

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

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French model and actress Marie-Hélène Arnaud in a tweed suit from Gabrielle Chanel's Autumn/Winter 1959 collection and Chanel shoes, carrying the 2.55 Chanel handbag.

HAUTE COUTURE

Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel’s Chic Legacy

An exhibition of elegance: ‘Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto’ at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London

By Lorraine Ferrier

In 2020, the Palais Galliera (Fashion Museum of the City of Paris) hosted the first Paris exhibition dedicated to French national treasure couturière Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel. That exhibition, “Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto,” has now been revamped, opened—and quickly sold out—at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). The museum’s fashion collection is considered the UK’s national collection of fashion.

The V&A shows the Paris exhibition in

a new light, with rarely seen pieces from the museum’s Chanel collection shown alongside looks from the Palais Galliera and Patrimoine de Chanel (the House of Chanel’s heritage collection, in Paris). This is the first UK exhibition dedicated to Chanel’s designs, from her first millinery boutique in 1910 to her final collection in 1971. In the press release, V&A director Tristram Hunt credits the House of Chanel’s success “to the templates first laid down by its founder Gabrielle Chanel, over a century ago.” Exhibition visitors can see over 200 of the eminent designer’s looks on display, alongside Chanel

jewelry, accessories, cosmetics, and perfumes. Among the exhibits are the instantly recognizable Chanel staples such as the braided tweed suit, two-tone shoes, and the 2.55 quilted purse with its gold-chain shoulder straps.

Chanel’s Timeless Chic

In a video interview on Chanel’s website, the former creative director of Chanel—the late Karl Lagerfeld—likened Chanel to “a rural Audrey Hepburn who wore relatively simple things, almost like a governess.” But there is nothing wrong with that, he said, as “it is more elegant than the

fuss and cheap frills of vulgar satins.” “Chanel’s style was based on the principles of comfort and respect for the female anatomy, but also on the details and chic elegance of her designs,” notes the director of the Palais Galliera, Miren Arzalluz, in the Paris museum’s exhibition catalog. Chanel’s designs have a timeless appeal. “Fashion changes, but style endures,” she once said. It’s hard to believe that many of Chanel’s early designs are over 100 years old. Made in fine-gauge silk jersey, the


Continued on **Page 4**



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POETRY

Poetry From Our Past Can Comfort and Heal

Lesser-known poets bring America's past to life

By Jeff Minick

In his introduction to “The Best Loved Poems of the American People,” which was first published in 1936 and remains in print today, writer Edward Frank Allen put down some thoughts intended to remind readers of the “necessity” of poetry. “It recaptures beauty,” he writes. “It stirs wholesome emotions and gives glimpses across the border that, vague as they may be, are a preview of eternal things. It entertains, it inspires, and, in time of need, it comforts.”

A friend's email prompted me to reopen my copy of “Best Loved Poems.” She'd been reading an *Ideals* publication, a 60-year-old treasure kept by her parents while they lived, and was struck by some of the poetry she found, the sense of peace these verses offered. If I correctly interpreted her email, my friend, who favors tradition in the arts, misses the mac-and-cheese comforts so often absent in today's poetry.

Because of when it was published and because of its editor, “The Best Loved Poems of the American People” is a treasure house of such verse.

The Woman Behind the Book

Let's meet Hazel Felleman (1884–1975), a version of Google in human form.

Her name is likely unfamiliar to us, but Hazel Felleman worked almost 50 years at *The New York Times*, beginning as a teenager dusting books and advancing into an editorship. Soon her principal job involved handling the paper's *Queries and Answers* in *The Book Review*, where she received numerous requests from readers around the country asking her to help them identify a poem or track down some obscure line. She consulted her large collection of reference books, kept track of thousands of these searches, and dug up answers. In her obituary, the *Times* reported Miss Felleman's solitary failure:

“Only once was she stumped. A reader asked an unusually tough question, and she took her problem to the public library. The library's experts tackled the query, finally admitted they could not find the answer and referred her to ‘Miss Hazel Felleman of the *New York Times*.’”

Eventually, Felleman compiled “The Best Loved Poems of the American People,” taking her title from the queries submitted by those thousands of readers and poetry hunters. Later, she edited an equally large anthology, “Poems That Live Forever,” which also remains available today.

Though not all of Felleman's selections are available today outside of her book, here is a sampling of those less familiar American poets whose works are available online and who sing to us of the peace and comfort sought by my friend.

‘Strains of One Familiar Song’

T.C. O’Kane (1830–1912) wrote songs, hymns, and verse. In his piece “My Mother's Prayer,” a man visits his old home, comes across the trundle bed in which he once slept, and is immediately whisked by memories into boyhood, when his mother would tuck him between the sheets with prayers and a kiss. Through word choice, rhythm, and the imagery of a mother in the shadows, the poet skillfully creates a picture of a child falling to sleep. At one point, the narrator once again hears his mother's voice:

Strains of one familiar song,
Often sung by my dear mother
To me in that trundle bed:
“Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed.

Even at the poem's end, when the narrator wakes from his reverie, the sweet, languid memories of “dusky eventide” and his mother's whispers remain:

Yet I am but only dreaming,
Ne'er I'll be a child again,
Many years has that dear mother
Handling the paper's *Queries and Answers*
In *The Book Review*, where she received
Numerous requests from readers around
The country asking her to help them identify
A poem or track down some obscure line.
She consulted her large collection of
Reference books, kept track of thousands
Of these searches, and dug up answers.
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Felleman's solitary failure:

‘All the Lovely Wayside Things’

Today, Helen Hunt Jackson (1830–1885) is chiefly remembered as an advocate for Native Americans in books like “A Century of Dishonor” and “Ramona.” Yet in her day, she was also widely known for her poetry, and given the season, it's fitting to look at her poem “October's Bright Blue Weather.”

In this piece, Jackson offers readers pure joy while placing us in touch with the earth, word-painting the change of season with bright colors and buoyant rhythm. Here, for instance, is the fourth stanza:

When on the ground red apples lie
In piles like jewels shining,
And redder still on old stone walls
Are leaves of woodbine twining...

Jackson also begins and ends her poem by humorously comparing October to June, that season of warm weather and weddings perhaps more celebrated by poets:

O sun and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.

‘Friends at Hand’

Wilbur Nesbit (1871–1927) earned his livelihood in journalism and advertising. Popular during World War I, and both recited and sung by school children, his best-known poem was “Your Flag and My Flag.”

We may revel along with H.H. Jackson in the fragrances of bright October, but that snap in the air foretells the coming of winter and more time spent indoors. Because I'm always drawn to books, and because books and cold weather go to-



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

gether like cocoa and marshmallows, here I present the first stanza of Nesbit's short poem “Who Hath a Book.”

Who hath a book
Hath friends at hand,
And gold and gear
At his command;
In quiet churchyard lain,
And rich estates,
If he but look,
Are held by him
Who hath a book.

Like Emily Dickinson in “There Is No Grave Like a Book,” Nesbit reminds us that the union of ink, paper, and a writer's imagination can carry us through time and around the world.

‘The Best Loved Poems of the American People’ is a treasure house of comforting verse.



▲ Poems can help us imagine sites on the wayside.

‘Growing Old’

Born in Arkansas, Karle Wilson Baker (1878–1960) fell in love with Texas in 1906, just about the same time she fell in love with her future husband. She was a teacher and a well-known poet and writer in her time. And though little known today, she was nominated for a Pulitzer in 1931.

A number of thinkers and writers down through the ages have proclaimed that as we grow older, we acquire the faces we deserve. In “Let Me Grow Lovely,” Baker hopes that she may exude beauty and quiet splendor as she ages:

Let me grow lovely, growing old—
So many fine things to do:
Laces, and ivory, and gold,
And silks need not be new;
And there is healing in old trees,
Old streets a glamour hold;
Why may not I, as well as these,
Grow lovely, growing old?

Perhaps it is Baker's inclusion of fine old things—laces, silks, and trees—along with the fourfold use of “old” in this short poem, but as in so many other poetic works from earlier times, we find a sweetness here, a tenderness that marks the poem and leaves it beautiful.

Chicken Soup Poetry

Human nature may remain the same, but human circumstances change. Here's just one example: Most of us living today were born in a hospital under professional care, and most of us will die in a hospital or in nursing facilities. Most of the people living at the time of these poets were born at home, and most of them, including the many children stricken with disease, died there as well.

Those two realities placed their stamp on the poets of that day. Some consider their verses saccharine, but they had earned the right to their sentimentality. In general, they were also closer to the things of the earth—crops, animals, the weather—than we are today, a familiarity reflected in their writing. Perhaps as a result of all these factors, they were likely closer to God as well, which may explain why so many of the pieces appearing in “The Best Loved Poems of the American People” invoke a deity.

Today, we face trials and fears that our not-so-distant ancestors never dreamed of. We sprint through each day, for instance, trying to make a living and raise a family, all the while bombarded by myriad bits of information and ubiquitous news reports that the sky is falling.

The result? In that earlier time, it was common for people to die of sepsis, or blood poisoning. In our day, it is more common for people to die of sepsis of the soul.

Eighty-seven years ago in “The Best Loved Poems of the American People,” Edward Allen wrote: “Today poetry is an absolute necessity. The world needs it for its vitiating strength. Poetry came into being because of this need, and it is perpetuated for the same reason.”

If you're in need of some vitiating strength, look to some of these poets and others for comfort, for some chicken broth in verse for the mind and spirit.

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.

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2.

1. Evening dresses line the mirrored staircase in the “Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto” exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Chanel had a similar staircase in her couture house, and for each showing of her collection she'd sit on the stairs and watch her dresses being shown below.

2. Chanel made the 2.55 bag between 1955 and 1971. Quilted leather and metal-chain straps.

3. Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel in her couture house at 31 rue Cambon, Paris, in 1937. She moved here in 1918, bringing her Haute Couture ateliers, apartment, and creation studio all under one roof.

4. American model Marion Morehouse, wearing a black crepe *romain* bolero dress with fringed and paillette embroidered skirt by Chanel. Published in *Vogue US*, 1926. Photograph by Luxembourgish American photographer Edward Steichen.



3.

ROGER SCHALL/CONDE NAST/SHUTTERSTOCK



4.

ROGER SCHALL/CONDE NAST/SHUTTERSTOCK

HAUTE COUTURE

Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel’s Chic Legacy

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Fine-gauge silk jersey marinière (sailor's) blouse from Gabrielle Chanel's Spring/Summer 1916 collection. Patrimoine de Chanel (the House of Chanel's heritage collection), Paris.

Continued from Page 1

sleek contours and deep V-neck of Chanel's long-sleeved marinière (sailor) blouse looks surprisingly modern. Yet the blouse is from Chanel's Spring/Summer 1916 collection and, at over a century old, is the oldest item of clothing on display in the exhibition.

In many ways, the blouse epitomizes the key elements of Chanel's elegant designs: lightweight fabrics in monochrome palettes, gently tailored with clever detailing, and minimal accessories.

Material Comforts

One of the fascinating things about Chanel's designs is how she made overlooked, humble materials majestic. She pioneered luxury designs using utility fabrics, such as different gauges of jersey and tweed that were normally confined to the countryside “uniforms” of jockeys, hunters, and fishermen. Her love for the outdoors and sporting pursuits was a great and, often surprising, source of inspiration for her.

Chanel's practical, chic designs shine through her sportswear, daywear, and evening gowns. Her design elegance came from simplicity itself, highlighting the material and female silhouette through skillful construction. She added accessories only where needed. “It is the material that makes the dress and not the ornaments that can be added to it,” she said.

In the exhibition, an ivory silk taffeta dress and jacket suit from Chanel's Spring/Summer 1926 collection shows the designer's exquisite eye for details. And it demonstrates a design ethos that she once linked to architecture: “It's all a matter of proportions,” she said. The soft suit jacket appears almost like a cardigan. The dress appears like a skirt and top, a belt sits firmly on the

hips, and the dress's top hemline is crenelated (indented with squares, a pattern seen on castle battlements). The dress skirt is structured with box pleats, like columns. A large, simple black silk bow and gloves complete the outfit.

Often for her evening wear, she would create simple chiffon dresses inlaid with decorations such as lace, tulle, beads, sequins, and tassels—like a second skin, which would sculpt and skim the contours of the body and sometimes shimmer and shine like feathers. She favored asymmetry and uneven garment lengths that embraced the curves of the female figure.

One of Chanel's most recognizable designs is her braided tweed *tailleur* (suit). Her very French design was inspired by a British utility design. She'd seen British ladies wearing tweed suits called “tailor mades” when hunting and shooting. Naturally thick, warm, and waterproof, tweed (spun from Cheviot sheep fleece) had been made in Scotland since the 18th century. Traditionally, the tweed was dyed with plant pigments, making the fabric disappear into the landscape.

Chanel made tweed visible and de rigueur by redefining the tailor made. Her suit consisted of a light jacket, a jersey blouse, and a practical skirt. Working with several Scottish tweed makers, she created different gauges of tweed that she dyed in myriad colors. A rainbow of suits can be seen in the exhibition, each one defined by meticulous detail such as upturned cuffs showing a flash of jacket lining that matches the color of the trim and jersey blouse and contrasts the tweed.

The Bare Accessories

Sports influenced Chanel's 2.55 bag, too. Made in February 1955 (2/55), its

quilted over-stitched design mirrors the quilted jackets of jockeys. Chanel added the jewelry chain shoulder straps as they reminded her of the keychains carried by the caretakers of the convent where she grew up.

Chanel's elegant clothing designs were often offset with multiple strings of pearls or gems, or both. She popularized costume jewelry, frequently mixing fine jewels with fake ones in her opulent designs. “Over the years, the jewelry drew inspiration from many geographies and historical epochs, often in response to Chanel's own travels abroad or the designers' visits to various museum collections,” the exhibition book states.

Chanel had begun making her own jewelry around 1924. Parisian jeweler Maison Gripoux made her glass-paste pieces, where molten glass is shaped directly into a metal setting. Gripoux even made glass-paste pearls, and according to the exhibition book, this elevated costume jewelry from imitation to “a new form with its own techniques and aesthetic.”

Chanel's final collection was shown in Paris two weeks after she died in 1971 at age 87. The director of the Palais Galliera, Miren Arzalluz, said in a press release that “Gabrielle Chanel devoted her long life to creating, perfecting and promoting a new kind of elegance based on freedom of movement, a natural and casual pose, a subtle elegance that shuns all extravagances, a timeless style for a new kind of woman. That was her fashion manifesto, a legacy that has never gone out of style.”

The “Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto” exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London runs through Feb. 25, 2024. To find out more, visit VAM.ac.uk

The exhibition is presented in partnership with Palais Galliera, Fashion Museum of the City of Paris, Paris Musées, and with the support of Chanel.

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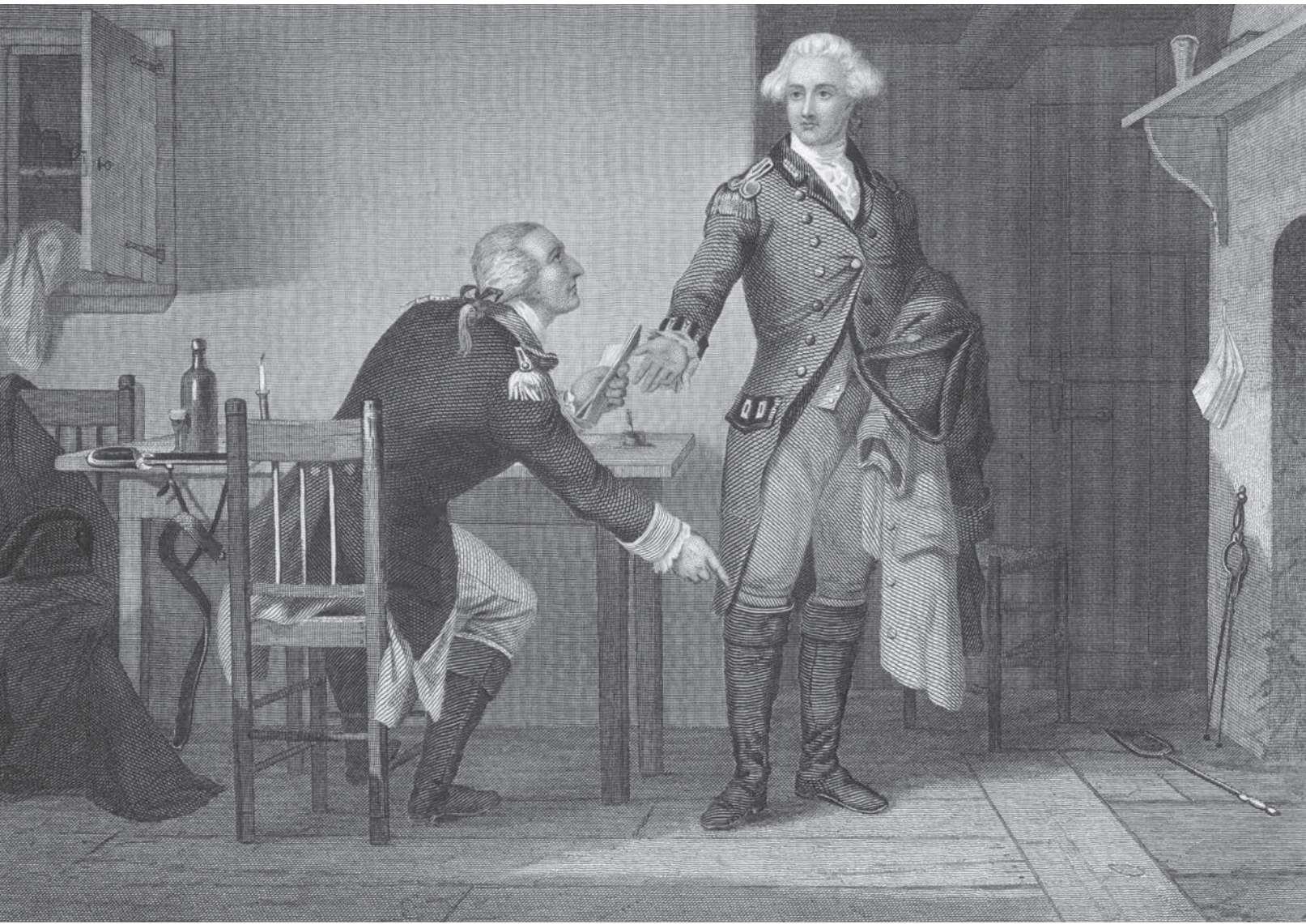
▲ Gabrielle Chanel made the tweed suit fashionable, reinventing the traditional sporting suit for the city.

◆ Silk taffeta dress and jacket suit from Gabrielle Chanel's Spring/Summer 1926 collection. Patrimoine de Chanel (the House of Chanel's heritage collection), Paris.

► Silk hat from Gabrielle Chanel's Spring/Summer 1917 collection. Patrimoine de Chanel (the House of Chanel's heritage collection), Paris.

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▲ Engraving depicting the treason of Benedict Arnold for changing sides during the American Revolutionary War, where Arnold persuades Maj. André to conceal the papers in his boot, 1779.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Traitor of the American Revolution

Benedict Arnold thought he was always right

By Dustin Bass

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes.” This biblical proverb is not an affirmation of man’s ability to choose; rather, it is a warning against believing in one’s infallibility. While British historian Stephen Brumwell researched the life of Benedict Arnold, the famous American traitor, he was taken aback at how often Arnold demonstrated this sense of infallibility. “He kind of always considered himself to be right,” Brumwell said during an interview on “The Sons of History” podcast. “There’s a phrase that comes up again and again in his correspondences, which is ‘conscious of the rectitude of my intentions.’ Basically he’s saying, ‘I consider myself to be justified in whatever I do.’ I don’t think Arnold was the kind who was deliberately setting out to portray himself in a darker way. I think he was someone who genuinely did what he thought was right.”

In Brumwell’s provocative and insightful book “Turncoat: Benedict Arnold and the Crisis of American Liberty,” he describes a complex man who turned from one of the new nation’s greatest military heroes to one of its greatest and most enduring villains.

Arnold in Ticonderoga and Quebec
“Right from the onset of hostilities in 1775, Arnold pushes himself to get into the action. He participates in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York, which was really important because Ticonderoga had been a significant fortress during the previous war—the French and Indian War,” Brumwell said. “The fort was also full of artillery, which the patriots were very short of, and those guns were brought back and used to besiege the British garrison of Boston and force that garrison out.”

“Before the end of 1775, Arnold, a colonel at the time, is appointed to command an expedition against Quebec. Despite the problems posed by the terrain, the weather, desertion of elements of his troops, he got the bulk of his command to the objective and united there with other forces under the command of Gen. [Richard] Montgomery. At the time, it was seen as a remarkable achievement, and it laid the foundation for Arnold’s reputation.”

Although the campaign would end in failure, along with Montgomery dead and Arnold wounded, the young officer had proven himself both brave and capable. The most important man in the Continen-

tal Army, George Washington, took notice. “Washington immediately identified Arnold as the kind of officer he really wanted,” Brumwell stated. “If you’ve got an army that is basically composed of amateurs, then you need people who are natural leaders who have that instinctive military ability.”

Arnold on Lake Champlain
The following year in 1776, Arnold, now a brigadier general, was assigned command of the patriot fleet at Lake Champlain. The problem was that the Americans had no fleet; they possessed a few small vessels. During the summer, he convinced his war council of the necessity of securing “our superiority on Lake Champlain by a naval armament of gun-dolas [sic], row galleys, armed batteaus [sic].” His men quickly got to work to assemble more vessels.

The British, known for their seafaring vessels, were forced to follow suit in order to regain naval superiority. They had planned to conduct an invasion from Canada, but Arnold’s foresight delayed such a military action. On Oct. 11, the two fleets met in the naval battle of Valcour Island. “Arnold’s fleet was defeated at the Battle of Valcour Island, but the mere fact he had forced the British to stop and build a fleet of their own, gained crucial time. Because at the same time, another British army under William Howe had defeated Washington on Staten Island, pushed him off of Manhattan, and Washington was retreating back through New Jersey.”

“The British plan was to advance south through Canada, and then these two armies would meet up and eliminate what was caught in the vice. Because of Arnold’s action, that northern wing didn’t materialize. We know what happened after that. Washington, despite being pushed across the Delaware, staged his remarkable Christmas campaign and basically saved the revolution.”

Arnold at Danbury and Saratoga
Arnold further distinguished himself in 1777 by fending off British raids in Connecticut, specifically in Danbury, where his horse was shot out from under him and his coat collar was shot off. His bravery resulted in his promotion to major general, but it was a promotion that Arnold felt was long overdue. His disdain for Congress led him to resign his commission in July 1777, but Washington did not accept it.

Arnold continued in his position, and

several months later he was instrumental in the history-altering Battle of Saratoga, which convinced the French to officially join the American cause. Arnold displayed conspicuous bravery, which left him practically crippled from a bullet wound to the leg. Again, however, he was undermined, this time by the campaign’s commanding officer, Horatio Gates, who preferred to take most of the credit.

Arnold in Philadelphia
Effectively crippled, Arnold was assigned to Philadelphia as the city’s military commandant. Washington meant it as a favor to Arnold, but Brumwell suggests that the appointment expedited his betrayal. “What Washington did, though he didn’t mean to, was he handed Arnold the poisoned chalice because this was the worst possible assignment for someone of Arnold’s temperament. Philadelphia was a hotbed of the most radical patriots. And here comes this military hero, and that didn’t mean a whole lot to them. They were suspicious of the military and what the military potentially could represent,” Brumwell explained.

Arnold and Congress had already been at odds for many months, and a new enemy was Joseph Reed, who was head of the Supreme Executive Council in Philadelphia. There were others who were suspicious of Arnold’s business practices, his lavish lifestyle, and his friendly ties with known Loyalists. (His wife, Peggy Shippen, was the daughter of a wealthy Loyalist.) Living in this “hotbed,” Arnold was “making enemies by the day,” Brumwell said, and these enemies were trying to “tarnish his good name.”

Despite today’s post facto view of Arnold, Brumwell explained that Arnold could endure battle wounds, underappreciation, and physical hardship, but he could not abide the sully of his reputation.

“Gradually you have a situation where Arnold gets more and more exasperated that he’s begging Washington to put him on trial so he can clear his name from all the charges that have been assembled by Reed,” Brumwell said. “Mostly very minor things, but Arnold is someone who cares very much about his personal reputation. He becomes more obsessed with this idea that people have a vendetta against him. And that’s something that pushes him toward the British.”

Arnold’s Changing Motivation
Brumwell also sheds light on another motivation for Arnold’s betrayal, and it is a point that is often overlooked. Although he began as a true patriot for the American cause of 1775, as the war progressed, he believed that the cause had changed. Arnold believed that the cause was about rights and not about becoming independent. After the Battle of Saratoga, the British government, led by Prime Minister Lord North, permitted the Carlisle Commission to negotiate with the Continental Congress. The purpose of the commission was to negotiate terms of reconciliation rather than independence. The agreement would have practically given the Americans everything they wished, including self-rule, but sans independence. After the American victory at Saratoga, however, it was past the point of no return.

“Arnold later maintains that the Carlisle Commission actually offered everything he’d been fighting for,” Brumwell said. “From the evidence I found, it was at this stage that he decided the only way to end the war was to inflict a decisive blow so that what he saw as a dysfunctional congress would be deposed and things would go back to the time before Britain began to impose the policies that antagonized people like Arnold in the first place.”

Arnold at West Point
That decisive blow was to be the surrender of West Point. Arnold had requested the position as commander of this defensive and strategic fortified outpost along the Hudson River. Through his wife, Shippen, Arnold made contact with British Maj. John André. Arnold provided him with vital information about the outpost’s troop strength, their future movements, and their defensive positions. After one of their meetings on Sept. 21, 1780, André was caught and captured. The information found on his person incriminated Arnold as a traitor. Arnold narrowly escaped, fled to the British, and became an officer in the British Army for the rest of the war.

The perpetual narratives about Arnold’s motivation for treason have been money and resentment. Although surrendering West Point was contingent on a 20,000 pound payout and a military command in the British Army, Brumwell argued that money and resentment were not the primary motivations.

“He had a lavish lifestyle to fund, but was he so badly in debt and in need of money that money, as one of his critics said, ‘was his god?’” Brumwell asked rhetorically. “I think it is very significant that when he first approached the British in May of 1779, the idea of money isn’t even raised. He does mention the question of compensation for any losses he might suffer. Of course, if you go over to the other side, all your property is going to be confiscated.”

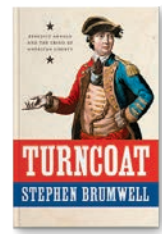
“There were plenty of other people in the Continental Army, from ordinary soldiers to senior generals, who were just as miffed as Arnold with the fact that they hadn’t been paid for months, they’d hardly had anything to eat, the cause was at low ebb, but they didn’t defect to the British.”

Ideological Grounds
“I would argue that Arnold felt strong ideological grounds for doing what he did,” Brumwell added. “Long after he had gone over to the British in 1784, [Arnold] said that at the beginning of the war he had been an out-and-out patriot. He thought the cause was just. He thought Americans—and he had always considered himself to be an American—were within their rights and were justified in rebelling against what he considered to be the tyrannical taxation policies of Britain. When he no longer considered it to be right, that’s when he changed sides.”

Arnold continued to contend that his decisions, from joining the cause in 1775 to betraying it five years later, were justified and that his reputation remained unblemished, going so far as to fight a duel against a British lord who accused him of defecting for dishonorable reasons.

“This is what intrigues me. He obviously thinks he hasn’t done anything wrong,” Brumwell said. “He really did believe that if he came to a decision, that was the right decision. Until someone one day opens up an old trunk in an attic somewhere and finds Arnold’s personal journal, which maybe that will happen if he wrote one, then maybe it will shed new light on his motivation.”

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of *The Sons of History* podcast. He also writes two weekly series for *The Epoch Times*: *Profiles in History* and *This Week in History*.



‘TURNCOAT: BENEDICT ARNOLD AND THE CRISIS OF AMERICAN LIBERTY’
By Stephen Brumwell
Yale University Press
May 29, 2018
Hardcover
384 pages



▲ Ernesto Miranda (Sebastian Quinn) is in the center of an important legal ruling, in “Miranda’s Victim.”

FILM REVIEW

A Suspect’s Rights Included in the Legal System

Even a criminal has certain rights after committing a crime

By Michael Clark

Watch any police or legal drama (TV or film) produced since the late 1960s and the chances are pretty good you’ll catch someone reading the “Miranda rights” (or “Miranda’s warning”) to a crime suspect. You’ll recognize it immediately. It has just six sentences and starts with: “You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.”

The new drama “Miranda’s Victim” explains how this legal formality came to be and its importance and indispensability to the workings of the U.S. legal system. As a procedural, the film is riveting and thorough; however, several parts of the actual execution are a bit wanting.

The case against Ernesto Miranda (Sebastian Quinn) should have been, and for

three years was, a slam dunk. Not long after the 1963 kidnapping and assault of Arizona teenager Trish Weir (Abigail Breslin), Miranda was identified by her in a lineup, questioned by detectives, and—this is very important—wrote in his own hand a full confession of the crimes.

The Supreme Court Weighs In
Miranda was then tried, convicted, and sentenced to 20 to 30 years. His attorney, Alvin Moore (Andy Garcia), appealed the decision to the Arizona Supreme Court, which denied the appeal. In 1965, the American Civil Liberties Union, via attorney John J. Flynn (Ryan Phillippe), appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in Miranda’s favor. The Supreme Court found that Miranda was denied proper access to an attorney during questioning, and thus his confession was inad-

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

High Drama at the OK Corral in the Old West

The real law in Tombstone is 3 Earps and 1 doc

By Ian Kane

Much of establishing the mythos of Americana can be attributed to classic Western films of the 1930s, ‘40s, and ‘50s. One of the most compelling real-life tales presented in Western cinema is the shootout at the O.K. Corral in the small town of Tombstone, Arizona, in 1881. It was the dramatic and violent climax between two conflicting forces that had been feuding for quite some time.

One of the greatest classic film renditions of this historic gun battle, and the events leading up to it, was in 1946’s “My Darling Clementine” (also directed by Ford), but perhaps the greatest modern version of it would be 1993’s “Tombstone,” helmed by George Cosmatos and Kevin Jarre.

The film kicks off in an interesting fashion, with the great Robert Mitchum delivering a rich-voiced narrative of the tumultuous late 1800s. The post-Civil War’s economic boom propelled many to move to the relatively untamed western United States. Although this time and place could be described as an everyman for himself free-for-all, some elements of the population wanted civility and justice, and some of those elements were personified in the Earp brothers.

The opening act doesn’t waste time getting into the action. A man who sports a perpetually devilish grin, Curly Bill Brocius (Powers Boothe), leads a band of banditos known as the Cowboys into a Mexican town. They believe that two of their cohorts were killed by the Mexican police, and so they ambush one of the officers just as he’s getting married. However, they end up slaying not only the officer they believe to be responsible, but the entire detachment of officers attending the ceremony. It’s a pretty grisly scene but successfully manages to convey the gang’s viciousness.

Meanwhile, after mopping up much of the crime in Dodge City, Kansas, former



lawman Wyatt Earp (Kurt Russell) wants to move on to a smaller town to start his new life. Since he has a rather checkered past, the wildness of a boomtown called Tombstone on the Arizonan frontier appeals to him. He travels there with his older brother Virgil (Sam Elliott) and younger brother Morgan (Bill Paxton). Tombstone is a lively place filled with all sorts: everything from cowboys, bandits, and miners, to upper-crust types. All are looking to better themselves through legal, or often illegal, means.

The three brothers have brought their respective ladies with them and it is revealed early on that Wyatt’s wife Mattie (Dana Wheeler-Nicholson) is becoming increasingly addicted to the opium tincture laudanum. Soon, a love triangle develops between Wyatt, Mattie, and another woman, a traveling troupe performer named Josephine Marcus (Dana Delany).

The Wyatt’s old pal Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) also shows up. Holliday has moved out to Arizona in the hopes of improving his tuberculosis because of the state’s arid climate.

But the good times don’t last for long. The Earps and Doc Holliday are gam-

missible as evidence—and this is the point where the whole thing got sticky.

The Supreme Court didn’t dismiss the charges against Miranda, and instead ordered that he be retried in Arizona without the confession as part of the state’s evidence.

Director (and acting coach) Michelle Danner gets off to a great start. The movie opens with newlywed Trish reacting to the news of the Supreme Court decision, which will be revisited later. The action then shifts to the night of the crime with only bits and pieces included, and presented in brilliant shorthand. We’re given all we need to know for the time being, and are privy not only to Trish’s understandable fragile psyche but also to the reactions of her immediate family.

What Will People Think?
Trish’s older sister Ann (Emily VanCamp) is a supportive and unwavering rock. However, her mother, Zeola (Mireille Enos), is mostly concerned with what people will think and the likelihood that the pursuit of any legal action will go nowhere.

From the story and narrative perspectives, Ms. Danner and screenwriter J. Craig Stiles were afforded great levels of source material to work with. Where a minimalist approach would have worked best, they chose the opposite. Far too often the tone slips into melodramatic overdrive with frequent performance histrionics to match, particularly from Mr. Phillippe and Ms. Enos.

Zeola is equal parts wet blanket and attorney for the defense, and not all that far removed from Piper Laurie’s portrayal of the title character’s fire and brimstone, doom-and-gloom mother in “Carrie.” Zeola all but orders Trish to put the assault behind her and get on with her life, and Zeola has a point, twisted as it may be. During the closing credits, it is stated that for every 1,000 cases of assault brought to trial, only five result in conviction.

High praise deservedly goes to Ms. Breslin for portraying a nonfictional character with a near-perfect mix of fear, shame, anger, and restraint, especially when Trish is on the witness stand. As any seasoned defense attorney does, Flynn attempts to paint Trish as someone who was a willing participant in her own assault, and although she comes close to cracking a couple of times, she never lets him break her.

Career Boost
The role of Trish couldn’t have come along at a better time for Ms. Breslin, whose transition from juvenile to adult actress has been, at best, inconsistent.

After breaking out of the gate in the 2000s with “Signs” and “Little Miss Sunshine,” Ms. Breslin’s career floundered and has only enjoyed critical and commercial success with the “Zombieland” franchise. Although it’s unlikely that “Miranda’s Victim” will light it up at the box office, Ms. Breslin’s rock-solid performance should catch the attention of filmmakers who would have otherwise written her off.

While some may consider the “Miranda rights” to be favorable to would-be criminals, it is absolutely essential to our modern legal system and, in the opinion of some, is as important as the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.

Exactly what happened to Ernesto Miranda after the trials is best left to the final minutes of the film, where karma and street justice show up to collect.

You can watch “Miranda’s Victim” in theaters on Oct. 6.

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.

‘Miranda’s Victim’

Director
Michelle Danner

Starring
Abigail Breslin, Luke Wilson, Ryan Phillippe, Donald Sutherland, Andy Garcia

Running Time
2 hours, 7 minutes

MPAA Rating
R

Release Date
Oct. 6, 2023
★★★★★

All of the performances, from the main to the supporting cast, are top-notch. The film’s music and excellent costuming are also well done and lend themselves to the overall immersion factor of the film. If there was one thing I felt wasn’t necessary, it was the love triangle between Wyatt, his wife Maddie, and Josephine. It just felt perfunctory and hollow, as if tacked on to bloat the running time.

Other than that minor quibble, “Tombstone” is one of the best modern Western films I’ve ever seen. A wide array of scenes are just oozing with tension and menace; there is lots of outstanding action with timeless themes about comradery, justice, and good standing up against evil, even when the forces of good are outmatched. It also may inspire those with curious minds to delve further into the fascinating history of the Old West.

“Tombstone” is available on Pluto TV, Vudu, and AMC on Demand.

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.

‘Tombstone’

Directors
George P. Cosmatos, Kevin Jarre

Starring
Kurt Russell, Val Kilmer, Sam Elliott

Running Time
2 hours, 10 minutes

MPAA Rating
R

Release Date
Dec. 25, 1993
★★★★★

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

Family Values Shine in Judy Garland’s ‘St. Louis’

Growth through the struggles within the family and Midwestern community

By Rudolph Lambert Fernandez

A friendly intercity rivalry between Kansas City, Kansas and St. Louis, Missouri is the stuff of Midwestern folklore. But a cinematic tie binds them, too.

Audiences had fallen in love with Judy Garland’s gorgeous 17-year-old singing voice in her 1930s hit “The Wizard of Oz.” Then in the 1940s, “Meet Me in St. Louis” made her audience fall in love again, when she was only 22 years old. Set in Missouri, the film echoes the same heartwarming theme: Home is where family is.

Nominated for four Oscars and set in 1903 before St. Louis’s 1904 World’s Fair, the film is an unashamed tribute to Garland that centers around the old-world charms of Midwestern family life. It recreates a time when a home bubbling with courtships, marriages, and children and their pranks were all that families needed to be happy.

The children of lawyer Alonzo Smith (Leon Ames) and his wife, Anna (Mary Astor), include eldest daughter Rose (Lucille Bremer), her younger sister Esther (Judy Garland), and brother Lon (Henry H. Daniels Jr.). As they come of age, they turn desperate for suitors. Much younger siblings Agnes (Joan Carroll) and Tootie (Margaret O’Brien) find the ups and downs of these courtships amusing, and don’t mind soaking in all the fun.

Rose fancies Warren Sheffield (Robert Sully), Esther is interested in the family’s neighbor John Truett (Tom Drake), and Lon seeks favor with family friend Lucille Ballard (June Lockhart). Even six months before it opens, they’re swept up in the excitement around the fair, which at a cost of \$50 million is billed to be America’s biggest at the time.

A lot is soon to happen. Tootie must enter school and Agnes move on to a higher grade, while Esther becomes a senior and Rose graduates. Suddenly, Alonzo’s firm decides to move him to New York to head their office there. That throws the family into a tizzy over leaving and losing the places, possessions, and people they love in St. Louis.

Morality Play

The opening song, “The Boy Next Door,” reveals Garland’s enviable poise, delivery, and timing. With barely any embellishment, it’s a songwriting masterclass from Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane. It advances the story, reveals Esther’s emotions, and sweeps audiences into her inner world. They repeat that magic with their melancholic hit later on, counterintuitively titled “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.” In every note and pause of that track, Garland depicts her foreboding over the impending move out of St. Louis.

The duet “Meet Me in St. Louis,” composed for the 1904 fair, is here performed by Garland and Bremer (in her feature debut). Throughout the film, both actresses portray the pleasures and pains of courtship. As girls who hurry around in private, they suddenly slow down and walk ladylike when in public, and worry about who their next dancing partners will be. Suffocating from her first corset, Esther jokes: “I feel like the ossified woman in the sideshow!”

Margaret O’Brien, at only 7 years old, won an Academy Juvenile Award for her sensitive portrayal of the pain that children feel when left out of adult festivities.

Director Vincente Minnelli’s camera follows Esther through the lower and then upper deck of the tram ferrying local youth to the fairgrounds. First, when John doesn’t show, she’s silent and sullen. When he does, she joins the jolly crowd singing “The Trolley Song.” Minnelli captures the bittersweet chaos of long-distance calls as Rose expects Warren to propose on the phone, while the family



at dinner eavesdrops by default, sharing every bit of her delight and dejection.

For all its lightheartedness, Minnelli’s film offers sobering lessons. Marriages and families teach individuals to think beyond themselves. They teach boys and girls, men and women to adjust, to compromise, to negotiate with each other’s likes and dislikes, leaving just enough room for themselves and those they love. Not too much, but enough. Husbands and wives, children, and grandparents grow as people precisely by jostling with each other, just as communities do—among themselves. Chivalrous Warren, John, and Lon showcase respect and restraint as authentic hallmarks of masculinity.

After tempers have flared, Anna plays the piano while Alonzo sings. When one pitch proves too high for him, she stops, then starts again, “I’ll put it down in your key.” The song’s words “You and I, together forever” imply someone having to adjust to another’s “key” every week if not every day. This theme reverberates in another song’s lyrics, “One live as two, two live as one, under the bamboo tree.”

You can watch “Meet me in St. Louis” on Prime Video, Apple TV, Vudu, and YouTube.

Rudolph Lambert Fernandez is an independent writer who writes on pop culture.

▲ Esther Smith (Judy Garland) and John Truett (Tom Drake), in 1944’s “Meet Me in St. Louis.”

‘Meet Me in St. Louis’

Director
Vincente Minnelli
Starring
Mary Astor, Lucille Bremer, Judy Garland
Running Time
1 hour, 53 minutes
Not Rated
Release Date
Nov. 22, 1944
★★★★☆

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