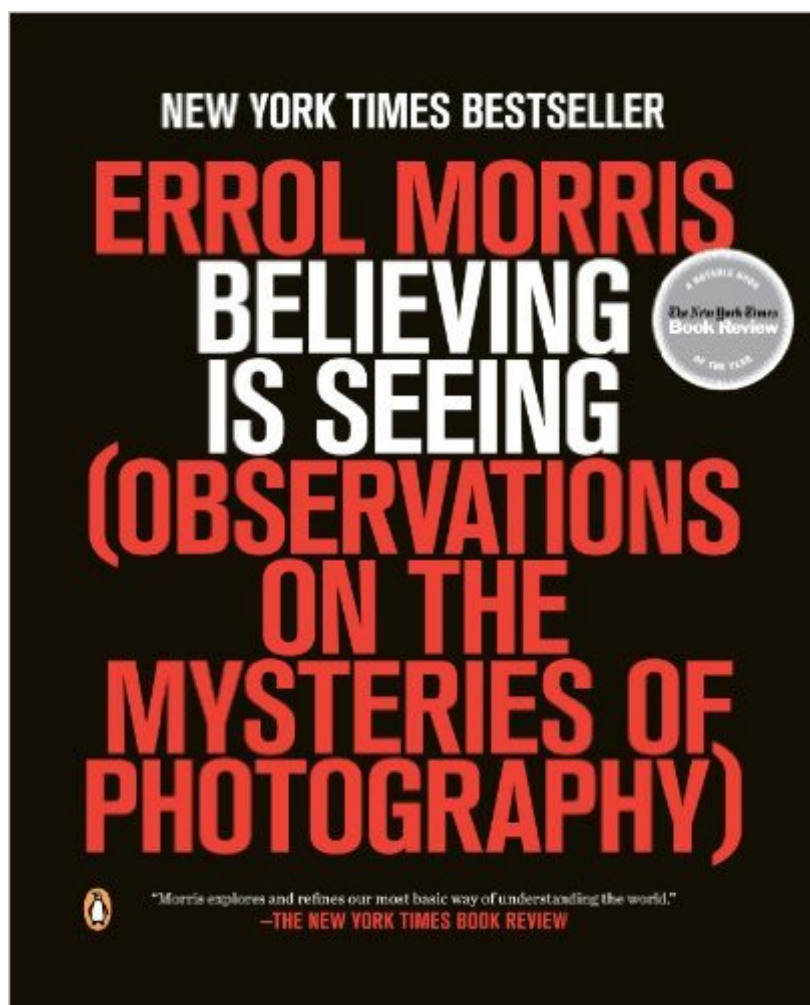


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# Believing Is Seeing: Observations On The Mysteries Of Photography



## Synopsis

Academy Award-winning director Errol Morris turns his eye to the nature of truth in photography. In his inimitable style, Errol Morris untangles the mysteries behind an eclectic range of documentary photographs. With his keen sense of irony, skepticism, and humor, Morris shows how photographs can obscure as much as they reveal, and how what we see is often determined by our beliefs. Each essay in this book is part detective story, part philosophical meditation, presenting readers with a conundrum, and investigates the relationship between photographs and the real world they supposedly record. *Believing Is Seeing* is a highly original exploration of photography and perception, from one of America's most provocative observers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A common question among serious photographers is "what is the truth of a photograph?" Errol Morris, an Academy Award winning documentary film maker, approaches the question in this book. He does it by examining specific images in six essays, that deal with two similar photographs taken in the Crimean War; the well known photographs of prisoners and GI's at Abu Ghraib prison; several photographs taken by the photographers of the Farm Security Administration during the Great Depression; an image of a child's toy in war-torn Lebanon; and a photograph of children found in the hand of a dead soldier at Gettysburg. His method is similar in all cases; he researches the background of the images and reports apparently verbatim interviews that he had with various people involved with the photographs. His handling of the Crimean war images is a paradigm of his

method. The late public intellectual Susan Sontag attacked a photographer of that conflict who had taken two images of a road, one with canon balls in a gully, and the same view with the canon balls on a road. Morris faults Sontag for accusing the photographer of setting up the latter image, and recounts his own efforts to learn which picture was taken first. After interviewing many experts with no success Morris made a trip to the Crimea and determined that the photographer was facing north. With this information in hand, a forensic scientist was able to determine which photograph was the later. The author raises many questions, including how and why the difference, and dances around the question of whether the second photograph should be considered a fake. Morris never really answers the question.

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