

Terror in Peru leaves you in a 'State of Fear'

BY GENE SEYMOUR
STAFF WRITER

January 13, 2006

(3 1/2 STARS) STATE OF FEAR (unrated). Poignant, hard-hitting documentary about the 20-year war on terror that shattered Peru's democracy and collective soul. Directed by Pamela Yates, produced by Paco De Onis, edited by Peter Kinoy. In English and Spanish with subtitles. 1:34 (violence, graphic details of torture and physical abuse).

At Film Forum, Manhattan.

Suppose you declared a war on terror and nobody won - or, to be more precise, everybody lost? This is the sobering rhetorical inquiry posed by "State of Fear," a fiercely detailed, yet scrupulously balanced documentary about the 20-year cycle of violence, retribution and corruption that engulfed Peru, its government and its citizens. Picking through the rubble of shattered dreams and ravaged lives, one is compelled to see parallels - potential or otherwise - in the Peruvian upheavals that took place between 1980 and 2000.

Director Pamela Yates' documentary traces the squalid story to a society that, by the 1970s, was drastically polarized by class and race. The Shining Path, a Maoist revolutionary army forged by a college professor named Abimael Guzman, set off a bloody reign of terror in rural villages throughout the 1980s in response to social injustice. Marines were sent in to battle the insurgents, but their own ham-handed response resulted in as many indiscriminate killings as those carried out by their adversaries.

By the 1990s, the battle had so escalated that Alberto Fujimori was elected president with a mandate to subdue terrorism by any means. Fujimori disbanded congress, set up military tribunals and made mass arrests that swept up innocent civilians. And still the terrorism continued until police detectives, using old-fashioned intelligence, finally arrested Guzman with the collapse of Shining Path coming close behind.

But even after Shining Path came down, Fujimori maintained absolute power by continuing to stoke mass fear of more terror. Eventually, his slick dictatorship collapsed under revelations of corruption. Shortly afterward, a public commission was formed in the name of "truth and reconciliation." And

RK19 Stops Hairloss

RK19 Stops DHT Driven Inflammation Hairloss and Regrows lost hair.
rk19.com

Find local banks in U.S.A

Find banks near you that offer CDs, loans and money market accounts.
LocalLender.Info

Find local job listings on Tribe.net-FREE

Get your foot in the door with Tribe.net's unique local job listings that connect you with the right...
Tribe.net

Top Finance Jobs

Visit jobsinthemoney.com: Jobs, salary & hiring news & career advice.
jobsinthemoney.com

[Buy a link here](#)

yet the documentary doesn't leave you feeling that the seeds for such horrific events have entirely vanished from Peru - or, more important, couldn't take root anywhere else.

Copyright 2006 Newsday Inc.