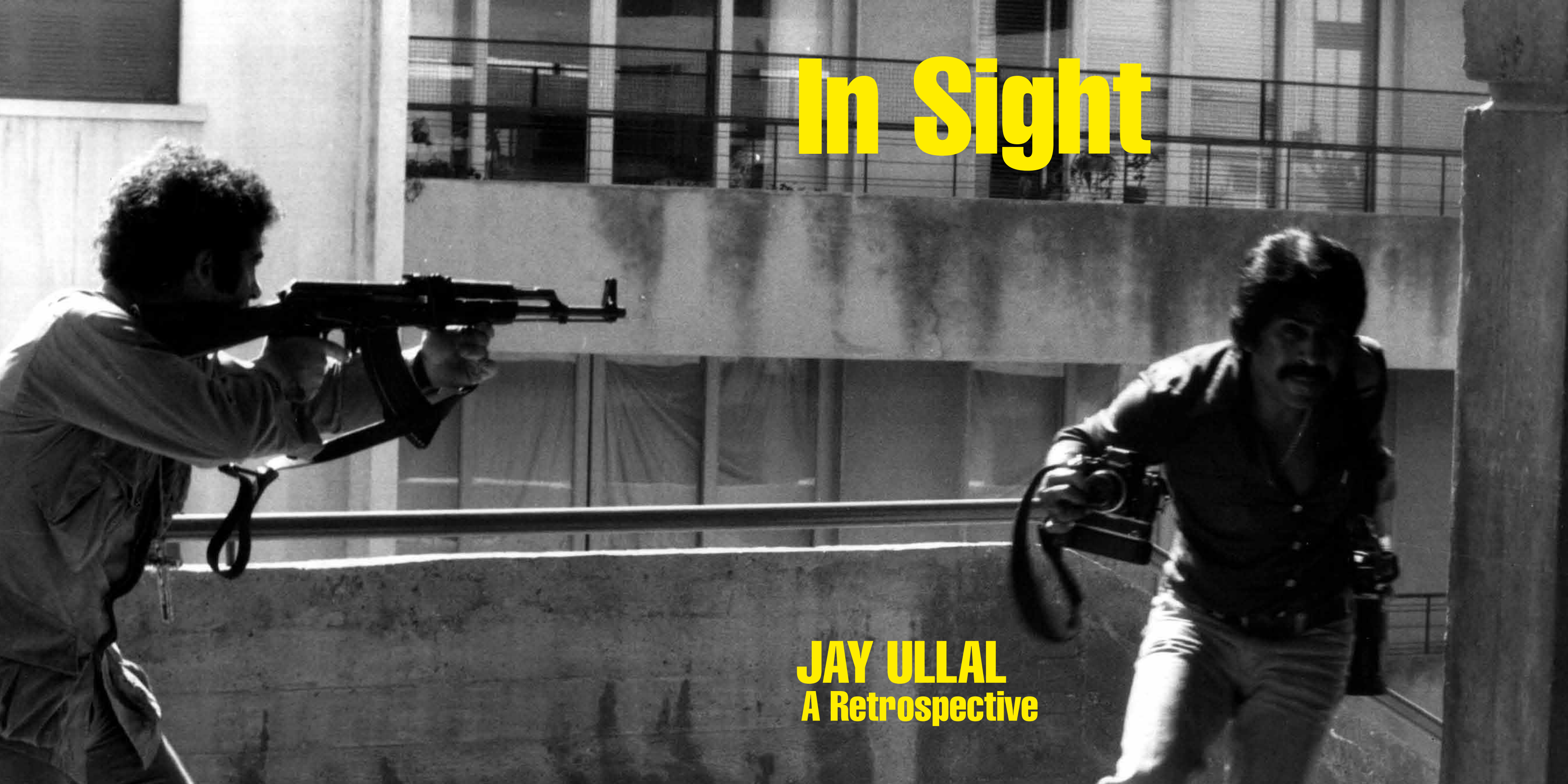




# In Sight



**JAY ULLAL**  
A Retrospective



Jay in Sabra Palastina camp  
in Beirut after Israel air attack  
August 1983



**Jay Ullal: In Sight — A Retrospective**

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**PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY**

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**“The only way to show the world what  
things are happening is by keeping the  
photojournalists in the front; they are the eyes  
of the readers. If the writers miss out they  
can ask eyewitnesses, taxi drivers and others  
and make a story. But we have to be on the  
spot to show the incident. We can’t say in a  
text form as this and that happened...at the  
end of the day, where is the photo?”**

Jay Ullal was born in 1933 in the port city of  
Mangalore, Karnataka. A fortune teller had  
professed to his parents that their third son would  
travel the world with a small instrument; his father  
thought he would become a surgeon and enrolled  
him to study medicine at Manipal Medical College.  
But it was the chance finding of a Rollicflex camera  
that changed the course of events.

Jay fell in love with photography.

After a short stint as an assistant to Bollywood’s  
veteran cinematographer, M.W. Mukadam, Jay  
Ullal began his journalism career with his first  
assignment for The Times of India in Delhi in 1957.  
At TOI, he started with photo features on the lives  
and homes of cabinet ministers, artists and other  
influential personalities. He made his readers privy  
to the candid side of some of the most powerful  
figures in the world.

As he remembers a famous photo he took of Indira  
Gandhi with her cat, “I told Indiraji that I have  
heard that your cat sleeps in your bed. So, she  
frowned at me and said that you are well informed  
but it is not possible to photograph with the cat. I  
said, Please, please, please! It is my request. She  
asked a girl to bring the cat and I managed to take  
only one picture before the cat jumped out. She  
asked me to give 100 prints of that photo. ”

Ullal left for Europe in 1963 and worked as a  
freelance photographer, taking up assignments in  
France and Germany. It was in 1970 that he got his  
biggest professional breakthrough when he joined  
the German illustrated weekly news magazine,  
Stern, as a photojournalist. He also made Germany  
his adopted country and was awarded the Federal  
Cross of Merit, ‘Bundesverdienstkreuz’, in 1998.

With Stern, Ullal crisscrossed the world countless  
number of times, bringing into sharp focus the  
world’s many tragedies. He was in Vietnam at the  
height of the war, in Beirut to witness the Damour  
Massacre, and in Cambodia where he was the first  
photographer to film the mass graves of the Khmer  
Rouge genocide. Of this time, Ullal says, “ War is  
never good. In any war, it is mostly the civilians  
that are killed and not the fighters.”

In his long career as a photojournalist, the  
photojournalist has contributed to several books  
and publications, including Children at War in  
1999. In 2007, Ullal published a book on the  
Orangutans in Borneo, Thinkers of the Jungle,  
which was translated into English, Dutch, French  
and Spanish.

Today, he lives in Hamburg with his wife Rajni. The  
couple calls Mumbai their second home, which  
they visit every year.



**BEIRUT 1983**

**Eight years of war, destruction, suffering. Since the end of World War II, no other city has suffered as much as the Lebanese capital. Yet, its citizens never gave up. 80,000 have been killed since the fighting began in 1975. Hundreds of thousands live among ruins - but they live.**

**“This photograph of a Muslim groom Abid and his Christian wife Arige helped them in getting the visa out of Lebanon. Because she showed them the photograph and said, “We want to get away from Beirut.” Later about one or two years after an Egyptian producer approached me to ask if he could make a film on the couple. He made the film and it won at the Cannes film festival and they thanked me. The couple now lives in Canada and has three children.”**

In those days, after the Israelis came and drove away Arafat and made East and West Beirut, there was no border dividing the two and all Palestinians were to leave East Beirut. There were no marriages for 8-9 years, while the war went on. Though marriages were happening in East Beirut where there were more Christians. Every week there would be a waiting line to get married, and I took photographs in broken churches, where there were no roofs, everything broken. There were shops to hire wedding gowns for about 200 Mark. So, the shop lady told me about a girl who was borrowing a gown and that she was marrying a Muslim guy.

I found that very interesting. Then, I asked a photographer friend of mine from the local newspaper An-Nahar, to tell her about me. He managed to convince her to give me her telephone number. Then I telephoned her and she said that the marriage will not be in a church and will be in his apartment because he is Muslim and none of my relatives are coming and none of his relatives

are coming either because the Muslims killed my uncle and my own brother. So, we are celebrating with only our friends.

I asked her about how did they first meet and she said that ‘we know each other from our childhood and my father was a lawyer and the law firm was on the ground floor and we lived upstairs. And his father had a small kiosk right outside selling cigarettes and coco-cola. They lived on the other side in West Beirut and the Christians killed his uncle and his father.’ Their marriage was in the house and the party went on till 4o’clock. In the morning, I asked them if they would be willing to walk the same place where she grew up and now the Green line is which divides the two sides. First she said, ‘ No, it is very dangerous because all the mines are there.’ Once I told her that I had been there recently and seen her parent’s house and that it is all broken but it is there. They obliged. And we took the photograph.”

“Wars are never a success, nothing good ever comes out of a war. In Vietnam also, so many years of war and still there are conflicts. Wars are really bad; politicians make mistakes, all knowingly or unknowingly, whatever the case maybe. But we are journalists and we have to show what is happening in the world to the public. We are peace lovers but when things happen, we have to make photographs.” - Jay Ullal





THE DAMOUR MASSACRE, 1976

“As a war photographer, you should take risks and you have to be careful with what you do and how you photograph. We are not suicide commando or self-mode commando, we are going there to show the world what is happening and you can write many things but without a photograph nobody will believe it.”

“I was in Damascus, waiting to take Hafez-al-Assad’s interview, the then President of Syria and suddenly I heard on BBC that Palestinians have taken over Damour. So, I directly left for Damour in an Al-Sharq newspaper van, they were the only ones with the permission to go from Syria to Damascus to Beirut and we reached Damour early that morning.” - Jay Ullal

In Damour, church bells began to ring. They heralded the last hours of the city, Damour is described in travel guides as one of the country’s most beautiful towns. And Lebanon is considered one the world’s most beautiful countries. On January 21, 1976, the city of Damour was completely destroyed. Future historians will probably consider it the day that marked the end of the country’s short history.

A short while later, a Palestinian patrol spotted us. The commandos briefly deliberated. Then, one of them said “Welcome to Lebanon!” he added that it would be a good thing if the international media reported on the Palestinian triumph and revenge in Damour. They escorted us into the city.

In the neat streets and alleyways of Damour, the city looked almost peaceful. In most of the buildings, the fire had ravaged only the interiors of the houses. The stone walls were able to withstand the flames. The high brick walls surrounding the

yards hid the killer commandos and bodies from view. Only the occasional screams, the sound of gun salvos and the smell of burning human flesh destroyed the hope that the majority of the 25,000 residents had fled the city just in time to escape the fighting.



“These people used to kill all the old people who cannot be transported, so they straightaway killed them. In Damour, there was an old couple lying on the floor, a man came with the gun to kill them but by the time he shot I took a photograph, I was using the flash because it was in a room. He got shocked with the flashlight and went away. About two weeks later, I got a telephone call from the director of Middle East Airlines, he said, ‘Are you Mr. Jay Ullal?’ I am calling to thank you very much as you have saved my parents lives.” - Jay Ullal





**KIDNEY THEFT IN INDIA, 1975**

**The village of Pallipallyam is located 300 km south of Bangalore. Villagers say that whoever owns a bike also has a scar on the side of their body. By now, around 100 people from the village have allegedly become victims of the organ-trading cartel in Bangalore.**

**“Today, the situation with photojournalism is totally different from those days. Those days they would send the film and we had to send the films back. Now with the digital, you can sit anywhere in the world and send the images. It’s a totally different subject altogether. The quality is very good admittedly, and that is why in Stern magazine, for example, we used to have 24 photographers but now we have zero photographers. Nobody is sending anybody anything because they are getting photos from all over the world almost for nothing - They sit on a desk and get 20,000 digital photos a day at their fingertips. - Jay Ullal**

“A few months ago, a man called Jussuf showed up to the market”, Velu recounts. He offered me a job in Bangalore. “100 rupees a day!” In Bangalore, Jussuf showed him a construction site where Velu would start working as soon as the construction freeze was lifted. “I stayed with Jussuf in his house. Three rooms, kitchen, a room all to myself.” “Bangalore, the Garden City”, India’s booming metropolis with its high-tech companies, was a new world to Velu. Jussuf slipped him some cash. After ten days he stopped giving Velu any money, took him aside and said, “ You can earn 500 for donating blood.”

Velu has no idea that at that moment, the Yellamma Dasappa Hospital is creating a file for patient number 11468. He does not know that the

doctors will use renal ultrasound to measure the size of his kidneys. He does not know that they will draw blood samples for tissue typing to evaluate whether his kidney will be compatible with the recipient. The Yellamma Dasappa Hospital is a private clinic with 80 beds. Eight-kidney specialists perform transplants. “They earn 5,000 rupees per patient”, says the head of the clinic. Next door in OR 5, only a few feet away, another surgical team goes to work on a 30-year-old woman. Both her kidneys are failing. It’s an ordeal that she does not want to endure any longer. She is from Saudi-Arabia. Of course, she pays handsomely for Velu’s kidney.

Seven days later, Velu is released from the hospital with a bandage wrapped around his abdomen. A nurse explains that Velu fell from the bed and had to undergo surgery. Velu receives 5000 rupees and asks no further questions especially since the construction job did not pan out. Velu buys a t-shirt, a bag and a bus ticket back to Pallipallyam.

In late January, Velu gets involved in a fight and when the pain lingers, he goes to see the village doctor. Only then does Velu learn what really happened. He angrily returns to Bangalore. Doctors at the hospital give him another 5000 rupees. Velu goes to the police. The authorities have amassed stacks of documents about the kidney mafia in Bangalore. Although the new transplant law has not yet been enacted in Bangalore, the defendants face a jail sentence of 7-10 years.



**DAS BRUTALE GESCHÄFT MIT ME**

# NIEREN IN I

**Der 30jährige Velu – hier mit seiner Familie – wurde in eine Privatklinik gelockt. Dort wurde ihm ohne seine Zustimmung eine Niere entfernt. Seither hat er am linken Rippenbogen eine lange Operationsnarbe und klagt über ständige Schmerzen**



## THE GREAT HOAX IN THE RAINFOREST, 1986

**“In Philippines, I was kidnapped with my German writer by these gangsters of the Abu Sayyaf group, we were taken as hostages. At that time, they wanted to kill us and nobody would be able to find our bodies for 100 years, as we were 5 days of walking distance into the rainforest from the nearest city of General Santos. On the way, we would sleep a little bit at night in the forest and then walk again.”**

Ever since the world first learned about an isolated stone-age tribe called the Tasaday, some 15 years ago, there have repeatedly been doubts about their authenticity. But the Marcos regime prevented closer examination. Bemujuk dengmekol bu delmot! Uuh, kunjum! The canopy swallows the words of our guide, Dafal. Who might he be talking to here in this empty wilderness? “He is talking to the Master of the Mountain”, explains Estido, our translator. “He asks him not to send any rain.”

On Easter Sunday March 30, 1986, the “Sunday Times” – a newspaper in the Philippines – published Dr. Itens’s first report about the Stone Age hoax. Today, we want to begin our investigation into the Tasaday who again present themselves as half-naked cavemen. But we never get the chance.

**9.10 a.m.** We are about to set up a wooden tripod in front of the lower cave when suddenly all direct their gaze towards the valley. A group of armed men, probably guerillas, aim their weapons at us. One of them asks us in English: “Who are you? What are you doing here?” We ask them the same question: “Who are you?” “We are rebels, soldiers”, they reply and one of them adds “I’m Cris, the Commander.”

We tell him that we are German journalists on an assignment about the Tasaday. Suddenly, we

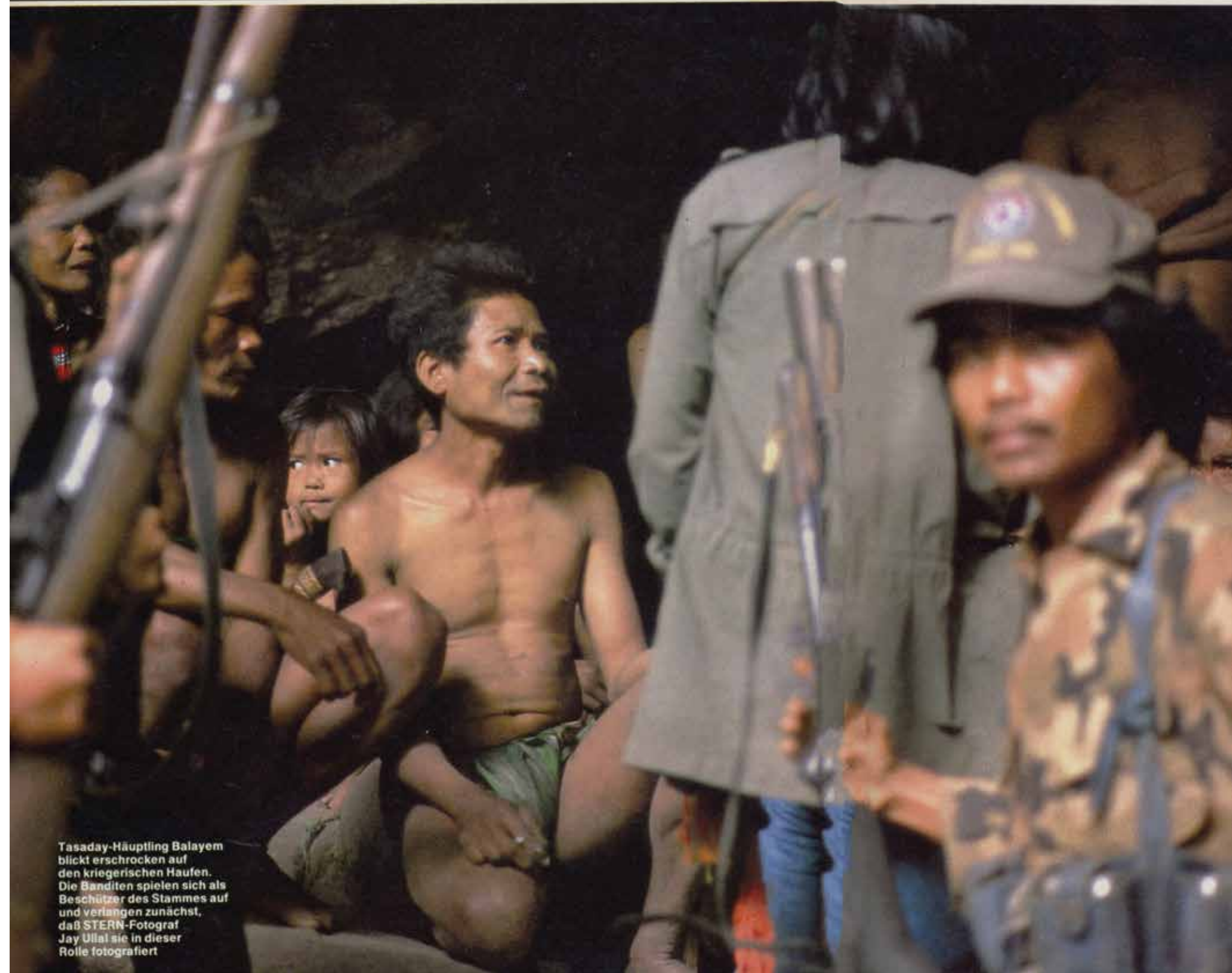
are surrounded by 19 heavily armed men. The Tasaday look scared.

We try to act naturally and undaunted. “No, not now, we have work to do.” “We should at least take a few pictures of you together with the Tasaday.” Cris seems to like the idea. “Good. Let’s go.” He wants us to stage the moment from this morning when he and his soldiers arrived. Cris’ men seem to enjoy it. They happily follow Jay’s instructions. The Tasaday witness the whole scene expressionless and without saying a word.

*“He kept us for 5 days and brought us to General Santos city, 250 km from where we were and then we could send the message to Germany. A person from Stern magazine flew with 200,000 dollars and came to Manila then paid the money and we were released with all our things. Till the end, he did not want to give my Rolex watch and said I’ll keep this as a souvenir. The writer who was with me said, ‘Show him the bag of money and say this your souvenir. And give the watch back.’ So, I got my watch also.” - Jay Ullal*

Shortly before 4 p.m. we are on our way, leaving everything behind – notes, cameras, rolls of film. But for now, we are happy. The ordeal is over. The truck rolls through bright green rice fields. We are on our way to the village of Mindupok.

... plötzlich umstellen schwerbewaffnete Banditen die Höhle. Sie nehmen die STERN-R



Tasaday-Häuptling Balayem blickt erschrocken auf den kriegsräuschen Haufen. Die Banditen spielen sich als Beschützer des Stammes auf und verlangen zunächst, daß STERN-Fotograf Jay Ullal sie in dieser Rolle fotografiert



JAY ULLAL – THE GLOBE TROTTER

India (incl. Lakshadweep & Andamans)  
Nepal  
Pakistan (incl. POK)  
East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)  
Burma\*  
Afghanistan  
Tibet  
Maldives  
Sri Lanka  
Thailand  
Laos  
Singapore  
Hong Kong

South Korea  
North Korea  
South + North Vietnam  
Russia  
Australia  
New Zealand  
Fiji Island  
West + East Samoa  
New Hebrides (now Vanuatu)  
Indonesia (Sulawesi, Borneo, Bali, Kalimantan, Java, Sumatra)  
Philippines (Cebu, Mindanao, Tasaday --

from Kidnap Story)  
Malaysia  
China  
Taiwan  
Japan  
East Germany  
Australia  
Poland  
Yugoslavia  
Sarajevo  
Bulgaria  
Portugal  
Tanzania  
Lima, Peru  
Sudan

Guatemala  
Tonga Island in Pacific Ocean  
Mauritius  
Zimbabwe  
Venezuela  
Colombia  
Barbados  
Spain (Ibiza, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Palma, Formentera)  
Italy  
Balkan region: Bosnia  
England  
Ireland

Holland (now Netherlands)  
Portugal  
Austria  
Sweden  
Denmark  
Norway  
UAE, Dubai,  
Abu Dhabi  
Sharjah  
Iran  
Iraq  
Turkey  
South Africa

Madagascar  
Argentina  
Mexico  
Tunis, Tunisia  
Jordan  
Israel  
Egypt  
Tripoli, Libya (Gaddafi)  
Syria  
Kuwait  
Lebanon, Beirut  
Saudi Arabia  
Cuba  
Grenada  
Dominican Republic

USA  
Canada  
Brazil  
Chile  
Peru  
Nigeria  
Mali  
Komoren (now Comoros)  
Marokko (Morocco)  
Senegal  
Ethiopia  
Kenya  
Uganda  
Nicaragua  
Honduras  
Mogadishu, Somalia

