

## 6. Le Boudin (2014)

### **Technical details**

HD video, 16:9, color, Dolby 5.1 sound, 16 min., Germany – Portugal

### **Synopsis**

“None of the people who were asked about me had seen me.” *Le Boudin* documents the encounter of the young Elias Geissler with the testimony of Nuno Fialho, who at the age of sixteen was forced to enlist in the French Foreign Legion. “I didn’t enlist. They enlisted me.”

### **Director’s intentions note**

In 2011 I did an interview with Nuno Fialho. It might have been the toughest interview I have directed, due to the fact that remembering was a delicate experience for Nuno. Asking someone to remember can be cruel.

It explains the fragmented discourse and the abstractions.

In *Le Boudin* it is Elias (the German youngster) who says, “I’m looking at that wardrobe, but it was smaller,” but it had been Nuno looking at the wardrobe in the room where we stand.

I never knew the crime he committed. Nor have I asked. We only know what happened after that event, and we have no clue where he might be now. On the other hand, we only know that where Nuno lives, “no one is concerned with anything.”

We watch cut-ups, the copying and pasting of excerpts where nothing was rewritten.

Nuno was sixteen years old when he left Portugal to join the French Foreign Legion, integrating the 82nd Airborne Platoon at and the Urban Guerrilla Division.

In *Le Boudin* (French Foreign Legion march) Elias Geissler, a sixteen-year-old German actor, represents Nuno’s narrative. His voice appears from time to time. We observe the friction between Elias’s androgynous figure and Nuno’s deformed voice—between the boy who stumbles over the words of a text that he doesn’t understand, that he theatrically pretends to feel and exceeds, and a voice that contains the traces of its narrative.

A voice (Nuno) who didn’t choose the story it narrates, but who knows it well, contrasts with the voice (Elias) who chose the story represented on-screen.

Nuno didn’t choose, he was led to X and then to Y: “I didn’t enlist. They enlisted me . . . Because if it were now or if I had been given the choice.”

When the first mission is described, the one where the African village was decimated for the establishment of a game reserve—the same game reserve

that is later portrayed in the National Geographic Channel broadcast—the “hygienization” is clear and the criticism that may prevail resonates within the display of this film. Simultaneously it highlights the paradox that surrounds classified missions led by governments and private entities.

*Le Boudin* is the fragile documentation of Elias’s encounter with Nuno’s account.

*Salomé Lamas*  
*Berlin, July 19, 2014*

### **Credits**

Written and directed: Salomé Lamas

Production: Salomé Lamas

With: Nuno Fialho, Elias Geissler

Cinematography: Salomé Lamas

Assistant director: Mónica Lima

Sound: Carlos Godinho

Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira

Editing: Salomé Lamas

Counseling: Francisco Moreira

Color grading: Unai Rosende

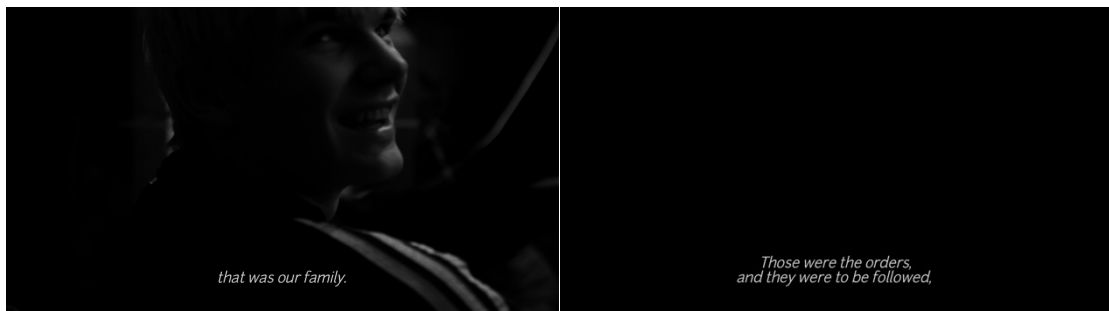
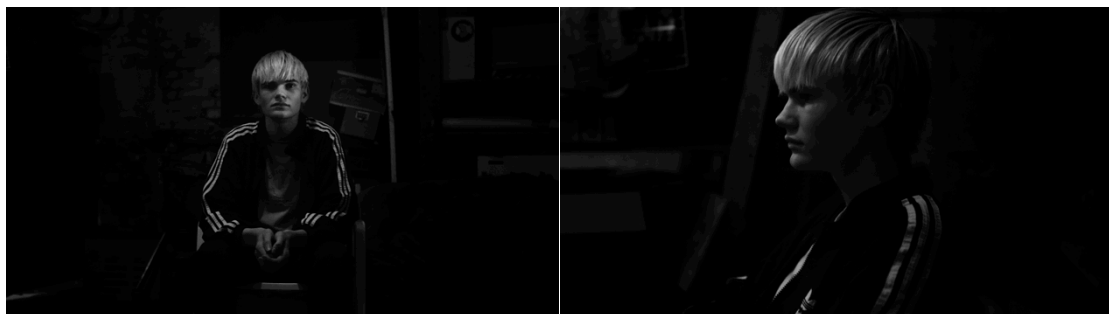
Laboratory: Mengamuk Films

Translation (Portuguese–German): Barbara Bichler

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Support: Berliner Kuenstlerprogramm des DAAD

Distribution: Agência da Curta Metragem



Le Boudin (2014)

**Nuno Fialhos' selected, edited and transcribed dialogues in the original language to be performed by Elias Geissler in German**

Nuno Fialho: Nenhuma das pessoas a quem pergunto por mim me viu.

Onde é que vivia quando tinhas 16 anos?

No deserto. Na legião estrangeira francesa.

Três meses antes do meu aniversário, na esquadra da GNR do Cacém deram-me a escolher entre o reformatório ou a tropa. Devido á minha idade a única que me aceitou foi a legião estrangeira francesa.

Fui primeiro para França.

Não me alistei. Alistaram-me. Como é que vou explicar? Trataram de tudo. Chegou aquela hora, aquele dia...

Levaram-me para a base. Fiz ensinamento e era para ir para o 2º regimento de pára-quedistas forças especiais.

Em França era só treino. Muito treino de montanha.

Só que tinha jeito para aquilo diziam. O sargento de instrução disse: "Apresenta-te em tal sítio, a tal hora no aeródromo".

Não fazia a mínima ideia de para onde me levavam. Apanhei um avião de carga militar e apercebi-me que ia para a Líbia. Para o deserto Líbio que faz fronteira com o Egito.

Nem sempre estávamos em missões. Não nos podiam ver parados. Fazíamos muito treino.

...Na Síria estávamos acampados perto da faixa de Gaza onde existiam muitas aldeias vazias, mesmo vazias. O meu pelotão era de guerrilha urbana.

...Então para nós era óptimo.

Quando não estávamos a melhorar as nossas técnicas de ataque e defesa dávamos treino a grupos paramilitares. Existiam muitos por ali pelo menos naquela altura ... Dávamos treino específico a qualquer um...

Vamos supor o IRA quer enviar um grupo para se especializar, seja em armamento, seja em comunicações, seja em guerrilha urbana. Pronto.

...Muitos. Demasiados paramilitares para o meu gosto.

Tivemos sempre grupos norte americanos que o que faziam na altura era patrulhar a fronteira entre os Estados Unidos e o México para os imigrantes ilegais não entrarem. Cada um escolhia um sector e pronto.

Mossad, Assad, serviços secretos ingleses MI6 ou MI7 mas acho que era MI6. Tivemos de tudo. Dependendo da especialização contratavam-nos 1, 2 ou 3 meses dependendo da disponibilidade.

Ás ideologias deles não ligávamos; se era para fazer aquilo era aquilo que fazíamos.

Nenhuma das pessoas a quem pergunto por mim me viu.

Não gostávamos muito de falar do passado. Naquele pelotão eram todos fugidos á justiça ou queriam desaparecer por uma razão ou outra.

Pronto era assim.

Não gostávamos muito de falar da nossa vida privada e tínhamos nomes de código. Eu não era o soldado Nuno Fialho. Não era revelada a nossa

identidade. Quando saí de lá (da Legião) continuei com o meu nome; mas se quisesse ser o Manuel, o Joaquim, o João, davam-me!  
Chegava a Portugal e mostrava: “Aqui está”. Sim... Era assim...

Vamos supor que tínhamos uma missão na mesma altura é claro que se fosse legar ia o 2º regimento de pára-quedistas, mas se fosse muito urgente íamos nós. Se não estivéssemos disponíveis contratava-mos um grupo de mercenários ex-legionários para desempenharem a missão. Como devem imaginar eu nunca soube quanto pagavam.

Legalmente a Legião Estrangeira é muito raro entrar em confrontos directos, mas trabalha muito para a ONU como consultora.

Vamos imaginar um país que esteja em guerra civil ou com o embargo da ONU, o consultor em princípio é um graduado, um oficial da Legião, que está, mas que oficialmente não está. Que é a história do meu pelotão existia, mas oficialmente não existia.

Fantasmas no deserto era o que nós éramos.

Nenhuma das pessoas a quem pergunto por mim me viu.

A primeira missão é difícil esquecer. Foi uma limpeza étnica de um belga que em África queria uma reserva para fazer safaris. Só que havia uma aldeia que não queria mesmo sair. Não ligavam a dinheiro, não ligavam a nada e tinham lá a vida deles. Então mandaram um helicóptero para libertar um veneno. Então na aldeia os animais morreram e tudo o resto. Eu e outros estávamos no “grupo de terra”, que era para fazer uma espera aos homens que tinham ido caçar ou que estavam fora na altura. E limpar tudo. Não deixar vestígio. Não tínhamos equipa de limpeza, éramos nós, portanto...

No outro dia estava a ver televisão, onde eu moro ninguém se interessa por nada, estava a ver o Geography Channel, fizeram uma peça sobre uma reserva em África. Mostravam os animais selvagens em ambiente protegido e uma entrevista com o proprietário tenho a certeza de que era aquela reserva, pelo menos era no mesmo local.

No Peru uma missão de resgate, que envolvia uma organização católica, que enviou uns médicos que foram raptados por um grupo armado. Em vez de contratarem um grupo de mercenários contrataram a Legião e nós fomos lá resgata-los. Quem se meteu á frente...temos pena. Infelizmente eram as ordens que tínhamos.

Na Rússia um gasoduto na Sibéria (nunca sobe a localização ao certo) era para explodir aquilo.

Em Mogadíscio um grupo de Médicos do Mundo acompanhado por um pelotão de capacetes azuis da ONU ficaram presos. Mandaram os Rangers Norte Americanos ficaram presos. Mandaram uma equipa Seal Norte Americana também ficaram presos. Até que por fim mandaram-nos a nós. Quando chegámos ao quartel da ONU foi contra civis que disparámos. Cada um de nós leva entre 1000 a 1500 balas, portanto dá para imaginar. Fomos 20, mais os Rangers, mais os Seal, mais os capacetes azuis. No final correu tudo bem.

Era a tal coisa entrávamos fazíamos o serviço íamos embora. Quem se metia á frente não tínhamos culpa.

Inicialmente fez-me impressão. Depois da primeira missão o meu corpo tinha convulsões e não conseguia dormir. Depois disseram-me: “o melhor é não ligar”. Ficava alheio a isso tudo. E pronto.

Muito sinceramente não tínhamos tempo para pensar. Estávamos sempre ocupados com qualquer coisa. Aprendi a ficar alienado de tudo o que se passava. O que pensava é que faltavam 8 meses para ir embora dali.

Era mais do que a amizade que se pedia. Era a vida. Aqui, confias as chaves da mota, as chaves do carro. Lá confiava a vida. Era como se fossemos um clube restrito como o Club Med ou o Clube Vip era só que fazíamos o que fazíamos.

Um meio para atingir um fim, éramos como se fossemos uma ferramenta mal ou bem e eu era um garoto. Uma ferramenta. Muito sinceramente de quem tivesse dinheiro para pagar pelo menos naquele grupo. Era um grupo militar, mas era como se fosse um grupo mercenários, quem pagasse melhor não se ligava. Tanto trabalhávamos para um barão da droga, para um senhor da guerra como para um político corrupto. Trabalhávamos para quem pagasse mais. O lema não era este, mas nós dizíamos “pagam nós fazemos”.

Era preciso uma arma especial, bastava requisitar, por vezes as informações não eram assim tão baratas quanto isso. Outras vezes tinham que pagar para ter imagens tiradas por satélite. Vamos supor que a França ou a Rússia tinham satélites, tinha que se pagar a esse país.

Vamos imaginar que um grupo de reféns está na sala ao lado. Quem nos vale para arriscarmos tudo para entrarmos nesta sala? Vamos sofrer baixas e o mais certo é não conseguir mos desempenhar a missão inicial. As informações são 50% do serviço.

Lá tínhamos o ópio líquido... Os interrogatórios para se saberem determinadas informações por vezes recorriam á tortura pesada. Era-nos facultado o tal ópio em estado líquido era apenas colocar numa seringa e injectar. Dá a mesma abstinência e ressaca que a heroína se não for mais. Cria dependência. Foi o meu caso.

...Dependendo da pessoa. Há pessoas mais sensíveis a umas coisas que outras. Desde choques eléctricos, dor infligida por laminas, asfixiamento... As interrogatórias eram rotativas, nunca era a mesma pessoa. Não podia ser...

Estive lá dois anos e vi o meu capitão apenas umas 7 vezes. Quem nos dava as ordens era um tenente: “temos isto para fazer e aquilo” e transmitia as ordens ao primeiro sargento, o primeiro sargento transmitíamos a nós. Pronto...e are assim.

Não se podia recusar uma missão porque o castigo lá ... A solitária. Estou a olhar para aquele armário mas era mais pequeno. Colocávamos um ombro em cada lado e as costas noutro. Aquilo eram 4 chapas. Durante o dia faziam

44°/ 48° graus e á noite 3°/4° graus negativos... já para ser simpático. Era uma tortura. Sem comida, sem água. Davam uns comprimidos de sal para pôr debaixo da língua para não desidratar. Mais nada. Durante o dia tínhamos que nos despir lá dentro - impossível. Encostávamo-nos á chapa queimava. De noite um frio desgraçado.

...Já não sei onde ia... Os castigos eram assim mas não era por se recusar cumprir uma missão - isso era como desertar e desertar é a morte ou a prisão perpetua. Ninguém é maluco para fazer isso.

Cumpri os dois anos. Mandaram-me para casa dois dias nem chegou a 48h. Enviaram 2 legionários para eu assinar o contrato seguinte (de oito anos). Recusei. Passado umas 3 semanas: “Olha, arranjámos trabalho para ti como segurança no continente Africano” Ganhava bem, mas bem. Fui para Casablanca. Resultado - era trabalho de mercenário. E eu apenas um garoto.

Em Marrocos fui porque me disseram que era uma firma multinacional que tinha sede ou uma repartição em Marrocos e que ia como segurança. Mas nada. Segurança é só o controle, controlar sistemas de segurança, estar á porta a revistar quem entra, ver se os papeis estão em ordem - isso é trabalho de segurança e foi o que me disseram.

Mas o trabalho não era nem perto disso. Tinha de estar num quarto de hotel á espera que me chamassem. Levava um telefone por satélite para estar sempre contactável. Recebia quase 1000 contos por mês com tudo pago. Basicamente o serviço era o mesmo que fazia na Legião mas era uma vida fácil porque não treinava. Não fazia mesmo nada. Ficava apenas á espera que me chamassem. Chamaram-me 3 ou 4 vezes.

Nunca fui sozinho. Tínhamos uma pasta com as informações todas, se era para salvar alguém que estava feito refém ou sei lá... Tinha um contrato de 6 meses, mas um dia tivemos uma missão... Uma empresa de mineralização de diamantes (que infelizmente passava-se muito) estava a fazer mineralização na foz de um rio e houve uns colonos que conseguiram uma autorização para ir mesmo para a nascente. Resultado quando os diamantes dessa empresa chegavam á foz eram muito pequeninos e a produção desceu drasticamente. A empresa contratou-nos para irmos “falar com os colonos. Pronto é para esquecer.

Em África deitámos abaixo regimes, posemos novos presidentes em países de que eu nunca tinha ouvido falar. E ali era a mesma coisa. Antes de irmos para a missão em si diziam “tu vais fazer isto e tu isto”. Íamos para o transporte indicado e fazíamos o que tínhamos a fazer.

É preciso gostar daquilo porque uma coisa é fazer porque somos obrigados a fazer, independente de se ser bom ou não naquilo que se faz... trabalho de mercenário há sempre opção própria.

Em Marrocos fizeram de mim mercenário. Peguei no telefone por satélite liguei ao graduado que me tinha arranjado aquele trabalho e disse: “isto não

é para mim. Vou-me embora”. Deixei o telefone no quarto. Deixei tudo no quarto. Apanhei um avião e vim para Lisboa.

Depois de Marrocos acho que ficou bem clara a minha posição. É tipo *persona non grata*.

Não tive escolha. Porque se pudesse escolher acho que preferia ir para uma prisão mil vezes.

E eu era apenas um garoto.

Nenhuma das pessoas a quem pergunto por mim me viu.

### **German translation of Nuno Fialhos' selected, edited and transcribed dialogues to be performed by Elias Geissler**

Nuno Fialho: Niemand den ich nach mir frage, hat mich gesehen.

Wo ich mit 16 gelebt habe?

In der Wüste. In der französischen Fremdenlegion.

Drei Monate vor meinem Geburtstag stellten sie mich im Polizeipräsidium der portugiesischen Nationalgarde vor die Wahl zwischen Erziehungsanstalt und Heer. Weil ich so jung war, nahm mich nur die französische Fremdenlegion an.

Erst ging ich nach Frankreich.

Ich habe mich nicht eingeschrieben. Ich wurde eingeschrieben. Wie soll ich das nur erklären? Sie haben sich um alles gekümmert. Dann rückte der besagte Tag näher, die Stunde ...

Sie brachten mich zum Stützpunkt. Ich machte die Ausbildung und sollte ins zweite Regiment des Sondereinsatzkommandos Fallschirmjäger.

In Frankreich waren nur die Übungseinheiten. Viele Übungseinheiten in den Bergen.

Sie meinten, dass ich irgendwie Talent dafür hätte. Der Ausbildungsoffizier sagte: „Geh da und da hin, zu der und der Zeit am Flughafen.“

Ich hatte nicht die leiseste Ahnung, wohin sie mich brachten. Ich stieg in eine Militärfrachtmaschine und bekam mit, dass es nach Libyen ging. In die Libysche Wüste an der Grenze zu Ägypten.

Wir waren nicht immer in Einsätzen. Sie konnten nicht sehen, dass wir nichts taten. Also machten wir viele Übungseinheiten.

... In Syrien hatten wir unser Camp in der Nähe vom Gaza-Streifen aufgeschlagen, da gab es viele leere Dörfer, komplett leer. Meine Einheit gehörte zur Stadtguerilla. ...Für uns war es also ideal.

Sobald wir nicht unsere Angriffs- und Verteidigungstechniken verbesserten, schulten wir paramilitärische Gruppen. Davon gab es dort viele, zumindest damals... Wir schulten jeden in Spezialtrainings...

Angenommen die IRA will eine Gruppe schicken, die sich spezialisieren will, egal ob in Ausrüstungsfragen, Nachrichtentechnik oder Stadtguerilla. Fertig.

... Viele. Zu viele Paramilitärs für meinen Geschmack.

Wir hatten immer US-Amerikanische Gruppen, die patrouillierten damals an der Grenze zwischen Amerika und Mexiko, damit die illegalen Immigranten nicht überkamen. Jeder suchte sich einen Sektor aus und fertig.

Mossad, Assad, britischer Geheimdienst MI6 oder MI7, aber ich glaube es war MI6. Wir kannten alles. Abhängig von der Spezialisierung beauftragten sie uns 1, 2 oder 3 Monate, je nach Verfügbarkeit.

Um ihre Ideologien scherten wir uns nicht; wenn genau das zu tun war, dann taten wir genau das.

Niemand den ich nach mir frage, hat mich gesehen.

Wir redeten nicht gern über die Vergangenheit. Alle in dieser Einheit waren vor der Justiz geflohen oder wollten aus dem einen oder anderen Grund untertauchen.

So war das nun mal.

Wir redeten auch nicht besonders gern über unser Privatleben und wir hatten Codenamen. Ich war nicht Soldat Nuno Fialho. Unsere Identität wurde nicht preisgegeben. Als ich da rauskam (aus der Legion) machte ich unter meinem eigenen Namen weiter; aber wenn ich gern Manuel, Joaquim oder Joao hätte sein wollen, hätten sie das geregelt.

Ich kam nach Portugal und zeigte: „Hier steht's.“ Ja... So war es...

Angenommen wir hatten gleichzeitig Einsätze, dann war klar, dass das zweite Regiment des Sondereinsatzkommandos Fallschirmjäger abgeordnet wurde, aber wenn es sehr dringend war, fuhren wir. Wenn wir keine Zeit hatten, beauftragten wir ein paar Söldner, ehemalige Legionäre, um den Einsatz durchzuführen. Sie können sich wahrscheinlich denken, dass ich nie erfahren habe, wie viel bezahlt wurde.

Legal taucht die Fremdenlegion kaum auf bei Auseinandersetzungen, aber sie arbeitet oft als Berater für die UNO.

Angenommen in einem Land herrscht Bürgerkrieg oder die UNO hat ein Embargo verhängt, dann ist der Berater im Prinzip ein Oberst, ein Offizieller der Legion, der da ist, aber offiziell nicht da ist. So wie auch meine Einheit, die es gab, aber offiziell nicht gab.

Gespenster in der Wüste, das waren wir.

Niemand den ich nach mir frage, hat mich gesehen.

Es war hart, den ersten Einsatz zu vergessen. Da ging es um eine ethnische Säuberung, ein Belgier wollte ein Naturreservat in Afrika für Safaris haben. Nur gab es da ein Dorf, das einfach nicht weg wollte. Geld interessierte die nicht, die interessierte gar nichts, sie lebten einfach dort. Also wurde ein Hubschrauber hingeschickt, um Gift zu versprühen. Alle Tiere in dem Dorf starben und alles andere auch. Ich und ein paar andere waren die „Bodentruppe“, wir sollten denen auflauern, die zum Jagen gegangen waren oder die gerade außerhalb des Dorfs waren. Und alles säubern. Keine Spur hinterlassen. Wir hatten keine Säuberungseinheit, deshalb machten wir es selbst...

Letztens habe ich ferngesehen, da wo ich wohne, interessiert sich niemand für irgendwas, ich hab den Geography Channel geschaut, da haben sie was über ein Naturreservat in Afrika gezeigt. Sie haben die wilden Tiere im Naturschutzpark gezeigt und ein Interview mit dem Besitzer, ich bin sicher, dass es dieses Naturreservat war, zumindest war es am gleichen Ort.



Eine Befreiungsaktion in Peru, mit der eine katholische Organisation was zu tun hatte: sie hatten ein paar Ärzte ausgesandt, die dann von einer Gruppe Bewaffneter entführt wurden. Statt eine Gruppe Söldner zu beauftragen, beauftragten sie die Legion und wir fuhren da hin, um sie zu befreien. Wer uns in die Quere kam... So leid es uns tut. So lauteten eben die Befehle.

In Russland eine Gaspipeline, irgendwo in Syrien (ich kannte die genaue Lage nie), wir sollten sie hochjagen.

In Mogadischu geriet eine Gruppe Ärzte der Welt in Gefangenschaft, die von einem UNO-Blauhelm-Trupp begleitet wurde. Man schickte die Army Rangers, sie gerieten in Gefangenschaft. Man schickte eine Navy Seals Einheit, die geriet in Gefangenschaft. Bis man schließlich uns schickte. Als wir ins UNO-Quartier kamen, schossen wir auf Zivilisten. Jeder von uns hat an die 1000 bis 1500 Schuss, man kann es sich also vorstellen. Wir waren 20, dazu noch die Rangers, die Seals und die Blauhelme. Letztendlich haben wir alles erledigt.

Das war eben so, wir gingen rein, erledigten den Auftrag und waren wieder weg. Wer uns in die Quere kam, dafür konnten wir nichts.

Am Anfang machte mich das fertig. Nach dem ersten Einsatz hatte ich Krämpfe am ganzen Körper und konnte nicht schlafen. Danach sagte jemand zu mir: „besser, du nimmst dir das nicht zu Herzen“. Ich ließ nichts mehr an mich ran. Und fertig.

Ganz offen gesagt hatten wir keine Zeit zum Nachdenken. Wir hatten immer irgendwas zu tun. Ich lernte, nichts, das um mich passierte, an mich ranzulassen. Woran ich dachte war, dass ich in 8 Monaten von dort weg konnte.

Es wurde mehr als Freundschaft gefordert. Das eigene Leben. Hier vertraust du jemandem deine Motorradschlüssel an, deine Autoschlüssel. Dort vertraute man sich das Leben an. Es war wie in einem elitären Club, wie dem Club Med oder dem VIP Club, nur dass wir eben machten, was wir machten.

Wir waren Mittel zum Zweck, wie ein gutes oder schlechtes Werkzeug, und ich war ein kleiner Junge. Ein Werkzeug. Ganz ehrlich, das Werkzeug von dem, der es bezahlen konnte, zumindest in dieser Gruppe. Es war zwar eine Militäreinheit, aber als wären wir Söldner, es ging darum, wer mehr zahlte. Wir arbeiteten für Drogenbarone, für Warlords oder korrupte Politiker. Wir arbeiteten für den, der am besten bezahlte. Das war nicht unser Motto, aber wir unter uns sagten „bezahlt und wir machen es“.

Wenn wir Spezialwaffen brauchten, mussten wir sie nur bestellen, Informationen dagegen waren manchmal nicht so billig zu bekommen. Mitunter musste man zahlen, um Satellitenbilder zu bekommen. Angenommen Frankreich oder Russland hatten Satelliten, dann musste man an diese Länder zahlen. Angenommen im Zimmer nebenan sind ein paar Geiseln. Was bringt es uns, wenn wir alles riskieren, um da reinzugehen? Wir

hätten Verluste und ganz sicher würden wir nicht das Ziel des ursprünglichen Einsatzes erfüllen. Informationen machen 50% des Jobs aus.

Flüssiges Opium hatten wir da... Um bestimmte Informationen bei den Verhören zu beschaffen, war manchmal heftige Folter nötig. Man bot uns das Opium in flüssiger Form an, das musste wir uns nur in eine Spritze ziehen und uns injizieren. Man kriegt den selben Kater und die selben Entzugserscheinungen wie bei Heroin, wenn nicht schlimmer. Es macht abhängig. Ich war abhängig.

...Es hängt ganz von der Person ab. Es gibt Leute, die reagieren sensibler auf das eine als auf das andere. Ob Elektroschocks, Schmerzen durch Rasierklingen, Ersticken... Wir rotierten bei den Verhören, das machte nicht immer derselbe. Das konnte man nicht...

Ich war zwei Jahre dort und hab meinen Vorgesetzten nur an die 7 Mal gesehen. Ein Stellvertreter gab uns die Befehle: „wir müssen das und das machen“ und er gab die Befehle an den ersten Offizier weiter, der Offizier dann an uns. Fertig... und dann war das so.

Man konnte sich keinem Einsatz verweigern, denn die Strafe dort... Einzelhaft. Ich schaue diesen Schrank an, aber es war enger. Wir drückten eine Schulter in jede Ecke und den Rücken in die andere. Es gab vier Metallplatten. Tagsüber hatte es 44/ 48 Grad und nachts 3/ 4 Grad minus... im besten aller Fälle. Es war Folter. Ohne Essen und Trinken. Sie gaben einem ein paar Salzttabletten, die man unter die Zunge legen konnte, damit man nicht dehydrierte. Sonst nichts. Tagsüber mussten wir uns da drin ausziehen – unmöglich. Lehnte man sich an die Platten, verbrannte man sich. Nachts elendige Kälte.

...Ich weiß nicht mehr, wo ich grade ware... Die Strafen waren so, aber man bekam sie nicht dafür, dass man einen Einsatz verweigerte – das war wie desertieren und desertieren heißt Tod oder Lebenslänglich. Niemand ist so verrückt.

Ich absolvierte die zwei Jahre. Sie schickten mich für zwei Tage heim, doch es waren nicht mal 48 Stunden. Dann kamen zwei Fremdenlegionäre, ich sollte den nächsten Vertrag unterschreiben (für acht Jahre). Ich weigerte mich. Als etwa drei Wochen vergangen waren: „Hey, wir haben dir einen Job als Security in Afrika besorgt“. Ich sollte gut verdienen, wirklich sehr gut. Ich ging nach Casablanca. Ergebnis – es war eine Arbeit als Söldner. Und ich war erst ein kleiner Junge.

Nach Marokko ging ich, weil sie mir sagten, das wäre eine multinationale Firma, die eine Filiale oder Außenstelle in Marokko hätte, wo ich als Security arbeiten könnte. Aber nichts da. Security heißt nur kontrollieren, Sicherheitssysteme kontrollieren, an der Pforte stehen und die durchsuchen,

die reinwollen, überprüfen, ob die Papiere in Ordnung sind – das ist die Arbeit eines Security und das hatten sie mir gesagt.

Aber die Arbeit hatte noch nicht mal im Entferntesten damit zu tun. Ich musste in einem Hotelzimmer darauf warten, dass sie mich anriefen. Ich hatte ein Satellitentelefon bei mir, um ständig erreichbar zu sein. Ich bekam fast 1 Million Mark pro Monat ohne weitere Ausgaben. Eigentlich war der Dienst derselbe wie in der Legion, aber es war ein lockeres Leben, weil ich keine Trainings absolvierte. Ich machte wirklich gar nichts. Ich wartete nur auf ihren Anruf. Sie riefen mich 3 oder 4 mal an.

Ich ging nie allein. Wir bekamen immer eine Mappe mit allen Informationen, ob eine Geisel zu retten war oder was auch immer... Ich hatte einen Vertrag für 6 Monate, aber einmal hatten wir einen Einsatz... Eine Firma zur Diamanten-Mineralisierung (das gab es leider oft) mineralisierte Diamanten an einer Flussmündung und dann holten sich ein paar Siedler die Erlaubnis, direkt an die Quelle zu gehen. Ergebnis – wenn die Diamanten dieser Firma an die Flussmündung kamen, gab es nur noch sehr kleine und die Produktion sank drastisch. Die Firma beauftragte uns, „mal mit den Siedlern zu reden“. Fertig, so was sollte man vergessen.

In Afrika haben wir Regierungen gestürzt, brachten neue Präsidenten in Ländern an die Macht, von denen ich noch nie davor gehört hatte. Und dort war es das selbe. Bevor wir den eigentlichen Auftrag erfüllten, sagten sie uns „du wirst das und das machen“. Wir gingen zum vorgesehenen Transportmittel und taten, was wir tun sollten.

Man muss das mögen, denn es ist eine Sache, was zu machen, weil man dazu gezwungen ist, unabhängig davon, ob man gut oder schlecht darin ist... Söldnerarbeit hat immer auch eine freiwillige Seite.

In Marokko machten sie einen Söldner aus mir. Ich nahm das Satellitentelefon, rief den Oberst an, der mir diese Arbeit verschafft hatte und sagte: „das ist nichts für mich. Ich bin raus.“ Ich ließ das Telefon im Zimmer. Ich ließ alles im Zimmer. Nahm ein Flugzeug und kam nach Lissabon.

Nach Marokko ist meine Lage ziemlich eindeutig. So was wie *persona non grata*.

Ich hatte keine Wahl. Wenn ich wählen könnte, würde ich tausendmal lieber ins Gefängnis gehen.

Ich war erst ein kleiner Junge.

Niemand den ich nach mir frage, hat mich gesehen.

### **English translation of Nuno Fialhos' selected, edited and transcribed dialogues to be performed by Elias Geissler in German**

Nuno Fialho: None of the people whom I ask about me have seen me.

Where was I living when I was 16 years old?

In the desert with the French Foreign Legion.

Three months before my birthday at the GNR police station in Cacém, they let me chose between the reformatory or military service. Due to my age only the French Foreign Legion accepted me.

First, I went to France.

I didn't enlist, they enlisted me. How can I explain? They took care of everything.

That time arrived, that day...

They took me to the military base. I did training and was meant to go to the 2nd regiment of paratroopers, special forces.

In France it was just training, a lot of mountain warfare training.

Only, I was good at it they said. The drill sergeant, told me "present yourself in this location, at this time at the aerodrome. I had no idea where I was being taken. I embarked on a military cargo plane and I realized I was heading to Libya.

To the Libyan Desert that borders Egypt.

We were not always on a mission. We had intensive training they couldn't stand seeing us be inactive.

.... In Syria we were camped not far from the Gaza Strip, where one could find several empty villages, actually abandoned. My platoon was an urban guerrilla platoon...Meaning the conditions were great.

When we weren't improving our offensive and defensive techniques, we would provide training to paramilitary groups, there were many in the region, at least back then...We would provide specific training to anyone...Let's assume the IRA wants to send a group for a specialization, let it be weaponry, communications, urban guerrilla warfare. There you go. ...a lot, too many paramilitaries for my personal taste.

We frequently had North American groups; most of them had been patrolling the border that crosses United States and Mexico to prevent illegal immigration, they would choose a sector and there you go.

Mossad, Assad, English Secret Services MI6 or MI7 (I believe it was MI6), we had them all.

We didn't care about their ideologies, if we were assigned to do that, that was what we would do.

...It depends; generally... Mossad for instance had a permanent base in the region, it is not exactly a military base I would say a permanent camouflaged camp. While I was in the desert they were always there. Each group depending on the specialization would hire us for one, two, three months depending on our availability.

None of the people whom I ask about me have seen me.

We were not very fond of talking about our past. Nevertheless, in that platoon most of us were fugitives from the law or were willing to disappear for one reason or another.

There you go.

We were not very fond of talking about our private life, we had code names; I was not soldier Nuno Fialho...Our identity was not revealed.

When I left (the legion), I maintained my name, but if I had wanted to be Manuel, Joaquim, João, they would arrange it. I would come to Portugal and I would show them "here it is".

Yes, that is how it was....

Let's assume that we had a mission roughly at the same time, it is clear that if the affair was legal the 2<sup>o</sup> regiment of paratroopers would be sent. Although, if it was extremely urgent, they would send us, if we weren't available, they would contract a mercenary group of former legionaries to carry out the mission.

As you can probably guess I had no idea what their fees were.

Legally, it is very rare for the Foreign Legion to be involved in direct hostile situations, but it works as a consultant for the UN.

Let's imagine that a country is in a civil war, or under UN's surveillance, the consultant is usually a graduate, Foreign Legion officer, that assumes that post, but that officially is not linked to the affair. ...That's roughly the story of our platoon we existed, but officially we didn't exist.

Ghosts in the desert that's what we were.

My first mission.... is hard to forget.

It was an ethnic cleansing ordered by a Belgian citizen that wanted a game reserve for safaris. Only that, there was a village established in that location and they didn't want to leave. They didn't care about money and they didn't care about anything. They had their own lives.

So, they sent a helicopter to release some toxic substance. So, in the village the animals were killed, everything died. Others and myself we were on the land group, we were ordered to wait for the men that were out hunting, or that for some reason simply weren't there. To clean everything, not to leave any trace, we had no cleansing team; we had to finish the service till the very end, so...

The other day I was watching TV, where I live now no one has got any interest for anything, I was watching the Geography Channel and they had done a reportage on a game reserve in Africa, the wild life was portrayed on a protected environment followed by an interview with the landowner, I'm sure we are talking about the same reserve at least the location matched.

Rescue missions... we did one in Peru that implicated a catholic organization that had sent some doctors, which appeared to have been kidnapped by an armed group. Instead of contracting mercenaries they sent the Legion. Who ever happened to be in front of us? I pity them; unfortunately, those were the orders we had.

Another mission I was assigned took place in Russia, I never knew its accurate location but the aim was to blowup a gas pipeline in Siberia.

In Mogadishu, a group of Doctors of the World accompanied by a platoon of UN Blue Berets ended up detained. They sent a team of North American Rangers they got stuck. They sent a North American Seal team they were detained. Finally, they sent us, but once we arrived to the UN barracks, we shot against peasants. Each of us took 1000 up to 1500 bullets, so, you can imagine. We were twenty legionaries, plus the Rangers, plus the Seal adding to the Blue Berets. It ended up alright.

It's like I told you we went in got the job done and left. Whoever got in our way, we weren't to blame.

At first it was very hard for me, after my first mission my body had convulsions and I couldn't sleep. Then I was told that the best was to not care too much and to be detached from it all.

At first it made an impression on me. After the first mission my body was convulsing, and I couldn't sleep. Then I was told: "it's best not to call". I was oblivious to it all. And that was it.

Quite honestly, we had no time to think. We were always busy with something. I learned to be alienated from everything that was going on. What I thought was that it was eight months before I was going to get out of there.

It was more than friendship that was being asked for. It was life. Here you trust the keys to the motorcycle, the keys to the car. There you trust your life. It was like we were a restricted club like Club Med or Club Vip it was just that we did what we did.

A means to an end, we were like a tool bad or good and I was a kid. A tool. Quite honestly of whoever had the money to pay at least in that group. It was a military group, but it was like a mercenary group, whoever paid better didn't care. We were working for a drug lord, a warlord, or a corrupt politician. We worked for the highest bidder. This was not the motto, but we said "they pay, we do."

You needed a special weapon, you just had to request it, sometimes the information was not that cheap. Other times they had to pay to have images taken by satellite. Let's say France or Russia had satellites, you had to pay that country.

Let's imagine that a group of hostages is in the next room. Who is it worth to us to risk everything to get into this room? We will suffer casualties and most likely not be able to carry out the initial mission. Information is 50% of the job.

There we had the liquid opium. The interrogations to find out certain information sometimes resorted to heavy torture. We were given this opium in liquid form, you just put it in a syringe and inject it. It gives you the same withdrawal and hangover as heroin, if not more. It's addictive. That was my case.

...Depending on the person. Some people are more sensitive to some things than others. From electric shocks, pain inflicted by blades, suffocation... The interrogations were rotating, it was never the same person. It couldn't be...

I was there for two years and saw my captain only about seven times. A lieutenant would give us our orders: "we have this to do and that" and he would give the orders to the first sergeant, and the first sergeant would give them to us. That's it...and that's how it was.

You couldn't refuse an assignment because the punishment there ... Solitary confinement. I'm looking at that closet but it was smaller. We would put one shoulder on each side and the back on another. That was four plates. During the day it was 44°/ 48° degrees and at night it was 3°/4° degrees below zero... just to be nice. It was torture. No food, no water. They gave us some salt pills to put under the tongue so we wouldn't dehydrate. Nothing else. During the day we had to undress inside - impossible. We leaned against the hot plate and it burned. At night, it was freezing cold.

... I don't know where I was going anymore... The punishments were like that, but it wasn't for refusing to fulfill a mission - that was like deserting, and deserting is death or perpetual imprisonment. Nobody is crazy to do that.

I did the two years. They sent me home for two days and not even 48 hours. They sent 2 legionnaires for me to sign the next contract (of eight years). I refused. After about three weeks: "Look, we have found a job for you as a security guard on the African continent.

I went to Casablanca. The result - it was a mercenary's job. And I was just a kid.

In Morocco I went because I was told it was a multinational firm that had headquarters or an office in Morocco and I was going as a security guard. But nothing. Security is all about control, controlling security systems, standing at the door, searching people who come in, making sure their papers are in order - that's security work, and that's what I was told.

But the job was nowhere near that. I had to be in a hotel room waiting to be called. I carried a satellite phone so that I could always be reached. I was paid almost 1000 thousand escudos per month, with everything paid for. Basically the service was the same as in the Legion but it was an easy life because I didn't train. I didn't really do anything. I just waited to be called. I was called 3 or 4 times.

I never went alone. We had a folder with all the information, if it was to save someone who was being held hostage or whatever... I had a 6-month contract, but one day we had a mission. A diamond mining company (which

unfortunately had a lot going on) was doing mineralization at the mouth of a river and there were some settlers who got an authorization to go right to the source. The result was that when the diamonds from that company arrived at the mouth, they were very small, and production dropped dramatically. The company hired us to go "and talk to the settlers. There, that's to forget.

In Africa we brought down regimes, put new presidents in countries I had never heard of. And there it was the same thing. Before we went to the actual mission they would say "you're going to do this and you're going to do this. We would go to the designated transport and do what we had to do.

You have to like it because it's one thing to do it because you have to do it, regardless of whether you're good at it or not...mercenary work is always your own choice.

In Morocco they made me a mercenary. I picked up the satellite phone and called the graduate who had got me that job and said: "this is not for me. I'm leaving." I left the phone in the room. I left everything in the room. I caught a plane and came to Lisbon.

After Morocco I think my position became very clear. It was like persona non grata.

I had no choice. Because if I could choose, I think I'd rather go to prison a thousand times.

And I was just a kid.

None of the people I ask about me saw me.

### **Dialogue list**

Salomé Lamas: Ok Elias. Whenever you are ready...

Nuno Fialho: We would either work for a drug baron, a warlord, a corrupt government, or we would uncover them.

It was up to the highest bidder.

That was it.

Forget about it.

Elias Geissler: None of the people who were asked about me had seen me. Where was I living when I was 16 years-old? In the desert. In the French Foreign Legion.

Three months before my birthday, in the National Guard office, I got to choose between juvenile reformatory or the army.

Due to my age the only one that accepted me was the French Foreign Legion.

First I went to France.

I didn't enlist.

They enlisted me.



NF: How can I explain it?

The GNR (Republican National Guard) at Cacém took care of everything.

I went on a military plane...

I was taken to the base.

EG: I did training and I was meant to go to the Special Forces - 2<sup>o</sup> Regiment of Paratroopers.

In France it was only training.

A lot of mountain training.

They'd say I was talented for that work.

The Drill Sergeant said:

"Be at this place, at this time, at that aerodrome."

I had no idea where they were taking me.

I took a military cargo plane and I realized I was on way to Libya.

To the Libyan Desert that borders Egypt.

NF: I stayed and that's all.

My platoon was an urban guerrilla platoon.

We were not always on a mission.

EG: We would provide specific training to anyone...

Let's assume the IRA wants to send a group to specialize in, be it weaponry, communications, or urban guerrilla warfare.

That was it.

... A lot. Too many paramilitary troops for my taste.

We always had North American groups; who at the time patrolled the border between the United States and Mexico to prevent illegal immigration.

However, they would choose...

Each one would choose a sector and there you go.

Mossad, Assad, English Secret Services MI6 or MI7 (I believe it was MI6).

We knew them all.

NF: We didn't care for their ideologies.

Those were the orders, and they were to be followed, that's what we would do.

In that platoon most were...

... Fugitives running from justice.

Or they wanted to vanish for some reason.

EG: We weren't very fond of talking about our private life. We had code names.

I was not the soldier Elias Geißler.

Our identity was not revealed.

When I left, the Legion, I kept my name, but if I had wanted to be Jakob, Tobias or Peter, they would provide the means...

I would get to Germany and show it: "Here it is, this is me."

That's roughly the story of our platoon, we existed, but officially we didn't exist.

Ghosts in the desert, that's what we were.

NF: Let's say that we were busy on another mission.

The Legion.

The Legion itself, would contract a mercenary group of former legionaries to carry out the mission.

My first mission?

It is hard to forget.

It was an ethnic cleansing, ordered by a Belgian citizen that wanted a game reserve in Africa for safaris.

EG: Only that there was a village there and they didn't want to leave.

They didn't care for money, they didn't care for anything. They had their lives there.

So, they sent a helicopter to release a toxic substance.

So, in the village the animals died, and everything else died.

Others and myself we were the on the ground troop, we were ordered to wait for the men that were out hunting, or that for some reason weren't there.

And clean everything, not leave a trace.

We didn't have a clean up team.

We had to see the job through...

It was only us...

The other day I was watching TV, where I live no one is concerned with anything.

I was watching the Geography Channel, they did a report on a game reserve in Africa.

The wild life was portrayed in a protected environment followed by an interview with the landowner.

I'm sure that was the same reserve, at least the location matched.

NF: No. The motto was different, but we would say "They pay, we do."

Whether we liked it or not, that was our family.

Independently of what we did.

EG: It was more than friendship that was asked for. It was a life.

Here, you entrust the motorbike keys, the car keys.

There you entrusted your life.

It was like we were a restricted club, like Club Med or a VIP Club....

Only that we did what we did...

I was only a boy.

A toll.

NF: In Africa we took down regimes, we placed new presidents into power, in countries I had never heard of.

EG: In Mogadishu a group of Doctors of the World, accompanied by a platoon

of  
UN Blue Berets, ended up detained.  
They sent a team of North American Rangers.  
They got stuck.  
They sent a North American Seal team, they were detained.  
Until finally they sent us.  
But once we arrived to the UN barracks, we shot against civilians.  
Each of us takes from 1000 up to 1500 bullets, so you can imagine.  
We were twenty legionaries, plus the Rangers, plus the Seal adding to the  
Blue Berets.  
It ended up running well.  
We would go in, execute the service and we would be on our way.  
Who happened to get in our way...  
We weren't to blame.

NF: I find that this was the mission on which I feared for my life the most.  
There was a group only for interrogations.  
Everyone had a turn.  
Everyone had to do it.  
It was part of our training.

EG: There we had liquid opium available...  
Occasionally during interrogations, in order to obtain information, would resort  
to heavy torture.  
They would provide the opium in a liquid form, we only had to place it in a  
syringe and inject.  
It gives the same withdrawal and hangover that heroin does or worst.  
It creates dependency.  
That was my case.  
Depending on the individual...  
There are people more sensitive to some things than other.  
From electric shocks, to blade inflicted pain, asphyxiation...

SL: Ok...Let's take a break.

NF: ... I don't remember what I was saying...  
But I guess I had already answered.

EG: You could not refuse a mission, because the punishment was...  
... Solitary confinement.  
I'm looking at that wardrobe, but it was smaller.  
We would place a shoulder on each side and our back on the other side.  
Four metal plates.  
During the day temperatures ranged from 44°/48° and -3°/ -4° at night...  
To put it nicely.  
It was torture.  
With no food or water.  
They provided salt pills to be placed under the tongue to prevent severe

dehydration.  
Nothing more.

NF: The punishments were like this, but it wasn't for refusing a mission.  
That was like deserting.  
Therefore, no one is nuts enough to do that.  
I did two years.  
They sent me home for two days.  
No more than forty-eight hours.  
A couple of legionaries presented me an eight-year contract to sign.

EG: I refused.  
After three weeks had gone by:  
"We have found work for you as a security guard on the African continent".  
I was going to be very well paid.  
I received 10.000 Marks per month, with everything paid for.  
I went to Casablanca.  
I went to Morocco because I was told it was a multinational company, that had its headquarters or a department in Morocco and that I would be a security guard.  
That wasn't the case.  
Conclusion:  
It was mercenary work.  
I was only a boy.

NF: One thing is to do because we are ordered to do it, independently of being good at what one does.  
Now, who leaves the Legion and becomes a mercenary, it's because they really like doing it.

EG: I had a six-month contract, but one day we had a mission...  
A company, unfortunately this happened a lot in the region, of diamonds was extracting at the river mouth, and some settlers obtained a permit to go right to the river spring.  
Resulting in that when the company's diamonds reached the river mouth, they were very tiny and the production decreased drastically.  
The company hired us to go "talk" with the settlers.  
Well, that's something to forget.

NF: No.  
Because if it were now or if I had been given the choice...

EG: In Africa we took down regimes, we placed new presidents at the head of countries that...  
I'm sorry.

SL: No problem.  
Cut.

NF: I don't know if you want to ask anything else?

EG: In Morocco they made a mercenary out of me.

I picked up the phone, called the official that had offered me the job and said:

"This is not for me. I'm leaving."

I left the phone in the room.

I left everything in the room.

Got on an airplane and I came to Berlin.

NF: After Morocco I find it was very clear where I stood.

I'm kind of a *persona non grata*.