

Pressekonferenz THE HANDMAID'S TALE

...Ich darf Ihnen nun unsere Gäste vorstellen. Ich beginne mit Volker Schlöndorff, er hat Regie geführt. Neben ihm sitzt die Darstellerin der Moira, Elizabeth McGovern. Rechts neben ihr sitzt der Produzent des Films, Daniel Wilson. Daneben haben wir die Autorin des Buches, des Romans, Margaret Atwood. And finally, am Ende, Harold Pinter, der das Drehbuch geschrieben hat. Bevor wir anfangen, vielleicht noch ein kleines Wort, eine Bitte von Volker Schlöndorff an die deutschen Kollegen, er möchte am Ende dieser Pressekonferenz, wenn es also nicht mehr so sehr um diesen Film geht, noch etwas sagen und etwas anregen. Also laufen Sie nicht weg, für die deutschen Kollegen, bleiben Sie noch ein Moment hier. Jetzt würde ich mich freuen über Ihre Fragen.

F First I have a question to the author. Did you recognize your book, I don't know it, I haven't read it, in this film?

MA Yes, I recognized it very much. Because I think they stuck fairly closely to the book, although there are some things that you can do in a novel that you can't do in a film, and vice versa.

F I'd like to address this question to Mr. Pinter. Although you wrote the screenplay, I understand that Margaret Atwood collaborated with you from afar. What, how would you describe the difference between your visions of the film?

HP Would you repeat that?

F Did you have different approaches from the beginning to this film, yourself and Margaret Atwood? What, where did you agree and where did you diverge in your approaches?

HP We didn't diverge at all. We agreed.

F I have two questions. The first one is to Miss Atwood, Mr. Pinter. It has to do with Nora Astorga, the diplomat from Nicaragua who also murdered a high commander of the government. Was there any inspiration in that for the character?

HP Well, A, it wasn't in the book, you know, Margaret didn't write that in the book. This is a development in the screenplay. And it was not based on that case. It seemed to me to be dramatically justified within the context of this particular film.

F To Mr. Schlöndorff. Did that have any significance for you, with your background, the Nora Astorga?

VS I tell you, I rather thought of Tosca.

F Second question is to Miss McGovern. Lesbians seem to be in Hollywood movies this year. There was one in "Internal Security." Did you find it difficult developing a character, particularly how the character resolved itself?

EM In regard to lesbianism? Well, for me, that wasn't so much an element that I thought about in terms of the character. It was part of the personality, but it wasn't one the film addressed in particular, so it wasn't something I thought about all that much.

VS If I may add a word to that, when it came to casting, Pat Golden, my casting director, who's somewhere around here. You know, we discussed, how do you cast a lesbian, and we

said, well we'll just ignore it. You know, what do we care about her sexuality? What we're interested in is her character.

EM And the important thing about the character is not the lesbianism so much as the fact that she follows her sexual inclinations, whatever they might be, and she's damned if she won't.

F I'd like further clarification about the character of the lesbian from Miss Atwood as well. Because I found that the lesbian is portrayed much tougher, much harder, which seems to refer to, well let's say stereotypes about lesbians. Did you think about that in any way?

MA Let's say the central character has a hostage connected with her. That is, she has the child who has been absorbed by the regime, in much the same way that children were taken in Argentina during the time of the generals and farmed out to highly-placed families. So there is a hostage involved for her, and therefore there is a curb upon her scope of action, shall we say, in the book. It's not in the film because it's pretty clear that the husband gets killed. But in the book, she doesn't know whether the husband either is dead or alive, or where he is. So I think with Moira, who has always been a rather expressive person in her life, it's not just a question of toughness or lesbianism, or anything else. She's got nothing to lose, so she can go for broke. She can be more resistant because there are no hostages involved in her case.

F Hier, von unter der Palme. Ich habe eine Frage an Volker Schlöndorff. Ich muß nur die Antwort aufnehmen, deswegen stehe ich etwas unglücklich. Sie haben ja in dem Film einige Ansätze gezeigt, diese Zustände wie sie da sich eingerichtet haben,

gesellschaftlich zu begründen. Mir ist der Zusammenhang dennoch nicht ganz klar geworden, wieso gesellschaftliche Zustände dahinführen können, Sie haben wohl im Hinterkopf speziell das Land Amerika gehabt, wo solche Rückwärtswendung für Sie offenbar denkbar wäre, das habe ich aus den Interviews der letzten Tage entnommen. Können Sie vielleicht diesen Zusammenhang nochmal darstellen? Für mich bleibt der Film, erklärt der Film diese Entwicklung nicht und bleibt dadurch vollkommen im spektakulären, in der Story als solche stecken. Ich sehe da keinerlei Zusammenhang. Ich finde, daß eine Art Show wieder gemacht wird.

- VS Das habe ich schon öfter in Europa gehört. Ich bin nur der Regisseur des Films. Margaret Atwood, die Amerika besser kennt als ich, hat das so geschrieben, und ich hatte als Europäer auch selbst zunächst diese Schwierigkeit, von dem ich sagte, ich kann die Prämisse nicht ganz übernehmen und verstehen. Erst bei der Arbeit an dem Film ist mir klar geworden wie gar nicht so ganz unmöglich das ist, und wie sehr schnell Umstände umschlagen können, und wie sehr stark die puritanistischen Strömungen und die Ordnungsströmungen in USA sind, vor allen Dingen, wenn es der weißen Bevölkerung, die vielleicht eines Tages die Minderheit sein wird, aufgrund der demographischen Explosion der Hispanics und der Schwarzen, um sie herum, wie die sich ganz schnell in eine Apartheid organisieren werden. Aber das geht hier nicht um - das ist für einen Amerikaner, für eine Amerikanerin, was Sie da gesehen haben, keine Utopie, übrigens um nochmal meine Freundin Pat Golden, die Schwarze ist und Casting für den Film gemacht hat ins Spiel zu bringen, sie hat mir bereits zwei Jahre vorher, sie als Schwarze hat mir das Buch gegeben, und hat gesagt, wenn du etwas über Amerika wissen willst, mußt Du "The Handmaid's Tale" lesen. Ich war damals so dumm, es nicht zu tun. Sonst hätten wir den Film schon vor 2 Jahren hier zeigen können. Und hab' gewartet,

bis das Drehbuch von Pinter kam, um dann tatsächlich den Roman zu lesen. Aber wenn ich noch ein Wort dazu sagen darf, Sie wissen, das Margaret Atwood den Roman hier in Berlin konzipiert, und angefangen hat zu schreiben, im Schatten der Mauer. Und ich kann mir vorstellen das sie, bei der Beobachtung, bei dem Blick auf die Mauer und über die Mauer vor 4 Jahren sich nur mal so gedacht hat, wie würden sich denn die Menschen in USA verhalten, die bisher eine sehr freie Geschichte hatten im Land, das diese Art von Totalitarismus nicht gekannt hatte, würden die solche Zustände vielleicht sogar bewillkommen, wie würden sie drauf reagieren, wie würden die Männer drauf reagieren, wie würden die Frauen drauf reagieren? Und sie hat einfach mal dieses Schema übertragen auf ein anderes Land, auf ihr Land, oder auf das Land südlich ihrer Grenze, denn sie lebt ja in Toronto, und siehe da, alle Figuren purzelten ganz von selbst in die vorgefassten Schächtelchen, und das war gar nicht so undenkbar. Und die Frage war daran, wie würden nun die Menschen sich verhalten, und sie macht ja nicht eine Gesellschaftsanalyse, sondern sie beschreibt konkret das Verhalten von einem Menschen, der kein Supermensch ist. No Superwoman. Sie ist schwach, sie sagt es von sich selbst, ich bin passiv, ich wollt', ich würd' 'ne bessere Figur abgeben, ich bin eben nicht aus dem Stoff aus dem die Helden sind wie Moira, aber die Helden die sich rebellieren, die werden gebrochen, und diese Überlebensfrage, wie kann ich mich anpassen, jahrelang anpassen, vielleicht vier Jahrzehnte lang anpassen, nach außen wie eine graue Maus aussehen, nur immer ja sagen, und trotzdem mir eine Würde bewahren, die es mir erlaubt, mit mir selbst weiter zu leben? Das ist eine Frage, die wirklich keineswegs spekulativ ist, und in USA schon gar nicht spekulativ ist, wenn sie davon ausgeht, daß das Brainwashing da ja viel subtilere Formen hat, ich meine das Fernsehen, ob das die Werbung, ob das sonst was ist. Wer hat denn da überhaupt noch ein eigenes Innenleben,

wer kann denn da resistieren? Sind das vielleicht nicht von außen bunt angestrichene aber ansonsten graue Mäuse? Ich kann Ihnen nur sagen, eine Spekulation ist das, für alle die an dem Film mitgearbeitet haben, und die alle Amerikaner waren, in gar keiner Weise.

MA Who was it that asked the question? Whoever you were, I based the book very very strictly on history and on present-day happenings. There was nothing in the book that human beings have not done at some time in their history or are not doing now, or for which we don't have the technology. This is not science fiction of the Martian kind. It is speculative fiction, but there is nothing in it that is impossible today, or is impossible from the point of view of human nature. And since the book was published, there have been several developments in the United States that have mimicked that society in the direction of the book. There was a very famous surrogate mother case which was decided against the surrogate mother. There have been changes in the law towards prohibiting abortion, which is what George Bush has stated he would like to do. And the religious cult aspect of the book is very strongly based on things that exist now in the United States. There is even a religious cult, which I didn't know when I was writing the book, but I found out afterwards, there's even one in which the women are called "handmaids."

HP I would like to add to this that I entirely agree with what has just been said, and I would like to point out that the USA at this very moment is a very highly conformist, Puritan and deeply violent society. So we're not talking about anything remotely like fantasy.

DW I would also like to comment on that. What attracted me to the book and the material in the first place was the complete

believability that it could happen anywhere. And having been born in the United States and raised in the United States, and very fond of living there, one can see that the vestiges of this are always there. And in any chaotic time, a society can run amok. If we look into history, chaos breeds this kind of response. The leader comes to the fore and says, I will give you happiness, I will give you safety, follow me. And it could happen in the United States; it could happen anywhere in a chaotic society, anywhere in the world.

MA I would like to say also that I based the treatment of women partly on Rumania, which some of us knew about then. For some reason the Western press is not paying a lot of attention to the treatment of women in Rumania. But some of us did know, and the Ceaucescu regime was doing the things that this regime does. It was banning abortion and birth control, and forcing women to have a certain number of babies. And a lot of these babies ended up in orphanages. They were being sold.

F I'd like if I could to ask Harold Pinter two questions. I'm at the back of the hall, slightly to your right. Firstly, this screenplay, this film, like your most recent stageplay, "Mountain Language", is set in an imaginary totalitarian state. I'm wondering if there's a personal reason which you can identify, why you should have been drawn to this setting. More in the recent past than you have been previously.

HP This setting, you say? I don't quite understand.

F This setting of a totalitarian state.

HP Maybe it's because I live in England. I'm not suggesting that England is actually a totalitarian state, but it's certainly on its way to that condition. I would like to remind you by

the way that this question, that in the film, in both the book and the film, homosexuality is a capital offense. And in England we recently had a law passed by Mrs. Thatcher's government, for which it's a crime, in which it is a crime, you go to jail, if you promote homosexuality. Now for example, to promote homosexuality is to say that two homosexuals can bring up a child. That is a criminal offense in England at this moment. Which is really rather interesting. And it seems to be little known elsewhere. That's only one of the many laws that are being passed in England. So that it's very interesting to me. I've just come from Prague, earlier today, and it's fascinating to note the distinction between one place and another. In Prague they're releasing, they're liberating themselves from a kind of tyranny. And in what we call Western freedom, democracy, actually the vise is tightening, it's going entirely the other way, so I think it's significant that we should keep our eye on that state of affairs. And I think I do. And I find that I'm very preoccupied.

F The second thing I wanted to ask you, was to refer to the fact that last week, you delivered on behalf of Salman Rushdie the Herbert Reid lecture in London. And a couple of days later the death threat or the decree from Iran was repeated, a year later. What do you think is necessary to resolve that particular conflict?

HP I think it's a very very serious question, but I honestly don't consider it to be relevant to this press conference.

F Miss Atwood, you addressed yourself a few moments ago to the issue of abortion. You mentioned George Bush in that regard, and seemed to imply that the anti-abortion forces in the United States were coming to a tension at his request. You are aware of course, perhaps as a journalist I read more papers

than you do, that in last year's elections, every candidate who was against abortion lost. I'm talking about the Congressional election in California and Florida. But most especially in the gubernatorial election, that means the election of a governor, in the state of Virginia, which is in the South. And I think you know who won that election, it was a black man. Do you still think that can be ignored, or do you still think there's a wave in the United States which will result in the banning of abortion? We're talking of course of the court decision, the Supreme Court decision.

MA This is of course a very important decision, and we have George Bush's own statements, and we have very well-organized and well-financed anti-abortion factions, but we're also now getting some opposition to them. For instance, you know this, there was a huge march on Washington which brought out a lot of people. But I think it's a very unresolved issue at the moment. I don't see it being resolved quickly. In my own country, which is Canada, we had some strange developments over the past few years. The entire abortion law was thrown out as being unconstitutional. But then men started bringing individual cases against their girlfriends. We had several of those. One of them went all the way to the supreme court. This is in a fluid state, but it is a very very, it's a position, it's an issue on which people take very entrenched positions. And for me, the kinds of issues that produce these kinds of reactions are a choice of evil issues. In other words, if there's a choice of two wonderful things, apple pie or ice cream, who's gonna fight? If it's a choice of something clearly acknowledged to be bad for you, such as smoking and not smoking, you'll have people who will still smoke and will say, I know it's bad for me, I'm gonna do it anyway. And the other people will say, well do it outside. But you won't have a war. It's when people have a choice of two things, both of

which are perceived to be bad, that you have these very entrenched positions. Because there's something in the human psyche that cannot stand to be wrong. So you have to blank out all the arguments against your position, and maintain that it's good. And this is what both sides of this thing do. And this is why you get these...But it's not just the abortion thing, it's the whole religious right. Which mobilizes itself from time to time. Sometimes it wins, it won with Ronnie Reagan, sometimes it loses, it's been losing in the elections that you've pointed out, but I would by no means discount it. By no means.

DW As someone who lives in the United States, I would say you can't discount it at all. While there may be a backlash against the anti-abortion movement right now, that could swing, that could swing in either direction very quickly in the United States. And even though there have been some elections that have been very positive in their response to abortion, I wouldn't count the religious right out, nor would I count the extreme conservative element out in the US.

MA It has a racial element, in that death rates among non-white mothers, non-white women who undergo legal abortions is way higher than among the whites. So by making government funds unavailable, which is what the law has done, what you're actually doing is raising the death rate among non-white populations in the States.

EM What's happened in the United States, the way I perceive it, is that we've taken the freedoms and the things we've worked so hard to get, and we've taken them for granted to a certain extent. And that's why we have to remind ourselves now to keep fighting for the things we've always fought for, or else they slip away on us.

F To Miss Atwood. I think you answered it a little bit. How much of "The Handmaid's Tale" also applies to Canada? Both as a book and as a movie?

MA When the book came out, it came out first in Canada, because my books do come out first, people said, could it happen here? When it came out in England, they said, by and large, jolly good story. When it came out in the States, they said, how long have we got? In other words, Canadians were worried about maybe, the English were not worried about themselves. They did their religious horror in the 17th century. So in 1984 they weren't worried. Maybe they're getting a bit more worried, I don't know.

HP I am, certainly.

MA And in the States, they felt that this is immediate. In fact, a huge grafitti appeared on the beach in Los Angeles, you know they have a wall there, it's a low wall but it's a wall. And grafitti have a habit of appearing on walls, as you know. Somebody took a spraycan and painted a big sign. It said, "Atwood was right. 'The Handmaid's Tale' is here."

F I'm sorry. What I really mean is, did you mean it to be about Canada?

MA No, I meant it to be about the United States.

F Why didn't you mean it to be about Canada?

MA Why didn't I? They always - how can I say this without being rude about Canadians? They usually wait and see what the United States does so they can see if they want to do it too.

And also dramatically, I based the escape route of the handmaids north on the Underground Railroad during the times of slavery in the US. And they made their way up across the border into Canada. So I wanted there to be some place for my central character to be able to escape to. So part of it was fictional, but it's also a comment on the two societies. Canada is also a multi-lingual society, a third of it is French-speaking. It is not overwhelmingly Protestant the way the United States is, in fact it's 50% Catholic. Except in a certain province, namely Alberta, why be shy? It's unlikely to happen because of the way that people think and behave, and because of the nature of the population. But also, it's not as quick to change. It is in some ways a more conservative society. By conservative, I don't mean politically conservative, I mean in its social behavior. The divorce rate, for instance is lower. The crime rate is way lower. It's not so volatile. We would wait and see, and then if we liked it, we'd do it too.

- F I have two questions. Jennifer Bartlett is given credit in a role. Is that the American artist? And if it is, what role did she play?
- VS It is her, yes indeed. And she did not get the credit she deserves because it was up front. And it had to be removed. Such is still the power of the unions, and she being an independent artist of course does not belong to any union. And so the unions considered that she had not the right to be among the few privileged up front. She was my most important collaborator besides Igor Luther, the cinematographer, in the creating of this world of Gilead. We had worked together on stage before, on a play and in an opera and Jennifer brought it down ...we had budget problems. This for Germans may look like an expensive movie. It is a low-budget movie. And we

wouldn't have the means to create a future society if we had wanted to. And Jennifer brought it down to the line, whatever the future will be, since everything goes down the drain, it'll be cheap. And for one thing, you know, we're not going to have better-quality fabrics, no better-quality cars, no better quality anything. So why don't we take the costumes out of Sears catalogue, Sears is like Quelle in Deutschland, you know, the cheapest house where you can order, and that's where Fay Dunaway, all-star she is, was dressed, out of Sears catalogue, \$49.50. Actually, \$49.99 because that's the way it always reads in the US. For a blue dress and the pearls and the Chanel sack. And just by multiplying. Nothing is real except the emotions in this movie. And that was her kind of artist's eye also to enhance even more the colors that already were given by Margaret Atwood, as you know from her last novel "Cat's Eye," has a very strong relationship to painting. So the colors, blue of course sterility and red for fertility and white for apprenticeship, which actually happens to be the colors of the American flag, are the colors of the movie. And there's like nothing in between. Jennifer's other idea, I must do her justice here, because on the credits you wouldn't see how important her part was, was that a fascist society in the United States would still be designed by Madison Avenue. They would try to make it look attractive. Keine Braunhemden da, no brown shirts, no, they would go for bright colors and make this grey society look bright. That's the whole purpose of this. So that is her main contribution to it.

F Mr. Pinter, Miss Atwood. There's such an emphasis on cleanliness, and we live in a time where there's a major health crisis around the world called AIDS, and is there a subtext? I know Miss Atwood, you've spoken out about AIDS, but I wonder from Mr. Pinter. Is there a subtext here that appeals to that kind of mind, that totalitarian mind that wants to do

away with everything dirty including people with AIDS?

HP Well, it doesn't need a subtext, does it? It's right there on the screen. I mean, that's precisely what it's doing, and what we're observing, that this emphasis on cleanliness, I think it comes absolutely from the book, where it's beautifully evoked, and I simply followed suit. And it's intrinsic to the kind of society which we are looking at. Don't you think, Margaret?

MA There's a word in English which is often used when people say we're going to do something about corrupt politics. It is "clean up." We have to clean up this, or we have to clean up that. I think it's almost built into the language. But it's also something about human societies. Actually it goes way way back to annual scapegoat ceremonies. Kind of ritual purification type of thing. You put your sins on a group of people or a person, and you get rid of that group of people or that person, and you somehow "clean house." Clean yourself up. I think it's quite dangerous. When you start identifying one person or one group of people as those who have to be got rid of. The Commander has a speech in the movie in which he pretty much says it. He says, well we had to clean things up.

VS Margaret, since you speak German, a few years ago we had an action here, it was called "saubere Leinwand." Clean, not sheets, it could actually be bedsheets, but it actually meant "clean screen," and it was quite powerful for a moment. So this, the word "clean" is always associated with this, as if life was dirty.

F I'll address this question to the group as a whole. The film and the novel both are critiques of traditional feminine roles. Yet in the film especially, it seems that in the end

the heroine resorts to the traditional role of the damsel in distress. She's rescued by a hero and also one of her last concerns is for her daughter and also for her man. These two concerns almost underline the rescue mission at the end. Do you see this as contradictory, and if not, why not?

MA Why should women not be human beings? Why shouldn't they love their children? Why shouldn't they have relationships with other human beings that are meaningful to them? Why should they have to be Wonder Women out of the comic books? As for damsel in distress, I think that...if you travel around a lot in most kinds of societies, everybody is really a damsel in distress. Except those at the top. As individuals, they're all pretty much in a passive position. We happen to be following one woman. But I think to say that because she doesn't suddenly on page three spring forth with her lasso and her six-shooter and do away with the regime is simply unrealistic. It means that you don't take these regimes seriously.

DW She was meant to be a survivor. And this was her way of surviving. And that doesn't mean you still don't care about the things you care about.

MA I could have bumped her off, you know, I could have had her done in. But if she was going to escape, she was gonna have to do it with the help of people.

EM Which says something in a broader sense about the woman's movement, at least the way I interpret it, which is not that we don't need men and we sever our connections to men or that we don't help each other in this world and we live autonomously. I don't think that's what the women's movement purports to say, at least it doesn't say it for me.

- F To me also it seemed a bit strange that a wonderful film, a wonderful story seems to end like all the good old Hollywood movies. Men and women together, nice little nuclear family, and that's all women think about. It seems like that, you know, the way the film ends.
- VS What movie did you see? I mean, they're not together. She is alone on a mountain, she is going to give birth by herself to a baby, she lost her daughter, she of course is still hoping to maybe sometime get it. She may never. She is not with her man. The man goes another way. And she is not rescued, not only not as a damsel in distress but as someone who joined in a way the underground by picking up that knife that she found in her drawer and become active, and once the partisan or the guerilla has made this action, he has to escape. I just don't see it. Where is the happy end? I don't see it. By the way you know we shot one, it's not in the movie.
- F I wasn't talking about a happy end, don't get me wrong, please. I'm not that much talking so much about the actual things that happened, but about the concept, that everything that is on a woman's mind is having a husband she loves and who loves her, and having a baby. A nice little family...
- VS I think that's what makes her human, and that's what makes us men so unhuman, that we can obviously live without family and women and children.
- DW We all like to love somebody, and there's nothing wrong with that.
- MA He's young, he's young. How old are you?
- F 30.

MA You are? Gee, you look a lot younger than that. Everybody's starting to look younger than that. You wait. You'll see.

F Could I ask Mr. Pinter and the director about the more optimistic ending which was not used. And what it was like, and why it was not used. I understand there was a scene which was shot and not used.

VS It was not more optimistic. It was just a happy ending that somehow needed a longer development to our feeling at this point, which we would have to add not just an ending, but we would have to add 15 or 20 minutes of film, I'd be glad to shoot, which would be the actual guerilla fight, the other side since we've only seen the commander's side. That would be a very interesting part. It would actually be like a movie in itself, and that may eventually lead to the overthrowing of Gilead, to the finding of her daughter, who may not recognize her any more, and all that. But it was, you just couldn't take the short cut and say, and then some day that happened. Those who know the novel know that there's an epilogue that is told like 500 years later, and scientists analyze the novel. Well that's the thing you can do in an epic form. Somehow in a dramatic form, we felt that it didn't work. But I don't want to preempt Harold's opinion of course on this.

HP No, I would just like to say that we considered a number of permutations, and this ending of the film is the one that was mutually agreed by everybody.

F Mr. Schlöndorff, just a question of interest. Where was the film shot? Where was this town, this city, this settlement?

- VS Well, it's a very old American city, in the state of North Carolina, it's Duke University, one of the finest in the country. The students who are partaking as extras and as handmaids were trained by their faculty's dance group and ballet teachers and also by their music teachers. I went there a few months before and told them what we were gonna do, and when we first came there and they showed us what they were doing, I was so scared, I can't tell you. I mean, they were so convincing, they used to be cheerleaders on the campus maybe, but from there to scream "For her sins! For her sins!" you know and be ready, I was the one in the center and I saw it coming. You know, how easily that is feasible was stunning. Another incident, just as a detail, this is a very fine campus, one of the better universities in the country, old tradition, nightfall vigilantes were patrolling the campus, voluntary vigilantes because there was so much rape on the campus. That after 8 or 10 when girls and the nurses walked who were still on duty to the parking lot, they had to be followed by vigilantes. And this is not Gilead, this is just North Carolina, NC.
- DW There have been incidences, this is true, on a number of campuses in the United States.
- VS Back to Puritanism on the other hand, just to bring it to the point, on the one hand there is this Puritanical movement, then you've got 8 guys, they get drunk and very horny, and they just grab someone and gang rape, because there is not really, the time of permissivity is over. And there is a new Puritanical feeling, and that creates such eruptive violence sometimes.
- F Talk a little bit about the choice of music. You picked a Japanese composer and a pop star to make the sound track for

this film. I wondered why he was the choice.

VS It was my choice. He was suggested by my friends from Cinecom as well, who took a very active part in the making of the movie. You know, Cinecom is a very small company. Financially at least, this is their most ambitious project. But I think subject-wise by far their most courageous project, because no major studio has touched such a hot potato. Riuwiji's work which I liked from "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence," and also his part in "The Last Emperor," when I met him, I felt had that blend, this wonderful freedom Japanese have to just take elements from all over and consider this planet from now on as a global thing at their disposal, and he would take elements of Mahler as well as Indian sithar, African drums, ethnic music, Okinawa singers, and blend it to this vision of the future. And I thought, in his score there is vibrant, some of this science fiction, but also he has a very very lyrical side to his music. The way he has almost Mahler in moments when Kate indeed has moments of feeling. In brief, I'd love to do an opera with him. He's a wonderful musician.

F I know that Mr. Pinter is very precise in his work, starting with... not only in the course but in his ideas, and also in his choice concerning the movies he has participated in, that he has been writing the script. I understood from the beginning from the author, who is here present, that in England her book was taken, I reckon by the public at large as "a jolly good story," but it couldn't be representative or they didn't get involved. Well, I don't see Mr. Pinter, excuse me Mr. Pinter, getting involved in such a movie if he thought the matter was not of involvement, also regarding Britain. So I'd like his very personal point of his choice not only because working with a team of friends, which is very easy to see that you were getting along very well on the movie, but

I want to know his very inner motivation of getting involved in this story.

HP I don't like to tell you my inner motivation. We might go and have a drink... But all I would like to say is that I admired the book very much indeed when I read it, it was a very tremendous challenge to do, it's been great to work indeed with everybody. But of course I considered it to be relevant. Politically important and relevant not only to the United States of America, but as I said earlier, to Great Britain. What used to be called Great Britain anyway.

F An Herrn Schlöndorff. Die Beziehung zwischen den beiden ist recht plattgebügelt. Also dieses ganze politische Sichannähern und die politische Dimension im kleinen Field. Warum?

VS Ja, wenn sie fehlt, kann ich's jetzt nicht wettmachen. Ich wollte schon, daß sie da ist, es ist einfach eine Frage, wieviel kann man in einer Stunde fünfundvierzig erzählen? Die Beziehung zwischen Off-Glen und Off-Fred, die da immer nebeneinander hertippeln müssen zum einkaufen. Zunächst mal, sie können, sie dürfen nicht mit einander sprechen, also politische Grundsatzdiskussionen kann da auf dem Weg zum Einkaufszentrum und zurück kann einfach nicht geführt werden. Ich glaube, daß irgendwie im Laufe der Annäherung, die Marge Baker spielt die Rolle, die Tochter von Carroll Baker, falls Ihnen der Name noch ein Begriff ist, und Blanche und Natasha haben ganz mit Absicht es immer wieder so gemacht, daß sie sich gegenseitig provozieren, weil jeder hält die andere für eine Angepasste, und erst in dem Moment wo die Autobombe hochgeht, und sie zum ersten Mal etwas getan haben, und wenn die Off-Glen sich dazu bekennt, aber gleichzeitig damit den Auftrag verbindet, jetzt mußt du aktiv werden, wir müssen ihn vielleicht umbringen, und du bist die Nächste dran, kommt das

'raus. Also ich glaube es kann auf langen schweigsamen Fußmärschen hin und zurück über Monate von Zeit die sich das erstreckt, sich etwas entwickeln und ausdrücken, wenn das nicht gelungen ist, dann liegt das an mir, sicher, ich habe das nicht richtig eingefangen, sicher haben die Darstellerinnen das beste getan, das zu tun. Aber gerade alles das, was so zwischen den Zeilen ist, Diskutierfilme haben wir ja genug gemacht, aber was da zwischen den Zeilen ist, was wir aber anfüllen können, aus historischer Erfahrung, die werden ja nicht umsonst Attentäter genannt, und Terroristen genannt und feiger Mord am Kommandanten usw., das muß uns Deutschen nicht ganz unvertraut klingen. Das Einzige, was sie nicht tun, und vielleicht weil sie Amerikaner sind, oder Amerikanerinnen, das sind Grundsatzdiskussionen.

Dann darf ich zunächst mal dem internationalen Teil dieser Pressekonferenz recht herzlich danken für die Geduld, schönen Dank für die Gäste, daß sie gekommen sind, soviel Zeit. Und die Deutschen bitte mocht nicht weglaufen.

VS Wenn noch jemand Geduld hat, ich fasse mich in drei Worte. I just beg your pardon to say one word, and I think it's relevant for everybody. Vor ein Paar Jahren haben wir hier mal den Film "Deutschland im Herbst" vorgestellt, weil wir das Gefühl hatten, es geschehen Dinge im Land die es verdienen, festgehalten zu werden. Seit dem 9. November haben wir alle gebannt vor dem Fernseher gesessen, und haben die Bilder hier aus Berlin gesehen. Wir haben gut daran getan, die uns gleich anzusehen, weil alle diese Bilder sind auf Video aufgenommen. In 3 Jahren, in 5 Jahren ist das Zeugs verblasst, es bleibt kein Dokument zurück von dem, was hier geschehen ist und von dem, was noch geschehen wird, weil seitdem es keine Wochenschau mehr gibt werden weltweit Aktualitäten eben nur noch auf Video aufgenommen. Ich möchte zusammen mit Kollegen

aus der DDR und von hier ein Dokumentar-, ein weitgestreutes Dokumentarteam aufstellen, was zunächst mal auf Filmmaterial, auf beständigem Material, Bild und Ton, 35mm wenn möglich, in den nächsten Monaten weiter dokumentiert, was vor und nach den Wahlen auf beiden Seiten des Landes, was in den Fabriken und was überall passiert. Das ist ein Unternehmen, das Leute vielleicht in 20 oder 30 Jahren uns mehr danken werden als im nächsten Jahr. Weil wir erleben's ja täglich mit am Bildschirm, und ich werde in den nächsten Tagen versuchen, Freiwillige dafür zu sammeln. Stefan Aust, der schon intensiv berichtet hat und auch schon bei "Deutschland in Herbst" mitgemacht hat, wird wahrscheinlich so eine Art Chefredaktion übernehmen. Aber Chefredaktion nur im Aufnehmen. Niemand soll dieses Material unbedingt redigieren. Das kann dann als Dokumentarmaterial zu jedermanns Verfügung in Koblenz im Bundesarchiv oder in Babelsberg eingelagert werden. Im Augenblick gibt es drüben in der DDR sehr viele hervorragende Dokumentarmacher und Kameraleute. Alles, was die brauchen ist Filmmaterial und ein Kopierwerk und Diäten um sich ihre Brotzeiten zu kaufen, und es gibt sehr viele Leute, die bei uns willig sind, um so einen großangelegten Archivfond zu machen. Das ist etwas, was ich in den nächsten Tagen mit der Filmförderungsanstalt und mit was weiß ich wo wir den Fond her, das Geld herkriegern können, besprechen möchte. Und jede Öffentlichkeit die da hergestellt wird, und deshalb benutze ich die Gelegenheit schamlos, um mit Ihnen darüber zu reden, ist angebracht, denn kein kommerzielles Unternehmen denkt daran, daß man damit vielleicht in 20 Jahren Profit machen kann, solange denkt niemand. Aber ich meine, daß wir das unserer eigenen Geschichte schuldig sind. Denn sonst werden im 50 Jahren zwar die hervorragenden Wochenschauen von Herrn Goebbels immer noch in erstklassiger Qualität in den Archiven liegen, aber nichts von dem, was am Tag des eigentlichen Kriegsendes, am 9. November, geschehen ist.

- F Ich finde das eine hervorragende Idee, möchte aber daran anschließend Fragen, ob Sie das wirklich nur für kommende Generationen planen, oder ob sich damit eventuell noch ein Plan verbindet, sowas wie die Wochenschau, von der ich auch sehr bedauere, daß es sie nicht mehr gibt, wieder eingeführt werden soll, und sei es nur in ein paar wenigen Kinos.
- VS Ich kann es noch nicht sagen, das ist eine ausgesprochene Schnapsidee, die mir gestern Abend beim Trinken kam. Und die von Kohlhaase und Heiner Carow, von Stefan Aust, von Thomas Brasch, von allen, die ich daraufhin seitdem angesprochen hab', die haben gesagt, natürlich, das müssen wir machen. Das ist alles. Wie immer, man muß dann auch Druck, um die Mittel zu finden, und das geht um ein paar Hunderttausend Mark, vielleicht eine Million oder mehr. Ich hoffe natürlich, daß das in 2 oder 3 Jahren, daß das ein Film oder Filme sein werden. Ich wollt' nur mal die Idee vorstellen, Sie wissen, sie haben die Öffentlichkeit in Ihrer Feder.