

The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo

By Joe Sacco

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When bombs are falling and western journalism is the only game left in town "fixers" are the people who sell war correspondents the human tragedy and moral outrage that makes news editors happy.

It's dangerous, a little amoral and a lot desperate.

Award-winning comix-journalist Joe Sacco goes behind the scene of war correspondence to reveal the anatomy of the big scoop. He begins by returning us to the dying days of Balkan conflict and introduces us to his own fixer; a man looking to squeeze the last bit of profit from Bosnia before the reconstruction begins. Thanks to a complex relationship with the fixer Joe discovers the crimes of opportunistic warlords and gangsters who run the countryside in times of war. But the west is interested in a different spin on the stories coming out of Bosnia. Almost ten years later, Joe meets up with his fixer and sees how the new Bosnian government has "dealt" with these criminals and Joe ponders who is holding the reins of power these days...

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The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo By Joe Sacco Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Intrepid reporter and comics artist Sacco returns to Bosnia and Sarajevo to chronicle Neven, a "fixer" who leads Western reporters to stories, dispensing information and literally guiding them through the fascinating, dangerous landscape of post-war Sarajevo and Bosnia. Neven worked for Sacco (Safe Area Gorazde) when he wrote his previous book about the Bosnian war. Initially suspicious of him, Sacco gradually realized Neven's own story-a microcosm of the Balkan conflict itself-may be the most compelling story of all. A native Sarajevan, Neven watched as rebel Serb nationalists armed themselves against an unarmed multi-ethnic Sarajevo and Bosnian Republic. Neven eventually fought to defend Sarajevo as his city was torn apart. He joined criminal gangs, thieves and borderline sociopaths-warlords who often defied the government-who ultimately took up the call to defend the Bosnian Republic. Wounded in combat, Neven became a fixer but was intimately involved-as a legitimate soldier, guerilla irregular and victimized citizen-in every aspect of the bloody conflict. He's really selling Sacco his own story ("Can you imagine the sort of movie that could be made about bastards like me?"), and Sacco marvelously weaves in his own feelings of uneasiness and awe at his guide's grim life story. The tightly wound, humane and suspenseful nonfiction graphic novella employs visual devices-e.g., the haunted, unreliable protagonist, obscured by shadow and cigarette smoke-from the best traditions of film noir. Sacco's finely wrought, expressively rendered b&w drawings perfectly capture the emotional character of Sarajevo and the people who struggle to live there. This superlative and important story is easily one of the best comics nonfiction works of the year.
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From School Library Journal
Adult/High School-Sacco's second graphic novel set in Bosnia and Sarajevo follows the author's real-life relationship with Neven, a "fixer"-one who, for cash, leads foreign journalists through the fragmented postwar landscape and sniffs out the grittiest "underground" news stories for them. Film noir conventions prevail in the black-and-white art and story-the shifty, unreliable narrator speaks amid the shadows and smoke-and the ambience is one that teens will find seductive. Neven's tales of his days as both a legitimate soldier and a guerilla gang member are interesting; even more compelling are his descriptions of the ways in which certain ruthless, sociopathic fighters became, bizarrely, bubblegum idols, their looks fantasized over and their deeds lauded in pop songs. The story is told in fragments, flashbacks, and flashforwards; what readers will gain is less a "practical" knowledge of the war and its aftermath and more a deep, realistic, and dizzying sense of the time. The book was not created with promoting "war awareness" as a primary goal, which is probably what makes it so realistic. War is not clear-cut and easily described in a narrative with a traditional beginning, middle, and end. It is full of jagged edges, and, while not difficult to follow, The Fixer, accordingly, reads like the equivalent of a roomful of broken mirrors. It will leave teens feeling stunned, intrigued, and changed.
Emily Lloyd, formerly at Rehoboth Beach Public Library, DE
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From Booklist
Comic-strip journalist Sacco returns to Bosnia for a second work of hand-drawn reportage, more intimate than yet as compelling as his acclaimed *Safe Area Gorazde* (2000). The book focuses on former paramilitary fighter Neven, who has become a "fixer," earning a dubious living by doling out information and contacts to foreign journalists. Sacco meets Neven in 1995, as the Balkans War is winding down, and becomes enthralled by this shady, opportunistic character's tales of the warlords who terrorized the countryside as they fought against the Serbs. As Sacco becomes more reliant on Neven, the man's truthfulness, particularly those

of his own heroics, grows more questionable. A poignant epilogue reveals much about Neven's fate but leaves many of Sacco's doubts intact. Sacco's mastery of the comics medium allows him to present a story as detailed as any print journalism and more expressive than the most adept film documentary. His careful, precise drawing ideally complements his expressive and dynamic layouts, and by focusing on a single character, he further realizes the possibilities of nonfiction comics. *Gordon Flagg*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Hubbard:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each reserve has different aim or even goal; it means that e-book has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They are reading whatever they take because their hobby will be reading a book. How about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, man feel need book if they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will require this The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo.

George Clark:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo, you could enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Victor Willis:

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Christine Brooks:

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