

Cooking With A Social Conscience

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 - Marinara Sauce
 - 3 Bean, Black Bean & Chili Dip
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CROATIA

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stop the war so they can go back to their hometowns. Finally, one girl named Vanya said to me, "Please tell the president to stop the war. We love him a lot."

In Zagreb, I stayed in a house where one refugee family from BiH was living. One lady in that family spoke English very well and talked to me a lot about the



hardship that her family had to face. She doesn't know her husband's whereabouts and takes care of two kids (three

years old and 10 months old) and her old father by herself. They came from Brcko, a northeastern town of the area where BSA tried to gain in order to make a corridor to connect with northwestern BiH and Krajina. She told me her extraordinary story of escape.

On May 1, 1992, BSA came to Brcko. At first, they took young men, and then women and children. She was pregnant at that time, and her husband took her and her kids to her father's house when their house was burned down. Later on, they were captured by Serbs, and her husband was separated from the rest of the family because Serbs were separating men and women from children and elderly persons. The latter ones were put into a so-called "Muslim village," and Serbs came every day to harass them. The former ones, including her husband, were sent to military barracks, and there were many killings and tortures in the barracks. On June 16, she heard that her husband and several other men were taken to Serbia for forced labor. Since then, she has lost track of him.

She and her family spent one month in Muslim village. One day, a Serb who knew her family approached them and let them go back to Brcko secretly because



A map describing the area the writer visited.

he knew what was going to happen in the village. She heard that 10 days after she and her family left, Serbs put women and children to buses and took them somewhere. She doesn't know what happened to them after that. She and her family stayed for only three months in Brcko.

Muslim forces took one village and began exchanging people in Brcko. It was a slow process, but she asked Red Cross to be exchanged quickly because it was better to be under Muslim forces protection. Then, in November, she and her family spent six months in the village near Tuzla. It was a horrible place with little food for her children and shelled by Serbs everyday. So, one day she and her family got on one of three buses from that village to a safer place through forests.

They traveled three days and nights in a bus. But in Jabranica where the BiH army and HVO were fighting, Muslims were forced to leave the buses by HVO. Muslims were put into one bus and Croats remained in another

bus. She begged HVO soldiers and stayed in the buses with Croats. One time the buses were checked by the BiH army, but they didn't ask passengers' nationalities. "HVO asked our nationalities," she said. "And they tried to separate Croats from Muslims." In Mostar, HVO tried to put men and women in different buses. She begged again and stayed with her old father. Finally, buses reached the border (near Metkovic) between BiH and Croatia.

She and her family found out that they couldn't cross the border because they didn't have any written documents and the border was closed. They went to a refugee camp in Caplina. In that camp, she met one humanitarian worker, whose name is Martin, from England. Martin gave money to her so that it could be used as a bribe for Croat soldiers in the border. As instructed, she gave money to the Croat soldiers, and her family could cross the bor-

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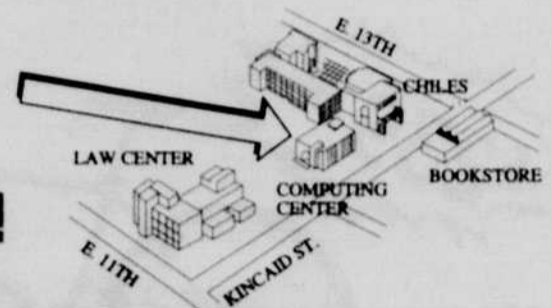
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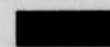
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