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THE FOG OF WAR

Directed by Errol Morris

Cast: Robert McNamara.

USA, 2003.
In English.

106 mins. Color.

Rental: Apply.



Academy Award winner for Best Documentary Feature, *The Fog of War* shows Errol Morris still in the vanguard of the ongoing documentary film renaissance that he pioneered. While previous Morris films have dealt with eccentrics and outsiders, this time he marches straight down the corridors of power and into ground zero of the military-industrial establishment. The core of the film is an intensive near-monologue by 85-year-old Robert McNamara, adviser to generals and presidents, head of the Ford Motor Co., and Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War. Divided into eleven numbered "lessons" (such as "Empathize with your enemy," "Rationality will not save us"), the film shows the steely, supremely articulate McNamara steering a tricky course between self-examination and self-justification as he guides us through his war-haunted career, including the massive firebombing of Japanese cities during World War II, the near-apocalypse of the Cuban missile crisis, and the disastrous escalation of the Vietnam War. Morris's idiosyncratic approach is far from cinema verité: the interview material is expanded with offbeat archival footage and elegantly surreal montages, given an ominous edge by Philip Glass's eerie music, and meticulously shaped into a multilayered narrative that functions as autobiography, inside history of the Cold War, ethical debate over ends and means, pointed parallel to current U.S. foreign policy, and spellbinding yarn served up by two master storytellers.

"Stunning...a story that knocks you right off your feet."

– Desson Thomson, *The Washington Post*.

"If there's one movie that ought to be studied by military and civilian leaders around the world at this treacherous historical moment, it is *The Fog of War*."

– Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*.

"A brilliant film...Both psychologically acute and historically revealing."

– Michael Wilmington, *Chicago Tribune*.