

The Eyes Wide Open Film Series presents
Hotel Palestine
Killing the Witness



The Palestine Hotel was to be a safe space in Baghdad for members of the media who were capturing the essence of war in Iraq through various mediums to inform the people. The Pentagon was told their location coordinates, and the journalists felt secure in the promise that the firing would not be targeted towards their site. But on April 8th, a U.S. tank aimed and fired at the floor where José Couso was set up with his camera. The U.S. government continues to tell conflicted stories as to what happened that day.

Hotel Palestine: Killing the Witness exposes the truth behind an attack on a media-filled hotel in Iraq. The film was produced by José Couso's network, Telecinco, and broadcast on Spanish TV. It includes interviews with numerous journalists who were inside the Palestine Hotel, the AP reporter embedded with US forces at the time of the attack as well as the US tank commander who pulled the trigger.

Produced by Telecinco Spain
Official site: www.josecouso.info

Additional Resources

April 8 2003: A Dark Day for Journalism

Tareq Ayyoub - Al Jazeera journalist killed during a US air-strike on their offices in Baghdad

Taras Protsiuk - Ukrainian journalist for Reuters killed in the attack on the Hotel Palestine in Baghdad

José Couso - Camera operator for Spanish television Telecinco killed in the attack on the Hotel Palestine in Baghdad.

The Case of José Couso

March 2005: the Zapatero government awarded Couso the "Gold Medal for Professional Merit" and went on record formally condemning the attack on the Hotel Palestine.

October 2005: a Spanish judge ordered an international arrest warrant for the purpose of extradition against the 3 US soldiers accused of the murder of cameraman José Couso on April 8, 2003 in the Hotel Palestine, in response to the suit brought against these soldiers by José's family.

February 2006: The U.S. Government refused the extradition order.

March 2006: The Spanish High Court archived the case, deciding that the attack on the Hotel Palestine was the result of an "act of war," against an "erroneously identified enemy."

Statistics on Journalists Killed in Iraq

From the Reporters Without Borders report:

Slaughter in Iraq: 20 March 2003 – 20 March 2006

» www.rsf.org/special_iraq_en.php3

- 86 journalists or media assistants have been killed in Iraq since March 20 2003.
- During 20 years of war in Vietnam 63 journalists were killed.
- 77% of those killed have been of Iraqi nationality.
- Since August 2005, all media professionals killed in Iraq have been of Iraqi nationality.
- Only 14% of the journalists killed were from coalition member countries.
- The U.S. Military is directly responsible for 12% of the case. In 53% of the case, those responsible are unidentified.
- In 55% of the case, the victims were deliberately targeted.

Articles

Shooting the Messenger by Jeremy Scahill

"One of the most powerful executives in the cable news business, CNN's Eason Jordan, was brought down after he spoke out of school during a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum in January. In a rare moment of candor, Jordan reportedly said that the US military had targeted a dozen journalists who had been killed in Iraq."

» www.thenation.com/doc/20050307/scahill

Special thanks to Linux Club for their hospitality.