

The Green Zone (2010)

Rated R. Our ratings: V- 1, L- 3, S/N-4. Running time: 1 hour 55 min.

*As for you, you whitewash with lies;
all of you are worthless physicians.
Job 13:4*

*Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment... Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.
Proverbs 12:19, 22*

Director Paul Greengrass's Roy Miller and CIA agent latest film, a combination of Martin Brown join forces to war and conspiracy thriller, find out the truth about the starts out at a fast pace even alleged WMDs.

before the opening credits and never lets up. It is 2003, and 2010 Universal Studios as the bombs fall on Baghdad at the beginning of the Iraq War, Gen. Al Rawi (Igal Naor) and his aides are hastily packing and leaving his palace for a safe haven. He intends to hide out there while awaiting orders from the invading Americans that he is sure will come—orders calling for his army to mobilize and help keep order. Those are orders that will never come, as we see later on.

After the brief opening credits, we see chief warrant officer Roy Miller (Matt Damon), head of an Army group committed to finding Saddam Hussein's WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction).

It is four months after the initial Shock and Awe attack, and the U.S. Army has occupied the Iraqi capital. His is an important mission because these were the alleged reason for the invasion of the country. His men, acting on a tip from an unknown source, enter an old warehouse, but find it empty. None of the tips that they have received has turned up anything, which leads Miller to question the veracity of the source. When he raises this question at a briefing, his suggestion is not at all welcomed, his superiors now seeing him as a possible troublemaker. A grizzled CIA agent Martin Brown (Brendan Gleeson) becomes interested in him.

Brown is the lone voice "crying in the wilderness" that it is a mistake not to use the Iraq Army and even some of the Baathists to help the invaders stabilize the country: "Cut them out, and you'll have a civil war in six months. I guarantee it!" But it is diplomat Clark Poundstone (Greg Kinnear) who is in charge, and he scoffs at Brown. Even when the latter points out that the new Iraqi leader brought back into the country has not lived there for thirty years, thus making it problematic that he will be accepted by the people, Poundstone will not listen.

Other characters who become intertwined with one another are Wall Street reporter Lawrie Dane (Amy Ryan) who has been reporting that there are WMDs, citing a knowledgeable source; and "Freddy" (Khalid Abdalla), who aids Miller in hunting down some of Gen. Al Rawi's aides, and subsequently becomes the interpreter for the Americans.

Based on Rajiv Chandrasekaran's novel *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, director Paul Greengrass gives us a fascinating action tale far more believable than the Bourne movies, which also starred Matt Damon—no incredible daring do as Matt's character chases through the night-time streets, himself under electronic scrutiny by a brutal. The film will upset some and please conspiracy theorist believers. Whether the Bush administration purposefully fabricated the false information

concerning Saddam's WMDs, or was just taken in by Iraqis with their own agenda, the film is an entertainment that never flags in its pace. The most truthful statement about the tragic events in the war-torn country is uttered by Freddy at the ironic climax when Miller has caught up with Gen. Al Rawi.

For Reflection/Discussion

1. What do you think of Matt Damon's character as compared to his Bourne hero?
2. How have you felt as events in and about Iraq have unfolded over the past seven years? Do you feel or believe differently about the war now than you did at its beginning?
3. How was the CIA agent proven right, that the firing of the officers and men of the Iraqi army and leaving them at large with their weapons was "a fatal mistake" ? To be fair to the other side, what did our officials, represented in the film by Clark Poundstone believe about the Baathists and the Army?
4. What irony, at least according to this fictional story, do we see in what Freddy does when he catches up with Miller and the General? How is the Iraqi's voice one that our policy makers need to hear? Why do you think that some Americans believe they can fix the world according to our own ways of doing things? How is this dangerous?
5. Miller's last act, working at his laptop, bears a similarity to the hero's last act in Three Days of the Condor. How is the press, often called "The Fourth Estate," a mainstay of a free society? How was its power abused or misused in the case of reporter Lawrie Dane?