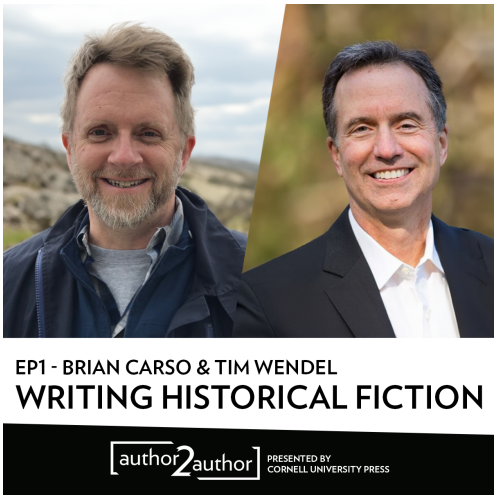

author2author
EPISODE 1
BRIAN CARSO & TIM WENDEL
WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION

00:01:57:12 - 00:02:26:02
Brian
Tim, let me say that I think you and I have gone a long way to satisfying America's desire for historical spy novels. It's wonderful to be here talking with you this afternoon. Just a brief introduction of myself. I started out as a lawyer, then became a historian, and I've been studying Benedict Arnold for several decades.

00:02:26:03 - 00:02:50:05
Brian
And long ago, I came across a story about a spy mission to capture Benedict Arnold. And I put it in my mind. I said, Well, I'll either do an academic article about this someday or wouldn't it make a really cool historical novel? And thank goodness I chose the latter. I started work on it in 2016, and it took four or five years to work on.

00:02:50:07 - 00:03:02:14
Brian
And it came out this September. And when I'm not writing novels, I'm a professor of history and government at Misericordia University in Dallas, Pennsylvania. Over to you, Tim.

00:03:02:16 - 00:03:29:16
Tim
Thank you, Brian. Yeah, we share a lot of parallel constructions besides our stories, which I think is pretty cool. I'm Tim Wendel. I worked for many years as a sportswriter and that was interesting. And then kind of segwayed over into teaching. Like Brian, I'm a writer in residence at Johns Hopkins University, which is a little bit of a joke considering I live in Charlottesville, Virginia, and went over and did

00:03:29:16 - 00:03:55:15
Tim
-several historical novels. *Castro's Curveball*, *Red Rain*, and the way Rebel Falls began is I was just—I don't know about you, Brian, but I love looking at and notes or where things came from. And I was reading, I didn't finish at all, but *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, and she mentioned two guys, John Yates Bell and Bennett Burley.

00:03:55:17 - 00:04:20:09
Tim
And I went, who are these guys? And then the fact we'll get into how close they came to, you know, seizing the remaining union warship on the Great Lakes, which is all true. I'm a little bit of a Civil War buff and I never heard of these guys. And so I started doing some more research on them and their exploits and then how the union, you know, pushed back with their own spy network.

00:04:20:09 - 00:04:38:02
Tim
And you're right. So now I was in your land with spies and it was fun. And that was pretty much the beginning of *Rebel Falls* and then got some great editing at Cornell Press. In fact, I think I went through three different editors just the way it happened. And all of them improved the book quite a bit.

00:04:38:02 - 00:05:16:06
Tim
So it's great to be with you, Brian. I'm a big fan of *Gideon's* and, you know, as one who kind of knew a bit about Benedict Arnold, I mean, he told the rest of the story and it was it was great. It was a great thing to do. I'm curious, you know, you're often I think you would agree, you know, when you're teasing something out, whether it's Benedict Arnold or John Yates Bell or whatever, at one point you're trying to figure out what's the best place for this. How close did you come to doing something else where there have been an academic paper or whatever,

00:05:16:06 - 00:05:21:01
Tim
And then what pushed you into doing the novel, which is which is so well done?

00:05:21:03 - 00:05:48:10

Brian
Well, thanks, Tim. And I'm a big fan of *Rebel Falls*, too, and I love how you describe in the author's note that the two characters are a bit like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But that introduces an interesting idea, how do we, and to your question, decide on telling the story through historical fiction? And I talked to a lot of authors as I was grappling with this subject, and I said, How much do you rely on fact when you're telling your story?

00:05:48:10 - 00:06:08:22
Brian
And there was a whole spectrum there. Some said, 'Well, I use historical facts only to the extent that it helps set a mood or give the background context and so forth.' And then way over on the other side is myself, frankly, as a as a historian, is my day job. I tried to use every single fact that was available.

00:06:09:00 - 00:06:42:05
Brian
But as you and I both know, when you're writing about a spy mission, there's going to be gaps, right? And so to tell the story, I thought, well, if I can apply a good historical imagination to weave those things together, I thought that historical fiction would be my best bet; the best way to communicate what happened with this story, and also to just kind of get people engaged with this larger question of who was Benedict Arnold and what is loyalty in a democratic republic mean and so forth.

00:06:42:05 - 00:06:46:16
Brian
So fiction seemed to work really well for the goals I had set.

00:06:46:18 - 00:07:04:11
Tim
Yeah. And I think the whole thing of loyalty, which you brought up with was a great themeto tease out one that's, I think you know, somewhat apropos for today, too. Yeah, I agree with you. I guess, you know, Tom Mallon, Thomas Mallon's a friend of mine who's done this.

00:07:04:11 - 00:07:07:09
Brian
Is that right? Yeah.. And I know him, too. Yeah.

00:07:07:10 - 00:07:28:13
Tim
And he's very kind of, you know, maybe more wedded at times to the historical fact, the burden of the facts. And in talking with him, I kind of decided, well, if I have something, I'm not going to go totally against the facts. You know, part of it is to maybe not so much embellish, but fill in the blanks, as you said. Historical imagination.

00:07:28:15 - 00:07:51:12
Tim
And so, you know, if there's a fact, I feel like I've got to work it in and I can't go totally opposite on it. But one of the problems I had and one of the things that that changed was I mentioned John Yates Bell and Bennet Burley and how cl—I almost wrote more of it or much of it kind of from their point of view.

00:07:51:14 - 00:08:23:08
Tim
But maybe it's after living in Charlottesville, Virginia, for the last five or six years, I was going, No, I'm not going necessarily down that road after we don't have a statue left in this town. (Because they were mostly all Confederate statues.) So I kind of pivoted at that point and I'm going I needed another more major character, one who's a little bit more, historically, in a sense, one you would root for the two guys that are trying to, you know, keep Abraham Lincoln from getting reelected.

00:08:23:10 - 00:08:42:11
Tim
And so I ended up with this character that I grew to love called Rory Chase, who was kind of a composite of some research, you know, she's somewhat a childhood friend, based on a childhood friend of Fanny Seward's, who is like, you know, the Seward family's huge in *Rebel Falls* and then just kind of working that out.

00:08:42:13 - 00:09:08:22
Tim
And I wanted a much more, so you say, uncertain or even anxious or novice hero or heroine. Somebody who's kind of placed into this spy network and has to, you know, have to really, you know, take it and run, so to speak. And she's pushing back against more experienced ones like John Yates Bell and Bennet Burley to a certain extent.

00:09:09:00 - 00:09:31:17
Tim
And that was a lot of fun to do. I know about you, but I tend to end up talking to my characters quite a bit, and it's a great way to be left alone. People just think you've lost your mind. But one of the things I kept, I needed to know Rory's motivation and some of the answers she gave me seemed apropos, not only for the time, but also for our times.

00:09:31:17 - 00:09:48:06
Tim
I think a lot of a lot of folks are out there in some ways or refighting the Civil War and people aren't sure what to do. And so that Rory isn't certain all the time was pivotal for me. That was a major insight and at that point said, Yeah, let's go.

00:09:48:08 - 00:10:11:21

Brian
I like the way you were able to use kind of two narrative perspectives from Rory Chase sometimes, and then from the two Confederates. And I thought the Rory Chase character was great because it invites somebody who's not a sophisticated Confederate spy, for instance, but it invites the reader to kind of participate in a way to say, Well, that could be me.

00:10:11:21 - 00:10:42:08
Brian
I would be like that person if I suddenly found myself in these circumstances, right?. So telling, the finding the narrative voice is tricky, right? You know, I had to decide first person or second person and so forth. And as you know, I stuck with the first person narrator. My objective was to tie various pieces of Benedict Arnold's life together because I wanted the reader to get a sense of what was Arnold's childhood like.

00:10:42:08 - 00:11:11:14
Brian
Because I think that goes a long way to understanding his later actions. What was he like as a hero on the battlefield? One of the great best American generals of the American Revolution? What do you do when he suddenly becomes traitor and so on? And so my narrator, like yours, is kind of a composite of different people I'd read about in journals, contemporary journals, and so forth.

00:11:11:16 - 00:11:40:11
Brian
So he very much is composed of parts of that story, but I kind of had to hook him all together so that he could appear in Arnold's life at various points, and we could see kind of the moral conundrums at various points between, you know, abstract ideas like national loyalty and then very sort of concrete, personal notions of, how do I do something to this person I know?

00:11:40:13 - 00:11:53:17
Brian
And your character, Rory Chase, finds yourself in that same predicament at various times. You know, I know this individual as a person, but there's also this big idea at work here. How do we reconcile both of those?

00:11:53:19 - 00:12:22:03
Tim
Yeah, very much. I mean, they talk about a template sometimes in storytelling, I guess, where, you know, somebody is sent into a difficult situation and then they have to make this momentous choice at some point. In a sense, do they join them, just kind of let it be, or do in a sense do you try to stop them, blow it up? Which is often the most difficult, you know, one which certainly, you know, you went through with Gideon.

00:12:22:04 - 00:12:45:01

Tim
And one of the things I loved with your book was, you know, you say Benedict Arnold, and it's so it almost becomes caricature or stereotype. Yet you made him a bonafide character that maybe I'm not rooting for, but I understood. I kind of understood in, again, his motivation, why he did certain things. How did you pull that off?

00:12:45:01 - 00:12:48:02
Tim
Because that was really pretty cool.

00:12:48:04 – 00:13:10:06
Brian
You know, part of it is, and I want to ask you about your research, and this might be a good way to get into that, because I know you and I both did tons of research, too, to be able to be authentic in how we told this story. But I spent a lot of time going to places. Well, I read a lot about Arnold, of course, everything from early 1800s to contemporary pieces.

00:13:10:08 - 00:13:33:15
Brian
But I went to places as well that were important in Arnold's life. I went up to Montreal and met a military historian—I'm sorry, Quebec, and met a military historian up there to show me where did it Arnold's failed mission to capture Quebec, where did that take place and where was he injured? And I went to West Point.

00:13:33:15 - 00:14:04:08
Brian
I met with the historian there and walked some of the trails around Tarrytown or to see where Andre was hanged and Tappan. And you start to imbibe all this and the most meaningful was probably Norwich, Connecticut, Arnold's hometown, which I went to several times. And the members of the Historical Society showed me some things about his childhood, like the church records that showed when Arnold's family was well-to-do,

00:14:04:10 - 00:14:31:05
Brian
they paid a big tithe and they sat in a family box right up to the altar. And then when they suffered a bunch of losses, several children died from disease, the Arnold's father becomes an alcoholic. They can no longer afford the good seats in the church. So they go back to where the regular folks and a couple of years after that, they're standing in the balcony with the poor.

00:14:31:06 - 00:14:58:17
Brian
And when you start to see those details of someone's life, you know, it becomes quite a personal thing where you can feel the emotion. It's not just reading about battlefields or

legislatures or looking at maps, but accessing that thing that, you know, we all experience life. Life is different in its variety, but in its forms, right?

00:14:58:19 - 00:15:22:04
Brian
We all experience joy. We all experience sadness all throughout the ages. And how do you tap into that? And I'll just end by saying, when I started the novel, I was staying in Norwich in a house built in the 1740s the young Benedict Arnold had lived in when he was an apprentice. And it got to be kind of late in the evening and I was up in this room that teenage Benedict Arnold had been in.

00:15:22:06 - 00:15:39:17
Brian
And I opened my laptop after having done all this travel and research, and it just started to come. Like I could imagine him walking the halls and started writing it. So, Tim, I guess there's a little bit of magic there, right, that we try to get our head in the right space where we can imagine these characters.

00:15:39:22 - 00:15:49:08
Tim
It's almost like a get out the Ouija board and try to talk with ghosts, and sometimes they answer you. And that's kind of startling in a way.

00:15:49:10 - 00:15:51:17
Brian
But tell me about your research, if you would.

00:15:51:19 - 00:16:21:14
Tim
Sure. Seward House in Auburn was big. You know, there's a visited there several times, and I think I'm going to do a thing. And back at the Seward house I think in a couple of months and which will be fun. You know, what an interesting family that was on several levels. I mean, you know, William Seward, secretary of state, arguably the second most powerful guy in the union, maybe in the country at that point and, you know, after Lincoln.

00:16:21:16 - 00:16:40:11
Tim
And yet it's an amazing place because it's makes it looks a little bit like your office at times. It's got all these books and paintings and all this stuff. And you're kind of going this this family, you know, this secretary of state was at like one of the epicenters of the world at that point? And so you start going, this would be interesting.

00:16:40:11 - 00:17:05:11
Tim

But I didn't want somebody who was totally maybe comfortable in that world, maybe a little bit of an outsider who struggling to get into that world, very much wants to have an impact on the war effort, you know, wants to be involved in some way, which kind of led me back to Rory again, Rory Chase. But I'll tell you, one of the funny things was we were finishing up the edits.

00:17:05:13 - 00:17:22:05
Tim
This had to me with Mahinder, Mahinder Kingra, the editor now at Cornell. And we were looking and of course, he thought of this and I didn't think of it. It was brilliant. He said, We need a map with this, with this book. And I'm going, Yeah, and we need a map.

00:17:22:07 - 00:17:48:10
Tim
And so I got a hold of a map through some contacts at Johns Hopkins. Thank God it was in the public domain, etc.. But at one point, so we decided on this map and it's both sides of Niagara Falls, you know, US, Canada, you've got the suspension bridge north part of town, which was an architectural wonder. You've got the falls themselves which are split there by Goat Island, etc..

00:17:48:12 - 00:18:20:21
Tim
And we're just both of us were on the phone similar to this. And we were like looking at this map that we're going to use. We're trying to figure out the right dimensions and this type of thing. And that one of the things that I have in the book is this place I had researched, it existed, but this set of stairs, I believe it's 290 steps down in the shadow of the falls on the U.S. side, very close to the Cataract House Hotel, which plays a prominent part in *Rebel Falls*.

00:18:20:23 - 00:18:43:06
Tim
And this would be where escaped slaves in the years before the war started, the wait staff from the Cataract House would take them across and in a sense that there was literally one more river to cross before you had total freedom and we were like, That's in the book. And so back Mahinder and I were like looking at the map in different ways.

00:18:43:06 - 00:19:07:04
Tim
You know, I think I'd much more of a zoom out look at that point. He was zooming in and at one point he goes, What are, what's this? What's this? You know, we're putting together the legend. And he goes, what is this design or what is this here right near the Falls? And I couldn't see it. I was too zoomed out and said, Hang on, hang on. So I'm zooming in and now we're very close up and I'm going, hang on.

00:19:07:06 - 00:19:25:04
Tim

And it was the steps, the steps down to the dock with the boat. They were literally on this map from 1870. I don't know about you at some point. So sometimes I feel like I'm getting kind of bit out of bounds. But. All right. Well, I know I did the research on this. I think it but that's more than 150 years ago.

00:19:25:04 - 00:19:34:12
Tim
Whatever. And there it was on a map. And I went, oh, I think we've got it. You know, I feel a lot better about my research in this thing.

00:19:34:14 - 00:20:03:07
Brian
I found that, well, first I, I like the map. And on the cover, too, there is an illustration of that suspension bridge. I was fascinated by the bridge. Anyone who's ever been to Niagara Falls, and I think a lot of people have, you know, we have an image of what it looks like today, but the history of Niagara Falls, you brought that out, like the Cataract House and how people travel to the Falls as a great natural wonder and its place in the Underground Railroad.

00:20:03:07 - 00:20:05:11
Brian
I thought that was absolutely fascinating.

00:20:05:13 - 00:20:24:00
Tim
And it it's funny because you wrote so well about place in *Gideon's* which I want to get to in just a sec. But I grew up only about 15, 20 miles from Niagara Falls and I've written several other books that had nothing to do with Niagara Falls. And it was it was very cool for me to go back to the Falls.

00:20:24:00 - 00:20:49:04
Tim
But as you say, you know, right now, if you go to Niagara Falls, the U.S. side is very ticket-tack. The Canadian site is almost looks like Disney World in some ways. And you've got still this beautiful free view, you know, right there. That's one of the wonders of the natural world, in my opinion. But to turn back the clock and realize, yeah, the water's still going, it's still enthralling.

00:20:49:04 - 00:21:08:17
Tim
I mean, Charles Dickens writes about going to Niagara Falls and just being so overwhelmed by it,, he literally just sat there for most of the afternoon, just looking at it, because it was just so overwhelming. You did a great job in yours with, you know, going back in time in terms of place and setting. How did you pull that off?

00:21:08:17 - 00:21:24:03

Tim
Because, you know, I would be reading the book and I'm not like in present day, I'm back with you and we're trying to track down Benedict Arnold and these guys are doing all this wild stuff and everything rang true. What made that work for you?

00:21:24:05 - 00:21:57:09
Brian
Yeah, that, you know, it's a pleasure to read our stories and try to imagine ourselves in those places. I mean, I tell my students, you know, history is so dependent on imagination. We want to…you know, I remember Hilary Mantel, who wrote all *Wolf Hall* and all. I kept a quote from her nearby when she talked about if you really want to understand the past, not just what it was, but what it felt like, we turn to novels.

00:21:57:11 - 00:22:23:08
Brian
So, yeah, it was just it was a question of going to these places, allowing myself to imagine myself in that spot and, you know, trying to communicate it on paper. That's the magic that, right? You've been a writer for a long time, right? How do we get this emotional content and this imaginative content? Invite the reader to participate in it?

00:22:23:10 - 00:22:50:16
Brian
And for me, yeah, a lot of it was those visits to the locations. And to try to walk in Arnold's shoes meant a lot to me. I went to just about all those spots to walk Saratoga Battlefield or to walk around Lower Manhattan. Unlike Boston, Boston's got its revolutionary history. It wears it on its sleeve. But New York, you got to look around for it. It's there but you got to look around for it.

00:22:50:16 - 00:23:17:19
Brian
But once you start to look around, yeah, it's pretty fascinating. And it's not none of this is all that long ago, right Tim? Like the Civil War is like 150, 160 years ago. The American Revolution, which we're going to have our semi quincentennial in a couple of years, the awkwardly named 250th anniversary. But that's not that far back in our history right?

00:23:17:19 - 00:23:37:11
Tim
No. I just came back from a trip to Paris and Prague literally a couple of days ago and yeah, and the time period is like a snap of the fingers over there and such. It's funny, know, I think you're absolutely right, Brian, that to go to the places, you know, read the works from it.

00:23:37:11 – 00:23:57:23
Tim

I think it was Joseph Conrad who said, somebody once asked him what's what makes up a quality story? And Conrad's reply was, If I can make you see. In a sense, can I make you see what I'm seeing in my head well enough on the page so then now you can see it? You're going, in a sense, back in time or back to that place too.

00:23:58:01 - 00:24:21:09
Tim
But I think you're absolutely right from a timing standpoint, at least, I don't know. Civil War. I feel like we're fighting the Civil War all over again. And, you know, some of the things, especially with Bell, not so much Burley, but certainly Bell was a very, you know, very Southern sympathizer, loved Stonewall Jackson Lee. You know, we've and I think supported it.

00:24:21:10 - 00:24:43:18
Tim
You know, we don't have those statues anymore in this town. And I think in some ways we're still kind of grappling with it. And that's why I think historical fiction helps, because I think if people understand the past a little bit better and arguably makes them, I don't know, better in the in the present, you know, maybe help some of those electorate ,as a voter or whatever it may be.

00:24:43:18 - 00:25:04:20
Tim
But I think it doesn't seem like it's still just coming out of the blue. It's like, we did this before. That's what it's led up to. And I think with both of our books, you can make that case. A lot of what's going on in the present has been led up to, you know, things like, you know, loyalty or, you know, statues and things like that.

00:25:04:20 - 00:25:07:01
Tim
In the past.

00:25:07:03 - 00:25:29:16
Brian
I agree with you 100%, Tim and I, I'm fond of telling the story that one of the reasons I decided to write this book; in the late 1850s, just a few years before the outbreak of the Civil War, Washington Irving was that toward the end of his career, people will remember Washington Irving is the author of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle* and so forth.

00:25:29:21 - 00:26:08:14
Brian
And he wrote *Life of George Washington*. And there's 60 pages that’s one of the biggest chapters is a recollection of the Benedict Arnold story. And Irving said that he wrote about Benedict Arnold and in fact, he wrote the whole work of George Washington, as the sectional tensions were breaking out that would lead to the Civil war. He said he wrote it to remind

Americans about the promise of a Democratic republic and our obligations toward self-government, and loyalty not necessarily to one man or one idea, but to the idea of a democratic republic.

00:26:08:16 - 00:26:42:16
Brian
And I thought, Man, that rings true in 2016, too, and let's do let's do that again. You know, and I think to your point, we have to share stories as a people, right? Because it becomes part of our identity. And if we don't have shared stories that we can relate to, that we recognize, you know, this is part of who I am, then it becomes easy to become polarized and we're no longer looking for consensus or compromise with our neighbors and community members.

00:26:42:16 - 00:27:02:23
Brian
We've become much more transactional. And that's my hope for historical fiction. Like *Rebel Falls* or *Gideon's Revolution*. Is maybe it reminds us of who we are as a people, what we've been through, and prepares us, like you said, a little bit for our contemporary challenges.

00:27:03:01 - 00:27:04:21
Tim
Yeah, well. Well said.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES TIME

00:30:48:21 - 00:30:51:07
Tim
What topics should we use, Brian? I'm looking at what.

00:30:51:08 - 00:30:56:10
Brian
I'm looking at. I'm trying to think what you know, So we just kind of talked about.

00:30:56:12 - 00:31:23:21
Tim
let's go a little bit off. Let's do this. Yeah, I can go off your thing just a little bit about pressure and I guess we should maybe talk about what's what we're doing next. And then I get to figure out what I'm doing next. But what, you know, going off your story about Washington Irving, Brian, one of the things I'm reminded of is you hear all the time, you know, repeating history.

00:31:23:23 - 00:31:47:02
Tim
I don't think we necessarily repeat history, but as others have said, sometimes it seems like events is that you're involved in present day. They start to rhyme a little bit. In a sense, they get

very, you know, the echoes of the past become stronger. And I think we're in one of those time periods right now, whether it's like,

00:31:47:04 - 00:32:10:19
Tim
Bennett Arnold loyalty, Revolutionary War for sure, probably Civil War. But I'm of the mind that if people don't know these stories, it's like they're blind. You know, they can't make good decisions, let alone reach out to their neighbors and feel like they're part of some, you know, kindred group or even a nation. I think it just becomes too difficult.

00:32:10:19 - 00:32:33:12
Tim
I mean, I think we're all also siloed now, you know, depending on what, you know, network we're watching news or how we're getting our current events. And that's why I think historical fiction breaks through that. It allows to go, hang this, this isn't all brand new. You know we've done this in some way before.

00:32:33:16 - 00:33:00:13
Tim
We've been down this road before. Amdsomething, and where I find history to be great, is it's a reminder of how we did the right things, you know, And things may have been lost for a while, but then we made the correct decisions. And I think that's one of the real powers of historical fiction. And I just hope people read more of it, because it is, as you say, it's the stories of us.

00:33:00:15 - 00:33:15:18
Tim
And the more you can speak to us, the less we're able to divide up things into them. You know, you, me, I hate that, whatever. And I think that's why it's really very important. That's why the Washington Irving thing, I'm going to steal from you and probably use.

00:33:15:20 - 00:33:38:01
Brian
Well Tim I agree or what you know as somebody who's you know I was teaching a history class this morning, one of the first things I try to do is just kind of break down the walls of presentism. Right? The idea that we are all carrying around phones that have more computer power than the lunar module, and we can fly wherever we want and we can talk on computers to each other, that somehow makes us different.

00:33:38:04 - 00:34:04:17
Brian
Well, not so much. It gives us new opportunities. But as you're saying, it's all these ideas have all been thought through before. Moral choices and decisions have been worked out before. And the best way we can figure out how to live our lives today, how to go forward, I think, is to think about the past. And what if other people in our shoes are in similar positions?

00:34:04:19 - 00:34:18:06
Brian
I mean, there's just endless amount of lessons to be learned and thought about if we can relate to people who have already done and been through the issues that we've been through today. Yeah.

00:34:18:08 - 00:34:22:01
Tim
Yeah. Very good. So what are you working on now? What's keeping you off the streets?

00:34:22:03 - 00:34:48:04
Brian
So I've decided I loved writing this novel and so that's my gig now, is I'm going to write historical novels and I have a few more in the works. I curated, as I've studied, one of the things I besides Benedict Arnold, I've done some work on the history of photography and photography as a as a source for telling historical stories.

00:34:48:06 - 00:35:19:02
Brian
And I did an exhibit. I curated an exhibit of Robert Capa's photographs. So Capa was a famous war photographer from the Spanish Civil War through World War Two. And ultimately, he stepped on the landmine in French Indochina and dies and is in his early forties. But there was a relationship between him and Gerda Taro, who was a colleague of his during the Spanish Civil War.

00:35:19:03 - 00:35:37:01
Brian
You know, Hemingway, Dos Passos, all these other kinds of characters are out there. So I'm writing a historical novel that looks at the relationship between Capa and Gerda Taro and some of the big issues of the mid 20th century.

00:35:37:03 - 00:35:40:08
Tim
Oh, count me in on this. Yeah, that sounds great. And it's funny—

00:35:40:08 - 00:35:41:21
Brian
How about yourself?

00:35:41:22 - 00:36:26:06
Tim
Yeah, it's funny you bring up photography. I had to cut some of it, but, you know, again, we think everything's so new, but, you know, in the 1850s, 60s, photography was like taking off. Matthew

Brady and all those guys and I use that somewhat in *Rebel Falls*. I mean, one of the settings there is a likeness, the photography store in Niagara Falls, and I had a lot more stuff than Matthew Brady, I could do him at some point, but I think I don't know, I think I'm a little bit on thin ice because I'm just started this, but I want to stay maybe in that or falls. I didn't realize is a guy, Larry Kerwin, who is a

00:36:26:06 - 00:36:40:17
Tim
great novelist and does a show on Celtic music on Sirius XM and I got to be pretty good friends with him. And he was telling me about the Fenians and they went and invaded parts of Canada.

00:36:40:19 - 00:37:03:08
Tim
For a while right after the Civil War, because they were most of them were in the Union Army and that we're going to swap part of Canada for part of Ireland that I'm just going, this is nuts. And yet, in an odd way, it reminds me, unfortunately, of what's going on in Gaza and the Middle East and such. I mean, our boundaries with land just blur and everything.

00:37:03:10 - 00:37:10:16
Tim
And so actually I'm going to go with Larry. Larry does a tour of Ireland every fall, and I'm going in October.

00:37:10:16 - 00:37:16:20
Brian
So that'll be that'll be a blast. Yeah. I'm a little familiar with Larry, too, from his book *Rockaway Blue* that Cornell published.

00:37:17:00 - 00:37:18:21
Tim
(overlapping) It was great book. Yeah.

00:37:18:23 - 00:37:22:04
Brian
That will be a wonderful trip. But, you know—

00:37:22:06 - 00:37:26:09
Tim
I may join his band or something. Learn how to play I play bass. I don't know.

00:37:26:10 - 00:37:47:12
Brian
You know, we seem to separate the idea of the image from the text, but there's a lot that can be done with photography and thinking about the evolution from the still photo, how still you had

to hold the equipment you had during the American Civil War and how you could only capture the battlefield after the battle.

00:37:47:12 - 00:38:08:02
Brian
And how that evolves to capturing action shots and telling stories. And we live in such a visual culture today that I think these kind of reflections on the evolution of photography and what it meant at various points in our history, I think there's a lot to mine there.

00:38:08:04 - 00:38:29:14
Tim
I think there's a ton. And I think you're going to you've probably already found, like I came up through newspapers and some of the best assignments I was ever on that I enjoyed the most was when they would team me up with a really good photographer. And part of it was they would see the world, you know, in a much different way than I would.

00:38:29:16 – 00:38:56:19
Tim
And so I found I even relied on them to a certain extent. What are you seeing right now? You know, even seeing the angle they set up and such, and it allowed a different way into the story. So I just think they're geniuses. You can present the same thing to a photographer that you could the me And I'm going to say, well, I see that that that, and they're going to go now look at it from this angle and they're so light and, you know, look at the way it's shading his or her face.

00:38:56:19 - 00:39:06:00
Tim
And it's just it's just great. I think you're on to some photography. And again, visuals are epic.

00:39:06:02 - 00:39:44:23
Brian
Yeah. Yeah. Well, I hope, you know, readers will read *Rebel Falls* and they'll read *Gideon's Revolution*. And in addition to I think, a couple of fantastic stories, I mean, I read *Rebel Falls* pretty quickly because I wanted to see what happened next, right? So they're great stories, but they as we touched on a little bit, they help us think about all the things we're going through as a nation and a people today, too, because they're about important historical events and they're about characters who are trying to work out difficult situations that they've been put in.

00:39:45:01 - 00:40:04:01
Brian
And that can tell us a lot about, you know, how we make decisions and how we should think about the world we're in today. So I hope people look at these stories and our history through the fictional tellings that we are telling that contained a lot of actual history too.

00:40:04:01 - 00:40:23:17

Tim
Right. I think ultimately, you know, hopefully our novels will help them understand themselves a little bit more where they stand in the world. And I think that's what I think quality historical fiction does it. It allows you to understand better what you're about, but also where you fit in and the general work.

00:40:23:17 - 00:40:30:02
Brian
And Tim if anyone in Hollywood is listening, both of these novels need to be made into major motion pictures.

00:40:30:04 - 00:40:40:12
Tim
I got one of my guys trying to work on it, but that writer's strike killed things.