

My Experience with Errol Morris and Mr. Death

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On Thursday evening 09 December 1999 when film-land's Errol Morris made a Los Angeles personal appearance with his monolog/Q&A following a screening of a film entitled *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr. - I came. I saw. I spoke [and learned something]* - and here is how it went: First a man appeared on stage and introduced Errol Morris who received a thunderous applause as he walked down the aisle and up onto the stage. He stood there smiling at the audience who then sustained their applause for about 12 seconds, while the other man left the stage. Morris at this point was on stage for just a minute or two saying that the film we were about to see was something he had started several years ago but it never got anywhere because he couldn't get the backing for reasons which we were about to see. Ha-ha. He said that he would be back on stage after the film to make some comments and for Q&A from the audience, who resumed their thunderous applause as Morris smilingly departed. Having already read the Ernst Zundel detailed review of this film, I was prepared for the rather loud electrifying opening which flashed before my eyes. I could recognize almost all the rest of this film from that review, and I was anticipating one particular part of the film described by Ernst as a highlight for him for which he was grateful in being able to get his message across by being allowed to look straight into the camera and look directly at the audience as he says "We Germans will not go down in history as a nation of genocidal maniacs! We will not!!!" Well, I do remember hearing Ernst's voice as he says these words, but I'm not sure I saw him look the audience straight in the eye as he says all those words - and as I write this now, I'm wondering if my memory is failing me on this point - but I plan to view this film again, and others in the meantime will no doubt give their recall on this point. But it was after that screening during the return of Errol Morris to the stage which was quite interesting. It was during these post-screening comments of Errol Morris that I learned that Morris considers Leuchter as "insane" - he clearly said that repeatedly as well as "Leuchter is wrong." He was heard loudly making these statements more than once. Morris spoke about blue paint on walls at Auschwitz. There was a few snickers during the screening from a few in the audience, which was alluded to in a scolding manner during the Q&A by one audience person, who rose so ask why no international scientific investigation had been made, while another audience member rose to inquire if there had been other reports other than the Roth and van Pelt opinions which were shown in the film. It was hard for me to restrain myself. I was going to bring up Germar Rudolf at that point. Later on, when I did get a

chance to speak, one of the things I was able to bring up was this exchange which I was told later was memorable. It went something like this: I rose, and clearly said, "Mr. Morris - how many versions do you have of this film?" His response was, "Oh, you mean the secret ones - ha-ha - no, this is the only version." - "Well", I said, "wait a minute - the word is out on the Internet that there was a Harvard University screening - is what we just saw the same version you showed at Harvard?" Earl Morris said, "No", to which I responded, "That's what I thought!" and I sat down to the sound of a distinct positive audience reaction. The fact is that the Harvard version got too much of a pro-Leuchter reaction from the audience, and then Morris made 'modifications' - see how it goes?

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