



Billy THE Kid

1 x 53 HD



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On April 28, 1881, 21-year-old Henry McCarty, a.k.a. Billy the Kid, just days from being hanged for murder, outfoxed his jailors and electrified the nation with the latest in a long line of miraculous escapes. An outlaw with a deadly reputation, the young man was finally gunned down by the ambitious sheriff Pat Garrett just a few weeks later. The felling of one of the most notorious criminals of the age made front-page news and marked the end of Henry—but it was the beginning of one of the West's most enduring legends.

Portrayed by everyone from Paul Newman to Roy Rogers to Emilio Estevez, Billy the Kid's real story has often been obscured. This documentary takes a fascinating look at the boy behind the myth.

Born to impoverished Irish immigrants, Henry McCarty left the slums of New York City with his mother to join the wave of humanity heading west following the end of the Civil War. Lured by the promise of silver, they settled in a remote outpost in southeastern New Mexico, a place on the edge of civilization where Latino, Native American and Anglo cultures mixed freely. Henry embraced this *mestiza* culture. Within a few months, he was speaking Spanish fluently and courting señoritas in the evening.

In 1874, his mother died of tuberculosis, and his stepfather abandoned him. An orphan at fifteen, alone in a tough and transient mining town, it didn't take long for the Kid to find trouble. He fell in with a gang of seasoned outlaws who taught him to steal horses and master a six-shooter. When he killed a bully named Frank Cahill in a barroom brawl, he suddenly went from thief to murderer—and to a life on the run. Henry McCarty became William H. Bonney and there was no turning back.

In the lawless corner of New Mexico where Billy came of age, times were changing. Anglo businessmen flocked to New Mexico, becoming the largest property owners. In Lincoln County, two tough Irish immigrants—Lawrence Murphy and James Dolan—held a vice-like grip on all moneymaking endeavors. With huge government contracts for their cattle, Murphy and Dolan ruled the county like a fiefdom from their headquarters known simply as “The House.” Meanwhile, Billy joined the cattle empire of an Englishman, John Tunstall, who took him in and treated him with respect.

When the House, with the help of the local sheriff, murdered Tunstall, Billy and the other Tunstall loyalists were out for revenge. Forming a cowboy army, the Regulators, they dispensed their own brand of justice, gunning down Sheriff Brady and his men as they strolled the streets of town. All-out war erupted between the House and the Regulators.

Eventually caught by Pat Garrett and convicted of the murder of Sheriff Brady, Billy the Kid escaped one last time, but not for long. On the night of July 14, 1881, as he crept into the home of his sweetheart, Paulita Maxwell, Garrett stepped out of the shadows and gunned him down. Featuring interviews with a wide variety of Western historians and writers, *Billy the Kid* puts a human face on the legend who transformed himself from a skinny orphan boy to the most feared man in the West and eventually to an enduring icon.

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CREDITS

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