

Serhii Zakharov

# DUMPSTER\*

(\*Donetsk People's Republic)



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**Serhii Zakharov.**

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Графічний роман Сергія Захарова «DumPsteR» – це мистецький вирок донеччанина так званим ДНР та ЛНР. Стоверений ним арт-проект «Мурзилка» заповнив Донецьк стрит-арт карикатурами на представників окупаційної влади. Захарова схопили, тримали у підвалі, кілька разів імітували розстріл. Вийшовши з катівні художник намалював те, що відбувалося з ним та іншими полоненими.

The graphic novel «DumPsteR» by Sergey Zakharov is an artistic verdict of the resident of Donetsk to so called DNR and LNR. His artistic project, «Murzilka», filled Donetsk up with street art caricatures on representatives of the occupation authorities. Zakharov was grabbed, kept in the basement, imitated shooting several times. After escaping the artist painted what had happened to him and other prisoners.



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### A STORY OF ART RESISTANCE

IT IS NOT THE MOST PLEASANT THING WHEN THE GUN BARREL IS DIRECTED AT YOUR FOREHEAD. IT IS ESPECIALLY UNPLEASANT WHEN A MAN WHO IS NOT QUITE SANE IS HOLDING HIS FINGER ON THE TRIGGER. BESIDES, THE MAN IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL. I HAVE READ THAT IN SUCH SITUATIONS THE WHOLE LIFE FLASHES IN FRONT OF ONE'S EYES. IT WAS DIFFERENT WITH ME. I WAS LOOKING AT THE MUZZLE OF THE GUN AND THOUGHT THAT IF THE MAN FIRED, MY BRAIN WOULD STAIN THE WALL WHICH WAS BEHIND MY BACK. IT WOULD BE NEITHER ATTRACTIVE, NOT AESTHETIC.





### THREE MONTHS BEFORE

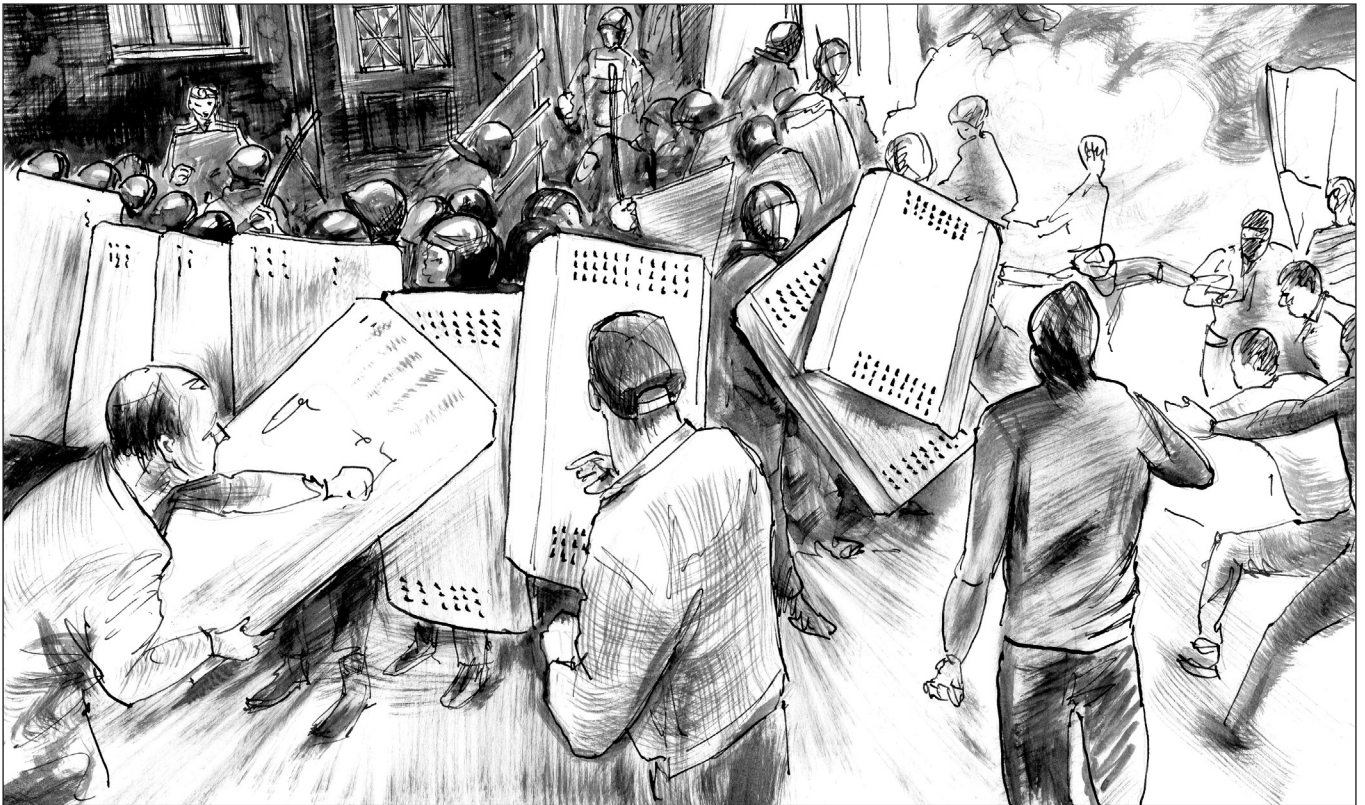
THE CLOUDS STARTED TO THICKEN OVER THE CITY IN MARCH 2014. NOT ALL THE PEOPLE IN DONETSK WELCOMED THE VICTORY OF MAIDAN. WELL-ORGANIZED PROTEST CAMPAIGNS BEGAN. MY FRIENDS WHO I TRUSTED TOLD ME ABOUT "GUESTS" FROM BEHIND "POREBRIC" (A DIALECTAL RUSSIAN WORD DENOTING "CURB" WHICH IS NOT USED IN UKRAINE) WHO THEY SAW IN THE CITY. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE "REBELS" EXPERIENCED LACK OF THEIR OWN SCUMS. IN FACT, THERE WERE A LOT OF SCUMS, BUT AT THAT TIME THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT GREAT PROSPECTS WOULD BE OPEN TO THEM IF THE "THE RUSSIAN WORLD" CAME. SO, THEY WERE SITTING OUT, WAITING, AT HOMES. THAT WAS WHY RUSSIAN CURATORS OF "SPONTANEOUS" PROTESTS DECIDED TO BRING SOME LOWLIVES FROM ROSTOV-ON-DON. "TOURISTS" WITH SPECIFIC APPEARANCE WERE WANDERING AROUND THE CITY, AT FIRST EVEN SHYLY, FORCING THEMSELVES TO ASK POLITELY, "DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW HOW TO GET TO LENIN SQUARE?" HOWEVER, THEY GOT USED TO THE SITUATION VERY QUICKLY AND, HAVING FRATERNIZED WITH LOCAL LOWLIVES, THEY FELT MASTERS. THEN THE SEIZURES OF ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS BEGAN.







IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS QUITE EASY TO BREAK THE COMPANY UP. HOWEVER, THAT WAS NOT DONE. THE GANG THAT CALLED THEMSELVES MILITIA (THE POLICE) HAD THE POWER AND COULD DO THAT, BUT AT FIRST THEY WERE INACTIVE, THEN JOINED THE "REBELLIOUS PEOPLE". THE OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES IN THE CITY FOLLOWED THEM ON THE WAY OF BETRAYAL. THERE WAS NOTHING FOR THEM TO DO IN NEW UKRAINE. ON THE OTHER HAND, "THE RUSSIAN WORLD" GAVE THEM A CHANCE TO PRESERVE THEIR POSITIONS AND EVEN TO GET SOME BENEFITS.



AT THAT TIME, IN THE EARLY SPRING OF 2014, THERE WERE NOT ONLY PRO-RUSSIAN RALLIES IN DONETSK. THERE WERE PRO-UKRAINIAN ONES TOO. I ATTENDED THEM AND OBSERVED THE PEOPLE. THOSE WHO WERE WITH UKRAINIAN FLAGS HAD NORMAL, HUMAN FACES. THOSE WHO WERE WITH RUSSIAN ONES HAD BATS AND EMITTED AGGRESSION... THEIR EYES SHOWED THAT WERE READY TO BEAT, TO SLAY, TO KILL. I STOOD, AND WATCHED, AND DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY COULD WIN. HOWEVER, VERY SOON THEY, TOGETHER WITH OTHERS LIKE THEM, SEIZED ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS IN DONETSK AND IN OTHER TOWNS IN THE REGION.





I THOUGHT THAT COULD NOT LAST LONG. A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT THE SAME WAY. WE LOOKED AT THE PHOTOS OF BUMS AND DRUG-ADDICTS - THE "CREATORS" OF THE "NEW REPUBLIC" - AND LAUGHED. BUT WE LAUGHED IN VAIN AS SERIOUS PEOPLE FROM ONCE A FRATERNAL COUNTRY STOOD BEHIND ALL THOSE SCUMS. THAT BECAME UNDERSTANDABLE ON MAY 11 WHEN THE REFERENDUM ON SELF-DETERMINATION OF "DPR" WAS HELD.

RUSSIAN TV PRESENTED IT AS THE EXPRESSION OF THE WILL OF PEOPLE - HUGE QUEUES OF THOSE WHO WANTED TO VOTE IN FRONT OF POLLING STATIONS. HOWEVER, IT WAS A PICTURE FOR TV AND HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH REALITY. THE QUEUES WERE CREATED IN A VERY SIMPLE WAY - ONE POLLING STATION WAS MADE OUT OF THREE- FOUR STANDARD ONES AT THE PEAK TIME FOR RETIRED PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE THE MOST ACTIVE - IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE QUEUES IN THE MORNING. THEN ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO COME AT THE RIGHT TIME AND TO TAKE THE PICTURE. THEY DID NOT MENTION THE FACT THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THOSE QUEUES WERE RETIREES WHO WERE MISSING THE SOVIET UNION.

**Бюллетень**

**ДЛЯ ГОЛОСОВАНИЯ НА РЕФЕРЕНДУМЕ 11 МАЯ 2014 ГОДА**

**ДЛЯ ГОЛОСУВАННЯ НА РЕФЕРЕНДУМІ 11 ТРАВНЯ 2014 РОКУ**

ОТМЕТИТЕ ЛЮБЫМ ЗНАКОМ В КВАДРАТЕ ТОГ ВАРИАНТІ ВІДПОВІДІ ЗА ЯКИМ ВИ ГОЛОСУЄТЕ

Відзначте будь-яким знаком у квадраті той варіант відповіді, за який Ви голосуєте

**Поддерживаете ли Вы Акт о государственной самостоятельности**

**Донецкой Народной Республики?**

**Чи підтримуєте Ви Акт про державну самостійність**

**Донецької Народної Республіки?**

**ДА / ТАК**

☐

**НЕТ / НІ**

☐

Бюллетень, в якому позначені перемцямими или отпечатанными вариантами, недействителен

Бюлетень, в якому залишені перемцямими або відбитими варіантами відповіді, не має юридичної сили

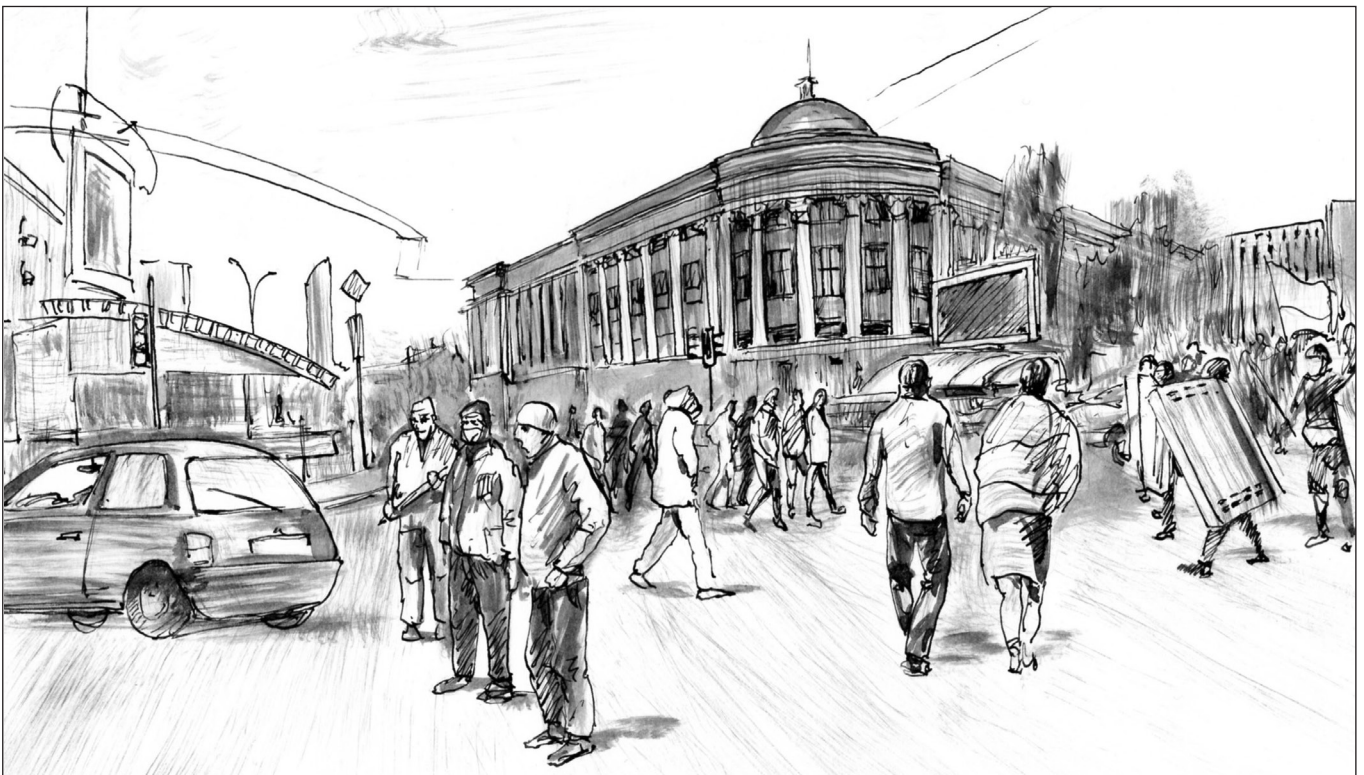




I DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE REFERENDUM AS WELL AS ALMOST ALL MY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES. HOWEVER, EVEN IF WE HAD GONE, WE WOULD HAVE VOTED "AGAINST". STILL, IT WAS EVIDENT THAT IT WAS USELESS. THE RESULT WAS KNOWN IN ADVANCE.

CONTRARY TO THAT, I DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON MAY 25. I CAME UP TO THE POLLING STATION WHERE I WAS TO VOTE. IT WAS IN THE SCHOOL I WENT TO. THE DOORS WERE CLOSED. NOBODY WAS THERE, ONLY A POLICE CAR STOOD NEARBY. I CAME UP TO IT AND NOCKED AT THE WINDOW. THERE APPEARED A FRIGHTENED OFFICER'S FACE. I ASKED, "WHEN WILL THE POLLING STATION OPEN?" THE ANSWER WAS, "I DON'T KNOW. WE ARE HERE TO GUARD THE ORDER".

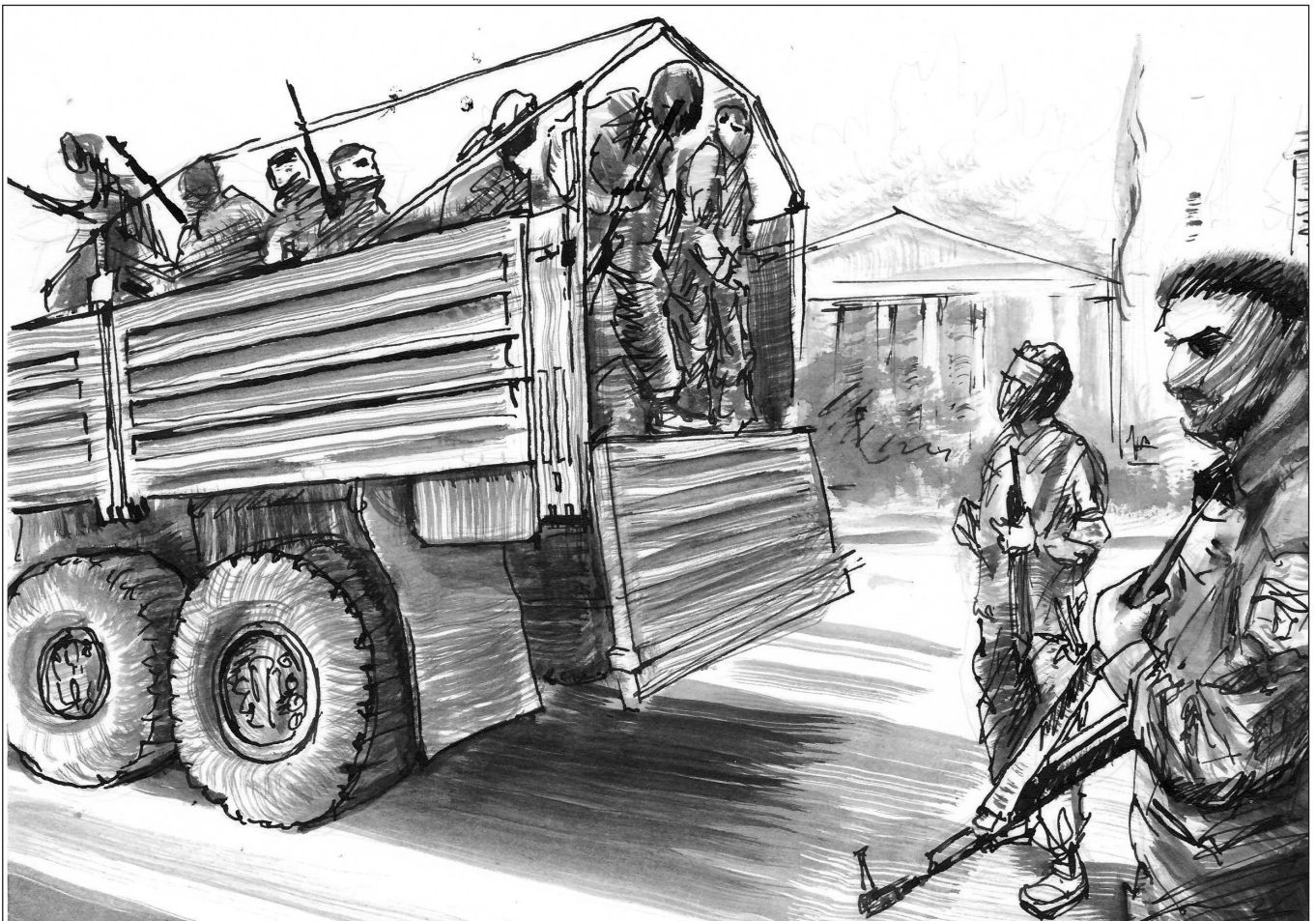
THAT DAY ONLY ONE POLLING STATION OPENED IN DONETSK. IT WAS IN DONETSK INDUSTRIAL TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL. HOWEVER, IT DID NOT WORK FOR A LONG TIME. SEVERAL CARS WITH KHODAKOVSKY'S "EAGLES" ARRIVED, AND CAMOUFLAGED MEN, IN THE WAY TYPICAL OF THEM, "CONVINCED" THE ELECTION COMMISSION TO CLOSE THE STATION.





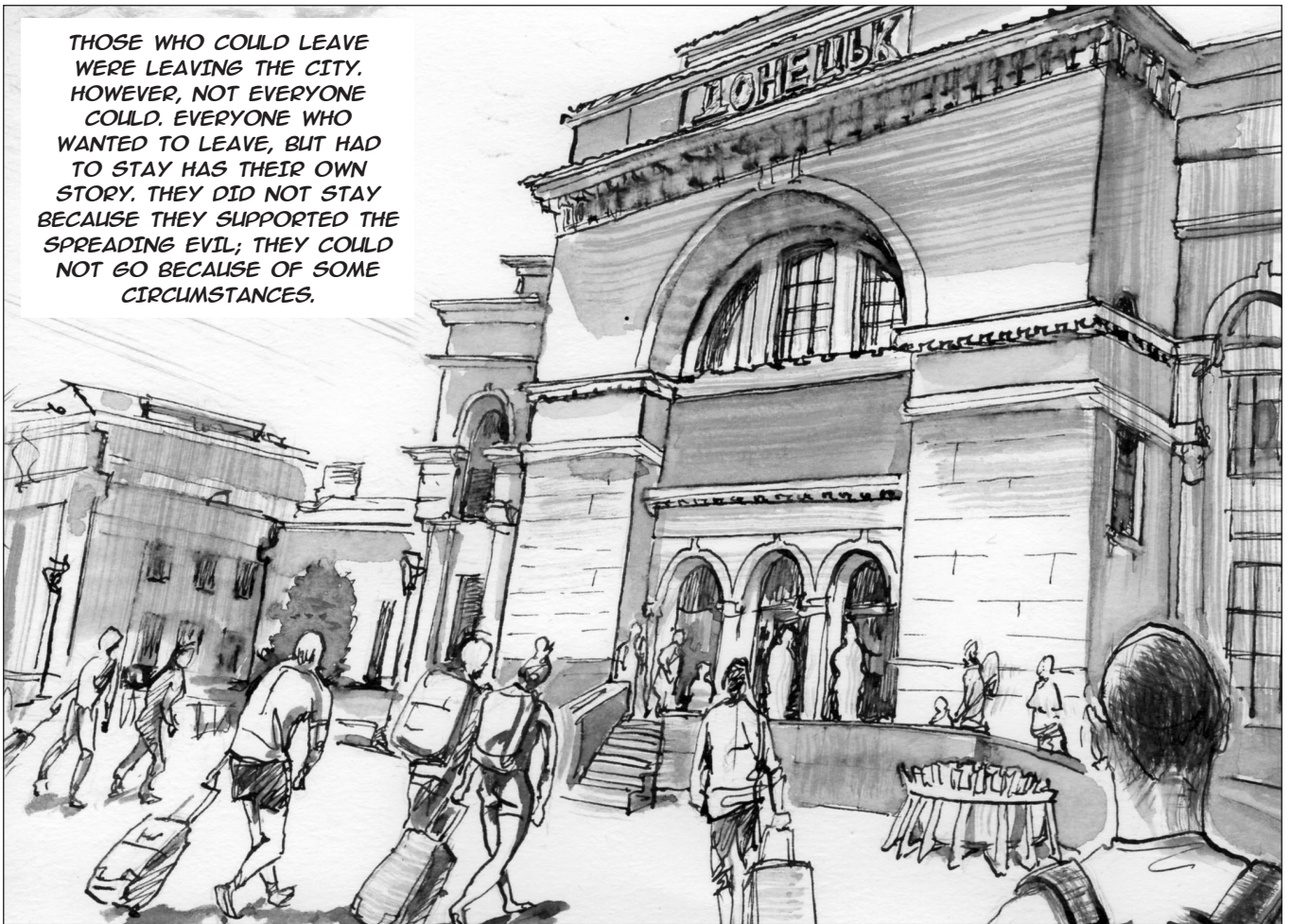


THE CLOUDS WERE THICKENING GRADUALLY. MORE AND MORE MARGINALS IN MILITARY UNIFORM COULD BE SEEN IN THE STREETS. AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CITY FROM THE SIDE OF MAKIIVKA, THERE APPEARED A POSTER "THOSE WHO SUPPORT KYIV JUNTA ARE FASCISTS". MACDONALD'S WAS CLOSED. INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOCATIONS OF NEARBY BOMB SHELTERS WAS POSTED ON THE WALLS AT THE ENTRANCE TO DWELLING HOUSES. BOUTIQUES WERE BEING CLOSED ONE BY ONE. CAMOUFLAGED GROUP MUGGERS ATTACKED A BAPTISTS' STATIONARY TENT WITH THE WORDS "WE ARE PRAYING FOR UKRAINE" ON IT. THE BAPTISTS WERE BEATEN; EVERYTHING WHAT WAS INSIDE THE TENT WAS THROWN OUT INTO THE KALMIUS RIVER.





THOSE WHO COULD LEAVE WERE LEAVING THE CITY. HOWEVER, NOT EVERYONE COULD. EVERYONE WHO WANTED TO LEAVE, BUT HAD TO STAY HAS THEIR OWN STORY. THEY DID NOT STAY BECAUSE THEY SUPPORTED THE SPREADING EVIL; THEY COULD NOT GO BECAUSE OF SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.



THE POWER IN THE CITY WAS SEIZED BY STRANGE PEOPLE. AMONG THEM THERE WAS NOBODY KNOWN TO DONETSK RESIDENTS, EVEN KNOWN NEGATIVELY. WHAT CRACKS DID THOSE GUBAREVS, PUSHYLINS, PURGINS ("DPR" LEADERS' SURNAMES), ETC. GET FROM? THEY COULD HAVE BEEN LAUGHED AT IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR SHADOWS - SUPPORTERS BEHIND THEIR BACKS.



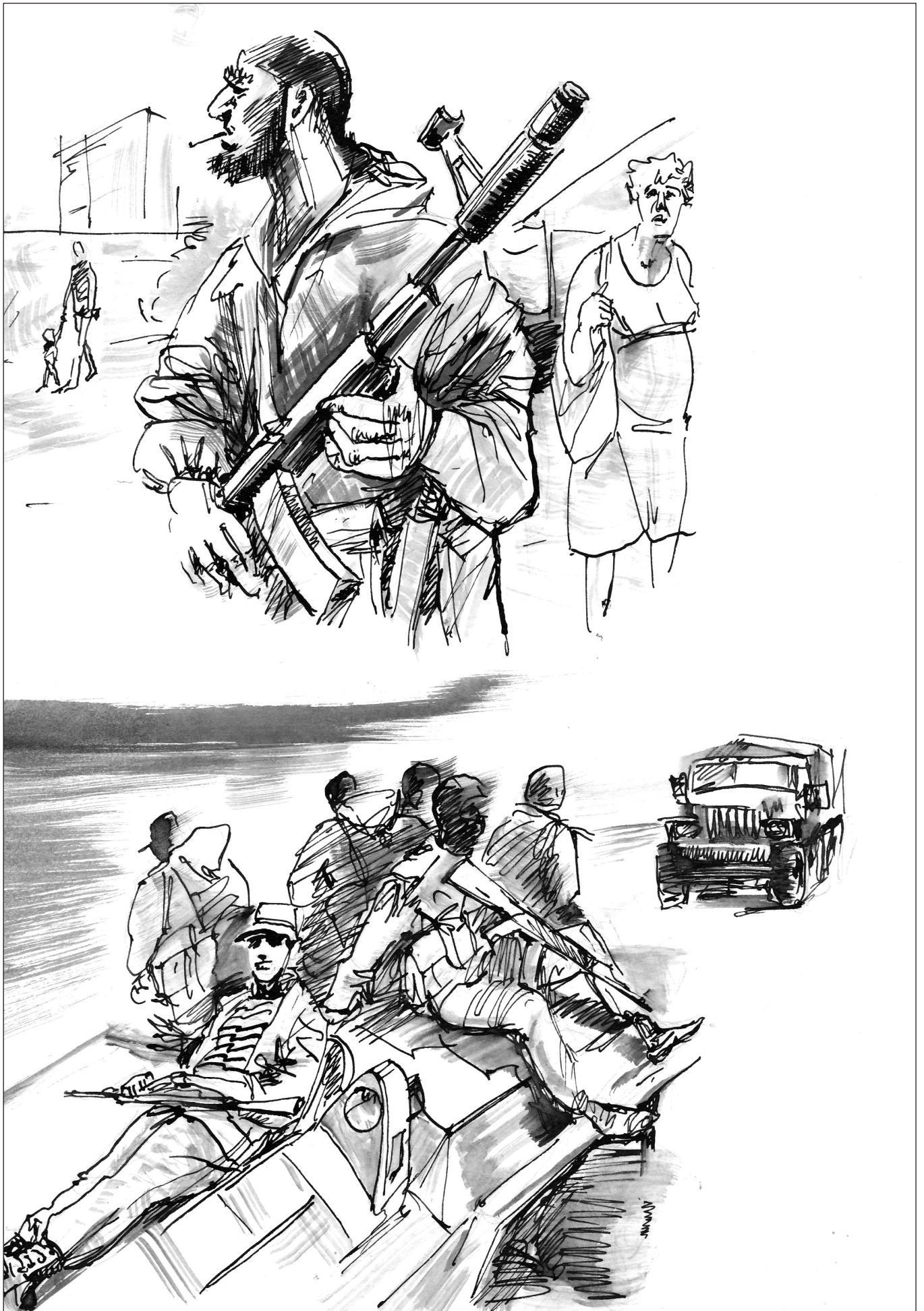


AT THE BEGINNING, MY FRIENDS AND I THOUGHT THAT ALL THAT NONSENSE AND ABSURD THINGS WOULD NOT LAST FOR A LONG TIME, THAT VERY SOON THE CITY WOULD BE CLEANED OF MOLD AND WOULD LIVE THE WAY IT HAD LIVED BEFORE. WHAT TO SAY? WE WERE NAIVE THEN.



WE UNDERSTOOD THAT MIGHT LAST FOR A LONG TIME WHEN ESCAPED "STRELKOVTSY" CAME TO DONETSK FROM SLOVYANSK ON JULY 5. IMMEDIATELY MASSES OF PEOPLE STARTED LEAVING THE CITY. THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD TO DO THAT LEFT FOR KYIV OR OTHER UKRAINIAN CITIES. A LOT OF PEOPLE WENT TO THE SEA HOPING TO STAY THERE FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS UNTIL EVERYTHING WAS OVER. I HAD SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN DONETSK AND I COULD NOT LEAVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, INSIDE I WAS GETTING CONVINCED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SIT IN ONE'S HANDS, SILENTLY OBSERVING WHAT WAS GOING ON. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROTEST OPENLY - IT MEANT SIGNING YOUR DEATH SENTENCE. I UNDERSTOOD THAT PERFECTLY WELL. HOWEVER, SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE.





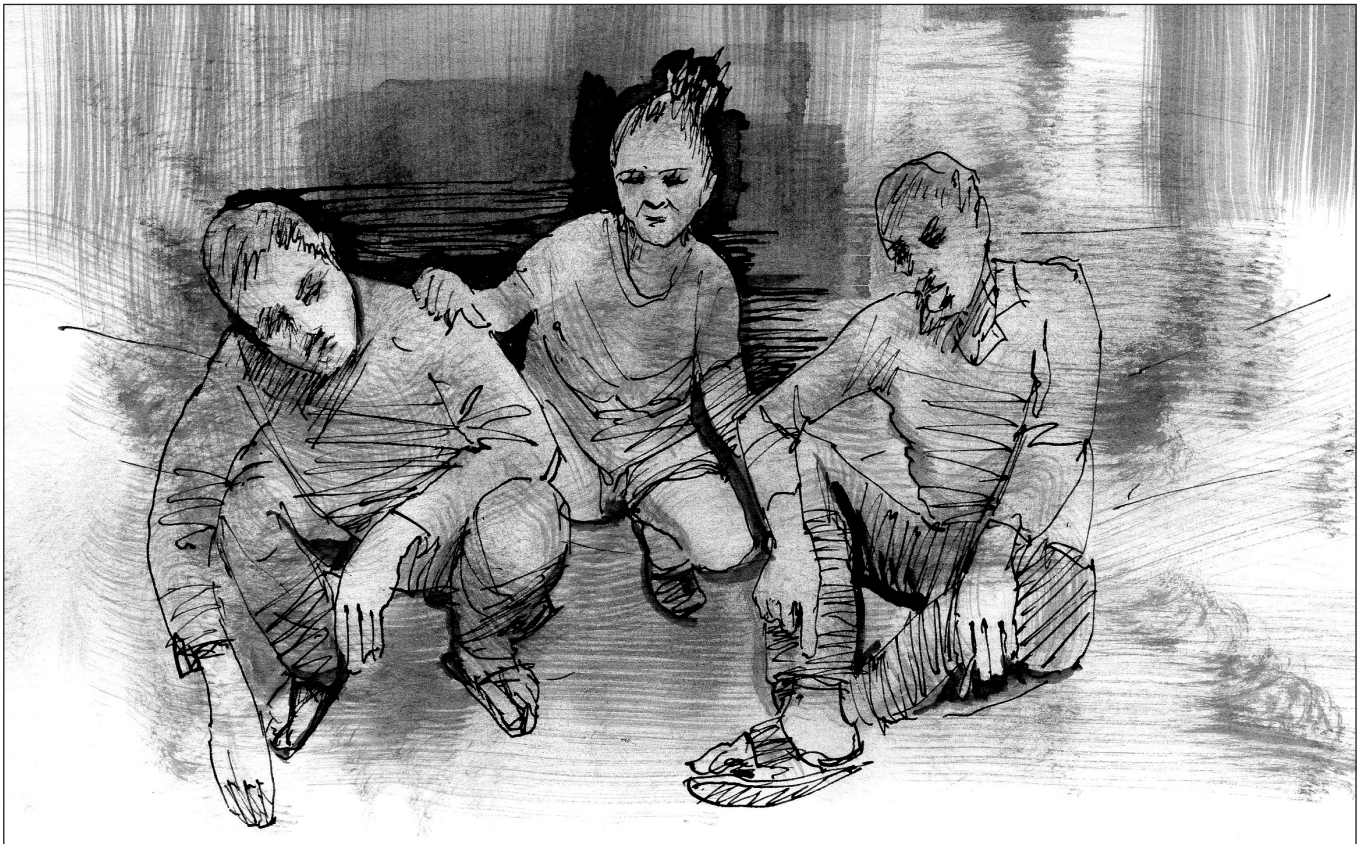




THE CITY WAS CHANGING IN FRONT OF OUR VERY EYES. RUSSIAN FLAGS AND "DPR" SYMBOLS WERE HOISTED EVERYWHERE. LOWLIVES IN MILITARY UNIFORM WITH GUNS WERE RUSTLING ABOUT THE CITY. IT IS NOT A SECRET THAT THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ACHIEVE ANYTHING IN LIFE, SO-CALLED LOSERS, WELCOMED THE WAR AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE AN AUTOMATIC MACHINE GUN AND TO FEEL THAT THEY MEANT SOMETHING. YOU ARE WALKING ALONG A STREET, YOU MEET SUCH A MAN AND YOU SEE GREAT SUPERIORITY IN HIS EYES! THE MAN SEES THAT PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF HIM AND IT GIVES HIM ENERGY. IT WAS NOT A SECRET THAT THOSE WHO WERE THE FIRST TO JOIN THE SO-CALLED MILITIA WERE NOT MINERS OR WORKERS; THEY WERE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTS.







ONE OF MY FRIENDS TOOK A NEUTRAL POSITION AT THAT TIME. THAT WAS UP TO THE MOMENT WHEN, COMING HOME, AT THE ENTRANCE OF A SHOP, JUST 50 METERS AWAY FROM HIS HOUSE, HE SAW A WELL-KNOWN TO HIM GROUP OF LOCAL DRUNKARDS. HOWEVER, THAT TIME THEY WERE WITH GUNS AND IN UNIFORM, THOUGH IN THE SAME INSANE CONDITION.

ONE OF THEM GAVE A GUN TO HIS INSANE WAR GIRLFRIEND, AND SHE STARTED FIRING JUST ABOVE THE HEADS OF MY FRIEND AND HIS COMPANION. AFTER THAT CASE MY FRIEND STOPPED BEING NEUTRAL. THAT WAS NOT A SINGLE CASE. SUCH THINGS HAPPENED ALL ROUND THE CITY.





EVERY DAY I HEARD THAT SOMEBODY'S CAR OR MONEY HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY, SOMEBODY HAD BEEN ROBBED, SOMEBODY HAD BEEN BEATEN, SOMEBODY HAD BEEN SHOT DEAD. THERE WERE TRAGICOMIC CASES TOO WHEN A MILITANT WAS TRYING A SUIT ON IN THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENT STORE AND, BY MISTAKE, PULLED OUT THE RING OF A GRENADE. ANOTHER ONE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO USE HIS AUTOMATIC GUN, STARTED FIRING AND DISPERSED HALF OF THE MARKET VISITORS.

I SAW THAT "RUSSIAN SPRING" STIRRED UP THE SILT, THE DRESS, THE DARK THAT WERE IN THE SOULS OF MY COUNTRYMEN. THOSE WHO CADGED MONEY TO BUY A DRINK GOT GUNS AND BECAME "MASTERS OF LIFE". THOSE WHO TRIED TO RESTRAIN THEIR AGGRESSION AND HATRED STOPPED DOING THAT, AND VIOLENCE STOPPED BEING SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY. IT BECAME TRIVIAL.







I AM AN ARTIST, SO MY WEAPON IS A PENCIL AND A BRUSH. THIS IS THE MOST HUMANE WEAPON. IT DOES NOT KILL THE ENEMY, BUT IT HELPS THOSE WHOSE BRAIN HAS NOT BEEN BURNT OUT COMPLETELY BY THE NAPALM OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA TO START THINKING.

I WANTED TO SHOW HOW I UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THE WAY MY FRIENDS SAW IT AND ALSO THOSE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN DONETSK AND WERE INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS OF SEPARATISM AND COLLABORATIONISM.

THERE WAS A CHARACTER IN LITERATURE WHO ABSORBED ALL THE "BEST" FEATURES OF AN AVERAGE STATISTICAL "MILITIAMAN" - IT IS BULGAKOV'S SHARIKOV. IF THE "DPR" LEADERS WERE SOLID SHVONDERS (CHARACTER FROM THE SAME BOOK BY BULGAKOV), THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO TOOK GUNS IN THEIR HANDS WERE CLASSICAL SHARIKOVs.



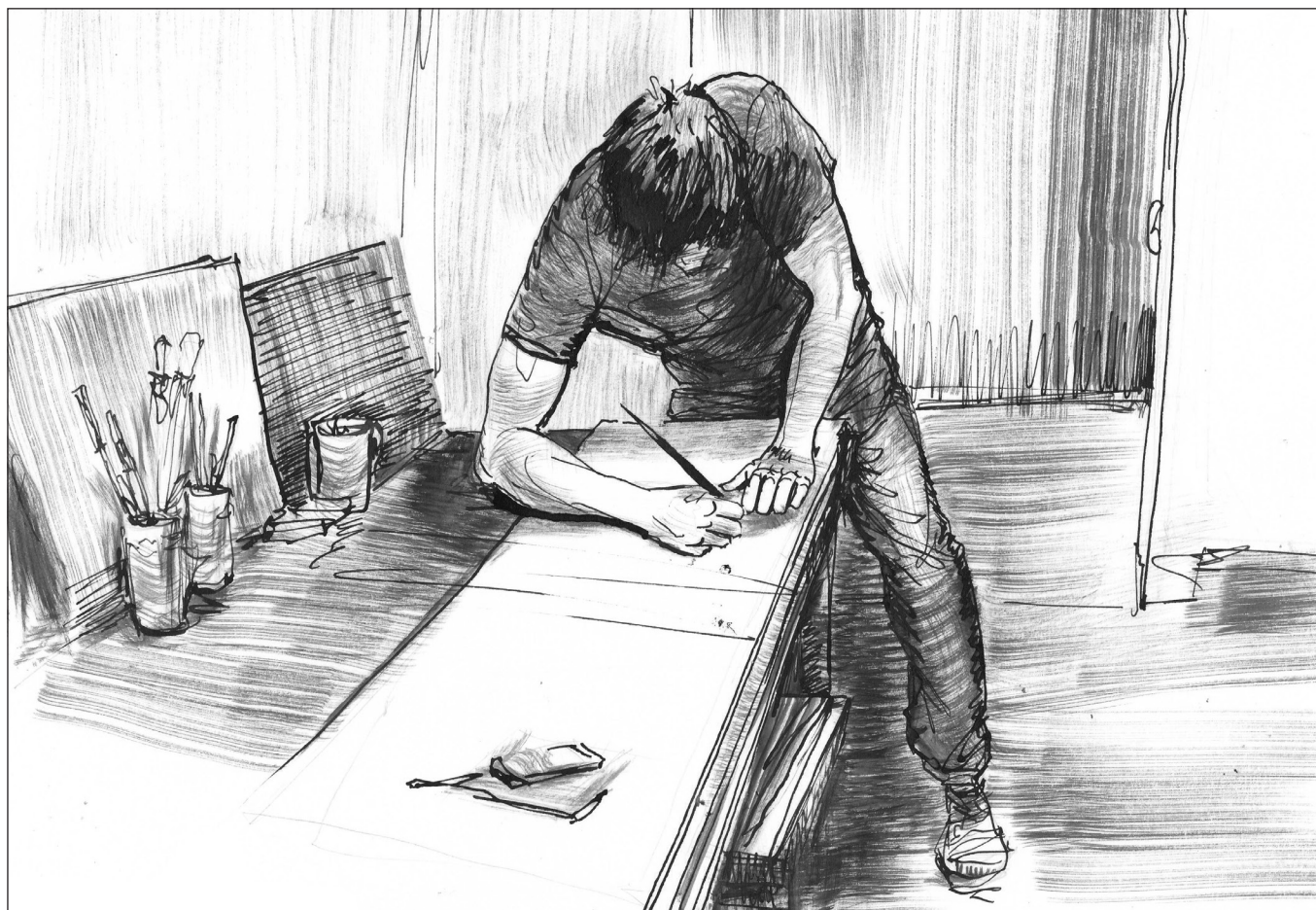
MY FIRST WORK FOR PROTEST STREET ART WAS SHARIKOV WITH A GRENADE LAUNCHER IN HIS HANDS. TWO MORE WORKS WERE MADE FOR THE FIRST ACTION - A CLOWN IN A "DPR" CAMOUFLAGE AND A MILITIAMAN IN THE IMAGE OF THE DEATH.



IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO CONDUCT SUCH AN ACTION BY MYSELF. MINIMUM, A PHOTOGRAPHER WAS NEEDED AS WELL AS SOMEONE WHO WOULD STAND WATCH. A PHOTOGRAPHER WAS FOUND, BUT I FAILED TO FIND OTHER ASSISTANTS. SOME OF MY FRIENDS WERE AFRAID TO RISK. SOME OF THEM WERE LOSING RELEVANCE RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES. TO BE EXACT, THEY WERE NOT BECOMING SUPPORTERS OF THE "RUSSIAN SPRING", BUT DEFINITELY THEY STOPPED BEING ITS ADVERSARIES. THEY SPREAD NEWS ABOUT ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE RIGHT SECTOR, ABOUT CRUCIFIED BOYS AND RAPED OLD WOMEN. THEY WERE SURE THAT IF UKRAINIAN TROOPS CAME TO DONETSK, THERE WOULD BE MASSACRE. ANY ATTEMPTS TO APPEAL TO THEIR COMMON SENSE FAILED. THEIR EYES GOT BLOODSHOT, THE SPEECH BECAME DISCONNECTED AND LOUD. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THEY HAD TO RESTRAIN AGGRESSION.



THE CIRCLE OF MY FRIENDS DECLINED CONSIDERABLY. I STOPPED BEING IN TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE WHO SPREAD SUCH HERESY... THE PROBLEM WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE FACT THAT THE FRONTLINE RAN THROUGH FAMILIES. WIVES, HUSBANDS, CHILDREN HAPPENED TO BE AT OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE BARRICADE.



OUT OF MY FOUR FRIENDS WHO I INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIONS, ONLY ONE WAS LEFT - THE PHOTOGRAPHER - BY THE TIME OF THE FIRST ACTION. WE CALLED OURSELVES ART GROUP MURZILKI (BUNTIES). I UNDERSTOOD THAT MY WORKS WOULD NOT BE HUNG IN THE STREETS FOR A LONG TIME, SO THEY SHOULD BE PHOTOGRAPHED AT ONCE AND THE PHOTOS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BE POSTED ON SOCIAL NETWORKS. I WOULD LIKE TO REMARK THAT WHEN I ARRIVED IN KYIV, I WAS SURPRISED BY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAD SEEN MY WORKS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MASS MEDIA. SO, THE FIRST ACTION WAS COMMITTED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND ME. IT WAS DANGEROUS TO PLACE THE WORKS DOWNTOWN IN THE EVENING AND AT NIGHT. THE CITY WAS EMPTY DURING THE CURFEW, AND WE WOULD BE ARRESTED VERY QUICKLY. SO, WE MADE THE DECISION TO DO IT EARLY IN THE MORNING.





WERE WE SCARED? YES, WE WERE. THE HOCKS TREMBLED. WE UNDERSTOOD IF THE PATROL SAW WHAT WE WERE DOING, IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY THAT THEY WOULD SCOLD US AND LET US GO. BUT THE DECISION WAS MADE. IF I HAD NOT DONE THAT, I WOULD REGRET THAT INDECISIVENESS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I COULD NOT SLEEP AT ALL THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FIRST ACTION. AT DAWN I SHOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHER WHO NIPPED ON THE COUCH AND WE POOLED OFF A JOB. THE WORKS HAD ALREADY BEEN IN THE CAR BOOT. WE GOT INTO THE CAR AND WENT TO THE CENTER OF THE SLEEPING CITY. HERE AND THERE WE MET PASSERS-BY HURRYING TO WORK.

AT THE BEGINNING EVERYTHING WAS FINE. I WAS FIXING THE WORKS; THE PHOTOGRAPHER WAS TAKING PICTURES. STILL WHEN WE WERE PLACING THE LAST OBJECT, THE THING WE WERE AFRAID OF HAD HAPPENED. WE WERE SLOWLY MOVING ALONG THE CENTRAL PART OF THE CITY CHOOSING THE PLACE WHERE THE WORK WOULD LOOK BETTER WHEN WE WERE OVERTAKEN BY A ZHYGULI CAR PACKED WITH ARMED PEOPLE. THEY SIGNALLED US TO STOP.

"DAMN IT! COULD IT END WITHOUT HAVING BEGUN? WHAT TO DO? NO PLACE TO RUN AWAY, AND TO BREAK AWAY BY CAR WAS NOT REALISTIC AS MY CAR WAS NOT IN PROPER TECHNICAL CONDITION. THEY COULD EASILY STOP US AT A CHECKPOINT".



THOUGHTS LIKE THAT WERE FLASHING THROUGH MY MIND WHILE I WAS PARKING THE CAR. A COUPLE OF ARMED CAPA'PIE APPROACHED US. "WHERE ARE YOU GOING?" ONE OF THEM ASKED, CHECKING OUR PAPERS. - "TO WORK. IT'S A LONG WAY, SO WE SET UP EARLY". - "WHAT ABOUT THE CURFEW?" - "WE WON'T BE IN TIME THEN".



"OK, YOU MAY GO". WE MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE SABOTEURS OR SPOTTERS. THE PATROLLERS DID NOT CHECK THE BOOT WHERE ONE OF THE WORKS WAS KEPT.

THE MOST DIFFICULT THING WAS TO FIND STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO PLACE THE LAST WORK AFTER THE ACCIDENT. BUT WE DID IT. AFTER THAT WE STARTED DRIVING AROUND THE CITY OBSERVING PEOPLE'S REACTION TO THE FIRST PROTEST STREET ART IN DONETSK OCCUPIED BY SCUMS. THE WORK WAS NOTICED. PEOPLE STOPPED IN FRONT OF THE PICTURES, LOOKING AT IT; SOME PEOPLE LAUGHED; SOME PEOPLE SHOWED THE PICTURES TO OTHER PEOPLE; SOME PEOPLE TOOK PICTURES OF THE WORKS WITH THEIR PHONES.

IT WAS A PLEASANT FEELING - TO OBSERVE THE REACTION OF COMMON PEOPLE AND SEE THAT NOT ALL OF THEM SUPPORTED THE SCUMS THAT HAD OCCUPIED THE CITY. HOWEVER, THE WORKS DID NOT HANG FOR A LONG TIME, AS A RULE FOR 30-40 MINUTES, THE LONGEST TIME WAS 2-3 HOURS. WE DID NOT SEE WHO WAS TAKING THEM OFF. HOWEVER, THOSE WERE NOT PASSERS-BY.







THE NEXT STAGE WAS TO PLACE THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACTION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MASS MEDIA. AT THAT TIME I WAS NOT AN ACTIVE USER OF FACEBOOK AND OTHER NETS, AND I DID NOT HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS THERE, JUST A COUPLE OF DOZENS. MORE THAN THAT - YOU CANNOT PLACE THE MATERIAL UNDER YOUR OWN NAME - YOU WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED. THE FIRST THING I DID WAS THE CREATION OF ART-GROUP BUNTIES SITE. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO INFORM PEOPLE ABOUT THE GROUP. I CALLED MY DONETSK FRIEND, WRITER SERHIY MAZURKEVICH WHO WAS IN KHARKIV AT THAT TIME. HE HAD LIVED IN THAILAND FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BUT FORTUNATELY FOR US HE WAS IN UKRAINE AT THAT TIME.

HE AGREED TO FULFILL THE FUNCTION OF A PRESS SECRETARY OF OUR ART GROUP. THERE APPEARED REPOSTS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR ACTIONS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE FIRST INFORMATION ABOUT US IN MASS MEDIA. TO TELL THE TRUTH, IT WAS PLEASANT. THAT WAS WHAT I WANTED - I WANTED TO SHOW THAT NOT ALL PEOPLE IN DONETSK SUPPORTED THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION.

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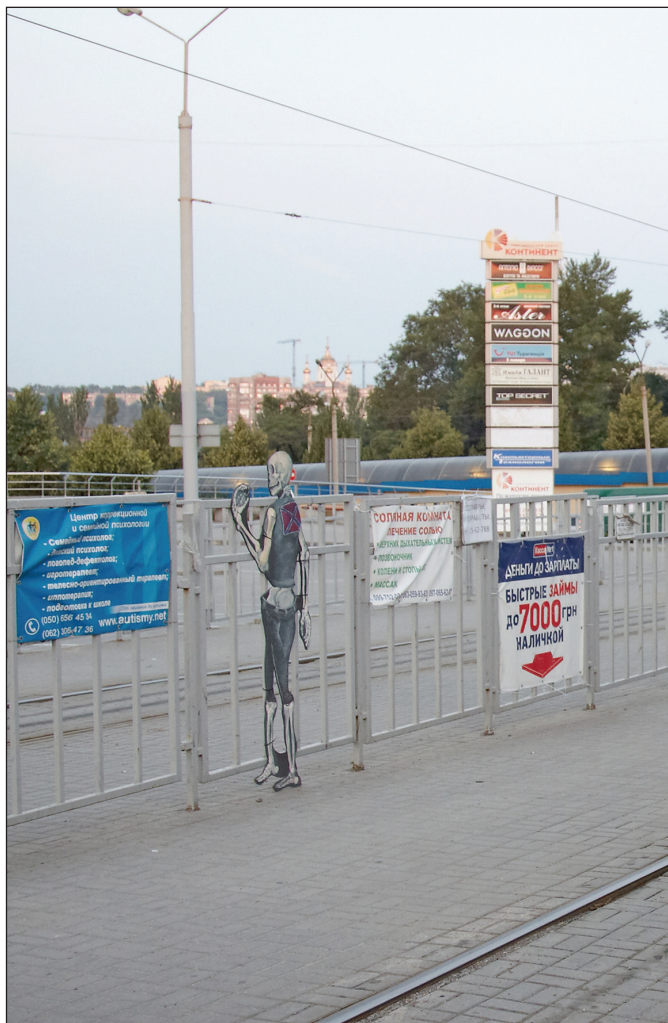
TWO WORKS WERE THE MOST RESONANT ONES: BANDIT MOTOROLA WITH HIS BRIDE AND IGOR GIRKIN-STRELKOV.







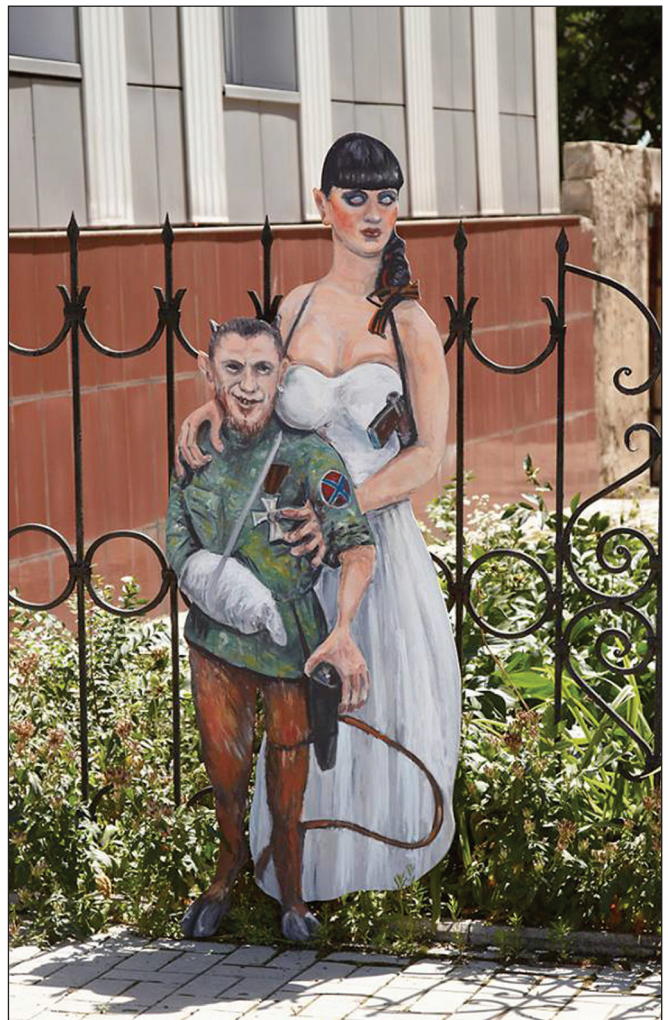








MOTOROLA AND HIS BRIDE ARE THE QUINTESSENCE OF NOVOROSSIYA - THE TRIUMPH OF THE LUMPEN, MORAL POVERTY, AND BAD TASTE. THEY WERE A PERFECT OBJECT FOR AN ARTIST - IF MOTOROLA DID NOT EXIST, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INVENT HIM. LATER BUTCHERS FROM "DPR" SECURITY SERVICE TOLD ME SEVERAL TIMES THAT IF MOTOROLA WITH INCLINATIONS OF THE SCHIZOID SADIST HAD BEEN IN DONETSK WHEN I WAS DETAINED, IT ALL WOULD HAVE ENDED BADLY FOR ME. HOWEVER, GOD PARDONED ME - AT THAT TIME THE BANDIT WAS AWAY ON A WEDDING TRIP.







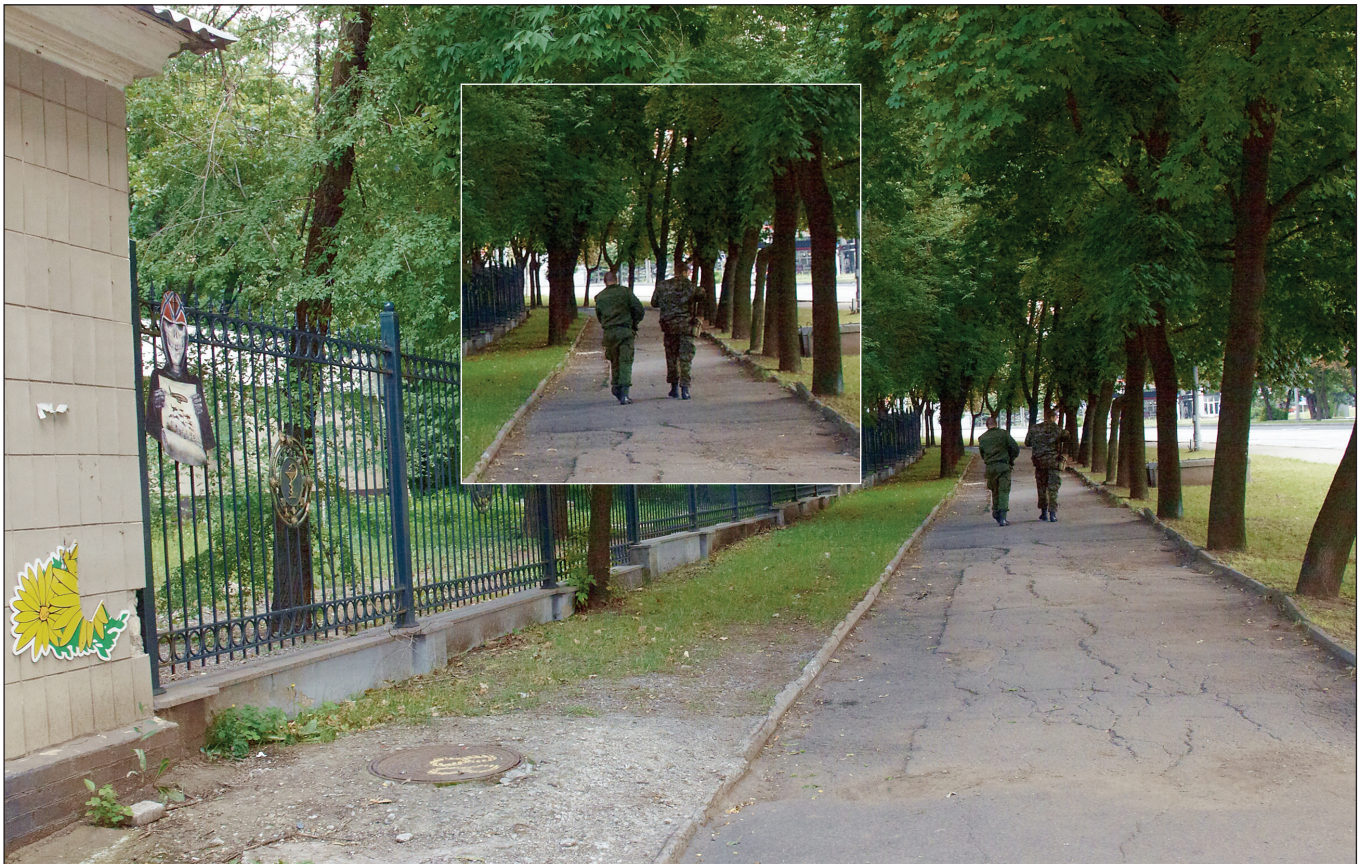




WE FOUND A GOOD PLACE TO FIX THAT WORK, AGAIN IN THE CENTER OF DONETSK. WE CHECKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY VIDEO CAMERAS. THEN, BEFORE EXPOSING THE "PORTRAIT" OF GIRKIN-STRELKOV WITH A GUN AT HIS TEMPLE, WE DID JUST DO IT! WE RETREATED TO A SAFE DISTANCE TO CHECK WHETHER IT WAS QUIET, AND THEN CAME BACK TO FIX THE WORK. THAT PORTRAIT WAS MORE POPULAR IN SOCIAL NETWORKS THAN MOTOROLA'S ONE. THAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD THAT MOTOROLA WAS JUST A CLOWN-SADIST, BUT GIRKIN WAS MORE SERIOUS. WE HAD A NARROW ESCAPE AT THE MOMENT WHEN WE WERE FIXING THE WORK WITH THE DEATH IN "DPR" UNIFORM AND THE DOWNED MALAYZIAN BOEINGS.







WE DECIDED TO PLACE IT NEAR THE REGIONAL KALININ HOSPITAL WHICH WAS STUFFED WITH WOUNDED HITMEN. WE HAD JUST FIXED IT WHEN THERE APPEARED A MILITIA PATROL WITH AUTOMATED MACHINE GUNS. FORTUNATELY THEY WERE CARRIED AWAY BY CONVERSATION AND DID NOT NOTICE ANYTHING; OUR PHOTOGRAPHER EVEN TOOK A PICTURE OF THEM PASSING BY THE INSTALLATION. THE WORK WAS EXPOSED AT THE END STOP OF TRAMS 9, 10, AND 14. IT HUNG THERE FOR ALMOST TWO DAYS. MAYBE, THAT WAS BECAUSE HITMEN DID NOT USE TRAMS; THEY WENT AROUND BY CARS TAKEN AWAY FROM PEOPLE.



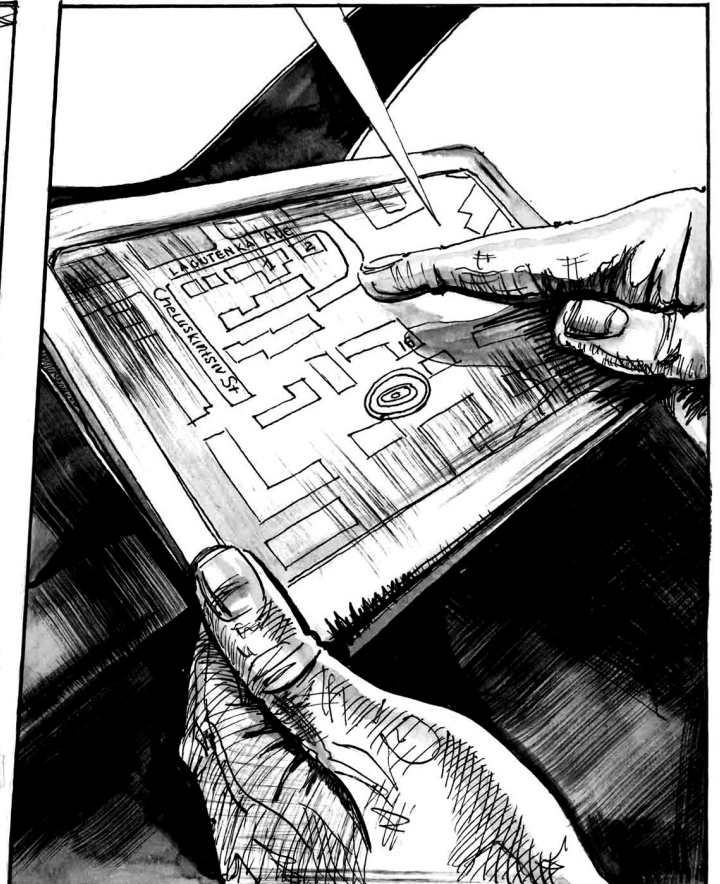
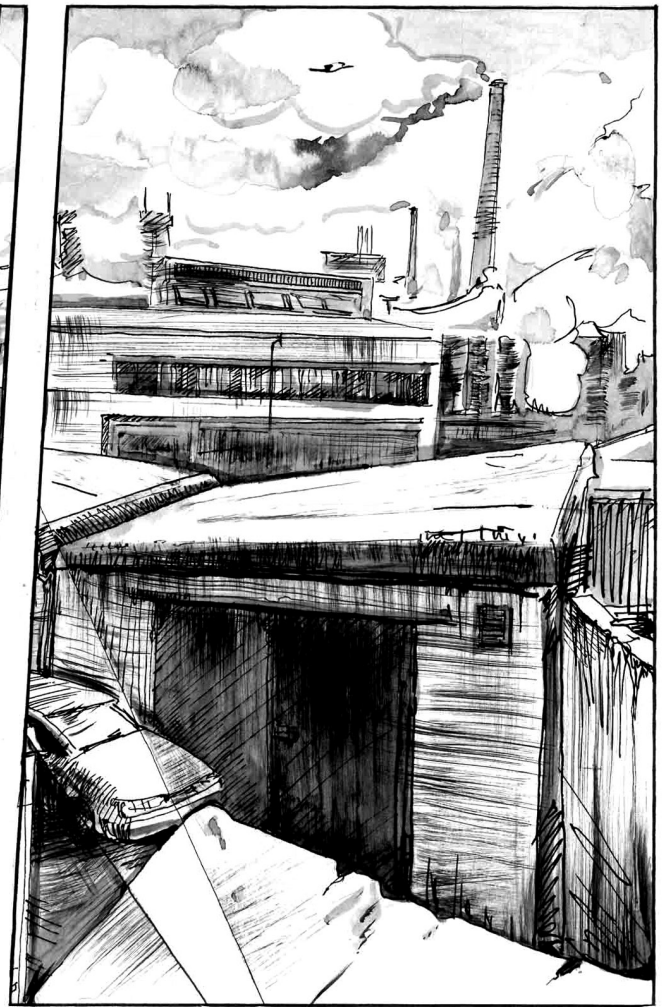
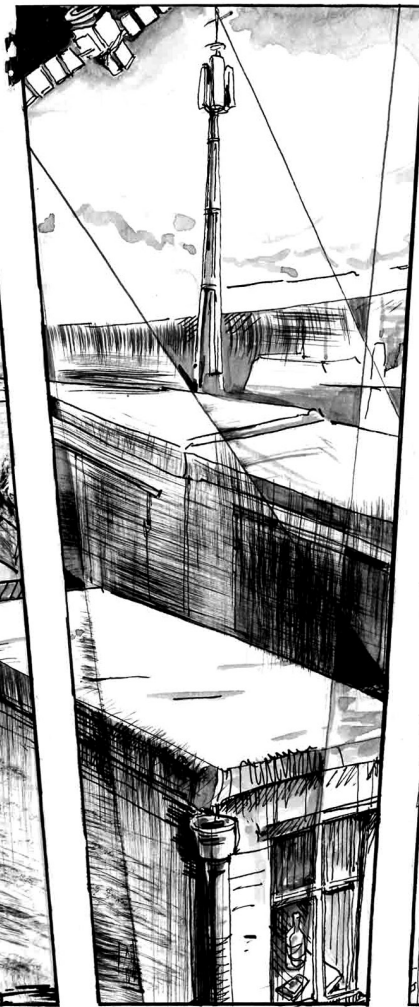
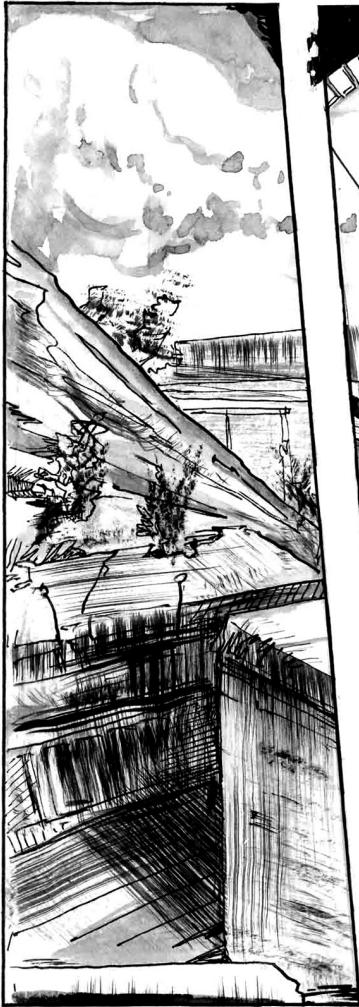


WHEN I UNDERSTOOD THAT OUR WORK WAS NOT IN VAIN, THAT WE WERE KNOWN NOT ONLY IN DONETSK, BUT IN OTHER REGIONS, AND EVEN ABROAD, THERE APPEARED AN EXTRA STIMULUS TO WORK. IT IS A PITY THAT WE WERE NOT ABLE TO IMPLEMENT ALL OUR PLANS. NOW WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL, BUT AT THE TIME OF HOSTILITIES NOBODY WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO YOU AS NOBODY NEEDED THAT. I THOUGHT THAT IF THEY DID NOT CATCH YOU IN THE ACT, NOBODY WOULD SEARCH FOR YOU NOW I KNOW THAT THERE WERE PROFESSIONALS OF THE HIGHEST LEVEL FROM FSS AND MDGS (FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE AND THE MAIN DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL STAFF, RUSSIA).

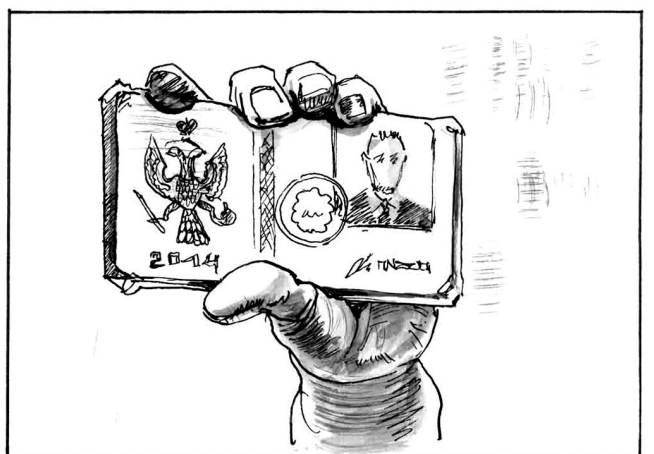
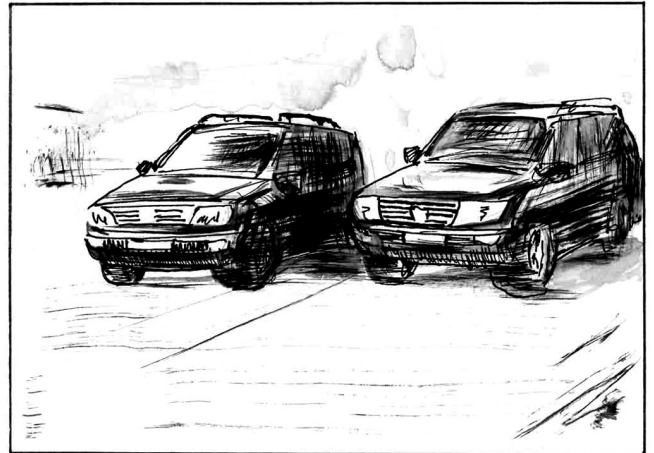
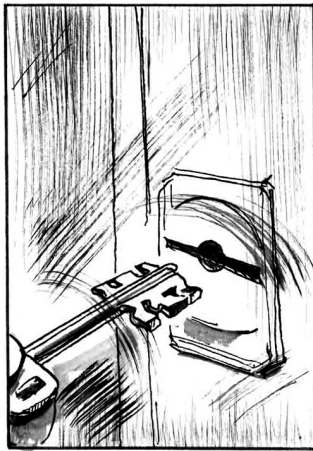
THEY MAY HAVE FOUND US WITH THE HELP OF THE TELEPHONE. AT THE BEGINNING I SWITCHED MINE OFF AND USED ANOTHER NUMBER. THEN I RELAXED AND STATED MAKING CALLS FROM MY NUMBER.

THERE WERE ALSO MEETINGS AND TALKS WITH JOURNALISTS, WITH A FRENCH ONE AND EVEN WITH A RUSSIAN ONE. A DAY BEFORE THE ARREST I MET WITH A DOZHD CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT. I WAS CAREFUL AND TOLD THEM THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVEN A LIFT. I ASKED A TAXI DRIVER WHO I KNEW TO GIVE ME HIS CAR. I DID NOT TELL HIM WHAT FOR. I DROVE BY MYSELF, TOOK THE JOURNALISTS TO A DESERT PLACE AND ONLY THERE TOLD THEM THAT IT WAS ME. EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE OK, BUT THE NEXT DAY I WAS ARRESTED. I CANNOT BLAME THE JOURNALISTS DIRECTLY. THEY MAY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ARREST AND IT WAS A MERE COINCIDENCE. I WAS ARRESTED JUST AT THE MOMENT MY TELEPHONE NUMBER BECAME KNOWN TO THE DPR MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR.









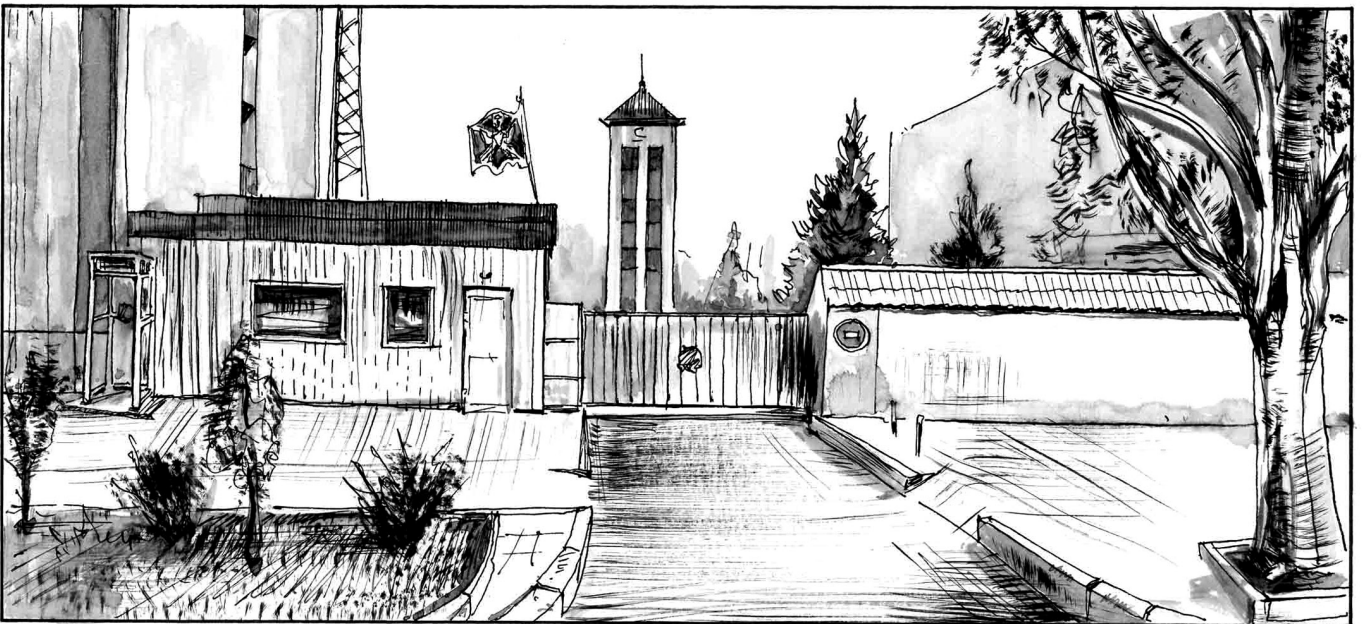
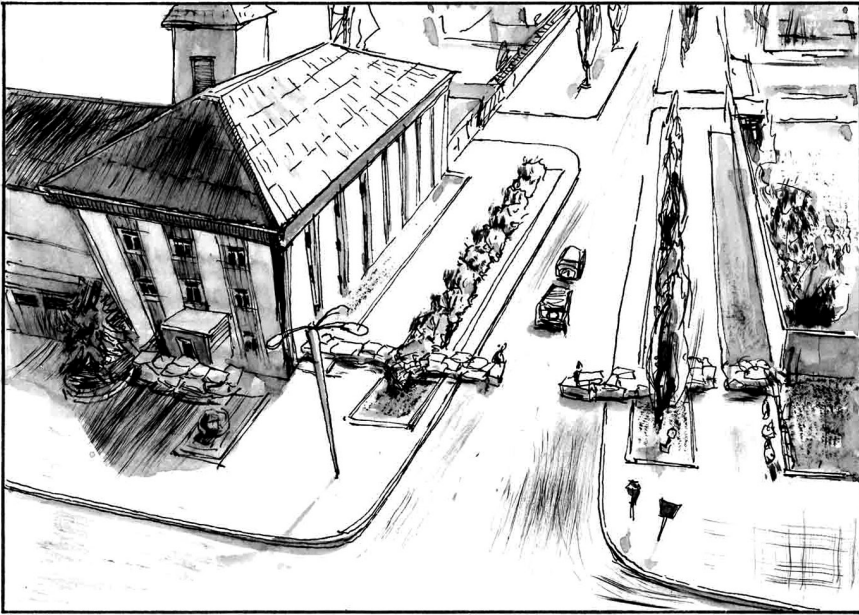




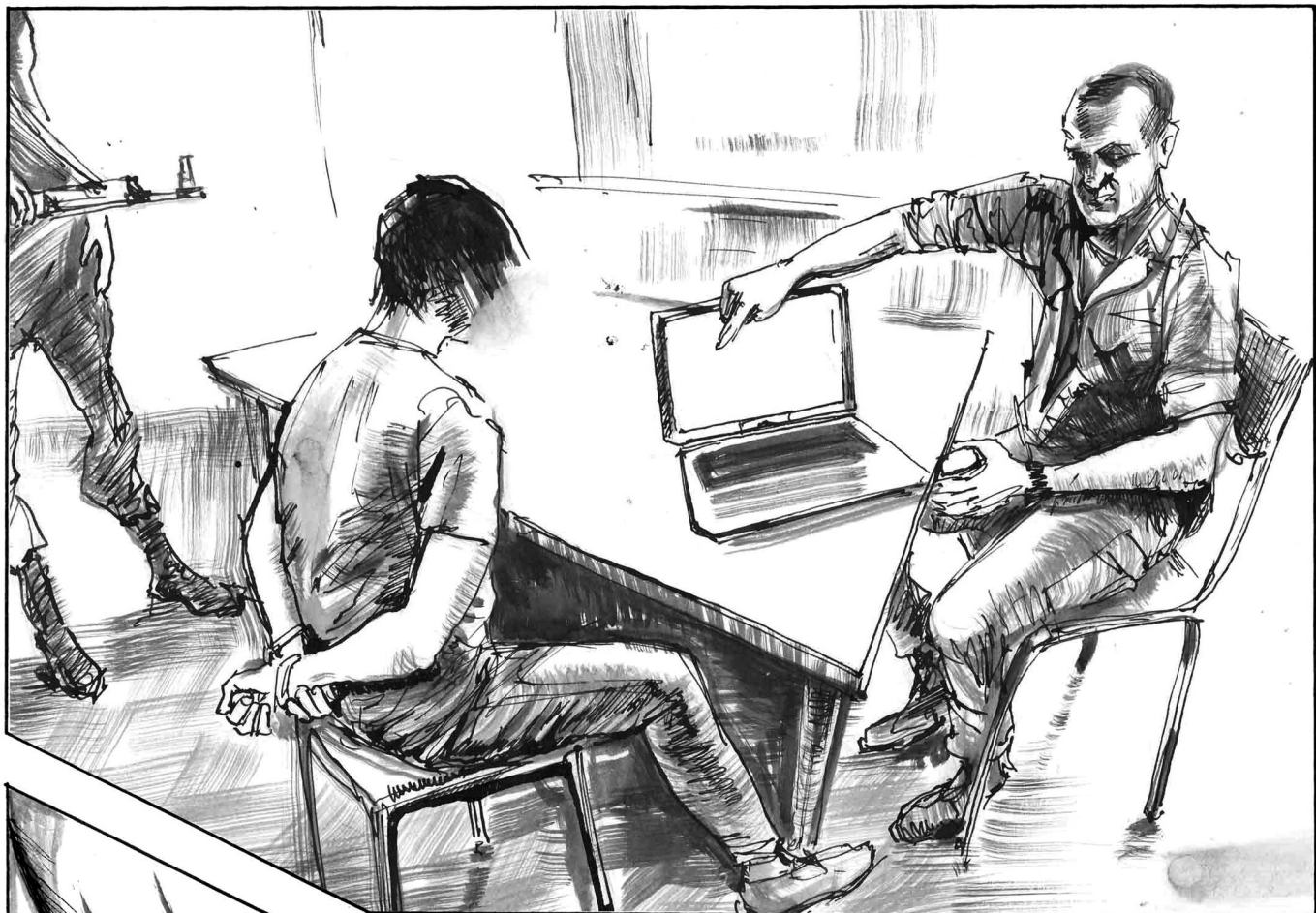
IT HAPPENED ON AUGUST 6. THAT DAY I LEFT MY STUDIO WHICH WAS NEAR MY HOUSE. THERE WERE TWO EXPENSIVE JEEPS AT THE EXIT. COMMON PEOPLE DID NOT USE SUCH CARS AS NOT ONLY THE CAR, BUT THE LIFE COULD BE TAKEN AWAY. I UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING AT ONCE. TWO YOUNG MEN OF ATHLETIC BUILD APPROACHED ME. ONE OF THEM DIRECTED HIS GUN AT ME. THE OTHER ONE SHOWED ME HIS ID. THEY PUSHED ME INTO THE CAR AND TOOK TO THE FORMER SECURITY SERVICE OF UKRAINE BUILDING.











THE FIRST INTERROGATION TOOK PLACE IN A BUILDING WHICH HAD BELONGED TO THE MINISTRY OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS. I AM TAKEN TO AN OFFICE, SHOWN MY WORKS ON A COMPUTER AND ASKED: "IS THAT YOU?" THERE'S NO SENSE TO DENY. "WELL, ME", I ANSWER.



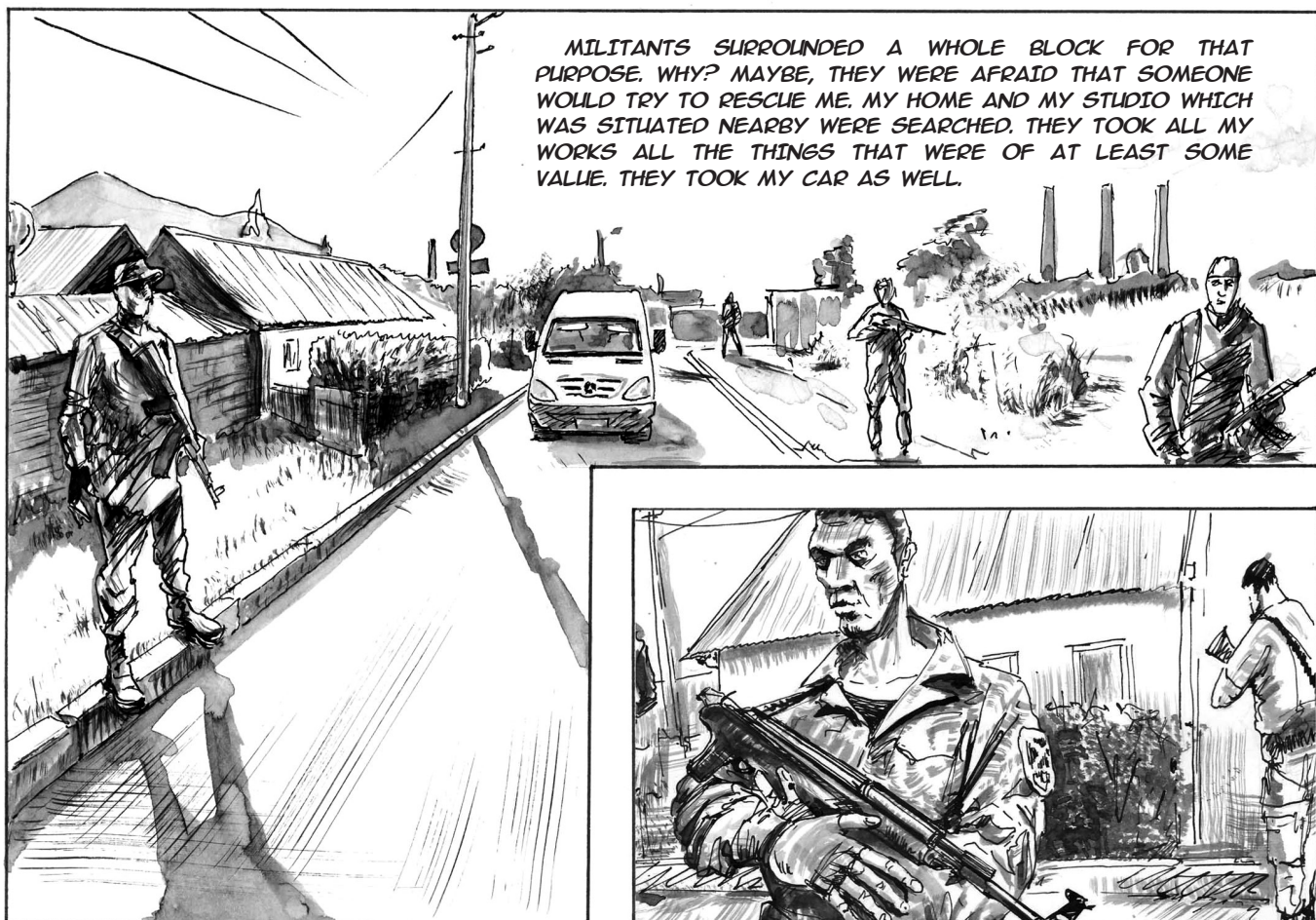




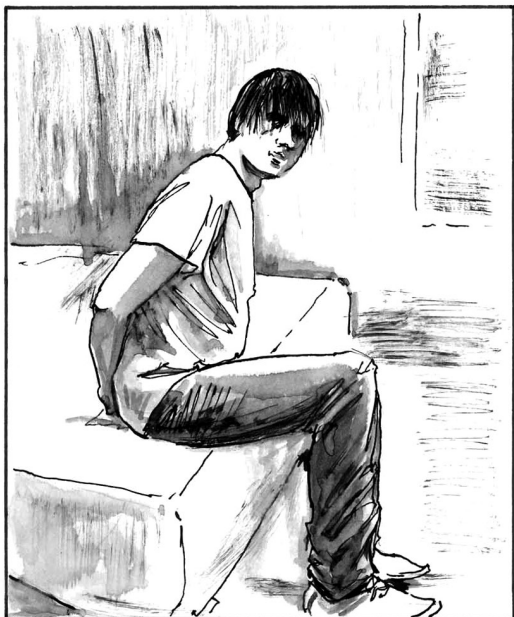
THE NEXT THING I FEEL ARE HANDCUFFS ON MY WRISTS WHICH CLICK AS I AM TAKEN BACK TO THE CAR. ON OUR WAY WE GO PAST A GROUP OF CAMOUFLAGED PEOPLE WHO ALREADY KNOW WHO I AM. ONE OF THEM CHARGES AT ME HOLDING PLIERS AND SHOUTING: "HEY, ARTIST, DO YOU WANT ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR FINGERS? YOU WILL PAINT A LOT THEN..." HOWEVER, HE IS PUSHED AWAY, I AM PUSHED INTO THE VAN WITHOUT A SEAT (WHEN THE VAN WAS MOVING I WAS ROLLING ON THE FLOOR) AND WE GO TO MY HOME WHICH IS TO BE SEARCHED.



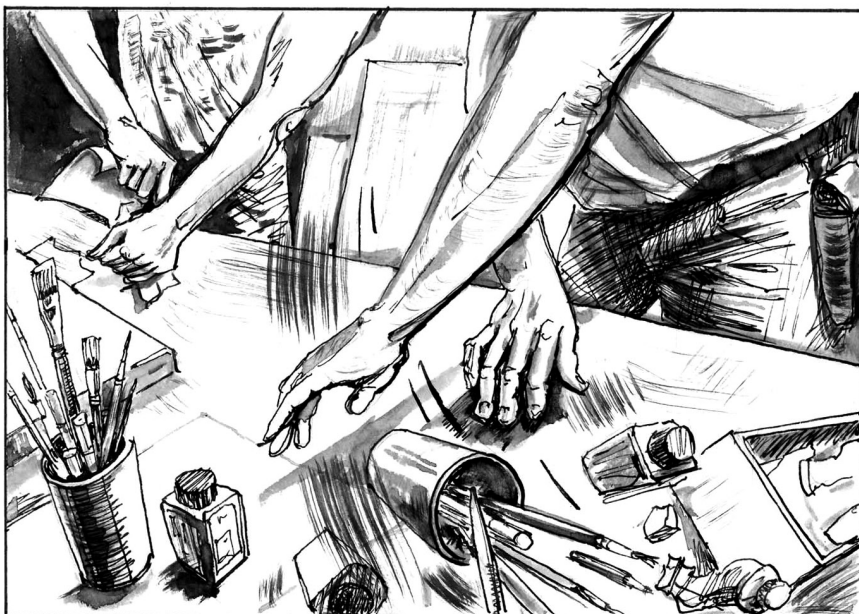












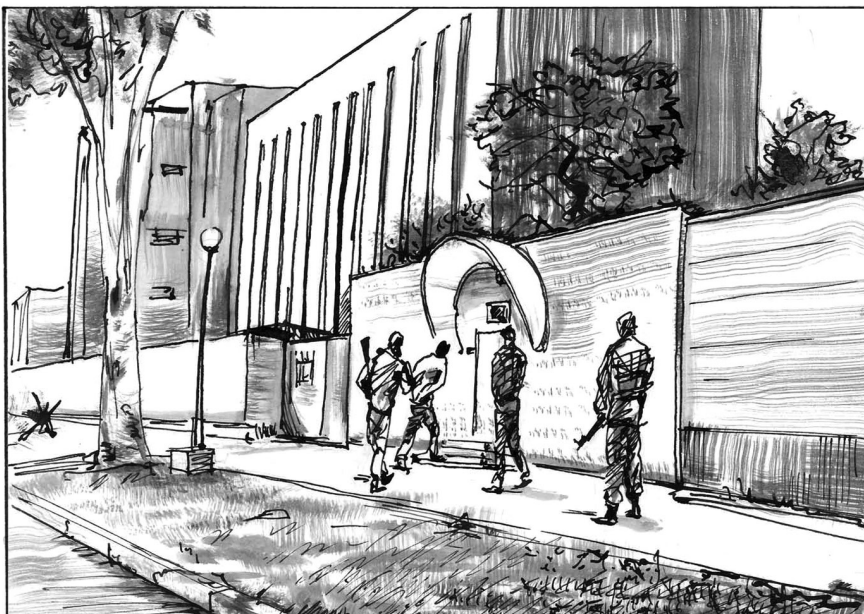
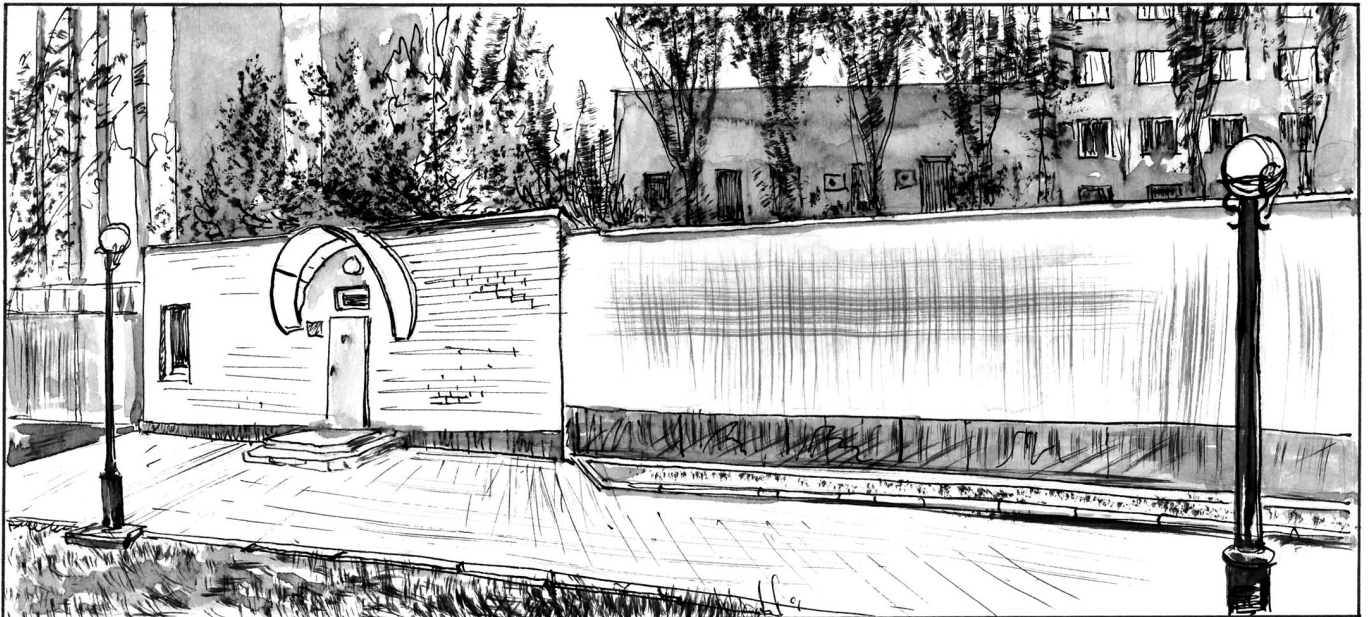
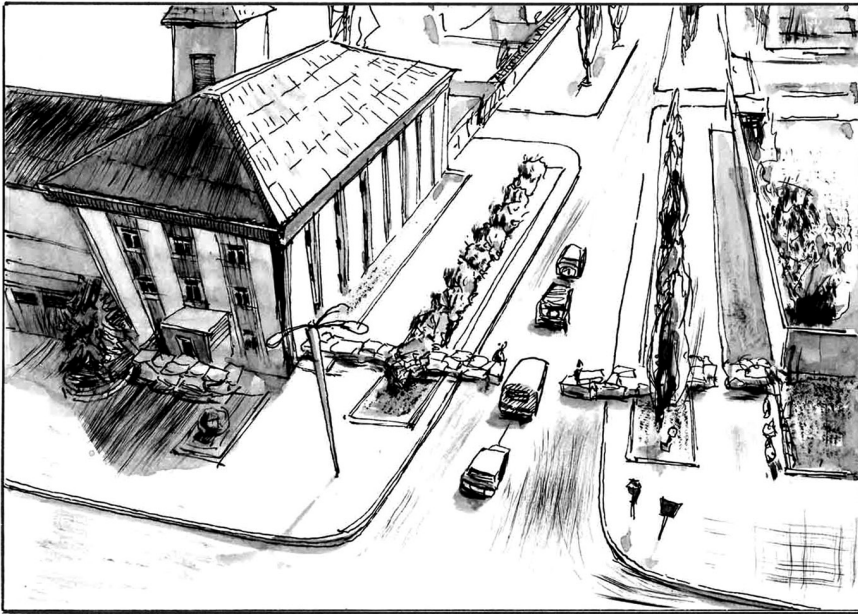




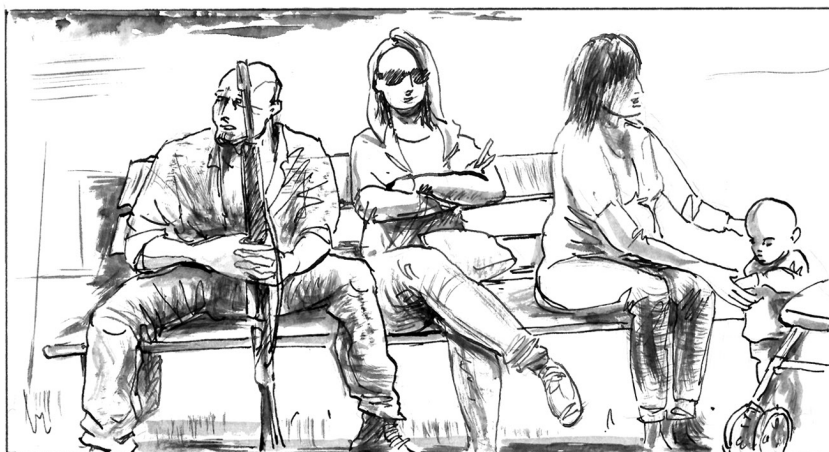
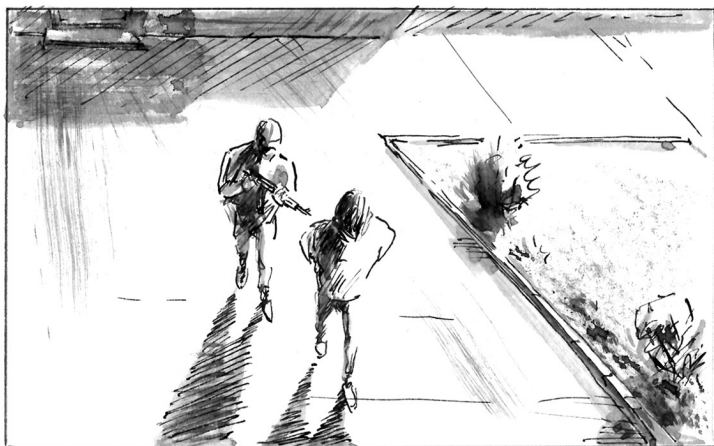
HOWEVER, NKVD OFFICERS (SOVIET PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS ABBREVIATED NKVD) HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH IT. I HAD WARNED THEN THAT THE CAR HAD BROKEN DOWN AND IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO START IT. THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME. SURPRISINGLY, THE ENGINE STARTED. IT EVEN MANAGED TO GO FOR ABOUT TWENTY METRES BEFORE THE ENGINE STOPPED COMPLETELY AND REFUSED TO COOPERATE. THEN, CHEKIST LOOTERS (CHEKISTS WERE OFFICERS OF SOVIET STATE SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS), WHAT ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO NAME THOSE WHO STEAL OTHER PERSON'S PROPERTY?, ATTACHED IT TO A VAN WITH A ROPE AND TOOK IT TO THE SSU PARKING, WHERE I SAW IT FOR THE LAST TIME.



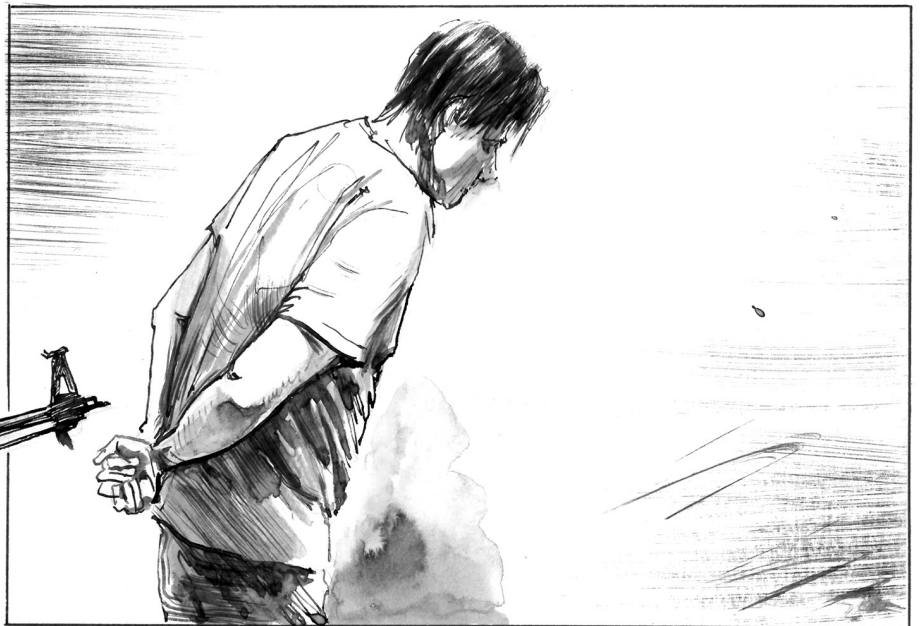




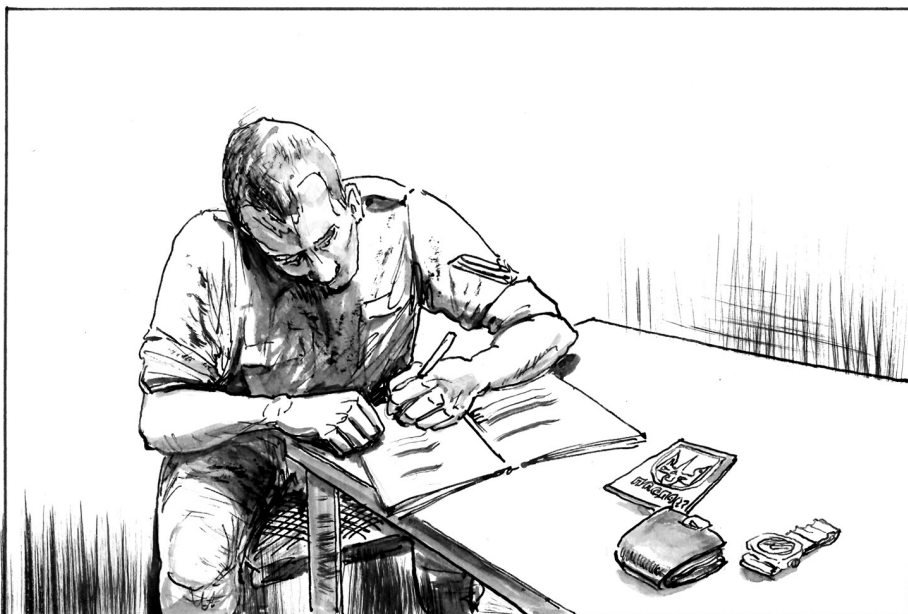
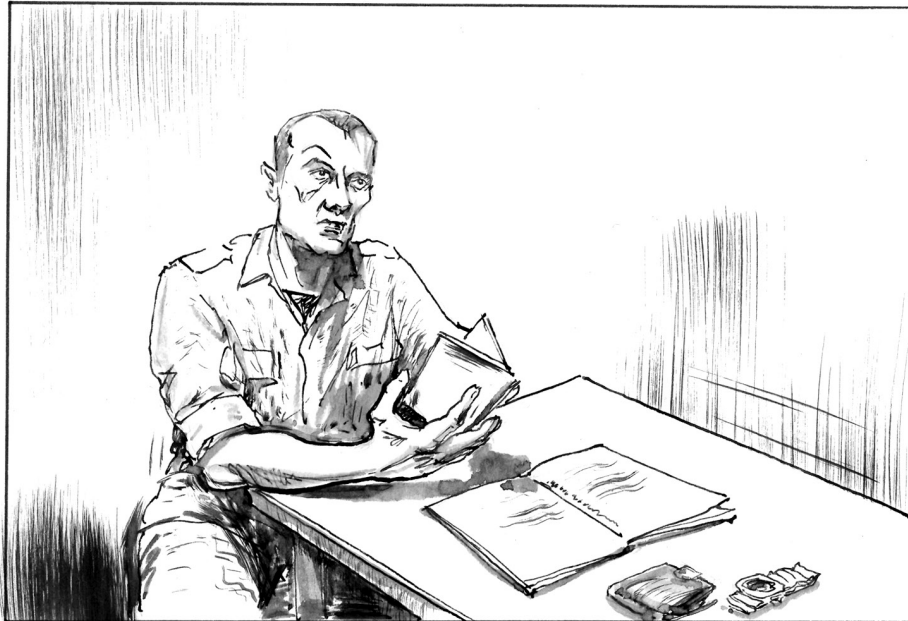




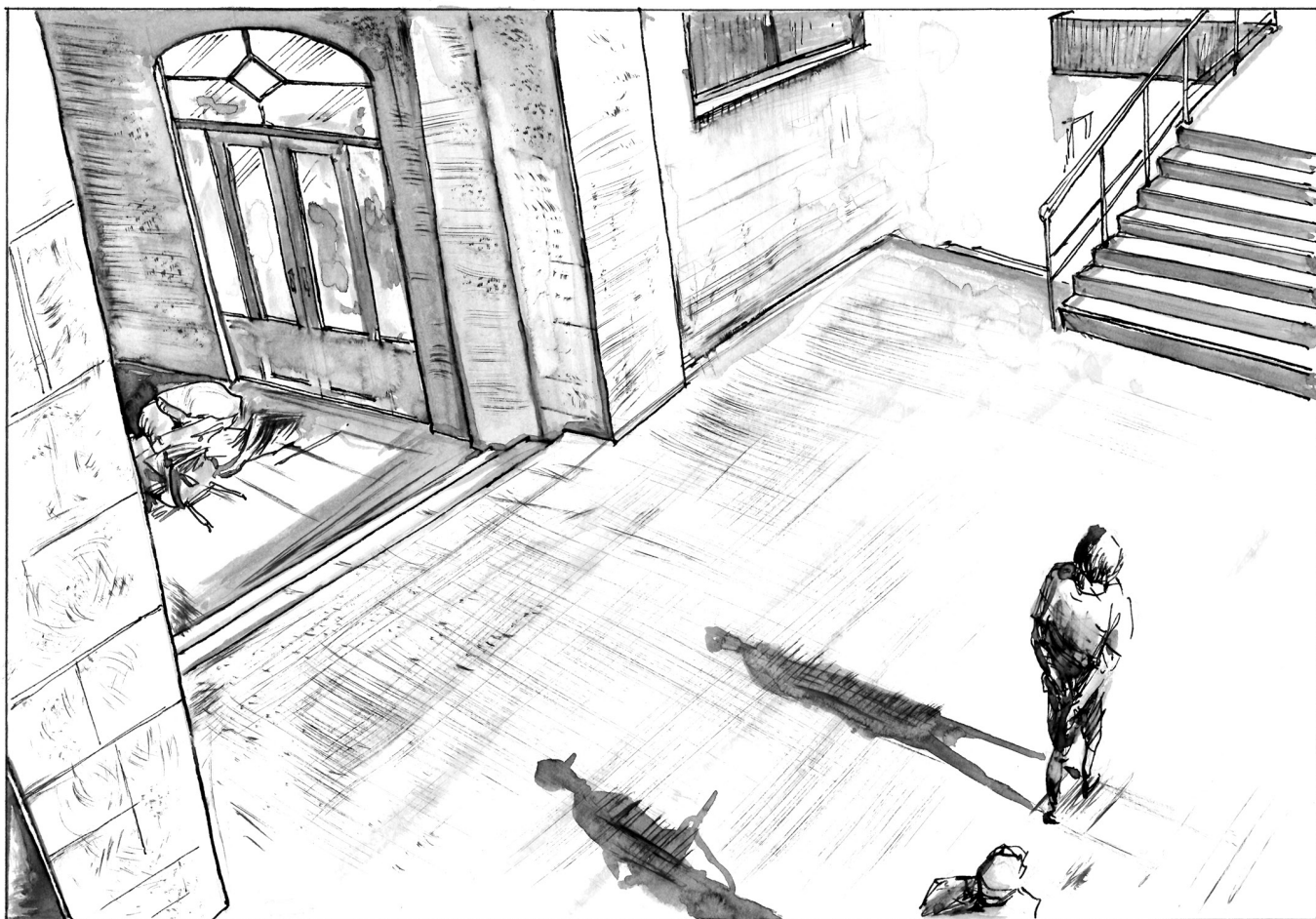




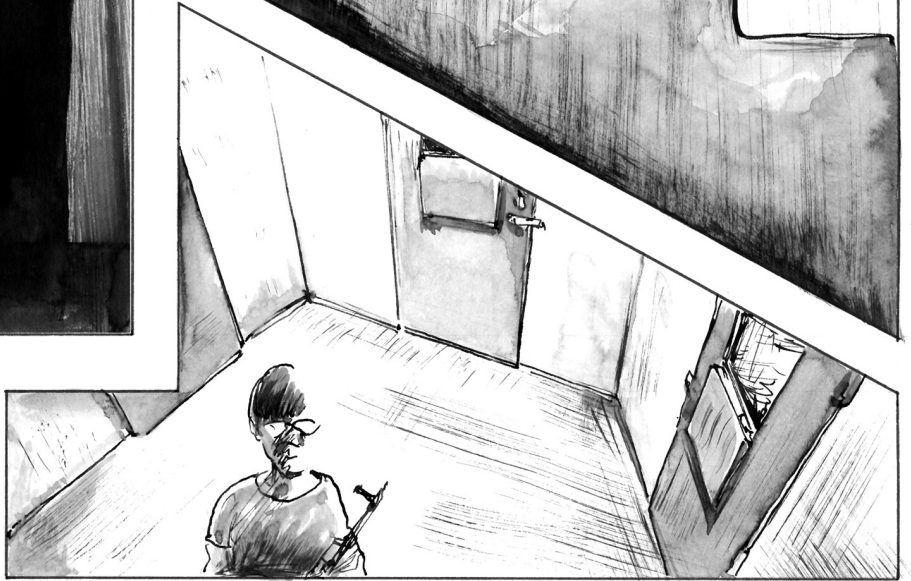








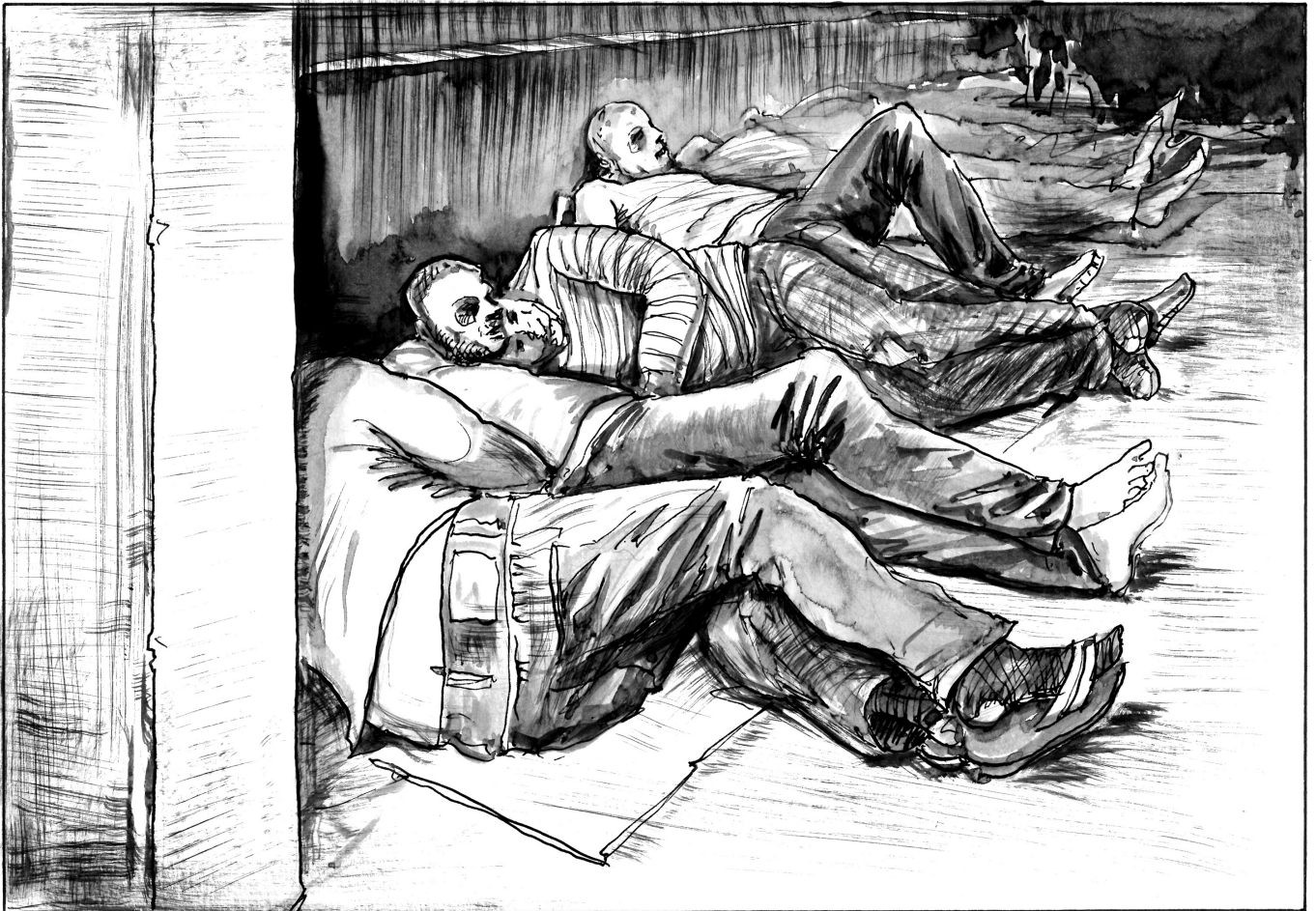
















BEFORE THE FIRST INTERROGATION I WAS TAKEN TO ONE OF THE ROOMS IN THE BASEMENT. IN FACT, THOSE ROOMS DID NOT LOOK LIKE REAL CELLS, IT WAS JUST A BASEMENT WITH CONCRETE FLOOR AND PEOPLE LYING ON SOME CARDBOARD SHEETS. THEY ASKED ME: "WHY ARE YOU HERE?" I WAS SO NAIVE THAT I TOLD THEM THE TRUTH. AN AWKWARD SILENCE FOLLOWED.







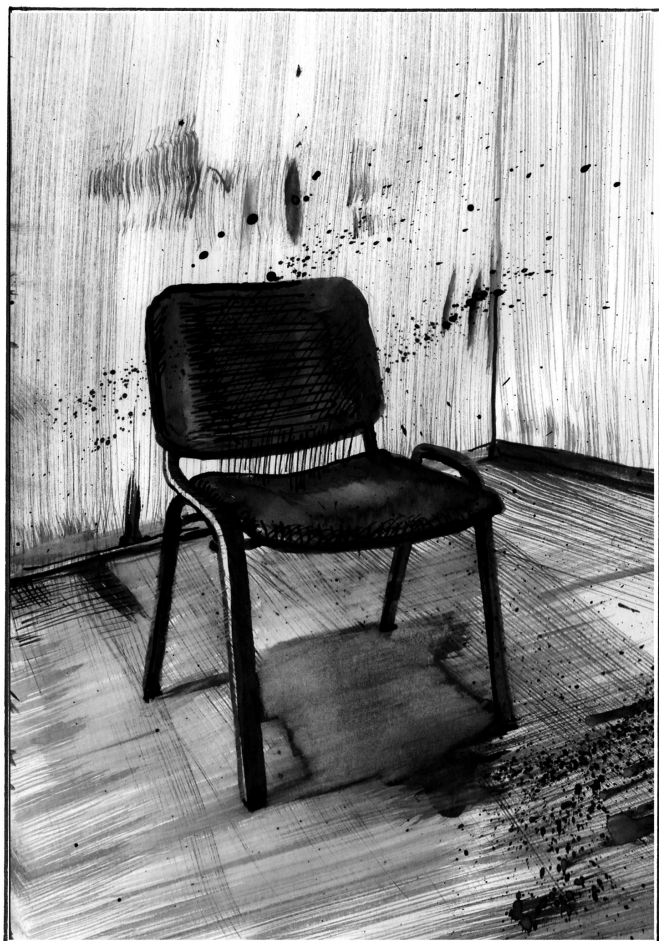
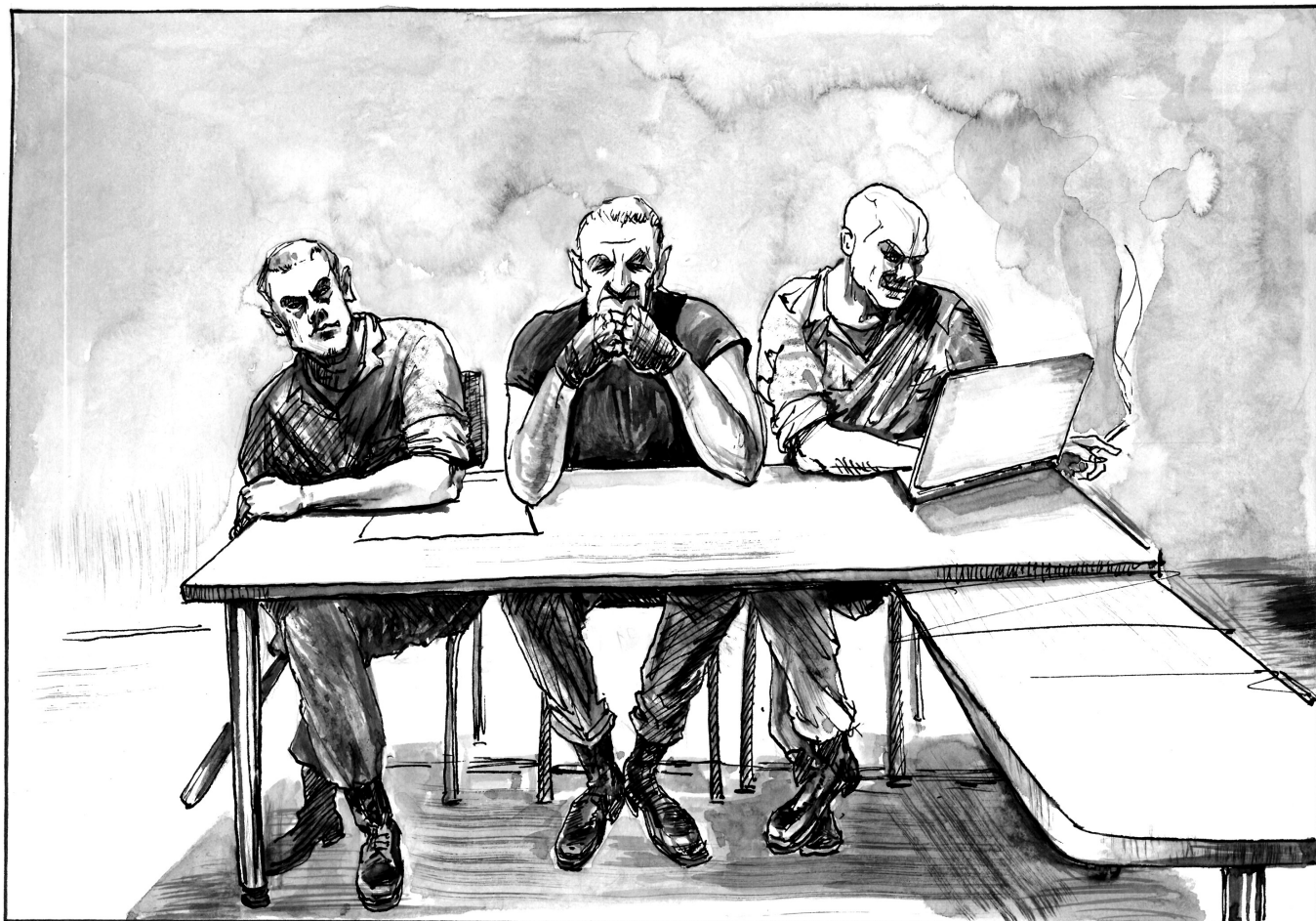
LATER, I GOT TO KNOW THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THAT BASEMENT WERE MILITIA WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR SOME MINOR OR MAJOR OFFENSES. LUCKILY, THAT TIME I HAD A NARROW ESCAPE. SOMEONE ASKED ME: "DO YOU PLAY CHESS?" I SAID I DID. SO, I SPENT MY FIRST HOUR IN THE BASEMENT PLAYING CHESS. I BARELY HAD TIME TO THINK THAT MY SITUATION WAS NOT THAT BAD WHEN I WAS TAKEN FOR THE FIRST INTERROGATION.











THAT WAS WHEN THE WORST DAYS OF MY DETENTION STARTED. I WAS TORTURED AND BEATEN FOR TEN DAYS. THE QUESTIONS WERE NOT VERY INVENTIVE: "WHO DO YOU WORK FOR? WHO ARE YOU PAID BY?" THEY JUST COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT I DID NOT WORK FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE OR THE RIGHT SECTOR. THEY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND: WHY WOULD ANYONE DO SUCH THINGS AT THEIR OWN WILL?





LATER, I WAS TAKEN TO THAT OFFICE WHEN THE INTERROGATIONS HAD TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY TORTURE. THEY WERE CONDUCTED BY RUSSIANS. THEY DID NOT INTRODUCE THEMSELVES, BUT THEIR ACCENT BETRAYED THEM.

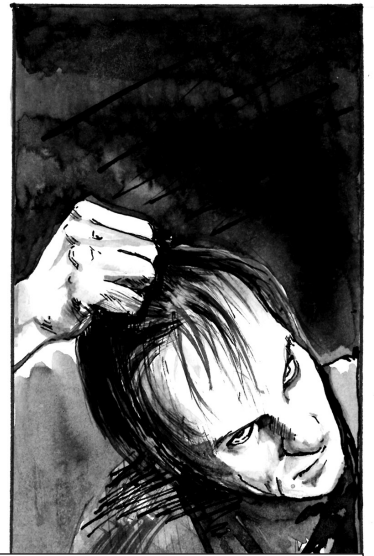
ONE OF THE INTERROGATORS SWITCHED ON A SONG ABOUT THE WAR OF SOME GIRL FROM SLAVIANSK ON HIS CELL PHONE WHO WAS SINGING USING THE MUSIC OF ADRIANO CELENTANO'S SONG "MA PERKE". HE WISHED TO PROVE ME THAT UKRAINE HAS BEEN KILLING RUSSIAN-SPEAKING POPULATION.







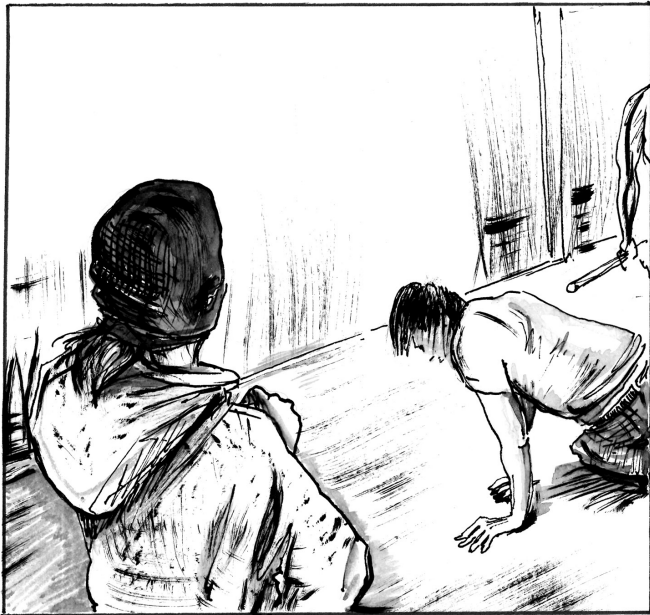


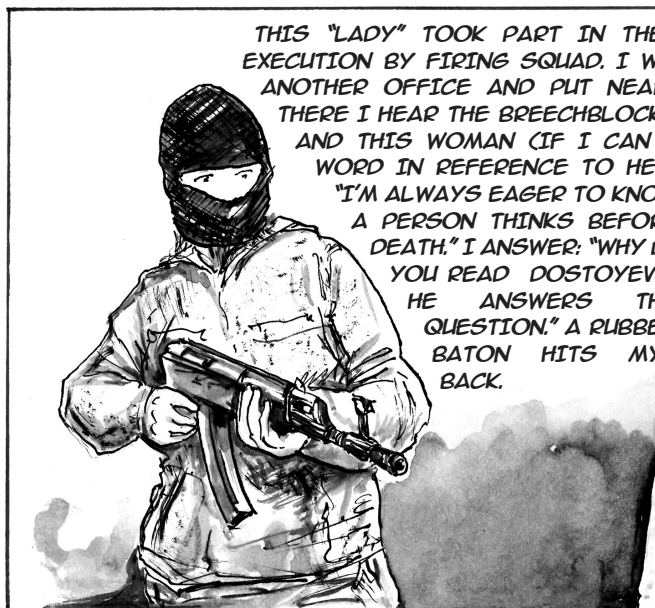


THERE WAS ALSO A GIRL AMONG THEM, SHE WAS WEARING A BALACLAVA WHICH HID HER FACE AND SHE WOULD BEAT AND TORTURE ME. SHE HAD A VERY DISTINCT RUSSIAN ACCENT. SHE EVEN TRIED TO "EDUCATE" ME: "DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?" - "YES, I DO." - "COULD YOU EVER SPIT ON AN ICON?" - "NO, I COULDN'T." - "DO YOU UNDERSTAND, THAT WHEN YOU PAINTED GIRKIN LIKE THAT, YOU SPAT ON OUR ICON?" AFTER THE FIRST INTERROGATION I WAS SENT TO A "DUNGEON", NOT TO A "CELL".

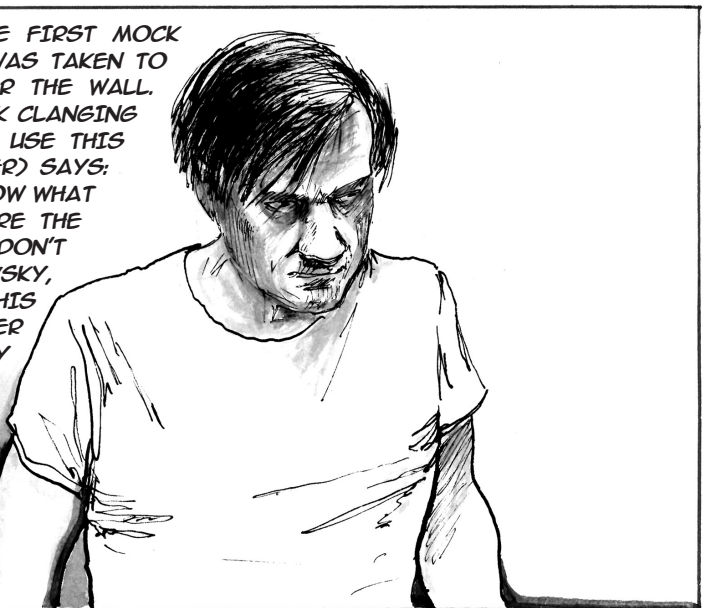




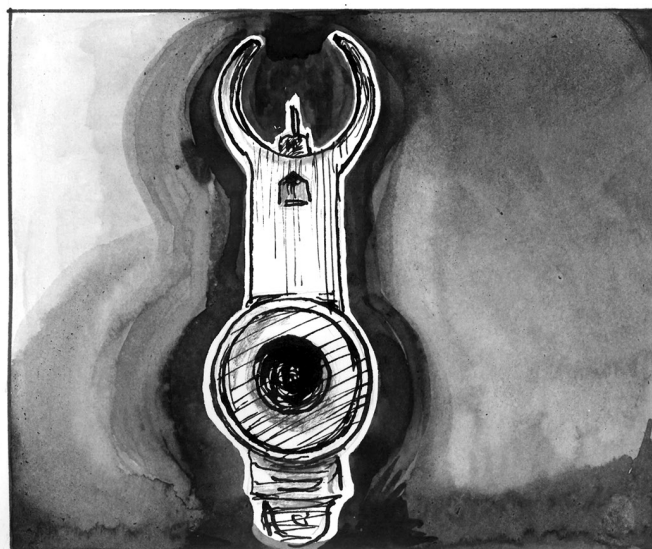
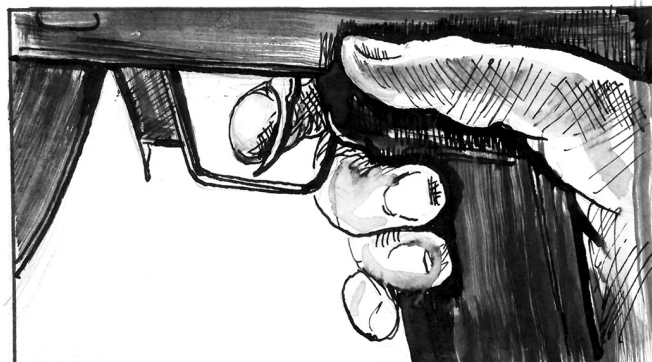




THIS "LADY" TOOK PART IN THE FIRST MOCK EXECUTION BY FIRING SQUAD. I WAS TAKEN TO ANOTHER OFFICE AND PUT NEAR THE WALL. THERE I HEAR THE BREECHBLOCK CLANGING AND THIS WOMAN (IF I CAN USE THIS WORD IN REFERENCE TO HER) SAYS: "I'M ALWAYS EAGER TO KNOW WHAT A PERSON THINKS BEFORE THE DEATH." I ANSWER: "WHY DON'T YOU READ DOSTOYEVSKY, HE ANSWERS THIS QUESTION." A RUBBER BATON HITS MY BACK.







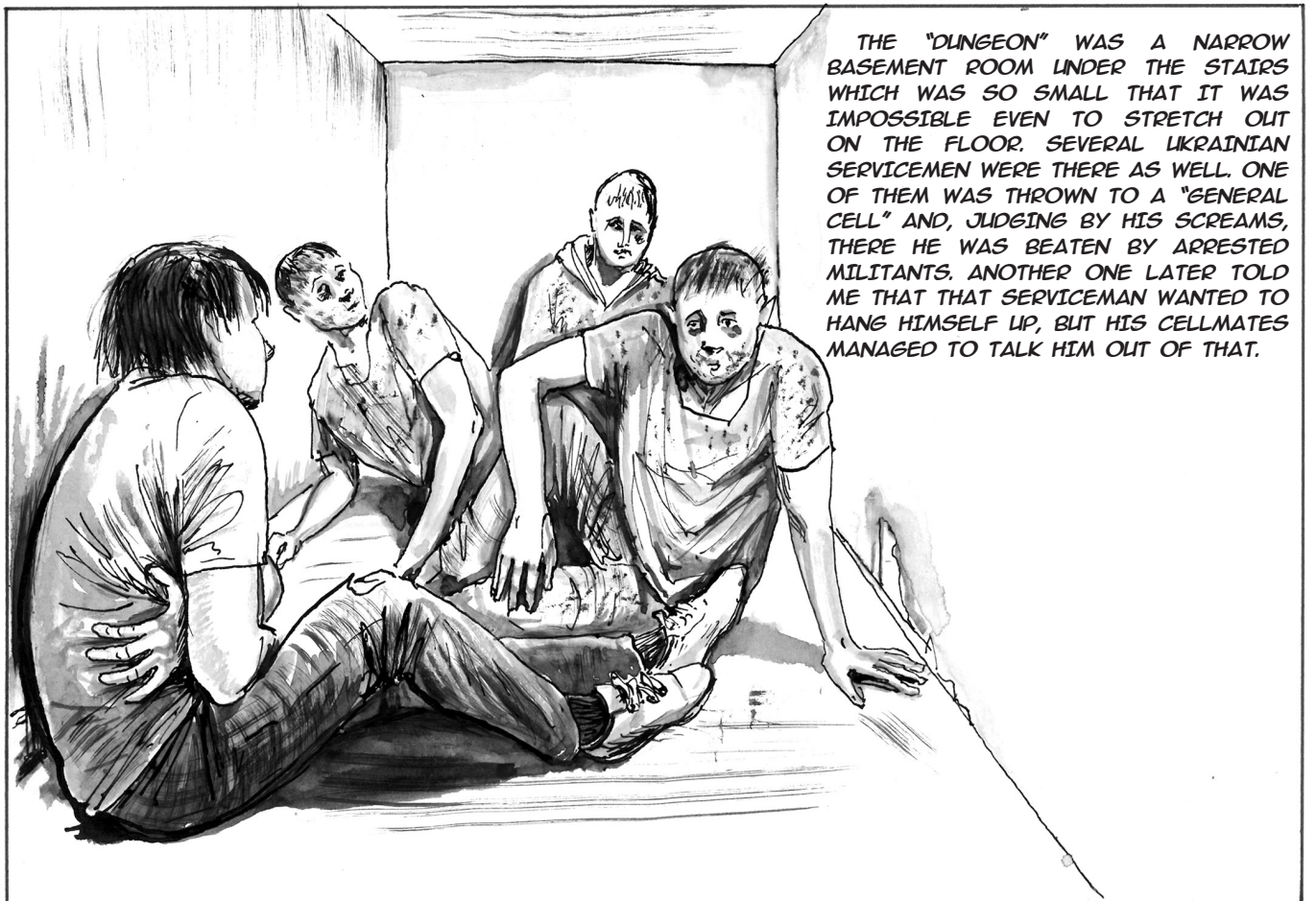




AFTER THE FIRST INTERROGATION I WAS SENT TO A "DUNGEON", NOT TO A "CELL". THE "DUNGEON" WAS A NARROW BASEMENT ROOM UNDER THE STAIRS WHICH WAS SO SMALL THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE EVEN TO STRETCH OUT ON THE FLOOR. SEVERAL UKRAINIAN SERVICEMEN WERE THERE AS WELL. ONE OF THEM WAS THROWN TO A "GENERAL CELL" AND, JUDGING BY HIS SCREAMS, THERE HE WAS BEATEN BY ARRESTED MILITANTS. ANOTHER ONE LATER TOLD ME THAT THAT SERVICEMAN WANTED TO HANG HIMSELF UP, BUT HIS CELLMATES MANAGED TO TALK HIM OUT OF THAT.







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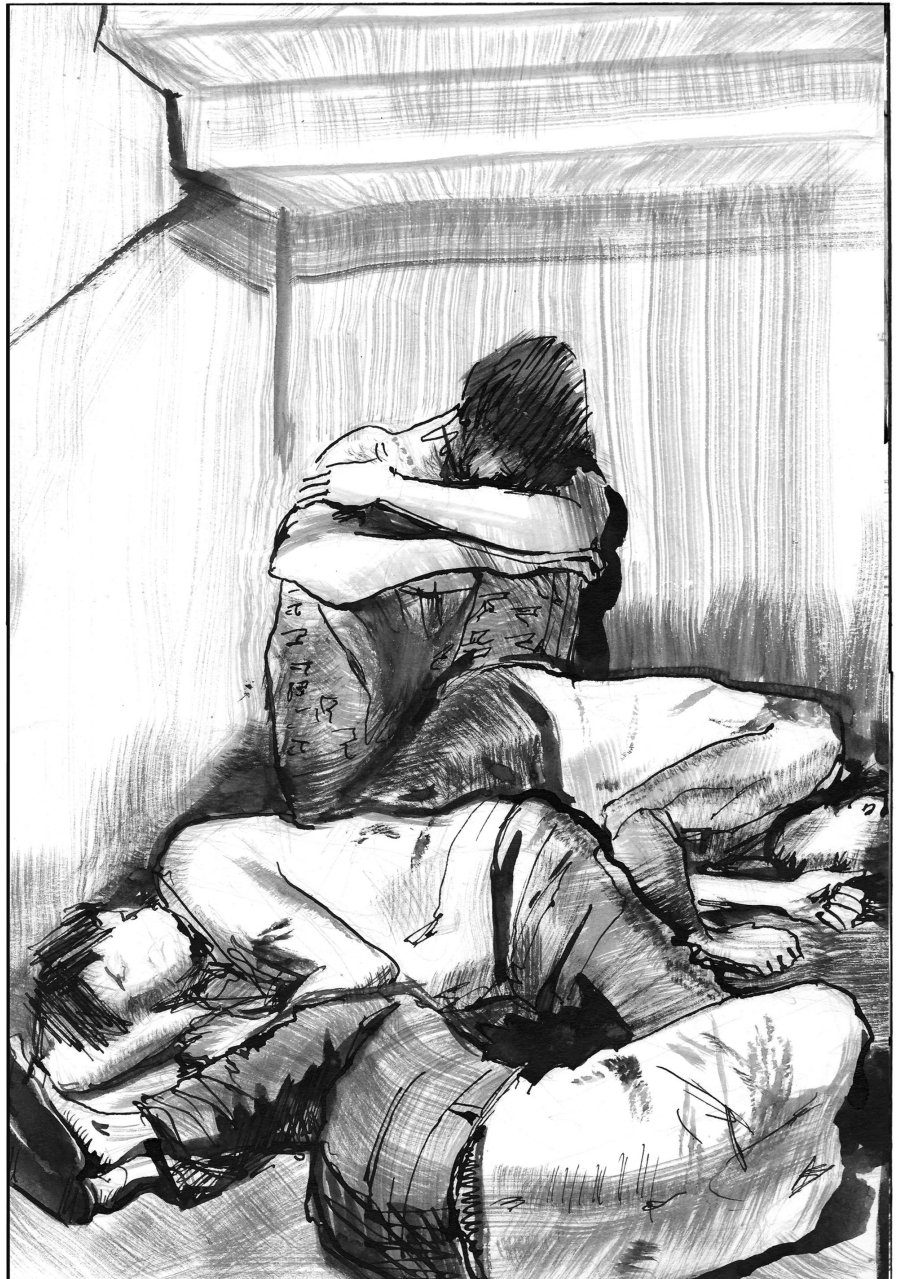
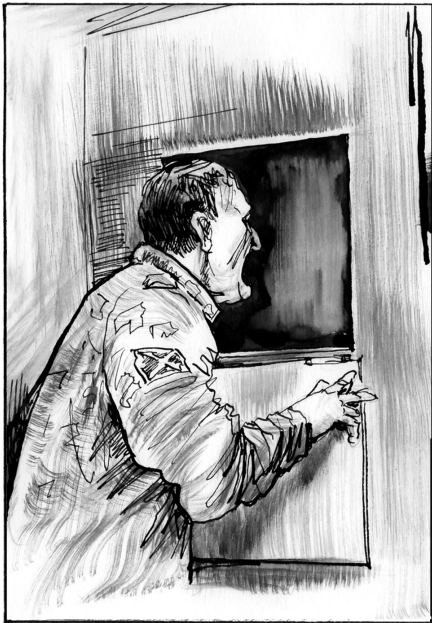
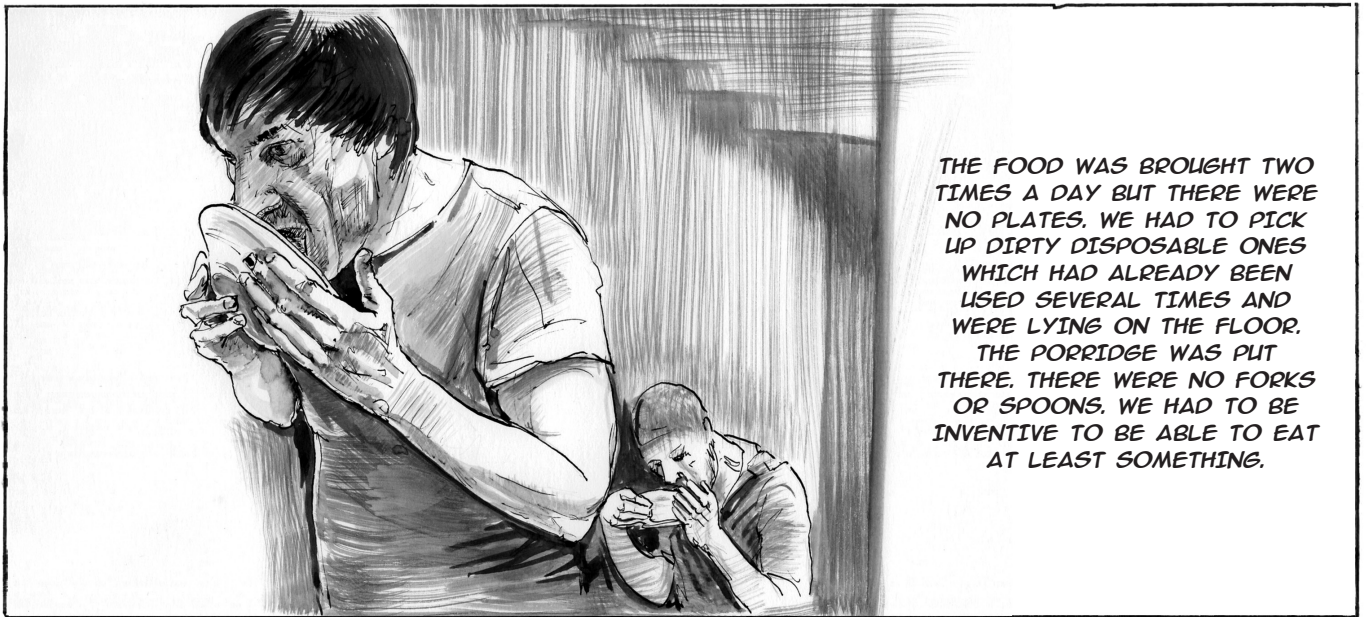




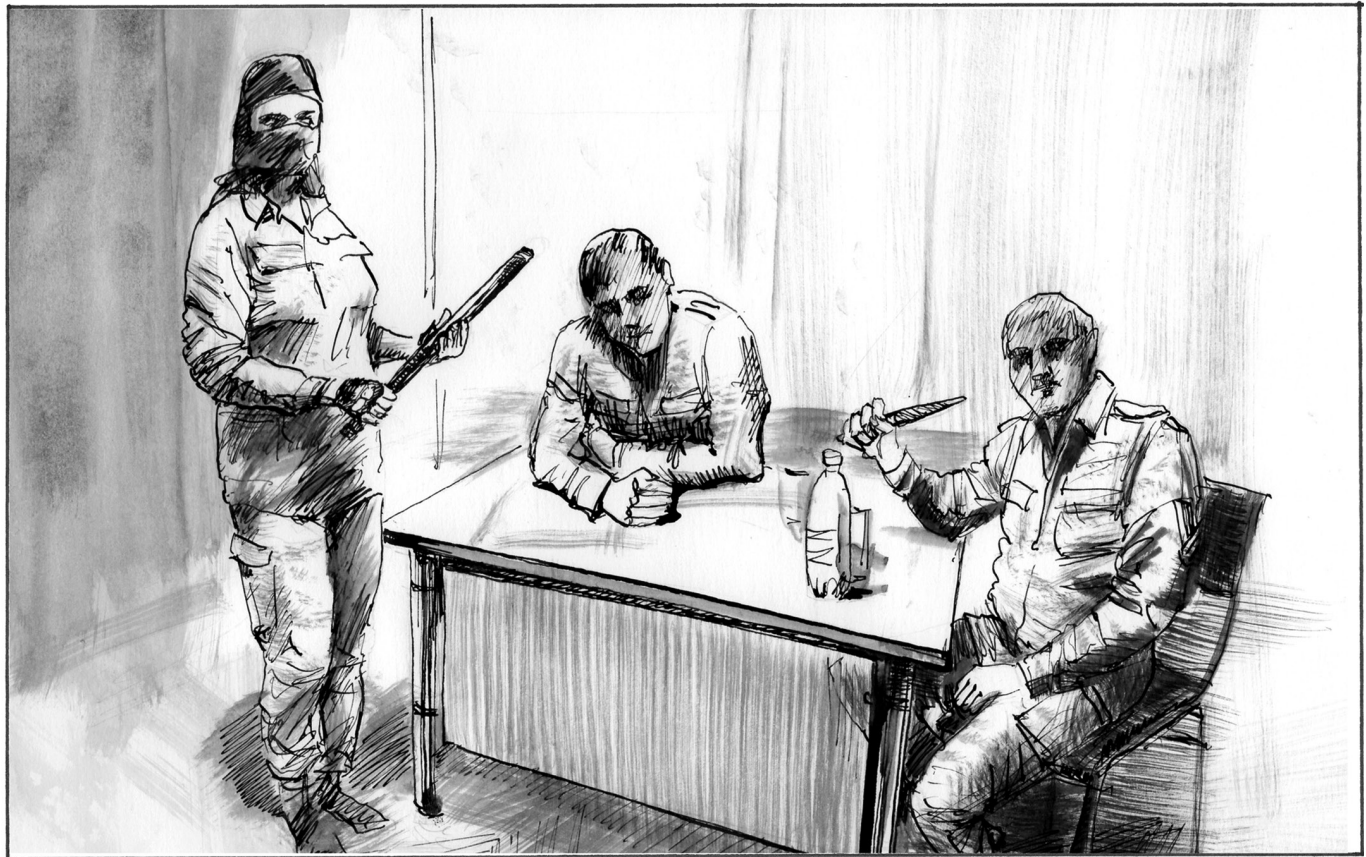
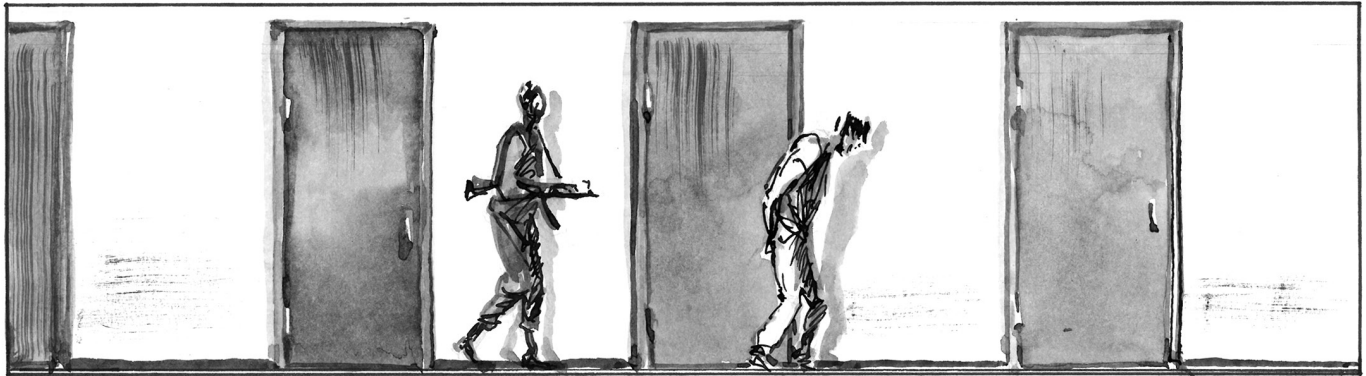
THEY WOULD NOT LET US SLEEP. THE LIGHT WAS TURNED ON ALL THE TIME, DAY AND NIGHT. THE GUARDS WATCHED US ALL THE TIME AND AS SOON AS SOMEONE TRIED TO CLOSE THEIR EYES, THERE WAS A SCREAM: "DON'T YOU DARE TO SLEEP, UKRAINIANS!" IF THEY SAW US FALLING ASLEEP ANYWAY, THEY WOULD RUSH INTO THE CELL AND BEAT US UP.



















RUSSIAN SPECIAL AGENT IN BALACLAVA WAS PRESENT AT THE SECOND INTERROGATION AS WELL. SHE USED MY PAGE ON VK SOCIAL NETWORK TO CONTACT SOME PEOPLE FROM MY FRIEND LIST AND SEND THEM MESSAGES. I DO HOPE, THAT DID NOT CAUSE ANY HARM TO THEM.

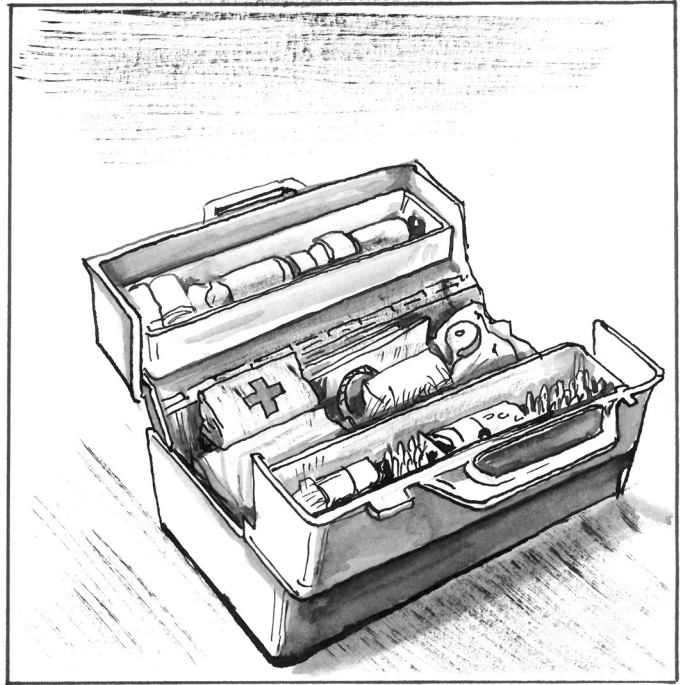
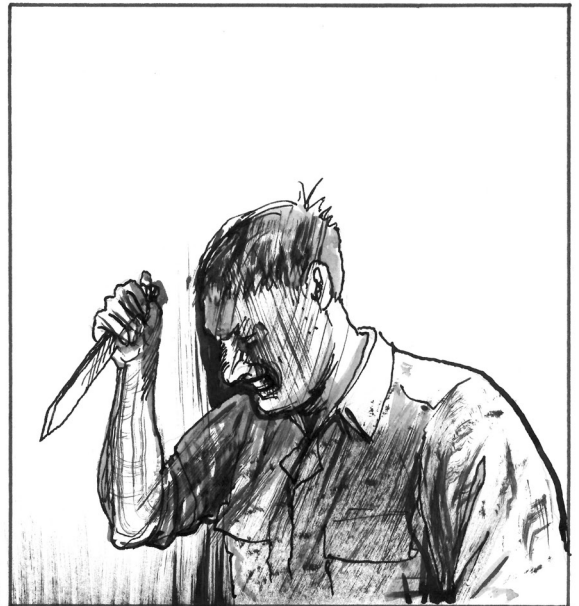






WE WERE MOSTLY BEATEN BY WOODEN BATS AND RUBBER BATONS. IT TURNED OUT LATER THAT I HAD THREE RIBS BROKEN. THEY WOULD ALL THE TIME ASK ME ABOUT MY CONTACTS AND WHO HAD BEEN WITH ME. I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER THAT HE WAS IN MARIUPOL AND THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH HIM. I WAS ABSOLUTELY SURE ABOUT THAT. MAYBE THAT WAS WHY THEY BELIEVED ME. IT TURNED OUT LATER THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHER WAS IN DONETSK AT THAT TIME, BUT FORTUNATELY THEY DID NOT SEARCH FOR HIM.







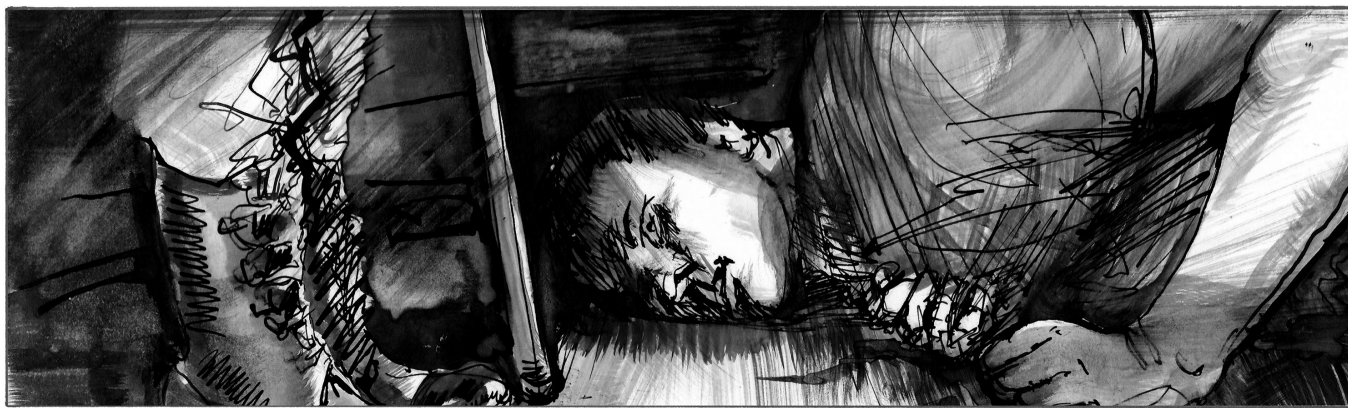


BEFORE BEATING UP, THEY TRIED TO LECTURE ME. "DO YOU KNOW, WHAT KIND OF PERSON PUTIN IS? DO YOU KNOW WHAT A HERO STRELKOV IS? DO YOU KNOW THAT THE RIGHT SECTOR STABS ALL RUSSIANS?" NO ONE WOULD EVER BELIEVE THAT NONSENSE. WHEN THEY TELL YOU SUCH THAT WITH SERIOUS FACES YOU NEARLY CAN'T HELP LAUGHING. MAYBE, THEY KEPT TELLING ME THAT TO PERSUADE THEMSELVES?

THEN, THE TORTURE WOULD CONTINUE AND FINALLY I WOULD BE SENT BACK TO MY CELL.









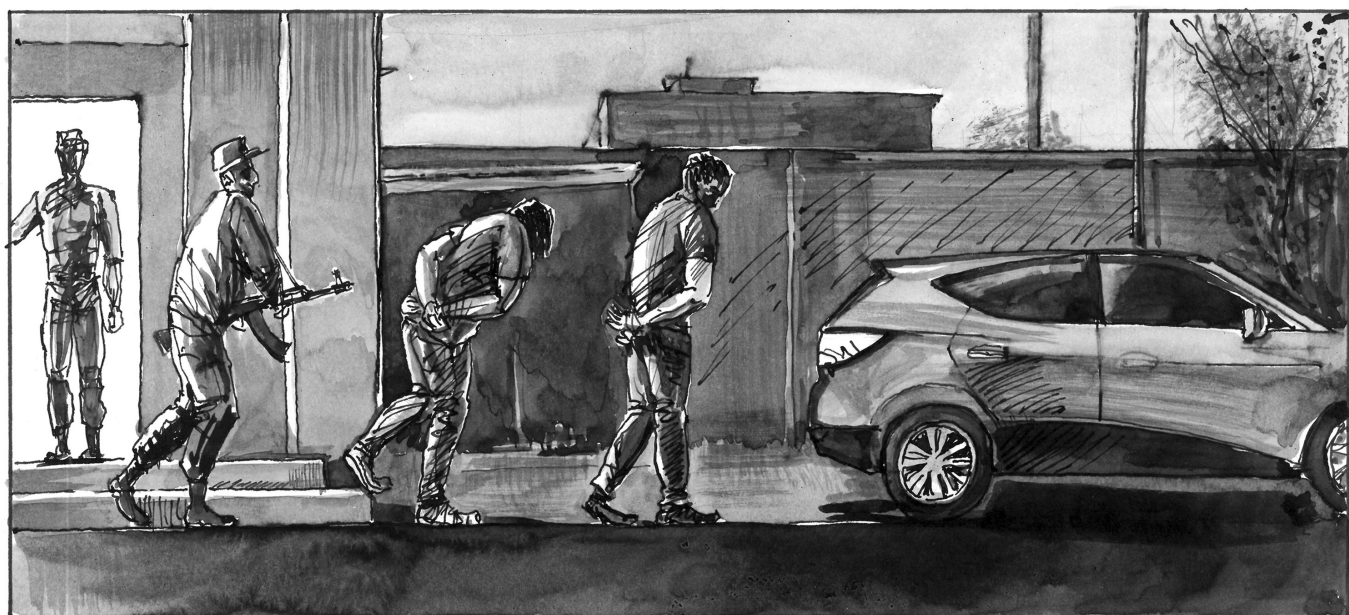
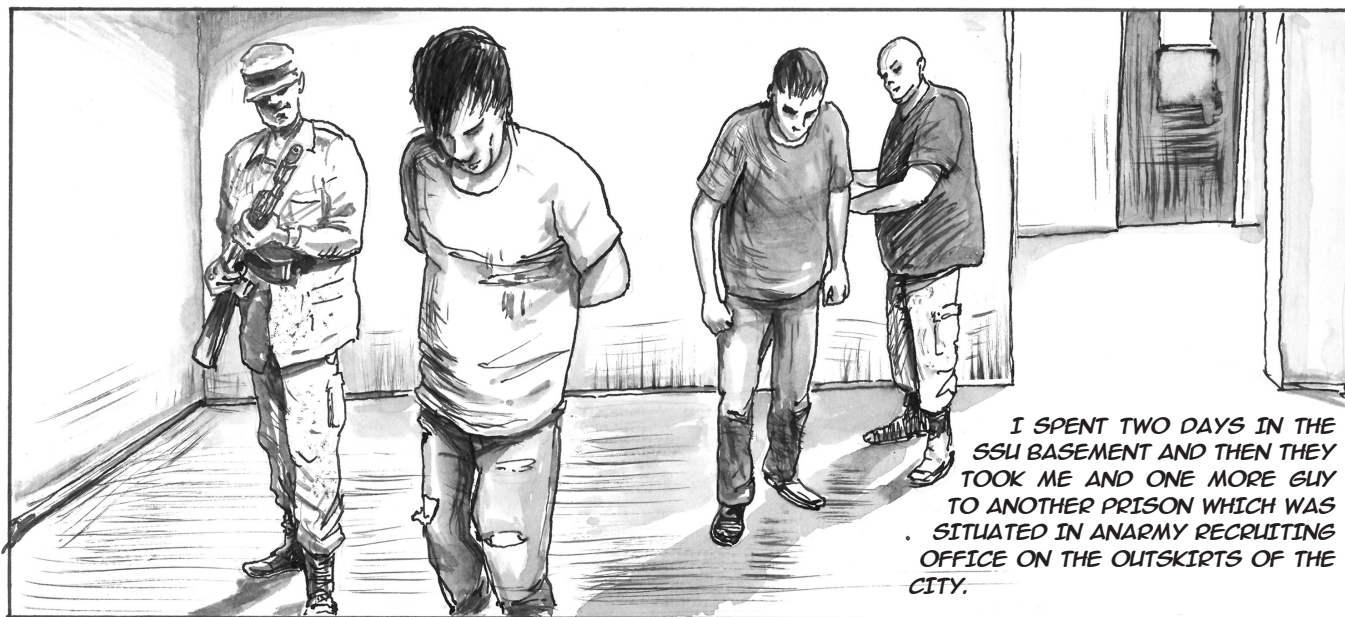


ACTUALLY, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO CALL THAT NARROW BASEMENT SPACE IN THE SSU BUILDING "A CELL". WE SLEPT ON A CONCRETE FLOOR WHICH WAS COVERED IN SOME PIECES OF TORN CARDBOARD. IT WAS IN THE SUMMER AND WE WERE BOTHERED BY STIFFNESS MORE THAN BY COLD. EVERYTHING WAS DIRTY AND THERE WAS A CONSTANT SMELL OF SWEAT. AN ORDINARY PRISON CELLS SEEMED LIKE A RESORT COMPARED TO THAT.

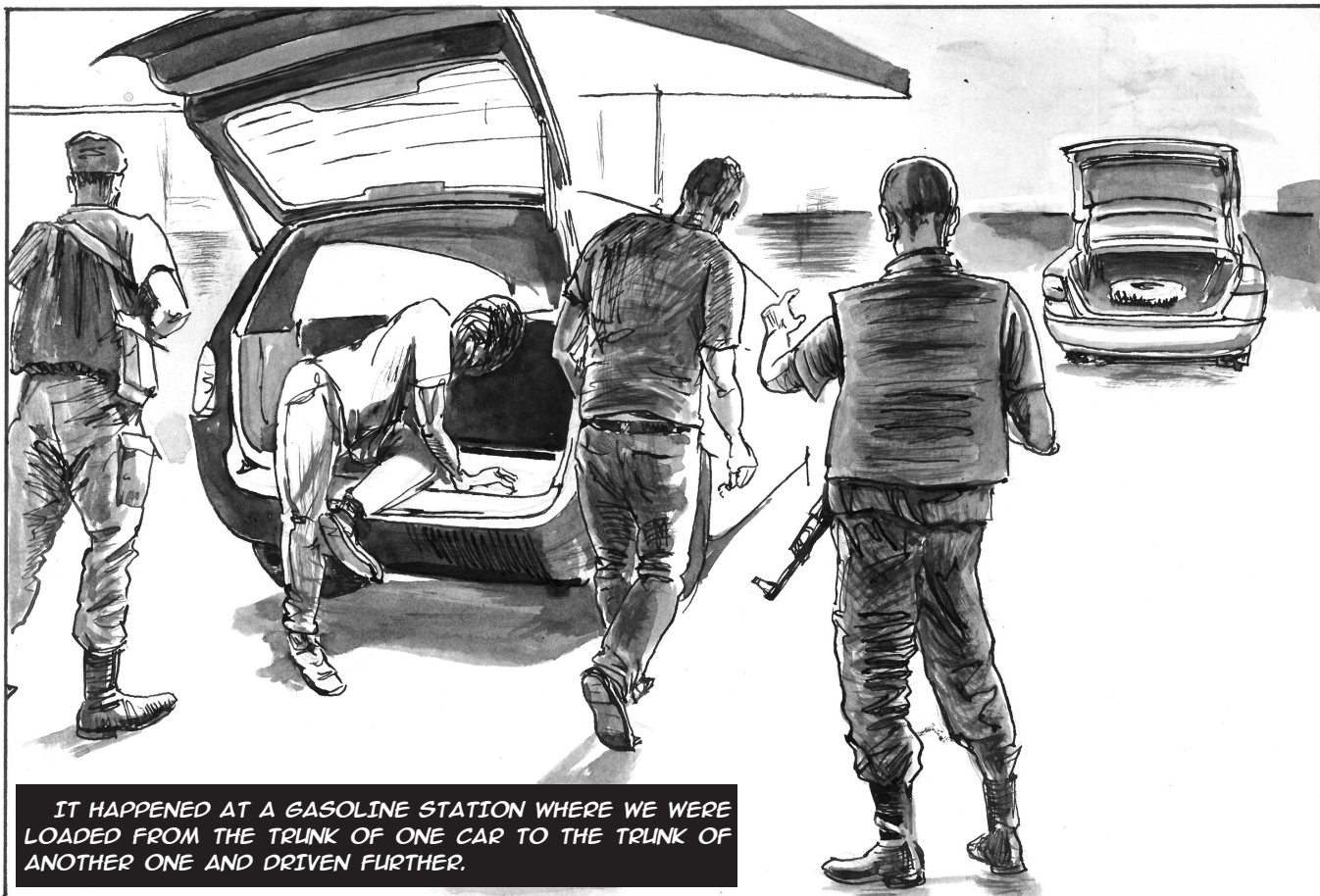
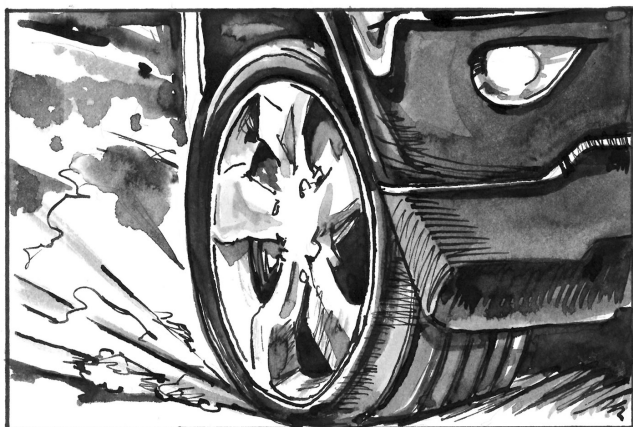
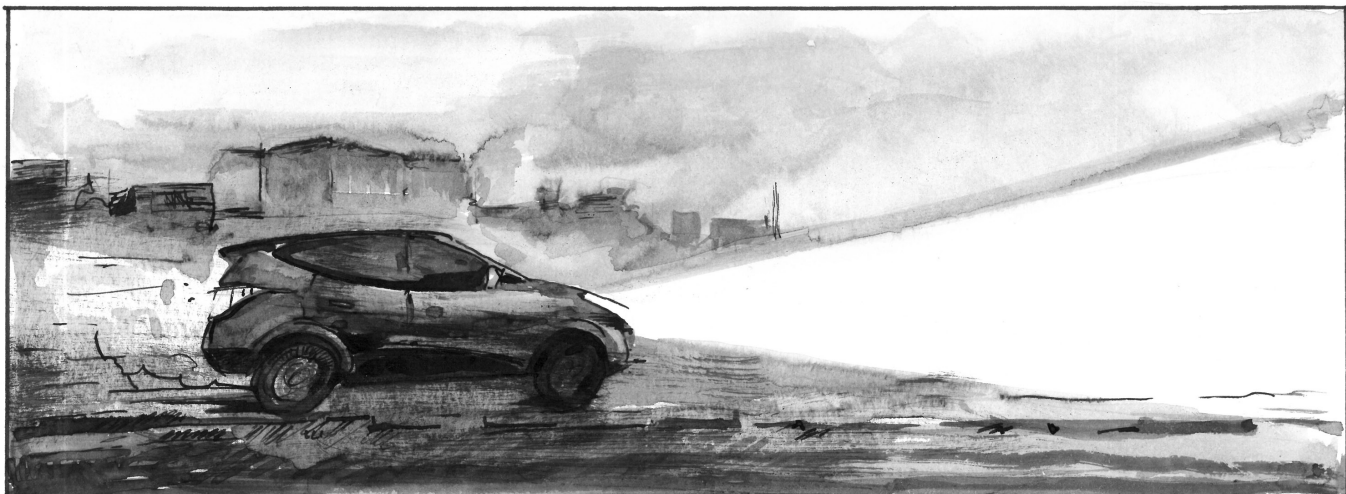
PEOPLE WHO WERE BROUGHT TO THOSE BASEMENTS HAD NO RIGHTS AT ALL. WHAT INVESTIGATION ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? LAWYERS? COURT? OH, COME ON! YOU WERE DETAINED AND THAT WAS THAT. THIS MEANS THAT YOU ARE GUILTY ANYWAY. PEOPLE WHO WERE TAKEN BY "DPR" WERE ARRESTED FOR DIFFERENT ABSOLUTELY FAR-FETCHED REASONS. YOU FEEL AS IF YOU HAD BEEN TAKEN TO THE USSR AMIDST 1937 REPRESSIONS.

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE TAKEN TO SUCH BASEMENTS AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN REPORTED ABOUT BY THEIR NEIGHBOURS WHO HAD BEEN OFFENDED WITH THEM FOR SOME REASON OR JUST ENVIED THEM. THERE WAS A WOMAN IN OUR CELL WHO NEIGHBOURS REPORTED THAT SHE HAD BEEN HELPING THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES TO LOCATE MILITANTS' "STRATEGIC OBJECTS". THIS WAS NONSENSE, OF COURSE, BUT AS THERE HAD BEEN A SIGNAL, THERE HAD TO BE SOME ACTION, SO AN ARREST AND INTERROGATIONS FOLLOWED. THERE WERE A LOT OF SO-CALLED "SPOTTERS". IF A PERSON WAS WALKING WITH A TORCH AT NIGHT IT MEANT THAT HE OR SHE WAS A "SPOTTER", IF A PERSON CALLED A WRONG PLACE IT MEANT THAT HE OR SHE WAS A "SPOTTER", IF A PERSON CYCLED PAST SERVICEMEN IT MEANT THAT HE OR SHE WAS A "SPOTTER". IF BESIDES THAT THERE WAS A FLASH MEMORY CARD IN THEIR POCKET IT MEANT THAT THIS PERSON WAS THE RIGHT SECTOR MEMBER. A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO GOT THERE WERE FREED AFTER THEIR RELATIVES PAID A RANSOM, SO FOR MILITANTS ARRESTS BECAME A WAY OF EARNING THEIR LIVING. WHEN I WAS DETAINED, MY FRIENDS TRIED TO FIND THOSE WHO WERE IN CHARGE OF THAT "BUSINESS" BUT THEY ANSWERED THAT I WAS A "POLITICAL" PRISONER SO NO ONE WOULD HELP ME AS IT WAS DANGEROUS.







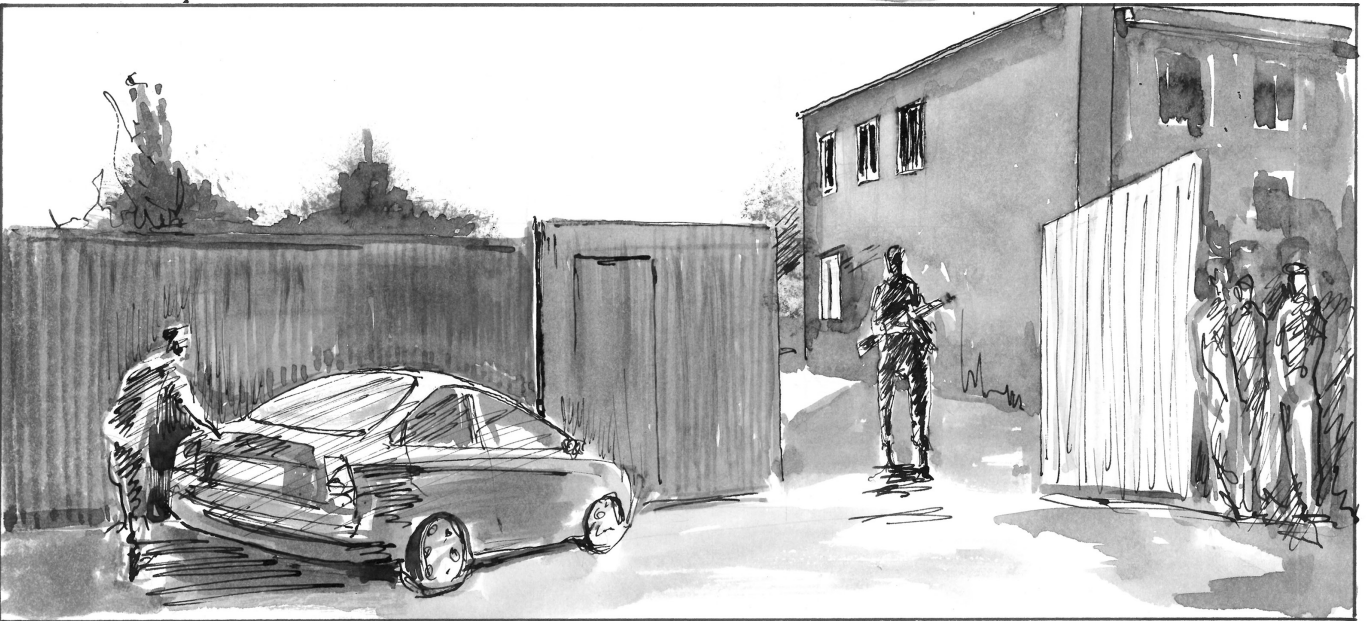
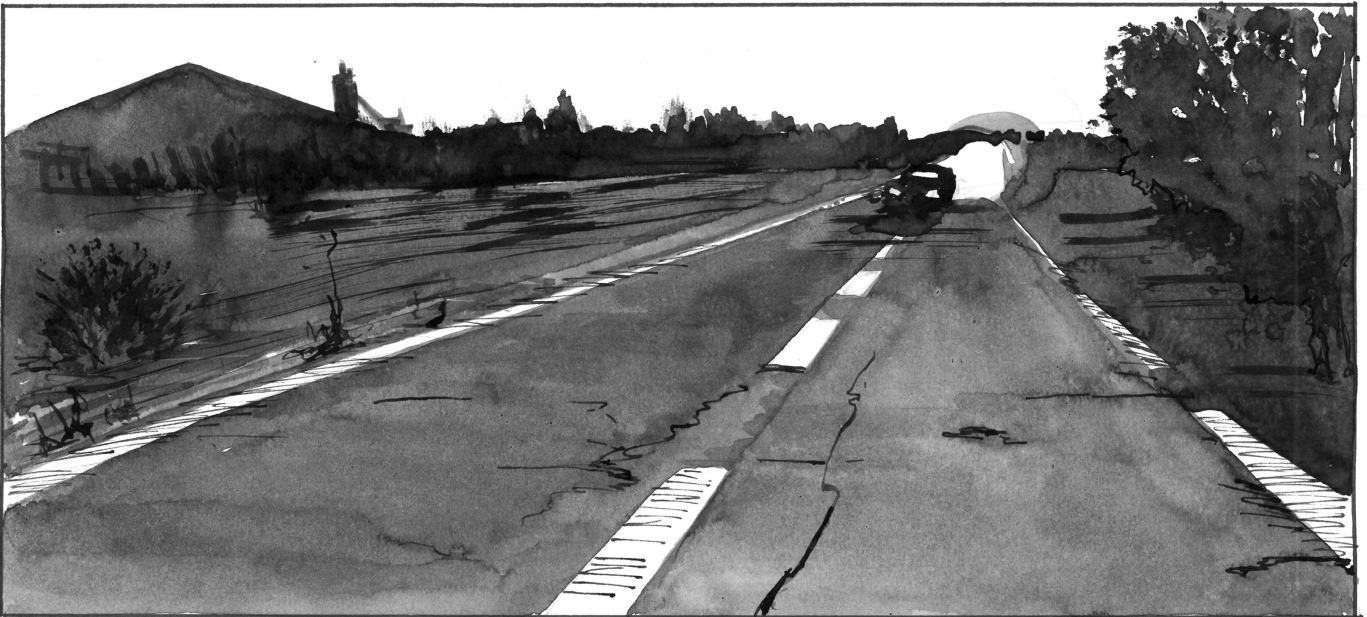






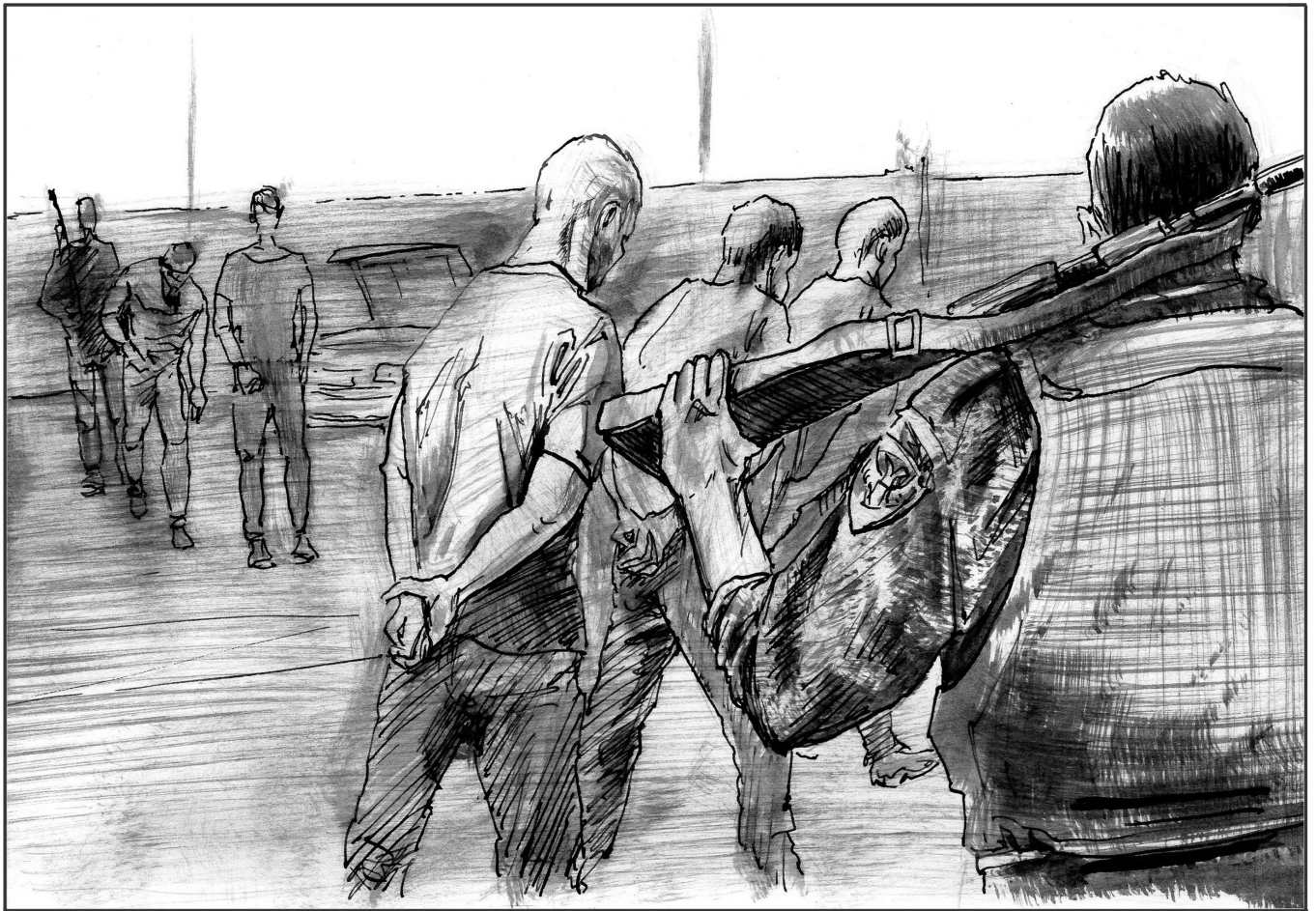
THAT GUY WAS FROM SHAKHTARSK (A TOWN IN THE DONETSK REGION). HE WAS DETAINED FOR SPEAKING ON THE PHONE WHICH WAS WIRETRAPPED. ACCORDING TO MILITANTS' INFORMATION, HE HAD BEEN TALKING TO THE RIGHT SECTOR OR SOME OTHER UKRAINIAN BATTALION REPRESENTATIVES AND HE HAD BEEN ASKED, MILITANTS SAID, ABOUT THEIR CHECKPOINTS.





WE WERE TRANSPORTED IN A BOOT OF A CAR. WHEN WE ARRIVED, WE HAD TO WALK PAST ROWS OF MILITANTS.







THE PRISONERS KEPT IN THAT MILITARY ENLISTMENT OFFICE WERE MOSTLY ALCOHOLICS AND THOSE WHO VIOLATED THE CURFEW. THEY WERE BEATEN OF COURSE, BUT NOT SEVERELY, AS THEY WERE NOT AGAINST THE REGIME, AND FINALLY REAL UKRAINIANS WERE DELIVERED SO EVERYONE TRIED TO BEAT THEM AS FORCEFULLY AS THEY COULD.







I REMEMBER ONE MAN WHOSE NAME WAS ALBERT. HE WAS DRUNK ALL THE TIME AND HE WAS VERY ANGRY WITH THE UKRAINIANS WHO HAD KILLED HIS SON. HE WANTED TO HIT US WITH ALL THE AGGRESSION POSSIBLE BUT AS HE WAS DRUNK, HE KEPT MISSING AND I THOUGHT THAT I EVEN FELT CERTAIN EMBARRASSMENT BECAUSE OF THAT.



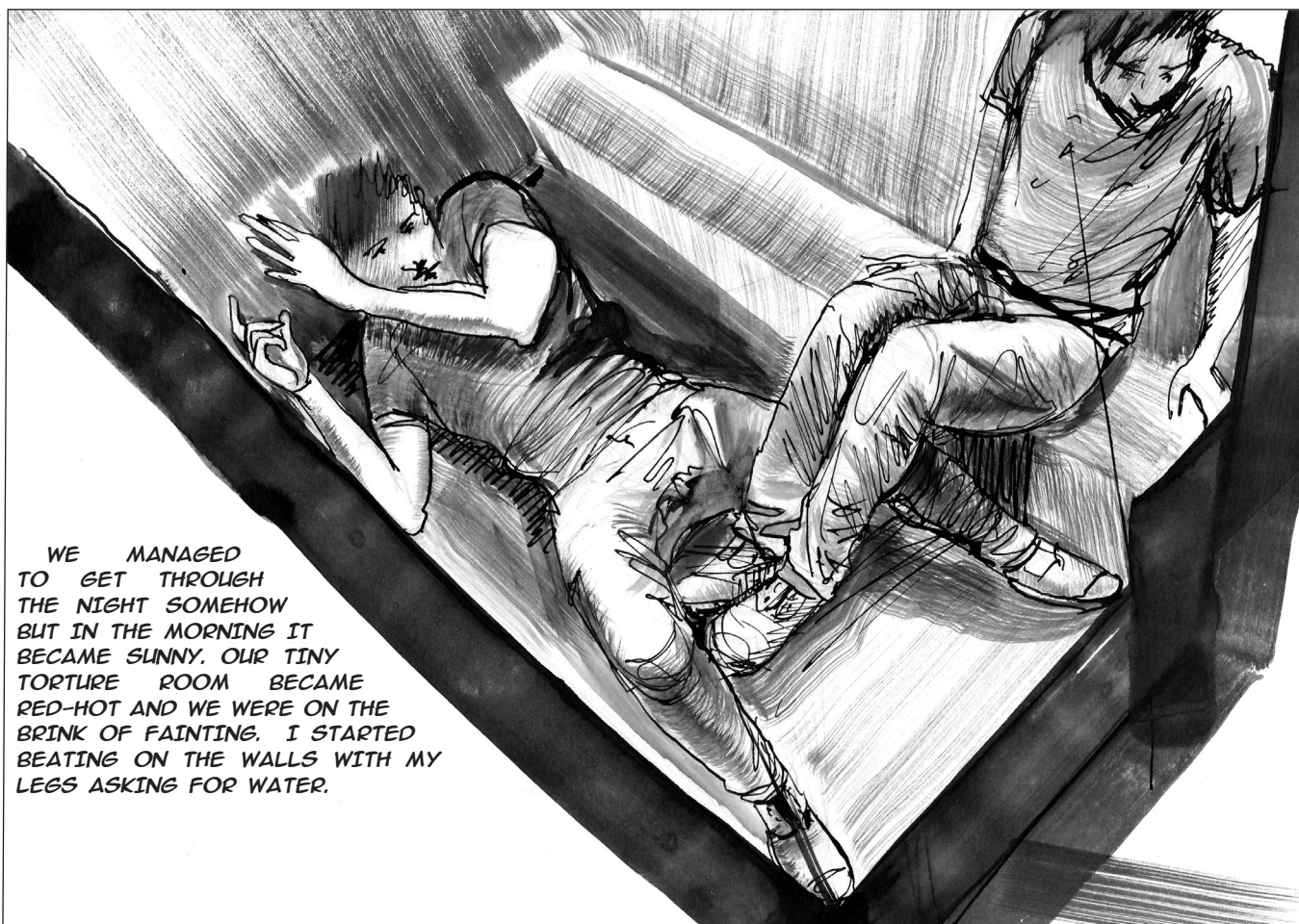




FIRST, MY INVOLUNTARY COMPANION AND ME ARE USHERED INTO A TINY METAL CARGO BOX. IT SEEMED THAT IT WAS USED FOR STORING TOOLS. IT WAS TOO TIGHT FOR ONE PERSON AND IT WAS PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR TWO PEOPLE TO SIT IN IT. WHEN ONE PERSON WANTED TO MOVE, ANOTHER ONE HAD TO MOVE SIMULTANEOUSLY AS WELL OTHERWISE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIT INTO IT.











WE WERE TAKEN OUT OF THE CARGO BOX. WE WERE LUCKY. A DOCTOR CAME TO THE ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE BY CHANCE THAT DAY. HE SAW THAT WE WERE NEARLY DEAD. HE GAVE US THREE SHOTS OF MEDICINE EACH AND CLEANED OUR WOUNDS. WE WERE GIVEN A BOTTLE OF WATER AND THEN THROWN BACK TO THE CARGO BOX.







IT THE MORNING WE WERE TAKEN OUT AGAIN. THEY TOLD US WE WOULD BE PLACED INTO A GENERAL CELL, TOGETHER WITH OFFENDERS.







TO MAKE OUR LIFE HARDER THEY ATTACHED THE GUY AND ME TO EACH OTHER WITH METAL HANDCUFFS. MY COMPANION HAD BEEN SHOT THOUGH THE FOOT AND HIS ARM WAS BANDAGED. I HAD A HUGE BRUISE ON MY HAND AFTER BEING BEATEN WITH RUBBER BATONS AND WOODEN BATS. THE DOCTOR HAD TREATED IT BUT IT TOOK A LONG TIME FOR IT TO HEAL. IT MEANT, WE BOTH HAD WOUNDS ON OUR RIGHT HANDS AND WE WERE ATTACHED TO EACH OTHER WITH THEM.



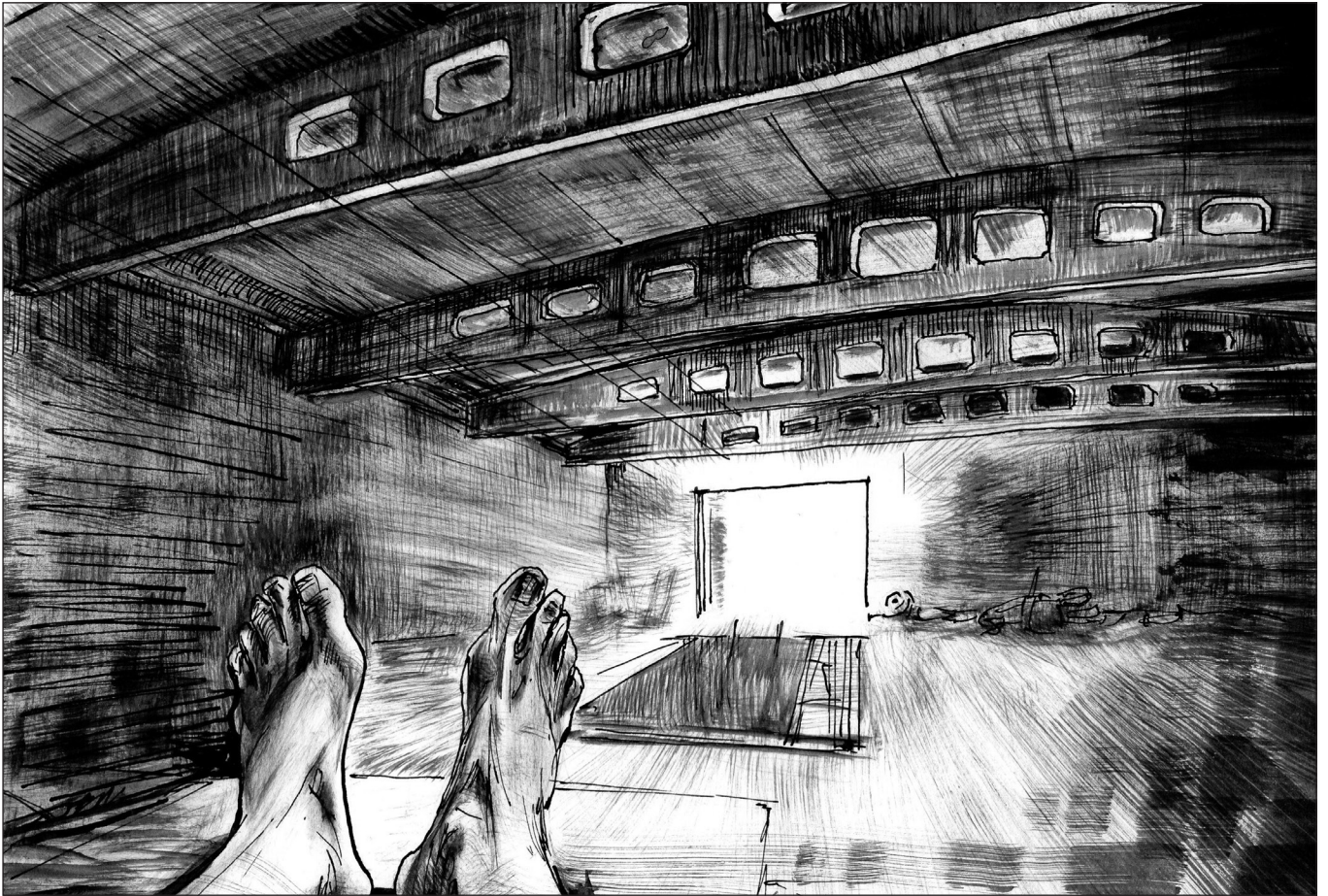




THAT WAS INCREDIBLY PAINFUL AND CRUEL. WE SPENT TEN DAYS LIKE THAT. AT SOME MOMENTS I DIDN'T FEEL MY ARM AT ALL. TEN DAYS WE WERE LIKE SIAMESE TWINS: WE ATE TOGETHER, WE WERE BEATEN TOGETHER, WE WERE TAKEN TO MOCK EXECUTIONS TOGETHER.







WHILE SEATING IN THAT CELL I WOULD SOMETIMES SINK INTO A STATE OF STUPOR WHICH I WOULD BE WOKEN UP FROM BY THIS GUY I WAS ATTACHED TO: HE WOULD JERK HIS ARM AND I WOULD SEE HIM CROSSING HIMSELF. IT WAS PAINFUL AS THE HANDCUFFS WERE NEARLY TEARING MY SWOLLEN ARM. THEY SAY THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS AT WAR... I ALSO PRAYED SILENTLY, THANKING GOD FOR EVERYTHING.



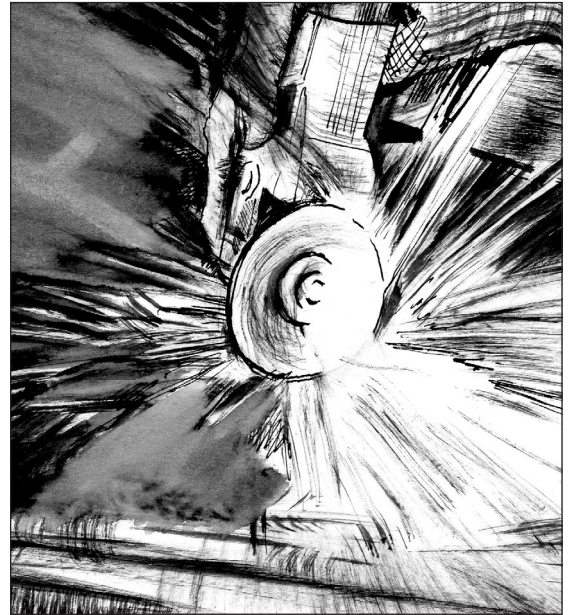




THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF MINOR OFFENDERS IN OUR CELL. SOME HAD BEEN CAUGHT PICKPOCKETING, SOME HAD VIOLATED THE CURFEW, SOME HAD BEEN DRUNK OR HAD SAID SOMETHING INSULTING TO MILITANTS. THOSE PEOPLE SURPRISED ME. AS A PUNISHMENT, THE NEW AUTHORITIES SENT THEM TO CUT CARS THAT HAD BEEN CONFISCATED FROM THEIR OWNERS FOR SCRAP METAL. THOSE WERE NEW GOOD CARS. SO WHEN THOSE OFFENDERS CAME BACK FROM WORK, THEY CONTINUED DISCUSSING HOW THEY WOULD CUT CARS NEXT DAY. ONE OF THEM EVEN SAID THAT AFTER SERVING HIS SENTENCE HE WOULD NOT GO ANYWHERE AND WOULD CONTINUE WORKING THERE, MILITANTS GAVE HIM FOOD, HE HAD WHERE TO SLEEP AND DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING MORE THAN THAT AND IF HE WAS BEATEN THAT WAS FOR SOME REASON. THIS WAS HOW MENTALITY OF SLAVES MANIFESTED ITSELF.







ONE GUARD WAS KIND TO US. HE WAS SECRETLY BRINDING PLASTIC CUPS WITH TEA IN THE POCKETS OF HIS UNIFORM.







AND WE WERE BEATEN AGAIN AND AGAIN. TWO MORE TIMES WE WERE TAKEN TO MOCK EXECUTIONS. FIRST TIME WE WERE WOKEN UP BY DRUNK GUARDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. THEY TOOK US TO A ROOM WHERE THEIR DRUNK COMMANDER WAS HAVING FUN WITH WHORES. HE CAME UP TO US AND STARTED WAVING HIS GUN IN FRONT OF US. THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST HORRIBLE MOMENTS. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK TO HIM AND WE JUST STOOD IN FRONT OF HIM WITHOUT MOVING. I DO NOT KNOW HOW WE MANAGED TO ENDURE THAT WITHOUT A BREAKDOWN.



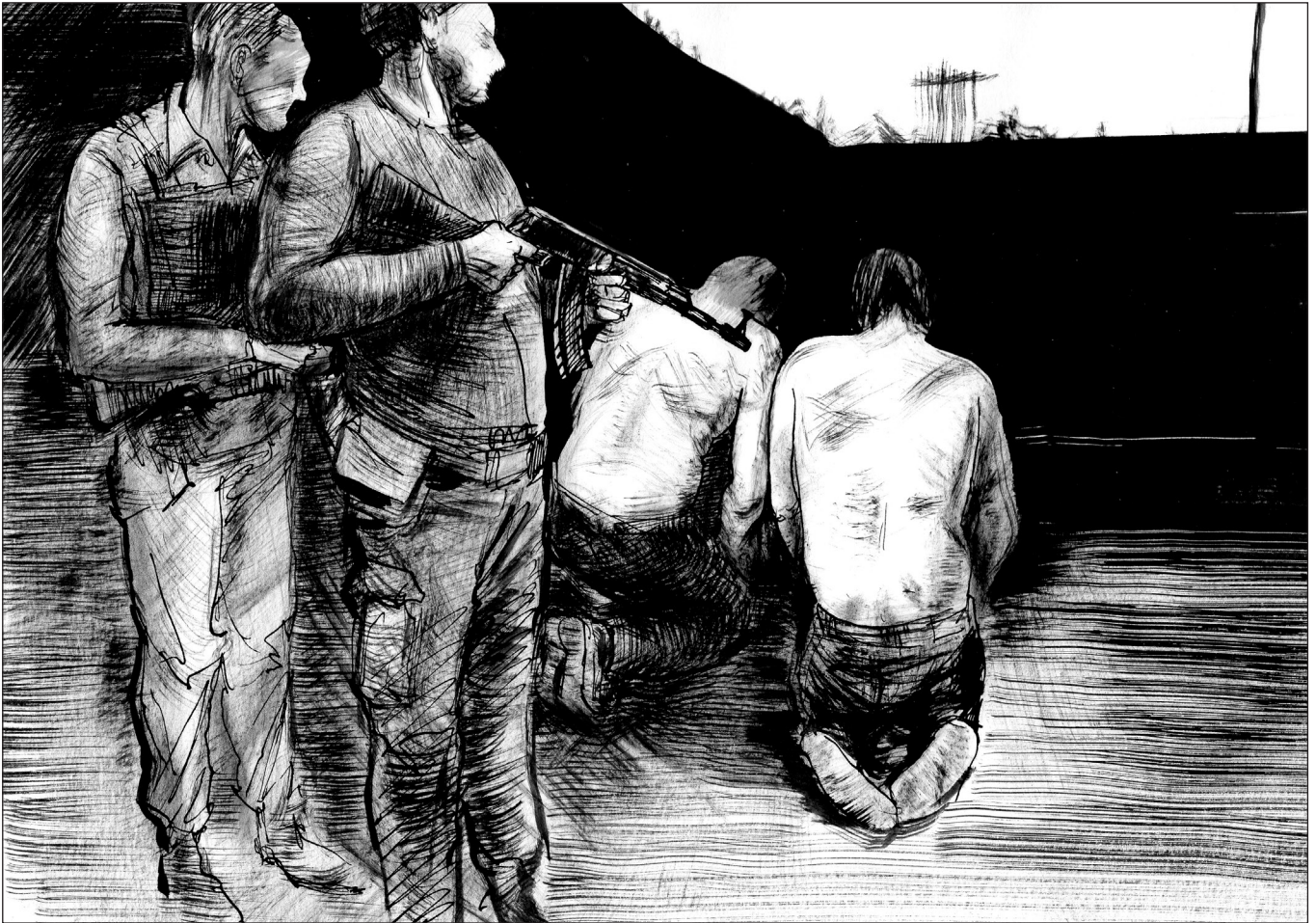




NEXT TIME WE WERE TAKEN TO SOME TERRICONE, GIVEN SPADES AND TOLD TO DIG GRAVES FOR OURSELVES. HOWEVER, THOSE RASCALS QUICKLY GREW TIRED OF THE SHOW AND WE WERE TAKEN BACK. I WAS TOLD THAT I WOULD REMAIN ALIVE AND MY MATE WAS TOLD THAT HE WOULD BE EXECUTED. I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM. IS HE STILL ALIVE OR DID THEY REALIZE THEIR THREAT?









THEY LET ME GO ON THE TENTH DAY OF MY CAPTIVITY IN A NEW PRISON. IT HAPPENED ALL OF A SUDDEN. ONE DAY WE ASKED IF WE COULD AT LEAST WASH OURSELVES AS DURING ALL THOSE DAYS WHEN WE WERE ATTACHED TO EACH OTHER WITH HANDCUFFS WE HADN'T HAD SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. WE WERE DIRTY AND COVERED IN BLOOD. WE SMELT AWFULLY. THEY BROUGHT US A BUCKET WITH WATER AND OPENED THE GATES.



ONE OF MILITANTS WAS STANDING ON THE PLATFORM WHERE THEY WERE CUTTING CARS FOR SCRAP METAL AND HE WAS JUST GOING TO PAINT ONE OF THEIR VANS IN CAMOUFLAGE COLOURS. HAVING LOOKED AT ME HE ASKED: "WELL, ARTIST, CAN YOU PAINT THIS VAN CAMOUFLAGE?" - "NO SWEAT", SAID I. AT THAT MOMENT I WAS HAPPY TO SPEND AT LEAST A MOMENT WITHOUT THOSE HANDCUFFS. SO, I STARTED PAINTING THAT VAN. SOMEONE SAID: "YOU DO THIS AND YOU CAN GO HOME." FIRST, I DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT, BUT THEY REALLY LET ME GO. MY T-SHIRT WAS ALL COVERED IN BLOOD, THEY GAVE ME A SHIRT AND EVEN SOME MONEY TO PAY THE BUS FARE. HOWEVER, THEY DIDN'T HAVE MY DOCUMENTS AS THEY HAD REMAINED IN THE SSU BUILDING.





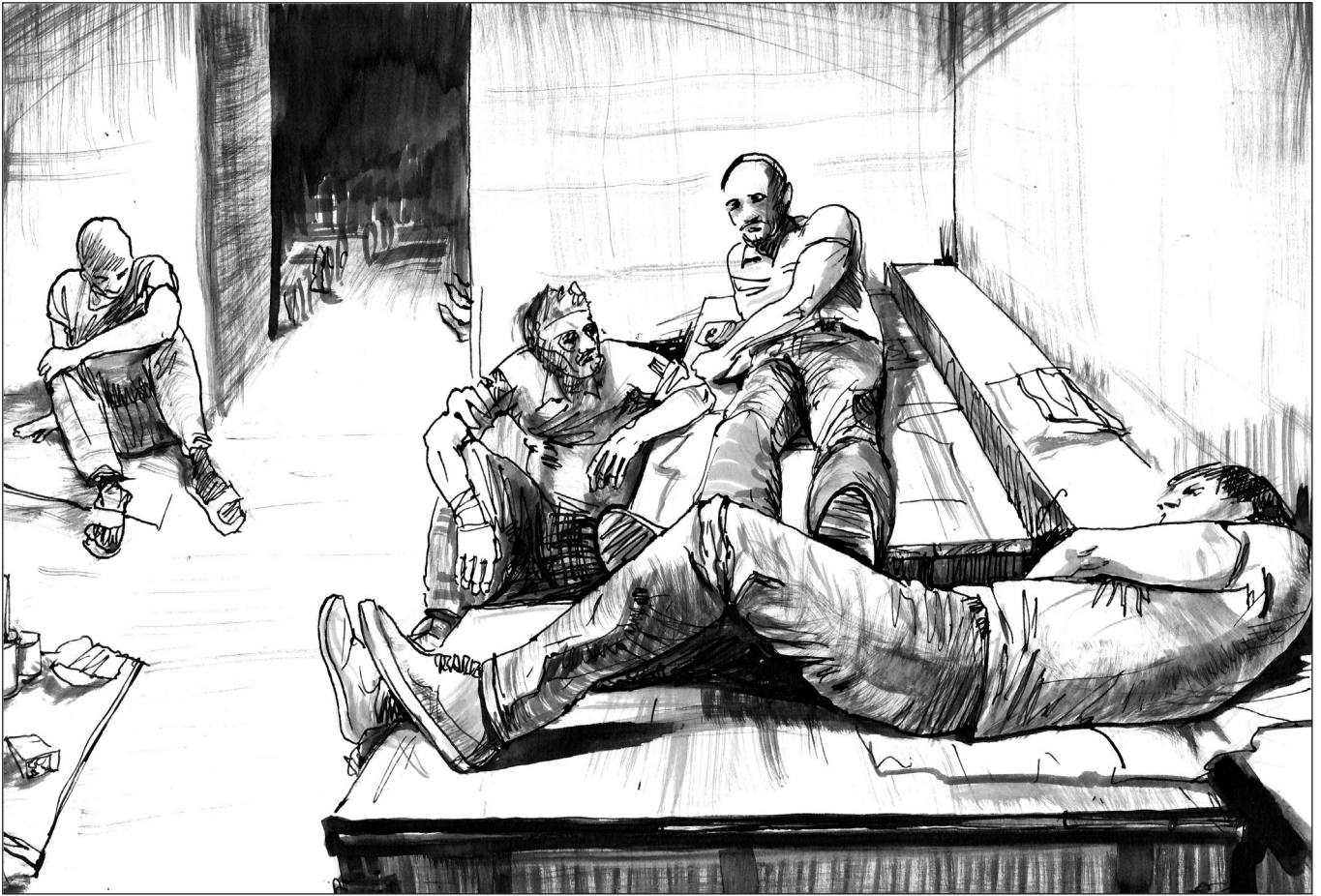




I MANAGED TO GET HOME SOMEHOW, MY GIRLFRIEND WAS WAITING FOR ME THERE. NEXT DAY WE WENT TO HOSPITAL, I HAD MY RIBS X-RAYED AND IT REALLY TURNED OUT THAT MY NINTH AND TENTH RIBS ON BOTH SIDES WERE BROKEN. THE HOSPITAL WAS NOT FAR FROM THE SSU BUILDING AND MY GIRLFRIEND TOLD ME: "LET'S GO AND TAKE YOUR DOCUMENTS." NOW I UNDERSTAND THAT I HAD TO LEAVE DONETSK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT ANY DOCUMENTS AT THAT TIME. BUT THEN MY BRAIN DID NOT WORK AT ALL AND MY INTUITION DID NOT TELL ME ANYTHING. I ENTERED THE SSU BUILDING AND I REMAINED THERE. NO ONE GAVE ME MY DOCUMENTS BACK, ON THE CONTRARY, THEY LOOKED AT ME IN A SURPRISED WAY AND ASKED: "WHAT? ARE YOU ALREADY FREE?" AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW WAS THAT THEY TOOK ME TO THE BASEMENT AGAIN. HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO MORE INTERROGATIONS AND NO ONE TOUCHED ME. FROM TIME TO TIME WE HAD TO DO SOME WORK, LIKE DIGGING TRENCHES OR DOING SOMETHING ON THE FRONT LINE.







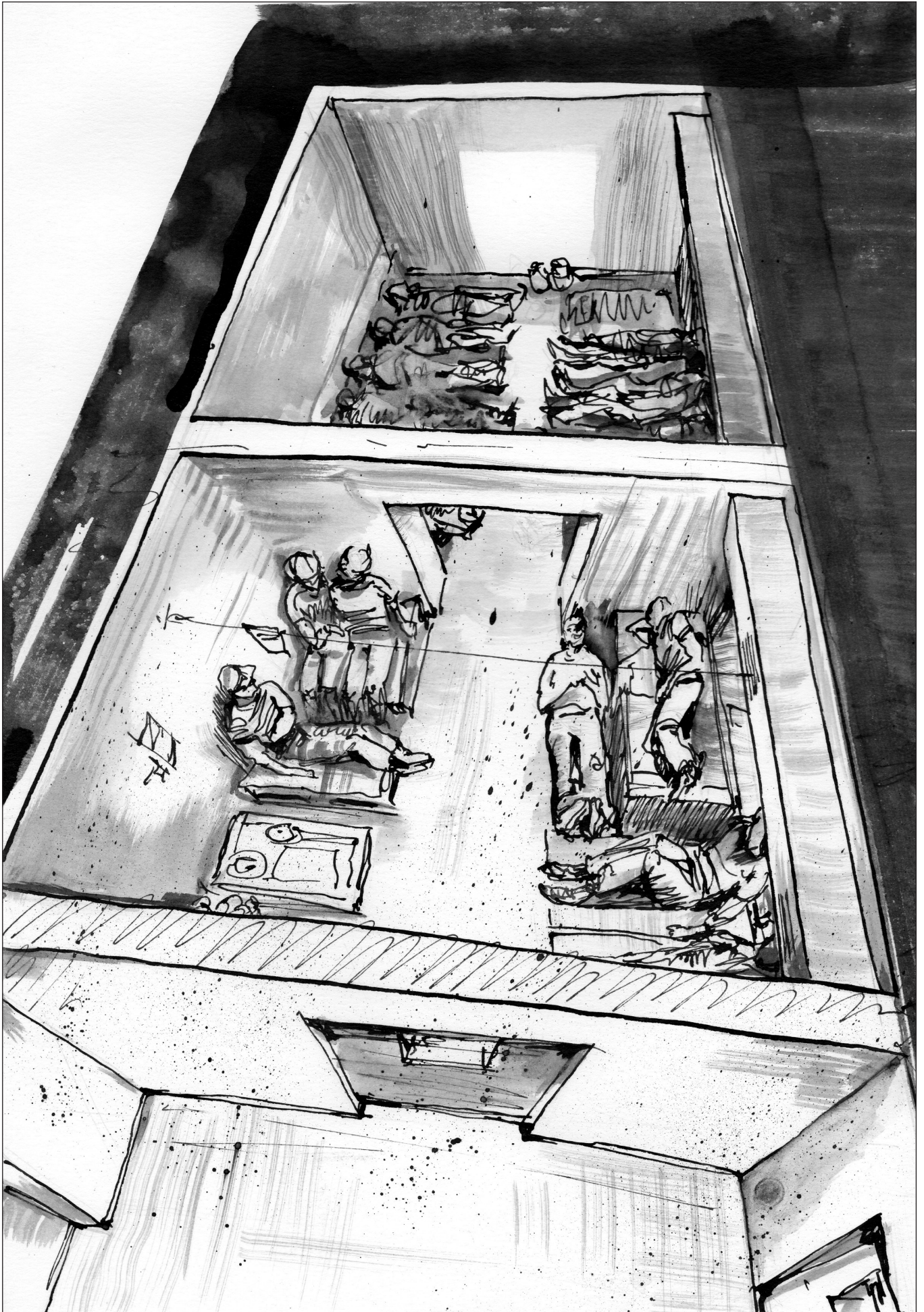
















MILITANTS WERE THERE AS WELL. SOMEONE HAD BEEN CAUGHT DRUNK, SOMEONE HAD FOUGHT WITH OTHER MILITANTS. THERE WEREN'T ONLY ORDINARY SOLDIERS. THERE WAS A MAN IN MY CELL WHO HAD OCCUPIED A HIGH POSITION AND HAD STOLEN SOMETHING. HE WAS WAITING FOR AN EXEMPLARY EXECUTION. DESPITE THAT HE REMAINED A FULL-HEARTED "DPR" SUPPORTER AS ALL OTHER INMATE MILITANTS. THERE WAS ALSO THAT DMITRIY, HE WAS THE BOSS IN OUR PRISON: HE HAD SET A TIMETABLE FOR SMOKING BREAKS AND HE WATCHED THE WAY FOOD AND OTHER THINGS THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT BY PRISONERS' RELATIVES WERE DISTRIBUTED. HE TOLD US ABOUT "BOYS CRUCIFIED BY THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES IN SLOVYANSK" AND ABOUT "CONCENTRATION CAMPS" THAT WERE AWAITING THE DONBAS RESIDENTS IN CASE UKRAINE WINS. I WAS LOOKING AT HIM AND THINKING: "YOU ARE TO BE EXECUTED TOMORROW AND YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT."







I REMEMBER ONE MORE "MILITANT". HE WAS SHORT, BUT WELL-BUILT AND HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED MANY TIMES. HE WOULD TELL US THAT HE HAD KILLED THREE PEOPLE. HE WOULD DESCRIBE HOW HE KILLED A POLICE OFFICER WHO WAS RAPING HIS GIRLFRIEND. HE WAS IMPRISONED FOR BEATING OTHER MILITANTS WHO WERE DRINKING WHILE ON DUTY.

ONE DAY THEY BROUGHT A NEW CAPTIVE INTO OUR CELL. HE WAS A MIDDLE-AGED MAN WEARING WHITE TROUSERS AND A SHIRT, IT LOOKED AS IF HE HAD BEEN ARRESTED AT WORK. HE WAS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF OUR IMPRISONED CELLMATE — A POLICE OFFICER WHO HAD CAUGHT HIM SEVERAL TIMES. AFTER THIS MEETING IN PRISON, THEY WOULD SIT CLOSELY TOGETHER AND TALK ABOUT GOOD OLD TIMES: "DO YOU REMEMBER, I WAS CHASING YOU? DO YOU REMEMBER, I WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM YOU?"







THERE WERE ALSO SOME FREAKS THERE. ONE RUSSIAN MERCENARY WAS THROWN INTO OUR CELL ONE DAY. HE LOOKED LIKE A WILD BEAST AND HE BEHAVED AGGRESSIVELY. ONE MORE NEW INMATE APPEARED IN OUR CELL THAT DAY AS WELL. HIS CALL NAME WAS MILITANT. SO, THAT RUSSIAN STARTED ASKING HIM ABOUT THE WAR: WHERE HE HAD BEEN AND WHERE HE HAD FOUGHT. WHEN THEY STARTED DISCUSSING SLOVYANSK, THE RUSSIAN CAUGHT HIM ON SOME LIE. THEN, HE BECAME ABSOLUTELY WILD: HE CHARGED AT HIS CELLMATE AND STARTED BEATING HIM. SUCH AN UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS REALLY SHOCKED US.















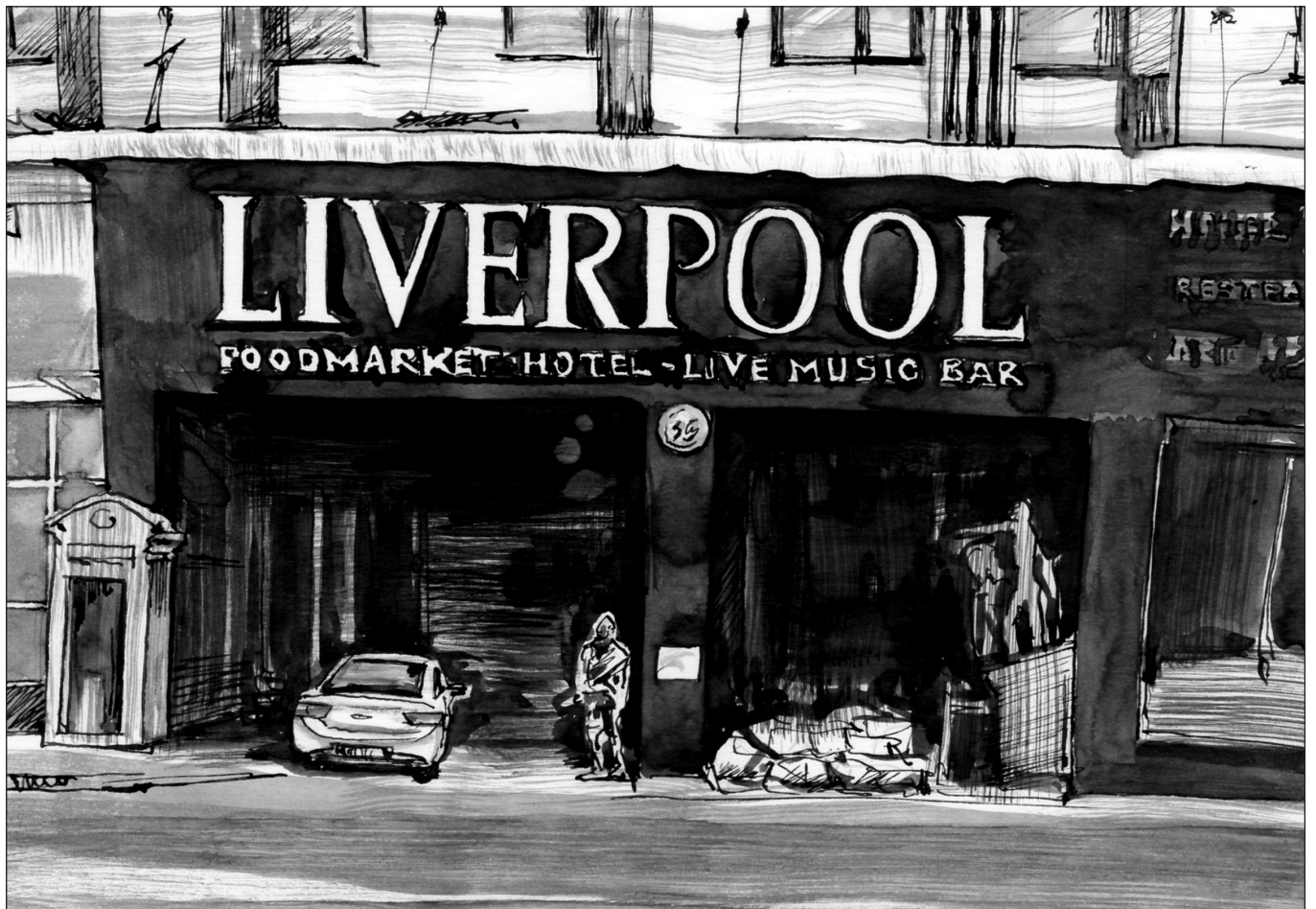
AMONG THE PRISONERS THERE WERE ALSO UKRAINIAN DOCTORS. THEY HAD GONE TO PICK UP WOUNDED AND GOT CAPTURED. THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN ZAKAHARCHENKO, WHO HAD SOLD CHICKENS BEFORE THE WAR AND THEN BECAME "THE HEAD OF THE REPUBLIC" DECIDED TO MAKE A HUMILIATING "CAPTIVES' PARADE" IN DONETSK. HE TOLD EVERYONE THAT UKRAINIAN SERVICEMEN WHO WERE FORCED TO PARADE THERE WERE "CRUEL BEASTS" AND "CASTIGATORS". IN FACT, THEY WERE USUAL SERVICEMEN INCLUDING SOME MEDICS FROM MY CELL.















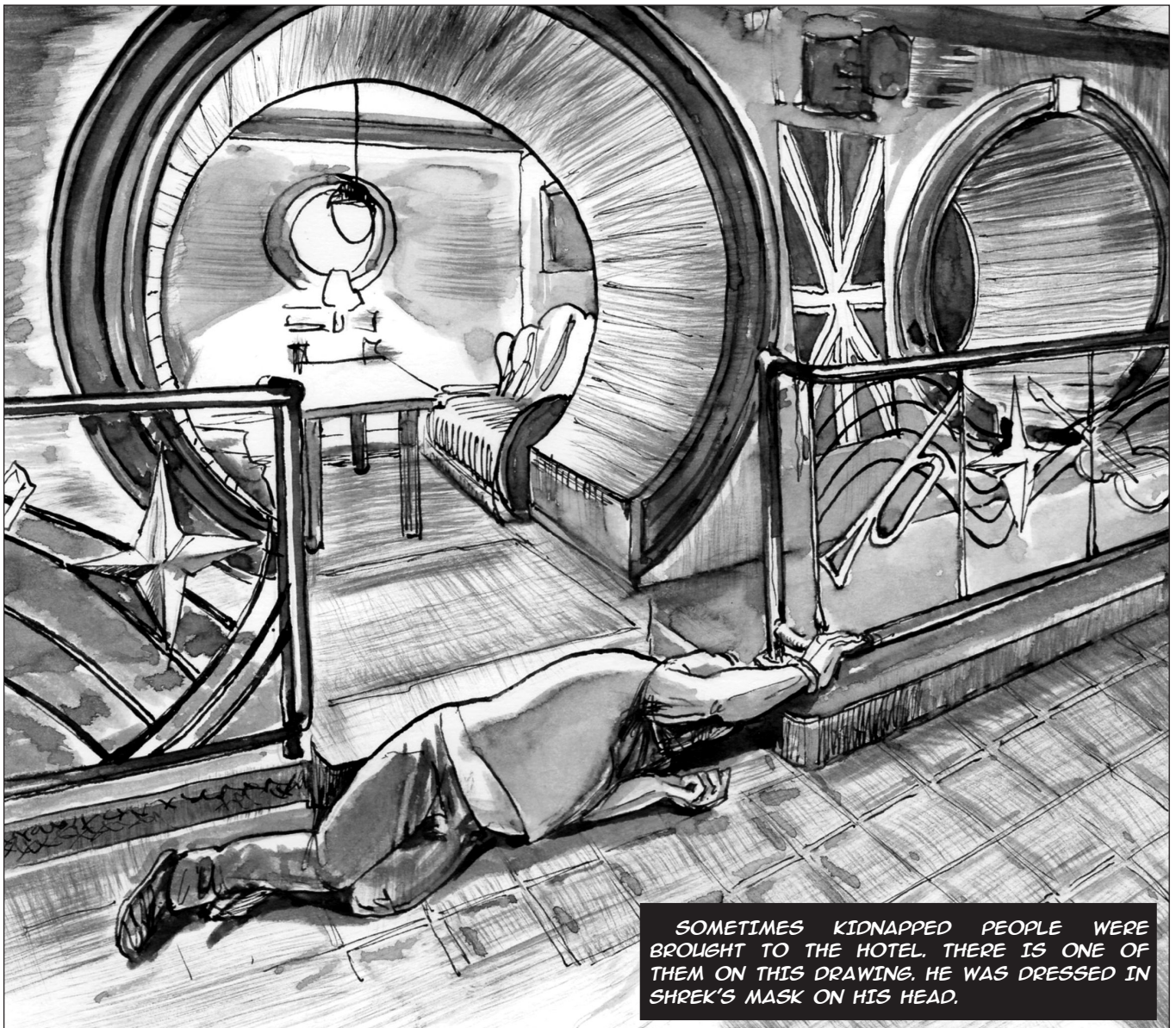
ONE OF OUR NEW CELLMATES EVEN MANAGED TO BE DEAD DRUNK FOR FOUR DAYS RUNNING. OUR PRISONERS DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO PUNISH HIM. TO IMPRISON? BUT HE WAS ALREADY IMPRISONED. THERE WERE SOME NICHES IN THE WALLS OF THAT NIGHT CLUB WHERE THERE WAS LONDON VODKA. WE WOULD TAKE IT IN THE EVENING AND REMEMBER PEACEFUL TIMES OVER A DRINK. WHAT COULD PEOPLE LIKE THE ONES WHO WERE THERE TALK ABOUT? MOSTLY, THEY WOULD TELL OTHERS SOME ADVENTURES THAT HAPPENED TO THEM WHEN THEY WERE DRUNK. WE WATCHED TV AS WELL, THOUGH THERE WERE ONLY RUSSIAN OR SEPARATIST CHANNELS.









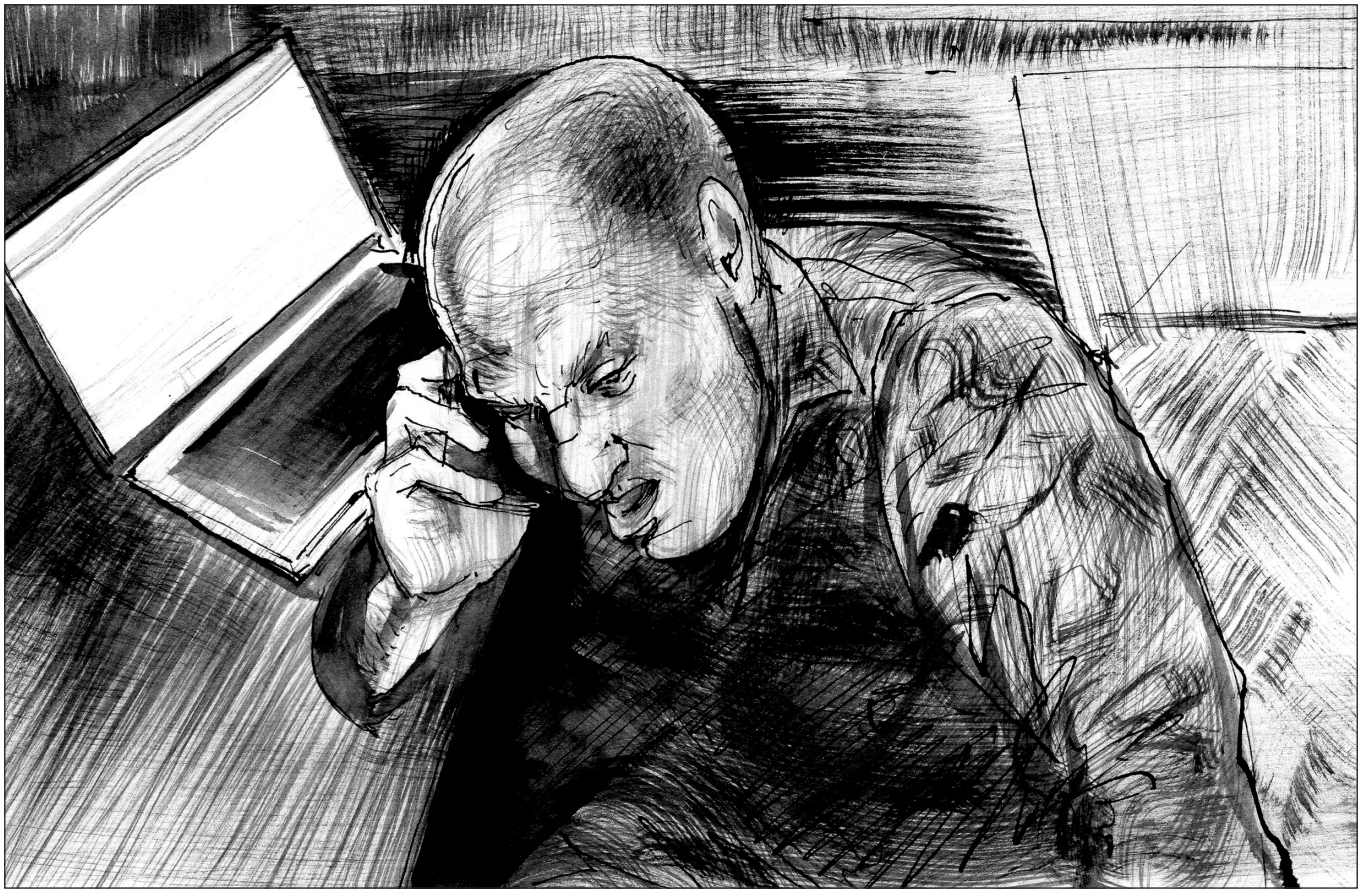




THE HOTEL WAS SITUATED IN THE UNIVERSITY DORMITORY'S YARD. IN SEPTEMBER, A FEW STUDENTS FROM AFRICA WHO RETURNED TO STUDY WERE BROUGHT TO US. IT WAS RATHER STRANGE THAT THEY HAD DECIDED TO COME BACK AS FAR AS IT WAS A HOT PHASE OF WAR AND ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WERE CLOSED THAT TIME.





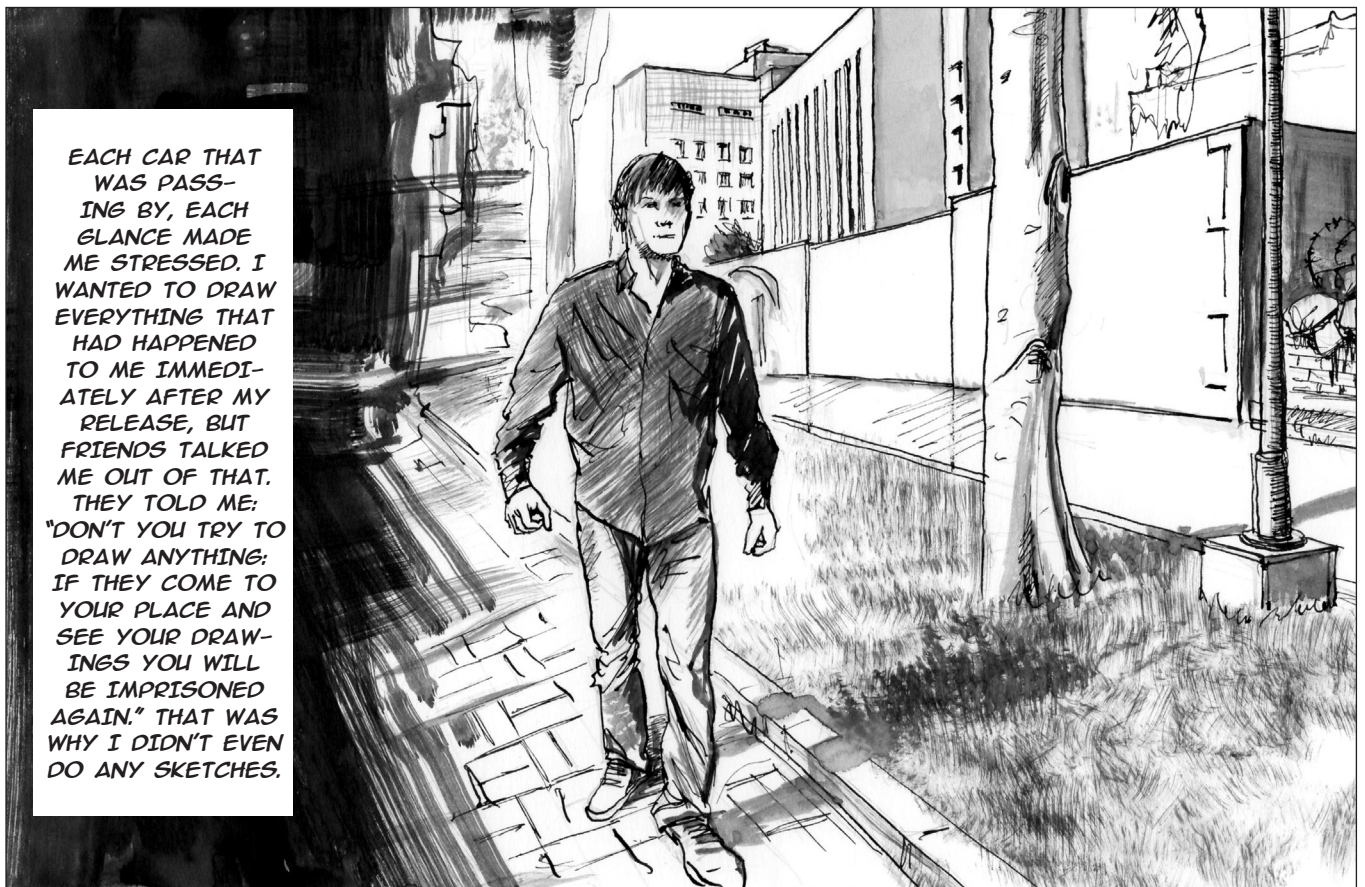


FINALLY, MY IMPRISONMENT FINISHED. MARINA, MY GIRLFRIEND HELPED ME. SHE HAD WORKED IN THE PENAL SYSTEM BUT WHEN THE "DPR" CAME TO POWER, SHE LEFT WORK. SOMEHOW SHE MANAGED TO FIND A PERSON WHO OCCUPIED A HIGH POSITION IN THE "DPR". HE BECAME INTERESTED IN MY FATE. I HAD BEEN IMPRISONED FOR A MONTH AND HALF INSTEAD OF TEN DAYS BY THAT TIME WHICH I ALLEGEDLY HAD TO SPEND THERE.





I WAS SUMMONED TO THE SSU BUILDING AGAIN AND MILITANTS WERE GOING TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH ME. AT THAT TIME THERE WERE TWO HEADS OF THE PRISON THERE, ONE OF THEM HAD A CALL NAME MINER AND ANOTHER ONE WAS BUTCHER. NONE OF THEM WERE THERE AT THAT TIME AND I WAS TAKEN TO A CELL AGAIN. FOR SEVERAL HOURS, FROM 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M. I DID NOT KNOW IF I WAS GOING TO STAY IN PRISON OR TO GO OUT OF IT. FINALLY, ONE OF THEM ARRIVED AND COMMANDED: "OK, LET HIM GO." SO, I WAS FREE. THAT TIME I DECIDED NOT TO PLAY WITH MY FATE AND TO LEAVE DONETSK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I PHYSICALLY COULD NOT STAND BEING IN THE CITY AS MY TEETH WOULD CLENCH AT THE SIGHT OF CAMOUFLAGED PEOPLE. BESIDES, I HAD DEVELOPED A PERSECUTION MANIA BY THAT TIME.

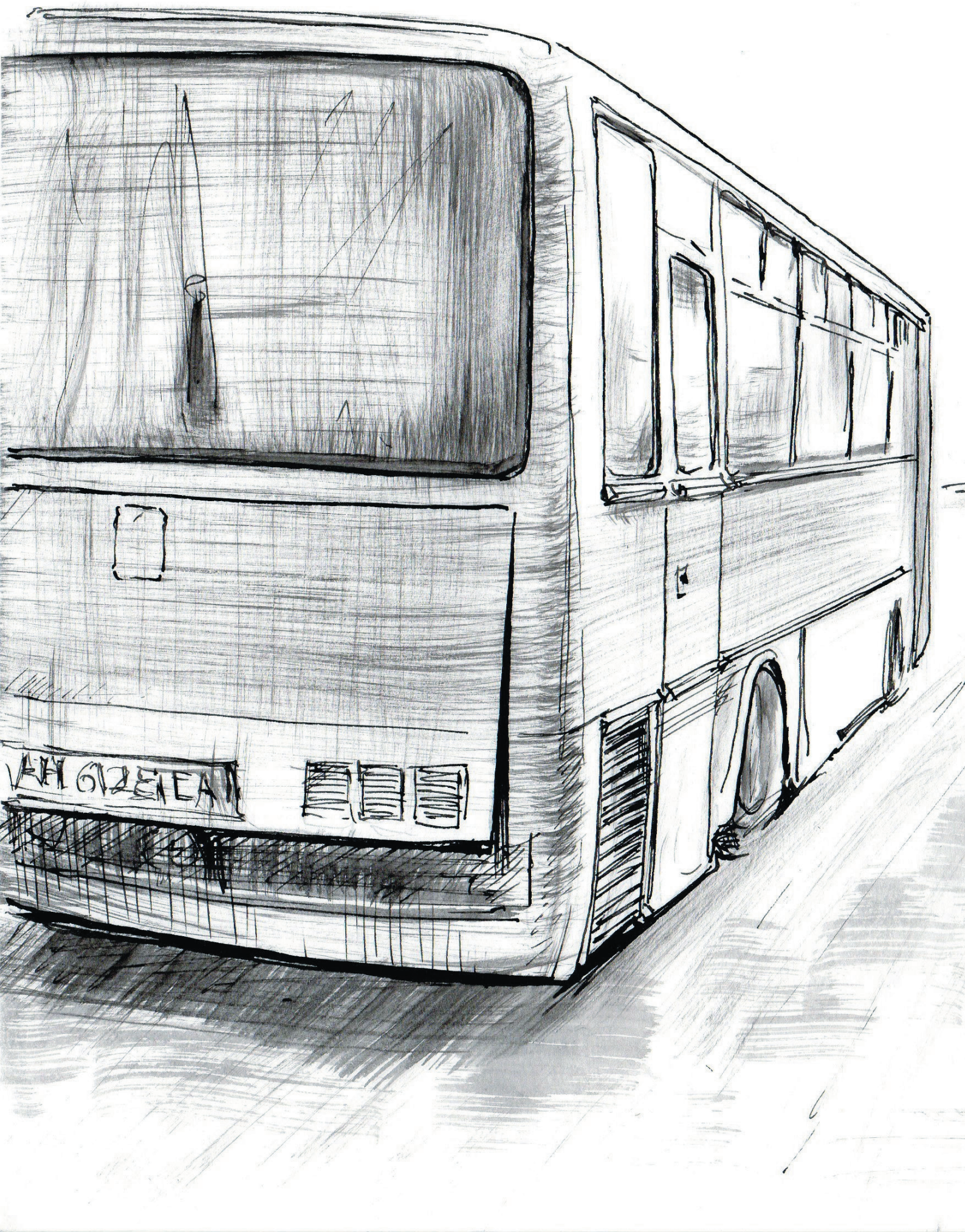


EACH CAR THAT WAS PASSING BY, EACH GLANCE MADE ME STRESSED. I WANTED TO DRAW EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY RELEASE, BUT FRIENDS TALKED ME OUT OF THAT. THEY TOLD ME: "DON'T YOU TRY TO DRAW ANYTHING; IF THEY COME TO YOUR PLACE AND SEE YOUR DRAWINGS YOU WILL BE IMPRISONED AGAIN." THAT WAS WHY I DIDN'T EVEN DO ANY SKETCHES.











BY THAT TIME IT WAS POSSIBLE TO LEAVE DONETSK BY CAR OR BY BUS ONLY, TRAIN CONNECTION HAD BEEN CUT OFF. I BOUGHT A TICKET TO KRASNOARMIYSK AT PIVDENNY BUS STATION. THERE WERE CHECKPOINTS NEAR THAT TOWN. WE WENT THROUGH THE "DPR" AND I SAW UKRAINIAN FLAG FAR AWAY. IT WAS A FLAG OF FREEDOM. I WAS ENTERING A NEW LIFE...





**Графічний роман**

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