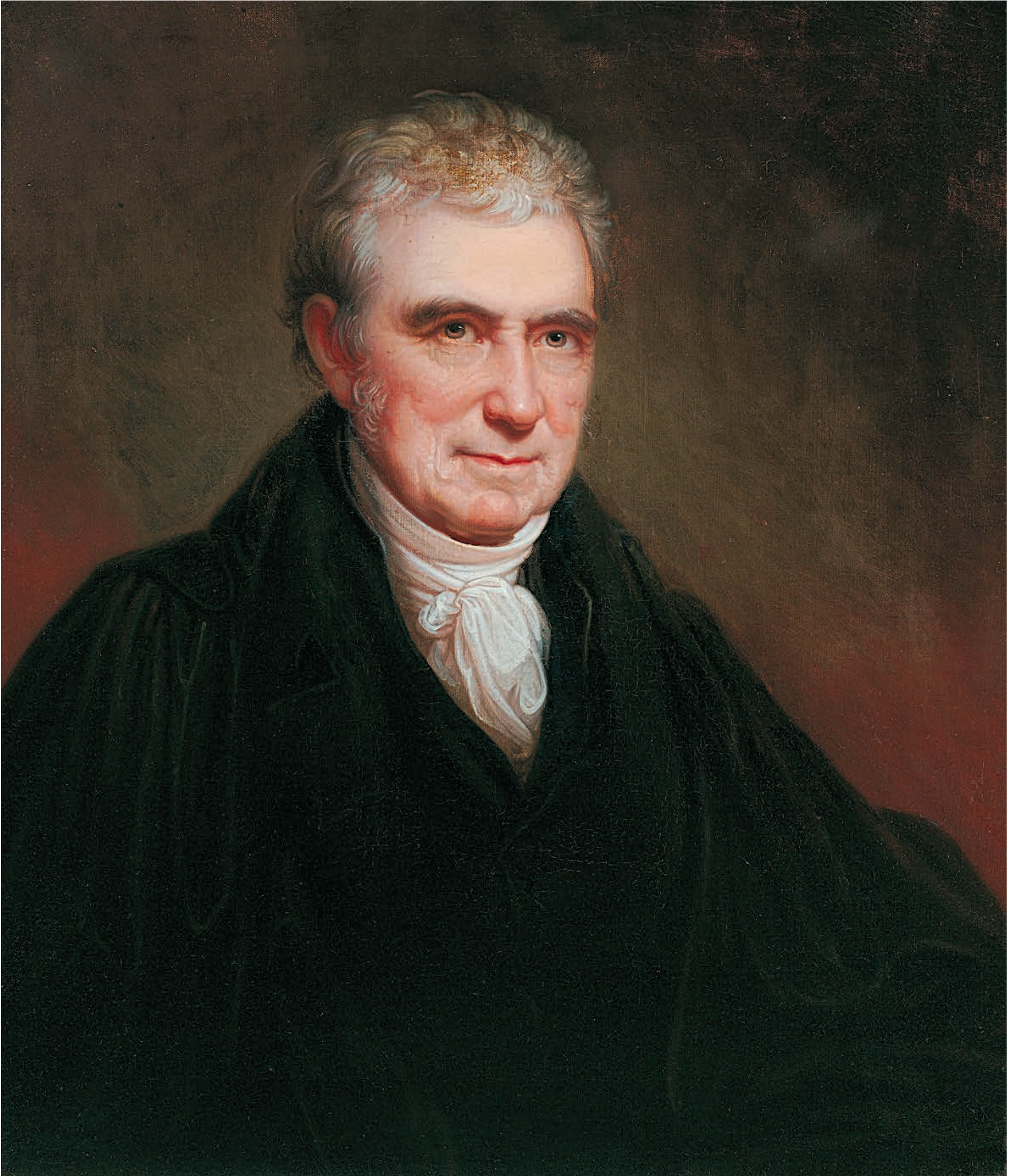


THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



A portrait of Chief Justice Marshall, 1834, by Rembrandt Peale. Oil on canvas. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Marshall added "judicial review" to the power of the Supreme Court.

HISTORY

Black Robes in a Marble Palace

A look at the Supreme Court of the United States

JEFF MINICK

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled 6-3 in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* case that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion. That judgment overturned two previous cases that had come before the Court, *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*. The Court's verdict means that voters and the states in which they live will now decide the legality of abortion.

This decision brought rage and violence

It's worth looking at the Supreme Court's history, meaning, and place in our government.

from pro-abortion supporters. Some pregnancy centers were vandalized or firebombed, protests and marches were organized in cities across the country, and some, including politicians, either called for an insurrection or for Americans simply to ignore this sea change in the law. Some protesters broke federal law by gathering at the homes of certain justices in hopes of intimidating them. Still others called for abolishing the court altogether or for packing it with justices who might more closely reflect liberal beliefs and prejudices.

As they vented their feelings, railing against what they saw as injustice, few of

these irate proponents of abortion seemed to understand either the history or the function of the Supreme Court. Some attacked the overturn of a previous Court decision as unprecedented, whereas in reality the Supreme Court has shot down past Court rulings more than 200 times. Others accused the Court of politics, failing to understand that the justices must weigh the law regardless of politics. Even now deceased justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, for example, who was decidedly liberal in her politics outside of the courtroom, considered *Roe v. Wade* bad law.

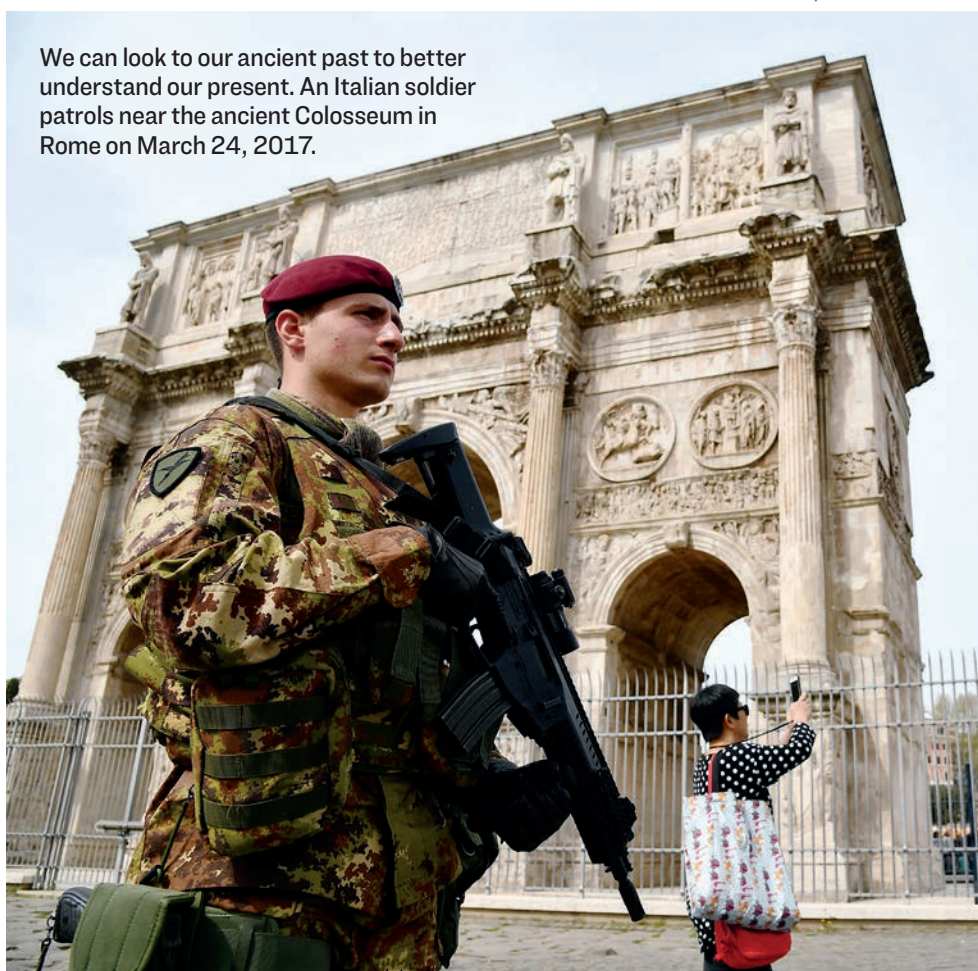
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We can look to our ancient past to better understand our present. An Italian soldier patrols near the ancient Colosseum in Rome on March 24, 2017.

BOOK REVIEW

Looking to Ancient Wisdom to Save a Republic

A modern translation of Sallust's ancient work

DUSTIN BASS

Princeton University Press is putting its best foot forward by using an old foot. The press's ongoing collection titled "Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers" has a new addition with "How to Stop a Conspiracy: An Ancient Guide to Saving a Republic."

Josiah Osgood, professor and chair of classics at Georgetown University, has written a new translation of the ancient work and one that is easily accessible to modern readers. Then again, that's the whole point.

The book is a new translation of Sallust's great work "The War With Catiline" about the Catiline Conspiracy. The conspiracy involves the patrician and politician Lucius Sergius Catilina who, after two electoral defeats for the Roman consul, decided a coup was the only other alternative. The story involves several famous ancient Roman figures, like Marcus Tullius Cicero, Julius Caesar, and Marcus Porcius Cato (Cato the Younger).

Osgood's translation from Latin to English is easy to follow, pleasant to read, and chock-full of memorable lines of wisdom. This historical work of more than two millennia demonstrates just how little human nature has changed in regard to ambition, persuasion, articulation, and violence.

The Catiline Conspiracy and the struggles of the Roman Republic also place a mirror in front of the American Republic. The similarities are striking, especially in the wake of the Clinton-Russia conspiracy and the Capitol riot of Jan. 6, 2021 (as mentioned in Osgood's introduction).

The arguments from Catiline about his reasons for conducting the coup, and the arguments from Cicero, Caesar, and Cato about how to deal with the conspirators are also striking due to the modern connections we can draw.

Who Should Read It?

The Founding Fathers read the classics of ancient Greece and ancient Rome, among others, which increased their knowledge and grounded their wisdom. As the education system, both public and private, has moved far away from classical liberal instruction, the "Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers" collection is primed for today's readers, whether still in school or venturing toward retirement.

The lack of experience and education in the classics has proven a detriment to American society. Many today reflect on the possibility of history's repeating

itself based only on recent history of the 20th century, and predominantly the 20th century starting with the outbreak of World War II—not even as far back as World War I.

The oversight has catered to an idea of extremism, with young and middle-aged people making direct correlations to the worst in history, rather than looking back at millennia gone by and understanding that there are many others who are not so cruel and devastating, and who are more virtuous and thoughtful than our modern version of historical figures.

Along with its reflections on modern society, "How to Stop a Conspiracy" is a perfect book for encountering the good, the bad, and the indecisive. Not only is it a necessary read, but it also will help push American society (I dare say the society of the West) further away from the ills of Allies versus Axis to look at people, politicians particularly, more clearly.

Learning in Another Way

Along with learning about ancient history, how human nature is unchanging, and how there is no perfect way to handle a conspiracy, readers can also task themselves with learning a bit of Latin. The original Latin is on the facing pages of the book. The visually direct translation, if given

enough time and effort, provides the opportunity to learn at least a smidgen of Latin. If nothing else, it creates a second dose of entertainment.

"How to Stop a Conspiracy" is a necessary read, along with many other selections published by Princeton University Press. They are well-conceived books in their design, small enough for travel, and have easy-to-read large print that is perfect for readers of every age.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's "About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them." He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.

'How to Stop a Conspiracy: An Ancient Guide to Saving a Republic'

Author Sallust, translated by Josiah Osgood

Publisher Princeton University Press, May 10, 2022

Hardcover 230 pages



A timely translation of an ancient work.

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THE EPOCH TIMES

BOOK REVIEW

An Insider's Look at Nixon's Administration

An important behind-the-scenes look into the Nixon administration

DUSTIN BASS

The 1960s and 1970s were a turbulent time in the United States. As turbulent as those times were, the past decade seems to be a mirror image of those years. While reading Dwight Chapin's memoir, "The President's Man: The Memoirs of Nixon's Trusted Aide," one begins to view the modern political world through his historical lens.

Chapin was one of President Richard Nixon's most trusted aides, eventually being sentenced to prison as part of the Watergate fallout. People don't really know the details of Watergate, yet they have little issue with making claims about it. In effect, not much has changed from the days when the story was breaking, where hyperbole or outright misinformation was being purported.

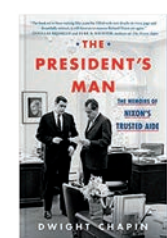
But this memoir is not simply about Watergate. It's also about the hopes and dreams and realities experienced by the author and those around him in the Nixon White House.

From a Bright Beginning to a Dark Ending

Chapin places the reader inside the West Wing, where he worked. The reader sees Chapin's memos and his discussions with the likes of Nixon, Bob Haldeman, Pat Buchanan, and Henry Kissinger, and thus the book is a chance to experience some of America's greatest personalities through the eyes of someone who was there.

Along with meeting those in the White House, the reader gets an introduction to what was taking place during Nixon's presidency: the inherited Vietnam War that was sucking the life out of the country (literally and figuratively). The antiwar movement made foreign affairs even more difficult, especially because the North Vietnamese were able to benefit from it. There was also the ongoing difficulties with the Soviet Union and their satellite country North Korea. And, there were the constant battles with a combative press. As aforementioned, there is so much irony in how little has changed over

The author Dwight Chapin was one of President Richard Nixon's most trusted aides.



An enlightening memoir that takes readers into the Oval Office during the turbulent 1960s and '70s.

the past 50 to 60 years.

One of the most significant moments in modern history (and obviously the book) was the opening of the People's Republic of China. Yet the impossible event took place, and Chapin organized and orchestrated the visits.

Along with opening China, the Nixon administration also signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreement with the Soviet Union. This agreement limited the manufacture of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Not only did Nixon begin the SALT treaties, which were followed up by later administrations, but he also did something almost as improbable. He convinced General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and the Soviets to allow him to conduct a live address to the Soviet people.

Chapin details the visit to the Kremlin, the SALT agreement, and the address, and how after Nixon's speech a brawl broke out between the KGB and the press corps, which involved Chapin and Haldeman. The author humorously wrote, "A fight had broken out at a peace conference."

According to the author, Nixon's great collapse took place in spite of him and because of him. Chapin discusses how Nixon blew off steam about people (whether those work-

ing for him or not), his indecisiveness, his preference to delegate nearly to a fault, and his rather understandable grudge against the media. These seemingly small problems resulted in a massive failure of leadership that resulted in his resignation.

The author also discusses many valid points that seem to be often left out of the Watergate conversation, including the motives behind the source for the Washington Post, known as Deep Throat, who decades later proved to be the FBI's deputy director Mark Felt. He connects several dots regarding the involvement of the CIA. Also, Chapin pulls no punches on John Dean, who was the president's counsel during the scandal.

Chapin's account of the adventures in the Nixon administration is, well, adventurous. It transitions, though not fully, from memoir to political thriller, which makes for even more enticing reading.

The Aftermath

This important memoir is chock-full of fascinating moments, yet the author lands the book smoothly. Chapin discusses his time serving a nine-month prison sentence and, according to him, how that changed his life for the better. Faith and mentorship come into play at an opportune time for the author personally and for the book.

There is no questioning whether Chapin is proud of his time in the Nixon administration. He makes it clear throughout the book that he was and still is.

There is so much in this book that makes it important for various types of readers, ranging from those who simply want more insight into the Nixon years to those who plan to go into politics, even only as a trusted aide.

It is even more important due to the numerous similarities between then and now.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's "About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them." He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.



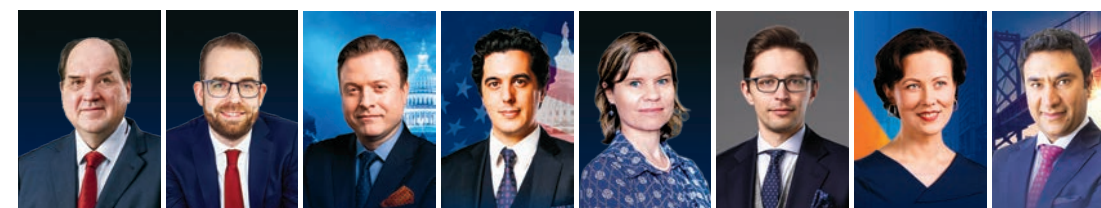
President-elect Richard Nixon (center R) takes the oath of office as he is sworn in as the 37th president of the United States by Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren (center L) during the inauguration ceremony at the U.S. Capitol, in Washington, on Jan. 20, 1969.

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"Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States," 1940, by Howard Chandler Christy. Oil on canvas. United States Capitol.

HISTORY

Black Robes in a Marble Palace

A look at the Supreme Court of the United States

Continued from Page 1

Given these mistaken or ignorant views, it is worthwhile looking at the Supreme Court's history, meaning, and place in our government and in our culture.

The Essentials

Article III, Section 1 of the Constitution declares, "The judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish."

This Article established our system of federal courts and also gave Congress the power to oversee the administration of those courts. As a result, for example, the Supreme Court has in the past ranged from five members to ten. The current number of nine justices has existed since just after the Civil War.

Section II of this same Article establishes the Court's jurisdiction, basically granting it the power arbitrate on the constitutional-

ity of such issues as treaties, suits between states, and other cases involving the United States as an entity.

A Gain in Function

In Front Royal, Virginia, where I now live, you'll find a highway named after John Marshall. Few residents, I suspect, could tell you much about Marshall. The same

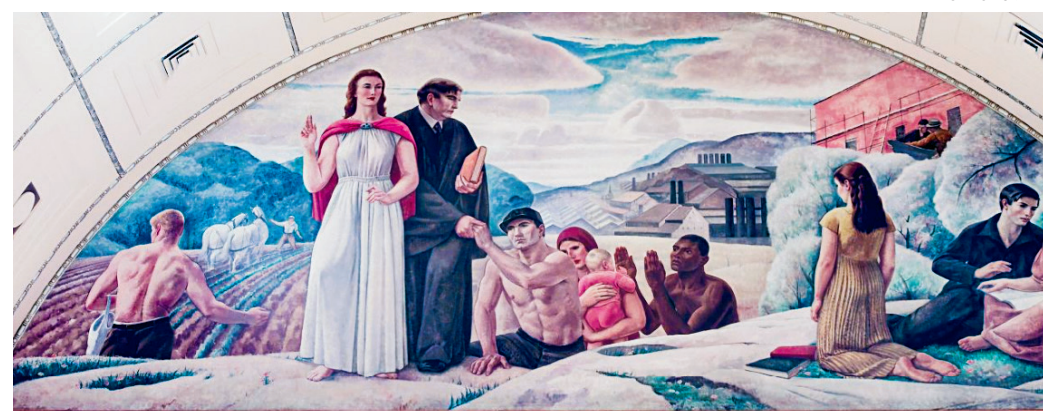
lack of familiarity probably holds true across the United States, but it was Chief Justice John Marshall who more than 200 years ago added to the Court the power of judicial review, which allowed the justices to examine and possibly invalidate actions of the legislative and executive branches. Incidentally, he was also the first justice to wear a black robe, dress that others on the

court soon adopted.

In the 1803 case of *Marbury v. Madison*, Marshall and the young court faced a dilemma. In brief, just hours before handing over the White House to Thomas Jefferson, John Adams had appointed several federal justices, including William Marbury as justice of the peace in Washington D.C. Though the documents were in order, Jefferson was upset by what he regarded as an act of chicanery and refused to deliver them. Consequently, Marbury sued for his lost position.

Though Marshall and the Court ruled that Marbury had the right to his commission, with Marshall writing this opinion, they also ruled that the Constitution did not give them original jurisdiction over such a case, meaning that Marbury had come directly to the Supreme Court with his case instead of going to a lower court first. In other words, their review of the case found this maneuver unconstitutional.

Since then, the Court has possessed and exercised this right of judicial review. Though thousands of such cases are presented to the



"Justice Triumphant," circa 1935, by Leon Kroll. Mural in the Attorney General Conference Room, Department of Justice, Washington. Library of Congress.

LITERATURE

A Ring of True Charity



A detail from a portrait of Lucrezia Panciatichi, circa 1540, by Angelo Bronzino.

KATE VIDIMOS

What does a ring mean? Based on the giver, the receiver, and the ring's character and composition, it carries a specific meaning and always has a story.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Antique Ring," when Mr. Edward Caryl gives his betrothed, Clara Pemberton, an antique diamond ring, she immediately asks about the ring's history. The ring's gem is so bright and set in so curious a fashion that it must have a unique story.

She wants to know "how many times it has been the pledge of faith between two lovers, and whether the vows, of which it was the symbol, were always kept or often broken." She entrusts Edward with producing a story that will bring the ring to life.

Edward revs up his imagination and tells the story of the ring. He starts with the wizard Merlin, who placed a wicked

spirit within it. Merlin made it "bound to work only good, so long as the ring is an unviolated pledge of love and faith." If the giver or receiver proves to be unfaithful or deceitful, the spirit's evil nature will awaken and rule the owner. Only an act of true charity can once again bind the spirit to goodness.

When Merlin gives the ring to a woman, she betrays his love by murdering him, and thus the fiendish spirit awakens and begins to wreak havoc. It then brings the woman sorrow, disgrace, guilt, betrayal, and eventually a terrible death. The ring passes from hand to hand, continuing to bring misfortune.

An Unfaithful Earl

It passes to the once great Earl of Essex, who awaits his execution the next day. He stares at the red-tinged diamond, a token from Queen Elizabeth I. To him, the ring

means salvation. He selfishly hopes that, by presenting Elizabeth with the ring, she will pardon him. He dwells on his past influence and power, hoping the ring will be a talisman of good fortune for him and that it will save his life.

But dwelling on false hope proves disastrous for the hapless earl. Out of desperation, the earl entrusts the ring to the Countess of Shrewsbury, "an unprincipled woman," someone he had once slighted. Full of vengeance and deception, she promises to take the ring to Elizabeth but keeps it for herself. One selfish act gives rise to another, bringing death to both. By betraying him, the countess lets him die. She keeps the ring and becomes subject to its evils; she dies, plagued by the guilt of her own evil deed.

The ring passes to many more unfortunate souls: soldiers, courtiers, nobles. To some, the ring offers passion, to oth-

ers a bribe. But to all, the ring brings evil consequences. Each owner continues to keep the evil alive in the spirit and, as Jordan Peterson says in "12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos," a "truly vicious circle takes hold."

Humble Charity
Eventually, the ring crosses the Atlantic and lands in a local church's collection box. Kind Deacon Tilton and another deacon empty the collection boxes they had passed around and count the proceeds. They are shocked to find an antique ring lying under a mound of copper coins. Unlike the red-tinged ring that the Earl of Essex possessed, this ring holds a diamond that "emits the whitest and purest luster."

It is not known who put the ring in the collection box, but Hawthorne writes that it was given in an act of pure and humble sacrifice and placed in the box as "a contribution for a charitable object." As it hits the bottom of the collection box, the ring loses all its hellish glow and shines like the brightest star. The spirit's evil nature is subdued.

As to its meaning, Edward tells his fiancée that the ring is "the human heart." The evil spirit in the ring is the falsehood "that causes all the sorrow and trouble in the world."

Hawthorne's story within a story shows that selfishness, deception, and lies have existed in the hearts of men throughout history, yet goodness also resides in a person's heart and one truly charitable act can cleanse a heart of selfishness. As St. Thomas Aquinas says, "Charity brings to life again those who are spiritually dead."

Though we fall, we do not have to yield to failure. We can rise higher than before. History can influence the present, but it does not determine it, for a selfish action

ing our criticisms.

A Truth We Must Never Forget
Appointees to the Supreme Court must take not one, but two Oaths of Office. All federal officials other than the president take the first oath, which begins by requiring the office holder to "solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic ..."

A Supreme Court justice must then render this Judicial Oath:

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will

faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as _____ under the Constitution and laws of the United States. So help me God."

Central to both oaths is the Constitution. Few of us are satisfied with every decision handed down by the Supreme Court, but those today who threaten injury to our Supreme Court justices, or who want to pack the court, or who regard the Constitution itself as out-of-date and useless might want to pause and reflect on the freedoms they enjoy.

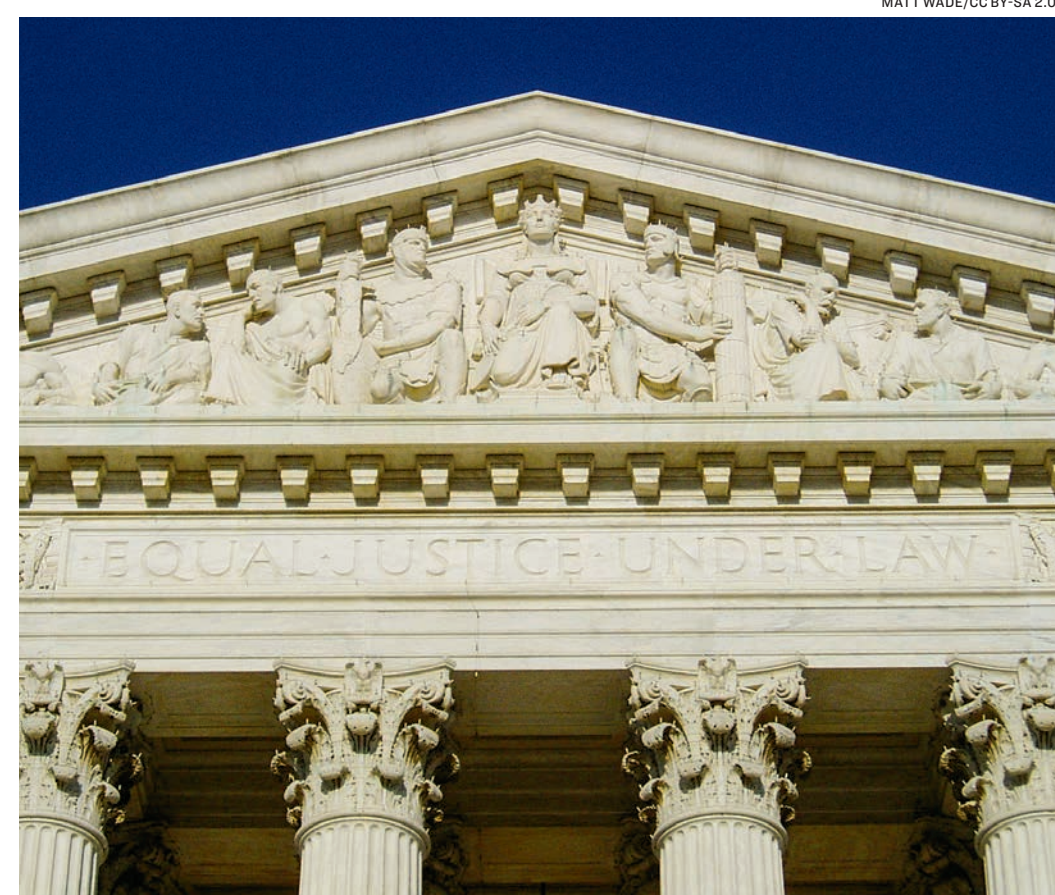
Those freedoms exist in part because of that Constitution and that Court. Together they form a bulwark defending liberty and justice against tyranny and oppression.

Wood engravings of Dred Scott and Harriet Scott from 1857 photographs by John H. Fitzgibbon. Library of Congress.

And the same holds true for our courts, a point we might bear in mind while deliver-



"Allegory of Justice," 1656, by Bernardino Mei. Private Collection.



Front façade of the United States Supreme Court Building highlighting the inscription "Equal Justice Under Law."

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ANCIENT ART

For the Love of Naples: Opening a Rare Ancient Greek Art Treasure

The Ipogeo dei Cristallini

LORRAINE FERRIER

Only a few ancient Greek wall paintings exist in the world.

LUCIANO AND MARCO PEDICINI



One of the more ornate burial chambers in the Ipogeo dei Cristallini features frescoed festoons strung between columns. Listed on this wall are the names of the Greeks and Romans who are buried in this tomb.

LUCIANO AND MARCO PEDICINI



Plump stone pillows feature on this sarcophagus that is also decorated with centuries-old colorful frescoes that have faded with time.

LUCIANO AND MARCO PEDICINI



Niches carved into stone in the Ipogeo dei Cristallini once held a variety of artifacts such as statuettes, sculptural reliefs, and vessels such as urns and amphorae (pots with a pointed bottom) containing oil, perfume, or ointment.

RICCARDO PICCIRILLO



Alessandra Calise Martuscelli and her family have recently opened the rare, ancient Greek Ipogeo dei Cristallini in Naples, Italy.



LUCIANO AND MARCO PEDICINI

The most elaborate burial chamber of the Ipogeo dei Cristallini is decorated like a luxury room with Greek architecture, frescoes, 'comfy' stone pillows, and a sculptural relief of the gorgon Medusa.

but in her heart she knew that's what she needed to do. "Art belongs to everyone," she said in a press release. And she feels that anyone who owns art assets has a duty to make them available for others to enjoy and to understand.

Ancient Greece Under Italian Soil

The ancient Greeks believed in myths, and the burial chambers are peppered with mythological characters. Set high on the back wall of the most opulent burial chamber is a sculptural relief of a Gorgon's head (Medusa) framed by a colorful circular frieze.

Frescoes in the entryway show a patera (a shallow dish), a jug, and two candelabra. Ancient Greeks used a jug and patera to conduct their daily libations, (ritual offerings they made to their gods or deceased loved ones). Beside one of the candelabras, there's a small drawing of Dionysus and Ariadne, the Greek god of wine and the daughter of King Midas, respectively.

Frescoed festoons, strung between columns topped with capitals depicting mythological creatures, line the upper walls. Listed under one festoon are the names of the Greeks and Romans who were laid to rest in the burial chamber. Two plump stone pillows are set on the top of each sarcophagus, or stone coffin, and a faint frescoed blue line decorates each pillow edge.

Niches carved into the wall of one burial chamber once held urns, amphorae (pots with a pointed bottom), and altar pieces. Some of the vessels contained oil, perfume, or ointments.

All the objects in the hypogeum, around 700 in all, were removed and preserved upon the site's discovery in the late 19th century. The objects are a mix of ancient Greek and Roman artifacts, as in Roman times some of the rooms in the hypogeum were adapted by Romans to their beliefs. There are offerings of food and terracotta statuettes, terracotta reliefs of farewell scenes, and even coins meant as offerings to Charon, whom the ancient Greeks believed would take their loved ones' souls to the world of the dead.

Around 470 of the artifacts are on display in a room dedicated to Hellenistic era burial tombs at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli or MANN), one of the world's most important archaeological museums. The rest of the artifacts will be displayed in the hypogeum once the restoration is complete, which could be in two years' time.

Restoring the Hypogeum

Martuscelli has had many challenges in opening the hypogeum, but she takes it in stride. "Everything I've done with love, without a problem," she said.

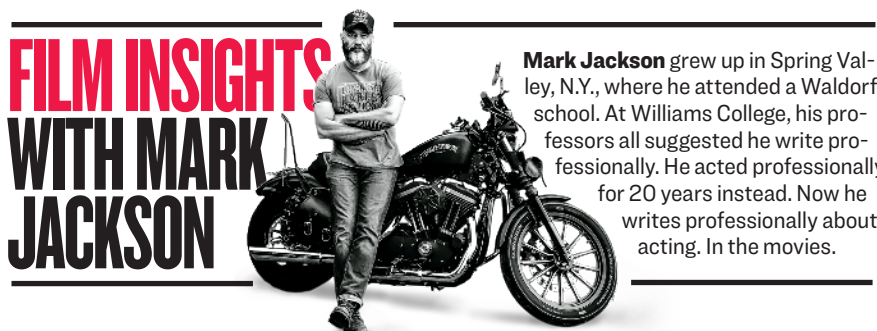
She's keen to point out that the project is a family one, with her husband and two children, Paolo and Sara, all pitching in. The restoration effort was partly funded by EU100,000 (around \$104,000) of family money and EU200,000 (around \$208,000) from the region's European funds.

For the last two years, experts and enthusiasts have worked every day at the hypogeum, preparing it for its public opening. And now, a maximum of 25 people can visit the hypogeum daily—any more than that could disturb the fine temperature-humidity balance needed to preserve the site.

Martuscelli stresses that the purpose of publicly opening the hypogeum was not to create a business. She wants to make a sustainable social impact in her city, and a real difference to the local economy. At the moment, she employs three local guides. And, of course, she wants more people to know about this important part of Italy's heritage.

Even though the once-hidden hypogeum has been made public, there are many secrets within the site that are still to be discovered. Human remains found onsite have been sent off for analysis. And conservators continue to restore the hypogeum so visitors can see them at work. Who knows what else will be uncovered.

To find out more about the Ipogeo dei Cristallini, visit IpogeoCristallini.org



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

The Life of Frankie Valli

MARK JACKSON

In Clint Eastwood's "Jersey Boys" (2014), we learn there were only three ways for young Italian American men to escape Jersey in 1951: join the Army, join the mob, or get famous. "Jersey Boys" is the movie version of the Broadway musical about the life and times of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons: four juvenile semi-delinquents who made it out of Belleville, New Jersey, on the third option.

When asked at a June 9, 2014, press conference in Manhattan (with other members of the movie's team as well) how he related so well to this seemingly foreign material, Clint Eastwood revealed a little-known fact: Growing up in Oakland, California, his high school and neighborhood were largely Italian American. And much like comedian Jay Mohr, who grew up similarly and said that it took him years to stop saying "Marone!" Eastwood let on that, unbeknownst to most, he possesses an in-depth familiarity with all things Italian American. Who knew?

For Those Curious About Clint

The first thing you notice about Clint Eastwood, in person, is that he's not Dirty Harry. Nor is he Staunch Republican Clint, chiding Obama-in-a-chair (who was not there). He's also not that movie-star legend, two-fisting Oscars in a tuxedo. And he's definitely not the gruff guy from "Gran Torino." He's all of the above, of course, but in person he's quite different. His voice is higher, he's very actor-y in the sense that he's chatty, he enjoys the spotlight, and is (not surprisingly) very funny. A chameleon.

It was a bit of a shocking revelation—all those film and TV Clint Eastwoods I thought I knew, plus a lot of the public Clint Eastwoods—all characters. So who is Clint, really? Clint Eastwood's an actor's actor.

A Jukebox Musical

At one point in "Jersey Boys," the band is watching 1951's "Ace in the Hole" on TV in a hotel room. Kirk Douglas's Chuck Tatum is having an altercation. "Make me!" says Jan Sterling's Lorraine to Chuck. Chucks slaps her across the face: Whack! "Oh!! Does she cry?!" asks a band member. "No, big girls don't cry," responds his band mate.

A so-called jukebox musical often uses a contrived setup to play a famous song. In this case, it's the truth—this is how The Four Seasons' hit "Big Girls Don't Cry" came into the world.

Mob or Music

At a barbershop in Belleville, New Jersey, local mobster Gyp DeCarlo (Christopher Walken) is having himself a shave. Young Francis Castelluccio (John Lloyd Young) will do the shaving honors—it's his first time. Gyp's taken him under his wing.

Francis is in a band. Buddy Tommy's on guitar, and Nicky's on bass. This kind of harmonizing variety trio was what people wanted to hear in 1951. This kid Frankie—he's got a voice! When he sings, it moves Gyp to tears (which, because it's Walken, is funny).

Buddy Tommy DeVito might as well be Frankie's bad-boy older brother; he's in and out of Rahway Correctional. Frankie's

'Jersey Boys' is about four Italian American youths in Manhattan's outer boroughs.



Frankie Valli (John Lloyd Young) and Mary Delgado (Renée Marino) on a date.

'Jersey Boys'

Director: Clint Eastwood

Starring: Christopher Walken, John Lloyd Young, Vincent Piazza, Michael Lomenda, Erich Bergen

Running Time: 2 hours, 14 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Release Date: June 20, 2014

★★★★☆

Gyp DeCarlo (Christopher Walken) takes a shine to Frankie Valli (John Lloyd Young).



ALL PHOTOS BY MALPASO PRODUCTIONS/WARNER BROS.

mom doesn't love Tommy and his ilk: "I don't understand the infatuation with those mamaluke bums!" (UrbanDictionary.com: "A mamaluke is an Italian slang term, for someone who does something dumb, stupid, silly or foolish, or, is dumb, stupid, silly, or foolish.")

Tommy schools Frankie about girls. "Marriage is when you take a shave while your wife sits on the can, cutting her toenails." But Frankie doesn't listen to Tommy; he marries Mary Delgado (Renée Marino) who tells him to change his name to Valley. With an "L." "Valli's more Italian."

From Trio to Quartet

But 'round about 1960, nobody's hiring trios anymore. They need to evolve, so Tommy finds a talent scout named Joey Pesci (Joseph Russo). That Joe Pesci? That Joe Pesci. And Joey Pesci finds them a fourth member, Bob Gaudio, writer of songs.

What to do about a band name? While they're standing outside a bowling alley called the Four Seasons, its sign goes haywire, lights flickering on and off. It's a sign. From a sign.

The way they sing and play, people think they're black. They go to the famous Brill Building on Broadway and talk to agents who say, "You? You're not black?" "No, we're Italian!" "Great! Come back when you're black!"

But agents are eventually landed, contracts signed, and fame waxes. And then wanes. Ironically, in the waning phase, we learn that Tommy's into a loan shark named Waxman for \$162,000 large. Plus an extra half a mill to another source.

Tommy's hustler personality may have ultimately gotten them off the ground, but it now threatens to grind them back into it. Nicky eventually quits the band. Tommy's compulsive need to use up every last towel while in a hotel suite got on Nicky's last nerve.

Tommy also dishes dirt to a reporter about Frankie. And yet golden-hearted Frankie, faithful to the end, winds up playing 200 dates a year in the polyester '70s, in cheap hotels and dive bars, while countertop roaches stroll by his coffee cup—all to cover Tommy's massive financial debt. Talk about a friend in need.

Jukebox Perennial

Since "Jersey Boys" is based on the Broadway musical, the movie version borrows the theatrical device of "breaking the fourth wall," where actors speak directly into the camera to tell their stories. This emphasizes the homey, bygone feel of American neighborhoods where everybody intimately knows everybody else's business.

Highly reminiscent of the now classic "Saturday Night Fever," which rocketed John Travolta to stardom in 1977, "Jersey Boys" is likewise about four Italian American youths in Manhattan's outer boroughs; the attitudes and lingo are the same.

"Fever" wasn't a jukebox musical, but its songs dominated jukeboxes and airwaves across America, and 45 years later they're still there. So are Frankie Valli's "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry," "December, 1963," "My Eyes Adored You," "Grease," "Rag Doll," and

"Walk Like a Man," to name a few.

An Actor's Director

In "Jersey Boys," thick-as-ragù accents pervade. When you meet the cast in person, you realize there's not a hint of mob-inflected Jersey-ese among them; they don't walk or talk that way in person—all highly articulate. So why not hire some "Jersey Shore" types for "Jersey Boys"? Why not Pauly D in the role of Nick Massi instead of Canadian Michael Lomenda? Because Eastwood, an actor's actor, who also directs, prefers to direct actor's actors. A Pauly D type also could not be cast due to the performers needing to have serious singing chops.

Eastwood hired musical theater vets from the Broadway shows, with hundreds of performances' worth of experience in these roles under their belts. Young has 1,400 performances, to be exact. It shows. These are classic Broadway actors who, in the words of cast member Erich Bergen, "live in fear they might be working at Starbucks next week." Clint hands down the ladder.

Stage Song Versus Movie Close-Up

So what about the differences between a stage and a film version of the same story? At the same interview session, co-scriptwriter Rick Elice mentioned some of the challenges of moving a musical to the big screen. The example he gave is that in musical theater, the magic of live music provides the vehicle of the close-up. The act of breaking into song allows us to focus on the inner life of the actor.

On film, however, music loses its magic. The camera close-up becomes the storytelling device that reveals a character's inner world. The use of the close-up then allows more of the story itself to be brought into focus. And it takes a director of Eastwood's caliber to manipulate the medium to enhance that storytelling to riveting effect.

The Eastwood Movie Set

Regarding Clint's on-set milieu, Bergen (who plays Bob Gaudio, predominant Four Seasons writing talent) said:

"When you walk onto a Clint Eastwood set, there's no ego there. There's respect for everyone, from the actors to the catering truck." (Clint injected in a stage whisper, "Especially the catering truck!")

"The ego-free nature of that set teaches me that if you have the talent, everything else is unimportant."

Female roles are few and far between, with only the actress playing Frankie's wife getting more than a couple of lines. Eastwood's daughter Francesca Eastwood plays a waitress.

The only thing really missing is that when Clint pays tribute to the stage musical with an all-cast dance number, he should have let legendary (yet few know this) song-and-dance man Christopher Walken do a nice soft-shoe. While dispersing priceless Walken-isms. Clint should've allowed the Saint of Strange Syntax to combine his musical and cinematic talents into one instantaneous, hall-of-fame YouTube classic.

(L-R) Frankie Valli (John Lloyd Young), Bob Gaudio (Erich Bergen), Tommy DeVito (Vincent Piazza), and Nick Massi (Michael Lomenda), in "Jersey Boys."

(L-R, starting 2nd L) Vito (Steve Schirripa), Frankie Valli (John Lloyd Young), and Gyp DeCarlo (Christopher Walken), in the barber shop where Frankie worked.





"The Abduction of the Sabine Women," circa 1633–1634, by Nicolas Poussin. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Classicism in French Art

Nicolas Poussin and Jacques-Louis David

DA YAN

The spring of 2022 was an extraordinary season for French art in the United States. At the Getty Center in Los Angeles, the exhibition "Poussin and the Dance" delved into the Baroque master Nicolas Poussin's pictorial choreography and showcased a number of paintings executed in Rome during the 1630s. Meanwhile, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, "Jacques-Louis David: Radical Draftsman" surveyed the practice of drawing in Jacques-Louis David's long and turbulent career around the time of the French Revolution.

Spanning two centuries, the works of art

exhibited at the venues come from public and private collections around the world, and trace the development of French painting at two crucial junctures in its history. The works of these two artists attest to the enduring legacy of ancient Greece and Rome in driving the stylistic innovations in the modern age.

Poussin's Rome was the major European center for antiquarian learning. Arriving in the Eternal City in 1624, he found a vibrant culture that succeeded the artistic flowering of the Renaissance. As powerful patrons and erudite scholars amassed impressive collections of Roman art, they also commissioned new works in the spirit of the antique. Thus Poussin, working in this milieu, developed a figurative style powerfully animated by the study of ancient sculpture. His arrangement

A new appreciation for ancient Greek and Roman aesthetic again spread throughout Europe.

of figures in a horizontal grouping evokes the format of the Roman sarcophagus, the marble surfaces of which were often decorated with a sculptural frieze in high relief—that is, a long stretch of deeply carved bodies.

And among the many antiquities on view in the papal city, the "Borghese Dancers" particularly inspired the French artist. It was carved in the second century, and by the 17th century it hung at the Villa Borghese above the door of the grand gallery. Joining hands, the five dancers spring with light-footed steps as a breeze presses the thin veil against their moving bodies.

Poussin transported this figure group into many of his paintings, capturing the horizontal axis of the frieze in the movement of a circular dance. His piece "Dance to the Music



"A Dance to the Music of Time," circa 1634–1636, by Nicolas Poussin. Oil on canvas. The Wallace Collection, London.

of Time" (circa 1634–1636) exemplifies this classic compositional formula, and the carefully modeled figures show a stylistic imitation of the marble's high sculptural relief. With line and paint, Poussin gave the dancers a weightless grace and a visible rhythm that rivaled even that of the ancient dancers.

No such festive pleasure is seen, on the other hand, in Jacques-Louis David's austere history paintings such as the famous "Oath of the Horatii" (1784) and "The Death of Socrates" (1787). In the century following Poussin's demise, the taste of the French Baroque had gradually evolved into an elaborate, theatrical, and ornamental style in the visual arts, known as the Rococo. Yet toward the second half of the 18th century, fostered by continuing antiquarian studies and archaeological explorations, a new appreciation for ancient Greek and Roman aesthetic again spread throughout Europe. This found a special manifestation in David's works.

In his "Horatii," David depicted a scene from a Roman legend, in which three brothers swear to fight for their country in single combat. As the men stand in an angular pose with stoic determination, their sister swoons, for she is betrothed to one of their enemies and must lose someone she loves. In composing the scene, David tightly reduced the story into its most basic elements, arranging the figure groups into a frieze against a solemn Roman arcade.

Such a design recalls Poussin's imitation of the Roman sarcophagus, but David's laconic expression emphasizes the sharp juxtaposition between masculine patriotism and feminine sentimentality. Here, the ancient civic heroism of the Horatii becomes a potent symbol, which spoke to the agitated political moment at the dawn of the French Revolution.

Then three years later, with "The Death of Socrates," David sought to convey an even stronger moral tale: The Greek philosopher would rather die in order to uphold his faith in truth. Thus, Socrates sits upright on his deathbed, passionately lecturing still, as his hand reaches for the poisonous hemlock. His disciples gather around in desolation—

some listen intently, and others weep and wail. Plato, in a gray robe sitting at the left, lowers his head lost deeply in thoughts.

In this picture, David again conjured up the ancient frieze structure and set the figures in dramatic lighting to accentuate a sculptural severity. Through assimilating this classic visual language, David successfully created a modern interpretation of an episode of ancient virtue, which resonated with the high intellectual ideals of the neoclassical movement.

Working across two centuries, the two major tastemakers of the French school both found their inspiration in distant antiquity. Yet both made ancient art speak to the present and crucially shaped the direction of modern painting. Therefore, the aesthetic influence from antiquity, combined with the incorporation of the present culture, formed the powerful art tradition we now classify as classical realism.

Da Yan is a doctoral student of European art history. Raised in Shanghai, he lives and works in the Northeastern United States.



"Oath of the Horatii," 1784–1785, by Jacques-Louis David. Oil on canvas. Louvre Museum, Paris.



"The Death of Socrates," 1787, by Jacques-Louis David. Oil on canvas. Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1931.



Marble relief of the "Borghese Dancers," carved during the second century in Rome. Louvre Museum, Paris.

BOOK REVIEW

A Dive Into Easy Company's Enigmatic Soldier

Meet WWII 'Band of Brothers' hero Ronald Speirs

DUSTIN BASS

For fans of the HBO series "Band of Brothers," the name Ronald Speirs is very familiar. He was a fan favorite due to his bravery, stoicism, and enigmatic nature. The new book "Fierce Valor: The True Story of Ronald Speirs and His Band of Brothers" by Jared Frederick and Erik Dorr proves that this portrayal was quite accurate.

The military life of Speirs is worthy of a biography. His exploits during D-Day on through the Battle of the Bulge and the end of World War II, as well as service during the Korean War and contributions during the Cold War era, are a testament to a man who personified brilliance on the battlefield.

A Controversial Hero

The authors begin the book by writing briefly about Speirs's parents, Robert and Martha, who with their five children emigrated from Scotland to New England and found success during the 1920s, managing well even during the Great Depression. Ronald was the youngest of the five.

Ronald was born in 1920. At the time of

the Pearl Harbor attack, he was working in accounting for an insurance company. He would soon be drafted into the war. The authors waste no time getting to the heart of Speirs's life: war.

As a member of the 101st Airborne, Speirs was part of the D-Day invasion, being air dropped in Normandy behind enemy lines. The authors home in on a moment that would contribute to Speirs's persona and aura throughout the war, and even the rest of his life. Out of necessity, or perhaps revenge, Speirs ordered the execution of surrendered German soldiers. The authors discuss how Allies had few options with prisoners, as there was nowhere to put them. It was either release them or execute them. Having them in tow put fellow soldiers at incredible risk.

Regarding revenge, the American soldiers had witnessed what had happened to many of their comrades. Many were killed upon landing, some savagely while still hanging from their parachutes in trees, and others ruthlessly executed.

It was this moment that created his aura, along with an incident involving a sergeant who had been drinking, was belligerent, re-



American troops landing in Normandy on D-Day, 1945. Life Photo Collection.

The military life of Speirs is worthy of a biography.

fused to obey an order, or displayed cowardice that resulted in Speirs shooting him. Why are there so many possibilities surrounding the sergeant's death? Those were the rumors that swirled around the camps. Throughout the book, Frederick and Dorr pull from various contemporary sources to corroborate stories or dispel rumors.

Just as was demonstrated in the HBO series, there was something almost mythical about Speirs. His ferocity and demand for bravery at every turn only played up to these swirling rumors.

The authors discuss how his men feared him, but even more so—and more importantly—respected him. Speirs, as proven throughout the book, would not require

anything from his men that he himself was not willing to do.

A Man of Heroic Exploits

Much of what is discussed in the book is reminiscent of the acclaimed TV series: the D-Day drop, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge, and the race to Hitler's Eagle's Nest.

Speirs rose through the ranks, having proven himself a man of valor. One outstanding example was during the Battle of the Bulge when he did the unthinkable. Called in by his commanding officer, the now-famed Dick Winters, he was to relieve a lieutenant who had become incapacitated during a firefight.

Speirs regrouped the men of Easy Company and coordinated the attack. Uncertain if Item Company could see Easy Company, he raced through the German lines with bullets nipping at his heels, made contact with Item Company, ran back through enemy lines, and returned to his men of Easy. In the words of Sgt. Carwood Lipton of Easy Company, "Damn, that was impressive."

It is these incredible moments that are captured in "Fierce Valor," along with how Speirs's subordinates and superiors felt about him. Even Speirs himself makes mention throughout the book that he never thought he would make it out of the war alive, especially with the types of risks he would take, often going on solo missions.

But he did make it out alive, and he would be called into action five years later with the outbreak of the Korean War.

Though most of the book covers Speirs's experiences during World War II, the au-

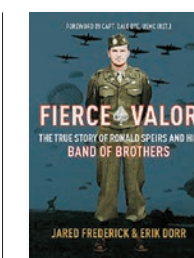
thors provide a good amount of material for his post-World War II work. He fought extensively in the Korean War. He was an administrator overseeing the imprisonment of several high-ranking Nazi prisoners at Spandau, including Rudolph Hess and Albert Speer. He was also an adviser during the Laos Civil War, and eventually worked in the Pentagon where he played a vital role during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

A Public and Distant Life

Frederick and Dorr present the breadth of who Speirs was, or at least as much as is possible. He lived a very private life during his long military career, and especially after. He married multiple times, but it was not until the late 1980s that he found a love that would last. It was a perfect fit for a man who seemed destined to be alone. He married into a very large family with children and grandchildren.

When historian Stephen Ambrose began writing his book "Band of Brothers," he began contacting and interviewing numerous members of Easy Company. Speirs proved rather elusive. He had proven to be so decades prior, having avoided reunions and contact with former comrades. But Ambrose was able to retrieve enough of a response to help write about him in the book.

Speirs, however, wasn't thrilled with the book; therefore, it precluded his desire to be involved in the TV series. The authors discuss how the actor, Matthew Settle, took cues from the book and from soldiers who knew Speirs. Settle's preparation was more than sufficient for the performance,



A man who took nerve-shattering risks during World War II.

'Fierce Valor: The True Story of Ronald Speirs and His Band of Brothers'

Author

Jared Frederick and Erik Dorr

Publisher

Regnery History

Date

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Hardcover

400 pages

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as he proved just as enigmatic on screen as Speirs did in real life.

A 'Killer' and a 'Tough Soldier'

The story of Ronald Speirs is more than a biography. It is a study of different types of soldiers. Throughout the book, there are various types: the hesitant, the reserved, and (what Speirs is termed numerous times) the killer.

But as is made quite clear in "Fierce Valor," war is about killing, and there are times when a killer is needed. The authors, and those soldiers who are quoted, are not referring to a madman or an unhinged psychopath. Rather, the discussion about Speirs concerns what is needed in battle not only to defeat the enemy but also to protect fellow soldiers.

Speirs left a legacy for future soldiers regarding what may at times be required of a soldier, and what is definitely required to be successful on the battlefield. It appears that this "tough soldier" will always be surrounded by mystery, but the authors show in their work that this is acceptable. They show that preserving some mystery and uncertainty can prove beneficial, especially when working to secure the respect of others.

For World War II buffs and fans of "Band of Brothers" (the book and the series), "Fierce Valor" is a wonderful addition to the personal library.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's "About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them." He is an author and co-host of "The Sons of History" podcast.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

A Fable About Love and Loss

MARK JACKSON

Back in 2012, from director and writer Peter Hedges ("What's Eating Gilbert Grape") came the magical tale "The Odd Life of Timothy Green." It's a fable about the power of intention, being careful of what you wish for, self-acceptance, love, loss, and new beginnings.

I reviewed it in 2012, but going back for a rewind-review-re-rate, I see it's now got a Rotten Tomatoes percentage skew of critics: 36, audiences: 67. That's ridiculous. This is a kid's story. Some film critics demand that movies please their adult sensibilities instead of considering what the kids want and need. Some critics also live out wannabe film professor fantasies, examining technical merits and far-reaching political ramifications with a magnifying glass (often, much like the academic community, with the intention of impressing colleagues) instead just feeling the feels. With art, the heart needs stimulation and nurture as well as the brain; for kids, it's mostly the heart.

Without Further Ado

So. Jim and Cindy Green (Joel Edgerton and Jennifer Garner) are a young couple who work at an old-timey pencil factory in the sleepy, small town of Stanleyville. They tell a strange and remarkable tale to the skeptical supervisor at an adoption agency (Shohreh Aghdashloo).

They tried desperately for years to have a child of their own, but after exhausting every known medical solution, the doctors finally advised them to call it quits.

While seeking to lay their grief to rest, they'd creatively brainstormed about the qualities their imaginary child would have had, and wrote them down. "He'll have Uncle Bub's sense of humor!" "He'll be a glass-half-full kid!" "He'll score the winning goal!" They wrote down 54 girl names—and one boy name. As a ritual to help them move on, they'd collected their notes, put them in a wooden box, and buried it in the garden. Perhaps "planted" would be a more accurate term.

The wind kicked up, there was a brief torrential rain, and suddenly ... there was a young boy named Timothy, covered in wet

mud, in their house (CJ Adams). He had strange green leaves growing on his legs. The skeptical adoption supervisor leans forward in anticipation. What was that one boy name on the list?

Timothy appeared to have all of the qualities that the Greens had planted in the garden, but he was also a bit of a strange one, this Timothy. When they tried to snip his leg-leaves off, the steel hedge clippers broke. Timothy was sweet and funny. He was completely awful at soccer, but he did score a winning goal.

He went to school and endured bullying. He also won approval from the aloof older girl whom all the other boys were enamored of. Mom Cindy had been suspicious of the ensuing puppy love at first. (Timothy, of course, got occasional bad advice from his brand-new, overzealous parents.)

'Timothy' drips with all-American small-town quaintness and nostalgia—in a positive way.

A joyous family life developed. Then one day Uncle Bub died, and one of Timothy's leaves turned brown and fell off. And they kept coming off, here and there, until it became clear that when they were all gone, so might Timothy be.

When the magical story of Timothy finally comes to an end, the adoption supervisor looks at Jim and Cindy with newfound respect.

Performances

CJ Adams as Timothy is adorable—it was very much a star-is-born performance. I was sure we'd be seeing a lot more of this kid, and sure enough, he's done eight movies to date. Let's see what he can do in the next phase of his acting career. Jennifer Garner fulfills the mom role well (naturally) and Aussie Joel Edgerton, who'd played an excellent dad in "Warrior," plays the kind of dad every kid would want.

The Israeli-born Odeya Rush is mesmerizing as Joni, the girl Timothy falls for. Boys



WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES

'The Odd Life of Timothy Green'

Director:
Peter Hedges

Starring:
Jennifer Garner, Joel Edgerton, CJ Adams, Rosemarie DeWitt, Ron Livingston, M. Emmet Walsh, Dianne Wiest, Shohreh Aghdashloo, David Morse, Odeya Rush

MPAA Rating:
PG

Release Date:
Aug. 15, 2012

Running Time:
1 hour, 45 minutes

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

everywhere will remember having, or having had, a crush on a girl like her in grade school. She teaches Timothy to accept his odd leafy-ness. I thought at the time that her portrayal of Joni was probably also a star-is-born performance, and she's done 27 movies, but she hasn't had a breakout hit yet.

At times threatening to trip and fall into the treacle vat, "Timothy" drips with all-American small-town quaintness and nostalgia, but mostly in a positive way. From the birthday parties, family gatherings, town hall meetings, and soccer games, right down to Joni's Stingray bike, it's an inspiring, magical fairy tale.

The film that "The Odd Life of Timothy Green" most resembles, however, is the similarly titled "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." While that film was dark and mystical with ever-so-slightly creepy CGI, and meant for adults, Hedges directs this cinematic fable with more lightness and magic, for kids. But in dealing with issues of mortality and child adoption, it's not just for kids—it's a movie for parents too.

Mark Jackson is the senior film critic for The Epoch Times. Mark has 20 years' experience as a professional New York actor, classical theater training, and a BA in philosophy. He recently narrated the Epoch Times audiobook "How the Specter of Communism is Ruling Our World," and has a Rotten Tomatoes author page.

(L-R)
Jennifer Garner, CJ Adams, and Joel Edgerton in "The Odd Life of Timothy Green."



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