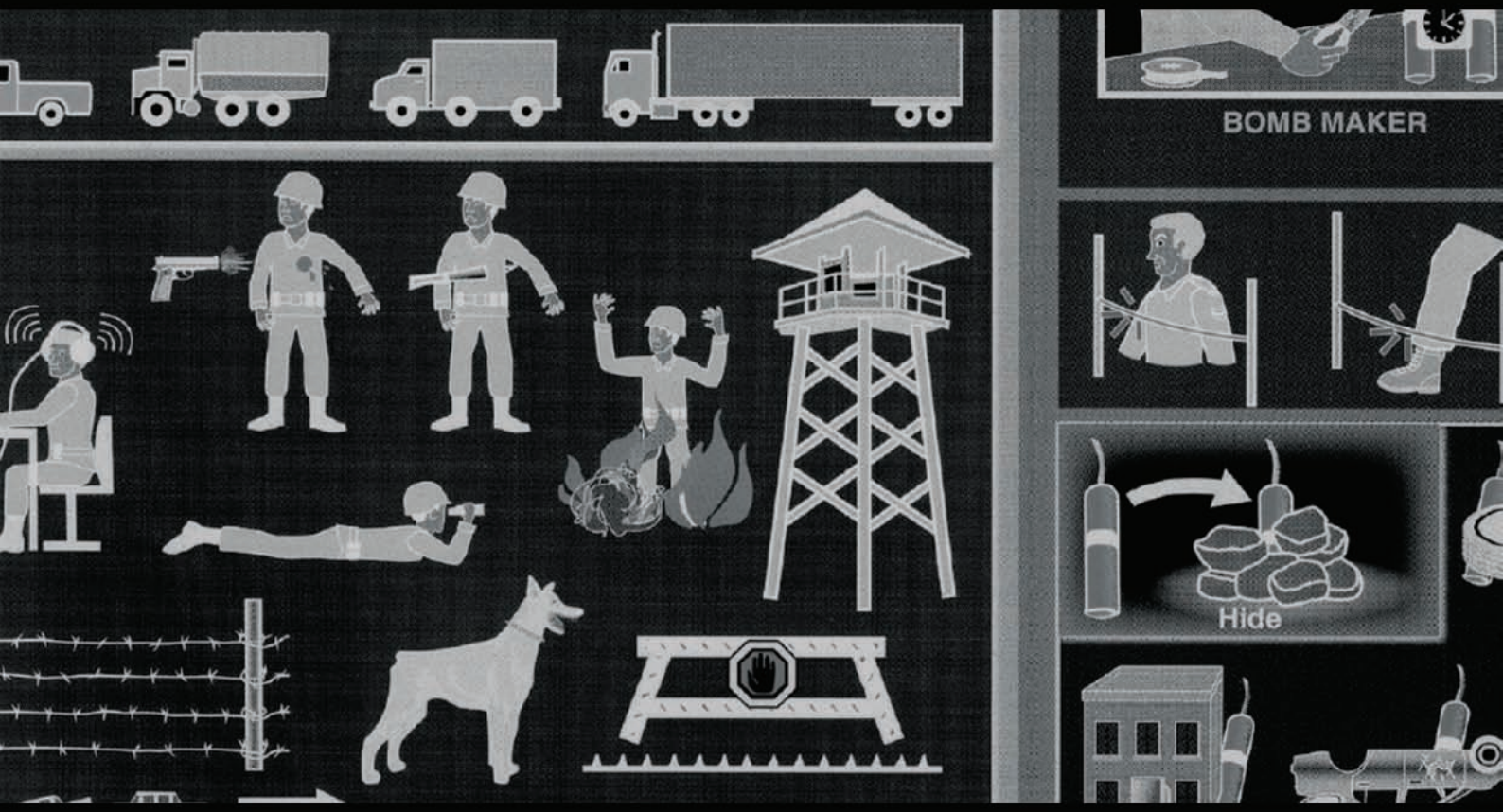
A 1 x 52' or 1 x 80' Documentary from Udris Film & Oxyopia Productions



Human Terrain

War Becomes Academic

Human Terrain tells two stories. The first exposes the US effort to enlist the best and the brightest of American universities in a struggle for the hearts and minds of its enemies. Facing long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US military has adopted a controversial new program, 'Human Terrain Systems', to make cultural awareness a key element of its counterinsurgency strategy. Designed to embed social scientists with combat troops, the program swiftly comes under attack by academic critics who consider it misguided and unethical to gather intelligence and target potential enemies for the military.

Gaining rare access to wargames in the Mojave Desert and training exercises at Quantico and Fort Leavenworth, *Human Terrain* takes the viewer into the heart of the war machine and the shadowy collaboration between American academics and the armed services.

The second story is about a brilliant young scholar who leaves the university to join a Human Terrain team. After working as a humanitarian activist, Michael Bhatia returned to Brown University to conduct research on military cultural awareness and a year later, he left as a Human Terrain member in Afghanistan. On May 7, 2008, en route to mediate an intertribal dispute, his humvee hit a roadside bomb and Bhatia was killed.

Is this a genuine attempt at cultural awareness in the battlefield or a cynical new strategy to acheive the same ends? *Human Terrain* asks what happens when war becomes academic and academics go to war.

UDRIS FILM/OXYOPIA PRODUCTIONS WITH THE GLOBAL MEDIA PROJECT AND THE WATSON INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
A FILM BY JAMES DER DERIAN AND DAVID UDRIS AND MICHAEL UDRIS

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