

# Powerful 'War' attacks Bush and Desert Storm

## TELEVISION

By Lon Grahne

**W**hen some Americans speak about the Persian Gulf war, their opinions don't come wrapped in pride, patriotism and yellow ribbons.

The feelings they express are anger, fear and sorrow.

In "War," tonight's powerful edition of "The 90's," everyday people from across the United States attack President Bush's handling of the gulf war. They also worry about the aggressive, pro-military mentality that is supported by the majority of Americans in national polls.

Airing at 10 on WTTW-Channel 11, "War" is a downbeat post-script to Monday's Memorial Day ceremonies.

"The 90's," a Chicago-produced series of documentaries, draws much of its material from independent video shooters—professionals and amateurs. With an obvious anti-war slant, tonight's program is a disturbing and somewhat disorganized collage of comments and images from a wide range of producers.



President Bush's handling of the Persian Gulf war comes under attack in tonight's "War," airing at 10 on WTTW-Channel 11. The program concludes with a sermon by poet Allen Ginsberg (right).

Some interview subjects are identified; many are not. And although the producers of the segments are named in the credits, viewers are told little or nothing about the producers' backgrounds

or affiliations. Are these objective-minded documentarians or advocates with axes to grind?

If one is willing to accept the loose journalistic standards of "War" and the subjective nature of its presentation, the program can be appreciated for the human dramas it records and the troubling questions it poses.

The theme is clearly stated in the lyrics of "War," Edwin Starr's 1970 protest song, which opens the telecast: "War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothin'!"

### The 90's: War

★★★

WTTW-Channel 11, 10 to 11 to-night.

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NEWS, PROGRAMMING AND PERSONALITIES

## INSIDE TV / BY PETER JOHNSON

**A '90s LOOK AT THE WAR:** Tonight, 257 PBS stations will air another edition of *The 90s*, an alternative-voice documentary series now in its third season (check local listings). This edition features a report by former NBC contributor Jon Alpert on his trip to Baghdad during the gulf war that NBC chose not to air; a cross-country trip where people speak out against the war; and a report on Vietnam veterans teaching Massachusetts high schoolers that war is hell. Says producer Tom Weinberg, "Check us out — especially after the patriotic, knee-jerk, jingoism of the (Memorial Day) weekend. If you don't like what you see, that's fine. It's America."

Noteworthy segments include the broadcast premiere of controversial footage shot inside Iraq by producers Jon Alpert and Maryanne DeLeo for NBC News and the "Today" show. NBC refused to air the tapes, which question the morality of U.S. air strikes.

Concluding "War" is a self-righteous sermon by poet Allen Ginsberg, a longtime peace activist. His words sound haughty and hollow when compared to the painful and critical observations shared by Vietnam War veterans earlier in the program.

Those who have survived combat know the real truth about war. The rest of us are just guessing.