

Manfred Becker

documentary filmmaker and editor

press quotes

The Polar Sea

"The Polar Sea — a 10-part TV series beginning Monday on TVO — is a thrilling epic that takes us on a magical 10,000-kilometre mystery tour through the legendary Northwest Passage. Hugely entertaining and mind-bogglingly educational at the same time, it instantly stands as one of the landmarks in the long and rich history of Canadian documentary filmmaking." Martin Knelman, Toronto Star.

The Photograph

"The lot of a TV critic is not a happy one. I spend my evenings in the dark relentlessly searching for something passable on my flickering TV set. And then something as evocative as The Photograph comes along. Surely it's one of the best Remembrance Day specials I have seen in a while. The Photograph plays like an old time movie, ... masterfully directed by Manfred Becker." Jim Bawden, TV critic

"We all know the adage "a picture is worth a thousand words." Well, The Photograph is worth a lot more than that — and it also serves as a timely reminder of what a poppy stands for in this country." Stu Cowan, Montreal Gazette

Guantanamo Trap

"Simply an intelligent, serious documentary on the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay and the institutional foreign-policy mess that it is. A film which seems far more insightful and broadminded than the foreign- and military-policy makers whose actions it examines." Guy Dixon, Globe & Mail

"The Guantanamo Trap is a vital addition to a growing catalogue of documentaries emerging from the War on Terror, highlighting four interconnected biographies that reveal the impact of gross injustice. This provocative study of humanity and democracy, and how easily they're corrupted under pressure, is a testament to the times." Alex Rogalski, HotDocs Programmer

"... a dry, methodical approach lays out the story clearly and without any unnecessary posturing". Norman Willner, NOW Magazine "This Canadian-Swiss-German co-production forces us to see the U.S. military prison in Cuba's Guantanamo Bay from a fresh angle—by focusing on four individuals who do not fit the profile of the usual suspects. This is not an agit prop documentary, and none of these characters fit convenient moral stereotypes." Brian D. Johnson, McLean's Magazine

Dark Tourism

"A fascinating examination of the phenomenon revealing that there is a good deal of confusion and conflict." John Doyle, Globe & Mail

"Dark Tourism raises some unsettling questions. Have People already forgotten their history? It's a worthwhile, and unsettling question." Rick McInnis, Metro News

"Manfred Becker's eerie, thought-provoking documentary. A morality tale well told." Montreal Gazette

"Hot Box - TV worth talking about." Toronto Star

"One of three to see." Alex Strachan, Financial Post

"Welcome to the dark side!" Lisa-Marie Brennan, TV guide

Fatherland

"Intense, difficult emotional moments and disturbing images. Profoundly intimate portrait of the relationships between fathers and sons. Intense, substantial and satisfying." Henrietta Walmark, Globe Television

"Opens a poignant landscape. One of those few truly great films that jumps right out at you." Jim Bawden, Star Week

"Tough questions are asked, tough answers are given, and what emerges is a deeper understanding of personal and collective guilt." Peter Howell, Toronto Star

"Uncomfortable and raw." Rick McGinnis, Metro News

"A profoundly intimate portrait." Lynne Fernie, HotDocs

"Enlightening, a stirring look. You won't find a better program to watch this Father's Day weekend. Enlightening." Andrew Borkowski, TV Guide

"A lyrical drama that illustrates the question how complicated the question 'What did you do in the war?' can get." Eye Weekly

"Sobering and provocative. Top pick of festival." Globe and Mail.

Diamond Road

"Fascinating with a firm point of view but no preaching." Kate Taylor, Globe & Mail

"A brilliant three-parter...a must-see of the fall season." Jim Bawden, Starweek

Hitler's Children: Germany in Autumn 1977

"Becker manages to bring both terrorists and victims together. A fascinating blueprint for dealing with future terrorist threads." Bill Brioux, Toronto Sun

"Becker has scored a real coup. Nothing could be more relevant. Explains where terrorism comes from and how states should react. The must see program of the week." Jim Bawden, Starweek.

The Siege

"Becker has a eye for personal detail and an ear for the way people talk and think. Exceedingly well made...a living, breathing record...paced like a thriller, the result is both sobering and thought-provoking filmmaking that puts most dramatized re-creations to shame...a relentless drive that puts viewers right inside. Surprisingly clear-headed and objective."

Alex Strachan, National Post

"Deftly paced and dramatic without overdoing either the heroism or the horror, a fine insight into what happened in a part of the world that was failed by journalism and the world's most powerful countries"

John Doyle, Globe and Mail

"This is one of TV's surprises...amazing...a major work."

Jim Bawden, Starweek

"The one to catch!" Toronto Star

"Dramatic, with powerful lessons for today's conflicts."

Ann Marie McQueen, Ottawa Citizen

The Life of Me

"A gripping documentary...director Manfred Becker has the knack of allowing his subjects to speak for themselves...an amazing piece that passes no judgment and draws no conclusions...more powerful, engaging and unsettling as any fiction can be." Richard Ouzounian, Toronto Star

"Raw and haunting...simply amazing...emotionally unsettling...ultimately heartbreaking." John Doyle, Globe & Mail

"Intimate and challenging." Henrietta Walmark, Broadcast Week

"At times it is almost impossible to believe that these rehearsals will ever result in a positive outcome in the documentary." Network Magazine

Neighbours

"In my eyes, both Hitler and my grandfather were false prophets of the 20th century." Sophie Freud, Boston

"Becker uses archival and new material with masterful editing touch."

John Goodman, Vancouver North Shore News

"Freud goes up in smoke." Judy Gerstel, Toronto Star

"Definite irony." Catherine Monk, Georgia Straight

"Riveting" Jewish Tribune

"Pick of the week." NOW magazine

Death of a Warrior

"A crisply made, clear-eyed look at a tale full of intrigue and courage...gripping, full of suspense and hidden surprises. remarkable, paced like a thriller. Proves that a well-made documentary can trump all other forms of visual storytelling. A must see." Alex Strachan, National Post

"An excellent documentary...In Becker's well-crafted program all the twists and turns of the murky events are made clear." John Doyle Globe & Mail

"Film tracks the thriller-like hunt for the saboteurs, the diplomatic skullduggery and the bitter-sweet outcome of the case."
Olivia Ward, Toronto Star

"In the vein of a true-crime detective story, unraveling the mystery."
Taos Talking Pictures Festival

"Saga unfolds like a pulp spy novel, a fine recap of the investigation. The film makes one uneasy in a post-9/11 world. Required viewing."
Andrew Ryan, Globe & Mail

Fix

"Political struggle is emotionally grounded by two very different yet similarly stubborn, rabble-rousing personalities whose loyal alliance is like a quarrelsome marriage. Verite package is well handled." Variety

Offspring

"This film has a wonderfully light touch resulted in an exemplary search documentary." Henry Lewes, Take One

Lola

"A well-crafted film about identity theft." Alibris

Obachan's Garden

"Ohama's emotionally exhilarating with dozens of emotionally wrenching and uplifting scenes." Louis Hobson, Canoe.ca

"Obachan's Garden is a film to be watched again and again. It reminds me once again of the impressive depth of ability in Canadian documentary filmmakers and of the fascinating stories we all have in our own families and communities. Highly recommended." Deborah Begoray, University of Victoria

Thin Ice

"A subtle investigation of the processes of colonialization and psychology of need, Thin Ice is a film about one expatriate Canuck's strangely desperate desire for American affirmation."

Tom McSorley, Take One

Breakaway

"A visionary piece of factual filmmaking." Take One Magazine

"I found it extremely potent and powerful and I could not take my eyes away from it for a second." Shelagh Rogers, CBC Radio

"A fascinating portrait of power, love and psychological obsession. Strongly recommended...this is the rare sort of film that does not come around very often." Library Journal

Johnny

"Heralded as the first North American entry in the growing Dogma '95 canon, Johnny is raw, bare-boned, and bleak." Alibris

Wrestling with Shadows

"This is one whale of a tale!" Newsday

"A classic story of a modern day hero, one of the most riveting Canadian films in years." Eye Magazine

"Jay, along with sensitive camera work from award-winning shooter Joan Hutton and seamless editing by Manfred Becker, tracks this progression all the way to its bitter, bitter end. Watching Wrestling With Shadows is still great entertainment. In fact, it's a knock out." Antonia Zerbisias Toronto Star

"Like great art, its essence lies not in the subject matter at hand, but in the universal themes that drive it - loyalty, betrayal, jealousy, revenge. You must see the great doc." Grant McIntyre, Globe and Mail

"A tale as bizarre as Kafka and tragic as Shakespeare. Riveting."

T. Atherton, Ottawa Citizen

Gerrie and Louise

"That sense of the indelible presence of awful memories is heightened by the film's use of skillfully selected archive footage heightening the sense of their subjectivity at the same time as underscoring for the viewer what exactly is meant by the euphemistic and evasive terms used by Hugo and other former apartheid agents and victims in the film."

Simon Lewis, Charleston College

A Place called Chiapas

"Exquisitely shot and edited." Jon Gralick, Boston Phoenix

"Electric, alive, commendable, coincidentally surreal. A humorous, awkward, imperiled cat's cradle of history, fury and injustice. Bold ways of showing unexpected sides of a story that sometimes has the transcendent urgency of a luscious and troubled agit-prop fable." Wesley Morris, San Francisco Examiner

"Wild and her crew bring out an affecting intimacy rare in documentaries with a news sensibility. Inspiring and chilling point bang glimpse leaves powerful impressions." Peter Stack, San Francisco Chronicle

The Journey

"A tour de force." Variety

"I went expecting a great movie. What I got was more information, emotion, despair and transcendent hope than I ever dreamed a mere length of celluloid could convey." New Zealand Herald

"Extraordinary, spellbinding and ultimately filled with hope." The Raleigh Times, North Carolina