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MOVIE REVIEW | 'STATE OF FEAR'

## 20-Year Reign of Terror in Peru

By JEANNETTE CATSOULIS

Moving from the breathtaking beauty of the Peruvian Andes to the graceful sweep of coastal Lima, Pamela Yates's harrowing documentary "[State of Fear](#)" chronicles 20 years of terror, brutality and repression.

Based on the testimony of more than 16,000 people to the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the film begins with the rise of the Maoist leader Abimael Guzmán and his Shining Path guerrillas and culminates in the collapse of President [Alberto K. Fujimori's](#) government in November 2000, when Mr. Fujimori resigned during a corruption scandal. Between those events lie an estimated 70,000 dead and untold numbers scarred for life.

Simply constructed around moving personal interviews, "State of Fear" clearly illuminates the racism that shielded affluent Lima residents from the atrocities suffered by the rest of the country. Not until "high-class white people" were killed, says one person who is interviewed, did Shining Path become real. But for the indigenous population, forced to choose between joining the guerrillas or being tortured by the military, terror was an everyday occurrence. As archival film shows a dead child held aloft like a broken doll, and an ex-guerrilla calmly explains how, at age 11, killing "became an addiction," the possible consequences of the United States' campaign against terror become an uncomfortable subtext.

This discomfort is only reinforced by "The Montesinos Media Buy," seven minutes of surveillance video shot by Mr. Fujimori's disgraced chief of intelligence, Vladimoro Montesinos. A damning record of the media bribery that oiled Mr. Fujimori's counterterrorist campaign, the film is a shockingly funny accompaniment to "State of Fear" and a lesson on the hazards of choosing security over democracy.

### State of Fear

Opens today in Manhattan.

Directed by Pamela Yates; narrated in English and Spanish, with English subtitles, by Karen Duffy; director of photography, Juan Durán; edited by Peter Kinoy; music by Tito la Rosa and Tavo Castillo; produced by Paco de Onís; released by Skylight Pictures. Playing with a seven-minute short by Mr. Kinoy, "The Montesinos Media Buy," at the Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, west of Avenue of the Americas, South Village. Running time: 94 minutes. This film is not rated.