

BALKANIZED AT SUNRISE

Written for the Stage

By

Joe Tripician

-excerpts-

Excerpt One:

JOE AND JAKOV IN OFFICE.

JOE

I can't write this book.

JAKOV

No, but Joe, you must. Only you must write book.

JOE

I can't write a glowing, official book about Tudjman. And even if I could, I wouldn't. I'd have no credibility. Why don't you hire a PR agency? There's lots in New York.

JAKOV

No, Joe, you just write what you have to.

JOE

But I can only do that if I have creative control over what's written.

JAKOV

Yeah, of course. We give you.

JOE

Are you sure? Do you know what you're saying?

JAKOV

You are a great artist. You make your view of his life. You can make a really great job.

JOE

I want you to know that I'll be critical.

JAKOV

Oh, yeah, yeah.

JOE

I want to be completely clear about this.

JAKOV

I know, but you can make great job. And we pay you up front.

JOE

When do I leave?...

(to audience)

What could be that hard about it? Gather some books, hire some researchers, do some interviews, a little cut-and-paste. But I was worried -- really worried. Worried I'd make some huge historic or geographic blunder, that I'd become known as a paid propagandist for a repressive regime, that I'd get myself shot for shooting off my big mouth.

MUSIC CUE.

But I was also excited: going on a journalistic assignment, even at the sponsorship of a nationalist government, I thrilled to the challenge of discovering the truth about ancient rivalries and ethnic cleansing. For I was about to unravel the Balkan onion, the mystery of the war between the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslims, and the greater mystery of why the hell I was hired in the first place.

Excerpt Two:

HOTEL ROOM. JOE AND JADRANKA ENTER.

JADRANKA

Oh, I see. Mr. Double-Bed! Why do you need a double bed, Mr. Double-Bed?

JOE

It's just what they gave me. I didn't ask for it. I use it to spread out my books, and—

JADRANKA

I think you have some other plan in mind, Mr. Double-Bed.

JOE

No, look. Let's just have a drink, and then you can go home.

JADRANKA

I think I go home now.

JOE

Don't go. I'm lonely here.

JADRANKA

Is that the only reason you want me to stay, because you are lonely?

JOE

No, of course not. I like you.

JADRANKA

Well... I can't make love to you. What if I fall in love?

Excerpt Three:

JOE IN DINING ROOM. JAKOV ENTERS

JAKOV

Joe, good morning! Oh, such a light breakfast, please to have more.

JOE

No, I really couldn't, thanks.

JAKOV

Joe, big day today. Today you meet President.

JOE
Today?

JAKOV
Yes, but first we have lunch at mass graves.
Come!

Excerpt Four:

JOE AND AIDA AT BAR.

AIDA
So, you American writer, you come to Sarajevo
with thought we are all fundamentalists.

JOE
Not at all. You're all very urban, very cool.

AIDA
I have always been able to find my blue eye-
shadow and red lipstick, even during war. I
wanted to taunt the snipers, to say to them: 'I
am wearing Lacome, and you can just wear your
leaves and mud.'

And you, Joe. Are you married?

JOE
No, but I used to be. I was married for thirteen
years until my divorce.

AIDA
Oh, and how many children?

JOE
I don't have any.

AIDA
No children? No, that cannot be.

JOE
No, no kids.

AIDA

Joe, excuse me, but you wasted 13 years of your life. Excuse me, I'm sorry, but you did.

JOE

Well, I don't exactly see it that way.

AIDA

Look at Ali here.

3-YEAR OLD BOY RUNS UP, HANDS STICKY WITH SUGAR AND SODA,
AND YELPS EXCITEDLY AT JOE.

AIDA

He likes you. He needs a visa. So, why are you scared of me?

JOE

I'm not scared of you.

AIDA

You are afraid I will steal your money.

JOE

No, of course not. I'm just on a limited budget, and can't hire you for every day. They didn't even want me to come to Bosnia.

AIDA

I think you need to have family.

JOE

I have a family, back home.

AIDA

You told me you didn't have kids. You are lying?

JOE

No, I'm not. I don't have kids, I-

AIDA

You need kids. Everyone needs a family. Buy me another double scotch.

Excerpt Five:

IN OFFICE. JAKOV HANDS JOE A LETTER.

JAKOV

Joe, here is letter from Eddie Bell, publisher of Harper-Collins in London. He suggest please to make small changes.

JOE READS LETTER.

JOE

Jakov, I have a problem with this. If I write the book Eddie wants me to write, and you expect me to write, that would be the end of my career. You understand, don't you? I can't write propaganda.

JAKOV

Please, please, please, Joe. Just to write on whole very positive image of president; how a great man he is.

JOE

(reads letter)

"We have thought up a new slogan: Tudjman, an Enigma or Lie and Truth in the World of Politics."

JOE LOOKS AT JAKOV -- WHO SMILES BROADLY.

JOE

Oh, yeah, that zings, doesn't it?