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3/19, A View From My Porch

Doreen LaMantia Maloney
University of Kentucky

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Doreen LaMantia Maloney
3/19, A View From My Porch

Note: the following images are stills from a 3 minute video. The text is an attempt to capture what motivated me to make the piece.

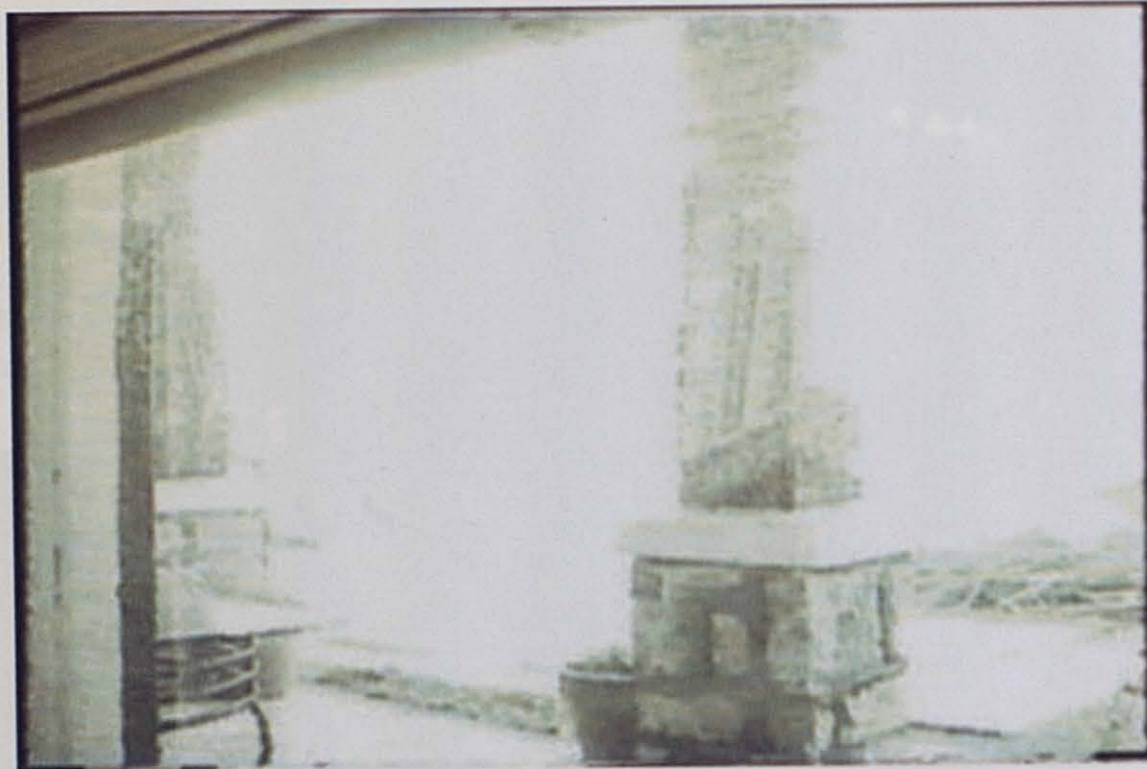


I was laying back on my sofa watching Dan Rather explain to me that a decision to go to war had been made. We were now going to watch the launch of the Shock and Awe campaign, please stay tuned. I flipped channels. The monikers of the networks: Operation Iraqi Freedom, War with Iraq, Objective Saddam, Strike on Iraq, A Nation at War, Operation Liberty Shield, all promised Enduring Freedom.



Then it happened. CBC aired a full two-minute segment of the tomahawk missile strike on Baghdad without the usual sound effects and without the usual talking head interrupting the transmission. I watched transfixed as the missiles launched into the night sky, and thought of bodies blown to bits, terror, fire, suffering, horror and pain, images that were not being broadcast on my TV.

I felt visceral rage. I was being invited to participate in war offered as digestible, televised news item. I had to do something. I grabbed my camera and turned it on. I turned on my surveillance VCR. I filmed the view out of my window – recording life in America at war at the speed of one frame every 15-seconds. I needed to bridge the gap between war as a media event and my own, mundane, seemingly perfect, everyday reality.



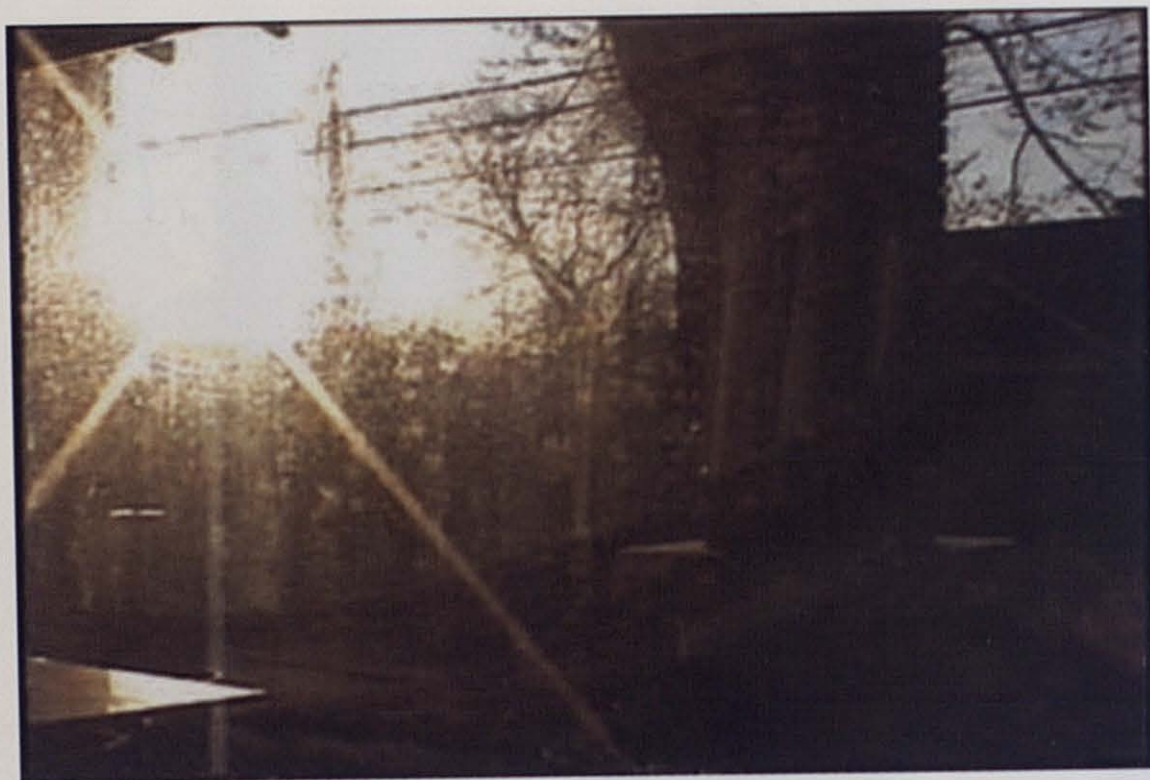
To make a piece out of the Shock and Awe campaign footage, I condensed the 24 hours of my surveillance tape down to 3 minutes.

The surveillance deck sped everything up to the point where cars at night became flashes of light, and the sunrise in infrared mode, a nuclear explosion. I took sounds from the actual U.S.S. Key West missile launch and used them as a sound track.



Other sounds from the Iraq battle were difficult to gather since the network footage transmitted in bite-sized chunks. I went to the web and found sounds of the war in Afghanistan, a perfect fit. Sounds of that war were like none I had ever heard before in movies. They resembled a chaotic drum core, were more akin to metal kitchen utensils thrown into a giant fan, and were full of chaos.

I simulated. I edited together the sounds of the Afghan war, tank blasts, and the missile launch and attempted to synchronize the sounds to the action of the lights of the cars.



The result was war, from my vantage point: the view from my porch.