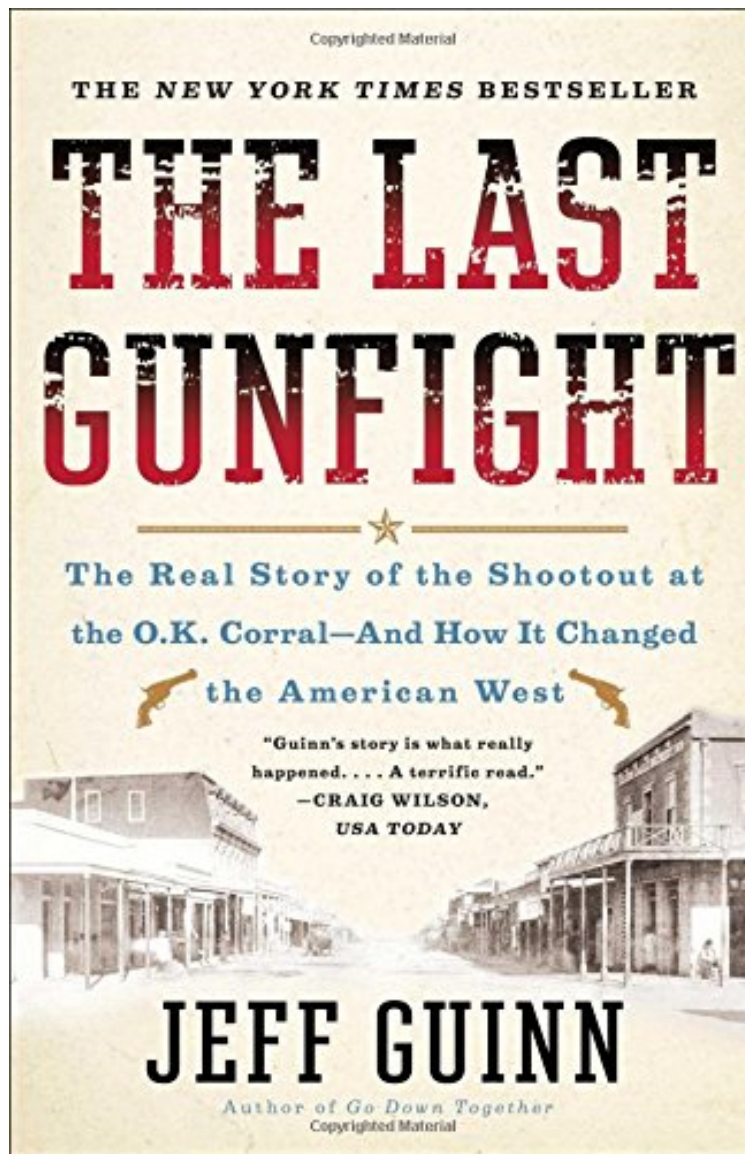


(Ebook pdf) The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral-And How It Changed the American West

## The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral-And How It Changed the American West

Jeff Guinn

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Jeff Guinn : The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral-And How It Changed the American West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral-And How It Changed the American West:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Expertly crafted, expertly researched, expertly written By Zé do BorogodóBear in mind the following: this is not a book only about the famous gunfight (or plain one-side murder - it depends on your point of view) at Fremont Street in Tombstone. The gun fight per se only appears at page 204! The book is also about the founding of Tombstone, its history and downfall; a lot of supporting characters; a lot of myth-destruction (without bring mean), a lot o US history. And it is a HUGE book. Typos are very small. This is the first book about Wyatt Earp, and that's enough for me. Great book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very well written and researched book on a subject ... By Tex Caledonia A very well written and researched book on a subject that has been treated on films filled with inaccuracies and lies. If you're either a fan or detractor of the Earp brothers then this book is for you. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Insight into human nature helps this author connect the dots By Marvin D. Pipher I've read quite a few books concerning the 'Gunfight at the OK Corral' and the resulting inquiry and its aftermath; and about Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Tombstone, and America's western frontier in general, and this is one of the better ones. The author has clearly done extensive research, perhaps over a broader range than any other western author that I have read, and knows his subject(s) well. He couples that understanding with a deep insight into human nature and seems to have an uncanny knack of putting two and two together. This has allowed him to flesh out the characters in the OK Corral saga and, by placing them in the proper context of their times, to make their decisions and actions appear logical, consistent, and appropriate to the given circumstances. This makes the story much more comprehensive and much more compelling. But at times I had to question the extent to which the author carried this approach: most particularly by putting thoughts into various people's minds to explain their actions. In a similar vein, I had some difficulty with his highly detailed description of the immediate actions preceding and during the actual gunfight. He seemed to provide much more unique and specific detail than is available anywhere else, and, in my view, some detail that I'm not sure anyone has any way of knowing. He also gives the impression that a great many people were in position to watch the actual gunfight. In all previous accounts which I have read, this was not the case and based on the testimony at the hearing wasn't the case. Having said that: It's still hard to find fault with this book or with its author. Unlike some authors, Mr. Guinn appears to have taken a fairly even handed approach to his subject, letting the chips fall where they may. The result is an excellent book which should advance many reader's knowledge of the "Gunfight at the OK Corral," and, to make things still better, it is an easy and enjoyable book to read.

A New York Times bestseller, Jeff Guinn's definitive, myth-busting account of the most famous gunfight in American history reveals who Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and the Clantons and McLaurys really were and what the shootout was all about. On the afternoon of October 26, 1881, in a vacant lot in Tombstone, Arizona, a confrontation between eight armed men erupted in a deadly shootout. The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral would shape how future generations came to view the Old West. Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and the Clantons became the stuff of legends, symbolic of a frontier populated by good guys in white hats and villains in black ones. It's a colorful story—but the truth is even better. Drawing on new material from private collections—including diaries, letters, and Wyatt Earp's own hand-drawn sketch of the shootout's conclusion—as well as archival research, Jeff Guinn gives us a startlingly different and far more fascinating picture of what actually happened that day in Tombstone and why.

"Guinn . . . delivers another double-barrel blast of history and true crime. . . . Superbly detailed . . . . A thorough, thrilling account of the crime and its influence on the history of the West. . . . Absolutely buy this dazzler." --"Library Journal Express "(Starred )" "The most thorough account of the gunfight and its circumstances ever published." --"The Wall Street Journal" "Scrupulously details how this isolated act of violence attained such heroic status. . . . A deeply researched and colorfully written history of one of those dramatic oddments of Americana that never fails to captivate us." --Dale L. Walker, "Dallas Morning News" "Jeff Guinn took readers down the back roads of Louisiana in his book "Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde." He's back in "The Last Gunfight", displaying the impeccable research that is his trademark. . . . Guinn's story is what really happened. . . . A terrific read." Craig Wilson, "USA TODAY" "A gripping revisionist account of the famed 1881 showdown. . . . Exhaustively researched, stylishly written. . . . As grimly compelling as a Greek tragedy." --"Publishers Weekly "(Starred )" "Jeff Guinn is a straight shooter when it comes to facts. He investigated the story from every imaginable angle, separating truth from tall tale, and now he delivers a factual account of what happened--and why--that's every bit as riveting as the fantasy." --David Martindale, "Star-Telegram "(Fort Worth, TX) Advance Praise for "The Last Gunfight" "Jeff Guinn gives us not only the clashing egos and the mythic gunslingers, but also the larger social forces that converged on a roistering mining town in southeastern Arizona that fateful day in 1881. The result is a kind of anti-Western: The clichés are stripped away, the black hats removed, the 'rugged individualists' unmasked, leaving us with real human beings who are swayed and shaped by the forces of history, and trapped in time." --Hampton Sides, author of *Blood and Thunder* "" "" "The Last Gunfight" "" is a portrayal of criminality, greed, ambition, rivalry, fidelity, and law enforcement gone awry. Add in the aspects of vengeance, lust, and enduring love, and you have a riveting book every bit as good as, if not better than, "Go Down Together", Jeff Guinn's much-lauded book about Bonnie and Clyde." --

Lynn R. Bailey, Tombstone historian and author of "Too Tough to Die" Jeff Guinn has come up with a new angle and approach to the events of that bloody day in Tombstone. Without that gunfight, Wyatt Earp would have never become a household name a hundred years later. Guinn delves into the myth and separates it from the facts. A terrific read about the West's most famous lawman."--Clive Cussler"An absorbing, meticulous account of the famous O.K. Corral gunfight as it really happened. . . . Guinn places his complex and nuanced story firmly within the context of the evolving Western frontier. . . . A great story." --"Kirkus s"About the AuthorJeff Guinn is a former award-winning investigative journalist and the bestselling author of numerous books, including *Go Down Together: The True Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral and How It Changed the West*, and *Manson: The Life and Times of Charles Manson*. Guinn lives in Fort Worth, Texas.Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Prologue

**TOMBSTONE THAT MORNING** Virgil Earp was determined to sleep in on Wednesday, October 26, 1881. The Tombstone police chief tumbled into bed around 6 A.M. after participating in an all-night poker game at the Occidental Saloon. Among others, he'd played against Johnny Behan, the county sheriff, and local ranchers Ike Clanton and Tom McLaury. Before sitting down to play cards, Clanton had spent much of the night threatening the chief's brother Wyatt and Wyatt's gambler pal, Doc Holliday. At one point he and Holliday had to be separated. Holliday eventually headed home to his room in a boardinghouse, but Clanton kept drinking and getting more worked up. As chief of police, even off-duty and playing in a card game, Virgil Earp always remained alert to possible trouble. But empty threats were common in Western saloons. Men had a few drinks too many, promised to commit mayhem on somebody else, and forgot all about it the next day when they sobered up. Ike Clanton had a reputation in Tombstone as a loudmouth who fired off hot air, not hot lead. Virgil didn't take him too seriously. When the marathon poker game finally concluded—afterward, nobody seemed to remember who won or lost, so no huge sums could have changed hands—Clanton swore again to Virgil that he was going to get his guns and then settle things with Holliday the next time he saw him. He added that it seemed Virgil was part of a group conspiring against him. The Earps and Doc Holliday, Clanton warned, had better get ready to fight. The police chief replied that he was going to get some sleep, Ike should do the same, and he better not cause any problems while Virgil was in bed. Dawn on that Wednesday morning broke bitterly cold in southeastern Arizona Territory, so it was a good time to stay warm under the covers. A storm was on the way; Thursday would bring sleet and snow. Extremes in weather had been common all year in the region. The blazing heat of summer was a given, but April through early July had been the hottest and driest in memory. When rain finally did come in July and intermittently thereafter, it frequently arrived as a deluge. Just weeks earlier, much of sprawling Cochise County—roughly the size of the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined—had been drenched. The desert soil, baked rock-hard by the sun under a coating of sand, didn't absorb moisture well, and roads throughout the county flooded. Now biting winds whipped down from the north, causing the temperature to plummet. It was not a comfortable morning to be outdoors. Yet as Virgil Earp fell asleep, the main streets of Tombstone still bustled with people. It was always that way, every hour of every day. Tombstone was a mining town, built over a warren of underground tunnels and surrounded by a bristling ring of hoists, smelters, and other structures manned nonstop in a frenzied communal effort to wring as much profit from the earth as possible. The mines operated in shifts, never closing, so neither did many of the town's dazzling array of shops, restaurants, and saloons. Weather, like the time of day, made no difference. Broiling, freezing, day, night, Tombstone pulsated with frantic energy. In some form or another, everyone there was on the make. For the better part of twenty years, Virgil Earp and his brothers, James, Wyatt, and Morgan, had roamed the American frontier, trying to make the great fortune and secure the leading places in a community that their family had coveted, and failed to achieve, for generations. Tombstone, they hoped, was where their dreams would finally come true. Virgil was police chief and a United States deputy marshal, James had a "sampling room" saloon, Wyatt and Morgan sometimes worked for Wells Fargo, and all four brothers owned shares of mine property in and around town. Wyatt had hopes of being elected county sheriff in another year, a job with the potential to pay him as much as \$40,000 a year—the kind of wealth that might gain the Earps admittance to Tombstone's highest social circles. Finally, they would be somebody. Tombstone was a place where such things could happen. Thirty miles from the Mexican border, seventy miles from Tucson, the town was well known throughout the country, mentioned frequently in the business sections of major newspapers from New York City to San Francisco. Its silver mines were said to be the richest since the legendary Comstock Lode was discovered in Nevada Territory in 1859. Legitimate investors, less savory speculators, prospectors in search of strikes that would make their fortunes, and experienced miners looking for work constantly flooded into town, along with those hopeful of siphoning off some of the rumored riches into their own pockets—lawyers, merchants, gamblers, saloonkeepers, prostitutes. In that way, Tombstone was typical of any mining boomtown. Yet it was also unique. By design as much as by accident, Tombstone was a cultural contradiction, one where the usual mining camp demimonde delights of fixed card games, brothels, and cheap rotgut coexisted amicably with swank hotels and restaurants, world-class stage entertainment, and pricey blended whiskies of the sort sipped in the finest East Coast metropolitan watering holes. Civic leaders were about to debate the advisability of installing sewer lines, and telephones linked the major mines and the busy Mining Exchange Building, as well as a few of Tombstone's glitziest hotels. The town was an addictive hybrid of elegance and decadence, a place soon to be

described in one prominent travel magazine as “a spasm of modernism.” Tombstone deserved the description. In many ways the town was the logical culmination of what, in just over a century, the American West had come to represent: Limitless opportunities for any man to achieve any ambition, no matter how lofty or unlikely. On this chilly morning, there was no other place like Tombstone in all of Arizona Territory, or in much of America. Thanks to stringent ordinances prohibiting guns to be carried within city limits, Tombstone was mostly a safe place, too. It was inevitable, in any community with so many saloons patronized by prideful, hard-drinking men, that alcohol-fueled testosterone overflow periodically resulted in fist-fights or drunken attempts at gunplay. More often, bellowed threats like Ike Clanton’s against the Earps and Doc Holliday were never carried out. The efficient town police force sent prospective combatants home to sleep it off, or else locked them up for the night and took them to court to be fined the next morning for disturbing the peace. As the sun rose on October 26, the vast majority of Tombstone residents had never witnessed, much less participated in, physical violence or gunplay within town limits. Billy Breakenridge, who served several years as a Cochise County deputy sheriff, later claimed that “I never heard of a house [in Tombstone] being robbed, or anyone being held up in the city, and it was perfectly safe for any lady or gentleman to pass along the streets, day or night, without being molested.” The most substantive proof came in August 1881, when Chief Earp informed the city council that things were so quiet, the town police force could be reduced to three men—himself and two officers, though he reserved the right to appoint civilians as “special deputies” if necessary. (When he testified in a trial in Tucson in mid-October, Chief Earp named his brothers Wyatt and Morgan to serve as special deputies while he was away.) In town, Virgil Earp had a well-deserved reputation as an impartial enforcer of the law; during the broiling heat of summer 1881, he even arrested Wyatt for disturbing the peace and fighting. Wyatt had to pay a \$20 fine. But there was ongoing concern among town leaders about a group they believed not only threatened local tranquillity, but Tombstone’s future prosperity. In the surrounding area, particularly in the smaller settlements of San Simon, Charleston, and Galeville, a loosely knit band of desperadoes collectively known as “cowboys” engaged in raucous lifestyles that frequently crossed over into lawbreaking. The cowboys rustled openly; because of beef shortages in Cochise County, butchers and consumers didn’t much care where cattle were purloined, so long as the majority of them were stolen from Mexican rather than American herds. In exchange for a cut of the profits, small ranchers in the area such as the Clantons and McLaurys gladly grazed the rustled stock on their property until it was fattened enough for sale. The cowboys were also suspected—it was never proven—of attacking Mexican pack trains bringing goods across the border to trade, and of raiding Mexican settlements in much the same manner as renegade Apaches. International tension resulted. Members of President Chester A. Arthur’s cabinet were consulting with territorial officials about it. Clashing opinions about the cowboys ramped up an already bitter political feud in Cochise County and Tombstone, the county seat. The town’s rival newspapers were engaged in all-out editorial war. The Nugget was unabashedly Democrat in its leanings, favoring minimal government intervention in territorial and local issues, and claiming that “cowboy depredations” were grossly exaggerated by area leaders who wanted to enrich themselves at the expense of individual freedoms. The Republican Epitaph took the opposite view: The cowboys were menaces not only to local safety, but to Tombstone’s reputation. There had been several area stage robberies in the last seven months, surely carried out by cowboys. The Epitaph demanded federal intervention, currently forbidden by congressional edict; meanwhile, John Clum, the newspaper’s publisher and mayor of Tombstone, joined other civic leaders to form the Tombstone Citizens Safety Committee, ready when needed to mete out swift vigilante justice. In an August 1881 e...