

FRONTLINE/WORLD INVESTIGATES A CHARGE OF MASS MURDER AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN— THE CASE OF 8,000 MISSING KURDS

Tuesday, January 24, 2006, at 9 P.M. ET on PBS
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FRONTLINE/World returns with three new “stories from a small planet”:

Saddam’s Road to Hell

Iraq: As Saddam Hussein stands trial for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, veteran filmmaker Gwynne Roberts undertakes a dangerous journey across a country sliding into civil war to investigate charges that the deposed dictator ordered the abduction and execution of 8,000 Kurdish men and boys during the early years of his rule. In *Saddam’s Road to Hell*, airing Tuesday, January 24, 2006, at 9 P.M. ET on PBS (check local listings), Roberts follows a team of investigators led by Dr. Mohammed Ihsan, Kurdish minister for human rights, in a search for the forensic evidence that will clearly establish Saddam’s guilt. Saddam’s trial resumes in Baghdad on January 24.

“The abduction of the Barzani Kurds is particularly significant, because it marks the point when Saddam’s regime moved from isolated acts of brutality to mass murder,” says FRONTLINE/World reporter Roberts, who has reported on the plight of the Kurds for more than 25 years.

The journey begins deep in the Kurdish mountains of northern Iraq, where Roberts meets with a group of women draped in black, still in mourning for their lost husbands and sons who disappeared in 1983. Holding up haunting photos of their missing relatives, these women still hope that their loved ones may one day return to them.

Dr. Ihsan’s search for the missing Kurds has been authorized by Masoud Barzani, now president of the Kurdish region and leader of the powerful Barzani clan. He says he lost 37 members of his own family. The attack on the Barzani Kurds followed his decision to side with Iran against Iraq in their war in the early 1980s. Saddam never forgave Barzani and unleashed a campaign of terror against Kurdish civilians.

Roberts and the team of investigators set off from the Kurdish capital of Arbil on an 800-mile journey that takes them through the volatile Sunni Triangle to Baghdad and beyond, venturing into the forbidding southern desert along the border with Saudi Arabia. From the outset, even in the relatively stable and prosperous Kurdish north, it’s a frightening odyssey, as a suicide bomber kills 70 people and injures 120 in a

crowd of young Kurds waiting to join the police force.

In Baghdad, in an insurgent stronghold, Dr. Ihsan tracks down vital evidence of Saddam's involvement in the case of the missing Barzanis. He visits a shop which sells black-market government documents looted from the former intelligence services after Saddam's regime was toppled. Here, Dr. Ihsan learns, anything is available for a price.

Acting on information he has uncovered, Dr. Ihsan travels the desert to a remote Sunni town, Busayyah, looking for eyewitnesses who might lead him to mass, unmarked graves where the missing Kurds may be buried. In the more than 20 years since their disappearance, not a single body has been found. Dr. Ihsan meets with Sunni tribal leaders, offering them lucrative rewards for their assistance. Several bounty hunters come forward and lead the team into a vast and trackless expanse of desert. Using bulldozers, the investigators search for days, but turn up nothing.

But five months later, Dr. Ihsan returns when his Shi'a contacts finally locate three mass graves just a few hundred feet from where he had previously searched. In a powerful and disturbing scene, Dr. Ihsan and his associates unearth bones, fragments of clothing, identification cards and the blindfolded skulls of 500 Kurds, all of them believed to be Barzanis. This will all be entered as evidence in the trial of Saddam Hussein. It is a legacy of cruelty that Dr. Ihsan thinks the Iraqi Kurds will never be able to forgive: "I personally don't think there is any hope that we can live together."

Jewel of the Amazon

Brazil: The world was shocked by news of a massacre in the Amazon rain forest: 29 miners murdered at an illegal diamond mine deep in the jungle on a protected Indian reserve. "From below I could hear the screams," a miner who survived the massacre tells FRONTLINE/World reporter Mariana van Zeller. "Miners crying, miners screaming, but nothing worked. They were all killed."

Traveling into the jungle with Brazilian federal police, van Zeller meets the indigenous Cinta Larga tribe, who stand accused of the crime. These Indians first encountered white men and their way of life in the late 1960s. They now find themselves occupying land that sits on a vast diamond deposit—possibly the richest in the world. In a rare interview with tribal chiefs, van Zeller learns that the Cinta Larga have come to embrace diamonds as the tribe's best chance for survival. "If we aren't able to mine, it will be bad for us," says chief João Bravo. "Who's going to bring things to the community?"

The conflict between the Indians and wildcat miners is a "war of the miserables," according to the federal chief of police in charge of maintaining peace in the region. Meanwhile, the Brazilian government is considering opening the vast diamond fields to multinational mining companies.

Calcutta Calling

India: At the end of the broadcast, FRONTLINE/World highlights *Calcutta Calling*, a funny and poignant story streamed on the Web site. It's the latest episode of *Rough Cut*, the groundbreaking series of Web-exclusive videos. Reporter Sasha Khokha joins three teenagers, born in Calcutta but adopted and raised by three different American families in Minnesota, as they travel back to the country of their birth for the first time. Confused and often uncomfortable with the poverty and beggars they encounter, the girls have to confront their conflicted, dual identities. "I wanted absolutely nothing to do with this trip at all," says Anisha Pitzenberger, "but this is probably one of the best things that's ever happened in my life."

Stephen Talbot is series editor for FRONTLINE/World. Sharon Tiller is FRONTLINE/World series executive director.

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