

Chicago Author Investigates Dark Chapter of Croatia's Past

DUBROVNIK, Croatia (Jun. 20, 2009) – After an intense research and promotional trek through southern Switzerland and northern Italy, Chicago-based author A.C. Frieden arrived in Dubrovnik, Croatia, to research an upcoming thriller. “Behind Croatia’s beautiful coast and medieval walled city, there is a modern history few want to talk about,” Frieden said. “The violent breakup of Yugoslavia and the siege of Dubrovnik at the hands of Serb and Montenegrin forces in the early 1990s left a deep scar in the psyche of many of its present inhabitants.” This recent, dark history forms a key piece of back story for Frieden’s literary plot.



Above: A.C. Frieden on the mountaintop overlooking the walled town of Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Frieden interviewed a number of local inhabitants who were in Dubrovnik during the five month siege of the city in 1991-1992. Serb and Montenegrin forces bombarded the city center and surrounding areas by air, sea and land, causing several hundred deaths and extensive destruction of historical buildings. Survival was tough, given that the city was cut off from the rest of Croatia, and the resulting challenge to supply fresh water and food. Even with international condemnation of the assault on the city, it took many months before Serb-controlled Yugoslavian forces retreated and turned their attention to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where an even bloodier conflict began. While most people today remember the breakup of Yugoslavia by the atrocities committed in Sarajevo and Mostar, Frieden chose to focus on Dubrovnik because it was an equally horrific experience for its people and the resentment between Croats, Serbs and Montenegrins is still evident today, particularly with those over the age of 40.

During his stay, Frieden also visited several islands near Dubrovnik, including Lopud and Koločep, for possible additional scenes, some of which are still only in the concept phase.



Above: Author A.C. Frieden photographing the port in Dubrovnik's old town.

Below: A.C. Frieden walking through the abandoned Yugoslavian government resort in Kupari, a facility used by the country's autocratic leader Tito and many of his senior military staff and which destroyed during the war in the early 1990s.





Above: Author A.C. Frieden visits Lopud, an island with no cars, friendly locals, a beautiful monastery, pristine beaches and amazingly clear water. It is located only a few miles northwest of Dubrovnik and is accessible only by boat.

About the author: A.C. Frieden is a Swiss-Brazilian novelist, lawyer and pilot living in Chicago. He is currently working on two political novels and a book on aerial photography. For more information, visit his website at www.acfrieden.com and his literary travel blog.

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