



**Critical Acclaim for
“THE OATH”**

By Laura Poitras

“All that time [Laura Poitras] has spent in the danger zones of Iraq and Yemen have produced two of the most searching documentaries of the post-9/11 era, [‘My Country, My Country’ and ‘The Oath’], on-the-ground chronicles that are sensitive to both the political and the human consequences of American foreign policy.”

— **Dennis Lim, *The New York Times***

“Poitras’ movie digs deep; it hints at the violently conflicting drives that an intelligent human being may be liable to.”

— **David Denby, *The New Yorker***

“An incredible documentary. Very, very powerful.”

— **Terrell Brown, CBS News “Up to the Minute”**

“Finding and using [telling] moments . . . are Poitras’ great skill . . . especially in having the patience to wait for the moments to emerge . . . to say nothing of the remarkable access she manages. . . . Just how deep inside Jandal’s world Poitras goes is all the more striking given the . . . danger she faced as a female filmmaker shooting a former Al Qaeda operative in Yemen.”

— **Betsey Sharkey, *Los Angeles Times***

“The complications emerging from a life devoted to jihadist revolution are considered with genuine fascination.”

— **Robert Koehler, *Variety***

“The most revelatory and essential documentary of 2010.”

— **David Edelstein, *New York Magazine***

“4.5 stars (out of 5). Offers a glimpse into the inner workings of Al Qaeda and the legal arms of the US military, and it scrambles all our assumptions about the post-9/11 world. . . . ‘The Oath’ asks a lot but gives much in return.”

— **Ty Burr, *The Boston Globe***

“An intriguing look at jihad and justice. . . . Poitras and Editor Jonathan Oppenheim thread an understated yet spellbinding narrative.”

— **Bill Stamets, *Chicago Sun-Times***

“‘The Oath’ contains fascinating information about the culture of al Qaeda. . . . It becomes a story of how character will prevail, how a person of decent impulses, however strong his political leanings, will ultimately find himself at odds with an ideology of hate.”

— **Mick LaSalle, *San Francisco Chronicle***

“[A film of] depth, fullness and haunting ambiguities.”

— **David Edelstein, “Fresh Air,” NPR**

“Grade A. . . . Compelling. . . . Has the propulsive air of a courtroom thriller.”

— **Stephen Schaefer, *Boston Herald***

“[‘The Oath’] has staying power.”
— **Mike Hale, *The New York Times***

“Penetrating. . . . ‘The Oath’ makes spare use of images to convey a great deal. Al-Bahri’s smiling child is surrounded by lethal weapons that are little more than toys to him. The color-drained skies of Guantánamo are juxtaposed with the lively Yemeni street scenes.”
— **John Hartl, *The Seattle Times***

“Laura Poitras [is] among the top docmakers anywhere. . . . More non-fiction films should be as beautifully photographed.”
— **Howard Feinstein, *indieWIRE***

“Astonishing and essential. . . . Both intimate and epic, mysterious and clear-eyed. Poitras draws a complex, novelistic portrait of two men whose intertwined destinies tell us more about this conflict than most newspaper articles ever could.”
— **Scott Macaulay, *Filmmaker Magazine***

“‘The Oath’ is a tale of two enigmas linked by history and fate. . . . Poitras makes salient political points about . . . some of the methods the United States used . . . but her film is just as effective as a portrait of two unknowable, individual souls caught up in events of global scale.”
— **Marc Mohan, *The Oregonian***

“‘The Oath’ is a film about a man who is an enigma—and about the confusion, not the clarity, that is the aftermath of 9/11. Poitras is a patient observer of the telling details that deepen the contradictions of her subject.”
— **Ella Taylor, *The Village Voice***

“A gripping story free of simplicity and forced conclusions, a fascinating journey into the lives of two former Jihadist warriors. ‘The Oath’ is finely layered with the complexity of regret and yearning, rock certainty torpedoed by deep desire.”
— **Stewart Nusbaumer, *The Huffington Post***

“Provocative. . . . A fascinating, sober documentary that zooms in from our satellite view of the war on terror to tell the story of two men. . . . A challenging, brilliantly constructed film.”
— **Kerry Lengel, *The Arizona Republic***

“When you watch half a dozen documentaries on the War on Terror every month, it’s startling to be blindsided by one as essential as ‘The Oath,’ an extraordinary feat of journalistic access. . . . It’s hard to think of another documentary that approaches the post–September 11 era from this angle or with this degree of intellectual drama—or that seeks to understand a terrorist mind-set so fearlessly.”
— **Ben Kenigsberg, *Time Out Chicago***

“‘The Oath’ paints a fascinating portrait of the complexities of Islamic fundamentalism and those who are caught in its thrall.”
— **Anthony Kaufman *UTNE Reader***

“Incisive.”
Roger Catlin, *Hartford Courant*

“Compelling. . . . Poitras is skilled at gaining the confidence of people who might well distrust Americans, as she demonstrated with ‘My Country, My Country,’ a gently incisive look at life in post-invasion Iraq. For ‘The Oath,’ she got astonishingly intimate footage of [Abu] Jandal, who was working as a cab driver in Yemen when she tracked him down.”
— **Mark Jenkins, *NPR***

“Critics Pick. Compelling. . . . An illuminating . . . portrait of the War on Terror’s lasting effects.”
— **Keith Uhlich, *Time Out New York***

“Poitras has opened up a fascinating window into the minds of the people who hate us . . .”
— **Jonathan F. Richards, *Film.com***

“What makes a terrorist go Tick . . . Tick . . . Tick? . . . This is a world of shadows and boasts and dangerous relationships. ‘The Oath’ is not a History Channel-style or CNN-style point-by-point exploration of terrorist history. It’s an intimate portrait of people and families who are deeply enmeshed in these deadly relationships.”
— **David Crumm, *Read the Spirit.com***

“A stellar documentary and a Perfect 10. . . . Superb.”
— **Cynthia Fuchs, *PopMatters.com***

“An act of great love and deep sorrow, ‘The Oath’ is as essential a documentary as any that will grace American screens this year. Press the masterpiece button now.”
— **Brandon Harris, *Hammer to Nail.com***

“That rare breed of documentary, a film so exquisitely told you don’t want it to end.”
— **Norm Schrager, *Filmcritic.com***