



## We Shall Remain: Geronimo

**Narrator:** In 1886, in the blazing summer heat, 39 Apaches raced across the desert southwest, chased by 5,000 American soldiers. They were the only Indian people in the entire nation still fighting the U.S. Army. For many months, the handful of men, women and children, evaded capture—running, running, then running some more, as much as 80 miles a day. Across the nation, Americans were horrified by details of the chase—some real, many exaggerated.

Thirty-nine people were on the run that summer, but the soldiers were really after only one man. To his hunters he was a vicious killer, capable of murdering without mercy. To the Apaches he was more complex—courageous yet vengeful, an unyielding protector of his family’s freedom, yet the cause of his people’s greatest suffering. In the course of the chase and in the years that followed, he would become a legend and the symbol of the untamed freedom of the American West. His name was Geronimo.

**Ellyn Bigrope:** Long ago Coyote opened a bag of darkness and it spread over the world. Creatures of the night loved it. But birds and little animals longed for day. The little animals played a game to win back the light. They won, but one night monster remained. After the game, the first human, White Painted Woman, gave birth to a son. She hid him from the monster. When the boy was grown, he faced the monster and killed it. He was then called Apache—all Chiricahuas are named after him.

**Narrator:** Geronimo was born sometime in the 1820s at the headwaters of the Gila River along the border of what became Arizona and New Mexico.

**Jennie Henry, Cibecue Apache:** His name is Goyalé. We also call him Geronimo. He might have had other names too. A long time ago people used many names.

**Narrator:** As young as age six Geronimo learned to hunt. He would have spent hours crawling along the ground sneaking up on prey, catching birds with his bare hands. When he made his first kill he swallowed the animal’s heart raw and whole to insure a life of success on the chase.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** Young kids grow up dodging arrows, dodging rocks. They were taught to use the bow and arrow very early. They were taught to run and run and run as young ones. And then as they grew older, they depended on this.

**Narrator:** “No one is your friend,” Geronimo was told, but your legs, your legs are your friends.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** There was always danger. There was always that fear, that just around the corner somebody would be coming across it to take your life.

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**Narrator:** Surrounded by their traditional enemies—the Utes, the Comanches, the Navajos—the Apaches numbered just 8,000 people, split into many tribes.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** A lot of people think that Apaches are just one tribe but they are a group of nations, a separate people with their own history and their own culture and their own territory. The Chiricahua Apaches, which are my people and we had four different groups, four bands within that tribe. We had the Chihenne, who are the Warm Springs Apaches. We had the Chokonon, who lived around the Chiricahua Mountains. There were the Nednai, the band that lived mostly in Mexico.

**Narrator:** Geronimo belonged to the smallest band within the Chiricahua tribe. The Bedonkohe. As a teenager he joined older Bedonkohe men on raiding trips. The raids were lightning quick attacks. Apaches seized the horses and provisions they wanted, before melting into the surrounding country.

**David Roberts, writer:** There's no getting around the fact that Apache life was built around raiding. They, they didn't raise horses, they stole horses.

**Andres Resendez, historian:** Raiding was a very good way to obtain horses, to obtain cattle, to obtain captives, and there were markets for all of these 'commodities—'

**L.G. Moses, historian:** It was common for the Chiricahua for example to raid one settlement and trade in another. This had been going on for a great many years.

**David Roberts, writer:** It wasn't considered by the Apache a crime. You took what you needed and too bad if the people who owned it got upset.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** People looked at the needs of their people, their group of people, and said: Hey, we need food. We need ammunition. We need some cattle. And so the raids were planned.

**Narrator:** Raiding had been a way of life for the Apaches and their Indian neighbors for generations, but Mexicans living on or near Apache land, found it intolerable. In response to the constant theft of property, the Mexican government passed laws offering cash payments for Apache scalps. Soon, bounty hunters were roaming the desert, killing any Indian they could find.

**Ramon Riley, Western Apache (in Apache):** Each time the scalp hunters killed an Apache they were paid. A child's scalp was worth \$25. A woman's scalp was \$50. A warrior's scalp was worth \$100.

**Narrator:** In spite of the bounty hunters, the Apaches continued raiding. By the time he was 17 Geronimo had successfully completed four raiding expeditions. Now in the eyes of the Bedonkohe he was a man—old enough to join the hunt—and choose a wife. He fell hard for a slender, young girl named Alope.

**David Roberts, writer:** I think Alope was, to use a kind of corny Americanism, the love of his life. Geronimo went to Alope's father to ask for her hand in marriage and the old man said, "It's going to cost you a lot of horses." And I think it's dad saying, "She's too good for you."

**Narrator:** Geronimo disappeared. When he returned several days later he led a long string of horses. "This," Geronimo later explained, "was all the marriage ceremony necessary in our tribe." Within a few

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years Alope and Geronimo had three children. As their young ones grew, the couple celebrated each stage of their lives with age-old rituals.

**Elbys Hugar, Chiricahua Apache:** When the baby is born, there's a small ceremony for the cradle. And then later on, when they start walking, there's another small ceremony for that.

**Narrator:** Like most Apache women, Alope pierced her babies' ears to make her children grow faster and bathed them in waters steeped with wildflowers to make their skin strong. And just as their parents had done, Alope and Geronimo taught their children to sing prayers to Ussen, the Creator, for health, strength and wisdom.

One day in the early 1850s, Geronimo and his family joined other Chiricahuas on a trading trip. The group camped on the outskirts of a Mexican town called Janos and the men headed in to trade. On the way back the Chiricahuas met distraught members of their band. Mexican soldiers had ransacked their camp, the women cried, stealing their ponies and supplies, leaving their wickiups in ruins. The Apaches scattered. That night Geronimo slipped back in to camp. There he discovered the bodies of his mother, his wife and his three small children, lying in pools of blood.

**Zelda Yazza, Chiricahua Apache:** When he saw all his family massacred there he cut his hair, and he left his hair there with them. You see all the pictures that were taken. You see their hair short, like mine. That was a sign of mourning, that they lost someone.

**Narrator:** When Geronimo returned home he ripped down his wife's paintings, tore apart strings of beads she had made and gathered his children's toys. And just as Apaches had done for generations when loved ones died, he set everything his wife and children had owned on fire.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** Geronimo's attitude changed after his mother was killed, after his wife was killed, after his children was killed. And so that created an attitude towards the non-Indians.

**Robert Geronimo, Geronimo's great grandson:** It just changed him completely and totally.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** Maybe it wasn't a wise thing to deal with things like that, but he wanted revenge.

**Vernon Simmons, Chiricahua Apache:** Your wife's dead, your kids are dead, your mother's dead. That's your life, taken away from you in an instant. It— want to make you go kill everybody.

**Narrator:** "I had no purpose left..." Geronimo later recalled, "my heart ached for revenge."

**Ellyn Bigrope:** Power is everywhere, it lives in everything. It might be known through a word, or come in the shape of an animal. We all have Power, but some tap into different rooms. Power speaks to those who listen.

**Elbys Hugar, Chiricahua Apache:** The greatest thing a person can have is the power. Benegotsi. It's scary. (in Apache) This is the truth. To live with Power is very challenging. It's so potent you must be wary. To have Power is a great responsibility. You can choose to leave it alone or accept it. It's up to you.

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**Narrator:** Not long after the vicious murder of his family, a despondent Geronimo ventured deep into Chiricahua country. Alone, he buried his head in his hands and began to cry. Suddenly he was startled by a voice. “No gun will ever kill you,” it said. “I will take the bullets from the guns of the Mexicans ... and I will guide your arrows.” Geronimo later said that he had been given what Apache people call Power, a gift from Ussen.

**Robert Haouzous, Chiricahua Apache:** The concept of power is fundamental in Apache belief. Everybody acknowledges that somebody has a certain power, like the power of medicine, the power of healing, the power of seeing or feeling something at a distance.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** There were people that knew where you were, people that knew about horses, people that knew about hunting. We call this power.

**Ramon Riley, Western Apache (in Apache):** Geronimo had “N’daa K’eh Godih.” A prayer power that worked on the minds of his enemies to make their bullets miss their targets and turn into water. Geronimo had this power and it helped him survive.

**Narrator:** Soon after the voice spoke to him, Geronimo put his power into action. He got permission from the Chiricahua chiefs to take revenge for the massacre at Janos. With a force of 200 men, he lured the Mexican soldiers who had killed his family, into battle. Leading the charge through a hail of bullets, Geronimo whirled and dodged, killing with his knife when his arrows ran out.

**David Roberts, writer:** So he’s dashing back and forth, running this zigzag pattern, and obviously scaring the daylights out of the Mexicans. They had never run into an antagonist quite like this guy.

**Vernon Simmons, Chiricahua Apache:** “I don’t care what you put up against him. He’ll come after you. That’s the kind of fighter he was. He was a true blooded Chiricahua fighter.” And he said he didn’t- “He wasn’t scared of bullets.” That, I heard from my grandpa.

**Narrator:** Geronimo and his men decimated the enemy. From that day forward, Mexicans would shudder at his name, while the Chiricahuas would accord him great respect. As a sign of his status, over the years he would take many wives, including the daughter of the greatest Chiricahua chief, Cochise. Yet Geronimo would never be a chief himself. For the Apaches, he was too impulsive, too fretful, too vengeful.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** We had many people in our tribe who had the characteristics that would appropriate for being a chief, who were well respected and who were known for making careful decisions for the well being of the people. And Geronimo was not among those.

**Narrator:** For the 10 years after his celebrated victory, Geronimo fought one bloody battle after another with Mexicans. In all that time he was completely unknown to Americans. His first encounter with them was friendly. A handful of land surveyors came through Apache country and Geronimo traded ponies, skins and blankets with them for clothing and food. “They were good men,” he remembered, “and we were sorry they had gone on into the West ... they were the first white men I ever saw.”

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**David Roberts, writer:** He may wonder—this is a whole different species of person from the Mexicans, who have raided and killed and enslaved us for maybe a century. Maybe we have something to hope from these “white eyes.”

**Narrator:** The Apaches didn’t know it at the time, but the men who traded with Geronimo had been sent to mark a new international boundary. At the end of the Mexican American War in 1848, the United States had wrested huge swaths of territory from Mexico, including large areas of Apache land. The surveyors were followed in the 1850s by thousands of other Americans, as fortune hunters streamed through Chiricahua country on the way to California gold. The Apaches debated how to respond to the newcomers. They looked to the one leader who could speak for all the Chiricahua bands, Geronimo’s father-in-law Cochise.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** Cochise was probably the greatest warrior and chief that the Chiricahuas had ever had. I think even to this very day that name is spoken with great reverence.

**Colin Calloway, historian:** Cochise is one of those people who earns a reputation, not only as a warrior, but as a statesman, if you like, as a diplomat.

**Narrator:** The Americans, Cochise believed, were an irritant, not a threat. He negotiated a deal allowing travelers, goods and mail to pass through his people’s land. But when Spanish gold mines were re-discovered in the Southwest, American prospectors came to stay.

**L.G. Moses, historian:** The miners that descend on Arizona are mostly a lawless bunch of people.

**Dave Edmunds, historian:** Mining camps are full of young men who are almost completely beyond any social bounds. They are one of the worst places in the American West they are absolutely full of racism. Miners are disastrous for most Native American people.

**Narrator:** Some miners were barbarous—poisoning the Apaches’ food with strychnine, cutting fetuses out of the bellies of pregnant women, selling Apache girls into slavery. When Americans decapitated a venerated Apache chief and sent his boiled skull back East as a gruesome trophy, they pushed Cochise too far.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** He believed in punishing someone that was wrong, and in punishing people that were responsible for, you know, his people dying or getting hurt. He wasn’t going to let anybody take advantage of him or his people.

**Narrator:** Cochise urged Geronimo and the Chiricahuas to take revenge. “All of the Indians agreed not to be friendly with the white man anymore,” Geronimo later said. “Sometimes we attacked the white men, sometimes they attacked us.” The Chiricahuas ambushed stagecoaches and wagon trains, mutilating their victims—smashing heads with rocks, stabbing corpses with their spears, dangling bodies over fires.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** What happened back then, happened because they were humans. It was done to them... so they did it back. But better.

**Narrator:** In his 40s now, Geronimo’s face showed the ravages of war.



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**David Roberts, writer:** The scars from bullets across his cheek—one journalist spoke of how one of those injuries had caused him to seem to have a perpetual sneer, a sneer of hatred, a sneer of contempt.

**Keith Basso, anthropologist:** The man had a very impressive face. Extremely handsome in his way. In Apache one would say ‘hashke’. There is a measure of meanness and anger in the face.

**Narrator:** Through the 1860s as the war with the Apaches raged, the growing population of white settlers became increasingly angry that the government was not protecting them. In the frontier town of Tucson, to the East of Chiricahua territory, newspapers called for retribution. While “utter extermination” might not be considered practical, one columnist wrote, “sound whippings” of Apaches should be encouraged. “We must stand by our race for blood is thicker than water,” declared another. “Let slip the dogs of war in good earnest upon all Indians.” News of the escalating violence shook Washington. To bring order to the Southwest, President Ulysses S. Grant sent his most respected Indian fighter to Arizona. A veteran of the Civil War, General George Crook had been fighting Indians ever since. Though he would prove ruthless in his pursuit of the Apache, Crook had an unusual empathy for Indians.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** General Crook, from the perspective of our own tribe, was one of the generals who tried hardest to understand things from an Apache’s perspective and it was something that our people at that time greatly appreciated that there was somebody who would actually talk with them.

**Keith Basso, anthropologist:** Crook was forever talking about how intelligent Apaches were. He was a firm believer that with proper forms of formal education, Apache people could quickly become “civilized” quote, unquote, and become upstanding members of society.

**Narrator:** Crook was charged with implementing a new federal Indian policy. Instead of treating Native tribes as sovereign nations, as the U.S. had been doing for more than a century, Indians would now be wards of the state. Over the next decade, the American army would force tribe after tribe onto reservations.

**Phil Deloria, historian:** The reservation becomes this dominant way of containing Indian people. This place where Indian people can be contained and then worked on, right, transformed and changed so that they can have a future within American society.

**Keith Basso, anthropologist:** Crook’s strategy was as simple as it was difficult to enforce. His basic idea was, that if Apache people would stay on their reservations, he would do everything he could to make their lives comfortable. But those who refused and who continued raiding he vowed to hunt down to the very last man.

**Narrator:** Ten years earlier the Apaches neighbors, the Navajos, had faced a similar choice—comply with the American demands or fight. The Navajos chose war. After a brutal military campaign, the American Army forced them into submission. Survivors were marched off their ancestral land to a distant reservation; along the way hundreds died of starvation and disease. Apaches knew this history well.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** The Navajo people and Apache people knew one another, they shared information. There was a whole network of information exchange between the tribes in the area.

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**Narrator:** Many Apaches reluctantly agreed to settle on reservations. Crook played Apaches against each other. He offered them incentives to become scouts for the U.S. Army and lead the hunt for Apaches who refused to give in.

**Ramon Riley, Western Apache (in Apache):** When the soldiers came here, they took away our rifles and our horses and our way of life. If you became a scout your rifle was returned to you. If you became a scout your horse was returned to you. The money you got paid, white people's money, could buy a lot of supplies for your family. I wonder what I would have done, where would I be?

**Narrator:** For several years as one by one Apache chiefs agreed to reservation life, Cochise and the Chiricahuas continued to fight. But the time came when the great Chiricahua leader realized his people could not resist forever.

**David Roberts, writer:** Cochise recognized that the Anglo-Americans were a more formidable foe than the Mexicans. They had better technology, their army was far more efficient and he sensed that there was too many of them, there were so many people compared to his people.

**Narrator:** After a decade of war, Cochise agreed to halt the killing and to end Apache raids north of the Mexican border. In return, the Americans would create a reservation for the Chiricahua on their ancestral homeland—a pristine wilderness of mountains, canyons, streams and open fields—prime land in the eyes of the settlers.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** The United States told them well all you have to do is stay in this one spot. That was the arrangement they made in order to stay on their own land.

**Narrator:** With minimal interference from the U.S., the Chiricahua lived much as they had for generations, raiding into Mexico whenever they needed horses and supplies. But just two years later, Cochise died, and the deal he had struck with the Americans was put at risk.

**David Roberts, writer:** Cochise's death was, an irreplaceable loss. No one would ever take his place, no one would ever unite the various bands of Chiricahua the way Cochise succeeded in doing.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** The death of Cochise brought out what the Americans thought was an opportunity to open up that area of land for mining and settlement, and that without leaders such as Cochise they would be much easier to eventually conquer.

**Narrator:** With Cochise gone, the federal government decided to move the Chiricahua 150 miles north to a mosquito-ridden reservation called San Carlos. This would open the valuable Chiricahua land for American settlement and appease the Mexicans who were fed up with Apache raiding. A young reservation agent, named John Clum, was sent from San Carlos to deliver the news. Reluctantly the Chiricahuas agreed to move. Clum's final meeting was with Geronimo's brother-in-law, Chief Juh. Juh stuttered, so Geronimo spoke for him. We will move to San Carlos, Geronimo told Clum. Just give us a little time. That night, after strangling their own dogs so the barking would not give them away, Geronimo, Juh and some 700 Chiricahuas slipped away. Clum was furious. Blaming Geronimo, not Juh, he became obsessed with capturing the Indian he believed responsible for the double cross. On April 21st, 1877 Geronimo rode into Clum's carefully laid trap. As he arrived at Ojo Caliente, New Mexico to

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trade some horses dozens of Apache scouts—including Cochise’s son Naiche—surrounded him. They carted him back to San Carlos in chains.

**David Roberts, writer:** He thought he was going to die, he thought he would be executed.

**L.G. Moses, historian:** He understands that he may not die in battle, something that his power tells him “this will never happen.” But it didn’t say much about him dying at the end of a hangman’s rope.

**Narrator:** Clum threw Geronimo into the San Carlos guardhouse, confident that he would soon be hanged. But Clum was unexpectedly relieved of his command. The new reservation agent saw no need to keep Geronimo locked up. After four months, he was released from the guardhouse. But he was hardly free. Soldiers treated him like any Apache on the reservation. They took away his gun, made him wear an identification tag, forced him to attend a daily head count and demanded he obtain an official pass to go anywhere, even to hunt for food. They ordered him to plant vegetables and dig ditches.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** It was too hot and too rocky and too thorny. If there was any good land, it probably belonged to somebody else.

**Zelda Yazza, Chiricahua Apache:** There was nothing there. They didn’t like it at all.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** Not even the dogs like it there.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** To top it off, they were expected to become farmers. Not only are we not farmers, but there’s nothing to farm.

**Narrator:** For four years Geronimo struggled with life on the reservation. Then in the summer of 1881, he was drawn to the startling message of a charismatic Apache medicine man, called the Dreamer. A former military scout, well versed in American ways, he urged a return to traditional Apache life. Apaches came from miles around to attend his ceremony. The Dreamer marked East, South, West and North with sacred cattail pollen. People circled around him as he preached. Apaches should not take revenge against the white man, the Dreamer said. Ussen would see that the Americans suffered for their sins in the afterlife. It was a plea for unity and peace for a people who had seen little of either.

**Jennie Henry, Peaches’ granddaughter (in Apache):** Those Apaches with the power to unite people and instill vision have always been labeled by whites as a threat. My grandmother said she saw this man and he was not a troublemaker.

**Narrator:** Reservation officials feared that the medicine man might incite a revolt and sent 85 soldiers and 23 Apache scouts to arrest or kill him. When the soldiers seized the Dreamer, a group of angry Apaches surrounded them. Suddenly a fire-fight erupted. Within moments the Dreamer had been wounded. Enraged by an attack on a peaceful medicine man, Apache scouts turned their guns on the soldiers. When the shooting was over, seven cavalymen, 17 Apaches, and the Dreamer, were dead.

**Jennie Henry, Peaches’ granddaughter (in Apache):** He wasn’t killed by a bullet. He was beheaded.

**Narrator:** The Americans limped back to Fort Apache. The scouts who had mutinied were arrested, and several hanged. News of the battle shot across the country. The *New York Times* claimed that Apaches in Arizona had carried out a massacre as horrible as Custer’s last stand. Anxious officials called for



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reinforcements from New Mexico and California. Soon, San Carlos was swarming with US soldiers. No one felt more endangered than Geronimo.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** It didn't make sense to stay in an area with a large group of soldiers who you knew had a history of them trying to kill you.

**Narrator:** On September 30, 1881, accompanied by Juh and 72 Chiricahuas, Geronimo escaped from San Carlos, and headed south. It was the beginning of five years of bloody Chiricahua resistance, the last Indian war ever fought on United States soil and the transformation of Geronimo into a legend.

**Narrator:** Geronimo raced towards the relative safety of Mexico. When he passed near the frontier town of Tombstone, terrified businessmen demanded protection. The town's newly elected mayor was John Clum, the former San Carlos reservation agent. He relished the opportunity of a second chance at his nemesis. He rounded up a posse, including a former sheriff made famous by a recent gun fight in Tombstone, Wyatt Earp. "If we get Geronimo this time," Clum declared, "we'll send him back to the army, nailed up in a long, narrow box, with a paper lily on his chest." For two days the posse pursued Geronimo, but never even caught a glimpse of him. Geronimo headed for the one place Chiricahuas felt safe, a part of Apache territory high in the Sierra Madre that no outsiders had ever penetrated. The Americans called it the Apache Stronghold, but it was much more than that.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** What you're really talking about is a whole territory of land or place that a group of people call home, you know, stretched for hundreds and hundreds of miles.

**Narrator:** There Geronimo joined the greatest Apache force assembled since the days of Cochise. They were the only Indians in the entire nation still fighting the American army. In the past two decades, one Indian tribe after the next had been defeated. The Kiowa, the Comanche, the Cheyenne had been forced onto reservations. The Lakota had surrendered. Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce had agreed to terms. Only the Chiricahuas were still free. They celebrated with a dance.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** Everything that an Apache does is sacred. Even the dancing.

**David Roberts, writer:** They feel a power and invincibility, they say, "Well, maybe we have to give up Arizona and New Mexico, maybe we can't live any more north of the border, but we can live forever here."

**Narrator:** For several months Geronimo and the Chiricahuas enjoyed a return to their traditional life. The men hunted and raided; the women gathered mescal, dried beef and made clothes from plundered Mexican cloth. But Geronimo couldn't stop worrying. He knew that it was becoming increasingly risky to raid local villages and Mexican troops were gathering in the mountains. And he understood that as long as they lived off the reservation, the American army would be after them too. They needed more people. To get them, Geronimo posed an audacious and controversial plan. In a heated debate, he argued they should return to San Carlos, abduct their own people -- 400 Chiricahuas under Chief Loco—and force them to join the resistance.

**David Roberts, writer:** Geronimo was a brilliant manipulator. He was able to talk people into things that their better judgment told them would not work.

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**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** Geronimo was said to be a good talker, that seems to be one of his primary characteristics.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** Geronimo was a person that came to some conclusion and he wanted to do something about it right then, no matter what the situation was, no matter what the cost was.

**Narrator:** At dawn on April 19, 1882, Geronimo and a group of armed Chiricahuas slipped onto San Carlos reservation. They confronted Loco with guns drawn. "Take them all," one of Geronimo's men shouted. "Shoot down anyone who refuses to come with us!"

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** Loco didn't want to leave. He wanted to stay. He wanted to settle down. A lot of these small group leaders wanted to settle down.

**Anita Lester, Chiricahua Apache:** Seems like the other leaders were trying to make peace for their women and children.

**Narrator:** Loco and his band were forced on a harrowing trip to the Stronghold. Within sight of the Sierra Madre, they rode into a Mexican ambush. Geronimo's hostages were unarmed and whole families were slaughtered on the spot. 78 Apaches, mostly women and children, were killed. Many of the survivors blamed Geronimo. "We were filled with gloom and despair," one of them recalled, "What had we done to be treated so cruelly by our own race."

**L.G. Moses, historian:** Geronimo's unwillingness to consider the wishes of Loco and his people points to a certain selfishness on his part.

**David Roberts, writer:** Cochise would not have done the same thing. Cochise respected the idea that Loco could have chosen for himself.

**Narrator:** Geronimo saw it differently. He had added more people to the Chiricahua band, the last living free off the reservation. If he had any regrets, he never spoke of them.

**Ellyn Bigrope:** Coyote threw a stone into water. He said, "If this sinks, all that live, will die!" Coyote knew all along that the stone would sink. For he is the trickster! Because of his stone, man must die. All that men do, Coyote did first.

**Narrator:** One spring night in 1883, US soldiers apprehended a young Apache man slipping onto the San Carlos reservation. His name was Tzoe, but the Americans called him Peaches. They suspected that he might have information that would lead them to Geronimo. They put him in chains, suspended him by his arms and interrogated him. Finally he broke down and told a remarkable story. Although he wasn't Chiricahua, he said he had been taken by Geronimo with Loco's band. When the group was ambushed by Mexicans, he lost both his wives. For a year Peaches lived in the Stronghold, but he missed his family.

**David Roberts, writer:** Peaches, we must remember, is not a Chiricahua. He is kept under surveillance in the stronghold, because people already think he might be a turncoat.

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**Jennie Henry, Peaches' granddaughter (in Apache):** My grandfather said he lived with fierce people. He had to be extremely careful in front of them because they would retaliate right away.

**Narrator:** Life in the stronghold, Peaches said, was hard. The Chiricahuas moved every few days, and were low on food. Yearning to see his mother at San Carlos, Peaches slipped away one night, and walked backed to the reservation. It was the break Crook needed: Peaches knew where the Stronghold was and how to get there. He could lead the U.S. army to Geronimo. Six weeks later Geronimo was in Chihuahua, Mexico, when he had a premonition. "Our base camp" he told the other men, "has been invaded by U.S. troops." They raced back to find that Crook had occupied their camp with several hundred soldiers and Apache scouts. The Stronghold had been breached. Now there was nowhere for the Chiricahuas to hide.

**David Roberts, writer:** It dealt an absolutely shattering psychological blow to Geronimo and the other Chiricahua. They believed we are always safe here in the stronghold. We can always, even if we can never live in, north of the border, we can always come here and flourish.

**Narrator:** Reluctantly, Geronimo and the band agreed to return to the reservation. For almost two years, it seemed as if peace had come to Arizona. Intent on keeping the Chiricahuas on the reservation for good, General Crook allowed them to decide where they wanted to live. They chose the fertile banks of Turkey Creek a spot resembling the cool mountain pastures of their traditional home. For the first time in years most Chiricahuas felt settled. Not Geronimo. He tried his hand at farming, but didn't like it and he bridled at being bossed around by young, white officials. Finally, he'd had enough. On May 17, 1885, Geronimo and nearly 150 people fled Turkey Creek, leaving the majority of Chiricahuas on the reservation. U.S. troops followed close behind.

**Vernon Simmons, Chiricahua Apache:** "We were running all the time," my grandpa said. "Always living one part one night, moving someplace the next time. The Calvary was always chasing us somewhere. We were running, always running."

**Narrator:** The fleeing Chiricahuas dispersed. Geronimo led a small group of men, women and children. Now in his 60s, he was respected as an elder. Although he was not a chief, his band looked to him for leadership and guidance.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** In times of danger, he was the man to be with.

**Robert Geronimo, Geronimo's great grandson:** According to my grandmother, they were walking miles and miles and miles.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** The men would run and the women would ride the horses and follow. The Chiricahua people you know they could move 70 miles or 80 miles in one day, you know where the Calvary that was following them a lot of times couldn't keep up.

**Elbys Hugar, Chiricahua Apache:** They were running from the Calvary. And they ran into these rocks. And they turned themselves into rocks.

**L.G. Moses, historian:** Among Geronimo's powers was the ability to suspend time and space. On one particular raid, he was actually able to hold off the dawn for a few hours, so they could approach in darkness.

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**Narrator:** The Chiricahuas killed anyone who crossed their path. “If we were seen by a civilian,” one Apache recalled, “it meant that Geronimo would be reported to the military and they would be after us, so there was nothing to do but kill.... It was terrible to see little children killed ... but the soldiers killed our women and children too.” Once Geronimo feigned friendship with a rancher, asking him to slaughter some sheep and cook them for his men. After they feasted on mutton, Geronimo shot and stabbed his host and the man’s wife and children. He would have killed the White Mountain Apache family living on the ranch, but members of his band intervened, guns drawn, forcing Geronimo to back down.

**Phil Deloria, historian:** He was driven, and his people were driven to such a sense of desperation and futility and humiliation that, that striking back in anger could take, you know often times, really quite awfully horrific sorts of forms. You don’t take over a continent, in an easy way and you don’t give up a continent without fighting hard. So there is a long history that everyone understands that that’s what the fight is about. And that it’s going to be bloody and awful and violent and painful.

**Narrator:** Most settlers in the Southwest now saw Geronimo as simply a vicious killer.

**Anita Lester, Chiricahua Apache:** Every time someone died or got raided, it was always Chiricahuas. Even if they were far away and it was because Geronimo was about here and there, bragging and saying things.

**Narrator:** By early 1886, the years of hiding, raiding and running had taken their toll. Even Geronimo was tired.

**David Roberts, writer:** Morale is pretty low. There are too few of them, there’s a sense of doom hovering over the Chiricahua existence.

**Narrator:** That March Geronimo arrived at Cañon de los Embudos, south of the Mexican border, to meet with General Crook. Surrounded by two dozen armed Chiricahuas, he sat down to talk about terms for surrender. Beads of sweat rolled down his temples. “There are very few of my men left now,” Geronimo said. “They have done some bad things but I want them all rubbed out and let us never speak of them again.” Crook had orders to demand unconditional surrender from the Chiricahuas, but he knew that Geronimo would never agree. After several days of negotiating, Crook promised that if the Apaches spent two years in an East Coast prison they could return to Arizona. Geronimo and the Chiricahuas finally accepted Crook’s terms. “I give myself up to you,” Geronimo said, “Do with me what you please. Once I moved about like the wind. Now I surrender to you and that is all.” It wasn’t all.

**David Roberts, writer:** Geronimo has one last change of heart, one more vacillation, his always vacillating mind. How does he know this wasn’t another double cross?

**Narrator:** Two days later, as most of the Chiricahuas headed North with Crook, Geronimo led a group of 21 men, 14 women and six children, mostly members of his family, into the night.

**Robert Haouzous, Chiricahua Apache:** When Geronimo made that final break, it’s hard to understand what was going through his mind, because he knew. He knew what he was facing.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** Maybe they wanted to go back for one more last look to say “thank you” for all that this land has provided them.

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**David Roberts, writer:** I don't think he had a coherent plan for a survival strategy that would last for another decade. He was an improviser.

**Narrator:** Geronimo took his band into New Mexico. "We were reckless for our lives," he later recalled, "for we felt every man's hand was against us. If we returned to the reservation we would be put in prison and killed. If we stayed in Mexico they would continue to send soldiers to fight us; so we gave no quarter to anyone and asked no favors." Word spread across Arizona and New Mexico that Geronimo was on the loose again. Ranchers pleaded with the White House for protection. "We are surrounded by Apaches," one wrote. "We have many small children and women with us.... For the sake of humanity send us some soldiers...."

**David Roberts, writer:** The terror, the psychological trauma that Geronimo wrought at the end created this fantasy, the great American western fantasy, I'm surrounded by Indians. They're going to kill us all.

**Narrator:** Incensed that Crook had allowed Geronimo to escape, federal officials removed him from his post. His replacement, General Nelson Miles, was a hard-liner with little use for Crook's Apache scouts. Miles requested thousands of reinforcements to bring in the fleeing Chiricahuas.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** The Chiricahua were a tricky group of people. Smart, wise decisions were made. The US military hunted for them almost all over Arizona and on into New Mexico, but they were chasing spirits.

**David Roberts, writer:** They're being pursued by 5,000 American troops; one quarter of the U.S. army, 3,000 Mexican troops, possibly 1,000 vigilantes. So you've got 9,000 hunters against 39 fugitives and they never succeed in capturing a single man, woman, or child. If that isn't brilliant, nothing is.

**Narrator:** Journalists flocked to the Southwest and provided lurid and riveting accounts of the fugitives.

**L.G. Moses, historian:** He had achieved a notoriety that went well beyond the American Southwest.

**David Roberts, writer:** That's when he really becomes the most famous Indian in the West and, in the phrase of the day, the "Worst Indian who ever lived."

**Colin Calloway, historian:** Geronimo assumes an important, symbolic status. His resistance is seen as the last resistance, not only of Chiricahua Apache people, but of Indian people in North America.

**Narrator:** After three months of fruitless searching, Miles was forced to turn to the scouts he disdained. Within weeks, two Chiricahua scouts with family ties to Geronimo, climbed towards his remote mountain camp. Geronimo wanted to kill them, but a member of the band intervened.

**Zelda Yazza, Chiricahua Apache:** My grandfather drew his gun against Geronimo and told him not to shoot because they're family, if Geronimo had his way, those two would have never climbed that hill.

**Narrator:** "The troops are coming after you from all over the United States," one of the scouts said. "If you are awake at night and a rock rolls down the mountain or a stick breaks, you will be running ... you even eat your meals running. You have no friends whatsoever in the world."



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“I live at the agency,” he added. “Nobody bothers me. I sleep well. I have my little patch of corn.” Geronimo finally agreed to meet with an army officer who outlined the terms of surrender.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** In spite of the feelings that Geronimo might have had the wisdom that came with the Chiricahuas was still a part of his life. I think in the end the wisdom took over. And so he negotiated with the Cavalry.

**Narrator:** Geronimo and his band would be sent to a prison in Florida. The president himself would determine when they could return home. As the negotiations wore on, the Chiricahuas learned that the Americans had decided to deport their entire tribe. Even the scouts, and those living peacefully at Turkey Creek, would be sent to Florida. “My wife and children have been captured,” one of the men said, “I love them. I want to be with them.” The Chiricahuas began to surrender, one by one. Geronimo was the last to give in.

**Robert Geronimo, Geronimo’s great grandson:** Family. It’s just... that’s everything, and that’s it. Everything else is secondary.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** The whole of our history is primarily of the parents and the children and the cousins and the aunts and uncles and grandparents and grandchildren. All of that is integral to Apache community, as the Apache existence. And the men didn’t exist in isolation.

**Narrator:** On September 8th, 1886, Geronimo and his band boarded a train bound for Florida. Like most of the Chiricahuas, Geronimo had never set foot on a train before and had never left the Southwest.

**Elbys Hugar, Chiricahua Apache:** I had a grandfather and a grandmother, along with their children, went on this train. It wasn’t their fault.

**Silas Cochise, Chiricahua Apache:** The Apaches that were on that train felt like it was the end of their time, that the non-Indian was going to wipe them out. This was another trick of the non-Indian world.

**Narrator:** When they finally arrived, Geronimo’s band was imprisoned alongside Chiricahuas from Turkey Creek and the scouts who had loyally served the U.S. army. The entire Chiricahua tribe now numbered fewer than 500, just one quarter of those who had lived free in the days of Cochise. They were all paying a terrible price for Geronimo’s brave but stubborn resistance. Families were separated, the men taken to Fort Pickens, the women and children to Fort Marion, more than 300 miles away. Almost immediately, the prisoners began dying of malaria and other tropical diseases.

**Robert Geronimo, Geronimo’s great grandson:** The humidity, the heat, even the bugs were different, the mosquitoes and everything else. And it’s just- to them it was miserable.

**Narrator:** Within three years, 119 people had died, including Geronimo’s wife and four-year-old daughter.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** When the United States almost put that final dagger, should I say, into the hearts of our people, almost carried out that manifest destiny, in a land, in a place that was worse than San Carlos.

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**Narrator:** Government authorities took the Chiricahua children to a boarding school in Pennsylvania. School officials cut the children's hair, forbade them to speak Apache and tried to convert them to Christianity. Our people were being told, "Well, that's all over with. You can't go back. Don't clutter their minds with all this old information."

**Robert Haouzous, Chiricahua Apache:** They taught them how to be western, how to dismiss their religion, how to dismiss their power. How to dismiss the power of their elders.

**Narrator:** Tuberculosis spread through the boarding school. Only children dying of the disease were allowed to return to their families. After less than two years in Florida, all the Chiricahuas were sent to a prison camp in Alabama, then moved again to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In all, they would spend 27 years as prisoners of war.

**Anita Lester, Chiricahua Apache:** What the government did is deplorable. And they should be somehow held accountable.

**Narrator:** Even when the federal government finally freed the Chiricahuas in 1913, the state of Arizona refused to allow them to return to their homeland.

**Michael Darrow, Fort Sill tribal historian:** Most people in The United States don't realize that there was an entire tribe of people who were imprisoned not because they'd done anything wrong, but because of who they were.

**Narrator:** In a few short years, Americans came to view Geronimo in an entirely new way. When he had first arrived in Florida, crowds gathered at the prison to gawk at "the wickedest Indian who ever lived." Eight years later, as Geronimo was being taken from Alabama to Oklahoma, crowds gathered again. This time they came to cheer a national hero. What had changed was America itself: Geronimo's surrender had ended the Indian wars that had raged for nearly three centuries.

**Phil Deloria, historian:** Once that moment is perceived to be over, there's an almost immediate turn to a kind of nostalgic sensibility. "Boy, you know, those were the days, right, when we faced off against these, you know, these challenging dangerous Indian opponents. Gosh! I miss those times." Once the despised savage, Geronimo was now the valiant warrior who had held out against impossible odds.

**David Roberts, writer:** By the 20th century, Geronimo comes to stand for some of the values we hold most dear in America. The lone battler, the champion of his people, the guy who never gives up, the ultimate underdog. He becomes an icon, a sentimental icon of what was once a real enemy. And there's something amazingly American about that transformation.

**Narrator:** While other Chiricahuas were kept under guard, Geronimo was allowed to travel. He attended expositions and appeared in Wild West Shows.

**Colin Calloway, historian:** Geronimo adopting or seen to adopt American culture represents a major symbolic victory. American civilization has arrived, and even Geronimo is now embracing it.

**Narrator:** In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt asked Geronimo to lead his inaugural procession. As the 80-year-old Apache rode down Pennsylvania Avenue, people threw their hats in the air and shouted, "Hooray for Geronimo!" Several days later Geronimo met with the President and asked if he could be

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allowed to return to Arizona. “My hands are tied as with a rope,” Geronimo said, “I pray you to cut the ropes and make me free. Let me die in my own country.”

“It is best for you to stay where you are,” Roosevelt replied. “Resentment still burns in Arizona,” he explained. “That is all I can say, Geronimo.”

**Narrator:** One day in February 1909, the most famous Indian alive, was riding home, when he was thrown from his horse. He lay out in the freezing cold all night. When an old friend found him, Geronimo was gravely ill. He died six days later, still a prisoner of war. Although Americans celebrated him, Geronimo provoked complicated feelings in the hearts of many Apaches.

**Tim Harjo, Chiricahua Apache:** We have different perspectives on the man—who he was, how he lived his life, why he did what he did, and how that affected the rest of the tribe.

**Zelda Yazza, Chiricahua Apache:** Apache people suffered because of him. We all suffered with him.

**Robert Haouzous, Chiricahua Apache:** Most of the tribe were angry with him and they blamed him. We don't look at him as a hero.

**Anita Lester, Chiricahua Apache:** He wasn't alone. And when these white people think about all these things that were going on, they should name all the group that was with him instead of just Geronimo. Because he didn't do it alone.

**Oliver Enjady, Chiricahua Apache:** Then there are a lot of other names also, lost in history, lost in the canyons of Mexico, lost in the mountains of the Chiricahuas names long forgotten.

**Narrator:** While other Apaches remained in the Southwest, the Chiricahua had paid dearly for Geronimo's resistance. They were never allowed home.

**Elbys Hugar, Chiricahua Apache:** Well he killed a lot of people. Why is he remembered when he did all these bad things? It's because he put a mark on the American people. He put a scar on them.

**Narrator:** In the end even Geronimo had regrets. On his deathbed, he summoned his nephew to his side, “I should never have surrendered,” the old man whispered. “I should have fought until I was the last man alive.”