words and music copyright Townes van Zandt (transcribed from the recording on Rear View Mirror) mandolin chord arrangement by John Tauxe 31 Dec 2023 • updated 31 Mar 2024 • mando.tauxe.net

### **INTRO** (à la Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard)

D A G A G  $\uparrow$ D (higher voicing)  $\times$  2

D A G A G  $\uparrow$ D (lower voicing)  $\times$  2 D...

#### **VERSE**



Living on the road, my friend,



Was gonna keep you free and clean.



Now you wear your skin like iron





Your breath's as hard as kerosene.



You weren't your mama's only boy





But her favorite one it seems.





She began to cry when you said goodbye



And sank into your dreams.

# **VERSE**

Pancho was a bandit, boys.
His horse was fast as polished steel.
He wore his gun outside his pants
For all the honest world to feel.
Pancho met his match you know
On the deserts down in Mexico.
Nobody heard his dying words.
But that's the way it goes.

# **CHORUS A**



All the Federales say





They could have had him any day.





They only let him hang around





Out of kindness I suppose.

## **VERSE**

Lefty he can't sing the blues
All night long like he used to.
The dust that Pancho bit down south
Ended up in Lefty's mouth.
The day they laid poor Pancho low
Lefty split for Ohio.
Where he got the bread to go
There ain't nobody knows.

## **CHORUS B**

All the Federales say
They could have had him any day.
They only let him *slip away*Out of kindness I suppose.

#### **VERSE**

The poets tell how Pancho fell; And Lefty's livin' in a cheap hotel. The desert's quiet and Cleveland's cold. So the story ends, we're told. Pancho needs your prayers, it's true, But save a few for Lefty too. He just did what he had to do. And now he's growing old.

#### **CHORUS C × 2**

A few gray Federales say They could have had him any day. They only let him *go so wrong* Out of kindness I suppose.