

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



Ingres's family portrait sketches show the love and strength of the family in the Napoleonic Age. "The Stamaty Family," 1818, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres; 18 inches by 14 and 1/2 inches.

## FINE ART

## THE FAMILY PORTRAITS OF

## Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Families during the Age of Napoleon come to life in simple yet skillful sketches

## YVONNE MARCOTTE

Families who lived in France during the Napoleonic era made strong and resilient homes in their country. Their homes were built not of bricks and mortar, but of caring and love. This is evident in the skillful portrait sketches of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), who presented

**With over 4,000 drawings, Ingres perfected the contour line.**

the prosperous and loving middle-class families of this time.

**Parent and Child**

In many of his drawings, Ingres showed the strong bond of parent and child through their expressions. When he prepared to sketch, he carefully observed the face of each sitter. He once said: "To really succeed in a portrait, first of all one has to be imbued with the face one wants to paint, to reflect on it for a long time, attentively, from all sides, and even to devote the first sitting to this."

In the sketch of Charles Hayard and his daughter Marguerite, we see the protective embrace that a father gives his child, and the

little girl rewards that care with a child's trust as she holds her father close to her. From the top hat on the chair, purposely placed in the composition, we assume Hayard has just returned or is just about to leave, as he still wears his topcoat. His daughter greets him or, possibly, wishes him goodbye. The pose is immediate and casual.

Art reviewer for the New York Review of Books, Sanford Schwartz notes in the online newsletter Artists Network that Ingres's drawings made the sitters come alive. "Ingres made sitters more physically tangible and psychologically present than they had perhaps ever been in the tradition of portraiture."

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## POETRY

# Kids, Showers, Love, and Flowers

Verses for March and the coming of spring

JEFF MINICK

Spring is the unlocking time, the greening of fields, forests, and lawns, the season of mud puddles, sunshine, and gentle rains when the last hard edges of winter melt away and the days are soft again.

Spring figures in several Western religions. To the ancient Greeks, the season meant the release of Persephone, goddess of spring, from the underworld, allowing her to cross the earth strewing garlands and seeds, and bringing the land to life again. Jews occasionally refer to Passover as a spring festival, a time of new beginnings. For Christians, spring brings Easter and resurrection.

Many people mark the first day of spring, the equinox (from the Latin for "equal night," meaning day and night are equivalent in their duration) as a special occasion.

This is the time when gardeners put aside the seed catalogs and reference books that they've been perusing all winter long, grab their gloves, shovels, and rakes, and till their flower and vegetable beds. Homeowners crank up their mowers or perform a "spring cleaning," kids run barefoot in the new grass, and families spend evenings on the back deck of their houses or on their apartment balconies, enjoying birdsong and the voices of neighbors.

And some people write poetry.

### Things Are Different Now

As recently as a century ago, poems celebrating spring found an audience missing in today's culture. We heat our homes with a flick of the thermostat, we drive to work in warm cars, and we amuse ourselves in the long winter evenings with televisions and computers.

For nearly all of human history, however, at least in cold climates, winter brought confinement, limited food choices, and living with icy temperatures. In 1900, for example, the Minnesota housewife cooped up inside her house from November until April may have welcomed May like a cherished, long-lost relative. The Vermont farmer who had plodded for three months or more through snow and slush to tend the cattle in the barn surely embraced those April mornings when his breath no longer froze in his beard. Such people undoubtedly took comfort from the spring poems that came their way.

Many of the poets felt these differences in the seasons as keenly as their readers. In "When Icicles Hang by the Wall," Shakespeare wrote of winter that "milk comes frozen home in a pail./ When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul." Three hundred years later, in "Winter-Time," Robert Louis Stevenson's young narrator tells us this about an early winter's day:

Before the stars have left the skies,  
At morning in the dark I rise;  
And shivering in my nakedness,  
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Go back in time 600 years, and we find the first lines of Geoffrey Chaucer's Prologue to "The Canterbury Tales" saluting April "with his shoures soote," meaning "sweet showers," which spell the end of winter and "the droghte of March."

Given winter's ice and storms, words in praise of spring have long been welcomed by these folks of hearth and candlelight.

### The Children's Hour

Winter is commonly used as a metaphor for old age, while spring serves the same purpose for the young. It therefore comes as no surprise that poets famous and obscure have written many pieces for children about the splendors of this season. This anonymous counting poem encapsulates the joy in spring with several of its specific delights:

Spring is here! Spring is here!  
Winter is gone and two flowers appear.  
Three little robins begin to sing,  
Four bicycle bells begin to ring,  
Five children come out and jump the rope.  
Spring is here now! I hope, I hope!

In "March Is Here," Lenore Hetrick reminds the younger crew that before they can jump rope and ride their bikes, they may have to endure some windy blasts from the third month of the year.

When the gray, bare boughs  
Creak and bend,  
When the tall trees toss like wild  
When there is a roaring  
Around the chimney  
That frightens every small child.  
When the clouds in the sky  
Rush swiftly past

In shapes that you would fear,  
Then there cannot be  
The slightest doubt.  
March! Wild March is here!

### Young and in Love

This poetic equation of spring with youth also brings us verses of romance and love.

For countless generations, human beings have equated this season with fertility and rejuvenation. The maypole dances that continue to be day in Great Britain and parts of the United States, the tales of the Celtic Green Man, and the baby chicks and bunnies we associate with Easter are only some of the season's symbols. For poets, young love is also emblematic of spring.

In his play "As You Like It," Shakespeare includes the Thomas Morley song "It Was a Lover and His Lass," in which "Sweet lovers love the spring":

It was a lover and his lass,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,  
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding,  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This connection of romance, dalliance, and spring has endured in modern times. Lerner and Loewe's 1960 musical "Camelot," for example, echoes Morley's song in "The Lusty Month of May" with its opening couplet: "Tra la, it's May, the lusty month of May/ That lovely month when everyone goes blissfully astray."

### Wounded Hearts

Some poets paint a picture of young love decked out in spring's rich mantle. In Sonnet 98, Shakespeare contrasted "proud-pied April dressed all in his trim" with an absent lover. And Royalist and

17th-century poet Thomas Carew wrote of the bounties and beauties of nature in "The Spring" with such lines as "Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring/ In triumph to the world the youthful Spring." Midway through the poem, however, he shifts gears to lament the love who has rejected him:

Now all things smile, only my love doth  
lour;  
Nor hath the scalding noonday sun the  
power  
To melt that marble ice, which still doth  
hold  
Her heart congeal'd, and makes her  
pity cold.

Carew concludes with this devastating description of the woman he loves: "only she doth carry/ June in her eyes, in her heart January."

Like Carew and Shakespeare, poets today write verse contrasting the delights and beauties of spring with disasters or disappointments in love.

Had I known love, flowers would have  
bloomed in Spring  
I would have danced when hearing  
whippoorwills sing  
But in my heart no seeds of love were  
sown  
No one brought bouquets or called me  
his own  
I wear no wedding ring

Lin Lane's poem "Had I Known Love" laments not the bitterness of a lost love or a betrayal, but the absence of any romantic love at all: "There were no strong arms to which I could cling." Spring promises blossoms and warmer days, but there are no guarantees regarding love.

### Appreciation Enhanced

The seasons pass, collecting themselves into years and then into a lifetime. Many of those who are old have surely experienced that profound moment when they are telling a story of youthful romance and realize with a shock that 60 years have passed since that kiss in the April dusk in the parking lot of a high school. Meanwhile, many of the young, filled with the sap and zest of spring, pay no heed to the passage of time. The words from "Fiddler on the Roof"—"Sunrise,



sunset/ Sunrise, sunset/ One season following another/ Laden with happiness and tears"—have little impact on a boy or girl in love in the springtime.

Yet one poem of the season reminds us of the swift river of time and the importance of appreciating the beauties surrounding us. Here is A.E. Housman's "Loveliest of Trees," which is also one of the loveliest of spring poems:

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.  
Now, of my three-score years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.  
And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

**Given winter's ice and storms, words in praise of spring have long been welcomed by these folks of hearth and candlelight.**

Let us look forward to spring, when we can take our own woodland ride simply by pausing to savor the beauties of budding trees, the April breeze against our faces, and if we are fortunate to see such a sight, a young couple laughing and strolling hand-in-hand through a green park in blossom. Add some poetry to that banquet table, and we have a royal feast of nature's bounties.

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. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

▲ The Greeks had myths to depict the season of spring, as in "Primavera," 1480, by Botticelli. Uffizi Gallery.

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THE EPOCH TIMES



Spring allows our enjoyment of the beauty of the earth awakening. "Spring," 1865, by James Tissot.

# THE SHADOW STATE

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## THIS INVISIBLE HAND CONTROLS MORE THAN YOU THINK

In the past couple of years, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies have taken the business world by storm. But what do these three words actually mean—and what does their prevalence signify for the American consumer?

The Epoch Times takes a deep dive into the multitrillion-dollar ESG industry, tracing the movement's development from

its origins. We examine the key players driving ESG, their goals for climate and social justice, and how they've united both governments and corporations in their quest for change.

And most importantly, we take a look into the future of ESG. Will it bring about the cleaner, more peaceful, and more equitable world it promises, or will it control our lives in ways that 20th-century totalitarians only dreamed of?

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ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



A family in harmony: portrait of the family of Lucien Bonaparte, 1815, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Graphite on white wove paper; 16 1/4 inches by 20 15/16 inches. Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.

FINE ART

## THE FAMILY PORTRAITS OF

## Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Continued from Page 1

In the same article, historian Stephen Longstreet agrees: “The people are real. They breathe and exist solidly on earth.”

Indeed, Ingres had a way of capturing the core personality of a sitter, and this spot-on accuracy came from careful observation. “He even captures their self-consciousness in posing,” noted the late Agnes Mongan, a past director the Fogg

Art Museum at Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, according to ArtistsNetwork.

**A Composite Composition**

Ingres’s most ambitious family portrait was the immediate family of his close friend Edouard Gatteaux, completed in 1850. The portrait was actually an imaginary family grouping. He placed figures together whose images were at different

ages at the time the portrait was made. Gatteaux’s father, engraver and medalist Nicholas-Marie, and his mother, Louise-Rosalie, had passed away. Nicholas-Marie passed away 18 years before, and Louise-Rosalie had passed away 3 years before the drawing. Gatteaux, who appears as a young man, would have been 62 at the time of the portrait.

To design the drawing, Ingres used three individual lithographs of Gatteaux’s

parents and Edouard made by Claude Marie François Dien after Ingres’s own drawings. The prints were destroyed during the chaos of the Paris Commune in 1871. Ingres cut out the figures from the prints and placed them compositionally on a larger sheet. He completed the background in pencil, as well as the other figures of the elder Gatteaux’s granddaughter, Pamela de Gardanne, who stands behind the main group, while in the far

left of the background is a profile of Edouard’s cousin, Mme. Anfrye. The artist also reworked the lower half of Edouard in pencil.

**The Blended Family**

Families sometimes change; new children come into them, and unrelated people are brought together by circumstance. During Ingres’s time, even Napoleon’s powerful extended family had its challenges to work out.

Napoleon had four brothers who were given titles and governance in the empire. Ingres’s portrait of Lucien Bonaparte’s family presents the Napoleonic ideal of a blended family. The youngest Bonaparte, Lucien, married a second time, and his second wife, Alexandrine, wanted a portrait by the artist. Ingres made a lively portrait sketch of Lucien’s family with music playing a central role.

Alexandrine, seated in the center, has her children surrounding her: Charles leans next to his mother’s chair, little Louis-Lucien is at her knee, and Paul-Marie sits on floor.



**Ingres was a miraculous technician. He was one of the most remarkably assured draftsmen who ever lived.**

Frank Wright, painter and art history professor

Anna Joubertson, a daughter from Alexandrine’s first marriage, holds a lyre at the far left. One of Lucien’s daughters from his first marriage plays on a spinet, and another, Christine Egypte, sits on a stool with a flower basket. Lucien’s other daughters, Giovanna and Laetitia, stand in the near background.

Musical instruments play an important role in this drawing. Ingres himself played the violin.

**Technique of a Master**

The sketches above show confidence and skill born of practice. Frank Wright, painter and art history professor at George Washington University, states in Artists Network that “Ingres was a miraculous technician. He was one of the most remarkably assured draftsmen who ever lived. When he put a line on, he did it with such certainty. How did he draw with such authority? It’s one of the things you can’t teach about Ingres, but you can be aware of.”

Ingres’s life was embedded in art. “I was raised in red chalk,” Ingres once stated. As such, he kept his graphite drawing tool ready to draw. “He always drew with a sharp point, sometimes even in a ‘chisel-shaped point,’ which enabled him to vary the thickness of the line and to shift from sharp to broad,” wrote printmaker and art historian Avigdor Arikha in a catalog for a recent exhibition.



Charles Hayard and his daughter Marguerite, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.



The Gatteaux family, 1850, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Reworked lithograph and pencil sketch. The final sketch was made from several sheets of paper, cut out and laid down for the final composition.

Ingres learned by copying his father’s drawings and the work of the great masters. The drawings of Renaissance master Raphael had a great influence on the artist, but he also learned from his renowned contemporaries. He apprenticed with Jacques-Louis David.

With over 4,000 drawings, Ingres perfected the contour line. Today, art instructors teach two styles of drawing: the open form and the closed form. Open form means that a drawn figure would open out to the background and not be enclosed within a drawn outline.

Ingres perfected the closed form, as the figures were enclosed within masterfully drawn lines. “With a graphite line that is constantly and finely adjusted—now narrow, now thick, pressing firmly or more swiftly—he defines contours with a remarkable range of modulations. Form is described above all by such calibrations of contour as well as by direction of a line,” Mongan said.

In the same article, artist and painting instructor Phillip Wade said: “His drawings are distinguished by their careful containment of form, perfect lines, and subtle shadings. I’ve never seen anyone who could do outlines as well as he could.”

**Ingres showed the strong bond of parent and child through their expressions.**

**A Teacher of Harmony**

In 1801, the artist won France’s prestigious Prix de Rome, which sent him to Rome where he was later appointed director of the French Academy there. In Rome, he carried on the tradition of teaching the younger generation: He “set about giving his students a solid base in technical drawing in order to continue Renaissance traditions and also provide a good starting point from which their careers could develop,” according to the History of Art website.

When teaching his art, Ingres was said to use musical metaphors: “If I could make musicians of you all, you would thereby profit as painters. Everything in nature is harmony; a little too much, or else too little, disturbs the scale and makes a false note. One must teach the point of singing true with the pencil or with brush quite as much as with the voice; rightness of forms is like rightness of sounds.”

Thus, Ingres’s masterful art was put to use to create harmony, especially in his drawings of families of his time. In a blended family group, his portraits show each member engaging in a different activity but together living harmoniously.

Other portraits show care and protection of a parent for a child or for a spouse. Harmony is what makes a family strong in any age. Ingres’s lively and insightful portrait sketches of the families of the Napoleonic era are now recognized as his greatest legacy.

LITERATURE

## Time, Nature, and Nostalgia in E.B. White’s ‘Once More to the Lake’

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E.B. White and his dog Minnie on the shore of a lake.

DUSTIN FISHER

Most everyone has experienced nostalgia at some point in their lives, whether it be a longing for friends, family, or some fleeting moment in time that sparks positive reflection and emotion. The reflection and emotions associated with nostalgia, most often positive, shade the details of events in a soft, ruddy glow.

This idea is central to E.B. White’s short story “Once More to the Lake” published in Harper’s Magazine in 1941. It employs nostalgia and memory as a narrative conduit for details and imagery of a man on a visit to a childhood vacation spot. It is a heartfelt and beautiful rumination on the past, the flowing of time, and the circular nature of aging itself.

Most of the story is told through basic descriptions of locations and activities at a small lake in Maine where the narrator spent several summer holidays with his family. A powerful motif of White’s tale focuses on the narrator’s subjective recollections of places, people, and activities he’d once done as a child. He takes his son fishing in a rowboat, eating at a local farmhouse restaurant, and trekking

through trails in the woods. These scenes are utilized to illustrate both the passage of time and how the human psyche processes memory through deeply attached emotion.

Early into the story, the narrator comments: “It is strange how much you can remember a place like that once you let your mind return into the grooves which lead back. You remember one thing, and that suddenly reminds you of another thing.”

**The story, in the end, is a rumination on mortality, nostalgia, and time.**

The structure and pacing of “Once More to the Lake” progresses in this exact manner. As the narrator encounters one memory after another, it pulls the narrative and audience along for the ride. Memory and emotions combine in seemingly trivial setting details to reach a deep climactic epiphany on the nature of aging and time.

At first, the reader is given small general details about the narrator’s son, his past at the lake with his own father, and recurrences of the natural setting that seemed never to have changed since his youth.

There’s a moment when the man and his son are fishing and a dragonfly lands idly on the fishing pole. This seemingly innocuous occurrence creates a moment of reflection for the narrator, and he comments: “It was the arrival of this fly that convinced me beyond any doubt that everything was as it always had been, that the years were a mirage and there had been no years.” Nature at the lake all seemed to be—for the narrator—as it always once was, yet as the narrative progresses, subtle hints of differences begin to creep in and move toward a rumination on the circular nature of life.

One morning, the narrator hears his young son sneak from his bed and take a kayak down to the lake. This is paralleled to a similar childhood memory of sneaking away, which forces him to confront the realization that “he was I, and therefore, by simple transposition, I was my father.”

After this, the tale begins to reveal more and more details that the narrator remembers being the same, only there are now slight differences. He comments that the waitresses at the family diner were the same age as they’d always been, only now their hair was washed and clean because they were mimicking movie stars they’d seen. The once 10-mile journey by wagon from the train station to the cabin

that built up childhood excitement now was traversed in a car and took only a few short minutes, disallowing for much sustained anticipation.

All these seemingly mundane details take on more importance in illustrating the connection between positive emotion and nostalgia. These are also the catalyst for the narrative’s epiphany in that memory and nostalgia have a way of suspending images and emotions while shielding us from the inevitable forward march of time.

In the essay “On the Enduring Power of E.B. White’s ‘Once More to the Lake,’” Matthew Vollmer sums up the reflective nature of White’s narrative succinctly: “We’re only here in this life for a little while, and any honest meditation on the passage of time or on nature’s ephemeral splendor must also acknowledge that our own consciousness, however manifold and complex, is but a spark in the light of our universe.”

The story, in the end, is a rumination on mortality, nostalgia, and time. White masterfully casts the climax against a quick-moving evening thunderstorm that, once passed, allows his son to swim in the lake during the rain. As the narrator watches his child dash toward the water, he’s suddenly aware of his own mortality and age.

A symbolic passing of the torch from father to son finally occurs in the end, and the audience is made aware of this impactful realization. However, as Vollmer notes in his essay, the beauty and majesty of the

Most of the story is set at a small lake in Maine. “Forest Lake” by Issac Levitan.



writing is what carries this theme and motif.

It is through the mundane of the everyday and the beauty of the surrounding nature that time can be witnessed and felt. In bringing his son to a cherished spot and reliving memories through him, the narrator comes to terms with the movement of time and can brush aside the glossy tint of nostalgia.

Dustin Fisher is a writer and educator.

He has penned multiple articles on film and popular culture as well as given lectures and presentations at universities in both the U.S. and UK. Currently, he is teaching at Edison State College while completing his doctorate in film studies and American literature at the University of Cincinnati.



PUBLIC DOMAIN





## POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# Guilt and Retribution Set During the Revolutionary War

IAN KANE

The United States of America has often been involved in a number of back-to-back wars, such as World War I (1914–1918) and the Russian Civil War (1918–1920). Often members of the military who participated in one war and experienced its horror were resistant to become involved in the next. As the French and Indian War (1754–1763) was followed in relatively quick succession by the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), many who fought in the former weren't exactly thrilled about becoming involved in the latter. The 2000 war drama "The Patriot" illustrates this resistance to continual warfare—at least initially.

The film's first act unfolds in the year 1776 as eight of the 13 American colonies rise up in protest against the British Empire's policy of taxation without representation. Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson), a hero of the French and Indian War, has settled into a relatively tranquil life in South Carolina. He's also a widower who is raising seven children and believes that it is his duty to care for them.

However, his oldest son Gabriel (Heath Ledger) is a staunch believer in the American colonists' cause, so he joins the Continental Army over his father's objections. Martin senior has had enough of war, and unfortunately, his prediction that the upcoming war with the British will be fought in his and his neighbors' fields comes true.

Lord Gen. Cornwallis (Tom Wilkinson), commander of the British Redcoats, attacks and subjugates Charleston, South Carolina. One of Cornwallis's more brutal subordinates, Col. Tavington (Jason Isaacs), is given carte blanche to deal with the Americans. Unlike his more gentlemanly cohorts, Tavington believes in war without limits and has decided to kill any Americans he comes across, regardless of age, when it suits his goals.

Tavington sets his sights on the Martins and proceeds to terrorize the family. This results in Martin's second oldest

**We see the chaotic, in-your-face craziness of 18th-century warfare as well as the tremendous loss of civilian lives.**

## 'The Patriot'

**Director:**  
Roland Emmerich

**Starring:**  
Mel Gibson, Heath Ledger,  
Joely Richardson

**MPAA Rating:**  
R

**Running Time:**  
2 hours, 45 minutes

**Release Date:**  
June 28, 2000

★★★★★



Mel Gibson stars in "The Patriot" as Benjamin Martin, who must fight for his family and his country.

son Thomas (Gregory Smith) being shot to death, and Gabriel being hauled off by the Redcoats to be hanged.

But the Brits underestimate who they're dealing with. The savage assaults upon his family unleash the guerilla warrior in him, and he takes partial revenge by carrying out a ruthless ambush on the Redcoat convoy in the woods to save Gabriel.

Martin decides that he can no longer stay neutral and, after placing his children in the care of their Aunt Charlotte (Joely Richardson), he reports with Gabriel to his old buddy Col. Harry Burwell (Chris Cooper), who is with the Continentals.

Burwell instructs Martin to form the South Carolina militia and puts him in command of the regiment. Martin's militia turns out to be quite a capable regiment that undermines the entire English campaign in the area and that also plays a decisive part in the final grand finale battle.

## Fiction Based on Truth

Scriptwriter Robert Rodat ("Saving Private Ryan") effectively conveys the tumultuous period of the American Revolutionary War. Paired with Roland Emmerich's ("Midway," "Independence Day") excellent direction, Rodat's script soars.

In this fictional account, we see a wide range of events that happened during the epic conflict: black people earning their freedom by joining the militia; the French aiding the colonial rebels; the resistance of some of the American settlers to join the fight; and some of the dastardly actions

carried out by those loyal to the British.

Emmerich doesn't shy away from some of the more brutal aspects of the Revolutionary War. We see both the chaotic, in-your-face craziness of 18th-century warfare, as well as the tremendous loss of civilian lives—those who were caught up in the savagery of the bloody conflict. In other words, the film definitely earns its "R" rating, so parents need to be mindful if sharing it with their young ones.

One fascinating aspect of this film is the turmoil in Martin's soul. He's a deeply conflicted man, on one hand, wanting to adhere to his beloved wife's wishes to give up the ways of war, while on the other, feeling compelled to fight for his family and country's safety and independence.

Martin doesn't want to revert to the person he was during that previous war and also doesn't want his family to pay for his past deeds. At one point in the movie, he even says "I have long feared ... that my sins would return to visit me. And the cost is more than I can bear."

"The Patriot" is an outstanding war drama with excellent acting all around by its superb cast. It's an ultimately uplifting film about paying for one's sins, unabashed patriotism, familial love, and eventual peace within a former sinner's soul.

*Ian Kane is an U.S. Army veteran, author, filmmaker, and actor. He is dedicated to the development and production of innovative, thought-provoking, character-driven films and books of the highest quality.*

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

## The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 1)



“We take your feedback very seriously. Usually when you send feedback ... we read your messages one by one and give serious thought to areas for improvement.”

**Teresa You**  
Manager, Customer Service

Dear Epoch VIP,

I started working for The Epoch Times back in 2011 as a reporter for the Chinese-language edition of the paper. In 2017, I switched over to the customer-facing side of the business. Having been a psychology major back in college, I wanted to go back to people and relationships.

Like many career moves, this one came with a huge learning curve.

When a lot of people talk about customer service, maybe they think it's talking to customers on the phone, or maybe over email, but it's actually more complicated than that. So many dots have to be connected to make it work—from hiring, to training, to quality control, to keeping up with changes in the entire company. In short, things were a lot more complicated than I first thought.

We've grown in the last few years because of the support from readers like you. On the hotline, we've been trying to hire more people to reduce wait times which then create more efficient workflows to better accommodate our customers. We're also trying to provide more technical support for problems with our digital products, like our Epoch Times app. We've also been working on more self-service tools to help you better help yourself, like the online Help Center and your subscriber Account Portal.

**And your feedback has been super valuable in telling us whether we're heading in the right direction.**

We take your feedback very seriously. Usually when you send feedback (or if other departments forward us your feedback), we read your messages one by one and give serious thought to areas for improvement. We don't want to be just any other company doing customer service: we hope to really get connected with every one of our readers, every one of you.

**You are so important to us. And because of that, we really value making you happy.**

One of my favorite parts of the job is being able to get the firsthand feedback from you, our readers—including hearing your support and seeing your reaction to our media.

For example, a subscriber sent us a letter saying that when he first saw our newspaper he sat down for a while because of being in shock—he couldn't believe that a newspaper like this still existed! And his letter isn't the only one I remember. We keep all your letters and put them up around our New York office so we don't lose sight of why we do what we do.

For me, my job is not about money or fame or power. It's about the subscriber who calls in, and we can hear his concern for this country in his voice. It's about the subscriber who breaks into tears on the phone because she was so worried about things that she couldn't sleep.

I can relate to these subscribers because I came from a communist country: China. My parents, who had been arbitrarily detained in China, sent me here to the United States at the age of 17 because they wanted me to enjoy this country's freedom. I don't want the same things that have happened to the Chinese to happen to people here—even though in some ways, I think they already have.

**I want to end by telling you that especially because I am an immigrant from China, I really appreciate the freedom I enjoy in this country.** Because of that, I want the best for this country and its people, and I will do my part by supporting a media that I believe has the interests of this country and its people at heart: The Epoch Times.

*In Truth and Tradition,*

Teresa You  
The Epoch Times

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