

The Last Wild West Town

Whiz Bang City

A Texas style 'Tall Tale' from Oklahoma, loaded with full historical action and half truths – Whiz Bang City depicts the final chapter of the bloody saga of the American West. It's also the legend of the double-edged gunslinger hired by the big oil companies in 1921, "to use any and all methods necessary to tame the last 'Wild West Town'

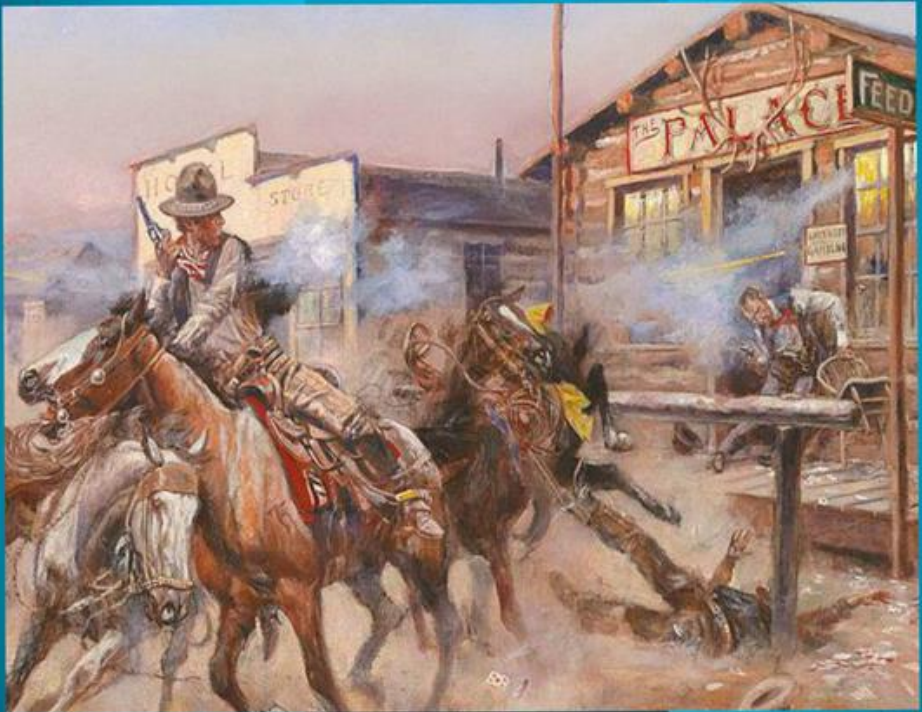
by

Bill Russo

Bill Russo

The Last Wild West Town

Whiz Bang City



*Forty years after the gunfight at
the OK Corral - Whiz Bang was
still ruled by Six Shooters*

Copyright © 2016 **Bill Russo**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without written permission of the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: FORT SILL	1
CHAPTER TWO: ENTERING WHIZ BANG CITY - POPULATION ZERO	7
CHAPTER THREE: THE SOFT BLACK GOLD	14
CHAPTER FOUR: GUN BATTLE IN THE EAST ROOM	24
CHAPTER FIVE: PAINS, RAINS, AND TRAINS	36
CHAPTER SIX: THE POST OFFICE SAYS NO TO WHIZBANG.....	52
CHAPTER SEVEN: A TWO-BIT BAR	60
CHAPTER EIGHT: CHALKY	65
CHAPTER NINE: ON THE JOB	71
CHAPTER TEN: TROUBLE ON THE WAY.....	73
CHAPTER ELEVEN: PLANNING THE JOB	90
CHAPTER TWELVE: THE HEIST.....	93
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE RAINY NIGHT FLIGHT	102
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: SHOWDOWN ON PISTOL HILL	108
CHAPTER FIFTEEN: MORE TROUBLES FOR THE SHERIFF	118
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE LAST GUNFIGHT	126
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: REVENGE FOR BIG RED	134
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS	142
CHAPTER NINETEEN: WHO WAS THAT HERMIT?	149
THE END.....	156
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:.....	157

**The Last Wild West Town
Whiz Bang City**

Chapter One: Fort Sill

While in Field Artillery School at Fort Sill in 1962, I first heard about the abandoned city of 'Whiz Bang'. A place frozen in time – it was the last, and perhaps the rowdiest of all the wild-west towns.

Forty years after the Gunfight at the OK Corral and twenty summers past the Ford Model T pushing the horses out to pasture; bank robberies, shootouts, and crooked poker games were still as common as the street walkers on Main Street.

I had some leave coming after graduation and I wanted to learn more about the Ghost Town, so I hired a car and headed northeast on Interstate 44 for Osage County. Pushing the rental as hard as possible, I flew by Oklahoma City in less than an hour and picked up Interstate 35. Edging the speedometer past 90, I had fleeting glimpses of the corpses of a dozen towns born of the 1920s oil boom and killed off two decades later by the bust. Tulsa was in my rear view mirror in another 45 minutes as I motored from the central part of the state to Northeastern Oklahoma.

A little more than three hours after leaving the order and predictability of one of America's most storied military installations, I had driven more than 230 miles across vast empty stretches and found myself gazing down the biggest and busiest

Main Street anybody's ever seen in a Ghost Town.

Bill Russo

Not that it was that large - but it was supposed to be deserted! Instead, there was a welding supply store, a chamber of commerce, a general store, barber shop, post office, restaurant, a saloon, a cluster of houses and two paved side streets that quickly degraded into dirt roads that twisted into dead-end paths.



A handful of cars languidly traversed the roadway. A dozen or more farmer types were dodging the 104 degree summer heat by lounging in shady spots around the sides of buildings. An ancient commercial truck piloted by a white bearded man pulled out of a space in front of the dry-goods store, apparently

The Last Wild West Town Whiz Bang City

going out on deliveries.

The painted lettering on the side of the 30 year old vehicle said “Whiz Bang Seed, Feed, and What Else You Need.” The old man behind the wheel smiled and waved to me as he passed by



I walked the short distance to the ‘Osage Bottles and Booths’ at the corner of Main and First Avenue - a combination take out liquor store and lounge.

Pushing my way through the batwing doors, I saw four high-back booths hugging one wall. On the opposite side stood shelves of bottled liquors standing alongside a walk-in cooler stuffed with chilled beer and sodas.

In the rear was a surprisingly elegant mahogany bar with eight stools. Highly polished, it gleamed almost as brightly as the brass foot rail at its base.

Bill Russo

A massive floor to ceiling mirror highlighted a back-bar trimmed in homage to the oil crew roughnecks who built Osage County. Tools of the drillers, derrick-hands, ginsels, and roustabouts hung from hooks on the wall where one might customarily expect to see paintings of scantily clad women.

“Howdy stranger. Step up and have a beer. The first one is on the house.”

There being no one else in the place, I knew that the smiling barkeep was talking to me. He was about five and a half feet tall with dark hair and an indoor complexion. Though trending towards obesity, he hustled up my beer with the skill of a juggler and proudly set down a frosty mug before I had a chance to get seated.

“My name’s Bert. Bert Shidler. What brings y’all to town? We don’t get a lot of visitors here anymore.”

“Well Bert, I expect that’s because besides myself there aren’t a lot of people who want to visit a ghost town - especially one as crowded as this! Don’t take it personally Bert, but I like my abandoned towns to be a lot more abandoned than Whiz Bang is.”

“You got it wrong stranger!” he laughed. “This ain’t Whiz Bang! Y’all are in Shidler! Whizbang is about two miles from here on Route 18 West. If it’s ghost towns you want, y’all have come to the right place. There are 12 of them within 30 miles.”

The Last Wild West Town Whiz Bang City

The beer was cold and I was hot, so I stuck around for two more and listened to the woes of Osage County.

“They found oil here in 1921 and within weeks the boom towns sprung up like posies after a rainstorm.

Why Shidler had 5000 people back then. Whiz Bang had over 8000.

“Then there was Bigheart, Carter Nine, Blackland, Cooper, Foraker, and Gray Horse. We even had a town called Hulah. They are all gone now. Nothing left but a few crumbling foundations, a couple of falling down buildings, and a whole lot of useless cement slabs next to rusty oil rigs.”

“What about this town Bert?” I asked. “Why didn’t Shidler die out like the rest?”

“Well it would have except that every time one of the other towns played out, they gave something to us. When Carter Nine shut down, Shidler got their school house and movie theater. As Blackheart failed, Smokey’s Barber Shop came over. This here bar that I have, was from Lucas town. My grandfather bought it for seven dollars. We got our own library when Cooper died. Upon the closing of Apperson Town High School, we got their three students. The last store in Whiz Bang, the Seed and Feed moved here and never bothered to change its name.

As the other places withered and expired, they passed along just enough to keep us going. We won’t hold out much longer though. We have less than 900 people now. As late as 1930 we

Bill Russo

had almost 1200 souls here. I guess ten years from now there might only be three or four hundred left.”

As I quaffed my last beer, Bert gave me directions to Whiz Bang and told me to be on the lookout for a travel trailer hitched to a long black 1957 Cadillac, parked at the edge of town.

“If he’s a mind to, that old hermit in the mobile home can tell you anything you want to know about the wild days of Whiz Bang. He rode into town in 1921 on a ‘Tin Lizzie’ - that’s a Model T ford – and he’s around Whiz Bang ever since.

“He’s the only person living there now. Course he don’t really live there, if you know what I mean. He parks his car and trailer near the town line, and when he needs supplies, he comes in to Shidler. If y’all are really fixing to palaver with him, take a few bottles of beer with you and maybe a bottle of Rye. He loves his Rye Whiskey.”

**The Last Wild West Town
Whiz Bang City**

**Chapter Two: Entering Whiz Bang
City - Population Zero**

Firing up the rental, with a take-out beer in one hand and the wheel in the other, I headed down Route 18. I only had to cover two miles but the desolation of the highway made it seem like it would take hours to get to Whiz Bang – and it nearly did.



As I found some classic Bob Wills Western Swing on the car

Bill Russo

radio the sky, like a petulant child, got angry for no apparent reason.

Two formations of thick, gray clouds, one coming from the West and the other from the East, converged overhead. Eerie crawler lightning shot out from the ill tempered haze like coins sprouting from the fingers of a master magician - accompanied by rolling thunder that shook the car as if it were a rag doll.

Pelting rain thumped the vehicle so hard and fast as to make it impossible to see out the windscreen. I killed the motor and sat back to await my fate.

Having experienced Oklahoma twisters before, I realized that there was at least an even money chance that my first trip to the Ghost Town of Whiz Bang might be not as a tourist, but as one of the ghosts.

The growling Oklahoma sky pressed downwards and the car was shuddering like an overloaded washing machine. As quickly as the torment began, it eased off and sun rays pushed through. Restarting the car, I dodged puddles on the highway for a thousand feet or so until I spotted the shiny new Airstream Land Yacht belonging to the hermit of Whiz Bang City.

The Last Wild West Town Whiz Bang City



Wheeling over to the side, I pulled in behind a dusty 1957 Cadillac Eldorado. Before I could shut off the motor I spotted a tall, rangy old man striding towards me clutching a long barreled pistol pointed directly at my head.

Dressed in wild-west garb from head to toe, the old timer shouted, "What business have you got here stranger? State it quick or back off and get out now!"

He held the weapon with conviction – straight, true, and steady. I sensed that he and that six-shooter had a relationship that was most likely long standing and probably bloody.

Bill Russo



Photo of the hermit of Whiz Bang City taken in the 1920s at the height of the oil boom.

**The Last Wild West Town
Whiz Bang City**

“No need for the weapon Sir. I have brought beer and whiskey in hopes you’ll tell me about this old town of yours.”

It wasn’t my words as much as the sight of my back seat filled with sweating bottles of frosty lager and a quart of Rye that quickly made the hermit stick his iron back in his belt and build a watermelon grin... “C’mon over to the Airstream and set a spell and I will tell you anything about this once great city that you might want to know.”

We settled into cast aluminum lawn chairs out of the sun on the shady side of the trailer and began working on the brews and exchanging introductions.

“I’m Sgt. First Class Bill James, on furlough from Fort Sill. I’ve heard many stories about your town that I find hard to believe. I hope to be a published writer after I retire from the army. If half the yarns I’ve heard have any truth to them, this town would make a great subject for a book.”

“Nice to meet you Sergeant Billy. I was military myself in my youth. I respect any man of any nation who puts on a uniform and wears it the right way. It looks to me like you do, so it will be my pleasure to tell you about the town. My name is Bert Bryant, originally from Texas. I followed the smell of oil back in 1921 and it led me to Whiz Bang just about when the ‘black liquid gold’ first began oozing up from the ground. I’ve been here ever since, except for a few brief forays elsewhere.”

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

