

"I wish we had tickets."

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THE TALENT GIVEN US

In Andrew Wagner's inspired low-budget drama—for which he ingeniously cast his family to play themselves—his good-humored and voluble septuagenarian mother (Judy Wagner) and taciturn father (Allen Wagner) fill their restless Upper West Side days with crosswords, stock-market trades, and watching their daughter on "E.R." When Judy gets it in her head that she must see her boy—Andrew, a forty-year-old English teacher-slash-screenwriter in L.A. and her "best chance" for getting grandchildren—she coerces her husband and their two grown daughters (Maggie and Emily Wagner) to drive across America in a minivan. A recent medical condition has left Allen's speech impaired but his mind no less sharp, and he blusters through his impediment with considerable charm. Judy, still youthful, preens for the camera, and Emily, as the attention-starved baby of the family, is perfectly obnoxious. On the trip, the usual ebb and flow of kvetching and hysteria exposes latent resentments and indiscretions, and the notion that there is no escape from one's family is elevated—and ameliorated—by the inkling that the Wagners' story is, in fact, real.—*Shauna Lyon* (Cinemas 1, 2, and 3 and Village East Cinemas.)



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