



**[J Edgar](#) directed by Clint Eastwood**

Reviewed by [Anne Ryan](#) January 2012

For cinema goers, 2012 opened with *Thatcher: the Movie*, here we have another chance to see a major political figure of the 20th century and see a Hollywood star walk the fine line between impersonation and insight. And in **J**

***Edgar***

there is also star power behind the camera in the form of Clint Eastwood who has proved himself a skilled and interesting film-maker.

This can also be viewed as the second in a right-wing trilogy to welcome 2012 – 'The Iron Lady', 'J Edgar' and 'W.E.', where we are asked to forgive the protagonists because they got old and anyway Denis, Clyde or King Edward loved them!

Unlike Margaret Thatcher, J Edgar Hoover, the founder of the FBI and eminence grise of 20th century American politics has been portrayed many times on screen, sometimes as hero, far more often as a villain - a physical and metaphorical 'heavy'. But DiCaprio gives a more nuanced performance and here we get to see the young idealist who began his career with the desire to catch bad guys. But even in these early days he is already creating his own myth. We see the young bureaucrat taking an attractive young typist, Naomi Watts, on a date to the Library of Congress to show her the cataloguing system that he created! We also see his recruitment of the handsome Clyde Tolson, Arnie Hammer. And here our trio of heroes decide to dedicate their lives to crime fighting.

