This is the last surviving Qur’an he has from his grandfather

Izvor: https://minbarlive.com/videos/this-is-the-last-surviving-qur-an-he-has-from-his-grandfather

> A family's personal account of loss during the Bosnian War, centred on a Qur'an left behind by a grandfather who disappeared while searching for his missing son in the forest. The artifact serves as a tangible connection to a family's trauma and the speaker's identity.

SAŽETAK

This testimony traces a family's experience of separation and loss during the Bosnian War, focusing on a Qur'an that belonged to the speaker's grandfather. The narrative begins with the object's significance as a family heirloom and a personal anchor to identity, then recounts the harrowing journey through forests to reach safety in Tuzla during the conflict. The speaker describes their father—then a teenager—and his brother Gemma fleeing alongside their grandfather, but Gemma becoming separated and never emerging from the forest. When the grandfather realised his son had not survived the crossing, he made the devastating choice to return into the forest to search for him, leaving behind only his Qur'an. Neither the grandfather nor uncle were seen again; both are buried in Srebrenica. The speaker reflects on how this object embodies their family's roots and identity, and shares a recent moment when their father—normally emotionally reserved—broke down while recounting the loss of his brother, revealing the enduring depth of grief across generations.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

- During the Bosnian War, the speaker's father and uncle fled through the forest as teenagers; the uncle became separated and did not emerge from the crossing.
- When the grandfather learned his son had not survived, he chose to return into the forest to search for him, leaving his Qur'an behind.
- The grandfather was never seen again after his decision to go back; he and his son are buried together in Srebrenica.
- The Qur'an serves as the speaker's only tangible connection to their grandfather and functions as a symbol of family identity and roots.

> Decades later, the speaker's father—who had suppressed his grief—experienced a vivid dream of his missing brother on his birthday and broke down emotionally while recounting the loss to his child.

> The speaker uses the family testimony to reflect on how historical trauma and loss are transmitted across generations through objects and memory.

ČLANAK

A Family Treasure

My grandfather was holding this Qur'an with him when he went back into the forest to search for my uncle. To many people, this might just be a historical artifact or a connection to a place, but to me it serves as my roots and it defines who I am as a person. Last year was one of the big moments where I felt this resonate with me deeply. My father, for example, woke up from a dream on his birthday where he saw his brother Gemma. My family still says that I look like him and resemble him. Gemma was 17 at the time of his death, but my father had this vivid dream of him. When my father woke up, I had never seen him cry before. I had never seen him shed a tear. Not because he didn't have the capability to, but because he was strong enough to hide that from me. But that day, he couldn't hide it anymore. He was telling me how much he misses his brother, and he told me the stories of how he lost him.

The Flight Through the Forest

The story goes that during the war, my father was 14 or 15 years old, and his brother Gemma was 16. They had to flee through the forest to reach safety in Tuzla. It was my father, my great grandfather, my grandfather, and my uncle Gemma making the journey together. My father and my grandfather made it through the forest safely, but my uncle Gemma, who was only 16, was separated from them and did not come through with the rest of the family.

The Final Sacrifice

When my grandfather realized that his son had not made it through the forest with them, he made a decision that would define the end of his life. He said that he would not go on and live his life if his son did not come with him. So my grandfather left his Qur'an with my grandmother or my father—I believe it was one of them—and he went back into the forest to find my uncle. He was never seen after that. His body is buried in **Srebrenica** next to his son. This Qur'an is the only thing I have left from my grandfather.

#Bosnian War #Family loss and displacement #Personal testimony #Intergenerational trauma #Material culture and memory #Srebrenica #Refugee experience

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