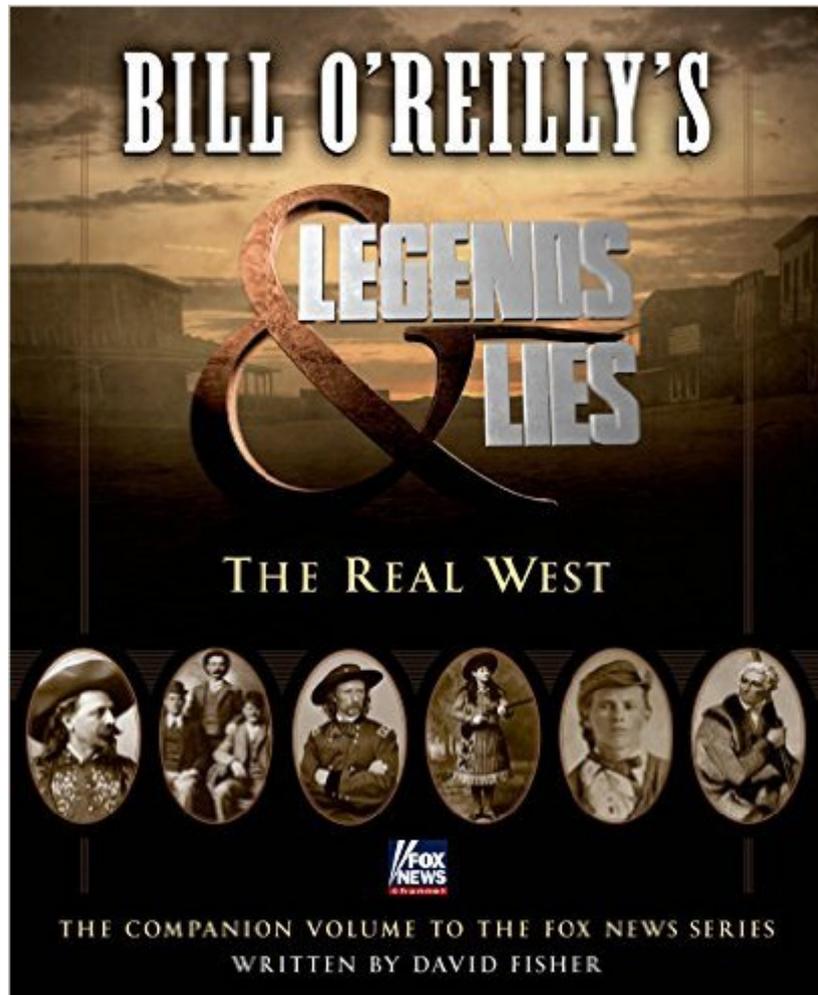


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Bill O'Reilly's Legends And Lies: The Real West



Synopsis

The must-have companion to Bill O'Reilly's historic series *Legends and Lies: The Real West*, a fascinating, eye-opening look at the truth behind the western legends we all think we know. How did Davy Crockett save President Jackson's life only to end up dying at the Alamo? Was the Lone Ranger based on a real lawman--and was he an African American? What amazing detective work led to the capture of Black Bart, the "gentleman bandit" and one of the west's most famous stagecoach robbers? Did Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid really die in a hail of bullets in South America? Generations of Americans have grown up on TV shows, movies and books about these western icons. But what really happened in the Wild West? All the stories you think you know, and others that will astonish you, are here--some heroic, some brutal and bloody, all riveting. Included are the legends featured in Bill O'Reilly's ten week run of historic episodic specials--from Kit Carson to Jesse James, Wild Bill Hickok to Doc Holliday-- accompanied by two bonus chapters on Daniel Boone and Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley. Frontier America was a place where instinct mattered more than education, and courage was necessary for survival. It was a place where luck made a difference and legends were made. Heavily illustrated with spectacular artwork that further brings this history to life, and told in fast-paced, immersive narrative, *Legends and Lies* is an irresistible, adventure-packed ride back into one of the most storied era of our nation's rich history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume is actually written by David Fisher (who is clearly and honestly credited) in a crisp and uncluttered, but sometimes dramatic, Bill O'Reilly style. O'Reilly himself attaches his name to the title and contributes a pithy (less than 3-page) introduction. Thereafter, biographical accounts (with

appropriate, relevant historical background) are provided for Daniel Boone, David Crockett, Kit Carson, Black Bart, Wild Bill Hickok, Bass Reeves (a lesser-known figure, but a fearless and tenacious African-American deputy marshall, here presented -- in a bit of myth-making of its own -- as a possible model for the fictional Lone Ranger), George Armstrong Custer, Buffalo Bill & Annie Oakley, Jesse James, Doc Holliday (and the Earps), Billy the Kid (with speculation about the possibility he was not really killed by Pat Garrett but lived on as one "Brushy Bill"), and Butch Cassidy (along with the Sundance Kid). Interspersed among these accounts are six informative topical essays (3-6 pages each) titled thusly: "Dime Novels," "Up and Down Towns," "The Reality of an 'Indian Summer,'" "The American Indian: With No Reservation," "Shooting Down a Legend" (about quick-draw shootouts), and "A Moving Image: Creating the Wild West on Film." There is a bibliography, and the book is beautifully and copiously illustrated (both in b&w and color). [See NOTE at end of review.] Overall, these short, realistic depictions purport to debunk the myths and correct the mistruths attached to these famous folks.

This book repeats as fact some of the same old myths and lies that have plagued these characters for years (Hickok killed 36 people? Really? There have only been about a half dozen deaths actually documented) but then, it is written for a popular audience, not the serious researcher. It is exhausting, however, to once again see the same sloppy "research" reported as fact. This sloth extends to the internal narrative; the book routinely contradicts itself, which means the writer and editor are not only ignorant, but are also too lazy to proof their own material. Here's a novel suggestion: don't write a history book unless it contributes something new, especially when dealing with an area that has been well plowed by far better writers and far better researchers for many years. At the very least, hire a ghostwriter who has a little knowledge of the subject, will actually read what he has written, and goes a little deeper than Wikipedia when looking for source material. For this project, you might actually have to go outside New York City, God forbid, to find somebody who has a passing knowledge of the American West. All that being said, what is REALLY annoying is to see the same cavalier approach taken with the photos in the book. Doc Holliday was never photographed with a bowler hat, it was a joke composite put together by a photographer a few years ago as every Holliday researcher knows - yet there he is, bowler and all, in this book. Bill's other picture of Doc was actually the cover story of True West magazine a few years back, which went into great detail about the fraudulent nature of the image. Yet, what head shot does Bill say is that of Doc? You guessed it.

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