

Wes: Our first story gets personal with two of the most celebrated gunslingers of the Old West. Tombstone, Arizona, is home of the most famous gunfight in the history of the Old West: the shootout at the O.K. Corral. These days, the town is an intoxicating blend of cowboy myth and historical fact. There are three different groups of gunfight reenactors stealing tourists from each other like the cattle rustlers of old.

Reenactor: Throw up your hands!

Reenactor: Hold! I don't want that!

Woman over loudspeaker: October 26, 1881, gunfight at the O.K. Corral!

Wes: But every so often in this surreal town, someone turns up with a genuine piece of Old West history. Is it the real McCoy?

Danny: Whenever I had it in my hand for the very first time, the hair on the back of my neck stood up, and I had goose bumps on my arms. I've always loved the Western days. I've always loved the shootouts and the pistols and all that. I feel that I should have been born in that era carrying around a six-shooter on the side of my hip, walking down the street. You know, mothers have instincts over kids. They know when the children are doing wrong, and I have the feeling that this watch is real.

Wes: I'm Wes Cowan, and I've traveled to tombstone to investigate the authenticity of Danny's pocket watch. Hey, Danny.

Danny: Hello, sir, how are you? Nice to meet you, sir.

Wes: Well, Danny, that's the watch, huh?

Danny: Yes, sir, it is. That is the watch.

Wes: Well, it's a nice watch. Wow. How'd you get it?

Danny: I bought that from the pawn shop that I worked at in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Guy came in and pawned it, and then 61 days later, he didn't come back in to reclaim it. So the owner sold it to me.

Wes: Okay, and did the guy who pawned it give you any documentation about it at all?

Danny: Unfortunately, he didn't. He said that somewhere, there was a picture of Doc Holliday with the fob and the watch, but he never produced it, and I never got to see it.

Wes: What is it you want me to find out about this watch?

Danny: I would like to find out if Wyatt Earp really, truly gave that to Doc Holliday.

Wes: I got to tell you that the field of Western collectibles is full of fakes and frauds. If there was anything else that you could give me to help me out, it would be great.

Danny: No, sir, I wish there was. I wish there was, but there isn't.

Wes: Well, Danny, here's hoping that it's real.

Danny: Yes, sir.

Wes: Huh. The engraving on the watch reads, "From Wyatt Earp to my friend Doc Holliday, Tombstone, Arizona, t." Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday: two of the biggest figures in the American West. If this is real, it could be worth six figures.

Reenactor: Did you say six figures?

Wes: Now, hold on, boys. We don't know if this is the real McCoy. To figure out if this watch is real, I'll need to dig into the history of Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. In 1880, Earp was a young lawman in Tombstone staring down the rustlers and cowboys who terrorized the Arizona mining town. His friend, the dentist Doc Holliday, was a hard-drinking gambler with a tubercular cough and a nasty temper. Doc was handy with a drill but even handier with a six-shooter. The friendship between these two men and their notorious battles with the outlaw Clanton brothers came to symbolize the tension between law and order and vigilante justice in the Old West. What happened that day at the O.K. Corral, and would Wyatt Earp really have given Doc Holliday a pocket watch? There's a historian in town by the name of Casey Tefertiller. He wrote the definitive biography of Wyatt Earp, and he's heavily armed with historical research.

Casey Tefertiller: Welcome to the West, city boy.

Wes: I ain't no city boy. Casey, what really happened at the O.K. Corral?

Casey: It was perhaps the most stunning gunfight in the history of the West. Lawmen -- Wyatt Earp, his two brothers, and their friend Doc Holliday -- marched through the street to confront outlaws who had been threatening to kill them, and there was supposed to be an arrest, and the arrest grew out of control, and all of a sudden, the Earps and Doc fired on the outlaws, and three outlaws lie dead in the street.

Wes: Why would Wyatt Earp hang out with a psychotic, gambling gunslinger like Doc Holliday?

Casey: Doc wasn't just psychotic. He was intelligent. He was witty. He was funny, and more than that, he saved Wyatt Earp's life. There was a special bond there.

Wes: So they were really -- they were friends.

Casey: They were.

Wes: Now, let me show you this. Were they friends enough for Wyatt to give Doc something like this?

Casey: Wow. They certainly were. Have you had it dated yet?

Wes: Not yet. That's my next stop. When it comes to antique pocket watches, no one in Tombstone knows more than Dennis Niswonger. A seasoned watch mechanic, he's fixed hundreds of them.

Dennis Niswonger: I have another watch here from that same time period, and the style of the writing of the engraving, the form of the letters, looks the same. Now we'll check for a serial number to know whether or not that was made in that time. That's 169,373 serial number. So what we'll do now, we'll check that serial

number out. It dates that movement to have been manufactured somewhere in late 1880.

Wes: 1880. So that's good.

Dennis: That's good, yeah.

Wes: That's when Doc and Wyatt were together.

Dennis: Yeah, now, you know, Wes, the date is not the important thing. I think it's more important -- is does this watch fit the style and the personality of the man it was given to? Doc was a gambler. He would have carried something gold-filled. This watch is mostly nickel with possibly just maybe a little bit of silver in it. That helps give it that real shine.

Wes: What about the fob?

Dennis: The fob is very feminine. Um...quite possibly, that could have even been part of a necklace.

Wes: That they recycled into a fob.

Dennis: Yeah. Usually, cowboys, when they carried fobs -- that would have hung down more manly. I don't think they would have carried something that feminine. I think they would have got shot.

Wes: I've got solid proof that the watch was made in 1880, the same year Wyatt and Doc were in tombstone. That's big news, but Dennis has doubts about the style. With all the mythology surrounding Wyatt and Doc, I need Casey to tell me what happened to them after the shootout at the O.K. Corral. He's agreed to meet me at the tombstone courthouse. All right, Casey, so what happens after the shootout?

Casey: Wyatt, Doc Holliday, and Wyatt's brothers were brought up on charges of murder. Wyatt and Doc sat in jail for 16 days before the judge finally deemed that there was not enough evidence to bind them over for trial -- to go to a murder trial for their lives.

Wes: But no sooner were Wyatt and Doc set free than the Clanton brothers got even. They killed Wyatt's brother Morgan and nearly killed his other brother Virgil. This was too much for Wyatt to bear. With Doc at his side, the lawman turned vigilante. And began convicting cowboys at the end of his gun. In all your research about Wyatt and Doc, have you ever heard anything about a pocket watch that was given by Wyatt to Doc?

Casey: No, but these weren't letter-writing-type guys. So it's conceivable.

Wes: Could Wyatt have even bought a pocket watch here in Tombstone?

Casey: Oh, sure, there were a number of jewelers here in town. There were gun makers who sold watches and did engraving. I mean, that wouldn't be at all unlikely. Very possible.

Wes: So not an issue at all.

Casey: Not at all.

Wes: You know, I showed the watch to a local guy who collects and repairs antique watches, and he's pretty sure that the case is made of nickel.

Casey: Nickel? Nickel?! You can almost imagine Doc Holliday saying, "I rode through hell with Wyatt Earp, and all I got was a cheap watch?" Ugh.

Wes: Wyatt's income varied but Casey says the lawman would never have given a nickel watch to a man who once saved his life in a Dodge City shootout. I've got an appointment with Steve and Marge Eliot who have the largest collection of Wyatt Earp memorabilia in town. Let's see what they have to say.

Marge: Well, uh, right off the bat, the first red flag is it says "Tombstone, Arizona, T" here.

Wes: Right.

Marge: In 1880s, which was when this was given to Doc, supposedly, "Arizona, T" was never used. We have never seen that in all the documents and legal papers that we have seen. They would use "Arizona." they would use a "T" or "Ariz," but never "Arizona, T."

Wes: Mm-hmm.

Marge: Well, my opinion of this watch is, as we say, phony as a \$3 bill.

Wes: Marge also tells me that Doc's vile temper may have dropped his lawman friend into a mess of trouble and that any sort of gift would have been highly unlikely.

Marge: If this was to commemorate the O.K. Corral -- absolutely not. It was the worst day of Wyatt's life. Wyatt spent the rest of his life trying to live down that day. Doc Holliday probably started the whole fiasco. So he would not have given a watch. He'd have probably given him a fist in the face, but never a watch.

Wes: I'm meeting Casey at the Boot Hill Cemetery, another Tombstone blend of fact and fiction where the bodies aren't always where the markers say they are. He says that in 1885, a year before Doc died, the two men met for a final time.

Casey: Their last meeting came shortly before Doc's death when Wyatt and his wife, Josephine, were visiting Denver, and they were sitting in the lobby of a hotel, and Doc walked up. A frail, emaciated Doc Holliday came up. Josephine Earp, Wyatt's wife, recorded that in her memoir.

Woman's voice: There coming toward us was Doc Holliday, even thinner and more delicate than he'd been in Tombstone. 'I wanted to see you once more,' he told Wyatt, 'for as you can see, I can't last much longer.' My husband remembered how Doc had once saved his life. There were tears in his eyes when at last they took leave of each other."

Casey: Wyatt Earp, this tough man, walked away with a tear in his eye.

Wes: Wow, what a great story. So, you know, I mean, after all those years, all the hardships, they were really still close.

Casey: They were close, and it was a special friendship. It's -- it's a relationship born through bloodshed.

Wes: The memoir suggests the two men did remain close, but no mention of a watch. It's starting to feel like the sun is setting on my investigation. You know, when detective work gets you down, there's only one thing

to do, and that's drink. Sarsaparilla, straight up. There's Dennis, who thinks the watch is the wrong style for Doc, Marge Elliot, who says it's phony as a \$3 bill, Casey, who's having his doubts, just like me, and there's Danny Ballard, hoping to get the thumb's-up on his watch. What am I going to tell him? Everybody in town is casting aspersions, but nobody can produce a smoking gun that says the watch is fake. I think it's time to get the hell out of Tombstone. And so I rode my faithful steed across the Rockies, changed horses at the Mississippi, rode through the foothills of Pennsylvania and the malls of New Jersey until I came to the land they call Gotham, a place where they've got all the modern equipment a man needs to really get to the bottom of things. Don Palmieri is a forensic expert and a master appraiser of antique jewelry.

Don Palmieri: As you know, the provenance on this watch is shaky. There's no documentation, no photographs, and with such famous names engraved on the back of this watch for over 100 years, why are we only finding out about it now? On the other hand, I've seen pieces, very valuable pieces, that have come out of safe-deposit boxes that were forgotten for generations.

Wes: Now, when you looked at the engraving, was there anything you could tell about the age of the engraving or quality of the engraving at all?

Don: Yes, actually. Why don't we put it up on the screen?

Wes: Okay, great.

Don: Let's give it a little bit of light.

Wes: Wow, look at that. What he showed me next blew me away like tumbleweed in a windstorm. So it's back to Tombstone to tell Danny what I found out. Sure wish there was such a thing as a flying machine. The watch does date from 1881, the movement does. The case, the engraving is all hand-done. It's nickel. Doc Holliday -- why would Wyatt Earp give Doc a nickel watch? So when I left Tombstone to go to New York to visit my expert, I was expecting him to deliver the coup de grace on this.

Don: Well, Wes, we can tell for sure this is hand-engraving. You notice that all the engraving, the lines here, there are no real sharp edges, the loops here on the "r" and even on the "f," and there are no burrs sticking up in any of the cuts. If this were recently engraved, you would expect to see some burrs or sharp edges, and those just aren't there. So we know that it wasn't -- the engraving wasn't done recently.

Wes: Now I'm starting to believe this thing is real.

Don: The scratches just go and the dings and the dents. This watch has been worn. It's been handled for a good bit of time in order for that metal to wear down.

Wes: Well, Don, what's the bottom line for the watch?

Don: Bottom line is: I can't tell you it's a fake. I can't tell you that it's authentic. So anything is possible.

Danny: But you could not say that it's a fake.

Wes: Could not say it's a fake, but that's not as good as saying it's for real.

Danny: Well, true, but it's still a priceless watch to me, and I'm going to enjoy every second of it. It just -- the fact that I'm here in Tombstone, this is something -- ever since I was old enough to watch Westerns, I've

wanted to be here, and look at me, you know? I'm here, you know? It's -- it's been worth it. It has definitely been worth it. It is just something I've wanted to do my whole life.

Wes: Oh, that's fabulous.

Danny: Appreciate everything you -- seriously.

Wes: I know you do. I know you do. It's been a blast. It's a big deal for me, too.

Danny: Is it really?

Wes: Yeah. Well, the way I see it, Danny's watch embodies the ambiguous history of the Old West itself: part fact, part fiction... And it's too dang late to separate one from the other.

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