

10 Questions

An exclusive interview with Billy the Kid, reprinted from a 1917 edition of the *Yale Record*



Yale Record: Tell me a little about yourself—I want to get to know the man behind the Kid.

Billy: My folks actually come from New York City; I was born there in 1859 before we moved West. My Christian name was Henry McCarty, but back then “Billy” was a common nickname for “Henry,” and they called me “Kid” because I resembled a young goat.

YR: You gained your notoriety in the 1870s in gambling halls and saloons in New Mexico where it is said you killed several men.

Billy: If you don’t watch it I’ll shoot you up too! Heh, I’m just joshing you. I think we’ve all had our youthful indiscretions and/or murders.

YR: Does the celebrity ever get to you? I mean, do you ever want to just go back to being plan old Henry instead of Billy the Kid, infamous cattle rustler?

Billy: Well, you know, rustling—I mean rustling was my life, man. When it’s just you and your buddies and the moonlight and the cows...it’s like heaven on earth.

YR: So you feel no remorse for what you’ve done?

Billy: Rustling’s a victimless crime. Those big cattle houses—especially those no good Nebraskans—you think they care about their stock? It’s guys like me who still focus on what really matters: the beef, the glorious, glorious beef.

YR: I’m a vegetarian.

Billy: Is that like a Mexican?

YR: Umm, no. But moving on: I gather the ranchers took a less kind view of your activities?

Billy: I think if you go to the heart of this you see something very profound. I think you see that “rustling” is just a cultural con-

struct created by the “haves” to disenfranchise the “have-nots.”

YR: In 1878, you and your gang killed two deputies who tried to stop you from stealing cattle. Another cultural construct?

Billy: Hey man, like I said: “truth is generally the best vindication against slander.”

YR: You didn’t say that, Abraham Lincoln did.

Billy: Yeah, I think I am like Lincoln in many ways. Only he freed the slaves, and I freed the cows.

YR: Do you think we could see a return of Billy the Kid?

Billy: Billy the Kid? No. Nowadays it more like Billy the Balding Middle-aged Man. Hey, that reminds me—I have to pick up the kids at soccer practice. Catch you later, partner. ☺ —Kau

The California Recall of 2003 involved a colorful list of candidates. Here are excerpts of actual position statements taken from the official “California Statewide Special Election Information Guide.”

Larry Flynt (D): California is the most progressive state in the union, and I’m sure its citizens would welcome having a smut peddler who cares as their governor.

Joel Britton (I): I’m for a workers’ and farmers’ government, which will abolish capitalism in the U.S. and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

B.E. Smith (I): I spent two years in federal prison...

Peter V. Ueberroth (R): I also served as Baseball Commissioner. When I started, 22 teams were losing money. The sport was in trouble. Five years later, no team was losing money. Ticket prices had not increased. Our state faces a similar problem.

Kurt Tachikaze Rightmyer (I): The name Tachikaze stands for “Wind from a sword stroke.” ...say goodbye to an increasingly restricted, more expensive, poorer quality of existence, and say hello to Tachikaze.



Kevin Richter (R): I breathe.

Trek Thunder Kelly (I): Dear Voters, Please vote for me, thus breaking the Seventh Seal and incurring Armageddon.

Jeff Rainforth (I): There is no other candidate. I am the one.

Bruce Margolin (D): We should teach basic criminal penalties and yoga in our schools.

Bill Prady (D): Bill Prady is an award-winning television comedy writer and producer. If elected, he pledges to solve all the state’s problems in twenty-two minutes and forty-four seconds with two commercial breaks and a hug at the end. ☺

—Dinh