

No. KRI 66/94

Witness Hearing Record

Made on 03/11/1995 with the Investigative Judge of the Basic Court in Ilidža in the criminal procedure against N.N. because of the crime described by Article _____ of the Criminal Law.

Bratislav Čukić - judge
s _____

W i t n e s
Ratko Mirković

Court reporter

Aleksandra Cvetković

Witness hearing attended by:

Public prosecutor

Defendant

Barrister

Started at 08:30 hours

The witness is warned that he is obliged to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He is warned about the consequences of giving false testimony, and that he is not obliged to respond to specific questions if it is likely that such responses would expose himself or his loved one a relative to grave shame, substantial material harm or prosecution (Article 229 CPA). To general questions, the witness responds as follows:

- 1) First and last name Ratko Mirković
- 2) Father's name Cvjetko
- 3) Occupation professional driver
- 4) Place of residence temporary Grbavica, Nikole Gardovića St, No.58/8
- 5) Place of birth Sarajevo
- 6) Year of birth 31/05/1949
- 7) Relationship with the defendant and the victim _____

After this, the witness says the following about the subject:

I was born in Sarajevo, where I lived in the Kralja Tomislava St, No.36/II. I was employed as a driver in the Public Enterprise "Pokop" - Sarajevo. I am not married.

During the war events on 04/04/1992, I was at my workplace. I was a hearse driver for the Public Utility Enterprise "Pokop" - Sarajevo. From 04/04/1992 until 02/05/1992, I was the only driver in the company, and I transported the dead to Nevesinje, Gacko, Trebinje, Kalinovik, Trnovo and other places. From 02 until 06/05/1992, Sarajevo was completely paralyzed due to war events.

On 05/05/1992, there was a call, broadcasted over the Muslim radio, by the "Pokop" director Šipčić, that all employees should report to duty, which most of us have done. Then, Šipčić told me to go to the morgue, to try to take the body of a Serb soldier and to try to transport it to Vraca. I was unable to do this due to the chaos present in the morgue. As I was returning from the morgue, behind the stadium Koševo, in the Đure Đakovića St, I noticed five-six bodies of the murdered soldiers of YPA in a trench, i.e., the water canal, on the right side of the road. I could not stop, so I notified Šipčić about this. The same day, I went with Šipčić to Lukavica, with the intention of leaving Sarajevo illegally, that is to notify the YPA authorities about the killing of the soldiers. Upon our return to Sarajevo, after I had left Šipčić in front of his apartment, I was stopped and arrested in front of the "Skenderija" building by a group of people, most of whom were in uniforms. One of them was the bodyguard of the former official Hasan Čengić, but I do not remember his name. I was taken to a nearby bar, the name of which I believe to be "Skenderija," which was their headquarters. In the HQ, I saw a large number of unfamiliar people, who had walkie-talkies and snipers. They handcuffed me and started asking me where I was, all the while beating me. The interrogation was led by the aforementioned Čengić's bodyguard. In the meantime, they went to my apartment, raided it and looted some things, as well as 300 German Marks. Around 18:00, they took me to the "Marin Dvor" police station where their prison was located. I was in this prison for two days and two nights. During this time, they interrogated me, and, as previously, they accused me of being a Chetnik and a sniper. I was also beaten.

On the third day, I was transported to the "Karingtonka" neighborhood in Sutjeska St, No.4 or 6, in the basement of a facing brick building, which also served as a refuge. In this basement, I found 20 to 25 other captured Serbs, of which I knew none. I saw that they were also beaten, especially one who was covered in blood. I was here for two days and two nights as well. During this time, people in uniforms kept coming to the basement and continued to beat and terrorize us. Opposite of this building there is the "RS" (Radio Sarajevo) bar, which was later also turned to a prison. I heard that, in that prison, the Serbs were dreadfully tortured.

On the fifth day, they put me in a car, and, judging by their gestures, I concluded that they planned to kill me. However, during the ride, they talked with someone via walkie-talkies, after which they brought me to the police station at “Marin Dvor,” and then disappeared, having told the officers on duty to keep an eye on me. Thanks to the fact that the officers on duty recognized me, they willingly took me to the Central prison by car, in order to protect me from the aforementioned people. Even to this day, I do not know to which formations the people who arrested and terrorized me have belonged.

In the Central prison, I was also interrogated, but I was not physically abused. On the evening of the same day, I was released from the prison, and I returned home.

Following my release from the prison, I had a working obligation in the PE “Pokop.” From 13/05 to 05/06/1992, I worked as a gravedigger at the “Lav” cemetery. During that time, I witnessed about 20 funerals of killed Serbs. They were mostly killed during nights and left at the cemetery, where we found them the following day. I specifically remember one case when, one morning at the cemetery, we found three murdered people, one of whom was a man over 60 years old. On the head, he had a Montenegrin hat, he was disabled, and next to him there was a crutch. The murdered woman was about his age, and I assume she was his wife. Next to them, there was the corpse of a woman, about 40 years old. Her head was deformed due to torture and completely covered in blood. Just as all the other corpses found at the cemetery, they had no personal document with them. These corpses found at the cemetery were buried in a common grave at the “Lav” cemetery without any markings. There are two such common graves. In one of them, there was around 50, and in the other, about 60 murdered Serbs.

Between 05/06 and 30/12/1992, I worked in the morgue of the “Koševo” hospital, which was in those days acquired by the PE “Pokop.” The Head of the morgue was Alija Hodžić, a semi-literate person and an extreme nationalist.

While I worked in the morgue, among other things, I remember when and SDS MP of the Parliament of B&H was brought. His last name was Najdanović, or something similar. He was in the morgue for about ten days, in a separate room. I had an opportunity to see his corpse. I saw that it was heavily beaten with six or seven bloody bruises. The foreign press was interesting in this case, but they were denied access to the morgue. He was buried ten or eleven days later, with the permission of the government and in attendance of the family.

On one occasion, a very beautiful woman, about 30 or 35 years old, was brought in, around 23:00 or 24:00 hours. Juka Prazina’s people captured the woman when she tried to escape Sarajevo, they tortured and finally murdered her. She was found without personal documents and was buried in one of the aforementioned common graves at the “Lav” cemetery.

A younger Serbs, about 25 or 30 years old, was also buried in the common grave at the "Lav" cemetery. He was captured around "Dariva." On his body, there were between 15 and 20 knife stabs, and I saw that some of the wounds were inflicted by an incandescent object, because burn marks could be seen around them.

On one occasion, a man, between 40 and 50 years old, was brought in from the "Viktor Bubanj" prison. He was beaten, but was still alive. They wanted to leave him in the morgue, but I refused to take him in even though they insisted, saying that they brought him following the command of the "Koševo" hospital's chief of security. He was known by his nickname "Kinez" and I know that he was an extremist. Because I, nevertheless, did not let this person be left in the morgue, he was returned to "Viktor Bubanj" prison, and the same night, around 24:00, he was brought in again, dead, and the guards who brought him told me: "There you have him now, he is dead." Later, I found that this man, killed in "Viktor Bubanj" prison was named Mato or Marko Čeranić, and, before the war, he worked in "Hidrogradnja." I do not know where or how he was buried.

I do not remember the exact date when, as I came to work, I saw the bodies of the murdered family Ristović in the morgue. Members of the "green berets" came to the morgue the whole day kicking the bodies of the deceased, swearing their Chetnik mother at them. Foreign press also came, interested in this case, but they were left with no information, as directed by the aforementioned "Kinez." I, however, managed to steal a moment and let one press reporter make several photos, and I also told him the names of the deceased. Two days after the murder, via Muslim TV, there was an apology for this crime to family Ristović. The murdered family was buried with regular customs.

About one month after this event, the younger son of the Head of morgue Alija Hodžić, whose name I do not know, was arrested, because he participated in the murder of the family Ristović. I do not know how long he was in prison, but I do know that, later, he was transferred to the neuropsychiatric clinic from where he was released as, apparently, he was mentally unstable.

Related to these cases, on one occasion, pathologist Dr. Ilijas, a Muslim, told me in confidence that he was forced to state in the medical records of the aforementioned Serbs that they had died of a heart attack. They particularly insisted on this in the case of the MP Najdanović. He told me that he did not want to accept this, which is why he was removed from the duty of the Head of the Pathology Department and the Faculty of Medicine.

From 30/12/1992 until the end of February 1993, I worked as a gravedigger at the "Stadion" cemetery, after which I became the night watchman at the Directorate of the PUE "Pokop." After this, I was transferred again to be a gravedigger at the "St. Marko and St. Josif" cemetery. During this time, I was not able to spot the Muslim crimes over Serbs as well as I could while I worked in the morgue. However, as I was in contact with many Serbs, I heard that they complained about brothers Hamid and Uzeir Balović. They

terrorized the Serbs, looted their property and killed them at night in Velešić and below the hill Hum. The two of them worked at the PUE “Pokop,” but I personally did not notice special extremism on them at the workplace.

My former neighbor, Ivan Bulatović, a retiree and the former director of the business board of “Jugokomerc,” a distinguished expert, told me once in confidence, that he had overheard a Muslim who was at the bar “Hamam bar,” when Mušan Topalović, aka “Caco,” brought in a sack from which he dumped decapitated human heads, claiming that those were all Serb heads. Bulatović’s sister-in-law Gara and her newlywed husband Milan, whose last name I do not know, were found dead in February or March 1994 in their apartment which was looted. When Bulatović tried to learn more about the circumstances of their death through the MoI, his friend in the MoI advised him to stop asking questions about that case.

I want to note that the director of “Pokop,” Vlado Raguž, a Croat and the vice-president of HDZ in Sarajevo, has always had a decent attitude towards me. Once, Raguž said in my presence, as well as the presence of Miro Lasić, an HDZ official in B&H and Ivan Marić, also a Croat, that Mušan Topalović - Caco had killed more than 2,000 Serbs in Sarajevo. We had this conversation immediately before the assassination of Topalović, when the Muslims dug out around 30 corpses of people murdered by Topalović and his men and buried them in a common grave located between Zetra and the “Stadion” cemetery. Ivan Marić, together with other workers of “Pokop” attended this mass funeral. That same day, I participated in the digging of a special grave at the Catholic cemetery “Sveti Marko,” in which the beheaded body of Ljubiša Frankić, a Croat from Sarajevo, was buried. The funeral was attended by his wife and two children. She said on that occasion that her husband was murdered by Mušan Topalović - Caco in his HQ, having been crucified before the murder. Her statement was corroborated by the director Vlado Raguž, who was also present.

I was also present at the funeral of Ostoja Šoja from Velešić, who was killed in “Viktor Bubanj” prison, supposedly by a sniper. Together with him was his brother Drago, who was later traded out of the prison. I also remember the funeral of one road hauler from Velešić, whose name I do not remember. He had a house next to the gas station in Velešić, in which he was killed by the Muslims. His corpse was later traded and buried at the “Sveti Marko” cemetery. A certain person named Šekara, from Velešić, who now lives at Grbavica probably knows more about this case.

In Sarajevo, there was an open secret that in the Student dorm “Mladen Stojanović,” at the junction of the streets Radićeva, JNA and Mis-Irbina, there was a brothel, which was supposedly operated by the members of the Army of the RB&H. They supposedly forcefully brought Serb women to this brother where they brutalized them. I do not have any more details on this brothel.

A witness to these events, as well as to the events that happened outside my presence, could be Ivan Marić, a stonecutter in “Pokop” who now lives in Sarajevo. He has two brothers whose names I do not now. One brother is an air force officer in the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, and the other is a Sergeant in the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia, also stationed in Belgrade. As much as I recall, the air force officer’s name was Marijo.

That is all I had to say. The record was dictated loudly and everything I said is clearly written down. I do want to read it, I acknowledge it as my own and I sign it as such.

Ratko Mirković
(signed)

The hearing completed at 11:00 hours

COURT REPORTER
(signed)

JUDGE
(signed)