

## *Other Players: Who is more credible, Wyatt Earp or Billy Breakenridge?*

From WEFAQs visitor Daniel, we are asked, "Who should we believe? Billy Breakenridge was, even according to Wyatt, an honest man. He said that most reliable citizens don't believe Wyatt killed anyone at Iron Springs, least of all Curly Bill. By that he meant citizens at the time, whom I believe more because they were there. The men actually camped at the springs, four in number, said that Curly Bill was in Mexico at the time. In fact, there is considerable evidence that Curly left Arizona in July 1881 to avoid a larceny charge. I understand that Curly never appeared again in Arizona but he was a wanted man in several states and his death would discourage the bounty hunters. Breakenridge said Curly Bill learned of his death at the hands of Wyatt Earp in 1889. My question is who is more credible, Wyatt or Breakenridge? Wyatt Earp himself said Breakenridge was a true blue and non corrupt law officer."

In Tim Fattig's voluminous [Wyatt Earp: The Biography](#) (2002, Talei Publishers, Inc.), we are told that Wyatt and Josie had entertained former Behan deputy Billy Breakenridge in late 1925 and early 1926, "talking over the old days and, seemingly, forgetting all about the old animosities." At that time, Wyatt did not know that Breakenridge was writing a book ([Hellorado: Bringing the Law to the Mesquite](#) [1928, Houghton-Mifflin], ghost-written by the Western novelist, William MacLeod Raine). Indeed, it was Albert Behan, Sheriff John Behan's son, who informed Wyatt of the book shortly before its 1928 release. Fattig reports Albert told Wyatt that Breakenridge had told him (Behan) he would "burn ... Wyatt Earp up. I am giving him hell."

In a letter dated November 6, 1928, to his biographer, Stuart Lake, Earp said of Billy Breakenridge, "He is a sly fox of the worst kind ... If there ever was a mean contemptible person he certainly is the one ... A man like him needs to be called down just a bad man as he paints me to be and make him show what a low down coward he is." Earp referred to *Hellorado* as "damn lies." Other Tombstoners who knew Wyatt in the early 1880s, including John Clum and Fred Dodge, agreed.

It would appear then, that in a question of credibility, the nod should go to Wyatt Earp.

(NOTE: Much of the conjecture regarding the death of Curly Bill Brocius comes from the fact that his body was never produced.)

*Unique solution ID: #1070*

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