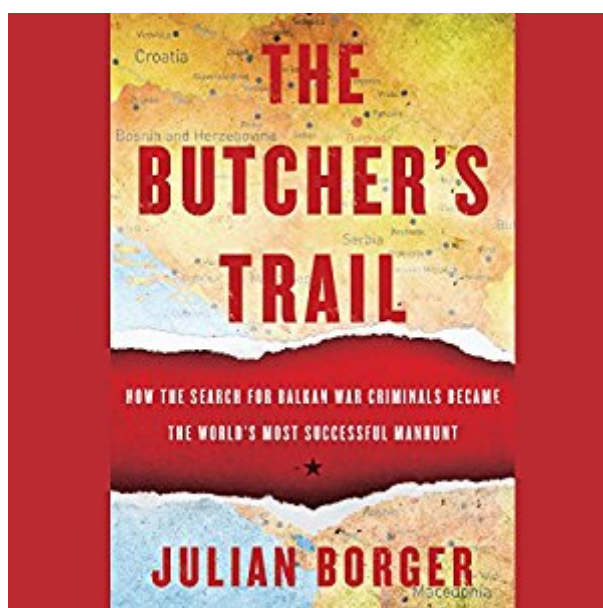


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The Butcher's Trail: How The Search For Balkan War Criminals Became The World's Most Successful Manhunt



Synopsis

The gripping untold story of The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and how the perpetrators of Balkan war crimes were captured by the most successful manhunt in history. Written with a thrilling narrative pull, *The Butcher's Trail* chronicles the pursuit and capture of the Balkan war criminals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. Borger recounts how Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladic - both now on trial in The Hague - were finally tracked down and describes the intrigue behind the arrest of Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav president who became the first head of state to stand before an international tribunal for crimes perpetrated in a time of war. Based on interviews with former special forces soldiers, intelligence officials, and investigators from a dozen countries - most speaking about their involvement for the first time - this book reconstructs a 14-year manhunt carried out almost entirely in secret. Indicting the worst war criminals that Europe had known since the Nazi era, the ICTY ultimately accounted for all 161 suspects on its wanted list, a feat never before achieved in political and military history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an amazing book, and is a "must read" for anyone who wants to understand the Balkans; how ethnic nationalism has led, and can lead, to genocide; all the politics behind the forming of the criminal court for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia; and how the indictees were captured. The book starts with an informative yet high-level and concise description of how the former Yugoslavia

devolved into warring ethnic groups. That is, ethnic nationalism was stoked and used to stake territorial claims and further individual political gains. The impact of those actions, combined with the human fact that some normally acting people can be led to commit atrocities, others can be led to directly support them, and others can be led to indirectly support them or to turn a blind eye, serve as a stark and necessary lesson to anyone who thinks genocide in the west or elsewhere can't happen again. The book illustrates how foreign monitors and peace keepers deliberately avoided criminal court indictments so they would not have to "risk" capturing them. The narrative behind the political inaction of the west was very informative, and changed my opinion about several international leaders (for both better and worse). The first capture is very well documented and begs to be made into a movie. This take down also illustrates that much of what we take for granted in history is actually the result of individual initiative, combined with a bit of luck and/or unplanned circumstance. That first take down helped turn the tide, which eventually led to all the living indictees being brought before the criminal court. The author deliberately does not address the decisions behind who was and who was not indicted, the duration of trials, or the perceived appropriateness of the prison sentences. He makes the point that he is focused on the capture of the indictees. The author provides a bit of caution for the future, noting that many of those sentenced to long prison terms are reaching the end of their sentences, being released, and being welcomed as "heroes" in their home areas. (As a frequent traveler to Sarajevo, I can attest to how the war resulted in a much increased presence and influence of fundamentalist Islamists. This is being driven by (a) jihadis who came to fight during the war having stayed (and starting families), (b) Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar building mosques and staffing them with fundamentalists as some kind of post-war foreign aid, and (c) most recently, increased tourism and investment from Gulf States. As an example of Gulf investment increasing fundamentalist influence, there are shopping centers in Sarajevo that were built with Gulf investment funds at which restaurants cannot serve alcohol do to the investors' Islamic rules.) If there is one shortcoming in the book, it is that it does not specify the number of indictees or estimated war deaths by each ethnic group. In making this omission, the author provides fodder for the separatist assertions of "it wasn't us, it was them and we are the victims" that help feed the war to begin with.

I knew generally about the Balkan Wars, and I knew the names of the major war criminals, but I have no idea how many lower level operators were charged, located, and brought to justice. Borger's telling of the pursuit of these criminals, how they were caught, and the obstacles that had to be overcome reads like an international and legal thriller. International organizations are often

maligned, but the Hague Tribunal is to be thanked and praised. Borger's book is great. It tells a story that needs to be told and retold. I strongly recommend it.

As the ICTY's seemingly incomprehensible failures continue to mount, it is refreshing to read about its early successes, which led to the capture or surrender of all 161 indictees. Borger's narrative is brisk and easy to follow, and his accounts of the wars, and the indictees' actions during those wars and since, are measured and accurate. The Butcher's Trail is an exceptionally entertaining, engaging, informative read by an astute, honest chronicler of Balkan's recent history.

This is a great read. It is much like a detective novel but all based on well documented facts carefully put together with good explanations where one part shifts chronologically from another chapter to keep each part in order. It is a book you will not want to put down until all is read. The copious notes, the maps, chronological chart and other aids are all helpful in providing this needed documentation of the problems that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia. This is particularly so now that the last of the major criminals has finally been sentenced in the last month or so.

No doubt this was a well-researched account of the recent struggles in Balkan politics, government and law enforcement But repeatedly mentioning who was still loose and how both the UN and US didn't want to get involved in catching these murderers -- that was quite distressing. I'd suggest everyone read this book, just to understand better why much of the world finds America and Americans disinterested in these horrific genocides. First them, then you.

Excellent account of the hunt for the worst war criminals since the Nazis. And the incredible complacency of the entire world in face of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thank you, Julian Borger, for your work!

Great collection of facts, explaining a lot about manhunt and why it took so long. Some things you simple forgot so this book is good to remeber. Also I always wonder how war criminals managed to be on run for such long period, so this book gave answers on some of my questions

masterful book about the balkan denial of justice and international complicity. must read for all those interested in international justice

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