



Special Features: "Anatomy of a Thriller" featurette / Behind-the-scenes featurette / Theatrical trailer.

In a fictional dictatorship, Joe (Ralph Fiennes) is a prison guard tending to a playwright-turned-terrorist and enemy of the state, Thorne. During his prison sentence and after his eventual release, Thorne convinces Joe that the current President-for-Life, Maximilian II, is enough of a threat to the welfare of his country that he must be replaced. Maximilian is executed in a daring coup and Thorne takes control of a new revolutionary government.

I thought this film was great. Call shenanigans or cry accusations of Orwellian similarity if you will, but that doesn't keep this *Land of the Blind* from being curiously engaging. First and foremost on the list of goodness is the visual style. The society that exists in this story is a mish-mash of influences. It is set in an indiscernible time period and location as a summary of civilization and government. Just as sure as you'll see automobiles from around the 1940's in this picture, you'll find Victorian court uniforms and television.

Maximilian is a Stalin-esque leader even to the point of earning the people's love after his death, despite an oppressive rule. Maximilian II takes the form of a Roman emperor by being completely self-absorbed, cruel, and relatively apathetic to the welfare of his country or its people. The police uniforms are French, the military uniforms are U.N. camouflaged, product advertisements are imbedded in television news broadcasts, and history has a terrible way of repeating itself.

One thing I'll warn about is the 20 minute hurdle at the beginning that you have to pass to get to a point that the content makes any sense. Before that point you'll be wondering if the film is some kind of bizarre comedy or the reinvention of a classic work of literature. While the themes *Land of the Blind* covers aren't rotten with originality, the film is still a very interesting accomplishment.

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