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Subject: Process for determining original movement/case combinations

Posted by [thesnark17](#) on Sat, 06 Feb 2021 17:40:10 GMT

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As I just ran through my checklist for determining potential original case/movement combinations for a particularly nice watch on Ebay, I thought I might put the steps up here.

This watch: ebay 164689291418

1. Assess case type and damage
  - 18k green gold case with fancy enamel work
  - Enamel in excellent condition
  - bow replaced in wrong gold color -- okay, it happens I guess; still, it's rather jarring
2. Assess dial/hands for originality
  - Egyptian multicolor dial is original, and style does not clash with case
  - Dial marked Gruen Verithin (no Precision) with 18k case: should mean V3.5 or V4 of SN <520k
  - Hands are likely not original, since Gruen did not prefer this hands style -- STRIKE 1
3. Check movement against expectation
  - V7 -- ??!!! STRIKE 2
  - However, dial would be correct for a V7, since it is not marked Precision
  - Also V7s in solid gold were made in the early range, maybe this is one of them? Though this style case is high-end.
4. Date case and movement, date ranges should overlap
  - case dates to ~1920/21 -- V7 not introduced until 1922...
  - movement dates to ~1923/24/25 -- STRIKE 3, YOU'RE OUT!

Clearly the movement was replaced. The original movement should have been in the SN 504-506k range. It could have been a V3.5, but much more likely a V4. The movement and dial markings match, which is either a fortuitous accident, or done on purpose to mislead.

This could not a factory movement swap from Gruen's "put the latest and best movement in your old watch" program. Gruen would not have replaced a V4 with a V7, and anyway this would not have been an old watch at the time. I suspect that a jeweler needed to replace a trashed V4, and a V7 was all he had on hand. The hands and bow also look like "on hand" sorts of parts, rather than putting effort into matching parts.

Without some sort of serial number check to work from, all a potential buyer would have to work with is the fact that the watch has not been well-treated (bow, hands) and a sense of vague unease about that movement. Without being able to date both case and movement, there's nothing to prove that it wasn't an original combination.

Which makes me wonder how many more watches have similar problems. I suspect rather a lot of them!

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