

Ukrainian non-fiction

# Zelenskyi without make-up

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„Zelenskyi without make-up“ is the first and so far only biography about the Ukrainian president. In 36 chapters, the author tells about the different stages of Volodymyr Zelenskyi’s life - starting from his childhood in Kryvyi Rih and ending with the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022. The last episodes of this work were written by the author in a bomb shelter during the missile strikes of the Russian army on Ukraine.

The book introduces Zelenskyi starting as a president for peace and becoming a president in war. In episodes which spotlight Zelenskyi’s rise to power as honestly and openly as possible and without any retouching we read about Zelenskyi’s triumph in 2019, but also about his numerous defeats in the political Olympus. The story of a man who, without any political experience or relevant knowledge, promised the Ukrainians to change their state. A man trusted by 13.5 million voters. A person who understood: great trust is also a great responsibility. The man who accepted the challenge of Vladimir Putin, becoming the head of the Ukrainian state in this difficult period. Last but not least we read about the shift not only in public opinion from a president with few success and bad ranking to a president standing up for his people, defending not only Ukraine but the freedom of Europe as it seems.

Contributors to this book have been in addition to Ukrainian politicians such as Roman Bezsmertny, Geo Leros and Ruslan Ryaboshapka, also political scientists and political technologists such as Viktor Bobyrenko, Serhiy Haidai and Kost Bondarenko.

Rudenko does not have any direct connection with Zelenskyi and was never part of Zelenskyi’s team or entourage. This book has no connection whatsoever to the president’s office and is written from a completely independent point of view. It is neither pro-Zelenskyi nor pro-Poroshenko, it keeps critical distance.

The author will update the book to make it as up-to-date as possible shortly before publication of a translation.



THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
English



Sergii Rudenko was born 1970 in the Sumi region in Ukraine. He is a publicist and television journalist, author of a weekly author column for Deutsche Welle and editor-in-chief of „Espresso.TV“. He worked for the Ukrainian service of Radio Svoboda, was the editor-in-chief of the editions „Now“, „Gazeta 24“, „Glavred“. He is founder of the book portal „Bukvoid“. He wrote dossier books on the entourage of Viktor Yushchenko, Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yanukovich, which according to the magazine „Correspondent“ were included in the TOP 20 best books (3rd place in the „Journalism“ nomination).

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# Content

## Foreword - Political Oscar for Zelensky

Short story about Zelensky and why he came to power. An explanation of why he became the hero of this book.

## Episode 1 10 assassination attempts on President Zelensky

On February 24, 2022, President Zelensky accepted Putin's challenge. At the head of Ukraine, he began to rebuff the Russian invaders. During the war, according to the entourage of the President of Ukraine, he survived 10 assassination attempts by Russian special services. About how Zelenskyy, who dreamed of being the president of the world, became the president of the war.

## Episode 2 Presidential Campaign

On December 31, 2018, Zelensky announced his presidential campaign. What preceded it, why the famous comedian decided to run for president and how he managed to get to the top of Ukrainian politics.

## Episode 3 „The Stadium means the Stadium!“

On April 19, 2019, a public debate took place between two rivals in the presidential elections - Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The story of this important meeting of rivals, which finally decided the fate of the presidency.

## Episode 4 Zelenskyy and 42 million presidents

On May 20, 2022, President Zelenskyy was inaugurated. The appearance of the winner put an end to the old political system of Ukraine. Zelensky is the destroyer of the old system and the man who told all voters that from now on they are all presidents.

## Episode 5 The de-virtualization of the “Servant of the People”

Until 2019, the “Servant of the People” party, of which Zelensky became the informal leader, was virtual - it existed only on paper. Why this party won the 2019 parliamentary elections and became a phenomenon in Ukrainian politics.

## Episode 6 Crazy Printer for the President

In 2019 Zelenskyy's party won the majority in parliament. This enabled him to pass many important laws in a matter of weeks. For this reason, the Verkhovna Rada was called a printer (continuous printing of laws). How did that happen?

## Episode 7 Impeach Trump

In July 2019, a telephone conversation took place between Zelenskyy and Trump. In it, Trump asked Ukrainian prosecutors to deal with his rival Joe Biden. Biden's son was involved in a case in Ukraine. Trump told Zelenskyy that US aid would depend on the Biden case. Two months after the conversation, its content became public. And in the United States, impeachment proceedings were initiated against Trump, however, Trump escaped impeachment.

## Episode 8 Vice President Bogdan

The story of Andriy Bohdan, who convinced Zelensky to run for president. After Zelensky's victory, Bohdan had big plans. He was de facto Vice-President of Ukraine, although such a post does not exist. On the role of Bogdan and his influence on Zelenskyy in the first phase of his presidency.

## Episode 9 The Cosmic Year 1978

Zelenskyy was born in 1978 in Krivoy Rog. What was happening at that time - in Zelenskyy's home town, in Ukraine and in the USSR. A chapter about the era in which Zelenskyy was born and what has shaped him.

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## Episode 10 The irreplaceable Julia Mendel

Julia Mendel is an important person close to President Zelenskyy. She was his first press secretary. She had a huge influence on Zelenskyy for two years. Since her resignation from office, she has been and remains a very important person in Zelenskyy's circle. She shaped Zelenskyy's image in the media and Zelenskyy's attitude towards the media. Tell me who your friend is and I'll tell you who you are. It's about Mendel.

## Episode 11 Look Putin in the Eyes and...

Zelenskyy has repeatedly said that he is ready to meet with Putin for the sake of peace in Ukraine. He said he was interested in looking the Kremlin lord into the eyes. The story of the Normandy meeting in Paris on December 8, 2019. What Zelenskyy saw in Putin's eyes.

## Episode 12 On the Scooter

A story about Oleksiy Goncharuk, who became the first prime minister of Ukraine under Zelenskyy. Honcharuk is the first prime minister to ride a scooter through the building. About why Zelenskyy and Goncharuk quarreled.

## Episode 13 A call for Maslyakov

Zelenskyy grew up on the crew of the "Club of the Cheerful and Resourceful", a popular television show developed by Alexander Maslyakov on Soviet television in 1968. Zelenskyy took his first steps in show business in Moscow. About why Zelenskyy left Moscow, quarreled with Maslyakov and how he started working in Ukraine.

## Episode 14 The Godfather

Alexander Rodnyansky is the former general producer of the 1+1 TV channel. It was him who paved the way for Zelenskyy and his company to enter Ukrainian show business after returning from Russia. In 2003, Rodnyansky became the "godfather" of Studio Kvartal 95, where Zelenskyy made a career.

## Episode 15 Scandal in Jurmala

In July 2016, the first festival of "Music and Laughter" Made in Ukraine, organized by Zelenskyy and his company, took place in Jurmala (Latvia). After the festival there was a big scandal because Zelenskyy compared Ukraine to a German porn actress. Zelenskyy had to apologize publicly and explain himself to Ukrainian society.

## Episode 16 The Family of „Kvartal 95“

In the 2019 presidential election campaign, Zelenskyy criticized rival Petro Poroshenko for nepotism. Zelenskyy promised to do something about it. But as a result he brought sponsors, friends, employees to power. About how Zelenskyy built his „family“ in Ukrainian politics. Who's who in Ukrainian politics today?

## Episode 17 Visitation of Kadyrov

In 2014, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov was mocked on the Kvartal-95 show. He made his accusations against Zelenskyy public and Zelenskyy had to publicly apologize to Kadyrov. About the difficult relationship that developed between Zelenskyy and Kadyrov, including the Russian-Ukrainian war.

## Episode 18 Ivory Sticks

Zelenskyy and his entire team were far from politics until 2014. In 2014, Kvartal-95 made fun of the Maidan protesters. They didn't make a name for themselves with active political engagement. Not even when Russia occupied the Donbass. This episode follows the difficult journey of Zelenskyy and his team from a non-political to an active position.

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## Episode 19 Zelenskyi's double

A chapter about the former Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Dmitry Razumkov. In 2019 he was Zelensky's double and represented him on all television channels. He then became chairman of the "Servant of the People" party and speaker of the parliament. In 2022, Razumkov began to clash with Zelensky. He was then dismissed from his post. Now Razumkov is Zelensky's competitor in presidential rankings.

## Episode 20 A wedding general for Zelensky

Former Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili is one of those who until recently was a member of Zelensky's team. About Saakashvili's role in Zelensky's entourage and his difficult role in Ukrainian politics.

## Episode 21 The Shefiry of Zelensky

Sergei and Boris Shefiry are longtime friends and partners of Zelensky, in show business and in politics. They have been together since 1996. It was them who discovered Zelensky and thanks to them he became a superstar in the post-Soviet space. Who are Boris and Sergei Shefiry, what is their role in the fate of Zelensky. From 1996 to 2022.

## Episode 22 The Knife of Kolomoisky

Igor Kolomoisky is a Ukrainian oligarch. He is a business partner of Zelensky, a man who did everything for Zelensky to become President of Ukraine. Who is Kolomoisky and what role does he play in today's Ukraine.

## Episode 23 Poroshenko on his knees

Petro Poroshenko is Zelensky's main opponent in Ukrainian politics. In 2019, Zelensky said to him publicly: „I am your verdict.“ A bitter political battle between Zelensky and Poroshenko has been going on for three years. Only the war reconciled the two politicians. And it's not clear how long the reconciliation will last.

## Episode 24 The Collective Zelensky

The term „collective Zelensky“ is used in connection with the power that now exists in Ukraine. About who leads the country and why we are talking about the "Zelensky collective".

## Episode 25 Zelenskyi's idol

Sergei Sivokho is a longtime friend of Zelensky. He is also a die-hard member of the „Club of the Cheerful and Resourceful“. A real star in the post-Soviet space. On the role of Sivokhos in Zelensky's attempts to reconcile with Russia and the occupied Donbass.

## Episode 26 Lie Detector for the „Servant of the People“

The seizure of power by Zelensky's associates was marked by public scandals - it was about bribery and corruption. How Zelensky's associates tried to use a lie detector to justify themselves and prove they were honest and decent politicians.

## Episode 27 Who Made Zelensky a Drug Addict?

During the 2019 presidential election campaign, Zelensky was repeatedly accused of using drugs. In fact, the allegations persist until today. But there is no evidence. Who created the myth about the drug addict Zelensky and why is this myth actively exploited by Putin?

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## Episode 28 Zelenskyy under Yermak

Andriy Yermak is a key figure in President Zelenskyy's team. He is considered one of the main players in today's Ukraine. Who is Yermak, why did Zelenskyy confide in him and why did he grow from a simple film producer to a person who leads both Zelenskyy and Ukraine.

## Episode 29 Zelenskyy's Dream Team

An episode about those who led Zelenskyy to victory and how they became unemployed after victory. The stories of Prosecutor General Ruslan Ryaboshapka and Secretary of the Security Council Oleksandr Danilyuk - who brought Zelenskyy into big politics. It begins with Zelenskyy meeting Macron between the first and second rounds of the presidential elections.

## Episode 30 Zelenskyy's Architect

A story about Zelenskyy's wife and children. How Elena and Vladimir met. What role does the First Lady play in modern-day Ukraine?

## Episode 31 The Magic Number 95

Zelenskyy's childhood, school, youth in the 95 district of the city of Krivoy Rog.

## Episode 32 Who Predicted Zelenskyy's Presidency?

In 2015, political scientist Viktor Bobyrenko predicted that Zelenskyy would take office. Bobyrenko himself tells about it. He also makes predictions about who the next president will be.

## Episode 33 Gagarin for Zelenskyy

The 2020 local elections showed that Zelenskyy and his team are trying to base their work on show business principles. A small chapter that tells how Zelenskyy's associates, who have settled into positions of power, try to please people.

## Episode 34 Wagner Gate - story with many unknowns

A story about the failure of a special operation conducted by the Ukrainian secret service SBU and the Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense. About how this became a problem for Zelenskyy. His entourage was accused of working for Russia. It's all about that special operation and why it nearly cost Zelenskyy the presidential seat.

## Episode 35 How Akhmetov prepared a coup for Zelenskyy

On December 1, 2021, Zelenskyy announced a coup d'état involving oligarch Rinat Akhmetov. This section deals with Zelenskyy's numerous conflicts and their causes. Why Zelenskyy switched to de-oligarchization. The reasons and whether Akhmetov really wanted to stage a coup in the country.

## Episode 36 The President of Peace

The final chapter of the book. About Zelenskyy and about the Ukrainian state after the war. About how the war in Ukraine and its president are changing the world. About the historical mission of Zelenskyy and why he has already become a historical character. Will Zelenskyy receive the Nobel Prize for Peace?

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