

my private show

a war diary by krok & petschinka

autor / author: eberhard petschinka

regie / directed by: petschinka

tongestaltung / sound: herta werner

producer / editor: peter klein

production / production: ORF

first broadcast in orf: 12 / 7 /2003

länge / duration: 49.33

übersetzung / translation: david zane mairowitz

ein kriegstagebuch von krok & petschinka
my private show

My Private Show

A War Diary by Krok & Petschinka

In February of this year, even before the attack of coalition forces on Iraq began, the feature department of ORF radio commissioned theatre and radio play author Eberhard Petschinka to write a war diary. From then on, we received electronic messages by Eberhard Petschinka almost on a daily basis: Concrete observations based on TV reports, reflections and poetically incongruous accounts of events.

One by one the individual fragments developed into a story that ultimately led to the creation of an artificial persona: A violent TV consumer, using war as a tool to satisfy his own needs and obsessions. This high level of expectation is bound to lead to disappointment. Especially if the TV pictures don't fulfill what promised to be a "decent" war: brutal, cruel and bloody.

Eberhard Petschinka's "private show" taps into a debate that Austrians would rather not go deeper into. The debate of how media, in an attempt to filter graphic and gruesome visual images out of respect for the feelings of TV spectators, prettifies the war and puts itself consequently on the side of the aggressor.

"Krok", the co-author of Eberhard Petschinka, is, based on his own accounts, a monster, his inner beast, the destructor who is hard to domesticate and is bold enough to say all the things in "Private Show" the author himself wouldn't even dare to think...

SIGNATION

TONE PICTURES – a feature programme

BUSH "we are a peaceful people!

laughter

BUSH: if you know what I mean!"

machinegunfire

vocal music

my private show a war diary by krok & petschinka

machine-gun fire

17. february 2003

CHIEF OF US HOMELAND-SECURITY: "its now my great privilege
to introduce our champion of freedom
the president of the United States george w.bush"

applause

BUSH : "great introduction! "

laughter

the propaganda machine presents our
champion of freedom on the scene in philadelphia.

BUSH : "he hasn't disarmed"

he sets his prayer-wheel in motion there:

BUSH: "if he doesn't disarm, we will disarm him!"

BUSH : "he is not disarming!"

BUSH : "if Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people
and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him!"

this is boring, folks!
there are no pictures of tonight's bombardments
in the no-flight zone.

machine-gun fire

the only slight ray of hope for me is the report
of a retaliation incursion by the israeli army in gaza :

REPORT FROM THE ISRAELI FRONT: „palestinean children get close and throw stones.“

night.
an explosion.
a man rushes towards a car. throws himself to the ground.
followed by archive footage of a burning tank.
a bulldozer destroys a house.
rubble.

REPORT FROM THE ISRAELI FRONT: "the end of a bloody week in gaza.
19 palestineans killed in israeli operations targeting hamas!"

all fine and dandy,
but where are the mangled bodies, the dismembered corpses.
the wounded.
the mourners.
where are the pictures of screaming palestinian women?!
where are the blown-off legs of the suicide bombers?!
the arms, the heads?

I'll have to go down and search in my archives.
maybe pull out the old atrocity reports from the balkans.
or watch the tv film about the war photographer james nachtwey.

SADDAM HUSSEIN : "I'm ready to dialog with bush
with mr. bush, the president of the United States.

CORRESPONDENT : "as soon as the White House heard of saddam husseins
proposal for a debat, it was immediately rejected. a spokesman called it: not serious!"

20. february 2003

MEMBER OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: "we are not yet there!! we are not yet there.
we ar not raising hands. we are not sitting in the council ..."

CORRESPONDENT : "france will vote against!"

it wasn't an event which turned me on today -
today was just another "day of talk talk talk",
that's how a CNN correspondent put it-
terrific – and the guy too
with the detestable facial expression
of an old hungry dung-beetle
who's been crawling for hours over a map
and turns up nothing more than dry skins
and rotten waste -
no,
today I got a special intellectual treat!

I read the letter of the "alliance against anti-semitism" criticizing this weekend's peace demonstrators, whose banners described mr. george w. bush as a "warmonger" and a "dog in a rage for blood".

the co-signers of this letter say: "this is unfair!"
"if the americans had not sacrificed themselves for us in normandy, dying bloody deaths in huge numbers

music

hitler might never have been defeated!"

just fabulous, how from nowhere
the military deployment in the gulf
and the allied landing in normandy
is pulled out of the magic hat of historical comparison.

the word "normandy" bring pictures
and memories of great films to my mind:

saving private ryan -

200 hold-your-breath minutes.
masses of mutilated corpses. eyes plucked out. smashed-in faces.
young men puking out their guts and souls all over the screen!

and also the memories of an old man.
friend of a friend's mother.
at first he was a devoted SS man.
then an orderly with the wehrmacht.

after an attack, as he strolled through the rows of wounded
like a hunter taking stock after the hunt,
it was like a ... casting session.

vocal music

I imagine an assistant to gianni versace -
going up and down the rows of young guys ...
picking out eight of the 500 candidates
to be presented to the master himself.

"not you. not you. not you. you've lost too much blood.
your intestines are too mangled. you can go! you can go!
YOU can be operated on. you only have an ordinary gunshot wound
in your thigh!"

vocal music

"it was a horrible feeling!" said the old man.

later I would see this same despair
on the faces of iraqi doctors
when the war had finally begun.

with the dying heaped on the floors of a bagdad hospital.
blood on the stone floor.
plastic bags full of severed limbs.
the angry faces of the relatives.
helplessness turning into fury.

I ...

CNN signation: „this is history. be the first to know. stay with CNN!“

25. february

CNN signation

oh so slowly, to the left and right of my *windows*-chatroom
- the *windows* of all my fellow voyeur-bloodhounds are opening;
lay little cushions on the *windows*-sills and make themselves comfortable.

"well well, neighbour, you´re also at your *windows*!"
"yes, but I don´t expect very much!" he says
"it´ll go very quickly!"
but this time they´d better show us more than usual,
not just crosshairs. explosions. smoke.
but also corpses. suffocation. people buried alive!"

a bang

then we hear the first detonation.
reach for our binoculars.
debris flying through the air.

YVES SAINT LAURENT : "Oh!"

maybe a tank.
or an iraqi anti-missile installation.

my neighbour on the left offers me a beer.
"when we lean so close together out the window,
my wife and I", he says

music

"I feel something - whether you believe me or not, -
of our first love! of our first spring!

and it's exactly the same for my wife.

you know, I was 13,
the yanks were bombing us.
and my wife and I,
there in the bunker, we kissed for the first time.
"kiss me, alfred, as if it were for the last time!"
she whispered in my ear.
and I still hear it today
with the whistling of grenades and the boom
when a bomb hits.

and it was so dark in our air-raid shelter.
and her hand was on my ... well we were young. and ...
when I tell my grandchildren about it,
they think I'm perverse!"

music

Pope : „tragico e glorioso momento de la roma imperiale!“

04. march

I don't care for this at all:
the pope wants to go to new york.
he wants to pray at ground zero -

POPE : "pace iraq!"

if this man
prostrates himself now before the UN-security council
as "the pope knocked down by the meteor of impending war",
adding his voice to the chorus
of those politicians who since the peace demonstrations
have joined up with the "peace chief" george w. bush himself

BUSH : "nobody likes war!"

BUSH : "I recognise there are people who ..."

BUSH : "our goal is peace!"

BUSH : "don't like war. I don't like war."

if mr wojtyla
throws his personal weight into the anti-war balance,
then ...

then we voyeurs will be left with nothing but
those beautiful pictures - only available in private circles -
of the mercedes in paris,

vocal music

showing lady diana and mr dodi al fayett in the act of expiring.

or else the pictures of a completely totalled vehicle
and its unidentifiable organic material -
you remember,
a helicopter firing a rocket into a car
carrying five men,
one of whom was on the CIA blacklist.

BUSH : "we hunt them down one by one, all across the world!"

or pictures of infected children
on the garbage dumps around cairo.

maybe we have to get out the old photos of the algerian war
once again,
- our classics!
we'll have to clean off the old sperm stains
and make room for new ones.

muezzin

06. march

BUSH : "I pray. I pray for strength. I pray for guidance. I pray for forgiveness!"

08. march

RUMSFELD : "he has weapons ... chemical biological weapons ...
and has been working on nuclear weapons"

the champion of freedom has changed his line of argument.
he has figured out that
he gets his best sound-bites and his limitless power
from the "war against terrorism".

the "weapons of mass destruction" argument,
even for the incredibly scared and horrified
american public,
is no longer the number one sexual stimulus.

it's lost its thrill,
like all the porno
you've watched ten, twenty times at home.
you know all the positions,

BUSH : "the dictator of Iraq and his weapons of mass destruction
are a threat to the security of free nations!"

you know the close-ups.

BUSH : "we know from human rights groups that dissidents in Iraq are tortured,
imprisoned and sometimes just disappear;
their hands, feet and tongues are cut off;
their eyes are gouged out; and female relatives are raped in their presence.

but suddenly:

BUSH : "he's a sponsor of terrorism!"

saddam is a terrorist!
right on. bingo.
at last!!

BUSH : "we will not wait to see what terrorists or terrorist states
could do with weapons of mass destruction!"

now all the other arguments can be discarded.
now all we have to do is simply - smoke out the whole lot of 'em!

BUSH : "we must cut off money together. we must smoke these ...
BUSH : "we are smoking them out!"
BUSH : "smoke these people out of their caves and bring them to justice.
and that's what we're doing -- one by one."

11. march

AL BARADAY : "one: there is no indication of nuclear activities.
second: there is no indication that Iraq had attempted to import uranium since 1990.

there is no proof of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

AL BARADAY : "after 3 month of intrusive inspections
we have today found no evidence or closed indication
of the revival of the nuclear weapon program in Iraq!"

and this on the same day
that commander in chief of the armed forces general Tommy Franks
is travelling to the region!

that suits me just fine!

if bush, blair, aznar & berlusconi become enraged
because they've been accused and convicted
of lies and propaganda -
then their bombing-raids will be even deadlier!

music

but now for a word about berlusconi -
just great the way he was made to perform at a press conference!

the media mogul as dancing bear!

he says: he loves america -

BERLUSCONI : "e quindi per noi gli estati uniti sono non soltanto un paese amico
ma solo la garanzia della nostra democrazia e per la nostra liberta!"

*"So for us, the United States is not only our friend,
but they are the guarantee of our democracy and our freedom."*

music

he's also seen sergio leone's "once upon a time in america"!!
maybe even francis ford coppola's "apocalypse now!"
or oliver stone's "natural born killers!"
or scorsese's "gangs of new york"

BERLUSCONI : "e io ho gia detto l'altra volta a presidente bush
que quando io vedo la bandera di estati uniti
non penso soltanto que sia la bandera di una nazione
ma penso que sia un simbolo della liberta
e della democrazia del mondo intero!"

*"and I already has the opportunity to say this to President Bush,
every time I see the U.S. flag,
I don't see the flag only representative of a country,
but I see it as a symbol of democracy and of freedom."*

and then bush says:

"come on, silvio, your english is very good, say a few words for us!"
and silvio -

BERLUSCONI : "And I am here with a friend, with a country, that is the best friend of my country."

BUSH : "Well, thank you. And your English is very good."

BERLUSCONI : "No, no. I have never the time.

We have so much to do in Italy, I have not time to - "

BUSH : "Not the time to practice?"

BERLUSCONI : "-- to learn a better English!"

BUSH : "Well, thank you for that kind comment!"

15. march

in online-spiegel I read:

"the outbreak of war can only be a few days away!"

wonderful word: the "outbreak" of war.

a tooth breaks out of someone's mouth.
a prisoner breaks out. a disease. an epidemic.

and: war.

which defines it as an uncontrollable power.

like sexual lust.

impossible to oppose this outbreak of thrilling madness.

let the war break out!!

iraqi war chorus

SOLDIER: "jenny I love you. and I think about you every day. I wish I had more time to write you!"

REPORTER: "these are likely to be the last letters written for war begins!"

IRAQI: "we are going to return their bodies in bags back to america!
we'll show them we can do better than vietnam or corea!"

17. march

in his radio address -
mr bush recounts the horrors committed by mr saddam.
and in detail !

BUSH : "electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills,
cutting out tongues, and rape."

he can't imagine ...

BUSH : "if this is not evil ...

... how this all turns me on.

BUSH : "... then evil has no meaning!"

applause

18. march 2003

at last a declaration of war : the ultimatum.

BUSH : "all the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end.
Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours!"

and all members of the security council go along with it.
a few hundred with gritted teeth.
the delegates from poland, bulgaria, great britain, italy, spain and australia
on the other hand with gratitude and dreams of
raking off some of that black gold from the oil wells.

there´s a final wonderful funeral oration:

KOFI ANNAN : "without the authority of the security council
the legitimacy and support for any such action will be seriously impaired!"

at last this dumb, childish
argument about resolutions and UN- Security Council debates is over.

I was thrilled by bush´s speech -
and it was delivered very very slowly,
so that even my little son could follow it.

he pointed out to me the deep worry line
which some clever make-up artist must have drawn
on the brow of our champion of freedom.

BUSH : "In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors,
no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents,
no more torture chambers and rape rooms!"

but the death penalty - that stays I hope - just like in america.

SADDAM HUSSEIN : „against those who are the enemy of humanity and allah ...
to these a glorious war that is written with the blood of the iraqi ...
and it is not just fight
according to the evil will
and after they don´t have any justification or cover
the invador occupier came boldly
showing the bad intentions
brother iraqi and honourable ladies
you will defeat your enemy”

19. march 2003

what I don't care for at all
are the cartoon explanations
offered up to me on sky-news,
trying to make clear
how the attack began
and how it will be carried out.

TV-COMMENT : "cut off the head of the monster and hopefully the monster dies!"

iraqi military installations are hit, go up in flames for a short time
and then disappear out of a pastel desert.

folks,
if that's your idea of war,
count me out.

what I want to see is recently destroyed biological matter!
I want to see blood fountains spraying forth from the severed throats of those used
as human shields –

vocal music

I want to see human brains drying up in desert sand
or trampled into the ground by boots.

I want to see a horrified child
staring at a leg lying in the street
and slowly realising
it's his -
and no one will ever sew it back on.
and he'll never be able to walk again.
just laughingly hopping about on crutches
or paddling along the ground
on freely distributed discarded skateboards.

I want to see grenade shrapnel,
sticking out of women's eyes.

I want to see people spitting their teeth out,
people trying to escape
from a cloud of poison gas
which envelops them,
robs them of breath,
the suffocated screams,
the bodies collapsing to the ground
while a ghostly silence reigns
over the whole town.

and finally here at my tv screens and my *windows*,
I want to see the great earthquake
brought about by the new superbomb.

I want to experience the great joy
of finding a small, practically unharmed child
pulled out of the rubble
after days of fruitless searching ...

sound

I want to feel this scene bringing tears to my eyes
see the grandfather's joy
as he presses this bundle of misery to his heart ...

I want to see the sadness on women's faces
when they realise
that there's no body to be found
to match the head of their child.

green light for war.

the theatre of war opens its door.

and ...

explosions / bombs

20. march

REPORTER : „there is a lot of activity around ... there is a large ...”

the first explosions.

explosions / bombs

REPORTER: “ ...but now things are very difficult here ... the airdefens across the city ...
up to the sky ...”

a night sky lit up.
but no victims!

TV-PRESENTER : „these are the pictures recorded just a short time ago!”

explosions / bombs

IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO THE UN : „well it seems that the war of aggression against my country started!“

BUSH : “on my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine saddam husseins ability to wage war!”

REPORTER : “... live in kuwait city as we just said the war has begun at ... 2.00 GMT this morning”

TV-PRESENTER : “paint the picture if you will in george bushes oval office last night”

REPORTER : „mr. bush decided, yes we will go for it! an he gave the order ...”

vocal music

REPORTER: “ he than went upstairs to the private appartement and had dinner with his wife ...”

SADDAM HUSSEIN : “these are conclusive days dear iraqis so hit according you are orded by allah your god hit them above the necks and cut all the heads ...”

spectacular pictures.
of a poison gas exercise
by coalition soldiers in the desert.
the whole company sits in sand-protected trenches.
each one has his sado-maso uniform on.
a gas mask covering his face.

I hope
they have to wear those masks all day long
and not just a few seconds for the sake of tv coverage.
until they begin to steam up in the heat.
until they suffer from lack of air and a feeling of suffocation.
and their brains -
no longer stuffed with propaganda -
begin to fill up with
lovely hate-hormones
so that they no longer have to think of anything else but -
killing.

TV-PRESENTER : “yes yes”

REPORTER : “... you can hear me?!”

whats happening here is everybody in this hotel
forgive me yeah
find it difficult breathing in this heat
everybody in the hotel has been told to get in the basement
these sirens went up about 3 or 4 minutes ago
when I look around me I can still see there is still chaos in the street ...”

“that was spooky enough
but we are in a city a civiliced city like this
we are in a smart hotel in the center of kuwait city
to see everybody putting their gasmasks on
having their collegues to check their gasmasks ...”

folks!
why don't you show me the destruction in bagdad,
rather than part of a street in kuwait city -
as seen from a hotel-window
during a poison gas exercise?

the war photographer james nachtwey was completely right:
if we want to see people suffering,
see bombing victims,
leave it to the photographers.
not those war reporters castrated by the knife called "censored & accredited"
but rather all those
who still have a dream of humanity -

these are the only ones who can really satisfy us *windows*-sadists.

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : „take your chance my beloved
it is your chance for immortality!"

21. march

you coming now? get your shoes on!
"are you angry?" asks my 4 year old son.
tired.
"and why are you tired?"
I haven't slept! come on, get your shoes on!
"what were you doing?"
television.
"what was it?"
last night the americans started a war against iraq.
"what's that?"
what?
"war!"
battles. tanks. planes shooting rockets.
"where are they shooting rockets?"
at the city of bagdad.
"now?"
yes. right in the middle of the city.
"and what do the rockets do?"
they explode. and a lot of people get hit.
"very many?"
yes.
"and what do the people say?"
they're frightened. then they scream. run around in panic. or they
are wounded.
"do they bleed?"
yes, or else they lose a leg.

"or two legs?"
or an arm.
"like my grandfather!"
or even a head.
"and does the blood run out?"
yes and the mama of a child cries.
"or screams?"
come on now, shoes on.
that's what I was doing in the night.
on every channel I looked for pictures of the dead and wounded
and those who screamed and tried to escape...
come on.

shots

REPORTER : „they code-named this operation JAMES
after james bond, but there was nothing make believe about it
this was real and raw and brutal power ...
SOLDIER : “the one ... they would shoot from ...
REPORTER : “and the iraqis suffered offnumbered,
offguned, the bodycount rising ... “
SOLDIER : „boom damaged!“
BUSH: „may god bless you! and may god bless america“
TV-PRESENTER : “president bush speaking at the port in philadelphia
sourrounded by the coastguard ...”

22. march

just after midnight we get into bed.
me and my girlfriend.
naked and in excited anticipation of the pictures of war.

today's terrific show has already been announced.
they call it "shock & awe".
shock & awe.
and we absolutely want to make use of this
to reinvigorate our romantic passion.

we tease each other,
make up a little dispute
about who gets to hold the remote control
and therefore gets to edit these blue movies.

bombs. fireworks. sirens. fires. brightly lit bagdad.

we couldn't care less
if this is archive footage or live show.
at this moment our nerves are programmed for
thrills and mounting excitement.

right near the bed the little night table
with its thrilling ingredients.

shall we?
"yeah!"

vocal music

we page through amnesty international yearly atrocity reports.
we page through high-quality photo mags
documenting bite-wounds made by killer dogs.
we get out our precious videos.
for a few minutes
we watch the shooting of the great ceausescu.
then some sequences from the devastation in kabul.
the bulldozing of entire city quarters by israeli tanks.
burial scenes. destroyed buses.

followed by the golden oldie photo albums :
crimes of the german wehrmacht.
black and white concentration camp photos.
nagasaki. chernobyl.

that's how we turn ourselves on.
and then my girlfriend sits up.
our son's voice brings her back from our delirium.
today he had an accident on his bike.
didn't brake.
fell head first against some stone steps.
opened a gash in his cheek.
bled.

now his sleep is disturbed.

she says: "sorry!" and jumps out of bed.
leaves me behind
in a state
you could only describe as : randy

in a few minutes she comes back.
completely cooled off.
and says,
"I'd like to start up our old and beautiful tradition again,
which we used to celebrate every evening in the early days of our romance ..."

what? I say.

"read to me from one of my favourite books!"

and opens the drawer of the night table.

pulls out the book,
which lies under the family planning gear.
under the lubricating jelly, condoms porno mags and paper tissues.

page 728

I lower the tv
and begin reading.

"in those days the servants of Nebuchadnezzar,
king of Babylonia, took up arms against Jerusalem
and the city found itself under siege..."

my girlfriend snuggles up against me
and gives free rein to her depravity.

" then Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia,
himself marched on the city..."

floating in the warm waters of euphoria
accompanied by muscular contractions
which drive me wild
we explode at the same time
as the presidential palace is bombed into oblivion.
at the same time as hundreds of buildings, gardens, housing estates, squares,
market places, reservoirs, oil tanks, grocery stores, bedrooms, soup kitchens are
reduced to ashes.
at the same time as vases, carpets, traditions,
coffee houses, water pipes, sewing machines, bicycles are wiped out.
our lust is in flames at the same time as palms, bananas, nuts,
women's hair, valises, pearl necklaces and old manuscripts,
and slowly burns itself out like the hunger of the dying,
like their fear, like their breathing, like their pain.

we lick each other off.
kiss.
and I reach for the remote control.
just in time
to experience the beautiful "shock & awe" fireworks.

war sound

when we've seen enough of the pictures,
heard enough of the wonderful text,
I place kubrick's 2001: a space odyssey
on the dvd player,
grab myself a bottle of bordeaux
I feel like a million dollars.

music

cheers, darling!!

we celebrate a beautiful moment of pure bliss.
wink at each other
and

music

BUSH : "we'll make sure that Iraq's natural resources are used for the benefit
of their owners, the Iraqi people!"

BLAIR : "and then in particular,
Iraq's natural resources remain the property of the people of Iraq!"

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : "the war criminals in washington and london
insisted yesterday through the aircampagne
to bombard bagdad, nineveh, karbala, sahaladin, an najaf, badisija, basra and babylon.

vocal music

in bagdad 194 wounded ... in nineveh 8 wounded ...
in karbala in salahadin 32 wounded and 10 and 2 killed ... in an najaf in basra ... "

vocal music

23. march

dear mr rumsfeld,

since the beginning of the talk
about a "war against saddam"
I've been your biggest fan.

you always appear on the screen
as a man
in whose wonderfully rotten soul
a consistent and profound copulation
between cynical intellect and cruelty takes place.

but now -
after your reaction to the first pictures of american POWs -
I'm disappointed in you.

you said:
"if it's true that these are pictures of our people,
then the treatment of these people
goes against the geneva convention!"

RUMSFELD : "under the genever convention it's illegal!"

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : "stop these crocodile-tears!"

the geneva convention, how boring.

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : "... we regarded the genever convention."

if you had placed any value
in conventions or resolutions, mr rumsfeld,
I would never have taken such delight in your wonderful show!

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : "their hands are still blood-stained
with the vietnamese bloods
with all their aggressions all over the world
and recently even women in afghanistan
and they are talking about genever convention!"

no, dear members of the rotten iraqi regime
I would really like,
for the POWs to be treated according to the new principle
which, since the beginning of the war,
has been baptised by the lovely name:
shock & awe.

and : I hope this treatment will be made public.

vocal music

let's bring back the old method of flogging.
cutting off of limbs : hair, noses, ears, fingers, toes, pricks

I'd love to see bald heads
with the words "shock & awe" tattooed on them
using rusty nails and needles
which have been dipped in the
contaminated blood
of AIDS sufferers & smallpox victims!

the women
should have their nipples cut off
and rats should be permitted to lick and gnaw at their ovaries-
according to the scenario
devised by Bret Easton Ellis in his novel american psycho!

these people should - while still alive -
be nailed up as human shields on the tv tower
and every night
reporters from the biggest american networks should be allowed to come
and eat their entrails

war-sound. crying soldiers, laughter.

TV-PRESENTER : „this is not a movie ... this is unedited ... “

war-sound

COMMENTATOR : “they love to do a good job these marines”

TV-PRESENTER :”... you saw that 4 hour battle unfolding today ...

so it is never a not-dangerous situation in basra.

we going to recapitulate this headlines on the iraq-crisis for you right here every 15 minutes”

24. to 26. march

sandstorm

KOFI ANNAN : „we all want to see this war brought to an end as soon as possible!“

REPORTER : “they are now engaging the iraqis by day and night to save the oil industry
which will be crucial in reconstructing this shattered country”

REPORTER : “this is what the nights attack left behind : a waste land ... of iraqi arm.”

PRESSCONFERENCE : “after the bombs were released a bus came into the pilots view
but too late to recall the weapons. the bomb struck the bridge and the bus.
unintended casualties are regrettable. we extend our sympathies to the families
of those civilians who were accidentally killed”

AL JAZEERA –JINGLE

28. march

after equipping myself digitally I can get Al jazeera,
from now on my favourite network.

here they show me un-commentated pictures
of death and desolation.

a reporter holds a photo in front of the camera.
you see a work of art.
in comparison all works of art from new britain - baby shit.

here´s a kind of organic bust.
bloody head.
shoulders.
under it a few centimetres of naked bloody flesh.
and that´s it.

this objet trouvé
was discovered in a market place in bagdad.

you can't reconstruct
what this woman was buying at the time.
they didn't find any arms. or hands.

PRESSCONFERENCE / GENERAL VINCENT BROOKS : "we have examined our flights,
our weaponsystems that were used in the period time associated with the explosion in the market
and there is absolutely nothing that joins that to coalition action!"

the americans declare : "it wasn't us!"
the brits say: "market place? us? no never!!"

BUSH : "and we will do anything we can as I mentioned and I mean this
to protect innocent life!"

nobody wants the copyright on this *oeuvre*.

AN IRAQI: "bush is the killer!!
REPORTER : "michael sullivan sky news!"
AN IRAQI : "killer president in the history of america
he' s a shame for america"

SADDAM HUSSEIN "so kill them
you are like my father and my mother
are sacrificed for you
dear hero people
kill your enemy precisely and accurately"

the camera shows a girl.
she's trying to smile.
the girl has only one leg and phantom pain.

a little king reclines in a comfortable armchair.
his crown is a thick white plaster.
the little king has no hands on his arms.
only white bandaged stumps.

at his feet a girl missing her lower jaw.
nearby a kid with tubes in his nose.
when they remove his blanket you can see:
he has no legs.

messrs. bush & blair
I don't care
if these pictures are faked.
or if they were taken before the war
with people volunteering to be
slaughtered and maimed just for this purpose.

I don't care
if you admit these were your rockets or not.
in any case these are pictures
of those killed by the air raid on the Bagdad quarter of Ash-Sha'ab.

vocal music

burnt cooked flesh
severed throats screaming for water
human beings
destroyed down to their last nerve endings
from the detonations
from dust from smoke in the air
moving targets
shadows

BLAIR : "his thugs prepared to kill their own people ..."

mr blair has also seen these pictures

BLAIR : "his thugs prepared to kill their own people ..."

so he overreacts

BLAIR: "... the parading of prisoners of war;
and now, the release of those pictures of executed British soldiers!"

the widow contradicted mr blair's lie immediately
and in no uncertain terms.
she said: " the war ministry told me my husband was
a victim of friendly fire!"

but mr blair has nothing but a grin for this widow,
a grin which has provoked the most amazing fantasies in me
since the beginning of the war.

music

I imagine him
tied
to a dentist's chair.
I lean over him,
and pull a canine out of his jaw with rusty pliers.

then I change instruments.
I smash his grin with a crowbar.

what about bush?
just listen to him.
he savours every word.

"BUSH: You heard the Prime Minister eloquently talk
about the loss of British life.
They were murdered, unarmed soldiers executed.
I mean, that's a war crime.
But, you know, I'm not surprised.
This man, Saddam Hussein,
has tortured and brutalized his people for a long, long time.

We had reports the other day of a dissident
who had his tongue cut out.
His sons are brutal, brutal people.
They're barbaric in nature."

30. march

TV-PRESENTER : „ ... francis: dramatic stuff yesterday, dramatic stuff ...“

BUSH : “the war goes on, and we are winning!”

31. march

a man comes into a room.
it isn't really a room.
it was once a room.
now it's a bombsite.
people standing around.
a cameraman.
the guy holding the spotlights.
another the microphone.
a couple of men.
wailing women with black kerchiefs.

on the ground under a blanket lies a small human form.

the man - an iraqi with gray hair and beard.
he's screaming.
desperate.
he refuses to believe
this is his son lying in front of him
a smashed-in bullet-riddled corpse
gathered up in a blanket.
he refuses to believe
that his child is
"just dirt in the ground"
as tom waits sings.
he refuses to admit
that these bodily remains
will soon be placed in a coffin
and taken away.

after receiving a sedative injection
- a mixture of extasy and existential speechlessness -
the man stands there
while the drugs work through his brain,
catapulting him into another sphere of reality:
into the world of angels, garish colours, music.

and he says:
"take it away. get rid of it!
I want to lie down here for awhile!"

sound
he falls asleep.
in his dream he holds a bouquet of roses in his hand.
he marches in the direction of the invading troops.
he hands them the bouquet.

and the dynamite belt
which he has brought as a second offering
sends him and four or five american soldiers
into a state of rapture.
an exalted dance in the disco
known as "desert shadow".

and for this act -
as is announced by the great propaganda machine -
he will be given two posthumous medals
by mr saddam hussein himself

and with this act
he creates the justification
for soldiers shooting at unarmed civilians.

MODERATOR : "today in an najaf : a tragedy ...

shots

SOLDAT : "stay back! back off!"

REPORTERIN : "this afternoon soldiers fired in the passenger cabin,
then discovered 13 iraqi women and children inside. 7 were dead, 2 were injured,
4 others unharmed!"

03. april

camp david.
diplomatic dancing.

just fabulous, messrs bush & blair.
how they manage to put on their humanity masks
and go before the cameras of the propaganda networks.
bush as lay preacher.
blair as hospital nurse.

REPORTER : „a family of farmers has just been brought in.
the doctors couldn't say whether the father was survive his severe wounds
caused by shrapnels ..."

they're doing their jobs
for the welfare of their patients

REPORTER : "his daughter was already dead."

starting with the liver,
followed by a market place. legs. eyes. a maternity ward.

REPORTER : "his son was still in a critical condition fighting for his young life.
an the bed beside him his mother was fighting back her tears"

vocal music

REPORTER : "US marines in iraq burrying the body of a 6 year old boy
his head facing mekka according to moslem tradition"

AN ARAB cries

and now on to the front.

war sounds.

MOHAMMAD AL SAHAF : "they are stupid! and they will never succeed!
they are criminals. and they are killers!"

REPORTER : "once again this fight has been taken into the heart of bagdad.
we are not on the outskirts not ion greater bagdad this is it.
this is bagdad, this is what these guys came here for."

08. april 2003

another surgical strike.

vocal music

while the other networks
react by being either highly impressed or horrified
by the four bunker-penetrating american precision bombs
dropped on a block of flats in the al mansur quarter-
bombs which transform a tall building into a crater -
CNN broadcasts pictures of a huge food distribution action.

PRESSCONFERENCE / RUMSFELD :
QUESTION: "why do you think saddam hussein has not used
chemical or biological weapons "

RUMSFELD: "don't know!"

09. april

it's plunder day.
day of execution for a statue of saddam.
according to the propaganda-machine.

BUSH : "one thing is certain : saddam hussein is no longer in power!"

applause

an iraqi gentleman rides the head of the statue through the streets.

but not one single picture for me.

finally one image attracts my attention.
a man with a dying child in his arms
storms into a hospital.
panic.
he screams.
he tries to get the doctors to attend to his child.
but the doctors are busy with other dying patients.
he has to go wait at the back of the queue.

10. april

since yesterday
nothing but the pulling down of the statue.

as well as -
so they tell me - :
a feverish hunt for the dictator.

the champion of freedom & his tonys
have worked well
in the interest of big business

and also of my pleasure.

but I have the feeling it's all over.
from now on : normal everyday life. pillaging. victory celebrations.

I won't get any more corpses or people dying of thirst.

POPE: „al termine di questa celebrazione
je vous salut chères pèlerins françaises “

11. april

today I´m closing my rear-*windows*
which look out onto the war theatre.

the last thing I see is a hospital.

a kid with both arms amputated.
victim of a brutal regime.

RUMSFELD : "It was a brutal regime"

this regime
seems to have cut off his arms single-handedly.

his name is ali abbas.

COMMENTATOR : "wars provoke 3 or 4 images you never forget in my experience.
and I think ali will always be a symbol for what this war in the end came to represent."

pulled out of rubble and pain
dragged before the cameras
finally placed on my richly-laid gourmet table
served up in a multi-course meal
and listed as a sweet
on the menu – under specialitès de la maison

a bomb destroys a block of flats.
a family is wiped out.
a 12-year old boy is saved -
brought back to life -

both arms are amputated
in a bagdad hospital
where there are neither painkillers nor anaesthetics
his skin is 60 percent burnt -
but:
his life must be saved!

this boy will become the icon of the war!

an image
which our hunger for great tragedy can sink its teeth into
like a killer mongrel

the cameraman visiting him in the hospital says:
"wave goodbye to us!"
and little ali waves
his bandaged white stump.

he tries a little smile with his lips

and fails.

BUSH: "And to the children who miss your Mom or Dad so much today,
you need to know, they love you, and that love will always be with you.
They were proud of you.
And you can be proud of them for the rest of your life!"

ali escaped with his life.

I imagine him travelling to florida
working as a ... "let's-feel-sorry-for-him-slave"
in one of those well-fed average american families-
allowed to contribute to their good conscience ...

until my interest in him is brutally reduced
because other showplaces
and other images are even more thrilling ...

nonetheless I´m toying with lascivious thoughts
about that body, that torso.

how will he piss?
with which hand will he shoo flies away?
with which hand will he jerk himself off?
with which finger will he touch a woman?
with which hand will he wipe away his own kid´s tears?
hold a weapon to his temple?
with which finger will he pull the trigger?

in my daydreams I imagine him
crawling around
on the floor.
I see him on a skateboard.
watch him desperately trying
to manoeuvre himself from a side street
onto the busy high street,
so he can throw himself under the wheels of a passing car.

he now lies in kuwait-city
under a wood and wire hospital frame
like a beetle under a magnifying glass.

gregor samsa from bagdad, I salute you!
I wave a quick goodbye,
needing my hands
to relieve my lust with
to translate your state of misery
directly into my joy and euphoria...

KOMMENTATOR : "it's just a handful of days since wellmeaning doctors said
it might be kinder, if ali died in that bagdad hospital.
they're not saying that now and he has hope of life
with new arms in a new iraq!"

tv-rustle
vocal music

my private show!

a war diary by krok & petschinka.

with andre jung and waltraud köttler.

sound direction: herta werner

directed by: petschinka

editor: peter klein

a production of the feature department of ORF 2003.

English translation: David Zane Mairowitz