

Prof. Bob Davidson of the University of Toronto

Monday 18 November,

**To take place at 11:45 a.m. in Room 2020
in the MacKinnon Building Extension
(sponsored by the Tourism History Working Group)**

**The End of Secular Sanctuary:
Tourists, Snipers and the Requisitioned Hotel**

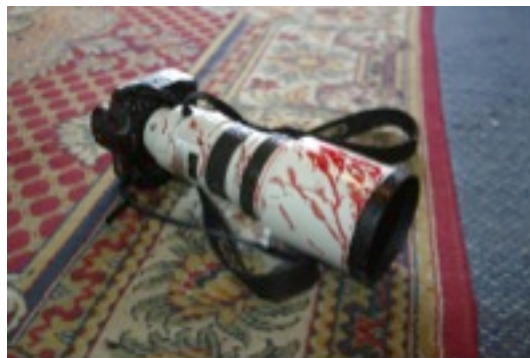


Photo: Hotel Palestine, Baghdad. (Credit: Patrick Baz/AFP).

The modern city has been gazed upon by two radical, lingering sets of eyes: those of the tourist and those of the sniper. The first takes in, sees afresh and captures; the second can control and terrorize and eliminate. In this paper, I argue that it is one of the city's most ubiquitous and underappreciated spaces—the hotel—that has come to bind the two. A key site of transculturation in Western modernity, the hotel acts as a zone of articulation and overlap for these seemingly opposed ways of looking. I propose that through an examination of the requisitioned hotel, in particular, one finds compelling insights not only into the way in which the act of appropriating alters spatial and scopic relations but also how it has contributed to changes in the role of the media in the theatre of war — a key element in my understanding of these gazes. From Orwell's front-line experiences and stay in Civil War Barcelona through to Sarajevo's brutal siege, the "War of the Hotels" in Beirut, and the overt attacks on journalists in Baghdad during the first Iraq War, one can see the alignment of the tourist's and sniper's gazes and how their apogee in that of the media has come to point to the end of secular sanctuary itself.