



A JOURNALIST WHO INTENDED  
TO BE IN BESLAN COVERING  
THE SIEGE WAS ANNA  
POLITKOVSKAYA.



POLITKOVSKAYA, A REPORTER FOR  
THE INDEPENDENT BI-WEEKLY  
NEWSPAPER NOVAYA GAZETA,  
WAS AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF  
PRESIDENT PUTIN AND THE  
RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT.

IT WAS HER REPORTING FROM CHECHNYA—ON THE MURDERS, TORTURE, AND KIDNAPPING THAT  
TOOK PLACE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CONFLICT—THAT MADE POLITKOVSKAYA'S NATIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION.



FOR YEARS SHE  
REFUSED TO GIVE  
UP REPORTING ON THE  
WAR DESPITE NUMEROUS  
ACTS OF INTIMIDATION  
AND VIOLENCE.

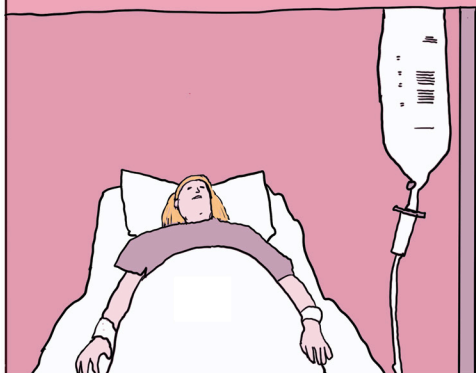
AS SOON AS NEWS BROKE OF THE SCHOOL SIEGE IN BESLAN, POLITKOVSKAYA ATTEMPTED TO TRAVEL TO NORTH OSSETIA. SHE REGISTERED FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE FLIGHTS, WHICH WERE ALL CANCELED. SHE FINALLY GOT A SEAT ON A PLANE TO ROSTOV, THE LARGEST CITY IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA—STILL FOUR HUNDRED MILES FROM BESLAN. HER PLAN WAS TO HIRE A CAR AND DRIVE THE REST OF THE WAY. AS POLITKOVSKAYA HAD BEEN THE TARGET OF DEATH THREATS IN THE PAST, SHE DECIDED NOT TO EAT THE AIRPLANE FOOD...



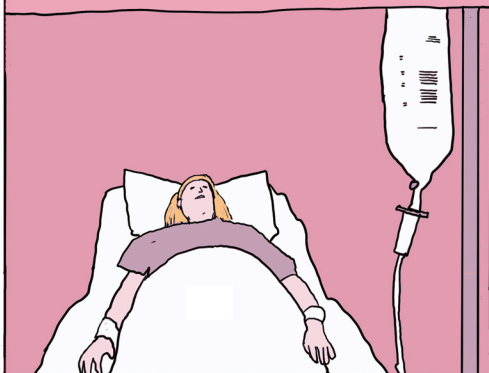
AND ASKED ONLY FOR A CUP OF TEA. TEN MINUTES LATER, SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.



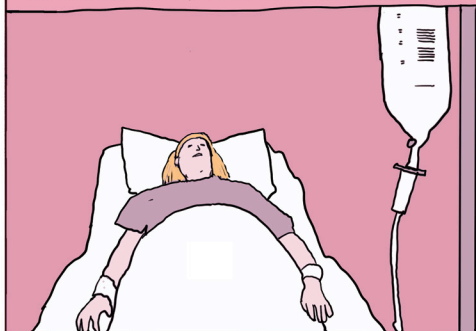
SHE WAS STILL UNCONSCIOUS WHEN THE PLANE LANDED.



DOCTORS IN MOSCOW, WHERE SHE WAS TRANSPORTED TWO DAYS LATER, CONCLUDED SHE HAD BEEN POISONED...



WITH AN UNDISCLOSED TOXIN THAT DID SEVERE DAMAGE TO HER KIDNEYS, LIVER, AND ENDOCRINE SYSTEM. IT TOOK MONTHS FOR HER TO RECOVER AND SHE NEVER ENTIRELY REGAINED HER HEALTH.

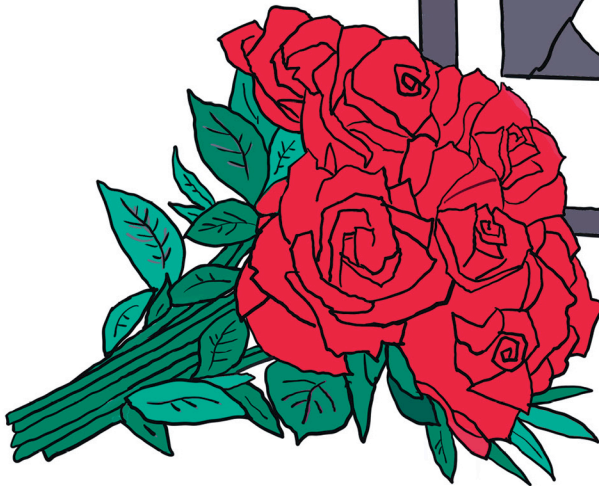


TWO YEARS LATER, ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006, ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA WAS SHOT DEAD IN THE ELEVATOR OF HER APARTMENT BUILDING IN CENTRAL MOSCOW: TWICE IN THE CHEST, ONCE IN THE SHOULDER, AND ONCE IN THE HEAD AT POINT-BLANK RANGE.

PUTIN HAD TURNED 54 THAT DAY. MANY PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT THIS MURDER WAS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

BEFORE POLITKOVSKAYA WAS BURIED, MORE THAN 1,000 MOURNERS FILED PAST HER COFFIN TO PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS.

DOZENS OF POLITKOVSKAYA'S COLLEAGUES, PUBLIC FIGURES, AND ADMIRERS OF HER WORK GATHERED AT THE CEMETERY.

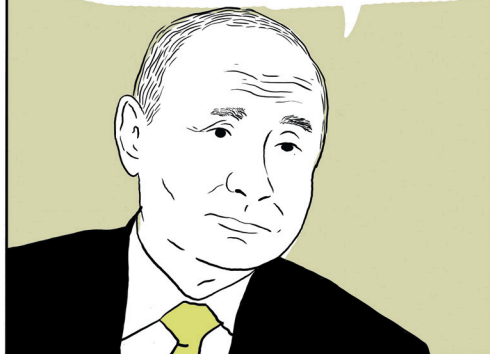


ALTHOUGH THE SUSPECTS WERE FOUND RELATIVELY QUICKLY, IT TOOK EIGHT YEARS AND THREE TRIALS BEFORE ANYONE WAS FOUND GUILTY. IN 2014, A COURT FINALLY SENTENCED TWO MEN TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR POLITKOVSKAYA'S MURDER, AND HANDED LENGTHY PRISON TERMS TO THREE OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE KILLING. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR WHO ORDERED OR PAID FOR THE CONTRACT KILLING.

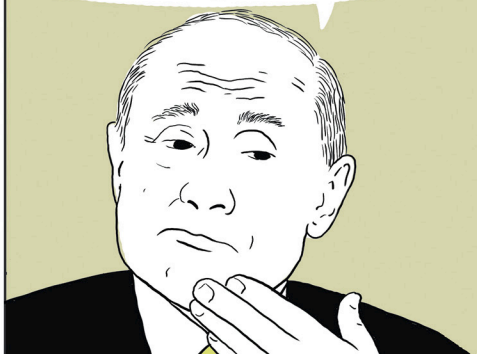
IT WAS NOT UNTIL THREE DAYS AFTER ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA'S MURDER THAT PUTIN SAID ANYTHING PUBLICLY ABOUT HER DEATH. HE MADE A STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA WHILE IN DRESDEN AFTER A MEETING WITH GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL. HE PLAYED DOWN POLITKOVSKAYA'S INFLUENCE AND SUGGESTED THAT HER MURDER WAS DAMAGING TO BOTH THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND HIMSELF, IMPLYING THAT HE HAD NO MOTIVE TO KILL HER.



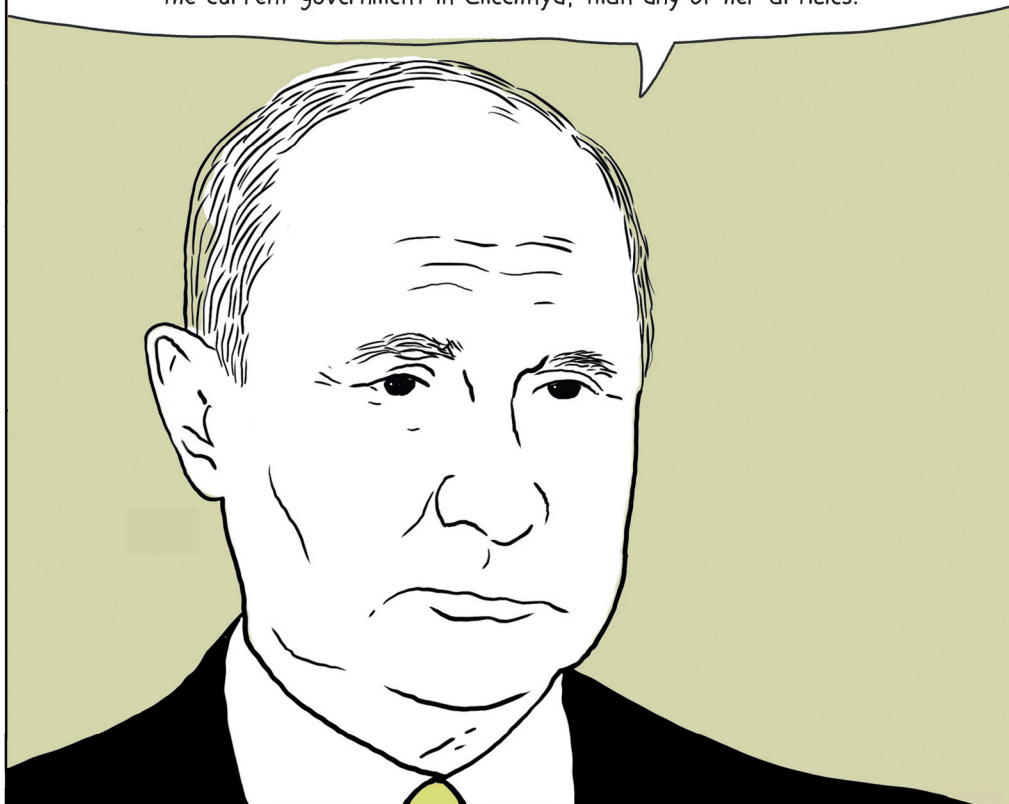
That journalist was indeed a harsh critic of the current Russian government. But I think that journalists know...



certainly, experts are aware of this, that her political influence in the country was extremely insignificant.



She was known in journalist circles and among human-rights activists and in the West, but her influence on politics in Russia was minimal. The murder of such a person—the cold-blooded murder of a woman, a mother—is in itself an attack on our country. This murder does much more harm to Russia and its current government, and to the current government in Chechnya, than any of her articles.

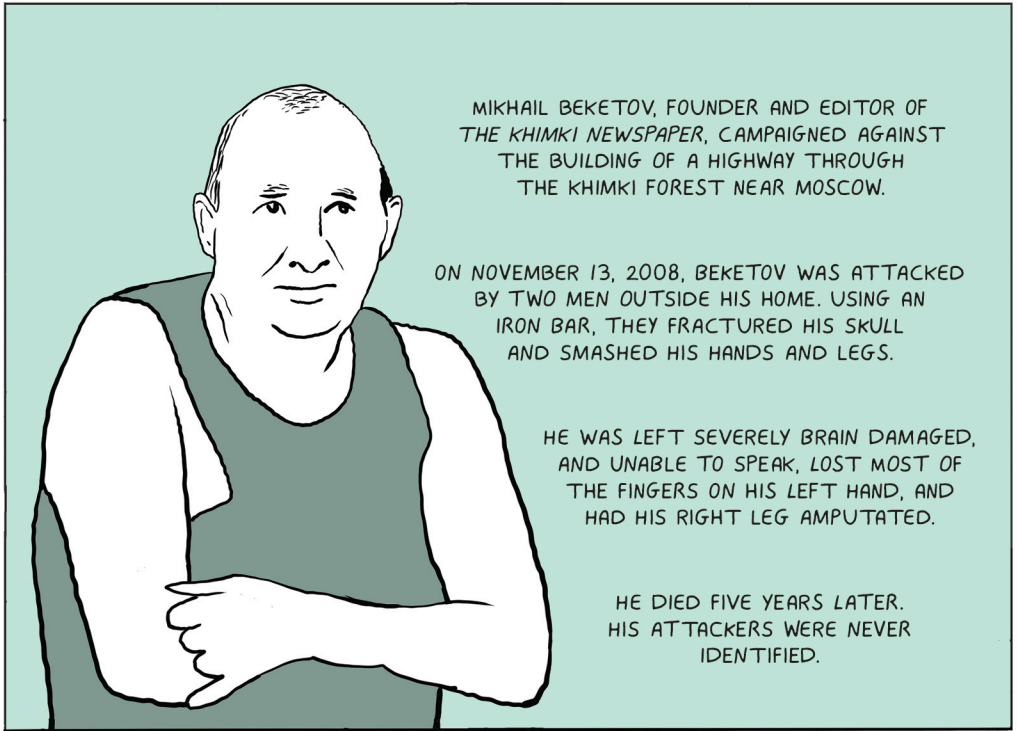


JOURNALISM IN RUSSIA IS A DANGEROUS OCCUPATION. DOZENS OF RUSSIAN JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN MURDERED OR DIED IN SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES SINCE 2000, ACCORDING TO THE COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS AND THE GLASNOST DEFENSE FOUNDATION.



IN NOVEMBER 2009, INDEPENDENT BROADCASTER OLGA KOTOVSKAYA FELL TO HER DEATH FROM A FOURTEENTH-FLOOR WINDOW, A DAY AFTER WINNING A LONG-RUNNING COURT BATTLE TO REGAIN CONTROL OF HER SUCCESSFUL KASKAD REGIONAL TV CHANNEL.






MIKHAIL BEKETOV, FOUNDER AND EDITOR OF THE KHIMKI NEWSPAPER, CAMPAIGNED AGAINST THE BUILDING OF A HIGHWAY THROUGH THE KHIMKI FOREST NEAR MOSCOW.

ON NOVEMBER 13, 2008, BEKETOV WAS ATTACKED BY TWO MEN OUTSIDE HIS HOME. USING AN IRON BAR, THEY FRACTURED HIS SKULL AND SMASHED HIS HANDS AND LEGS.

HE WAS LEFT SEVERELY BRAIN DAMAGED, AND UNABLE TO SPEAK, LOST MOST OF THE FINGERS ON HIS LEFT HAND, AND HAD HIS RIGHT LEG AMPUTATED.

HE DIED FIVE YEARS LATER. HIS ATTACKERS WERE NEVER IDENTIFIED.



ON JANUARY 19, 2009, AN ASSAILANT SHOT ANASTASIA BABUROVA, A FREELANCE CORRESPONDENT FOR THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER *NOVAYA GAZETA*, WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE KREMLIN.

BABUROVA'S DEATH WAS LIKELY PROMPTED BY HER RECENT COVERAGE OF PROMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER STANISLAV MARKELOV—WHO HAD DENOUNCED THE EARLY RELEASE OF A RUSSIAN ARMY OFFICER CONVICTED IN 2000 FOR THE ABDUCTION AND MURDER OF A CHECHEN GIRL.