

Re-imagining

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justify behaving as Cody's family does. Here it is a will written before Joey was part of Cody's family that provides Cody's sister with reasons to enforce what she asserts were Cody's wishes, ignoring other better evidence of what he would have wanted.

The film is full of tiny examples of how being part of a dominant culture allows one the prerogative to use law and custom to bolster norms that may well contradict the purpose of those very laws and customs. One can feel angry at Cody's family members and others in the film -- I certainly did -- but the film does not turn them into cartoon villains. In a time of pain and confusion, they merely reach for the tools at their disposal to bring order to chaos, and the power they have gives them the means to justify actions they would not otherwise have taken.

As a result, Joey's dilemma seems all that much more unsolvable. The groundwork laid in the film's early scenes establishes for us that separating Joey and Chip is a tragedy, but in this time and place it seems a truly unsolvable one.

Cody's never-updated will -- an apt metaphor -- has left his sister in charge of his property and his son, so she now wields the power to take away everything that has meant home and family to Joey. Joey's truth gives him no standing to assert it, and

a succession of lawyers tell him he has no case.

And here is where the suspense comes in. After months of banging on closed doors, Joey receives an offer of help from a most-unlikely source: a retired judge who seems a card-carrying member of the good-ole-boys' club. Yet this good man provides an extremely rare example of a person who puts the law in a proper perspective, who looks beyond the surface to its intended purpose, and imagines how to use the law to move beyond what currently seems possible to what is just and true. It's the most inspiring legal story I've seen since "To Kill a Mockingbird."

I wish I could find a way to make this film required viewing for anyone who dares to opine about gay marriage. More effectively than any argument, Wang's inspired work invites you spend some time sitting with the experience of an outsider and contemplating what is really true about his experience. It invites you to think more deeply about the meaning of family. And particularly if you are a lawyer or judge, it challenges you to look beyond our collective failures of imagination to where the law might also point the way. It's hard for me to imagine a better investment of three hours.

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CALENDAR for October 2013

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| 6 Thomas Edison Shows 1st Motion Picture In 1889. American Library Association Founded (1876) | 7 World Habitat Day Child Health Day Alice Dalglish born, 1893 | 8 Edward Ormondroyd born, 1925 J. Frank Duryea born in 1869 The Great Chicago Fire started (1871) | 9 First Two-Way Telephone Conversation in 1876 Leif Ericson Day Moldy Cheese Day The Count's Birthday (Sesame Street Character) | 10 National Poetry Day (England) James Marshall born, 1942 Henry Cavendish born in England in 1731. | 11 Eleanor Roosevelt born, 1884 First Steam-Powered Ferryboat 'Juliana' began operations in 1811. | 12 Farmer's Day Dia de la Raza (Mexico) |
| 13 Margaret Thatcher born in 1925. First Aerial Photo in US Taken in 1860. Molly Pitcher born, 1754 | 14 Columbus Day Thanksgiving Day in Canada Lois Lenski born, 1893 | 15 Eid al-Adha (Muslim Holiday, 16th in North America) National Grouch Day | 16 Dictionary Day Noah Webster born, 1758 World Food Day Edward Ardizzone born, 1900 | 17 Black Poetry Day San Francisco Earthquake (1989) | 18 Mason-Dixon Line Established (1767) Puerto Rico Became U.S. Colony In 1898. | 19 Star Spangled Banner First Sung In 1814. Thomas Edison Demonstrated Electric Light Successfully in 1879. |
| 20 Sir James Chadwick (Discoverer of the Neutron) born, 1891 Crockett Johnson born, 1906 | 21 Guggenheim Museum Opens (1959) | 22 National Nut Day | 23 iPod First Revealed (2001) Red Ribbon Week (Oct.23-31) Marjorie Flack born, 1897 | 24 Bruno Munari born, 1907 Betty Lou's Birthday (Sesame Street Character) National Bologna Day United Nations Day | 25 Pablo Picasso Born in Spain in 1881. | 26 Hillary Rodham Clinton born, 1947. Red Cross Organized In Geneva, 1863. Erie Canal Opened (1825) |
| 27 Mother-in-Law's Day Theodore Roosevelt born in 1858. | 28 Plush Animal Lover's Day Bill Gates born, 1955 Statue of Liberty dedicated in 1886. Leonard Kessler born, 1921 | 29 Stock Market Crash - 1929 (1929) | 30 John Adams born in 1735. Emily Post (author) born, 1873 | 31 Halloween Juliette Gordon Low Born in 1860, she started Girl Scouting in the United States in 1912. | <p>CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</p> | |