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Beyond the Multiplex

A documentary masterpiece that shows us Iraq as it truly is. Plus: Ed Harris as Beethoven, and an exegesis on the word "fuck."

By Andrew O'Hehir



Followers of Muqtada al-Sadr at a rally in Kufa Mosque, in "Iraq in Fragments."

Like many of you, the staff here at Beyond the Multiplex world HQ was [up late](#) on Tuesday night parsing electoral returns in rural Montana, the outer suburbs of St. Louis and inner-city Richmond, Va. As some readers are ea-

ger to remind me, the job of this column is to rise above the mire of politics, to hark only to the highest vibrations of Apollo's lyre, plucked in the empyrean realms of Art.

Well, forget it. As it happens, this week's most important new independent film is James Longley's documentary "[Iraq in Fragments](#)," winner of numerous festival awards, including Sundance prizes for directing, cinematography and editing. There hasn't been much audience for Iraq docs so far -- who wants to see a film about a place we all wish we'd never heard of? -- and I don't know that Longley's film will change that. But it's head and shoulders above the rest in its clarity, intimacy and poetry, and it illustrates the dreadful predicament America has created in Iraq, which drove so many angry people to the polls on Tuesday.