

F I L M R E V I E W

Wizard of the Desert

An Alexander Vesely Film

Executive Producer: Roxanna Erickson-Klein

Produced by: Mary Cimiluca

Directed by: Alexander Vesely

Editors: Alexander Vesely & Jon Brian Mead

Colorist: Sam Olugach

Original Music Composed by: Gerrit Wunder

Sound: Christoph Burgstaller

Noetic Films, Inc.

2013

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100 minutes

wizardofthedesertmovie.com

A Joint Review by John D. Lentz, D.Min., Shepherdsville, KY and
Annellen M. Simpkins, Ph.D. & C. Alexander Simpkins, Ph.D., San Diego, CA

Wizard of the Desert is about the genius and humanity of Milton H. Erickson, MD, but it is also more. In keeping with the multilevel communication that made Erickson famous, this film speaks to the viewer on more than one level. (We counted at least five.) In his seminars, Erickson often spoke directly to the unconscious of his students, believing that would accelerate learning. This movie continues in that vein. Filmmaker, Alexander Vesely, masterfully weaves together footage of family, friends, students, and neighbors who knew Erickson, the man, as well as Erickson the doctor, teacher, and extraordinary model healer. We loved the way the film smoothly flows from one person to another, and then back again. The hours of editing paid off, because the effect is multifaceted communication that invites you to stay interested, intrigued, and enchanted. What you get is an amazing glimpse into the thought, talent, and personhood of Milton H. Erickson.

The eight chapters open a panorama of commentary on Erickson's life, interwoven with his lessons, revealing the development of his individualized solutions starting at an early age. He believed that adversity was his teacher, and he always found creative ways to turn things around. From the first chapter's "blinding flash of light," we see how Erickson's disabilities spurred him toward creative understandings that would rock the world of psychotherapy. This movie shows how Erickson lived this wisdom, sensitively chronicled through the eyes of the many people he knew, taught, and inspired.

The understandings shared in this film will give you numerous Zen moments to stimulate your own sense of possibilities. You will be touched hearing so many top therapists saying such loving and genuinely appreciative things about what they learned and how Erickson taught them. Seeing their positive emotions in response to how they experienced Erickson is especially moving. By weaving together the thoughts of Erickson family members and students who are now renowned therapists, you get a special flavor of this amazing man and the family that continues to impact the world of psychotherapy in such a powerful way. There should be CEUs offered with this 100-minute film. It deserves it.

We are certain that Vesely and producer, Mary Cimiluca, drew from some of the best artists in the film business to create the music, enhance color, and coordinate the overall effects. The film is so compelling that you could almost miss the subtle use of color synchronized with sounds, in perfect harmony with the insightful message. The viewing experience is amplified by beautiful music, fascinating historical pictures, and insightful film clips of Erickson in action.

The kaleidoscope of multilevel communication happens just outside of your conscious awareness, and may culminate when you realize that not only are you inspired to be a better therapist, you also feel compelled to be a better person because of the wizardly way the film touches your heart. We highly recommend this great work, as an opportunity to share intimate time with the spirit of Milton Erickson and to be transformed by the deep learning.



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