



**Documentary film  
and video in Roberto  
Berliner's journey:  
"I almost became a  
war journalist"**

*O documental e o vídeo  
na trajetória de Roberto  
Berliner: "quase virei  
correspondente de guerra"*



Andréa Martins França<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor of the Graduate Program in Communication at PUC-Rio.  
CNPq researcher. E-mail: afranca3@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The importance of Arlindo Machado's book, *Made in Brasil: as linhas de força do vídeo brasileiro*, has been to produce – among others subjects – an interrogation about “the new generation of videomakers” from the perspective of the city of Rio de Janeiro. This interview with Berliner seeks to respond partially that question as the filmmaker speaks on his first video's experiences in the 1980's. One of the conclusions is that the Circo Voador's concert venue was a key place to bring about a cultural environment where affectional bonds and video discovery nurture all that generation.

**Keywords:** video; documentary; the 1980s; Rio de Janeiro.

**Resumo:** A importância do livro de Arlindo Machado, *Made in Brasil: as linhas de força do vídeo brasileiro*, tem sido favorecer – entre outros pontos - uma interrogação sobre a “nova geração de videastas” da perspectiva da cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Esta entrevista com Berliner busca responder parte dessa questão a partir de perguntas onde o realizador fala de sua experiência com o vídeo nos anos 1980. Uma das conclusões é que o espaço cultural do Circo Voador foi um lugar importante para a criação de um ambiente marcado por laços afetivos e pela descoberta do vídeo que marcam toda uma geração.

**Palavras-chave:** vídeo; documentário; década de 1980; Rio de Janeiro.

This interview with director Roberto Berliner was carried out at his production company TVZero, in Botafogo, on an afternoon in May 2016. I did not publish it at the time. The idea was the material would serve as a source of information for the research I had been developing about the Carioca generation of independent video in the 1980s. The reading of *Made in Brasil: as linhas de força do vídeo brasileiro* compilation, organized by Arlindo Machado, had provoked a few years earlier the question about what this “new wave of filmmakers” that would reorient “the trajectory of Brazilian video,” however, from the perspective of the city of Rio de Janeiro (MACHADO, 2003, p. 16).<sup>2</sup> The article “Séries documentais na televisão: o *travelling* rasante de *African Pop*” (FRANÇA, 2018) was one of the developments of the research. Although showing the expressive video potential of a broad and valuable picture of its contribution to a critical country reading, it argued that Machado practically ignored Rio’s circuits productions in the 1980s.

In this conversation, accompanied by Ananda Correia (then an Undergraduate Research scholarship holder), I seek to rescue the cultural atmosphere of Rio de Janeiro’s southern zone in the 1980s from Berliner’s specific perspective. At the beginning of the decade, there was no VCR or cable TV in Brazil. The stations themselves produced the programming with their antiquated equipment, as Berliner reports on the trip for documentary *Angola*. As much as the directors had a particular cinematographic culture formed by film clubs, the space in dispute was the small screen and not the big screen. Roberto Berliner enters TV via the video clip, pop music, resulting from affective relationships forged in Rio’s cultural circuits. In the city of Rio, the alternative circuits – especially the Circo Voador and later the Magnetoscópio room (1990-94), on Siqueira Campos street, in Copacabana – functioned as “affective communities.” The video tools allowed us to embark on collective, social, political, and esthetic struggles.

The conversation with Berliner was affectionate and full of curious stories. In the end, I got a copy of *Ovídio* (1983), which I was able to watch later. It is an experimental collective creation, directed with total freedom by filmmaker Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, edited by Roberto Berliner, held at Circo Voador in Lapa. During the interview, the experiment is mentioned a few times. *Ovídio* was the result of a course in VT Cinema with the famous director of *Macunaíma* (1969). Already in

<sup>2</sup> Arlindo Machado presents, in the introduction to the collection, three major cultural movements linked to the video: the first is part of the project to expand plastic arts in the 1970s; the second is connected to the later generation, known as the independent video generation; and the third generation of videomakers, who appeared in the 1990s, with a more personal, more authorial work, less militant or socially engaged.

the opening credits, written by the almost naked body of Victor Lopes (at the time, an actor and, today, a documentary filmmaker),<sup>3</sup> we are introduced to the “collective craziness” that was this performative experience, with photography directed by Walter Carvalho and Paulo Violeta. *Ovídio* was a joint production of Circo Voador, Faculdade da Cidade, and Embrafilme.

Both in *Ovídio* and *A farrá do Circo* (2013), *Herbert de perto* (2008), *Pindorama – a verdadeira história dos sete anões* (2007), *A pessoa é para o que nasce* (2004), *Angola* (1988), among others Berliner's documentary films, the imperfection of the image, the technical flaw, the electronic defect, become a language to be explored, interferences that, far from distancing or disturbing, drag the viewer closer to the characters and their stories. The electronic defect – or “blur” – translates the perceptive and sound sensations of the love affair between team and character. As Roberto says, there is a “love” for dirty, amateurish, defective images. A love that equally embraces special characters – wheelchair users, dwarfs, blind people, crazy people, all artists, all poets.

At the end of the interview, I ask about his first feature film, *Angola* (1988). Designed to be part of the commemorations of the Centenary of Abolition, the documentary was shown on the SBT broadcaster simultaneously as the exhibition of photographs by Ricardo Azoury, *Angola*, at the Museu Paço Imperial. Berliner recounts the trip adversities with the team to Africa. Also, the vertigo of being with the camera in the middle of a war (the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale). Throughout the 1980s, Brazilian TV began to open up to the world, establishing communication channels with what came from outside, not just with what was happening here. Berliner catches this wave of political openness and goes to Angola at the invitation of producer Luis Antonio Silveira. The documentary begins with a sequence of bare feet dancing to pop music. The pace is fast, and the cuts are abrupt. Next, neon signs write “Angola” in the colors of the country's flag. What comes to us is a definitely close place, unlike the series *African Pop* (1989), by Belisário Franca, whose proposal is to make a sweeping shot through the musical roots of the continent. Berliner's camera animates encounters and affections along the dirt streets. The radiant faces and Portuguese as a common language, amid absolute poverty, establish a short circuit between musseques (from there) and slums (from here), distant and near, the memory of slavery and present.

Berliner reiterates, during the conversation, the importance of doing collectively in groups. In fact, the sharing of the direction signed together with the editor, photographer, the screenwriter is a significant authorial mark and present in

<sup>3</sup>He made, among others, the documentary *Língua – vidas em Português* (2001).

the credits of his films. Perhaps a heritage from the time of the videomaker and the affective community was the cultural environment of Circo Voador. “Lust for filming” and collecting images “without stopping,” as he says, is also a *way of connecting*, through the body, people to each other, people to objects, and he, Roberto, to all of that.

### **Interview**

Andréa França – Circo Voador played a fundamental role in the early 1980s in bringing together the youth culture of Rio de Janeiro in the same place: theatre, music, dance, circus. The video appears as a connector to all of this. This is what your documentary *A farrá do circo* shows through the VHS images of your personal archive. I want you to talk about your beginnings with the camera, your interest in video. Was it really in São Paulo that debates and video festivals were concentrated, or were things happening in Rio?

Roberto Berliner – In fact, everything was concentrated there because, first, there was the [Festival] *Videobrasil*, which was fundamental initially. Here, there was the first festival, in 1983, at the Centro Cultural Cândido Mendes (1º *Vídeo Rio*). And, along with that, there was the Circo Voador. At Circo, a nice thing happens because it brought together a lot of cool people. There was a circus, dancing, and I wanted to dance, do circus, act, even if not professionally. There were people from the visual arts, performance... there was practically nothing of video in 1982. The Circo started at Arpoador in 1982 [January]. Only later it goes to Lapa [October 1982].



AF – How was the beginning? What did you study at university?

RB – I studied at ECO, at UFRJ, but I was sure I would be an actor. I went to Communication because there was no theater college. I remember those little prep

school books that described the professions. I was interested in Physical Education, Geography, Forestry Engineering, but I really wanted to be an actor. I also wanted to live in the forest, which was another alternative and such. None of my friends came for communication. Everyone was an engineer or a doctor. My father, this in the 1970s, was shocked. For him, it was a girl's college.

AF – You went to Communication, then, to do theater, organize collectives, get together.

RB – The first thing I did was organize a theater group. It was a time of effervescence, the years 1976/77, a second moment of the strong student movement, then the struggle for amnesty. And then we do TRECO – Teatro de Resistência da ECO [*ECO Resistance Theater*]. We always performed at student demonstrations. There was TREPE, which belonged to PUC, and other resistance theaters. During this period, someone decided to start a film club in college, and they called me to join. I already liked cinema, had a camera, and loved taking pictures, framing, deciding where to point the camera. We started showing some banned films, in 16mm. And then one of the members says to me: look, I have a Super 8 camera at home, but I don't know how it works. And me: bring it, let's find out. We started the film club *Olho Vivo*, I think that was the name. We filmed marches, the student movement, the UNE reopening congress in Salvador.

AF – Did you keep these images? Do they still exist?

RB – Nothing, everything stayed in the college, but nobody knows where it ended up. I remember that the idea was to leave it at ECO because, in the late 1970s, we won an award for the best film club movement in Rio. We won a moviola, a cutter, a camera, and a lot of other things. And we donated everything there. Although it had nothing to do with college, it was within the college. We assembled, cut, had those strips, the clotheslines. Craziness. We assembled and recorded with a cassette recorder the sound separately.

AF – And how was the film course at Circo Voador in the 1980s, which resulted in *Ovídio*? Was it still in Arpoador, or was it in Lapa?

RB – This course by Joaquim Pedro [de Andrade] was essential. It was a film language course. He taught directing, Walter Carvalho taught the camera part, and I took care of video editing. I was a kid, just starting out. The Circo was already in Lapa.



AF – You mean, in the early 1980s, were you already teaching video editing?

RB – The first VHS video camera I got from Buza Ferraz. He was wealthy and told me he had a video camera in his house that nobody used. This happens when Circo is still in Arpoador. I started recording without limits. There is still a love for filming everything, a lust for the image, the limitation of the frame, the framing...

AF – That's cool. There's a film critic, Serge Daney, now deceased, who describes the frame edges, boundaries between outside and inside of the frame as being highly eroticized. It has to do with deciding what is visible and what is not (and can only be imagined). But, going back to Joaquim Pedro's course at the Circo, you were responsible for editing during classes. Talk about your experience with Joaquim and about the short film.

RB – I filmed the course exercises, collecting everything and then putting it together. The video goes to a festival in Rio [1º Vídeo Rio, in 1983] and we do a performance there at [Centro Cultural] Cândido Mendes. Then goes to *Videobrasil*. I remember the father of one of the students had a Mercedes. We stop in front of Cândido Mendes, inside the Mercedes, and start to get out. But we went in on one side and out on the other, in and out. Nonsense, but we agreed to go into the room and laugh at everything when the video was shown. The jokes, funny or not funny, we laughed incessantly. Obviously, we infected the audience, and it worked. We won the award for the best edition. I won. The award was an internship at Globo Vídeo. As I was already working there, I thought it was too paltry.

AF – And how were the dynamics of Joaquim Pedro's film classes for theater, vídeo, and dance people? Did Joaquim already understand video, video editing?

RB – It was a cinema course in VT. Very fun, because it had all the anarchy of Joaquim. You have to see the movie [*Ovídio*] in this context. He didn't understand video editing, which is linear editing, where you occupy a space on the tape, different from moviola. In it, you have a piece of the plan here, another there, and, if you're interested, you cut and paste. In the video, editing is going to a new tape. Back then, every time you switched to a new tape, a copy was generated, and it lost quality. I had to do it in a way that didn't lose quality. The basis of editing was essential – unlike moviola or non-linear editing today. This base could not be moved due to the time and space of the videotape. You can't cut it because there's a noise on the magnetic tape. I used to say: 'Joaquim, this cannot be done.' I drew the tape for him. And he thought I was kidding. 'But... how can it not? I've been working with this for years!' I used to say: "Joaquim, this is a tape. The image has to fit all here in the middle." He got mad. This course was important. Victor Lopes, Waltinho Carvalho, Paulo Violeta, Barrão were there.

AF – And were there women in the course?

RB – Claudia Calirman was there, who now writes about art and lives in New York. Dorinha Pellegrino, who is an actress, and Alice Andrade, Joaquim's daughter.

AF – Before landing in Lapa, there is the moment of Circo Sem Lona. It is the period that Circo Voador, with no fixed address, takes its work to the slums of Rio and its suburbs (from March to October 1982). What was your role as a video artist at that time?

RB – This is in the Circo documentary [*A farra do Circo*]. Perfeito [Fortuna] gets us some money to do animation in slums, do theater and video in slums. And it was there that a nucleus of Circo Voador was formed, which the people in the South Zone abandoned. I was dressed up, on my motorcycle, as a clown. At the end of the day, I would set up two large televisions on top of a VW Bus and show the interviews with the residents and the animations. It was amazing. The guys saw each other right after we filmed because we started at 10:00 in the morning and at 4:00 in the afternoon we showed. It was a commotion. I carried the camera in the trunk along with the small recorder. The video was recorded independently of the camera, and I had to synchronize, do everything.





AF – Theater and video groups, connected by Circo Voador, were bringing fun to needy communities in Rio, right? And is it during this period that you will work at Globo in the image archive? I want you to talk about the work of organizing, collecting, identifying documents. An activity that requires time, patience, quite different from the warm and communal experience of the Circus, perhaps.

RB – It was still in college that I started working at Globo in the image archive, Cedoc. At that moment, the paper files were being replaced by the computer. It was there, in the archive, that I learned to deal with time. I worked there for 3 and a half years. I continued doing theater but realized that I wouldn't get very far as an actor. Being an actor is not for everyone. I also did children's theater and an adult play because I had to replace a last-minute actor. I was the stagehand.

AF – It's nice you saying that it's working on the archive that you learn to deal with time because time will be important in your documentaries. The long time of gestation and realization (I think about the feature film *A pessoa é para o que nasce*, an unfolding of the short film with the same name, of 6 min, made in 1998). I'd like you to talk about the arrival of video as a language here in Rio. In São Paulo, TVDO people are coming on TV to make fun of, sneer, talk on national television, and the group *Olhar Eletrônico*. In Rio, are the people who will work with video more dispersed?

RB – *Olhar Eletrônico* was a producer. Nowadays, it is Fernando [Meirelles]'s O2, which comes from there [O2's partners today are Fernando Meirelles and

Paulo Morelli]. At *Olhar Eletrônico*, there were also Marcelo Machado, Marcelo Tas, and Renato Barbieri. [Journalist] Goulart de Andrade invites the group to join his [*Comando da Madrugada*] program. In Rio, the only thing I did to get on TV was from Dulce Quental's video clips and then *Paralamas [do Sucesso]*'s. There was no such strong movement of wanting to get on TV as in São Paulo.

AF – When you tell these stories about Circo Voador, I think that making videos had to do with making friends, something collective, affective. This is true for both São Paulo and Rio. In São Paulo, groups arise from within universities. Here, the consolidation of video and collectives appears more dispersedly: along the beachfront, through Arcos da Lapa, then the slums. Communication with popular movements, engagement with the peripheries, and the role of NGOs (Ibase, Cecip, etc.) are also an offshoot of this first euphoria with video, perhaps. What do you think?

RB – The Circo group really had this issue of the collective, of everyone doing things together, like organizing together to live... The question of the collective is very important in my films. Then I left the group and started working at TV Manchete, directing a video clip program, *FM TV* [in early 1985]. Patrícia Pillar, Tim Reskala, Marcão Rodriguez, João Kleber, a kind of imitator comedian, started to work there too. The idea was to make a very messed-up program. We opened the camera lens, and the boom guy appeared, the cameras, the backstage. Sometimes one of the cameras would feature a video clip. TV Manchete was outraged. Paulo Coelho was the program's writer, wrote feeble things. I don't think he had any desire to do that because I had to redo everything! He wrote "Matube" a lot, Good Afternoon in whatever language or "Mactube." I think he was no longer with Raul Seixas, kind of off-season. But Tim Reskala and Patricia Pillar were really cool. Belisário [Franca], Sandra [Kogut], João [Salles] are starting to make videos here in Rio. I ended up becoming Sandra's partner in 1986. We wanted to do everything that TV didn't do [Sandra Kogut and Berliner start a production company, *Antevê*].

AF – Making "anti-television" as an esthetic and political program. And what were these Manchete video clips like? Far from the clean style of *Fantástico* [Rede Globo], I imagine. Was there any experimentation like the documentary series shown at Manchete in the 1980s? I think of *Japão – uma viagem no tempo* (1985, Walter Salles), and then *América* (1989, João Salles) or *African Pop* (Belisario, 1989).

RB – Nothing daring. I only recorded the heads in a style that later became MTV in the 1980s. The video clips either came from *Fantástico* to TV Manchete, or they were material from outside Brazil. There was a lot of smoke and a crooked camera. That was the buzz. I had the presenters pretending they were disappearing and screwed up this kind of esthetic from *Fantástico*. The TV was very clean, with no mistakes. As I worked at Globo, I saw how they were bothered when someone stuttered; the text was wrong. Today is different. My first video clip was from 1985, when I left Manchete. Dulce Quental [singer, former member of the band *Sempre Livre*] asked me to make the video clip *Delica* [to be shown on the Sunday program, *Fantástico*] made with archival footage, all bootlegged and taken from the Globo and Manchete archives. I already start editing with some defects, using different file images from other places, clean and dirty.

AF – You seem to treat the image as if it were the music itself in this clip. I mean, the image appears to be in tune with the beat. And you didn't have copyright issues?

RB – It was broadcasted a lot, but there was a lot of trouble. Walthinho Salles was furious. I had taken pictures from *Japão* series without knowing it. The episodes hadn't been aired yet, but they were there in the archive. I asked a friend who worked at TV Manchete, without knowing it, for images from Japan. Walthinho was very angry. I went there to apologize. It was a very irresponsible thing indeed. Imagine if they were going to sue me for this video. I would have paid a fortune...

AF – And Roberto, what was your relationship with the documentary at that time? Did you already have a critical eye for the documentary as you already had for the video clip?

RB – When I started making documentaries, I remembered films shown at school, bad documentaries, didactic, boring. And the shorts, which played before the features, which were also very bad. Lots of films about crafts, etc. There is *Jango* (1984), by Silvio Tendler, which is very important. The movie fascinated me. Also, *Os anos JK* (1980), an interview documentary, but *Jango* arrived differently.

AF – Any film by Glauber Rocha, by Leon Hirzsmann, at that time?

RB – I remember the impact of seeing the *Abertura* program, in the late 1970s, with Glauber's participation. The program was created by Fernando Barbosa Lima, and one of the parts had Glauber participating. It was sensational. Have you seen any snippets?

AF – Yes, we see Glauber disheveled, the camera shakes, a dirty image, the wrong side of the TV. That's in 1979! I asked about your relationship with the documentary because you later make *Angola* (1988) and because *Paralamas do Sucesso's* video clips, which you will direct, connect with the documentary. A camera that goes there in places, in the slums, wants to film the people, the garbage, the toothless smile, the backstage footage.

RB – *Paralamas* [do Sucesso] saw the program I made for Dulce Quental and called me to make their first video clip, *Alagados* (1986), the first one of the LP Selvagem. It was a turning point in their careers. Because it's with *Alagados* that they come to Brazil for real, begin to be successful, and look to Brazil. *Alagados* is a record that has a lot of African and Brazilian influence. Then I say: "This record is very Brazilian. The video clip will be a documentary". So we go to Morro de São Carlos, at Estácio, to the funk ball, to Vila Mimosa, that's in 1986. It's a documentary clip, something no one did. I filmed with the camera in my hand, very Brazilian roots, connected to a third-world cinema thing.

AF – Connected to the cinema made here, at Cinema Novo and the affirmation of an esthetic point of view about what to film, how to film. Did you have this clarity of mixing the documentary with the video clip, injecting the document into the traditional clip?

RB – Total. What happened was that the people who made video clips would go to New York, record VHS tapes, and send them to show what was happening there. Then people would say: "I'm going to make a clip like this one by David Bowie, a clip like this by I don't know who is." I didn't want to go that way. I looked for this more documentary wave that ended up being my thing.

AF – Do you remember Marcello Dantas's Magnetoscópio room, in Copacabana, a space of about 40 m<sup>2</sup>, at 143 Siqueira Campos, room 159? We read the articles in the press at the time. The room appears as an important place for video movement in Rio de Janeiro, with debates, performances, video art exhibitions, video clips, video performances. *Angola* was debated by anthropologists, critics, historians. Here's an excerpt we found in the press: "The documentary genre that has been discussed since November 21 in the Magnetoscópio room, within the Seminar "Quase nada é verdade," wins a special night on Saturday at 8:30 pm, with the presentation of two successful examples of the independent lode: the videos *African Pop* and *Angola*. Instead of trying to swim against the tide, the two video documentarians take

advantage of the video clip's banal language to recreate it. The two productions will be projected with the presence of their respective directors, who then participate in a debate with the audience and guests" (PEDROSA, 1990).

RB – Marcello [Dantas] played a fundamental role in this history of video mixes – video art, plastic arts, video performance. He was super connected.

AC – From 1985 onwards, we found, researching in print newspaper archives, many events with video art, photo exhibitions, hybrid art events, plastic arts, performance. Magnetoscópio room lasted four years. *Angola* and *African Pop* (Belisário Franca) were exhibited and discussed together. Remember anything?

RB – This debate was very curious. I remember my surprise. Hermano [Hermano Vianna, anthropologist, who wrote the documentary series *African Pop* with Belisário Franca] said: "we went to Africa knowing exactly what we were going to do. We filmed exactly according to plan". And I said: "damn, I couldn't film anything I had planned in Angola! We got there, and everything I wanted to film was forbidden. Everything I thought was forbidden was released... no one knew how to read in Portuguese; the guys took the permits that we had upside down! A lot of people had never seen a camera".



Source: Ricardo Azoury | Agência F4.

AF – Would you say that the video clips you directed for *Paralamas do Sucesso*, due to their documentary treatment, open the doors for your first documentary, *Angola*?

RB – Before *Angola*, Sandra [Kogut] and I did *V, o Vídeo*, a special [video feature with *Paralamas*]. I say this because it was the first independent program to air on SBT's station in 1987. I remember the headline in the newspaper was: 'Paralamas contra o rei.' It was shown on the same day as the Roberto Carlos special. The people at the station thought that we had filmed a *Paralamas* show and that wasn't it. It has a whole documentary language. When we went to SBT to finish the program 24 hours before, they were scared, but they had no other option. Everything was already edited; it needed to insert letterings and such. Ricardo Basbaum [visual artist] made all the art.

AF – Another critical moment in your video trajectory will be *Angola*. I learned that the team had classes with African historian José Maria Nunes Pereira before the trip. How did the invitation to go to Africa, in 1988, the year of the Centenary of Abolition, come about?

RB – Luis Antonio Silveira, producer, organizes this. He thought of the project because it was, in the beginning, a photography exhibition book about Angola, if I'm not mistaken. And he calls me to make the video too. So much so that I have the poster for the exhibition [*Angola*, held at Paço Imperial, in 1988], with photography by Ricardo Azoury.



Source: Ricardo Azoury | Agência F4.

AF – Yes, I talked to Ricardo. The initial idea was to make an exhibition of photographs. And he ends up traveling with you. I saw that, in this project, the city hall of Rio was involved with the city hall of Luanda. How were this trip and filming there?

RB – So, Luis Antonio (producer), Ricardo Azoury; I called Gustavo Hadba to photograph the video and Robson Maia as VT technician because there was no sound technician. We were five plus the driver there. There were six of us with equipment in a small, two-door car, Russian brand Niva. We run Angola like this. I don't even know how to. I remember that Varig gave the tickets. And the problem was the visa to go there. As it was getting delayed, we had several classes with this African history teacher.

AF – And how was the experience of going there to make a documentary that would later be shown on SBT? Watching *Angola*, we perceive the desire to meet people on the streets, map, and traverse the country amid a complicated context of civil war. The film is a journey punctuated by the lines of José Luandino Vieira [historian]. It also has the narration made by the actor Chico Diaz and the musical score signed by João Barone.

RB – This trip was fascinating. Through research, we knew that more than 70% of Brazilian slaves had come from Angola. Let's go there and discover our roots, the Angola-Brazil connection, the route of slavery. But arriving there, Angolan TV did not go out on the street; it did not make contact with people. We were going to stay for three weeks, and it ended up being two months. We traveled with a camera that couldn't zoom because the tooth was broken. I had to choose the lens first, so there wasn't that TV language. We filmed with U-Matic, and there were two recorders. We took two because the VTs were old. I remember that when we arrived on Angolan television, at TPA, with our U-Matic equipment, the guy looked and laughed. "But we no longer have it here!". In Angola, there was nothing but beta equipment!

AF – You come to film in an entirely conflicted country, in a struggle for power since the 1970s, when Angola became independent from Portugal. You arrive amid the hurricane of civil war, a battle between two liberation movements, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Crazyiness?

RB – Total, we almost died. We record images of UNITA, but actually, we were with the MPLA, a political party still in power today. We're going to Cuito Cuanavale [south of the country, where the civil war's biggest military conflict occurred a few months before], an area in dispute. We go by truck, with another English team, to the point that is in conflict. We stop at this place, a tank comes. War was no longer that thing about shooting, about machine guns. Everything is still, an emptiness. You see the bridge in dispute, but you don't see anyone, just silence and us, on this side. We film, there's the



landscape there, until suddenly we hear a sound, missile sounds, and the earth shakes... I look to the side; the people hadn't left the truck, just me and Gustavo with the tripod, camera, and a soldier up ahead. And this soldier, who was close to us, was killed by the missile. We didn't understand anything, the truck started to drive away, and we were with that dead guy over there. Gustavo and I left running. We thought at the time: no, that didn't happen, these guys are acting. The question of death was bizarre. We decided to help, pick up the guy, and take him with us in the helicopter. I remember the British guys were furious, poor guys. They were coming from England and had a very different relationship with the country. Imagine they brushed their teeth with mineral water! I certainly, if I hadn't married, would have become a war journalist. It would have been my fate. That adrenaline, that danger, everything fascinated me there.



Source: Ricardo Azoury | Agência F4.

## References

FRANÇA, A. M. “Séries documentais na televisão: o *travelling* rasante de *African Pop*”. *Galáxia*, São Paulo, n. 37, p. 80-93, 2018.

MACHADO, A. (org.). *Made in Brasil: as linhas de força do vídeo brasileiro*. São Paulo: Itáu Cultura, 2003.

PEDROSA, M. “A face pop dos documentários”. *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, 30 nov. 1990.

submitted on: Dec. 8, 2020 | approved: Feb. 18, 2021