

Full Translation

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Headline: **REFRIGERATOR TRUCK IN THE DANUBE, BODIES IN THE TRUCK**

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Subject: Journalists enquire about the refrigerator truck with bodies found in the Danube

Recently, a renown journalist from Zaječar told us that he had learned from reliable sources that, in the early days of war, a refrigerator truck surfaced in the Danube somewhere between Kladovo and Tekija. When the truck was opened, dead bodies fell out. We couldn't believe it. We told him forthrightly that it was just a rumour intended to alarm the public. Our colleague swore that he had got the information from a competent person, but that he had made a vow not to disclose his identity. He himself could not write about it because no one would publish it.

The author of this article and his distinguished colleague travelled the whole day. My colleague's behaviour indicated that he wouldn't be able to help unveiling his source of information for long. And that is exactly what happened. It was nearly dark, and we were approaching our destination, when he told me the name. Indeed, his source was a man of authority and someone least likely to have imagined the whole story.

A few days later we visited this government official in a town in Timočka Krajina. We openly asked him to tell us what he knew. He replied that he and the institution he was running had received information that a refrigerator truck had been found on the Danube riverbank near Tekija some two or three days before the war, and that when it was opened, human bodies fell out of it. His institution did not get involved in the case, and he knew nothing about subsequent developments.

The road took us further on to Kladovo where we talked to several acquaintances that we believed were well informed. Each and every one of them told us that the story about bodies in a refrigerator truck was circulating, but that people were reluctant to discuss it.

"It's all true, but any involvement could be dangerous," said a man from the *Derdap* hydroelectric power plant, and referred us to another man who supposedly knew much more.

After much hesitation and many questions as to who we were, and why we were interested, the man told us the following:

“A few days before the bombing started, a refrigerator truck with Swiss licence plates was travelling down the road from Kladovo to Tekija. A few kilometres from the *Derdap* hydroelectric plant, the truck overturned and landed on the Danube riverbank. Since the door was slightly deformed, human bodies began to fall out. Folks began to gather, but then the police came, secured the location, and drove the civilians away. Shortly afterwards, a crane came, the bodies were put back into the refrigerator truck, and it proceeded in the direction of Tekija,” concluded the man. He could hardly have invented the whole story. With a smile, he added that those were probably the bodies of the Kurds or Talibans who had mysteriously arrived on our territory. Their bodies were probably being taken to a medical institution where students would practice on them. He told us the name of a man who directly took part in putting the bodies back into the truck, but we failed to locate him. Our search for him simply yielded no results.

On the same day, we went to Kladovo to meet another distinguished colleague of ours, a famous journalist from Kladovo. He confirmed the story about the bodies in the refrigerator truck, and added one more detail:

“A man who happened to be at the scene was sent to a well-known restaurant to fetch table cloths to wrap up the bodies. When he asked for them, he forgot to mention that he needed old ones. Assuming that was throwing a party, the restaurant staff offered him brand new table cloths. But, when he explained for what purpose he wanted them, they gave him old ones,” said this journalist.

Finally, we came to Tekija. At the entrance to the town we asked a native resident if he had heard anything about a refrigerator truck with dead bodies. He said that he had, and that it was common knowledge in Tekija, but when people had gone the spot, which is near to Captain Koča’s monument, to see for themselves what had happened, the police sent them back. In the Tekija local commune office we failed to find the chief, because he was on a trip. But there was a young woman there who told us that she didn’t know much, and that besides it was ill-advised to discuss the subject. A while later, she loosened up when we told her we were journalists. She said that the refrigerator truck incident did take place, that the truck was pulled out of the Danube, having probably floated downstream. She herself did not see the bodies because a large number of policemen prevented access to the spot. She added that the truck had been retrieved from the Danube near Captain Koča’s monument by cranes belonging to *Brodoremont* /ship maintenance and repair/ company and the *Derdap* hydroelectric power plant, and was then driven down towards Donji Milanovac. It happened at the beginning of the war, in late March this year.

Coming to an end of our research, we were still not certain if the incident actually occurred, or the relaying of information through the grapevine had been so powerful that it convinced so many people. We cannot say for sure, because we did not get to speak to anyone who was present at the scene. And the police remain silent, as they have been doing over the past several years.

If this incident really took place, and we are going to continue our research and inform our readership of the results, it still remains unclear how the Kurds and Talibans came to this region. And how did a refrigerator truck with Swiss licence plates manage to cross the border and enter the country?

Nevertheless, we believe that the authorities, above all the police, the prosecutor, or somebody else, must go public and explain whether this event occurred or not, and thus put a stop to dangerous rumours that are spreading at lightening speed and disturbing the public.