TRANSCRIPTS

Romeo and Juliet in Sarajevo

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Written and Directed by John Zaritsky
Produced by Virginia Storring

ZIJO ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I still don't believe that they're dead because it's very hard to believe such young people like that can disappear with such a sudden and violent death. All their wishes, all their plans are sunk after one bullet, after one burst, after one move, after one monstrous act.

ANNOUNCER: Tonight on FRONTLINE, love and death in Sarajevo. She was a Muslim, he was a Serb. As a young couple, they tried to build a future, defying the hatred that was tearing their country apart. But a year ago, trying to escape, they were struck by sniper's bullets and died in each other's arms. Tonight on FRONTLINE, "Romeo and Juliet in Sarajevo."

NARRATOR: For two years, the world watched while Sarajevo died-- the shelling of the besieged city, the slaughter of the innocent civilians, the unending scenes of carnage and grief, overwhelming, numbing.

DAN RATHER, CBS News: This is the CBS Evening News.

NARRATOR: But there was one picture and one story that seemed for a moment to break through the fatigue of horror.

1st TELEVISION REPORTER: Here are some of this week's events around the world.

NARRATOR: A boy and a girl, one Serb, the other Muslim--

2nd TELEVISION REPORTER: The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has created--

NARRATOR: --dead in one another's arms on a bridge in no-man's land. They were called "the

Romeo and Juliet of Sarajevo."

3rd TELEVISION REPORTER: They died in each other's arms.

NARRATOR: This is their story.

DAN RATHER: Two of the dead are a modern-day Romeo and Juliet, shot and killed by snipers in Sarajevo.

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, when they were 16, Bosko Brkic and Admira Ismic kissed at a New Year's Eve party. It was the beginning of 1984. That year, a Muslim girl and a Serbian boy fell in love for the first time in their lives. Admira's best friend in high school, Tanja Bogdanovic, knew them both well.

TANJA BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* The two of them were very, very different. I loved Admira because she was so different from me. She was very unusual. She was interested in things that were a little bit strange for a girl. She loved to drive motorcycles and she knew how to fix cars very well. She was a little bit of a wild character. Usually, girls are afraid of something, but nothing could scare Admira. Bosko was different. He was quieter and cooler. He had a smile all the time. He liked to play jokes on people, but in a nice way, like a real nice guy. He had a real charm that you don't see in people very often.

NARRATOR: Nineteen eighty-four was a magical time to be in Sarajevo. The city was hosting the winter Olympic games and Bosko and Admira saw the world come to their home. Historically, Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, had always been a crossroads of nations, a city that had tried to set aside the old hatreds, the embodiment of an international dream. It was a cosmopolitan place, a melting pot where Muslims, Serbs, Croats, Jews and other nationalities had lived together for more than 500 years.

Bosko's parents came here from Serbia in 1970. Dragen was an engineer who worked for the United Nations. Rada was a chemist. They had two sons, Bosko and Bane.

RADA BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I raised them without thinking about religion or nationality. I never said, "You are Serbs, they are Muslims or Croats." I didn't regard her as a Muslim, as different. I saw her only as the girlfriend of my son, who loved her, and who I loved, too.

NARRATOR: Admira's Muslim parents were just as welcoming to Bosko. Zijo Ismic, a prosperous garage owner, and his wife, Nera, approved of their eldest daughter's first serious boyfriend.

ZIJO ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Well, I knew from the first day about that relationship and I didn't have anything against it. I thought it was good because her guy was so likable. And after a time, I started to love him and didn't regard him any differently than Admira.

NERA ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* In my family, there are many mixed marriages. Two aunts of mine are married to Serbs. They have kids who are my relatives, so that means I can't see a difference. And we lived like that the entire time before the war. All of us-- or should I say most of us only judge people as people, not which nationality they are. But people who think differently made this war. We didn't care about nationalities. That wasn't important to us.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* My best friend, Otto, is a Croat. I spent more time in his Catholic church than in all the mosques of the world. Besides, I've never been in a mosque, but I went to church with him

because his parents were religious and they were going to church. I was Otto's friend, and wherever he went, I went. I even sang in the church choir and I didn't care. And that's something the world can't understand, is how a Muslim would sing in a church choir.

NARRATOR: For Admira's younger sister, Amela, that Bosko was a Serb and a Christian was not important. He was just the brother she'd never had.

AMELA ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko treated me like a younger sister. He always protected me and told me that if I ever had any problems, I could talk to him. "If somebody bothers you," he said, "tell me." He was like my brother.

NARRATOR: But Amela couldn't understand that, for her 80-year old grandmother, accepting a mixed relationship wasn't so easy.

SADIKA ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Yes. Yes, I did have something against it. I thought he is a Serb and she is a Muslim and how will it work? You know, some mixed marriages didn't last for a very long time-- you know, some of them. You know how old people like me are thinking.

NARRATOR: What she was thinking about was her family's history, how her husband and brothers had fought the Serbs as part of a multi-ethnic force called "the Partisans" in the Second World War. They were fighting not just the Germans, but also Serbian nationalists known as Chetniks. The war had inflamed all the old nationalism. In neighboring Croatia, pro-Hitler fascists were rounding up Serbs in Nazi-like extermination programs. Bosko's grandmother remembers those times. She and her husband and her daughter, Rada, were living in a Serbian village in Croatia. One day, her husband was summoned to a police station.

NAKA GRUBER: *[through interpreter]* And then I never saw him again. I don't know where they took him. I just know he was killed. They said he was thrown in that Jadova pit near Gospic.

NARRATOR: Bosko's grandfather was one of an estimated 500,000 Serbs killed by the Croatian fascists. When the Partisan leader, Marshall Tito, emerged victorious at the end of the war, he had to contend with this legacy of deadly hatreds. His solution was to outlaw all expressions of nationalism. Everyone would now be a Yugoslav. A multi-ethnic youth corps, the Tito Pioneers, set out to rebuild the country. For Admira's father, Zijo, it was a time for hope.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I was a Tito Pioneer and I still believe in one idea. Tito was probably a visionary, and even now, I remember his words. "Keep brotherhood and unity in your eye." If we had succeeded in keeping to that, this war would not have happened.

NARRATOR: For the generation that followed, Yugoslavia became the most open society in Eastern Europe, with the freedom to travel and a standard of living closest to the West. When they graduated from high school in June, 1986, Bosko and Admira were typical Yugoslav teenagers. His mother says they were interested in cars, movies and music. But that summer, Bosko's father suddenly died from a heart attack. He was just 45. It was hard on Bosko. Three weeks later, he had to report for compulsory military duty in what was then the Yugoslav Federal Army. He was sent to an officer training school in Serbia.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Admira was very upset at the time he was in the army. You could see in her face that she loved Bosko. One day, I tried to help her, to say to her, "Go out. Go out with your

friends. There are more guys than Bosko." That was my personal opinion. I thought the kid should go out and have a good time. But I could never convince her.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* Admira was really his first love. I can honestly say it was true love between them.

NARRATOR: They had never been apart before. He was 300 miles away. They wrote to each other almost every day.

1st READER: "My dearest Admira: Every night when I go to bed, I cannot sleep because I'm thinking of you. My love, you are the only happiness I have."

2nd READER: "My dear love: Sarajevo at night is the most beautiful thing in the world. I guess I could live somewhere else, but only if I must or if I'm forced. Just a little beat of time is left until we are together. After that, absolutely nothing can separate us."

1st READER: "My dearest Admira: Truly, I miss you so much that I cannot say or explain in words. Now all my life points to the day when I'll finish my military service and see you again."

NARRATOR: After 11 months they were back together again. While Admira continued studying economics at university, Bosko set up a small kitchen-ware store stocked with products they'd buy on trips to Italy.

Meanwhile, across Eastern Europe communism was crumbling. But in Yugoslavia, an old force was reasserting itself. On an ancient battleground called "the Field of the Blackbirds," half a million Serbs gathered to honor their 14th century war hero, Prince Lazar. He had fought the Muslim Turks at the battle of Kosovo in 1389 and his defeat had not been forgotten. Now a militant Serbian politician, Slobodan Milosevic, used the threat of ancient enemies to stoke a rising Serbian nationalism with a call to re-claim their ancient territory.

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC: *[subtitles]* It is a coincidence of life and history that Serbia in 1989 is regaining its state and dignity. So in this way, we are celebrating a historic anniversary from the ancient past that has symbolic importance for the future of Serbia.

NARRATOR: In Croatia, the Serbian threat led to a declaration of independence in 1991. War broke out as Croatian forces battled the Serb-dominated Federal Army. History seemed to repeat itself. The old hatreds reasserted themselves as forces from both sides massacred civilians. Once again, Serbs in Croatia were forced to flee. Among them, after her house was destroyed for the second time in her life, Bosko's grandmother, Naka Gruber. Leaving literally everything behind, she finally joined relatives in Canada.

Mrs. GRUBER: *[through interpreter]* Everything was looted and robbed, burned down. How couldn't it be hard? I say that there's no good fortune in anything. Since I was left without a husband, without a home, without anything, how can I be hopeful? How can I be happy?

NARRATOR: In the Serbian Orthodox church, she lit candles for the dead and prayed for the living, especially for her daughter and grandsons back in Bosnia, where people were still convinced that the war would not come to them.

Mrs. GRUBER: *[through interpreter]* I told my daughter, Rada, before I came here, "Get out of Sarajevo. Take the kids and go to Serbia." I saw the situation was boiling over and would lead to great evil. And it was.

NARRATOR: On April 5th, 1992, the streets of Sarajevo were filled with Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats demonstrating their support for a new, independent, multi-ethnic state. Sarajevans marched in the hope that they could hold on to their tradition of tolerance and avoid the bloodshed that followed Croatian independence. Suddenly, shots rang out. Bosnian Serbs loyal to a political party opposed to independence had fired into the crowd. A sniper's bullet claimed the first casualty of the Bosnian war. The siege of Sarajevo was about to begin.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I think that Bosko and Admira thought that everything would end soon. Even I thought that it would be 15 days, maybe a couple or three months, maximum. But it took time. Horrible things are going on and it's very hard to watch and live with that. But it's more horrible when you're a part of it. They felt very bad.

NARRATOR: There were, of course, many Serbs who immediately left the city to join the Serbian army, people who had known Admira's father, Zijo, people like Father Voyislav Charkich, an orthodox priest.

Father VOYISLAV CHARKICH: *[through interpreter]* I went into the war voluntarily, as a priest and as a man, because the Orthodox church and the Serbian nation were in jeopardy. If we did not enter this war, within 10 years we would no longer be living on these lands. Even though the oldest object in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina is the old church in Sarajevo, which dates back to the 10th or 11th century.

NARRATOR: In a ceremony going back centuries, to the holy wars against the Muslims, Father Charkich blessed the elite Serbian soldiers, qualifying them to be known as Chetnik dukes.

Father Charkich: *[through interpreter]* We should all live with our own people. It's better for us to separate now, following this bloody war, so that my grandsons won't have to pick up a rifle, like I did. This is the last opportunity for accounts to be settled.

NARRATOR: On the other side, some Serbs stayed and joined the hastily assembled Bosnian defense forces, now dominated by Muslims. Bosko faced a hard decision.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko said, "I cannot go and shoot Serbs. I can't go into the Muslim army. If they call me, I simply cannot." He was talking once with one of his friends and said, "I simply cannot go and shoot Serbs" and he would not do that. Never. I know that for sure. But to go up into the hills and shoot back into Sarajevo-- he couldn't do that, either, because Admira was there. Her parents were there and he couldn't do that, either. He was simply a kid who was not for the war.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko stayed in Sarajevo because of his opinions of the war. He thought the same as I think. If he left Sarajevo, he'd never come back to his friends. He would be ashamed to face his buddies because if he left them, he would be a traitor.

NARRATOR: Misa Cuk, Bosko's Serbian neighbor, faced the same dilemma. Misa had sent his Muslim wife and children out of Sarajevo, but had stayed behind and joined the Bosnian army, to protect the city. With feelings against all Serbs running high, Misa was worried that if Bosko didn't fight, too, he might be killed by local gangs of Muslim extremists.

MISA CUK: *[through interpreter]* I said, "Take this gun, because if somebody comes for you and it's time to die, at least you can protect yourself." He didn't want to take the gun. He didn't even want to hold it. He picked it up with two fingers, like his handkerchief.

NARRATOR: But every day on the streets of Sarajevo there was even greater danger. Anyone anywhere could suddenly become the target for a sniper's bullet. Every few hours a Serbian marksman would collect a bounty of 500 German marks reportedly placed on the head of every Sarajevan. It was a war where the hunter and his prey were often former friends and neighbors.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* So many friends have gone over to the other side. That emptiness I'll never fill for the rest of my life. Those are friends I've spent a long time with, a good part of my life. Until yesterday, we were together, sitting together and drinking and celebrating together-- Ramadans, Christmases, Orthodox Easters, Catholic Easters, birthdays, 29th of Novembers, Liberation Days and all of that. We celebrated together. What changed overnight? Who led the way for these people? Who had the power to lead the people, to take them from friends and bring them into the woods to shoot at us? I could never understand that.

NARRATOR: Every day Serbian artillery shells rained down on the city, killing and maiming even more innocent victims. Despite the terrifying risk, Bosko and Admira continued to see each other. Every day, one of them would walk across the city, traveling the five miles between the homes of their parents.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I remember she told me once a shell landed near the bakery and some people died. That happened just after she crossed near the bakery. She couldn't stand the blood. She hid herself. She was horrified.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* And they saw each other in a hail of bullets and a rain of shells. It didn't matter where in town-- at Gram's place, here. Both of them, when they left their homes, faced the same risks, and Bosko and Admira were in the same danger.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* They fought sometimes, like everybody else, but there wasn't a day when they didn't hear from each other. They always knew, for every moment, where each other was. I was sitting once with her alone and I asked her, "Can this war separate you from Bosko?" And she said, "Dear Rada, only bullets can."

NARRATOR: By July, 1992, Sarajevo was slowly being leveled. The Serb shells landed indiscriminately all over the city. Everyone -- Croats, Muslims and Serbs -- was vulnerable.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* We were in the living room, watching tennis, and just before, Bosko and a younger friend were in the kitchen. They left the kitchen just two minutes before the shell hit the apartment. He could have been killed there because shrapnel was everywhere.

NARRATOR: The random shell caused so much damage that Bosko and his mother had to abandon the apartment on Koshevo Hill, where they had lived for 25 years. They moved to another building next door, but just two weeks later another shell completely destroyed their new home. No one was hurt, but Rada decided she must now leave the neighborhood she loved.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I left Koshevo Hill because of the constant shelling and it was very hard to go into shelters all the time. I was shaking every night. And Bosko was telling me all the time,

"Mom, please go. Just you go. When you're safe, it will be easier for me to take care of myself. Now I'm worried, when you go out into the street, whether you will come back again or not."

NARRATOR: Admira's parents lived on a large property on the outskirts of the town. Zijo insisted that Rada should come and stay with them.

Mr. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I said to him once, "Zijo, maybe we'll have some problems with your neighbors because of me," and he said, "Nobody has the right to tell me what I can do in my own house or who should be in my house."

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* We were very close. She could have stayed with us as much as she wanted-- the entire war. She knew she wasn't a big burden on us. It's war. It's hard, but we could have.

NARRATOR: That July, they spent most of their time indoors. It was the heaviest bombardment of the war so far. Thousands of shells fell daily. After a month, Bosko's mother couldn't take it any longer.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I cannot choose any one moment -- not the bread line massacre, not the shelling of my apartment -- because everything was so tragic for me. When I saw that the town was completely destroyed, I just said, "Oh, my God. Is it possible that this can happen in this century? "

NARRATOR: In desperation, Rada turned to the only person she knew who could get her out of Sarajevo to join Bosko's older brother in Serbia. Her son, Bane, had grown up with a Muslim friend, a boy who was known as Celo.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* Rada was like my mother. When my mother died, Rada helped me. Bane and I were always together, day and night. He'd go home and take a shower. I'd go home and take a shower. And then we'd be together again. And Bosko was like our younger brother. Sometimes we'd meet him and tell him to come with us.

NARRATOR: When Celo was 17, the tough Muslim was arrested for armed robbery and rape and sent to a maximum security prison. Inside Yugoslavia's Alcatraz, Celo made an important connection when he protected a frail political prisoner, Alia Izetbegovic, who would later become the president of Bosnia. After six years, Celo returned to the streets a hardened criminal, leading a gang that controlled much of Sarajevo's drug and protection rackets.

When Serbian attacks began, the 29-year-old gangster organized the first armed resistance to defend his city.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* Why did I do that? Let's just say that if somebody jumped on your head and started to pound you, wouldn't you defend yourself? And I wanted to defend myself and to defend my town.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* But when this town was in the biggest danger, he came to defend this town. And because of that, for me, he is a good guy.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* Celo was good to me and he was good to all Serbs on Koshevo Hill because he didn't let anybody touch them. Some people were coming and taking people away, but Celo saved many of us. You know, many Serbs stayed in Koshevo Hill.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* What's going on in Sarajevo is just survival. There was a duty for me to protect my town. It's not a war for heroes, like World War II. This is a civil war. In a civil war, you can't regard anybody as a hero. If I'm going to be a hero to Muslims, I don't want to be a hero. But if I'm a hero to all people in Sarajevo, no matter what nationality, I would be honored to be a hero.

NARRATOR: But Celo was quite prepared to play the hero, even posing for the part in a rock video. In real life, he had emerged as one of the most powerful people in the city. Between his military position and his criminal connections, he could get things done. Celo was the linchpin in exchanges of civilians and prisoners of war across the Muslim and Serb lines. Rada came to see her son's old friend at his headquarters.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* When we were alone, I said, "Celo, I want to leave Sarajevo," so he said he could fix that in the next three days. I asked him what we could do about Bosko and he said, "Bosko can stay. I will take care of him." So that was a big guarantee for me that Bosko would be all right.

NARRATOR: Getting out of the besieged city was dangerous. It meant taking one of the few routes out, and then only after arrangements had been made to hold fire. But there were no guarantees and people arrived on the other side shaken by the experience. Bosko's mother knew that it was a one-way trip.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I said good-bye to everybody and then I told them only to take care about my Bosko. And then I specially said to Admira, "Take care of my Bosko," and she said, "I will."

NARRATOR: On August 23rd, 1992, during the heaviest shelling of the war, Bosko's mother and two other Serbs were smuggled out of Sarajevo in exchange for three Muslim prisoners of war.

By the summer of 1992, the Serb "ethnic cleansing" strategy was under way all over Bosnia. Muslims were rounded up in Nazi-like concentration camps or they were simply executed. The campaign claimed the lives of 200,000 Muslims, including six of Admira's relatives.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko was appalled, like everybody else. We didn't expect that from Serbs who lived with us. He couldn't understand how it could happen. He couldn't understand how people could do that to each other, Serbs killing Muslims. He couldn't understand the purpose and why and where such a crime came from, where such hatred came from.

NARRATOR: As the Serbs tightened their grip on Sarajevo, Bosko and Admira began to worry that a sudden shift in the front line could suddenly cut them off from each other. In September they decided to move in together in Bosko's old apartment on Kosevo Hill.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* They had decided that they would never be separated again. Bosko said, "She's there with her parents and if they decided to divide the town in two, then I can't help her, and so it's better for us to be together. It doesn't matter what will happen."

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Especially for Bosko, it bothered him that they were not married because he had such respect for my husband, Zijo, so he was always worried about what Zijo was going to say and think because they were not married. He tried to get me to persuade Admira to marry him, but she refused, saying, "Those mixed marriages in the war are always covered by the media."

CHRISTIANNE AMANPOUR, CNN: Muslims, Croats and Serbs come to the town hall to get married, exchanging vows--

NARRATOR: Mixed marriage ceremonies at Sarajevo's city hall had become international media events and propaganda tools for the Bosnian government, determined to show the world that Muslims and Serbs could still live together.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Admira didn't like hat. "I don't want to make such a big deal out of it," she said. And when I said, "Do it privately, just with the two of you and the best man" so nobody would know, and that's it, and then she told me, "I would feel so sorry to get married without anybody from Bosko's side of the family."

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, the war was taking a terrible toll on Admira's family. Her favorite cousin, Brana, the mother of two boys, had lost her husband before the war and then she was killed by a 60-millimeter shell while putting her sons to bed. The boys were so traumatized by witnessing their mother's death, they refused to leave the courtyard of their apartment building. Bosko and Admira soon became surrogate parents for the two orphans.

GORAN: *[through interpreter]* I knew Bosko and Admira almost from the day I was born. They took me everywhere. Admira was here on my birthday.

VANJA: *[through interpreter]* She brought me books. The last time, she gave me three books. Before that, she gave me six. She was bringing me different books all the time. And she brought us chocolate that Bosko got from the army.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Admira took toys to them. She knitted sweaters, made slippers for them-- anything to make them happy. It's war. You're not able to buy anything-- no stores. It's only what you can find on the black market, if somebody's selling something. It was hard to find anything, but they would constantly go there. They loved those kids so much.

NARRATOR: The first winter of the war hit Sarajevo hard. The city had been without power or running water for months. Its citizens were forced to make long, dangerous treks to the few public water supplies scattered throughout the city. Muslims, Croats and Serbs were drawn together by the daily struggle for survival.

On Koshevo Hill, Jurko Radojevic, a Serbian neighbor, relied on the young couple who lived downstairs.

JURKO RADOJEVIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko carried water to me all last winter. It was only rarely that he couldn't do it, but-- nobody had electricity. They didn't have any and I didn't have any. We helped each other because I had an old wood stove, which I'd found in a burned-down house, and we baked bread in it together. We always shared every piece of bread.

NARRATOR: The winter was unusually harsh and across the city, a desperate population scrounged for fuel wherever it could be found. But the young man on Koshevo Hill remained generous.

Ms. RADOJEVIC: *[through interpreter]* He never did anything bad to anybody. He was always coming with a kilo of flour or rice to try to help out, but he never came to your door to take something.

NARRATOR: A bag of rice or flour now cost a small fortune in a city where people were forced to use a bunch of weeds to stave off starvation for days. Sarajevo was now completely dependent on the United Nations relief flights for food and medicine. To supplement these meager rations, Sarajevans relied on the black market that flourished thanks to corrupt soldiers serving in UNPROFOR, the United Nations peace-keeping force. Coffee, cigarettes and gasoline stolen from UNPROFOR depots appeared on the black market and 10 or 20 times their original value.

Unable to operate his store any longer, Bosko, like many other Sarajevans, became an operator in the black market. Misa Cuk was his partner, but was reluctant to admit the extent of their illegal business.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* You have to make money to live. It wasn't so much petrol, but coffee and things like that.

JOHN ZARITSKY: *[through interpreter]* You can't tell me that it's not petrol and diesel.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* Yes, it was that, too. It was a dirty job, but it was better with stuff like that. Celo told us we could do that.

Mr. ZARITSKY: *[through interpreter]* Celo told us you were dealing in petrol and diesel the whole war.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* Yes. Yes. Celo told us we could do that.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* Petrol. They were dealing in petrol with UNPROFOR. You know what a good business it is, dealing with UNPROFOR? You take one ton of petrol at night and sell it by next morning, so you're ahead 2,000 or 3,000 Deutschmarks, even more.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Misa and Bosko were inseparable. He was with him all the time. He would come here and he was in their apartment all the time, also. Bosko felt badly for him. His mother was gone, his wife was gone and he was all alone, so he brought him home very often for lunch and he spent evenings in their place. So during this war, they were inseparable.

NARRATOR: In the spring of 1993, as the war entered its second year, Misa Cuk was a desperate man. In late April, he volunteered to drive Bosko and Admira from Koshevo Hill to a wedding in central Sarajevo. In a lavish ceremony, Celo was getting married. Generals, cabinet ministers, all of Sarajevo's elite was there. Bosko and Admira were honored to be invited. But as they celebrated, Misa Cuk was disappearing, fleeing out of Sarajevo, carrying with him a gun, a two-way radio and secret military codes from his unit in the Bosnian army. He had told Bosko nothing.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* He put Bosko in a very grave situation. I would never do that to a friend. I don't know if he thought about that or how deep or strong that friendship was, but I could never do that to a friend. It's very unpleasant if you and I are friends and then you leave me here and go to the other side. This is war-- people shooting, people dying. Misa should have thought about what would happen, but Misa didn't think anymore. It's terrible, Misa's mistake.

NARRATOR: Misa's mistake would cost Bosko and Admira dearly.

In April of 1993, the Western powers were debating whether air strikes or military intervention could bring a halt to the siege of Sarajevo. Misa was now with his wife and children in Serbia-controlled Bosnia while

Bosko remained behind to face the consequences of his friend's desertion.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* So when Misa did that shit -- I mean, escaping -- then the pressure on Bosko started. Some guys in our army started to attack him, even sometimes physically. One of them threw a rock at him, and so I had to protect him again. If I hadn't protected him, they would have killed him. He'd disappear.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* The neighborhood reacted in a very ugly way because Misa had a reputation there as commander of Koshevo Hill and then the commander flees to the other side. So they had the urge to retaliate against somebody connected to Misa, but Misa had nobody there except them, so they turned against them because they were the people who spent time with Misa.

Ms. RADOJEVIC: *[through interpreter]* They knew they weren't ever separated. They were together all winter. And then, when they found out that Misa had escaped, they started to talk differently about Bosko.

Mr. ZARITSKY: *[through interpreter]* Here in the neighborhood?

Ms. RADOJEVIC: *[through interpreter]* Yes. Yes. They started to say that he was a Chetnik, that he should be in jail.

NARRATOR: Bosko was harassed daily by angry Muslim neighbors weary of the war and its hardships. One day in a bread line, when Bosko ended up with the last loaf, tempers flared.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* The people in the line didn't get any because there wasn't enough. And then one neighbor came out of the line and cursed the government and said, "How is it possible that a Chetnik can get bread and I cannot?" Bosko turned back and gave her their piece of bread -- that's a little bit more than half a kilo -- and then came back home. Admira was crying and he was in a bad mood.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* But he had to get out, one of those days, no matter how. He was in real danger because I couldn't be with him all the time. And you know how bad it is when your friend sells you out. Because Misa sold him out. It was classic.

NARRATOR: In early May, when Bosko received a summons ordering him to appear for questioning at a Muslim police station, he feared the worst. Serb traders were often tortured and killed in police custody. And 50 years earlier, during World War II, Bosko's grandfather had disappeared when he obeyed an order to report to the police.

Bosko had 72 hours to report or he would be arrested, and so he decided he must leave Sarajevo.

SADIKA ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I was begging Bosko not to take Admira with him. "You go alone." I was begging both of them not to go. "How you lived until now you can live. If you want, you can live here in my place. Live in my place. Don't go there." And I'd ask him, "How can you take her there? You see what they are doing to the Muslim girls. You are helpless and they can do in front of your eyes what they want." They can kill her. They can slit her throat and everything else. "No, Grandma. The same way I spent so long here during the war and nobody has ever touched me, so nobody will touch her of mine."

NARRATOR: But Bosko and Admira had already decided they would leave Sarajevo together and escape

to the Serbian side.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I was so afraid. I knew terrible things were going on. Can you imagine how big that love is and the courage that she, as a Muslim, needed to go to the Serbian side, where all the Muslims were thrown out, where they take people to concentration camps, where they are raping, killing, where babies in carriages are killed? I couldn't understand how she had the courage to go.

NARRATOR: Bosko and Admira hid out at her grandmother's apartment until the gangster, Celo, could arrange their escape. When Bosko returned the next day to Koshevo Hill, he discovered their apartment had been looted by his neighbors.

Ms. RADOJEVIC: *[through interpreter]* When he came back to his apartment, he called my son to see him, to say good-bye, but he didn't tell him that he was going to cross to the other side. My son said to him, "Take care, Bosko. You know how many friends you have, but you have even more enemies."

NARRATOR: On May 13th, Admira and her mother baked a cake to celebrate her 25th birthday.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko came back in the afternoon. He yelled from the door, "Do we have any cake?" "Yes, we have fruit cake," Admira said. Bosko sat at the table, took some cake and asked, "Where the fruit?" We were all laughing. "Fruit will be next year," Admira said. So like that they celebrated her last birthday.

NARRATOR: On May 19th, the day they were to leave, Admira arrived early at her parents' house.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Leaving her cat was very hard. Yellow was her darling. She asked me to take care of him, to pet him like she did. He slept with her in her room, so she said, "Mum, please sleep with him so he's not alone."

NARRATOR: That morning, Admira's mother made one final effort to persuade her daughter to stay.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* And Admira said, "Mum, do you know what you are asking from me? I can't do anything else but to go with him. Go back to the past, about 30 years ago. Would you have gone with Father?" I couldn't lie, even if it would have stopped her. I would have gone to the end of the world. But this is something different. This is a war. We couldn't convince her and she didn't want to talk about it.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I didn't say good-bye to either one. To either one, I didn't say good-bye. They planned their escape without me because I disagreed. They avoided saying good-bye to me.

NARRATOR: Back at her grandmother's apartment, Admira and Bosko packed their clothing and some jewelry from Bosko's family in two small suitcases.

SADIKA ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* She had sewn money into their clothes. I told them, "Hide your money. They can take your money and where can you go after that? You cannot buy food. You cannot pay for a bus." And she put 3,500 Deutschmark into her waistband and he put money in his pockets. I told him, "Bosko, how can you do that, just like that?" And he said, "No, nobody will do anything." He was 100 percent sure that everything would be more than good when he got to the other side. Before she got in the car, she waved to us, so they went like that. We stayed and cried. We waited for

them to call-- waited and waited. "I'll call you, Grandma, right away." But they never.

NARRATOR: On the Serbian side, two soldiers originally from Koshevo Hill, and old friends of Bosko and Celo, had negotiated with the gangster for the couple's escape. Sasa Bogdanovic had done many deals with Celo during the war and Milkan Gaborovic had been trying to get his relatives out of the besieged city.

MILKAN GABOROVIC: *[through interpreter]* I was waiting for Celo's call and he called me and said, "Look, I'll send you Bosko and Admira now and tomorrow at the same time, your aunt and cousin." I told him, "Give me my aunt and cousin first, and then Bosko and Admira." He said that Bosko had problems, that he'd gotten a call from the police and he must send them now.

SASA BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* Milkan had asked me to help him because I had worked on exchanges before. He had set up everything on all front lines so that no one would open fire. That was the only condition which Celo would let them leave.

NARRATOR: Late in the afternoon, Admira and Bosko arrived at Celo's headquarters in Sarajevo.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* Bosko was a little nervous. Admira wasn't. I got it set up with our men, but I told him, "Wait until dark." There it's no-man's land, surrounded by four or five different forces -- Shatzo's police, special police units, HVO and Chetniks -- and it's impossible to make a deal with all of them.

DINO KAPIN: *[through interpreter]* We didn't know at all that somebody was supposed to cross. That zone is prohibited from any kind of movement.

NARRATOR: Dino Kapin was a commander of a Croatian unit allied with the Muslim army on the Sarajevo side of the front line. He had a rooftop view of the no-man's land where Admira and Bosko would try to cross.

Mr. KAPIN: *[through interpreter]* This-- I was on the front line on May 19th. It was a nice day. About 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon, from the direction of our checkpoint, a man and a woman were walking with some bags towards their lines.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* I was calling to Bosko and whistled at him and he whistled back. That was the only way I could get him to notice me because I was down low and there was no way for me to show my face, nor could I wave at him, or I could be seen myself and get shot. Anyway, it was about-- they were about 15 or 20 yards away.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I found a letter she had left with cat food. She hadn't told me she had written me a letter.

2nd READER: "My dear Mum: It seems we are finally leaving tonight and whatever happens is God's will. I'll call you as soon as we are safely on the other side. I most worry about you and my little Yellow. Bosko and I have been talking about when the war is over, we will come back to Sarajevo. Everything will be fine, like the war never happened. Do not worry about me. Think about yourself. It will be much easier for me. I love you so much. Your Admira."

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* So they were walking and skipping. And when they came to

the intersection, we heard one bullet. It was a sniper's bullet that landed in front of their legs.

Mr. KAPIN: *[through interpreter]* Just after they passed Vrbanja Bridge, Chetniks opened fire at them. The guy, as far as I could tell, was killed instantly and the girl was injured. She was screaming and started to crawl over to him. And then she hugged him. And then there was no sign of life.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* In the first instants, I didn't believe it. I didn't believe that they were dead, that they were shot, even that it was them. I thought maybe somebody else got shot. I couldn't believe it because I thought what Celo organized was always a strong and safe connection.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* It's very hard for me to talk about it. I loved them very much. I felt badly he didn't listen to me.

NARRATOR: That night in Serbia, Misa Cuk heard the news.

Mr. CUK: *[through interpreter]* I said, "I will come right now to Sarajevo." I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe he was killed. So I went to the Serbian side of Sarajevo and I saw how they were lying there.

NARRATOR: Two days later, the bodies of Admira and Bosko still lay where they had fallen.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* At about 11:00 o'clock, the phone rang. I picked it up and it was a ham radio operator from Serbia. He asked me to confirm information that he had received that Admira and Bosko were killed on a bridge in Sarajevo. I was thunderstruck. It was a terrible shock.

NARRATOR: Admira's mother, not believing the news, went to Celo's headquarters, where he told her what happened.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Bosko died instantly. Admira was alive for five or ten minutes. She was injured, but crawled over to him and hugged him and then didn't move anymore. So they died together like that. After that, I was tortured with the worry-- "Oh, my God. Did she feel any pain? Did she feel any fear? Was she aware that she was going to die?" She probably saw Bosko was dead because as she crawled over, she was conscious. Terrible. I will never know that and I am so tortured with that.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* They died for each other. I mean, even now, I can see them hugging each other in my mind.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I still don't believe that they're dead because it's very hard to believe such young people like that can disappear with such a sudden and violent death. All their wishes, all plans are sunk after one bullet, after one burst, after one move, after one monstrous act. That's the proof that love cannot conquer all. Love cannot win over people who don't believe in love. But these people who are shooting at us don't believe in love. For them, love doesn't exist. All their love and hatred they show through cannons, machine guns, pistols and guns. And so that's their love. Their love is a bullet and nothing more.

TELEVISION ANCHOR: In the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, Serb rebels and the Muslim-led authorities have spent the day arguing over which side has claim to the bodies of a young couple who were shot dead and left lying in no-man's land. They were both 25-- he a Serb and she a Muslim.

NARRATOR: As the days passed, Serb and Muslim authorities continued to accuse each other of shooting Bosko and Admira.

Mr. KAPIN: *[through interpreter]* There doesn't exist any possibility that the shooting came from this side because the position of the bodies would be absolutely different. When we were watching, the bullets came towards us because we were watching each other face to face. It couldn't be any other way.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* I've been 18 months in the war and I'm a soldier. I'm a fighter. So I can judge from which side fire came from and where. So I'm more than sure. From our side, nobody has any reason to shoot them because they were coming to us alive.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* During our investigation into which side she was facing-- she tried to cover herself with her jacket from the side where the bullets came from. She crawled to him and covered her face from the side where the bullets came from. And on the pictures you can see which side she's facing. She wasn't facing our side.

Mr. GABOROVIC: *[through interpreter]* After it happened, I talked to Celo and I asked him, "Celo, how could you do this to me?" And then he asked me, "How can you do this to me?" And I swore at him and he said he'd kill my cousin and aunt and I told him, "You can do that, but I'll do the same to your family."

NARRATOR: But there was one thing the enemies could agree on: There was no motive, no logic, no reason.

CELO: *[through interpreter]* There was no specific reason. It was just butchery, like somebody came into view in a neutral zone and then-- I don't know. They don't know. None of the soldiers know. Somebody said, "Let me open fire. Fuck them. I don't give a shit who they are." It's as simple as that.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* This is a big front line of Muslims and Serbians and there are so many mentally sick people who carry a gun. They are everywhere. You never know which fool will start to shoot to kill when they see somebody.

Mr. GABOROVIC: *[through interpreter]* Their bags disappeared two nights before we rescued their bodies. They snuck up close and grabbed their bags with hooks, probably because they thought there would be big money. They were saying around town that they had about 100,000 Deutschmark. Because I was there every night, I saw their bodies being hit with Molotov cocktails and they were shooting incendiary bullets to try to burn them, but they didn't succeed.

NARRATOR: Once again, the Serbs and Muslims blamed each other for trying to destroy the bodies, which would have eliminated any evidence of which side had fired the fatal bullets.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I thought we were going to go crazy. For days they lay on the street. That was May and it was very hot for Sarajevo. On the streets roved hungry dogs and cats, but they were in the middle of downtown. That's just 250 yards from the Holiday Inn. In the heat, on the street, and we're not able to do anything. We tried through our army, through the presidency, through UNPROFOR. We thought UNPROFOR was going to help us. Everybody told us UNPROFOR was there for humanitarian reasons. "They must do that because they are paid to do that." Foreign journalists, especially Reuters, told us that. But UNPROFOR didn't do anything, even when I came to talk to them. They wouldn't even let me

in.

NARRATOR: Admira's father told the U.N. forces that he would retrieve the bodies himself if they gave him an armored personnel carrier.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I told them that none of their men needed to take the risk of getting the bodies. I would do that alone. "I will get the bodies into the APC." But they turned me down. They were so uninterested that it looked like we're here because of UNPROFOR and not because UNPROFOR is here for us.

TELEVISION REPORTER: It took a week before Serb militiamen retrieved their bodies, because the area was so dangerous. But mystery surrounds the deaths.

NARRATOR: The Serbs claimed a team of their commandos rescued the bodies during the night.

SERBIAN MILITARY SPOKESMAN: *[subtitles]* We rescued the bodies mainly for humanitarian reasons, and to show the other side that we are not the monsters they accuse us of being.

NARRATOR: Only later would the truth be revealed.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* The bodies were rescued by a Muslim crew. They tied ropes around them and pulled them out.

NARRATOR: In a cruel irony, the Serbs won their propaganda victory by sending Muslim prisoners to rescue the bodies and to risk being shot by their comrades in Sarajevo.

Mr. BOGDANOVIC: *[through interpreter]* They couldn't know at the moment, in the dark, that there were Muslims that were coming to get the bodies. When you are in the dark, you just hear a noise so you just open fire at the place where you hear the noise. And there was really a possibility that those Muslims who went out could get killed.

NARRATOR: The bodies were moved to a Serbian military morgue. No autopsies were performed and so there were no final answers as to who fired the shots.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* When I went to the morgue and asked the man in charge if he had any more information about them, he said, "No, I don't have anything about them. But for everybody that is brought in here, I have a paper with at least a name." They were just in the book under the numbers 250 and 251. And I signed for them in that book. Just those two numbers. Nothing else.

NARRATOR: Both families wanted their children returned to Sarajevo, but the Serbs said no, and so they were buried in a bleak military cemetery as part of a service for a Serb soldier. Father Charkich, the Serb military chaplain who had known Admira's father in Sarajevo, officiated.

Father CHARKICH: *[through interpreter]* Since she is a Muslim and he is a Serb, there was a question about the funeral until an understanding was reached with certain people. We came to an agreement that they'd be buried next to each other. Since she's a Muslim, I did not conduct prayers for her, but she was beside Bosko at the same time prayers were said.

NARRATOR: At the end, Bosko's mother presented a final gift, a sweater she had knit for Admira.

NARRATOR: The Serbs had offered safe passage to Admira's parents to attend the funeral, but they refused to participate in what they saw as more Serb propaganda.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* My dearest kids, rest in peace. Your destiny is to be together in the grave.

NARRATOR: Zijo watched the ceremony on T.V.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* Even their henchmen buried them together. Even they couldn't show disrespect for their love. It doesn't matter if they were their executioners. They still couldn't separate them. Probably that is destiny.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* All the time I thought if I could only go to the grave to give flowers, to see how it looked-- but there isn't any possibility for that. It was terrible for me, on August 11-- because that was Bosko's birthday. He would have been 25 years old. I cried all day. On that day, we wrote a letter to Rada. I wish so much I could go to his grave and place 25 roses for 25 years. For us, it is still impossible. We are hoping that something will change and that the madness will stop, that we will bring our kids to our town. There must be an end to all of this. I don't know how long it will take, but some day it has to stop.

Mrs. BRKIC: *[through interpreter]* I will never go back to Sarajevo. I will never go because of the two of them, even if there was a castle waiting for me there. I couldn't go through the same streets which they had walked. I couldn't go into that apartment anymore. I could never go into that apartment again. Never.

NARRATOR: In Sarajevo, the spring rains have come again. It's been almost a year.

Mrs. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* I still cannot accept the reality that the two of them are gone. They promised that they would come back. When I saw Admira off, I said, "Mama will count the days until you return," and I am still counting the days, one by one, but I know there will be no end.

Mr. ISMIC: *[through interpreter]* The rest of my life I will spend bringing Bosko and Admira's murderers to trial, to be punished like they deserve. I will always try to do that. If I can't do it that way, I will choose my way and my way is an eye for an eye and a head for a head.

NARRATOR: After 22 months of bombardment and 10,000 deaths in Sarajevo, the West threatened air strikes and the Serb forces withdrew. An uneasy peace finally settled on the city. "A glooming peace this morning with it brings / The sun for sorrow will not show his head / Go hence to have more talk of these sad things / Some shall be pardoned and some punished / Where never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

ANNOUNCER: Next time on FRONTLINE, correspondent Robert Krulwich reports on miners digging up gold on public lands and paying you practically nothing.

ROBERT KRULWICH: So they'll pay the people of America $9,000 to get the right to dig up $10 billion worth of gold ore?

BRUCE BABBITT, Interior Secretary: It's an awesome result, isn't it.

EXPERT: Here you have a scandal, a real scandal, because nobody really cares about this.

ANNOUNCER: "Public Lands, Private Profits" on FRONTLINE.

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MICHAEL SAVOIE

EDITOR
RICHARD WELLS

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
ZORAN STEVANOVIC

NARRATED BY
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BRANKO DJORDJEVIC-BELGRADE

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TRANSLATION VOICE RECORDISTS
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SOUND MIX
ERIC APPS, JEFF WHITE

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