

# THE WHITE TORNADO

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In this short story, I will turn back the pages of time in my life. I was in my early thirties, and was working in the oil fields in those days. My brother, Kenneth, and me owned around 100 head of cattle together at that time. We had a little over 2000 acres of grazing land leased. Much of the land was rocky hills with lots of brush and timber. We were rigging up to drill an oil well one day, when one of the guys I was working with was looking over across to the other hillside when he saw a pretty white horse grazing over there. He said to me, "That sure is a beautiful horse over there. I would like to have him for a saddle horse. I would give \$300 for that pretty white horse right now. I wonder how I can go about finding out who owns him?" I said to him, "I own that horse. He is three years old and unbroken." The horse was snow white, his skin was pink and his eyes were a pretty blue. I believed him to be a true albino and he was one beautiful animal. I had tried to break him but he bucked me off every time. My brother, Kenneth, and I would snub him up close to another saddle horse with a rope, so he wouldn't have a chance to get his head down and start bucking. I would ride him two or three hours at a time like that. When he seemed to have gentled down some and I thought he would be alright and not buck anymore, I would take the rope off from around his neck. He would then throw me sky-high! He did that with me three different times. I really didn't have the time to fool with him anyhow. I was working long hours in the oil fields and we had our cattle to look about. I think if I would have rode him day after day for two or three weeks, he would have been a good riding horse. The guy that wanted to buy him was Leonard Hilderbran. I told Leonard, "I will sell that horse to you

for \$300. But you'll have to catch him the best way you can for he can run like the wind! I don't have any horses fast enough to catch him." The next morning Leonard handed me \$300 in cash. I wrote him out a bill of sale for the white horse. Leonard said, "I will get him over the weekend." The next Monday morning, I asked him if he got the white horse and he said he did. Leonard said, "I've got a fellow who will break this horse for \$50, then I'll have me a fine saddle horse." Along about that time, Leonard went to work on one of the other rigs. I never saw him anymore for a long while. Then one day around seven months later, I saw Leonard and asked him "Have you got that pretty white horse broke yet?" He laughed and said, "No, the man couldn't break him. Every time he got up in the saddle that horse would throw him sky-high! After about three weeks of that, I sold that sucker to a fellow who has a string of bucking horses. This fellow furnishes the bucking horses for the big rodeo. I sold him for \$800 as a bucking horse." I would see Leonard every now and again and he would keep me posted on the white horse. Leonard would get a monthly news magazine that was put out by the rodeo circuit of all the big national rodeos all over the United States and Canada. It would give all the information on the outstanding bucking horses and bulls, as well as the cowboys that rode them. It was through this magazine news that old Leonard and I kept up with that horse we had both owned at different times. The white horse soon was labeled as *"The White Tornado from Oklahoma"*. The White Tornado was sold to another bucking string in Houston, Texas for \$3,000. A few months later, he was sold again in Denver, Colorado for \$5,000. The White Tornado still had not been rode yet and

was becoming more valuable with each passing day. Later on he was sold again in Madison Square Garden to another bucking string for \$15,000. Still, he had not been rode. Not one of the best bronco busters in the business had been able to ride him for eight seconds. He was by now a very famous bucking horse. When The White Tornado came out of that chute gate, he put on quite a show - He was nine hundred pounds of pure dynamite! He was sold once again in Cheyenne, Wyoming for \$17,000. He had bucked his way to fame. By now the white albino horse with the pretty blue eyes from Rock Creek, Oklahoma had bucked his way all over the United States and Canada - bucking where ever the big National Rodeo's were held. He was sold for the final time in Round Up, Montana, for the sum of \$20,000. According to the rodeo circuit magazine, around two years after he was sold in Round Up, he got one of his hind legs broken while being transported across country. His broken leg finally healed and he could walk again. He was put out to pasture on the Plains of Montana where he lived out the rest of his life. The White Tornado kept his title through all his rodeo years, for not one of the best cowboys ever stayed on his back for the eight seconds that is required.

He was nine years old when his bucking career came to an end. I don't know now many more years he lived out there on the Montana plains because the little monthly magazine dropped any news of him after his rodeo days. I will say, he made quite a name for himself and left a lot of history behind. *The White Tornado* was born here on Rock Creek - His mother was a pretty blaze-face sorrel mare. He was raised here in these old sand hills of Oklahoma - Where the ill winds sometimes blow very hard in the dark hours of a long night.