

A Wounded Man's Deception

The *Fog of War* film opens by Robert S. McNamara, stating, "Every military commanding officer, if he's honest with those around him, he'll admit he's made mistakes. Mistakes that have killed people...but not destroyed nations." McNamara wanted to show people what had happened in the past, in hopes that we can learn from our nation's history and not make the same mistakes in the future.

His knowledge the destructive nature of war is comes from his experience in the aftermath of WW1, living through the great depression, fighting in WW2, and being the Secretary of Defense during the cold war. Throughout the film, he deflects and tries to distance himself from the terrible things he is recanting from his past. He is also careful. He does not want his words to harm those he cares for. McNamara puts distance between him and his past comrades, making them seem like warmongers. When McNamara is asked if he had previously known about an action that took place, he tries to make it seem as though he had as little to do with it as possible. He does this with many questions, he'll panic and get through the question as quickly as possible with little information.

When McNamara finally says, "Never answer the question that is asked of you, answer the question that you wish was asked of you". It makes the audience wonder, 'what are you hiding and why?' When asked about Vietnam his deflection comes in full force, he pushes it off and decides to talk about the end of WW2 and the Ford Motor Company. We can see that he is genuinely sympathetic to those affected by his past, but he puts himself in an awkward position with this film. He omits information that would be embarrassing or wounding to his ego. You have to know history to change the future. His shame keeps him from wholeheartedly telling his audience why war isn't the answer. He can make good points and explain how destructive war can be to the nation and to the human psyche. But as a hero, he fails. His evasions limit his potential contributions.