

The Rhetoric of Visual Communication – a Philosophical Resumé

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November 30, 2023



Gone with the Wind (scene: “Gentleman vs Rouge”) 1939:
Leslie Howard, Vivien Leigh, Clark Gable; dir: Victor Fleming.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84VHrUTmcr0&ab_channel=PulpFusion

The phenomenology of film/video:

Look at **the work** behind and with **the camera**
- where and how it is placed, adjusted, and moved

The work on the **production of sound**
- dialogue, music, ambiance

And the editing (cuts, and assembly):

Horizontal montage (structure - over time: "narrative")

Vertical montage (dynamics of the moment: "the mood")

Only film (film-like media) can "really" do this

– and these features are there for all to observe:

- **Camera movements:** clarifying, following, pointing, marking, miming/participating (*creating presence and intent*)(sound can move too)
- **Cuts:** jumping and joining in the time-space orientation (continuity/discontinuity, association/contrast) of what we see and/or hear (*creating the story*).
- **Vertical montage:** arranging the interplay of what we see and hear simultaneously (*creating the mood*): the complex mix of the moment: film, graphics, text, music, noise, dialogue, voice-over.

Camera movements

Can be transparent – unnoticed, well motivated:

- help us see and understand the 3D location
- following the motion of a person/thing
- miming an interest (of the director/audience)
- marking the beginning and end of scenes
- subjective view of character (person in the film)

Film/video is **not** a “representation of reality”!

Neither a speaker nor a filmmaker is just trying to “**copy**” the world as it is.

A speaker and a filmmaker usually want to influence, persuade, create, or obtain something.

The rhetorician chooses the most **apt** words, examples, and gestures....

Likewise, the filmmaker chooses the most **apt** way of framing, placing the camera, moving it, and using all the other features of impressive filmmaking.

Working with a camera should be seen as a **rhetorical** effort



Psycho – (bathroom scene) 1960: Alfred Hitchcock (Janet Leigh, Anthony Perkins).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQtH7MS2Rec&ab_channel=Fear%3ATheHomeOfHorror

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho (shower scene):

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho:



1) Screams start here (on the soundtrack), but she only sees him and starts screaming (on camera) when she turns a good second later...

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho:



2) Bad continuity: She is reaching upwards to get hold of the curtain – but on the immediate next clip she is reaching downwards

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho:



3) Everything else in the bathroom is well-lit, including the woman's face no matter where she turns, but the face of the killer remains dark. Well, smart for horror, but not realistic!

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho:



4) The killer is striking downwards repeatedly – but all of a sudden upwards (a continuity problem)

Find 5 "flaws" in Psycho:



5) In a series of 3 shots we see her holding on to the arm of the assassin trying to stop the blows – but in the immediate next shot we see a free arm and blow.

6) Same shot, but the camera is moving (traveling, not zooming) in an unsteady, almost handheld fashion closer to the curtain, the focus is adjusted/remains sharp on the curtain.

The "un-easiness" of the camera is transmitted to the viewer...

Not a "flaw" – but it is in part the "eloquent" camera-work that makes it spooky together with the rapid editing!



Film/video is **not** a "representation of reality":

- No one got killed in the shower
 - There was no blood – it was chocolate syrup
 - No one was playing musical instruments in the bathroom
 - Not the same woman in all the shots (they used a double)
 - The main actress was never really naked on the set
 - They spent a good 7 days shooting this short scene
-and probably even more time editing: they created a completely **new event** for the screen.

Film/video can make us see and experience **new events!**



Hans Blix, UN Security Council, March 7, 2003
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IImVN1dmGuY>

FEBRUARY 5, 2003



Colin Powell, UN Security Council, Feb. 5, 2003

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhWlPo3qxak&t=49s>



Hans Blix

UN Security Council, 2003: Are there Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq?



Colin Powell

What is the camera doing for their *logos/ethos/pathos*? And the background?

Anthrax?

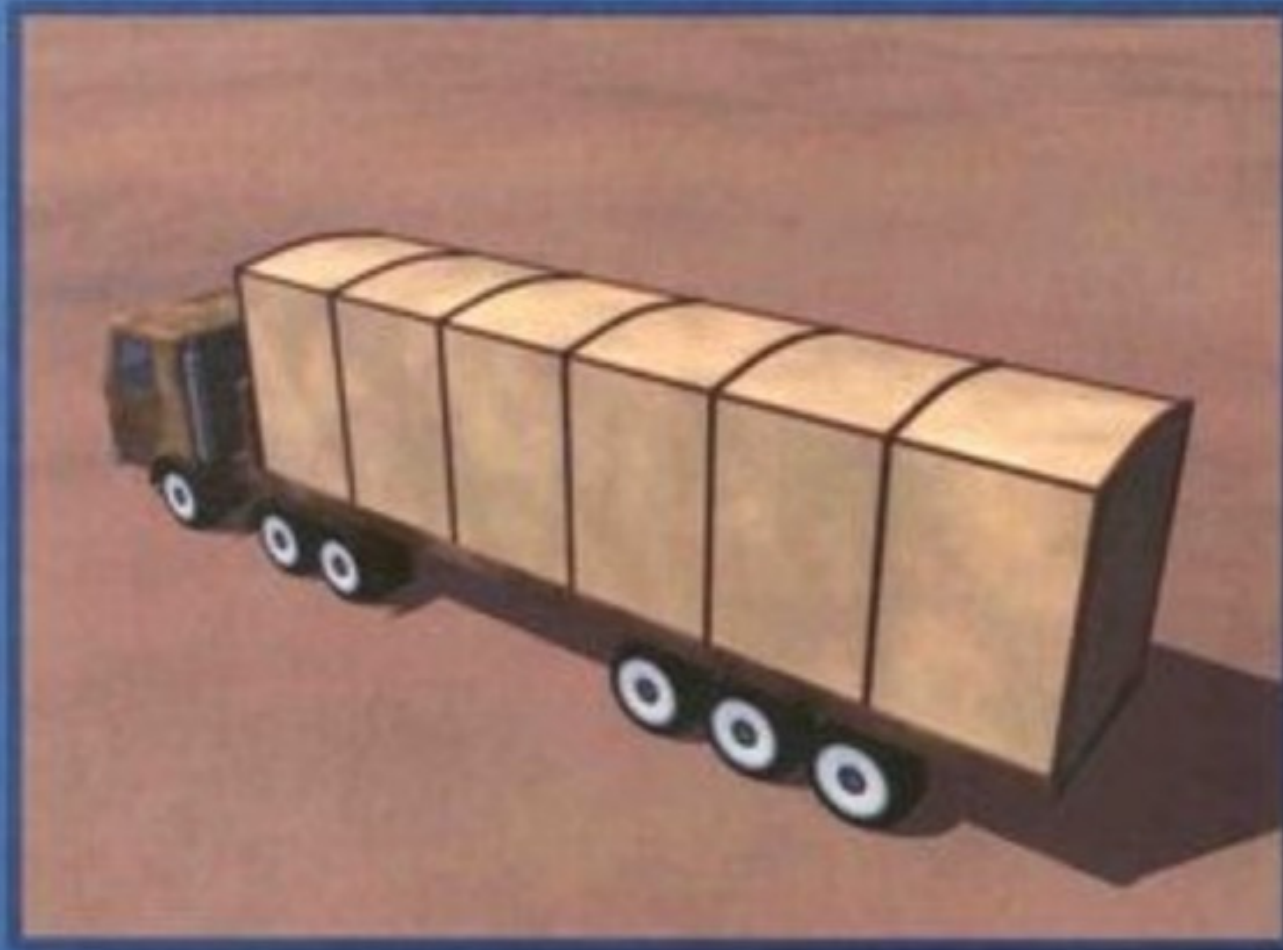


Chemical Munitions Stored at Taji



“.... hard for the average person to interpret,....”

Mobile Production Facilities For Biological Agents



Visual documentation?

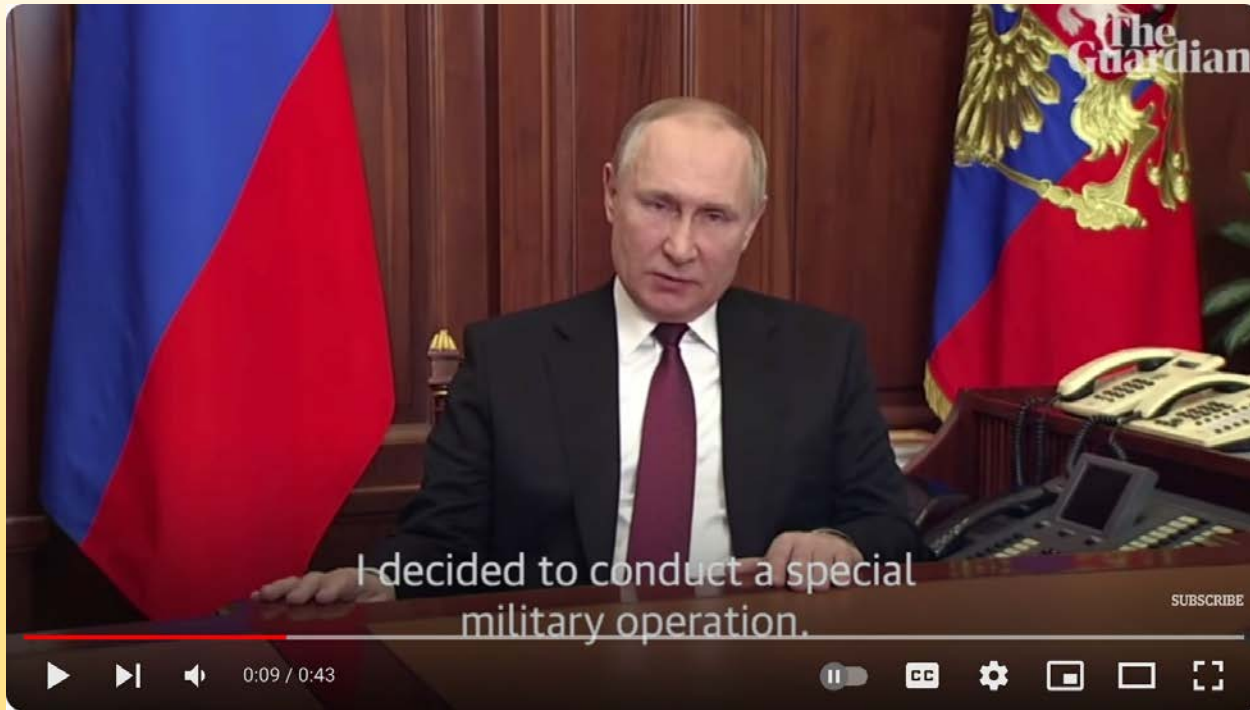


"Special Military Operation" – Putin, February 2022:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asuhx16wlWo&ab_channel=GuardianNews



"I'll remain in Kyiv" – Zelensky, February, 2022:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0-Yeqh4PFY&ab_channel=euronews



Analytical tools from rhetoric: *Logos - Ethos – Pathos*.

3 main genres: Past (*judicial*) – Present (*epideictic*) – Future (*deliberative*).

Also, *the 6 communicative functions* (from Roman Jakobson) can be applied here.



Today we know politicians from pictures



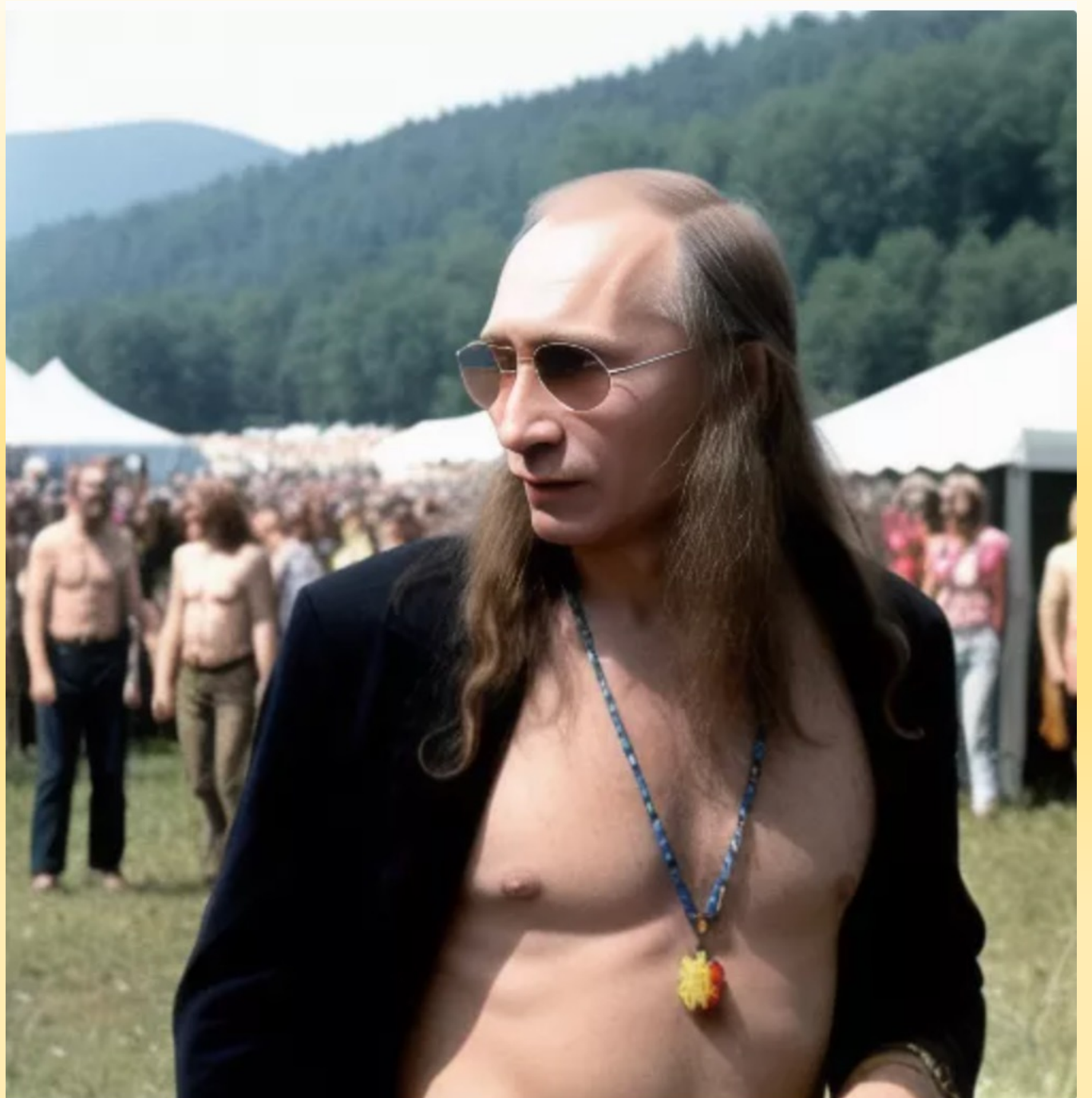


Putin plays the piano during a visit to China, May 14, 2017? Several versions...
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXgp5LxAiCc&ab_channel=SladjanaTodorovic



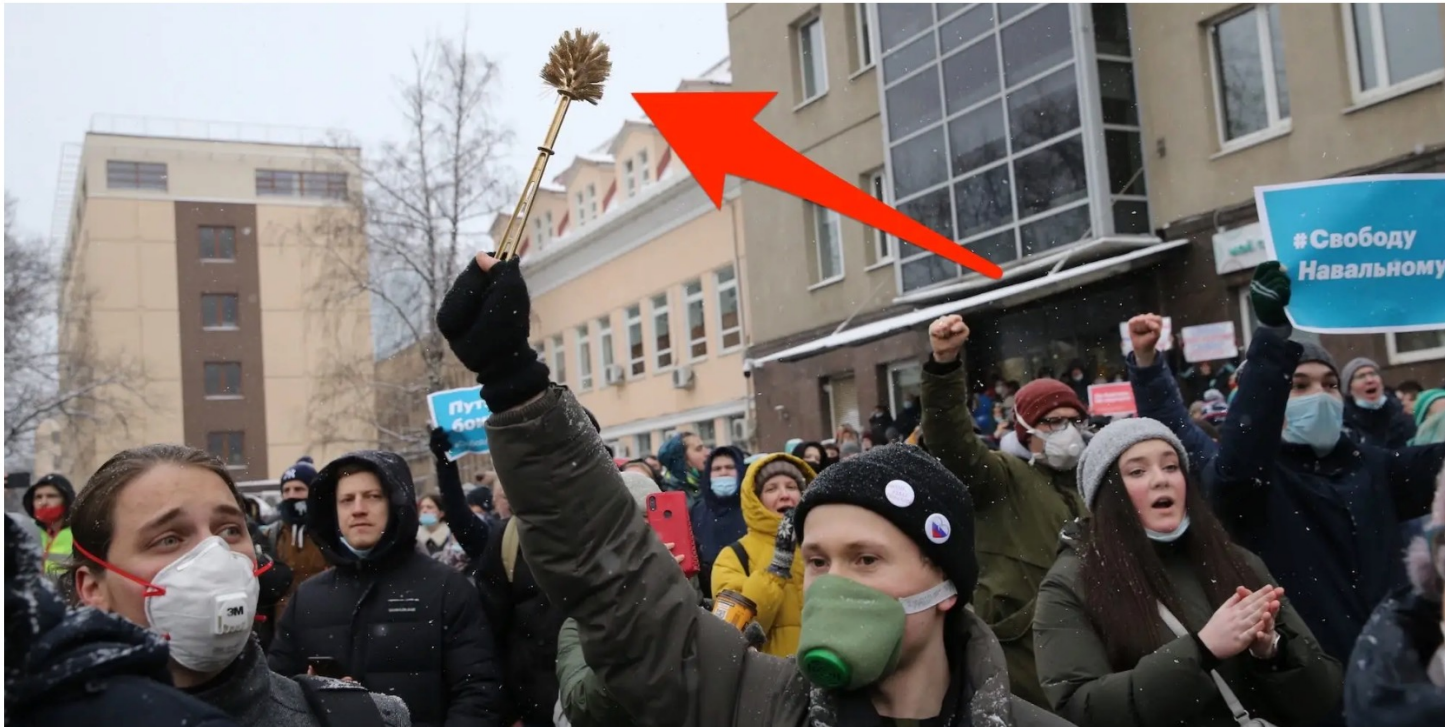
Visual documentation provided by
the clever students in this class:

Putin attended the Woodstock
Festival in 1969!



Protesters in Russia trolled Putin with golden toilet brushes, mocking the extravagant wealth he is accused of hiding by jailed foe Alexei Navalny

Sinéad Baker Feb 1, 2021, 12:45 PM CET



A protester in Moscow holding a gold-painted toilet brush at a rally against the jailing of Alexei Navalny, on January 31, 2021.

Mikhail Svetlov/Getty Images

- Russians held gold toilet brushes while protesting the jailing of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.



Vladimir Putin under pressure like never before from gold-plated toilet brush waving Alexei Navalny supporters | The US...



A parody of the iconic 1989 Tiananmen Square photo of a Chinese protester confronting government tanks. (Weibo.com)

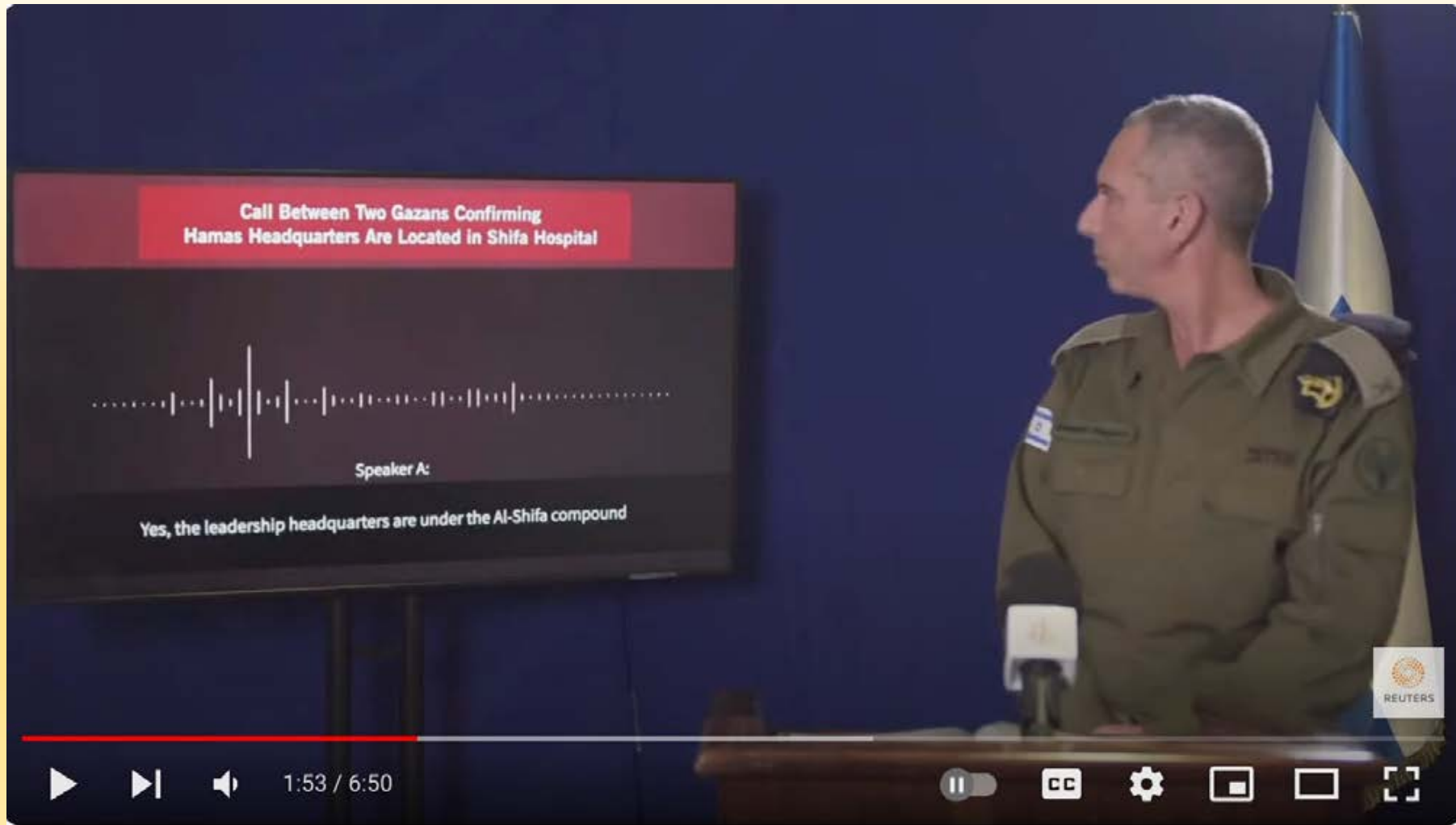
A photo of a Chinese protester, Tiananmen Square, 1989

- and a **meme** trying to duck the censorship



A Briefing by IDF Spokesperson RAdm. Daniel Hagari.

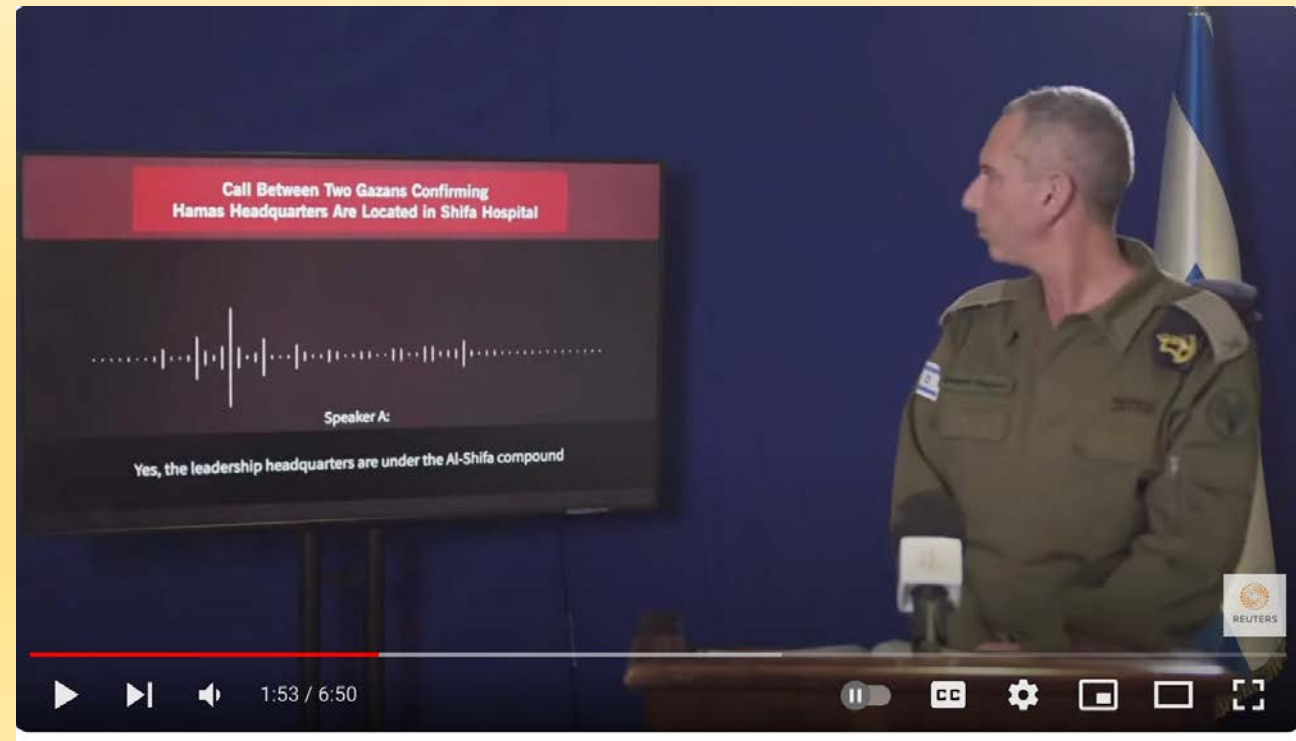
“.... hard for the average person to interpret,....”



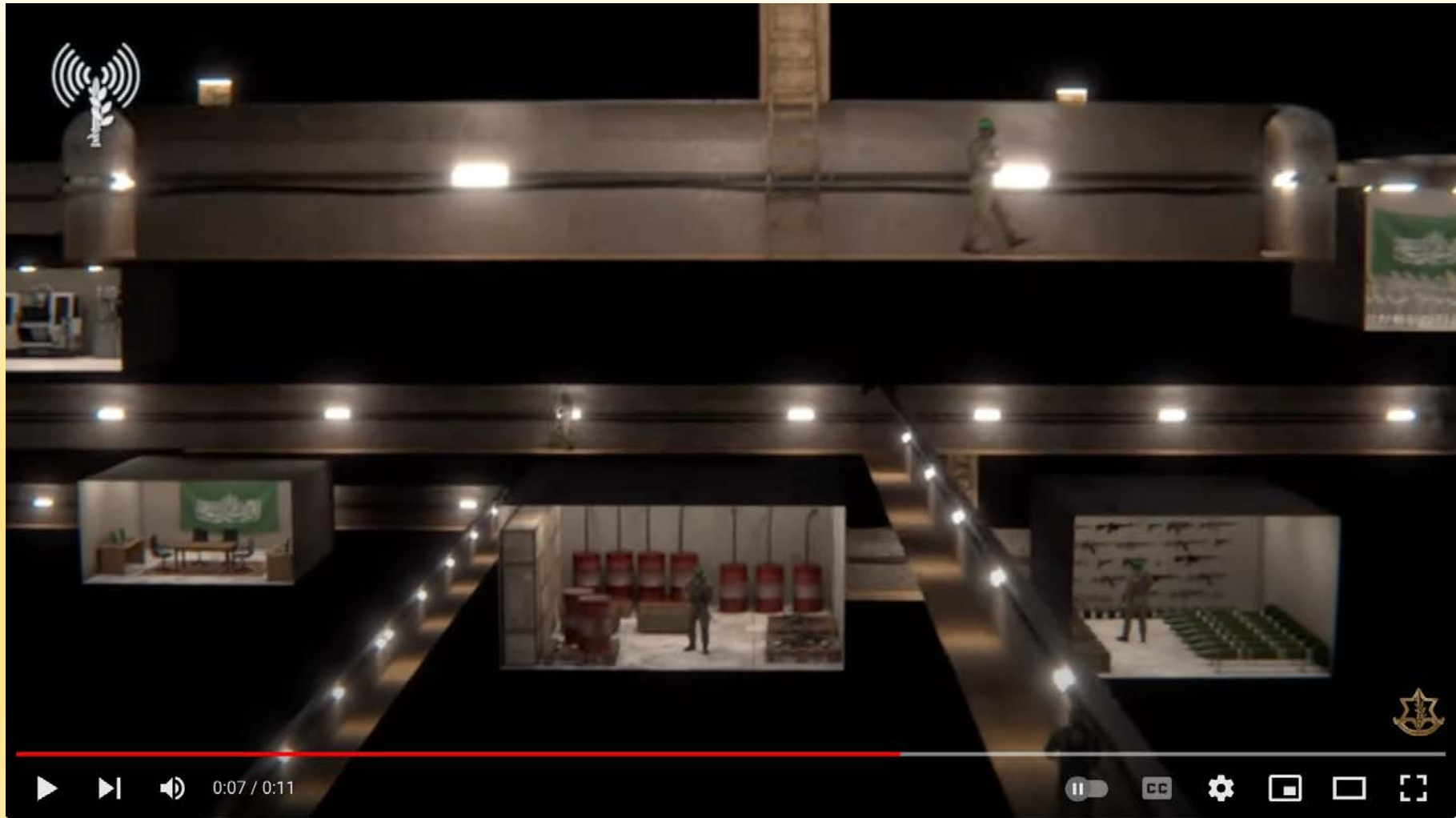
“.... hard for the average person to interpret,....”
- but so easy to fake it



A Briefing by IDF Spokesperson RAdm. Daniel Hagari.



“.... hard for the average person to interpret,....”



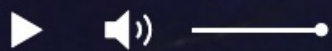
Home to Hamas' Headquarters, This is an IDF 3D Diagram of the Shifa Hospital:

IDF-animation 27/10 2023

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pTYHBZVgVQ&ab_channel=IsraelDefenseForces



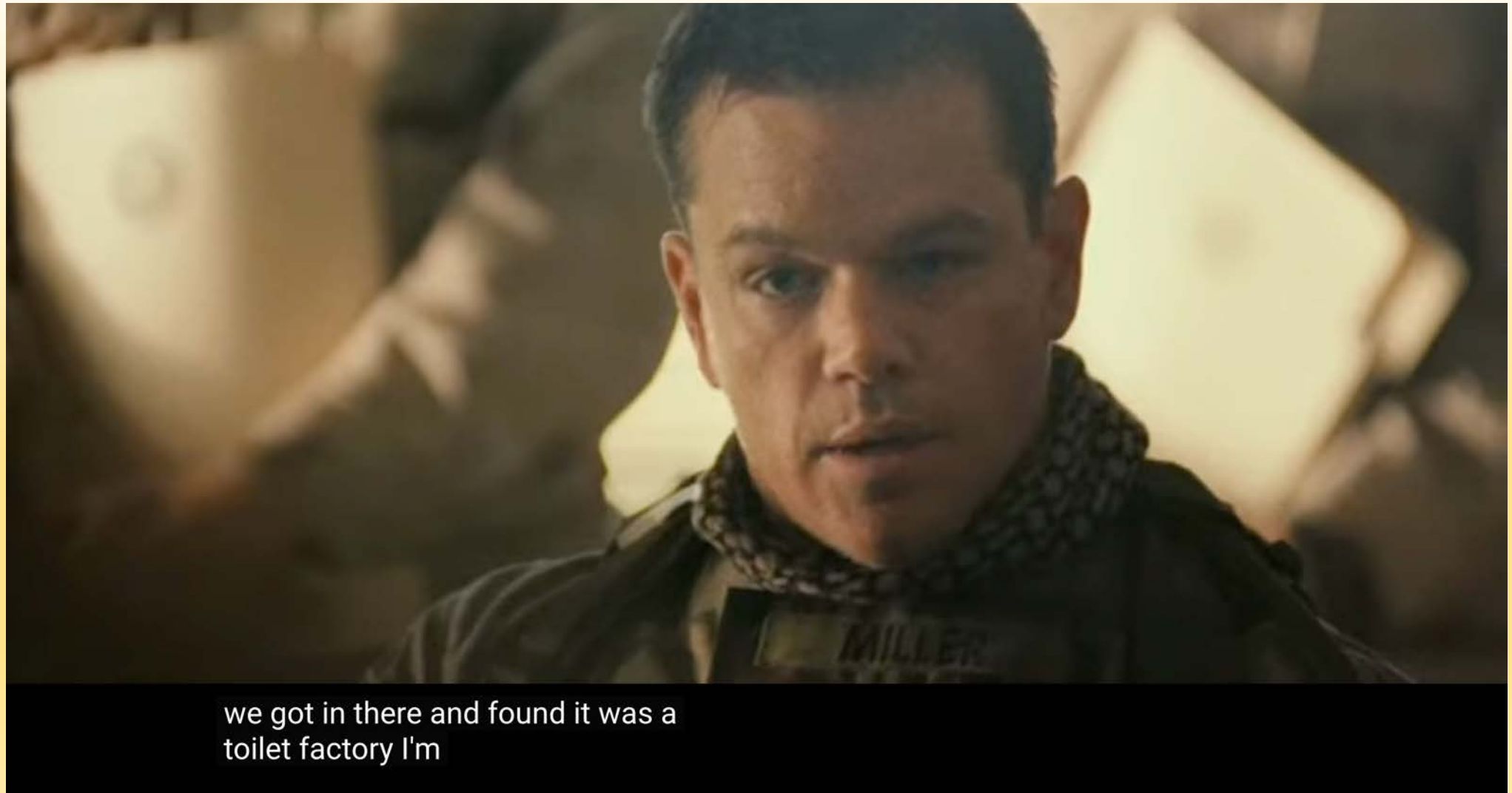
Vi fandt også et interimistisk toilet
i nærheden.



0:04 / 0:11



“.... hard for the average person to interpret,....”



we got in there and found it was a
toilet factory I'm

Matt Damon in *Green Zone*, 2010:

“...it was a toilet factory...”

**IDF UNCOVERED SHIFA HOSPITAL'S
MRI BUILDING**

Source: IDF



IDF



BBC

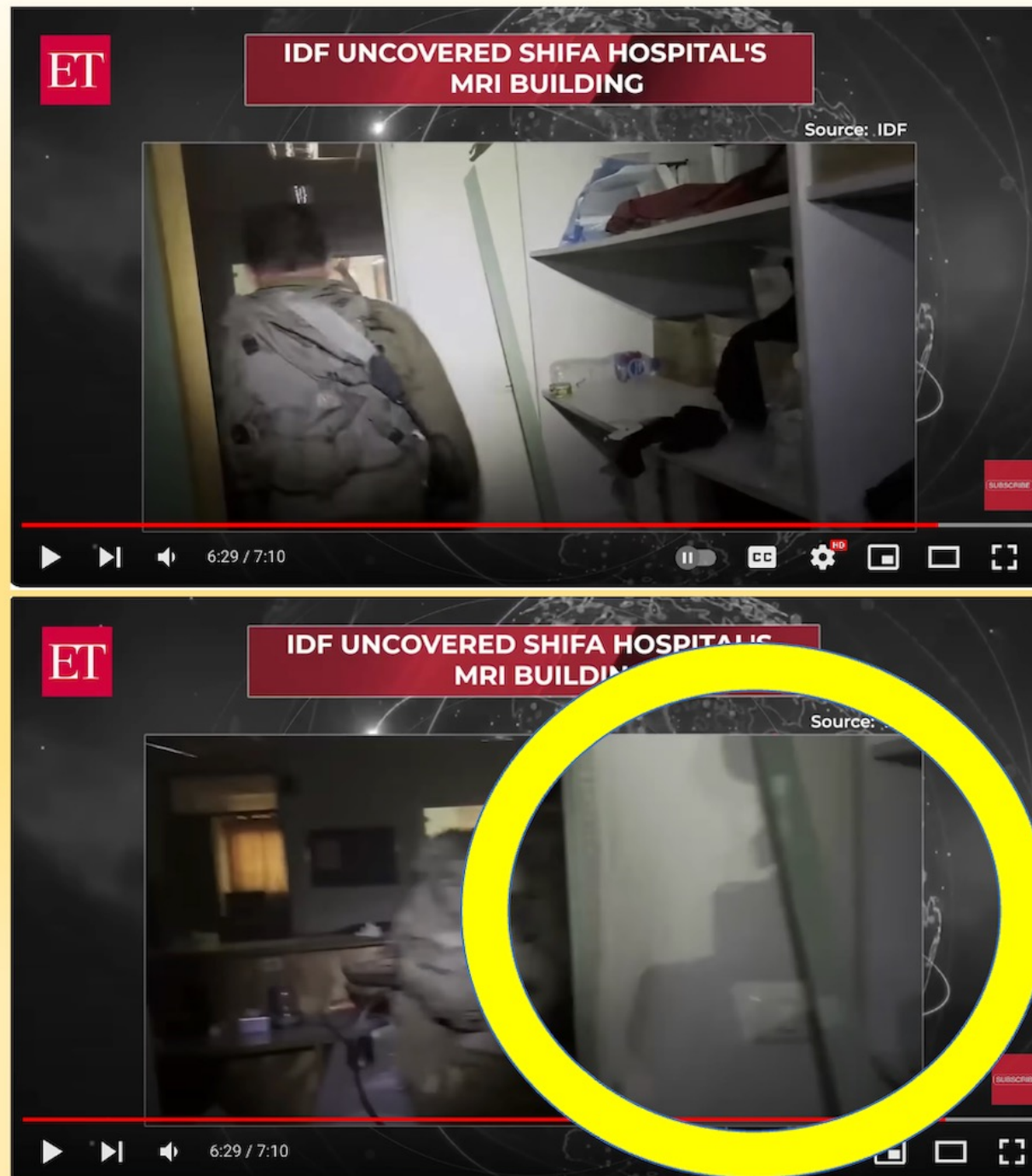
At first there was one.... then there were two “smoking guns”

*"A one-shot video,
one-shot,
no-editing,
of all of the
evidence....."*
says the presenter



Two consecutive
frames –
Only 1/25th of a
second apart, but
a lot has changed

*"A one-shot video,
one-shot,
no-editing,
of all of the
evidence....."
says the presenter*



*Ups - here is a cut!
So, it is not true...*

The man moves 1 meter
in 1/25th of a second
(between two frames)
making him the new
Olympic Champion:
100-meters in 4 seconds!

Iconic Mideast Photo Is a Fake — and Heartbreaking One at That

Jewish-Palestinian Friendship Once Seemed Possible



RICKI ROSEN

Staged: Ricki Rosen's photograph meant to depict an Israeli boy and a Palestinian boy in Jerusalem has been reproduced hundreds of times.

Photo: 1993

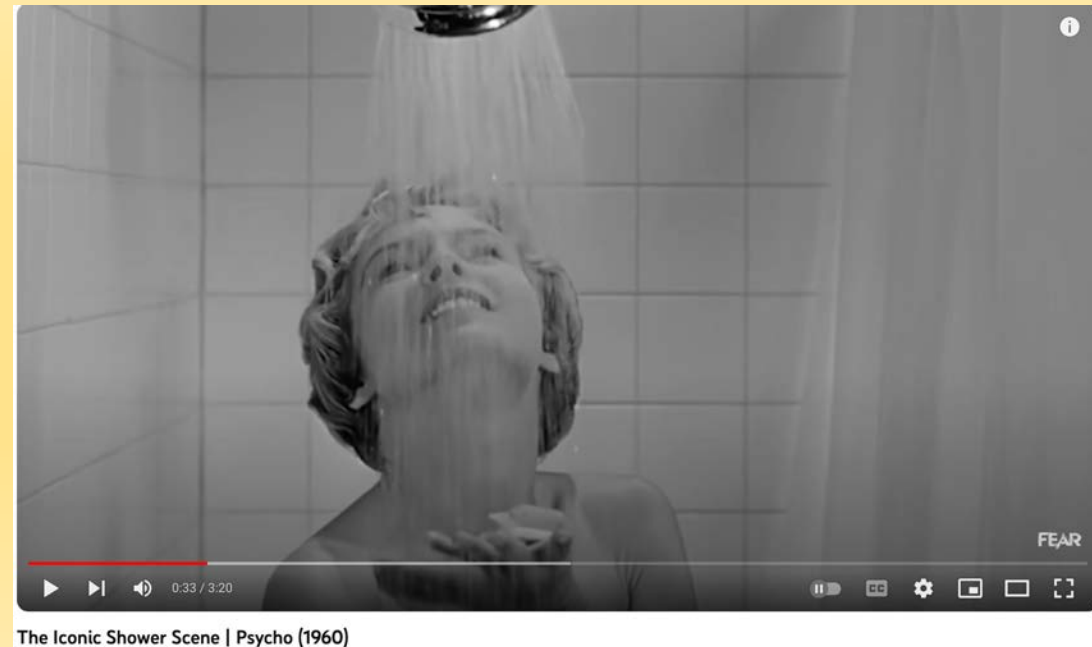


Student exercise during Covid lockdown – Spring 2021:

Do a remake of the shower scene from Hitchcock's *Psycho*, 1960.

Film it with your own smartphone
and edit it using free software

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwyM86MfiVk&ab_channel=RUCcomVideo



Henrik Juel

... just a student of life ...



Philosophy, Rhetoric

Speech, Communication

Argumentation, Nature

Film/Video, Aesthetics



See more on: www.henrikjuel.dk

Thank you!