



P.O.V.'s "THE JUDGE AND THE GENERAL"

By Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco

Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2008 at 10 p.m. on PBS (Check local listings)

Filmmakers' Statement

We had both wanted for many years to explore in a documentary what happened in Chile after General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the democratically elected Socialist President Salvador Allende in 1973. Patricio is Chilean and lived through it all. Elizabeth helped make a film in Chile in the early 70's and has been haunted ever since by what happened there. She brought to **The Judge and the General** years of work as a print and television foreign correspondent. Patricio, a producer and musician, brought an insider's view of the *matices*, the different shades of inference and doubt at work in a place like Chile.

Elizabeth was especially interested in understanding the phenomenon of "the Good German," the conscientious person of high ideals who goes along with state terror because it offers safety and order in a time of chaos. Patricio was driven to explore more deeply the nature of hope. Faced with state terror, how did Chileans from so many different backgrounds dare to hope and act as if someday justice would return?

We had first worked together in Chile in early 2000, producing reports for *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. Later, when we separately met Judge Juan Guzmán, we each realized his was the story we had been waiting to tell. He had been appointed by judicial lottery to investigate the first criminal charges filed against Pinochet in Chile in 1998. (Judges there investigate, as well as try, cases.)

Because Guzmán was politically conservative and had welcomed the 1973 Pinochet coup, human rights lawyers and victims' families feared he would never seriously investigate the alleged crimes of the general he had supported. Those skeptics had often risked their own lives gathering evidence during the Pinochet years in hope of eventually bringing torturers and murderers to trial. Why should they trust a Johnny-come-lately? There was little basis for hope that Guzmán might change.

By the end of **The Judge and the General**, viewers will know whether the skeptics were right or wrong. The documentary is a detective story told by Guzmán and his witnesses, focusing on two specific crimes. As a *NewsHour* correspondent, Elizabeth was used to leading viewers through the labyrinth of a complex story with a voice-over narration, but here the main characters tell the tale. Our toughest job in editing was sticking with this mode of story-telling and keeping the present in the forefront while also flashing back to the past to explore the context of the crimes.

At our sides as we solved creative dilemmas were executive producer Dick Pearce, a documentary and feature filmmaker (*Hearts and Minds, Country, The Long Walk Home, Leap of Faith*), who also had experience in Chile and continually urged us craft a film which spoke to the heart as well as the head, and editor Blair Gershkow, who argued for the primacy of suspenseful story-telling every step of the way.

As Guzmán travels ever deeper into what he calls the “abyss” of the past, he benefits from evidence gathered, *as the crimes were occurring*, by victims’ relatives, journalists and human rights lawyers. The hope implicit in their determination to gather every available shred of evidence to lay the groundwork for future trials is a defining moment in the worldwide human rights movement and stands in direct contrast to the actions of those who went along with – or even aided – the repression, including Judge Guzmán. We believe his journey — as he uncovers long-buried truths from the past and confronts his own role in the tragedy — holds meaning for us all at a time when terror, torture, rendition and secret prisons, all part of the Chilean experience, make news in the United States most every day.

— Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco, Producers/Directors

