

WEEK 31, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES  
ARTS &  
CULTURE

BOSS & CO.



Boss & Co.,  
*'Makers of Best Guns Only'...4*

# What Our Readers Say:

“It’s the only sane newspaper amidst all this insanity.”  
STAN K., PASTOR

“It’s bringing morality back to newspapers.”  
LISSA T., BUSINESS OWNER

“It’s the only paper that I know of right now that actually gives you the honest, old fashioned journalism.”  
DRUE L., BUSINESS OWNER

“You’re presenting the facts and letting the reader decide.”  
TERRI B., BUSINESS OWNER

“Everything I read in it is fair and balanced, compared to other newspapers.”  
JUNE V., RETIRED BANKER



(Left) An illustration of a man telling a story to youngsters, 1850, by Johannot. Published in Magasin Pittoresque, Paris.

(Right) Northern soldiers from the Army of the Potomac take a respite from battle to write letters and mend clothing during the American Civil War, early 1860s.



financially, I always regarded America as a land of opportunity that rewards hard work and initiative. I can remind my grandchildren—their parents long ago learned these lessons—that if we cast aside free enterprise, if we instead turn, as some demand, toward socialism, the independence and opportunities found in entrepreneurship may well be stolen from them.

Age may not confer wisdom, but it always endows us with experience, stories, and beliefs—a library of philosophy and personal history that we can share with the young and with others around us. Protesters, many of them ignorant of what they are doing, may topple or deface statues, but

we who are old can act as living statues. What we have witnessed in our lives, when handed over to succeeding generations, can act as a bulwark for truth.

By sharing our past in this way, we help preserve our republic and safeguard the future of those generations walking in our footsteps.

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](http://JeffMinick.com) to follow his blog.

## REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

# Living Statues: Old People, Culture, and Heritage

## Reflections and Recollections

JEFF MINICK

In my later elementary school years, my family spent a week every summer in New Castle, Pennsylvania, visiting relatives. In the evenings, while my siblings played with their cousins, my Great-Uncle John and I often sat in the backyard of my grandparents’ house at a picnic table beneath a canopy, where he, recognizing my interest in history, filled me with stories of my ancestors from the 19th century: farmers for the most part, abolitionists who helped run the Underground Railroad, others who fought for Lincoln’s army in the Civil War, and tales from his own boyhood.

Several times, Uncle John read to me family letters from the Civil War era. A Minick girl who had married a Bland visited her wounded husband in Washington, D.C., and saw Abraham Lincoln walking through the streets; a Union soldier wrote in guarded terms of the fighting he’d seen; others reported the daily news from their farms and small towns.

Uncle John left me those letters in his will, a kind and thoughtful gesture given that we had not visited in years.

Though much of my knowledge of the past derives from my education and reading—I majored in history in college and studied medieval history for two years in graduate school before deciding a Ph.D. was not for me—many docents like Uncle John added to my memory bank of history.

There were my father’s stories of his service in the infantry in Italy during World War II; the writer Lewis Green, now also deceased, told me of his hardscrabble upbringing in the mountains of Western North Carolina, the combat he saw in Korea, and his troubles with the law on his return home; there was the family lore shared with me by my good friend Allen from Boonville, North Carolina. These and others painted the past in vivid colors, populating it with the tales of flesh-and-blood characters and their participation in the tangled story of our country.

### Dr. Burrows

First and foremost of all these storytellers was my beloved history teacher at Guilford College, Dr. Edward Flud Burrows. Ed grew up on a large farm in South Carolina, working, like other family members, in the fields alongside nearly 100 of their tenant farmers. (The last I heard, one of Ed’s relatives who owned the land had expanded the acreage, and because of modern technology now operates with just two employees.) From there, Ed attended Washington and Lee University, earned his doctorate in American history from the University of Wisconsin, and began teaching history at Guilford long before I showed up.

World War II interrupted Ed’s education. Early in the war, he made headlines across South Carolina after registering as a conscientious objector, just one of two in the state. He was sent to work on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and then, wishing to make a stronger protest, left that post and was sentenced to time in a Florida prison for refusing to carry a draft card.

Following the war, Ed earned his doctorate and joined the staff at Guilford in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he participated in the budding civil rights movement and was active in promoting integration.

Though we differed politically—I grew more and more conservative, and Ed remained a liberal—we remained close friends until his death. Through his many stories, I learned much about the South of the 1920s and 1930s, about life in prison, about his religious faith, and how that had influenced so many of his decisions.

In addition, I learned even more about his story when Ed offered to buy me my first computer if I would edit and put his autobiography, “Flud: One Southerner’s Story,” onto floppy discs. Though I long ago got rid of the computer, “Flud” remains on my bookshelf.

Once when Ed was teaching me how to bake corn bread in an iron skillet, he looked at me and said, “You and I are so different politically. How is it we’re still friends?”

I shrugged and blurted out the first thought that came to mind. “Maybe because we can laugh together?”

He smiled, and then took another peek inside the oven to check on the corn bread.



MARZOLINO/SHUTTERSTOCK

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

### Follow Their Example

Today, Americans in different political camps share little laughter, and I often wonder what the gentle-natured Ed would think of the cancel culture movement, the destruction in some of our cities, and the attempts to drastically change or eradicate completely the story of our American past and the traditions of our culture.

One way we can thwart these efforts is to follow the examples of the people I mentioned above. We can offer others the gifts my guides bestowed on me: their stories and family histories, many of which underscored the meaning of the American Dream. By sharing our stories about the past with others, we help keep that Dream alive.

In my case—in eight months I will, God willing, turn 70 years old—I must continue to relate to my children and children’s children the stories of my life. Like those who helped shape me, I can hand over the lessons I’ve learned and what I have seen so that they can absorb these things, make some of them their own, and pass them on to future generations.

### Become Living Statues

I can tell them, for instance, of the magic of my Boonville childhood, of “roll-the-bat” played in the backyard, of firefly nights, of plays we put on for the neighbors, and of those Saturday afternoons in winter when Allen, my brother Doug, and I fought our “little man” wars with toy soldiers in the basement. I can tell them of the boy who in those years became enamored with history and heroes, and who first found those heroes in the series “The Childhood of Famous Americans,” men and women whose virtues he wished to emulate.

I can tell them what it was like to enter the U.S. Military Academy at the height of the Vietnam War, of the training I received there, the preparation for combat in a jungle, and why I resigned—honorably, I might add—in the middle of my sophomore year. I can tell them of the chaos of the early 1970s, the protests I saw, the decaying effects of drugs on American society, the rise of feminism, the implementation of abortion, the beginning of the shift from our pride in America to the shame some feel these days.

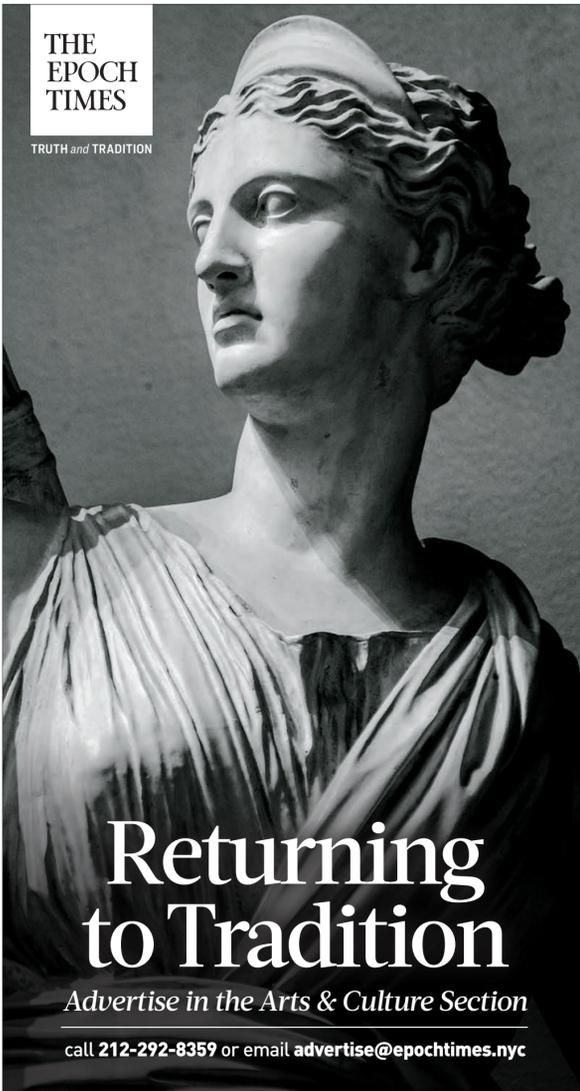
I can tell them of my varied work life, how and why I wanted to be my own boss, the joys of that freedom along with its tremendous stresses, the years of debt operating a bed-and-breakfast and several bookstores, and the years of teaching that followed. Whether I was up or down

# THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION



# Returning to Tradition

Advertise in the Arts & Culture Section

call 212-292-8359 or email [advertise@epochtimes.ny](mailto:advertise@epochtimes.ny)

# How to Share The Epoch Times With Your Friends and Family



**As an Epoch VIP,** you’re passionate about the traditional journalism and in-depth reporting you get in The Epoch Times. You’ve even sent us ideas on how to spread the word. Here are some of the best suggestions from readers like you!

**Request FREE Newspapers to Be Sent to Your Friends\*** Submit the names and shipping addresses of your friends. You can request FREE newspapers for as many friends as you want. The Epoch Times will send the newspapers on your behalf for free.

**Newspaper Sharing** Simply pass your copy of The Epoch Times, or a section of it, to someone

else after you’ve read it. Consider neighbors, friends, family, relatives, co-workers, teachers, golf buddies, and your boss.

**Newspaper Placement** Place a copy of The Epoch Times at places where people typically wait such as doctors’ offices, dentists’ offices, hotel lobbies, airline terminals, barbershops, and beauty salons. Also consider placing copies at community centers, company cafeterias, break rooms, coffee shops, gyms, churches, automobile dealerships, or in your car. Visit [EpochShop.com](http://EpochShop.com).

**Bumper Stickers** Put a bumper sticker on your car plus ask friends and family to put stickers on their cars as well. Visit [EpochShop.com](http://EpochShop.com).

**Getting the Word Out** Word-of-mouth is always a great way

to spread the news about The Epoch Times. Talk it up at your local library, meetings, birthday parties, special events, and with friends and family over the holidays.

**Using Email and Social Media** Use technology to share stories from The Epoch Times. Forward our daily email MORNING BRIEF to friends and family. Share postings from our Facebook site and YouTube channel. Simply copy the URL and then send it with a brief note such as: “Here’s a story I thought you’d like to read.”

**Displaying Your Poster** The Epoch Times SPYGATE poster has become legendary—so consider posting it on a wall at your home or office. When friends or business associates ask, explain what the poster is about and how they can get their own copy.

**Not a subscriber yet?** Visit [ReadEpoch.com](http://ReadEpoch.com) to learn more

# THE EPOCH TIMES

\* (1) Please log into your account at [TheEpochTimes.com](http://TheEpochTimes.com) (2) Click your name to manage your account (3) Click “Request Free Papers” on the left menu bar and follow steps

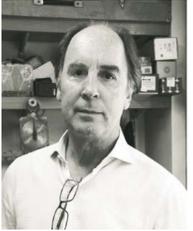
ALL PHOTOS BY BOSS &amp; CO.



Boss &amp; Co. has been making "Best Guns Only" with flair, elegance, and fine craftsmanship for over 200 years.

## CRAFTSMANSHIP

# Boss & Co., 'Makers of Best Guns Only'



American Arthur Demoulas, the owner of Boss &amp; Co.

## LORRAINE FERRIER

If beauty were a gun it would be a Boss & Co.

London gun-maker Boss & Co. is firmly rooted in the golden age of London gun-making with its rich history of innovation and traditional, hand-skilled fine craftsmanship passed from generation to generation. And it's this heritage that Boss & Co. keenly upholds to this day.

Around 1773, William Boss became an apprentice to gun- and pistol-maker Thomas Ketland in Birmingham, north-east England. At that time, Birmingham was the "foremost arms producer in the world," according to a Birmingham commemorative plaque in the city's gun quarter.

Later, Boss moved to London to train at the workshop of one of the preeminent London gun-makers, Joseph Manton. Manton was renowned for training esteemed gun-makers, many of whom are known by name today, such as James Purdey and Charles Lancaster to name a couple.

In Manton's workshop, Boss took on his three sons as apprentices, although he died halfway through his youngest son Thomas's apprenticeship. Perhaps testimony to Thomas's talent, Manton allowed the youngster to remain at his workshop to finish his apprenticeship.

Thomas Boss went on to found Boss & Co. in 1812. In the mid-1800s, Boss headquartered the company in the exclusive central-London neighborhood of St. James's, close to the Gentlemen's Clubs of the gentry where Boss & Co.'s customers frequented.

Over time, the company became renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship. As testimony to its success, Boss & Co. was invited to exhibit its guns at "The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations" in 1851, the international

fair organized by Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's husband) and civil servant Henry Cole.

The company stayed within the family after Thomas Boss's death in 1857 and was run by the Pattison brothers, Boss's nephews, who had apprenticed with him.

After the Pattison brothers died, gun-maker John Robertson led the company (from 1891 to 1917), a period that many deem as the most innovative period in Boss & Co. history.

Robertson is held in high esteem to this day for three particular patented innovations: He refined the Over and Under gun design (where one barrel is on top of the other) to become more lightweight and elegant; he developed a single-trigger gun, allowing both barrels to be fired one after the other with one trigger pull; and he invented a simple streamlined ejector to remove spent cartridges.

**The 'Mystique' of Boss & Co. Today** Since 2015, successful American businessman Arthur Demoulas has owned Boss & Co. The prospect of owning the historic gun-making company appealed to him more than American gun companies did.

"The likes of Winchester and Colt have achieved wonderful things in their long histories, but they're a very different proposition to the heritage-laden, exclusive world of Boss & Co. ...

"Boss has never been about mass production; it has remained true to traditional handcrafted techniques, delivering elegant and innovative guns that have been, and continue to be, the best in the world. It has a mystique and a personal connection that bigger gun-makers would struggle to recreate, and that's what really drew me here," he wrote in an email.

As an avid gun enthusiast, Demoulas bought his first pair of Boss & Co. guns, 1920s Over and Under guns, in the early 1990s. "The first time I set eyes on them,

they were in their original presentation case, and I was immediately struck by their elegance: The ribless design, the wonderful shape of the barrel, [and] the masterful engraving. You can't help but be awestruck by the craftsmanship."

For a gun novice, it would be easy to mistake such fine-gun craftsmanship as a work of art to be confined to the display cabinet, but all Boss & Co. guns are tools designed to be shot.

Demoulas mainly shoots partridge, pheasant, and grouse on private estates (where the game is managed) in upstate New York, Georgia, and also in Scotland.

Demoulas recalls the first time he shot a Boss & Co. gun: "It felt like I was holding a magic wand. It was so beautifully balanced, like an extension of my body."

But a Boss & Co. gun is a rare find out on a shoot. In the more than 30 years that Demoulas has been on numerous shoots, he's only ever seen one other set of Boss & Co. guns. "These days, we're shooting with our customers, so we do have the privilege of seeing more Boss & Co. guns put to good use regularly. But to see one 'in the wild,' so to speak, is an occasion in itself," he said.

**A Guardian for Traditional Gun-Making**

For Demoulas, Boss & Co. is far from just a business. "I see my role in its simplest terms: as the trustee and/or custodian of the company, securing as bright a future for Boss & Co. as I possibly can," he said.

For Boss & Co. that means continuing to make "a handmade, hand-finished gun, not a machine-made gun," Demoulas said. And continuing to commit to building "best guns only."

Whereas many gun-makers have diversified into making second-grade guns, fashion, and accessories, Boss & Co. won't do that, Demoulas said.

Honoring the past is important for the company. Demoulas cites an early 1900s

Boss & Co. brochure still relevant to how the company runs the business:

"We would say from the outset that we make only one grade of gun and have never placed a second quality make upon the market. This policy has enabled us to retain the services of the finest workmen in London, and to give them continuous employment. The advantages attending the production of best work only are manifold. There is no opportunity for the work of inferior men to be utilized in the economy of the workshop, which is frequently the case when more than one class of weapon is produced.

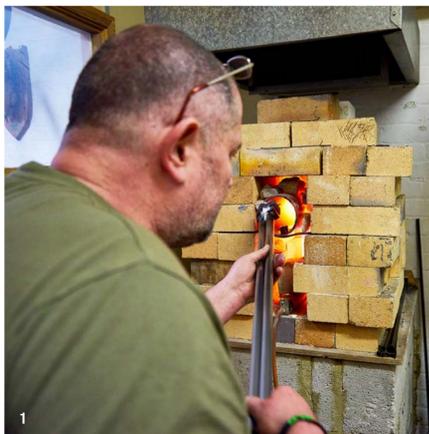
"The owner of a Boss & Co. gun has the satisfaction of knowing that he has the best gun that money can buy, and that no one has a better. The Boss & Co. gun has, therefore, always a standard value whether new or second hand. Our output is strictly limited according to the amount of first class labor available."

A Boss & Co. gun can take two and a half to three and a half years to make, and sometimes longer. In its 208-year history, Boss & Co. has produced over 10,000 guns, with each taking over a thousand hours to make.

To ensure that "first class labor" is in the workshop, Boss & Co. runs a five-year apprenticeship program. These apprentices work alongside the seasoned gun-makers. But Demoulas is adamant that the gun-makers never stop learning. "They are always perfecting their art as a barrel maker, an actioner, a stocker, an engraver, or a finisher ... even after almost 40 years in some cases."

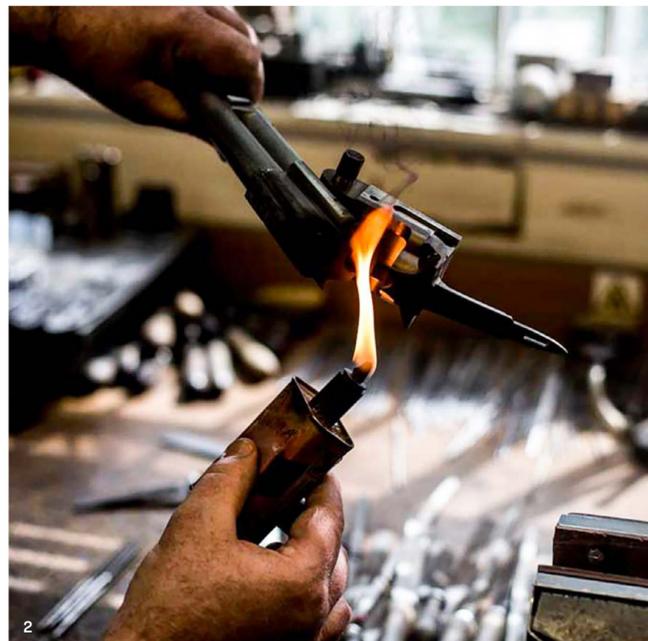
"The art of gun-making is being lost continually and quickly, but it stands at the heart of what we do and we do all that we can to maintain it."

To find out more about Boss & Co., visit [BossGuns.com](http://BossGuns.com)



**1. BARREL MAKER.** Concentric steel tubes are braised together to create each individual barrel set to the customer's own specification, then meticulously filed and shaped before soldering on the ribs and wings.

**2. ACTIONER.** Each individual shape is "filed up" after sculpting with a hammer and chisel, and uniquely "dropping the barrels" into the action rather than "hooking the barrels" in. Attention to detail is given to all the small internal parts, including Boss's own single trigger.



**3. STOCKER.** The woodwork is beautifully crafted and fitted to the metalwork using original methods and all shaped by hand to the desired size and measurements. Precise chequering of the stock is carried out by the craftsman's own handmade tools.

**4. ENGRAVER.** The vast majority of Boss & Co. guns are engraved with the Boss best rose & scroll engraving. The gun engraving has slowly diversified, allowing the customer and engraver to create a custom design as an alternative.

**5. FINISHER.** The wood-to-metal finish is conscientiously examined, and the best London oil finish is applied to the woodwork by hand. The mechanical side of the gun is checked over, regulated, and extensively test shot.

## ARTIST PROFILE

# Hard Work Is the Instrument of Mastery

Violin virtuoso Charlie Siem scales new heights in his music during quarantine

J.H. WHITE

"Life is a journey, not a destination."  
"[That platitude] can be a copout, avoiding the effort you need to pull yourself out of bad moments," violin virtuoso Charlie Siem told me. "You can be very mediocre if you're too easy on yourself."

The 34-year-old British violinist exemplifies the opposite of mediocrity. As a young child, Siem's mother often played Beethoven's Violin Concerto on cassette tapes. The simple melodies so entranced the 3-year-old that he picked up the violin, an instrument nearly his own size. Twelve years later at age 15, Siem made his professional debut. For almost 20 years now, he's played with the world's finest orchestras and conductors, from the London Symphony to the Czech National Symphony, and from Charles Dutoit to Sir Roger Norrington, among many others.

An onlooker could describe Siem's disciplined life and practice regimen as a grind—a life full of sacrifices made for music. In his youth, he practiced four hours a day; he now practices two to three. In 30 years, he's taken off very few days. Siem sees his life very differently from an onlooker, however.

"It wasn't that I thought I was giving anything else up. I always thought I was gaining something by focusing on one thing, the violin," he says. "I felt lucky to know what I wanted to do and was able to sink my teeth into it," he said in a phone interview.

## Hardship and Brilliance

Siem believes that society today too often attacks the idea of excellence.

"Everyone is told not to be too aggressive or competitive. You have to accept and love yourself as you are. I think we all know that's just not good enough," he says. "None of us feel good by just accepting things as they are."

He explains that life inevitably throws you twists and roadblocks.

"The ups are only good because of the downs. The downs are only bearable because there is hope and a possibility to succeed at some other point afterward," he says.

Although the standard at each level of his musical journey changes, the required effort and passion remains constant.

"You have to invest in each level 100 percent. You cannot even look at the next level until you've mastered what you're doing right now," he says. Without that level of dedication and focus, "we feel empty when we start zoning out."

## Quarantine Cocoon

Siem's typical schedule of over 50 concerts a year easily motivates and focuses him day after day. He's in a state of perpetual preparation for his next performance. But without a concert in sight, the quarantine period has tested Siem's enthusiasm. He's responded in two ways, both at opposite ends of the spectrum: intermission and immersion.

"When you're so isolated and you're so cocooned, it's just your own little reality ... There have been times I've gotten lost in that void," he says. Occasionally, he's

**Siem's acute study of his daily practice has provided new insights into his rendition of Bach.**

Violinist Charlie Siem.



A statue of J.S. Bach in front of the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany.

## BEHOLD THE BEAUTY

# A Grand Spectacle



"Morning Over the Gulf," 2018, by David Jenks. Oil on canvas; 36 inches by 56 inches. Recipient of an honorable mention in the landscape category of the Art Renewal Center's yearly competition.

## LORRAINE FERRIER

There's nothing quite like being up in the clouds.  
In June or July, California-based artist David Jenks often flies to Florida's Gulf Coast to catch the warm monsoon, which brings the most dramatic scenes for his paintings. "Rain showers and rain clouds arrive from all directions, creating spectacular displays," Jenks said in his artist video statement in the catalog for the "14th International Virtual ARC Salon Exhibition (2019-2020)."

Even though Jenks has painted

the sea and sky endless times, the scene in his painting "Morning Over the Gulf" is a first for him. Jenks painted the sky and ocean as seen from the plane on his way home from one of his Florida trips. The painting won him an honorable mention in the landscape category of the competition held by the Art Renewal Center.

When he depicts the sea, the paintings essentially "become studies in light itself as it's filtered, bounded, and reflected by atmosphere and water," he says. Jenks painted "Morning Over the Gulf" on a large canvas to "convey the grandeur and complexity

of the view."

At the end of his statement, Jenks quotes Victor Hugo in "Les Misérables," almost as a gift for us to ponder: "There is one spectacle grander than the sea, that is the sky; there is one spectacle grander than the sky, that is the interior of the soul."

To see David Jenks' painting alongside the work of 98 other international realist artists, visit the "14th International Virtual ARC Salon Exhibition" on the ARC website through July 31, and click on the exhibition banner at [ArtRenewal.org](http://ArtRenewal.org)



GILLES MARIE ZIMMERMAN

taken a string of days off, a rarity in three decades of daily practice. "Taking time out disconnecting from the instrument and reconnecting with yourself just as a human being in the world, I think, it's also good for you."

Siem has taken the days away from his instrument to explore where he is in life, his career, where he's been, and where he's heading. With a laugh, he admits he hasn't received clear answers to these ruminations. But these recesses have refreshed him, inspiring him to engross himself in his craft on all the other days of quarantine solitude.

"The more time you have without concerts almost the better, because you can really focus on your own technical ability, refining it, improving it, really going deeper and having much more time to investigate the repertoire that you played before," Siem says. "[My] total immersion in music ... has forced me to question my interpretation and what it is I'm trying to express."

After a morning workout and breakfast, Siem video records his violin practice with his phone.

"[I was] treating myself as my own student. [Video recording is] definitely a useful tool that I've been using more in this period than I ever have before," he says.

Reviewing the footage, Siem checks his finger placements and bow resonance, for example. He has seen bad habits and corrected minute inaccuracies.

He could see he wasn't "vibrating every note," he says. "There [were] drop-offs in the sound when I think I'm sustaining the sound."

To further challenge his technique, Siem tackled Paganini scales, arpeggios, and caprices. He believes Niccolò Paganini is the father of violin, whose repertoire of 24 caprices catapulted the violin into the new sphere of solo performer. On Siem's Instagram account, his fingers move so quickly on these scales at times that they appear to hover above the neck, not actually pressing down.

## New Realms

Bach wrote six cello suites for solo cello and six violin sonatas and partitas, a repertoire that Siem describes as a bible for string players.

"There's something about solo repertoire. You don't require an orchestra or complementary players, [such as a] pianist. You're alone," he says.

Bach's music poses many challenges with its different registers and voices dispersed in episodic variation and then returning throughout each piece. Siem's acute study of his daily practice has provided new insights into his rendition of Bach.

"I feel like I'm expressing something that is coherent, that has an architecture in terms of a beginning, middle, and end of the narrative within a phrase. Yet when I listen from a distance, I see that actually I haven't conveyed it all and there are holes in the interpretation," he says.

After smoothing out these gaps, the final sound and his connection with the music became "transformative, otherworldly, or certainly transcendental." Bach's works allow "access to another kind of realm."

Bach's music echoes his unique starting point, philosophy, and ethic. His wisdom encapsulates the journey of a musician more than a feel-good platitude.

"I worked hard. Anyone who works as hard as I did can achieve the same results," Bach said. "The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than ... the refreshment of the spirit."

To that, Siem may agree. Above all, Siem craves sharing that deep, even spiritual connection with his audience again.

"When I get back on stage, I look forward to recapturing that magic," he says. "Having had all this time out, I really appreciate what it is that I do. I've got to squeeze out every little drop of value and juice from that experience."

J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's fashion journalist living in New York.

## FILM INSIGHTS WITH MARK JACKSON



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION:  
FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

# Soul-Cleansing via Pilgrimage

MARK JACKSON

Back in 2010 when "The Way" came out, one immediately assumed that movie stars Emilio Estevez and father Martin Sheen made this movie with their troubled movie star brother and son Charlie Sheen in mind, in hopes that he'd see the need for a thorough soul-cleansing.

Like so many actors before him who succumbed to the excesses of Hollywood and successfully recovered ("Iron Man" star Robert Downey Jr. being a prime example; Martin Sheen himself being another), one hoped "The Way" would give Charlie (who was going through a particularly toxic period at the time) a road to a Damascus type of revelation.

Regardless of Charlie's personal journey, brother Emilio succeeded in creating a humanistic road-trip drama that captures the spirit and offers an example of seeking meaning in one's life during these complicated times.

Tom (Martin Sheen) is an ophthalmologist. His son Daniel (Emilio Estevez) is a seeker, who has called off his Ph.D. studies to walk the 1,000-year-old Camino de Santiago de Compostela, or Way of St. James, a network of old pilgrimage routes covering 760 km (about 475 miles), from St. Jean Pied de Port in southern France, to Santiago in Spain.

Daniel dies in an accident in the mountains. Tom flies to France to identify the body, and decides to finish the journey for his son, scattering Daniel's ashes along The Way.

On the Camino, he meets a gregarious, chubby Dutchman named Joost (Yorick van Wageningen), whose quest is to lose weight; a cynical, angry Canadian (Deborah Kara Unger), whose quest is

## 'The Way'

Director  
Emilio Estevez

Starring  
Martin Sheen, Emilio Estevez, Deborah Kara Unger, James Nesbitt, Yorick van Wageningen

Rated  
PG-13

Running Time  
2 hours, 31 minutes

Release Date  
Oct. 7, 2011  
(USA, limited release)

★★★★★



(L-R) Martin Sheen, Deborah Kara Unger, James Nesbitt, and Yorick van Wageningen in a scene from the picturesque pilgrimage movie "The Way."

to quit smoking; and a garrulous Irish travel writer (James Nesbitt), who, while clearly having kissed the Blarney Stone, has writer's block.

We follow them through the bucolic French and Basque countryside, along steep paths in the Pyrenees, through copses, vineyards, quaint inns, and hostels, and over hill and dale.

The acoustic guitar-laden soundtrack is inviting. Also cozy are the communal meals of bread and cheese, Joost's Dutch-inflected "Let's have a coffee," an observed innkeeper's private moment twirling a wine-colored tablecloth in a Walter Mitty-esque bullfight, and the way the Europeans love to heatedly debate ancient history as if it weren't ancient at all. It's a pleasure to see how current and visceral the ancient tales are for the descendants of those lands.

There's more than a little of "The Wizard of Oz" about the way the group forms and the roles of the four main characters. They joke, offend, confront each other, have a tiny war, get drunk, philosophize, have adventures together, and end up bonding deeply.

Among the many interesting things about the film are the campfire debates about what constitutes a true pilgrim and a true pilgrimage. A false pilgrim eliminates suffering by riding bicycles or horses and indulging in creature comforts, and at one point our new friends collectively lapse into this type of blasé pilgrimage: They cheat by checking into a luxurious hotel with cognac and masseurs—compliments of Tom.

A real pilgrim is destitute, chooses suffering for soul-cleansing, that is, the

(Christian) atonement of sin or the (Buddhist) repayment of karmic debt. This is visually depicted when the travelers eventually cross paths with a real, heavy-duty, old-school version of the pilgrimage: silent monks carrying a massive, heavy wooden cross, with their backs bleeding from self-flagellation.

**This simple yet alluring film is highly inspiring.**

The modern pilgrimage depicted in the film would appear to be, in large part, about forming friendships. To be sure, deep bonds and sharing offer part of the sea change of the soul sought on a pilgrimage. But, as evidenced by the spiritually tough, hard-men monks, it's still a far cry from the original version, where, in addition to the physical hardship, a scouring, deep loneliness was key for a true cleansing of the soul.

Yet this simple, alluring film is highly inspiring. Still waters run deep. And perhaps it had the intended effect: Charlie Sheen said, of recently becoming sober:

"I essentially have nothing to promote today ... actually I do have something to promote: I'm promoting sanity," he said. "I'm promoting a sense of nobility and a return to a more innocent place and just gratitude and knowing that whatever comes next, work-wise, that the version that I will deliver will be spectacular."

## REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

# A Timely Title, Not Much More

MARK JACKSON

It's now the year 2020. We've all had enough of the COVID. It's probably safe to say we're all looking for a friend for the end of the world, in some way, shape, or form.

"Seeking a Friend for the End of the World" came out in 2012. Hollywood was cashing in on all that business about the Mayan calendar, which was long known to have predicted that 2012 would be the official end of the world. Remember all that? How quaint it all was. Never a more opportune time for a movie titled "Seeking a Friend for the End of the World."

There's a chance, since most of us are still in quarantine, to go browsing Netflix and come across this movie title, and go "Hey! Wow! This could be just the comedy to make me stop feeling depressed today."



DARREN MICHAELS/FOCUS FEATURES

Keira Knightley and Steve Carell in the romantic comedy-drama "Seeking a Friend for the End of the World," a film about a man's journey to reunite with his high school sweetheart before the world ends.

spend your time trying to be a better person. Which is obviously good. I'm just here to tell you there are better ways to come to that conclusion.

## Why It's the End of the World

A 70-mile-wide asteroid named "Matilda" is headed toward Earth, and all attempts to divert it have failed. What to do, what to do?

Well, for one, Linda (Nancy Carell), the wife of Steve Carell's character, Dodge, upon hearing the news, exits the car and leaves him on the spot, stomping away in her high heels.

People riot, loot, and flee their jobs in droves. It's announced at his insurance sales office, "We have lots of new job opportunities, like, for example—anybody want to be CFO?!"

## 'Seeking a Friend for the End of the World'

Director  
Lorene Scafaria

Starring  
Steve Carell, Keira Knightley, Connie Britton, Adam Brody

Rated  
R

Running Time  
1 hour, 41 minutes

Release Date  
June 22, 2012

★★★★★

**It's a script chock full of mundane musings, droning on about trivia.**

There are two possible benefits for seeing this movie. Firstly, if you watch it, you'll be strongly reminded that time is precious, and you will therefore henceforth meticulously plan all future movie viewing so as not to be this bored again. Secondly, you might decide to

Dodge's normally staid, well-to-do neighbors choose the rapid-moral-decline route, throwing parties—"Hey everybody, Sarah and Dave brought heroin! Who wants to go first?!"

Dodge, finding all such behavior completely tasteless and pointless, starts staying home. He then crosses paths with Penny (Keira Knightley), a Converse sneakers-wearing pretty young thing who dates a musician and lives in Dodge's building. They couldn't be more different.

Time is running out. They bond a bit over botched burglary (taking the moral high ground comes a bit later). They jump in her Smart car, ditch her farcically self-involved boyfriend, and flee the city. All of a sudden it's an odd-couple road movie.

Dodge wants to see his long-lost high school girlfriend one last time. Righto. With Keira Knightley in the car. That's what he wants. Sure he does.

They have tiny adventures. They visit Dodge's dad (Martin Sheen). Dad, a pilot, tries to fly Penny back to England to fulfill her wish of seeing her parents one last time, but the gorgeous 28-year-old wakes up en route and realizes what's really important in her life: Dodge the insurance salesman. Really? En route to see your parents one last time and you choose him? OK, never mind.

The movie starts off leaning toward broad comedy, as if to announce "This is a Steve Carell vehicle," but it's not really sure what it wants to be and eventually ends up a drama.

It is a Steve Carell vehicle, though, since it follows his usual character arc: For the first half

of the movie, he's nerdy, and the second half sees him becoming more of a leading man. It's full of Carell's patented fumbling and mumbling, where the drawn-out lack of resolve to speak his mind makes one want to shake him and shout, "Spit it out!"

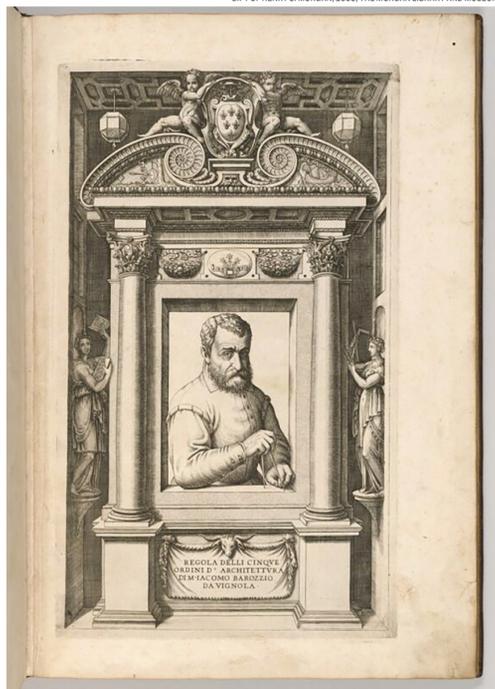
Overall, the movie manages to be hectic while lacking tension, thus paradoxically ending up irritating and boring simultaneously. It's a script chock full of mundane musings, droning on about trivia, all accompanied by a cheesy soundtrack largely comprising little-known early-to-mid-1960s pop non-nuggets, just this side of elevator music. It's been hip to do these retro-hit soundtracks in movies lately, but this one's a clunker.

One never really comes to care about any of the characters, and the chemistry between the two leads feels fairly contrived. Which is a shame, because this topic is very apropos of our current COVID-19. The Grim Reaper stalking around in our midst has a way of making normally hard decisions easy. A massive asteroid threatening to wipe out humanity demands, "Choose now!" Well ... we've all been asking ourselves: Choose what?

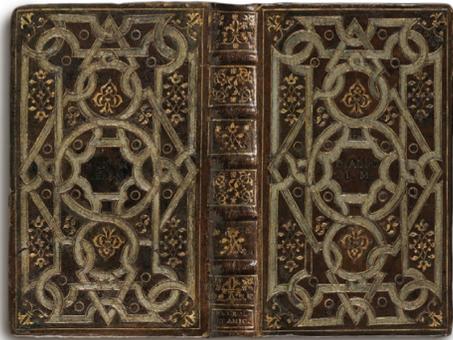
This is the heartfelt (if boring) story of two people who choose not to let their humanity slide into depravity. And there you have the full benefit of this movie in a nutshell, without having to actually suffer watching it—I did your suffering for you. You're welcome.

But make your life choices soon. The Mayans were clearly wrong, but the end of the world is very much a possibility, necessitating comportment choices of various kinds. And choices matter.

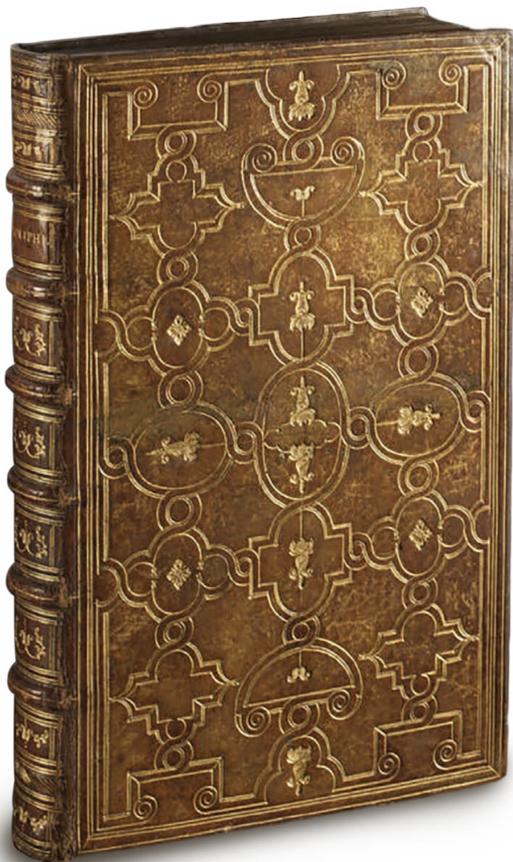
Title page with a portrait of the author Vignola, "Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura," 1563.



THE BARBIER-MUELLER FOUNDATION, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA



The spine, front and back cover of "Dialogues" by Sperone Speroni, 1546.



The spine and front cover of Francesco Colonna's "Hyperotomachia Poliphili," 1499.

## During the Renaissance, You Could Judge a Book by Its Cover

A rare collection of Renaissance books hidden for 400 years until now

J.H. WHITE

Like the paintings and sculptures of the Renaissance, the era's books and their artisanal bindings uplifted man to moral ideals. During the 16th-century Renaissance in France, one young statesman in particular, Claude III de Laubespine, adored commissioning and collecting ornately designed books.

"Imagine seeing this magnificent array of front covers when you walk into the library room," said John Bidwell, a curator at The Morgan Library & Museum, in a phone interview. "They're tokens of knowledge and learning."

The Parisians of the golden age were highly educated and wanted to be remembered for their well-cultured manner. Laubespine, who married an heiress and obtained the favor of King Charles IX, typified this sophistication.

"There were many ways of displaying your wealth. You could have fancy clothes, a stable full of purebred horses, or gardens. With [Laubespine's] luxury bindings, it's a way of displaying wealth and culture. It's a way of proclaiming wealth and erudition," Bidwell said.

But Laubespine wasn't motivated simply by showing himself off. Unlike other Renaissance collectors, he didn't emblazon his name on his

commissioned books. His modesty, however, made the discovery and authentication of his esteemed collection that much more difficult.

Yet by piecing together historical artifacts across the globe, historians eventually tracked down one of the French Renaissance's most prized book collections. Hidden for 400 years, Laubespine's literary treasures can be seen at "Poetry and Patronage: The Laubespine-Villory Library Rediscovered," from Oct. 16, 2020 to Jan. 24, 2021.

Soft, grainy Morocco leather with intricate designs and ornamentation wrap around these books. One of the books in the collection, "Hyperotomachia Poliphili," is "covered with powdered gold." In addition to gilt tooling of the designs, the rest of the leather has a gold sheen. When you look at it in the exhibit case, you'll see specks of gold," Bidwell said.

The exhibition showcases 12 books from Laubespine's collection, including poetry and Italian architecture books, perfect for illustration due to their large size. From cover to cover, artisans filled his literary commissions with beauty.

"Part of the story of the exhibit is about how Italian Renaissance ideas and styles came to France," Bidwell said. "This is [The Morgan's] opportunity to be the first to tell this great story in English."

### A Novel Detective

In 2004, Isabelle de Conihout—historian and the exhibition's guest curator—published a piece about Laubespine's collection. "At that time, it was considered too good to be true," Bidwell said.

Since Laubespine did not brand his name on the books and the bookbinding artisans were typically anonymous, "These books' [lineages] were unknown," Bidwell said.

For over 10 years, Conihout and her colleague Pascal Ract-Madoux rummaged through all the great libraries of France, England, and America in search of rare, ornate bindings. On many of the books they found, they detected specific patterns, and the front flyleaves boasted ink inventory numbers.

"Lucky Isabelle, time after time, her instinct, her intuition led her to the right book, and bingo, there it was, that telltale number inscribed in the book," Bidwell said. She believed that these clues suggested these books belonged to the courtier Laubespine. However, "her discoveries were greeted with skepticism."

One day, Conihout gave a lecture about her theories on her Laubespine collection. After the talk, she learned that an audience member owned an actual manuscript inventory of Laubespine's collection. Its contents "corresponded exactly to these inventory numbers and therefore proved Isabelle's hypothesis," Bidwell said. "In our world [of historic books], it was a magnificent piece of detective work."

### Poetry and Patronage

Since historians knew who the Laubespine family patronized, the authors' names helped determine to whom the poetry books belonged, consequently authenticating the collection.

The exhibition showcases Laubespine's beautifully bound commissioned works by two of the French

Renaissance's most famous poets: Pierre de Ronsard and Philippe Desportes. Madeleine de Laubespine, the sister of Laubespine to whom he bequeathed his collection, was a patron of the poet Pierre de Ronsard.

Ronsard, like other French Renaissance poets, made his living by obtaining the favor of highly placed government officials and the king. The elite supported the poets for many reasons: The nobles and officials revered the arts and poetry; they also knew the poets could sing their praises, acting as good PR, Bidwell explains.

It's also possible that the poets of the day lauded their employers in the same way Renaissance artists painted a more perfect version of their sitters. The aim was to raise society to an ideal aesthetic and elevate people's thinking through beauty.

Ronsard praised Madeleine de Laubespine's "country estate, the library, and its perfumed bindings, which, he said, 'smells as good as [her] orange trees,' the exhibition's online material reads.

Ronsard continues his flattery of Madeleine, a hobbyist poet, whose works are now just being recognized for their own merit. "[Ronsard] writes a poem to her saying, 'You're so good. You're making me feel a little inferior,'" Bidwell recounts.

With the Renaissance's moral ideals and rich language gracing the pages of Laubespine's books, Bidwell said, "This is a case where you can tell a book by its cover."

J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's fashion journalist living in New York.

## HISTORY

# The British Parliamentarian Who Jumped Ship from Socialism

Socialism promises progress and delivers disaster

LAWRENCE W. REED

"It is seized with the lust for power. The appetite has grown with the eating, and it will not be content until its grasping hands are laid on every section of the industrial and trading life of the nation."

That's how Ivor Thomas described the British Labour Party in his 1951 book, "The Socialist Tragedy." For six years (1942-47), he was a Member of Britain's House of Commons—representing the very same Labour Party! Prime Minister Clement Attlee even appointed him Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and, later, Under-Secretary for the Colonies. But when Thomas expressed disillusion with socialism in late 1947, Attlee sacked him. Thomas then switched to the Conservative Party.

Ivor Thomas was a man of wisdom who "grew" in office, by which I mean he allowed sound principles to eventually take priority over party allegiance. His transformation from naïve socialist to an eloquent devotee of freedom and free enterprise didn't take very long. As his understanding of economics improved, he viewed with alarm the Labour government's penchant for the nationalization of industry in the late 1940s. When Attlee moved to seize the steel industry, Thomas realized that Labour was on a course to trash British economic liberty.

An incumbent MP jumping from one party to another is not unheard of in British history. Winston Churchill was a Conservative in 1900 until he became a Liberal in 1904, until he switched back to the Conservatives in 1925. For Ivor Thomas, jettisoning Labour was the outward manifestation of an inner, philosophical awakening. He had discovered that socialism is a deceit that promises progress and delivers disaster.

In a television broadcast explaining his change of parties, Thomas opined:

"Today it is clear that between communism and socialism, there is no difference. Both lead to a condition of affairs in which the State counts for everything and the individual for nothing... It is impossible to build up a healthy society on class envy and class hatred."

Thomas's 1951 book, "The Socialist Tragedy," caught the attention of the founder of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), Leonard Read, who published a short extract of it as a FEE pamphlet titled "The Positive Approach to Personal Rights."

I recently acquired a copy of that book and devoured it. Thomas had clearly learned a lot about socialism, in part because he experienced it up close and at the hands of the very government of which he was a part. Though I don't know it for sure, I'm betting he read F. A. Hayek's 1944 classic, "The Road to Serfdom," too.

## His transformation from naïve socialist to an eloquent devotee of freedom and free enterprise didn't take very long.

"The Socialist Tragedy" is full of insights that deserve to be dusted off and re-read today. With that in mind, here's a selection:

- "The blunt teaching of history is that socialism is not an advanced stage in the evolution of human society but one of its most primitive stages. A highly articulated form of socialism was practiced among the Incas, the tribe which Pizarro found in control of Peru when he landed there in 1527. All produce, whether agricultural, pastoral or industrial, was the property of the state... In fact, the Incas had not only 'communal ownership of the means of production' but a 'planned economy'. All the basic features of socialism were present, and the feature which has specially attracted the attention of the archaeologist is that the Incas were in effect a huge bureaucracy... [T]he lesson of history is clear that communal ownership is normal among primitive people, and the institution of private property in the 'means of production' is the first big step on the road to civilization."

"The state in practice, as we have seen, is capable of tyranny and oppression and brutality on a scale which would be impossible for a private person, and from which all except the most debased private persons would shrink. The power of the state is vastly greater than the power of the mightiest private owners of property; and men will commit cruelties and atrocities in the name of the state which they would be too ashamed to commit in their private capacity. We must be chary, therefore, of assuming that we shall cure any misuse of the power inherent in the private ownership of property by concentrating all ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange in the state."

"Human beings are tiresome creatures from the planner's point of view—always wanting something different; and to make it worse, the wicked capitalist supplies what they want. The planner would have it the other way round. Instead of supplying what people want, he would make them want what they are supplied with."

"The rock on which socialistic experiments have hitherto always foundered is human nature. Any sound political system must be based on a correct appreciation of human nature; and socialism is bound to fail because it offends the best elements of human nature and panders to the worst."

"The prime fact of human nature which the wise statesman must take into account is that men will exert themselves for their own benefit, or for that of their families, regarded as an extension of themselves, as they will exert themselves for no one else; and, in particular, men are not prepared to work for the state or for any other collectivity as they will work for themselves or for their families... If it is made impossible for him to advance himself or his family by his exertions, the average man will cease to exert himself. No motive comparable in its effects... has yet been known in the history of the human race... Because socialism expects the average man to exert himself for the state as he would for himself, ... the socialist is doomed to disappointment when he comes to put

FOX PHOTOS/HULTON ARCHIVE GETTY IMAGES



British MP Ivor Thomas, circa 1940.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, SEE:

- Ivor Bulmer-Thomas (Wikipedia)
- "The XYZs of Socialism" by Lawrence W. Reed
- "Thatcher on Socialism: Twenty of Her Best Quotes" by Lawrence W. Reed
- "Was Jesus a Socialist?" by Lawrence W. Reed
- "Experiencing Socialist Britain" by Alistair Segerdal
- "The Collectivist Menace" by Reginald Jebb

his ideas into practice."

- "If the state were all-wise and all-good it is conceivable that it would not misuse its supreme economic power. But the idea that the state is somehow wiser and better than the best of its citizens is a metaphysical delusion. In practice the concentration of all economic power in the hands of the state... has hitherto always been followed by the enslavement of thought and action. 'Power corrupts', and states do not differ from individuals in this respect. But the tyranny of an individual is limited by the circumscribed area of his power, whereas the power of the collectivist state is boundless; and the concentration of all power in the hands of the state will in practice almost certainly be followed by the imposition of a rigid orthodoxy in belief."
- "We have seen in the twentieth century the dire consequences when all power is concentrated in the hands of the state. When power is widely diffused, it is difficult and normally impossible for any one man or a few to turn it all at once to evil use. But when all power is concentrated in the hands of the state, it is a simple matter for one man or a few men having control of the state mechanism to turn all that concentrated power in any direction they please; and unhappily their pleasure has usually been in the direction of evil."
- "It is now clear to me that socialism would not be a step forward in the evolution of society but a retrogression; it would not lead to an advance upon capitalism as great as capitalism was upon feudalism, but would take mankind back into semi-feudal conditions."

Lawrence W. Reed is President Emeritus and Humphreys Family Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), having served for nearly 11 years as FEE's president (2008-2019). He is the author of the 2020 book, "Was Jesus a Socialist?" as well as "Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction," and "Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism." His website is LawrenceWReed.com. This article was originally published on FEE.org



1. Old Town Square in Prague. The city center is a UNESCO World Heritage site. 2. The clock features figures such as Vanity, the Miser, the Turk, and the Rooster, which move, and stationary ones such as Archangel Michael, the Astronomer, the Philosopher, and the Chronicler. 3. The clock traces the movement of the sun and moon. 4. The calendar plate below the clock features a church calendar with holidays and the names of 365 saints.

## Prague's 600-Year-Old Astronomical Clock Is Filled With Secrets, Symbols, and a Hidden Message

ROBERT JAY WATSON

The 600-year-old astronomical clock in Prague is a major tourist attraction in the city's historic center, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Yet many tourists and even city residents might not exactly know how intricate and loaded with symbolism it is.



Death with an hourglass in hand, as a reminder of the brevity of life.



Since the clock, locally known as the "Orloj," started ticking in 1410, it has only stopped a few times for repairs, first in the 18th century, then after the devastation of World War II, and again in 2018. Despite global uncertainty about the future, this wonder of the world remains a constant.

To those who haven't been fortunate enough to see the clock, it might seem strange that a time-keeping device could be so special, but this is no ordinary clock. The clock is based on a mechanical astrolabe, a device that dates back to antiquity, designed to track the movements of the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies.



To modern eyes, the clock may look confusing, as it was designed in the 15th century, when no one system of telling time had yet become dominant. One of the clock's dials tracks time in the Old Bohemian fashion, which starts the new day from sunset, while another reckons time in the ancient Babylonian system: from sunset to sunrise.

Other features indicate modern Central European time and star time, which tracks the movement of the constellations resulting from Earth's orbit.

Part of the clock's appeal, besides its incredible longevity, is its beauty. Not simply a functional

object for telling time, the clock is adorned with beautiful gold leaf script for the numbers, and its dials are painted beautiful colors.

The clock's decoration also continues to offer moral lessons for citizens of Prague and visitors to the historic city. In addition to displaying the 12 constellations of the zodiac, the clock is also adorned with sculptures, including Death with an hourglass in hand, as a reminder of the brevity of life.

Another sculpture with a mirror represents Vanity, highlighting the pernicious obsession with self that existed then as now.

If all this intricacy and rich symbolism weren't enough, one of the statues of the 12 Apostles on the clock reveals a secret message from the past. During the 2018 repairs, the statues were taken down for restoration, and that of St. Thomas was examined with X-ray, and a metal case with a message was found inside.

As reported by Prague.tv, sculptor Vojtech Sucharda, who was responsible for the post-World War II restoration, had tucked away his vision for a fuller restoration as well as criticism of the late 1940s communist government.

The clock will be there as always, telling time and telling stories about the city's past and present.

Prague's clock master and head of the 2018 restoration, Petr Skala, put it perfectly to 'The New York Times': "A clock measures time. And time is the most precious gift we are given."

## POPCORN AND INSPIRATION: FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

ALL PHOTOS BY WALT DISNEY PICTURES



(Above)  
Chris Pine and Holliday Grainger  
in "The Finest Hours."

(Left)  
The SS Mercer's flooded engine  
room, in "The Finest Hours."

# A ROUSING DISASTER FILM

## Based on Real Events

## IAN KANE

Back in 2016, director Craig Gillespie ("I, Tonya," "Million Dollar Arm") helmed a good, old-fashioned maritime disaster film titled "The Finest Hours." Adapted for the silver screen by screenwriters Scott Silver, Paul Tamasy, and Eric Johnson, it's based on a real-life storm that pummeled the entire Cape Cod region of Massachusetts on Feb. 18, 1952. The script is based on the 2015 book, "The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue," authored by Michael J. Tougas and Casey Sherman.

During the film's opening act, a megastorm not only inundates landlubbers ashore with snow and rain, but it also manages to shear two oil tankers—the SS Mercer, and the SS Pendleton—clean in half. Immediately following the twin disasters, the Mercer is able to send off an emergency

distress call and get help. However, the Pendleton's radio wasn't functioning, and therefore its crew is left to the mercy of the tumultuous sea.

As the Mercer slowly begins to sink, the crew become increasingly desperate to try and keep their crippled half of the ship afloat. But as more time goes by, it becomes increasingly apparent that the damaged vessel is taking on more seawater, and it starts sinking ever faster. Needless to say, this causes the small crew of men to panic further, and fights eventually erupt as frayed nerves combust and almost boil over.

The ship's engineer, Ray Sybert (Casey Affleck) rises to the occasion and manages to keep the crew from devolving into complete anarchy, but just barely. His quietly confident style of leadership doesn't mix well with some members of the crew. Sybert's eventual plan of running the crip-

pled vessel ashore doesn't go over well either, especially when he cuts the sole lifeboat loose since he deems trying to disembark on it suicidal.

Meanwhile, back onshore, an equally shy and understated Massachusetts Coast Guard boatswain named Bernie Webber (Chris Pine) is eventually tasked with a daring rescue attempt. The leader of the small Coast Guard outpost, Daniel Cluff (Eric Bana), sends Webber with three other men, Richard Livesey (Ben Foster), Andy Fitzgerald (Kyle Gallner), and Ervin Maske (John Magaro), into the stormy seas to try to first locate and then aid any surviving crew members of the Mercer.

What makes the task so daunting (and dangerous) is that the four-man rescue crew must embark on their rescue operation onboard a small, foot-powered lifeboat. Will Webber, newly en-

gaged to his sweetheart, Miriam (Holliday Grainger), survive the ordeal and return to shore in one piece? Will his tiny crew be able to rescue the stranded crew in time before the damaged vessel descends beneath the chaotic seas for good?

**Old-Fashioned Heroics**

As far as disaster films go, "The Finest Hours" plays like a classic '50s throwback film that wears its old-fashioned sensibilities on its sleeve. It's somewhat melodramatic at times, but under director Gillespie's guidance, it manages to keep from descending into pure sentimentality and cheesiness.

The film's cast is also quite capable, and both Pine and Affleck embrace their roles as understated, yet confident leaders who rise to the occasion when it's their time to shine. Likewise, Grainger is not only convincing as Pine's

love interest, but she also reveals herself to be a heroic, unconventional woman for the times; the film is set in the 1950s, after all.

In the end, "The Finest Hours" should manage to thrill both landlubbers and mariners alike.

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

**'The Finest Hours'**

**Director**  
Craig Gillespie

**Starring**  
Chris Pine, Casey Affleck, Ben Foster, Holliday Grainger

**Running Time**  
1 hour, 57 minutes

**Rated**  
PG-13

**Release Date**  
Jan. 29, 2016 (USA)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Send **FREE** Newspapers to Your Friends

Are you looking for a way to introduce The Epoch Times to your friends?

Thousands of subscribers asked us to send free copies of the paper to their friends and family. Now we can!

## Let's spread the news!

If you're currently a subscriber to The Epoch Times, simply follow these steps:

**1. Log In**

Log into your account at [TheEpochTimes.com](http://TheEpochTimes.com).

Welcome, Jenny

**2. Click**

Click your name to manage your account.

**3. Request FREE Papers**

Click "Request Free Papers" on the left menu bar.

**4. Enter the Name**

Enter the name and shipping address of your first friend.

**5. Add More Friends**

If you want to submit info for more friends, click "Add More Friends".

**6. Submit**

Click "Submit" after you finish entering info for all friends.

**Request as many as you'd like—there's no limit!**

For any questions, please visit [ReadEpoch.com/Help](http://ReadEpoch.com/Help) or call (917) 905-2080.

# THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

