

Film Review: 'Tabloid' From Errol Morris Teases, Tantalizes, Entertains

Submitted by [mattmoviemann](#) [1] on July 15, 2011 - 8:27am

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CHICAGO – Errol Morris's "Tabloid" is the sort of documentary so probing and inquisitive that it can't help questioning its own validity. It's a story about storytelling, a documentary that deconstructs the artifice of documentary filmmaking and a nonfiction narrative that may very well be comprised entirely of fiction. Such boundless ambition and self-reflexive irony is only typical of Morris, who is surely one of the greatest filmmakers in the history of the medium.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Though his last film, 2008's shattering "Standard Operating Procedure," drew instant comparisons to Alex Gibney's Oscar-winner, "Taxi to the Dark Side," the films' similarities didn't extend far beyond their basic subject matter. Morris's films are closer in style and spirit to the work of Frederick Wiseman and Werner Herzog—auteurs with a knack for illuminating the absurdity and futility of existence. It's been a long while since Morris picked a subject that allowed him to explore his playful side, and "Tabloid" provides him with a golden opportunity.



[Read Matt Fagerholm's full review of "Tabloid" in our reviews section.](#) [12]

Like so many of the documentarian's greatest triumphs, "Tabloid" unearths a tale forgotten by many and re-opens it for fresh speculation. A sordid story popularized by British tabloids may seem like an odd source for inspiration, but it's worth remembering that Morris's debut effort, "Gates of Heaven," was born out of a tale the filmmaker originally discovered in a gossip rag. It's clear that Morris's intention is not to exploit the material but to get beneath the layers of smoke and mirrors. 'What's really going on?' is a question not always easy to determine. Who can say whether former Miss Wyoming Joyce McKinney stalked her alleged boyfriend Kirk Anderson to a Mormon meetinghouse in Ewell, Surrey (circa 1977), kidnapped him at gunpoint, chained him to a bed and had her way with him? Who can determine whether the young missionary was complicit in the supposed abduction? Was he really raped, or did he just claim to be out of theological guilt? A dishonest documentary would be one that pretends to have all the answers. Good thing Morris's questions are more tantalizing and provocative than any number of debatable truths.

'Tabloid' features Joyce McKinney, Jackson Shaw, Peter Tory, Troy Williams and Kent Gavin. It was directed by Errol Morris. It opens July 15 at the Landmark Century Centre Cinema.



[Continue reading for Matt Fagerholm's full "Tabloid" review.](#) [12]



Joyce McKinney's controversial past is the subject of Errol Morris's new documentary, *Tabloid*.

Photo credit: IFC Films

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