

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE Presents *Wyatt Earp*

Encore Broadcast Tuesday, January 24, 2012
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS

As part of a month-long re-examination of some of the most controversial and mythic figures of the West, PBS's AMERICAN EXPERIENCE will encore *Wyatt Earp*, the award-winning story of one of the central figures in the narrative of how the West was won. The one-hour film features interviews with some of the best-known biographers and historians of the American West to present a fresh take on an old legend.

"A lot of people feel strongly that Wyatt Earp was either hero or villain. The real story is a lot more interesting than that," explains Rob Rapley, who wrote, directed, and produced.

Wyatt Earp has been portrayed in countless movies and television shows by some of Hollywood's greatest actors, including Henry Fonda, Jimmy Stewart, and more recently, Kevin Costner, but these popular fictions often belie the complexities and flaws of a man whose life is a lens on politics, justice and economic opportunity in the American frontier.

As a young man, Wyatt Earp was a caricature of the Western lawman, spending his days drinking in saloons, gambling, and visiting brothels. He gained notoriety as the legendary gunman in the shootout at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Arizona, but shortly after his death in 1929, distressed Americans down on their luck transformed Wyatt Earp into a folk hero.

"We think of him as the ultimate example of a man controlling his own destiny. Although there's some truth to that, the fact is he spent almost all of his life being tossed around by the vast forces that were reshaping the West," Rapley says.

"How the West was won is one of our greatest American narratives," says AMERICAN EXPERIENCE Executive Producer Mark Samels. "In the tradition of *Annie Oakley*, *Buffalo Bill*, and our other Western histories, *Wyatt Earp* examines an ordinary man's role in that larger-than-life story, and how he became the legend that lives on today."

The month-long series will also include the premieres of *Billy the Kid* and *Custer's Last Stand*, as well as encore broadcasts of *Geronimo*, *Annie Oakley*, and *Jesse James*.

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Explore the vastness of the West and its people, places and history through the extensive resources on the AMERICAN EXPERIENCE website. Features include photo galleries, interviews with filmmakers, preview clips and a library of full-length streaming films (*The Donner Party*, *Geronimo*, *We Shall Remain* and many more) at pbs.org/americanexperience/collections/wild-west/.

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About the Filmmakers

Written, Produced and Directed by	Rob Rapley
Editor	Bruce Shaw
Associate Producer	Kathryn Lord
Line Producer	Deborah Clancy Porfido
Director of Photography	Michael Chin
Music by	Joel Goodman
Narrated by	Michael Murphy

ROB RAPLEY (Writer/Director/Producer) Rob Rapley was nominated for a Writer's Guild Award for *Wyatt Earp*; his most recent film for AMERICAN EXPERIENCE was *The Greeley Expedition*. He previously produced *Buffalo Bill*, *Trail of Tears*, and two episodes of PBS's acclaimed series on the Supreme Court, which the *Boston Globe* called "as good as it gets when it comes to history on public television." He was nominated for Primetime Emmy Awards for his work on *Bill Moyers' Becoming American: The Chinese Experience* and *Loosely Mozart: The New Innovators of Classical Music*.

MARK SAMELS (Executive Producer) Under Samels' leadership, the series has been honored with nearly every industry award, including the Peabody, Primetime Emmys, the duPont-Columbia Journalism Award, Writers Guild Awards, Oscar nominations, and Sundance Film Festival Audience and Grand Jury Awards. Samels also serves on the Board of Governors at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Prior to joining WGBH, Samels worked as an independent documentary filmmaker, an executive producer for several U.S. public television stations and as a producer for the first co-production between Japanese and American television. A native of Wisconsin, he is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

About AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Television's most-watched history series, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE has been hailed as "peerless" (*Wall Street Journal*), "the most consistently enriching program on television" (*Chicago Tribune*), and "a beacon of intelligence and purpose" (*Houston Chronicle*). On air and online, the series brings to life the incredible characters and epic stories that have shaped America's past and present. Acclaimed by viewers and critics alike, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE documentaries have been honored with every major broadcast award, including 14 George Foster Peabody Awards, four duPont-Columbia Awards, and 30 Emmy Awards, including, most recently, *Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking* for *Freedom Riders*.

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