

“I’m your huckleberry”

This statement that was made by Val Kilmer, who played Doc Holliday in the 1993 movie “Tombstone,” has become one of the most famous movie lines of all time. Like all words or phrases in the English language it has several meanings.

First definition; below is the definition of the statement, according to Bob Bose Bell, who is a historian, editor of True West Magazine and a regular on the television station, “The Western Channel.”

In the southeast portion of our country, specifically Georgia, where John Henry “Doc” Holliday was born, the Huckleberry plants grow wild, grazing cattle eat the succulent berries and then they continue eating the plant. Since the plant branches, after trying to digest the branches they end up choking to death a few hours after consuming the plant.

Second definition; According to deceased screenwriter, Kevin Jarre, Doc was suppose to say, “I’m your hucklebearer,” but when he made the statement it came out it sounded like “I’m your huckleberry.”

In the 1800’s the little handles on a coffin were called “huckles,” an English term. Instead of pallbearers the people who carried the coffin were called “hucklebearers” at a funeral.

Whether you take either definition, it means the same thing; the statement for sure would provoke a fight.

Ringo, drunk and angry yells in the middle of the street after confronting the Earp brothers after the funeral of Billy Clanton and the McLaurey Brothers; “Wretched slugs, don’t any of you have the guts to play for blood?”

Doc Holliday, who was sitting on a porch outside the barbershop getting a haircut and shave, got up and walked out into the street and faced Ringo stating loudly: “I’m your huckleberry, that’s just my game.”

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