

THE GREEN BORDER

[Zielona Granica]
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by

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CHAPTER ONE - THE FAMILY

1. INT. AIRPLANE - OCTOBER 2021. DAY

A plane is flying through the clouds.

Sitting by the window is LEILA (45, a teacher of English from Afghanistan), a slim woman wearing glasses with thick lenses, and with a hijab around her head. She is asleep, but moves restlessly in her sleep.

Next to her is NUR (10 years old), a boy with a swarthy complexion. He has a book tucked under his arm, and every so often he glances at the window behind Leila; he would like to look through it, but the woman is blocking his view.

Next to Nur is his mother AMINA (30), a pretty woman with a young, open face. On her lap is MAHIR (eighteen months old).

Sitting directly behind her is her husband BASHIR (40 years old), thoughtful and sullen; next to him are GHALIA (two years younger than Nur), who has been given a phone by her grandfather and is now watching a cartoon on it, and GRANDPA (robust, with a beard, 70 years old). They are dressed in sporty, comfortable clothes, except for the grandfather, who is wearing a smart jacket, a light-colored shirt and a vest.

Amina turns round and nudges her husband. She whispers something to him, and Bashir takes out a small bag from under his seat. He hands it to his wife, and sinks back down into his seat.

Amina takes a scarf out her bag, and covers herself with it so the other passengers can't see. She unbuttons her blouse, and begins to breastfeed Mahir.

Nur notices that Leila's glasses have slipped onto her lap. He looks around to see if anyone is looking at him, and then surreptitiously pushes the glasses with his finger so that they fall to the floor. Feeling pleased with himself, Nur nudges Leila on the arm. Startled, she sits bolt upright. For a second, she looks like she has no idea where she is.

NUR
(in Arabic)

Your glasses fell off.

Leila looks at Nur in surprise. She doesn't understand what he's saying to her. Only when the boy points his finger does she realize what's happened, and she picks her glasses up. Leila smiles and strokes the boy's head.

LEILA

Thank you.

NUR

Yes.

LEILA

Can you speak English?

NUR

Yes.

Leila pulls a pack of assorted candies from her carry-on bag and gives it to the boy. She also eats one herself.

NUR

(in Arabic)

Swap places. You're just sleeping all the time anyway.

LEILA

I don't understand.

NUR

Yes.

(in Arabic)

Swap places.

He gestures to her in order to explain what he has in mind. Leila stands up and lets Nur go past. Amina, who is sitting next to them, is breastfeeding her son and struggling with the drooping scarf that she's trying to drape over herself. She says indignantly to Nur:

AMINA

Behave yourself! At least say thank you.

NUR

Yes, yes. Thank you, madam.

Now Leila helps Amina by holding her scarf.

AMINA

Thank you, my dear! Thank you. This route through Belarus is a miracle, a true miracle... God had mercy on us. We're going to my brother-in-law, in Sweden...

Amina, as if completely unaware that Leila doesn't understand her, is chattering away, delighted to have found a friend.

AMINA

In Syria, we lost everything. Our house, our store. We fled from the bombs. Then we had five years in the camps. Mahir was born there, and Ghalia doesn't remember another world...

LEILA

Sorry... I don't...

Grandpa leans out from behind the seat:

GRANDPA

(trying to translate)
We lost everything... Everything... war - very bad.

AMINA

The children couldn't even go to school, their grandfather was teaching them...

Leila nods, staring at an exasperated Nur.

AMINA (CONT.)

Bashir didn't believe in anything anymore, but I said: we owe our children a normal life...

Outside the window of the plane, the clouds press against the side of the aircraft.

NUR

Why can't we see anything?

GRANDPA

Because we're flying through the clouds.

Ghalia takes her eyes off the cartoon and looks through the window.

GHALIA
Are clouds water?

GRANDPA
Well, yes. Rain comes from the clouds.

The clouds are thinning now and the sun is SHINING. After a while, we see the ground. Roads. Lakes. A mosaic of fields. Buildings...

GHALIA
Sweden! Grandpa! Sweden.

GRANDPA
No, it's not Sweden yet.

NUR
How do you know?

GRANDPA
Because we're coming down to land. This is Belarus. From here, we'll go to Poland, and then on to Sweden.

He takes his phone back from the girl.

GRANDPA
That's enough. You'll drain the battery.

Mahir has eaten well and is now fidgeting impatiently. His father takes him from his mother and puts him down in the aisle. The toddler runs forward, swaying as he goes. He laughs, delighted to be able to move around.

Bashir follows him slowly, keeping him safe.

AMINA
(adding quietly)
My husband broke down after that...
Despair is a sin. But perhaps
now...

Leila can see tears welling in Amina's eyes. She strokes her gently.

PILOT (OFF)

Ladies and gentlemen... We're approaching the airport in Minsk. The air temperature on the ground is 8 degrees Celsius. Thank you for traveling with us.

The plane shudders. Mahir would have fallen over, but a flight attendant who was approaching from the direction of the cockpit catches him. Smiling, she picks up the toddler and hands him to his father.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

A beautiful boy. We're about to land. Please take your seat and fasten your seat belt.

BASHIR

(in Arabic)

Sorry...

Bashir picks up the toddler, returns to his seat and, with the child in his lap, buckles up.

The 'fasten seat belts' sign comes on - Nur clings to the window, and watches as the plane breaks through the clouds and descends towards the rapidly approaching runway. Bashir straps the boy in.

The flight attendants are carrying bunches of roses and handing them out to all the passengers.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Welcome to Belarus!

The flight attendants are smiling, and the passengers smile back at them with hope in their eyes - it looks like a heartfelt greeting.

Mahir puts one of the flowers into his mouth, which his mother quickly takes out. The camera pans over the faces of the passengers. We see tension in all of them, but also hopeful excitement.

Faces - older, younger, children, women, young men, teenagers, old men. Faces that are swarthy, dark, black...

2. **EXT. IN FRONT OF THE AIRPORT IN MINSK. DAY**

Our family have already picked up their luggage and passed through border control.

They are standing in front of the airport building, while visible in the background behind them are several planes beyond the airport fence. We see the last of the PASSENGERS WALKING PAST. They are mainly the same migrants that we saw on the plane.

We see various passengers getting into vehicles in the car park.

Our family is waiting for the transport arranged by Bashir's brother in Sweden, which is running late.

Amina and the grandfather are staring at the screen of a smartphone. The grandfather writes down a vehicle license plate number onto a piece of paper while Nur efficiently repacks the luggage, taking out the things they will need for their onward journey and putting them into a smaller bag. He stuffs the rest into their backpacks. He takes his penknife from a pouch on his rucksack and puts it into his pocket. Mahir runs off every now and again, but Ghalia runs after him and patiently brings him back.

On the smartphone screen, we can see a man who looks similar to Bashir, though a little younger (it's his BROTHER). He's patiently explaining something:

BROTHER

Did you note the number down?
You're in the right place. He might
be a little late, but he'll be
there soon. It'll be a gray
minibus.

Grandpa notes the details down.

Nur pushes through to see the screen.

NUR

Uncle, do you have that model for
me?

The uncle on the phone laughs and disappears for a moment. When he returns, he shows a large box with a beautiful picture of a spaceship on it.

BROTHER
How's Bashir?

AMINA
(to Bashir, handing over the
phone)
Bashir, your brother...

BROTHER
Salaam alaikum, brother. Hang in
there, you'll be in the EU in a
moment, and then in Malmo in no
time!

Bashir smiles limply.

BASHIR
I know.

BROTHER
Amina! When you cross the border,
send a location pin right away.
Then the second taxi will find you.
And I'll come to Germany for you.
May God guide you.

Behind them, we can see their fellow passenger from the plane, Leila. She is standing at a distance, not wanting to disturb them. She has her hands on the handle of a large wheeled suitcase. As Bashir talks to his brother, a gray minibus draws up alongside them and stops. The driver gets out of the cab, and opens up the back.

AMINA
(to the brother)
He's here!

They pack their luggage, and Leila shyly approaches Grandpa.

LEILA
(in English)
Can I go with you to the border? I
have money. I can pay.

GRANDPA
She wants to come to the border
with us.

AMINA

If the driver agrees to take her...

[THE FAMILY SPEAK ARABIC (SYRIAN) AMONGST THEMSELVES, WHILE THE GRANDFATHER SPEAKS TO LEILA IN BROKEN ENGLISH, WHICH IS ALSO HOW HE ADDRESSES THE BORDER GUARDS. LEILA SPEAKS ENGLISH TO EVERYONE. DURING REHEARSALS, WE WILL FIND SOME MOMENTS WHEN SHE USES ARABIC WORDS.

THE REST OF THE REFUGEES SPEAK VARIOUS LANGUAGES, BUT MOSTLY ARABIC.]

3. INT. MINIBUS IN MOTION. DAY

Dirty windows, through which we can barely make out the disappearing flat landscape. The children are exhausted and asleep, with Mahir on Leila's lap. Their grandfather is praying, while their father is searching for something on the internet.

Through the window we see them drive past a TAXI BY THE ROADSIDE WITH A FLAT TIRE, along with several refugees who are helping the driver to change the wheel. There are also other groups of refugees walking along the roadside.

4. EXT./INT. MINIBUS CAB, ROAD AT THE BORDER. DAY

The DRIVER (a big guy with a bald head, tattoos and a military jacket) turns into the forest.

The minibus is driving along a narrow bumpy road. Time and again, the vehicle jumps over large bumps in the road. We can hear branches HITTING the windshield and scratching the hood.

The minibus stops. Standing right next to it is a characteristic VAN belonging to the Belarusian Border Guard. Inside are TWO MEN in Belarusian Border Guard uniforms; one of them is observing the area in front of him through a thermal imaging camera.

DRIVER
(to Bashir)
300 dollars. Now!

BASHIR
No. No dollars.
(to his family)

What does he want? Musa has already paid him!

DRIVER
300 dollars, I said!

Seeing the commotion, one of the Belarusian border guards gets out of the van.

He goes up to the driver and knocks on the window.

BELARUSIAN BORDER GUARD
Got a problem?

DRIVER
I don't know.

LEILA
Mister! Please, don't get angry.
Here is 300 euro. It is more than dollars. Here.

Leila takes her wallet out of her purse and pays him.

The driver quickly grabs the money, gets out of the minibus without a word, and slams the door behind him.

Silence.

NUR
Are we in Sweden?

GRANDPA
Not yet. Just sit quietly.

Outside, the driver is taking care of business with the Belarusian border guard: he separates some of the bills and gives them to the guard.

They both light up cigarettes.

CUT TO:

(Inside the car) Mahir is fidgeting and crying.

GHALIA
I need to pee.

NUR
I need to pee too, but I'm not whining about it.

Suddenly: somewhere in the distance comes the sound of a single GUNSHOT. Then TWO MORE. The family freeze. Then the minibus door is flung open:

DRIVER

Get out. Fast! Fast!

The driver and the Belarusian border guard throw the refugees' belongings out of the minibus. They gesture to them, indicating that they should move quickly and follow them.

Leila drags her huge wheeled suitcase behind her.

It is slowly getting darker. A few dozen meters away, perpendicular to the direction in which the group is advancing, we can see FLASHING HEADLIGHTS and hear the ROAR OF ENGINES and the piercing CRIES OF PEOPLE SCREAMING.

LEILA

(loudly)

What's going on?

DRIVER

(hissing)

Shut up!

The Belarusian border guard picks up Leila's suitcase with ease, as if it were empty, and runs ahead until they reach a BARRIER MADE OF COILS OF RAZOR WIRE. He throws the suitcase over the wire and then he and the driver pull an iron rod from out of the bushes. With the help of the driver, he lifts up the lower coils of the wire.

DRIVER

(to Leila)

You, listen. Go there and run. Run far. Not stop. Run.

Terrified, Leila nods in agreement.

LEILA

Is it the state border?

But before she has time to finish, the driver forcibly pushes her under the wire. Then, pointing to the crossing, he urges the rest of the family on.

DRIVER

Go! Go! Go! Run!

Our protagonists throw themselves on the ground and crawl flat under the wire. Bashir hands Mahir to Amina, while Nur helps Leila, cutting himself on the wire in the process. Ghalia's back gets caught on the wire, and her jacket is torn. The back of Leila's coat also gets ripped. Nur's hand is bleeding, and the baby is crying...

The family are confused - they all look at Leila.

LEILA
(to Grandpa)
We have to run now!

GRANDPA
We need to run!

Grandpa grabs Nur's hand, but the boy breaks free from his grip to help Leila pull her heavy suitcase.

The screams and roaring engines seem to be getting closer.

5. EXT. FIELD AND FOREST. DUSK

They run across a field. Amina is carrying Mahir, and Grandpa is holding Ghalia by the hand. Leila and Nur are not lagging far behind, despite the fact they are dragging a heavy suitcase as well.

Time and again, Leila has to hold her glasses on her nose as they keep slipping off.

After running across the field, they all enter a forest.

5A. EXT. FOREST. NIGHT

As they enter the forest, they keep running forward, scared. It's almost pitch black inside the forest.

The terrain is BOGGY and SWAMP-LIKE. Their shoes sink into the ground.

Leila pulls out her cell phone and uses it to light everyone's way as much as possible, but keeps having to stop while she struggles with her suitcase.

It's getting harder for Grandpa, too, and he finally stops, exhausted. The others stop beside him, panting heavily.

SILENCE. No one appears to be chasing them. The danger has passed.

Grandpa, who is holding onto a tree, is about to sit down on the mulch, but Leila stops him by slipping her suitcase under his legs.

LEILA

There you go, here...

The terrain is marshy - we can see glistening puddles of water scattered around.

Grandpa sits down on the suitcase, while Amina bandages her son's arm - she has a small first aid kit in her backpack. The boy grits his teeth. Ghalia is sobbing quietly, but then suddenly bursts out crying, loudly.

AMINA

What's happened?

GHALIA

I peed my pants.

AMINA

Don't worry about it. We'll get you changed right away.

Amina takes some spare panties and pants from her backpack, and screens the girl from the others as she helps her change. She neatly hides the wet clothes in a plastic bag and puts them into her backpack. Nur, meanwhile, is holding Mahir in his arms.

Leila, who is nervously looking at something on her phone (on Google Maps), suddenly freezes and screams:

LEILA

This is Poland! We're in the European Union already! We've made it!

Amina grabs Bashir by the shoulders.

AMINA

We've made it! We're in Europe.

Bashir takes his phone out; he tries to fiddle with it, but it's clear he's not really managing too well. Amina helps

him, and together they succeed in sending a pin to his brother.

Grandpa looks around skeptically.

GRANDPA

As far as I'm concerned, we're just in some wild woods for now.

LEILA

(looking at the map on her phone)

We have to reach this road, then we'll get out of the forest.

She points to it to show Amina, who seems to understand what she is saying. Amina nods, and embraces Leila tightly.

Nur, as if to prove himself, is already dragging Leila's suitcase away.

Bashir helps Grandpa up. They walk, stumbling over fallen branches. Leila and Grandpa occasionally light the way with their phones.

Ghalia starts crying softly, and whimpers:

GHALIA

I'm cold, cold... cold...

ABOVE THEM IS THE HUGE, DARK, RUSTLING FOREST, WITH THE HOWLING OF WOLVES AND THE HOOTING OF NIGHT BIRDS. BRANCHES BREAK UNDER THEIR FEET AS THEY WALK. SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!

6. EXT. FOREST. DAWN

They sleep all curled up - everyone except Bashir. They are spread out in a small clearing surrounded by bushes and trees.

Bashir holds up his phone and tries to call his brother, but fails; it looks like there is no signal. He sends another location pin and waits for a reply. He watches anxiously as the battery indicator on his smartphone screen approaches empty.

Grandpa wakes up and pulls off his disintegrating shoes. His feet look as if they've been soaking in water for months; they're all white, wrinkled and swollen. The children sleep wrapped up in the adults' clothes.

Bashir once again tries to send a text message, but the battery on his phone has finally died.

He sits motionless, staring blankly at the dead screen.

Grandpa spreads out a small rug and starts to pray.

BASHIR

Dad, can you give me your phone?

Grandpa doesn't respond as he is lost in concentration while he prays. A moment later, he folds his rug up and answers his son:

GRANDPA

It's dead. Ghalia was playing with it. And then we had to light up the...

Suddenly, it starts to rain. The sleeping women and children wake up. The rain gets heavier and turns into a downpour. Panicking, they stuff their dry things into their backpacks and try to hide under the branches of a tree, but they are soon soaked to the bone.

Everyone is shivering with cold.

Later.

The downpour has stopped. Amina helps the shivering children change into drier clothes. Leila has opened her suitcase; her clothes were saved from the rain and she shares them with Amina and the kids. In her clothes, the kids look like they are dressing up. They look at each other and - despite the cold and the wet - start laughing. Bashir gets changed to the side. We can see some scars of torture on his naked back.

GHALIA

Nur! You look like a girl!

NUR

And you look like an old lady!

GHALIA

Lady Nur, Lady Nur!

Nur, offended, pulls Leila's sweater off.

AMINA

Leave it on! It's better to look like a girl than get sick.

Leila pulls out her phone, opens up an online map, and tries to find their position, but her phone dies as well. She looks helplessly at her companions.

AMINA

Nur, did you pack the powerbank?

Nur turns pale - clearly he forgot. Without much hope, he starts rummaging through his backpack.

Leila understands the word "powerbank" and nods, looking for something in her suitcase, then in her purse. She triumphantly pulls out a large powerbank with a cable. She plugs the cable into her phone and looks at the screen, but nothing happens. Bashir tries to connect his - but the result is the same. Amina takes the powerbank and phone away from him and tries too, shaking the powerbank as she does so. She shakes her head.

AMINA

It got wet... The battery is wet.

They stand there, helpless. Mahir starts crying so Amina takes him to one side and unbuttons her blouse. The boy calms down at her breast.

GRANDPA

(to Leila)

So, where we go?

Leila hesitantly shows the direction:

LEILA

I think there is the road...

They look in the direction she indicated, from where they hear some thudding and crackling noises coming. A moment later, a huge moose (deer, bison...) runs out into the clearing. They all scream in terror, while the even more startled moose disappears into the woods behind them. Ghalia starts crying.

GHALIA

I'm scared. And thirsty...

Amina gently bends down a tree branch and shows her daughter how to sip water from the leaves. Everyone follows her lead.

GHALIA

Mommy... I'm hungry...

AMINA

You'll eat when we find our car.

GHALIA

And when will that be?

Bashir takes the baby and the backpack and heads off in the direction Leila indicated. Behind him come Grandpa, with the other backpack, Nur, with Leila's now nearly empty suitcase, and the others.

GHALIA

I'm hungry...

NUR

Stop whining. We're going to Sweden.

Leila triumphantly pulls out of her purse the half-full pack of candies we saw on the plane. She hands some out to everyone, and the children greedily grab two each and start sucking on them. The adults give theirs back to Leila.

AMINA

Let's leave them for the kids...

From the edge of the clearing, we see the huge forest wall and our group disappearing into it.

7. EXT. FOREST. NIGHT

They walk in single file through the forest. Amina groans. Bashir is only carrying one backpack as the rest are somewhere back in the forest. Grandpa is limping as he carries little sleeping Mahir on his back, tied up in a scarf. Nur follows him, then come Leila and Ghalia. They trip over roots and fallen trees. Amina stops suddenly.

AMINA

Wait...

Everyone stops in their tracks. Amina steps to the side and we hear her trying to urinate. A few little spurts, then a

soft cry. Bashir runs towards where the sound came from, trying to illuminate the area with his dimly lit flashlight. He sees that his wife has fallen into a swamp, and is standing with water halfway up her calves. Together with the grandfather and Leila, he pulls her out. Tired, dirty and wet, she sits down on the moss on the ground. The baby starts crying, so Bashir hands him to Amina and turns away. Amina unbuttons her blouse and puts her son to her breast. Mahir starts to suck, but apparently there's nothing there. He bites her nipple, trying to squeeze something out of it. Amina gasps, and the boy starts crying again. The woman hands the baby to her husband and tries to get up. She slides herself along the ground. Leila takes the baby from Bashir, and the little one immediately calms down in her arms. Ghalia is asleep on her feet, as Leila quietly sings a song in English to the baby. They get their things together and set off. Slowly.

NUR

Hello, I love you!

Nur laughs. He doesn't understand what he's said. It sounds a bit like he is repeating the chorus of a song.

LEILA

Do you love me? Really?

Leila laughs, amused.

NUR

(showing off)

Yes... Monday. Tuesday. Wednesday.

Thursday. Friday. Sun...

(hesitating)

(Leila prompts him about what comes next and they finish together)

Saturday. Sunday...

LEILA

Bravo! You can speak English!

What's your name?

NUR

Kylian Mbappé.

LEILA

I don't think so...

(pointing to herself)

My name is Leila. What is your name?

NUR

Nur.

LEILA

(gesturing)

Repeat: My name is Nur.

NUR

My name is Nur.

(laughing)

They start walking again. Bashir is carrying the baby. All we hear are their quiet footsteps in the undergrowth, with the occasional snap of a twig and whispered sentences:

LEILA

Where are you from?

Nur doesn't understand, but his grandfather prompts him:

GRANDPA

Syria. Homs.

LEILA

So you are from Homs. Say: I'm from Homs.

NUR

I'm from Homs.

LEILA

I want to stay in Europe. I want to go to school...

NUR

I want to stay in Europe. I want to go to school...

8. EXT. FIELDS. DAY

Leila - on her own - comes out of the forest. She is walking along a path leading through some fields when she spots a man on a tractor and calls out to him. The tractor stops and the man looks at her.

Leila approaches him and holds out an empty bottle.

LEILA

Water? Can you spare some water,
sir?

The tractor driver hesitates for a moment, looks for something in the cab, and then hands Leila a barely filled bottle of water.

LEILA

Thank you so much! Do you have some
food? Food...

She gestures to him to show what she means.

The man jumps down off the tractor and rummages around in the trunk box at the back.

He holds two apples out towards her.

FARMER

Want some?

Leila tries to push a €10 bill into the tractor driver's hand, but he refuses with a firm gesture. He points towards a house in the distance.

FARMER

You can try over there...

Leila quickly hides the apples in her pocket.

LEILA

Thank you so much!

The man nods.

Leila smiles at him and walks away toward the house. When she turns round, she sees that the man has pulled out his phone and is calling someone, while continually glancing back at her.

Their eyes meet. Leila suddenly feels a strong sense of danger, though she doesn't fully understand it.

She changes direction and starts to run off towards the forest (holding her glasses on her nose as she goes). She turns around and sees the tractor driver clumsily running after her (his rubber boots don't make it easy to run). In an increasing panic, Leila speeds up. The man stops at the edge of the field, watches her go for a moment and then returns to his tractor.

9. EXT. SCRUBLAND NEAR A FIELD. DAY

Leila can no longer see that he has stopped. She runs into the forest, trips over a branch, and falls over. Her glasses fall off and she lets out a shrill cry. Someone then forcibly covers her mouth with their hand. Leila looks up. Without her glasses on, she is almost blind. In a panic, she runs her hand over the moss, searching for her glasses. She finds them and puts them on.

She sees a MAN (HASSAN, 22 years old) with a swarthy complexion. He is scruffy, dirty, and has a bruised and scratched face. He is furious, and looks like he's about to tear Leila to pieces.

Leila starts screaming again, but Hassan quickly closes her mouth again and pushes her up against a tree. We can now see that his forcefulness stems from desperation and he looks frightened.

HASSAN
(in Arabic)
Keep away from them. You mustn't
talk to them!

NUR
(jumping out of the thicket)
Leave her alone!

Surprised, Hassan looks at the boy. Behind him is Grandpa, holding Ghalia's hand. Hassan lets go of Leila.

HASSAN
(agitated)
You have to run, run away. The army
will be here soon.

GRANDPA
What army?

But Hassan doesn't seem to hear him.

HASSAN
Water? Give me some water!

Another man now appears next to Hassan; it is KARIM (25 years old). He looks bad but seems to be in slightly better condition than his friend.

Leila hands Hassan the bottle of water. Hassan drinks greedily, like an animal. Meanwhile, his companion can't help himself any longer - he grabs the bottle, which Hassan only gives up very reluctantly.

Karim gulps the water down.

LEILA

Leave some for the kids!

Grandpa and the children approach.

GRANDPA

Enough!

Grandpa grabs the bottle, which Karim lets go of surprisingly easily. At the same time, there is a look of sudden terror on Karim's face. Karim grabs Hassan's hand and the men run away like frightened animals.

Leila and Grandpa, as if following Karim's gaze, turn to see that a dozen or so yards away, Bashir is waving at an approaching green Border Guard van.

TWO BORDER GUARDS jump out of the car and try rather abusively to push Amina, with the toddler in her arms, and Bashir into the car.

GHALIA

Mom! Mom!

The girl lunges toward her mother. The guards freeze. Slightly taken aback, they watch as Grandpa, Leila and the two children approach them uncertainly.

One of the guards reflects for a moment and takes out a candy bar. Smiling, as if in encouragement, he offers the treat out toward the girl.

9A. EXT. DIRT ROAD. DUSK

We are in the same place as in the previous scene. There is the same van as before, and the same border guards.

But some time has clearly passed - dusk is now slowly falling.

Through the open door of the van we can see the family - they are sitting in silence, with a mixture of relief and anxiety on their faces. Mahir is crying quietly. The guards

are being relatively friendly (maybe they even gave them something to drink?). The driver lets Nur get into the cab and sit behind the wheel, where he contentedly pretends to drive the van.

The second border guard is talking to someone on his walkie-talkie.

BORDER GUARD KOSA
Yep... behind the curve... you'll
see us soon...

A MILITARY TRUCK with covered plates emerges from behind the curve and pulls up behind the border guard van.

BORDER GUARD STARSZY
(to Nur)
Ok, boy. Let's go!

The driver helps Nur out of the cab.

The guards quite politely, though firmly, tell the family to get out.

LEILA
Where are we going?

No one answers. Grandpa timidly defends himself.

GRANDPA
Mister, mister, we have to go. We
go Sweden.

STARSZY
Yes, yes Sweden... That truck goes
to Germany, then Sweden. You're
lucky, man!

He pushes Grandpa toward the truck, and Grandpa looks at him in disbelief.

The guard smiles and Grandpa starts to feel a little tentative hope. He turns to the family:

GRANDPA
He says they'll take us to
Germany...

When the family go to the back of the truck (which is covered with a tarp), two SOLDIERS jump out, in full riot gear and with their faces covered. Quickly, efficiently and

quite insultingly, they "help" the frightened family to climb inside.

10. INT. TRUCK IN MOTION. NIGHT

When our family are all up against the back of the truck, they freeze in terror. Inside is a group of terrified people - refugees just like them - all perched on narrow wooden benches.

BORDER GUARDS

Sit down!!!

(and then in English)

Sit! Sit!

The truck immediately moves off.

Now we can take a closer look at the passengers: there are 4 youngsters from sub-Saharan Africa (three men and a woman all from Somalia), the two Iraqis KARIM and HASSAN, whom we just saw in the forest, a delicate young woman of eastern beauty, and two Afghans (an older man holding a child on his lap and with a large Chinese floral-patterned thermos in his hand).

After a moment, he hands the infant to the delicate young woman, who is clearly very afraid. She looks at the soldiers sitting by the tarp. One of them winks at her in a conciliatory gesture, but the woman looks away.

Hassan (the younger Iraqi) is shaking, or maybe sobbing silently to himself. He is holding Karim's hand like a frightened child.

GHALIA

Mommy... What are they going to do to us?

AMINA

There's nothing to fear. I'm with you. It'll be alright.

She says it with great assurance, as if she really believes it.

Grandpa hugs the little girl and pulls her closer to him. He can feel the child trembling.

Leila takes one of the tractor driver's apples from her pocket and hands it to Nur. He takes out his penknife, carefully divides the apple into quarters and hands the pieces out to his sister, parents, and grandfather.

Bashir gives his share back to him, while Amina keeps hers for Mahir.

Nur greedily bites on the apple, but then he suddenly pauses and turns to Leila.

NUR
And you?

LEILA
I've already eaten.

Everyone in the truck stares hungrily at the family as they eat the apple.

Leila looks at them, takes the other apple out of her pocket and holds it out in front of her.

LEILA
(whispering)
Does anyone have a powerbank?

The Somalis look at each other, and then shake their heads.

The woman seems to be pregnant, and her partner is embracing her, trying to soften the truck's bumps and jolts. The woman looks at baby Mahir in Amina's arms, who is so tired that he has fallen asleep despite the conditions. The young woman begins to cry softly.

LEILA
(to the Somali woman)
What is it? Can I help you in any way?

The Somali woman shakes her head. She hugs her husband and smiles at Leila through her tears.

Meanwhile, the elderly man with the thermos leans down to Leila and whispers in Dari:

AFGHANI
Give me the phone.

Leila turns to Grandpa:

LEILA

The telephone. Quick.

Grandpa has understood, and he discreetly hands his phone to the man. At the same time, Leila gives him the apple. The man obscures his actions from the soldiers' view and plugs the grandfather's phone into a powerbank. Bashir has noticed what is happening and doesn't take his eyes off the man. They wait in suspense to see if the phone will charge.

Ghalia has cuddled up next to her grandfather, who, as if trying to lull her to sleep, quietly tells her about Sweden:

GRANDPA

...Swedes live in peace and the king drives himself to work, just like everyone else.

GHALIA

(also quietly)

Will the king give us an apartment in the palace so I can have my own room?

GRANDPA

In Sweden, everyone has nice and clean houses or apartments. And every girl who studies hard has her own room.

The truck passes a checkpoint (the same one where we will soon see JULIA).

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS in the escort elbows the SECOND ONE and points at Karim and Hassan. The boys are tightly squeezing each other's hands. The soldiers exchange knowing glances, and one chuckles.

The other soldier is drinking hot coffee from a thermal mug.

The Afghan man opens his floral-patterned thermos and hands it to the soldier, who, after a moment's hesitation, pours some coffee into it. The thermos cap falls off so the man looks for it on the floor.

At this point, the truck turns sharply onto a dirt road leading into the woods and Karim can stand it no more. In a

hysterical fit, he throws himself to the floor and grabs hold of the legs of one of the soldiers. He sobs:

KARIM

Please, no Belarus! Please, please!
No Belarus, I beg you!

The soldier pushes him away with his foot and yells at him contemptuously.

SOLDIER 1

Get off me, gay boy!

11. EXT. BORDER STRIP. NIGHT

The truck stops in the forest, opposite an entanglement of barbed wire.

We can also see some border fence posts.

A DOG and ANOTHER BORDER GUARD jump out of the truck cab, and the guards push the group towards the barbed wire.

KOSA

Go! Go! Go! Go!

Some refuse to get out of the truck, and they try to defend themselves.

BORDER GUARD GÓRAL

Get down on the ground! Now!

The soldiers are brutal now, as if they are stoned all of a sudden.

LEILA

What are you doing? I escaped from Afghanistan! My brother worked for the Polish Army! I want asylum in Poland!

SOLDIER 1

Move, I tell you! Keep going!

They scare them with the dog, which is tugging at its short leash, increasingly agitated. The terrified refugees begin to squeeze through the partially cut and stretched wires.

The soldier from the truck carries the Chinese floral thermos, which was forgotten in the panic, toward the wires.

SOLDIER 2

Whose is this?

One of the border guards, GÓRAL, takes the thermos from him and smashes it against the metal side of the truck with all his might. The sound of glass shattering inside can be heard. He then throws it across to the other side of the barrier, where the pushed refugees have gathered.

GÓRAL

Here! Catch!

Karim catches the thermos in mid-air, unscrews it and begins to drink greedily. Suddenly, there is a terrible scream. Karim cries out, and begins to spit out pieces of silver glass from the inside of the thermos. Blood comes out of his mouth. Hassan embraces him, while shouting in the direction of the border guard:

HASSAN

Are you human?! If you were in my village, I would give you food and drink. I'd give you my bedding, receive you like a dear guest!

LEILA

Why are you doing this? Why? We need your help!

The other border guard looks accusingly at his colleague.

STARSZY

You went too far, man!

Góral smiles wryly.

GÓRAL

So what?

12. EXT. "CONCENTRATION CAMP" AT THE BORDER. DAY

Our group is being hurried forward by the Belarusian border guards and members of the OMON special forces.

Leila tries to stay active.

LEILA
(to the youngest, friendliest-
looking guard)
Sir, where are we going?

The guard doesn't answer.

They arrive at an encampment where a larger group of refugees are sitting or lying on the bare, beaten ground.

Sitting around CAMPFIRES, they are all exhausted and apathetic, with empty eyes. Some are lying on sheets of foil. We can also see some makeshift shelters - more sheets of foil tied together with wire, and branches leaning up against wooden logs.

A little boy, just a few years old, is sitting by a campfire and playing, mindlessly hitting one stick against another.

Our family walk into the nomads' camp, and look on in horror at everything they see. Even Ghalia and Nur have gone silent.

At the edge of the camp, a HUMAN BODY lies under a piece of plastic sheeting - we can see some legs sticking out. The sheeting flaps in the wind, revealing a lifeless hand.

Some OMON troops - the Belarusian special forces - are surrounding the CAMP REFUGEES in a semicircle. Some of the Belarusians have rifles, while others are armed with metal shields and long batons.

Our group take in the whole sight, terrified.

Leila boldly walks up to one of the men.

LEILA
We need water. Please, give us some
water! The children need to
drink...

One of the guards leaves and returns with a bottle of water.

BELARUSIAN BORDER GUARD
50 dollars.

Leila pulls out her purse, and takes the money out.

A second guard snatches her purse, pulls out her wallet and takes the money. Then he grabs the bottle of water from his colleague, opens it and starts pouring the contents onto the moss.

Bashir launches himself at them, trying to snatch the bottle.

The Belarusians start beating him, hard and methodically. Grandpa tries to come to his son's aid, but the other guard knocks him to the ground and starts beating him with his baton. Nur jumps onto the back of the soldier who is bludgeoning his father and sinks his teeth into the man's hand; the guard then whacks him over the head with his baton as well.

The bloodied boy slumps to the ground; Leila helps him up and then cradles him, wiping away the blood with a handkerchief. Little Mahir and Ghalia are crying desperately.

Hassan and Karim sit huddled together on the ground, with their hands on their heads.

The Somali couple fend off blows, while Amina hugs Ghalia and the baby. She picks up the empty bottle, as there was still some water at the bottom. She pours it into the plastic cap and lets Mahir drink what's left.

Ghalia swallows hard, kneels down and, with her face on the ground, tries to suck the remaining water from the moss.

LATER:

Amina tears some clothes up to bandage the grandfather's leg.

GRANDPA
Bashir, Bashir...

Bashir moves closer to his father, who discreetly hands him the phone.

GRANDPA
Write to your brother. Now, while
the battery is still working.

Bashir walks away into the depths of the encampment. He hides out of sight of the OMON men behind a shack made of branches. He sits down and writes a text message. He tries

to send it, but time and time again he gets the same message - *failed to send*.

A man (JAMAL, 40) is watching him closely from inside the shack, where his pregnant wife and three children are sitting. He comes out and sits down next to him.

JAMAL

(in Arabic)

There's no signal here, brother.
Don't waste your battery and hide
the phone. You'll need it some
other time...

Suddenly, he goes silent. We hear the whirr of an engine, and more OMON soldiers pour out of a truck and surround the group.

Jamal quickly tells Bashir:

JAMAL

Listen, brother, the Belarusians
will soon push us back. They always
do that. We've been to Poland six
times and always been caught. But
there are some who make it. You
need to write this number down.

Jamal rolls up his sleeve and shows Bashir - he has a STRING of DIGITS on his forearm (written on his skin). He hands Bashir a pen.

JAMAL

Come on, write it down... When the
Belarusians push you across to the
Polish side again, go at least 8
kilometers away from the border.
There is an exclusion zone in that
area. No one can help you there, no
one from the outside can enter or
drive in. You'll need to hide.

The Belarusian soldiers begin rushing the helpless people down a slope toward the border. Amina sees what's going on, and grabs the younger children. Grandpa picks up the last backpack.

OMON SOLDIER

Go Poland! Go, dogs! Go!

Jamal grabs one child in his arms and helps his pregnant wife. Our protagonists are now running alongside Jamal and his family. Jamal finishes his instructions in a breathless half-whisper.

JAMAL

When you leave the zone, send a message to this number. Write what you need and everything will be brought to you... by good Polish people.

12A. THE SITUATION AS SEEN FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARRIER, FROM THE POLISH SIDE

We see the Belarusians pushing people through the barbed wire. They scream at them, pushing them with their shields, beating them with their batons, and threatening to set the dogs on them. They shoot into the air, and we can hear the desperate wailing of children... It's another, even greater, vicious circle of cruelty.

13. EXT. FOREST IN POLAND. DAY

Poland. Close to the state of emergency zone.

We are following a group of people in a dense forest. They are carrying huge rucksacks, some of which have hot soup sloshing around in jars, and water.

They are activists from one of the humanitarian organizations that respond to the calls of refugees hiding out in the forest. They received an alert earlier, asking for help.

They don't use flashlights to light their way.

There are several activists (MARTA, 30, along with three other young women and a young man who is also a translator), followed by a doctor and two paramedics carrying incredibly heavy equipment. Whether they like it or not, the second group makes more noise than the first. Marta turns round to them.

MARTA

Can't you be any quieter?

DOCTOR

Sorry...

At this point, one of the paramedics stumbles over a tree root and topples backwards onto his backpack full of medical equipment.

PARAMEDIC 1

Fuck...

ŽUKU

Watch out: you're live!

She pretends to film him on his phone. Everyone bursts out into muffled laughter as the paramedic clumsily tries to get up.

Marta gestures for them all to stand still.

They listen carefully - but hear only silence. Then come the loud noises of the animals in the forest.

And what sounds like a child crying far away.

They keep listening to the sounds.

Somewhere between the trees, a shape flashes by.

Was it a man? Or an animal?

MARTA

On we go.

14. EXT. FOREST CLEARING. DAY - A LITTLE LATER

Our family, all together, are in a clearing in the forest, together with Leila, Karim and Hassan, the Somali couple, and Jamal and his heavily pregnant wife, FARAH. Farah is sick and unable to move. She's pale, glistening with sweat and moaning in pain. Next to them are their three children, and a few other men... The volunteers move among them, distributing water, thermal blankets, warm clothes, sleeping bags, powerbanks, flashlights, and hot soup. They also help them change into warm, dry clothes.

Leila makes some quick alterations to her glasses. Using a plaster and some string she got from the volunteers, she makes a special strap to keep her glasses from slipping off her nose.

There are also four African teenagers among the refugees. One of them seems to be close to getting hypothermia, so a paramedic dresses him with the help of his colleagues, warms him up, and wraps him tightly in a thermal wrap. The boy is blue, shivering and crying. The paramedic helps him slowly drink some warm tea from a thermos.

The doctor and MACIEK, a young activist holding a PORTABLE ULTRASOUND MACHINE, are both examining the semi-conscious Farah, who is moaning. Her husband, Jamal, watches on anxiously.

The two younger children cling to him, while the older one looks away, seemingly too afraid to look at their mother.

The second paramedic dresses Amina's sore feet, gently applying cream and then a sterile dressing. Already bandaged up, the grandfather has been given warm rubber boots, but there are no shoes for Amina.

One of the activists, STEFKA, a cheerful, slender girl with long braids, takes her own shoes off and hands them to her.

STEFKA

Take them. Put on.

Grandpa translates, but Amina shakes her head.

AMINA

(in Arabic)

What will she wear? I can't...

Thank you very much...

STEFKA

(in English)

I am close to my house, there are plenty of shoes there.

(kindly)

Come on, put them on, now!

Marta gives one of her gloves to Nur, and the other to Ghalia. The girl puts both her hands inside it, and Marta rubs them through the glove. Very fast and hard, but playfully.

Ghalia looks at her seriously for a long time, and finally smiles shyly at her. Marta returns her smile.

The activists hand out papers - powers of attorney and applications for international protection. Leila and the

interpreter translate for the people, explaining where they should sign; some still have passports, so the activists write down their numbers, take photos of everything they can, and ask the refugees for additional information. We hear snippets of the stories told by the grandpa, Leila, Amina and Karim, some of which are recorded:

AMINA

(in Arabic)

...After ISIS arrested him - for nothing! He lit a cigarette during Ramadan.

BASHIR

(interrupting her)

Don't! Don't say anything!

Amina falls silent and looks at her husband. After a moment:

AMINA

The children couldn't even go to school in that camp, their grandfather was teaching them... We have family in Sweden. They chipped in with the money... One boy from the camp went through Belarus and wrote to us from Holland saying he'd made it, and that it wasn't difficult...

GRANDPA

(in Arabic)

We thought the war, the camp, was hell, but this is the real hell. There is no humanity on this border...

LEILA

(in English)

The school where I worked closed down immediately... My sister was arrested by the Taliban. I was hiding with friends, but they started to get scared... My parents are dead, my brother is in Germany... I could have stayed and waited for death, or I could run away. I managed to get to Istanbul and once there it turned out that

we could buy a visa and a flight to Minsk... I'd like to stay in Poland. My brother worked with Polish people and he praised you all very much... I could teach the children English, like I do at home in Kabul....

HASSAN

(in Arabic)

I don't know if I'm still human. I have become an animal hunted by regimes. My crime is that I have the world's worst passport...

KARIM

(very quietly, in English)

...ISIS came and a bad neighbor reported me for allegedly living with a man... and they push people off roofs, or stone them, for that. My wife and I fled to the mountains... My wife went back to her parents, but I couldn't take any chances... I have to have asylum. I can't go back there, they will kill me...

SOMALI WOMAN

(in French)

The Belarusians beat us and push us into Poland: "Go, Poland, go!" And then the Poles catch us in the forest and take us back to the wires again: "Don't you dare come back here to Poland, or you'll die in the strip between the wires!" And then again, and again. They play with us like a ball, kicking us back and forth. And we just want to live normally.

NADIN (the interpreter) brings the signed papers to Marta, who is taking care of the children. Marta looks at them and nods - they are all in order.

Marta gets to her feet, all the time cuddling Ghalia by her side. Amina pulls the little girl away.

MARTA

(to Nadin)

Translate.

(Nadin interprets simultaneously
into Arabic)

Everybody...

I have to tell you honestly what
your situation is. You all signed
the paperwork. Now your lawyer can
represent you in Poland, the first
country of the European Union that
you have found yourselves in.
According to the law, your asylum
application will be reviewed here.
While they are processing it, you
cannot leave Poland and you will be
living in a center that is just
like a prison. The Polish
authorities don't want you here,
and are using you as a tool for
their own political ends. They tell
the Polish people that you are all
evil. The border guards have orders
to take you back to the border.
Maybe they will accept your
applications, or maybe they will
throw them in the trash and push
you through the wire back to
Belarus again...

Murmurs of protest and some commotion among the refugees.

SHOUTS

No Belarus! No, please! We want
asylum in Poland! It's ping pong!
They're playing with us like with a
ball!

MARTA

The dictator of Belarus,
Lukashenko, has deceived you.
He lured you here to use you in a
game with the European Union.
Nobody wants you - he doesn't, and
neither does the EU. If you decide
to apply for asylum, we have to
call the Polish border guards...
(a murmur of terror from the
refugees)

who are very likely to use pushbacks - which are against the law. I'm not going to tell you what to decide, because there is no good choice... If you don't want to call the guards, we will bandage you up and leave you in the forest. Unfortunately, there is nothing more we can do for you.

The refugees begin to confer among themselves in whispers. Then they gather around Marta and the interpreter, asking questions and listening to their patient explanations.

Meanwhile, Stefka squats with Ghalia next to Nur. Amina also approaches, with Mahir in her arms. The boy is hugging a teddy bear that he got from the paramedics.

Stefka asks the children some questions, using an online translator app, gesturing as she does so:

STEFKA

And did you see any animals in the forest?

Nur nods.

STEFKA

Do you know what they were?

NUR

A gazelle... Antelopes... And a giraffe.

STEFKA

A giraffe? Are you sure? A giraffe, here?

They laugh. Stefka's laughter is infectious and cheerful. Ghalia laughs softly, covering her mouth. Even Amina smiles.

NUR

But I really did see a giraffe!

The doctor stands up after looking at Farah, the moaning woman, who is lying inert. He has finished examining her.

DOCTOR

It doesn't look good. I would call an ambulance. Bleeding from the genital tract, possible placental abruption. The risks are high; both for her and the baby...

The interpreter translates for Jamal.

The people around them murmur; the border guards will come with the ambulance.

The sick woman has understood. Her husband is quietly crying, while their three-year-old son, whom he was holding in his arms, wipes away tears from his cheek with his hand.

JAMAL

Please, save her...

FARAH

But not to hospital... They'll split us up... I won't leave the children behind...

JAMAL

We need to treat you, darling...

MARTA

(through the translator to the refugees)

This woman needs to go to hospital. Ambulances are always accompanied by the Border Guard. When they arrive, you have to ask for international protection in Poland. If you don't ask, the Border Guard will kick you out to Belarus. Those who don't want to ask for asylum in Poland have a little time now to get as far away as possible.

The people are confused and don't know what to do. A few of the younger and stronger ones gather up their belongings - the new sleeping bags, water and jars - and disappear into the forest. They include the two young Somali men. The third one - the young woman's partner - stays with her.

The doctor goes to the side to talk on the phone with an ambulance dispatcher.

DOCTOR

...What do you mean: 'We don't send ambulances for illegals'? Can you hear what you are saying? I'm a doctor and I can assure you that if you don't come, this woman will die. I assume you're taking that into account...? Our conversation is being recorded, you know...
Okay, I'll call the border guards.

The Somali couple shyly approach the paramedic who is packing up the portable ultrasound machine.

YOUNG MAN

My wife is five months pregnant and has abdominal pain... She fell...
The Belarusians beat us... Can you check if everything is alright?

The doctor has finished talking, so he walks over and gestures for the young Somali woman to lie down on a foam mat. He exposes her abdomen, lubricates it with gel and begins an examination with the ultrasound machine.

As the young man holds his wife's hand, the doctor shows the parents-to-be a screen on which we can see their future child - head, legs, tummy and hands.

Seemingly from above the trees we hear the loud heartbeat of the fetus and the sound of the mother's blood flow. The baby in the abdomen is sucking its thumb.

The young parents-to-be cannot take their eyes off the screen.

Everyone is touched: the couple, the doctor, the paramedic... The young man has tears in his eyes, while the young woman smiles through her own tears.

In the darkness, in the middle of the forest, this pulsating image of a future life and its beating heart looks surreal - like a letter from another time and space.

One of the female activists, ŽUKU (20), a slender tomboy in a sweatshirt a few sizes too big, seems very moved by the sight.

To control her emotions, she lights a cigarette and finds several hands reaching out to her. Žuku hands out the

cigarettes, and everyone lights up from her. They eagerly puff on their cigarettes with great delight.

14A. FOREST ROAD, NIGHT

They are just loading the ailing Farah into the ambulance. Jamal and the children want to get in with her, but the guards pull them away violently. The woman screams in despair; her husband and children are crying.

JAMAL

Where are you taking her? We are family!

DOCTOR

Which hospital are you taking her to?

The ambulance paramedics don't answer. They slam the ambulance door shut and drive off with the siren on, which in the forest silence is probably just to drown out the woman's screams.

A MILITARY TRUCK has just arrived, into which the army and guards begin to load the remaining refugees.

Ghalia clings desperately to Marta, as if believing that she will be the one to save her. Feeling that the girl has peed her pants, Marta hugs her even tighter, stroking the girl's head.

MARTA

It's nothing, my dear...

BORDER GUARD

(to Marta)

Get away from these kids! Everyone back off! And you -

(to the refugees)

Pack up! Now! Now! Now!

Bashir and Grandpa help Jamal's children, while Nur helps drag things toward the truck, glancing at Marta as if seeking her help. Marta avoids Nur's gaze and bites her lips. Then she glances at him and their eyes meet. Nur bursts out crying, trembling with terror.

NUR

(to Marta)

Belarus...? Belarus...?

Marta doesn't answer.

STEFKA

What are you going to do with them?
They've signed papers for asylum in
Poland. Do you hear? You can't use
pushback against them! There are
procedures...

GÓRAL

It's none of your business! We know
the procedures!

ŻUKU

Where are you taking them? Could
you please introduce yourself?
Name, surname, border post...

MARTA

Żuku, let it go...
(to the commander of the border
guards, politely, almost
sweetly)
Commander, these are families with
children. The media already know
about them, just like the
Ombudsman, and we would just like
to be able to check where you are
taking them and what facility they
will be in... We are their
proxies...

The refugees gather in a close group and start chanting in
unison, including the children; they are clearly being
conducted by Leila:

REFUGEES

We want asylum in Poland! We want
to stay in Poland!

The border guards are now screaming louder and louder and
pushing the refugees. The scene is documented by members of
the media - a cameraman and a photographer.

BORDER GUARDS

Quick! Move it! Now, right away!!!

REFUGEES

We want asylum in Poland!!

STARSZY

We are taking them to the Border
Guard post. Stand back.

ŻUKU

But which one?

The commander doesn't respond, but starts shouting again at the people who are climbing too slowly onto the truck.

Marta walks Nur and Ghalia over to the truck. A guard snatches the kids' hands from Marta and pushes them onto the vehicle. Amina hands the crying Mahir to Bashir. Nur speaks to his mother:

NUR

Ghalia has peed herself again!

Amina turns the little girl around, sees that her pants are wet, and starts shouting at her:

AMINA

(shouting)

Couldn't you pay attention?
Couldn't you say that you wanted to
go pee? What am I supposed to do
with you now? Where will I get you
dry clothes? You silly little shit!

Ghalia starts crying, and next to her is Mahir, who is also in floods of tears.

In the truck, through the open door of the cab, we see JAN (32, whom we'll get to know better in the next part). He is staring intently at his smartphone screen while he replies to a text message. Suddenly, he starts shouting in the direction of the refugees:

JAN

Silence, for fuck's sake! Quiet!

MARTA

(to Jan)

Do you really have to shout like
that in front of children? After
all, they don't even understand
you.

In response, Jan simply slams the cab door shut.

Marta walks round to the back of the truck, where Nur and his sister are.

The truck sets off, followed by the border guard cars. Nur waves to Marta from the side of the truck, and puts his hand on his heart. The soldiers pull the tarp down.

Only then does Marta allow herself to cry.

The activists run toward their cars (one of them ran over there earlier and is now pulling up in one). Marta and the others get into their cars quickly and speed after the departing border guard vehicles. The license plate numbers of the military cars are covered with silver tape.

14B. FOREST ROAD. NIGHT

The activists try not to lose sight of the vehicles containing the refugees. The vehicles in front cross the highway and turn off onto a smaller forest road. Unfortunately, the activists are forced to stop when all the border guard vehicles enter the exclusion zone and disappear into the forest. We see a board with a sign: AREA UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY.

CHAPTER II - JAN

CAPTION: TWO WEEKS EARLIER

15. INT. DOCTOR'S SURGERY WITH AN ULTRASOUND MACHINE. DAY

An ultrasound image (showing advanced pregnancy).

In the surgery are Jan, his wife KASIA (30, approx. 30 weeks pregnant), and a gynecologist.

We can hear the characteristic rumbling sounds of an ultrasound examination (the baby's heart, Kasia's blood flow).

GYNECOLOGIST

Oh, that's a lovely fibula, and what a pretty face. Come on, come on, baby. See how she's wiggling her little leg.

We stay close to Jan, observing his emotional reaction. The light of the ultrasound monitor is reflected on his face.

There is a momentary silence as the sound of the fetal heartbeat stops.

JAN
What's happening?

KASIA
Why is there no sound?

The doctor slams her hand firmly against the side of the ultrasound machine.

GYNECOLOGIST
They should pay me damages for
working with this equipment.

The sounds come back. Jan breathes a sigh of relief. He goes up to Kasia, touches her belly, and briefly kisses her forehead. He meets the doctor's gaze and blushes. After a moment, he returns to his seat.

GYNECOLOGIST
It's okay, come on, baby.

JAN
So, it's a girl, then?

GYNECOLOGIST
One hundred percent woman, sir.

Jan smiles, tears pouring down his face. He looks at Kasia, and their eyes meet.

KASIA
Woo-hoo, daddy's little girl.
Klara.

JAN
Zosia.

KASIA
Lewandowski named his daughter
Klara.

Kasia smiles at Jan.

JAN

Doctor, when is the baby due?

GYNECOLOGIST

The date of Kasia's last period would suggest the end of January.

JAN

And more specifically?

GYNECOLOGIST

Medicine isn't an exact science. A full-term pregnancy runs for 36 weeks.

JAN

But just from your experience...

KASIA

(getting angry)

Geez, Jan, I'm not an incubator that you can program. Just get the renovation done before Christmas.

16. EXT./INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE OF KASIA AND JAN'S HOUSE. DAY.

We are inside a house that is still under construction. Jan is standing alone in a room - this will be the baby's room. There are flowers half-painted on the wall, a little messed-up and kitschy, but still cute all the same. SYLWESTER (65, Jan's father-in-law, in work clothes) keeps an eye on the moonshine still he has set up at the renovation site. Sylwester enters the room, where Jan is painting. A toothbrush lies behind some large bottles of moonshine. Sylwester is also carrying a toothbrush in his hand. Seemingly disgusted by it, he's holding it in a cloth, keeping it far away from himself. He shows it to Jan.

SYLWESTER

I'm fucking telling you, someone has been sleeping here.

JAN

I probably left it myself.

Jan moves the box containing the baby's cot so that he can prepare the wall for painting. There's something lying behind the box - a sleeping bag. Jan looks at Sylwester,

and at the same moment notices a figure standing at the front door. It's a young boy, dressed as a tramp. They freeze for three seconds - Jan looks first at Sylwester, then at the boy. The boy moves off and starts running towards the fields and the forest. As he runs, he knocks over a tin of parquet flooring glue (for their baby daughter's room), which spills all over the doorstep. Sylwester runs first, slips on the glue and falls over, like in a slapstick comedy. Jan catches him, but the boy runs off into the forest. Sylwester and Jan, now covered in glue, involuntarily burst out laughing. Sylwester makes the gesture of firing a gun, which he "aims" at the boy who is just disappearing into the forest.

SYLWESTER

Do you have the right to use guns during this state of emergency?

JAN

Only in self-defense.

SYLWESTER

(smiling)

Well, of course, as always. Self-defense! But you have clearance, I take it?

JAN

No way, these are different times now. They count every fucking bullet we fire. Everyone's shitting their pants about the ammunition usage. Absolutely, I'm telling you.

17. EXT. IN FRONT OF KASIA AND JAN'S HOUSE. DAY.

Sylwester has now gone. Jan packs his tools into the trunk of his car, which has some bags of groceries in it as well as a pack of water bottles. He takes out the pack of water bottles and puts it on the road beside the car. He thinks for a moment, then adds two tins of preserved meat that he takes out of a floral plastic bag, putting them down beside the pack. Every now and then, he instinctively glances around him, as if he doesn't want anyone to see what he is doing. He quickly gets in the car and drives off.

18. INT. TRAINING ROOM AT THE BORDER GUARD POST / CORRIDOR
OUTSIDE THE ROOM. DAY.

A small training room at the border guard post.

Sitting inside it are male and female officers from one post, about 25 people in total. At the desk stands CHIEF KARCZEWSKI (in a border guard commander's uniform, about 45 years old).

Seated beside him is OFFICER SCHITZ-LIS (also in a border guard uniform, about 40 years of age). Another OFFICER is walking around behind Chief Karczewski and Officer Schitz-Lis. There is silence in the room. All we can hear is Officer Schitz-Lis tapping her pen on the desk. The audience includes Jan and OLA (35, female border guard), and we can also see some other faces that will appear in the next scene. Jan's phone vibrates - Kasia is calling. Jan declines the call.

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI

Let me make this clear: you are serving Poland and defending the whole of Europe against an invasion. You don't wear the uniform for everyone to like you... Remember, you are not a bunch of scouts from the TDF, you are a proud formation of the Border Guard, the pride of the national uniformed services!

Everyone listens avidly. Jan's phone vibrates again, and he rejects the call again.

Chief Karczewski continues his diatribe.

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI (CONT'D)

And if your hearts are too soft, then sign up to join those lefties back in Warsaw... who think they can save the world by walking around waving a foil blanket. Besides, a foil blanket wouldn't do them any fucking good. Any lifeguard will tell you that. Ok... Ah, yes. You have to show professionalism. Because if you give one of them even an apple, they'll just say that it was

poisoned, and then what? It's not just propaganda, but a real threat! One mistake and six months later, we'll have an attack on the Warsaw underground.

Jan glances at his phone; Kasia is writing to him. TEXT MESSAGE FROM KASIA: "Got pains".

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI

Did you hear what Minister Kamiński and Minister Wąsik said? They were found with terrorist, pedophile and zoophile materials!

Have you seen their phones? You wouldn't have enough money to buy half the phones that they have. And I don't want to hear about their children! They hire or buy children to blackmail us emotionally, and then they blow smoke in their eyes to make them look like they've been crying. I've seen the clips myself. We are saving them! After all, you have children yourself - what true father would take their child on such a journey? Well, tell me! They are trying to play on our Polish compassion, and Lukashenko is rubbing his hands, even though he's just a fucking puppet of Putin himself. After all, this is a classic hybrid war.

(MORE)

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI (CONT'D)

Remember, these so-called "refugees" are weapons of Putin and Lukashenko! They are not people - they are human shields! You have all had first-aid training at some time, as I understand. (they all nod in confirmation) Now listen up, no one is to be found dead out there, not on your watch. There are to be no dead

bodies lying around. If you see one, it shouldn't be there, is that clear? They're saying that you don't get any psychological care, but that's not true. The officer present here... erm...

OFFICER SCHITZ-LIS
Daria Schitz-Lis.

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI
Diarrhea Shitless.

There's laughter in the room.

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI
Schitz-Lis, Daria Schitz-Lis, is a trained psychologist and you can make an appointment with her, normally, by the hour, like with you know who...

More laughter in the room.

TEXT MESSAGE FROM KASIA: "Come here".

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI
All right, joking aside, they sent me to give you a morale boost, but fuck it - if you're not ready to wear the uniform, you now have the chance to think about the whole situation and leave the room if you want.

Silence, nobody moves.

Another text message from Kasia: "I have to go to hospital".

Silence. A colleague next to Jan is bouncing his leg up and down out of nerves. Several people glance at each other.

Jan's phone vibrates again, and Jan again declines the call. The phone rings again.

Jan waits a while longer, but he can't stand it anymore and leaves the room.

In the corridor, Jan takes the call.

KASIA'S VOICE OVER THE PHONE
Sorry, it's ok, mom called the
doctor. I forgot to drink water
today and probably have colic. The
movements feel normal.

Jan breathes a sigh of relief as he walks back into the
training room, forgetting that he should explain himself.

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI
And who is this maiden of
indecision?

JAN
No, no, I just...

CHIEF KARCZEWSKI
Sit down. Learn the grace of God
the Holy Father.

19. (FORMERLY SC. 21) INT. GROCERY STORE. DAY

Kasia approaches the checkout with a basket full of
shopping. The line, which is quite long, consists of two
Territorial Defense Force (TDF) soldiers (semi-amateur,
volunteer military formations - each with a rifle slung
nonchalantly over their shoulders) and two uniformed BORDER
GUARD OFFICERS (Kosa and Starszy). Kosa is putting bottles
of vodka into his backpack. Noisy and arrogant, they are
joking around with the shop assistant.

Behind them stand three kids, with the TDF soldiers' guns
dangling in front of their faces.

TDF SOLDIER
And maybe some... erm...

KOSA
Our friend wants to buy some
condoms but is afraid to ask.

The whole group bursts out laughing.

Kasia joins the end of the line. Directly in front of her
is JULIA (approx. 50 years old), who has mostly dog food
and energy drinks in her basket. While waiting, she leafs
through a newspaper she has taken from the rack. The front
page contains moving photos of some refugee children.

TDF SOLDIER

(to Kosa)

Don't fuck with me...

(to the shop assistant)

L&Ms, please.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Red or blue?

KOSA

(mockingly)

Slims!

Again, the whole group snickers. Julia looks up from the newspaper.

JULIA

Gentlemen! You might have noticed that there is a pregnant woman standing here. I know it doesn't matter to you, but you should let this lady go first.

(to Kasia)

Please come through.

Julia takes Kasia by the arm and gently "pushes" her to the front of the line.

The soldiers step back.

SHOP ASSISTANT

But I've already entered these items.

STARSZY

No problem. Just cancel them.

KASIA

Thank you.

Julia helps Kasia put her shopping onto the conveyor belt - Kasia finds it difficult and is wheezing a little.

KOSA

(accusingly, to Julia)

How do you know what matters to us?

Bending down to pick up another handful of items, Kasia notices a newspaper lying in Julia's basket with a picture of a woman with a baby on top.

JULIA

Well, apparently pregnant women don't - if you push them behind the wires!

The uniformed men are stumped for what to say, but Kasia cannot contain herself.

KASIA

Madam, my husband works for the Border Guard and he certainly doesn't push anyone behind the wires. And you have no idea about anything! They are Lukashenko's weapons. If we let them in now, there will be thousands here in no time.

All this time, Julia continues to help Kasia with her shopping.

JULIA

I understand that it's difficult for you and I do sympathize.

KASIA

I'm proud of my husband. You take them in if you're so smart!

20. (FORMERLY SC. 22) EXT. IN FRONT OF THE STORE. DAY

Jan and Jacek have just pulled up in the parking lot outside the store. When Jan sees Kasia leaving quickly, he takes the bags of shopping from her.

JAN

Quick, so we can still give you a ride home...

He starts carrying the bags quickly towards the car. Kasia suddenly bursts out crying, very full-on, and Jan turns around.

KASIA

It's nothing, just my hormones. Yesterday I cried at a soap powder commercial.

At that moment, Julia comes out of the shop and looks over at Kasia. They say nothing. For a second, Julia seems to want to go over to Kasia, since she is concerned about her condition, but Kasia moves away. Julia then leaves.

JAN

Do you know her?

Kasia shakes her head.

21. (FORMERLY SC. 23) INT. TRUCK CAB - IN MOTION. BORDER. NIGHT

(CONTINUATION OF SCENE 14A, TOLD THIS TIME FROM JAN'S VIEWPOINT, WHERE WE WILL WITNESS THE SECOND PUSHBACK OF BASHIR'S FAMILY ON THE BELARUSIAN SIDE)

The interior of a truck cab - Jan is sitting next to the driver, who is a friend of his (JACEK).

Jacek is driving, and at the same time trying to pull up his shirt sleeve (the sleeve of his jacket has already been rolled up). There are some bumps in the road, and Jacek is struggling with his sleeve.

JAN

Okay, man, perhaps another time?

JACEK

(undaunted, he really wants to show something on his arm)

Check this out.

Jacek shows Jan part of a tattoo on his arm - we can see that the rest is going to be on his shoulder and back. What we can see now are the wings.

JAN

(looking)

Cool. Is it a fishing hook?

JACEK

Yeah right, a fucking hook! I don't fish. It's the Home Army anchor, you prick! I sent a pic to one chick yesterday, and she got really hot for it. A hundred times more effective than dick pics.

He turns on his phone and speaks into it:

JACEK

Are you there? We're taking about
thirty to the sorting station.
Over!

Jacek rolls his sleeve back down. He continues with his rant, while Jan keeps his eyes on the road. He is tense, and not in the mood to talk - but Jacek completely fails to notice this.

JAN

Wait, it's easy to miss the turn.

JACEK

Come on, what are you so uptight about? You'd get laid too, you'd relax right away. Do you know how much the likes of us are getting on the internet right now? One has already brought me three dinners on duty. And cake. A bit fat, but great boobs.

Jan notices a spot in the distance where some barbed wire is glistening. We can also see some soldiers. There is a road, but it's easy to miss.

JAN

Now.

The truck turns toward the wire.

22. (FORMERLY SC. 24) EXT. BORDER IN THE FOREST. NIGHT

Border guards and masked soldiers jump out of the cabs and sides of the trucks and start pulling out the refugees, who are resisting, having instantly realized what awaits them. They are pushed towards the wires. The yelling of the guards and the soldiers, the pleas of the refugees and the cries of the children all merge into one great cacophony of noise. Added to this is the barking of the dogs held by the soldiers guarding the passage. Several of the refugees try to escape, scattering in different directions. Leila runs away towards the thicket, and we see Nur running after her.

NUR

Auntie! Wait!

Leila turns back for him, and then they both run off as fast as they can. Jan spots the boy running away and takes a few steps forward. But Nur disappears into the darkness. Jan looks into the darkness for a moment longer, then turns back towards the wires.

Most of the refugees have already been pushed across the border. The young Somali man and his wife protect themselves against being pushed. Falling to their knees, they grab the guards by the legs and beg:

SOMALIS

Mister soldier... Please, don't...
No Belarus... We are humans... We
will die there... She's pregnant...
I beg you...

Two guards pick the young man up off the ground; they hold him while a third guard (Jacek) drags his wife along the ground. Jacek shouts out to Jan:

JACEK

Janek! Come here...!

Jan runs up just as Jacek grabs the Somali woman under her arms. Jan stands silently and looks at him.

JACEK

What are you just standing there
for? Grab her feet!

Jan grabs the woman by her legs, and Jacek starts swinging her.

JACEK

One, two, three...!

Jan quickens the swinging rhythm, and the woman screams loudly. The young Somali man, who has been watching, breaks free from the hold of the two guards and shouts out:

YOUNG SOMALI MAN

Noooo! Olyinka!

Jan and Jacek throw the woman over the wire with all their might. She lands on the ground on the other side with a heavy thud.

The young Somali man, who has escaped from the guards, is now clambering through the wires of his own free will. He reaches his wife, who is lying motionless and groaning.

Not far from them are Bashir, Amina and the grandfather. They have just realized that Nur is not with them. They call out to him.

BASHIR, GRANDPA

Nur!... Nur! Has anyone seen Nur?

AMINA

My son...!

She runs toward the barrier.

AMINA

We've lost our child! Our son
stayed on the other side!

She runs up to the wire, trying to get back through.

AMINA

(to the Polish border guards)
Let me through! My son is there!

BASHIR

Nur!... Come back...! Let us
through!

On the Polish side, some border guard trucks pull up and block the passage.

Amina and Bashir stare helplessly at the wires, still crying out desperately:

AMINA, BASHIR

Nur!... We're here! Son...! Come
back!

The young Somali man and his wife are kneeling on the ground. Olyinka crouches down, swaying unsteadily.

She bites her lips and reaches up under her skirt. She takes her hand out and looks at it. The hand is covered with blood.

On the other side, Jan gets into the cab of the truck. He hears Amina's tearful cry from afar:

AMINA (OFF)
Nur!... My baby is still there!...

Jan slams the cab door.

23. (FORMERLY SC. 19) INT. KASIA AND JAN'S HOUSE. DAY

Kasia and Jan's house in its raw state. In a small room, the future bathroom/utility room, Ola is smoking a cigarette by the window and also sipping a bottle of Maracuja beer. Jan is busy, carefully pouring moonshine into plastic cups. He handles the moonshine with great care, reverentially pouring it into the cups to make sure it all stays level and nothing gets spilled. Ola and Jan don't speak, but we can hear the sounds of a loud party coming from the other rooms - with laughter, conversations, and very loud party music (such as Baila Ella by Young Leosia).

OLA
Ah, I get it. It means your father-in-law doesn't know you're desecrating his sacred source...?

JAN
(amused)
Oh, quit it.

Ola's holding her phone in her hand as she browses Tinder (a dating app). For a moment, we see her phone screen and a succession of potential matches - many of whom are in uniform or have their names written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Jan peeks over Ola's shoulder.

OLA
And this one?

She wants to relight her cigarette, which has gone out, but her hand is shaking from the cold and the lighter keeps going out.

Jan, without taking his eyes off the bottled moonshine, lights her cigarette with his lighter.

JAN
Eh, some jerk from the TDF...
Anyway, he's short, you want to have dwarf children? And a ginger on top of that?

Ola remains silent for a long time. She's not amused, and flips the broken lighter in her hand.

OLA

(pointing to the lighter,
laughing slightly)

Basically, this lighter is me all over. What's the point of turning it on if it doesn't work? Seven miscarriages. Endometriosis, adhesions, kaput.

Only now does Jan break away from the moonshine and look at Ola.

JAN

Damn, Ola... Sorry, I didn't know...

Jan gets closer to Ola, possibly to hug her or to give her a pat on the shoulder? We don't know because Ola is quick to jump away, nipping in the bud this moment of closeness between her and Jan.

OLA

Come on, let me help you.

They take the cups of moonshine and go into a large room, the heart of the party, where loud music is coming from a speaker connected via Bluetooth. The room is in its raw state, so there is plenty of space on the "dance floor". Male and female border guards, some of whom we've already met in previous scenes, are dancing in a frenzied, wild way - a kind of pogo dance that allows them to release their work-related stress. KRZYSIEK (27, also a border guard) and Jacek are also present among the revelers. Jacek, who is talking to a colleague, takes one of the cups from Jan and Ola. We can't see Krzysiek yet.

JACEK

And what were you guys doing in the utility room?

Jan remains silent. He is still thinking about the conversation with Ola, but doesn't want to share what they were talking about. The silence between Jacek, Jan and Ola lingers.

OLA

We had an arm-wrestling match...
and he lost!

Jacek and his friend burst out laughing. Laughter spreads among a few more of their colleagues.

JACEK

Well, that calls for a rematch! Jan
the softie!

Jacek drinks.

JACEK

(to the colleague he was talking
to when Jan and Ola came over)
So, anyway, at least we didn't have
to troll them, right? That guy was
with a girl, and she was pregnant,
of course.

GÓRAL

Yeah, fuck, they're all pregnant
now!

Jacek and Góral start laughing. Jan tries to make eye contact with Ola, but in vain. Meanwhile, their colleagues are getting into the groove, quickly arranging a place for an arm-wrestling match and chanting "Ola, Ola" and "Softie, softie!" Everything has been set in motion. Ola and Jan are seated across from each other, and the party crowd chant as the music plays loudly. Now we notice Krzysiek sitting in the corner - he has a distant expression on his face. Góral approaches him with a cup of moonshine, leans over him and hands him the cup.

KRZYSIEK

(taking the cup,
dispassionately)
What kind of father would involve
his children in shit like that?
What kind of father, I ask you?
They're fucking kids, you know?
Fucking bastards...

Góral stays next to Krzysiek. He was laughing earlier with Jacek, but now he turns serious in a second and just lays his hand on Krzysiek's shoulder.

Meanwhile, a huge cry rings out - it's the culmination of the cheering for Ola and Jan in their contest; the duel is over. Jan stands up, looking like a victorious gladiator, clearly having regained his vigor.

JAN

Yeah! Let's get a fucking drink!

Jan's shouting and the sounds from the party carry across the clearing surrounding the house. Now we see at the end of the clearing, not far from the party, is a group of refugees huddling around a small campfire: a young man, an older man, a child...

24. (FORMERLY SC. 20) INT. KASIA AND JAN'S ROOM. NOC

Kasia is lying in the dark with her eyes open. Jan lies next to her, sleeping restlessly.

KASIA

Jan?

Jan opens his eyes.

KASIA

Tell me what's going on...

JAN

Huh? With what?...

KASIA

You don't normally drink... Ever.

JAN

Everyone drinks nowadays.

KASIA

The female guards too? And Ola?

JAN

Kasia, please give it a rest.

KASIA

But tell me why...

JAN

Believe me, you'd rather not know.

Kasia remains silent for a long time. She doesn't know what to say to that.

Kasia picks up her phone and starts playing a video on it from one of the pushbacks - there is the shouting from the officers, the pleas of the refugees, and the beatings.

KASIA

Zero zero fifty-four. I recognized you by the patch on the jacket. I ironed it on myself. Look.

Jan doesn't look, and he doesn't want to look. A moment of tense silence follows - Kasia plays the video back several times more, up to the point it shows Jan. We don't even have to see it, we can hear and see Kasia doing it on the phone.

KASIA

Jan, you don't have to do this. Shit! After all, Wojtek easily earns more than five grand at Lidl.

JAN

(sharply)

Fuck! And what the fuck did you think I was doing there, knitting?

Jan abruptly snatches the phone from Kasia, who looks at him in shock.

JAN

Sorry.

Silence.

JAN

(more gently)

Kasia, this is my job. Now do you understand why I don't tell you?

Silence. Kasia starts stroking Jan's hand. After a moment:

KASIA

And were you at the house yesterday?

JAN

They didn't deliver the materials... and they are pricey as fuck.

KASIA

I can barely get up from this mattress anymore. I have to have a bed at least... Do you know how much my fucking back hurts?

JAN

I know. I'll get it sorted, I promise.

KASIA

How about Laura? Lewandowski's second daughter is called Laura.

Jan mutters something, but he's already falling asleep. Silence ensues, during which only Jan's snoring can be heard. Kasia strokes her breasts, which feel swollen and distended. She feels very lonely, and wants to cry.

CHAPTER 3 - JULIA

25. EXT./INT. CAR IN MOTION. DAY

Julia (the woman we saw in the store; a focused, attractive lady of somewhat exotic beauty, about 50 years old) is driving a run-down small city car along a picturesque winding road among the hills and forests of Podlasie.

She is dressed the same as she was in the grocery store scene.

The inside of the car is a mess, with chocolate bar wrappers, empty cans, and plastic bottles... On the front seat lies a newspaper with pictures of refugee children. THE RADIO IS ON (the news).

Driving fast, Julia takes a sip from a can of drink. Then she suddenly slams on the brakes.

In front of her, by the broad grassy side of the road, is a huge... MOOSE. The moose strolls by - nibbling on twigs as if it hasn't seen her. Julia is frozen behind the wheel - she looks at the animal in awe, but immediately grabs her cell phone and turns on the FaceTime option for one of her contacts - BASIA.

A moment later, a woman's face appears on the screen (Basia's).

BASIA
(over the phone)
What's up, honey...?

But Julia doesn't let her finish. She shouts excitedly:

JULIA
Basia, look!

Julia points the camera on her phone at the side of the road:

BASIA
(condescendingly)
Well, yes, I can see that. A real-life moose.

Outside the window, the moose moves majestically away and disappears in the undergrowth.

JULIA
Sorry...

At this point, we hear the LOUD DRONE OF AN ENGINE - the moose startles and runs away, deeper into the forest. Julia looks up...

The SHADOW OF A FLYING HELICOPTER moves swiftly across the road and over Julia's car.

Julia slides the phone into its holder and drives off. Their conversation continues as she drives.

BASIA
Don't worry, dear, when we moved here in the nineties I had the same thing.

JULIA
But I... it's the first time I've ever seen a moose in my life...

BASIA
What!? But you've lived there for over half a year!

Julia's car emerges from around a bend. Julia sees a young POLICEWOMAN (20 years old) waving her arm in the air and ordering her to stop.

JULIA

Sorry, But... there's a police checkpoint... gotta go. I'll be in touch...

BASIA

Bye.

Julia slows down and comes to a stop.

A sign (on a makeshift pole) can be seen:

AREA UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY.

ENTRY ONLY FOR RESIDENTS AND UNIFORMED SERVICES.

A BORDER GUARD VAN is parked a few meters away, with some people in uniform standing behind it (although they are obscured by the police van parked nearby).

26. EXT./INT. CAR / LOCAL ROAD - CHECKPOINT. DAY

The policewoman knocks on the window pane, and Julia winds the glass down.

JULIA

I'm just driving...

POLICEWOMAN

(interrupting her)

Your ID, please.

Julia "rummages" around in her purse looking for her ID.

JULIA

I live right here. I'm only going to Rysiówka, as I have to...

Julia finds her ID and hands it over to the policewoman, who glances at the newspaper lying on the front seat. She looks at Julia's face, and then walks away without a word carrying the ID.

JULIA

(calling out the window)

I'm going to the pharmacy! You hear me!?

The policewoman doesn't react, and gets into the police van.

Upset, Julia swears softly. She takes her inhaler out of her purse, puts her lips around the mouthpiece and inhales while pressing it twice. She then shakes it and presses it again.

Suddenly, she notices some kind of commotion going on about a dozen or so meters away, behind the border guard van. We can see a stopped car, probably that of a people smuggler, with three refugees kneeling beside it with their hands behind their heads. Another car has pulled up behind Julia, with some children inside watching the action with the refugees through the windows.

Julia looks at the group of kneeling refugees, who are now obscured by the border guards. She is concerned. After a moment's hesitation, she opens the door as if to get out.

POLICEWOMAN

Please turn around!

Julia hadn't even noticed that the policewoman had returned with her ID - she gives Julia her ID card back and pushes the open door with her knee.

JULIA

What is actually going on here?

POLICEWOMAN

I told you to turn around.

JULIA

You should probably introduce yourself first. Please show me your ID...

The policewoman reaches into her pocket, takes out her ticket book and starts filling in a form.

POLICEWOMAN

I'm giving you a ticket for a 200-zloty fine.

ANOTHER POLICEMAN gets out of the van and comes towards Julia's car.

Julia quickly closes the window and mutters under her breath:

JULIA
What a bitch!

She turns round sharply, and drives away.

In the rear-view mirror, she sees the police officers laughing as if they have just heard a good joke.

27. EXT. IN FRONT OF JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

Julia has parked up. She gets out of the car with her shopping bags (mainly dog food and energy drinks).

The house stands near a marshy forest, in quite a remote area. We can see some more buildings several hundred meters away.

Julia enters the house - in the doorway she is greeted by her two dogs (MELA and WACŁAW), who are both barking joyfully.

28. INT. JULIA'S HOUSE. DUSK

Julia's laptop screen shows the open WINDOW of a teleconferencing program. In the window, we can see a man (BOGDAN, about 40 years old), who is rather handsome and well-dressed.

Behind him is a HOUSE INTERIOR that must have cost a fortune.

BOGDAN
(exasperated)
First, Anka gets upset that I didn't clean the air conditioning in my car. Is it so important now, I ask? It's autumn and you don't use the air conditioning now anyway!
Then, when she dropped it... something made me turn on the TV and... fuck me: have you heard?! You know what's going on?

Julia is sitting in her house, at her desk with her laptop on it and a communicator window open. On her lap is one of her dogs (Wacław), who constantly demands to be stroked.

JULIA

I only use the internet to conduct sessions. I don't turn on the TV. I only know what we need to know.

Next to the laptop is a mobile phone; it starts to vibrate and buzz quietly.

The word 'Mom' comes up on the display.

Julia sends an automatic, machine-like reply: "Can't talk now. I'll call you back".

BOGDAN

Our state has taken patronage... over this fascist rally. A Nazi march in the capital under the patronage of the minister!

JULIA

Running a national therapy session is beyond me. Let's not address issues beyond our control. We should talk about your problems.

BOGDAN

(strangely agitated)

But that is my fucking problem. We have some fucking racist fuckwits in the government. I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't think. My libido has dropped below zero.

Julia glances at Bogdan again and again, and writes something down in small letters in her notebook.

JULIA

Bogdan...

BOGDAN

It makes me sick looking at all this. When I see the face of this monkey, this fucking half-wit, who can't string a sentence together in any human language. Fucking hell... Where do they get these guys from?

Where do they breed them, where do they reproduce?

JULIA
(shouting)
Bogdan!

Bogdan pauses, somewhat surprised.

JULIA
And what did you take?

He fidgets anxiously as he tries to explain something, but only monosyllables come out.

JULIA
Bogdan?

BOGDAN
Tranxene...

Julia sighs (she seems genuinely concerned about her patient's lapse), and gently places the dog down on the floor. She notes something in the patient's chart.

JULIA
This is a breach of abstinence and you know what the consequences are.

Taking advantage of the situation, the larger dog (Mela) jumps up onto her lap, teasing and whimpering.

JULIA
(to the dog)
Mela, stop being so jealous.

She puts the dog down on the floor and glances out of the window, where the silhouettes of birch trees are growing dimmer behind the curtains. A patrol of two border guards walks on the road behind the birch trees.

JULIA
(to Bogdan)
If you still have any benzodiazepine in the house, then you should get rid of it immediately. I am suspending your presence in the group until we have worked through what happened. Now

we have to finish. Tomorrow at 4
pm, is that ok with you?

Bogdan nods. Julia waves goodbye and closes down the program. Annoyed, she slams her laptop shut. Upset by what has happened, she shouts out loudly:

JULIA
Fucking hell!

The phone buzzes again, and she answers.

JULIA
(into the phone)
Yes, mom?

The dogs run squealing to the door - they want to go outside.

JULIA
But I do call...

She opens the door. The dogs bark and run outside.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I couldn't say that because I have
patients at six...

Without interrupting the conversation, Julia puts her shoes on, slings her jacket over her shoulders and follows her dogs out of the house.

29. EXT. IN FRONT OF JULIA'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Julia is by the house, talking to her mother on the phone.

JULIA
Nothing's happening. I don't need
you to take care of me. Remember
about the medical examination
tomorrow?...
No, I won't call later today, I
want to go to bed soon.

She walks to the gate and closes it. Some CRIES can be heard coming from the forest in the distance. It's a human voice, but it's hard to make out the words. Julia freezes for a moment.

JULIA
(into the phone)
...Yes, yes, right, love you. I'll
call you tomorrow night, bye.

Julia listens carefully, but there is only the sound of the wind.

Julia whistles to the dogs and shepherds them back inside. Again, there is a distant cry (for help!).

30. INT. JULIA'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Julia dashes into the house and starts digging around in the drawers and cupboards. Finally, she finds it: a cap with a head flashlight.

She runs out of the house.

31. EXT. FIELDS BEHIND JULIA'S HOUSE - FOREST. NIGHT

Julia runs across a field towards the forest. The light from her head flashlight jumps around to the rhythm of her steps.

While we can see something in the open countryside, the forest is just a BLACK IMPENETRABLE MASS.

31A. EXT. FOREST. NIGHT

Only the streak of TORCHLIGHT cuts a tunnel through it, crossed by a tangle of branches.

Julia stands on the edge of the forest, facing a moment of hesitation.

JULIA
Hello!

The CRIES come again.

VOICE
Help! Help us! Please!

Julia enters the forest, and wades through the wet undergrowth. We can hear the cracking of broken twigs, and the splashing of water. Julia tries to walk quickly, but

stumbles and falls. She gets up and continues walking, with scratches on her face from the thorn bushes.

She is getting increasingly tired, panting harder and harder.

JULIA
I'm coming! I'm...

Getting out of breath, Julia reaches into her pocket for her inhaler and takes a deep breath. She chokes slightly, but keeps on walking. She stops to look around. She casts the flashlight beam around: the wild, marshy forest looks like the setting for a ghostly fairy tale.

JULIA
Hello! Hello! Where are you?!

Silence.

After a while, the voice is heard again:

VOICE
Here... here...

Julia tries to follow the voice, but the ground is getting increasingly boggy. She sinks to her knees and crawls out of the muddy slush on all fours. She clambers onto a fallen tree trunk.

VOICE
Here... I'm here.

The voice seems quite close.

Shining her flashlight, Julia looks around: there are fewer trees here as it's mainly just swamp. WATER GLISTENS among the clumps of decayed grass and bushes.

JULIA
Where?!

It seems that the voice is nearby, so Julia takes a step forward.

VOICE
No!

But it's too late.

Julia sinks down almost to her waist. Only now does she spot Leila, who is using all her remaining strength to support the head of the unconscious Nur with one hand and hang onto the trunk of a bent birch tree with the other.

Holding the flashlight in her teeth, Julia crawls out onto an island overgrown with weeds. She's on the verge of panic. Nervously looking for her phone, she finds it. In a panic, she wipes it with a piece of dry clothing.

JULIA

You can do it! I'll call for help.
Help is on its way. It's coming
now.

Julia dials the emergency number...

LEILA

I have no strength... I can't...

Julia waits to get connected, which takes an unbearably long time.

JULIA

(into the phone, in a panic)
People are drowning in a swamp...
listen... they are drowning now.
Yes, I am here... the forest on the
road to Bednarka, I'll send you the
location...

Julia taps on the phone screen.

We can hear Leila moaning constantly.

Julia notices that she has sunk even deeper, and now Nur's face is barely protruding above the surface of the water.

Julia manages to break off a branch, and she crawls with it towards Leila.

Leila screams - her fingers are slipping from the face of the unconscious Nur. When Julia gets near, Leila, howling terribly, grasps with both hands the branch that Julia holds out to her.

Seeing how the swamp is closing in over Nur's head, Julia also starts screaming in horror, but with all her strength she manages to pull the branch that Leila is clinging on to. This begins to bear fruit...

At some point, the women are able to grab hold of each other with their hands. Julia pulls Leila to her. Their desperate wailing merges into one monstrous howl.

32. EXT./INT. AMBULANCE / ROAD ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST. NIGHT

An ambulance siren can be heard. Through the ambulance door, we can see firefighters moving around the edge of the forest, illuminated by the SIREN LIGHTS.

Inside lies Leila, wrapped in a thermal blanket, with a paramedic bent over her.

Next to her sits Julia, dripping with water, with a DIRTY, INJURED FACE and her hands covered in BLOODY SCRATCHES - the women are clutching each other's hands tightly.

33. INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT

Julia (having had a cursory wash) is sitting up in bed in hospital. She is wearing soaking wet pants and her underwear top. The wounds on her face and hands have already been cleaned up and disinfected.

A female doctor enters.

JULIA

And...?

FEMALE DOCTOR

The firefighters pulled out a body,
I'm sorry...

Julia shrinks in on herself as if all the air has come out of her. The doctor walks over to a cabinet and prepares an injection.

FEMALE DOCTOR

(giving her the injection)
You should stay here under
observation until tomorrow.

JULIA

No, I have to get back to my dogs.
And that other woman?

34. INT. HOSPITAL - LEILA'S ROOM. NIGHT

Leila is lying in bed. Hooked up to a drip and also attached to a monitor, she is weak but conscious.

FEMALE DOCTOR

(to Julia)

Extremely hypothermic and dehydrated... Let's say in a severe but stable condition...

Next to her are the three activists we already know: Maciek, Żuku (nervously chewing gum) and Marta. Leila signs some papers.

Before doing that, she puts on her glasses that are hanging on some string around her neck (see scene 14).

After she signs the documents, she removes the glasses and places them on the hospital bedside cabinet.

Marta is talking with Leila in English, and Maciek is recording it all on his mobile phone.

After a while, Leila spots Julia and holds her hand out towards her. Julia walks over to her and the two women hug each other tenderly, crying together.

Maciek looks at the doctor and, as if excusing himself, says:

MACIEK

We're just about to finish.

Julia stands up.

FEMALE DOCTOR

These are my friends from... a humanitarian organization... They'll drive you home.

Żuku stands at the window and peeks through the parted blinds outside.

VIEW OUT OF THE WINDOW:

In the parking lot in front of the hospital is a Border Guard van - several uniformed men can be seen in its bright interior. The engine is running (and the men are warming themselves inside).

ŽUKU

The fucking pigs are standing
guard...

Žuku nervously plays with her chewing gum - she stretches it with her fingers while holding one end in her teeth. Then she winds it round her finger before chewing it again. All the while she stares hatefully out of the window.

FEMALE DOCTOR

Let them, better here than at the
border...

Now Marta is leaning over Leila, holding some papers and showing Leila where to sign. Leila signs the papers.

MARTA

We can slowly get going. Thanks,
Paulina..

A nurse calls the doctor out into the corridor. The doctor returns after a while, holding Nur's already familiar penknife in her hand. She places the knife on Leila's bedside cabinet.

FEMALE DOCTOR

That's what they found in that
boy's pocket...

Leila closes her eyes and cries silently.

35. EXT./INT. CAR IN MOTION. DAY

Julia's POV (detail): On a smartphone screen, we see Leila lying in her hospital bed as before and speaking in a faltering voice straight into the camera:

LEILA

(in English)

Bashir, Amina... I tried... yes,
I'm sorry! I'm so sorry... I know
you won't be able to forgive me...

Julia is sitting in the back (wearing Marta's jacket, and with a plastic bag full of dirty clothes on her lap). Maciek is next to her - he is holding his phone out and showing Julia the recording he made in the hospital.

LEILA

My phone didn't work... I was calling out... I was calling for help. I don't know why it's me who's alive... Nur was unconscious when...

The recording ends. Everyone is silent...

Marta is driving the car, with Žuku alongside her.

A moment later.

JULIA

So, what happens next?

MARTA

We have the signed powers of attorney. There should be interim relief in the morning.

JULIA

What's that?

MARTA

An application for international protection.

ŽUKU

(chewing gum)

That should protect her against being deported. The pigs still respect it, for now...

(quieter)

Fuck...

As she speaks, Žuku starts to wriggle and rummage around in her pockets, looking for something while cursing under her breath... Used tissues, lip gloss, and some crumbs fall out...

Marta, from behind the wheel, glances at it all disapprovingly.

MARTA

(to Žuku)

Hey, don't make a mess.

Żuku carries on - as if she didn't hear her. She has found some small earphones - and is now agonizingly untangling the wires.

JULIA

I read about you online... are you from that Granica group?

Marta nods.

MARTA

I'm Marta, group coordinator.

When Marta says this, Żuku rolls her eyes theatrically. Żuku puts her earphones into her ears - there is a buzzing sound (dynamic music from the earphones).

JULIA

(to Marta)

Nice to meet you, I'm Julia.

MACIEK

(to Julia)

Maciek.

As if lost in her own world, Żuku is nodding her head along to the rhythm of the music. Marta indicates her with a nod of the head.

MARTA

Żuku is a bit eccentric - she takes after dad. But she knows her stuff.

Żuku tilts the window and loudly spits her gum out of the window.

ŻUKU

Fuck off, Marta.

(to Julia)

Hiya.

Julia indicates the direction they should go with her hand and says to Marta, who is driving the car:

JULIA

Are you two sisters?

Marta nods her head.

ŻUKU

I can't fucking believe it either!

JULIA
(to Marta)
Now turn right here, after the bus
stop.

At that moment, Marta's phone rings. Marta answers it and her face changes. Suddenly, she turns the steering wheel.

JULIA
What's going on?

Marta just turns the car around and drives quickly back towards the hospital.

36. EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL. DAY

Marta is driving fast, and the hospital building is already in sight. The car tires squeal as she pulls into the car park.

We can see the guards coming out of the building with Leila, heading toward their off-road vehicle. Leila tries to resist and in the struggle the string holding her glasses breaks - and the glasses fall to the ground. Leila reaches out for them, shouting:

LEILA
My glasses! My glasses!

But the guards violently drag her away without heeding her screams.

The doctor is still trying to stop them. She is carrying a coat in her hands and trying to throw it over Leila.

FEMALE DOCTOR
She'll die, do you hear? She'll die
in that forest! Why are you doing
this? You have no right?

The guard waves a sheet of paper at her:

BORDER GUARD
This is the discharge paper from
the consultant. Out of the way,
woman!

Suddenly, the car park is swarming with UNIFORMED SOLDIERS (after they jumped out of a second vehicle), blocking the way for the volunteers.

Žuku picks Leila's glasses up off the tarmac and tries to break through the police cordon - but one of the officers grabs her arm and, in the process, the glasses fall and shatter.

ŽUKU

Get off me, you dickhead!

Julia looks on at the whole scene, shaken and shocked.

MARTA

I am the legal representative of
this woman! Please let me pass.

Everyone screams almost simultaneously; cries which are combined with Leila's desperate wailing. Leila yells:

LEILA

I don't have my glasses! I'll die
without my glasses!

Suddenly, we hear the door slam. Leila's voice fades as the guards lock her inside the car and it immediately starts moving off.

Žuku jumps behind the wheel first, with Marta alongside.

MARTA

Move over.

ŽUKU

Give me the keys!

MARTA

Get out.

Žuku, cursing, goes round to the passenger's side. Marta gets into the driver's seat and starts the car, but then another border guard car stops at the gate to the car park to block them in. Marta stops. Žuku leans over towards the steering wheel and presses the horn.

MARTA

(mockingly)

You think that'll scare them?

ŽUKU

At least I'm trying to do
something.

37. INT. JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

The team are sitting in Julia's house over tea, with grim faces.

Nobody is saying anything.

Only Żuku is unceremoniously and energetically playing with the dogs. She's playing tug with them... the dogs bark and growl as they tug on one end of a toy rope while Żuku pulls the other end, gasping and shouting, and occasionally "growling". It's clearly getting on everyone's nerves.

After a while:

JULIA
Żuku, cool it.

ŻUKU
I am cool.

JULIA
(to Żuku)
Be so good as to...

Julia unceremoniously removes the rope from Żuku's hands, and the disgruntled dogs start barking unbearably.

JULIA
(to the dogs)
Wacek, Mela! Be quiet.

Then, luring the dogs with a treat, she takes them deep into the house and locks them in one of the rooms.

Julia returns and sighs heavily.

JULIA
They can't get away with this!

Julia starts to get worked up, speaking louder and louder.

JULIA (CONT'D)
We need to publicize all this...
shout about it. Where are the
politicians, what is the EU
doing...?

Żuku starts laughing out loud.

JULIA
What's so funny?

MACIEK
Let's get going, maybe...

MARTA
(to Julia)
Don't worry, sometimes Żuku is...

ŻUKU
(vehemently, to Julia)
Do you know how many people have drowned in the Mediterranean trying to flee to Europe? Since the beginning of the crisis in 2015? Do you? Well?

JULIA
I don't know, but...

ŻUKU
More than twenty thousand!!! You probably haven't heard about the boats being turned back, ships being blocked, fucking Frontex actions... So yeah! It makes me laugh when someone talks bullshit about our "beloved" European Union...

In the next room, the dogs start barking loudly.

MARTA
Calm down. But it's true, we do have to go now. I'm sorry Julia...

JULIA
No, no... wait. Wait a minute.

The dogs run back into the room, and head for Żuku. One of them brings her a piece of thick rope.

Żuku starts playing with them again, but without the same level of commitment as before. She glances at Julia. Julia is frozen in thought...

JULIA
It's true...

(to Žuku)
You're right.
Look... I... I can't pretend it
doesn't affect me anymore. I want
to help. I want to do something...

Žuku has lost interest in the dogs now. She sits down on the floor, listening to Julia's monologue, and very efficiently - though still looking at Julia - starts rolling a cigarette for herself. The others also look at Julia slightly bewildered.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Look, I'll definitely be useful.
I'm in pretty good shape... Anyway,
I can do anything...

Julia stammers, as if waiting for the reaction of the others. Žuku taps ("compacts") the ready cigarette against the table top.

ŽUKU
(to Julia)
Keep going. You're doing great.

Julia adopts a tone as if it were a job interview.

JULIA
I'm a psychologist...
In any case, I have some tools to
help people in a crisis... and...
an emergency first-aid course.

MARTA
And a driver's license?

JULIA
A driver's license, car and, as you
can see, a lot of free space. It is
much closer from here to the border
than it is from your base in town.
You won't draw attention to
yourselves. I've got three beds
upstairs and you'll have the whole
house at your disposal... Except
for my bedroom!
(she adds, looking hard at Žuku)
And you can smoke if you must,
but outside!

Later:

Żuku is holding her phone in her hand with a communicator window open (detail). She shows it to Julia, and explains.

ŻUKU

(chewing gum)

It works just like Messenger. This is Honza, our guy in Czechia. He helped us once, and his number began to circulate on the web. Now a lot of people going across the border know him. When they need help, they send him a pin with their location. Honza sends it to us.

(to Julia)

But be warned! If you want to work with us, you have to accept the rules: we give food, water, medicines, clothes, powerbanks, phones. We don't give lifts or guide anyone. We don't enter the exclusion zone. We have to operate completely legally. We can't give the pigs any excuse, because then they'll hit the whole organization and those people won't get any more help. Understand?

Julia nods.

Żuku, who is now sitting behind Marta's back, cringes throughout her speech and makes the gesture of putting two fingers in her mouth like she's about to throw up.

38. EXT. COMPACTED EARTH ON THE BELARUSIAN SIDE. DAY

From a drone flying overhead, we can see the two sides of the Polish-Belarusian border. On the Polish side is a row of soldiers and border guards, and it's the same on the Belarusian side. Lying in no-man's-land between the two rows of barriers is a small camp of migrants. The Belarusians circle around the area, but the Poles don't pass their barriers.

On their side of this "system", the Belarusians have lit a bonfire, and are toasting sausages and drinking beer from bottles.

Amina, Bashir, Grandpa, Karim and other refugees are sitting on the heavily trodden ground between rows of barbed wire.

All are exhausted, and most are lying swathed in bandages. The young African teenager is dying; his companions beg the border guards but get no reaction. They plead for their help, but to no avail.

TEENAGE BOY

(in English)

Mister soldier, my friend has
diabetes, he needs an injection!

The guards act as if they heard nothing at all.

Karim is sitting huddled up, and he's crying. He's fallen into a deep depression ever since fate separated him from Hassan.

The young Somali couple hug each other. The woman has blank, absent eyes.

Only the children are playing, acting as if nothing has happened; Ghalia runs among them, dragging her little brother, who is now so weak that he keeps falling over. The guards occasionally toss them some hard, broken candies in the mud. The children pounce on them like dogs, snatching them up off the ground and pushing each other over. The guards laugh, delighted by this new form of amusement.

Suddenly, there is a loud, almost animal-like CRY of despair from the camp. It's Amina screaming.

Amina, Bashir and Grandpa have just found out about Nur's death.

They are talking to Bashir's brother, who found Leila's video online bearing the news of the boy's death.

BROTHER

She says he didn't suffer at all...
He lost consciousness before it
happened...

Amina doesn't answer, but starts swaying back and forth, wailing.

AMINA
My little boy... My sweetheart...
My sunshine...

Ghalia hears her mother crying, and comes running up. She looks at her parents with big eyes.

AMINA
(aggressively, to the brother on
the phone)
You said it would be a simple and
quick journey! You said...

GRANDPA
We are the ones who failed to look
after the boy. We must accept this
with humility... Nur is now where
there is no suffering or sadness.

Amina starts screaming and smacking herself in the face.

AMINA
I killed my own child.

Bashir grabs her firmly and shakes her.

BASHIR
Shh! You'll scare the kids! Shh!

Amina slowly calms down. She is trembling and weeping, but making no sound.

A long silence. After a while, a voice comes from the phone:

BROTHER
Protect the phone, you will die
without it. As soon as you get to
Poland again and manage to go
outside the exclusion zone, send
the location pin and wait for a
sign. I have a man at the ready...

Bashir remains silent. Ghalia clings to her mother's lap, while little Mahir has climbed onto his father's lap and, watching him closely, wipes the tears from his cheeks.

The guards have got bored of throwing candies to the children.

The tallest of them throws the last handful straight into the mud. The children scramble to get to them, throwing themselves at the candies, scooping them out of the mud and fighting over them, all dirty and wet.

On the Belarusian side, a truck pulls up. The soldiers pull back their barbed wire entanglements and gather up the group from "no-man's-land", pushing them onto the truck.

The grandfather has had enough. He lies down on the ground and refuses to climb up onto the truck. Bashir and Amina call to him from the back of the vehicle, but the grandfather simply waves his hand: Go, go!

The Belarusians try to get him to walk through the barbed wire, but he doesn't move. They give up and leave him on the ground. The truck moves off.

Bashir wants to jump off the back, but a Belarusian guard whacks him with the butt of his gun. Bashir raises his head and sees the border guards taking his father by the hands and feet and carrying him like a sack of potatoes back into no-man's-land.

39. EXT./INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE OF KASIA AND JAN'S HOUSE. DAY

Jan is in civilian clothes, having just parked Sylwester's van outside the house. He takes some tools from the boot and walks towards the house. The door to the house is only closed by the handle, not locked. On the floor, he notices various footprints, partly clumsily wiped away with a cloth, some of which are very small. There is a note on the table - "THANK YOU. SORRY FOR TOILET, BABY IS SICK". Jan drops the tools he brought from the car, and walks with quick, sweeping steps towards the bathroom. The toilet is clogged. Jan jerks the flush handle, but it only makes the situation worse. He kicks at the toilet bowl so hard that it hurts his foot. Jan gets down to repairing it right away.

39A. EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE OF KASIA AND JAN'S HOUSE. DAY

In his dirty clothes, Jan is filthy and exhausted. He lights up a cigarette, and then puts it out by treading it firmly into the ground. He looks for something in the car, in the toolboxes and equipment that are in the boot.

Later:

Jan finishes fitting two additional padlocks to the front door of the house. He turns to walk to the van and jumps back in fright - a wolf is standing in front of him, looking directly at him. They size each other up with their eyes, and then the wolf flees into the woods, much like the young refugee a week earlier.

40. EXT. BIALOWIEŻA FOREST. NIGHT

It's dark and cold, and the weather is very bad. The darkness is illuminated only by the beams of the head flashlights of Jan and Krzysiek. Jan and Krzysiek are walking along a barbed wire fence. Krzysiek takes a small bottle out of his pocket and offers it to Jan.

KRZYSIEK

My uncle's quince liqueur, to warm you up.

Jan looks at Krzysiek searchingly.

JAN

Sorry, but how do I know you're not a snitch?

Krzysiek takes a sip from the bottle.

KRZYSIEK

Give me your phone.

Surprised, Jan hands him his phone. Krzysiek takes a selfie with the bottle against his lips. The flash illuminates the area for a moment at a slightly wider angle than their flashlights. Jan notices something in the flash, a little further along. Krzysiek hands the phone back to Jan.

KRZYSIEK

I get it, relax. Are we friends now? It's in your photos.

Krzysiek stretches out his hand to Jan, but Jan is already starting to walk towards the shape he noticed near the barbed wire. Krzysiek follows him. They quickly reach the thing that caught Jan's eye. It's a woman's body; she is lying on her belly so we can't see her face. Krzysiek nudges her with his foot. The body is heavy and stiff.

JAN

We have to turn it over.

Jan and Krzysiek turn the body over, with difficulty - in front of their eyes, the ghastly face of an old woman appears. Her eyes are open, her jaw has dropped - it almost looks like she's smiling, in a ghastly way. Her clothes are tattered and she has scratches on her face. Krzysiek jumps back, and vomits a little further away. Jan looks at the woman's face for a while. Jan's hands, in huge black gloves, move from top to bottom over the woman's face so that her eyelids are completely closed.

JAN

(very quietly)

Eternal rest grant unto her, O
Lord, and let perpetual light shine
upon her.

Meanwhile, Krzysiek returns.

KRZYSIEK

Maybe we should leave it. I didn't
see anything, you didn't see
anything.

JAN

Don't you get it that the Ruskies
threw her over to us? Fuck, they
give her to us, then we give her
back to them? No fucking way. We
just have to move her about 50
meters. There is a good place in
the fence right there.

41. EXT. BIAŁOWIEŻA FOREST. NIGHT

Jan and Krzysiek have dragged the woman's body to a place in the barbed wire that has been prepared for pushbacks - so it will be relatively easy to push the woman's body to the other side of the fence. Jan begins to lift the body towards the wire. Krzysiek rushes to help him.

JAN

No, I can do it on my own. See if
anyone is coming. And we should
turn off our flashlights.

Krzysiek and Jan switch off their head flashlights.
Krzysiek wants to help Jan and goes towards him.

JAN
(sharply)
Are you fucking deaf? I'll handle
it myself.

Krzysiek walks away a little, while we stay with Jan. Pushing the woman's body to the other side turns out to be a very difficult task, even though they are in a place with "pushback infrastructure". The body is heavy and stiff, and the weather is terrible. On the other side of the border, a car is driving some distance away. Jan freezes. The car drives on, not having noticed them. Jan is panting; he gets scratched by the wire in several places, and it's all a long and laborious process. Jan has tears in his eyes, both from the cold and from the hard physical work he's doing. Finally, Jan readies himself and pushes with all his might. The woman's body lands on the ground on the other side of the fence with a deafening thud. This time, however, the woman lands on her back, with her ghostly, pale, twisted face illuminated by the moonlight. Panting out of exhaustion, Jan stares blankly at the woman's face. Krzysiek approaches him to help him get safely out, since he can still be pricked by the wire. Jan is still panting and unable to move. Krzysiek helps him. When they are finally standing in a safe place, Krzysiek, without a word, hands Jan the bottle of alcohol, which Jan drinks in large gulps. He is trembling so Krzysiek embraces him tightly. They stand like this in silence.

42. EXT./INT. SCHETYNÓWKA [VOIVODESHIP] ROAD / CAR. DAWN

Mortified, and with scratches on his hands, Jan is driving home along a dark road after his shift. The radio is on in the car. A news report comes on, which also talks about the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border. Jan stops at some traffic lights and turns the radio off. When he lifts his head, an old country woman appears in front of his eyes as she walks to the other side - probably having got up first thing in the morning to do something on the farm. Their eyes meet - the woman has something about her that is strikingly similar to the face of the woman whose corpse Jan pushed to the other side of the barbed wire. The woman crosses to the other side. Jan is alone, and there are no other cars around. Jan cries out, and "lets it all out". Tears run down his cheeks as he looks at his scarred hands, banging them on the steering wheel.

43. INT. JAN'S IN-LAWS' HOUSE. BATHROOM - DAY

Jan is lying in the bathtub, still fully dressed, and sipping vodka from a small bottle; two empty bottles are already standing on the side of the tub. In a drunken stupor, he stares at the droplets of water dripping from the basin next to the bathtub. There is silence. Suddenly, a sleepy Kasia enters the bathroom, sits down on the toilet, and takes a pee. Only after a while does she notice Jan.

KASIA

Jesus!

Jan is stunned. He doesn't have time to hide the bottles. Anyway, we can see in a second that he is completely drunk, and Kasia has caught him red-handed.

JAN

Sorry, I fell asleep...

Kasia gets up from the toilet, snorting with laughter. She goes over towards Jan.

KASIA

Yeah, u-huh, in the bathtub. In your clothes. Smashed.

Kasia and Jan look at each other for a long time. Jan is sure that he is about to be severely reprimanded, but Kasia is amused. She extends both hands out to him, wanting to help him out of the tub.

KASIA

Come on, you poor thing! Grab hold.

Jan catches her hands, but fails to rise. He slips in the bathtub and inadvertently pulls Kasia back onto himself. Her huge belly presses him down. She can't fit in the tub, as her belly gets in the way, so they both start laughing, and hugging each other. They look clumsy and awkward, but they don't seem to care - it's the first time we've seen them carefree.

JAN

Laura, baby, hang in there. You have a crazy mother, and a drunkard for a dad, but it's alright! You'll be just fine with us!

Kasia smiles, touched by her husband's approval of the name she proposed for their baby girl. She stays lying like this, in the bathtub with Jan, when suddenly there is a knock on the door, and the voice of KASIA'S MOTHER (62) can be heard.

KASIA'S MOTHER

Daughter, are you ok? Because sometimes when you're pregnant you can get hemorrhoids, it's normal...

Jan and Kasia try to suppress their laughter, theatrically hushing each other but snorting with laughter every now and then.

44. INT. JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

Julia's house has been completely transformed, practically turned into a storeroom of things for refugees.

Žuku is sorting through some of the things, making up aid packages, etc.

Julia is cooking something. We can see (through the window) that a car has stopped in front of the house. Maciek and Marta get out. They enter the house, tired and muddy. We can see they have been to an intervention.

JULIA

Just in time, I'll pour you some soup.

Without a word, Maciek takes a large pack of water in each hand and leaves. Julia takes a bowl...

MARTA

Pour it into the thermoses. I've just got a pin.

(she reads from her phone)

Seven adults. Needed: food, powerbanks, painkillers, anti-inflammatories, bandages... Get your stuff together, we're all going.

(to Julia, whilst packing her things)

As for Leila, that Afghan woman, we still don't know anything. No one saw her, and she didn't contact

anyone anywhere. Just disappeared into thin air. Her brother from America is also looking for her through his own channels.

Julia freezes for a moment, but then she and Żuku immediately drop everything and start packing.

Marta studies the map on her phone. Maciek makes another round, this time taking seven of the prepared aid packages.

MARTA

(turning away from her phone)
Shit. Fuck!

JULIA

What's happening?

MARTA

They have to move. They're inside the exclusion zone.

ŻUKU

(glancing at the map)
Fuck it. It's only a few hundred meters.

MARTA

All the easier for them to get out!

ŻUKU

Are you fucking stalling on purpose? We're wasting time. If you tell them to cross now, then we'll be looking for them all night...

MARTA

Spare us your sage wisdom...
(waving her hand)
Okay... let's go!

45. EXT. FOREST. DAY

Julia, Maciek, Marta and Żuku are walking through the forest, carrying heavy backpacks. The terrain is difficult: there is lots of mud, tall grass, and many fallen logs that have to be climbed over. Nevertheless, everyone is trying to keep quiet. It was RAINING recently, and drops of water keep falling on them from the trees.

45A. EXT. FOREST ROAD. DAY

Maciek leans out onto the road. He looks to the left, and sees a border guard car at the end of the road. He nods to his colleagues, and they all quickly run across the road.

45B. EXT. FOREST, FALLEN TREES. DAY

We see their legs moving over the fallen trunks in the forest.

45C. EXT. BY A STREAM. DAY

They jump across a stream.

45. CONT'D. EXT. FOREST, CLOSE TO THE PIN. DAY

Marta holds her phone out in front of her all the time - the screen shows the position of the group and the "pin" they are aiming for.

Julia steps on a twig, which snaps under her foot. Marta frowns and whispers to Julia:

MARTA

Be careful where you put your feet.

A second later, she stumbles herself and, trying to catch her balance, catches a small branch, which breaks off with a loud snapping sound.

Żuku begins to giggle quietly, and Marta furiously freezes her with one look. They go on.

After a while:

Marta stops, and Julia glances over Marta's shoulder at the map on her phone.

ON THE SCREEN, it looks like they are standing exactly where the pin is. But all around there is silence, with no one to be seen.

Then someone notices some wet and dirty clothes.

A moment later, Żuku picks up a wet tracksuit top off the ground - a bit farther on we can see an abandoned campsite hidden among the thicket.

ŽUKU
(quietly)
We're too fucking late.

Suddenly, there's a RUSTLING sound and Julia spots a figure shivering with cold (it's AHMED, 30).

He has FRIGHTENED EYES and is shaking constantly as he repeats:

AHMED
They left me... left me... I don't
want to die here, I don't want to
die... they left me.

MARTA
Shh!

She puts her finger to her lips and speaks in a whisper:

MARTA
Relax, we'll help you... you won't
die.

JULIA
What is your name? I am Julia.

AHMED
My name is Ahmed. Thank you. Thank
you.

Marta and Žuku work together and take excellent care of Ahmed, helping to change his clothes, and wrapping him with a foil blanket, etc. They do this with great skill, complementing each other perfectly. It looks like they have practiced it many times before.

The boy is extremely weak - he almost slips through their hands. With every movement, he moans in pain. He shows his SWOLLEN ANKLE. Marta leans over him, "examining" the injury.

MARTA
I don't think it's broken. More
like a dislocation...

Žuku nods - she knows what to do: she hands Ahmed the right pills, while Marta gives him some water to drink. Meanwhile, Maciek pours him some soup and hot tea (all together, perfectly synchronized).

Finally, Marta, Żuku and Maciek, working together very efficiently, pack Ahmed into a sleeping bag and place him onto a foam carrimat.

Julia, who doesn't have much to do, collects the things abandoned by Ahmed's companions and puts them into a garbage bag.

CUT TO:

Ahmed seems to be feeling better. Suddenly, there is a "glint" in his eyes and he shouts out:

AHMED

Do you have a phone? Please. Do you have a phone? Please.

Julia hands him her phone.

Ahmed takes the phone from her and dials a number. He does it slowly - as if he's trying to recall the digits.

A good while passes before anyone picks up.

Ahmed explodes with joy and starts crying. In a broken voice, HE SPEAKS TO SOMEONE IN ARABIC.

AHMED

Sabih?... Yes, it's me. Where are you?... Praise God, listen, those people you asked for help have come... How long will you wait?... Send me a pin, they'll give me a ride. I beg you, don't go without me... Good, I'm hanging up. Send the pin.

Ahmed hangs up - and we hear the sound of a text message being received. Ahmed opens the message, grabs Julia's hand and pulls her close.

AHMED

My friends haven't left yet, they are waiting. The taxi will be here in an hour. It's not far away. That's very close. Look.

Ahmed shows Julia the message he has received - it's a MAP WITH A POINT MARKED WITH A PIN. And it's true, it is just a few kilometers from their current location.

AHMED

Take me there, please. My friends
have money. They will pay.

Julia takes her phone back from Ahmed.

JULIA

Nobody wants money from you...
relax.

AHMED

Don't leave me. I don't want to
die.

JULIA

No one will leave you. Take it
easy... You'll definitely...

Marta abruptly interrupts Julia.

MARTA

Julia!
(to Ahmed)
We'll do whatever we can. Give us a
moment.

Marta pulls Julia aside as Ahmed implores them to help.

AHMED

They are still waiting. Please take
me there.

The volunteers step a few meters to the side, speaking in a
whisper:

MARTA

You can't promise him anything.

Julia doesn't appear to hear this reprimand as she's
staring at the map on the screen.

JULIA

It's only a few kilometers...

The activists look at the map on their phone.

MACIEK

The pigs will be standing there for
sure. You'll have to go around.

JULIA

It's only a few minutes by car
anyway.

MARTA

How do you want to get him to the
car? Huh?

Żuku takes a puff on her cigarette, and rolls her eyes at
Marta's words:

ŻUKU

Holy fuck!

MARTA

(to Żuku, upset)

Fucking hell, keep it down. And
don't blow that smoke at me,
please!

The DRONE of a flying helicopter can be heard overhead.

MARTA

If they have thermal imaging,
we're fucked.

MACIEK

Stay with him, I'll bring the car
round.

MARTA

And you'll bring the guards too.
You've seen how many patrols there
are driving around? They'll take
him and push him back through the
wire. And then they'll arrest us.

JULIA

Let's try to move him, though. We
might manage it.

MARTA

Have you ever carried someone
without a stretcher? Because I
have. We barely managed to get here
ourselves...

MACIEK

Why don't we try to carry him on a
sleeping bag.

Marta taps her finger on her forehead.

MARTA

No. We'll come back here in the morning and start sorting out the interim relief.

JULIA

In the morning? There is a frost at night.

Žuku looks at Julia appreciatively.

MARTA

You know the rules, you agreed. If we go to jail, it won't help anyone.

JULIA

Go to jail for what?

MARTA

For breaking the state of emergency regulations, for entering the exclusion zone, you name it. You can't give them any excuse...

ŽUKU

Fuck it.

They argue while getting wet in the rain, becoming more and more agitated but still speaking in a whisper the whole time.

JULIA

You think they need an excuse! Ziobro just snaps his fingers and...

MARTA

I'm the coordinator of the group! I bear the responsibility and I make the decisions! The car belongs to the foundation and is to be used as intended. I'm sorry, but we have to leave him. End of discussion!

ŽUKU

Then you go and tell him.

Marta freezes - she clearly doesn't know what to do.

Julia takes out her inhaler from her pocket - she puffs on it, and takes a deep breath... Then, to everyone's surprise, she turns and walks towards a horrified Ahmed (who, judging from the heat of the discussion, has figured out what is going on).

46. EXT./INT. CAR IN MOTION - NIGHT

Marta is driving, with Maciek next to her.

Żuku and Julia are in the back seat. Everyone is still, and silent. Only the roar of the engine can be heard.

Through the windscreen, a shiny black road is visible in the headlamps. Raindrops draw bright lines across the glass.

Around the bend - in the distance - comes the FLASHING BLUE LIGHT of a "rotating beacon" on a military jeep.

One of the SOLDIERS indicates with a flashlight for them to pull over.

When they stop, he shines the flashlight in their faces. Julia can see his strange, glistening, dazed eyes (out of tiredness or drugs) and his ghostly pale face, wet from the rain.

The soldier acts a little like a zombie - and with a mechanical gesture he tells them to go.

47. EXT. IN FRONT OF JULIA'S HOUSE. NIGHT

The car containing the volunteers pulls up in front of Julia's house.

Julia jumps out first and runs into the house. When the other three enter, Julia is already running out again with her car keys in her hand. She runs to her car.

MARTA

What are you doing?!

Żuku wants to run after Julia, but Marta grabs hold of her to stop her. Żuku tries to break free.

ŽUKU
Fuck you!

Julia slams the car door shut and drives away.

48. SERIES OF SNAPSHOTS:

48A. EXT. FOREST ROAD. NIGHT

Julia parks her car on a forest road.

48B. EXT. FOREST ROAD. NIGHT (REMOVED FRAGMENT)

48C. EXT. FOREST ROAD. NIGHT

Julia goes through the forest - among the fallen trees (as previously). She calls out as she walks.

JULIA
Ahmed! It's me, Julia! Ahmed!

Suddenly, Julia notices an empty sleeping bag and the things they left for Ahmed earlier: a pack of water, canned food and some spare clothes. In the middle lies Ahmed's passport - ostentatiously torn up by the border guards. She takes it in her hands and looks at his photo. She begins to sob.

49. EXT. FOREST ROAD. NIGHT

Exhausted, Julia goes back to the forest road.

She sits on a log by the side of the road, and glances at her watch. She takes out her phone and dials a number.

JULIA
Hi mom... Yes, yes. Everything is fine. You're due for your second jab...

A BEAM OF LIGHT appears on the road and we hear the roar of an engine.

JULIA
Mom, I have to go. Don't get upset. I'll call you back.

She hides her phone, and turns around. Then SHE IS BLINDED BY SOME CAR HEADLAMPS. We can see some silhouettes, and someone jumps out of the car.

Some hands suddenly grab Julia and press her face to the ground.

Julia screams in pain.

VOICE

Hands! Put your fucking hands
behind your back!

Now we can see some FIGURES IN UNIFORM. One of them grabs her hands and tightens handcuffs around her wrists.

50. INT. TOWN POLICE STATION. NIGHT

Behind the desk is a POLICE OFFICER, with latex gloves on his hands.

On the tabletop, the contents of Julia's jacket pockets have been spilled out: her phone and inhaler, among other things.

Julia stands with her hands up - a YOUNG POLICEWOMAN is frisking her. She puts everything she finds in Julia's pockets onto the desk.

POLICEWOMAN

(roughly)

Wider, open your legs wider.

OFFICER

You entered the exclusion zone.

While talking to Julia, the officer places more items into individual plastic bags.

JULIA

I don't think so.

OFFICER

If you admit to it, the prosecutor
will drop the sanctions...

JULIA

You must be kidding. Sanctions? For
a minor offense like that?

OFFICER

We could always add complicity in human trafficking. Article 264 of the Penal Code. Up to eight years in prison.

JULIA

I want to make a phone call. It's my right.

The officer takes his phone out of his pocket and unlocks it. He hands it to Julia.

JULIA

I need to call my mom. She is seriously ill. She won't answer a stranger's number, it'll only upset her.

The officer hesitates for a moment, then takes Julia's phone out of the bag.

Julia snatches it from him and dials her mother's number:

JULIA

Mom?...

(we can hear the mother agitatedly shouting something to Julia on the other end of the line, but what she says remains unclear)

I was out of range...

Yes, I went for a walk...

Yes, at night. Honestly, I'm tired of this checking in every night!

Did you go for your tests?

Oh, for Christ...mas sake! F...

Fuck! Mom... How am I supposed to take care of myself if you can't look after yourself?

OFFICER

Please finish.

The officer holds out his hand for the phone.

JULIA

What?

Yes, you heard right. It was a man's voice!...

Mikołaj has been dead for a year! I
have the right to a life!
Understand!?

Hearing this, the officer smiles knowingly.

Julia hangs up and turns around sharply - she presses the
side button on the smartphone casing (to turn the phone
off).

The officer grabs Julia in a trained hold, sticking his
thumb under her collarbone. Julia screams in pain and
releases the phone, which falls to the floor. The officer
picks it up quickly but it's too late. The phone is "dead".

OFFICER

Fuck!...
(furious)
You've done it now.

JULIA

I'm a psychologist... I have to
protect my patients' data!

The raging officer opens the door and calls out loudly to
someone:

OFFICER

Iza! Come in here for a body
search!... Iza!!!

ANOTHER POLICEWOMAN enters the room and the officer leaves.

POLICEWOMAN 2

(putting on rubber gloves)
Strip naked, please. You can put
your clothes on the chair... Well,
what are you looking at? Faster!

51. INT. POLICE STATION - CELL. NIGHT

The first policewoman takes Julia to her cell, and enters
it with her. She takes something out of her pocket and
passes it to Julia - it's her inhaler.

JULIA

Thank you...

POLICEWOMAN

Our commander is on leave. That son of a bitch has got under everyone's skin here.

JULIA

And no one will rebel?

The policewoman sighs heavily.

POLICEWOMAN

You know... It is what it is. I can notify your foundation's lawyer that you are here.

JULIA

I don't even know the number.

The policewoman just smiles, and then leaves.

52. INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

Julia picks up her belongings from the police storeroom and signs the forms. Next to her is a LAWYER.

53. INT. STAIRCASE LEADING OUT OF THE POLICE STATION. DAY

LAWYER

How are you?

JULIA

(to the lawyer)

Great. They let me have a lie down. I wasn't freezing. I even got tea and two lukewarm sausages for breakfast.

The lawyer blinks, as if he doesn't really understand what Julia is talking about.

LAWYER

I am sorry... We will, of course, prepare a complaint against your detention.

Julia takes her phone out of her pocket, which she has just picked up from the police storeroom. Just as she is about to turn it on, the lawyer gestures with his hand.

LAWYER

I would change your phone, just in case. And the SIM card.

54. EXT. DIRT ROAD ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST. DAY

The lawyer's EXPENSIVE CAR is driving through the countryside. We can hear the chassis grinding against something and the lawyer winces in displeasure.

They approach Julia's car. We can see from the distance that something is wrong...

The car is sitting on its rims, with broken windows and shattered headlamps.

Julia gets out and looks at her car, grim-faced. Suddenly, she bursts into a nervous laugh.

LAWYER

(with concern)

I'll get a tow truck for you.

JULIA

No. Thank you.

LAWYER

He's a friend of mine. I'm sure he won't charge you anything.

JULIA

Thanks, but no. I don't have the strength, I'll arrange it another time.

LAWYER

I'll give you his number... Here.

Julia writes down the number from the lawyer's phone.

JULIA

And now, I would be eternally grateful if you could drop me off at home.

55. EXT. IN FRONT OF JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

Through the glass door of Julia's house, we can see her dogs jumping up and barking excitedly at the sight of their mistress.

THE ACTIVISTS' CAR IS GONE.

The lawyer's car can be seen driving away from the rear.

Julia is about to enter the house when she notices that the hood of a car (different from hers) is sticking out from behind the corner - it's an old, dilapidated and filthy Opel.

56. INT. JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

Julia greets the dogs affectionately. She is different from how she was a moment ago - as if the joy of the animals has erased the nightmare of the last few hours.

Žuku is lying on the sofa in front of the TV set, smoking a cigarette. She's watching a sitcom. Over and over, we hear HOWLS OF LAUGHTER coming from the screen, but Žuku's face remains motionless.

JULIA

Fuck, Žuku, you can't smoke in here. That's way beyond the fucking line!

Žuku, by way of response, switches the channel on the TV and stubs the cigarette out in the ashtray.

Julia opens the windows wide. She pulls out her inhaler and takes two deep puffs.

ŽUKU

(contrite)

Sorry!

On the table, next to Žuku, is some uneaten BREAKFAST - a half-eaten slice of bread, some cold scrambled eggs, and some tea dregs in a mug.

Julia starts pacing around, as if looking to get settled again inside her home.

JULIA

Whose car is that outside the house?

ŻUKU

Mine. Among others. A few of us bought it together.

Julia takes a bag of dog food from the kitchen cupboard, and goes to the dog bowls. The dogs start yapping in excitement.

Żuku calls from the sofa:

ŻUKU

I've already given them some.

JULIA

Thanks. Well...

(Julia hesitates for a moment)

They'll get a second helping.

Julia puts a "small portion" of food into the bowls, which the dogs wolf down in no time. Żuku smiles.

ŻUKU

I thought they'd locked you up.

JULIA

They did lock me up.

ŻUKU

That's what I thought... Maciek and Marta have returned to the old base.

JULIA

A-ha.

ŻUKU

I must apologize to you again.

JULIA

It's not necessary. Just smoke outside...

ŻUKU

I don't mean about smoking...

Żuku starts rolling a cigarette.

ŽUKU (CONT'D)

You know, I thought you were just a common, petty liberal looking to boost her self-esteem... I was wrong. Respect!

Julia opens a drawer in the dresser and finds an old used phone in a dirty plastic case, and a charger. She takes out the old phone and plugs it into the charger. She turns off HER CELL PHONE and puts it in the drawer.

JULIA

My self-esteem is fine. Other than that, you're right. By the way... I'm an addiction therapist so if you'd like to talk about your addiction...

Žuku looks down at the bag of tobacco she bought in a tobacco shop.

ŽUKU

Seriously? Right, I should quit. By paying for this shit, I'm supporting the military-industrial complex.

Julia notices the uneaten breakfast, takes a plate and without a word sits down on the sofa next to Žuku. She wolfs down the remains of the cold scrambled egg and the half-eaten piece of bread.

JULIA

More like the tobacco industry!

ŽUKU

It's one and the same. People still don't get that turbo-capitalism is generating...

On the TV screen, there is a report on the visit of the Polish president and his wife to the border, which included a visit to a school. There is a "WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS" banner, some thank-you cards for the soldiers written by the children, and a special performance: children in border guard uniforms, etc.

JULIA glances at the screen - with hatred and disgust.

JULIA

So I assume that since you stayed -
we're doing this together, our
way...?

ŽUKU

Yep!

The women exchange "knowing" glances. It's clear they have
established some kind of mutual understanding.

ŽUKU

We have to do it in two cars. One
in front, as the lookout, to let us
know about any checkpoints.

Julia looks around - as if she's looking for something.

ŽUKU

I saw that some guy gave you a
lift. What happened to your car?

Julia finds the remote control and turns off the TV.

She sighs and spreads her arms out.

JULIA

I don't have a car for the time
being... Ok? Let's bear that in
mind.

ŽUKU

Sure... We can't bring them here
anyway... They'll be keeping an eye
on you now. They'll trace us...

JULIA

Žuku, I know one thing! I will
never leave anyone in the forest
again!

Julia puts the plate down on the table, walks over to her
bedroom door, and opens it. Inside are two young people
asleep on her bed.

ŽUKU

Wait!

Hearing Žuku's shout, the two young people wake up and
lazily climb out of bed. They both look rather eccentric.

ŻUKU
This is Sasha.
And this...

JULIA
(exploding in fury)
Fuck, Żuku, I said no one was to
sleep in my bed! What's wrong with
you guys? There are two big
bedrooms upstairs!

ULA
(to Julia, not minding her
outburst)
Hi. Ula.

ŻUKU
I invited them because we'll need
backup...

JULIA
(remaining silent for a while, then
wishing to take back her outburst)
Just remember: No one sleeps in my
bed, no one eats out of my bowl.

Julia sees the old phone start up now that it is plugged
in. A photo is displayed on the phone's wallpaper - it's
Julia with a slightly older, gray-haired man (MIKOŁAJ).

ŻUKU
Cute!

JULIA
He died of Covid.

ŻUKU
Oh, fuck. Sorry...

Julia just sighs heavily.

CUT TO

Some time passes (Sasha and Ula are now dressed).

Julia is talking on her husband's old phone, which is still
connected to the charger.

JULIA
Hi Basia.

As they talk, Julia glances at her watch.

BASIA (OFF)
God, I almost had a heart attack...
Why don't you call from your...

JULIA
I have a favor to ask. Could you
drop your SUV round? My car is
wrecked. Best right away. Thanks a
lot, bye.

Julia instantly starts up her laptop and sits down at her desk.

SASHA
I could have a good place, but it's
in Lublin...

Żuku taps her finger on her head.

JULIA
Sorry, give me a moment. I need to
speak to a patient.

Julia calls someone on Skype.

Bogdan (Julia's patient from scene 28) appears on the screen, somewhat "disheveled" in a stretched T-shirt. He's surprised.

BOGDAN
Hi... oh.

JULIA
I can give you one session free of
charge. Interested?

BOGDAN
Well, actually...

JULIA
I'm glad you appreciate the
gesture.
And how is your moral outrage at
our reactionary regime?

BOGDAN
(smiling)
Growing steadily!

Julia nods approvingly and smiles intriguingly.

57. EXT. IN FRONT OF JULIA'S HOUSE. DAY

A flashy SUV is parked in front of the house.

Basia holds the keys in her hand, as if she is about to hand them to Julia.

BASIA

There's still half a tank of gasoline in it. It has automatic transmission, but that shouldn't be a problem.

JULIA

Right.

BASIA

You always did drive like a lunatic. It's good that you're okay.

JULIA

Basia, I said my car was damaged. It doesn't mean I had an accident.

Basia's eyes "open wide" in surprise.

The door opens and Žuku's head pokes out.

ŽUKU

Howdy. Julia, we got a pin...

JULIA

Ok. Get the things together, I'll be right there.

BASIA

What's actually going on here?

JULIA

We want to take people out of the woods and put them up somewhere in the area...

BASIA

What?! You mean... refugees?

JULIA

People seeking refuge. They need
somewhere safe to recover. And
then...

Sasha comes out of the house, with a head flashlight in his
hand.

SASHA

Hiya.
(to Julia)
Do you have any AAA batteries?

JULIA

Bottom drawer in the desk.

Sasha notices the car and takes a step toward it:

SASHA

Holy crap. What a cool car! And
local plates! We can take it to the
forest and use the Opel as the
lookout!

It seems that Basia is about to faint. She slowly withdraws
her hand and puts the keys back in her pocket.

JULIA

(to Sasha)
Let me have a minute to talk, ok?

Sasha smiles wryly and walks away.

JULIA

(to Basia)
I'll show you something.

Julia starts playing the video of Leila on her phone and
shows it to Basia:

It's a different part of Leila's account of events from the
ones we have seen so far, in which she tells the story of
Nur's death.

BASIA

(shaken)
Please... I can't watch this kind
of stuff... It just gets to me
and...

JULIA

This is the woman that I dragged
out of the swamp...

Basia interrupts her abruptly:

BASIA

Julia, my dear, listen, you know
me... I always voted for Civic
Platform. I stood outside the
courts with a candle when it was
necessary, but this... I have to
make a living, work, you know?

JULIA

Everyone has to.

BASIA

(abruptly)

That's easy for you to say. You
don't have a family!

JULIA

(ice-cold)

That's right, my husband died.

BASIA

Sorry...

JULIA

I have a mother. And my dogs.
Will you lend me the car or not?

BASIA

What if they catch you and tie it
to me?

JULIA

Helping is not illegal!

BASIA

Julia, what world are you living
in! Sorry, but no. I can't...

Basia walks away toward her car. As she gets in, she
shouts:

BASIA

And don't ask me for such things
again! Understand?!

She drives off. Waiting for her nearby is a second flashy car, which takes off after hers.

58. EXT. CORNFIELD. MORNING

Bashir, Amina, Ghalia and Mahir are all huddled together - sleeping on a bed of broken and fallen plants. TALL DRY STALKS surround them on all sides, forming a kind of curtain that separates them from the world.

Bashir is half-asleep, shaking from the cold. We can see that he has covered his daughter with some of his clothes. He opens his eyes and looks at Mahir, who is sleeping peacefully, as though unthreatened by any danger.

Above them is the blue sky, with rays of sunlight piercing through the tall stalks swaying gently in the wind.

Suddenly, a STRANGE SOUND COMES from somewhere in the distance - a steady, mechanical sound that keeps growing louder.

Amina stands up, alarmed. She notices, above the corn tips, the cab of a working combine harvester, and a MAN inside it who seems to have noticed her too.

Bashir grabs Mahir, and Amina grabs Ghalia's hand.

They run away, breaking through the thicket of stalks. Then we see from a bird's-eye view how they jump out of the cornfield like frightened mice and rush through the mowed, wide strip of stubble.

They run out of the field and into a copse, then into the thickening forest. They don't stop, but continue running until they are out of breath. The forest turns into a swamp, but they keep running for a good while until their feet start to get bogged down in the muddy slush.

59. EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE THE TOWN. DAY (REMOVED SCENE)

60. EXT. TOWN. DAY

A little later, they are in the town, sitting down on the curb of the pavement. They look completely different from how they did on the plane at the beginning. They are dirty, ragged, emaciated and resigned.

Passers-by walk past them, some of whom glance at them and immediately speed up. Someone stops and looks at them for a moment.

Someone else films them with a phone from a passing car.

No one in the family reacts to the people's stares. Mahir has fallen asleep on his mother's lap.

A mother and a seven-year-old boy come out of the bakery opposite. The boy is holding a half-eaten bun in his hand. He notices the seated family, and his and Ghalia's eyes meet.

BOY
(to his mother)
Can I give it to her?

The mother thinks for a moment and nods. The boy runs up to the seated group, takes a few steps back and then comes up again, slowly this time. From a distance, he holds out the bun to Ghalia.

BOY
Hey little girl, here you are...

Ghalia glances at Amina and takes the bun. She holds it in her hands. Then she looks at Amina again, who is staring fixedly into space.

BOY
You can eat it, it's a nice bun.
With vanilla cream.

Ghalia searches for something in her jacket pocket. She takes out a pine cone and holds it out to the boy. The boy's mother approaches him briskly and pulls him away.

WOMAN
Let's go. That's enough of that.
Say goodbye to the girl.

BOY
Goodbye, little girl.

They leave, and Bashir's phone beeps again. Bashir takes it out of his pocket, checks the message and then stands up, as if she's been given a new lease of life. He takes the yeast bun from Ghalia and breaks it up, handing a piece to

Mahir, eating a piece himself and giving the rest back to his daughter.

BASHIR

Let's go!

He dashes off with Mahir in his arms, followed by Ghalia. Amina reluctantly follows them. After a while, Amina takes the little boy from Bashir and carries him herself. They turn between some houses, disappearing among the trees.

A moment later, a column of military cars passes along the street where they were sitting.

61. EXT./INT. CAR IN MOTION. NIGHT

Žuku is driving. She drives carefully and "by the book".

They are overtaken by a number of cars (including police and army vehicles).

Julia's POV:

We see the screen of the cell phone that Julia is holding - there is a map with a pin marker. Julia uses her fingers to zoom in on the map, and then zoom out - she's checking something...

JULIA

Good thing they are pretty close to the road...

SASHA

Hey guys... Maybe we can do it without giving them a ride? When I used to do these trips, they never wanted a ride.

Ula replies hesitantly, as if it were a confession of guilt.

ULA

Because we didn't ask...

SASHA

(gently teasing)

We did! I asked them! The Kurds themselves said they'd already got hold of a cab.

ULA
(annoyed)
Did you ask all of them!? Geez,
besides, we...

JULIA
(cutting them both off)
This is no time for squabbling. We
have to consider every option.

ŽUKU
If necessary, we can put them in
the back and cover them with
blankets. I'll drive them out first
and then come back for you...

ULA
Or not...

SASHA
I'll drive. After all, it's my car.

They all argue, one shouting across the other:

ŽUKU
Hey, I chipped in too!

Julia uses her inhaler, taking two deep "puffs".

ULA
Hold on, the Opel is registered
under my name!

JULIA
(putting her inhaler away)
I'll go. I'm the eldest, and sorry,
with all due respect, but I don't
exactly look like an anarchist who
only dreams of bucking the system!

ŽUKU
I'm the best driver. I've already
got away from the fucking pigs more
than once.

JULIA
Really?!

At that moment, there is the squealing of tires as Żuku brakes suddenly. She drifts into the middle of the road so that the car can spin round 180°.

SASHA
Jesus Christ!

She accelerates sharply and repeats the same maneuver. Without taking her foot off the gas, she changes gear in a flash and drives forward at full speed. Everyone is momentarily thrown about in their seats.

SASHA
You're out of your fucking mind!

Żuku brakes sharply and starts driving totally by the book again.

61A. EXT. ROAD. NIGHT

Right away, as if on cue, they see a police car parked by the side of the road. Standing beside it is a policeman, who signals for them to pull over.

Żuku stops the car and the policeman approaches. Żuku lowers the window.

POLICEMAN
Where are you going?

ŻUKU
We're out of the exclusion zone, we can go wherever we please.

POLICEMAN
You could at least say 'to the store'.

ŻUKU
To the store. Is that better, sir?

The policeman takes a long and very suspicious look at Julia.

POLICEMAN
And the lady next to you, with the dark face... Does she speak Polish?

ŻUKU
She does.

POLICEMAN

Then why doesn't she say something?

JULIA

(after a moment of silence)

Our Father who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom
come, thy will be done, as in
heaven, so on earth...

POLICEMAN

Okay, on your way.

JULIA

(continuing)

Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins...

The policeman is now getting annoyed:

POLICEMAN

Fuck off!

62. EXT. FIELDS - FOREST EDGE. NIGHT

The volunteers (each carrying a heavy backpack) are now walking along the edge of a field. Julia is on the phone.

JULIA

I am an acquaintance of Counsellor
Janicki... Yes, it's about picking
up a broken-down car and taking it
to a garage. It's on a side road.
I'll send you a pin... Yes, as soon
as possible.

Julia stops.

JULIA

Hello? I'm losing the signal...
Damn.

Julia stops and takes a step back. She holds her arm out (trying to get a better signal) and glances at the phone's screen.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello? Yes, I can hear you
now. Could you repeat that, please?

Yes, great. Thanks...

Julia catches up again with the group, who had left her behind a little.

THEY ALL ENTER THE FOREST.

63. EXT. FOREST. NIGHT

It's wet, and constantly DRIZZLING WITH FINE RAIN.

A black boy (PATRICE, about 15 years old), covered with mud and in wet clothes, is SHIVERING in terror. His movements are visibly slowed down (due to the symptoms of hypothermia) but nevertheless he still tries to cooperate with Sasha and Julia, who, like a caring mother, helps him get dressed with the utmost care. The boy is given clean "hiking" clothes, which Julia brought with her in a backpack.

JULIA

(struggling for words)

Je t'aider... peux-tu...? Bien.

Très bien. What's your... I mean...

Quel est ton nom?

PATRICE

Patrice.

JULIA

Nom mon est Julia...

The boy smiles weakly (it looks as if Julia has amused him with something).

Žuku and Ula are selecting some clothes and helping the two friends of the 15-year-old boy (MABI and ALAIN), who seem to be in better shape. They are both black boys, about 17-18 years of age. One of them has dreadlocks, and we saw them earlier on the Belarusian side.

Ula pours soup from the thermoses.

PATRICE

I'd like to drink some more...

[Je voudrais boire plus...]

Sasha pours a few sips of tea into a mug and gives it to the boy.

When Patrice is clothed, Julia helps him get into his sleeping bag and somehow get into a semi-reclining position. She covers him with chemical body warmers, and then feeds him some soup...

ŽUKU

What do we do now?

(glancing at her watch)

It's 11 p.m.

Patrice is worried and he looks at them, terrified.

JULIA

(in broken French)

Relax. Nobody is going to leave you.

(to Žuku)

We stick to the plan. Go to the car. Leave a sleeping bag and a powerbank with me. I will stay here with them until morning.

The other members of the team nod in understanding.

Julia lays out her sleeping bag next to the 15-year-old.

Žuku and the others leave - everyone clearly knows what to do.

Patrice (still in a semi-reclining position) looks a little better. He is weak, and reaches out for his phone, which the volunteers have plugged into a powerbank.

He awkwardly turns his phone on. The screen lights up his face, and we can also see Julia's profile as she sits next to him.

The boy shows Julia the screen - there is a photo on it of Patrice playing an instrument.

PATRICE

(in French)

It's me, you see it's me.

[C'est moi, vous voyez, c'est moi.]

It's true - we can see that it's Patrice, about a year younger. He laughs into the camera.

Patrice browses through more photos.

He suddenly stops scrolling and points at what appears to be a child of around 7 or 8 years old.

PATRICE

And that's my brother...

The phone slips out of his hands and Patrice starts crying like a little boy.

He lays his head down on Julia's lap, and she embraces him gently.

64. EXT. DIRT ROAD. DAY

A winch on a tow truck is pulling Julia's wrecked car onto its platform.

Julia watches on, clearly tense.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

No need to be upset. You can easily buy the headlamps from a junkyard somewhere. You can find the windows there too. Only the paintwork will be covered by insurance, but you'll still come out ahead.

The driver secures the car onto the platform, then gets into the cab together with Julia.

65. EXT./INT. TRUCK CAB - IN MOTION. DAY

The driver sets off, with Julia talking on the phone.

JULIA

Yes, we're on our way now. Take care, please. Bye.

66. EXT./INT. TRUCK CAB - IN MOTION. DAY

Julia seems a little calmer. From her seat next to the driver, she watches the traffic on the road. The radio is playing.

After a while, Julia sees that the Opel, driven by Žuku, is overtaking them. The road is straight, and from the height of the cab she can see several hundred meters ahead.

67. EXT./INT. OPEL - IN MOTION. DAY

Sasha is sitting next to Żuku. Behind them, under a pile of blankets on the back seat, someone is moving.

Żuku sees a vehicle in the rear-view mirror - it's the tow truck.

The Opel is gradually moving away from it.

Suddenly, Żuku notices a checkpoint a few dozen meters ahead. Before the policemen can do anything, Żuku slows down and turns around with tires screeching.

The policemen jump into their car and set off after the Opel with their siren on.

68. EXT./INT. ROAD. TOW TRUCK CAB. DAY

Julia watches nervously as Żuku's Opel speeds past them in the opposite direction. She is breathing heavily.

She takes the inhaler out of her pocket, but only shakes it next to her ear to check that the "liquid" hasn't run out.

Then she holds the inhaler tightly in her hand the whole time...

Moments later, the police car goes past with its SIREN BLARING.

69. EXT./INT. ROAD. OPEL INTERIOR. DAY

Żuku shows off as she tries to get away from the police.

Eventually, the police overtake her and force her to pull over to the side of the road.

The policemen drag Żuku out of the car.

One of them opens the back door and pulls off the blanket that was "hiding" Ula, who was lying in the back, and a backpack stuffed with clothes.

70. **EXT. IN FRONT OF BOGDAN'S VILLA (JULIA'S PATIENT'S HOUSE) .
DAY**

The tow truck carrying Julia's car pulls into the driveway of a luxurious villa in the middle of nowhere.

Bogdan is waiting.

Julia jumps onto the platform and opens the car door.

Out of the car come the BOYS FROM THE FOREST.

The boys say a quick goodbye to Julia by the car.

Although they have been given dry and clean clothes, they look miserable, and they are scared and cold.

BOGDAN'S WIFE (MAGDA) leads them to the door and lets them in. From behind the door, Bogdan's daughter (ADA, 14 years old) peers out inquisitively.

ADA
(in French)
Go ahead, come on in.
[Allez-y, entrez.]

Everyone immediately disappears inside.

The driver gets out and greets Bogdan.

JULIA
(to the driver)
Thank you, Franek.

The driver simply smiles.

DRIVER
Are we dropping your car here
or...?

Julia smiles - only now does she put the inhaler back in her pocket.

JULIA
If you could, please drop it off at
the garage.

DRIVER
Then it's gonna be two hundred
zlotys. I can't do too much for
free.

Julia reaches into her pocket, but the driver starts laughing.

DRIVER

What are you doing? I was kidding... Quick, get in, miss... let's go.

The driver opens the cab door for her. Julia and Bogdan embrace each other tightly.

JULIA

(to Bogdan)

See you on Skype on Wednesday.

Julia jumps into the truck cab.

IN THE CAB:

The driver puts the key in the ignition, but he doesn't start it.

DRIVER

Miss Jola?...

JULIA

Actually, my name is Julia, but it could also be Jola.

DRIVER

Sorry. Miss Jola, because, you know, my wife and I were thinking about helping in some way. Whatever you need... I'd always be happy to... I can give lifts, pick people up... you know what I mean?

JULIA

Aren't you afraid they might shut your company down?

The driver starts the engine and drives away.

DRIVER

No... I get on very well with the guards. I went to school with the chief. We're on good terms. And the police? You know how many police cars I've pulled out of ditches...?

71. EXT. FOREST BY THE ROAD. OUTSIDE THE EXCLUSION ZONE. DAY

Bashir, Amina and now just two of their children are sitting huddled together in the bushes by the roadside.

They are watching Nur's funeral on the cracked screen of their phone.

He is being buried by a Tatar community in Podlasie, in a Muslim cemetery.

We see a small coffin, and a grave dug next to a row of other fresh graves, where beside the plaques with Arabic names there are also a few with the inscription "John Doe".

A small crowd has gathered - some of the activists that we already know (Stefka among them), as well as a few Polish Tatars and several Syrians.

A Tatar IMAM speaks over the grave:

IMAM

...Muslims can never call death a tragedy. It is a sad event, but never a tragedy. For God foresaw a better place in heaven for our brother, calling him to Himself at such a young age. And it is a consolation, dear brothers and sisters, that our brother died an uncommon death, because he drowned in a swamp. He died as a drowning man. In Islam, he has the status of a Shahid. A Shahid is a martyr. Because the body of one who burns to death, or who dies in war or drowns, can be buried without any ceremony. This is a privilege bestowed on him by God himself. It is not even necessary to wash the body, which is a duty in the case of other people who die a natural death. He does not have to be wrapped in a shroud. As he died, so is he buried, and there are no religious rites even. It is the angels who take over these activities for us and the angels who pray for him. God rest his soul. Thank you all for coming and

for broadcasting the burial of our
brother in our Muslim cemetery...

The gravediggers tap the mound of earth by the grave with their shovels. Someone lays a wreath made of juniper leaves, while someone else puts up a white plaque in the shape of a shield with Nur's full name.

His parents cry silently while staring at the battered smartphone screen. The broadcast is over, and they sit completely motionless.

A small van with German license plates stops nearby. A pin pops up on the smartphone screen - right next to the place where they are sitting.

They shuffle toward the van, watched by the driver. A ditch filled with water lies between them and the road, which Bashir helps his family across - one by one. He then shows the driver his phone, with the pin. The driver nods and quickly pulls out some heavy cardboard boxes from the back.

The driver is JINDRA, a jovial 50-year-old Czech.

As he unloads the boxes, he glances sideways and simultaneously makes funny faces at Ghalia, but she doesn't smile back. He takes out a rabbit mascot from his pocket and gives it to the little boy, who immediately clutches it to his chest.

Bashir helps him, silently. The family climb up onto the side of the platform of the van; Bashir goes first, then he stretches out his arms. Amina props the children up, then she gets in herself, crawling on all fours to the back of the platform, looking as if she has used up her last reserves of energy.

The driver hands them some bottles of Coca-Cola and a few bananas, then piles the cardboard boxes back up in front of them.

He closes the back door, and they set off. The van drives through the landscape of Podlasie, passing a small village and several houses, then turns onto a road where we see a checkpoint and two uniformed men. The driver slows down, then accelerates, then brakes again. He looks hesitant.

The family at the back huddle closer together. There is the squeal of brakes, then the sound of people talking...

72. EXT. BORDER GUARD CHECKPOINT. DAY

Jan is on duty with Ola; they are checking cars heading out onto the main road. A small van has just pulled up, and the man driving it was "kangaroo hopping" when he was braking - like a novice driver.

Ola looks expressively at Jan.

Ola knocks on the window from the driver's side. Now we see him - it's Jindra (the Czech who loaded Bashir's family into his van a moment ago).

Jindra starts to prepare his documents, but they fall out of his hands. The Czech sighs heavily throughout the scene; he is red in the face - as if he has hypertension problems at the very least, or he's very nervous about something.

OLA
(in English)
Why so nervous?

JINDRA
(in broken Polish)
I... I knew you would stop me. I
know what I look like... I... I had
a Polish mother. Do you see?
(he shows Ola his phone and we
see the photo of a gravestone)
I went to visit it. My mother is
buried here.

Ola looks expressively at Jan. Her face says: "Yeah, sure".

JAN
Let me see in the back.

OLA
I'd just book him right away.

Jan looks at Jindra - the man is clearly agitated. Jan looks inside the van and notices a picture hanging from the rear-view mirror - it's Jindra with a woman, and a sweet little girl with pudgy cheeks. Jindra sees that Jan has spotted the photo.

JINDRA
My two sweethearts.

JAN
(to Ola)
Take a look at the paperwork, I'll
go round to the back.

Jan goes to the back of the van and opens the door. The back wall is cluttered with cardboard boxes. Jan runs his eyes over the boxes, takes one out, and then suddenly his eyes stop on another pair of eyes - after a second, we recognize that the eyes (and the face, which we can now see a little better) belong to Bashir.

There is a prolonged freeze and stillness, similar to when Jan and Sylwester encountered the young boy in Jan and Kasia's new home.

Jan and Bashir stare at each other for several seconds. Bashir is like an animal looking into the eyes of a predator, knowing that it is about to die anyway. All we hear is the sound of breathing - that of Bashir and the other family members hiding in the van.

We see Ola starting to walk round to the back of the van. She keeps walking, and Jan suddenly realizes that she is approaching. Literally at the last second, he puts the box back inside and slams the van door shut.

JAN
All clear...

OLA
I don't fucking believe him, but
the papers are in order. Let him
go, or he'll drop dead on the spot
from a heart attack.

Jan just nods, unable to say anything more.

73. INT. BEDROOM IN BOGDAN'S VILLA. EVENING

The boys are looking at three beds covered with clean, starched linen. Stacked up on top of them are new clothes and toiletries.

WOJTEK
(in French, totally at ease)
This is where you will sleep. Here
are the towels, and some clothes so
you can get changed... The bathroom

is over there... I've written down the wi-fi password for you, and the name of the network. It's over here...

[Vos lits, vos essuies de bain, des vêtements... par-là à la salle de bain... Je vous ai écrit le mot de passe WiFi et le nom du réseau. Voilà...]

There is a small monitor hanging on the wall, with a TV decoder/mini pc below it (which has a piece of paper on it with the following written clearly with a marker pen - Name: F*ckPiS_01; Password: ADA2007).

Wojtek turns the device on with the remote control.

WOJTEK (CONT'D)

Here you have Netflix. HBO... And a web browser.

[Voici Netflix. HBO... Le navigateur web.]

Magda, Bogdan's wife, just smiles and nods.

The boys are embarrassed, and speak in French:

MABI

Thank you, thank you very much.

[Merci, merci bien.]

ALAIN

(the oldest, to Bogdan's wife)

Can the military find us here?

[Est-ce que l'armée peut nous retrouver ici?]

WOJTEK

Mom doesn't speak French. Don't worry, you're safe here.

[Maman ne parle pas français. Ça va, vous êtes en sécurité ici.]

(turning serious)

I guarantee it.

[Je vous garantie...]

Alain and Mabi smile involuntarily. Only Patrice has sat down, on the edge of a chair, and he looks silently at Wojtek.

WOJTEK (CONT'D)

Here's a basket for your dirty laundry. Get changed and meet me upstairs.

[Voilà le panier à linge. Ok, je vous laisse, on se retrouve à l'étage/en haut.]

74. INT. BATHROOM IN BOGDAN'S VILLA. EVENING

The boys take a hot shower in the elegant bathroom. They soap themselves up, and put their faces under the stream of water. We see their expressions of delight, as if they are washing away the last few weeks of pain, fear, cold and hunger.

(Maybe there are some scars visible on the body of the youngest one? A suggestion: they all have fresh scratches and bruises, but the 15-year-old also has extensive old scars visible. M.P.)

75. INT. DINING ROOM IN BOGDAN'S VILLA. EVENING

They enter the dining room, where Bogdan, his wife, daughter Ada (18) and Wojtek are already waiting for them at a table laden with food: there are pieces of roast chicken, with rice and lettuce. The boys look like students at a private school - they are clean-cut, with their hair neatly combed, and wearing smart clothes. Bogdan's wife seats them, while Ada puts some food on their plates. The boys timidly start eating the rice, trying not to rush.

Alain suddenly exclaims, as if confessing his guilt:

ALAIN

I'm sorry, I just wanted to...
Mademoiselle, the thing is, we're Muslims...

[Excusez-moi, je... Vous savez, mademoiselle, on est musulmane...]

ADA

It's ok, that's why my mom made chicken. Is the chicken okay?

[Ok. C'est pourquoi maman a préparé le poulet. C'est bon?]

MABI

Yes, it's delicious.

[Oui, délicieux.]

Emboldened, he takes a second helping.

ALAIN

Yes, mademoiselle, it's halal.

[Oui, mademoiselle, c'est Hallal.]

ADA

Please, don't mademoiselle me. Or I'll address you as Monsieur Alain.

[Non, s'il te plaît, je ne suis pas "mademoiselle". Je vais t'appeler Monsieur Alain.]

Laughter. The mood has relaxed and the boys start eating again. The chicken portions disappear from the serving plate.

Even Patrice has livened up. He notices that Ada has only been nibbling on her salad.

PATRICE

And why aren't you eating?

[Et toi, pourquoi tu ne manges pas?]

ADA

I'm a vegetarian. I don't eat dead animals.

[Je suis végétarienne. Je ne mange pas des animaux morts.]

Patrice freezes over his chicken bone, which has almost been stripped bare.

PATRICE

(contritely)

Actually, so am I...

[À vrai dire, moi aussi...]

WOJTEK

Wait. I'll bring some tofu stew.

[Attends. Je vais lui apporter du ragoût de tofu.]

Wojtek rushes to the kitchen.

The parents, hitherto proud that their daughter had been doing so well, now look at each other, bewildered.

BOGDAN'S WIFE

Ada! What's going on?

ADA

Patrice is a vegetarian.

BOGDAN

But the other boys aren't?

Wojtek returns with a saucepan from the kitchen.

WOJTEK

I guess not.

Bogdan chuckles, while beaming broadly.

BOGDAN

I'll get them some more.

He disappears into the kitchen and immediately reappears with another tray of chicken.

He serves more portions to Alain and Mabi - who are already eating freely.

Bogdan is cheerful, suddenly confident, collected, and strong.

BOGDAN (CONT'D)

See? I was right to do more!

76. INT. JAN'S IN-LAWS' HOUSE. JAN AND KASIA'S ROOM. NIGHT

Jan enters the room, where Kasia is asleep. She has rolled out from under the duvet, her already large belly visible.

Jan looks at her and walks over to the mirror in the three-door wardrobe.

He stands there, looking at himself. He is still in his uniform, which is devoid of any identification - as has been the case for all officers lately. He stands in front of the mirror and stares at his reflection. He pulls his balaclava over his face, leaving only his eyes visible. He looks into his eyes. For a long time.

77. INT. BOGDAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Later, Bogdan and his wife watch on as the youngsters talk together in the kitchen while loading the dirty dishes into the dishwasher. On top of the cupboard are some white masks on racks and a device for playing music. Patrice searches for something in the playlist and puts on some music that they all seem to know well. The smallest boy jumps around to the beat, doing some kind of fancy dance. The other one takes off a white mask, and puts it on his face. Everyone laughs, and copies him. They start rapping to the music. Wojtek also knows the song so he raps ferociously as well, which soon turns into a duet with Patrice... If it weren't for the color of their skin, they would be no different from each other.

78. EXT. HIGHWAY SOMEWHERE IN POLAND. DAY

The van with our family in the back is driving across Poland - past freeways, gas stations, and the dull landscape of a moderately prosperous European country.

They look at it through a crack in the cardboard-covered window.

A river border, and a bridge...

It's probably Germany already...

79. EXT. POLISH-UKRAINIAN BORDER. NIGHT

EPILOG

CAPTION:

POLISH-UKRAINIAN BORDER - END OF FEBRUARY 2022

We see crowds of Ukrainian refugees: women, children, old people, pets. They are being helped by Polish and foreign volunteers, Polish soldiers, police, and border guards. It's a carnival - tragic and moving - of solidarity and tenderness. (THIS IS DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE, WHICH WE WILL INTERSPERSE WITH CONTEXT-APPROPRIATE RE-ENACTMENT SHOTS FEATURING OUR ACTORS).

Among the refugees, Żuku and Stefka are bustling around next to a bus heading to WARSAW. Jan, in his uniform, approaches them. He is carrying a crying child with great tenderness. He whispers something to the boy, and cuddles

him close to his chest. The child calms down. Next to him is an elderly woman with a wounded dog in her arms.

Jan hands the child to Żuku, who is standing in the doorway of the bus. Żuku looks at his border guard uniform and can't stop herself:

ŻUKU

Too bad you weren't such an affectionate daddy to those kids on the Belarusian border, you prick!

Jan blushes. He helps the woman with the dog in her arms to get on, and then hands her luggage up to her. Only then does he answer Żuku:

JAN

I've never been there.

More Ukrainians get on the bus, and Sasha hands each one a bottle of water. Jan and Żuku help without saying a word.

CAPTIONS:

Date in 2022 - construction of the wall on the Polish-Belarusian border is now complete.

That has not stopped refugees from trying to cross it, however.

The number of those who succeed is not decreasing.

But many more suffer serious injuries when trying to climb over the wall.

DOCUMENTARY SHOT OF A MAN ENTANGLED IN THE RAZOR WIRE ON TOP OF THE WALL, HANGING HEAD DOWN. THERE ARE BORDER GUARDS STANDING BELOW, LAUGHING AND JOKING.

Poland, with the support of the authorities and the incredible commitment of the population, took in x million refugees from Ukraine.

The Polish president called people helping refugees from the Belarusian border fools and traitors.

(THESE CAPTIONS ARE NOT FINAL AND THEY WILL BE POLISHED UP LATER. WE WILL DECIDE ABOUT THEM ONLY ONCE THE FILM HAS BEEN EDITED.)

THE END