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“Tombstone” Midterm

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“Tombstone”

“Tombstone” is a movie directed by George Cosmatos in 1993. The main actors in this movie are Val Kilmer and Kurt Russel. This movie is about Wyatt Earp, Virgil Earp, Morgan Earp, and Doc Holliday who were once in law enforcement. They all retired and moved cities to start new and get actual jobs to stay away from the being involved in the sheriff’s department. This was a very historical movie and had many significant historical events in it. However, Hollywood always has to alter the truth a little bit in their movies to make it so that people will watch it. Since directors do this, I am going to straighten some of their false facts out by comparing their movie to history.

In the beginning of “Tombstone” the narrator says, “It is 1879 and the civil war is over…” That fact, however, is not true. The civil war actually ended in 1865 when General Lee surrendered to the union at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia (William).

There was a gang called the Cowboys and they are known as being the first organized crime group in the United States. The gang was led by Ike Clanton and his brother Billy Clanton. Two other high ranked people in the Cowboys were William “Curly Bill” Brocius and Johnny Ringo. These men and the Earp brothers have had a heated hate for each other for a long time before they eventually moved to the same town and all hell broke loose.

The day of the Battle at the OK Corral, Virgil saw Ike Clanton walking around town with a firearm when they were illegal. Virgil took the gun from him and hit him in the head with the butt of the gun. Little did Virgil know that he was going to be in a huge battle with them later that day. Shortly after the incident between Virgil and Ike, the Clanton’s were seen buying ammunition and trying to buy guns. People went to the Sheriff’s office to tell the Earp’s of the threats that the Cowboys made against them. After they heard this they went over to the OK Corral where they were meeting to disarm them. These both happened in the movie and in history.

Just like in the movie, Virgil handed Doc Holliday a sawed-off shotgun to take into battle. On their walk to the Cowboys down Fremont Street the sheriff ran up to them saying that he already has disarmed them. In the movie they keep their guns out as they walk to the empty lot where the Cowboys are congregated when in history they put their guns away thinking that the sheriff actually had disarmed them. They walk up to the lot and see Frank Mclaury and Billy Clanton still carrying revolvers (OK Corral).

During the battle Virgil got shot in the calf and Morgan got shot as well shortly before Doc did. Mclaury went for the kill shot on Morgan and Doc stepped in and got grazed in the side by a bullet. Like in the movie Mclaury goes out into the street when Morgan finishes him off with a dome shot. Tom Mclaury and Billy Clanton got killed in the whole ordeal as well.

After the battle was over, the sheriff told Wyatt that he was under arrest and Wyatt said, “No I am not under arrest today.” In history he said this as well but he went on as to why he said that which was, the sheriff had told them that they were unarmed when they really were not. But after the battle in the movie the Cowboys had a parade type thing with the three people that died and made a huge deal about it.

A few days after the Battle at the OK Corral, Virgil was walking around the street at night time and three Cowboy ambushers shot him three times in the back and arm with a double barrel shotgun. From all the injuries he sustained from that required the amputation of his left arm. A few months later, Morgan was playing billiards with some friends when an assassin shot through the window and hit him in the back of the spine. This event happened the same in the movie and in history but in the movie he died almost instantly when he dies an hour or so later in reality.

After Wyatt and Virgil took Morgan home to be buried, Wyatt embarked on something called Earp Vendetta. The movie does not use this term but it does show what he does during this time. And during the vendetta, Wyatt, Doc, James, and some others hunted for every single cowboy that was left and found and killed them. While looking for people they accidentally stumble upon Curly Bill and other cowboys’ camp and immediately start firing their guns. Wyatt gunned down Curly Bill in the river. The movie kept it pretty accurate with history in this aspect too.

In the movie, Johnny Ringo tells Wyatt Earp to meet him on top of Oak Ridge Mountain. Instead of Wyatt going, Doc shows up surprisingly because he was sick. The two duel each other and Doc comes out on top with a single, perfect shot to the dome. But in history he Ringo was found dead by a tree with a .45 caliber Colt and a hole in his right temple and exiting the top of his head (Death).

In conclusion, this was a very good history movie and kept the facts straight most of the movie. They also did a great job at keeping names and nicknames the same which made it much easier for researching facts about the people. I hope that I cleared up a lot of the statements in the movie that were not completely true. Also, I thought it was a great movie and I am glad that you had us watch it because I love history and I learned a lot from is as well.