



P.O.V.

Season 19

Discussion Guide

# The Fall of Fujimori

A Film by Ellen Perry



[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)



## Letter from the Filmmaker

MARCH 2006

### Dear Colleague,

I first saw Alberto Fujimori on CNN, just after his commandos stormed the Japanese Embassy in Peru, freeing hostages and ending a four-month crisis. As Fujimori delivered a powerful and emotional victory speech, I remember thinking, "Who is this Japanese guy, and how did he become president of Peru?" The next day in the *New York Times*, an article suggested that the commandos might have killed some of the rebels after surrendering. There seems to be more here than meets the eye, I thought. Perhaps this would make a good film.

That was in 1997. At the time, I was in the middle of production for my first film, *Great Wall Across the Yangtze*, an unauthorized investigation of China's contentious Three Gorges Dam project that focused on the plight of 1.5 million displaced persons. In China, I dodged government officials, stumbled onto a top-secret army base, and was even placed under house arrest by the military. Luckily, the soldiers never checked my bags or even suspected I was making a film, a process that requires government authorization and 24-hour supervision.

Making *The Fall of Fujimori* has been equally memorable. In Peru, I often didn't know if I was making a film or starring in one. In Lima, CIA operatives and the Peruvian secret police followed me. While interviewing an arms trafficker in San Jorge prison, I was knocked off my feet by an earthquake that registered 7.2 on the Richter scale. After the rumbling died down, the trafficker let me know that he and his associates would be interested in financing a feature-length movie about a Latin American gun-running drug dealer with a good heart (starring, of course, Robert DeNiro!) I told him I'd think about it. He gestured at the prison walls and smiled, "Well, you know where to find me."

Locating an arms trafficker in a Lima prison is one thing; tracking down Fujimori in Japan was another entirely. For a year and a half I bounced between Peru and California, calling and knocking on the doors of every politician and relative that might be able to introduce me to the exiled president. Eventually, Fujimori's brother and other loyal members of his senior staff agreed to meet me. After earning their trust, I was able to interview Fujimori's eldest daughter (who also served as his first lady), Keiko. With her blessing, Fujimori finally agreed to see me. I was closer! But more months passed as an ambivalent Fujimori failed to commit to an interview date. By January 2004, I was running out of time and bought a ticket to Tokyo. When I arrived, a somewhat surprised Fujimori said he was fighting a nasty flu. Every morning for the next four days I called his office and politely inquired about his health. Finally — almost reluctantly — he called and said he could see me in thirty minutes at the Tokyo hotel where he lives.



*Ellen Perry, Director of "The Fall of Fujimori."*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures



## Letter from the Filmmaker

Navigating my way through Tokyo's labyrinthine subway system, I was at the hotel an hour later. Fujimori had been patiently waiting for me, and I half expected him to be angry at my tardiness. On the contrary, he was the epitome of grace. While he had initially said he could spare only an hour, six hours later he was preparing a hotpot dinner for us and enthusiastically recalling key events of his presidency.

In person, Fujimori was gracious, warm and accommodating. I expressed my vision and assured him that the film would be honest and impartial. Fujimori was only too happy to tell his side of the story. We finally parted at midnight after agreeing to begin the formal interview on camera at the hotel at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

The next few weeks were surreal. It didn't seem possible that the Alberto Fujimori wanted by Interpol for murder and corruption could be the same polite, modest and soft-spoken man I spent hours with everyday.

Three weeks into our interview, Fujimori and I set off for Kumamoto, Japan, the birthplace of his ancestors. I asked him if we could shoot a scene with him on the nearby beach, as I would be leaving Japan in days. Without complaining, and still fighting his cold, Fujimori let me shoot him for over an hour in miserably wet and frigid conditions. In the near dark, our faces tingling and fingers nearly frozen, we finally wrapped.

But even though we had a flight back to Tokyo in two hours, Fujimori's work wasn't done: he had promised to meet workers of a local factory. When I pressed him about the time and suggested we get to the airport right away, he insisted we accommodate the workers in the same way he had accommodated me. The "factory" visit turned out to be a stop at a family mat-weaving business. As I watched Fujimori take a tour of the barn where the mats were produced, I understood how he had won the hearts of millions of Peruvians, and why many still revere him: Fujimori has a true affinity for the common man. So, I asked myself, what had gone wrong?

The deeper I dug, the more the story resembled a Shakespearean tragedy in its richness and its plot. There is the bitter and estranged wife, the fiercely loyal daughter, the cruel and diabolical enemy and even the treacherous confidante. Finally, there is the exiled king, Fujimori himself, wandering the edge of the night, searching in the shadows for his lost throne.



*Ellen Perry, Director and Enrique Bedos, First Unit Director, of "The Fall of Fujimori" (2002).*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

### **Ellen Perry**

Filmmaker, *The Fall of Fujimori*



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## Introduction

*The Fall of Fujimori* is a revealing look at Alberto Fujimori, the former Peruvian president wanted by Interpol for corruption, kidnapping and murder. This feature-length (90 minute) film explores the volatile events that defined Fujimori's ten-year presidency (1990–2000) and his subsequent life as an exile in Japan.

At the center of Fujimori's presidency was his controversial war on terrorism, which employed hard-line tactics such as hooded judges, military tribunals and the alleged use of torture and death squads. Within two years, President Fujimori's extreme measures brought success, including the capture of South America's most notorious terrorist, Abimael Guzman, founder and mastermind of the bloody Shining Path guerilla movement. But Fujimori's victories came at a crippling cost: he sacrificed democracy, freedom of the press, his presidency, his citizenship and even his own family.

Fujimori's complex case challenges viewers to question whether he is a model leader, or, as his critics claim, a dictator. The assessment of Fujimori's track record is particularly apt in the face of the United States' current global war on terrorism. What freedoms are worth sacrificing for security, and who should be empowered to make those decisions? As an outreach tool, *The Fall of Fujimori* is a compelling case study that provides a timely springboard for discussions about the meaning of democracy in the face of fear.

[Sources: Bloomberg.com, encyclopedia.com, trial-ch.org, *New York Times*]



*Filmmaker Ellen Perry sits with exiled former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori before his interview for "The Fall of Fujimori", 2004.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures



## Potential Partners

## Key Issues

*The Fall of Fujimori* is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and P.O.V. films relating to terrorism or Latin America, including *Discovering Domingo* and *No More Tears Sister*.**
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed to the right**
- **Legislators**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities, community colleges and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as P.O.V.'s national partners Elderhostel Learning in Retirement Centers, members of the Listen Up! Youth Media Network, or your local library.**

*The Fall of Fujimori* is an excellent tool for outreach because it raises deep questions about how far governments should be permitted to go in battling terrorists and how a fearful population can be led to accept cruelty under the guise of democracy. The film will be of special interest to people exploring the issues below:

- **Asian diaspora**
- **Civil liberties**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Corruption**
- **Cronyism**
- **Democracy**
- **Economic development**
- **Human rights**
- **International relations**
- **Latin America**
- **Law**
- **Nationalism**
- **Peace studies**
- **Peru**
- **Police brutality**
- **Political science**
- **Populism**
- **Prison reform**
- **Resistance movements**
- **Social justice**

## Event Ideas

Use a screening of *The Fall of Fujimori* to:

- **Organize a mock-UN human rights trial or tribunal based on Fujimori's case.**
- **Invite elected federal representatives to a community dialogue on the limits of appropriate responses to terrorism.**
- **Convene a panel of scholars to explore the contradictions of democracy and the strategies available when corrupt leaders or dictators are elected democratically.**



## Using this Guide

**This guide is designed to help you use *The Fall of Fujimori* as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing an event as well as ideas for how to help participants think more deeply about the issues in the film. The discussion questions are designed for a very wide range of audiences. Rather than attempt to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.**

### Planning an Event

In addition to showcasing documentary film as an art form, screenings of P.O.V. films can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views, or create space for reflection. Using the questions below as a planning checklist will help ensure a high-quality, high-impact event.

- **Have you defined your goals?** Set realistic goals with your partner(s). Will you host a single event or engage in an ongoing project? Being clear about your goals will make it easier to structure the event, target publicity and evaluate results.
- **Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- **Have you arranged to involve all stakeholders?** It is especially important that people be allowed to speak for themselves. If your group is planning to take action that affects people other than those present, how will you give voice to those not in the room?
- **Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel equally comfortable?** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- **Will the set-up of the room help you meet your goals?** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, can people see one another? Are there spaces to use for small breakout groups? Can everyone easily see the screen and hear the film?
- **Have you scheduled time to plan for action?** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even if the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the issues on the table. For those who are new to the issues, just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.



## Using this Guide

### Facilitating a Discussion

**Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. By their nature, those same topics also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere where people feel safe, encouraged and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share their ideas openly and honestly. Here's how:**

### Preparing Yourself

**Identify your own hot-button issues.** View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

**Be knowledgeable.** You don't need to be an expert on Peru or terrorism to lead an event, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. In addition to the "Background Information" section below, you may want to take a look at the suggested Web sites and books in the "Resources" section on p. 22.

**Be clear about your role.** You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, such as host, organizer, or even projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure that you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that as a facilitator your job is to remain neutral and to help move the discussion along without imposing your views on the dialogue.

**Know your group.** Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue, or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion and socioeconomic class can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles and prior knowledge. Take care not to assume that all members of a particular group share the same point of view. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.

### Who Should Facilitate?

You may or may not be the best person to facilitate, especially if you have multiple responsibilities for your event. If you are particularly invested in a topic, it might be wise to ask someone more neutral to guide the dialogue.

If you need to find someone else to facilitate, some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation skills. In addition to these local resources, groups such as the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) and the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) may be able to provide or help you locate skilled facilitators. Be sure that your facilitator receives a copy of this guide well in advance of your event.



## Using this Guide

### Preparing the Group

**Consider how well group members know one another.** If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time at the beginning of the event for introductions.

**Agree to ground rules around language.** Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically such rules include prohibiting yelling and slurs as well as asking people to speak in the first person (“I think...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that...”).

**Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.** Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners, or should attendance be limited?

**Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate.** In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue. This will be especially important in preventing a discussion from dissolving into a repetitive or rhetorical, political or religious debate.

**Encourage active listening.** Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase what was said to ensure that they have heard it correctly.

**Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of his or her own experience.** Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. Everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of the film they have just seen, and each of them may be accurate. It can help people to understand one another’s perspectives if they identify the evidence or experience on which they base their opinion.

**Take care of yourself and group members.** If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies or have local professionals present. Think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly, and explain things like confidentiality and whether or not press will be present.



## Background Information

### Peru

An independent nation since 1821, Peru is about the size of Alaska and is located on the Pacific coast of Latin America, just south of the equator. Approximately 90 percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic. Almost half (45 percent) of its 28 million citizens are indigenous peoples. Another 37 percent are “mestizos” (a mix of indigenous and the descendants of Spanish conquerors). 15 percent are white (descendants of the conquistadors), and the remaining three percent include communities of Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The largest immigrant population in Peru is comprised of Japanese descendants who were originally sent to different parts of the world in response to overpopulation and foreign interests as part of a government sponsored migration. These immigrants were mostly contract laborers employed as plantation workers, who eventually chose to stay in Peru after their contracts expired in hopes of better economic opportunity.

[Source: [www.latinamericallinks.com/japanese\\_in\\_Peru.htm](http://www.latinamericallinks.com/japanese_in_Peru.htm)]

Through the 15th and 16th centuries, Peru was the seat of the Incas. Their 300-year rule extended from present-day Ecuador to central Chile. Spanish conquistadors defeated the Incas in 1533 and founded Lima as the capital and focal point of Spanish expansion. Spaniards and their descendants have controlled the Peruvian government ever since, even though they have always been a minority. Political power has resulted in economic benefit, leading to ongoing disparities (and, as a result, ongoing conflict) between the indigenous population and the descendants of the colonizers.

Peru has significant mineral, metal and agricultural resources, as well as natural gas, but fluctuations in worldwide pricing of commodities have made it difficult to establish a strong, stable economy over long periods of time. The most recent government maintained control over inflation and oversaw



*Fujimori in indigenous dress while campaigning for the 2000 elections.*

Photo courtesy of the Presidential Archives

economic growth, but prior president Alejandro Toledo, unable to escape accusations of corruption and persistently high rates of unemployment and poverty, was not particularly popular.

[Source: CIA World Factbook]

### The Environment Before Fujimori’s Election

Prior to Fujimori’s presidency, Peru oscillated between democratically elected governments and military dictatorships, eventually ending all military governance in 1980. Democratic elections have been in place since then. Fujimori’s predecessor, Alan Garcia Perez (1985–1990), grew popular in the first years of his presidency after promising to devote no more than 10 percent of the country’s export earnings to repaying foreign debt. However, his popularity waned as inflation grew to 7,000



## Background Information

percent in what some saw as a product of his free-spending policies. Garcia was later accused of corruption, including taking bribes and kickbacks as head of state.

To exacerbate matters, there was an upsurge in Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso or SL) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru or MRTA) activity during Garcia's term. The Shining Path began in the late 1960s as a Maoist takeover of the Peruvian Communist Party. Led by former university professor Abimael Guzman, its goal has been to destroy existing Peruvian institutions and replace them with a communist peasant revolutionary regime. To accomplish that goal, it waged a guerilla war during the 1980s and early 1990s that took the lives of at least 30,000 people.

Sometimes an ally and sometimes a competitor of the Shining Path, the MRTA was also a guerilla group, but its ideology was Marxist rather than Maoist. It cast itself in the legacy of fighting the centuries of oppression of the Indian masses (Tupac Amaru was an Indian noble who traced his lineage back to the Incas and who led a revolt against the Spanish crown in 1780–81). MRTA is best known for the four-month takeover of the Japanese Embassy in Lima in 1997. Since that hostage situation, the MRTA has focused its energies on the release of its imprisoned members.

[Sources: [www.dfat.gov](http://www.dfat.gov), BBC News, *New York Times*, US State Department, NPS library]



*Fujimori stages a coup d'etat on April 3, 1992.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

### Alberto Fujimori's Presidency

In the wake of an administration plagued by terrorism and a dismal economic situation, Peruvians elected Alberto Fujimori to office in 1990. The son of Japanese immigrants and a former agricultural engineer, Fujimori stabilized the economy and launched an attack on the Shining Path and the MRTA. His free-market reforms, privatization of state-owned companies and removal of subsidies helped bolster the economy and ended hyperinflation.

Fujimori's fear of leftist insurgents and their potential control over the country led him to stage a coup against his own administration in 1992. During this period he dissolved the Peruvian congress and courts and seized dictatorial power. This undemocratic move was vindicated when Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman was captured later that year.

Given his record of curtailing terrorism and strengthening the economy, Fujimori was re-elected in 1995 by an overwhelming



## Background Information



Fujimori was elected to the Congress of the Republic in April 2006 and vowed to help her father return to the political arena “through the front door.”

The former president is still wanted on charges of corruption, murder and kidnapping, however. Though Peru has sought to extradite and try him in their courts, he was able to elude arrest from 2000 to 2005 during his self-imposed exile in Japan. In November 2005, however, Fujimori traveled to Chile in an attempt to run in Peru’s 2006 presidential elections. He was arrested by Chilean authorities upon arrival, but perhaps as a result of the tenuous and historically strained relationship between Chile and Peru, the Chilean authorities did

not hand him over to his home country. In May 2006 Fujimori was released on bail on the condition that he not leave Chile. At press time, Fujimori was still fighting extradition to Peru.

Alejandro Toledo, president from 2001 to 2006, was responsible for decentralizing the government to a certain degree and prosecuting Vladimiro Montesinos, but failed to appease striking teachers and farmers. Toledo was also the subject of several scandals, one involving his illegitimate child. With Fujimori banned from running in the April 2006 elections, the top candidates were Ollanta Humala, a former army officer, Lourdes Flores, a former congresswoman, and Alan Garcia, Fujimori’s predecessor. While Humala won the most votes, he did not receive 50 percent of the vote, and thus faced Garcia in a runoff election in May 2006. On June 4, 2006, Ex-President Alan Garcia was elected into office for a second time.

[Source: BBC News, New York Times]

*Fujimori in Japan.*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

majority of constituents. However, his second term was wrought with suspicions surrounding Vladimiro Montesinos, the head of the National Intelligence Service and an alleged human rights offender. In 2000, Fujimori attempted to run for a third term, a move that was seen as unconstitutional. His opponent, Alejandro Toledo, also accused him of rigging the election. A corruption scandal that involved footage of Montesinos bribing a congressman to join Fujimori’s party led to the eventual exit of the president, who fled to his ancestral homeland of Japan.

[Source: BBC News]

### **The Aftermath of the Fujimori Administration**

Despite being banned by the Peruvian government from holding office until 2011, Fujimori has not given up hopes of running for president again. His daughter and former first lady Keiko



## Background Information

### Timeline

**June 10, 1990:** Alberto Fujimori, an agrarian engineer and the son of poor Japanese immigrants, is elected president of Peru.

**November 3, 1991:** Barrios Altos massacre. An army intelligence death squad known as La Colina assassinates 15 people, including an 8-year-old boy, in the impoverished district of Barrios Altos.

**March 24, 1992:** Fujimori's wife, Susana Higuchi, accuses Fujimori and his family of illicitly selling clothes donated from Japan to the poor of Peru.

**April 3, 1992:** Fujimori leads a coup d'etat against his own administration. Later that month, over 20,000 Peruvians fill the streets to support the coup.

**July 16, 1992:** The Shining Path's brutality peaks in the Tarata Bombing, a terrorist attack against civilians in Lima. In the space of nine hours seven car bombs explode on Tarata Street, which is in the business area of Miraflores, an upscale district of the city. In response, Fujimori orders the largest crackdown on suspected terrorists in Peru's history.

**July 18, 1992:** La Cantuta massacre. La Colina members kidnap and murder a university lecturer and nine students from the University of La Cantuta.

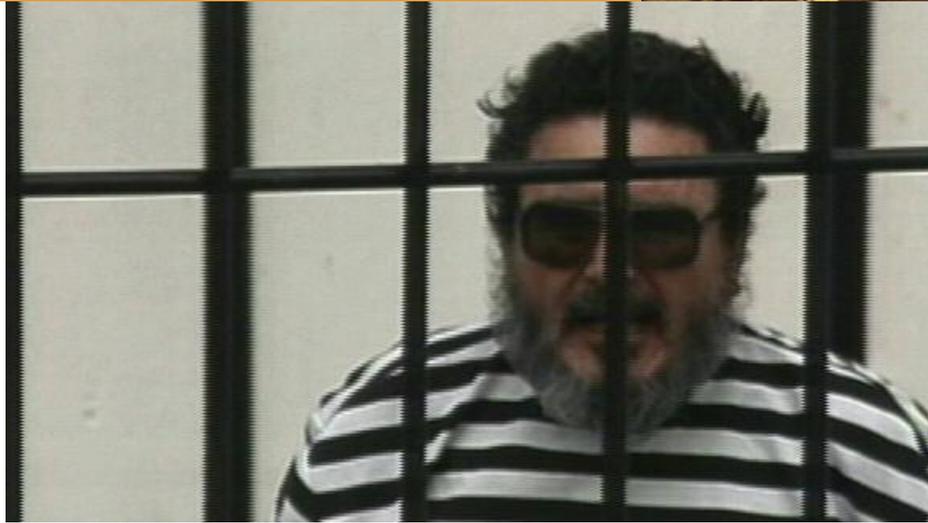
**September 12, 1992:** Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman is captured. Guzman is shown to the press, behind bars, in a striped prison suit.

**April 4, 1994:** Operation Aries, the final push to rid Peru of the Shining Path.

**August 3, 1994:** Susana Higuchi leaves Fujimori, her husband of 20 years.

**April 9, 1995:** Fujimori is re-elected for a second term despite an attempt by his ex-wife to run against him.

**December 17, 1996:** The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) takes over the Japanese Embassy. Four months later, Peruvian commando units storm the Japanese Embassy, rescuing all but one of the 72 hostages while killing every rebel.



*Abimael Guzman in jail.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

**May 5, 1997:** Protest in the streets against Fujimori for firing three judges in congress.

**October 26, 1998:** Peace accord signed with Ecuador, with whom Peru had been at war for several years.

**July 18, 1999:** Arrest of Oscar Durand, the number-two man in the Shining Path.

**December 27, 1999:** Fujimori officially announces his decision to run for an unconstitutional third term as president.

**May 29, 2000:** Fujimori takes office for a third consecutive five-year term with nearly 52 percent of the vote.

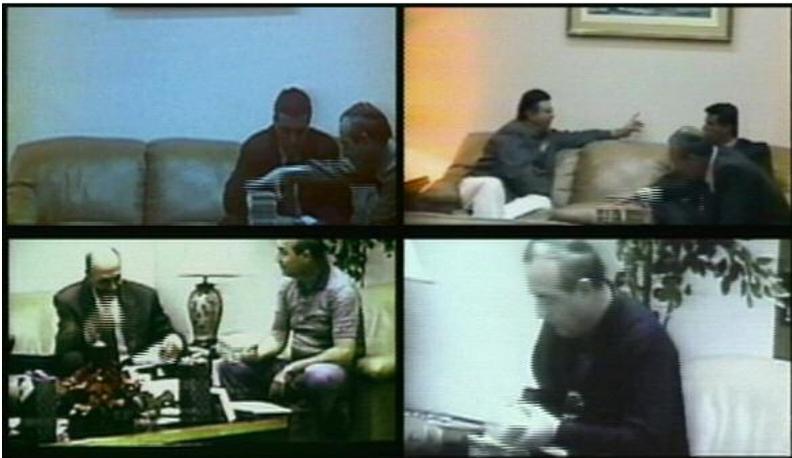
**August 21, 2000:** President Fujimori holds a press conference with Vladimiro Montesinos announcing the interception of a large consignment of arms from Jordan destined for FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Colombia's largest guerrilla movement. It is later revealed that the mastermind of the arms deal is Montesinos.

**September 14, 2000:** A Peruvian television station broadcasts a leaked videotape showing Vladimiro Montesinos paying an opposition Congressman \$15,000 to abandon his party and join President Alberto Fujimori's ruling bloc.

**September 16, 2000:** As the bribery scandal grows, Fujimori says he will disband the feared National Intelligence Service. He offers to step down and hold a new election in 2001, in which he will not run, ending his 10-year rule.



## Background Information



*Videotape of Montesinos bribing a Congressman.*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

**September 21, 2000:** Peru's military, widely perceived as being under Montesinos' control, breaks its silence and publicly supports Fujimori's call for new elections in a move seen as a break with Montesinos. Montesinos flees to Panama, where he requests but is denied political asylum. He eventually enters Venezuela using a false passport.

**November 4, 2000:** A special investigator appointed by Fujimori files criminal complaints against Montesinos for corruption of public officials, money laundering and inexplicable increases in personal assets.

**November 9, 2000:** Fujimori announces the discovery of foreign bank accounts linked to Montesinos in New York, Uruguay and the Cayman Islands totaling about \$10 million. These are in addition to previously discovered Swiss accounts. (Investigations would later find that Montesinos and members of his inner circle had amassed more than \$274 million, allegedly from shady arms deals and drug trafficking.)

**November 17, 2000:** As Peru's political upheaval worsens, Fujimori flees to Japan, his ancestral homeland, after attending an international conference in Brunei.

**November 20, 2000:** Fujimori faxes a letter of resignation to congress. Congress rejects it and votes to oust Fujimori on grounds of "moral incapacity."

**December 12, 2000:** The Japanese government declares Alberto Fujimori a Japanese citizen, thus protecting him from extradition by the Peruvian government.

**June 24, 2001:** After an eight-month manhunt, Montesinos is captured in Caracas, Venezuela, and deported to Peru, where he faces charges of money laundering, drug and arms trafficking and murder.

**September 13, 2001:** The Peruvian government issues an arrest warrant for Fujimori, charging him with complicity in the Barrios Altos and La Cantuta massacres and linking him to the covert La Colina death squad.

**March 26, 2003:** Interpol, the international police organization, issues an arrest warrant charging Fujimori with murder and kidnapping.

**November 2005:** Fujimori ends five years of exile and travels to Chile. He is arrested upon arrival but not handed over to Peruvian authorities. Fujimori may have been relying on historically strained relations between Chile and Peru to protect him from imprisonment and extradition as he prepared to run for Peru's presidency in 2006.\*

**January 10, 2006:** Peru's national election commission upholds a decision that bars the former president from running for public office until 2011.\*

**April 9, 2006:** Elections in Peru. Fujimori's daughter and former first lady, Keiko Fujimori, wins a congressional seat. Ollanta Humala, a former army officer, wins the most votes for the presidential nomination, but because he does not receive 50 percent of the vote, must face Alan Garcia, Fujimori's predecessor, in a second-round run-off election in May.\*

**May 18, 2006:** Fujimori is released on bail but forbidden from leaving Chile.\*

**June 4, 2006:** Second round of presidential elections ballots counted in Peru. Ollanta Humala concedes defeat to Alan Garcia.\*

[Source: Majority of information collected from: [www.falloffujimori.com](http://www.falloffujimori.com),

\*BBC News]



## Background Information

### Selected People Featured in *The Fall of Fujimori*



#### **Alberto Fujimori (b. 1938)—**

The son of Japanese immigrants, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori was the first person of Japanese origin to become head of state of a foreign country and, after Fidel Castro, the longest-serving Latin American ruler. During his ten-year term, Fujimori reduced Peru's staggering deficit, resolved the 50-year border dispute with Ecuador and became the only Western leader in recent history to credibly claim victory over terrorism. However, these victories came at a crippling cost: he sacrificed democracy, freedom of the press, his presidency, his citizenship and even his own family.



#### **Vladimiro Montesinos (b. 1946)—**

The son of communist parents, Montesinos joined the Peruvian army in 1966, where he quickly rose through the ranks. In 1976, he obtained copies of secret military documents and was discovered delivering them to CIA agents on an unauthorized trip to the United States. He was dishonorably discharged from the army and sentenced to a year in prison. While incarcerated he studied law, and, upon his release, specialized in the defense of drug traffickers (including members of Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel). When he first met Alberto Fujimori in 1990, the presidential candidate was facing accusations of tax evasion. Montesinos quickly made the allegations disappear, and in return was named de facto chief of Peru's all-powerful National Intelligence Service. Fujimori's right-hand man in the covert and highly controversial war on terror, Montesinos directed the notorious La Colina death squad. He was at the center of the scandals that ultimately brought down Fujimori's regime, including the bribery of an opposition party official and a secret arms deal to supply weapons to FARC guerrillas in Colombia. Montesinos fled Peru in September 2000 and remained at large for nine months after being denied asylum in Panama. Caught by the FBI in Venezuela in 2001, he is currently facing over 70 court proceedings on charges of arms and drug trafficking, extortion and murder. He is incarcerated at the Callao Naval Base in Peru, a prison he had built to contain high-risk terrorists including Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman.

Photos courtesy of Stardust Pictures



## Background Information

### Selected People Featured in *The Fall of Fujimori*



#### **Abimael Guzman (b. 1935)—**

A philosophy professor at the University of San Cristóbal de Huamanga, in Ayacucho, Guzman exploited the poverty and injustice of his rural surroundings to start an armed insurrection that in 20 years of fighting would cost as many as 35,000 lives, most of them civilian. Guzman was captured in 1992 and sentenced by a military court to life in prison. His conviction has been overturned by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. He is currently being retried in a civilian court on terrorism charges.



#### **Susana Higuchi (b. 1950)—**

Wife of Alberto Fujimori and Peru's first lady from 1990 to 1995, Higuchi was her husband's most ardent and enthusiastic supporter. By 1992, however, she was disillusioned by the direction of his leadership, and their highly public separation included accusations of embezzlement, mental cruelty, and illegal detainment. She was a candidate for president against her husband in the 1995 election, but had to abandon her campaign when Fujimori hastily passed legislation (dubbed "The Susana Law") barring relations of the president from seeking higher office. Now one of Fujimori's fiercest critics, Higuchi was elected to congress for the opposition FIM party in 2000.



#### **Keiko Fujimori (b. 1975)—**

When her parents separated in 1995, Keiko Fujimori was asked by her father to serve as first lady. She interrupted her studies at Boston University to travel frequently to Peru to perform her required duties. Fujimori's eldest child, Keiko maintains that her father's downfall was caused by corrupt advisors and by his failure to recognize the magnitude and harm of their influence. She remains loyal to her father and plans to actively campaign for him in the future. Keiko attended Columbia University's business school in the United States, where she met her American husband, Mark Villanella. In April 2006 she ran in the Peruvian elections and won a congressional seat.

Photos courtesy of Stardust Pictures



## General Discussion Questions

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you may want to pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question, such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask them?**
- **What, if anything, in this film surprised you? Why was it surprising?**
- **What did you learn from this film? How might what you learned influence what you choose to do?**
- **Two months from now, what do you think you will remember from this film and why?**



*Fujimori in indigenous dress posing with Peruvian children.  
Photo courtesy of the Presidential Archives*



## Discussion Prompts

### Lessons from Fujimori's Presidency

- If you were a poor or working-class Peruvian citizen and Fujimori ran for president again, would you vote for him? Why or why not? At this point, what might be appealing about his leadership? What would be the drawbacks?
- According to Anthony Quainton, U.S. Ambassador to Peru from 1989 to 1992, "for the disadvantaged in Peru, the Indians of the highlands, Fujimori seemed much more like them in a very profound cultural sense." In your view, how was this possible?
- One of Fujimori's slogans is "A president like you." Do you look for candidates who are "like you"? Why or why not? In the context of politics, what characteristics might the phrase "like you" refer to?
- Fujimori says that he is not a criminal. What do you think? If you agree with Fujimori's daughter Keiko that the main source of corruption was Montesinos, does Fujimori bear any responsibility? As Montesinos's boss, should Fujimori be held accountable for his actions? Why or why not? Is a president responsible for knowing about the actions of those who serve in his administration? Why do you think Fujimori selected Vladimiro Montesinos as the head of National Intelligence Service after his election?
- If you accept that Fujimori was a strong and positive leader for Peru, did his run for a third (and presumably unconstitutional) third term weaken or strengthen the country's democracy?
- Journalist Enrique Zileri says it was traitorous for Fujimori to flee and especially to take on the citizenship of his "motherland." Do you agree? Should someone who has taken citizenship in one country be permitted to run for president of another? Why or why not?
- Why do some of the people in Japan regard Fujimori as a hero? What do you think they admire about him? What, if



*Fujimori election poster.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

anything, do you admire about Fujimori? Do you think he served his country well as president? Why or why not?

- What do you think of Susana Higuchi's actions? In your view, what are the responsibilities of a first lady? Should she be expected to stand alongside her husband even in the face of corruption?
- Fujimori says, "Some people say that my government was not democratic. What's a democracy? It was more democratic than any other Latin American country." How would you answer him? How do you define a democracy?



## Discussion Prompts

### Combating Terrorism

• No one disputes that terrorism was a very real threat in Peru. Consider the following strategies used or allegedly used by Fujimori in response to that threat:

- Dissolving congress (when they wouldn't pass the antiterrorist legislation he wanted: "Before they could depose me and before terrorism would take over and destroy our democracy, I stepped in.")
- Prosecuting terrorists in military courts with hooded (anonymous) judges.
- Using death squads to "disappear" and execute suspected terrorists.

In your view, were these methods valid responses to terrorism in a democracy? Why or why not? How would you impose law on a lawless society?

• Congresswoman Martha Chavez says, "I think we share a notion of common good, a notion of solidarity among people that obliges us to renounce some of our individual rights." What rights would you be willing to give up for the sake of the "common good" or a hope of greater security? What rights would you not give up in exchange for security?

• A man on the street: "Terrorism, that's the first thing he [Fujimori] got rid of. Before, it was a country in which everything was unmanageable. All was corruption. An iron fist like Fujimori is needed." What is appealing about a person who rules with an "iron fist"?

• Journalist Enrique Zileri says, "In violent times, the difference between terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism gets lost." In your view, is it necessary to use violence to respond to or prevent violence?



*Hostages leaving the Japanese Embassy.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

• How did fear of terrorism influence who was imprisoned and how prisoners were treated? Do you see differences between terrorists and other kinds of prisoners? If so, how should incarceration practices be designed to accommodate those differences?

• According to Julio Wicht, a hostage in the 1997 Japanese Embassy crisis and an MRTA confidante, the MRTA members who seized the Japanese Embassy "were young, had no education and never received any of the economic or social opportunities that we had." How do you think this background factored into their choice to use violence? In your view, did their use of violence help or hinder their cause?

• When congress refused to increase Fujimori's administrative powers, he conducted a coup and awarded himself more power. Fujimori claimed that it was necessary to take control in order to pass anti-terrorism laws immediately and protect democracy. In your view, how



*Death Squads.*  
Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures



## Discussion Prompts



*Fujimori looking at corpses in the Japanese Embassy.*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

did Fujimori's actions affect Peru's political process? Do you think his drastic actions and anti-terrorism laws helped protect democracy? Should there be strict checks and balances for the different branches of government? Or should the government have leeway during special circumstances, such as a fight against terrorism? What was life like under the coup?

- Fujimori explained, "If judges are being threatened, the logical thing to do is to assign judges that cannot be identified." What do you think the impact is when hooded, anonymous judges preside over terrorism trials?
- Why do you think many Peruvian voters re-elected Fujimori in 1995 (after the coup)?

- What did you learn from this film that you could apply to the current situation in the United States and debates over presidential power in a time of war? How would you compare Fujimori's strategies for dealing with terrorism with the U.S. administration's tactics for its war on terror? Which, if any, are justified? Explain your reasoning.



## Taking Action



*Abimael Guzman en route to Callao to serve out his life sentence.*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

- Investigate the status of current human rights and anti-poverty efforts in Peru. Identify organizations working on achieving justice and equality in Peru and find ways to join their efforts.
- Using the lessons of the Fujimori presidency as a guide, look at different U.S. policies that might call for a balance of national security and civil liberties such as:
  - U.S. Patriot Act
  - CIA and Guantanamo Prison Charges
  - U.S. government-approved phone tracking
- Brainstorm a list of strategies that governments could use to fight terrorists that do not involve human rights abuses or undermine the rights of citizens living in democracies. Find ways to publicize your list. Use it to engage your community in a discussion about how to end terrorism.

Share your analysis with your elected representatives.



## Resources

### WEBSITES

#### The film

**P.O.V.'s *The Fall of Fujimori* Web site**  
**[www.pbs.org/pov/falloffujimori](http://www.pbs.org/pov/falloffujimori)**

*The Fall of Fujimori* Web site offers exclusive streaming video clips from the film, a podcast version of the filmmaker interview and a wealth of additional resources, including a Q&A with filmmaker Ellen Perry, ample opportunities for viewers to “talk back” and talk to each other about the film, and the following special features:

#### OVERVIEW

Peru emerged from military rule in 1980 and endured political violence, terrorist attacks, severe inflation and a stagnant economy in the years leading up to Fujimori's election. Find out more about this tumultuous time in Peru's history.

#### INTERVIEW

##### Robert Goldman

From July 2004 to July 2005, Goldman was the UN Human Rights Commission's Independent Expert on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. Goldman describes Fujimori's aggressive methods in countering terrorist groups like the Shining Path and MRTA during his tenure as president of Peru during the 1990s. What lessons can the U.S. learn from Fujimori and Peru?

### What's Your P.O.V.?

*P.O.V.'s online Talking Back Tapestry is a colorful, interactive representation of your feelings about **The Fall of Fujimori**.*

*Listen to other P.O.V. viewers talk about the film and add your thoughts by calling 1-800-688-4768. [www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html](http://www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html)*

#### THE FALL OF FUJIMORI

**[www.falloffujimori.com](http://www.falloffujimori.com)**

Filmmaker Ellen Perry's Web site for the film *The Fall of Fujimori*.

#### PERUVIAN GRAFFITI

**[www.gci275.com/index.shtml](http://www.gci275.com/index.shtml)**

The Web site of journalist Michael L. Smith includes an exhaustive set of resources on Peru, including his report, “Rural Development Caught in the Crossfire: The Role of Grassroots Support Organizations in Situations of Political Violence in Peru.”

#### PERUVIAN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

**[www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/pagina01.php](http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/pagina01.php)**

The official report of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2003) summarizes human rights abuses on the part of the government as well as the Shining Path and MRTA. A response to the report from sympathizers of armed revolution is available from the Committee to Support Revolution in Peru at: [www.csrp.org/cmte/Truthcom.htm](http://www.csrp.org/cmte/Truthcom.htm)



## Resources

### **NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE**

**[www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB96/](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB96/)**

Housed at George Washington University, the National Security Archive is a non-governmental, nonprofit collection of declassified U.S. documents, including a record of items relating to human rights in Peru.

### **LATINO STUDIES PROGRAM AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

**[www.latinamericanstudies.org/fujimori.htm](http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/fujimori.htm)**

The Latino Studies Program at Indiana University has amassed a useful collection of news articles about Alberto Fujimori.

### **WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA**

**[www.wola.org/andes/andes.htm#Peru](http://www.wola.org/andes/andes.htm#Peru)**

The Washington Office on Latin America monitors the impact of U.S. foreign policy on human rights, democracy and equitable development in Latin America. Its Web site includes overviews of and background for events in Peru.

### **U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT**

**[www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/c2893.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/c2893.htm)**

The U.S. State Department compiles government press releases about countries around the world. This is a link to the Peru section of the Department's Web site.

### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

**[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)**

Amnesty International is an advocacy organization that promotes and protects human rights. It has called for Alberto Fujimori to be brought to justice for murders and "disappearances" that took place during his presidency. Check the Web site's "library" (searchable by country) for information specifically related to the current situation in Peru.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

**[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)**

Human Rights Watch is an international human rights defense organization. Of special interest on their Web site is their report "Peru/Chile: Fujimori Implicated in Serious Crimes" ([www.org/reports/2005/peru1205/](http://www.org/reports/2005/peru1205/)).

### **ALBERTO FUJIMORI**

**[www.fujimorialberto.com/en/index.php](http://www.fujimorialberto.com/en/index.php)**

Web site of the former president of Peru. Includes messages from Fujimori, articles and audio/visual links.



## How to Buy the Film

To order *The Fall of Fujimori*, call (818) 349-8822  
or email [info@CinemaLibreStudio.com](mailto:info@CinemaLibreStudio.com)



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and entering its 19th season on PBS, the award-

winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running series on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought over 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V is available online at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

### P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these originally produced materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences nationally. P.O.V. also works closely with local public-television stations to partner with local museums, libraries, schools and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films.

Front cover photo:

*Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori greets supporters in front of the Presidential Palace after winning his second term in office (Lima Peru, 2000).*

Photo courtesy of Stardust Pictures

### P.O.V. Interactive [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. It also produces a Web site for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information and feedback on the issues. In addition, [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov) houses our unique Talking Back feature, filmmaker interviews and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

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### American Documentary, Inc. [www.americandocumentary.org](http://www.americandocumentary.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, on-line and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.



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