

Juan Forch

I prefer to tell you about the day that the first night of the television campaign came out. We had been working for about 15 days in the production company where the teams were, where the studio was and where the editing room was where we were making the programs, editing the programs for the NO. And we worked very intensely because we were absolutely behind schedule, regarding what we wanted to do and how to achieve it, etc. And therefore, we worked 20 hours a day, which was like the normal schedule. When you entered there, you could find people who were sleeping in the corridors, on an armchair, on a sofa. They slept one, two, three hours, got up, went back to work, etc. So, it was a very intense situation, already a very intense work situation. If you add to that, the fact that we lived in a very authoritarian regime and that we were in opposition to that regime, the tension was very strong. And that day was the first day that our program came out. Up until the last day, we had some concern - and I would even say fear - that the program would be banned at the last moment, that the plebiscite would be suspended, that the campaign would be suspended, or whatever other situation. They could even take some people prisoner. In other words, we had a dictatorial government, but also, like any dictatorial government, it was very capricious. It did what it wanted at the time it wanted, without any previous planning, or warning of course. Therefore, I would say that the most exciting day was the day we saw the campaign appear on the air. And this was in the editing room, which was a large room with a lot of machinery, where we were all crowded together because the big television monitors were there. So, we were able to see this program that appeared and it was a collective shout that took place there as soon as the first image of the program appeared and we said "Okay, we're on the air." And I think that in the whole process of the plebiscite it is probably the most exciting moment that I have lived through.

Let's see, I had a very special task within my duties, within the campaign. I had to work on the image of Pinochet, and for me that was a pleasure. It was a challenge and a great pleasure because in the first chapter of the campaign there was a piece in which the four members of the junta enter the Ministry of Defense and they enter with a very martial step. So I gave myself small pleasures that are subtle, let's say, but that, trying to understand military language, were very aggressive. And it's because I made the four of them enter with *The Blue Danube*, that is, with a waltz, instead of a military march. And those kinds of little joys are like that, I think they are very petty, but at the same time, but in the end they are the little joys that one allows oneself. I indulged myself during several programs. Well, for example, when I compared Pinochet in civilian clothes with Pinochet in uniform, the possibility of splitting him in half was a way of cutting him. Putting it together was a kind of surgical pleasure like Frankenstein, like putting together a Frankenstein like this but with the same person. And then, since they didn't want to keep him on the screen for a long time, they began to write on top of him with very thick black and white letters that would cover him up. There are several images of him where the word No is written with a brush. I concerned myself with making sure that the second vertical of the "N" would fall right in the middle of his face to cover it, that is, they were small pleasures like that, yes, no one was going to notice, but it was an emotion, a small revenge that I had with Pinochet.

In other words, I think that one of the great political successes that the campaign had was making power more prosaic, taking it down a level, removing its omnipotence. In other words, it's like having the "great hero" in quotes right there in front of you and the medals falling off. It was like toning it down somehow. I asked a producer to go to one of the YES headquarters to get material and obviously she didn't want to go because people were working [on the NO campaign] for political convictions as well. So, asking them to go...producers in general are very brave people, they go anywhere. They are courageous. In other words, one asks them to ask a

person something, they go and ask them. If you ask one to look for a pink elephant, they find an elephant, they paint it pink, they don't care. In other words, there are very agile people in that sense. But there was great resistance to going to a YES headquarters, because we are also a small country and if someone saw you entering a YES office, it made you much more embarrassed than any other task that had been done before. So, with a lot of resistance, she went to this place and the truth is that I wanted badges, the rules, the music, some posters for the Yes, but no, she came with a number of photos, as well as official photos of Pinochet, of his wife, and all that was fantastic. And there is this photo in which Pinochet is standing with a camera that is placed a little lower than him to give him a stronger presence. He is dressed in full regalia, with a uniform that is ridiculous because it is like Napoleonic, like Prussian, but like one of the end of the 17th, beginning of the 18th century, with this saber, with his two hands on the saber, etc. Then, there we began to call him names and suddenly it occurred to us to look up what were the real titles that he had been given and we found that number of titles that were... that is about 10% of the titles that he had and we chose some that appeared to us funniest. But he had a number of titles because they had named him an illustrious son of a lot of cities and towns, because, that is why he had thousands of titles. So, we started from the feet, we lifted the camera up as if revealing who he was. Already by the knees one already knew. Until we got to the top of the face and then we tried to twist the story, going from titles that were real to inventing the titles that were... well, he was the only candidate but then the losing candidate. So lowering him down and pulling him off the screen was also a pleasure for me, and putting a lilac color like half purple. It was also a pleasure doing it.

Well, there are two things, on the one hand it is said that the campaign and the franja promised happiness. I don't know if it was a promise. I mean, I think it wasn't strictly a promise, I think it was more of an announcement. If this happens, we are going to feel more joy. I mean, that's going to make us content, that's going to make us happy. But people took it as a promise and you have to accept it. And I think that yes, the end of the dictatorship produced great joy in the country and the people celebrated it very much. I think that the supporters of the NO celebrated so much that even the people of the YES began to celebrate it because it was a moment of great joy, because there was a moment of great closeness between people. It was a very broad concept that brought together people with very different opinions, different political positions, etc. And that even incorporated people who had voted YES, let's say. But later this "promise" of joy began to be used politically to complain against the new democratic governments. And I think that - these complaints that seem absolutely legitimate to me - [they began] to say that joy had not arrived and that "When did joy arrive? Because it passed me by, I didn't realize it", etc. And I think yes, they have every right to do so, but I'd like to make a distinction. We never talked about happiness coming. And I feel that when they are claiming that joy never came, they have every right to do so, but I like to make a distinction. We never talked about happiness coming. And I feel that when they are claiming that joy did not come, they are referring more to happiness than to joy. And happiness, we will pass this generation and all the generations that come looking for it, but we will never find it, but it doesn't matter. That's where we are headed. It is a much higher concept, say, than joy. But yes, I make the distinction between joy and happiness.

People also complain a lot because the campaign seems to have a lot of attention to the detriment of other political actions that existed before or during it. And I believe that is because although in the campaign we talked about the social movements, the disappeared, the struggles, the rallies that took place, the protests that were occurring, etc., what people remember most about the campaign is the most beautiful part, the colorful part. The black and white part is not remembered as much. And therefore, the campaign is surrounded by a veneer of frivolity, and that is why it is criticized that the campaign is given so much importance within

this story. I believe that everything that was done in Chile had vital importance in the result of the plebiscite. I believe that all the opposition that was made to the dictatorship, the result was the plebiscite and I include in that the armed struggle that also took place in the country. In other words, I think that trying to dismember that animal, let's say, of the opposition to the dictatorship seems very pretentious. To me it is like saying, "Yes, we do not consider this leg then." And how did it walk if it didn't have a leg? I think that is important. Now, this was a 15-year-old marathon and the last 100 meters was the campaign. And I think that's what happened. That is, the campaign was just before the result of the plebiscite and that's why it stands out so much. That is to say, the full marathon started 15 years earlier and so each of the steps that the runners took in that marathon were important. One stumble and the runner would have fallen, but the last 100 meters is where you always focus on who is going to win the race.

I believe that October 5th itself has not had the celebrations that one might have expected at that time. But in some measure, I'm in agreement with that. I think that what winning the plebiscite did was that we returned a little to normality. And therefore, it seems good to me that there isn't a permanent [celebration]... I think that there does have to be a memory or a presence of mind so that it doesn't happen again because it's a huge danger for society, but I don't think we should be celebrating the plebiscite every year.