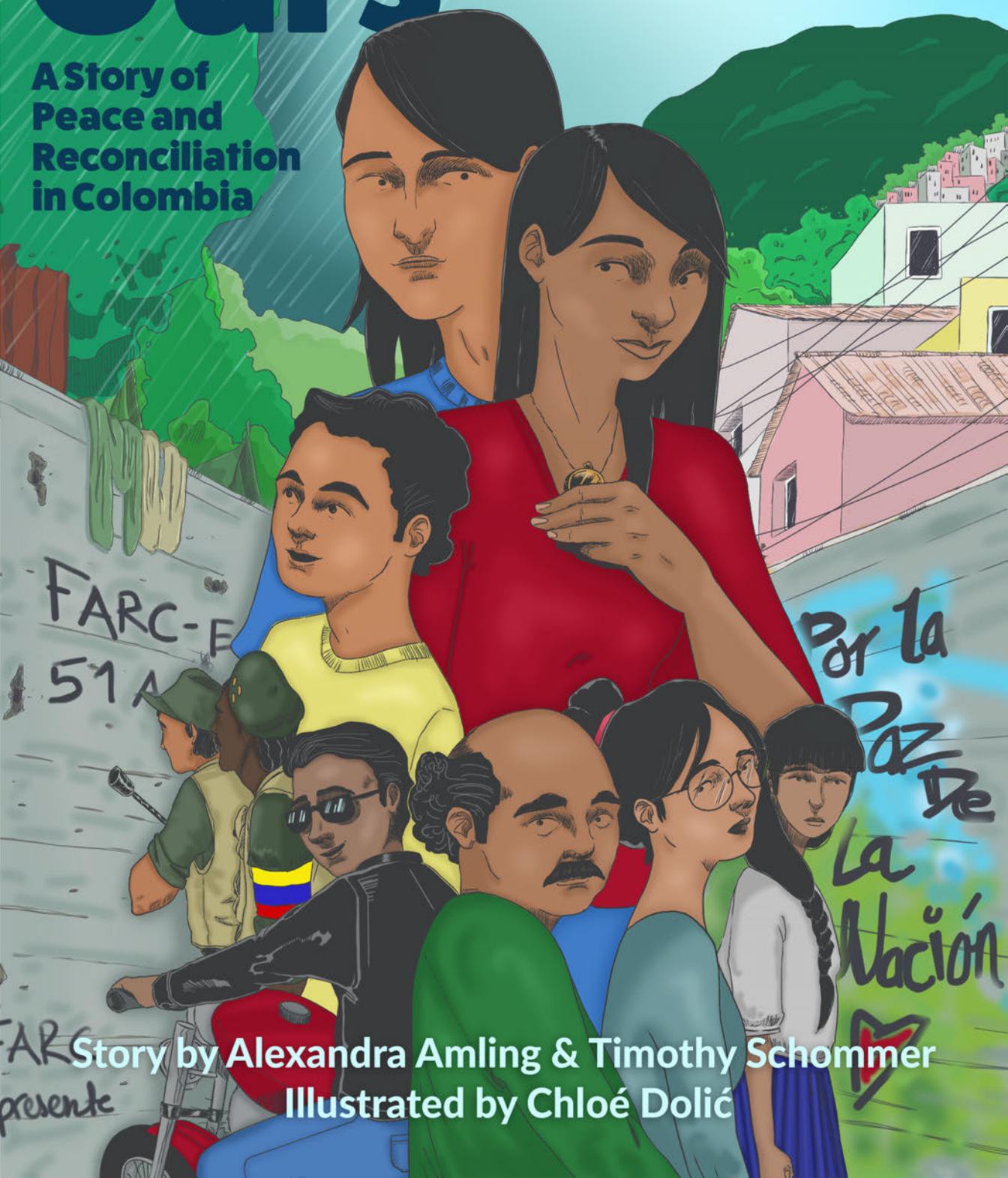


Peace is Ours

A Story of
Peace and
Reconciliation
in Colombia



Story by Alexandra Amling & Timothy Schommer
Illustrated by Chloé Dolić

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Produced by

one earth

FUTURE

oneearthfuture.org

This story and its characters are fictional, but the events and conversations described within are inspired by real stories told by Colombian ex-combatants and FARC guerillas. Their stories were recorded during interviews conducted in Colombia in the spring of 2017 as part of a research project on gendered experiences of reintegration.

The decision to set the story in the months leading up to the signing of the peace agreement in September 2016, the surprising outcome of the plebiscite in October 2016, and the subsequent passing of the agreement in December 2016, was a deliberate choice. The story aims to not only connect the past with the present, but also to connect the challenges of civil society with the struggles of the ex-combatants.

This story was developed in response to requests by many ex-combatants to share their stories of the long journey toward peace and becoming recognized citizens of Colombia again. To honor their request and their willingness to share their experiences, the comic attempts to shed some light on the challenges of coming to terms with Colombia's violent history, while also highlighting opportunities and prospects for reconciliation.

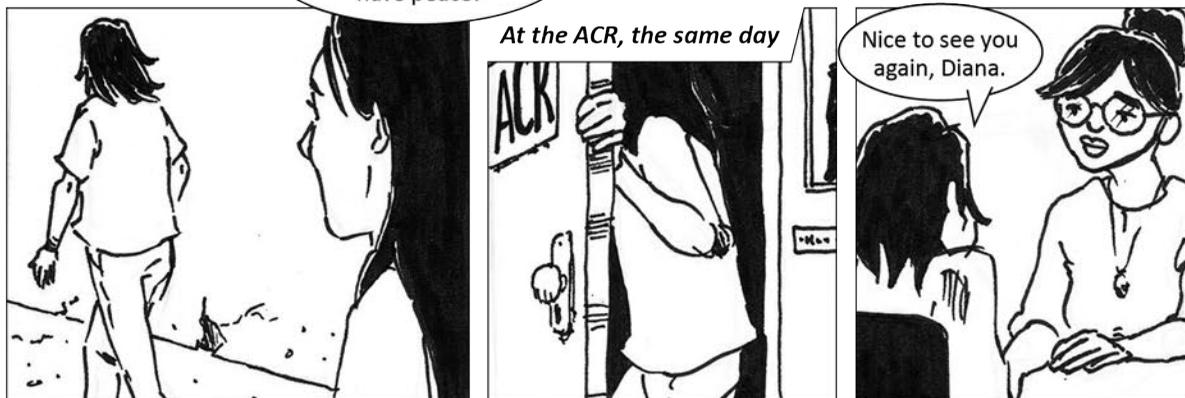
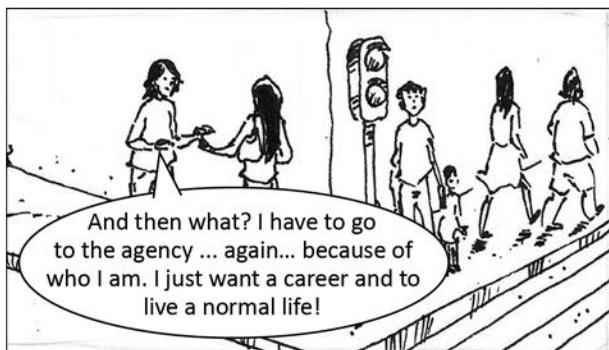
This comic coincides with the development of a full research report about gendered experiences related to Colombia's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, also produced by One Earth Future.

Thanks to all the ex-combants who were willing to share their stories. Thanks also to the staff of One Earth Future's PASO Colombia program and Laura Ome Velásquez for their support in the development of the story.

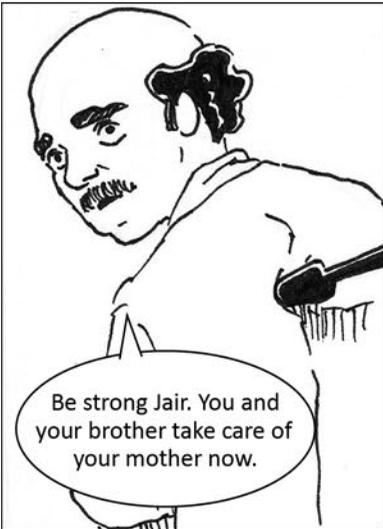
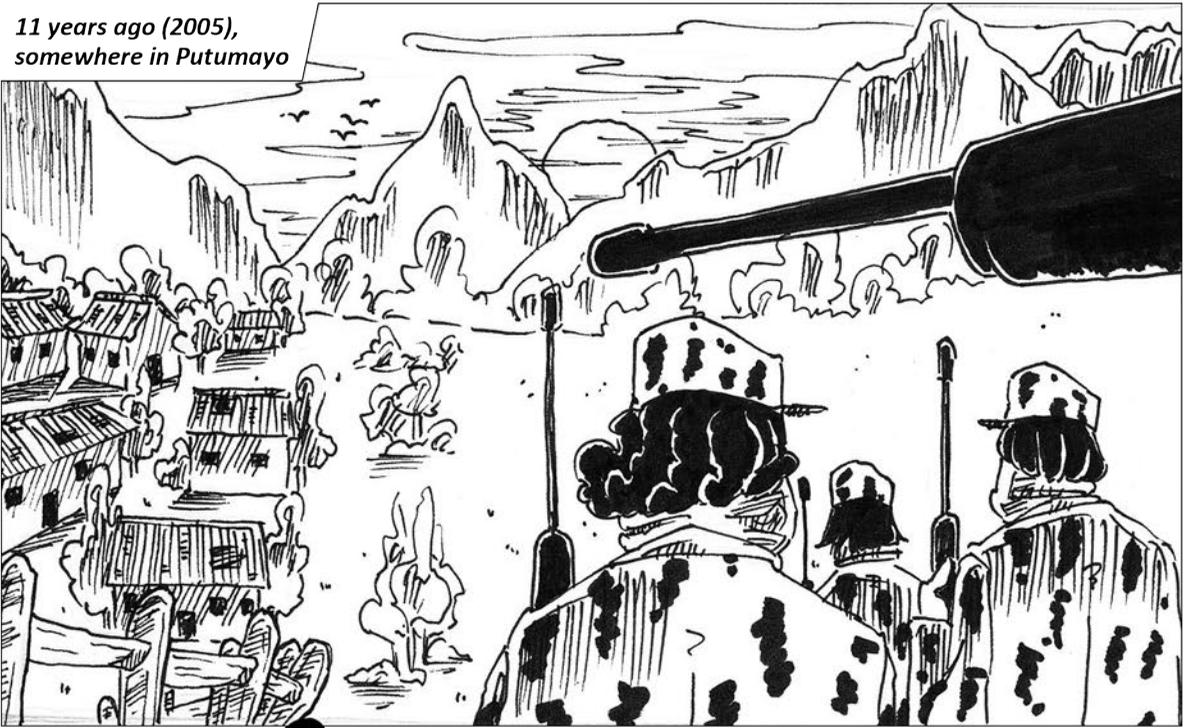
Apartment in Medellin;
August 25, 2016



On the street, same day



11 years ago (2005),
somewhere in Putumayo



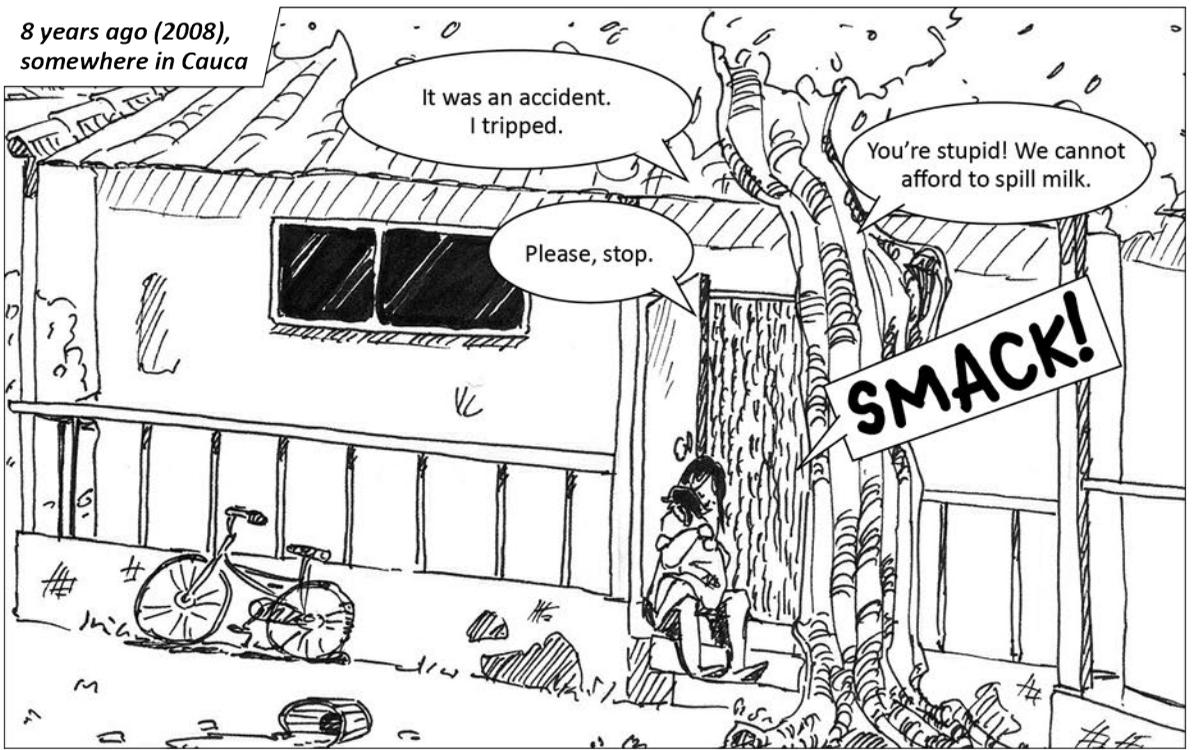
Inside the ACR office;
August 25, 2016



Meanwhile, elsewhere in Medellin,
Ximena is on her way to work.



8 years ago (2008),
somewhere in Cauca



The next day



A few days later

Back inside the shop;
August 25, 2016



Hola, Ximena. I know a place where you'd be better off. Come on, I'll take you there.



...are you listening?

What? Yes. Sorry. Should I work on the order?

Same day, at home



The peace agreement signals the end of suffering, pain, and war. But others are skeptical. Former President Uribe criticized the deal as a path to impunity. On October 2, the Colombian people will be able to vote on the agreement in a national referendum.



Impunity! And now a referendum!



ENOUGH, JAIR!
ENOUGH! I had a difficult day as well!



I'm... I'm sorry. What... What happened?

We are part of a process, and this peace agreement is a new beginning!



Later that night



I hope my family is happy today. But you... can't you, for once, be happy that we've come this far?

This city is still so foreign to me. The people, the noises, the smells. But you're right. We are alive. And we have each other!

The next morning; August 26, 2016



I forgot to ask you last night how your ACR meeting went.

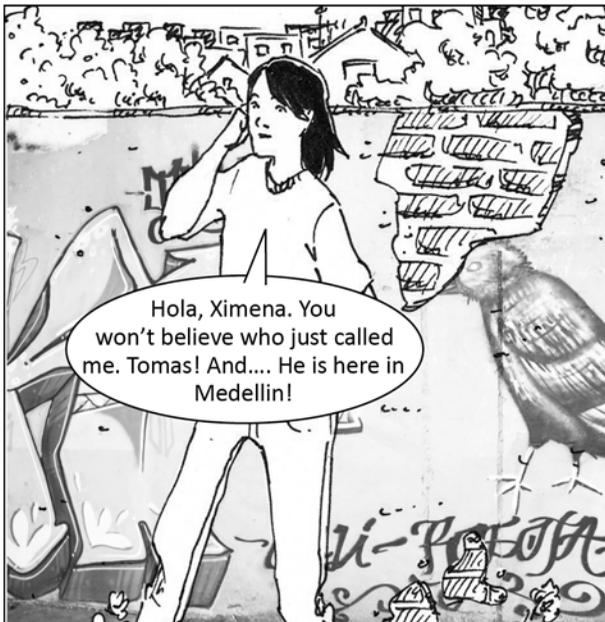
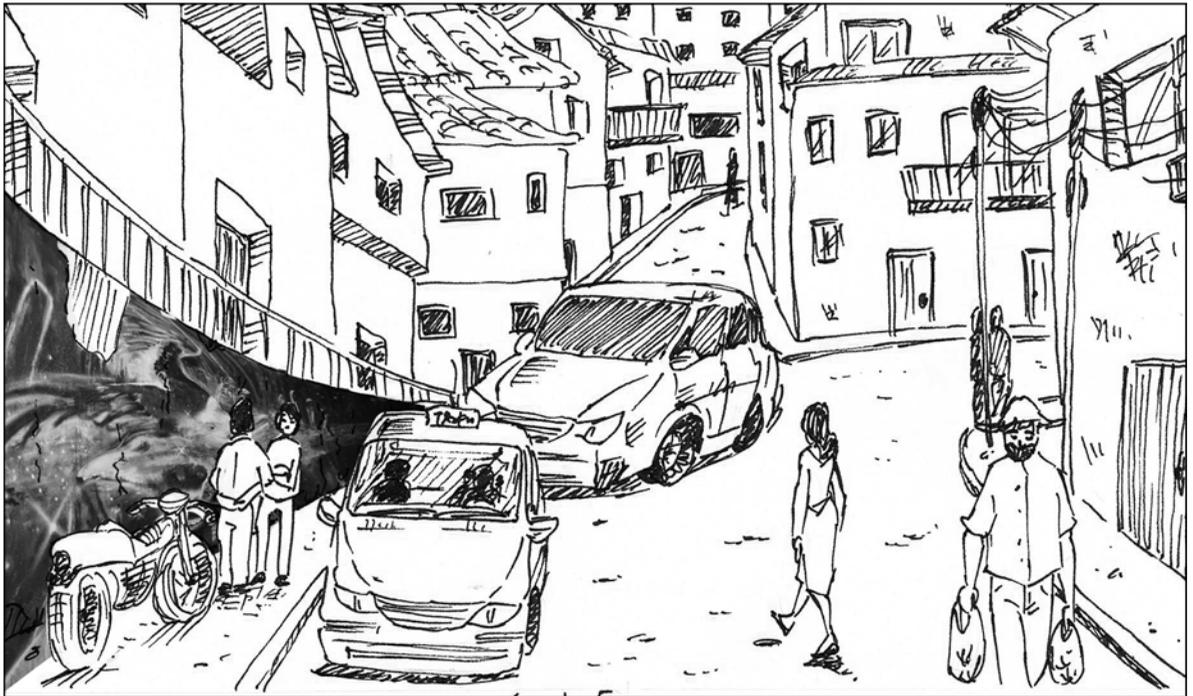
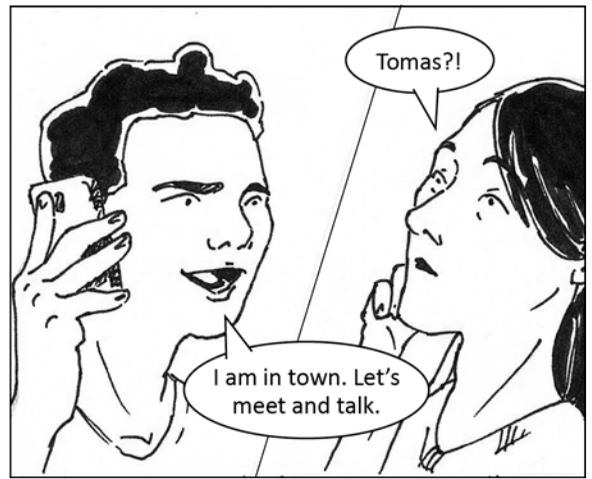
It was ok. She might call me today. It would be further away but better than nothing.

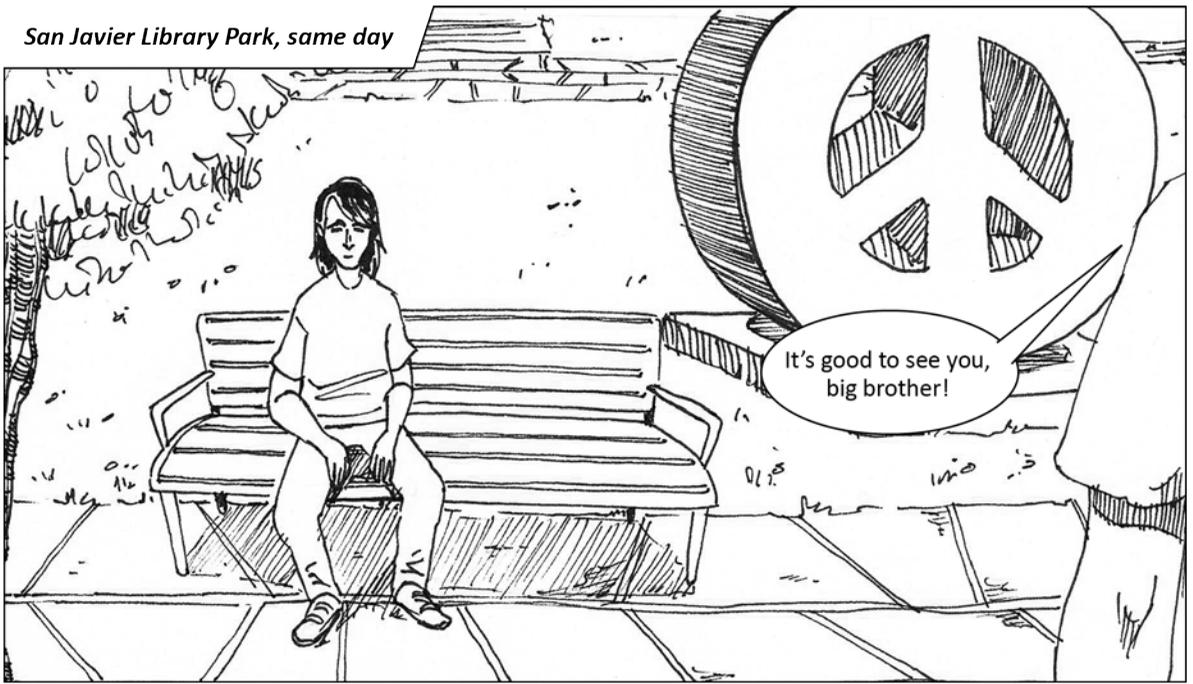


See you later. And good luck!

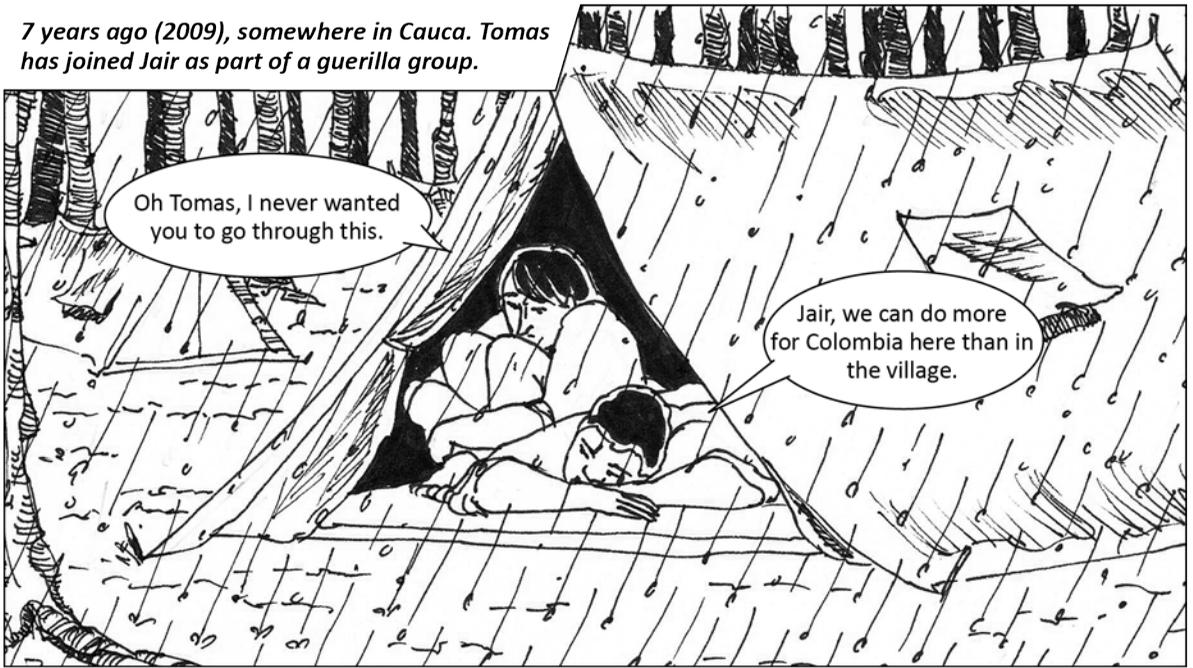


RING!!





7 years ago (2009), somewhere in Cauca. Tomas has joined Jair as part of a guerilla group.



Oh Tomas, I never wanted you to go through this.

Jair, we can do more for Colombia here than in the village.

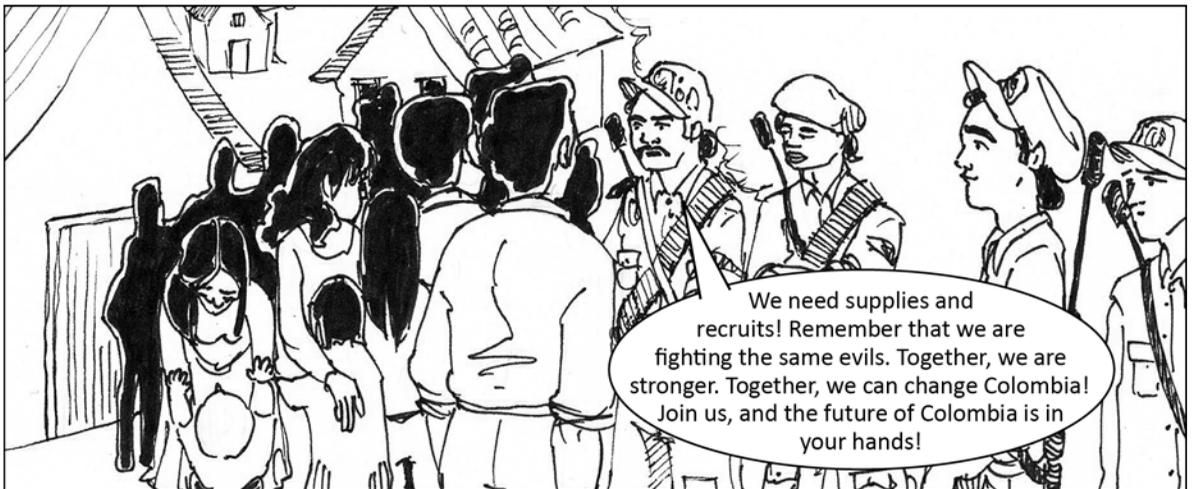
A few days later



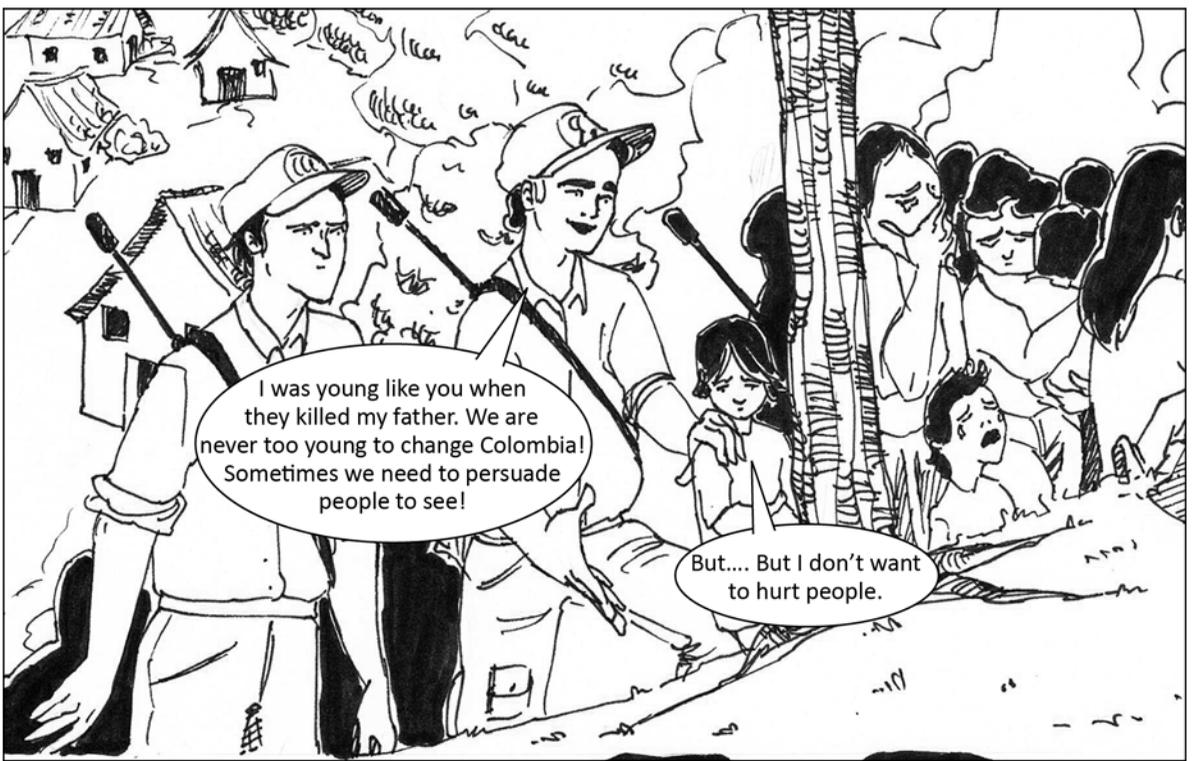
Do you know where we're going?

I...

QUIET! You two will get us killed! The enemy is always listening, goddammit!



We need supplies and recruits! Remember that we are fighting the same evils. Together, we are stronger. Together, we can change Colombia! Join us, and the future of Colombia is in your hands!



I was young like you when they killed my father. We are never too young to change Colombia! Sometimes we need to persuade people to see!

But.... But I don't want to hurt people.

Two weeks later



You're a deserter and a traitor! Do you know the punishment for that?

I... I just wanted to see my mother and family!



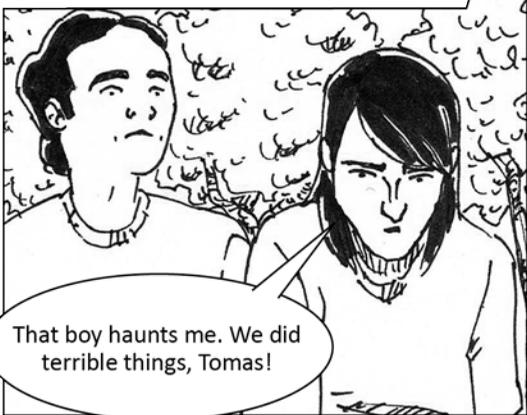
Later that night



This is not why I joined. Think how our mother would feel if it was you or me!

I know, but war changes people. Looks at us. But we can still do good, Jair!

San Javier Library Park; August 26, 2016

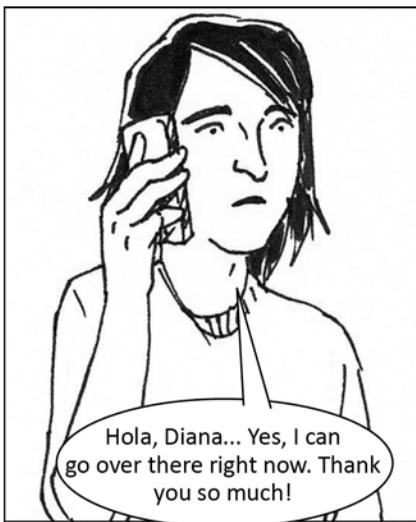


That boy haunts me. We did terrible things, Tomas!



We can't change the past. We have to look forward. We have a real chance to change things, without violence.

RING!!



7 years ago (2009), somewhere in Cauca



At their house in Medellin;
August 26, 2016.



Two weeks later;
September 9, 2016





Hola, Jair. How is your new job going?

Hola, Laura. How are you? It's been some time!

Small pay, but Señor Rodriguez is very kind. He is like me, like us, you know.



So, they will sign the agreement in a few weeks! I think this will be good for Colombia.

I think so, too. It's the best shot at peace we have had in years.

Yeah. I hope so.

On the walk home



Just once, don't be so negative! Not everyone hates us!

You haven't lost your job once! I can barely support us!



I don't need you to take care of me.

I know. Can we not have this conversation here, please?

Do you think I can come over now?

Yes, Tomas, of course. See you soon!



Hola, Ximena. It's been a long time.

Tomas! I... I didn't hear you come in.

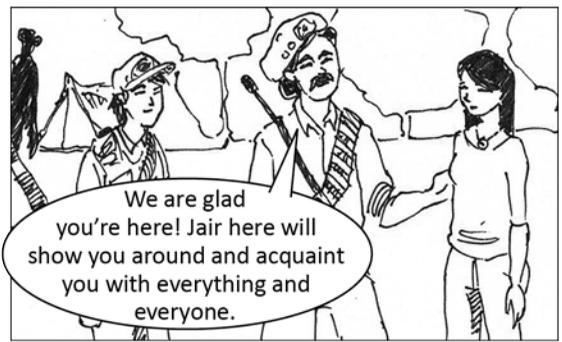
I didn't think you'd ever leave the cause.



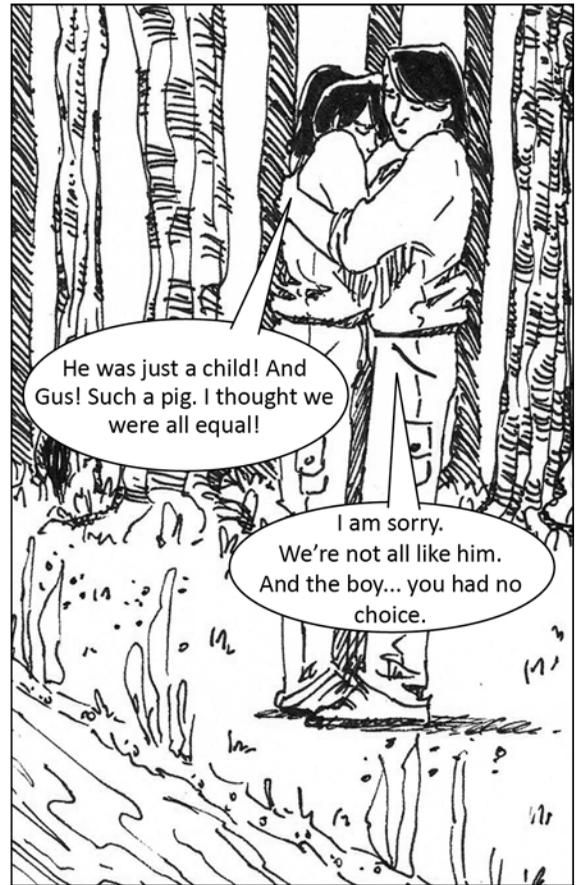
But I still am with the cause! But now I am helping in the neighborhoods campaigning for the agreement.

8 years ago (2008),
somewhere in Cauca





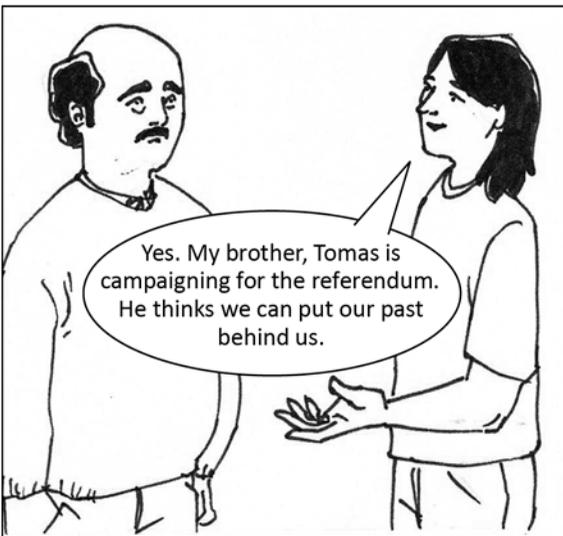
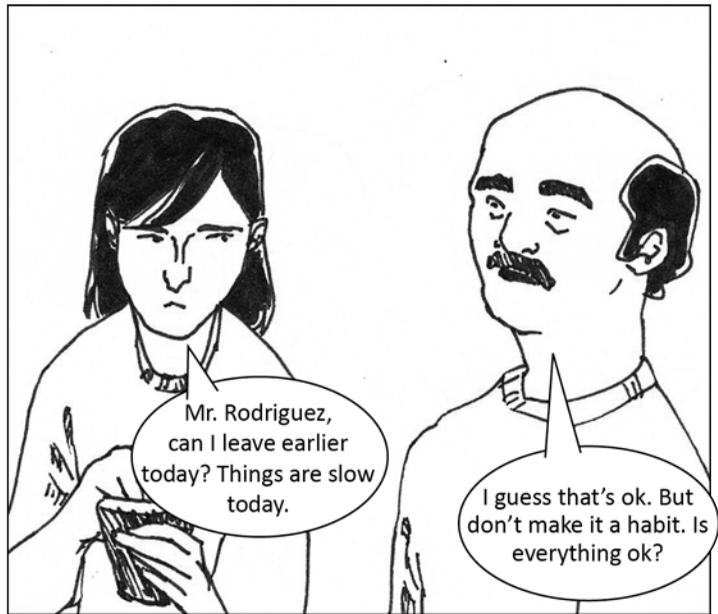
Later that day



Medellin; September 26, 2016

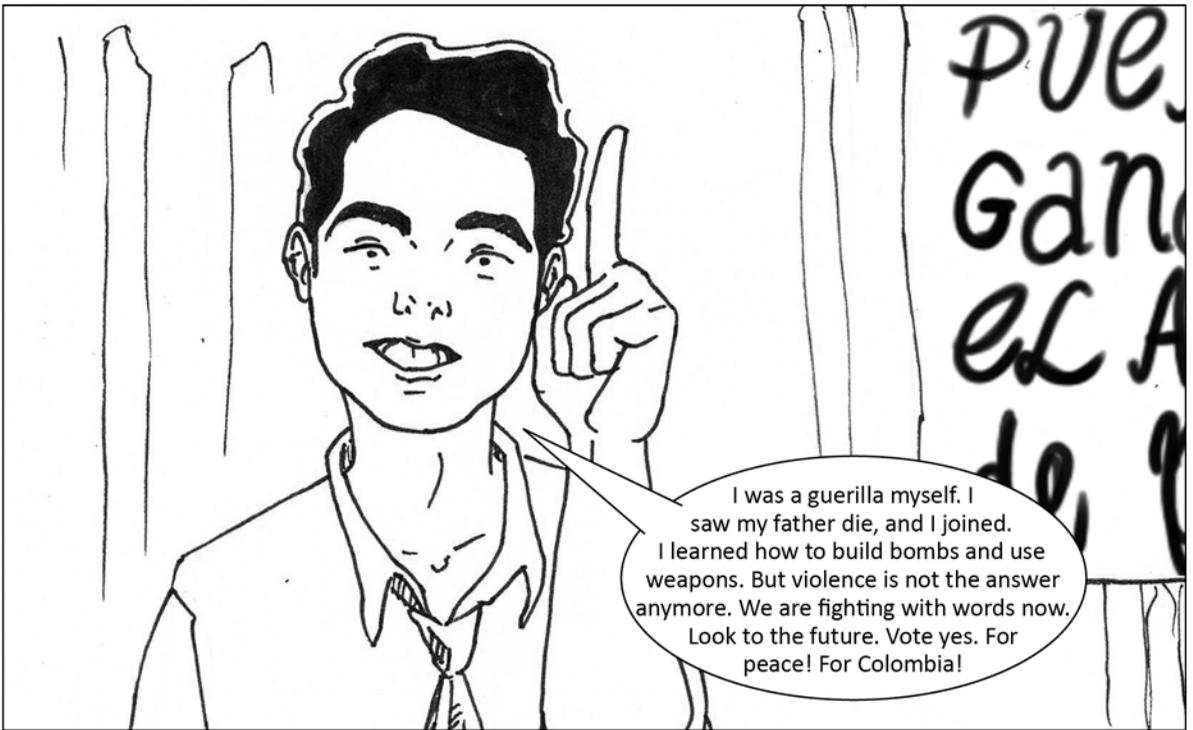


A few days later

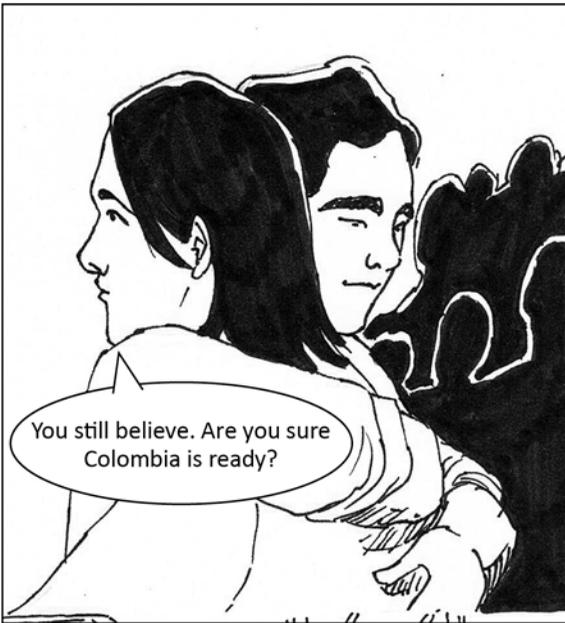


Same day, late afternoon





I was a guerilla myself. I saw my father die, and I joined. I learned how to build bombs and use weapons. But violence is not the answer anymore. We are fighting with words now. Look to the future. Vote yes. For peace! For Colombia!

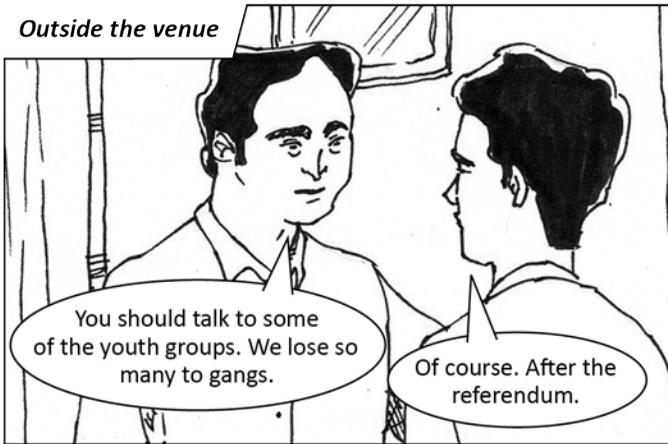


You still believe. Are you sure Colombia is ready?



With time... Yes. But we need to show them what good we can do. We all want peace.

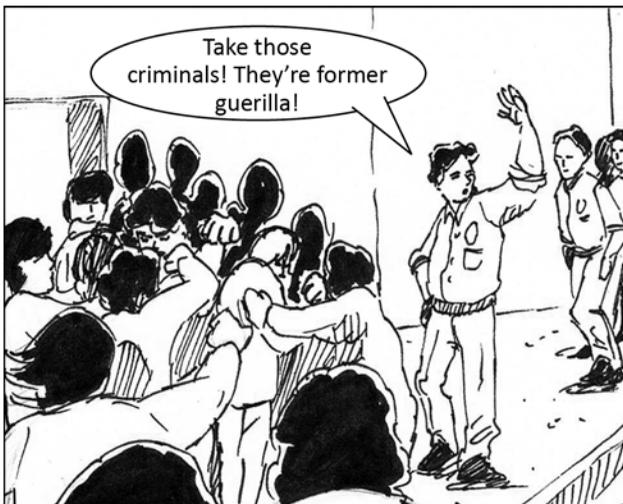
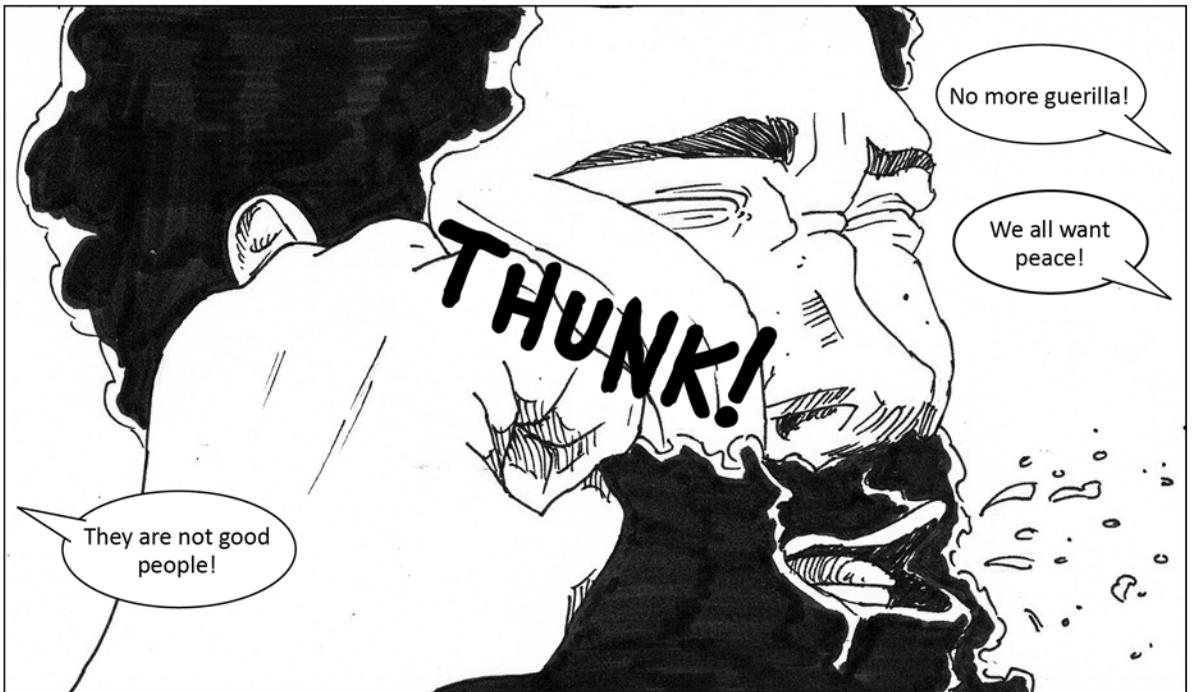
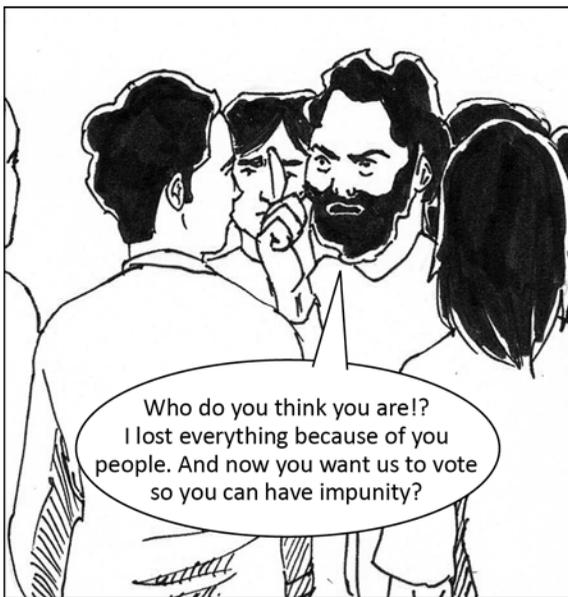
Outside the venue



You should talk to some of the youth groups. We lose so many to gangs.

Of course. After the referendum.





5 years ago (2011), somewhere in Cauca. Jair, Ximena, and Tomas are on patrol with their rebel group.



There is talk about peace negotiations! Can you believe it? They finally hear us!

Suddenly, the sound of helicopters are heard overhead.



It's an ambush! Everybody split up!



Jair and Ximena have been captured, Tomas! We must go before they catch us too!

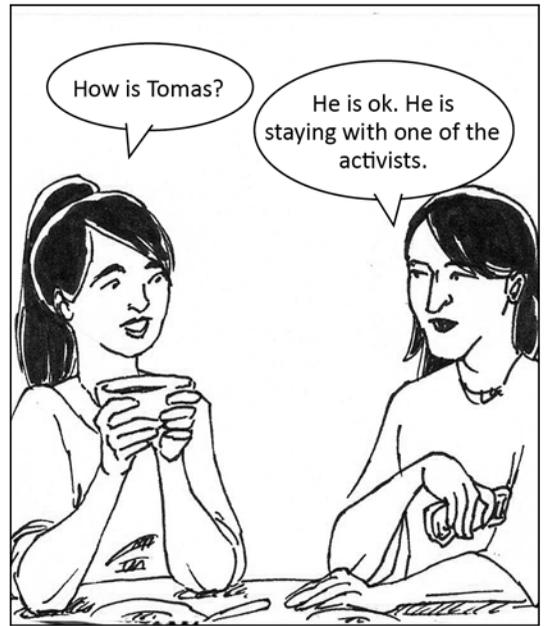
A few months later, Tomas and the rest of the group are captured as well.



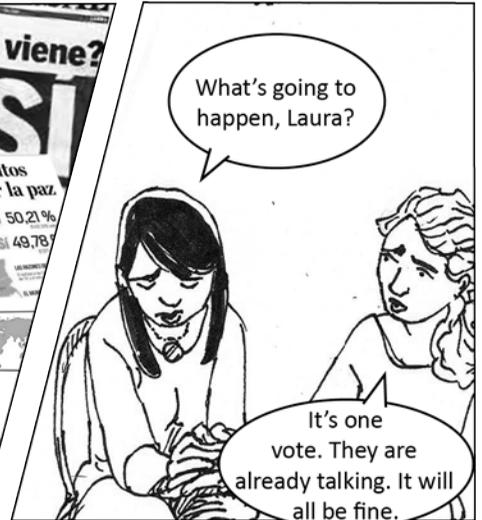
You're safe now, boy.

I am not a boy. And I was safe with my group. Don't you know? We are negotiating peace now!

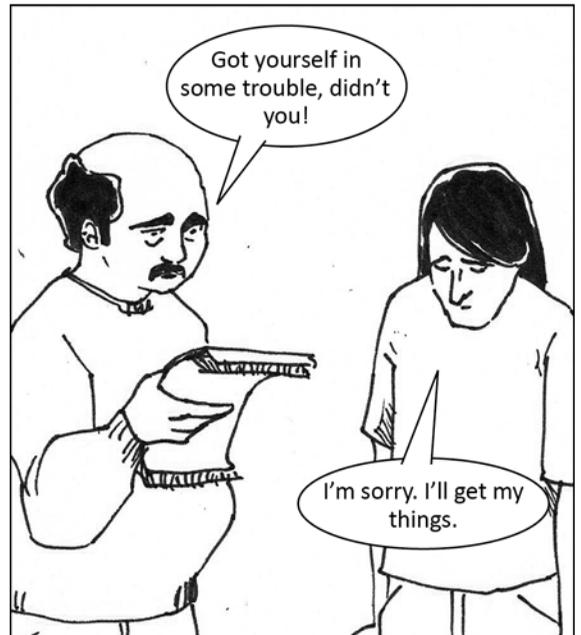
Medellin; October 2, 2016

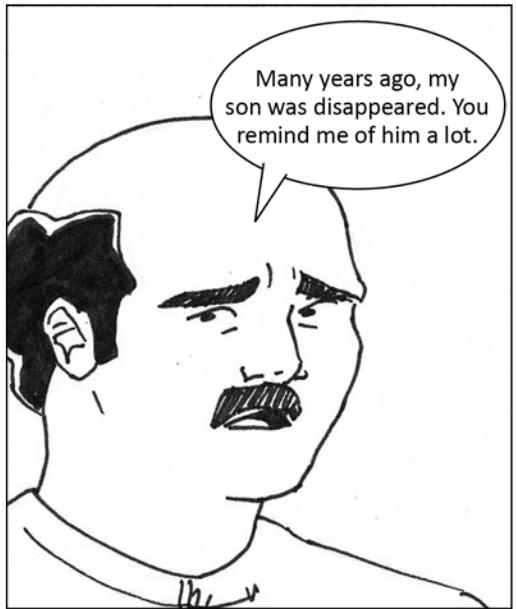


Medellin; October 3, 2016.
One day after the referendum

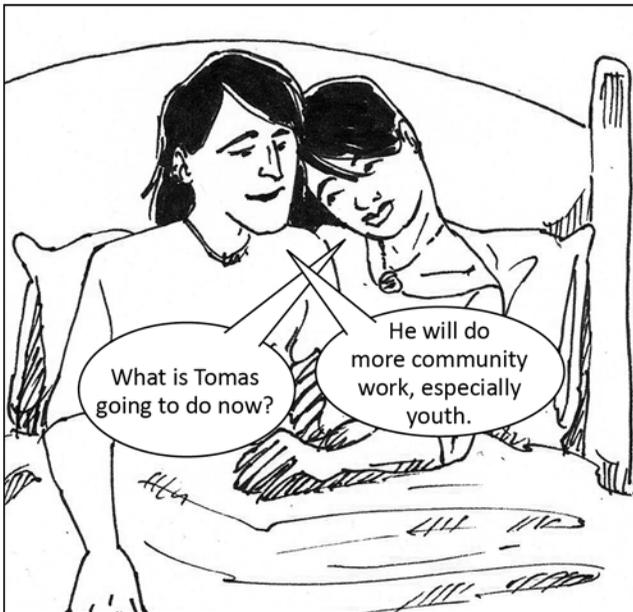


The same day, at the ACR





Later the same day, Jair trips over some luggage as he walks in the door.



Medellin; November 25, 2016



Same day, at work





Same day, at night



OVERVIEW

Peace is Ours is the story of a young couple, Ximena and Jair, who attempt to build their lives in the shadow of the Colombian peace process in 2016. As they struggle to find their way in society, they are haunted by memories of family tragedy, their role as guerilla fighters during the conflict, and the difficulty of establishing a sense of normalcy within a deeply divided Colombia.

Produced by

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