

BARBARIANS





*Because it's night now, and the barbarians haven't shown up.  
And there are others, just back from the borderlands,  
who claim that the barbarians no longer exist.  
What in the world will we do without barbarians?  
Those people would have been a solution, of sorts.*

(C.P. Cavafy, Waiting for Barbarians)



## Synopsis

Feb 17th 2008. Kosovo declares independence and Serbian government announces mass protests, so people could express their discontent.

Luka, a troubled teenager on the verge of adulthood, lives in Mlad-enovac, a ruined ex-industrial town on the brinks of Belgrade, where, with his best friend Flash, he is a leader of local football club fans. During an unannounced visit by the social worker, Luka is faced with a family secret that his father, who was believed to had disappeared in Kosovo conflicts, is in fact alive and asking for him.

Torn between family issues, the pressure of his ongoing parole and affection to a girl he can't have, Luka loses his temper and breaks the leg of the local club's top player. He is now under pursuit from people who seek revenge because of their ruined investment and even friends from his group take distance.

The day of organized trip to Belgrade protests comes and Luka uses this opportunity to leave town. As hooligans demonstrate their rage in Belgrade streets, Luka gathers his strength to finally meet his father who abandoned him years ago.



#### Director's statement

One event left a significant mark in my memory. That night Belgrade burned. The streets were flooded with broken glass. Young people were destroying and burning... Young people that may have visited Belgrade for the first time. Rage and violence triumphed that night. Anarchy caused by a dissatisfaction brewing for years exploded... My wish was to return to this night and make a film about yet another generation lost in the dust of Serbia's transition.

This is a story about coming of age in a small Serbian town, told from an intimate perspective of the main character Luka; story about searching for one's own identity and environment acceptance, about the tragedy of growing up in a society of lost values, where corruption, immorality, crime and abuse of power only prosper.



## Approach

During a two-months long workshop, performed by director and AD, non-actors were put through a series of exercises developing their ability to recognize, articulate and express their emotions, so they can use them in shooting. This way, we learned what to expect from each of them, also drastically adapting the script to these kids' characters along the way.

Non-actors were never given the script. In stead, they were given a single situation to deal with, scene by scene, keeping a fresh and honest approach to their conflicts.

The only actors used in the film are the ones playing the characters of Luka's mother, Social worker and Luka's father. With them having read the script, it was interesting to see how they lead non-actors through the scene. It would usually create confusion with the kids, resulting in honest and very realistic reactions.



#### On set | off set

Casting of “Barbarians” hooligan group (including Luka and Flash) was performed during six months through more than twenty high schools in Belgrade and Mladenovac, until one day the casting manager spotted a group of drop-out kids hanging out behind one school in Mladenovac. “Family”, as they call their gang, started as a fan group, attending local club’s football matches, but were soon banned from the stadium. We immediately loved them and took them as a group to play in the film. Later, through a series of rehearsals, we enjoyed deciding who will play which character.

One of the non-actors used the break in shooting (May-August) to serve his prison sentence and got back in time to finish the shooting. Another one, on the other hand, was arrested just before second part of shoot and is therefore missing in some scenes in which he should appear.

In the night before first day of shooting, Nenad (role: Flash) has a crash falling off his scooter without a helmet, which caused severe face injuries. Start of shooting was delayed for a month until he was recovered.

Character of Muhamed was played by a rapper called Edwin Otta, son of Ghana embassy employee. After Ghana embassy in Belgrade was closed, his family and him went back to Ghana and his scenes were re-shot with Kagai, great guy from Kenya, studying in Belgrade.

Marija (role: Stefana) and Lidija (role: Nina) were best friends when they were small girls, but couldn’t stand each other when brought together for rehearsals. “Barbarians” rehearsals and shooting got them close again, so they would repeatedly sneak out from the set together every day.



## Cast

### **Zeljko Markovic – “Luka”**

Zeljko is an extremely bright and very impulsive teenager. With divorced parents who don't live in Mladenovac, Zeljko takes care of his siblings and their home. Very popular with girls. His favorite movie character is The Mask (Jim Carrey) and he is about to do a tattoo of him on his back.

### **Nenad Petrovic “Flash” – “Flash”**

Flash is an ex kick boxer, now fully dedicated to changing cell phones every week and exchanging laptops for scooters and then exchanging scooters for laptops again. Spends a lot of time working as a painter in Paris with his father. Has more than 100 traffic tickets for driving without license, speeding etc.

### **Jasna Djuricic – “Luka’s mother”**

Jasna Djuricic is an acclaimed theatrical and film actress, having won Golden Leopard at Locarno International Film Festival in 2010 for her role in “White White World”. Being a professor at Novi Sad Academy of Arts, she possesses great pedagogical skills, which was of great impact in her collaboration with non-actors during “Barbarians” shoot.



### Director

Ivan Ikic born 1982 in Belgrade. Finished Film and TV Directing at Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade as a best student in generation. Attended Berlinale Talent Campus 2008 and Berlinale Dox Clinic 2008. Directed several short fiction, commercial and documentary films, including documentary road-movie “Tarot Serbia!”. “Barbarians” is his first feature film.

### Producer

Milan Stojanovic born 1983 in Belgrade. Finished Film and TV Production at Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade 2006. Finished filmmaking course at New York Film Academy 2008. Won Promotion Prize at Cottbus Film Festival 2007. Since 2002, works as an independent film professional in various Serbian (“Circles”, “Life and Death of Porno Gang”) and international productions (“Mothers”, “Destricted”).

**Cinematographer: Milos Jacimovic**  
*Borders, Raindrops* (in production)  
*Tilva Rosh* (2010)

**Costume designer: Biljana Grgur**  
*The Box* (2011)  
*Tilva Rosh* (2010)  
*Belgrade phantom* (2009)

**Editor: Dragan von Petrovic**  
*The Disobedient* (in production)  
*Dragan Wende West Berlin* (2012),  
documentary  
*Tarot Serbia!* (2010), documentary

**Sound designer: Vladimir Živković**  
*Dragan Wende West Berlin* (2012),  
documentary  
*The Box* (2011)  
*Life and Death of Porno Gang* (2009)

**Production designer: Zorana Petrov**  
*Clip* (2012)  
*The Enemy* (2011)  
*Life and Death of Porno Gang* (2009)



#### Credits:

Serbia/Montenegro / Slovenia / BiH 2014, 87 min

**Director:** Ivan Ikic | **Writer:** Ivan Ikic | **Producer:** Milan Stojanovic | **Co-producers:** Nina Redzepagic, Bojan Mastilovic, Snezana Maric | **Cinematographer:** Milos Jacimovic | **Editor:** Dragan Petrovic | **Sound designer:** Vladimir Zivkovic | **Production designer:** Zorana Petrov | **Costume designer:** Biljana Grgur | **Mask:** Tijana Draguljevic | **Cast:** Zeljko Markovic, Nenad Petrovic "Flash", Jasna Djuricic, Marina Vodenicar, Mirko Vlahovic, Marija Rakic, Lidija Popovic, Aleksandar Pitulic, Aco Cirovic, Kagai Muriithi

**Production:** SENSE Production (SRB) | **Co-production:** OR (MNE), Restart (SLO), Refresh (BiH)

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#### Production company:

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restart

REFRESH  
PRODUCTION



CineLink  
Sarajevo Film Festival

