

REDEMPTION IN RED

Written by

Mikhail Iliev

And

Steve Mihaylov

Based on a true story by Steve  
Mihaylov

646-267-9426  
333 E41st street, ap. 1A  
New York, NY 10017

U.S. Copyright Office  
Reg. No: PAu 4-055-862

WGAW Reg No: 2072030  
(Writers Guild, West)

CARD:

THE SUMMER OF 1986

SOUTH WEST BULGARIA, NEAR THE GREEK BORDER

THE PIRIN MOUNTAIN

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - DAY

A quiet mountainous scene. Summer haze blankets a narrow gorge. A swallow on a tree branch. Grey rocks, muddy banks. Green grass and low bush round out the palette. A river wraps its legs around the bends.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - SAME TIME

LOUD RUSTLING. SGT. MELCHEV, early 30's, is STREAKING down a narrow weaving path hugging the river. Pebbles and larger stones roll off into the river-bed as he runs over them. Branches and twigs CRACK.

Melchev is breathing hard, the measured hard of a man in top shape. His arms swing side to side clutching a Kalashnikov rifle in tandem with his stride.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - SAME TIME

A BLOND MAN WITH LONG HAIR and a BROWN-HAIRED MAN, both late 20's, dressed in jeans and wearing backpacks, RUN along a similar path hugging the river. Both breathe hard, a ragged tired hard.

Blond Man stops to catch his breath, sweat watering the ground beneath. Brown Hair stops, too.

BROWN HAIR MAN

(German accent)

Ve are nearly there, *Schazi*.

(waves a map at the bend ahead)

*Aussehen*. River means Greece.

The blond one nods and they resume running.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - SAME TIME

LOUD click from a portable radio. Melchev drops to a crouch and adjusts volume on the handheld.

VOICE FROM RADIO  
Comrade Melchev, spotter Gruev  
here, sir. Canine unit does not  
have a scent yet. Await instruc-

MELCHEV  
(hissing)  
Stay off the air.

Melchev turns radio off and resumes running.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - SAME TIME

Blond Man and Brown Hair running. Something gleams up ahead in the distance. Their faces normally wrinkled with stress begin to relax, begin to break into the widest grin.

Blond Man starts to strip his clothes. Jacket. T shirt. Backpack? No, not the pack, need that one. Brown Hair follows suit.

Blond Man pants and whimpers like a child. Is this it! Is this it!

One more bend, one more sprint.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY CANYON - SAME TIME

Melchev comes to a spot where the path juts out. It is a perfect vista of the gorge ahead where the river swerves to the left.

Melchev drops to the ground, rifle in hand. He feels his pulse. A few deep measured breaths and it comes back to his resting rate.

With a couple practiced movements, he is in a perfect spread-eagle shooting position. Whips out a handheld chronometer, glances at it and sets it down in the grass near him. Takes aim at a ledge a hundred meters out currently occupied by...thin air.

MELCHEV

Four...three...two...one.

Nothing happens. Melchev takes a breath and lets it out slowly. A second passes. Of a sudden, Blond and Brown Hair burst onto the ledge.

Melchev squeezes the trigger. A SHOT rings out. Blond crumples to the ground.

Before Brown Hair realizes what's what, Melchev fires another SHOT. Brown Hair's head snaps back and he falls dead.

EXT. LEDGE ABOVE RIVER - A BIT LATER

The skies have turned dark grey. Rain begins to drizzle.

CLOSE UP of Blond gasping for air, life seeping out of him slowly.

Close-up of Brown Hair's lifeless head, a bullet hole gaping above his left temple.

We hear a CRUNCH. Boots walking on pebbly ground. Boots stop in front of Blond's face...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TOWN LIBRARY - DAY

Dark empty corridor. Lit by faint dirty fixtures dotting old walls.

SQUEAKING of new leather shoes on mosaic floors. Dotted by hurried SHIFFLING, as from slippers.

We follow LONG-HAIRED MAN (late 30's, handsome) in jeans and a STOUT WOMAN (50's, slight limp) way past her prime, if she had one.

STOUT WOMAN

Good trip, Comrade Petrov, we hope.  
A short hop, considering. Train, I  
hope? Those buses are a disgrace.

When she speaks it's either professional servility or creepy lewdness seeping from her slightly mustachioed lips.

She trots ahead and opens a room labeled the BREAK ROOM with a flourish.

STOUT WOMAN (CONT'D)

Everyone! Attention please. With baited pleasure I give you: Comrade Petrov! A man from Sofia, gracing us in deep country. And a handsome man, to boot. Double pleasure. No, twin pleasure I should say. As a language teacher I should know to express myself with precision.

LONG-HAIRED MAN

Call me Luben, please.

When Luben speaks his words seem to form a warm and cozy vortex which pulls you in. And the smile...

Luben's eye sweeps the room. A few other evening tutors who seem to be napping at a table snap to at the sound of his voice.

A YOUNG WOMAN, sits by herself at the far end of the room doodling in a notebook.

STOUT WOMAN

What a charming young man, and so highly recommended.

(touching his elbow)

Oh, forgive an old excitable widow, my lovely Luben. I can prattle on and on till the cows come home, dearest.

There is an awkward pause as the woman is ogling Luben.

STOUT WOMAN (CONT'D)

Silly me.

(to everyone)

So, young Comrade Luben, as you have heard-

LUBEN

Just Luben.

STOUT WOMAN

- has been sent to sub in for Comrade Mravkov who's fallen ill.

A soft concerned murmur spreads across the room.

EVENING TUTOR 1 (60's, bald) crosses himself secretly and quickly. EVENING TUTOR 2 (late 50's, slight build) shakes his head and covers his eyes.

EVENING TUTOR 2  
 Heaven forfend. So suddenly, too.

EVENING TUTOR 3 (late 30's) snorts.

                  EVENING TUTOR 3  
                   (under his breath)  
 Seen that movie. He was hale enough  
 to suck on the *raki* the other day.  
 Now...Big mouth disease is what he  
 got, you ask me.

                  STOUT WOMAN  
                   (to Evening Tutor 3)  
 Shush.  
                   (to the room)  
 I know I know. Mravkov was, is, I'm  
 sorry, beloved. But we must put on  
 a brave face. And really how lucky  
 are we, that the Ministry happened  
 to have just the man for the job.  
                   (caressing Luben's arm)  
 Com-, Luben. Now, Luben, this here  
                   (motions at EVENING TUTOR  
                   2)  
 is our Socialist Literature and  
 Poetry tutor Comrade Tolumbiiski

Stout woman continues babbling but Luben's attention is captured by the young woman in the corner. From his vantage point he can see her drawing something like a shipwreck, to be precise. A man crawling away from it. Blood seeps out of his body...

Stout woman is tugging at his arm.

                  STOUT WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 Sweetie? Honey-pie, you with us?

                  LUBEN  
 And the shy young lady in the  
 corner?

                  STOUT WOMAN  
                   (snorts)  
 Oh, of course.  
                   (killing the young woman  
                   with her eyes)  
 Nedia, child, say hello to our new  
 Art History tutor? Subbing in for  
 poor Goshe.  
                   (under her breath)  
 Young people, what a waste.

Nedia looks up from her notepad. Strong cheeks, bottomless eyes.

NEDIA

Hello, Luben. Please excuse my absent manners. I doodle to relieve stress.

STOUT WOMAN Doodle?

Don't listen to her, Comrade. Nedia teaches Drawing. Also doubles as our resident genius. Arabadjiev himself wants her to apprentice with him! Our little Nedia, from zero to hero? Can you imagine! The Master himself.

STOUT WOMAN (CONT'D)

(fussing)

Silly me. Luben, darling, you must be exhausted from the trip. Sit, please.

(pulls out a chair)

Let me make you a nice espresso. See if I can rustle up some wafers to munch on.

LUBEN

(sitting)

Yes. Thank you.

Stout Woman heads out to the kitchen.

Luben sits next to Evening Tutor 3. Stares out the window at a buggy drawn by a horse. Stray dogs hobble around in the hopes of dinner. Flies, fleas and fowl abound. A proper scene in deep country.

Evening Tutor 3 follows his gaze.

EVENING TUTOR 3

You must be thinking what did I do to deserve such a cushy assignment, at the rear end of the world.

LUBEN

I go where the country needs me.

EVENING TUTOR 2

Oh, yeah. Now you sound like an elite counter-intelligence officer in Afghanistan. As bombs fall all around him.

LUBEN (feigning  
insult)  
How little you think of substitute  
tutors! Those who stand and wait  
they also serve, Milton said.

Evening Tutor 2 looks down at the floor, mumbling.

                                  EVENING TUTOR 3  
Oh, we don't presume to read  
bourgeois poets.

A few uncomfortable beats.

                                  LUBEN  
Sorry. This is all new to me.  
Different. I guess I resort to  
bourgeois poetry to relieve stress.

Nedia gives a giggle.

Evening Tutor 3 looks him up and down, lingers on the long  
hair and the jeans.

                                  EVENING TUTOR 3  
You do look like a fish out of  
water.

Luben fidgets with his briefcase, looking rather helpless and  
nervous.

                                  EVENING TUTOR 1  
                                  (whispering)  
So, what happened to Goshe?  
                                  (eyes darting around)  
Anybody know?

Evening Tutor's eyes come to rest on Luben. Luben avoids eye  
contact.

                                  LUBEN  
I wasn't told much, I'm sorry. A  
sudden bout of the gout or  
something. Or was it leukemia?

                                  EVENING TUTOR 2  
I heard the ambulance came all the  
way from Razlog to pick him up.

                                  EVENING TUTOR 1  
Makes sense. That polyclinic we  
have here is an abomination-



## EVENING TUTOR 3

(chuckling)

Don't I know it. Had a blinding headache last month. They sent me home with Soviet aspirin. Broken limbs? Romanian iodine.

## EVENING TUTOR 1

The regional in Razlog is top class, I hear. Our Party Secretary goes there for everything.

## EVENING TUTOR 3

That's another thing. How does our Goshe all of a sudden get admitted there!

Silence. The tutors glance at each other and the conversation dies.

Luben gets up. Pens and paper roll out of the briefcase's side pocket. He bends to gather it. Nedia helps him.

## LUBEN

(to Nedia)

Thanks.

(to the tutors)

My apologies, friends. I need to go rest a bit.

Before they can say anything, Luben is at the door. As he's opening it he turns and looks at Nedia catching her staring at his back.

Both smile at each other. And Luben is gone.

A moment passes. Stout woman walks in, tray with coffee and wafers in one hands.

## STOUT WOMAN

(seeing that Luben is gone)

But-

INT. GROUND LEVEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

CLOSEUP of a human jaw with teeth sitting on a table.

Table vibrating which you can see as jaw bone and attached teeth jump rattle.

Scraping and whirring.

We PULL BACK to reveal PETSU (beefy man, early 40's) bent over another jaw bone. He is dressed in a white lab coat and is holding a dental drill which he uses to chisel a tooth crown. The drill has a foot crank which accounts for the SERIOUS VIBRATIONS.

It is a spacious and brightly lit room. Nearly every inch of surface space is covered with skulls, medical instruments and mock-up models of teeth and jaws.

The clock strikes 5 pm. Petsu gets up and goes into a side door.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. SAME ROOM - A BIT LATER

The clock strikes 5:20. Petsu comes back in through the side door. No lab coat. Smart shirt and creased trousers. A shapely medical bag in hand.

He shuts off the light and heads up the stairs.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Ominous clouds crowd the sky and make it look like a lid is lowered onto the world below.

Petsu leaves his house. People greet him as he walks by. Some smile at him, some just nod briefly.

He mouths hello here and there and nods back. Even shakes a hand or two, but does not stop to chat.

EXT. STREET - A BIT LATER

KRUM (early 50's, haggard face), is walking on same side of street as Petsu.

Soon as he espies Petsu, Krum crosses the street, which is when Petsu spots him.

PETSU  
 (waving at Krum)  
 Krume, is that you, buddy? Been a while, buddy!

Krum feigns surprise.

KRUM

Oh, hey.

PETSI

Man, it *has* been a while. But what brings you this side of town? Have they moved the factory to this side of town?

KRUM

(distracted)

What? Oh no. Just walking around to clear my head.

PETSI

What's going on? Something wrong?

KRUM

Na, nothing. Just, you know.

(hums)

*Times you feel you're a part of the scenery*

*Pam param, pam param*

*Take the long way home*

(off Petsi's

uncomprehending look)

Supertramp? From Niko?

PETSI

(eyes dart around

nervously)

Please. Not on the street.

KRUM

Oh, I wouldn't. Nedra just plays the damn thing all the time. Sticks to your brain.

PETSI

How are the kids?

KRUM

(distracted)

I should probably go. You're busy. Busy man, right. Don't want to hold you up.

PETSI

Hows's Kris? Heard good things.

KRUM

Oh, yeah. Kris is great. Out on his own. First mission abroad, Petsi. It's something, isn't it, my little Kris. Well, mum's the word, right.

PETSI

Good man. Nothing like the Army-

KRUM

Navy.

PETSI

Navy.

KRUM

I remember my Kris and your little brother Niko, always together. Always getting in trouble.

(hushed voice)

Those Western things, remember? Scraps of paper from what was it? Pictures of fast cars-

PETSI

Der Spiegel. Time, Newsweek. Propaganda rags from the West. Boy, did Niko get a whupping.

KRUM

Brigands, the lot of them. Ah, the 70's, Petsi, the 70's. Niko, with his music. Kris, with the radio. Remember the radio, buddy? Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, how did they even figure out the frequencies. I swear- Well, I have my suspicions-

(whispering)

That Ivan fellow.

Petsi looks away.

PETSI

Good old days. Listen, buddy, I should-

KRUM

Boys will be boys, huh. At least Niko didn't fly away the first chance he got...

Some faint sirens in the distance.

PETSI  
 (clutching bag)  
 Ah, I should really be going-

KRUM  
 Where did it go, Petsi. Where did  
 those hopeful years go. It's all-  
 (looks around)  
 Gray now. Like we're just marking  
 time.

A car with MILITSIA emblazoned on the doors pulls around and zooms down the street toward the pair.

Petsi discreetly drops his bag and kicks it under a parked car. Reaches over and puts his hand on Krum's shoulder.

PETSI  
 Hold your head high, my old friend.

Krum winces slightly at the word friend.

PETSI (CONT'D)  
 If these are end times so be it.  
 You have a choice. Go unto them  
 like a whimpering victim. Or like a  
 man.

KRUM  
 I'm worried about Nedra. This is  
 not time for dreamers. All she does  
 is scribble in her pad. All day.

PETSI  
 My friend. Sounds like she's  
 doomed. Done for.

KRUM  
 What do you mean?

PETSI  
 She's an artist. No cure for that.

The cop car pulls up to where they are.

Two uniformed cops come out and head directly for the pair.

KRUM  
 (off cops approaching)  
 What the!

Krum.           PETSI

(one hand on Krum's  
shoulder)  
Head high, old friend.

The cops, one YOUNGER, one OLDER, stop in front of them. Older cop takes off his regulation hat and wipes off his forehead.

                  OLDER COP  
(lighting up)  
I'm too damn old for this shit.  
(to the younger cop)  
Mantcho, love, go ahead.

                  YOUNGER COP Citizens,  
uh, as lawful vested organs of  
Party, country and. Uh, the-

                  OLDER COP  
The people, retard. We ain't worth  
a damn without the people. It's  
what this nonsense is all about.

Petsi turns to Older Cop.

                  PETSI  
Kotse, just get it over with. How  
are your mom's dentures by the way?

                  YOUNGER COP  
The people, right. Citizens,  
refrain from further motion as we  
instament this writ of arrest-

                  OLD COP  
(under his breath)  
Implement, imbecile.  
(whispers in Petsi's ear)  
Fantastic, thank you, Pets.  
(to Younger Cop)  
Speed it up, Einstein.

                  YOUNGER COP  
Of Comrade Krum Zografski.

Krum is pulls back, stunned.

                  KRUM  
Wait a second.

Petsi, even more so.

PETSI  
 (under his breath)  
 Wait a second...

OLDER COP  
 Don't wait another second, Krum,  
 darling. Let's get going. Boss  
 wants you.

YOUNGER COP  
 By way of temporary detention to  
 clarify charges of high treason.  
 (waves to the car)  
 Pray, Comrade, proceed to the  
 people's authorized transport  
 vehicle.

People start to gather and stare with curiosity. A faint  
 murmur rises.

KRUM  
 Comrades, this is a patent mistake.  
 I've been working all my life. I go  
 to all the Party meetings. My  
 father was a founding member of the  
 local antifascist-  
 (his brows knit)  
 Nedia?

Older cops waves his hand, half dismissal, half token of  
 solace.

OLDER COP  
 Not unless she switched genders and  
 made ship's captain overnight.

The cops and Krum drive off, sirens going.

Petsi's face relaxes enough for a bit of panic to show its  
 hand in his pursed lips.

Seconds pass. People disperse.

Petsi looks up. A giant slogan drapes the building on the  
 other side of the street.

**"ВИНАГИ НАЩРЕК! ВРАГОВЕТЕ НА МАРКСИЗМА-ЛЕНИНИЗМА НЕ СПЯТ"**

("Eternal Vigilance! The enemies of Marxism-Leninism do not  
 sleep)

Finally the angry sky releases its bile. Rain begins to pour.

Petsi retrieves his bag and rushes down the street.

EXT. SAME STREET - SAME TIME

A black VOLGA sedan parked not too far from the building with the slogan.

Back window rolls down. Thick smoke wafts up to the sky.

In the back seat, a MAN (late 60's, piercing eyes) in a buttoned double breasted suit, is staring at Petsi's dwindling figure. A fat CIGAR stuck to his mouth.

The man takes one last puff and stamps out the butt in the car ashtray.

In the rear view mirror the man's eyes meet those of his driver. A barely perceptible nod from the man send the driver into action. The car pulls out and zips down the street.

INT. NEDIA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

A big PHOTO of a young man in an officer's uniform, on a mantelpiece in a small cramped living room.

Small cramped kitchen. NEDIA'S MOM (50's, stoic looking) is busy making dinner. Pots, pans, boiling, baking. The Woman stops occasionally to check to clock on the corridor wall.

Small, tidy bedroom. Nedia sitting in a chair reading a letter. She looks up occasionally at one particularly large portrait of the young man in the living room visible through her open door.

Nedia's Mom walks in, on a cloud of spices and delicious boiled beef.

NEDIA  
Smells good, mom.

NEDIA'S MOM  
How many times are you going to  
read this, sweetie?

NEDIA  
(puts letter away)  
How many pretexts are you going to  
use to check in on me, mom?

Nedia's Mom sighs and sits down next to Nedia.



NEDIA'S MOM

I just worry about you, honey. When I was your age-

NEDIA

I'm 23, mom!

NEDIA'S MOM

Almost 24. Women your age have had a child. Some, two. And now you're going to run off to Sofia, with these decadent long haired ones.

NEDIA

Mom! These are the best painters in the whole wide country. I have a chance to do what I want.

NEDIA'S MOM

I- I just don't understand, I guess. This career thing.

NEDIA

(Waves at the young officer's picture)  
Kris has a career. You never worried about him!

NEDIA'S MOM

You're not a man, my love. I- I just don't want you to be alone.

Nedia's lip starts to tremble.

NEDIA'S MOM (CONT'D)

Oh, honey.

A beat.

NEDIA

(fidgets with the letter)  
I think Stefan wants to break up with me. I mean Sofia's not that far, is it!?

Nedia's mom runs her hand along Nedia's beautiful auburn hair.

NEDIA'S MOM

You know what. Want to come help me in the kitchen. I could use those what was it the Sofia guy said. Surgically precise hands.

(MORE)

NEDIA'S MOM (CONT'D)  
 Those hands could make a perfect  
 salad I bet.

Nedia nods sobbing.

INT. KITCHEN - A BIT LATER

Nedia and her mom are busy bees in the kitchen. Nedia's mom keeps glancing at the clock.

NEDIA'S MOM  
 (to herself)  
 Where is this man?  
 (to Nedia)  
 So, anything interesting happen  
 today?

NEDIA  
 (stops stirring for a  
 beat)  
 It did, actually. We have a new  
 substitute tutor at the Adult  
 program. Luben. Kind of a  
 fascinating person, I must say.

NEDIA'S MOM Really?  
 Tell your old mom everything  
 now. No detail is too minor.

Both giggle.

A LOUD KNOCK at the door.

NEDIA'S MOM (CONT'D)  
 Aha, finally! He's gonna get it  
 now.

NEDIA  
 Dad? But why knock?

NEDIA'S MOM  
 Probably sheepish since he's  
 late...again. There better be  
 flowers.

She flings the front door open.

It's the cops. OLDER COP takes out a fag and lights it,  
 breathing heavily.

OLDER COP  
 (sucking air)  
 If I ever get the big chair, I'm  
 gonna ban all stairs.

Motions at Younger Cop.

YOUNGER COP  
 (to Nedie's Mom)  
 Ahem, as lawful vested organs...

INT. BUSY CAFE - SAME TIME

Petsi walks in. Shakes off the drops of rain.

In a second, a waiter is by his side, grin as wide as the sun's circumference lights his face.

WAITER  
 Our favorite customer. Our evening  
 has just reached its zenith.  
 (in a familiar tone)  
 Regular? Or outside?

PETSI  
 Outside for now.

Waiter leads Petsi to a table at the very far end of the cafe's garden, the most private one.

Petsi sits, medical bag between his feet, hands clasped in front of him. Prayer or intense contemplation?

His brother, NIKO (late 20's, thin, hollow eyes) approaches, led by the waiter, and sits next to him.

Petsi nods, nervously fidgeting with feet and thumbs.

IVAN (late 40's, sunk eyes), joins them. He's already lit up, and the sun is not down yet.

Ivan beams a smile that would have launched a thousand ships...as far away from his rotten teeth as possible. Niko averts his nose. The smell matches the sight of the rot.

NIKO  
 (to Ivan)  
 I was raised to respect old folk,  
 but have you heard of this new  
 invention?  
 (motions at Petsi)  
 My brother here is in the business,  
 he'll tell you.

Both Ivan and Petsi ignore him. Ivan snaps fingers and motions to the waiter.

IVAN

(to waiter in singsong)  
Comrade Dragi, give us some of that raki. Don't you water it too, it's an act you will rue.

NIKO

(to himself)  
Toothpaste?  
(to Ivan)  
Ivan, please! It's not even 6 yet.

IVAN

And let me answer like God spoke unto the sinner Job. Who art thou that darkened counsel and sought to make drivel in front of the Mighty. Where were you, irrelevant moth, when I cracked the continents and drank a liter in one breath while your mama was wiping you brown ass.

Waiter chuckles. Niko incinerates him with his eyes.

Petsi raises his hand. Ivan and Niko stop chattering.

PETSI

(to nobody in particular)  
Ran into Krum walking here today. Krum, of all people. Niko would remember his son, Kris.  
(to Niko)  
Right?

Niko looks away. Petsi rubs his face. One could say he is trying to find the right words.

PETSI (CONT'D)

Kind of odd. Today of all days. Running into Krum, of all people.

Silence.

NIKO

Is this..going anywhere?

PETSI

It got stranger. Downright absurd. The Militia showed up. Today, of all days. As I was carrying this.

Petsi gives the medical bag at his feet a kick.

PETSI (CONT'D)

As they pulled up I thought. The game is up.

NIKO

Well, you are here. So, it wasn't up. The game.

Petsi runs a finger over his mouth.

PETSI

Second time you've interrupted.

A beat.

PETSI (CONT'D)

They arrested Krum. But something is definitely up.

IVAN

This has the hallmark of just a feeling. Paranoia, even. There is no concrete act or circumstance to justify it. Although, as I say this, look-

Waves at a table inside where BOYKO (late 20's, wrestler's physique), a man with a buzz cut sitting alone and brooding over coffee.

PETSI

Yep. Boyko.

IVAN

Frenchie's vultures. Been circling all week.

PETSI

Paranoia. Vigilance. Sides of the same coin. Point is they're on to us, my gut says. Gut don't lie.

NIKO

Ok, so they arrest some schmuck. So what. They arrest schmucks all the time. Hell, they arrested those morons at the wood-processing plant the other day. That's just how the-  
(lowers his voice)  
Commies are. Their whole cadre of hypocritical sadists.

(MORE)

NIKO (CONT'D)

That's what they do. It don't mean jack for us. We keep far from politics. Right? Right, brother? That's the whole thing behind dropping Krum and Kris.

Petsi's eye twitches.

PETSI

Enough.

NIKO

Look, I'm sorry he got nabbed. I liked the bunch. Nedia is gorgeous-

PETSI

Enough.

NIKO

All I'm saying they don't know anything. And b), the cops are on our side. Hell, you did their entire extended families' teeth for free.

A beat.

PETSI

Don't get me started on you, Niko. Supertramp? Breakfast in America?

NIKO

What?!

PETSI

You know exactly what I'm saying. Selling to the Krastev's?

NIKO

You are paranoid. I wasn't selling. I gave it to Nedia. People need this, man. It's manna. Salvation.

IVAN

(mock disgust)

Niko, you impressionable slut. You and young Nadia have fallen pray to degrading Western propaganda.

Petsi sits back raising two fingers. Two burly men heretofore indistinguishable from the masses at the Cafe peel off, walk up to the table and lean on both ends of Niko. Petsi's eyes point at his brother's hands. The burly men each grab a hand and twist a pinkie. Niko shakes with SEARING pain.

PETSI  
 Your music? Van Der Graaf. Captain  
 Beefcake. Can't pronounce half. But  
 ok. Means little to me, but a lot  
 to you. Little profit but hey.

NIKO  
 (through the pain)  
 Beefheart not Beefcake.

PETSI  
 Look. That whole thing, the music  
 you sell to other introspective  
 maladjusted people, is a privilege,  
 not a right. A privilege I GIVE TO  
 YOU. Be buggered by several large  
 Negroes before I let you-

Another burly man trots up to the table and whispers in  
 Petsi's ear. Petsi nods.

PETSI (CONT'D)  
 (to brother)  
 One other thing: we are wholesale,  
 man, none of that piddly shit. Now,  
 let's go deal with Herr Mark.

Petsi and his muscle get up and head inside the Cafe. Waiter  
 casually passes by the bunch.

WAITER  
 (whispering as he walks  
 by)  
 Beige turtleneck. Corner of bar.

PETSI  
 (to Niko)  
 Turtleneck? Guy really is from the  
 Black Sea.

Petsi head over to the bar, sits next to TURTLENECK (late  
 30's, tanned). The muscle sink back into the faceless mass.

Back at the outside table...

IVAN  
 Let's continue with your deductive  
 reasoning shall we?

NIKO  
 What?

IVAN  
A), they know nothing. B), cops are beholden to you.

NIKO  
So.

IVAN  
Well, b) is irrelevant and a) is just not true. For starters, your brother, rightly, is not worried about Laurel and Hardy back there in the cop car.

NIKO  
What do you mean?

IVAN  
Look at that table.

Nods at a table in the center occupied by Boyko.

NIKO  
Boyko? So what? They're just volunteer scum.

IVAN  
Well, now. There is a reason your brother runs the business, not you.

NIKO  
What?! They're hacks. That Party chief, what's his name, he keeps them around right?

IVAN  
Yes. But these so called hacks, like Boyko or sometimes French, the chief hack, himself. They've have been tailing us and ours practically non-stop in the past week.  
(lowers voice)  
Ever since H bomb came to Petsi.

NIKO  
You think these bumpkins know about that?! Na, not possible. This stuff has never been seen in Bulgaria. Nobody knows anything.

IVAN  
(sitting back)  
They know something's up.  
(MORE)



IVAN (CONT'D)

And that's plenty. And the worst is, money or favors has no pull with them. I know the type. They want power. The ultimate aphrodisiac. And being volunteer they're practically off the books.

Niko shakes his head. Gets up to lean on the parapet dividing the cafe from the street. His eyes focus on the bar in the middle of the cafe.

Ivan gets up, too, and joins a table at the other corner.

EXT. CAFE BAR - SAME TIME

Petsi is sitting on a bar stool next to Turtleneck.

PETSI

(to somebody behind the bar)

Beer, Slavtcho.

SLAVTCHO (sliding ashtray and

matches over to Petsi)

Coming right up, hoss.

PETSI

(to nobody in particular)

Heard today Chernobyl means wormwood in Russian. Is all in the Bible, too.

Turtleneck freezes, beer jug half lifted to his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

Boyko, still sitting over his coffee, has his eyes glued to Petsi. Niko, over by the parapet has his eyes glued to Boyko.

Niko looks back at Petsi sitting at the bar. As Petsi's eye meets his, Niko shakes his head subtly. Petsi holds up four fingers up in response, casually.

Niko nods and repeats the sign to a man on a table in the center of the cafe. The man gets up and joins the table in the corner that Ivan had joined a few moments ago.

INT. CAFE BAR - SAME TIME

TURTLENECK  
 (to Petsi)  
 What's all in the Bible?

PETSI  
 'bout that Chernobyl business back  
 in April.

TURTLENECK  
 You telling me he Bible, from,  
 what, 2.25 thousand years ago  
 predicts a minor technical mishap  
 this year? Nonsense.

PETSI  
 (smiling)  
 Prophecy is vague, give you that.  
 When the Bible got written? Not so  
 vague.

TURTLENECK  
 Meaning?

PETSI  
 2.5 Thousand years ago. All  
 scientists agree.

Turtleneck stares at Petsi a moment.

TURTLENECK  
 Right. Fine. What do you hear on  
 the number of dead? West German  
 press puts it at 15, 000.

Silence. Petsi is sipping his beer.

TURTLENECK (CONT'D)  
 Is that correct?

Petsi keeps drinking.

INT. CORNER TABLE - SAME TIME

IVAN, now at a table of elite hard-drinking townsfolk, is  
 holding court surrounded by a few select colleagues.

The man to which Niko motioned with the code sign ambles  
 drunkenly to the table, carrying a glass of beer and leans  
 over Ivan. Ivan looks at one of the man's hands as it rests  
 on the table, thumb bent, four fingers extended.

IVAN

Right, I will illuminate the lot of you, mindless curs, on why no revolution succeeds without brutality made into state policy by a cunning cadre of cosmically amoral intelligentsia. All that, and more, as they say in the corrupt West, after this brief commercial break. I gotta piss.

Ivan gets up and lurches toward the middle table where Boyko is sitting drinking alone. Before Boyko can say anything, Ivan not so much sits as collapses into a chair opposite him.

BOYKO

What the-

IVAN

(slurring)

Like father like son, eh, Boyko?

BOYKO

(scrunching his nose)

Mind you own drunk business, useless bourgeois leech.

IVAN

Your immense vocabulary never ceases to amaze, son.

(shouting to the bar)

Slavtcho, *Perlovska* please. Bottle. Boyko the useful leech here is in a generous mood.

(to Boyko)

I knew your daddy, you see. Knew him well. Ask him. Now there was a man would sell his firstborn for a chance to suck people's blood. Yes, sir, there he was, filing his fangs. I knew that man, didn't I. Had that suck up, fuck down type career, catch my drift? Party chief cock morn, noon and eve. Was even angling for extra action with the regional vampires over in Razlog.

Boyko launches himself across the table, at Ivan's throat. They are both on the floor, Boyko pounding on Ivan who laughs inanely.

General COMMOTION ensues as patron and staff try to break up the fight.

IVAN (CONT'D)  
(giggling as Boyko  
suffocates him)  
Like father like son.

INT. CAFE BAR - SAME TIME

As soon as the commotion at the center table starts, Petsi and his group snap to action.

Niko who now has Petsi's medical bag leaves the cafe heading to a car nearby. A man gets out of that car.

Petsi's associates appear as if from nowhere and flank Turtleneck. Petsi gets up.

PETSI  
15,000 confirmed. Good to do  
business. Your friend in the Lada  
can confirm receipt.

Niko is back to his spot. No bag.

Turtleneck looks back toward the car. Two flashes from a flashlight greet him.

TURTLENECK  
Good.

Petsi gives a slight nod at the floor. One of his associates picks up a medical bag at the feet of Turtleneck.

PETSI  
We go. You stay 15 more minutes.  
Pay your bill and go.

Turtleneck takes a french fry from his paper plate, dips it in mayo and eats it.

TURTLENECK  
I don't think so. We ain't finished  
yet.

Petsi freezes. So do his associates.

PETSI  
What did you say?

TURTLENECK  
(whispers)  
We LOVED THAT wild horsemeat  
sampler you sent over.

PETSI  
We're done here.

TURTLENECK  
Relax. I am Micky In-law's partner.

Turtleneck reaches into his pants. Petsi's muscle come within inches of Turtleneck, their hands reaching behind their backs where the telltale gun bulge might be.

TURTLENECK (CONT'D)  
Easy. Just a picture.

Pulls out a picture of a fancy yacht, him and an old guy in sailor's t-shirt and suspenders.

TURTLENECK (CONT'D)  
You know In-law's boat, right.  
Everybody does.

Petsi looks at the photo. Then at Turtleneck.

PETSI  
No turtleneck.

Turtleneck chuckles.

TURTLENECK  
We pay top dollar. Or  
(nodding at his car back  
there)  
Mark. Double your best offer so  
far.

Petsi turns to the bartender.

PETSI  
Slavi, put this Comrade's bill on  
my tap, love.  
(to Turtleneck)  
Again, nice seeing you.

Makes to leave again.

TURTLENECK  
Triple. Nobody's ever seen anything  
like this.

PETSI  
(smiling)

Ah, Kabul Mukhtada's new line of  
sausage. Gotta go to Sofia.  
(MORE)

PETSI (CONT'D)  
 Customs office. You'll be the first  
 to know, though.

Slight nod. Petsi and entourage vanish.

EXT. STREET - LATE EVENING

It's pouring rain. A man approaches a phone booth. His jacket collar is up. A big black umbrella obscures his face.

Man gets into booth, lifts the receiver and dials. Operator comes on. When Man speaks it becomes clear it is Luben.

MAN  
 Ministry of Culture, Books  
 Division, please. Extension triple  
 seven, zero seven.

Series of clicks. Then, ringing. A recorded voice comes on the other line.

LUBEN  
 (after the prerecorded  
 voice stops)  
 This is a progress report under  
 Agency Rule Gamma Igrek 2020,  
 aline 54, related to the Party's  
 Circular on the Necessity of  
 Leninist Saturdays for Part-time  
 Teachers. To Comrade Didnik-  
 Malinchev, Technical Director,  
 Bureau for the Provinces and Border  
 Principalities as Bulgaria's Most  
 Vulnerable Chokepoints for Western  
 Influence. Comrade DM, thank you  
 for the opportunity to serve the  
 Party in the Unending Struggle  
 against the sly oppressors of the  
 people from without and from  
 within. My brief report follows.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE - A BIT LATER

The commotion has died down. Boyko straightens himself out, as staff lead pissed drunk Ivan off.

Boyko looks up at the bar. No Petsi, just a few locals and the man with the beige turtleneck.

He walks over to the bar and talks with Slavtcho the bartender. Not much can be heard over the din of the busy cafe.

We see Slavtcho shrugging a few times. Boyko leaves clearly annoyed.

INT. CAFE - LATE EVENING

It is the end of the night for the Cafe. Most tables are empty.

At his regular table, in reality a cozy booth in the back of the Cafe, Petsi and his brother are eating. Petsi is visibly more relaxed. You can even hear him chuckle at Niko's jokes.

Ivan ambles over. He is completely inebriated.

NIKO

There he is. Man of the hour.

IVAN

(to Petsi)

And there he is. *Al-Rahman, al-Rahim*. By whose grace we live.

Sits at the table and methodically drains the half drunk bottle of beer.

IVAN (CONT'D) (staring  
wistfully at the  
empty bottle)

I could murder seven of your  
sisters, my dear vessel.

PETSI

God save us from taxmen and drunk  
academics.

IVAN

Former academics.

Ivan's face beams like a pimply boy entering a large bordello.

IVAN (CONT'D)

*Bismillah*...How Do you say nectar  
from the Gods in Arabic?

NIKO

How the hell should we know. We didn't get sent to Lybia to sit on cushy ottomans and lecture towel-heads about the proletariat. Earn top lira in the process.

Ivan is oblivious. His eyes are stuck to the waiter carrying a couple bottles of beer, approaching the table.

NIKO (CONT'D)

(off Ivan's stare)  
You've had enough.

The waiter freezes in hesitation.

IVAN

(to Niko)

Quiet, you insolent pup. Today is Friday and on Fridays Ivan drinks. You know I can drink kegs twice your girth and still recite Lenin's pamphlet What To Do, not to speak of the Quran opening.

NIKO

Wednesday.

IVAN

What?

NIKO

It's Wednesday. Not Friday.

Ivan looks at him uncomprehending.

IVAN

What difference does it make.  
(to the waiter)  
Set those beauties down, my brave Ganymedes.

Niko looks at the waiter and shakes his head. Ivan is incensed.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Who do you take me for, boy. I will not be trifled with.

(to waiter)

What? I have money. I am solvent.

(spit flying from his  
mouth)

Ask my benefactor, sitting there like a mute. Go ahead, go ahead.

(MORE)



IVAN (CONT'D)

Don't I have money, my wordless  
master? Go ahead, go ahead, say it.

(now crying)

For I exist not but for your grace  
eternal, my old comrade.

Petsi nods at the waiter. The bottles go on the table. Ivan  
grabs one and guzzles it in one swoop. Then he jumps on Petsi  
and starts kissing him.

Petsi's helpers swoop in, but he waves them off.

IVAN (CONT'D)

I love you. I love you, my friend.  
You are the light effervescent,  
carbonated. The foam sweating down  
the glass. The glass of the bottle.  
My so called life. The beer bottle.

Niko shakes his head, gets up and goes to the bar where a  
gramophone is playing music. He whips an LP from the back of  
the bar, puts it on. Then headphones come out and onto his  
head. The plug goes into the side of the machine. His head  
sways gently to the inaudible music.

INT. CAFE - LATER

Petsi's booth. Petsi is sipping a glass of cognac. Ivan is  
next to him snoring loudly. He wakes briefly, mumbles  
something then falls back to sleep.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CAFE - LATER

Ivan is awake but staggeringly drunk. Cradling the bottle of  
cognac. Niko is back at the table.

There is a wad of money on the table. Ivan picks it up.

IVAN

Bidness, people, bidness! The thing  
wherein we catch the conscience of  
the king. And bidness, Petsi, is  
hopping. Hopping I tell you.

NIKO

No thanks to you. You almost got us  
all picked up tonight.

(MORE)

NIKO (CONT'D)

Code said make a diversion. Not start a knock-down drag-out fight.

IVAN

(to Niko)

Child, please. I helped you devise the whole

(rolls his eye)

"code," remember?

NIKO

What is it with you and Boyko anyway?

IVAN

Eh, nothing really. His cretinoid father destroyed my career is all. The hairless vole of a rodent. You don't think I overreacted, do you? But you see, that's the beauty of this whole setup? That's why it works, man.

NIKO

What works?

IVAN

Oh, Lord. Youth is truly wasted on the young. The whole setup works. It's credible me picking fights with the devil's spawn because of our rich history. But if the two grey cells in your brain talked to each other you'd see it too.

NIKO

(to himself)

I've had enough of this Jekyll and Hyde routine.

Petsi, who had been smoking the while sighs and flicks the ash off his cigarette.

EXT. STREET - SOMETIME AT NIGHT

Luben speaking into the receiver.

LUBEN

Arrival. Creation myth intact. Universal acclaim. Apple near tree, phase one. Janus 1938, end transmission.

INT. CAFE - LATER

Same booth. Niko is asleep. Petsi is smoking. Ivan is staring at space, mumbling under his breath. His eyes are blood shot.

Music is heard from the gramophone as Niko had unplugged his headphones.

*When lonely days turn to lonely  
nights  
You take a trip to the city lights  
And take the long way home  
Take the long way home*

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. CAFE - LATER

Ivan's face. His eyes are clear, almost too clear. Petsi is staring at his ashtray, cigarette butt smoldering on it.

IVAN

Why are you doing this?

Petsi is still silent. Ivan gets angry.

IVAN (CONT'D)

I don't need charity. You don't have to do this.

Petsi does not speak.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Just don't do it. Let me die with alone, drowned by fetid vomit, like I'm meant to. Please grant me that dignity.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CAFE - LATER

Ivan and Petsi are alone. In the distance, a staff member is putting chairs up on tables, getting ready to lock up.

Ivan is calm.

IVAN

Why are you doing it, Petsi?

PETSI

Bidness. A magician is nothing without misdirection.

IVAN

You know what I mean. Not *this* tonight. This-  
(gestures at Petsi and then at himself)

Ivan's lips tremble.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Why are you- I'm not. I'm just-

Ivan's voice trails off.

Petsi is looking out into the street, the town, the night.

EXT. A BALCONY IN A SMALL HOUSE - MORNING

The sky is fresh. No sign of the rains from yesterday, except in a few puddles along the street. A MAN (60's, stern face) in a simple white t-shirt and track suit pants holding on to the railing surveying the scene.

And a scene it is. The whole town unfolds under the balcony like that yellow brick road. The crisp morning air adds a rare clarity to the view. You could almost see all the way to Sofia.

The man smiles and nods to himself with satisfaction. Lifts his hand and deposits a lit CIGAR in his mouth. It is the same man from the Volga car.

Faint male voice is heard from the room. A man is speaking in a pleasant baritone as if admonishing a crowd or delivering a prayer. Words are not clearly audible.

A thin scurrying mass darts in the background. It moves like a well trained dog but we see it is a SERVILE MAN (40's, thin) as he stands behind the smoking man.

SERVILE MAN

Comrade Secretary, the arrestees await your attention, sir.

The Party Secretary hushes him, his eyes dash to the room inside where a YOUNG WOMAN has just entered.

Party Secretary takes out a wad of cash and puts it in Servile Man's hand and nods toward the room.

Servile man makes to go back in. Party Secretary holds his wrist a moment.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Be sure to thank Comrade-

SERVILE MAN  
Porazhenska, Comrade Secretary.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Comrade Porazhenska for her  
service.

Servile Man scurries back. A brief exchange between him and the woman is seen through the curtains.

A door opens and closes. The woman is gone.

The Servile Man is back on the balcony.

SERVILE MAN  
Sorry comrade, didn't think she  
could hear.

PARTY SECRETARY  
(every word a precise  
heavy grenade)  
Trifon, right?

TRIFON  
Trifon, Comrade Secretary.

PARTY SECRETARY How  
long have you been my  
assistant? Six, seven months?

Trifon makes to answer but Secretary waves him off.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Never mind. Tell you a secret,  
Trifon. A state secret, if you  
will.

He motions at the town below.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Our town, my friend. What word  
comes to mind for it, Trifon?

TRIFON

Comrade?

PARTY SECRETARY

When was the last time a problem happened here? It's a border town, the border with the West, Trifon? Anybody skip town lately? Dissidents? Strikes?

TRIFON

Not at all, Comrade Secretary. It's very peaceful, very orderly, sir.

PARTY SECRETARY

Orderly, peaceful. Happy. Not at all like the turmoil to the West, the Turkish border.

TRIFON

Not at all sir.

PARTY SECRETARY

I'm chief 20 years. Not a blip. Ever wonder why, Trifon? Pay attention, this is the secret part.

The Party Secretary takes a long satisfying drag from his cigar, looks around.

Picture perfect meadows leading up to majestic mountains, to the south. To the north and east, neat, geometric fields with hangars at even intervals. In the west, rustic houses, straight paved roads. Neatness and provincial beauty, all around. Green, gold, brown bricks, fresh, clean whitewashed facades.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

The secret behind happy, behind orderly? Very simple. Create a place where everybody has a role, a station. A place under the sun that contributes to the whole. Simple.

TRIFON

Very simple, sir.

PARTY SECRETARY

You know only what you need for your station. Not more, not less. Only the overseer knows all. Feels all and ordains all.

(MORE)

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
 (hissing)  
 Understood?

TRIFON  
 Deep apologies, sir. She was in the  
 other room-

PARTY SECRETARY  
 Enough. I must get dressed.

Party Secretary walks into the house, Trifon in trail.

INT. PARTY SECRETARY HOUSE - A BIT LATER

We are inside a small, humble place. The bed is made, to perfection. There is an old desk and a huge mantelpiece next to it. Over the mantel piece, a portrait of Lenin. Next to it the country's leader, Todor Zhivkov.

On the desk, a portrait of the Secretary as a young man. Leaning on it an old plaque, dated 1948. On the plaque:

FROM THE GRATEFUL PEOPLE TO

YATAK KRASIMIR GESHEV,

WHO RAN CLANDESTINE SUPPLY FOR THE PIRIN-MACEDONIAN PARTIZAN CELL DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR, 1941-1944.

Party Secretary is putting on a shirt, a tie. Pants. His movements are deliberate, precise, near-military. Jaws clenched the while.

There is an old radio with a turntable on top. An LP is spinning. Next to it few LP sleeves are scattered. LEV TROTSKY'S SPEECHES. Lev's voice is now coming the LP.

TROTSKY'S VOICE  
 (from the recording)  
 How is the *gestalt* of Ancient Greece during Homer, in its radical difference to our 20th century, to help in the struggle of the International Commune, of all workers and ultimately all Communists of the world. How can it be re-enacted in today's world? To begin to address this we must understand the notion of power, and its correlate comprehensive control. Control over what people know and should know.

(MORE)

## TROTSKY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

But, friends, total unrelenting control over the aspects of life need not be evil or Fascist. Must not be. In fact, control is precisely the essential condition for the only essential principle of Communism. How else may the ubiquitous, and correct, *To everyone according to their needs and from everyone according to their abilities*, be achieved?

The sound of a vehicle stopping in front of the house. Trifon, who has been standing by the window, turns to Party Secretary.

## TRIFON

The car is here, Comrade Secretary.

## PARTY SECRETARY

Right. On my way.

He put on the double breasted suit and combs the few hairs on the side of his scalp.

## TROTSKY'S VOICE

Certainty and calm, the true nature of happiness. And the simple reason for that is: balance. If you are given everything you should need. And if you let go of all that you are able to, you are in perfect stasis. Balance, equilibrium.

The door to the bedroom opens. FRENCH (late 30's, built) shaved head, big ears and the dead eyes of a recidivist, walks in.

## FRENCH

Comrade Secretary.

## PARTY SECRETARY

How are the guests, French?

## FRENCH

Busted lip. Sasho fixin' it. The females are scared.

PARTY SECRETARY Sometimes the cause requires that men be treated as means. If so such treatment must be what it must be. Not more. Hear me, French? Never more.



FRENCH  
Loud and clear, boss.

French and Party Secretary leave the room and go down the stairs.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Separate rooms? The ladies  
shouldn't...

FRENCH  
Separate rooms.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

French opens the door to the car.

FRENCH  
Somethin' else, boss.

Party Secretary sits in the car. French follows him.

INT. VOLGA CAR - A BIT LATER

Party Secretary is looking out the window. His eye gives a twitch.

PARTY SECRETARY  
When?

FRENCH  
Yesterday, looks like.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Already itching to talk, huh. Push  
to tomorrow. Haste makes waste.

FRENCH  
Done.

Silence.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
Some mess, this Kris business, huh?

Secretary keeps looking out the window. Puts a hand on French's knee, eyes still focused on the outside.

PARTY SECRETARY  
My grandkid told me a story the  
other day. That's what we do.  
(MORE)

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

I tell him a story then he tells me one. Anyway, you know where Holland is, French?

French looks at his boss but knows better than to answer.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

It's below sea level. All of it. Bunch a dams keep it dry is all. One evening, a small Dutch boy is walking home. Sees a tiny trickle coming from one dam. Walks up to it, what does he see? A tiny whole through which water is passing, flooding his country, bit by bit. What to do?! Goes home to papa to tell him about it? By the time papa does something about it the tiny crack will be a carter. And other cracks will appear. Why do you think?

Secretary looks at French. French does not answer.

Water, French, water.

(stares off into the distance)

I love water, my friend. Necessary. No life without it.

FRENCH

None, boss.

PARTY SECRETARY

But brutal, too. Unrelenting. Ask any jagged rock.

Party Secretary has pulled a file from a briefcase. Looking at pictures of Krum and his family. It is the Krastev's dossier.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

The little Dutch boy does the thing that makes sense. Sticks his tiny finger and plugs the tiny hole. Camps out there all night until he is found by worried grow-ups who also plug the hole. Holland is saved.

FRENCH

Kid's tales. Dams I know, you find one hole, it's already too late. There's hundreds others.

PARTY SECRETARY

Right. And if you can't find one hole, well, you can't find a hundred others.

Party Secretary smiles, as the car turns on to the main street flanked by a big park...

...and his smile darkens to a scowl, as he sees a black mass invading the beautiful green of the park.

Random black dots streak in, man and women in gaudy clothes, shouting at each other, horse drawn carts carving the grass into shreds. Somebody banging on a drum, loud violins.

CHAOS. CACAPHONY.

A nomadic unit of gypsies setting up a *katun*.

FRENCH

I'll be fucked by monster-dicked Tanzanians.

Secretary glares at him.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Kanchev, the half-wit, swore he set up the barricades, keep them out of town...

Mancho, the younger cop, cuts a solitary figure running back and forth trying to contain the chaos.

Party Secretary taps the driver. The Car pulls over.

PARTY SECRETARY

Get his attention.

Driver honks several times.

Mantcho spots the car and comes running. Secretary rolls down his window.

MANTCHO

(out of breath)

Comrade Secretary- They just walked on- I ran-

(then a motormouth)

They just don't listen to anything I say, comrade Secretary. And they babble in some other language. Then there is this guy comes up all important-like.

FRENCH

Slow the fuck down, boy.

Secretary raises his hand. French and the cop quiet down. Their boss's face forms the beginnings of a glare, eyes not so much as slits. A mere second later, the calm of a Roman statue.

PARTY SECRETARY

(to cop)

You are instruments of order.  
Please act like ones.

Mantcho nods and scurries off. Secretary runs a hand over his tired eyes. Looks at French.

French gets out and walks toward the cloud of gypsies.

Secretary gets back into the Krastev's file.

EXT. PARK GROUNDS - SAME TIME

We see French talking to a GYPSY ELDER (late 50's), just out of earshot. Gypsy is motioning excitedly to horse drawn cart in the back surrounded by milling gypsies and some townspeople.

French glances back to the Volga with Party Secretary in it and gently leads the gypsy elder around the other side of the katoun away from the line of sight of the Secretary.

French hands the gypsy a wad of cash whispering in his ear. Gypsy nods.

INT. VOLGA CAR - A BIT LATER

Party Secretary is deep into the files. Car door opens, in goes French and taps the driver. The car takes off.

Secretary looks at French.

FRENCH

Another mess, boss.

A beat.

PARTY SECRETARY

French.

(stares at him fixedly)

Get them off my park. Feet first,  
if you have to.

FRENCH

Comrade Geshev.

(sighs)

Boss, we have this talk every year,  
come summer. They off the gird,  
boss, nothing we can do. Hell,  
Sofia been on they case for  
decades. They don't care.

PARTY SECRETARY

My town, my rules. Make soap of'em,  
you want to.

FRENCH

I talked to the elder some. On top  
of everything, they brung a  
soothsayer. Fucking gypsies.

PARTY SECRETARY

A soothsayer. That's messy. People  
gonna want fortunes read, long  
lines, whining, kids. I hate  
messes.

FRENCH

Fucking gypsies.

PARTY SECRETARY

Soothsayer, huh. What a mess.

FRENCH

Fucking mess, boss.

Party Secretary clenches his jaws. Sits back and exhales  
quietly.

The car pulls up to the Communist Party House.

PARTY SECRETARY

We'll deal with this tomorrow.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - A BIT LATER

The skies have turned grey again. It smells of rain.

The Volga's door opens. Out steps Party Secretary and walks  
into Party House. French follows.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - SAME TIME

The two slip through a side door under a side staircase. Down a set of dark stairs, deep into the bowels of the building. Party Secretary goes first, French behind him.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Had a chat with them, I assume?

French, smiles crookedly.

FRENCH  
Words were said, yes.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Anything useful?

FRENCH  
Nobody sayin' nuthin'.

PARTY SECRETARY  
He'll keep saying nothing, mark my word.

FRENCH  
(dismissively)  
A man's a man, boss. Everybody sings sooner or later.

Party Secretary shakes his head.

PARTY SECRETARY  
His father, his grandfather, all Macedonian revolutionaries.

FRENCH  
So?

PARTY SECRETARY  
We dealt with them back in '44 and '48. Toughest sums'a'bitches you've ever seen.

Party Secretary stops at the bottom of the stairs. Thinks a moment and sighs.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Run on ahead. One more go.  
Phonebook only. Stop at my knock.

FRENCH  
Yes, Comrade Secretary.

French runs ahead.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT - A BIT LATER

Party Secretary stands in front of an internal window looking into a basement room.

The scene inside: Krum on a chair, shirt crumpled around his torso hanging from a rope tied to a big ceiling hook. Mouth gagged with a wraparound cloth.

Two men, faces in ski masks, sleeves rolled up, are twirling like some weird hammer-throwing athletes around the detainee, heavy sacks in hand. As they twirl, the goons begin slamming the sacks, which appear to have heavy books in them, against Krum's body, both back and front. SLAM, TWIRL, SLAM TWIRL.

Party Secretary is watching, jaws clenched tightly.

The blows come faster come faster and faster. Krum grunts, tears rolling down his sides.

Party Secretary knocks on the door. Loudly.

INT. GROUND LEVEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Petsi is in his lab working. A rumbling sound right in front of the ground level window catches his attention. Petsi goes over to investigate and sees a government issue UAZ 4x4 vehicle idling. TECHNOCHIM painted on the side door.

PETSI  
(to himself)  
Hm. Is it the 1st already?

Glances at the wall calendar. Thursday, July 19th is circled.

Buzzer goes off. Petsi goes to intercom and presses a button.

PETSI (CONT'D)  
Hello?

MAN ON THE OTHER END  
Technochim Impex.

PETSI  
You, guys, are way too early for  
the monthlies.

MAN ON THE OTHER END  
Special delivery.

PETSI  
(buzzes the man in)  
Downstairs, please.

A MAN (30's, nondescript) dressed in dark coveralls comes down the stairs. Big, horn-rimmed glasses and thin mustache.

The man becomes rather excited at the sight of all the machinery and jaws and such. Throws himself on to Petsi's work chair.

MUSTACHED MAN  
Oh. Oh. This swivels. Fantastic.

It's not long before he gets a hold of a dentist's hand drill. He squeezes the trigger and A LOUD whine ensues.

PETSI  
(over the noise)  
How can I help you?

INT. BASEMENT - A BIT LATER

Party secretary is sitting in a chair. Krum, now sitting, as well, is across the table from him, hands tied in front of him. The man in ski masks are behind Krum.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Gag.

One of the men takes off the gag. Krum looks up at the Party Secretary. His eyes are tired, and bereft of expression.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
(to Krum)  
I apologize for this-  
(motions at the sacks)  
Just a means. Your father and the  
Macedonian movement - my hat off.  
Misguided but strong, loyal.

Krum spits on the floor.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
I understand your feeling. Tell me  
though. What would the IMRO do if  
somebody betrayed the cause? Even  
if it was the closest to your  
bosom, your own son.



Krum is silent.

Party Secretary takes out a cigar. Nods at the other man in ski mask. The man takes out a piece of paper, which he consults as he speaks.

MASKED MAN

As you are aware, Comrade Krastev, your son Kristo Krastev, captain of the Dimitrov frigate, has committed an egregious crime, a massive betrayal-

KRUM

French, you son of a Turkish whore. Show your pimply face.

MASKED MAN

(clears throat)

Betrayal of that which is most sacred. That which he swore to uphold. Conc-, Concordantly, he is charged with dereliction of duty and abandoning his post. As executive powers of the people, our Party cell has been instructed to identify the close associate's of the criminal and prevent-

Krum spits again, with force. The spit ends on Masked Man's shoes.

PARTY SECRETARY

Alright.

Party Secretary gets up and leaves the room.

MASKED MAN

(throws away the paper)

Just me and you, lover. For the record Imma ask you the three questions that you been hearing all night. Ready?

Masked man kneels in front of Krum, examines his nose.

Then, a quick nasty headbutt.

FRENCH

Who knew.

Another headbutt.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Who helped.

Another quick one.

Who else is gonna go.

A beat. Two beats. Krum is silent. Masked Man bends down to Krum's ear.

MASKED MAN

Maybe you tough as them nails, like boss says. So? You gonna rot in Belene. Not me, *you*, tough guy. Your wife, *your* girl, they gonna toss and turn those 20 long years. *Your* girl, *your* 20 years. Not mine.

Masked Man leers.

FRENCH

That's right, tough guy. We know where you live, small town and all. And, holy molly, Nedia is one tasty morsel.

Masked Man smacks his lips. Krum's jaws tighten.

MASKED MAN

And yes, we can. The chief, he won't know. Hell, he don't know half of it already.

KRUM

Don't you DARE!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

CLOSE UP of Party Secretary. Dmitry Shostakovich's String Quarter no. 8 playing softly in the background.

Nedia's Mother is sitting on the other side of the table, hands tied in front of her, just like Krum's were. Her mouth, however, is not gagged.

Two goons flank her, one of them holding the sleeve to the record.

GOON

(reading off the sleeve)

The music you are hearing is, a work of staggering beauty. Staggering Soviet beauty. Sad, powerful, triumphant. The quarter was patently written for the victims of Fascism. But, as it enters into 20th year of existence, we can also see it as an ode to our continual fight against the many new fascisms, new empires that try to destroy our limpid ways. For we are still at arms, and our struggle will not end until the reactionary West is vanquished. Until our historically unavoidable bid to make the world a better place is complete.

The Party Secretary nods and the goon puts down the sleeve.

PARTY SECRETARY

Comrade, your son Kris dealt the kinda blow to-, to-  
(shakes head)  
Our motherland, our gentle people, our world, the very fabric of our life. Unimaginable.

Comes over to the woman and cradles her tied hands in his. Nedie's Mom cringes.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

And it goes beyond us. To do it like this, during a humanitarian mission under the aegis of our Soviet brethren. A callous, horrific blow to our entire cause.

Nedie's mother is staring at him quietly.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

All of which, Comrade, just makes my mission, simple, swift. And inexorable.

Nods quickly at one of the goons. The goon leaves the room and is heard going back into the adjacent room.

The other goon drags Nedie's Mother to an internal window looking into the next room.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Stop the rot from spreading.

There, in the other room, sits Nedia, tied up. The other goon walks up to Nedia, takes off his belt and unbuttons his pants.

Nedia's Mother starts crying.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Use absolutely any.

The goon drags her back to her chair and ties her up.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Means necessary.

NEDIA'S MOM  
Go to hell.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Who knew. Who else was involved.  
Who else plans to defect.

NEDIA'S MOM  
Go to hell.

Party Secretary glances at the goon in this room. The goon goes to the internal window and taps.

A woman's screams are heard from the room. Ripping of clothes.

NEDIA'S MOM (CONT'D)  
No! Please!

PARTY SECRETARY  
Who knew. Who else was involved.  
Who else plans to defect.

Screams intensify from the other room. There is gurgling as though someone is being suffocated.

NEDIA'S MOM  
Please! Please have mercy. Please  
for decency's sake. I don't know.  
We don't know. Kris kept to  
himself.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Here's a list. Just nod. Angel  
Marudiev.

NEDIA'S MOM

No!

PARTY SECRETARY

Zhoro Karadunis.

NEDIA'S MOM

No.

PARTY SECRETARY

Niko Simitliev, his brother Petsi Simitliev.

NEDIA'S MOM

No. No, please.

PARTY SECRETARY

Ivan Kainarov.

NEDIA'S MOM

Ivan? Are you crazy.

Party Secretary gets up and walks to the internal window, motions to somebody in the other room. The cries get louder.

GIRL'S VOICE

(from the other room)

NO. NO!

Nedia's Mom is crying.

NEDIA'S MOM

Please, I'll tell you everything. It was all at the Academy. He got radicalized there. I could barely recognize him. That's all I know. Please!

Party Secretary stares at her. A glance at the goon. A tap on the window. The screams stop.

PARTY SECRETARY

Very well.

INT. GROUND LEVEL ROOM - SAME TIME

The Mustached Man is picking up, examining and dropping down all the instruments on the work table. His other hand still pressing the drill.

MUSTACHED MAN  
 (over the noise)  
 What? Oh, yes. Chief Agent  
 Karadjambazov, Sales and  
 Requisition. Want a business card?

PETSI  
 No, thanks. How can I help you?

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV  
 (turns drill off)  
 Chief Agent Karadjambazov, *Sales*  
 and *Requisition*.

Uncomfortable silence.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV (CONT'D)  
 And we do the helping.

PETSI  
 You do, don't you.

Petsi sits down and lets out a tired sigh.

The agent takes off his sunglasses, also lets out a sigh.  
 Eyes look tired, too. Moments pass in uncomfortable silence.

The two men look at each other.

PETSI (CONT'D)  
 It's been two weeks only. Not even.  
 We agreed-

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV  
 New schedule. It's now or never.

PETSI  
 Nothing wrong with the old one. You  
 came to me, remember.

Karadjambazov lifts the drill to his eyes.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV  
 You know I have actually never been  
 to the dentist. Not once. Blessed,  
 I guess.

He grins to reveal perfect white teeth under the mustache.  
 Turns the drill on and raises it up to his mouth.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV (CONT'D)  
 I wonder how it feels. I'm really a  
 sucker for new sensations.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Party Secretary and French are outside the basement rooms.

PARTY SECRETARY  
 You buy this? I know for a fact  
 Kris hung out with the younger  
 Simitliev boy.

FRENCH  
 Niko? We checked him out. He's  
 clean.

PARTY SECRETARY Hm. I  
 admit. I do love this headline.  
 "No local ties found in defector's  
 case; all fingers point at the  
 Academy."

French chuckles.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
 Is it true though?

FRENCH  
 (chuckling)  
 What is it you always say, boss. If  
 it works in theory.

PARTY SECRETARY  
 Who cares about practice.

INT. BASEMENT - A BIT LATER

CLOSE UP of Nedia sitting in a chair, hands tied in front of  
 her. Her clothing is intact and she shows no effects of  
 violence.

She is sobbing. Head staring at the floor.

Party secretary and a Masked Man sit on the other side of the  
 table.

PARTY SECRETARY  
 (to Nedia)  
 I've been running this town a long  
 time. You know how long?

NEDIA  
 Very long?

PARTY SECRETARY

Very long. Long enough to get to the bottom of it. And you know what the bottom of it is?

NEDIA

No.

PARTY SECRETARY

Balance, child. People got their stations. They man them, no questions asked.

NEDIA

Um, ok.

PARTY SECRETARY

And now the bottom, well the bottom is falling out. We are out of balance. People wonder, whisper.

Nedia is silent.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

But, eh. What do you do. Shit happens,  
(to Masked Man)  
Right, comrade?

MASKED MAN

Shit sure does, boss.

Party Secretary takes off his watch and shows it to Nedia.

PARTY SECRETARY

I absolutely love that watch. Russian *Poljet*, the best, right. Amazing machine. Complex. Hundreds of parts, springs, cogs, tolerances. Here, let me show you.

Takes out his pocket knife and pries the back panel fo the watch loose revealing an intricate maze of moving parts.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Well one day I dropped it and boom, a cog got bent. A tiny cog. A tiny bend. But it threw the whole thing out of whack. One tiny-

Secretary flicks the watch off the table. It falls to the cement floor and shatters.



PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Cog gets bent. Bye bye balance.  
(smiles)

Infuriating right? Wrong. Except,  
bent cog got nothing to do with it,  
Nedia. Our reaction to it.  
Everything to do with it. You gonna  
rage and rave and kill all around  
you from frustration. Or you gonna  
fix the problem.

MASKED MAN  
(giggling)  
Boss here a fixer not a killer.

PARTY SECRETARY  
Nobody loves a despot. But people,  
they love a fixer. And I  
(fixes her with unblinking  
eyes)  
I will fix this, Nedia.

A goon approaches the Party Secretary, and whispers into his  
ear.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
(to goon)  
Sgt. Melchev again? This guy is a  
miracle worker.

Goon whispers some more.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
(to goon)  
They survive?

The goon shakes his head.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
(to no-one in particular)  
Good. These criminals come to my  
country, and think, what, they can  
waltz in here and just stroll  
across to Greece. What is it with  
these "sister Socialist States"  
anyway? They just tell their ninny  
citizens our borders are made Swiss  
fucking cheese?!

Gets up. Turns to the other goon.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)  
Read her the names. Hope she can  
confirm what her mother told us.

Picks up the files and makes to leave. As his hand rests on the doorknob, his head turns back.

PARTY SECRETARY (CONT'D)

(to Nedra)

Say, what is this Comrade's first name and patronymic? This Arabadjiev painter fellow.

NEDRA

Stoyan Ivanov. Why?

PARTY SECRETARY Hm. And that new entrants coordinator at the National Academy. Stefka something? Peeva, right?

Nedra's lips begin to tremble.

NEDRA

How do you know her. Why are asking?

Party Secretary opens door and sets through doorway.

NEDRA (CONT'D)

(crying)

Why are you asking? What do you want? Please! Why! Please.

The door shuts with a thud.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - A BIT LATER

Party Secretary is climbing the stairs out of the basement. French is right behind taking his mask off. He takes out a cassette tape and taps Party Secretary who turns to look at him.

FRENCH

Clever, right? The comrade I sent was worth her weight in rubles, right?

Party Secretary smiles.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

What do we do about the tape?

PARTY SECRETARY

Destroy it.

INT. GROUND LEVEL ROOM - SAME TIME

The bit bores into one of his canines, enamel flying around. The drill makes that sickening high-pitched whine we all know and love.

The bit keeps going. It surely is through the tooth now. The Agent takes out the drill and feels around in his mouth. Blood begins to trickle down his lips.

He looks at Petsi, more from wonder than anything else.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV

Ouch?

A question, not admission of pain.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV (CONT'D)

Interesting.

He gets up and as he walks by Petsi sticks a business card in his shirt pocket.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV (CONT'D)

Call this number between 13:00 and 14:00 today. Seven rings. Then hang up.

Makes to leave.

PETSI

And if we don't?

The Agent turns his head as he walks by Petsi.

AGENT KARADJAMBAZOV

Don't what?

PETSI

Call.

Loud chuckle escapes Agent's mouth. And he's gone.

Petsi face is emotionless. In a few moments, a long fitful breath enters his lungs and escapes them slowly.