



Digging up Spains dead

German Martin:

Spanish

"Fear generated such silence that it has been a horror, a horror ... and now the only thing I want is for that silence to disappear" *Germán Martín*

Voice Over:

In 1936, a bitter civil war between the marginally elected republican leftists and the right wing nationalist rebels tore Spain apart in a bloody struggle over class, region and religion.

Voice Over:

A brutal authoritarian government was established by the victorious nationalists under General Franco.

Franco ruled Spain through a combination of terror and oppression.

Voice Over:

Many people who tried to take a stand against Franco's forces were imprisoned, tortured or executed. German's father was among them.

German Martin:

Spanish

They were married, with four children. I was four years old. My mother lived in constant fear. She lost contact with everybody. Her social life vanished.

Voice Over:

When Franco died in 1975 political parties of both the left and the right agreed to draw a line under the past in order for Spain to undertake a peaceful transition to democracy.

But today, German is breaking that pact of silence by searching for his father - one of thousands whose bodies were left in unmarked graves.

The site where his body might lie was found with the help of a local man, Don Ignacio, who was a witness to the burials as a child.

German is joined at the site by two friends Juanjo and Angel, whose relatives were also killed.

Juanjo:

Spanish

The first person to be shot in Ciudad Rodrigo was German's father. Then one of his father's brothers was shot. Then my father, Angel's great-uncle and grandfather, were also shot, as part of that criminal act. Our friendship was founded on that terrible fact. They all shared the last moment of their lives. A most terrible and tragic moment.

Angel

I'm looking for neither praise nor glory. However, I will not allow this to be forgotten.

German Martin:

Spanish

What I would like...is a proper tribute to these people, who did not do anything to anybody. We'd also like them to have a decent burial and not be forgotten.

What they had tried to do, by means of instilling fear, was to make people try to forget and not stir things up.

Rather than stir things up, we want people to know what happened.

Voice Over:

So why now, is Spain breaking its self-imposed silence about its past?

Voice Over:

An estimated 113,000 republican victims of the civil war and subsequent dictatorship are still missing. This is just one of hundreds of sites across Spain where families are searching for their loved ones in the hope of finally giving them a decent burial.

German Martin:

Spanish

They haven't found anything and the digger can't come tomorrow.

Now we have to make arrangements to find another digger, so that we can carry on tomorrow.

Text

The next day on June 1st 2010, the remains of 6 men were found under the tree where German, Juan and Angel had stood.

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