



In a small flat in the German town of Erlangen in February 2003, an out-of-work Iraqi sat down with his wife to watch one of the world's most powerful men deliver the speech of his career on live TV.

As US secretary of state, [Colin Powell](#) gathered his notes in front of the United Nations security council, the man watching — Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, known to the west's intelligence services as "[Curveball](#)" — had more than an inkling of what was to come. He was, after all, Powell's main source, a man his German handlers had feted as a new "Deep throat" — an agent so pivotal that he could bring down a government.

As Curveball watched [Powell make the US case to invade Iraq](#), he was hiding an admission that he has not made until now: that nearly every word he had told his interrogators from Germany's secret service, the BND, was a lie.

Everything he had said about the inner workings of Saddam Hussein's biological weapons programme was a flight of fantasy - one that, he now claims was aimed at ousting the Iraqi dictator.

Janabi, a chemical engineering graduate who had worked in the Iraqi industry, says he looked on in shock as Powell's presentation revealed that the Bush administration's hawkish decisionmakers had swallowed the lot. Something else left him even more amazed; until that point he had not met a US official, let alone been interviewed by one.

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