



## **NAVAJO MAN FINDS FAMILY AFTER 41 YEARS**

*By The Farmington Daily News, Monument Valley, Utah*

"John Wayne, where are you?" The man's shouts echoed across the canyon before drifting away on summer breezes. Over the years, many had posed the same question: Where was John Wayne? Some had pondered, others had prayed, and some had even cried out. Now, at last, the mystery was solved. After 41 years, John Wayne Cly had come home. Two weeks ago, Cly, 43, was re-united with a faintly he has never known. That same weekend, he was heard calling out his own name to the reddish rocks of Monument Valley, as if to celebrate his return to the homeland.

The pieces of the puzzle began to come together in April 1997 when Jeff Spitz, a filmmaker in Chicago, was handed a mysterious old film. Chicago resident Bill Kennedy brought him the film, which was made by his late father, Robert Kennedy, in the 1950s while attending Brooks Institute in Santa Bar-bara, Calif. The half-hour movie, titled "Navajo Boy," was about Native Americans and appeared to have some sort of ceremony in it. Time revealed that the movie, dated around 1955, chronicles a 10-year-old Navajo boy's search for a medicine man to cure his ailing grandmother. Although filming sacred rituals is normally not permitted, the film includes a healing ceremony, or "Windway".

In July 1997, Spitz showed the movie to then-Navajo Nation President Albert Hale and other members of the tribe. He was given permission to make a documentary about the return of the film to its origins and the history of the Cly's. Little did Spitz know that when he named the future documentary "The Return of Navajo Boy," the title would fulfill its own prophecy. When Spitz shared the old movie with people in Monument Valley, identities began to emerge. Jimmy Cly was the actual "Navajo Boy" His cousin, Elsie Mae Cly, was having her hair wrapped by their grandmother, Happy Cly. Richard Blackwater knew he was the boy with Happy Cly in the healing ceremony. John Wayne Cly was taken from his home by white missionaries when he was 2 years old and his mother and grandmother became ill. He was raised by a white foster mother near Thoreau, and the Cly family never saw him again.

That is until two months ago, when a newspaper article closed the gap As part of his documentary, Spitz attended congressional hearings on uranium April 18 in Fort Wingate, New Mexico. A reporter from the Gallup Independent asked Spitz what he and the camera crew were doing, and an article about "The Return of Navajo Boy" appeared in the newspaper. Cly's stepdaughter saw the article and told Cly about it, and he contact-ed the newspaper. He was given a telephone number for his niece's husband in Window Rock, Ariz. Cly had found his family.

On June 13, he had a reunion with his long-lost relatives in Monument Valley. After more than 40 years of praying, Elsie Mae Cly, now with the last name Begay, had found her brother. "Half of my life was missing," she said. "But (now), It seems like I'm all myself again". It seems like I'm all myself again".