



Association of Venezuelans in Defense of Democracy
738 11121-82 Av. Edmonton, AB. Canada. T6G 0T4.

Email: avended@avended.org

Web: www.avended.org

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To: **Metro Cinema Society**

6-22 Stanley Milner Library
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB
T5J 2V5
Tel: 780.425.9212
Fax: 780.428.3509
Email: metro@metrocinema.org
Web: www.metrocinema.org

Subject: Edmontonians, please do not be poisoned by their lies

From May 7 to May 12, 2004 the film “The Revolution will not be Televised”¹ is going to be screened by your prestigious society at the Citadel Theatre. In the comments about the film on your website, you included a quote from Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez: “Don't be poisoned by their lies”. We are using this phrase as the starting subject of this communication, according to the opinion of many Venezuelans living in Edmonton; this statement should be applied to this motion picture.

This production may present only one point of view and still be considered a fair documentary, but when a film distorts the facts and selectively ignores the context to favour the position of a regime then it becomes just a simple piece of propaganda.

For your organisation, this film might represent only one of the many screenings offered each year to your spectators. However, for us, who grieve everyday for the hundreds of Venezuelans who have been wounded and the dozens who have been killed due to repression and political confrontation. This film represents an authentic motive of indignation, because it constitutes the main weapon of the Venezuelan government to disseminate internationally a manipulated and cynical version of the events that took place in our country from April 11 to 13, 2002.

This film is an accomplished edition of real events, ordered and constructed in a truculent manner, omitting several crucial facts of the political process that happened in Venezuela in April 2002. The main goal is to discredit the struggle of millions of Venezuelans for their democracy, threatened by the authoritarian project of President Hugo Chávez.

After months of study, the filmmakers Wolfgang Shalk (BBC of London studies) and Thaelman Urguelles have denounced the ethical violations committed by the Irish producers Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Brien during the production of the documentary, The

¹ Also known in other countries under the alternating titles “Chavez Inside the coup” or “Chavez-the film” with different editions and versions

Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Their research reveals evidence that compromises the impartiality, precision, veracity, editorial integrity and ideological independence of the documentary.

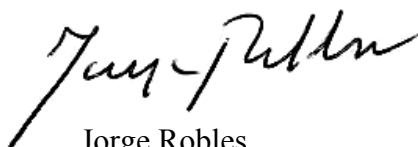
It is for this reason that we address your society very respectfully and very kindly request you to give us the opportunity to make a statement at the beginning of each screening, with the purpose of urging the audience to dig deeper and gather further information before reaching a conclusion about the events distorted in this film.

In the Appendix A you will find an extensive and comprehensive document that summarises the finding of the experts who analysed this production.

Sincerely,

AVENDED

Association of Venezuelans in Defense of the Democracy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorge Robles', written in a cursive style.

Jorge Robles

President

jrobles@avended.org

(780) 913 3543

APPENDIX A

X-RAYS OF A HUGE LIE

The film *“The Revolution will not be Televised”* is being divulged worldwide by the Venezuelan government in a very expensive publicity and misinformation campaign, with the main goal of discrediting the struggle of millions of Venezuelans for their democracy and their wellbeing which are threatened by the authoritarian project of President Hugo Chávez. There have been numerous experiences in world history resembling this massive deceit operation; still, it keeps its ability to misinform unwary and well-intentioned spectators.

Presented under different titles (*“The Revolution will not be Televised”*, *“Chávez Inside the Coup”* or *‘Chávez The Film’*) in film festivals, academic forums, cinemas and TV channels, the promoters of the film sell it as an informative research and author documentary, while it is actually an accomplished edition of real events, ordered and construed in a truculent manner in order to tell the story at the convenience of its client, which is no other than Hugo Chávez and his rich government. Under the pretense of depicting “historical events”, the film omits several facts that are essential to understand what really happened and is still happening in Venezuela. When exposed like in the film, the narration hinders the spectator from forming an independent opinion and, much on the contrary, leads him blindly along the only way the filmmakers are interested in.

Let’s just remember the efficient documentaries of Leni Riefenstahl to promote the Nazi project, the Soviet documentary cinema of the 20’s and other recent examples, to situate the vicious communications maneuver of this film, under the willing and uncritical scrutiny of film festivals, film critics, intellectuals, universities, and mass media.

Out of respect for your comprehension ability, and far from trying a similar manipulating operation, we will show you a selection of the most noticeable truth distortions present in the “documentary”. For the sake of clearness, we will divide the lies of the film in the five forms used by the forgers: **conceptual lies, lies due to manipulated edition, lies by omission, half lies and absolute lies.**

1. **Conceptual Lies.** The film tries to show two central theories: a) That there is a confrontation between a poor and mixed-blood majority, supported by president Chávez, and a rich and white minority, backed by the US government; b) That this white and rich minority carried out a coup, with the aid of the American government, on April 11, 2002, that was repudiated by the poor people, who reinstalled Chávez in office. These theories are based on two old and powerful myths used to manipulate consciences: *Chained Prometheus* (or, more recently, *Robin Hood*); and *David vs. Goliath* (or, more recently, the “poor countries” vs. “Yankee imperialism”)
 - To “prove” the racial and class conflict, the filmmakers used a simple method: from a massive opposition with a diverse racial, social, ethnical and cultural composition, further including a massive and diverse immigration, they only showed small and isolated groups of white and well dressed people.
 - Among a multitude of oral available statements, they only chose those that suited their twisted idea of a class struggle motorized by a privileged and reactionary segment. They took great care in hiding the opinion of the most important writers, artists, scientists, thinkers, jurists, and professionals of the country, as well as the presence of millions of women and

men of the working class in the opposition rallies, poor people who believed in Chávez and have been disappointed by his government. They did not show any open image of these rallies, the magnitude, peacefulness and creativity of which have astonished the world since last year.

- Regarding the participation of the US government in a “coup d’état”, the film simply presents testimonies of second and third order officers, omitting other statements and conducts of that government that would reorient the view of the film.
 - The film dedicates most of its footage and discussion to the coup thesis. All the aforementioned kinds of lies are present here; therefore, we will answer this thesis later by the unraveling of them.
2. **Lies due to Manipulated Edition.** The edition of the film is full of images and even complete scenes that have been changed in time and space, in order to narrate a different story than the one that actually happened. This is particularly important, because the film adopts a chronological narrative scheme, superposing titles with places, dates and even hours. There are so many of these distortions that it would be too long to describe them all; therefore, we will only refer to the most important and decisive misrepresentations contributing to the shaping of the final lie.
- **An opposition neighbor’s meeting held in June 2002 was edited as if it had happened in January 2002.** This distortion completely changed the sense of that meeting, conferring it an offensive character as opposed to the original defensive motivation. After the accusations and protests of the people that were depicted there, this detail was more or less corrected in the recent broadcast of the BBC, in a clear confession of the fact.
 - **This distortion of time is particularly atrocious in the sequences corresponding to April 11, 12, and 13.** The film irresponsibly alters the timing of events in order to build a foundation for its communicational project. For example, it situates the statement of a group of generals and admirals at 3 pm of April 11, when it really happened at 6:21 pm. The documentary says that Channel 8 was forcibly taken off the air a little after 3 pm, while this actually happened (voluntarily, as we will mention later) at 11 pm; and many other examples, that totally change the interpretation about what happened in Venezuela during those days.
 - **To show crowds of people, presumably belonging to the working classes, before the presidential palace on April 11, the film uses images of a rally that occurred on a different day** in a different city, where people are shown happily singing with children. In reality, on that day, government officials were actually quite busy aggressively calling on people to "defend the Revolution". Some scenes later, the film shows, for that same date, a clearly different stage platform erected in front of Miraflores.
 - **In the same segment, the narrator's voice is heard saying "... very early, the opposition rallied in Chuao..."**, but that text is edited with images corresponding to the rally in another part of the city, where crowds were effectively much more pugnacious than when it all began, although at no time were armed people seen anywhere among the opposition.
 - **In the case of the Llaguno Bridge, the distortion is coarse and conscious.** On April 11, the images of a journalistic team showing a group of President Chavez's supporters shooting from the bridge to the opposition rally became famous. In the film, images from an amateur video taken from a different angle than the one used by this journalistic team, were added. In this video, the bridge and the avenue underneath are completely empty, no persons or rally walking underneath. It has been demonstrated that the images of this amateur video were taken between 1:00 and 1:30 in the afternoon, when the opposition rally had not yet arrived near that location, while the images taken by the journalists were taken between 4:30 and 5:00 in the afternoon,

while the tragic events were indeed happening. In images captured by the same amateur video at 4:30, people can be seen running, falling dead and wounded in the same avenue, which was shown empty before. These images were used by the filmmakers in another segment... with a different purpose!

- **The worst manipulated edition is the “parallel edition” of the inauguration speech of Pedro Carmona (who took over the transition presidency for a few hours) and images of police repression against alleged Chávez supporters very close to the presidential palace.** The film tells us: "while Carmona pronounced his inauguration speech, two blocks away the police were beating and shooting the people..." There is even a "voice over" of Mr. Carmona on the repression images. The truth is that only small government-supporting groups gathered in the vicinity of the presidential palace on the afternoon of April 12 without displaying any violent behavior. The scenes of policemen dispersing unruly chavista crowds shown on the film happened no earlier than the morning of April 13. This disarrangement of dates and times leads to totally erroneous conclusions about what happened in Venezuela during those days.
3. **Lies by Omission.** When omitting several crucial facts of the political process that happened in Venezuela in April 2002, *“The Revolution will not be Televised”* creates a completely different story. Be your own judge. What would you think if a “research documentary” on a historic fact ignoring the following facts, that are essential to understand what happened in Caracas that day?
- **On April 11, between 3:45 and 5:27 pm, president Chávez linked all radio and TV transmissions to speak, while around Miraflores some 21 Venezuelans were being killed and more than 150 wounded.** These "cadenas", as the linking of signals is locally known, consist in forcing all open signal TV stations and all radio stations, AM and FM, to link to the government channel (Venezolana de Televisión, Channel 8) and broadcast the same content. The private TV stations decided to split the screen in two to show, simultaneously with the image of the President talking on one side, the tragic happenings on the other. The government promptly jammed the signals of the private stations. This crucial fact was considered needless to be included by the filmmakers.
 - **The filmmakers also omitted another important “cadena”, broadcasted at 2:15 pm on April 11. In it, General Lucas Rincón Bravo, the country's highest ranking military officer, surrounded by his Army Commanders, delivered a speech backing President Chávez.** At that moment, the colossal opposition rally was on its way to the presidential palace. Including this fact resulted inconvenient when trying to present the story of a military coup.
 - **At 3:20 in the early hours of April 12, the military high command, again led by General in Chief Lucas Rincón Bravo broadcast a statement on another radio and TV "cadena" in which he announced that "... (the) President was required to resign office, to which he agreed..."** This statement, of undeniable importance in the reconstruction of what really happened that day, was simply ignored in the film, because it contradicts the thesis that the president never resigned office. General Rincón is currently Secretary of Domestic Affairs of Chávez; therefore, he cannot be accused of being a “coup monger”.
4. **Half Lies.** The most frequently used resource in the whole film consists in exaggerating some aspects of a real fact in order to give them the appropriate bias or in taking a basically real fact and presenting it with words that completely change its meaning. To achieve this, the text of the narrating voice plays a very important role, one of the more skillfully build factors in this audiovisual farce.
- **At the end of the film, some titles “inform” us the destiny of some of the leading characters. Thus, the film tells us that “Pedro Carmona fled to Colombia and a little later**

appeared in Miami...” The truth is that Mr. Carmona was placed under arrest on April 13 and extensively questioned by the Venezuelan Congress some days later. Under subsequent house arrest, he requested asylum at the Embassy of Colombia, where he remained for several days until granted safe-conduct by the Venezuelan regime in May, to travel to Colombia, where he has stayed to this day. He did travel to Miami for a few days in August 2002, a brief visit for lecturing at a conference held at a college there. This is a quite different story than the one offered by the final titles of the film, where Carmona seems some kind of Osama Bin Laden, whose whereabouts no one knew and only appears suddenly in recordings.

- **Another final title says: "the dissident generals were expelled from the Army and most of them traveled abroad"**. Almost completely untrue. Only one of those generals traveled abroad and lives as a refugee in El Salvador. The remaining generals live in Venezuela, where they are openly opposing the government (exercising a constitutional right). The film omits that these generals were absolved of the accusation of coup d'état by the Supreme Court.
- **This film says that the president only has the chance to speak through the state- owned channel because private media do not broadcast his speeches.** The filmmakers are very careful to neglect that in the almost five years since Chávez has been in office, he has spoken in his compulsive “cadenas” for over 2000 hours! Only between January 1st and November 8, 2003, he has spoken 520 hours, an average of 1 hour and 40 minutes a day. Besides that, he has the state-owned channel that only broadcasts government favorable information and coarsely slanderous information on the opposition. Is there worldwide a president that daily talks this amount of time to his citizens, without leaving them the choice to hear other messages because all media are forced to broadcast the same content? In Venezuela, there is no one who comes even close to the media coverage that Hugo Chávez gets.
- **As a matter of fact, the referred disobedience of the generals – outraged by the massacre occurring near the presidential palace – were the seed of the crisis of authority that - hours later- led to Chávez' resignation and peaceful surrender to the military commanders, a most complex situation that the film simplifies and transforms into a classic Latin American "coup d'état"**.
- **When mentioning union leaders opposed to the government, the supposedly “coup mongers”, the announcing voice says: “... Pedro Carmona, president of the business association and Carlos Ortega, president of the CTV...” And what is the CTV, as a hint for non Venezuelans...?** It is the Venezuelan Labor Federation, the only and powerful union central of the country, something the film cannot make clear without telling that the working class unions oppose Chávez' “Revolution”.
- **During the events after April 11, the film mentions a deliberate absence of news on the side of the private mass media, which is not absolutely true.** The film further ignores that media and journalists were limited in their work by the harassment, threats and attacks suffered those days from aggressive Chávez supporting groups. All this is documented.

5. Absolute Lies.

- **Several times in the film it is said that on April 11, 2002, the state owned TV station was taken and that the broadcast signal was cut by the "coup mongers" and even shows the effect of a TV image interrupted by noise.** This is an absolute lie. All Venezuelans know that on the night of April 11, 2002, a military officer ended the broadcast and peacefully left the facilities. The doors of Channel 8 remained open and its facilities empty for almost an hour, until a group of reporters of a private TV station entered the place and showed all the studios, offices and technical centers totally deserted. Simultaneously, a group of officers of the

Miranda State Police (the Venezuelan state where Channel 8 is situated) arrived in order to protect the facilities and equipment.

- **The documentary's commentator refers to some tanks as "surrounding the presidential palace of Miraflores to pressure the president to resign from office";** while the images briefly show the armored vehicles. Actually, the presence of these armored vehicles on the streets was ordered by President Chávez himself, as part of the so-called "Ávila Plan", a contingency operation to be performed by military forces against the hundreds of thousands of civilians that had taken to the streets by that time. This fact is well documented. Chavez' order was not obeyed by most of the generals, and the column was ordered to return to where they came from; however, 3 of these vehicles went on to the presidential palace. Once arrived there, they were parked in front of the Palace to be used for its defense in case of attack. This is another coarse fact inversion, where such a crucial and newsworthy fact as the recording of the radial communication between Chávez and several generals, when he ordered the Ávila Plan, was blatantly omitted.

Some questions.-

- Did you know that the Venezuelan government had ten thousand VHS copies of this independent film made in Cuba and these copies are given away at Venezuelan consulates and embassies all over the world to whoever wants them...? Did you know that ambassadors and press aggregates of Venezuelan Embassies travel with the film organizing "film-forums" in universities and cultural centers that back up their ideological project?
- Each day, this film is projected simultaneously in tens of cities, supported by expensive paid advertising in the press, posters, pamphlets, and internet. Who pays this expenses, estimated in millions of US\$? Don't tell us that they are paid with the film, because most of the exhibitions are for free or at a very low cost.
- And did you know that Mr. Andrés Izarra, shown in the film as the main witness against the private TV media, is now a highly ranked official at the Embassy of Venezuela in the USA, and that the private TV station where he had a managing position before April 2002 employed him for several years, despite the well-known fact that he is the son of Lieutenant Colonel William Izarra, a co-conspirator associated with Hugo Chávez plotting the overthrow of Democracy in Venezuela for over 10 years from within the Venezuelan Armed Forces, and current Director of Ideology at the regime's political party?

For further information on this accusations, please visit the following Websites:

www.elgusanodeluz.com

www.recivex.com www.provea.com

There, you can ask for disclosure materials like this one and a 110 minutes long video on the dismantlement of the lies with the help of an audiovisual support.