

THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



"Library With Reader," turn of the 20th century, by Charles Edmund Brock. Watercolor on paper; 10 inches by 8 inches. Dorotheum, Vienna.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

### TREASURES FROM THE PAST:

# Our Libraries, Public and Private

JEFF MINICK

Whether it's a special trip to the Library of Congress or a 10-minute drive to the local library, when true lovers of books hear the words "Let's head for the library," they experience the same stab of excitement produced by the words "ice cream parlor" in a 5-year-old. For bibliophiles, the Magic

Kingdom isn't in Florida, and the only price of admission is a library card.

For some libraries, of course, Magic Kingdom is an apt description. Harvard's Widener Library, for example, is not only a building of beauty and grace, but it also contains 57 miles of shelf space and can hold over three million books. The Library of Congress in Washington has the largest collection in the world and offers a cornucopia of artistic and architectural delights. The Iowa law

**Libraries are a gathering place for those seeking wisdom.**

library in Des Moines is a tangled extravaganza of artwork, beautifully tiled floors, terraces, and twisting stairs visited by over 100,000 visitors a year. In Virginia's Northern Shenandoah Valley is Winchester's Handley Library, another architectural gem, which the National Park Service says is "perhaps Virginia's purest expression of the regal and florid Beaux Arts classicism."

*Continued on Page 4*



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### HISTORY

# Cartoonist of World War II: Bill Mauldin

DEENA BOUKNIGHT

**B**ill Mauldin once said, "Humor is really laughing off a hurt, grinning at misery."

Few of the 16 million who served during World War II are still living. At least a half-dozen wars have occurred since Japan surrendered in 1945, but some surviving veterans recall details as if they happened yesterday. Among the highlights and horrors of the World War II experience, Bill Mauldin's cartoons are remembered by many.

At 19, when the New Mexico native joined the Army in 1940 as a rifleman in the 180th Infantry Regiment, he was already leaning toward a career as an illustrator, having studied political cartooning at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. So when an opportunity opened up for him to illustrate for military newspapers, including Stars and Stripes, he landed it.

Fairly quickly into his service, Mauldin established the cartoon characters Willie and Joe, and these quirky, often haggard infantrymen, sketched in pen and ink, became the recognizable visual images of the World War II era.

The National WWII Museum in New Orleans expresses to visitors regarding Mauldin: "Although surrounded by the brutality of battle, his main characters, Willie and Joe, reflected the indelible spirit of America's citizen soldiers who overcame the hardships of war with resilient humor."

Mauldin's cartoon following increased after 1943 and his involvement in the Italian campaign. He traveled regularly by jeep to observe and sketch soldiers. The Library of Congress noted: "Bill mostly worked at night, until the wee hours, on drawings made from innumerable sketches made up [during his time on the] front with the combat troops."

By 1944, six Mauldin cartoons were published weekly and, because the cartoons featured the average soldiers' daily rigors, they were relatable. For example, one cartoon shows two rain-soaked, exhausted GIs squatting in a mud-filled ditch. Willie says, "Joe, yestiddy ya saved my life an' I swore 'I'd pay ya back. Here's

my last pair of dry socks."

"He turned his considerable talents (not to mention his wry wit) to capturing the gritty and absurd reality of life in uniform," noted the website Military History Now in a March 2015 report.

Another Mauldin cartoon of a GI digging a trench reads: "Me future is settled, Willie. I'm gonna be a professor on types o' European soil."

Traversing with pen and ink around battlefields was not without its dangers. The Library of Congress documented that "around Christmas 1943, while sketching at the front, a small fragment from a German mortar hit his shoulders. 'My only damage was a ringing in my ears and a fragment in my shoulder. It burned like a fury but was very small,'" Mauldin said. Mauldin received a Purple Heart for his injury, yet he supposedly protested that he had "been out worse sneaking through barbed-wire fences in New Mexico."

The Military History Now website pointed out: "While Mauldin's wounds were non-life-threatening, the experience only added to his comic strips' authority. No one could say the artist behind Willie and Joe didn't know soldiers' sufferings. He shared them."

Although many of the cartoons may not have produced laugh-out-loud reactions from readers, they did convey to soldiers that their service was noticed. In the Stephen Ambrose biography of Mauldin's life, Mauldin is quoted as saying: "When you lose a friend [in battle] you have an overpowering desire to go back home and yell in everybody's ear, 'This guy was killed fighting for you. Don't forget him—ever. Keep him in your mind when you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night. Don't think of him as the statistic which changes 38,788 casualties to 38,789. Think of him as a guy who wanted to live every bit as much as you do.'"

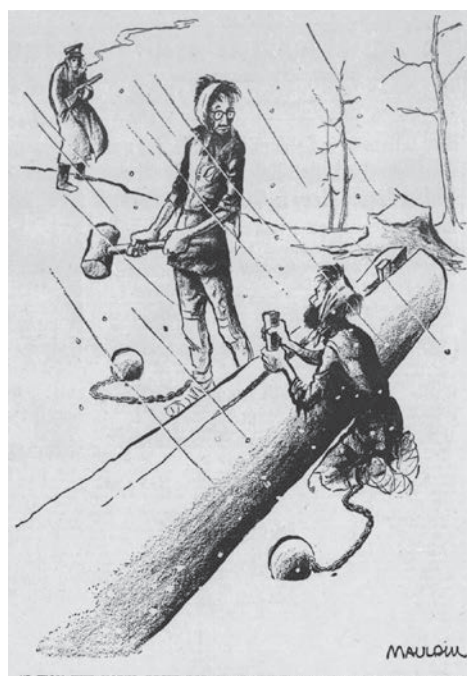
Mauldin's cartoons garnered so much notoriety that in 1945 he received a Legion of Merit citation as well as a Pulitzer Prize. Time magazine devoted its June 18, 1945, cover to his "Willie" character. That same year, Mauldin released a compendium of the best of his 600 cartoons titled "Up Front." It was a bestseller.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



American GI and cartoonist Bill Mauldin holds a drawing board featuring some of his characters, New York.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



Mauldin's 1958 cartoon for which he received his second Pulitzer Prize.

After the war, Mauldin continued to work as a cartoonist, even winning a second Pulitzer Prize in 1959. His sketches evolved from communicating soldiers' lives to addressing decades of political issues. For example, one cartoon depicted Soviet author Boris Pasternak in a gulag, asking another prisoner: "I won the Nobel Prize for literature. What was your crime?"

While Mauldin attempted to keep Willie and Joe "alive" in his cartoons after World War II ended, he decided that their civilian lives would not have the same appeal. However, Willie and Joe did resurface in Mauldin's cartoons around the time of the deaths of Gen. George C. Marshall in 1959 and Gen. Omar Bradley in 1981.

Mauldin left behind a legacy of ironic visual creations when he died in 2003. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

*A 30-plus-year writer-journalist, Deena C. Bouknight works from her Western North Carolina mountain cottage and has contributed articles on food culture, travel, people, and more to local, regional, national, and international publications. She has written three novels, including the only historical fiction about the East Coast's worst earthquake. Her website is DeenaBouknightWriting.com*

### OPERA

## Mozart's Childhood Opera: 'Bastien and Bastienne'

ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

Everybody is familiar with Mozart's most famous operas: "The Magic Flute," "The Marriage of Figaro," and "Don Giovanni." But few are familiar with "Bastien and Bastienne," a one-act singspiel (a comedic German opera with spoken dialogue), which Mozart composed when he was only 12 years old.

It was long considered his first opera, for although "Apollo and Hyacinthus" was written when he was 11, it was not accepted in society for its same-sex theme, and "La Finta Semplice," also written when he was 12, had a delayed production.

### Uncertain Origins

We don't know much about the origins of this opera. What we do know comes from Georg Nikolaus von Nissen, Mozart's first biographer and the second husband of Maria Constanze, the composer's former wife.

According to Nissen, the young prodigy composed "Bastien and Bastienne" in the summer of 1768 at the request of Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer, a famous Viennese physician and hypnotist, whom Mozart parodied in the Act 1 finale of "Così fan tutte." The private performance supposedly took place in the physician's garden theater in Vienna. However, in 1768, this theater didn't exist yet, and the opera may never have been composed in Vienna.

Whatever the case, this was Mozart's first singspiel and one of his first works. Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern wrote the libretto, inspired by a popular play in Vienna, "The Loves of Bastien and Bastienne," which was a comedic parody of an opera by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Village Soothsayer" (1752).

There are only three characters in the opera: Bastien, Bastienne, and Colas. These roles are often sung by a tenor or mezzo-soprano, a soprano, and a bass. While Mozart originally planned to transpose the role of Colas for an alto and replace some of the spoken dialogues with recitatives, he never did. This early Mozart opera was re-discovered and revived in 1890, in a Berlin performance.

### A Delightful Pastoral

The plot of the opera is very simple. It is the love story of two young shepherds, Bastien and Bastienne, and their happy ending, aided by the village's magician, Colas. It is essentially a pastoral, an idealized depiction of the shepherd's way of life. The opera is short, light, and delightful.

Bastien believes that her lover, Bastien, is unfaithful to her. Feeling abandoned, she seeks help from Colas, a magician. He comforts her and reassures her of Bastien's love, while admitting that the young shepherd can be fickle at times. The magician suggests that she feign indifference to make her lover come back.

This stratagem succeeds far beyond her hopes, and it is now Bastien's turn to be distraught as Colas tells him that Bastienne has a new lover. Desperate, the young shepherd asks the magician for help. Following his request, Colas opens his book of spells and recites a magical formula.

Bastienne comes back but continues her stratagem, and pushes Bastien away. The lovers start to quarrel but soon remember their past happiness. The shepherds reconcile and Colas congratulates them. The opera ends with praise of the magician and the lovers' newfound bliss.

It is a delightful plot, but what makes it so charming is its delightful music and the childlike emotions it portrays.

### A Charming Opera

Although Mozart composed this opera as a child, it sounds very much like the composer's future works, full of charm and subtlety.

The opera is short, with only 16 arias. The ensembles and solo arias are light, yet skillfully constructed and orchestrated with clear rhythms and evident musicality. While nothing in this singspiel, strictly speaking, moving, every emotion is believable—from sadness, jealousy, and seduction. In "Bastien and Bastienne," there are no useless palavers, only the magic of a child's heart.

"Bastien and Bastienne" is an appealing work, with memorable melodies. Although there is no vocal virtuosity in this opera, Mozart displayed excellent writing skills for the voice and a talent for parody, which would bloom in his later works. Colas's nonsensical aria "Diggi, Daggi," for example, where Latin and nonsensical syllables combine, exhibits his schoolboy humor.

"Bastien and Bastienne" displays Mozart's emerging talent in all aspects of musical composition. The young composer imitated the French, Italian, and German models, adding popular-sounding tunes, while demonstrating a confident sense of the style and its language. He created a work at the crossroads of the Baroque and Classical genres, creating a new kind of opera in what would become the 18th-century Classical style, and which would lay the groundwork for his later music.

More than the work of a child prodigy, it is the work of a genius. And it is unmistakably Mozart.

*Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.*

PUBLIC DOMAIN



Mozart's opera is the story of two young shepherds, Bastien and Bastienne, and their happy ending, aided by the village's magician, Colas. Bastienne is shown here with the magician Colas in a production at the Marinsky Theatre.

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

## The World Through a Journalist's Eyes

Dear Epoch VIP,

Thank you for your continuing support—we are at your service.

My name is Petr Svab and I've been covering politics, courts, police, immigration, economy, and other topics during my 16 years at The Epoch Times.

**It is my pleasure to work for a newspaper that stands for values I can wholeheartedly endorse and fittingly summed up in our motto of Truth and Tradition.**

I believe that truth is the living world, and an infinite journey of exploration. The more topics I tackle, the more issues I delve into, the more I realize how complex, multifaceted, and enormous the world truly is. We can never dream of grasping it all, but, with diligent effort, a journalist can map a part of the journey and present it to readers, hoping to help them navigate their own realities.

Moreover, I've found, a journalist can open doors closed to others, give readers the facts of the story, the context that enlightens them, as well as the insights of the participants.

I remember walking the streets of West Baltimore a few years ago. My plan was just to interview some local business owners to see what the city was doing about some of its issues—from piles of trash and abandoned houses to homelessness and crime.

Within five minutes of my arrival, a man on the street noticed me and started to shout: "Guy with a camera! There's a guy with a camera here!" A group of young men further up the street took notice as I approached.

"Are you a cop?" asked one of them. He was a young man with wide eyes that looked like they'd already seen more than their share.

I introduced myself and my business of the day, handing the gentleman my card. The young man's expression softened as he realized I was here to report on a story—the story of his home.

As it turned out, the young man was not only ready to share with me his insights on the local issues, but also to offer advice on where to find what I was looking for. We parted ways with a handshake.

In all my experience talking directly to the people



“With diligent effort, a journalist can map a part of the journey and present it to readers, hoping to help them navigate their own realities.”

**Petr Svab**  
Reporter

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### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

**“This is true journalism. This is what the Founding Fathers meant by ‘freedom of the press.’”**

— DARRYL AGEE

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— DR. MARY ELLEN BLUNTZER

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In Truth and Tradition,

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The Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

## TREASURES FROM THE PAST:

## Our Libraries, Public and Private

Continued from Page 1

Lovely as they are, like any community library these buildings and others like them have one chief purpose: to preserve books and other resources, and make them available to the public. In a sense, they are the secular counterparts of our places of worship, gathering places for those seeking enlightenment and wisdom.

**A Snapshot History of Public Libraries**

Founded in 1640, the Biblioteca Palafoxiana in Puebla, Mexico, is recognized as the oldest public library in North America.

Nearly 3,000 miles to the north, Massachusetts Puritans and Virginia planters who colonized these lands soon took pride in their home libraries. In Philadelphia, booklover Benjamin Franklin, who over a lifetime amassed more than 4,000 volumes in his private library, helped open the first subscription library in Philadelphia as well as lent his

influence to create medical, philosophical, and university libraries.

Only in 1790 was the first real public library founded in the United States, in a small town in Massachusetts, and therein lies a story. Formerly known as Exeter, the town changed its name to Franklin in 1778, and then some of the inhabitants, their names now lost to history, asked the revered Franklin to donate a bell for the steeple of the town meeting hall. Franklin turned down that request, but he offered books instead, replying "sense being preferable to sound." Known among the townspeople as the Franklin Collection, the books circulated free of charge after 1790.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, public libraries become commonplace in the United States, points of pride in cities and towns, and they were a driving force in the nation's development. Individual citizens, local governments, and donations from the wealthy—Andrew Carnegie used some of his fortune to build 1,679 public libraries—built these repositories



**'AT HOME WITH BOOKS: HOW BOOKLOVERS LIVE WITH AND CARE FOR THEIR LIBRARIES'**

By Estelle Ellis  
Potters Style  
1995  
Hardcover  
256 pages

for books, thereby enhancing the education of millions of Americans.

**Treasures From the Gilded Age**

Meanwhile, private collectors made their own impact on libraries and library architecture, most noticeably so during the period after the Civil War, the so-called Gilded Era. With enormous funds at their disposal, wealthy bibliophiles indulged themselves by purchasing rare works or bringing together books on subjects that particularly interested them. And some of them built libraries.

In the early 20th century, for example, financier Pierpont Morgan had a library constructed adjacent to his Madison Avenue residence in New York to house his burgeoning collection of literature, old manuscripts, and drawings and prints. Architect Charles McKim designed three magnificent rooms to resemble a Renaissance palazzo. Following his father's death, "in what constituted one of the most momentous cultural gifts in U.S. history," according to The Morgan Library and Museum website, J.P. Morgan opened the library to scholars and the public. Later additions, including one that was completed in 2006 and added spaces like a lecture hall, a restaurant, and a reading room to the complex, have helped make The Morgan Library & Museum a Manhattan landmark.

**Gifts From the Brothers Vanderbilt**

One of the greatest 19th-century American architects, Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895), who had attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, showed a keen interest in libraries throughout his career. In the early 1870s, he designed a library for James Lenox, one of New York's wealthiest men. The Lenox Library was one of

the city's first libraries accessible to the public. It housed arcades, reading rooms, and valuable manuscripts and art, and stood until 1912, when entrepreneur and art collector Henry Frick demolished the building and built what is today a museum of art: The Frick Collection.

Two of Hunt's libraries that have survived the ravages of time are meccas for booklovers from around the world. Like Morgan and Frick, Cornelius Vanderbilt accumulated vast wealth during his lifetime. One of his grandsons, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, commissioned Hunt to design The Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island, a 70-room "cottage" that is today visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year. His brother George Vanderbilt likewise engaged Hunt and had him draw up the plans for the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, which is the largest private home ever built in America and which again is a major tourist attraction.

Cornelius and George were inveterate readers and collectors of books, and the beautiful libraries designed by Hunt for both these homes are testaments to this passion. These rooms are done up in a grand style, ornately decorated from floor to ceiling, yet they also offer intimacy, inviting readers to take a book in hand and draw up a chair before the fireplace or sit in one of the stuffed chairs scattered around the room. In both libraries, we see the homage paid by wealth to the printed word.

**At Home With Books**

Most of us who are booklovers visit these magnificent private libraries and others like them, and come away with mixed emotions: happy to find books so revered, overwhelmed by the setting in which these jewels of paper and print have been placed, and perhaps a little envious. We return to our own homes, an apartment so small that our books are stacked on tables or kitchen counters, or to a house where shelves are scattered willy-nilly room to room. We may let out a sigh of longing, thinking that if we possessed a library like the one at Biltmore, we could spend every free moment in that room and never become bored.

But in one important way our collection is unique. The books lined up on our shelves or standing on the floor in the corner of the bedroom are mirrors of who we are. That volume of "The Best Loved Poems of the American People" may mean little to a visitor, but when we turn the pages, we remember our mother reading from it to us when we were children. Mark Helprin's novel "A Soldier of the Great War" gave strength to our hearts during a desperate time, and we remember and honor its counsel when we pass it by in the den. Some of the Golden Book titles we read to our grandchildren were shared with us decades before by our own grandmothers.

In "At Home With Books: How Booklovers Live With and Care for Their Libraries," now regrettably out of print, the authors created a lavish feast of photographs from apartments and homes around America inhabited by men and women who treasure books, some of them quite wealthy, others middle-class. In the introduction we read:

"People continue to make a home for books because books make a home. Book-centered rooms are described as nurturing, a comfort zone, an escape hatch, a place to retreat to for tea and talk, thinking and reading, recapturing memories, regenerating spirit and ideas."

Whatever the state of your own home library—messy and cluttered, tidy and ordered, a spacious getaway room with a Persian rug and some fine works of art, or a single easy chair surrounded by shelves and stacks of books—just remember this:

It's the books that count. All the rest is just the whipped cream on the dessert.

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.



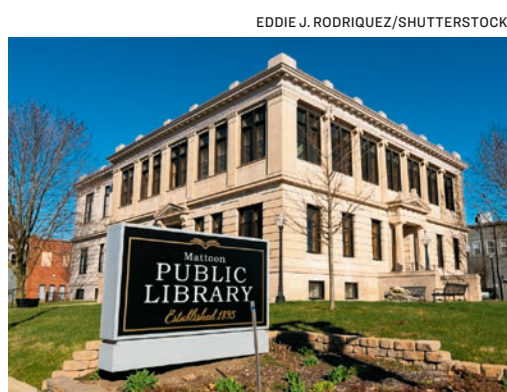
The Franklin Public Library in Franklin, Mass., the first and oldest public library in the United States, with books donated by Benjamin Franklin.



East room of the Morgan Library and Museum in New York.



Lenox Library building, Fifth Ave., New York, circa 1905. Library of Congress.



The historic Carnegie Library, built in 1903, Mattoon, Ill.



Palafoxiana Library, the oldest library in the Americas, in Puebla, Mexico.



The library at The Breakers in Newport, R.I.



## ONLINE SERIES REVIEW

## The Hunt for Public Enemy Number One

The hunt for Hezbollah terrorist Imad Mughniyeh ranks with that of Bin Laden, but it was many more years in the making. The CIA also never officially took on-the-record credit for its involvement, even though their widely reported joint-operation with Mossad targeted the man considered the most prolific murderer of Americans until the September 11 attacks.

Mughniyeh never became a household name in America, but for Western intelligence services, he was public enemy number one. Mughniyeh's reign of terror and the operation to take him out are chronicled in creators Avi Issacharoff and Lior Raz's four-part "Ghosts of Beirut."

Each episode starts with the preamble: "This is a fictional account of deeply researched events," so consider yourself reassured or forewarned. The action kicks off in 2007 Iraq, when a group of terrorists masquerading as American soldiers brazenly kidnaps four U.S. servicemen from the Karbala regional headquarters.

The series then rewinds to when it all started in 1982, with the assassination of newly elected Lebanese President Bachir Gemayel and the Israeli invasion of the country in anarchy. CIA station chief Robert Ames (Dermot Mulroney) warns of the potential long-term radicalization that could result, especially among Shia Muslims, like Mughniyeh.

However, Ames has a reputation for being a little too close to his PLO contacts, which stokes the suspicions of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. That distrust lingers throughout the series, even when the CIA and Mossad unite to run an ambitious joint operation.

Regardless, Ames's perceived pro-Arab sympathies benefit him little when the increasingly enraged Mughniyeh (Amir Khoury in episodes one and two, Hisham Suliman thereafter) masterminds his first suicide bombing.

The second episode focuses on Ames' successor, the ill-fated Bill Buckley (the CIA officer, not the political commen-



The younger Imad Mughniyeh (Amir Khoury), in "Ghosts of Beirut."

tator). Buckley (Garret Dillahunt) will spearhead the search for Mughniyeh, of whom little is known, despite his growing influence. As the scale of Mughniyeh's operations grow, the pressure from Washington increases, but so does the danger to Americans stationed in-country.

The final two episodes flow together more smoothly, picking up where the 2007 prologue left off. As the CIA's point officer on Mughniyeh, Lena (Dina Shihabi) is forced to work with Teddy (Ido Goldberg) from the Mossad.

Initially, they do not trust each other very much, because of institutional rivalries. Her Lebanese heritage does not help much either. However, the fictional spies convince their bosses the time is right to pool their resources.

It might have been more efficient to produce "Ghosts of Beirut" as a feature, focusing on Lena and Teddy's hunt for Mughniyeh, because the stop-and-start progression from the first episode to the third lacks a unifying narrative cohesion.

Series director Greg Barker (who previously helmed the documentary "Manhunt: The Inside Story of the Hunt for Bin Laden") and his co-writers Issacharoff and Raz added background information that strays a bit far afield from the thriller meat of the story.

On the other hand, viewers would have

SIFEDDINE ELAMINE/SHOWTIME

missed an outstanding performance from Dillahunt as Bill Buckley. Sadly, those who lived through the reporting of his ordeal mostly remember Buckley from the grainy photos pictured in newscasts. Dillahunt fleshes out and humanizes Buckley, which deepens the tragedy of the events that unfold.

**Engaging Characters**

Regardless, Shihabi and Goldberg make an engaging odd couple team, who easily pulls viewers into the procedural details of their investigation. Mulroney is credibly measured and down-to-earth as Ames, but he is not as tall as the real-life 6-foot 3-inch CIA officer, who was a member of La Salle University's NCAA championship men's basketball team.

Frankly, Khoury is much more chilling and intense playing the younger Mughniyeh than Suliman is as the older Mughniyeh, but, arguably, that accurately reflects the ruthless terrorist's growing complacency.

Too often, CIA officers are the villains in movies. "Ghosts of Beirut" reminds us they are human beings who serve and sacrifice for their country. It is also interesting to see the CIA's caution with regards to Mughniyeh's Iranian puppet-master, Qassem Soleimani (Khalid Benchehra), who was considered absolutely off-limits in 2007, for fear of provoking the Iranian regime.

Yet, President Trump successfully ordered Soleimani's execution by drone in 2020, with no apparent repercussions, despite widespread predictions it would launch World War III.

"Ghosts of Beirut" is indeed an uneven series, but the writing is consistently smart. Most espionage series focus on Cold War Europe, so watching spycraft in a Middle East setting is an interesting change of pace. Even with its early detours, "Ghosts of Beirut" is recommended for fans of films like "Zero Dark Thirty" and "Argo."

Paramount started streaming "Ghosts of Beirut" on May 19 and the Showtime network premiered the series on May 21.

Joe Bendel writes about independent film and lives in New York. To read his most recent articles, visit [JBSpins.blogspot.com](https://www.jbspins.com)

The series contrasts the values of U.S. intelligence agencies with those they hunt.

**'Ghosts of Beirut'****Director**

Greg Barker

**Starring**

Dina Shihabi, Dermot Mulroney, Garret Dillahunt, Ido Goldberg, Hisham Suliman

**Running Time**

4 episodes

**MPAA Rating**

TV-MA

**Release Date**

May 19, 2023

★★★★★

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TRUTH AND TRADITION