

**Paresh Patel interview with Pam Dawes (1:07:31)**

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

(00:00)

PD: So Paresh, could you just give your name and describe your work background?

PP: Ok, my name is Paresh Patel, I'm a BBC television news reporter who's worked for National BBC, I also make documentaries. I have worked as a journalist for the past 18 years. Prior to, before becoming a journalist, I was an engineer, I went to University and studied engineering, worked for four or five years and suddenly realised in my life that this wasn't what I wanted to do. It suddenly struck me that although engineers are incredible people - who have changed lives of millions around the world - I felt that I needed to contribute more in other areas and I was always interested in journalism.

I became addicted to television news, radio news, newspapers: this back in 1992. What really grabbed my attention was the Balkans war and especially the atrocities that were being carried out. It first came on my radar when I was at a U2 concert in 1992 when half way through the concert the band

Bono stopped the concert and they introduced a live link to Sarajevo<sup>1</sup> and three women came on. He told the crowd at Wembley stadium that they'd either murdered or raped within weeks and they were hiding in a basement in Sarajevo and Serb soldiers were marauding around the streets. And I thought, "Why isn't anybody doing anything about this?"

So from 1992 when I was an engineer, I carried on as an engineer for the next three or four years until '96 but I monitored what was going on in the Balkans and horrific things were happening. Houses with hundreds of people in them being burnt down by Serbs, killing innocent people: men, women, and children, no mercy shown. And this was literally two or three hours away from Manchester, here on our doorstep in Europe. Things were happening like the holocaust of 1945. Were happening now! And that's how I became more and more interested in what was happening in the Balkans. Little did I think that four years later, in '96, I decided to give up engineering, go back to University and study journalism. I did that and became a BBC journalist in 1997. Little did I ever think that I'd be involved heavily with what was going on in the Balkans in terms of the Bogujevci family; the War Crimes trial; Manchester Aid to Kosovo<sup>2</sup>. I never, ever imagined I'd be so heavily involved in all of that. So that's how I got into my interest that was peaked in what was happening in the Balkans.

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<sup>1</sup> From 2 May 1992 until the end of the war in 1996, the Serbs blockaded the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. Bono knew those living under siege in makeshift bomb shelters played music, including U2's, at loud volumes to drown out the sound of explosions

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.makonline.org>

It's really outrage how people can do this to one another. Absolute, you know, anger that people were getting away with massacres of women and children: Innocent men, women and children. '96 you have the Srebrenica<sup>3</sup> killing of 8,000 men and boys. It seems that the people behind it were doing it with impunity. Again, little did I think we'd have a direct connection because the killers of Srebrenica were also the killers of Podujevë. So I never in my wildest imaginations thought that we'd ever come face to face with those killers.

(03:10) It all started round about 2001 when I was a General Reporter for the regional TV news programme, North West Tonight, and I was asked to cover a concert that was happening. It may have been the Cohesion concert, I think, that Manchester Aid to Kosovo were promoting. I went to interview **Pam Dawes**<sup>4</sup> of Manchester Aid to Kosovo. We got talking about music, what kind of music we liked and then, for whatever reason that connection I had, I mentioned that I liked U2 and why I liked them because they were conscientious band: the fact that here was a rock band trying to let the world know what was happening in the Balkans during a concert. And Pam and I hit it off because Pam also had connections with what was going on in Kosovo. I was aware that she'd helped raise convoys that went to Kosovo in

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<sup>3</sup> The Srebrenica massacre was the genocidal killing, in July 1995, of more than 8,000 Muslim Bosniaks, mainly men and boys, in and around the town of Srebrenica during the Bosnian War.

<sup>4</sup> Pam Dawes recording included in this archive

1999, during the conflict, and afterwards to help people. So we kind of hit it off because we had a common interest in the Balkans.

And then I think about a month or so later, after doing that interview with Pam, Pam rang me to tell me about how she'd come across five Kosovar children who'd survived a massacre in Podujevë and each one had been shot at least nearly four or five times and the eldest one, **Saranda Bogujevci**<sup>5</sup>, had been shot sixteen times. And this I found extraordinary. I found this incredible. Initially, I was a little bit sceptical about all the facts were actually there, you know: five children had been shot so many times, survived a massacre of 19 women and children.

Pam asked me to come to a school disco in Altrincham to meet the children. It was a fundraiser for Manchester Aid to Kosovo as well. I went there. Probably it was in the summer of 2002, and I met Saranda Bogujevci. I met Liria, **Jehona**, **Fatos** and Genc. And admittedly, they were a little bit suspicious of me, a journalist wanting to know their story: they'd been through the most traumatic things that any child could go through. They'd witnessed the murder of their mothers, their grandmother, two brothers, a sister and each of them had been shot several times. They were still undergoing medical treatment; they were still adjusting to life in a new country; trying to learn the language. They had enough on their plate without having to deal with a journalist, so we talked but I knew it would take some time to win their

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<sup>5</sup> Saranda, Fatos and Selatin/Jehona Bogujevci recordings included in this archive

trust. It took about six months of meeting them through Pam, I could come over on a Sunday and I used to go over to their house and we'd have tea at the Bogujevci family and we'd have a discussion with the five children and their fathers about what could be possible.

And it took about six months. And then six months later, I got a call from Pam and Saranda to say, yes, they would be happy for me to make a documentary about their lives. And that was in 2002. And then one day, Saranda also said to me, "If you're going to make a documentary about our lives, is there any way you can bring the men who did this to my family, the men who killed my family, the men who killed my mother, my aunt, my grandmother, my two brothers? Is there any way through the BBC we can hunt them down or find them?"

I was then a Junior Journalist at the BBC thinking I would love to do this but it seems almost impossible because The Hague had been to see the five children, to see what they could recollect about who was in the garden in Podujevë when the machine guns opened fire on them and it just felt that they didn't have the recollections or the memories to even try to begin anywhere to try to identify who the killers were. It seemed like an extraordinary mountain to climb to find these killers. I have five children talking to me in Manchester who had been in the country maybe two or three years who wanted me to hunt down maybe five, ten, fifteen members of a unit. At the time we didn't know who they were but it turned out to

members of a unit called the Scorpions<sup>6</sup>. And they couldn't identify many of them. They had recollections of some of them. And it just felt like an impossible task, almost asking me to fly to the moon even, at the time, I thought.

(07.49) How can I break it to these children that this is not even possible, not even feasible? But as a former engineer, one thing that life has taught me is any great big problem you can break down to small parts and it's like a journey of a thousand steps. One step at a time and see where we go from here.

Again, never in my wildest imaginations did I think that, fifteen years later, we would have captured a lot of those who were involved in the massacre. But, back then, I thought it was an impossible task. Then we got... Pam told me that the children had been asked to testify in Belgrade, against one of the killers, Saša Cvjetan. He was a 29 year old member of a unit called the Scorpions. And the situation was that the Serbs had been instructed to bring to court - bring to justice - all those foot soldiers who actually pulled the trigger in massacres across the Balkans, who'd killed people; whilst The Hague would capture the Commanders and the Generals. And I did... I was very sceptical about the whole thing. How can you? It would have been the

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<sup>6</sup> The Scorpions became part of the Serbian Ministry of Affairs in 1995. They participated in the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995. During the Kosovo war the Scorpions were placed under the command of the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SAJ) and perpetrated the Podujeva massacre on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1999.

same as asking the Nazis to try their own Nazi war criminals. It didn't really make sense, to me. But this is what the United Nations had ordered.

And, as part of that, there was a trial going to be in Belgrade. In July 2003, the children had been asked to testify in that trial, all five of them, against Saša Cvjetan, who was in the dock. I went over to Belgrade to try and negotiate to make sure that they would be safe if they testified. Pam did a fantastic amount of work over here trying to find out if there's any safe way the British Government could protect them. Pam negotiated a lot with the British Embassy in Belgrade and also the British Government to see if we could take bodyguards to Belgrade to protect them. And, initially, they said, "No," because the five children were Kosovans and not British citizens. But then Pam put a lot of pressure on them and managed to get them to agree that we could take British Secret Service Agents to Belgrade when they testified for that week during July 2003.

Sadly, the Serbian government did not want that and refused to allow British Secret Service agents into the country and insisted they would have their own bodyguards. But, the problem was, when the trial started on March 2003, on that very first day, on that very first morning, when Saša Cvjetan's van arrived in court, at the very same time - about half an hour after he'd been taken out of his prison van, taken into the court, half an hour later - around about ten o' clock, on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2003, shots were fired in parliament... just outside parliament. My film crew was on the scene just a

hundred, two hundred yards away and we didn't know what it was, my film crew ran over to the square, in parliament and we found that Zoran Djindjic<sup>7</sup>, the Prime Minister, had been shot dead. Djindjic had been shot dead because he had ordered, he wanted to bring Serbia into the modern European fold, he wanted Serbia to become part of the European Union and a price of this was to bring all his war criminals to justice. He'd agreed with the U.N.: "I will bring all these war criminals to justice". The network however, the network of war criminals in Serbia, were not going to allow him to do that. And they sent a message to Djindjic, the government... the reformist government: "We're not having this." So they shot him dead outside parliament.

Now, after that happened, as I say, I went to Belgrade to try to find out how safe the children would be if they went and came and testified. I met the Chief Prosecutor. I was introduced to the Assistant Chief Prosecutor, a man called Milan Sarajlic, and the reason I mention him - and this is very important - Sarajlic, I met him, I sat down with him and he asked me to describe every one of the Bogujevci children, how old they were, when they would be arriving and I gave him all this intelligence on the children. And five days later, when the trial started, as I said, Zoran Djindjic was shot dead. And I came back, told Pam, told the children, that this is a very dangerous thing they're thinking of doing, testifying in Belgrade. The Serbian government can't even protect their own Prime Minister. So I suggested to the five kids,

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<sup>7</sup> Serbia's prime minister Zoran Djindjic was killed by a sniper while entering a government building in central Belgrade on Wednesday 12 March. Paresh was in Belgrade for the re-start of the Cvjetan trail.

and Pam, that this is not a good idea to go to Belgrade. If they can't protect the Prime Minister, how are they going to protect five kids and Pam and myself if we did go?

Saranda's response and her father's response, and Salatin's response, was they hadn't written it off.

They appreciated the danger: they weren't being callous and just walking blindly into this dangerous situation, about going into Belgrade and testifying at a War Crimes Trial. A week after Djindjic had been shot dead, they hadn't written the situation off.

(12.59) Two, three weeks later, the Serbian government announced that they'd captured the men who had assassinated Zoran Djindjic. Incredibly, the ring leader was Milan Sarajlic, the Assistant Chief Prosecutor, who I'd sat down with and described who the witnesses were: who Saranda was, Liria was, who Genc was, who Fatos was, who Jehona was. and I couldn't believe that I'd walked into a trap. I'd gone straight into the heart of the Serbian network, told them about us and the leader of that network, the Assistant Chief Prosecutor, a mole, a civil servant in the Serbian government was behind the killing of Zoran Gjingjic.

Once he was captured, the Bogujevci family, the Bogujevci family decided that it would possibly be now safe, or maybe it's worth the risk of going to

Belgrade and testifying. I wasn't 100% sure. Pam and I just basically decided to do what the children wanted to do: but all we could do was advise them. And Pam organised for the children to testify on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2003, for a week. And the stipulation would be that we would fly there, land at Belgrade and when we arrived then we had something like 40 Secret Service bodyguards protecting us for the week. And we were staying at a hotel called the Inter Continental, which is kind of ironic as that was the hotel that much of the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo was orchestrated from. A man called Arkan<sup>8</sup>, one of the most wanted war criminals of Serbia's history: he'd orchestrated the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo from that hotel.

And ironically, this is where the children were staying and it was the first thing that Saranda noticed. When we were driving up to that hotel, she said to me, Saranda and her father noticed the name of the hotel and they said to me, "Is this really where we are going to stay?" And I knew what the hotel was. Initially I thought that we could get away without saying anything about it but sadly they knew what it was. And we stayed there for a week. Forty-odd body guards round the clock protection. And on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2003 that's where we stayed.

Now it wasn't as simple as that. The children had to prove to the courts in Serbia that that they were psychologically fit to testify. So Pam had organised for Saranda and the kids to meet a psychologist [psychiatrist] called Lynne

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<sup>8</sup> Zeljko 'Arkan' Raznatovic was a Serbian career criminal and commander of a paramilitary force in the Yugoslav Wars, called the Serb Volunteer Guard. Murdered January 15 2000

Jones from Cambridge University, who had also accompanied us. She was already there to sort of evaluate the children psychologically, and she did it on behalf of the Serbian government [Serbia insisted on assessment by their own psychologist but LJ was able to challenge this, if necessary]. And various tests were carried out on the Monday on the kids and it was concluded that the kids were fine to testify. However, one child, Genc, decided that he didn't want to testify and he was flown out of the country on that Monday. He was a six year old [at the time of the massacre], and of the five witnesses we had, we were now left with four.

And on Tuesday, I think it was the 6<sup>th</sup> July, the Bogujevci children thanks to the support of MaK<sup>9</sup>, (Manchester Aid to Kosovo that is), Pam Dawes, Lynne Jones the psychologist, became the first children in U.N. history to testify at a War Crimes Trial. That in itself is an extraordinary thing considering three years earlier, they'd been shot to pieces. They'd survived. They were starting a new life in the U.K. trying to learn English and now going into the heart, into the capital city, Belgrade, of a country that had caused so much death, destruction and misery, not only in Kosovo but also in Croatia and Bosnia. A hundred and fifty thousand people had been slaughtered by the Serbs and here they were in Belgrade ready to testify against the killers - some of the killers - who'd done this on behalf of the Serbian government. And I thought

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.makonline.org>

that was extraordinarily brave of them to do so. It's the most extraordinary thing I have ever seen as a journalist.

Five children, the youngest was roughly eight years old, Fatos was twelve [15], Jehona was about ten [13] and Genc was about eight and for them to do that was extraordinary. And each one of them went in the stand.

I watched how Saranda testified, again: an extraordinary thing. Saranda was sat next to Saša Cvjetan when she testified, side to side. Nothing separated them and I watched Saša Cvjetan - the accused - his body language. And he turned his side to Saranda, almost his back to her, as she gave testimony. And the body language said it all. It said, "I'm guilty. I did this." And the other trick that Saša Cvjetan played was that before the trial, the children went to a line up, to identify if they could pick out Saša Cvjetan. Each of the children went one by one, in prison, to identify - whether they could identify Saša Cvjetan in a line up. And I believe each time, Saša Cvjetan changed his clothing to try to possibly put off the children, whatever. But all four children identified him as one of the killers in the garden.

Then they testified against him and after two days of solid testimonies, the children, their part ended. And on Wednesday night - it might have been - during that first week in July - we left Belgrade for the five or six hour drive from Belgrade to take the children to Kosovo, where they wanted to go back to Podujevë (where the family home was). And that hadn't been on the

schedule but we decided to leave because there was no point leaving once the children had testified. There was no point staying for the trial. And prior to me going with the children to Belgrade, I'd been trained by MI6, the British Secret Service, about what to do in a situation like this when you're under covert pressure - there are assassins out there trying to kill you - and I'd also spent two weeks with the SAS about, again, what to do in a similar situation. And I was always told, "Be spontaneous - don't plan anything." If you don't know what you're doing until the last minute, how will the assassins?

So on that Wednesday night with Pam and I and the Head of the Secret Service in Belgrade, we just decided it was time to leave. The children had testified on the Tuesday and the Wednesday. There was no point staying in Belgrade. So we left on that Wednesday night: a five hour drive to the border with Kosovo, extraordinary situation. You had five SUVs on the border with Kosovo; loads of Secret Service Agents from the Serb side; No Man's Land of about a hundred yards; on the other side was the MPs from UNMIK, United Nations MPs. And the children walked across from one side to the other. And one of the things I'll never forget was the back pack that Liria was carrying. It was a teddy bear.

And I remember - as a BBC journalist - thinking: *There's armed guards here from the U.N. all tooled up with their machine guns. There's the Secret Service all tooled up. And here you've got five kids with teddy bears walking across from one side to the other.*

And we arrived in Kosovo safely. We felt elated, incredibly proud of ourselves that we'd been to Belgrade, we'd testified, and we'd got out safely; and here we were in the safety of Kosovo back at the Bogujevci house: the house that they'd grown up in, the house from where they were taken and shot in the garden. And we were back there meeting members of their extended family, their aunts, and we felt extremely jubilant that night.

(20:30) The next morning we got up and although I didn't say anything to anybody then, I got a call from Nataša Kandić<sup>10</sup> - the lawyer's office - who basically told me that it's 'a good job you left last night because they have just detonated a bomb in the foyer of the court building.' So that's how dangerous it was and in later years we've come to find out that the judge in the trial to this very day has to live with 24 hour protection and also a bomb was placed under her car, as well. And we then realised on that Thursday morning how dangerous things were then and what we'd achieved.

At the time we didn't know what the sentencing or whether Saša Cvjetan would even be found guilty or not. The trial was going to continue for another six months, or whatever it was. But we felt that Pam and I, and the five kids, and Lynne Jones, helped. We'd done all we could. What more could they do? What more could the children do but stand in front of a Serbian court in

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<sup>10</sup> Nataša Kandić is a Serbian human rights activist and the founder and ex-executive director of the Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC), an organisation campaigning for human rights in the former Yugoslavia. It was formed in 1992. See also **Bekim Blakaj** recording in this archive (Exec Director, Humanitarian Law Centre: Kosova)

the dock with three Serbian judges: a Serbian public that was watching in the galleries. It couldn't get any tougher. But they did what they were asked to do.

And then I went back, Pam and I were flying home, leaving the kids in Kosovo to spend the summer there. Pam and I had to fly back because I had the tapes of the trial that I wanted to incorporate into the BBC documentary that I was making which was scheduled to be aired in about two or three weeks time. So I desperately needed to get back to London.

However, Pam and I were stuck in traffic in Prishtina. We were late. By the time we got to the airport the plane - the BA plane - was on the runway about to take off. And we got into the airport. They were telling me the plane was about to take off and there was no way on earth I was getting on that plane with suitcases with cameras and everything else, onto that plane. And I explained to them that I was from the BBC and I mentioned the Podujevë trial. And the reason I'm telling you this story is everybody in Kosovo knew what was happening with the Podujevë trial, the trial in Belgrade happening, about the killings in Podujevë. And that included the people at the airport. And when they heard I was the journalist covering that trial, they basically stopped that plane and allowed me and Pam... I remember the man on reception saying, "You cannot get on that plane, Mr Patel, engines are hot." It means it was ready to take off. He picked up the phone to the tower. Something was said. Engines were cooled. We were allowed on that plane.

We got on first class on a BA flight to London. And as I walked in I remember seeing all these U.N. people in first class and I said, "Sorry, we have to be in London." And we got on that plane. And we got back to London.

I then spent a month in London and Manchester editing the first documentary about the Bogujevci family: what had happened to them. The first documentary covered their arrival in the U.K., how they met MaK and how much help they've had from Pam and her organisation, in recovery; their first days at school; the medical side of things. They were still having operations; they were still having psychological therapy with Lynne Jones. The documentary covered all that; the trial. And we put that all into a half an hour - four years into half an hour - which I felt the BBC had undersold it. It should have been an hour long documentary. Nonetheless we put that documentary - and that was shown around about August 2003 - it was nominated for several awards including a Royal Television Society Award as the Best U.K. Documentary of that year. Sadly it was entered in the wrong category. It should have been entered in the 'Foreign' category and it probably would have won but it was entered in the 'Domestic' category and we came second.

But nonetheless, for me, as a journalist, as a human being, that was the greatest achievement of my life.

Getting a degree or a master's degree, a lot of people can do that. I felt that was... I was quite proud of them. I was an England International at Karate: I was quite proud of that. But the greatest achievement of my life, and to this day still the greatest achievement of my life, is being instrumental with Pam Dawes in seeing five children... their wish for justice.

(25:00) We'd just testified against Saša Cvjetan: one of the killers of the garden in Podujevë. And then an extraordinary thing happened. Pam had been talking to The Hague. One of the Hague investigators into this case of the massacre of 19 women and children at Podujevë was a man called Kevin Curtis, a former Scotland Yard Officer. And he gave me the heads up that one of the other killers, Saša Cvjetan's partner - his close friend - a man called Dejan Demirović, a 28 year old, was hiding somewhere in Canada.

And it was suspected that he'd also taken part in the massacre. He'd actually pulled the trigger. He came on the radar. The way he was found out was extraordinary. Before Demirović took part in the massacre in the Balkans, because of all of the upheaval in the Balkans, his parents had actually emigrated to Windsor, in Ontario, in Canada, years before he had even taken part in the massacre, because of all the turmoil. Because apparently his father was a Muslim and the Muslims were being persecuted by the Serbs in the Balkans. So it's ironic how the son of a Muslim man would go on to kill Muslims. So his parents had emigrated, as I said, to Windsor, in Ontario, and he also had a sister there. And they'd gone to a wedding - to a local Serb

wedding in Windsor - and his sister got into a fight with another woman at which point she blurted out, "Don't mess with me, my brother is a killer from the Balkans."

That got it spread in the town of Windsor in Ontario. It was picked up by a local newspaper. The Hague spotted it. Kevin Curtis spotted it. Kevin Curtis told Pam. Pam told me. I spoke to Kevin Curtis. And they confirmed to me that it was likely that Dejan Demirović, one of the killers from the Balkans, a fugitive, he'd actually escaped. He'd actually been arrested at the same time as Saša Cvjetan but he'd somehow escaped from prison and escaped from the Balkans. So he was a fugitive on the run. And it was believed that he was somewhere in Canada.

(27.10) I therefore decided, due to the success of what we'd achieved in Belgrade, Pam and I and the family, I decided that we should go after him in Canada. I proposed to the BBC that we do another documentary about Dejan Demirović and the BBC declined. And the reason I'm telling you this is because our achievements in Canada are extraordinary because we had no support. The BBC had spent £100,000 on the first documentary; they weren't interested in the sequel. But due to Pam Dawes' foresightedness, Pam had insisted that all the copyright, everything that we had ever filmed with the Bogujevci family, belonged to the family and not to the BBC. And we'd spent about £100,000; the BBC had spent £100,000 filming interviews with Saranda, the children, pictures in court and so many other things. It hit

me that this was such a valuable resource. I then spent a week - sorry, about a month - ringing various broadcasters in Canada telling them the story of the Bogujevci family and telling them that the killer was on their patch, living in Canada, and if I offered them £100,000 worth of tapes, would they offer me £100,000 in resources to go after Demirović?

Incredibly, CBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the equivalent of the BBC in Canada, agreed. They said, "We'll give you all the resources to hunt Demirović down. We will do the documentary, you can be part of it, help co-produce it, if we can have access to those tapes."

So at this point, Saša Cvjetan's trial in Belgrade was still happening. He hadn't been convicted or found guilty: other people were still testifying. And what happened in Belgrade was Nataša Kandić, from the Humanitarian Law Centre in Belgrade, found one of the members of the Scorpions who had almost witnessed what had happened in the garden. A man called Goran Stoparic.

Goran Stoparic was a member of the Scorpions. He joined up, he said, 'To defend his country in the Balkans' but he didn't join up 'to kill women and children'. And he said - we'd found him along with CBC - we'd found him and we interviewed him at length. And Nataša Kandić had persuaded him to testify at the trial against Saša Cvjetan. And Stoparic did exactly that. And Stoparic's main testimony was that he was stood outside the garden. He

watched Saša Cvjetan and Dejan Demirović, the guy we were after in Canada, and four others, walk in through a narrow tunnel, into this garden. He heard all machine gun fire and he saw those same six men leave the tunnel reloading their weapons.

Although he didn't actually witness the actual massacre, you can conclude what he saw. He saw six men go in with weapons heavily loaded: six men, a lot of machine gun fire: six men came out, and there were 19 bodies on the ground afterwards. And one of them, he said, was Dejan Demirović.

(30:10) That for me was the impetus to continue with the hunt for Demirović in Canada.

So September 4<sup>th</sup> 2003, Pam Dawes and myself and Saranda flew to Canada. We arrived there, met members of the CBC documentary team known as "Counterpoint", a man called Alex Shprintsen and the presenter Carol Off<sup>11</sup>, and they were so excited about this story, that one of the killers from the Balkans was on their patch, Dejan Demirović, and they wanted to find him. They had Saranda doing interviews for them so it had really localised the story, and the problem in Canada was... this is how what an incredible thing we did in Canada... in Canada, at that time, back in 2003, there were 2,000 war criminals living in Canada. Canada had become a mecca for war criminals because in 1985 the Canadian government tried to prosecute a

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<sup>11</sup> vice-president of [Canadian Journalists for Free Expression](#).

Nazi war criminal called Imre Finta<sup>12</sup>. He pleaded not guilty. He then said, "Ok, I killed 8,000 Jews in Hungary during the war in 1945 but I was following Hitler's orders." Imre Finta had been living in Toronto for years and he'd been exposed and his was the first trial of 2,000 war criminals and he'd been found not guilty by the jury. The jury said, "Yeah, he was just following orders."

That went to the Supreme Court of Canada and incredibly, despite the fact that no soldier on this planet is allowed to plead that as a defence, 'Oh, I was following orders', you can't kill women and children and say, 'I was following orders', it's not allowed under U.N. convention, the Supreme Court of Canada ratified the jury's decision to acquit. So from that day onwards, from 1985 onwards, when the first war criminal ever to be prosecuted in Canadian history was found not guilty 'because he was following orders', you had Rwandans coming into Canada, you had those involved in various massacres in Lebanon coming to Canada. The place was full of war criminals. Two thousand.

And I was told when I took legal advice on this, in Canada, by a man called Professor Irwin Cotler <sup>13</sup>there, the most brilliant legal mind in Canada, he said, "You've got no chance, ever, of catching Dejan Demirović." He said, "Demirović? You will not have a chance. It will never happen."

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<sup>12</sup> A commander of the Gendarmerie in Szeged, Hungary, during the Second World War, Finta emigrated, became a Canadian citizen, and ran a catering business.

<sup>13</sup> Member of Parliament for Mount Royal from 1999 to 2015. He served as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada from 2003 as a Liberal.

So I said to Professor Cotler that I wanted to expose him and ruin his life in Canada then. Let's go for second best. I wanted the people of Canada to know that here's a man who had taken part in the Podujevë massacre and killed the Bogujevci family, the Durijqi family, and killed 19 women and children. I said, "At least we can do that, expose him."

Irwin Cotler then said to me, "You can't even do that." He said, "There's a thing called the Privacy Law in Canada." The Privacy Law in Canada was designed to protect asylum seekers, like women who had been raped in Rwanda and places like that, to come into the country and not be exposed. It meant that the Canadian government could not tell the Canadian people who was applying for asylum. So therefore that law was now being used by war criminals to come into Canada, apply for asylum, and the Canadian government can't say, "This man, who's a killer from the Balkans". And I was told that we couldn't expose him, we couldn't expose Dejan Demirović, which I thought was incredible. Here's a man who's committed all these murders, he's got away with it. He's got away with a trial in Belgrade. He's now living in Canada. He's about to get asylum in Canada and he's going to get away with it: which I thought was an extraordinary injustice. But I thought, "No, we're still going to ahead with this."

(33:34) Saranda - I asked Saranda if she knew anybody in the Kosovar community in Toronto. She did. She mobilised about 50-100 people in Canada and we knew, we got a tip off in the Hague, that Dejan Demirović

was applying for asylum in September 2003 in Canada, at a secret court in downtown Toronto. Pam and I, and Saranda, we mobilised the local community; we held a meeting two or three nights beforehand; told them about Dejan Demirović. And the Canadian community decided to help us by holding a demonstration outside the building in downtown Toronto where Dejan Demirović was supposed to turn up for his asylum hearing.

At the same time, I decided I was going to tell every newspaper in Canada and I would get Saranda to do interviews. We did that, and on the day of the demonstration, the day Demirović was supposed to turn up, at the very last minute we heard the Canadian government cancelled that asylum hearing because they knew what we were doing.

But nonetheless, the story got out in the press and the message got to Demirović and his lawyer. The next day, Saranda had done an interview with The Globe and Mail in Canada - it's Canada's foremost newspaper - about why she was there, about the fact she was hunting down a man who had killed her family. And the newspaper then managed to get a response from Dejan Demirović's lawyer. And his lawyer was absolutely livid that we were in the country - trying to derail his asylum application, trying to expose him - saying that we were acting illegally.

And I took great gratification that they knew that we were after them. So I knew they must have been scared. Here's a man on the run. And the message was sent out, September 2003,

"Demirović," Saranda said on tape, "We're coming for you."

At that point, I still knew it was impossible to get Demirović because of the law that said - the Privacy Law says - you, the government, can't tell the people that here's a man applying for asylum. And even if he did get prosecuted in Canada, he could always say there's a precedent there: 'I was following orders.'

(35:30) But then, a couple of extraordinary things happened: the Canadians changed the law which banned the defence of - well it's called the Office of Defence. It meant that you can't say, "I was following orders." That was the first great thing that the Canadians did. They repealed that law in June that year.

And then I basically spent the next three years going backwards and forwards from Manchester to Toronto working with Carol Off and Alex Shprintsen. And without them we couldn't have captured Dejan Demirović.

Of that £100,000 they promised me in terms of resources, they hired a private detective to try and find him when we couldn't. We, as journalists, we have

other jobs to do. We spend a lot of resources trying to track him but we can't - full time - waste time staking out his apartment. Which we did, in actual fact: we spent about a week just staking out his apartment, round the clock from morning till night. Then we'd have a night shift and nothing happened. Nothing happened, so we decided to spend money on a private detective and he found out that Demirović knew he was being watched and he'd only pop into his parents' house, a flat in Windsor, once every sort of month or two months.

So as a documentary team, we decided to just knock on the door of that flat. And I went there, into that block of flats in downtown Windsor. We knew, he'd crossed into Canada through a bus across the Hudson River from the United States and I knocked on the door and I could hear people inside his flat. And I introduced myself, "Paresh Patel, from the BBC. Is it possible to speak to Dejan Demirović?" Which, I knew there was no way they're going to answer the door. And they never did.

Then we heard that the Canadian government had postponed his asylum hearing for another six months. Then, in February 2004, we got the fantastic news that Saša Cvjetan, the fugitive that we'd testified for in Belgrade, had been found guilty by a court in Belgrade and had been sentenced to twenty years, which for the murder of 19 women and children was, for me, nothing. But, you know, it's the best we could do. It was the maximum sentence that the Serbian War Crimes Trial could hand out.

The next day, I was in Canada with the Canadian team and it was a blizzard. It was some of the worst weather: -32. It was about three foot deep in snow throughout Toronto and I thought there's no way that Dejan Demirović is going to turn up for his second asylum hearing. That's right, Demirović's second asylum hearing was the day after Sasa Cvjetan in Belgrade was sentenced and the Canadian government had done that deliberately because they felt, they told us, "We will wait to see if Cvjetan is convicted and if he's convicted, then you've got some evidence on this guy as well because he was part of the same team." If Cvjetan had been found 'not guilty' it would have been impossible to get Demirović but thankfully, the judges in Belgrade found Cvjetan 'guilty', it gave us the green light to go after Demirović. I was waiting in the same building that the Kosovo community had held a demonstration six months earlier and incredibly got a call from Alex Shprintsen and Carol Off saying, "He's outside, he's on his way in. Dejan Demirović is about to walk in."

My camera crew hadn't arrived and, unbelievably, I was absolutely panicking. I thought: *Here's a once in a lifetime opportunity to film one of the killers in free society, going applying for asylum, and my camera crew hasn't arrived.*

(38:44) He walked through the door. I saw him: recognised him from photographs. At the same time, my camera crew arrived at the same time,

but I'd phoned them earlier and they were actually rolling their tape as he ran in the foyer of the building. And I just pointed to Demirović and they didn't say a word. We just descended on him.

And I pinned him with 3 Canadian cameras. I remember exactly what I said to him. I said, "Dejan Demirović, my name's Paresh Patel from the BBC, I'm here to ask you what you were doing in Podujevë on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1999, the date of the massacre?"

And... his mother! Incredibly, here's a man who'd slaughtered women and children. He was with his mother who was pushing me away, telling me to go away.

He smirked for a while and when all the cameras descended tightly on his face, he was getting more and more uncomfortable, and I said, "Did you kill 19 women and children?"

And his mother said, "No! Go away."

He didn't say a word, Demirović, and I persisted and I said, "What were you doing in that garden? Did you kill 19 women and children with Saša Cvjetan and the Scorpions?"

And he didn't say a word but he knew he was in trouble because he was going into a lift to another floor, in that building, for his asylum hearing. And if the asylum panel found out that there was a BBC crew that had just ambushed him twenty minutes earlier - asking him questions about his involvement in a massacre - he knew his asylum application would be in jeopardy. So he was getting really flustered and he ran into a lift with his mum and off he disappeared.

And if anything, we must have put him off psychologically going into that hearing, if anything at all. But nonetheless, Canada had never extradited a war criminal in its history. It had never convicted one in its history. And I had built a team up of a man called Irwin Cotler, Professor of Law at McGill University, (one of the most brilliant minds in Canada, the one who had been advising me, the one who told me about the Privacy Laws, the one who had told me that you'll never get him). He was advising me constantly. I had taken Saranda to Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Toronto<sup>14</sup>. They were telling me the same kind of thing: they promised to try and help us track down Demirović. We'd exposed him in the newspapers. So there's an alert out on him. We'd given his photograph to the newspapers: he was exposed that way, much to the annoyance of the Canadian government. We'd also gone to the Mounties<sup>15</sup>. I'd taken Saranda to the Mounties in Toronto, with Pam, and Saranda had gone in there, spent... explained to the Mounties and I thought it was a waste of time. But the Mounties - after two hours of speaking

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<sup>14</sup> Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

<sup>15</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police

to Saranda - came out and said, "We've opened a case on Dejan Demirović. The reason is because the Canadian government have repealed the law on the Office of Defence which means he can't say, 'I was just following orders'." The fact that Sasa Cvjetan had been convicted in Belgrade - his partner - and they said, "We think we've got enough evidence to go after him." And so they did.

They arrested him, he was released on bail. He was arrested several times in the course of the next three years and released on bail. And I thought: nothing's ever going to happen.

Then, in 2005, late 2005, 2006 I think it was, an extraordinary thing happened I think there was an election in Canada, a General Election, and a new government was elected. I think it went from Conservative to Labour, and the new Labour [Liberal] government appointed a new Home Secretary. And this is the most miraculous thing ever, that new Home Secretary was Professor Irwin Cotler, my legal advisor [Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada]. My legal advisor was chosen as the most powerful legal man in Canada and again, under Canadian Law, he's not allowed to talk to me about any applications for asylum. And I rang him to find out what the score was. And - sadly he was in hospital as his mother was dying - and he said, "I'll speak to you, Paresh, but you know in future, legally, I can't speak to you again about this. My mother is on her deathbed."

I said, "I'm so sorry, I'll ring back some other time, I'm sorry."

But he said, "No, don't go." He said, "Paresh, I'll tell you one thing: do not worry about Dejan Demirović."

And I didn't know what he meant by that at all. He couldn't elaborate because of the Privacy Laws.

(42:48) Three or four months later, Dejan Demirović was arrested by the Canadians and extradited to Belgrade. The first war criminal in Canada's history to be extradited. And again, probably for me, Pam, Saranda and the family - on a personal level - one of the greatest achievements of my life I thought getting the kids safely in and out of Belgrade - testifying in Belgrade - was a high. This was like an understated high because no one knew we had done this.

And we'd made history in Canada. Two thousand war criminals and this is the only one that's ever been extradited. Three or four others, shortly after the Second World War, had been kicked out the country, but none had been formally arrested and sent back to Belgrade.

In 2008, the children and Pam and I were asked to go back to Belgrade to testify against Dejan Demirović. That was the plan. The one in Canada that was back there: the plan was to testify against him. In the mean time, Nataša

Kandić and the Humanitarian Law Centre had done tons and tons of work on the Srebrenica massacre; on the Podujevë massacre. They were the ones who had found Goran Stoparic the member of the Scorpions who'd testified against the others. Stoparic had told Nataša who all the killers were: not only at Podujevë, but also at Srebrenica. And what Stoparic had done was one of the most incredible things: he'd told Nataša that there was a tape of the Srebrenica massacre. The killing of eight thousand men and boys had been filmed by the Scorpions.

(44:30)Nataša decided she was going to try and find this tape. So she went to the heartland of the Scorpions, a city called Prolom Banja, in the South of Serbia and that's where all the Scorpions lived: there's a garrison there. That's where they'd all signed up. And the leader of the Scorpions was a guy called Slobodan Medić. He's the one who reported directly to Ratko Mladic in Bosnia. Ratko Mladic is still on trial at The Hague and Slobodan Medić reported directly to him and he is the one who orchestrated the killing of eight thousand men and boys: and also the filming of it. In that town - their home town - he'd learnt there were twenty tapes of the massacre - of Srebrenica - and he put the word out that he wanted all the tapes to be destroyed because he knew that Stoparic had been talking to Nataša Kandić. One of his own men, in his eyes, had turned traitor and decided to talk to Nataša Kandić, who was on the prosecution team.

And he put a hit out on Stoparic. Stoparic was to be killed if anybody came across him and all those tapes were to be destroyed. Nataša went to the town; found Stoparic; found the tape: managed to get Stoparic out of town with the tape. She got back to Belgrade and sent copies to The Hague for the trial of Ratko Mladic. That tape was also used to convict Slobodan Medić, the Commander, and four or five others who had also taken part in the Srebrenica massacre.

So as a direct consequence of this whole extraordinary, extraordinary story - which could be a Hollywood film - we not only got the killers of Podujevë, well, we were about to get the killers of Podujevë, but we'd got the killers of Srebrenica as well in the court.

And this was reported right across Serbia. And the people of Serbia began to realise, you know, Podujevë: the connection with Podujevë and Srebrenica and what the Scorpions had done.

In 2008 the kids were asked to testify against Dejan Demirović and I went with them again, in December 2008. When we landed at the airport, I was met by Nataša Kandić, who gave me the most devastating news at that time, at that moment. I got off ... the arrivals lounge ... she was waiting with several bodyguards and said, "Let's go for a coffee." We sat in the airport café. I was living in London at the time and flying into Belgrade. The kids were living in

Manchester so they were on separate flights. The kids were arriving in an hour's time so we were waiting for them.

And Nataša said to me, "Paresh, we are going to let Dejan Demirović go."

And I was in stone shock and silence. I'd spent 4 years of my life trying to hunt him down with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Canada. Spent a lot of my own money - a hell of a lot of my own money - trying to find him. And they were saying that they're going to release him.

And I said, "What? Why? Why are you letting him go?"

And she then explained that he had offered to turn State's Evidence against the other Scorpions, against all the other killers of the Podujevë garden and against the killers of Srebrenica.

And then I took a deep breath and realised that was the most intelligent thing to do.

It was right to release him. We lose one but we gain another five or six, and completely gave her my wholeheartedly endorsement of that decision to do that. And again, and she said to me, "Paresh," after I'd agreed to that she said, "without your and Pam's work in Canada, we'd never have got Demirović."

She said, "The Serbian prosecution has no jurisdiction in Canada: doesn't have the resources to go after him in Canada. All we ever did was make representations to the Canadian government. But you actually found him, exposed him. And you got him."

She said, "Without you, we would never have got Demirović and without Demirović's testimony we may not get... without having his testimony, he was in the garden when they pulled the trigger." She said, "We have got the most powerful witness in Demirović. He was in the garden."

So again bodyguards everywhere. The four kids testified in court. It was all filmed. One day I'd like to get hold of that film of the children testifying in that Belgrade court in 2008, in December.

It was my birthday as well, December 21<sup>st</sup>. It was the day I was in court in Belgrade.

(48:55) That meant a message to me, like almost a spiritual message, "Your life hasn't been a waste you know. You've done something worthwhile."

So the kids were in the dock and I've never heard so much clarity in their testimonies about what happened. Because then the most powerful wasn't as I expected it to be - Saranda. But it wasn't - it was Fatos. Fatos

remembered all kinds of things, from the moment he was shot to the moment being given first aid by a doctor in the garden; to being carried into the ambulance; to being taken in hospital. And his was the most extraordinary, most powerful testimony. And he was there on the stand for an hour.

He'd never told me that, on tape, ever before. I think he might have found it hard to say anything. And one slight bit of lightness at the end, he wished the judges 'a very happy Christmas' at the end of his testimony, which I'll never forget.

And they testified and I thought: *Demirović is getting free!*

And another extraordinary thing was the courtroom had a glass panel, a glass wall, at one side. It was built specially for this trial. I sat on one side of the glass panel and believe it or not five of the Podujevë killers were sat on the other side of it. I was literally two feet away from them. They had their back to me and I was sat behind them. And what separated us was a glass wall. And after each of the children testified, after Saranda testified, she came out of court, she came and sat next to me, behind the killers. Fatos went in, he testified, he came out and sat next to me behind the killers. And then Liria and Jehona did the same thing. I could feel the five killers getting very nervous, getting twitchy on their chairs, and they knew what was happening. And they knew we were behind them.

And another extraordinary thing that happened was that one of the wives of the five men on trial asked, approached the bodyguard, and asked to talk to the children, and they said, "No". We said, "No".

And she said the reason she wanted to talk to the children was that she wanted to know if her husband was a child killer or not. And she said to us that if he was then she'd shoot him herself.

So she came. We still didn't trust her, she might have had a gun hidden, a weapon or whatever, and we didn't allow her to get anywhere near the children.

The kids testified and on the trial, when Dejan Demirović went to testify, he was known as 'Witness P'. His identity was concealed although the Scorpions knew who he was and when he told the court what happened in that garden -how they'd killed all the women and children and babies - one of the other defendants, stood up and said, "Well, Demirović, after the massacre, you went over to the five year old."

Apparently, what had happened is that after the 19 women were gunned down in the garden, a 5 year old stood up and I think that was Enver Durijqi's son, Albioni, who stood. His mother had protected him with her body. And apparently Demirović went up to him, pulled out his revolver, and shot him in the head.

That's what one of the other defendants said Demirović had done.

And on the back of all that in 2011, I think, two years after we testified in that court, the killers of Podujevë were sentenced to 20 years and 15 years, I think Slobodan Medić<sup>16</sup> got 20 years. The others got 15 to 18 years. So all in all, to summarise: Saša Cvjetan, the first guy who we testified got 20 years: Dejan Demirović was free, but there is a target on him. The Scorpions will try and kill him, to this day. He can't live in peace. He's a wanted man in Serbia but no-one knows where he is. Four more Scorpions were convicted for up to 20 years for the Podujevë massacre. Slobodan Medić, the Commander of the Scorpions, was convicted and sentenced to 20 years for the Srebrenica massacre with another four of his 'comrades' as he would call them.

And to round off the story, last year, or the year before I think it was, in 2013, incredibly, Slobodan Medić, the Commander of the Scorpions, who should be serving 20 years in prison, was killed in a car crash in Belgrade with his wife and seventeen-year-old son. He should have been in prison but for some reason, we believe, he bribed himself out of prison. He was killed on a highway.

Whether it was an accident or whether it was deliberate, because when you kill eight thousand men and boys at Srebrenica, kill right across the Balkans -

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<sup>16</sup> Slobodan Medić, Bosnian Serb army commander of the Scorpions, was sentenced, in 2007, to 20 years imprisonment. He was killed in a car accident with his wife and son in 2013.

his was a death unit, a death squad, they'd killed right across the Balkans - people don't forget. And once he was exposed as the Commander of that you'd have thought that he'd made many enemies and people would have gone out to get him. It might have been just an accident, we don't know, but he and his family were killed. And the tragedy is his seventeen-year-old son was killed. But one of the last people he killed - Slobodan Medić apparently killed a seventeen-year-old Muslim boy for the hell of it at one of the massacres, because he felt like it. And so Medić is now dead; his wife is dead; his seventeen-year-old son is dead. His brother should still be in prison, who also took part in the Podujevë massacre. His brother - who was a diabetic - wanted to be released on health grounds: I'm tempted to think that he's probably been released.

I think the Scorpions that we testified against probably spent no more than 8 or 9 years in prison and have probably been released on parole. The next stage of the battle is trying to find out what happened to them. Are they still in prison or have they been released?

And that is the story of how from 1999 to about 2014/15 - a 16 year old story - of how one family, the Bogujevci family - five kids and their fathers; how Manchester Aid to Kosovo, Pam Dawes and the resources she put behind this; how the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation team of Alex Shprintsen and Carol Off, and Professor Irwin Cotler worked to hunt down Dejan Demirović. How Goran Stoparic had the courage to testify against his former

comrades, the Scorpions. He is now living somewhere in witness protection. And how myself - I am proud to say - I was heavily involved in this and instrumental in a lot of this. And it's without question the greatest achievement of my life and given my life meaning.

(55:14) PD: Paresh, can I ask you first of all what impact you think the trial has had, impact referring to Serbia in particular.

PP: In Serbia? I'm going to be absolutely frank and honest. I think, at the time, when I was covering that trial, there was a lot of media interest. Outside the court, there was loads of cameras and news reporters. I think it was covered extensively in Serbia, especially by news organisations like, I think, it's B92, I think, one of top news channels, which is, I will say, not afraid to tell the truth. It's one of the few news channels in the country which is not controlled by the government and it's a bit a thorn in the side of the Serbian government.

What impact did it have on the public? I don't... it's difficult to gauge that but you find in General Elections in Serbia the population is split almost virtually in half, and I'm talking about 49.5% voting for the people like Milošević and 50.5% voting for the reformists. It's that tight. And the people who are still pro Milošević, they're in denial a lot of them. They refuse to - the ones I've met - refuse to admit that massacres happened in Bosnia, in Croatia, in Kosovo. They actually say, "No, none of that happened." To this very day, you'll find a large section of Serbian society will say the Srebrenica

massacre of eight thousand men and boys never happened. Only recently, the President Boris Tadic tried to go to pay his respects at Srebrenica and was attacked with bottles and stones by pro Serbian Nationalists. So it gives you an indication. I don't think Serbia has moved on much, to be honest, in its attitudes towards its neighbours like Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. There is still a strong Nationalist element in that country.

(57:30) One of my objectives when I made that documentary was to show the other side of asylum seekers. Back in 2003, just as now, there's a huge debate about whether we should take more asylum seekers, especially when you have some are economic migrants, some are fleeing terror... there's always been this huge debate in England about whether we should take more asylum seekers. And when I made that documentary, it was to try and show that there are some genuine asylum seekers who are fleeing terror. And I think we did that and we had a lot of positive response from viewers who emailed me after the documentary. We had a very small proportion who were really angry. They were invariably Serbs living in Britain who said, made all kinds of claims against the BBC, of being pro Kosovan or pro Bosnian or pro Croatian. And we weren't: we just told the story. We let the facts tell themselves.

The reason NATO blew up the television station is that it was a propaganda machine for Milošević and it was also a way of sending signals out to the army in the field so NATO justified the destruction of that building because it

was a military asset. 16 journalists were killed, or propaganda writers - or whatever you want to call them - and its believed that, in retaliation, Jill Dando was shot dead. We'll never be able to prove one way or the other I think.

You asked me earlier whether... when does a current affairs story become history? And my definition is not based on time, after a certain amount of time or whatever. It's based on when the story stops evolving. And this story has not stopped evolving.

First of all... Srebrenica? Eight thousand men and boys slaughtered in 1995. The men who pulled the trigger, yes, they've been prosecuted or are either dead or in prison, but the man who ordered that, Ratko Mladić<sup>17</sup>, is still at The Hague awaiting trial. His trial is likely to be some time next year. It will continue. So as far as the Srebrenica story and therefore to some extent the Podujevë story: they are still active. Ratko Mladic is on trial, Radovan Karadžić<sup>18</sup> is still on trial. They were the Bosnian Serb leaders who ordered the

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<sup>17</sup> Ratko Mladić is a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, arrested on 26 May 2011 is on trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, Netherlands. Under Mladic's command, the Army of Republika Srpska killed more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys in the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995. Between April 1992 and February 1996, the army laid siege to Sarajevo killing an estimated 10,000 people.

<sup>18</sup> Karadžić is a former Bosnian Serb politician. During the breakup of Yugoslavia, Karadžić, as President of the Republika Srpska, sought the direct unification of that entity with Serbia. Arrested 21 July 2008 and tried at The Hague was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity during the 1992-95 Bosnian war and sentenced to 40 years in prison on 24/3/16 (after Paresh Patel's recording). At a UN tribunal in The Hague, judges found him guilty of 10 out of 11 counts of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocities in the Bosnian war of the 1990s, including leading the slaughter of thousands of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Croats. One count of genocide related to the massacre of more than 7,500 Muslim men and boys in the Srebrenica enclave in July 1995, which the UN said was part of a campaign to "terrorise and demoralise the Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat population".

Srebrenica killings. So when they are prosecuted and imprisoned that, for me, will be the end of the Srebrenica story.

As far as the Podujevë massacre story: it depends on what's happened to the men that carried out the Podujevë massacre. Are they still in prison? We're finding it hard to find out if they are still in prison or been released early like Slobodan Medić was. Medić, as I said earlier, was killed in a car crash with his son and wife. But I want to know what happened to the other five or six men that we got prosecuted and what's happened to them.

So that's the next step, really, maybe we can look at the European Parliament and find out what Serbia's doing. I don't think the story has ended yet.

(1:00:20) I don't think Serbia is ready to become part of the E.U. I wouldn't like it until, as I said, every Serb war criminal at The Hague has been tried and convicted or released - or whatever - and similarly for all those who have perpetrated crimes that have not been brought to justice. And the problem is, Serbia still has this almost, like, a dual personality in that half the country believes in joining the E.U. and reforming and moving on but the other half still holds on to the past of how Serbia is at the centre of the former Yugoslavia and still wants Kosovo back as part of Serbia.

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The whole world does not recognise Kosovo as an independent state. It's what - two hundred odd countries? And only half of them recognise Kosovo as an independent state and that needs to be resolved. Is Kosovo independent or not? The U.N. needs to decide but other countries around the world won't accept it. Serbia doesn't and countries like Spain don't accept Kosovo as an independent state because it's got its own problem with the Basques.

When I first came across the Bogujevci children, there was a point where they told me that, shortly after the massacre, a French TV company had filmed them reacting to what had happened. And Liria had gone missing - one of the five children - and she was taken back to her family home she'd obviously seen the massacre of a lot of members of her family. And she knew that four of her... three of her brothers and sisters and her cousin were still alive, but they'd come to the U.K. And there's a piece when it was being explained to her that there was nobody at the house. And after the massacre she was taken to Belgrade for treatment. She was eight years old at the time, been shot between - in the neck - between the windpipe and the oesophagus, and she had traumatic treatment in Belgrade. Some people like Nataša Kandić believe she might have been adopted in Belgrade.

Nataša found her: got the Red Cross to repatriate her back to Kosovo. And I remember watching her going through the house looking for everybody. She

was crying her eyes out. And that for me was very moving. I ended up crying over that piece of footage

(1:02:22) As a journalist you go from something, seeing a very moving story, then that horror and emotion turns to anger. Why has this happened? And you use that as fuel for your passion to do something about it.

First and foremost, when you have asylum seekers who are escaping terror with physical injuries - as in the case of the Bogujevci family five children each shot a minimum of five times, one shot sixteen times - in the first instance, they need Medical treatment, operations. In Saranda's case the sixteenth bullet was taken out of her body at Wythenshawe hospital and that was sent to The Hague as an exhibit in the Milošević<sup>19</sup> trial. So I think Manchester is doing all it can in terms of medical treatment as you'd expect from the NHS. In terms of trauma, what we do with those who've suffered trauma in terms of psychological help. Yes, again, I think the U.K. has a good record on that: does what it can. And in terms of economic support, you know, Great Britain and Manchester does a lot for asylum seekers and I can't see what more they can do. It just takes time for people to get through trauma. It's not something you can accelerate through money or more resources. It's just something that you've got to live through.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.trial-ch.org/en/ressources/trial-watch/trial-watch/profiles/profile/108/action/show/controller/Profile.html> ; <http://hrp.bard.edu/slobodan-milosevic-trial-public-archive>

I think you need people to empathise and people to understand. I mean, people in the community who have also escaped Kosovo when it was under sieges, giving support to those who've escaped with being shot, suffering trauma, all the things that go with being terrorised. And the local community, the Kosovar community have rallied round really well. The great thing about people like **Bruce Thompson**<sup>20</sup> - people like him - they see beyond the religion. You know, that's one of the big assets for Christianity, I think. They transcend that. They don't consider people who are not Christians as not worthy of help. Of course they are. They see everybody as equal and that's a great thing. It doesn't matter about your religion. I think, spiritually and morally, people like Bruce and the Christian community have done a lot without any reservation.

(1:04:36) In the early days I was angry. I was shocked about what I'd heard and over time, over fifteen years, that's gone from relief that we did something about it. Relief also that we succeeded to a large extent. Also it's given meaning to my life, as a career. One story: fifteen years old. I'm very proud of what I've achieved in this story.

So it's changed me from a point of view that sometimes you have to give a commitment to a story and it might mean decades, you know, years. And people need to do that. Journalists need to know that sometimes you've got to follow through on a story and if you make a promise, especially to five kids,

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<sup>20</sup> Rev Bruce Thompson recording included in this archive

to find the killers of their family, then you've got to step up to the plate and do whatever you can. I really don't like journalists who make promises and don't deliver. It's a matter of self respect. You've got to... if you tell someone you're going to do a story... help them tell their story. And whatever it involves, then you should do it, even if it takes fifteen years of your life.

(1:05:42) I just think the whole of what you're doing is fantastic. Documenting what we did. And it's a shame that the whole world doesn't know what we did. That's all I'd say because what we did, you Pam and as I listed the people earlier: the five kids; the fathers, Selatin and Safet; the Canadian team - Alex Shprintsen and Carol Off - and, incredibly, Nataša Kandić who has put her life on the line for years, a humanitarian lawyer in Belgrade. She has survived several assassination attempts; she is considered a traitor in Belgrade for trying to bring justice to the war criminals of her country. Without all those components coming together, we wouldn't have got anywhere. Nataša Kandić has done an extraordinary job: really has put her life on the line.

We've needed each other, three separate, well four really: Nataša in Belgrade, the Bogujevci family, you and I and the Canadians all coming together for this project over 15 years.

## **Oral History**

(1:06:50) People speaking off the cuff connected with their own emotions and recollections, is probably the most genuine way of telling the story. Whereas a reporter telling the story: he has to interpret the story. And no reporter can interpret a story one hundred percent. A reporter can't convey the horrors of a war better than a person who has actually lived through that. So even when I tried to tell a story of what happened to the Bogujevci family, my portrayal of the story is second hand. If the interviews of those people involved in that story come first hand that's the most powerful way. And therefore, for me, oral history is incredibly important. Unadulterated, pure recollections for the sake of history and documenting are incredibly important.

Ends (1:07:31)