

## America Waist Deep in Endless ‘Dirty Wars’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 14, 2013 - 1:04am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Jeremy Scahill is a relentless investigative reporter, a rare species in an age of increasing corporate control of the media. He goes to terror zones that others fear to tread, and has uncovered stories that comprise his new documentary, “Dirty Wars,” which uncovers dangerous U.S. foreign policy.

This film is based on the premise that the branches of government have decided that war no longer has to be declared, but perpetually fought, and it is that recent foreign policy that Jeremy Scahill investigates. He inserts himself into the story, becoming an increasingly angry and paranoid participant while shining a light into many dark corners. The game of one specialized military unit maintaining a perpetual war on terror – and draining the United State’s resources while expanding the battle – results in no oversight, no ordinary citizen knowledge of their associative activities and virtually unlimited powers to crash and burn in all parts of the world. It’s not only a paper moon, but the material it’s comprised of is also on fire.

While embedded with some troops in Afghanistan a few years back, Jeremy Scahill happened upon an attack on villagers by U.S. troops, killing innocent men, pregnant women and children. It was part of a mission for information gathering regarding the enemy Taliban. At first, the actions are covered up by NATO commanders (who blamed the Taliban itself), but as the facts were revealed – and after they threatened the journalist who exposed them – the U.S. sent an apology contingency to the village survivors of the raid. One officer who led those apologies was about to become famous.



Embedded: Jeremy Scahill (center) in 'Dirty Wars'  
Photo credit: IFC Films

The killing of Osama Bin Laden occurred in 2011. The commander of the Navy Seals that carried out the mission – dubbed the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) – was the same officer who offered an apology to the villagers from that Afghan raid. The theme of a “kill list” is under the auspices of JSOC, and includes an American named Anwar al-Awlaki. In the battles and missions under the banner of the “War on Terror,” all bets are off and anything goes.

This is chilling stuff. Since September 11th, 2001, the United States has seemingly gone into the war-making business, and are stuck endlessly in destroying countries and cultures while expanding the “battlefield.” At home, with a media that barely reports on such indiscretions, the populace remains uninformed on exactly what the government is doing to “protect” us, and arbitrary recommendations from shadow special forces like JSOC become more important than Congress or the President.

Jeremy Scahill had been there before. He had reported before on the private security company called Blackwater (now Academi), which still provides security forces for the U.S. overseas. As that company’s mission had expanded in Iraq, their lack of accountability was exposed by Scahill. In essence, JSOC is the U.S. government’s own Blackwater, heroic when killing Bin Laden, invisible when shooting civilians in a poor Afghani village.

The insertion of Scahill into the story – as an on-screen participant – is a bit controversial. What is the story, when the storyteller is part of the story? The film does not hide Scahill’s increasing anger, confusion and a tinge of paranoia. Does that affect the outcome of the story? It certainly colors it, but Scahill’s reputation proceeds him, and the decision for him and director Rick Rowley to use this technique adds another layer to the film.



An Innocent Victim of 'Dirty Wars'  
Photo credit: IFC Films

We need this kind of investigation. The concept of war is so muddled by the non-existent borders and definitions of the “war on terror,” that it’s easy to imagine we live very closely to the society fictionalized in George Orwell’s “Nineteen Eighty-Four.” Oceania is perpetually at war with Eurasia and Eastasia. Substitute actual countries and ideologies (War on Terror) and the notion of ongoing warfare becomes reality. With outside security contractors, the defense industry and Pentagon budgets perpetually getting trillions of dollars, there are political parties (and their media representatives) aghast at providing healthcare for a dying nation.

Jeremy Scahill is a self-styled Paul Revere, sounding an alarm of what is coming, and what will continue to come. Like those sleeping patriots at Lexington and Concord, who is going to wake up and what will they – or we – do about it?

*“Dirty Wars” expands its limited release in Chicago on June 14th. See local listings for show times and theaters. Written by Jeremy Scahill and David Riker. Directed by Rick Rowley. Not Rated.*



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