

## INDEPENDENT INTERVENTION - review

INDEPENDENT INTERVENTION opens with a warning: "This film shows images of war." Portland based Norwegian director Tonje Hessen Shei contrasts the U.S. mainstream media coverage of the Iraq Invasion with Independent media reporting. This taut, well-paced documentary, edited by David Bee, explores how the corporate-controlled mass media in our country censor information, at the cost of the democratic process.

Using TV news footage, her own spare narration, and interviews with the likes of Amy Goodwin, Noam Chomsky, veteran war reporter and writer Chris Hedges, Howard Zinn, Dahr Jamail, and others -- Shei advances an impassioned clarion call for truth in media about the Iraq Invasion.

Only 5.5 corporations own 80% of the media. The viewpoints among our media outlets are uniform, with the same experts making their rounds. Amy Goodwin says that media monopoly and militarism go together; and that "this unholy relationship has to be challenged." Americans are watching a very different war than the rest of the world because of the media's clear bias toward the administration and the censorship that exists.

Media outlets are competing for viewers, so they combine entertainment and news, according to Danny Schechter of Globalvision. War is reported with enthusiasm as if it's a sporting event. News is a merger of showbiz and newsbiz. Schechter says entertainment values have infiltrated into news presentations with high production values, fast paced graphics, and music that attempt to grab people's attention. He calls it "mili-tainment" - war as entertainment. Graphics make war look more like a video game, disassociating it from the reality of what war really is. He says that instead of the media bearing witness, it is a watchdog for power, and has become a "lapdog." When talking about military strategy Tommy Franks referred to the media as "the fourth front" of the war.

According to Chris Hedges "we have lost touch with the essence of war." Amy Goodwin says that our media sanitize war, when what we should really be seeing 24 hours a day is the reality of children, women, old men, and men injured and killed. Dahr Jamail reports from the ground in Iraq and brings us heartbreaking footage of the horror that the Iraqi civilians face every day.

Independent Intervention is Shei's first feature documentary; when I interviewed her a few weeks ago for the United Nations Association Film Festival she said that the film started as her master's thesis and evolved as she immersed herself into the issues. One of Shei's points is that America believes what they believe because they don't have access to any other information. In a speech, Bill Moyers

says that democracy cannot exist without an informed public, and the media is not informing them. Shei says we need to fight for our access to knowledge for a healthy democracy.

The film ends with hope and ways for citizens to pursue the truth through independent media. INDEPENDENT INTERVENTION is a valiant and tneacious treatise by a talented filmmaker in the tradition of Michael Moore and Robert Greenwald. When people see it, it may well contribute to turning the tide and stopping the slaughter in Iraq.

For more information and to purchase the DVD, go to [www.independentintervention.com](http://www.independentintervention.com). For Movie Magazine, this is Joan Widdifield.

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