

# **hearings**

## **(audiences)**

99' / France / 2000

Filmed during the six-month trial of Papon, this video depicts the coverage by journalists, reporters and court artists of one of the greatest trials in French history. The film shows how journalists, effectively working as a closed group, agreed or disagreed on information, and how they dealt with the length of the trial and the editorial pressure they were subjected to. Interviews with journalists and lawyers for both prosecution and defence give unique insights into the trial. "Hearings" lays bare the ins and outs of both the judicial process and the journalist's profession.

A film by: **Rafael Lewandowski**

Music: **David Hadjadj,**  
**Jérôme Rebotier**

Image: **Rafael Lewandowski**

Sound: **Sophie Laloy,**  
**Nicolas Zwarg**

Editing: **Marie Da Costa**

Sound editing: **Philippe Amouroux**

Mixing: **Cyril Holtz**

Coloring: **Philippe Couteux**

Musicians: **David Hadjadj** (piano)  
**Nicolas Stern** (drums)  
**Clément Lauday** (bass)

Recording: **Aymeric Dévoldère**

Production assistant: **Hind Saïh**

Administration: **Sandrine Surget**

Production: **YENTA Production**  
**François Chilowicz,**  
**Didier Farmache,**  
**Anne Le Grevès**

Archives: **TF1, Radio France**

With the participation of Centre National de la Cinématographie,  
la SCAM (Société Civile des Auteurs Multimédia)

(c) Yenta Production / Cités Télévision / La fémis - France 2000

After CELA and A SHADOWED GAZE, and while proceeding with my thinking about the connection between the human being and memory, I arrived in Bordeaux on October 8th 1997 to be present for Maurice Papon's trial opening. I then immerse myself, camera in hand, into two for me totally alien worlds: the justice one and most of all the one of the press. For a whole six months, I then took advantage of my "virgin eye" to scrutinise, without any a priori, the journalists in their professional and human confrontation to the judicial hearings about this out-of-the-ordinary trial. During this exceptionally long event it became for me a extraordinary "laboratory for contemporary media ways and means".

The journalist coverage of the Papon trial was confronted with a filming and recording prohibition of the proceedings. Because of this prohibition, a new hearing emerged, set up by (and for) the media. It became a behind-close-doors show of a permanent relationship of complicity and seduction common to all involved and depicted in an unparalleled way, the working of the show society in which we are living.

In showing how such an event was lived by those who reported it in the media, I wished that HEARINGS would be able to shed an unprecedented light on the doubts and unsatisfactions, which assail journalists in their daily work. Contrary to a pamphlet or an analytical speech, the film indeed shows under a fair and humane light, these men and women working on the ground who are often accused of acting like vultures.

The actual permanent connection they develop with subjectivity and in search of the truth, is the recurrent theme of the film: it progressively puts the spectator in a unstable situation of questioning and uncertainty. The end of HEARINGS is thus setting an unease equivalent to the one felt by all concerned in the trial when the verdict was issued: a bitter taste of dissatisfaction and exhaustion, as coming out of a long time without ending timeless tunnel...

Rafael Lewandowski

**Hearings** has been selected by numerous festivals :

FIGRA 2000 (Lille, France)  
Entrevues 2000 (Belfort, France)  
Amascultura 2001 (Lisbon, Portugal)  
Traces de Vie 2001 (Vic-Le-Comte, France)  
10<sup>th</sup> Film Festival in Vendôme (France)  
Documentary Film Festival of the International Criminal Court (The Hague, The Netherlands)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Attac Film Festival (Paris)  
1<sup>st</sup> Salon des Refusés (Paris)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Jewish Film Festival of Warsaw (Poland)  
3 Festival "Images of Justice" (Rennes, France)  
11 Independant Cinéma Forum (Lille)  
10<sup>th</sup> "Rendez-vous de l'Histoire" (Blois, France)

**Hearings** was winner of "Written Dream" grant SCAM in November 1999 and received a special mention at "Traces de Vie" Film Festival (Vic-Le-Comte).