

Making of



ONCE I PUNCHED A GUY IN HAMBURG*

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

OK, BUT CAN WE NOW START THIS PROPERLY?

MY MOTIVATION, APART FOR INDULGING SASHA IS THAT THIS WOULD ALSO GIVE US A CHANCE TO EXPRESS SOME OF OUR CONCERNS AND FURTHER THOUGHTS...

IT TOOK US MORE THAN TEN YEARS TO COMPLETE THIS, THE WORK ON IT STOPPED AND STARTED SO MANY TIMES. IN 2017 WHILE VISITING BELGRADE I MET DEJAN ILIC, THE EDITOR OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE FABRIKA KNJIGA, WHEN I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE PROJECT HE IMMEDIATELY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST TO PUBLISH IT AND THAT RE-IGNITED OUR EXCITEMENT AND STRENGTHENED OUR RESOLVE TO FINALLY FINISH IT.



IT ENDS TOO ABRUPTLY, YOU DEFINITELY NEED AN EPILOGUE, YOU HAVE TO TELL THE REST OF THE STORY

MEANWHILE DEJAN WAS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR US TO FINISH

ON THE OTHER HAND SASHA'S CONCERN WAS THAT BECAUSE OF THE LONG PERIOD OF TIME PASSING SINCE THE EVENTS AND THE STORY BEING RE-TOLD SO MANY TIMES HE WAS MISREMEMBERING SOME PARTS,

I THINK THAT A STORY WITHOUT EXAGGERATED HEROISM AND DRAMATIC ACTION MOMENTS MAKES IT MORE RELATABLE AND CREATES STRONGER ANTI-WAR SENTIMENT WHICH WAS WHAT WE HOPED TO ACHIEVE

YES, ONE NIGHT ON THE 18TH FLOOR IN SOUTH LONDON MICHEL, SASHA AND I WERE, YET AGAIN, TALKING ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA, SASHA STARTED SHARING SOME OF HIS MEMORIES AND WE DECIDED TO SHAPE THEM INTO A GRAPHIC NOVEL

HE DID HAVE ONE CONDITION FOR BEING INCLUDED, HE ONCE JOKINGLY SAID...

FINE AS LONG AS I DON'T LOOK FAT IN THE DRAWINGS

WE EXPECTED IT WOULD NOT TAKE US LONGER THAN A YEAR TO FINISH IT...

IT WAS ALL GOING QUITE SMOOTHLY AND WE AGREED ON MOST OF THE THINGS, THE TITLE WAS ONE POINT OF CONTENTION - WE WERE STUCK ON IT FOR AGES UNTIL DEJAN CAME TO RESCUE WITH HIS SUGGESTION***

ON ONE HAND WE FELT THAT WE NEEDED TO EXPRESS A STRONG POLITICAL AND MORAL STANCE WITHOUT SOUNDING PREACHY AND TOO POLITICISED, I HOPE WE SUCCEEDED

ALWAYS THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE A GREAT OPENING LINE FOR SOMETHING

SURE, I'VE ALWAYS LOVED THE EXTRAS THAT WOULD COME WITH A MOVIE ON A DVD, MISS THOSE, ME BEING A FRUSTRATED FILM DIRECTOR AND THIS BEING THE CLOSEST TO ME, KIND OF, CO-DIRECTING SOMETHING I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A FITTING END TO OUR STORY

NOW, THAT THE INTRO IS OUT OF THE WAY...

ORIGINALLY WE INTENDED TO END THE TALE THE MOMENT I GOT WOUNDED AND MY OPERATION IN THE FIELD HOSPITAL, LUCKILY WE PASSED THE FIRST DRAFT TO VANJA, A FRIEND OF OURS WHO AFTER READING IT INSISTED...

THE PART 'WHAT HAPPENED AFTER' CAME AS A RESULT OF THAT BUT IT TOOK US ANOTHER 20 MONTHS

FACT THAT IT TOOK US SO LONG TO COMPLETE IT MEANT THAT THE DRAWINGS WERE DONE AT DIFFERENT TIMES USING DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES AND PERHAPS THIS ENDED UP STYLISTICALLY INCONSISTENT WHICH IS ONE OF SASHA'S CONCERNS BUT SOMETHING THAT I REALLY LIKE

ALSO I WAS WORRIED THAT MY STORY WAS UNREMARKABLE AND NOT EXCITING ENOUGH AND THAT THERE WERE SO MANY OTHER, MUCH MORE TRAGIC AND DRAMATIC STORIES FROM THAT TIME

WE STARTED WORKING ON IT IN 2007 DURING YOUR STAY IN LONDON.

MICHEL'S SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT WAS INVALUABLE AT THE TIME



... HOW NAIVE AND WAY TOO OPTIMISTIC WE WERE

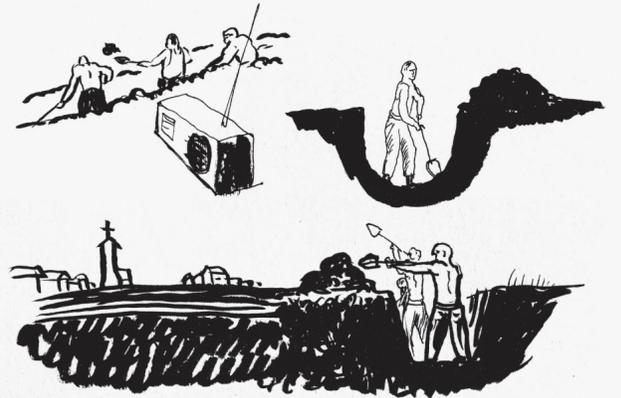
ANOTHER ONE WAS THE PAGE 42, AND ESPECIALLY THE FOOTNOTE THERE, THE ONE ABOUT SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC'S ROLE IN THE CONFLICT

Deleted Scenes

SOME OF THE SCENES WERE REMOVED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, THEY WERE MOSTLY ABOUT OUR EVERYDAY LIFE IN LONDON BUT WE FELT THAT THEY WERE SLOWING THE NARRATION DOWN AND THAT WE NEEDED TO GET TO SASHA TELLING HIS STORY QUICKER



DURING MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR, EVERY TIME WE CHANGED OUT POSITIONS WE WERE DIGGING TRENCHES, I FOUND THAT EXTREMELY TIRESOME, BUT IN RETROSPECT IT PROBABLY WASN'T AS BAD AS I INITIALLY THOUGHT AND ALSO THE REPETITION OF SIMILAR SCENES WAS UNNECESSARY



ALSO MY FATHER MADE ANOTHER, EARLIER VISIT, IN SOON AFTER WE ARRIVED IN CROATIA WHILE WE WERE STILL CLOSE TO THE BORDER, HE ARRIVED WITH FEW OTHER PARENTS BUT FOR SOME REASON I HAVE A VERY VAGUE RECOLLECTION OF THAT VISIT

SCENES OF THE TIME I WAS DRAFTED TO GO TO WAR WERE QUITE SURREAL AND ILLUSTRATE THE MADNESS AND PARANOIA OF THE PERIOD BUT ONCE WE DECIDED IT WAS GOING TO BE SASHA'S STORY WE FELT WE SHOULDN'T USE THESE



ZA TEBE JE ZOVE TETKA MANJKA.

NAILAZE OBLAGI I LOZE VREME I TREBA SE SKLONITI. KLICK! TU TUUU, TU TUUU.

TETKA MANJKA !?!

A FEW SCENES NEVER MADE IT IN BECAUSE I REMEMBERED THEM OR MENTIONED THEM TOO LATE TO BE INCLUDED. FOR EXAMPLE ONCE I WAS ON THE LOOKOUT AND FOUND A SMALL ROCKET GRENADE, STUPIDLY I STARTED PLAYING WITH IT NOT REALISING THAT IT HAD BEEN FIRED BUT DIDN'T EXPLODE



SOMEHOW MY PLATOON COMMANDER SAW ME AND STARTED SCREAMING TO ME TO DISPOSE OF IT, STILL REMEMBER THE TERROR ON HIS FACE WHILE HE WAS RUNNING TOWARDS ME, THE GRENADE COULD HAVE EXPLODED AT ANY POINT, QUITE POSSIBLY HE SAVED MY LIFE THAT DAY

* MANY YEARS AGO SASHA HEARD THIS LINE TOLD BY A GUY AT A PARTY, THE PERSON SAYING IT GOT INTERRUPTED AND SASHA NEVER HEARD THE STORY, INTRIGUED, HE WAS LEFT WONDERING WHAT THE STORY WAS ABOUT, THE WONDERING CONTINUES TO THIS DAY

** WELL, KIND OF

*** THE TITLE FOR THE ENGLISH VERSION TOOK EVEN LONGER, THIS TIME TOM, WAYNE, MAGDA, PAVEL, OLIVIA AND MASSIMO HELPED US WITH THEIR SUGGESTIONS AND FEEDBACK, WE ARE REALLY GRATEFUL FOR THAT