

# The tuberculosis of “Doc” Holliday in the cinema. *Hour of the Gun* (1967) and “Doc” (1971)

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## Summary

John Sturges' *Hour of the gun* (1967) begins with the famous fight at the OK corral while Frank Perry's "Doc", like the earlier My Darling Clementine (1946) and *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957), ends there. Both films portray the pulmonary tuberculosis of "Doc" Holliday. The first one places special emphasis on "Doc"'s last days at the Glenwood Springs Tuberculosis Sanatorium while the second one, in which he is the main character, emphasises his incessant bouts of coughing.

*Palabras clave:* Tuberculosis, Cough, Dentist, Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Drug Consumption.

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"Doc" Holliday is the most famous consumptive and dentist of the Wild West. His adventures as a consumptive have appeared on the screen on several occasions. In this work, we analyse the character and his illness in *Hour of the Gun* (1967) by John Sturges and in "Doc" (1971), by Frank Perry.

## HOUR OF THE GUN

### Technical details

**Original Title:** *Hour of the Gun*

**Country:** USA

**Year:** 1967

**Director:** John Sturges

**Music:** Jerry Goldsmith

**Screenwriter:** Edward Anhalt

**Cast:** James Garner, Jason Robards, Robert Ryan, Albert Salmi, Charles Aidman, Steve Ihnat, Michael Tolan, William Windom, Lonny Chapman and Larry Gates.

**Color:** Color

**Runtime:** 100 minutes

**Genre:** Western

**Production Companies:** Mirisch-Kappa Production and The Mirisch Corporation

**Synopsis:** Wyatt Earp and his brothers Virgil and Morgan, together with "Doc" Holliday, face down three of Ike Clanton's men, who are killed. As from that time, the showdowns between both groups follow one another until Wyatt kills Ike.

John Sturges (1911-1992) must have liked the character of Wyatt Earp and his animosity towards Ike Clanton in order to direct a film about the same characters nine years after *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. The new version was first shown on the first of November 1967. The script is original (not an adaptation) and is by Edward Anhalt, who wrote it specifically for the film. An excellent soundtrack, composed by Jerry Goldsmith, accompanies the action, highlighting the drama presented at the start of the action and during the duel at the end.

### The plot

The film tells the story of the showdowns between Wyatt Earp (James Garner), a representative of the interests of the citizens of Tombstone, law, and order, and Ike Clanton (Robert Ryan), a shady businessman. Although the film gives the idea that this animosity was rooted far back in time, it portrays the

famous duel at the OK Corral during the very first shots. As of that moment, both characters will become involved in a string of revenge and further revenge.

In the credits, accompanied by a soundtrack heavily featuring percussion to create the mood, we are introduced to the characters: the good ones, Wyatt Earp (figure 1) and “Doc” Holliday (Jason Robards) (figure 2), and the evil Ike Clanton. The action begins in Tombstone (Arizona) on 26 October 1881. Wyatt and his brothers Morgan (Sam Melville) and Virgil (Frank Converse) all in the company of “Doc” are walking towards the OK Corral in Tombstone (the name can be seen on a small plaque in the corral itself). Their idea is to disarm Billy Clanton (Walter Gregg) and the McLaury gang, who have just arrived in the city. Virgil is the city Marshal and the others are his assistants. The two groups face up: Billy and the two McLaury men are killed and Morgan and Virgil are wounded, one in the hip and the other in the shoulder. The whole scene and its consequences are witnessed by Ike Clanton, who is unarmed, and by the rest of his men, who do not intervene. Jimmy Bryan (Bill Fletcher), the county sheriff, who is being paid by Ike, tries to arrest Wyatt and his men for murder, but “Doc”’s shotgun changes his mind. After the funeral there is a hearing where we learn that despite the prosecution’s attempts, and thanks to some good police work, the deaths were caused in the discharge of their official duties.

The city is about to hold municipal elections for city Marshal, and Virgil, who is running again, has



Figure 1: Wyatt Earp

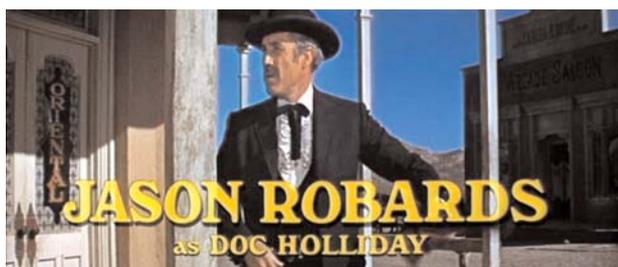


Figure 2: “Doc” Holliday

Pete Spence (Michael Tolan) as his opponent. Pete is one of Ike’s men. One night, when Virgil is going out on his rounds he is shot under the cover of darkness. Wyatt manages to get an eyewitness (... “I’ve got a boy and a wife... I can’t, they’ll kill me unless you promise I won’t have to say this to anyone but you”) to confess that Ike’s men are responsible. At the hearing the men get off because Wyatt cannot provide the evidence. Virgil is left disabled and Morgan replaces him as candidate. While they are waiting for the results of the polls at the billiard parlour Morgan is shot in the back and before he dies he is told that he has won the election. And it is because of this that Spence, without winning anything, gets the job of city Marshal of Tombstone.

Wyatt accompanies Virgil and his family by train to Tucson (Arizona). They are on their way to California to bury Morgan. When he gets into one of the railcars he finds “Doc”. During the trip Wyatt receives a telegram telling him that he has been named city Marshal, although with no pay, and that he should organise a posse to arrest the murderers of his brother. When they get to Tucson, sheriff Sherman McMasters (Monte Markham) warns him that Ike has sent to men to kill him and his family. Wyatt offers Sherman money to join the posse and the three of them return to Tombstone after disarming Ike’s men at the station.

Back at his ranch, Ike Clanton, after hearing of his men’s failure, asks Sheriff Bryan to try and arrest Wyatt with the help of a couple of dozen deputies. He also deputises 25 men in order to disarm any vigilante committee. Although these men are legally under the order of the deputy city Marshal, Spence, Ike sacks Spence because he does not trust his abilities.

Wyatt and his men arrive at Tombstone. At the station the “honourable citizens of the city” –who have been disarmed by Spence’s deputies- are waiting for them. Owing to the presence of these and because there is news that Ike has managed to serve a warrant for his arrest, Wyatt decides to stay on board the train with Sherman. “Doc” gets off and manages to get two more men deputised as assistants to his friend. All three meet up with Earp and McMasters who have got off the train after leaving Tombstone.

They come across a stagecoach running out of control and the driver, on the verge of death, tells them they have been attacked by Spence, who has stolen the mine payroll. Wyatt sets off after him and

after serving him an arrest warrant and, finding that he has the money, viciously kills him.

Wyatt meets up with his men again. At night they are playing cards. “Doc” finishes off a bottle of whiskey, coughs, and orders another but there is none. Angry and coughing, he goes off to find more drink. Events lead him to meet three of Ike’s men, including one of those who attacked Wyatt’s brothers. Thanks to Wyatt’s help, killing Morgan’s murderer, he escapes the confrontation unharmed.

The next morning the manhunt continues. The federal Marshal faces up to another of the men involved in Morgan’s death and cruelly kills him. The reward for the arrest of his brother’s murderer is now invalid: all of them have been killed. He tells his men that he is sorry and that they can go, which they do. “Doc” remains behind and starts to reproach Wyatt cynically for his brutality, his desire for revenge, and tells him that instead of having arrest warrants in his pockets they are hunting licenses. Wyatt punches him and “Doc” develops a bout of coughing. It is because of this turn for the worse in “Doc”’s health that Wyatt takes him to a sanatorium in Colorado.

In view of the way things are developing against his interests, Ike asks Sheriff Bryan to get rid of Wyatt before he arrives in Colorado or to have him extradited from that state.

In Denver, Wyatt hears from one of the “notables” of Tombstone that Bryan has been done away with and Ike has fled to Mexico, where he now lives near Nogales. Although they ask Wyatt to go back to the city to be sworn in as Marshal, he simply avoids giving any answer.

Wyatt goes to see “Doc” at the sanatorium and tries to convince him that he is going to accept the position, but “Doc” sees through the subterfuge. On the train on the way to Nogales, “Doc” suddenly appears and they continue the journey. Accompanied by Mexican federals they come across two men who are transporting cattle rustled from the Mexican Government. The showdown is inevitable and some of the rustlers die, others are taken into custody, and the rest flee. Later the two detainees are riddled with bullets through the window of the jail, thus invalidating Ike’s charges.

Flouting the law, the two friends set off after Ike, who they find in an abandoned Mission. Face to

face, speaking not a word, they face each other and draw. A single shot is fired and Ike falls.

Wyatt visits “Doc” at the sanatorium again. “Doc” asks him if he is going to go back to Tombstone, which would mean that he would be acting within the law as City Marshal. Wyatt lies and says yes. Then “Doc” asks him to leave. Outside is the Tombstone’s Dr. Charles Goodfellow (Karl Swenson) who asks: “Willya be in Denver or Tombstone?” - “I’m not gonna be in either of those places, Charles” - “Well, uh, where will you be?” - “I don’t know, but I won’t be in this part of the country.”

In the long run, “Doc” plays poker with his nurse, drinks, coughs, recognises that alcohol is a poison and wins the game (figure 3).



Figure 3: “Doc” at the Tuberculosis Sanatorium

### “Doc” Holliday and his Tuberculosis

At the end of the credits, we see a legend telling us of the argument behind the film. “This picture is based on fact. This is the way it happened”. Thus, many of the aspects characterising the personality of “Doc” can be assumed to approach reality to a greater degree than in previous versions.

“Doc”, who is the main character in the film, appears on the scene very early on, in the credits, and is shown as Virgil’s assistant, a position that he holds, as he himself says, “for a favour I owed Wyatt” and to defend the law from the threats of Ike Clanton and his gunslingers. Unlike previous films<sup>1</sup> they appear as close friends from the very beginning, so much so that “Doc” says of Wyatt “I’d go to hell and back on the name of Wyatt Earp and so would the rest of the men in this bar”

In the interrogation by the prosecutor when he is accused of murder, we learn that he is a dentist, a gambler, has tuberculosis, and is a killer:

Prosecutor: "Why did you give up practising dentistry and take up gambling?"

"Doc": "What's the word they use, irrelevant?"

Prosecutor: "Was it because of your illness?"

"Doc": "Partially."

Prosecutor: "Or of your reputation and a killer?"

"Doc" "I don't know, somewhere between 18 and 25 men."

As in the *Gunfight at the OK Corral*, "Doc" ceased his activities as a dentist owing to his pulmonary tuberculosis, although the name of the disease is not mentioned in either of the versions<sup>1</sup>.

We know he is a good gambler. He says he is good and does not need to cheat. In his last appearance in the film he beats his nurse. We also know that he has always lived slightly outside the law: "Just educating myself, Wyatt." He tells Wyatt that he has never actually lived inside the law and that he'd like to see what such a life might be like. Nevertheless, he has better ethics than the Marshal and he realises that Wyatt is motivated more by a sense of revenge than justice. He tells Wyatt he should stay on the right side of the law and this indeed is his last wish for him.

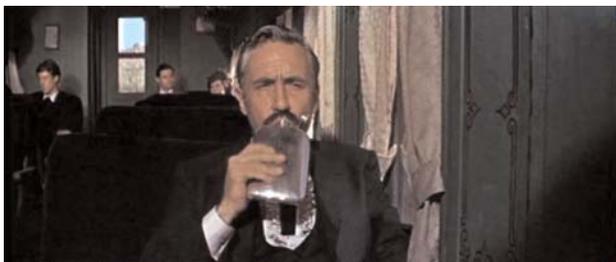


Figure 4: "Doc" and alcohol

Shortly after the trial another of "Doc"'s traits becomes apparent; namely, his fondness of drinking. We see this when he is drinking during a card game. This is the first film in which "Doc" is clearly seen as an alcoholic and we become aware of his dependence on the drug: he drinks steadily until he becomes drunk; he seeks more when he has run out and gets mad when they tell him to stop drinking (figure 4). He knows full well that he is an alcoholic and recognises the damage that the drug is doing to his consumption-ridden body. "I cough when I drink", but he continues to drink until the end. Wyatt also knows of the dangers of alcohol for his friend. Sometimes we see the effect of the drug, such as

when he is unable to beat Ike's three gunslingers and has to ask for Wyatt's help. On the other hand, in this film "Doc" does not smoke. Actually, none of the characters smokes and when "Doc" coughs he does not cover his mouth. Unlike other films, too, he does not frequent saloons.



Figure 5: Doc's cough

We understand then that "Doc" has pulmonary tuberculosis. Although this is never actually mentioned, "Doc"'s clinical picture is unquestionable. The symptoms of the disease begin to appear when the film is quite advanced -at about minute 60-. "Doc" coughs for the first time after swallowing some whiskey. From that moment onwards the situation changes and "Doc"'s coughing becomes more and more frequent, comes in bouts, and intensifies, so much so that sometimes he has to lean against a wall with both hands or even kneel down (figure 5). Sometimes it appears that the coughing is productive. After an argument with Wyatt, who ends up hitting him, the coughing is followed by dyspnoea (figure 6).



Figure 6: Doc's dyspnoea



Figure 7: The Glenwood Sanatorium

He never coughs up blood. The worsening and deterioration become so intense that “Doc” ends up in the Sanitorium at Glenwood Springs (Colorado), taken there by Earp (figure 7). Here, “Doc” can enjoy a sunny, cold and dry environment, fresh food and rest (he goes around in a wheel chair, covered with blankets). In one scene the physician checks up on his health (figure 8) and a conversation develops between them:



Figure 8: The Doctor attend to “Doc”

“Doc”: “How am I?”

Dr.: “If you could put pipes in those lungs, you could play a hymn. Terrible.”

“Doc”: “But I’ve been following your orders. Rest, fresh air, fresh eggs...”

Dr.: “Go on... You know, you’re going to have to get well to please me. I’m used to people dying on me.”

“Doc”: (laughs) “So am I.”

Dr.: “Don’t laugh too long, those lungs won’t stand it. My friend, if you don’t give up drinking you’ll go like (snaps fingers) that!”

“Doc”: “I’ll say this for you; you’ve got a helluva bedside manner”

Dr.: (to nurse) “Put him back in the ice-box.” (figure 3).

It is advanced tuberculosis, with a poor prognosis. “Doc” knows this and feels abandoned. His end is not portrayed in the film but we know it will not be long before he will die.

When he co-starred in this film, Jason Robards was 45, was going grey, and was almost 15 years older than the character of “Doc” in Gunfight at the OK Corral- He also had a constitution that did not match that of someone with tuberculosis.

## “DOC”

### Technical details

**Original Title:** “Doc”

**Country:** USA

**Year:** 1971

**Director:** Frank Perry

**Music:** Jimmy Webb

**Screenwriter:** Pete Hamill

**Cast:** Stacy Keach, Faye Dunaway, Harris Yulin, Mike Witney, Denver John Collins, Dan Greenberg, John Scanlon, Richard McKenzie, John Bottoms, Ferdinand Zogbaum, Penelope Allen, Hedy Sontag, James Greene, Antonia Rey, Philip Shafer, Marshall Efron, Fred Dennis, Bruce M. Fischer, Gene Collins, Mart Hulswit and Gene Reyes.

**Color:** Color

**Runtime:** 96 minutes

**Genre:** Western

**Production Company:** FP Films

**Synopsis:** “Doc” goes to Tombstone at the request of his Friend Wyatt Earp. In the city, Wyatt tells him that he wants to run for Sheriff while “Doc” should look after the gambling side; that way, they would both get rich. Before they reach the city he meets Katie Elder, a prostitute who he eventually falls in love with, and Ike Clanton, a killer who is to contribute to Wyatt’s getting the post of sheriff.

First shown on 1 August 1971, the film is based on a script written by Pete Hamill that was not very faithful to the historical reality. It is the first film addressing the events that surrounded the gunfight at the OK corral in Tombstone, narrated from the perspective of



John Holliday, the star. It is undoubtedly the weakest of the films in which “Doc”’s tuberculosis is present. Moreover, in narrative terms it is very different from the other versions addressing the character and it has too many sharp changes of scene.

### The Plot

Although the star in the film is “Doc” (Stacey Keach), the whole story revolves around Wyatt Earp (Harris Yulin), a character who is completely unscrupulous and is prepared to go to any lengths to achieve his own ends. “Doc” dances to Wyatt’s tune, although for friendship’s sake. The plot is completed with an analysis of the star and his relationship with Katie Elder (Faye Dunaway), Wyatt, and two of the Clantons: Ike (Mike Witney) and his nephew Kid (Denver John Collins)

At night, a rider struggles across the desert through a storm. He arrives at a saloon and the light reveals who he is. He is young, is dressed in black and his unshaven face sports a moustache and a sore on his nose (figure 9). In the bar are the owner, who is Mexican, two men and a woman, who is in the arms of one of them. The man manages to get a drink, even though it is only warm beer, and also wins the woman, a prostitute, in a card game with Ike Clanton, one of the men, who is accompanied by his nephew Kid. Since Ike is not willing to accept the result of the game, the man (“Doc”) draws his pistol and throws them out. He spends the night in a room at the bar with Katie (figure 10), and then he goes to Tombstone to see a friend and identifies himself as Doctor Holliday, “Doc” to his friends. The following day, accompanied by the woman, he faces the challenge of crossing the last part of the desert before arriving in the city. That night he tells Katie that he is not a physician but a dentist.



Figure 9: First appearance of “Doc”

Tombstone is a bust, noisy and bustling town and “Doc” and Katie go their separate ways. Kate goes off to ply her trade and “Doc” goes off looking for Wyatt Earp, the Marshal of the city. The meeting of the two is very warm (figure 11) and on the way to the saloon they bump into Ike and Billy Clanton, the McLaury brothers and Johnny Ringo (Fred Dennis). Ike wants to face up to Wyatt, but his companions hold him back, and Wyatt refers to them as trouble-makers. The reason why Wyatt has sent for “Doc” is simple. Wyatt wants to be sheriff, because this will give him more power than being a Marshal, and he wants “Doc” to look after the gambling, so that both of them can become rich. Kate arrives, dances with several clients and Wyatt has to stop Ike from approaching her. The hate between the two is searing. “Doc” plays cards and always wins. The Marshal realises that the player has fallen in love with the girl.



Figure 10: Katie Elder

Wyatt organises a party at his house to present himself as a candidate for sheriff of Tombstone. Present with him are Mattie, his wife (Penelope Allen), and his brothers Virgil (John Bottoms), Morgan (Phillip Shafer) and James (Ferdinand Zogbaum). “Doc” is also there and is the object of comments by some of the guests. When he is speaking with Clum (Dan Greenberg), the editor of the *Tombstone Epitaph*, he has a bout of coughing which gets worse when he drinks whiskey and he has to leave (figure 12).

After smoking some opium at Wong’s (Gene Reyes), he is approached by Kid. After hearing that “Doc” is a gambler, that he is not under anybody’s orders and that he is not interested in killing his uncles, Kid asks “Doc” to teach him to shoot. At first “Doc” refuses, but when the boy plays on his ego –saying he is the best shot, that he has read much about him and that he is a legend, etc...- he acquiesces.

After a bout of coughing in his room “Doc” goes down to the bar. At the bar counter thinks, while playing with the water left on the surface by glasses. Suddenly he gets up and goes after Kate, who is “working”. He picks her up and takes her to his hotel. The next morning, “Doc” gives Kate a beautiful white dress and takes her to a house he has rented for the two of them. On the way, Wyatt, who has been looking at one of his election posters, cannot help but show his anger at seeing “Doc” and Kate kiss. To “Doc”’s dismay, the house is like a pigsty.



Figure 11: “Doc” meets Wyatt

The stagecoach arrives. It has been held up for 80,000 dollars worth of gold. Wyatt goes to get “Doc” and together they go to the scene of the robbery. There, they discover that the tracks lead in the direction of the Clanton ranch. Although Wyatt believes it was Ringo, they go to Ike’s ranch, where Wyatt is severely beaten up.

After tending to him, “Doc” takes Wyatt home. Wyatt tells Virgil to make a deal with Ike: if he hands over Ringo he can keep the reward. He thinks that this way he can become sheriff. “Doc” goes home



Figure 12: “Doc” has an intense bout of coughing and coughs up the whiskey he was drinking

and is hugely surprised to see that Kate has cleaned it up and left it sparkling.

In the next scene, Kid kills a man who provoked him and Wyatt tries to arrest him. “Doc” realises his responsibility in all this for having taught Kid to shoot. He stops Wyatt from arresting him but at the end Kid is taken off by Sheriff John Behnan (Richard McKenzie). After the electoral debate with the sheriff, Wyatt goes to see Ike. Since the latter refuses to hand over Ringo, he blackmails him, saying that his nephew is in jail. Meanwhile, “Doc” has had Kid released on bail for one thousand dollars. After trying to convince the boy that the path he has taken is the wrong one, that the man he has killed had a wife and two children, he finally falls into despair when Kid tells him he wants to be just like him.

Back at home, Kate and “Doc” talk about what lovers usually talk about. She says she would like to be his wife and give him a child. Again, his coughing betrays him and breaks the spell of the moment. The gambler then leaves.

The following morning, Wyatt is having breakfast when he receives news from Virgil: “Doc” has paid Kid’s bail. Since this breaks the deal he had with Ike, he decides to kill him and all of his gang. He goes in search of his friend, but only finds Kate, who he recriminates for having changed “Doc”, reminding her that she is a prostitute. He finds “Doc” in the Saloon, next to a pack of cards and a bottle of whiskey, asleep over his winnings. Both accuse each other about their respective deeds and attitudes.

In light of the circumstances created by Kid’s release, the Marshal wants to force the situation. Knowing that Billy Clanton is in a bar he asks his brothers Virgil and Morgan to go and talk to him. He wants them to tell him that the deal with Ike is off, and that he knows that he has not kept the secret; that he is going to teach him a lesson, that he is going to denounce Ike and Kid, accusing them of robbery, and that he will say that Ike tried to bribe a Marshal. He makes it clear that what he wants to do is provoke Ike in order to finish him and his gang off for once and for all. Kate goes to him in search of “Doc”. She hasn’t seen him since the morning and she needs his help to find him. She tells him they had spoken of the kind of life they had lived before and how they were planning to live as from then on. Wyatt stonily tells her that he cannot remember “Doc” ever taking anybody with him anywhere. Kate believes this could change,

seeing how much “Doc” loves her. The girl finally finds him in the Chinaman’s house, smoking opium (figure 13). She reacts violently and sets fire to the Chinaman’s business. Ike and his group arrive, while Wyatt is designating Morgan and Virgil as deputies and they swear their oaths. Kid, who has been sent by Ike to the town, tells “Doc” -who is having breakfast, apparently with whiskey- about the problems Wyatt caused when he said that the deal was off, and that 7 men, including himself, are coming after him. He tells him this because he does not want the gambler to die.



Figure 13: Doc" and opium

“Doc” has a picture of himself taken; a potter is seen working in the background as he goes home, where he gets some money and leaves without saying anything to Kate. In the saloon, he joins up with the Earps. All four of them, armed with shotguns leave in search of their enemies, although the sheriff tries to prevent the clash.

The wind rattles the sign indicating the corral. The tension is seen in the men’s faces. Wyatt starts the fight (figure 14). Kid and “Doc” draw but the boy eventually holsters his pistol. “Doc”, however, shoots, killing the boy with a bullet to the heart. All Wyatt’s



Figure 14: Gunfight at the OK Corral

enemies have died but so has his brother Morgan. “Doc” leaves, moving through the spectators while Wyatt, looking miserable, takes time to do some PR and receives timid applause from the crowd. He approaches “Doc” and asks him why he killed Kid and “Doc” says that he supposes that the boy reminded him of too many things. With no further words, he gets on his horse and leaves Tombstone riding past the caskets of the men he has helped to kill.

### “Doc” Holliday and his Tuberculosis

The narrative part that takes place in the bar introduces the star, among other things. In the first few minutes we see –sequentially- that he dresses in black, is a drinker, is ill, coughs, is a professional gambler, and is a killer. Shortly after we learn of his name, when he tells Kate, and before he reaches Tombstone we know that he is a dentist.

His manner of dress is not a visual ploy; this detail is emphasised at the party at the Earps’ house. A child’s voice in *off* comments “He’s dressed all in black, Paw”. This is very suitable attire for a gambler and a gunslinger.

As from that time, his fondness of drinking is evident on many occasions. We often see him with a bottle and a glass of whiskey next to him. Alcohol apparently worsens his cough since the worst bouts occur when he is drinking. Sometimes he gets drunk, such as when Wyatt finds him asleep over a table in the saloon. And if this is not enough he smokes and certainly doesn’t say no to a bit of opium.

“Doc”’s illness is pulmonary tuberculosis. At the party, another voice in “off” says that he is tuberculous and is dying. We see his condition mainly in the form of a dry cough, which we hear in many of the sequences. On two occasions, his coughing is a major element of the scene; the first time at Wyatt’s party, when he has to stop talking to the journalist. His coughing is so violent that he spits whiskey out of his mouth, which he covers with a handkerchief that turns red with blood. (figure 15). The second time is in his hotel room and his coughing elicits an intense dyspnoea (figure 16). Curiously, in the latter part of the film he no longer coughs. At some points we see him sweating, with shining eyes, as though he had a fever. At the end, “Doc”’s appearance is the same as at the start. We get the impression that his tuberculosis has not further deteriorated him. He knows his days are numbered, but he steadfastly

wants to continue living, as indeed he confesses to Wyatt. This feeling that he has little time left leads him to leave Kate and act as though he has nothing to lose. The physician recommends that he should travel west.

“Doc” is an extraordinary gambler. Not only does he win Kate in a game but Wyatt even thinks that “Doc” can make him rich. At the card table, the money is always next his side. He is a virtuoso poker player. As he recounts, he became a gambler by chance, as with everything else.



Figure 15: “Doc” has haemoptysis

Inherent to his gambling side is that of a gunslinger. He handles from derringers to shotguns, with revolvers in between. He received his skills from his father, who taught him, and he is not just good but is also famous for it. As Kid says, he is a legend. Ike Clanton certainly fears him.

In a conversation with Kid, he tells us that he is from the south. His father fought with the confederates. From Richmond he went to Baltimore, where he studied to be a dentist, and then he went west to Fort Griffin for health reasons: then on to Dodge City.



Figure 16: Coughing and dyspnoea

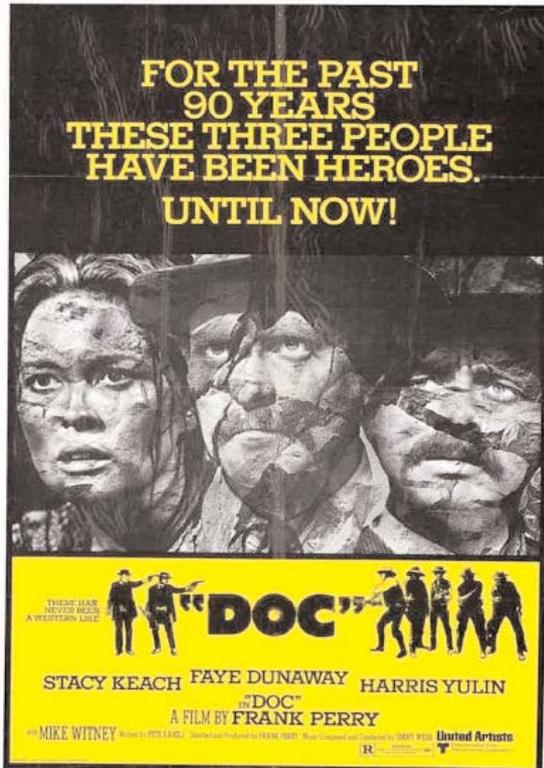
We see him as psychologically complex; he thinks, reflects and would like to change to leave something permanent behind him after he dies. As he tells Kate, his attitude is ambivalent. He tells Kid that he is not going to kill anybody and yet ends up killing kid himself. So, first he teaches Kid how to shoot, then he is sorry about possible consequences, and finally ends up shooting him because he reminds him too much of himself.

He is taciturn and bitter, solitary and independent. He has no sense of humour and has a certain degree of egomania. He is sensitive, loyal, cultured, and in love. We learn that he is educated in the scene where we see him asleep with a book in his hands. Stacy Keach’s interpretation of “Doc” is excellent, although his phenotype does not reflect that of one’s typical tuberculosis patient. When he made this film, Stacy Keach was about the same age as “Doc” would have been at the time; that is 30.

#### Comparative study between *Hour of the Gun* and “Doc”

*Hour of the Gun* has little to do with *My Darling Clementine* and *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. The action begins where the others end at the fight at the OK Corral, where neither Ike Clanton nor Deputy Latigo (Jorge Russeck) are involved and “Doc” is not wounded. Jimmy Earp does not appear in the action and the reason for the animosity between the two bands is not clear. The bad guy of the film is Ike Clanton, a shady businessman. Misogyny is patent. The only woman to appear is Virgil’s wife and there are no other women in the other characters’ lives, or indeed in almost any of the scenes of the film. The action occurs around Tombstone, Tucson, Denver, Colorado, Glenwood Springs and Sonora (Mexico).

In “Doc” Wyatt Earp and his brothers Morgan and Virgil, together with “Doc”, face up to Ike and six of Ike’s men are killed together with Morgan. Ike is not well profiled: he is a grubby killer; a stockman with no cows. Who is, however, well characterised is Wyatt, a character with few morals played by Harris Yulin. Jimmy Earp appears in the action but only in one scene. In this film an important role is given to “Doc”’s lover “Big Nose Kate”, Katie Elder<sup>2</sup>. She is portrayed as a prostitute, brazen and vulgar, plying her trade. This character also appears in *Gunfight at the OK Corral*, this time under the name of Kate Fisher. In *My Darling Clementine*, “Doc”’s girl is Chihuahua. It is clear that these last two women are prostitutes but in one case the exercise of their profession is limited to an infidelity to “Doc”. The ex-dentist first uses Katie Elder and then



falls in love with her. This love is requited and leads the woman to show her tenderness, sensitivity and house-caring ideals. With the exception of the sequence in the desert, all the action takes place in Tombstone. Other women with a role are Mattie Earp (Penelope Allen), Wyatt's wife, whose full name was Celia Ann Blaylock,

a real person in the life of the famous Marshal, and Alley Earp (Hedy Sontag), Virgil's wife<sup>3</sup>.

Sturges' "Doc" is serious but he has a certain sense of humour, sometimes seen as dark. As an example, at the sanatorium the nurse takes him outside and when they are alone he gives him a bottle of whiskey and tells him it is pure poison and when he gives it back to the nurse, who is behind him and takes a surreptitious swig, he says "That's terrible stuff. I wouldn't drink it if I were you". He dresses in black and has a moustache. Perry's "Doc" is also serious and has not one iota of humour and, as expected, dresses in black and has a moustache.

In *Hour of the Gun* emphasis is given to the great deterioration of "Doc"'s lungs and his final stay in the anti-tuberculosis sanatorium; in *"Doc"* two violent bouts of coughing are featured, one with haemoptysis.

Both films were made at a time when the Western was no longer in its heyday and hence their impact on the history of this cinematographic genre was limited. Although not on a par with their predecessors, they are two very acceptable films, particularly the first one and the first half of the second one. As in other previous films about these characters both have many historical inaccuracies, but fewer. In the first one there are hardly any women and in the second, for example, the marshal of Tombstone was Virgil and not Wyatt, and Kate left the city with "Doc", she did not abandon him. There is, however, no untruthfulness regarding John Holliday's pulmonary tuberculosis.

Table 1: "Doc" Holliday's Tuberculosis

Film	<i>Hour of the Gun</i>	<i>"Doc"</i>
Bouts of chronic dry cough	Yes*	Yes*
Haemoptysis	No	Yes
Fever	No	Yes
Dyspnoea	Yes	Yes
General malaise	Yes	Yes (twice)
Worsening	Yes	No
Involvement of a physician	Yes	No
Tuberculosis sanatorium	Yes	No
Death	Foreseen	No
Added factors	Alcoholism	Alcoholism, smoking habit

\*Sometimes in isolated bouts

## References

- 1.- García Sánchez JE, Merino Marcos ML, García Sánchez E. The tuberculosis of "Doc" Holliday in the cinema. *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *Gunfight at the O. K. Corral* (1957). J Med Mov [serial on the Internet]. 2005 [cited 2005 Oct 3]; 1: 115-125: [11 p.] Available from: [http://www.usal.es/~revistamedicinacine/numero\\_4/ing\\_4\\_pdf/doc.pdf](http://www.usal.es/~revistamedicinacine/numero_4/ing_4_pdf/doc.pdf)
- 2.- Myers, J. Doc Holliday. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; 1973.
- 3.- Tefertiller, C. Wyatt Earp : The Life Behind the Legend. Nueva York: John Wiley and Sons; 1997.