

I had sent a dependable scout to Ojo Caliente several days in advance of my arrival, and he informed me that Geronimo, with one hundred followers, was then camped about three miles from the agency, and that he had come into the agency that day for rations. We had been on the trail nearly a month, including our stop at Silver City, and had marched all the way from San Carlos, four hundred miles, for the special purpose of capturing Geronimo. Our only chance for success was through prompt action. I determined to attempt the arrest without delay, relying entirely upon the loyalty and efficiency of my Apache police.

'Having left Beauford to follow me into Ojo Caliente, proved a most fortunate maneuver. Geronimo and his renegades knew that some Indian police were on the trail from Arizona, but they did not know how many. My guess was that Geronimo thought that the twenty-two mounted police that I had with me constituted my entire force. Upon the correctness of this guess, I based my plan of action.

'The main agency building faced east, fronting on a large parade ground. Fifty yards to the south stood a commissary building, which, happily, was vacant. From this commissary building a row of employee quarters extended eastward along the south line of the parade ground. The east and north limits of the parade ground were marked by a deep ravine. As soon as it was dark, I dispatched a courier to Captain Beauford with orders to bring his reserves in before daylight, and to observe the utmost caution in approaching the agency. At 4.00 A.M., Beauford and his eighty reserves arrived, and were quartered in the commissary building, each man with thirty rounds of ammunition, and his gun loaded. This was a bit of stratagem, in which the commissary building was destined to duplicate the trick of the famous Trojan horse.

'At daylight, I sent a messenger to the renegade camp to inform Geronimo and the other chiefs that I desired to have a talk with them. They came quickly, a motley clan, apinted, and equipped for fight.