

THE EPOCH TIMES
ARTS &
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U.S. ARMY ARCHIVES



The Angels' Lt. Bernard J. 'Bud' Stapleton raises the American flag atop the Nippon News building in Tokyo on Sept. 5, 1945.

BOOK REVIEW

Blood and Battle in the Philippines

James Fenelon's
'Angels Against the Sun'

By Jeff Minick

In "The Bridges at Toko-Ri," the movie about the Korean War based on James Michener's novel, Rear Adm. George Tarrant watches as his pilots take off from the pitching deck of a carrier to attack the enemy and asks, "Where do we get such men? They leave this

ship and they do their job. ... Where do we get such men?"

Though our schools and colleges have neglected the teaching of military history these last 50 years or so, novels like Michael Shaara's "The Killer Angels," the histories of World War II by Stephen Ambrose, and movies like "Saving Private Ryan" remain popular with the public. As we read these books or watch these films, we may be thinking, as did Rear Adm. Tarrant, "Where do we get such men?"

Coming Together

For readers of "Angels Against the Sun: A WWII Saga of Grunts, Grit, and Brotherhood," this question will likely arise a multitude of times. Here, James Fenelon, a historian who served 12 years in the military and is a graduate of the U.S. Army's Airborne, Jumpmaster, and Pathfinder schools, tells the story of the 11th Airborne Division and the courageous role it played in the liberation of the Philippines.

Continued on Page 4

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TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The Perpetual Return: Fidelity in the 'Odyssey'

Marriage as a perfectly imperfect institution

By Walker Larson

What does it mean to return? What does it mean to come home? Home is where one belongs, the people and places that are ours while we are theirs. Yet that belonging comes to its fullness only through our actively choosing it and conforming to the restrictions placed on us by dedication to a people and a place. Such dedication requires constant choosing, reaffirming, and returning. The "Odyssey" by Homer explores these notions of returning and belonging in great depth. "Nostos"—"return"—stands out as the signal word and concept in the poem, as Eva Brann tells us in her book "Homeric Moments." But there are different kinds of returning. She writes: "It appears that Coming Home, Return, is not so simple as surviving the sea and retaking a palace; you may come home but not be there, you may return but not be you." In the "Odyssey," Homer sings to us of a deeper kind of return—the perpetual returning of true fidelity.

Fidelity to a Mortal

Though the theme of fidelity surfaces throughout the poem, it finds its deepest and most important expression in the marriage between Odysseus and his wife, Penelope.

In Western literature, Penelope is a paragon of fidelity. She waits 20 years for her husband to return, fighting off suitors who seek to usurp Odysseus's crown and his bed. She holds on to hope and to her marriage vows when many lesser women would have given up on Odysseus and given in to the immense pressures to remarry.

Her steadfast heart never ceases longing for her husband. Time does not seem to heal the wound of loss for her—or to quite stifle hope. "All day long I indulge myself in sighs and tears," she laments, as though Odysseus had left only the day before.

Odysseus is grief-stricken for his spouse, too. And though his fidelity doesn't measure up to Penelope's, it is remarkable nonetheless. The first time in the poem that we see "long-enduring" Odysseus—to use his most important Homeric epithet—he is pining away for Penelope while he is trapped on an island by the nymph Calypso, who craves him for a husband. Homer says that his heart is "set on his wife and his return." In a poignant image, Homer depicts Odysseus on the island like this: "Off he sat on a headland, weeping there as always, / wrenching his heart with sobs and groans and anguish, / gazing out over the barren sea through blinding tears."

Now, Odysseus may weep for Penelope.



▲ Steadfast in her fidelity to Odysseus, Penelope (L) sits forlorn at her tapestry loom while a handmaiden picks apples, representing the temptation that lurks around her. "Penelope," 1864, by John Roddam Spencer Stanhope. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.

ope, but in point of fact, he sleeps with other women during his journey home. Odysseus fails to stay true to Penelope with his body. Yet he proves his ultimate loyalty to her when he makes the pivotal decision to forsake not only Calypso, a minor goddess, but immortality itself, for Penelope's sake.

This is how Calypso craftily tempts Odysseus to stay, even after Zeus has commanded her to let him go:

"Farewell! / But if you only knew, down deep, what pains / are fated to fill your cup before you reach that shore, / you'd stay right here, preside in our house with me / and be immortal. Much as you long to see your wife, / the one you pine for all your days ... and yet / I just might claim to be nothing less than she, / neither in face nor figure. Hardly right, is it, / for mortal woman to rival immortal goddess? / How, in build? in beauty?"

But here is Odysseus's luminous reply: "Ah, great goddess, / worldly Odysseus answered, / 'don't be angry with me, / please. All that you say is true, how well I know. / Look at my wise Penelope. She falls far short of you, / your beauty, stature. She is mortal after all / and you, you never age or die. / Nevertheless I long—I pine, all my days— / to travel home and see the dawn of my return.'"

What makes the answer so superb is that Odysseus doesn't deny the goddess's point—she is more beautiful and impressive than Penelope. And she is immortal, unlike Odysseus's wife, who is destined to age and die. Odysseus acknowledges all this, yet he chooses Penelope anyway.

Even with all her defects, no one can replace the unique soul Odysseus chose as his life companion all those years ago. And here we have a profound truth about marriage and fidelity. As Wendell Berry puts it in his essay

"The Body and the Earth" from "The Unsettling of America": "This is, in effect, a wedding ritual much like our own, in which Odysseus forsakes all others, in renouncing the immortal womanhood of the goddess, and renews his pledge to the mortal terms of his marriage."

Something, indeed, must be sacrificed when we marry. Before marriage, we all carry a blueprint, an ideal of the person we hope to marry. In a way, men love womanhood and women love manhood in the abstract, as ideals. But when we fall in love and marry, that abstract ideal must become particular and concrete. We no longer love womanhood or manhood or some immortal, perfect specimen of these but rather this particular, wonderful, imperfect being, and only this one.

Homer shows us that true fidelity means forsaking all other potential partners—even and especially that "ideal" that exists in the abstract, "out there" somewhere, that goddess or god whom people may fool themselves into waiting for—in favor of a real, mortal being. The ideal must be sacrificed for the real person, the person one really has.

And this person, though not a god or goddess, is in a mysterious way far superior to our idealized version of a mate, just as all readers know that Penelope is somehow far superior to the hollow goddess Calypso, who would try to displace her. The story of Odysseus dramatizes all this.

Marriage, A Rooted Institution

Penelope's final testing of Odysseus in the matter of their marriage bed relates to whether he has returned in body only or in heart as well. Is he the same man? Is he loyal to her and their home? In his knowledge of the immovability of their bed (which is literally rooted in the earth), Odysseus shows himself to be unchanged. "The test he has passed now is one of identity in its literal meaning, self-sameness," writes Brann. "He is still the manner of man he was before he went to Troy, her husband who has returned steadfast in his memory-laden, ineradi-



▲ Ceiling fresco of "Ulysses's [Odysseus's] Return to Ithaca" with a frieze decorated at the corners showing allegories of Fidelity, Fortitude, Hercules, and Apollo, circa 1814, by Gaspare Martellini for Ferdinand III. Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy.

cable love for his wife and his loyalty to the naturally rooted institution of marriage."

Fidelity requires a constant returning, a constant choosing, in spite of all the difficulties of land and sea. And if one is faithful, the joy will also return. Berry comments: "What marriage offers—and what fidelity is meant to

protect—is the possibility of moments when what we have chosen and what we desire are the same."

Those moments cannot be continuous, he reminds us. Odysseus and Penelope are separated for a long time—symbolically, their love is dry, painful, unrewarding. But Odysseus and Penelope's loyalty

is rewarded when they experience, as it were, a second wedding night after their famous reunification at the end of the poem. In their middle age, their love becomes fresh, new again. Joy redounds with greater intensity, even, than when they were first married. Such an experience comes only through fidelity.

Walker Larson teaches literature and history at a private academy in Wisconsin, where he resides with his wife. He holds a Master's in English literature and language, and his writing has appeared in *The Hemingway Review*, *Intellectual Takeout*, and his *Substack*, "TheHazelnut."

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THE EPOCH TIMES



U.S. troops during World War II arriving on the beach at Ormoc, in Leyte, Philippines, circa 1943.

BOOK REVIEW

Blood and Battle in the Philippines

Continued from Page 1

While fighting against the ferocious and determined soldiers of the Japanese army, these U.S. soldiers also battled swamps, rain and mud, jungles, and disease.

Like Stephen Ambrose in his World War II saga "Band of Brothers," Fenelon focuses our attention on the enlisted men as well as on their commanders. We follow them as they join their newly formed division at North Carolina's Camp Mackall, where officers like Gen. Joseph Swing, Col. Orin Haugen, and Col. Edward "Sluggo" Lahti work them hard, with rigorous training designed to pound them into the best physical shape possible while also forging them into a cohesive, well-trained military unit.

We may forget at times how young so many of these recruits were. Lat-

er known as the creator and host of "The Twilight Zone," Rod Serling was a member of the 11th Airborne. During the battle for Leyte Island, he was hit by shrapnel in the knee, a wound that plagued him for the rest of his life. He later wrote: "Shrapnel wounds and mangled, bullet-ridden bodies are not the only casualties of war. There are casualties of the mind. Every war produces a backwash, a residue of pain and grief."

He was 19 years old when he was wounded.

Into Action

Their training at an end, the 11th traveled to San Francisco and departed in May 1944 to New Guinea. In November they joined the fighting, first on Leyte and then on Luzon, where they participated in the bloodbath that accompanied the liberation of Manila.

Throughout his book, Fenelon provides maps and commentary on the movements of these American forces as they slugged it out with the imperial army. He makes clear, for example, the importance of capturing certain airfields and the strategies intended to divide and conquer the more than 400,000 Japanese troops stationed in these islands. He also pauses in his narrative from time to time to go behind the scenes of the Japanese high command and give us some insight into their defensive strategies and tactics.

Yet Fenelon devotes most of the book to the Americans on the ground, the grunts of the airborne division. By means of his extensive research—the notes and bibliography are 80 pages long—and his talents as a writer, Fenelon re-creates these men in their pride and heroism, their fears and anxieties.



'ANGELS AGAINST THE SUN: A WWII Saga of Grunts, Grit, and Brotherhood'
By James Fenelon
Regnery History
April 18, 2023
Hardcover
528 pages

In these battles, which often involved hand-to-hand fighting with bayonets, the courage that these men frequently displayed inspires awe. On Leyte, for instance, 31-year-old Pvt. Elmer Fryar, an "old man" in his company, killed multiple enemy soldiers trying to overwhelm his platoon and then pulled a wounded man to safety and dressed his wounds. He was shot down saving the life of his platoon leader when a Japanese soldier burst out of the underground. "Fryar sprung between the two men, taking the full burst in his chest and stomach. Slumping to the ground, Fryar's final effort was pulling the pin of a grenade and killing his assassin."

A Culture War

A radical difference in culture brought about the lack of mercy shown by both sides during this vicious fighting. For



In the waist of a Marine bomber, 2nd Lt. Minoru Wada, a captured Japanese army transport officer, helps an American bombing raid at Upian, Mindanao Island, Philippines, on Aug. 10, 1945.



Sgt. Don Singery (L) and Cpl. John D. Moore man a .30-caliber machine gun on Manarawat's perimeter.



Paratroopers exit a C-47 in flight during a training jump.

the Japanese, surrender was the ultimate disgrace. Indeed, for decades after the war had ended, a few Japanese holdouts still resisted surrender in the Philippines. This attitude along with the Japanese tactic of pretending to surrender while concealing a weapon, in turn, hardened the American attitude toward taking prisoners of war. Young American males who only a couple of years earlier were playing high school football or working mundane jobs were driven to become hardened killers, often shooting down without a qualm surrendering Japanese for rightly fearing that they carried a grenade to take out one last G.I. As Fenelon writes: "The enemy's atrocities and code of non-surrender broiled the Americans' psyche into charred toast."

The battle for Manila further inflamed the hatred of the men of the 11th Airborne for their enemy. At one Red Cross station, for instance, rampaging Japanese soldiers bayoneted women and children, including a 10-day-old infant. Fenelon cites 1st Lt. Randolph W. Kirland Jr.'s description of one room of this aid station, "crammed with women of all ages," where the atrocities beggared belief. As Kirkland later wrote: "The Japanese had simply gone berserk in the center city, raping and killing with a childlike, mindless ferocity that forever blotted

their absurd claim to be a superior race. We certainly treated them as vermin to be destroyed from then on."

Yet even in this merciless arena of killing and hatred, a human bond between these mortal enemies sometimes appeared. Nineteen-year-old Calvin Lincoln came upon a dying Japanese soldier, who "asked me in perfect English if I could get a priest." After the astonished Lincoln learned that the soldier had attended Catholic University, a medic administered last rites, and Lincoln gave the man a last cigarette before he died. "It put a human face on the enemy," he later recalled. "You thought they were animals, and here he spoke perfect English and was more educated than I was."

Some Lessons

Today, far fewer Americans have come face-to-face with war. Less than 7 percent of us are veterans, and of these men and women only a fraction have experienced the rigors and terrors of combat.

Reading histories like "Angels Against the Sun" gives the rest of us at least a secondhand education in the camaraderie, brutality, and the suffer-

ing of war. Using eyewitness accounts, for example, Fenelon re-creates how it felt to lie in a foxhole when the night was black as tar and the smallest noise might signal an enemy moving in for the kill. This book and others like it help us understand the toll that combat takes on the nerves and emotions, the steel-wire tension of rounding the corner of a jungle trail knowing that a machine gun crew may be waiting to open fire.

"Angels" also reminds us that weather, terrain, and logistics are huge and often incalculable factors in battle. These troopers endured monsoons that made sleep impossible and mud so thick that it added pounds to their boots and equipment. The jungle, hills, rice pad-

dies, and urban fighting in Manila each brought unique challenges, often made worse by poor maps or lack of information. Resupply under these conditions often meant dropping weapons, food, and medical supplies from the air, sometimes without parachutes, which killed several troopers on the ground.

Finally, "Angels Against the Sun" helps us grasp the fierce friendships hammered together in the hell of

combat. "When you're engaged in a fight for your life," Robert Marich told Fenelon, "you don't think about mother, God, country, and the flag and all of that. ...The only thing you're worried about is getting killed, and your buddy next to you getting killed. You have a friend there that's like a brother."

Which brings us back to that question with which we started: Where do we get such men? We could search in a dozen different directions, from their Great Depression childhoods to the love of family and country that brought these troopers to enlist in the first place, without arriving at a satisfactory answer.

Odds are that we will always have need of such men. If that is the case, if that time comes round again, we must hope we have equally brave patriots who are fit and ready to serve their country.

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 nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.



U.S. chockmen removing the chocks from the wheels of Navy Grumman Hellcats as they prepare to take off, during the strike at Manila Bay during World War II, Philippines, 1945.



A U.S. Navy signal officer aboard the USS Princeton bringing in a Grumman Hellcat fighter plane during the Pacific Campaign of World War II, Philippines, October 1944.



A trooper watches Manila burn from Parañaque.



The destroyed environs of Manila.



▲ Chénier (C, seated) in "Appeal of the Last Victims of the Terror in the Prison of St. Lazarus, 7, 9 Thermidor 1794," 1850, by Charles Louis Müller. Museum of the French Revolution, Vizille, France.

POETRY

A Poetic Voice, a Tragic Life

André Chénier and the French Revolution

By Da Yan

From Luciano Pavarotti to Jonas Kaufmann, talented tenors have vied to interpret the much beloved role of André Chénier—the French poet of the revolutionary generation, memorialized in the musical repertoire by Umberto Giordano's popular 1896 opera. With a succession of passionate arias, the composer charts the tragic story of the talented poet, whose life was cut short by the infamous Reign of Terror. On stage, the young Chénier righteously advocates for the suffering people before the lascivious aristocrats, falls passionately in love during the turbulent revolution, and at the end is unjustly sentenced to the guillotine. Accompanied by his lady, he announces the triumph of infinite love even in the face of gloomy death.

Chénier's enthusiastic embrace of death was certainly a romantic interpretation on the part of the composer, as the grim realities of the revolutionary years were made to fade into the background. At that time of turmoil, with the corruption of the reigning dynasty, French society underwent a total transformation based on the Enlightenment ideals of equality and democracy. But it quickly descended into a period of social unrest, political conflicts, and mass executions under the radical leader Maximilien Robespierre.

'The Young Captive'

Chénier, born in Constantinople in 1762 and raised in France, was thoroughly embedded in the ideals of the revolution. But during the Terror, he was imprisoned for months and executed at the age of 31, just two days before the downfall of Robespierre himself.

In the final days of his captivity, Chénier wrote the poem "The Young Captive" in the voice of a cellmate, an innocent young lady who shared his unfortunate fate:

The budding ear ripens from the respected scythe;
Without fear of the press, the vine all summer
Drinks the sweet gifts of dawn;
And I, like him beautiful, and young like him,
Though the present hour may be troubled and boring,
I don't want to die just yet.

The verses begin with a picture of vines and grapes blooming strong at the height of summer. But we immedi-



▲ Portrait of the French poet André Chénier, 1825, by Horace Vernet. Oil on canvas.

ately realize that they are an analogy for the speaker herself. In the original French, the line "comme lui belle, et jeune comme lui" ("like him beautiful, and young like him") lays out a "chiasmus," an ABBA structure frequently found in classical poetry, which highlights the lively energy of the girl and the tragedy of her impending death.

Though locked deep in a black cell, the poet refrains from describing in detail the "troubled and boring" imprisonment, but paints a picture of nature in a still hopeful tone:

Let a dry-eyed stoic fly to embrace death,
I cry and I hope; in the dark breath of the north
I bend and raise my head.
If there are bitter days, there are also sweet ones!
Alas! What honey never left a distaste?
What sea has no tempest?
...
O Death, you can wait. Get away, get yourself away;
Go to comfort those sad hearts whom pale despair, and woe,
And shame, perchance have wrong.
For me the woods still offer verdant ways,
The Loves their kisses, and the

Muses praise:
I would not die so young!

One stanza after another, the speaker defies Death's imposition of sorrow, but rather evinces strength and resilience in the face of tribulation.

Unlike the ancient stoic who shows no emotion, she acknowledges her suffering but retains the hope, bending "in the dark breath of the north" yet still raising her head. Indeed, as anyone experienced with life would say: "What sea has no tempest?" At the end, she commands Death to leave, because it must not haunt one who still holds much passion for love, beauty, and the world.

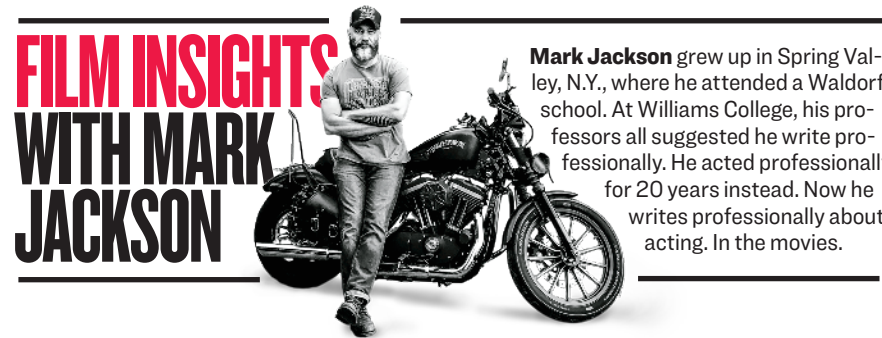
Upon the conclusion of the young captive's enthusiastic speech, Chénier's voice resurfaces in the poem, explaining its genesis in that dark Parisian cell:

So, sad and captive, my lyre however
Woke up, listening to these complaints, this voice,
These wishes of a young captive;
And shaking off the burden of my languid days,
To the sweet laws of verse I bent the accents
From her kind and naive mouth.

Sorrow, passion, and hope—these were the emotions of the young captive, which Chénier put into verse. But the poet himself must have felt them deeply, too, before his hour of death. Stories have it that before he walked up to the guillotine, Chénier pointed to his head and uttered: "I leave nothing for posterity; and yet, I had something there." And while waiting to be executed, he was still reading a book by the Greek playwright Sophocles.

On a charge of conspiracy, Chénier died on July 25, 1794, at what is now the Place de la Nation. Upon the belated publication of his work in 1819, it has come to influence French poetry in a considerable way. Having absorbed the style of Greek and Latin verse, Chénier composed in a classic manner, but his civic engagement also pushed him to express personal feelings from the bottom of his soul in the language of freedom, dignity, and justice. It is little wonder, then, that a hundred years later Umberto Giordano would be inspired to compose the opera based on the poet's life, recounting a tale of love, death, and the passionate pursuit for the righteous.

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



FILM REVIEW

Documentary Opens Minds to Awareness and Healing

Post-traumatic stress disorder is treatable

By Mark Jackson

Although the term "shell-shocked"—the now-archaic term for combat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—is not that far in the rearview mirror, the fact that PTSD can materialize out of many other stressful situations other than combat is only recently becoming clear to the general public. Many such instances are described in "Here. Is. Better."—a new and excellent documentary on the topic.

When one thinks of combat-instigated PTSD, one tends to think of shells exploding, bombs falling with shock and awe, and the myriad instances of haunting war-carnage images that veterans encounter. But PTSD can also be subtle and sneak in under the wire.

PTSD Examples

We're given a few examples of this. One of the four main subjects of the documentary, Jason Kander explains to a therapist how, during the Afghan War, his job as an intelligence officer was to be deep in enemy territory for extended periods of time, isolated from his unit, with only an interpreter and a sidearm, surrounded by highly dangerous individuals. No one knew of his whereabouts, and there was no way of contacting him (and vice versa) should something go wrong.

The therapist points out that while not overt like the IED (improvised explosive device) that destroyed the life of the husband of one of the film's other subjects—in front of her eyes—such a situation is,

albeit subconsciously, massively stressful and will produce PTSD just as readily.

Another vet, a single mother and former Army metal worker with two adorable children, is shown not being able to get out of bed because she can't sleep for weeks at a time. During her tour of duty, a group of soldiers broke into her barracks and gang-raped her.

And I'll just say right here that this particular story, and the depictions of volunteers heading into the underbrush near highway overpasses to talk to homeless veterans, brought up massive anger

for me. I despise the way America always waves the flag, sings the anthem, touts honor and bravery, and then can't do an even decent job of protecting the men and women on the front lines who suffer and have their lives destroyed while keeping America safe and free.

This Fourth of July, I'm feeling shame regarding this topic. It's gone on for so long. And why is it largely vets who take care of American vets? Because American politicians, policies, and bureaucracy don't. And to think that some politicians would like to see the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs gutted. Don't get me started.

What It Is

Director Jack Youngelson elicits candid interviews from four interview subjects: veteran and former politi-

FILM REVIEW

A Film Canceled for the Truth About Gender Grooming

Release in the works on DVD and on-demand

By Michael Clark

Following in the wake of "2000 Mules," "My Son Hunter," and "Died Suddenly," "No Way Back: The Reality of Gender-Affirming Care" ("No Way") is an independently produced, low-budget movie, which those in positions of power (and by extension their minions) do not want you or anyone else to see.

What differentiates "No Way" (original title: "Affirmation Generation") from those other titles is that it was scheduled for wide theatrical release on June 21, yet on that same day, it was canceled by its sole exhibitor, AMC Theatres. Succumbing to pressure from special-interest fringe groups, particularly the Qt (queer/transgender) Project, AMC pulled the plug on "No Way" without so much as an announcement or advance notice to the producing studio, Deplorable Films.

For now, you can't view "No Way," but will be able to in relatively short order; more on that in a bit.

Apolitical and Unbiased

A documentary devoid of politics or bias of any sort, "No Way" is steeped in facts backed up by the testimonies of six "detransitioning" young adults, the opinions of a dozen medical, psychological, and social behavioral experts, and pesky little bothersome things like basic science and biology.

Directed, photographed, and edited by L.E. Dawes, "No Way" is divided into three parts: "Dysphoria," "The Only Path," and "Detransition." Each chapter is chock full of charts, graphs, and other bits of powerful minutia that follow textbook cinematic storytelling technique. Dawes is careful not to overwhelm or bog down the viewer with hyperstylized

information overload while striking a perfect balance between the data and human interest elements. The film is flawlessly executed.

Needless to say, the majority of what Dawes presents is revelatory and ear-pinning (which is probably why the Qt group and others fear it) and there's far too much of it to lay out here, but there are some tidbits worth knowing going in.

According to the film, in 2011, less than 0.3 percent of American teens identified as transgender. In 2021, that number skyrocketed to 9 percent, a nearly 2,700 percent increase. The film also states that the current suicide rate among transgender individuals is 19 percent higher than non-transgender people.

Hijacked

Of late, many members of the former "LGB" community, whose mantra was "born this way," have begun distancing themselves from the "T" faction, which essentially hijacked the movement and replaced the original mantra with the polar opposite "born in the wrong body."



▲ John, a former Vietnam helicopter door gunner, in the PTSD documentary "Here. Is. Better."

cal aspirant Jason, Vietnam helicopter door gunner John, severely emotionally traumatized single mother and veteran Tabitha, and wife-mother veteran Teresa whose husband was injured in the IED explosion. We learn how PTSD has affected their lives and how therapy has helped heal it.

For me, this was an eye-opener because PTSD is absolutely treatable, via trauma-focused therapies such as Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. I did not know about any of this.

The film follows these men and women who have decided to participate in psychotherapy to overcome their PTSD. The film showcases an unprecedented access to various residential treatment programs of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

An effective filmmaking decision was to spend the majority of the documentary's runtime with the veterans instead of the clinical staff, giving them and their families the opportunity to share their experiences and their reactions to the treatment.

The audience is allowed to sit in on these therapy sessions and experience the treatment in real time. Overall, the documentary focuses on the hope in treatment and doesn't exploit the trauma. This earnest approach humanizes, removes barriers, and allows spectators to care about the film's subjects.

The film provides the audience with a beacon of hope by revealing the practical steps that its subjects take on their healing journey, and one imagines that the film will eventually be utilized as a learning and awareness tool for soldiers and medical professionals, as well as for friends and families of veterans.

Veterans are three times more likely than civilians to experience PTSD, but over 13 million Americans currently suffer from the disorder. It's time to spread the word that there is help available.

"Here. Is. Better." is an effective documentary that facilitates the understanding of a deep-rooted and often underestimated diagnosis. If someone watching is able to relate to the subjects on-screen, eventually be able to acknowledge their own struggles with PTSD, and seek help without giving up, this documentary will have achieved exactly what it was supposed to.

Where to Watch: VOD released on all major platforms in the United States.

'Here. Is. Better.'

Documentary
Director
Jack Youngelson
Running Time
1 hour, 35 minutes
MPAA Rating
Not Rated
Release Date
June 27, 2023
★★★★★

Although not expressly stated, the film makes the connection between the multitude of COVID-19 "vaccines" and the litany of drugs involved in the transitioning process, and the common bond is the participation and seemingly endless profits enjoyed by Big Pharma.

Perhaps the most distressing part of the movie in general, and the relentless pushing of the transgender lifestyle in particular, is what is known as "informed consent," something practiced by several "healthcare professionals" and Planned Parenthood.

Boiled down, this abhorrent policy allows minors to begin the transitioning process not only without parental consent but also without any kind of physical examination or psychological testing. In the majority of U.S. states right now, minors—those who cannot legally drink, drive, join the armed forces, or even get a tattoo—can attempt to start what will eventually become a losing battle with their own DNA.

To clarify, although "No Way" was produced by a company named "Deplorable," don't think for a second that the movie is the work of far-right neons—far from it. During the closing credit sequence, the names of Dawes and producers Vera Lindner, Joey Brite, and Stephanie Winn, and these words appear on the page describing them: "All life-long, West Coast, liberal democrats."

Not Left Versus Right

This is no longer (if it ever was to be-

gin with) a Left versus Right or lifestyle choice issue; it is, pure and simple, a child protection and antigrooming issue. Many on the far left (including singer Elton John) have feigned outrage over laws recently passed in states such as Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, North Dakota, and South Dakota that prohibit young children (third grade and below) from being exposed to sexually oriented material. None of these laws prohibit consenting adults from doing whatever they please with their own bodies, provided that it does not involve minors.

The sudden withdrawal on the part of AMC did succeed in stopping people from viewing "No Way" in theaters; however, Deplorable is now in the process of preparing the movie for release on DVD and on-demand, which should be sometime within the next 30 days.

If you wish to be notified when the movie can be viewed, register at NoWayBackFilm.com

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favors dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.

'No Way Back: The Reality of Gender-Affirming Care'

Documentary
Director
L.E. Dawes
Running Time
1 hour, 30 minutes
MPAA Rating
Not Rated
Release Date
June 21, 2023
(canceled)
★★★★★



▲ Poster for "No Way Back: The Reality of Gender-Affirming Care."

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Surviving the Harsh Realities of the Frozen North

A beautifully nuanced tale of survival

By Ian Kane

One of the most compelling survival genres features elements that are all around us day in and day out—the natural world. Man vs. nature movies are very compelling since many of us have also experienced challenging, and sometimes dangerous, brushes with Mother Nature.

Helmed by Brazilian director Joe Penna (who also co-wrote the screenplay), 2018's survival flick "Arctic" is a welcome departure from the usual overwrought Hollywood fare. Unlike other cold-weather survival films such as 2003's "The Snow Walker" or 2011's "The Grey," which feature noisy, special effects-laden plane crashes, and copious amounts of melodrama, Penna's film takes a much more minimalistic approach to the genre—and it's all the better for it.

Standout Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen steps into the snow-custed boots of a man known only as Overgard, who has crash-landed his plane in the desolate environs of the Arctic. It seems that he's been stranded in the middle of nowhere for some time since his full beard look is in stark contrast to his clean-shaven mug on his pilot's license picture. A couple of his toes are also missing, although they've healed over.

Overgard has settled into a more or less regular daily schedule and we get accustomed to not only his typical routines, but also the increasing sense of despair. Just outside of the crashed plane, which serves as his makeshift shelter, he has dug out holes in the ice in order to keep his sole food source, raw fish.

Overgard's forlorn expressions are indicative of a man who is losing hope of being rescued day by day, which is further exacerbated by the fact that no one is answering the emergency distress



Overgard (Mads Mikkelsen) makes a hazardous journey, in 2019's "Arctic."

beacon he cranks by hand for hours on end. Oh, and there's that giant polar bear that keeps looking at him longingly from afar as if gazing at a two-legged meal that it'll gobble up in the near future.

The action picks up as Overgard hears a helicopter nearing his location; his emergency beacon's lights start to flash as stormy weather moves in. However, his new hope is all but crushed when some powerful Arctic winds cause the helicopter to spin out of control and smash into the icy tundra. Unfortunately, the would-be rescuers didn't land as successfully as Overgard's plane, and its pilot (Tintrinai Thikhasuk) is instantly killed.

Overgard discovers that the chopper's passenger (Maria Thelma Smaradottir) is still alive, albeit seriously wounded and fading in and out of consciousness. He takes her back to his shelter and sews up her abdominal wound.

While rummaging through the helicopter, Overgard finds useful supplies, such as a sled, packs of ramen noodles, a propane burner (along with a lighter), and a map of the area.

When his companion's condition

doesn't seem to be improving, Overgard forms a calculated strategy. He decides to risk his life and transport her to a "seasonal station" indicated on the map. The station is the nearest place of safety, but getting to it means traveling over rough terrain in dangerous, unpredictable weather conditions.

Overgard packs up the equipment he needs and heads out with the young woman strapped to the sled. Things seem to be going well initially, as they traverse a vast icy plateau. As his route is blocked by massive boulders, and a storm begins to move in, things become much more complicated and hazardous.

Something that immediately caught my attention about this harrowing adventure film is that it starts off as a slow burn, almost hum-drum affair, and gradually ratchets up the tension as the story progresses. Utilizing sparse visual clues, the viewer is forced to speculate on Overgard circumstances, moods, and chances of survival.

Mikkelsen's ability to emote his character's various emotional and psychological states, coupled with the barren environments, lends itself well to the

speculative nature of the storyline and keeps you engaged throughout the arduous journey. There were numerous times during the film when I'd ponder what I would do if I found myself in situations similar to Overgard's.

I also enjoyed the unobtrusive cinematography that takes its time showing you the beautifully bleak, frozen environs (it was filmed in Iceland). There are no ear-splitting explosions, orange fireballs, or CGI avalanches, just the harsh realities of unpredictable, freezing weather, and the ever-present threat of hungry predators.

As a film, "Arctic" is not only a gripping tale of survival under dire circumstances, but also one of human willpower, selflessness, and the capacity for compassion that we're all capable of. It's an ultimately hopeful movie that in the end, should lift the spirits of those who watch it.

"Arctic" is available on Apple TV, Vudu, and Netflix.

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.

"Arctic"

Director
Joe Penna

Starring
Mads Mikkelsen, Maria Thelma Smaradottir, Tintrinai Thikhasuk

Running Time
1 hour, 38 minutes

MPAA Rating
PG-13

Release Date
Feb. 1, 2019 (Limited)

★★★★☆

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

From the Desk of Our Puzzle Master



“I've benefited greatly from the many relationships and friendships formed making the puzzle pages better and better with each passing year.

Tom Houston
Puzzle Master



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Dear Epoch VIP (and Puzzler!),

Thank you for subscribing to The Epoch Times and for supporting our journey of providing the world with truthful, uncensored journalism as well as analysis of world events, especially in China.

My journey with The Epoch Times actually began in 2009 when I discovered the publication's outstanding coverage of events in China, something of which I had studied for over 30 years principally as a linguist and China analyst. The Epoch Times' coverage was unique and included many aspects and facets of Chinese life under the Chinese Communist Party that were either not covered or were entirely avoided by the mainstream press. After reading this coverage, I felt compelled to "climb aboard" and support The Epoch Times on its journey toward truthful reporting that would not be beholden to any kind of censorship, whether it's from a government or commercial entity.

After discussions with the editor-in-chief on what the newspaper actually most needed and what I personally could do to support the paper, I published my first puzzle page on Jan. 4, 2010—over 12 years ago. Since then, my Epoch Times journey has been eventful, to say the least. I have learned and grown a great deal, and so has our puzzle page! It's grown from a single page of puzzles in a 16-page edition to two pages of puzzles (and a half page on the Wednesday "For Kids Only" page) in what is now a 52-page paper!

Along the way, hundreds of puzzlers have reached out through our feedback@epochtimes.com email to comment on the puzzles, send me pictures of their unique solutions, ask questions, point out my mistakes (I've made many!), pass along a compliment or constructive criticism and offer to help. I've benefited greatly from the many relationships and friendships formed making the puzzle pages better

and better with each passing year.

Thank you, readers! We wouldn't be where we are today without you! **Each and every one of you who has subscribed, advertised, or who has sent in encouraging words, constructive comments, or ideas has helped to make The Epoch Times what it is today.**

A number of Epoch Times readers (and puzzle fans) actually contribute to our puzzle pages! "Coder Chang" developed a "4 Numbers" puzzle tool (4Nums.com) that we have been using since January 2018. Our skydiving chess master, Michael Gibbs, began donating "Chess Challenges" to The Epoch Times over two years ago. Liz Ball, an accomplished puzzle developer whose work has appeared in more than 300 publications (HiddenPicturePuzzles.com) began donating her popular "Hidden Picture" puzzles to The Epoch Times' kids page over a year ago.

We sincerely appreciate these puzzles, and for me, they are a kind reminder of the community that has built up around this newspaper.

In short, seeing people genuinely moved by The Epoch Times' commitment to journalism and truthful reporting of events, often glossed over or "slanted" by other media outlets, has been a heartwarming experience for me.

I hope that your journey with The Epoch Times will be as educational, satisfying, and fulfilling as mine has been. And, please, always feel free to drop us a line at feedback@epochtimes.com. We appreciate your insight, and who knows—I could always use a few more hands in the puzzle workshop.

In truth and tradition,

Tom Houston
The Epoch Times

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