

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

6
WAYS TO
SIMPLIFY
THE
HOLIDAYS

Page 2

TEACHING
CHILDREN
TO GIVE
THANKS

Page 2

KEVIN AND
SAM SORBO:
MAKING
FILMS THAT
BRING SOME
LIGHT INTO
THE WORLD

Page 3

A father of seven, the NFL athlete doesn't shy away from conversations about race, religion, or sanctity of life.

Benjamin Watson

ON FAITH, FAMILY, AND CULTURE

Page 4





The Watson family.



As a child, Benjamin Watson followed his father to games and training camps and developed his love of football early. His son Isaiah loves football just as much as Watson did when he was his age.



CATHERINE YANG

As the oldest of six siblings and an athlete from a young age, following in his father's footsteps, Benjamin Watson has always known that he was a role model. Even as a high school athlete, he knew younger kids looked up to him. Then, when he became a football player in college, the high schoolers looked up to him, too.

And as an NFL star, just by virtue of being in the public eye, you're a role model even if you aren't seeking it out. And of course, as a husband and father of seven, he takes seriously the importance of being a role model for his children.

"I like to talk about all the stuff you're not supposed to talk about," Watson said with a laugh. "Race, religion, fatherhood, sanctity of life, abortion. Basically all the stuff that around the water cooler they say not to talk about." "But what I've found is that in my sphere, in football, which is my workplace, these are all the things that people think about," Watson said. "Everybody has their work to do ... but we all live in the world and more specifically the United States, so we're all affected by certain issues of our day that come up: immigration, race, religion, taxes, freedom of speech—whatever comes up."

"These issues that many feel need to be hushed up are precisely the ones that affect us the most. Watson feels naturally inclined to engage with people holding contrasting opinions.

"I like to engage with people and see what they're thinking, and I think that there is a way to do that," Watson said. "This civil discourse is something that is lacking on a broad spectrum, but personally I think it's something very important, in order to communicate and in order to show respect to people that you don't agree with and don't agree with you."

One of his current projects is precisely

one of those topics that come with hugely emotional and divisive reactions.

"I'm working on a documentary called *Divided Hearts of America* and it's about the topic of abortion—something that I guess almost a lightning rod topic right now," Watson said. "But it's something that is near and dear to many Americans' hearts."

It's the first time Watson's done something like this, and filmmaking is completely new territory for him, but in light of several new and very different abortion-related laws being passed in various states this year, he wanted to dig deeper and "navigate the truth behind it."

"Both on the liberal and on the conservative side," Watson adds. He is personally pro-life, but he didn't want to only speak with people who had similar opinions. He's interviewed legislators sponsoring both pro- and anti-abortion laws and listened to their stories, and sought out advocates and people who have had abortions to tell their own stories. He speaks to people not just in politics but also in academia, medicine, and culture.

"I think when we hear the statistics about where people stand and why, they can be very polarizing. I want people to see that there's a lot of gray," he said. "These are real women, these are real children, these are real men that are going through these decisions."

"I want people to see the commonalities that we may have with someone who seems to be the polar opposite of us politically, and see their humanity and their reasons for the stance that they have. I want people to be challenged in their views no matter what they may be. And I want people to be encouraged that they don't stand alone, if they're in opposition to what seems to be the prevailing view, they're not alone," he said.

Using Your Voice

Watson knew early on that the mainstream culture wouldn't always align with his values. A lot of it—film and television—is entertainment, so he doesn't begrudge it for that, but he is cognizant that what you watch and

listen to does become a part of you.

"Whatever you allow to come in is going to affect you in some way," he said. "If you're not affirming truth and reaffirming those values on the side, don't be surprised if your consciousness and your thought process start to slip in the other direction."

"Everything's not going to align all the time, that's to be expected. But in the same token, if culture is speaking with one voice, it's important that we speak with another voice, to counteract it," he said.

Watson's first role model was his father, and his parents are the kind of models who passed on their values both by living them and through instruction.

"My dad always said give 100 percent in anything you do," Watson said. It was not only about success but effort. "Did you prepare yourself? Did you work as hard as you could unto the Lord and not for me? That was really big in our house."

Knowing right from wrong, having integrity, good character, service, leadership, charity, and loving people who may not be like you were all values he grew up with as a child, and now instills in his own children. But Watson reminds us that even if we didn't grow up with parents who modeled certain things, "it doesn't mean that can't be your story."

"I always tell people that didn't have a father growing up that just because they didn't, they can still change the course of history, change the course of generations and their family by the decisions that they make," Watson said.

Family

Family is a big topic for Watson.

"The importance of family is not just internally, within the walls of a house, but how our family affects culture, how family affects politics and how it affects this country," he said.

Manhood and fatherhood are things that come up when you've been in a locker room as Watson has for the last 16 years in the NFL.

"Around 50-something guys, and we're having a conversation about guys having their first children and everything. And they're scared like I

was having my first kid," Watson said.

"And I'm able to encourage them that you have what it takes to be a great dad. And not only do you have what it takes to be a great father and to love the mother, but we need you to do that. The mother needs you. The child needs you. Society needs you to step into that role. And if I can encourage them and equip them, that's something that I always want to do."

Family isn't something that just happens. You have to work for it, and that's why it's rewarding.

Watson is asked for advice on everything, from how many diapers to buy to dating. After he and his wife had their second child, she encouraged him to compile all of this into a book. Eventually it did happen, and now he's able to hand his teammates a copy of "The New Dad's Playbook," which covers the first OBGYN meeting to medical terms to preparing a loving environment for the baby to come into and everything in between.

"It's also kind of encouragement to men, because I feel like culturally we live in a time where manhood is sometimes degraded or underestimated, or men feel like it's not important, or they feel like they simply can't be the man that they're needed to be. So that's part of the book as well," he said.

Watson is always ready to give realistic and honest advice—perhaps guiding his children through every current event as a teachable moment has given him plenty of practice on that front as well. The Ferguson shooting, for instance, meant they talked about policing, killing, respect, race, and how you engage with people who don't look like you.

"We don't shy away from those things," he said. "We want them to have genuine respect for all types of humanity."

That includes having integrity, sticking to your word, understand-

“Faith is not something we carry beside us. There's a misconception that your faith is here, in this suitcase, and I'm carrying this with me into this situation, that situation.”

Benjamin Watson



ing their need for grace because at the end of the day they're human, and standing up for those who are mistreated.

"If you see someone being mistreated, being bullied or something, I expect you to stand up for them. I expect you to use your voice. We want them to grow up to be men and women who care about other people," he said. And above all, the Watsons want their children to grow their faith and make the decision themselves to follow God.

The Watsons have seven children—the two youngest are twins who arrived just this April.

"We have fun together. Right now they're at the point where they're involved in different things, my daughter does ballet, my son does flag football, my other daughter likes to run and do track. We're starting to get to that age where we're a bus service sometimes, taking kids from practice to practice," he said with a laugh, adding none of this would be possible without his very orderly wife who keeps everyone on schedule.

Faith Is Not a Suitcase

As an NFL athlete, life is full of ups and downs, tremendous highs and lows. "You win, everybody loves you. You lose, everybody says you're terrible," Watson said. "I can't ride the wave of everyone's opinions."

Watson is a self-proclaimed recovering perfectionist, and readily admits he's tied his football performance to his self-worth.

"Which is a very, very dangerous place to be in, in whatever field," Watson said. Luckily, he said, early in his career, he had a teammate tell him to leave work at work.

"You can't take the struggles, the disappointments, the trials, the victories or defeats from work, and bring it into your house, which is a safe place with people that love you for you, and take it out on them, whether it's good or bad," Watson said.

He gives the same advice in his book: maybe it means taking an extra 10 minutes sitting in the driveway and letting go of the day, but you have to learn how to do it. It won't be immediate; Watson

said it probably took two or three years to really learn how to do that, and his faith provided him an anchor with which to battle the highs and lows.

"Faith is not something we carry beside us," Watson said. "There's a misconception that your faith is here, in this suitcase, and I'm carrying this with me into this situation, that situation."

Faith is something inside you, inseparable, and for Watson that provides perspective. Football requires a narrow perspective, with a focus on improving day by day, but God has an eternal, wide perspective, he said.

Eternal Value

"We're simply living this short amount, but eternity is all of this," Watson said with a gesture. "That means, what are the things that I'm doing now that are going to have eternal value? Playing football, the act of football does not necessarily have eternal value as important as it is, but the things that we do while playing, the conversations that we have, the way we can touch people's lives, the ability to advocate for what's true and righteous and just inside our country and globally, these things are going to have eternal value."

Watson takes comfort in the fact that nothing catches God by surprise.

"When I got cut, it didn't catch him by surprise," he said with a laugh. "He already knew that was going to happen. I was surprised. I struggled with it. But he already knew that was going to happen, and so while as a human you go through those emotions, your faith allows you to follow in the fact that nothing catches him by surprise. And he's in control."

Football has always been tied to faith for Watson; it's his way of using his talents to honor God and have conversations about him. He and his teammates pray before every game, and a group of them will come together after every game, win or lose, to thank God for their health, the opportunity to play, and pray for those who were hurt as well.

"My faith is what's true, and my faith tells me what God really believes about me, when things are great, and when things aren't," he said.

(Above left) As an athlete and older sibling, Watson has always felt a responsibility to be a good role model.

(Above right) The two youngest members of the Watson family arrived this April.

(Left) Benjamin Watson, number 84 of the New England Patriots.

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF NTD



Pure Truth, Pure Kindness, and Pure Beauty

NTD holds 5th annual International
Figure Painting Competition

CATHERINE YANG

Pure truth, pure kindness, and pure beauty are the central theme of the 2019 NTD International Figure Painting Competition, whose ambitious mission is to revive traditional values. Now in its fifth year, competition organizers feel they are succeeding.

"The NTD competition is leading art to go back to traditional ways," said professor Zhang Kunlun, the head judge of the competition. "These contestants act like a bridge between viewers and tradition in reviving traditional art, restoring the glory of fine art."

"In today's society, persisting with traditional fine art is itself something remarkable," Zhang said.

Over the years, Zhang has corresponded with many artists participating in the competitions, and heard their stories of self-improvement and striving to better both their artistic skills and themselves. Through the competition, many artists say they have realized they have a responsibility to society and now work to create artwork that conveys traditional

values—like pure truth, kindness, and beauty.

Art is powerful, and a single image well composed has the ability to influence all who see it. Oil painting remains the most popular and influential painting method in Western art history, hence the art competition's focus on oil painting, and of the human figure in particular.

"Human beings are the center of society," Zhang said. "The human figure is also the most difficult to depict, and the best test of one's abilities."

This year, the competition received over 400 submissions, 103 of which were selected for an exhibition in New York City. Of the exhibited works, 47 of these paintings are for sale and an auction will be held on Nov. 30.

The finalist exhibition will be open to the public at the Salmagundi Art Club at 47 Fifth Ave. in Manhattan from Nov. 24 to Nov. 30. Winners of the competition will be awarded on Nov. 26, and auctioning of the works will take place on Nov. 30. For more information, please see OilPainting.ntdtv.com

Pictured here is a selection of the works that will appear at the exhibition.



1.
"Edelweiss" by
Wei-Ni Chen, 82
1/2 inches by
51 1/2 inches.

2.
"Plum Blossoms
in a Muddy
World" by
Xiangyang Sun,
42 inches by 61
inches.

3.
"Sujiatun's
Killing
Persecution"
by Yu-Jung Liu,
67 inches by 82
1/2 inches.

4.
"Leaving" by
Yu-Jung Liu,
46 inches by 36
1/2 inches.

5.
"Milena's
Friends" by
Clodoaldo
Martins, 31 1/2
inches by 23
1/2 inches.

6.
"Maria's Wish"
by Joseph Daily,
36 inches by 55
inches.

7.
"July 20 - The
Evil Persecution
Started" by
Yu-Hsua Lin, 82
1/2 inches by
51 1/2 inches.

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Winston Churchill (1874–1965), British statesman and prime minister, at Chartwell House, his home in Westerham, Kent, England, in 1939.

HISTORY

At Home With Winston Churchill

LORRAINE FERRIER

Most of us know Sir Winston Churchill's very public persona—a man of great charisma, achievements, and vision. Chartwell House, the Churchill family's country home, offers visitors a hint of how Churchill and his family lived behind closed doors.

Churchill lived at Chartwell

from 1922 until October 1964, a few months before he died on Jan. 24, 1965. Katherine Carter, project curator at Chartwell, shared in a phone interview more about Churchill's time at Chartwell.

THE EPOCH TIMES: How important was Chartwell to Churchill?
KATHERINE CARTER: First and foremost, Chartwell was his

family home. But in addition, it was the place from which he worked in terms of his writing—writing having always been his primary source of income. These were the writings that would ultimately feed into the reason he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. And this writing wasn't just books. It was correspondence, articles, and speeches, so

this real flow of words—some of which have become among the most quoted in the English language—they have their origins here at that time. For his first few years of living at Chartwell, Churchill had been chancellor of the exchequer, one of the highest offices in our country.

Continued on Page 16

Nov. 30 marks the 145th anniversary of Winston Churchill's birth.

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THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION

HISTORY

SHOWMAN AND KNIGHT: Emperor Maximilian I

‘The Last Knight’ at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

JANI ALLAN

NEW YORK—Those who remain enchanted by the notion of chivalry and the medieval rules of knighthood will find the new exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art a source of wonder.

“The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I” relies on the life of Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) to look at the deeply rooted significance of European armor at the onset of the Renaissance.

The ambitious North American exhibition on view at The Met coincides with the 500th anniversary of the emperor’s death, and includes 180 objects on loan from some 30 public and private collections.

It is both magnificent and profoundly, thoughtfully curated.

The exhibits chosen reveal the complicated character that was Maximilian: showman, narcissist, and knight. His projects speak to his ceaseless exploration for inventiveness and theatricality.

The exhibition is both magnificent and profoundly, thoughtfully curated.



will have none after his death, and will be forgotten with the tolling of the final knell. Therefore the money I extend on perpetuating my memory will not be lost,” a museum wall plaque quotes him as saying.

And each gallery, too, expands on his arena of messaging, that is, on his broadening of influence and personal legend by writing, commissioning art and armor, and his knightly pursuits—especially in tournaments.

Tournaments were a favorite activity. When, with his second wife, he moved to Innsbruck, where he had inherited a palace, he built a loggia from which he could look down at the main square where all the tournaments were held.

The tournament was not just for watching, though. It was the ideal setting for large crowds to see his skills as a horseman and a joust. He competed and was constantly injured.

Maximilian was constantly imagining different and more theatrical events. The Joust of War, developed by Maximilian, was hostile jousting with sharpened rather than blunted lance tips. The goal here was to splinter the lance or throw the other knights off their mounts.

The knights wore ferocious armor and carried gold-tipped lances.

Luck by Design

Similarly, suits of armor were constantly commissioned and constantly innovated on. As he advised his offspring, luck is the residue of design.

Three breastplates in the collection have spring-loaded mechanisms designed to eject the shield, dispersing it into the air like fireworks. Maximilian collaborated with, but micromanaged, clockmakers and goldsmiths in Brussels. There is even a helmet which, when needed as a face defense, has shutters that could be activated.

The ingenuity is spectacular. For Maximilian, arms and armor were not only functional. His aim was to have an audience experience the theater of battle.

There are suits of armor covered in gold, suits of armor for teenagers, and suits of armor that replicate cloth and have skirts like a fashion statement of the day. There are suits of armor with telescoping legs and arms, allowing for intricate movement.

There is a suit of sensational horse armor, embossed, stippled, and engraved with pomegran-

An Extravagant but Noble Knight
In the first gallery is the suit of armor that the young Maximilian commissioned in Augsburg, Germany. He was 18. This was his first foray into battle. He was to marry the princess Mary of Burgundy, and he intended to defend his future wife’s inheritance from an attack by Louis XI.

Maximilian had no troops or money. But the suit of armor he commissioned conveyed a different message. The suit is intricate and tiny. It is like a piece of jewelry. Indeed, that is what it was—jewelry for battle. The gold edging, the exquisite pierced work, and the ribs and fluting indicate a man who put no restrictions on what he would pay for fine workmanship and detail.

Receipts for the armor have been preserved. Today, this suit would cost tens of millions—enough to go some way toward buying a New York townhouse.

The first battle of Guinegate took place on Aug. 7, 1479. The French troops of King Louis XI were defeated by the Burgundians led by Maximilian.

Maximilian fought on foot. Traditionally, he would have fought mounted, but along with 200 of his nobles, he joined the infantry. Although sometimes lesser-ranking nobles were known to fight on foot, the fact that the archduke was doing so was remarkable. His act of bravery served as a role model for the local nobility and his troops.

The Theater of Battle
Each gallery displays the various ways in which Maximilian ensured that his legacy would be lasting.

“He who makes no memory of himself during his lifetime



ates. Made of silver foil and gold, the armor must have created a vision of the horse that literally dazzled. Maximilian gifted it to Henry VIII.

Armor for Maximilian was a way of retelling stories of heroic deeds. It was armor as commemoration. It was important that people knew what he had done.

Leaving a Lesson After Death

It is said that Maximilian was morbidly depressed. From 1514, he traveled everywhere with his coffin. For penitential reasons, he gave very specific instructions for the treatment of his body after his death. He wanted his hair to be cut off and his teeth knocked out. His body was to be whipped, covered with lime and ash, wrapped in linen, and “publicly displayed to show the perishableness of earthly glory.”

This is of deep interest because during his lifetime, Maximilian’s unparalleled passion for the trappings and ideals of knighthood served his worldly ambitions and imaginative stratagems to forge a lasting legacy.

For him, whether in this life or when considering the next, ordinary effort would yield only ordinary results.

Jani Allan is a South African journalist, columnist, writer, and broadcaster.



1. Maximilian I in imperial regalia, after 1508, by Bernhard Strigel. Oil on wood. Tyrolean State Museum, on long-term loan from a private collection (Gem 136).

2. Field armor of Maximilian I, 1480, by Lorenz Helmschmid of Augsburg. Steel, copper alloy, and leather. As mounted: 70 5/8 inches tall. Sallet: Private Collection, New York; all other elements of the armor: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (A60).

3. Inventive armor with telescoping arms, for the Joust of War of Maximilian I. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury.

4. Ceremonial armor of Charles V, circa 1512–14. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (A 109).

5. Foot combat armor of Maximilian I, before 1508. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Imperial Armoury (B 71).

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CHARLES THOMAS/NATIONAL TRUST

(Above) Sir Winston Churchill wearing his robes as chancellor of the exchequer, 1925, by John Singer Sargent. Charcoal drawing on paper.

(Top) The terraced garden at Chartwell. The house sits proudly above the gardens. Churchill's home from 1922 where he helped to dig the lakes, one of which is pictured in the foreground.



JAMES DOBSON/NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

Sir Winston Churchill's study in Chartwell House is one of the oldest parts of the house, with the roof timbers dating back to the early 16th century. In this room, Churchill would stand and dictate his prose to one of his many secretaries.



CHRIS LACEY/NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

Winston Churchill's bedroom at Chartwell House. Churchill produced most of his work late at night and in the early morning hours. Staff would sometimes stay at one of the estate guest houses and watch for when he turned on his bedroom light. That was when their work began.



STEPHEN ROBSON/NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

The Churchill children planned the Golden Rose Walk at Chartwell as a gift to celebrate their parents' golden wedding anniversary in 1958.

HISTORY

At Home With Winston Churchill

Continued from Page 13

Then the change in government resulting from the election saw him lose that office. It would certainly have been difficult for him to have this sudden lack of influence after decades of having a great deal of it. A number of people thought, "Well, that's it. Churchill is finished."

During his political wilderness years from 1929, Churchill was voicing a number of opinions which weren't in line with the prevailing consensus at the time. By the time that his attention turned toward Nazi Germany, there were a lot of people who were no longer listening to him. But through the 1930s, Churchill was exposed to more and more information that demonstrated that Germany was preparing for war.

Chartwell had a nickname at the time as "the most important country house in Europe." It was where people who had the information around Germany's preparing for war could come to see Churchill because it would be far too risky for them to be meeting him in London, where it would be very possible they could be seen and followed. Chartwell almost became like a Kent-based branch of the foreign office in terms of this information that was reaching him here. Chartwell became the base from which he began to create this narrative against Nazi Germany and against appeasement in the later 1930s, so it was particularly vital in terms of that role of preparing him for war.

He had very few allies in Westminster at that point in time. That would've been especially frustrating for him because he had the evidence: He had the statistics around German rearmament demonstrating that the

terms of the Treaty of Versailles were being flouted, and yet he was just being ignored for most of that decade.

There's a quote of Churchill's that I love, as he reflects on being appointed prime minister on May 10, 1940, which is, "I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and this trial." Those years in the wilderness at Chartwell were particularly immediate in preparing for him for that trial.

There was, of course, the lighter element of Chartwell life. We've got to remember that this was where he was spending time with his family, entertaining close friends, painting beautiful views of the garden, and building a brick wall. Those elements really were the antidote to the darker side of what he was having to deal with, what he was being made aware of, and the fight that he was going to have to have in Westminster.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What propelled him through those times?
MS. CARTER: I think for Churchill, he had such a sense of his own destiny. In 1891, when he was 16 years old at Harrow, one of his school friends was asking him what he foresaw for his future. Churchill had the most astonishingly prophetic reply. He said: "Great upheavals, terrible struggles, and wars such as one cannot imagine; and I tell you London will be in danger. ... I shall be very prominent in the defense of London. ... I shall be in command of the defenses of London and I shall save London and England from disaster."

You get this feeling that he's absolutely sure of the fact that he is destined to have a key role in leading our country at some point in the future.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Please tell us about Churchill's marriage and his children.

MS. CARTER: Churchill and Clementine's marriage was a very long and happy one. I think that they were utterly devoted to each other. Mary, the Churchill's youngest daughter, once said of her mother that Churchill came first, second, and third.

For Clementine, being the wife of Winston Churchill was unto itself a hugely important role and particularly because Churchill's focus was always outward: It was always toward Westminster, or his publisher, or whoever he was liaising with. Whereas the running of the house itself, which was so vital for Churchill's well-being, came down to her. She did a phenomenal job with looking after this very expensive, high-maintenance house and home.

I think Churchill wanted to be a very different father from his own. He famously had a comparatively poor relationship with his father. His father would write to him at boarding school calling him a "wastrel" and saying that "he would never amount to anything in life." That had a real impact on Churchill.

When Churchill was made chancellor of the exchequer, his first response was that he had his father's robes from that role and how he would now wear them. For Churchill, there was always this sense of walking in his father's footsteps but having never been able to truly gain his approval. When Churchill came to raise his own children, there's a much warmer dynamic between them and a real care and affection. I would say.

When the Churchills' golden wedding anniversary was looming, Randolph, the Churchills' only son, thought that a wonder-

ful gift from the children would be to give them an avenue of golden roses, which to this day is still in the garden here at Chartwell. Because the anniversary fell in September, which isn't an optimal time for roses to be in bloom, the gift on the day was a wonderful book of artists' illustrations, drawings, and paintings of golden roses that the children had commissioned. The following summer was when the avenue in the garden itself came into bloom.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Can you tell us a little about Churchill's relationships with people?

MS. CARTER: Churchill had a remarkable ability to connect with people, and that's something that we certainly see during his visits to bomb sites during the blitz—that ability to connect with people across all areas of society. Of course, being the grandson of a duke, spending a great deal of time at Blenheim Palace growing up, there was a certain world into which he was born. But I think his charisma and his sense of humor and his phenomenal ability with words just meant that he could connect with people.

The fact that Churchill allowed a Romany widow to live on Chartwell land, after the local council evicted her, is demonstrative of his kindness. I think that's a trait of his that doesn't get as much focus. Of course, Churchill is famous for his leadership, courage, and oratory, but he was also a very kind and caring person as well.

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

To find out more about Chartwell House, visit www.NationalTrust.org.uk/Chartwell

“**For Clementine, being the wife of Winston Churchill was unto itself a hugely important role.**

Katherine Carter, project curator

Keeping Chartwell House

In 1946, a group of admirers purchased Chartwell House after they heard that the Churchills found the upkeep expensive. Carter said they felt "it would be a travesty for this man, who in their eyes had saved Western civilization from tyranny, and yet was at risk of losing the home that he loved so much." They passed the house to the stewardship of the National Trust with the proviso that the Churchills could live there as long as they pleased.

(L-R) John Strange Spencer-Churchill, his mother Lady Randolph, and Winston Churchill, the future British prime minister.

HISTORY

Mothers and Sons: Jennie Churchill and Winston Churchill

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle

JEFF MINICK

On battlefields around the world soldiers have cried out for their mothers as they lay dying. And memorably, Abraham Lincoln once said, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." In "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle: Mothers and Sons," we will look at a number of famous men strongly influenced by their mothers. Not all these women were angels, but their love, disposition, and sense of principle left an indelible stamp on their sons.

American-born Jennie Jerome Churchill and her British husband Lord Randolph would never qualify for any Best Parent of the Year award.

Though Winston adored his father, Lord Randolph rarely displayed any affection for Winston, considering him lazy and dimwitted. The distance between father and son was enormous. In "Churchill: Walking With Destiny," biographer Andrew Roberts reports that after a family dinner in the 1930s, Winston said to his own son, "We have this evening had a longer period of con-



GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

Churchill turned the rearing of her two sons—Winston had a younger brother, Jack—over to nannies, including Winston's favorite, Elizabeth Everest.

It was Miss Everest, whom Winston called "Woom," who showered her young charge with love, cared for him in his illnesses, and often provided him comfort and counsel. Other, Churchill later recalled, "My nurse was my confidante. It was to her I poured out my many troubles."

Later, after her death, he wrote, "She had been my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the twenty years I had lived." When she was dying, he sat with her and held her hand until she passed. He attended her funeral, erected a tombstone in her memory, and paid for the care of her grave for as long as he lived.

In contrast, Winston wrote in his autobiography "My Early Life" of his mother "She shone for me like the Evening Star. I loved her dearly—but at a distance."

A Maternal Sea Change

All that changed in 1895, when Lord Randolph died. In his absence, the relationship between Jennie and her 21-year-old son took a 180-degree turn. In "The Last Lion: Visions of Glory," historian William Manchester conjectures that "... she would slowly transfer her devotion to her brilliant, eccentric son. Her passion would run deep and strong, and it would be of immeasurable benefit to him, though it could never be mistaken for maternal love."

Because of her many social connections—she was known for her wit and charm, had earned a minor reputation as a writer, attended parties and balls, and had also taken a series of lovers—Jennie was able time and again to use her influence and help Winston attain those successes he so furiously sought.

This new bond between mother and son was particularly strong during the years 1895 to 1900. After Winston's graduation from Sandhurst, Britain's West Point, Jennie pulled some strings and helped win him a coveted spot in the Fourth Hussars. A writer herself, she used her contacts in the world of print and arranged for Winston to pen dispatches about the fighting he saw in India for the Daily Telegraph. In doing so, Jennie launched him on a writing career that would provide him with economic sustenance for the rest of his life and would eventually win him the Nobel Prize in Literature.

She acted as both agent and publicist for his first book, "The Story of the Malakand Field Force," again using her

many acquaintances in publishing and politics. She later appealed to the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, for Winston's transfer from India to the Sudan, where he would participate in one of the British Army's last cavalry charges and would write another book, "The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan." On his return from these and other adventures, she worked tirelessly to put him in touch with politicians, hoping to boost him into Parliament.

On winning election to Parliament, Winston wrote a note to Jennie stating, "I could never have earned it if you had not transmitted the wit and energy which are necessary."

'A Great Believer in Your Star'

Jennie demonstrated that wit and energy through the letters of encouragement she sent to her son. She supplied him with the books he requested while in India. She sent notes filled with advice and admonitions. In late 1915, after Churchill's idea of attacking Germany through the Dardanelles had failed and he was serving on the Western Front, Jennie wrote to him, "I am a great believer in your star."

Even in practical matters she proved invaluable. She gave assistance in furnishing his rooms, finding a secretary, and assisting personally with his early political campaigns.

Of this period in his life, Winston later said, "My mother was always at hand to help and advise, but I was now in my twenty-first year and she never sought to exercise parental control. Indeed, she soon became an ardent ally, furthering my plans and guarding my interests with all her influence and boundless energy. She was still at forty young, beautiful and fascinating. We worked together on even terms, more like brother and sister than mother and son."

When Jennie Jerome Churchill died in 1921, her son arrived at her bedside too late to say goodbye to the woman who had meant so much to him in his youth and had promoted his ambitions. After all the ceremonies, the man who went on to become the greatest of England's prime ministers stood alone beside his mother's grave, wept, and dropped a spray of roses onto the coffin.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

FILM REVIEW

A Decent Race-Against-Time **Cop Thriller**

IAN KANE

Whenever I hear of a new cop feature film, I maintain a sense of cautious optimism. The standard “bad cop” trope has really been done to death, and the real-life folks in law enforcement have a tough enough time serving and protecting the public without negative publicity broadcast about them in our country’s theaters.

Fortunately, the new cop thriller “Line of Duty” doesn’t necessarily follow this hackneyed formula, but it does fall into another familiar category—that of the disgraced cop who has to redeem himself.

Screenwriter Jeremy Drysdale’s script has a distinctly 1980s vibe to it, harkening back to fluffy cop dramas such as “Lethal Weapon” and “Red Heat,” and combined with Steven C. Miller’s loud and raucous direction, proudly wears its retro trappings on its sleeve.

Aaron Eckhart (“The Dark Knight,” “The Core”) is Officer Frank Penny, a cop with a murky past who gets caught up in circumstances that verge on the fringes of ridiculousness. In the film’s first act, he becomes involved in the chase-in-progress of a male suspect and ends up cornering the man in a dead-end alleyway. (We’ve never seen that before.) The suspect does an almost perfunctory pause while drawing a pistol out of his waistband and turns to fire on Penny, who of course drops him with his own gun.

Officer Penny’s superior, Chief Volk (Giancarlo Esposito), isn’t too happy about the suspect’s death: The man was the only lead in the disappearance of his daughter. Hence, Penny catches hell and his career is thrown into jeopardy. The only way to redeem himself is to find out where the chief’s daughter is and rescue her from

‘Line of Duty’ is hampered by a boggy script.

‘Line of Duty’

Director
Steven C. Miller

Starring
Dina Meyer, Aaron Eckhart, Giancarlo Esposito

Running Time
1 hour, 38 minutes

Rated
R

Release Date
Nov. 15, 2019

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit [DreamFlightEnt.com](#)



Aaron Eckhart in “Line of Duty.”

drowning in a box that is gradually filling up with water.

The main problem is that Penny’s been ordered to take a sudden leave of absence due to the shooting mishap, something that makes his effort to solve the case a rogue affair. Going rogue, of course, means disobeying orders from on high in his desperate bid to find the young girl.

Along the way, he meets up with a shrewd reporter named Ava Brooks (Courtney Eaton, “Perfect,” “Gods of Egypt”), who has a penchant for live-streaming her news reports.

The film does feature some of the silly back-and-forth dialogue that we’ve all witnessed in retro cop dramas from the ‘80s and ‘90s, mainly in the form of wisecracks that Officer Penny and reporter Brooks cast at one another. There’s nothing tongue-in-cheek here. It’s all handled pretty straight-nosed, as opposed to being clever or strewn with moments of irony.

Saggy Script but Great Action Film

I feel for both Eckhart and Eaton, both capable actors, who try to make the best out of a rather saggy, boilerplate script. Penny’s shady past is served up right on time when Brooks discovers that he accidentally caused the death of a young person. From there, she becomes increasingly suspicious of him since he also killed the suspect in the alleyway. Is this a pattern?—she wonders.

At various junctures, Brooks seems to be unrealistically shoe-horned into the half-baked storyline. It’s as Drysdale wanted to make a buddy-cop film but tried to be self-consciously different because he wanted the strong female trope, but without her being a cop. As a cop, she would have been more complicit in Penny’s sketchy, morally tenuous actions.

Ben McKenzie (“Gotham” TV series) stars as main bad guy

Dean Keller and does what he can with his cheesy lines; his character is pretty mono-dimensional.

Esposito rises to the occasion and manages to convey a frantic father trying to get to the bottom of who kidnapped his daughter and why they did so.

To the film’s credit, Miller is able to flex his directorial muscles with tense, adrenaline-pumping action scenes. You can tell that this is the same man who brought us noisily fun actioners such as 2017’s “First Kill” and 2016’s “Marauders.”

In the end, there’s not a whole lot to “Line of Duty,” which is hampered by a boggy script that has all of the directorial subtlety of a jackhammer. The acting is decent and there are a few laughs to be had with some of the corny one-liners, so the film does perform decently as a straight-ahead cop thriller. I just wish that it would have been a little more clever and nuanced.

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**Speed comparison based on 1.5 Mbps DSL.