

**THE RUBY RIDGE INCIDENT: WHEN THE WEAVER
FAMILY FOUND OUT TO THEIR COST THAT YOU
CAN'T ESCAPE BIG GOVERNMENT.**



By David Noble

In January 1983 Randy Weaver and his family left Iowa to get away from the rat race and a government they did not trust, moving into the mountains of northern Idaho where they could raise their children apart from the hustle, bustle and immorality of American society.

Here they felt that they could home school their children saving them from a government funded public school system where they believed that their children would be brainwashed. They bought 20 acres in the woods up the mountain called Ruby Ridge. Here, a general store and a small sawmill are the only signs of commercial activity. Most residents in this beautiful scenic area are hunters and most households have guns.

To get to the Weaver property you had to drive about three miles on a dirt road off the main drag followed by a couple of miles on a much steeper and rougher dirt road. Nearby is a traditional general-store that stocks a little bit of everything. It's in this idyllic setting that the Weavers built a cabin on a small, rocky bluff, planted gardens and built a couple of storage sheds. Randy would take occasional odd jobs to pay for anything that required cash, otherwise they lived off their garden and hunting.



They became friendly with a Christian Identity movement who claim to live by Old Testament laws; many were white separatists which unlike white supremacists say they simply want to live apart from other races, rather than persecuting them. The Weavers weren't particularly active in either Christian or the Christian Identity movements beliefs and weren't active church goers, though they did attend a few Aryan Nation meetings and some Christian Identity summer camps.

Sometime around October 1989 Randy met Gus Magisone, an undercover BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) informant in the Aryan Nation whose real name was Kenneth Fadley. Randy was strapped for cash when Magisone approached him asking Randy to sell him two shotguns with the barrels sawed off. Though reluctant and after much persuasion he agreed and sold him two shotguns for \$300, after following Magisone's instructions regarding cutting the barrels off.

Eight months later Randy was approached by two BAFT agents who asked him to serve as an informant within the Aryan Nation threatening him with arrest and confiscation of his truck or house if he refused. He refused.

Randy Weaver was indicted for manufacturing, possessing and selling illegal firearms in December 1990.

On the 17th of January the Weavers stopped to help a couple having engine trouble with a pickup truck hauling a camper. These turned out to be two BAFT agents and while Randy was looking under the hood the male agent stuck a 45-caliber pistol against the back of Randy's neck and announced he was under arrest while other law enforcement agents piled out of the camper.

Randy was taken into custody but later released on \$10,000 bail.

The trial which was originally set for February 19th 1991 was then changed to February 20th for the convenience of the BAFT. Randy was sent a letter by probation officer Karl Richins instructing him to appear on March 20th and even though Assistant U.S. Attorney Ron Howen, who later acted as prosecutor, knew Weaver was sent the wrong notification he got an indictment for failure to appear in court against Randy.

Fearing that he would be railroaded into prison without being allowed a proper defence Randy spent the next 18 months on his mountain, hardly venturing out of his cabin, relying on friends for food and supplies. His family by this time included Sara 16, Sammy 14, Rachel 10 and a 10 month old baby called Elisheba.



Meanwhile the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) had started watching the cabin and surrounding area which included paying a neighbour to record the comings and goings of visitors and even to take down their license numbers. Agents and marshals wearing camouflage gear were placed on and around the property along with two concealed video cameras. Planes and helicopters were also used along with phone taps for several residences and for the phones at the general store; all this on taxpayer dollars for a minor gun offense, a charge that might well have been rejected had it come to trial.

In a cruel twist of fate the Weavers were left facing the very thing they had tried to escape from. On August 21st 1992 the Weavers worst fears were realized as a six man team of U.S. Marshals from the Special Operations Group made their move, coming onto the Weaver property wearing full camouflage clothing including ski masks, carrying night vision goggles and silenced 9-mm M-16 machine guns with laser scopes.

Three of the Marshals started throwing little stones up toward the cabin to see if they could get the attention of the family's dogs. Striker, the family's yellow Labrador, began to follow the agents. Sammy Weaver and Kevin Harris, thinking that the dog had picked up the scent of a deer, went after the dog along the logging road while Randy Weaver went down the straighter, easier trail to try to surround and trap the deer.

Marshal Lawrence Cooper testified that before deputy marshals could take cover they saw Randy coming down the trail and ordered him to stop. Randy yelled at Kevin and Sammy to head back to the cabin as it was an ambush. Firing a couple of shots in the air Randy headed back to the cabin. Two other agents, Cooper and Degan, had taken cover behind some trees further up the trail.

There is some confusion as to what happened next as according to Cooper: "as the boys passed their concealed spot, Degan crouched on one knee and yelled, "Stop, U.S. Marshal!"—where upon Kevin fired his .30-06 rifle from the hip and shot Degan in the chest.

But contradicting this Idaho State Police Capt. David Neale testified that shortly after the battle, Roderick, one of the other Marshals present told him that he, Roderick, had fired first, wounding and then killing Sammy's dog, Striker. Although the government initially claimed that Degan was killed by the first shot of the battle, seven shells from his gun were found near the deputy marshals' hiding place. What is certain was that the dog was running away from the Marshals as it was shot in the rear end. Sammy Weaver who was running towards the cabin had turned around and yelled "you shot my dog, you son of a bitch," fired a couple of shots and had once again started running towards the cabin when he was shot twice, first wounded in the elbow then killed by a bullet in the back. Kevin had fired back after Sammy was hit and believed that he had hit Degan though he insisted that it was in self-defence as the Marshals had open fired first. A siege, which was to last 11 days had started.

Randy had managed to retrieve his son's body and put it in an outbuilding. It is hard to imagine the grief and anger that the Weaver family felt at this point when all they had wanted was to be left alone. Unknown to them things were about to get worse. Richard Rogers, commander of the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team, under the impression that a fierce two way gun battle was going on, decided that any armed adult outside the Weaver cabin was to be taken out by snipers. At least 400 people, with sophisticated military hardware had arrived, along with various aircraft and armoured personnel carriers. Again all this was at the taxpayer's expense, for a miner gun offense.

Despite the rules of engagement requiring a warning shot being fired before firing on anybody, Randy, who had left the cabin to go to the outbuilding where his son's body lay was shot without any warning with the bullet hitting him in the shoulder. Both Randy and Kevin Harris who had also gone outside ran for the cabin. Vicki Weaver stood unarmed in the doorway yelling for them both to hurry. In her arms was baby Elisheba. As Kevin tumbled into the house a bullet went through the glass window hitting Vicki in the temple killing her instantly. The killing shot was fired by sniper Lon Horiuchi who is trained to be accurate to within a quarter inch at 200 yards.

Horiuchi claims he missed Kevin and hit Vicki by mistake. Vicki's body lay in the kitchen covered with a sheet for a week.

Former Green Beret commander Bo Gritz eventually negotiated Randy Weaver's surrender after convincing the FBI to give him a chance to talk to Randy. They were not keen on giving him a chance but eventually relented.

Bo Gritz brought Horiuchi's claims that Vicki had been shot by accident into doubt after saying that the FBI had shown him a psychological profile of the family prepared for the Marshals Service before the siege that described Vicki as the "dominant member" of the family. Gritz told the Spokane Spokesman Review. "I believe Vicki was shot purposely by the sniper as a priority target....The profile said; "if you get a chance, take Vicki Weaver out." The fact that they opened fire on the cabin knowing there was a baby inside shows an utter lack of respect for human life.

During the trial Judge Lodge estimated that about 75% of the testimony from government witnesses so far had helped the defence. Randy was found not guilty despite some dirty tactics being used to hamper his defence. Defence attorney Spence told reporters after the verdict “A jury today has said that you can’t kill somebody just because you wear badges and then cover up those homicides by prosecuting the innocent,” he said. “What are we now going to do about the deaths of Vicki Weaver, a mother who was killed with a baby in her arms and Sammy Weaver, a boy who was shot in the back? Somebody has to answer for those deaths.”



While not admitting any wrongdoing the US government eventually settled suits filed by the
Weaver family, paying out 3.1million Dollars

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