

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice Los Alamos Study Group • Stop the War Machine

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British Citizen and American Filmmaker Return from War-Torn Iraq Pair Visits Albuquerque and Santa Fe as Part of National Speaking Tour

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Jo Wilding, a 29-year-old human rights campaigner and trainee lawyer from Britain, and David Martinez, an American filmmaker, have returned from Iraq with first-hand accounts of the U.S. occupation and the dire humanitarian situation there. Wilding and Martinez have spent much of the past three years in and out of Iraq on multiple peace missions involving medical care and emergency transportation – and even a circus tour for families and children living in the war-ravaged nation.

Wilding and Martinez were in Fallujah during a series of full blown street battles between U.S. troops and members of the Iraqi resistance. Both helped in the evacuation of civilians in need of medical attention from the front lines, or (as it is called by U.S. forces) the “kill zone.” On her first bus ride into the ferocious scene of street fighting of Fallujah Wilding wrote:

“The reason I'm on the bus is that a journalist I knew turned up at my door at about 11 at night telling me things were desperate in Falluja, he'd been bringing out children with their limbs blown off, the US soldiers were going around telling people to leave by dusk or be killed, but then when people fled with whatever they could carry, they were being stopped at the US military checkpoint on the edge of town and not let out, trapped, watching the sun go down.”

David Martinez recounts a full day and night of evacuating the wounded from the “kill zone” in Fallujah, dodging sniper fire, making ambulance runs, all the while shouting, “we are an international medical team! Please do not shoot us!”

“Riding in the back, I can see the flash of the gun as bullets pierce the walls of the vehicle above our heads. Thank God I am on the floor. Another shooter blows out our headlights, and I hear the Brit, who is in the front seat, scream as pieces of engine spray into the cabin. Then they take out our front tires. It is madness, we are in a clearly marked ambulance, with a flashing, noisy siren, and they are shooting at us. Another bullet rips into the engine as the driver throws the vehicle into reverse. We hit a curb doing about ninety miles an hour, which takes out the rear tires. We screech back to the hospital on rims alone.”

While in Iraq both Wilding and Martinez sent back numerous dispatches regarding the escalating war between U.S. forces and Iraqi militias, the humanitarian situation among Iraq's civilian population, as well as many stories about the daily struggles of families and ordinary people trying to survive under the brutal conditions of the occupation.

Jo Wilding and David Martinez will speak in Albuquerque on Sunday, June 6, 7:00 pm at the Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE and at the Cloud Cliff Restaurant at 1805 2nd St. in Santa Fe on Monday, June 7 at 6:30 pm. They will be available for interviews before and during their stay in New Mexico and can be reached by cell phone at (773) 860-4648. Jo Wilding's web-logs from Iraq are available online at <http://www.wildfirejo.org.uk/>. David Martinez's reports from Fallujah are available online at http://vitw.us/weblog/archives/cat_david_martinez.html.

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