



Timeline of a Disaster

A damning indictment of the war's inept architects

NO END IN SIGHT: Written, produced and directed by Charles Ferguson. Narrated by Campbell Scott. Featuring interviews with Faisal Al-Istrabadi, Richard Armitage, Barbara Bodine, Paul Eaton, Jay Garner, Paul Hughes, Seth Moulton, Walter Slocombe, Lawrence Wilkerson and many more. Magnolia Pictures, 2007. Not rated. 102 minutes. ★★★★★

If you can watch Charles Ferguson's *No End in Sight* without finding yourself on the verge of tears, you are made of stronger stuff than I. A searing, elegant, eloquent exploration of the U.S.'s disastrous Iraq invasion, *No End* is a gripping, moving antidote to the numbness that comes when you begin to feel you've seen all the stories on the news before: the car bombs, the IEDs, the explosions in public areas, the deaths, the horrors. It starts at the beginning and leads us carefully through to the point at which we stand now, but it takes the most time with a few months in 2003 during which countless major decisions — and massive mistakes — were made.

First-time filmmaker Ferguson, a political scientist who produced and funded his own film, has distilled the frustration, sadness and anger of both those he interviews and those who see his film into one precise, methodical, analytic narrative. Though his careful use of interviews, news footage and data, you can look at this picture of Iraq, broad and brutal, and see things you might not have been able to see quite so clearly before. *No End in Sight* is a portrait of a mismanaged disaster, from the insufficient planning that went into the war at the very start to the numerous fatal mistakes made after the mission was declared accomplished. Ferguson focuses largely on several key decisions that influenced Iraq's descent into chaos, including the decision not to try to control the looting of Baghdad; the decision to "de-Baathify" the country; and the decision to disband the Iraqi army, putting countless armed men out of work and out of money.

The people Ferguson interviews are not longtime critics of the war; they are men and women who were in Iraq, in the govern-

ment, in the Marines, in the organizations working on the reconstruction; they are journalists and writers who've documented the happenings in the Middle East since March 2003. Often, they tell the same story: Those who were experienced, on the ground working, who knew what they were talking about, were routinely dismissed and ignored by those above them. Time and time again it's pointed out that many people in charge of the reconstruction of Iraq spoke no Arabic, had no experience, had never been to the country. Col. Paul Hughes, who worked in Strategic Policy Office of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA); Barbara Bodine, who was placed in charge of Baghdad; Jay Garner, who was director of ORHA for a brief month before being replaced by ambassador L. Paul Bremer — they speak tersely and with resignation of the work they tried to do and how it clashed with what they were told to do or with the resources they had. As David Denby wrote in *The New Yorker*, "The bitterest revelation of *No End in Sight* is that the people who got it right are in agony, whereas the people who got it wrong are practically serene."

To watch this film is to be furious and disgusted, heartbroken and horrified. From Donald Rumsfeld's insulting dismissals of the possibility of insurgency to the death of U.N. special representative Sergio Vieira de Mello; from the welcoming signs in the streets to the murder of American contractors; from Paul Wolfowitz and Dick Cheney's involvement in the first Gulf War to their continued positions of power — what Ferguson has assembled is a damning indictment of those in our government who took the country to war on false pretenses and kept us there ineptly and ignorantly, ignoring the things that didn't fit with their ideology, the advice of their best-informed advisers or even the needs of the troops on the ground. **EW**

No End in Sight opens Friday, Sept. 14, at the Bijou.

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DRAGON WARS PG13 12:10, 2:40, 5:05, 7:35, 10:00	SUPERBAD R 1:05, 3:55, 7:10, 10:00
MR. WOODCOCK PG13 12:15, 2:55, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15	RUSH HOUR 3 PG13 1:45, 4:45, 7:15, 9:35
3:10 TO YUMA R *12:30, 1:35, *3:20, 4:30, *7:00, 7:45, *9:50, 10:35	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM PG13 1:10, 4:00, 6:55, 9:50
*DIGITAL SHOWTIMES	THE SIMPSONS MOVIE PG13 3:40, 10:05
SHOOT 'EM UP R 12:40, 3:05, 5:35, 8:00, 10:25	HAIRSPRAY PG 12:45, 7:10
HALLOWEEN R 12:50, 3:35, 7:20, 10:05	HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX PG13 12:25, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15
LIVE IN CONCERT: DAVID GILMORE "REMEMBER THE NIGHT" ONLY ON SATURDAY 9/15 AT 12:00 NOON	TRANSFORMERS PG13 1:00, 4:25, 7:30, 10:35
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