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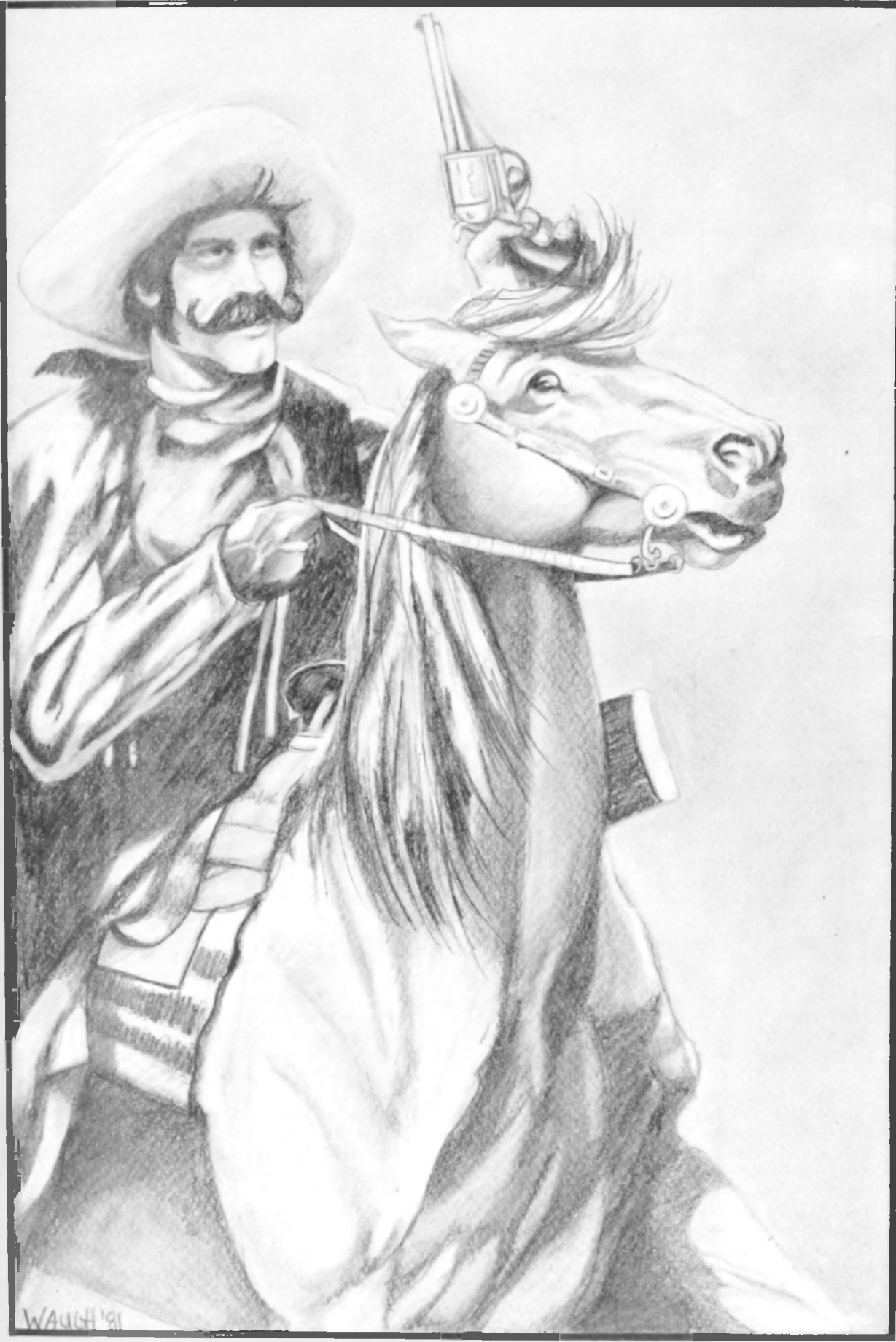


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RED BUCK: THE UNKNOWN OUTLAW



— Randy Beutler

Before Oklahoma became a state its towns were far and few between. The lawmen were understaffed and underpaid. This environment bred trouble and it came in the form of the outlaw. The Oklahoma outlaw was a bank robber, horse thief, and when the time proved right, a murderer. One such outlaw of earlier days was the little known bandit Red Buck.

George Weightman, alias Red Buck, was likely born in Texas sometime in the 1860's. He was of medium height, stockily built, with dark red hair and a large moustache of the same color.

Red Buck presumably came to Oklahoma Territory from Texas where, in the fall of 1889, he was arrested by Marshall Heck Thomas for horse stealing. He was convicted and served four years in the penitentiary. Thirty days after his release he stole seven good horses and started riding for Ingalls, Oklahoma Territory, where he joined the Doolin gang.

A posse of deputies, out after the Doolin gang, reached Ingalls the night of August 31, 1893, and camped in a wooded ravine southwest of the town. At dawn the next morning the lawmen sent Deputy Red Lucas into town to find the whereabouts of the outlaws and report back. When Lucas returned, he reported that Bill Doolin, Bitter Creek Newcomb, Red Buck Weightman, Dynamite Dick, and Tulsa Jack were all in the Ransom-Murray saloon drinking and playing poker.

The deputies knew that the outlaws were deadly shots, so they placed their wagons into strategic positions around the town. When the lawmen had settled into their positions, one of the deputies called on the outlaws to surrender. Doolin jumped up from the poker table ran over to the door and yelled: "Go to Hell!" The deputies then opened fire on the saloon, wounding Newcomb as he came out the front door. Bitter Creek jumped on a nearby horse and sped out of town with bullets whistling by his head. The other outlaws were still in the saloon shooting at the deputies. They found a back door, snuck out to the livery stable, saddled their horses, and rode out of town to a nearby cave. After the battle was over, three deputies and two residents had been killed.

The next escapade of the Doolin gang was at Southwest City, Missouri, on the afternoon of May 10, 1894. Seven of the outlaws rode to a high ridge south of the Missouri town and then swooped down to rob the bank. As the bandits fought their way out of town, two citizens were killed and one was wounded. The townspeople formed a posse and started in pursuit, but lost the outlaws in the Cherokee Nation. The robbery netted the gang about \$4,000.

In January, 1895, Marshall Bill Tilghman and Mar-

shall Neal Brown left Guthrie on a cold wintry day, hunting the location of the Doolin gang. The officers came in sight of the Rock Fort dugout and Tilghman decided to go inside to get warm and ask directions. He went in and walked across the dugout, over to the fireplace where he turned around and saw gun barrels sticking out from behind blankets stretched across the bunk beds.

"I guess I'd better be leaving," Tilghman shakily said.

"How does a person get out of here?" he asked.

"The same way he came in," was the reply. Tilghman walked out the door, got into the wagon, and left. Red Buck wanted to kill Tilghman, but the other outlaws restrained him from doing so. The bandits left the dugout that night fearing an attack later in the night.

On the night of April 3, 1895, two men silently boarded the No. 1 southbound, Rock Island train at Dover, nine miles north of Kingfisher. The men made the engineer stop the train while three other outlaws jumped aboard. The outlaws started for the express car where they found a way safe. The safe supposedly contained the Fort Sill payroll, but it couldn't be opened and the bandits abandoned the plan. The desperadoes then started looting the passengers of their money and jewels, leaving the train about \$1,500 richer. A posse started out after the gang, but the bandits split-up, never to rejoin again.

Red Buck then came to the western part of Oklahoma Territory where he went under the aliases of Tom Weightman, Charles Evans, White Horse Doolin, Gant, Bert Collins, and Bill Doolin No. 2. Red Buck and a partner, Charlie Smith, murdered Gus Holland and stole his cattle from the head of Cheyenne Creek on September 1, 1895. Later Weightman was accompanied by two Texas bandits, Joe Beckham and Elmer "Kid" Lewis.

Beckham met up with Lewis and headed north where they joined Red Buck. About two months later these bandits were the trio who robbed the Noyes General Store in Arapaho. Charles E. Noyes, who owned the store, was just closing up one evening in October, when Red Buck and his partners stormed into the store with their guns drawn. Red Buck went through the cash drawer and found only a small amount of money. The outlaw demanded to know where the money was hid. Noyes told him the cash had been sent to the bank in El Reno by mail hack. The bandits then loaded up with goods from the shelves. Red Buck took Noyes gold watch and demanded that Alice Noyes give him her diamond wedding ring. When she refused to give it up he decided to take it by force. This made her refuse even more and Red Buck stared at her for a moment and then ran from the store.



The three outlaws escaped from town and hid for a few weeks. At about seven p.m. on December 4, the trio rode into Taloga and held up the Shultz & Alderice Store getting away with a quantity of clothing and one hundred dollars. The desperadoes then headed south for Texas, with the outlaw Hill Loftos, where they robbed Waggoner's store in Wilgarger County. Later the same night the bandits took seven hundred dollars worth of merchandise from Alf Bailey, who ran a store a few miles south of Waggoner. The Texas Rangers chased the outlaws across the Red River to a dugout where Red Buck and his gang took shelter. Sergeant W. J. L. Sullivan, Company B, Texas Rangers, recalls the following battle:

We started toward the dugout in a gallop, . . . I fell off my horse and faced the four men. Three of them were in a trench leading into the dugout, and the fourth, Redbuck, was standing in the door of the dugout. I opened fire on them, as they were already shooting at us, and my first shot struck Redbuck just over the heart, and he fell backward into the dugout. The ball had only struck his breast-plate, however, and he fainted, but recovered in a few minutes and again joined in the fight. I found out afterward that we hit him again, shattering his collar bone and shoulder blade. . . . The firing was kept up until we had emptied our Winchesters and reloaded them.

The Rangers fought the bandits until the weather became so cold that they couldn't pull any cartridges from their belts. The Rangers retreated back to their camp twenty-five miles away. Red Buck fled from the fight and a friend hurried him out of the country. Days later he showed up at the Dolph Picklesimer dugout, five miles north of Canute in Custer County, where he obtained food and lodging.

George Miller, a forty-year-old cattleman, was visiting Picklesimer at this time. Miller, Picklesimer, and Red Buck had all known each other from earlier days in Jones County, Texas.

Red Buck stayed at the Picklesimer dugout for a few days until his wounds healed, then Miller and Red Buck left the dugout together. On the night of February 13, 1896, they showed up at the W. W. Glover dugout about five miles west of Arapaho. They requested food and lodging for the night. The next morning they asked Mr. Glover to go to Arapaho and get them some whiskey and cartridges. Miller and Red Buck hid themselves in a canyon near the dugout until Glover returned that night.

When Glover arrived at Arapaho he informed the local authorities, Undersheriff Montgomery and Constables Shahan and Womble, and they formed a posse of six men. The posse arrived at Glover's dugout and hid

themselves in a crib and behind a haystack. Glover then called the outlaws out of the canyon and told them that the coast was clear. While Red Buck, Miller and Glover walked back to the dugout, the lawmen called out to them to surrender. The outlaws answered with a volley of gunfire and as Glover tried to escape to the dugout, Miller turned and shot him in the right temple. The bullet passed entirely through his head killing him instantly. Miller and Red Buck then jumped on their horses and escaped.

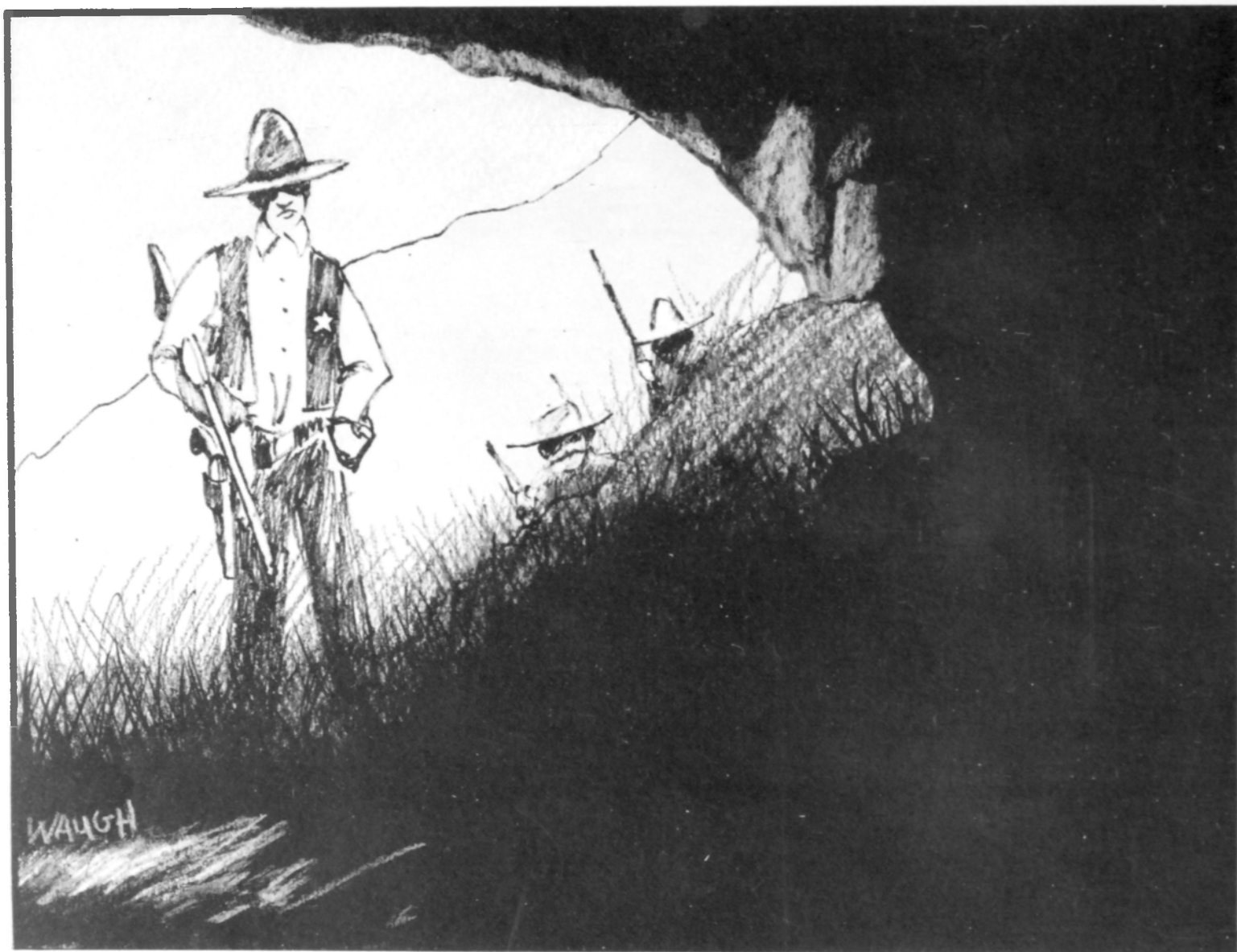
The outlaws rode north about thirty miles to their hideout on the Canadian River, in the edge of Dewey County. Officers of that county learned the whereabouts of the bandits and attacked them. Miller and Red Buck drove the lawmen back with their gunfire and they escaped southward toward the Wichita Mountains. Custer County officers, citizens, and Dewey County deputies Joe Ventioner, Bill Quillin, and William Holcomb, followed the outlaws to the mountains where Red Buck and Miller separated, trying to elude the officers. The lawmen soon discovered the change and turned back. The officers found the bandits trail again and followed it to the mouth of Elm Creek. From there the officers traveled up Elm Creek to Oak Creek where the posse reached the Dolph Picklesimer dugout on the afternoon of March 3, 1896.

Walter Armstrong, a nephew of Picklesimer's, recalls what he was told by a member of this posse:

The posse rode to the dugout that night and they saw Red Buck's and Miller's horses in the corral. They were sure that the bandits were in there. The possemen then scattered up and down the creek and back west of the dugout up on a higher hill. Before daylight, Dolph Picklesimer came to the spring in the creek and got a bucket of water. The posseman said that he was so close to Picklesimer that he could have reached out and touched him. After this the possemen could see a light in the dugout. They waited until it got light enough that they could see, and they started shooting into the dugout. Dolph then ran out of the dugout with his hands up and ran towards the creek. That just left Miller and Red Buck in the dugout. The possemen started shooting into the dugout several times. The desperadoes came out on top of the dugout and started shooting in the direction that the possemen's fire was coming from. Finally one of them hit Red Buck enough to kill him and another one shot off Miller's arm.

The Arapahoe Argus of March 5, 1896, states:

. . . George Müller and Picklesimon [sic] came out and



started to the lot, it is supposed to feed their horses. The officers called on them to surrender. Miller went for his revolver, and just at that juncture a ball from one of the officers guns made him drop it firing into the ground at the same time. Miller then made for the dugout calling for Red Buck to come to his assistance. Red Buck appeared on the scene shooting at the officers. Officer Ventioner was shot in the lower abdomen, the ball passing out just above the left hip. . . The firing was kept up on both sides until Red Buck was killed, and Miller had retreated into the dugout. After some time had elapsed Miller called out to the officers to come to him as he was shot all to pieces.

Red Buck still had on the gold watch he had stolen from C. E. Noyes. Having both his hands shot up, and trying to remove the evidence of the Noyes Store robbery, Miller took the watch off Red Buck with his teeth

and buried it in the dugout with his feet.

The officers crowded into the dugout with Dolph Picklesimer where they found Red Buck dead and Miller seriously wounded. Picklesimer wrapped a cloth around the stub of Miller's severed arm and applied hot ashes and smut as a treatment.

The officers tied Red Buck to a wooden board, loaded Miller and the dead outlaw's body in a wagon and headed back to Arapaho. The posse arrived at Arapaho that night. The next day the officers propped Red Buck's corpse up against the courthouse and photographed it to prove the outlaw was dead. Since no one claimed Red Buck's body, he was buried at the county's expense.

George Miller was never tried for his crimes in Oklahoma Territory. He became a body guard and bartender at a saloon in Pottawatomie County around 1908. He was killed while a law officer at Three Sands, Oklahoma.