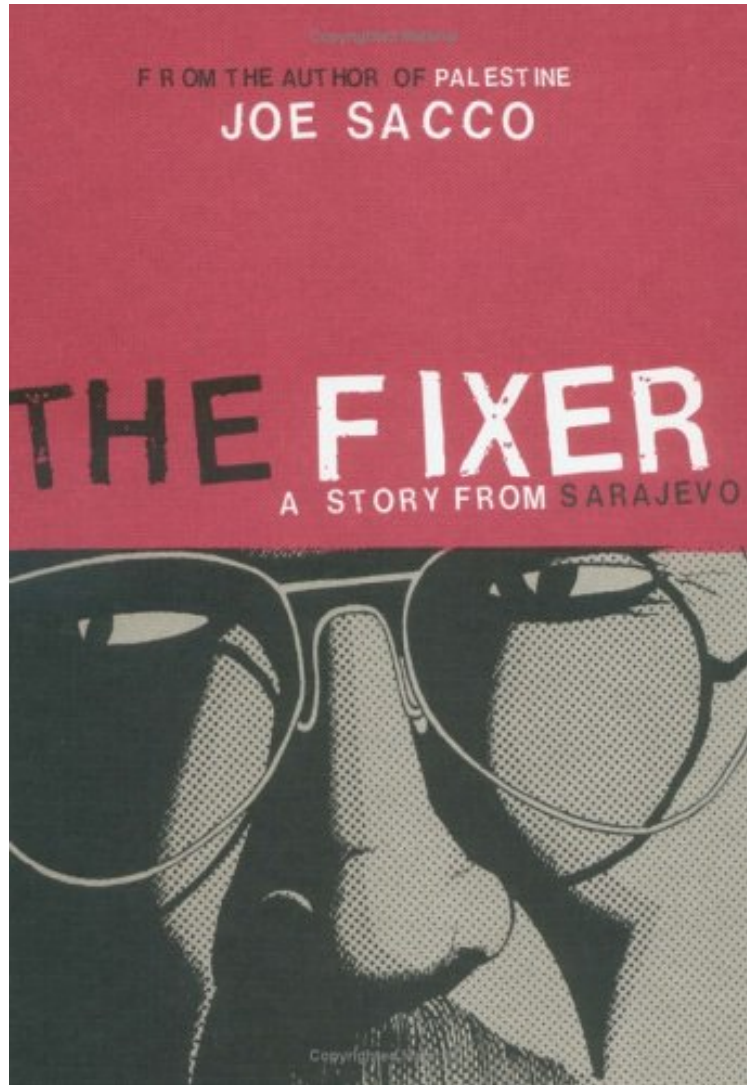


(Read free) The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo

The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo

Joe Sacco

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#623871 in Books Drawn and Quarterly 2003-12-01 2003-12-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 286.00 x 16.38 x 7.60l, #File Name: 1896597602140 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Joe Sacco : The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books I read last yearBy S. FosterA darkly violent Fellinesque riff on the Bosnian war, this "graphic novel," by Joe Sacco is a fast read, a noirish examination of the relationship between a parachute journalist and the necessary local 'fixer' who serves as a local contact and makes it possible for the journalist to drop into a foriegn country and get a story. In this case, the local turns out to be a questionable ex-fighter whose war stories are both more and less true than appearances indicate. The fixer, a troubled

ex-fighter scorned by his former comrades and spurned because of his ethnic background, is a terrific character, evocative of both the unresolved issues behind the Balkan wars as well as the marginalized citizens anywhere made exiles in their own land. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Sacco's Sarajevan Search By A. Ross Just to be clear, this is not a graphic novel, as some people are saying. It is graphic non-fiction, or graphic reportage, occupying a gray area somewhere between newsprint, photojournalism, memoir, cartooning, and essay. Sacco's first such book on Bosnia, *Safe Area Gorazde*, is a classic -- and those who found it compelling will certainly want to read this account of his 2001 return to Sarajevo. Aided by a Guggenheim fellowship, Sacco returned to do followup research and find old friends to see how they were getting along in peacetime. In his attempt to learn more about the siege of Sarajevo and the and its aftermath, he reconnects with an paramilitary veteran who had been his "fixer" on his previous trip in 1995. In war zones and trouble spots throughout the world, fixers are the oil that lubricates the machinery of international journalism. They are the ones who steer journalists to the right translator, hotel, driver, interviewer, clean hooker, alcohol, location, etc. -- for a few hundred in hard currency per day. Sacco's fixer was Neven, a Bosnian Serb who loves his city and fought in one of the many ad hoc brigades that were assembled by charismatic men in the early days of the war before a real Bosnian army was established. An outsize character, Neven becomes a kind of lens through which Sacco tries to understand the war's very confusing impact on Sarajevo. The book hopscoches between various stages of the war and the present in a kaleidoscopic jumble of images, confusing nicknames, and impenetrable mix of fact and myth. Through Neven, Sacco tells the fragmentary tale of some of the more prominent warlords (almost all of whom were shady prewar characters), and of their sometimes heroic, sometimes despicable activities during the siege. To a certain extent, they are the subject of the book, populist characters who took it upon themselves to create personal armies to fight the separatist Serbs when there was no central government or army to do so (most of the Yugoslav army supplies were handed over to Serbia following the dissolution of Yugoslavia). Of course, many of these patriotic men were also probably interested in enriching themselves, and as the war dragged on, attempts were made to incorporate them into the regular army and police and things got rather messy. As Sacco recounts, many of the "facts" surrounding various killings, atrocities, and profiteering by the warlords will forever remain obscured by the fog of war, and the need for politicians to wash their hands of those dirty times. At the same time, what becomes increasingly interesting is the relationship between Sacco and Neven, and the plausibility of Neven's endless stories about what it was like "back then." Neven is a down and out character who owes money all over town, and Sacco clearly feels guilty about walking around with bundles of Deutchmarks, while his fixer is real-life war veteran. The subtle (and not so subtle) assaults on Sacco's wallet become a running theme, and are an interesting window on the less glamorous side of being a foreign correspondent. At the same time, as Sacco spends more and more time in Sarajevo, he meets more and more people who cast doubts on Neven's veracity. He's certainly known all over town, and certainly did fight in the war, but there's also clearly a gulf between his stories and the truth. And as a Serb, he's also somewhat of a pariah in his own home city, his apartment is seized by connected refugees, and a general antipathy for Serbs hover around him. Ultimately, readers looking for a clear understanding of who was who, and what was what during the war, are going to be frustrated -- and are perhaps missing the whole point. This book is all about the fog of war, the strange mutations of time and place that raise certain men to power and then cast them aside, as well as the guilt and confusion of being an outsider looking in. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. very good but only 105 pages By King Yin Yan This book should be read after "*Safe Area Gorazde*" in order to gain a context of the war (unless you're already knowledgeable about it, which I wasn't). This one has more psychological depth than "*Gorazde*". Many of the warlords who defended Sarajevo had criminal backgrounds and after the war the government tried to get rid of them, but they defied the orders. A few of them came to tragic ends. The "fixer" is a mixed Serb-Muslim guy who was raised as a Serb. The Bosnian fighters questioned his loyalty (apparently some Serbs who were non-separatist got killed indiscriminately in the war). But he's also revealed as often lying. In the war he was a sniper, often he had to make decisions of whether to kill someone or not, it's like playing god. I learned a lot about what war is like from this and other books by Joe Sacco.

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 comic-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...

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 bw 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. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library JournalAdult/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, DECopyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From BooklistComic-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.

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