

CHE GUEVARA THE BODY AND THE LEGEND

The post-mortem life of Che Guevara: his elusive remains, at large for thirty years; and the creation of a myth. A story told through the critical and personal perspective of those who “touched” some of history’s most famous remains.

Running time	52 min.
Authors	Raffaele Brunetti, Stefano Missio
Editor	Ilaria de Laurentiis
Photographer	Gianni Maitan
Music	Carlo Crivelli
Filming locations	Argentina - Bolivia - Italy – France
Format	Digital Betacam 16:9
Production	B&B Film – Rome
In co-production	ZDF ARTE YLE RTE
In association	SBS SVT HISTORY CH RTSI ERT VRT LTV ETV

developed and produced with the support of the MEDIA Plus programme

The Cold War ended and the Soviet Union was dissolved. Only then was it possible to look beyond the myth of Che Guevara and begin to search for his “ghostly” remains, gone missing for some 30 years. From 1967 (the year of Che’s execution) to 1997 (the year his body was recovered) international political events kept the remains of Ernesto Che Guevara hidden from the world, making the recovery of history’s most famous revolutionary all but impossible.

Thanks to the accounts of those people who came into direct contact with Guevara’s corpse, the documentary reveals the last hours of Ernesto Guevara, the reasons that led to the disappearance and later to the recovery of his remains and the role that the vanished corpse with its amputated hands played in the creation of the legend of “Che”. The film will reveal how during the Cold War the agreements for a “peaceful



coexistence” between United States and Soviet Union led to Che Guevara leaving Cuba, his death and the disappearance of his corpse. Corpse which could only be searched for after the fall of the Soviet Union, its bureaucracy and imperialism having been opposed by Che during the final period of his life.

The grandiose funeral processions in Cuba, which after 30 years was able finally to celebrate the re-possession of their national hero's remains, were not enough to put Che's legacy to rest.

Forty years after his death and ten after the discovery of his remains, the wounds caused by the execution of Ernesto Guevara have yet to heal. The peasants of Vallegrande continue their devotion to “Saint Ernesto”, those same Bolivian soldiers who fought against him continue to claim official recognition for themselves and their fallen comrades, and Che's icon has returned to haunt protest marches. Today, -this image is the twenty-first century's best-selling icon. Yet his myth has lost nothing of its force.

FILM STRUCTURE AND STYLE

The film develops on three main levels:

-The testimony of three people living today each of whom had a pivotal role in Che's death, although not in any official capacity. They recall the events attesting to the power that Guevara continued to hold after his death and his burial in Cuba.

- Our exclusive filming of the research, discovery and reassembling of Guevara's remains in Bolivia and the funeral in Cuba, shot from 1995 to 1997.

- Exclusive archival material and newsreels with original commentaries during the years between 1967 and 1997.

The archival material and the filming by B&B Film in Bolivia, have a strong impact and a great historical significance. Several important sequences will be shown for the first time. The characters unfold the events with their personal and emotional accounts. Despite their narration - at times exclusive versions - of important events, their mode of storytelling will be informal; the film will leave space for their personal ideas and reactions. The narration is left principally to the testimony of the main characters, it will be completed by both a narrator and by the voices of journalists in archive newsreels. The film has a chronological story line: the 30 years that separate the day on which Guevara died (8 October 1967) with the research, finding and reconstruction of the remains, up to his funeral in Cuba on October 1997, and on up to the present day.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Alejandro Incharregui

the Argentinean forensic anthropologist and head of the excavations for the recovery of the body, which lasted over two years, who slept next to Ernesto Guevara's remains throughout the entire excavation of his remains and reconstruction of his skeleton. Incharregui, who has devoted his entire life to the retrieval of the bodies of the victims of political 'disappearances', was caught in a difficult position between the Bolivian and Cuban authorities and the peasants devoted to their "Saint Ernesto".

Robert Savio

Italy's Latin American public television correspondent, who during the 70's obtained in daring circumstances the only interview ever granted from the man who executed Che Guevara. Savio shows the interview and other controversial material in a documentary that was never broadcast, but which cost him his job. This includes evidence that both the United States and the Soviet Union had reasons for wanting rid of Che Guevara, reasons which Soviet Union Premier Alexey Kosygin communicated to Fidel Castro when he visited Cuba after meeting US President Lyndon Johnson.

Benigno

One of three of Che's companions who survived the mission in Bolivia. Fidel Castro's head guard until he broke with the Castro regime and requested political asylum in France in 1996, Benigno is one of the heroes of the Cuban revolution. He recalls the last moments of Che's struggle and life and his personal relationship with Che's myth. His account has been recorded in his modest Paris home and while moving through the streets of the city centre among the shops that sell Che's image reproduced on nearly everything.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

B&B Film is a dynamic and growing Italian production house based in Rome. The company develops and produces documentaries and documentary series for international television through co-production and broadcast agreements, ranging from social issues, to history, to creative themes, and working with quality European partners such as NDR, Arte, YLE and worldwide broadcasters such as National Geographic.

Since 1988 B&B has produced documentaries and entertainment programs for major foreign broadcasters such as the BBC, NHK, the History Channel, Canal+, Arte and ARD. B&B Film's documentaries have been aired in more than 150 countries and received the Award for Creative Excellence at the 2002 US Film & Video Festival and the 2005 "Globo d'Oro", given by 500 foreign media correspondents to the best Italian documentary. In 2006 B&B Film received Slate Funding from the MEDIA PLUS Programme.



LIST OF PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Raffaele Brunetti

Co-Author

Raffaele Brunetti is a documentary director and producer. He has been producing and directing documentaries since 1987. His most recent work has involved producing and directing creative and historical documentaries in co-production with European broadcasters.

He received the Award for Creative Excellence at the 2002 U.S. International Film and Video Festival. His film *Mitumba*, produced with NDR Arte and YLE, has received several awards including the "Globo d'Oro" in 2005 given by 500 foreign media correspondents in Italy. It also won the Napoli Film Festival in 2006. *Che Guevara the Body and the Legend*, one of his most recent films, was co-produced in partnership with 11 broadcasters and has had an excellent reception in all the countries where it has been shown. His latest film, 'Hair India', is in competition for the "IDFA Joris Ivens Award for Feature-Length Documentaries" as well for the international competition in the 'Festival dei Popoli' of Florence.

Since 1993 he has been a member of the Foreign Press Association in Italy, EDN (European Documentary Network), and Doc/it (Organization of Italian Documentary Makers) where he has been a member of the board of directors since 2005. Furthermore he is the director of the Italian Doc Screenings.

Stefano Missio

Co-Author

He graduated in cinematography at the Sorbonne in Paris and at the Italian National School of Cinema (CSC).

He has made various documentaries among which *When Italy was not a poor country* (in competition at IDFA 1997, presented at the Torino Film Festival in 1997 and Marseilles in 1999) and *Succes à l'italienne* produced by Fandango for ARTE and broadcast in Italy by Tele+. Since 2000 he has directed the *ildocumentario.it* website on documentary cinema in Italy.

Gianni Maitan

Director of Photography

Gianni Maitan has been working since 1988 with Italian and foreign broadcasters and production companies such as ABC, ARD, the BBC, Channel 4, CNN, France 2, History Channel, Mediaset, Fuji TV, National Geographic, NDR, arte, YLE, Spiegel TV, NHK, Orbit, WRD, ZDF, RTL, Reuters, RAI.

He has been director of photography for acclaimed and successful documentaries such as *War Secrets*, *Italy's forgotten invasion* (NGCI) and *MITUMBA, the second-hand road* (NDRarte, YLE). He filmed several documentaries focusing on National Parks and gardens, such as *Giardini*, *Hanbury* and *Ninfa* for the BBC and National Geographic.

Ilaria de Laurentiis

Film Editor

Ilaria de Laurentiis graduated from the Italian National School of Cinema (CSC) with a degree in editing in 1987. She has worked with internationally acclaimed Italian directors like Marco Bellocchio, Marco Risi, Pupi Avati and Mario Martone. Her editing credits include documentaries broadcast by RAI, Arte, National Geographic, NHK, Tele+, NDR, Yle and Planet. From 1997 to 2000 she has been Head of Promotion for the cinema channels Cine Cinema and Cine Classic for the Tele+ platform.

Carlo Crivelli

Music Composer

Soundtrack author and fine composer who favours contemporary music, Carlo Crivelli makes his cinema appearance in 1986 with the soundtrack of Marco Bellocchio's *Diavolo in Corpo*.

Many to follow among which *Sogni infranti* (1995), *La balia* and *Le affinità elettive* (1996) by Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, *Principe di Homburg* (1997), *Del Perduto amore* (1998) *La Balia - The Nanny - English title -* (1999), *Un viaggio chiamato amore* (2002) by Michele Placido.

In 2002 he founds *L'orchestra città aperta (Open City Orchestra)* which is especially committed to making music for cinema films.

In 2006 he is the author of the soundtracks for *Kan shang qu hen mei* by the Chinese director Yuan Zhang and winner at the Berlin international Film Festival for the C.I.C.A.E. Award.

