



**P.O.V.'s "My Country, My Country"**  
by Laura Poitras

Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2006 at 9 p.m. on PBS (Check local listings)

**Filmmaker's Statement**

This film was motivated by a sense of despair about the contradictions of the U.S. occupation of Iraq and its project to implement democracy in the Middle East through the use of military force. I wanted to understand these contradictions from the perspective of the people living them, on the ground.

I spent eight months in Iraq, from June 2004 to February 2005. I worked alone in the field, operating camera and sound. I met Dr. Riyadh, a medical doctor and Sunni political candidate, in July 2004 at Abu Ghraib Prison while he was conducting an inspection of the prison. I knew immediately that this man's story would capture something larger about the meaning and implications of this war.

Although *My Country, My Country* focuses on the January 2005 elections, it is a broader story about U.S. foreign policy post-9/11. The use of preemptive military force and the project to implement democracy in the Middle East mark a radical shift in U.S. and world politics. I was compelled to try and document some piece of this shift. These elections were the first held following the U.S. invasion, and thus are in some ways a testing ground for this new era.

I took the risk to tell this story because I believed there was a story that wasn't, and won't, be told. We read daily accounts of suicide bombings, U.S. military strikes, etc., and yet these stories remain abstract events that don't connect to human beings. The U.S. media covers the death of each U.S. citizen, yet there are no accurate reports on Iraqi civilian deaths. The U.S. politics on the left and right debate the war, and yet the debate rarely takes into account the lives of Iraqis or the U.S. soldiers whose lives are on the line. I believe that a story about a man fighting for democracy while living under U.S. occupation will contribute something new to my country's understanding of this war.

- Laura Poitras

