of a circus, left a ransom note that went something like this:

Dear Rich Rancher,

We have yer cows. Give us a lot of cash or bad things will happen to them. And don't call the cops either or you'll never see your cattle agin.

Signed, Yer Nabor.

This is how I'd respond if my cattle were kidnapped and I received such a ransom note.

Dear Neighbor,

You may have noticed this thank you note contains no ransom money. Don't worry about me calling the cops, even if I did they are much too busy due to a new donut shop opening in town to deal with a cattle-napping case. But I did mention the theft to my local coffee club and before I knew it the local weekly newspaper called and I made the front page for the second time in my life! I want to thank you for making me world famous.

Secondly, I also wanted to thank you for taking the cattle that you did. You see, they were in that pasture because I was gathering up a gooseneck load of losers to take to the local auction market. Thanks for saving me the gas to get them there and the commission.

I'd like to familiarize you with the cattle you pilfered. The one-eyed cow with the crooked horns hasn't had a calf in the eight years I've owned her. The only reason I still had her is because she's so mean I couldn't catch her. I won't pay you anything for her because I'm sure she'll be condemned due to the cancer in the one eye she has left, but I would be interested to know how you caught her.

You must be awful handy with a reata, and I'd like to invite you to my next branding. We could use someone who can actually rope something.

Please be careful with the mean cow with the bobbed tail as she has already put two people in the hospital and put a hitch in my wife's get-a-long. We think she's so crazy because she may have contracted mad cow disease from hanging around some Canadian cattle. My wife hates her and says to go ahead and do despicable things to her before you kill her and eat her. You might want to cook her hamburgers well done due to her Canadian connections.

The bull you stole shoots blanks, and if he comes in contact with any of your cows don't expect a calf crop because the bull has Trich.

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

You can keep the money you get from selling him but I'd love to get his hide back as the three way cross between a Longhorn, Corriente and a Holstein created some interesting color patterns. It would make an great rug, don't you think?

The stray is self-explanatory because I think she belongs to you. It's the first time she's been on the right side of the fence in six months and I'm tired of feeding her.

Although I won't pay your ransom demands I will leave two old horses in the same field so you can steal them too. Since they banned horse slaughter I've been stuck with them. Also feel free to take any dogs, sheep or old rusty scrap metal you find in the field as I'm sure all this will allow you to increase your ransom demands.

Best wishes, Your neighbor.

Then when the kidnapers tried to bring all the cattle back that they stole, I'd nab them.