

“Monument to Unresolved Grief”

“Spomenik nerazriješenom bolu”

“Monument to Unresolved Grief”, a hart-breaking documentary about the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, shows ten years after the fall of Srebrenica, the effects of the tragic events on the lives of all parties involved: a former Dutchbat soldier (UNPROFOR), a woman who lost her husband and her son, a former Muslim commander and a former Serbian commander.

The Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Center, where all identified victims of the massacre are buried, plays an important role in the documentary. In the final scene the four main characters are confronted with each other in this Centre. Although they try to listen respectfully to each other, their personal tragedies still precede those of the others. Yet sitting between the graves after the final confrontation, the first signs of recognition and reconciliation become visible.



Hans in front of former UNPROFOR compound in Srebrenica

Hans Thijssen was sergeant-major in the Dutchbat 3 battalion. He was responsible for the maintenance of all technical installations of the UN before and during the fall of Srebrenica. His position in the hierarchy gave Hans a perfect view on things that happened before and during the fighting in the enclave, starting June 1995. But he found himself also more than once in the crossfire between Serbs and Muslims and he tried personally to get as much refugees out of the besieged city on July 11th, when the Serbs conquered Srebrenica.

Hans is still bitter about the way he and his comrades were treated by the media and the politicians in the aftermath of the tragedy.

But during the shoot of this documentary he discovers that his grief should be placed in perspective of the grief of survivors from Srebrenica.

Kada Hotić was living in Srebrenica when the enclave fell. Her husband and son were killed on their escape through the woods or during one of the massacres afterwards. Her husband has already found his last place to rest on the Potocari Memorial Centre. Her son is not yet identified. Kada is now member of the steering comity of the Memorial Centre and is living in Vogosca, a suburb of Sarajevo.



Kada Hotić at her home in Vogosca

Nijaz (Kiko) Mustafić was one of the muslim commanders who defended Srebrenica against the Serbian assaults in July 1995. When the enclave fell, he fled through the forest. Kiko survived the death march to Tuzla. He's the only male survivor from a family of 32.

Kiko is now living in Tuzla. During the recording of this documentary he stayed overnight in Srebrenica for the first time in ten years. He tells that for the first time in ten years he could sleep a whole night, without waking up.

Dragan Zekić was commander of the Srebrenica battalion of the Bosnian Serb Army. He was in charge of the 650 Serbian soldiers that lived in Srebrenica till 1992. During the

attacks on Srebrenica July 1995 he was attacking Srebrenica from the East, while Muslim fighters and refugees fled through the forests in the West. So, he denies firmly that he or his men helped with the gathering of Muslim fighters and refugees during the hours and days after the fall. He has been heard by associates of Carla Del Ponte several times. Since the Serbian victory in Srebrenica, Dragan lives in his native town again. Together with his son he has a little grocery shop.

Short description

The film starts with Hans Thijssen travelling back to Srebrenica. For the first time in ten years he is back in Bosnia. He visits places in Srebrenica where he experienced the most dramatic moments of his life and has a hard time dealing with his memories that hunted him the last ten years. At the Potocari Memorial Center he meets Kada Hotić for the first time. While Kada and Hans are talking, the camera spots the Dutch politician Mr. Relus ter Beek. As Minister of Defence he was responsible for sending Dutch UN-soldiers to Bosnia in 1993.

In the second part the three war veterans, Dutchbatter Hans, Serbian commander Dragan and Muslim commander Kiko, try to make a military reconstruction of the fall of Srebrenica. When Hans enters the local soccer field for the first meeting, he experiences the worst flash back during this trip. On July 11th 1995, Hans was collecting wounded refugees and put them in his truck. His aim was to bring as many refugees as possible to the UNPROFOR HQ in Potocari, five kilometres further down the road. When his truck was next to the soccer field, he came under heavy Serbian fire. Shells exploded a few meters away from him and he saw refugees blown away by mortar shells. He decided to leave, aware of the fact that he had left tens of refugees behind.

The next two days the veterans make a tour around crucial military sites in the former UN-protected enclave. They discuss the fall from a military perspective, but the conversation shift rapidly to the real matters at hand.

Standing on top of the ruin of the forming Castle of Srebrenica, the going gets tough. Kiko wants to know why his brother, who worked for UNPROFOR and Dutchbat, was not saved by Hans and his comrades. And Dragan has to explain why he co-operated with the slaughtering following the fall of the enclave. In the end both Hans and Dragan pay there respect to Kiko. But all three have a rough time.



Muslim commander Kiko Mustafić (r) asks Dutchbatter Hans Thijssen (l) why his brother was not protected by UNPROFOR

In the third part of the documentary all story lines are joined at the Potocari Memorial Centre, when widow Kada Hotić gives the three veteran a tour of the Centre. In the small photo gallery the final show-down takes place. All three soldiers must pay their respect to the widow. In a polite and decent way all horror and grief is thrown into the arena.

The magic, however, takes place after the confrontation.



from left to right: Muslim commander Kiko Mustafić, Dutchbat soldier Hans Thijssen, widow Kada Hotić and Serbian commander Dragan Zekić

When all four smoke a cigarette together, for the first time the ice breaks. Kiko shows the grave of his brother to Hans and Dragan and Kada have, sitting between the graves, a long talk.

"Monument to Unresolved Grief" shows in which way the dramatic events in July 1995 still torments the minds of all people involved. The grief is so enormous, it seems like no-one can give any comfort and must probably there grief will play a dominant role in the rest of there lives. But the relaxed atmosphere after the confrontation at the Memorial Centre, shows that after ten years, the first small steps towards recognition and reconciliation are possible. All four know that their grief shouldn't be passed on to the next generation.

"Monument to Unresolved Grief" is a co production between the independent production company Electrical Films and the Dutch public broadcaster NCRV.



Kiko Mustafić (l) and Hans Thijsen (r) just after Kiko showed the grave of his brother to Hans

Summary

title: **“Monument to Unresolved Grief”**
duration: 50’
material: Digibeta 16:9 (wide screen)
directors: Kay Mastenbroek en Jaap Verdenius
camera: Alexander Goekjian
sound and editing: Jaap Verdenius
interpreter: Emina Purković
research and production: Kay Mastenbroek
production NCRV: Yolande van der Blij
editor and chief NCRV: Jelle Peter de Ruiter



widow Kada Hotić and former Serbian commander Dragan Zekić talking together after the confrontation at the Memorial Centre

Sales Contact:

NPB Sales
PO BOX 26444
1202 JJ Hilversum
tel: + 31 35 677 3760
fax: + 31 35 677 5318
npbsales@omroep.nl

Producer:

Electrical Films
Oosterdoksade 5 - unit 810
1011 AD Amsterdam
contact: Mr. Kay Mastenbroek
tel: + 316 29010806
electricalfilms@dds.nl