



**Critical Acclaim For
P.O.V.'s "MY COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY"**

By Laura Poitras

"Laura Poitras has seen deeper into the tragedy of Iraq than any other filmmaker. She has created an epic story of ordinary life in extraordinary times. It is hard to imagine there will be a better film about this war."

— **George Packer, *The New Yorker***

"Without comment but with unusual sensitivity, the director, Laura Poitras, exposes the emotional toll of occupation on Iraqis and United States soldiers alike . . ."

— **Jeannette Catsoulis, *The New York Times***

"[Poitras'] eye is a compassionate one, and never censorious. . . . *My Country, My Country* . . . supplemented with a truly haunting and often beautiful music score by singer-songwriter Kadhum al-Safer, is a tragedy that everyone should bear witness to."

— **Verne Gay, *Newsday***

". . . important to see, this compassionate documentary tracks the considerable travails of Iraqis living under U.S. occupation."

— **Elizabeth Weitzman, *New York Daily News***

"Laura Poitras (*Flag Wars*) comes up with a still-timely, quietly hard-hitting look at the Iraqi situation . . . focusing on the lead-up to and outcome of the Jan. 30, 2005, Iraq election. . . . and makes broader points on current U.S. foreign policy."

— **Derek Elley, *Variety***

"Using an unpretentious cinema vérité approach . . . Poitras interweaves her plot lines into a cohesive and fascinating whole. . . . *My Country, My Country* has a powerful truthfulness that should make it stand out amid the probable profusion of documentaries to come about the war . . ."

— **Frank Scheck, *The Hollywood Reporter***

"Compelling While it won't be a hit at the White House, the film is also not an antiwar polemic. . . . Perhaps the most important aspect of the film is its reminder that those who struggle under occupation are much like ourselves: patriotic . . . , committed to their neighbors and trying to live in peace with family members."

— **Dave Shiflett, *Bloomberg News***

"The film shows us a country struggling with the formidable task of democratization, the everyday cultural collisions between Americans, and the constant perils and almost willful dysfunction of post-invasion Iraq. Many of these movements are moving and revelatory . . ."

— **Desson Thomson, *The Washington Post***

"A great documentary. . . . Poitras' film needs no narration and has none; it is, in effect, a series of self-contained scenes that take us not just into Riyadh's world but provide glimpses of the U.S. presence, which comes off as impossibly well-meaning in a violence-torn chaotic world."

— **Paul Brownfield, *Los Angeles Times***

"[Laura Poitras] traffics in intimacy where most other documentarians parse policy, and with *My Country, My Country* she produces something close to a small masterpiece."

— **Sam Allis, *Boston Globe***

“Indispensable, heartbreaking, and ferociously wise. Time and again, Poitras manages to be where platoons of U.S. telejournalists were afraid to go . . .”

— **Michael Atkinson, *The Village Voice***

“An important picture. . . . [Poitras] gives us a memorable portrait of a nation's growing pains.”

— **Michael Wilmington, *Chicago Tribune***

“The film delivers powerful images of a country mired in chaos. . . . Poitras withholds comment, but her film is charged nonetheless with images of a wary populace and weary American soldiers.”

— **Glenn Whipp, *Los Angeles Daily News***

“Elections can make for great documentaries, as they examine the mechanics of democracy, campaign as theater, a candidate's family, the issues at stake, all capped by the tally for a finale.

Shooting solo in Iraq, Laura Poitras follows an Iraqi Islamic Party candidate to reveal the grinding gears of regime change.”

— **Bill Stamets, *Chicago Sun-Times***

“There have been plenty of documentaries lately about the conflict in Iraq, but none that gets us inside the heads of everyday Iraqis as clearly as this one.”

— **John Monaghan, *Detroit Free Press***

“Poitras' *My Country, My Country* chronicles events leading to the January 2005 Iraq elections with such breadth and detail that it almost feels as if they're being revealed for the first time.”

— **Gene Seymour, *Newsday***

“While it seems every non-fiction filmmaker has something to say about the current state of affairs in Iraq, Laura Poitras' documentary goes beyond the politics and into the personal. . . . Through the struggles of Dr. Riyadh, *My Country My Country* offers an intimate, and at the same time widely illuminating, look at modern Iraq and the affects of U.S. occupation.”

— **Filmmaker Magazine**

“The documentary of the [Edinburgh] festival is *My Country, My Country*. . . . Iraq is now a subject so burnt up in polemic that it is like cool, clear water to step inside Iraqi homes and hear ordinary Iraqis talking about their post-traumatic stress society.”

— **Johann Hari, *The Independent***

“Intimate, nuanced, complex and devastating. . . . Witness the film's continual sense of discovery, its endless unfolding of emotional complications and Poitras's near-miraculous conjuring of a whole story out of six months' chaos. What you see is a remarkable filmmaking achievement — and an indispensable record of one man's war.”

— **Stuart Klawans, *The Nation***

“Eloquent and keenly observant, the film captures a period of palpable anxiety over the fledgling nation's potential that still seems preferable to today's ravaged reality.”

— **Nicolas Rapold, *New York Sun***

“Exhilarating and frightening, a cautionary tale about our ignorance of Arab culture and at the same time a testament to the powerful attractive pull of democracy. Kudos to director Laura Poitras for . . . getting close enough to the Iraqis to capture their daily lives . . .”

— **Christian Toto, *Washington Times***

“In 90 captivating minutes, Laura Poitras' extraordinary documentary gives you a greater understanding of the situation in Iraq than you'd get from 100 hours of Fox News or CNN.”

— **Jeff Shannon, *Seattle Times***

“When Riyadh's family jokes about the purple stain that marks them as resistance targets after they vote, the black humor speaks volumes about them as individuals, as Sunnis and as Iraqis with a dream of a better way. GRADE: A-“

— **Sean Axmaker, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer***

“A rare look at the historic 2005 Iraqi elections through the eyes of a politically active Iraqi doctor.”

— **Joanne Weintraub, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel***

“Poitras has created a stark portrait of Iraqi life. . . . Some of the footage is astounding.”

— **Andrew Ryan, *Toronto Globe and Mail***

“The secret weapon of *My Country, My Country* is something that never occurred to Michael Moore. This documentary of life in Iraq has no commentary whatsoever. “

— **Robert Horton, *The Herald*** (Everett, Wash.)

“Spellbinding.”

— **Sam Adams, *Philadelphia City Paper***

“The director’s unobtrusive technique – she worked without a crew, handling film and sound herself – pays off with powerfully revealing footage. . . . shows a lot more than all the ‘embedded’ documentaries and news coverage . . .”

— **Mark Jenkins, *Washington City Paper***

“*My Country, My Country* provides answers to Iraqis' questions about the U.S. occupation.

— **Raleigh News and Observer**

“This documentary about the Iraq war disregards the strict black-and-white terms that skew our national debate. . . . If you go in with strong opinions about the war (either way), you'll likely see enough to reinforce your beliefs. But go in with an open mind, and you might learn something.”

— **Santa Fe New Mexican**

“The genius of filmmaker Laura Poitras' approach . . . [is] telling the story largely through the eyes and experience of Dr. Riyadh. . . . He gives *My Country, My Country* and the elections the human dimension that is so often missing in news reports.

— **Cliff Vaughn, *Ethicsdaily.com***