

Pancho And Lefty
Townes Van Zandt

#-----PLEASE NOTE-----#
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#

Here s one of my favorite ballads which was written by the inimitable Townes Van Zandt. Emmylou Harris recorded it, as did Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard in a duet (don t ask me why). I first heard it in a coffeehouse at RPI (remember coffeehouses, where people went to hear good music, not get drunk) by Robin and Linda Williams, of later Prairie Home Companion fame.

I play this with a D, C#, B bass run transition from the D chord to whatever follows. I ve indicated this with the following chord notation.

Eb x00232
Eb/C# x40232
D4/B(?) x20032

I also lead into the verse with
e+-----2--|
b---2--3--5----|
g+-----| then picking out of the D chord, etc.
d+-----0--|
a--0--2--4----|
e+-----|
Livin on the road, my friend.....

which is nice for many songs played in D.

Enjoy,
Denny Straussfogel

Pancho and Lefty by Townes Van Zandt

Eb
Livin on the road, my friend
Bb
Was gonna keep us free and clean
G#
But now you wear your skin like iron
Eb Eb/C# Eb4/C Bb
And you breath s as hard as kerosene
G#
You weren t your mama s only boy
Eb Eb/C# Eb4/C
But her favorite one, it seems

Eb

She began to cry

Eb/C# Eb4/C Bb Bb7

When you said good bye

G# Cm

And sank into you dreams

(same chords as first verse)

Pancho was a bandit, boys

Rode a horse fast as polished steel

Wore his guns outside his pants

For all the honest world to feel

Pancho met his match, ya know

On the deserts down in Mexico

No one heard his dyin words

But that s the way it goes

Chorus (words change slightly, each time)

G#

And all the federales say

Eb Eb/C# Eb4/C

They could of had him any day

Eb Eb/C# Eb4/C Bb Bb7

They only let him slip away

G# Cm

Out of kindness, I suppose

Now Lefty he can t sing the blues

All night long like he used to

The dust that Pancho bit down South

It ended up in Lefty s mouth

The day they laid old Pancho low

Lefty split for Ohio

Where he got the bread to go

Well there ain t nobody knows

But all the federales say

They could of had him any day

They only let him slip away

Out of kindness, I suppose

Now poets sing how Pancho fell

Lefty s livin in a cheap hotel

The desert s quiet and Cleveland s cold

And so the story ends, we re told

Pancho needs your prayers, it s true

But save a few for Lefty, too

He only did what he had to do

And now he s growin old

And all the federales say

They could of had him any day

They only let him go so long

Out of kindness, I suppose

Yes a few old gray federales still say
They could of had him any day
They only let him go so wrong
Out of kindness, I suppose