

LONG DEAD

1. Synopsis

Grigorije Zidar (45) was a hero in the Balkan War of 2034 who charged into battles alone, today he is a grumpy truck driver who transports everything they give him and just wants to be left alone. The European Union established a loose peace, but left all power to local sheriffs. Grigorije has the misfortune that his truck breaks down in the very place where he fought, but he hopes that the memories of him have faded. However, the repair takes more time and he stays in a local hotel which is run down like the whole place which lives on smuggling people who want to go to Scandinavian countries and Greenland after the drastic global warming.

Sofija, an Albanian who was stuck in Montenegro because she had no money for the last round of the trip, works as a waitress in the hotel. Sofija persistently refuses to become a prostitute and very aggressively rejects men and tries to earn money in an honest way. This proud Albanian woman awakens in Grigorije the need for closeness and the desire to care for someone after many years.

As someone skilled with weapons, a man who knows the roads, has a truck, and is an ideal candidate for people smuggling, the head of the municipality, and actually the leader of the mafia, Luka tries to recruit Grigorije for himself. Grigorije rudely refuses him. In this way, Grigorije only resents the mobsters. They take him to prison and there he learns that he is even being indicted for attempted murder and terrorism. In addition, Luka flogs him in front of the whole place to humiliate him.

Sofia brings medicines to the injured Grigorije in prison and sees his wounds. They become even closer and Grigorije promises to take her away from here. However, for helping Grigorije, the powerful Luka also decides to punish Sofija and rapes her. That same evening, Gligorije escapes from prison. He takes the gun from guard Stanojlo, frees Sofija and takes cruel revenge on his abusers. He takes Sofija and they drive together to Greenland in his truck.

2. Director's statement

Long Dead is a neo-western set in the Balkans of 2035, in a land where war never truly ended but only changed its form. The film speaks about forgotten heroes, fabricated histories, and a society consumed by corruption, revenge, and survival. Its central message is deeply anti-war: all Balkan wars have served only criminals and profiteers, while ordinary people remained trapped in their own ruins.

The story unfolds in Maglav, a fictional city ravaged by past wars and climate disaster. Here, power lies not in ideals but in the control of water and human lives. Luka Savić, the autocrat and self-proclaimed "restorer," rules through propaganda, fear, and smuggling. Against this backdrop, two broken souls cross paths: Grigorije Zidar, a former soldier stripped of identity and faith, and Sofija, an Albanian refugee clinging to dignity and survival. Their fragile bond becomes a search for humanity in a place where myths are celebrated in bronze, while the living are buried in oblivion.

Visually, the film draws on western iconography- vast landscapes, silence, sudden eruptions of violence, merged with the legacy of Yugoslav "red westerns." The atmosphere is dry, scorched, and suffocating: nature itself reflects spiritual exhaustion. Maglav, with its grotesque hotel "Riviera" and its plastic illusions of prosperity, becomes an allegory for post-Yugoslav societies where myths outlive their creators.

Stylistically, the film embraces wide, static compositions, natural light, and slow, deliberate camera movements. Harsh daylight exposes the cruelty of existence, while night brings noir-inspired shadows, neon signs, and moments of fragile intimacy. The film will be shot on authentic locations, relying on physical set design and tangible textures rather than digital effects, to preserve realism and emotional weight.

The climax is not a battle, but a realization: Grigorije and Sofija were already "long dead" until they found each other. Their escape across the barren plain toward a mythic Greenland is not a triumph, but a question- does hope exist, or is it just another necessary lie?

Ultimately, *Odavno mrtav* is not a story about heroes or love. It is a meditation on how to fight when defeat is inevitable, how to hold onto humanity when the world forgets what it means, and how to survive the inner wars that never end.

—

Milija Šćepanović
Director

3. Producer's statement, stating the needs of the project at this point

"Long Dead" is a personification of the society we live in, exploring the human dilemma, disturbed values, and moral principles and behavior in a world where it is not important *how*, but *how much* and to *whom*... an absence of essence permeated by daily survival. The biggest fight is man against himself—a question of identity embodied through Zidar's encounter with his own statue, which he must defeat.

The script, under the then working title "Nehaj" was supported by the Film Centre of Montenegro in the script development category. After that, the project participated in several foreign screenwriting workshops: Solace 23 and MIDPOINT Institute in 2019. Project got support from Film Centre of Montenegro for project development in 2023 and for production in 2024. LONG DEAD and producer Milena Charan was selected for the training programme EAVE Producers Workshop 2025.

This marks the *director's first feature film*; however, he is highly experienced and has undertaken extensive long-term preparation for this project. We have high expectations for the film, which is intended for a theatrical realize.

From a production perspective, and to date, we have secured 34% of the budget. We are now seeking co-producers—specifically from Albania and Italy—to facilitate technical and artistic collaboration, expand our network, and access new markets, which will elevate the project's international profile and credibility. As for now we have secured partners from Slovenia, Croatia, North Macedonia and Serbia. We are also in search of sales agents, distribution partners, and post-production service providers.

4. Total Budget – 700.000€

5. Secured Budget – 34,29%

6. Your picture and short bios



DIRECTOR & WRITER

MILIJA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ

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FORMAL EDUCATION

- „Academy of Arts“, Belgrade, Serbia - Films and tv directing in class of professor Slobodan Šijan.

- „Faculty of Drama Arts“, Cetinje, Montenegro - Master in directing.

FILM:

*My own projects

2024: Odavno mrtav / Long Dead (in development)

Feature film directed by and writer

Co-writer: Ognjen Sviličić

Production: Taurus Production

2022:

Orlovsko gnijezdo / The Eagle's Nest ('18)

short film (directed by)

Cast: Plamen Brnović, Petar Kažić, Jelena Gavrilović, Ana Vučković.

Director of photography: Dragan Vildović, SAS.

Production: Open Box Studio, Bibi Film, Videa Production.

Festivals: Bogoshorts, Film Front, SEE Los Angeles, Balkan Beyond Borders, Amarcort, Adana Film Festival, IFF Message to Man, Nepal International Film Festival, Podgorica Film Festival, Karlovci FF.

2014:

Felix Romuliana (Documentary short) ('24)

Production: Narodni Muzej Zaječar, National Geographic Channel Adria

Director of photography: Srđan Božinović, SAS.

2010:

Krik / The Cry ('16)

short film

(directed by, screenplay)

Cast: Petar Božović, Miodrag Krivokapić & Mirljub Lešo.

Director of photography: Bojan Brbora, SAS, BAFTA.

Production: AU Beograd, FDU Beograd, Cinema Train, Opština Bar.

*Film was in official program in 16 festivals all around the world and was three times awarded (Herceg Novi, Cinema City, Vrnjačka Banja)

2009:

“Braunau” (‘22)

short film

(directed by, screenplay)

Cast: Ljubomir Bandović, Dejan Jajčanin, Sonja Popivoda.

Director of photography: Draško Pejanović, SAS.

*Film took part in festivals (Beograd, Herceg Novi, Podgorica)

2005:

“Ma ajde kao” (‘05)

Amateur short film

(directed by, screenplay and camera)

*Film was awarded for the best editing on amateur films festival „Irie Motion“ in Milan, Italy.

- Currently working as the programming director at the Bar Cultural Center, Montenegro.



PRODUCER

MILENA CHARAN

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Milena Charan works as a producer and executive producer.

- Projects: **TV series:** Dug moru 3 (2022.), Dug moru 2 (2020.).

- **Feature film:** Long Dead (development 2024), Zar sanja (script development 2025)

- Executive producer: Supermarket (2023), Local Vampire (2012)

producer of the series “Local Vampire”.

Producer of the festival “Barski ljetopis” 2021 and 2022.

- **Documentary films:** Milica, u majke (in production 2025.), Montenegro and the Great War, Njegoš – a biography, Žabljak Crnojevića, Life on a pause.

- **Producer of animated films** Kokokatapetl 2025, Requiem for Pinocchio (with award for Best short animated film „Best Shorts“in Los Angeles), A Little Man in a Big Coat.

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Thank You!

LONG DEAD

MILIJA ŠČEPANOVIĆ/MILENA CHARAN



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7. One image that represents the project

