



Channel 8 Screenplay

Version "Man with the Comb Over" 3.09 e
© Andrea Maria Dusl - Vienna, 16th December 2005
(English translation by Charles Osborne, Prague, 19th June 2006)

Andrea Maria Dusl
Ateliers Dhaulagiri
Kleine Neugasse 3/7 1050 Wien, Austria
+43 1 58 55 295
www.comandantina.com
andrea.maria.dusl@gmail.com
dusl@falter.at

lotusfilm
Lotus-Film GmbH
Johnstrasse 83 A-1150 Wien, Austria
Tel.: +43 1 786 33 87
Fax.: +43 1 786 33 87 11
E-mail: office@lotus-film.co.at
www.lotus-film.co.at



Channel 8 Screenplay

Version "Man With The Comb Over" 3.09 e
© Andrea Maria Dusl
andrea.maria.dusl@gmail.com
dusl@falter.at
14th December 2005
(English translation by
Charles Osborne 19th June 2006)

1. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 STUDIO - DAY

A studio monitor: the picture is of a television correspondent; this is VALENTIN, 37, slim, good-looking, a melancholy face that has experienced a lot. Valentin is standing there, a microphone in his hand, in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. It is autumn. The fat microphone in his left hand has been stuffed into a cube-shaped red sleeve with the inscription CHANNEL 8 in white letters.

Wind ruffles Valentin's hair. He attempts to straighten his hairstyle.

VALENTIN

Am I there? Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Am I there? Come in please, Vienna! One... two... hello, yes? Vienna, am I there?

The picture freezes, rewinds to the beginning and starts all over again.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

(OFF, on tape)

... Am I there? Come in please, Vienna! One... two... hello, yes? Vienna, am I there?

MAIN TITLES

On one of the monitors we see Valentin in front of the Eiffel Tower, frozen in mid-sentence, and on another we see a shot of the Eiffel Tower in autumn... without Valentin. A third monitor shows the bluescreen background.

The camera slowly tracks backwards to reveal the room: a recording studio in a TV station. More monitors become visible, studio equipment, cameras, cables, mike cradles, spots, and the blue background of a chroma key screen. A lot of TV technology. Valentin is sitting in front of three monitors at an editing desk.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

That was November. Don't we have an Eiffel Tower in April? We definitely had an Eiffel Tower in April.

Title:

CHANNEL 8

Valentin gets up from the editing desk and crosses to the other end of the studio. He picks up a reporter's mike, stands in front of a bluescreen, positions himself according to marks on the floor and turns on a large free-standing fan that blows gentle, gusting wind into his face.

LARS, the soundman, 35, German accent, a technical nerd with a seven-day beard, puts on his headphones, flicks a small switch on his equipment and gives Valentin a bored nod.

NINA, 29, slim and casual, camouflage trousers, a Slovakian camerawoman from the Berlin-Mitte generation, looks down into the viewfinder of her camera.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

All right, from the top. Is the light OK now? Nina, do we have an April Eiffel Tower?

Nina leaps over to the editing desk. The background on the monitor switches from November to Spring.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

OK, so is the wind all right now? Do we have a connection with Vienna?

LARS

Yeah, connection OK.

NINA

3

We're running, the wind's fine...

Nina, the camerawoman, stopped looking through her viewfinder a while back and is rolling herself a cigarette.

VALENTIN

Can you hear me, can you hear me,
Vienna, can you hear me? Am I there?
Come in please, Vienna? One... two...
Vienna, am I there? This is Paris.
One... two... Vienna, am I there?
Yes...?

(clearing his throat)

French President Jacques Chirac
announced today that he is standing
behind his controversial Prime Minister.
Chirac has also postponed his trip to
Russia, which had been planned for this
week. Now he will leave on Saturday for
Saint...

2. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT - EVENING

An empty apartment in the Marais district of Paris. White walls, freshly sealed parquet floors that echo, open doors. Valentin and MONIQUE, 34 - good-looking, slim, urbane, shoulder-length hair, bourgeois Bohemian - are being shown through the rooms by the ESTATE AGENT, a 52-year-old woman who is both elegant and unobtrusive.

ESTATE AGENT

(French, subtitled)

The living room. 32 square metres. But
you know that, of course: we had the
floor sealed again just for you.

They enter the bedroom.

ESTATE AGENT (cont'd)

(French, subtitled)

Here you are. Everything fine. A
beautiful rose.

(indicating the ceiling)

Haussmann. The windows close properly.
Nothing to worry about.

MONIQUE

(whispers, to Valentin)

Let's get the futon in here first of all
so we can...

(whispering more quietly)

...do it properly.

4

The next room is smaller.

ESTATE AGENT
(French, subtitled)
The nursery.

Monique squeezes Valentin's hand.

ESTATE AGENT (cont'd)
(French, subtitled)
Which now has Internet connection.
You've seen the bathroom and kitchen.

Voila. I just need your signatures on
the purchase agreements. Then we have
completed the paperwork. Oh yes. Here
are your keys.

She holds up a key ring with 6 identical keys.

3. INT. PARIS. CANTEEN IN CHANNEL 8 - DAY

Valentin is standing in a long line at the self-
service counter, with his tray, filling a glass with
soda water. It fills up slowly. Nina, the camerawoman
we saw earlier, is standing next to him and pushing
her tray along the counter.

VALENTIN
Have you noticed they've got a different
soda? Since Monday the soda's not the
same. Now they're even economising on
soda! I'm telling you, the whole station
won't be around much longer. It was the
same in Bratislava in 95, they
economised themselves to death, and then
they weren't around any longer.

Valentin takes a small bottle of Angostura from his
pocket.

NINA
God, Valentin.

VALENTIN
(takes a swig)
Go on, try it.
(offering Nina his glass)
That's not real soda, is it?

NINA
(sipping)
Yeah, well...

VALENTIN
Yeah, well. Is that what you'll say when they⁵

let you go? Yeah well isn't the attitude to take. Yeah well is globalisation, yeah well is Guantanamo.

They have reached the salad bar.

NINA

And tasting soda water isn't exactly revolutionary.

Valentin shakes some Angostura into his soda, which now takes on a red tinge.

VALENTIN

Monique and I got the apartment.

NINA

You got the apartment? And you just mention it casually? How did it all work out so fast in the end?

VALENTIN

Don't ask me; the estate agent just rang and asked if we wanted to move in. We're going to give a little dinner party. A sort of house-warming. Just off the cuff. No big production. Just Monique and me, you, Dirk, Chris.

4. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Valentin in the improvised kitchen. Scraps of conversation from the living room. He has wedged his mobile phone against his shoulder and is trying to uncork a bottle of red wine.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled, he is talking to an answering machine)

...it's a pilot's watch. IWC Schaffhausen. In my name. Soracanins. Valentin Soracanins. Black leather strap. You were going to look at it.

IN LIVING ROOM:

White walls. Light from two office lamps. Cardboard boxes from a removal firm all over the place. A sheet of wood has been placed on piled-up boxes to form an improvised table. The meal has been cleared away, leaving just baguette crumbs, napkins and red wine on the table. The air is thick with smoke. Music oozes from an iPod hanging from a monitor loudspeaker placed on a cardboard box.

Around the table are Monique, Nina - who we have met - CHRIS, 35, slim with small beard, DIRK, 42, stockier, balding. Both gay.

CHRIS

In Rome.

DIRK

When were you in Rome?

CHRIS

With Arthur.

DIRK

Why don't I know about that?

CHRIS

You didn't ask.

DIRK

You have to mention something like that.

CHRIS

I'm mentioning it now.

NINA

Go on.

CHRIS

So were in this Trattoria in Rome.
Arthur...

(to Dirk, pointedly)

And me. And suddenly I see Helmut Berger
mincing over to us.

MONIQUE

Who?

CHRIS

Helmut Berger. THE Helmut Berger. So he
comes over, Helmut Berger. The way he
walks. He's got this really funny,
prancing walk. As if he were balancing
on invisible beams, like in gymnastics.

5. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT, BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Valentin is standing on the balcony by himself,
smoking. Below him Paris by night. From a window in
the house opposite the background noise of a
champions' league football match blares out.

NINA

(appears in the balcony door)

Everything all right, sailor?

7

Valentin flicks some ash into the night.

VALENTIN

Everything's just fine. Marseilles are winning 2:0.

6. INT. PARIS. KITCHEN OF EMPTY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Monique is washing dishes in the sink. Nina comes up and tries to be useful.

NINA

Need some help?

MONIQUE

No, no, it's all right. I don't have any tabs for the dishwasher yet. So I'd rather wash the dishes now. How's Valentin? Is he out on the balcony again? He's out on the balcony.

Nina grabs a little roll of biscuits from a bowl.

MONIQUE (cont'd)

When he's happy, he stands on the balcony. When he's happy, he wants to be all by himself.

7. INT. PARIS. MONIQUE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Valentin is now sitting at the table with the others again. Nina and Monique join them. Monique places the bowl of biscuits on the table.

CHRIS

... rubs the leather between his fingers and then he says: "This jacket doesn't suit you, it's too small for you, it's not you at all - I'll give you mine! It's from Yves Saint Laurent, but I hate it."

So we swap jackets and I put on the Yves Saint Laurent jacket Helmut Berger was wearing, and he puts mine on, but guess what - the sleeves of my jacket only reach just past his elbows, and it won't close at the front at all.

"Where's your jacket from?" he asks, in that voice again. "From Caritas," I say. He says: "Who's that?" Like he thinks it's some sort of designer he's never heard of. So I say: "Caritas is the place where poor people buy second-hand clothes."

8

So he rolls his eyes, turns round and texts his suit guy again...

Laughter. Dirk picks up one of the biscuit rolls.

DIRK
You know this?

He waves the biscuit roll around.

DIRK (cont'd)
You don't know it? That's absolutely amazing. All right...
(to Valentin and Monique)
Swear you don't know it!

He takes off the transparent foil, removes the biscuits, smoothes out the foil and then rolls it up to form a long tube the thickness of a finger.

DIRK (cont'd)
What we're doing here is a partnership test. It's a test to see if two people are ideal partners. And the test only works with this particular brand. I need your hand, Monique. Hold out your hand.

Dirk stands the tube up on the palm of Monique's hand.

DIRK (cont'd)
Valentin! Hold Monique's hand. Just here, at the wrist. Right; now we need a lighter.

Valentin holds Monique's wrist. Dirk hands him a lighter.

DIRK (cont'd)
Nice and easy: set fire to it.

Monique's eyes are wide; she feels uneasy. Valentin lights the tube of foil. It burns down, the flame getting bigger, closer and closer to the palm of Monique's hand. Suddenly Monique starts to panic: she screams and pulls her hand away, leaping backwards. The tube falls to the table and burns out quickly.

An embarrassed silence. The music stopped some time ago.

NINA
(trying to save the situation)
Er... I'll put the music on. Wine, anyone?

8. EXT. NEVA BRIDGE ST. PETERSBURG - WHITE NIGHT

The cool silence of the Neva at night in St. Petersburg. A line of cars with doors open are waiting in front of the raised wings of the bridge.

Faint howling and curious music emerge from one car, which is rocking as a COUPLE inside go at it.

TWO DRUNK SAILORS, both 18, are dancing together on the cordoned-off section of the bridge, with their arms resting on each other's shoulders.

In a delivery van we can see the regular glow of a cigarette as it is inhaled repeatedly.

A DRUNK GIRL, 22, fragile and anaemic with dark hair, is balancing on one of the stone walls of the bridge. Her light blue T-shirt has a white dolphin printed on it. She flashes her T-shirt and shows her breasts.

DRUNK GIRL

(Russian)

Oh, go fuck yourselves. Money, money, money, that's all you're interested in, isn't it?! Go fuck yourselves, you miserable jerks!

The girl stumbles and falls backward into the river, head first. The sailors don't notice.

The splash as she hits the water.

CUT TO:

9. INT. PARIS. NEW APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the bedroom Valentin is breathing heavily, as if unable to get any air. Monique wakes up. She turns on the light.

MONIQUE

Valentin?

He takes a deep breath and drinks from the glass of water at his bedside. His head sinks down on to the pillow again.

MONIQUE (cont'd)

Were you dreaming?

He shakes his head and sleepily scratches the inside of his left elbow.

10

Monique hesitates briefly. Valentin turns off the bedside light.

10. INT. PARIS. KITCHEN OF NEW APARTMENT - MORNING

A camping table. Valentin and Monique are having breakfast in their dressing gowns.

MONIQUE

(dunking her baguette in her coffee)

We should paint the kitchen yellow. Like the Cafè in Aix. The one with the starry sky, you know, the one Van Gogh painted.

VALENTIN

(looking through Le Monde)

A café? Yellow? He painted a café? In Aix? You sure? Wasn't it in Arles? Bush is coming. That's all I need.

MONIQUE

Is that blood?

VALENTIN

What blood?

MONIQUE

On your dressing gown.
(pointing to his sleeve)

Valentin looks down at the sleeve of his dressing gown. There is a blood stain inside the elbow. He pushes the sleeve up; there is a wound with a scab on it.

VALENTIN

I must have been scratching it.

MONIQUE

(looking at the time)

Shit, ten to ten. I must fly. I'm meeting Houellebecq today.

VALENTIN

I thought that was tomorrow.

MONIQUE

Today. 11 in Deux Magots.

VALENTIN

Deux Magots. Typical for him. He's so provincial.

MONIQUE

(rushing to finish her coffee)

Is there anything you want me to ask him?

VALENTIN

No, that guy is completely over-rated. Hang on, there is something. Ask him... ask him why he always holds his cigarette in such a funny way.

Valentin wedges a cigarette between his ring and middle fingers.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

He always holds a cigarette so it looks really stupid. There must be a reason. I bet he only does it so someone will ask him about it one day. Ask him.

Monique walks into the bathroom and turns on the shower. Then she comes back. Naked.

MONIQUE

Are we happy, Valentin?

VALENTIN

Why now... Because I had a go at Houellebecq?

MONIQUE

Just tell me. Are we happy?

VALENTIN

Of course we're happy. What's the idea of asking such a stupid question: are we happy? Of course we're happy.

11. EXT. PARIS. METRO STATION STALINGRAD - DAY

The platform at Stalingrad metro station. Valentin is standing next to a huge EYE of a woman in a poster. We hear the penetrating beeping that means the doors are about to close. Valentin flicks his cigarette into the gap between the train and the platform and sprints through the door in front of him at the last second. The pneumatic doors closes with a squeak of rubber. The train sets off, picks up speed and vanishes into the tunnel with a metallic hiss.

12. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 BUREAU CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

The boss's office: light, elegant, spartan and bare. Piles of Le Monde, Financial Times and New York Times on the floor. ADROWITZER, 55, greying hair, drinker's eyes, white shirt with open collar, is sitting at his large Scandinavian desk. He reaches for the remote and¹²

turns off the volume on the huge flat-screen TV. He gets to his feet when Valentin appears in the doorway and adjusts the belt of his trousers.

ADROWITZER
Come on in Valentin; coffee?
(French, to his secretary in
the adjoining room)
A coffee for Herr Soracanins!
(to Valentin)
Milk?

VALENTIN
(French, to secretary)
Please, milk and two sugars. Thanks!

ADROWITZER
Sit down, Valentin.

They cross to some easy chairs. Valentin sits down, as does Adrowitzer.

ADROWITZER (cont'd)
How long have you been in Paris,
Valentin? 5 years.

VALENTIN
5 years.

ADROWITZER
Cologne has been on the phone -
informal, no firm decision yet... could
you imagine running the business here?

VALENTIN
Here? Me?

ADROWITZER
Right. Cologne wants me to go to
Washington. And we need an experienced
man here. Someone like you. I could see
you running the bureau, you know. The
whole thing, including the budget.

VALENTIN
Huh - what can I say?

ADROWITZER
We still have a little time. You don't
need to agree right now. Cologne doesn't
know I'm talking to you. But they want
me to make a recommendation. Think it
over. You don't have to say anything
this minute.

13. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 STUDIO - DAY

Valentin, thermos flask in his hand, is walking along the corridor in the Channel 8 offices. He stops in surprise outside a cutting room:

The monitor where the CUTTER, a woman aged about 42, is sitting shows the morning traffic in the main street of St. Petersburg, Nevsky Prospect. A BALD CORRESPONDENT, 45, in a red parka, is standing on the pavement in front of a news kiosk, making his report.

CUT TO:

14. INT PARIS. CHANNEL 8 STUDIO KITCHEN - DAY

Valentin pours some water into the coffee machine, changes the filter and spoons some coffee into it. Valentin looks thoughtful, chewing something over. He turns the machine on and then goes back along the corridor.

15. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 STUDIO - DAY

Valentin appears in the doorway of the cutting room.

VALENTIN

(to Cutter)

Hi! The material you were just editing, a couple of minutes ago - is that the same tape? Could you go back a bit?

CUTTER

What for?

VALENTIN

There was something there. Can you rewind it... Stop there... Yes, there...

We see on the monitor a street corner outside the entrance to a subway station. The correspondent we have already seen, balding, in a red parka, is talking into his mike. Behind him, among the passers-by, looking like a rock in a fast-moving current, is a newspaper kiosk where a GAUNT MAN, 55, is selling newspapers, magazines and porn mags.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

That's Alexei. Behind the bald reporter. The guy in the cap. That's Alexei.

He taps the tiny figure on the monitor with his finger.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

The guy in the newspaper kiosk. His wife worked in a thermometer factory and is going to die soon. Her name's Anzhela...

CUTTER

You know them? That's agency footage from Russia. Nobody's seen it yet: we had it sent this morning.

VALENTIN

Where is it?

CUTTER

(checking her list)
St. Petersburg. Shot yesterday.

CUT TO:

16. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 CUTTING ROOM - MORNING

Valentin is sitting at the cutter's desk, surrounded by piles of video cassettes, alone. He is facing one of the monitors, staring as if hypnotised at footage from St. Petersburg. The footage is uncut and has no sound.

CUT TO:

17. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

VIDEO FOOTAGE (NO SOUND): CHILDREN PLAYING in a desolate housing project. Burning garbage containers. Stray dogs. A YOUNG SKINHEAD, 17 proudly demonstrates his skills with a knife. A SECOND SKINHEAD, 16, holds up his T-shirt and shows the long scars on his stomach. The first skinhead takes a rusty Iron Cross out of a silk handkerchief.

18. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. MOSCOW STATION - DAY

VIDEO FOOTAGE (NO SOUND): TRAVELLERS with numerous bundles of luggage get off a train. A YOUNG WOMAN, 22, WITH A SQUINT gazes sadly into the camera and slowly sucks a pink ice-cream on a stick.

CUT TO:

19. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. EXPENSIVE GALLERY - EVENING

VIDEO FOOTAGE (NO SOUND): A QUARTET in black suits is playing classical salon music. A WELL-DRESSED, handsome man proudly takes a necklace out of a glass

15

display case, a price tag on the velvet stand bears the number 135,000. The lips of the Mediterranean-looking dealer form the word "dollars".

CUT TO:

20. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. MOSKOVSKY PROSPECT - DAY

VIDEO FOOTAGE (NO SOUND): A car accident on the four-lane Moskovsky Prospect. In the background the huge Soviet-era "Memorial to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad at the Square of Victory". One car is on its roof, smashed. There is a DEAD BODY under a woollen blanket, in a pool of blood. From underneath a jacket we see the legs of a DEAD CHILD. A POLICEMAN is describing to camera how the accident happened.

21. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT. CORNER - DAY

The tent-like newspaper kiosk run by ALEXEI, 55, the haggard, unhealthy-looking man who sells newspapers, magazines, lottery tickets and porn mags here. Again and again the bald correspondent enters the shot.

The picture freezes. Valentin rewinds it. Then he freezes once more the image of Alexei in his newspaper kiosk.

22. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 CUTTING ROOM - MORNING

Close-up of Valentin's face. He is sitting in front of the monitor, entranced - hypnotised - by the footage from St. Petersburg.

SEQ2 PoA

23. INT. PARIS. BRASSERIE LIPP. BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAINE - DAY

Valentin and Nina have arranged to meet for lunch. It is still early, and the Brasserie is almost empty.

VALENTIN

Strange things are happening, Nina.
Crazy things, Nina, real crazy.
Yesterday I'm strolling along towards
the kitchen to make some coffee. And as
I come past cutting room 3 I happen to
see a report from Russia on the monitor. So I
stood there - and I saw someone I know. 16

Alexei, the newspaper seller.

NINA

Fine. What exactly freaks you out about that?

VALENTIN

I don't know any newspaper seller called Alexei. And I've never been to Russia.

NINA

Maybe you should take a holiday.

VALENTIN

How do I know the guy's name is Alexei? How do I know his wife is called Anzhela? And that she has leukaemia?

NINA

No idea, Valentin. We live in a media society, a society of images... and as for us: we're right in the middle of it. We make the images, we pick up pictures, we're like sponges, soaking everything up. That's our job.

VALENTIN

Maybe I'm crazy, Nina? Maybe I'm one of those people who suffer from split personalities, maybe I'm one of those freaks who completely flip one day and blow up a whole subway train and themselves with it?

You think I'm capable of blowing up a whole subway train?

WAITER

(pretending not to have heard the last sentence)

The... the chicken, Mesdames et Messieurs? A little beer for Madame? A mineral water for Monsieur Valentin? As usual?

Valentin is miles away. Nina nudges him.

NINA

Mineral water? You want mineral water?
(when the waiter has gone)

VALENTIN

Someone is out there, transmitting on my frequency.

NINA

What frequency? What are you drivelling

about?

VALENTIN

There's somebody out there transmitting things into my thoughts. Transmitting thoughts that end up in my head.

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and I've got a feeling about a certain city. There are scenes I dream again and again. And yesterday I found out that this city actually exists.

NINA

Maybe you should give the Fernet a rest today. They say there's something in it, in Fernet. Maybe you can't take it.

24. EXT. PARIS. STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST -
AFTERNOON

Valentin is standing in front of a red door decorated with Chinese ornaments and looking down at the clock on his mobile, which reads 16:59. He waits until the number changes to 17:00 and then presses the doorbell. Immediately the door is opened by a wrinkled Asian man in his late 50s. FARISHTAY KITFI ROST has a shaven head and is wearing a white doctor's coat.

KITFI ROST

Valentin! Lovely to see you! Come in!

25. INT. PARIS. STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST -
AFTERNOON

The room is bathed in subdued lights. Gentle Chinese music. Kitfi Rost places a large red cloth on the treatment table. Valentin takes off his shoes, socks, jacket and shirt and sits down.

Kitfi Rost now starts a miniature fountain, crosses to an altar-like installation and washes his hands with steaming towels. He pours a glass of yellow tea for Valentin.

KITFI ROST

(French with Tajik accent,
subtitled)

Tián Chéng. Today Tián Chéng.

Valentin lies down on his stomach. Kitfi Rost opens a varnished box containing coloured glass discs. Blue,

18

green, yellow, orange, red violet: discs in all the colours of the rainbow, each about the size of a thin slice of banana. Kitfi Rost now slowly places the coloured discs along Valentin's spine: first orange, then green, with the occasional red and blue as well.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

Something's happening these days, Kifti.
I can't put it into words. It's as
though somebody were here.

Kifti Rost holds a tuning fork against a red disc.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

I'm here.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

Not you, Kifti, someone else.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

You don't have enough red.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

Life is out of joint somehow. Maybe I
just have to do some things differently.
Change little things. Smoke different
cigarettes, or go somewhere I've never
been before. Wear different colours.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

Good idea. Maybe get a new apartment Or
a new woman.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

We just got a new apartment. In Marais!
You can't get any better than that.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

Then a new woman!

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

Why a new woman? I'm happy with Monique.

Kifti places a red disc on the back of Valentin's thigh. He holds the tuning fork against the disc.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

Fork of tuning say not enough red. Red
at this place means new woman.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

You're being unfair, Kifti: Monique is
completely OK. We have a new apartment,
and I'm in line for promotion.
Everything's OK.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

OK? What is OK? OK is not red.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

What's not OK about OK? OK is completely
OK - OK?

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

OK isn't good enough for woman.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

What could be better than OK?

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

Love.

Kifti crosses to a red Chinese cupboard, opens one
door and extracts a thin, yellowing book with Chinese
letters and a butterfly on the cover.

KIFTI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

Chuang Tzu, The Butterfly Dream,
Shanghai, 1934. This book is a rarity! I
only found it again myself just
recently. I want you to have it.

VALENTIN

(French, subtitled)

That... that's very nice of you. How
much do you want for it?

Valentin sits up, and the discs fall to the floor.

KIFTI ROST

(bad French, subtitled)

How much? It is present.

20

He reaches to the back of Valentin's leg and takes off a disc that has stuck there.

KITFI ROST

(bad French, subtitled;
surprised)

Discs always true. All discs fall to floor - except this one.

(he holds a red disc between his thumb and forefinger)

Red. Love.

26. EXT. PARIS. RUE DE SEINE - DAY

In the Rue de Seine, in the inner city quarter Saint Germain des Prés, there are expensive art galleries one after another. Valentin strolls along the narrow pavement, stopping now and then to look in the windows: African masks, Impressionists, Japanese ceramics, Pop Art, abstract wooden sculptures, oversized photographic portraits.

Valentin stops again. A large sign on the window of a small gallery proclaims "L'Envers du Miroir" (the Reverse of the Mirror). The door opens, and the GALLERY OWNER - 55, white hair, balding, gold-rimmed glasses, tweed suit - holds it open for TWO WORKMEN in blue overalls, both about 30, who are carrying a large package inside. It is as big as a man, wrapped in brown paper.

GALLERY OWNER

(French; to the men)

Put it over there at the back, on the left, with the others. Right there... bon.

27. INT. PARIS. RUE DE SEINE. GALLERY "L'ENVERS DU MIROIR" - DAY

The gallery is a long, white room, and three huge paintings are leaning against the wall. They are white with massive dark-red letters: a "P", an "O" and a "C".

Valentin has entered the gallery. He walks slowly towards the pictures, as if drawn to them by magic.

GALLERY OWNER

(to Valentin, French, subtitled)

POC. Is it POC? That's how they came in. Or is it COP. COP? POC, CPO? What do you think,

21

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

Monsieur. We don't know the correct sequence. The pictures are from an anonymous artist, a woman.

The delivery men are waiting. One of them has a clipboard. The Gallery Owner signs for the delivery and hands them 2 €20 notes with a nod. The men leave.

Valentin is standing in front of the huge canvasses as if rooted to the spot. Each of them has a huge red letter on white background, lined up at the moment in the order P, O, C.

VALENTIN
(French, subtitled)
There's another C.

GALLERY OWNER
(French, subtitled)
How do you know that?

The Gallery Owner unwraps the picture that has just been delivered. He tears away the paper and then the bubble-wrap... and reveals a picture with a huge C.

Valentin gently strokes the red of the picture.

28. INT. PARIS. VALENTIN'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Valentin is sitting at the kitchen table, engrossed in the book.

KIFTI ROST
(Off, whispers)
... One day Chuang Tzu dreamt he was a butterfly, a fluttering butterfly who felt well and happy and knew nothing of the existence of Chuang Tzu. Suddenly he woke up and found he was once again Chuang Tzu.

As Valentin reads he doesn't notice a butterfly that flies across the window, rests briefly on a bowl of fruit and then flies off. The camera follows the butterfly out through the window...

KIFTI ROST (cont'd)
(Off, whispers)
Now I do not know whether Chuang Tzu dreamt he was a butterfly of the butterfly dreamt he was Chuang Tzu...

CUT TO:

29. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. TAXI/NEVSKY PROSPECT. CORNER -
EVENING

The fluttering butterfly. A GROUP OF STREET KIDS,
none older than 10, are surrounding a YOUNG CANADIAN
TOURIST WITH RUCKSACK, begging for money.

CANADIAN

(Canadian French, subtitled,
desperate)

No, no, you guys, I hate this! Me no
have dollars, panimai?

In a taxi waiting nearby: a bored taxi-driver, 38,
slim, athletic, black leather jacket, roll-neck
pullover: we shall later know him as ROTOR. Rotor has
stopped his taxi on Nevsky Prospect. A Russian call
show is on the radio.

30. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT. CORNER - NIGHT

A young woman, ANASTASIJA, 26, slim, long blonde
hair, a dark dress, is standing at the newspaper
kiosk and talking to the vendor: it is ALEXEI. The
same haggard, sick man Valentin discovered on the
video cassette in the cutting room.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

How are you? How is Anzhela?

ROTOR

(Russian, subtitled; calls from
the taxi)

Say hello from me!

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

Rotor says hello.

Alexei gives Anastasija a newspaper.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)

(Russian, subtitled; to the
street kids)

Be quiet, you brats, I can't hear myself
think.

ALEXEI

(Russian, subtitled)

How's Anzhela... What can I tell you?
Bad, the medicine... it goes in one end
and out the other, she's getting thinner
and thinner, my Anzelka. How many more
weeks do we have left?

Anastasija hands Alexei a bundle of money.

In the background the Canadian has produced his wallet and gives each of the kids a dollar. Two boys run off round the corner.

ALEXEI (cont'd)
You're an angel.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Oh, you know, angel... I don't believe in angels. I might believe in Marx, but certainly not in angels...

CUT TO:

31. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. DOORWAY ON PUSKINKSKAJA -
EVENING

Three of the CHILD THIEVES are standing in a doorway: one with a SQUINT, one with FAIR HAIR and one with a RUNNY NOSE. They are proudly examining their spoils: a small but expensive shiny silver digital camera. Suddenly Anastasija is standing next to them.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
What's that? A camera? Did you take it from that Canadian idiot?

She slaps the largest boy, the one with FAIR HAIR, on the side of the head and takes the camera from the boy with the SQUINT.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)
God oh God, what a gang of miserable brats you are. You need a computer for these things. And the right software. Did you steal that too? No. Can you use a computer? No. The most you can do is fart around with the Playstation in Gostiny Dvor. What's going to happen to this thing? I'll tell you: it's going to end up in the Fontanka.

Nobody would give you a hundred measly rubles for it without the right cables, not even the idiots in the Udelnaya, not even them. I should pull your ears off. And apart from that: you little clowns don't have enough respect for pictures.

Cameras capture picture - you got that? The pictures people have of the world. And you don't steal pictures. Understand?

24

Pictures are sacred.

And anyway: the idiot tourists always take photographs of themselves. You could have a picture of you there, with the wallet you stole in your hot sticky hands. There's no better evidence for the cops than a tourist's camera.

Anastasija presses something on the digital camera and shows the boys the picture on the monitor: a snap of the Canadian.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)

God oh God oh God, you little fools have got a lot to learn! Rule number one: what you're allowed to steal is everything that doesn't have a face.

What have we learnt today? Passports have a face. Steal? Nyet. Cameras have a face. Steal? Nyet. Money? Money you can steal. Money has a face, true, but it's always the same face.

Go out the back way. Through the courtyard. I'll take this back to the idiot you just robbed. Which one of you is the boss?

BOY WITH SQUINT

(Russian, subtitled; pointing to the boy with fair hair)

Vanya.

Anastasija reaches behind the boy's ear and produces three €100 notes by magic. She hands him the money.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

That's €300. Buy some shoes. Real good ones, Adidas or Nikes. Running shoes, not hip-hop rubbish. Running shoes. With profiles on the soles. Shoes you can run in.

Anastasija pockets the camera and vanishes.

BOY WITH SQUINT

(Russian, subtitled)

Christ. 300 euros!

(gaping at the €100 notes)

The boy with fair hair peers after Anastasija through the open door.

BOY WITH FAIR HAIR

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film

Version 3.09e

(Russian, subtitled)
That was Anastasija!

BOY WITH SQUINT
(Russian, subtitled)
Which Anastasija?

BOY WITH FAIR HAIR
(Russian, subtitled)
Anastasija, you idiot: don't you know about Anastasija? Man, she's the best. The best thief in the whole of Russia. Nobody's as fast as Anastasija, nobody moves so smart. Nobody can act half as fast as Anastasija. Nobody knows more tricks than her. She grew up in the circus. My cousin told me. And was told by Fargas. Fargas with the six fingers.

The boy with fair hair rings a bicycle bell.

32. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT / BEDROOM - EVENING

Valentin wakes with a start from his afternoon sleep. The yellowing book is still in his hands. Someone is knocking wildly at the door.

33. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT - EVENING

Valentin opens the door. Monique is standing outside with a large paper bag from which three baguettes are protruding.

MONIQUE
Why did you lock the door? What's the idea?

VALENTIN
I didn't lock the door. I fell asleep.

Monique carries the shopping into the kitchen.

MONIQUE
(from the kitchen)
I was starting to think something had happened to you.

VALENTIN
What could happen to me?

MONIQUE
(from the kitchen)
No idea. Maybe you jumped out of the window.

VALENTIN
(confused, still sleepy)
Why should I jump out of the window?

MONIQUE
I don't know - you never do know with
suicides. I just suddenly felt scared.

VALENTIN
That I would jump out of the window?

MONIQUE
I don't know... Yes.

Monique appears in the door in an apron, holding a
knife.

MONIQUE (cont'd)
Can you chop the onions?
(handing him the knife)

VALENTIN
How much time do we have?

34. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT - EVENING

The empty apartment now has some furniture in it, and
though it is furnished in spartan style, it looks
much more comfortable. Valentin is sitting with Chris
and Dirk on comfortable chairs: lounge music and soft
lights. Monique is standing behind the kitchen
counter, chopping lollo rosso.

The doorbell rings. Valentin gets up and opens the
door.

Nina is standing there in a tight Chinese dress from
the 1950s.

VALENTIN
(whispers)
Did you bring the wine?

Nina holds up two bottles of wine she has wedged
between the fingers of her left hand. With her right
hand she flourishes a well-thumbed Noam Chomsky
paperback.

NINA
Your Chomsky.

The door closes behind Nina.

Back at the comfortable chairs Valentin puts down the
bottles of wine, and Nina takes a seat. Valentin
stares at the blank wall opposite. A large framed

27

picture of a huge eye. Gigantic. Red. Valentin stares at it as if hypnotised.

DIRK

Sloterdijk.

CHRIS

Thingy. Derrida.

DIRK

Marcello Mastroianni.

CHRIS

Yves Montand. No... er... what's his name... er... Jean-Louis Trintignant... Jean-Louis Trintignant.

DIRK

Jean-Louis Trintignant. Yep. Wong Kar-wai.

MONIQUE

Park Chan-wook.

Valentin turns round. The eye in a picture frame is transformed into a photograph which reveals the distant silhouette of an eye.

NINA

Can anyone join in?

CHRIS

Sure. Say something.

NINA

What?

CHRIS

Anything.

NINA

Sony.

CHRIS

(accusatory)
Nina! Sony.

NINA

Sony.

DIRK

Man. Panasonic.

CHRIS

Fnac.

MONIQUE

28

Amazon.

(to Valentin)

What about you? Are you sulking or are you going to play?

VALENTIN

Er. Saint-Germain des Pres.

NINA

Saint Pölten.

CHRIS

Saint Pölten?

NINA

Saint Pölten.

CHRIS

Elfriede Jelinek.

NINA

Marlene Streeruwitz.

CHRIS

You think?

DIRK

Well, if Saint Pölten is all right with Saint-Germain des Pres, then Streerowitz must be all right with Jelinek.

CHRIS

That's completely different.

MONIQUE

(mixing the lollo rosso salad)

Now what? I thought we were saying the good one first and then the bad one.

CHRIS

Who said that?

MONIQUE

That's what I thought.

(to Valentin)

Valentin, have you opened the Barolo yet?

DIRK

Shiraz. Barolo is only for parolos.
(liking his own joke)

Valentin uncorks the Shiraz.

A little later: the five of them are at the table, eating paprika chicken.

DIRK

I went to see this Indian guy. Two metres tall, a turban and he was wearing an apron like Ghandi. And he must weigh 150 kilos.

CHRIS

Now you're exaggerating.

DIRK

150, he said so himself.
(imitating an Indian accent)
Tree hundred bounds. Anyway, you lie down on the floor, on a cotton mat - a sort of Indian Futon.

Valentin finds something in his mouth. He licks the food off it in his mouth and then slips it out on to a spoon. It's a key. A solitary key. Brass in colour, like a key to an apartment. Valentin looks round to check whether anyone has noticed this curious discovery. He slips the key into a napkin as if it were a piece of chicken bone.

DIRK (cont'd)

He holds on to a rope and walks up and down your back. It creaks and cracks, and you think you're going to die.

Valentin cautiously opens the napkin: the key is still there. Valentin studies the others around the table. One by one. Nobody has noticed what he has found. Now Valentin gets to his feet, clutching the napkin with the key in his left hand.

35. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Valentin is standing in front of the mirror. He washes the key, dries it, turns on the shaving light and peers at it closely. Then he takes a deep breath. There is writing on the key - in Cyrillic letters.

NINA

(from the living room)

Valentin, that cameraman in Barcelona that time, what was his name? The one with the artificial hip?

Valentin slips the key into his wallet and walks out of the bathroom.

We now see only the mirror. It is empty - as though something were missing.

PPI SEQ 3

30

36. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT - WHITE NIGHT

The sombre apartment is full of canvasses, boxes, cartons and easels, illuminated by a single bulb. Anastasiya is wearing a white dressing gown over her slip. The dressing gown is open and covered with red spots. Anastasiya puts down a small metal container and lights a cigarette.

She makes her way past canvases, some blank and others painted, past the piles of boxes containing video recorders, cigarette cartons, Playstations and mobile phones, and she enters the kitchen, where she turns on the light.

She reaches for a lighter and lights two candles standing on a plank of wood against the wall with some flowers; the arrangement looks like a small altar. There is a picture of a young man on a snow-covered mountain peak. His skin is tanned, his lips are covered with white cream and nevertheless blistered, and his anti-glare sunglasses are pushed up on to his forehead. The picture seems to have been cut out of a glossy magazine. The caption reads:

Mount Communism, 7495m.

A date has been added by hand: 27. 6. 1989.

CUT TO:

37. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Exhausted, Anastasiya fills a kettle with water, lights the gas stove with her cigarette and puts the kettle on the stove.

A cat slides along her legs, its tail held upright.

Anastasiya sits down - but we still can't see her face. She sits there motionless, staring ahead, lost in thought. There is a rubber strip around her left arm and a cannula inside her elbow, of the sort used when someone gives blood. Anastasiya now opens the sterile packing around a blood bag, attaches it to the cannula and opens the valve on the cannula: the bag starts filling with blood. Now a police siren can be heard outside. Anastasiya reaches into her coat pocket, takes out her mobile and presses a few keys.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, into mobile)

Rotor? Hello, it's me, Anastasiya; can you drive me tomorrow?

31

Yes, I'm home. Why shouldn't I be here?
It's only half past one; I don't go to
bed at this time. I work.

Enough of that.

CUT TO:

38. EXT. PARIS. STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST -
AFTERNOON

Valentin stands outside Kitfi Rost's door and is
about to press the bell but then hesitates briefly.
He takes the Russian key out of his pocket and tries
it in the lock. It doesn't fit. Suddenly the door
opens.

KITFI ROST

Valentin! Lovely to see you! Come in!

39. EXT. PARIS. STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST -
AFTERNOON

Valentin is lying on the couch. Kitfi Rost is placing
coloured discs on his back.

VALENTIN

I didn't ring the bell today, Kifti. I
just acted as though I had rung the bell
- and you opened the door. I mean, I did
everything exactly the way I usually do,
but with one small difference: I didn't
ring the bell. But you still knew I was
there, and you opened the door. How? How
did you know I was there?

KITFI ROST

I thought you were about to ring. And I
opened the door. And there you were.

VALENTIN

That's not normal!

KITFI ROST

It's completely normal. But you're
right. What is normal, anyway? How are
you today?

VALENTIN

Nothing is normal, and you ask me how I
am. How am I? God, Kifti... I'm afraid
I'm crazy. Crazy things are happening,
Kifti.

KITFI ROST

Kitfi.

VALENTIN

Kitfi? I thought it was Kifti.

KITFI ROST

Kitfi. My name's Kitfi. Kitfi Rost. Farishtay Kitfi Rost. You've been coming here for two years. For two years you've been getting it wrong. Kit Fi. Kit Fi. Rost.

VALENTIN

I see. Kitfi. Crazy things, Kifti. Kitfi. It's not funny.

KITFI ROST

Not funny.

VALENTIN

And then I keep on seeing this eye.

KITFI ROST

An eye?

VALENTIN

A red eye.

KITFI ROST

What does it look like?

VALENTIN

What.. how... what does it look like? It's an eye, a completely normal red eye.

KITFI ROST

What does the red eye remind you of?

VALENTIN

I don't know. It doesn't remind me of anything. It's just there. It's always the same. Always there.

KITFI ROST

Always there. I see. We'll leave it there for the moment.

VALENTIN

Our dreams, Kifti... It must be possible to record them somehow, like we do with television; have a recorder running at the

33

same time, and then stop it where we don't know what's happening.

KITFI ROST

You can. You can learn lucid dreaming.

VALENTIN

Lucifer's dreaming?

KITFI ROST

Lucid dreaming.

VALENTIN

How does it work?

KITFI ROST

Lucid dreaming is a question of individual talent. It works like this: you ask yourself, whenever you want, no matter where you are, one single question:

Am I dreaming or am I awake?

VALENTIN

Am I dreaming or am I awake?

KITFI ROST

Am I dreaming or am I awake.

40. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSP. OUTSIDE BAKERY - DAY

Anastasija comes out of a biscuit shop with a large white Chanel bag under her arm. She is wearing an elegant Chanel outfit. Her hair is pushed up by a pair of expensive sunglasses. She has a simple pearl necklace around her shapely neck. Anastasija strolls slowly along Nevsky Prospect. She walks at a slower pace than the others: she is constantly overtaken by PASSERS-BY. It is as though Anastasija is waiting for something.

41. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT - DAY

Rotor is sitting in his taxi, listening to a cassette of a classic boxing match.

An expensive black Audi with tinted windows pulls up at the curb. A nouveau riche Russian couple get out: a pretty GEORGIAN GIRL, slim as a model, in an expensive Italian outfit, and her husband. He is somewhat older, 35, a tough and sinister looking GEORGIAN MAN in an elegant dark designer suit. He leans down to the driver's window and addresses the

34

MAN IN A TRACKSUIT who is driving, his voice thin:

GEORGIAN MAN

(in Georgian, subtitled)

Park somewhere. Somewhere round the corner. If you can't find a parking place, drive round in circles. I'll call you from my mobile when we've finished shopping. Is your mobile working again? Hey, I'm talking to you! Is the fucking thing working?!

MAN IN TRACKSUIT

(in Georgian, subtitled)

It's working.

The Georgian Man and the young woman join the people strolling along the street. Anastasiya speeds up and follows them, staying a few metres behind.

Anastasiya watches the Georgian Man closely from behind. She looks at his hands, the right first and then the left. Then the Georgian Man toys with the fingers of his right hand and scratches his groin.

ANASTASIYA

(to herself; Russian, subtitled)

Right handed.

42. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. OUTSIDE SNEAKERS SHOP - DAY

The Georgian Girl stops at a shop and pulls her husband closer. Anastasiya stops at the next window and gazes at the display there. She bites a biscuit.

YOUNG GEORGIAN GIRL

(Georgian, subtitled)

I don't believe it! Those are the Uma Thurman sneakers! Bagrat! They've got the Uma Thurman Kill Bill sneakers! The original Asics Onitsuka Tiger Tai Chi trainers! That's incredible!

She points at a pair of bright yellow sneakers.

43. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. IN SNEAKERS SHOP - DAY

The Georgian Girl is posing in front of a mirror in the yellow sneakers from the window, a salesgirl dutifully admiring her. Her husband is standing near the window, hand behind his back, gazing out with a bored expression.

The Georgian Girl makes a few Kung Fu movements in the ³⁵

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

mirror. She kicks her foot in the yellow sneaker out in front of her, at chest height.

YOUNG GEORGIAN GIRL

Kill.

(breathing in a loud hiss)

Bill.

Anastasija enters the shop, wearing her sunglasses. She bites the corner off a biscuit.

The Georgian Girl is dancing on the spot in front of the mirror proudly, a little out of breath.

YOUNG GEORGIAN GIRL

(cont'd)

Zapp...

Zarapp.

(to salesgirl, Russian,
subtitled)

I'll take five pairs.

SALESGIRL

(Russian, subtitled)

Sorry, but we can only sell one pair to each customer.

YOUNG GEORGIAN GIRL

(to her husband)

Bagrat! Botso!

The Georgian Man turns - and bumps into Anastasija. She crumples the biscuit in her hand, and the man's black jacket is now covered in crumbs.

GEORGIAN MAN

Bodishi!

(sorry)

Anastasija brushes the crumbs off the front of his jacket with her hand. First the front, then on his shoulder. The Georgian Man glances at his shoulder - and Anastasija slips her thin, bare arm inside his jacket and fishes out his wallet without him noticing anything at all.

Anastasija brushes off another crumb or two and then turns round and walks out.

The Georgian Man is standing at the cash desk with his wife. Five boxes of Asics Onitsuka Tiger Tai Chi trainers on the counter in front of them. When it is time to pay he reaches for his wallet.

GEORGIAN MAN

(to his wife)

My money? Do you have my money?

36

(reaching for his mobile)
No! No! Not again!

44. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. BACK YARD CAFÉ - DAY

Anastasija is standing at the bar of a cheap backyard café. She opens the mobile, takes out the battery and then uses her fingernail to fish out the little white SIM card from its slot. She flicks the SIM card towards the toilet door with her forefinger. The SIM card lands in a small toilet bucket. The waiter emerges from the kitchen, and Anastasija orders a vodka.

ANASTASIJA
(in Russian)
A hundred grams of Standard.

Anastasija is wearing thin leather gloves. She opens the Georgian Man's wallet, takes out a thick wad of money and a credit card, and then throws the wallet into the waste bin behind the bar with a skilful flick.

On the credit card it says:

Hamlet Gonashvili.

ANASTASIJA
Hamlet Gonashvili.
Hamlet. Yep.

Anastasija keys a number into her own phone.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)
(into mobile, Russian,
subtitled)
Yes, it's me. MasterCard. Hamlet
Gonashvili. Georgian. International
Moscow Bank. 5490 1004 5118 9643. Valid
until 07 07. We have a time slot of two
minutes, maximum three. I want us to do
it in one go. Get out as much as
possible. A realistic scenario:
portfolio upgrading, transfer fees,
something like that.

You'll get the signature in a few
seconds. He's in a shoe shop on Nevsky
Prospect. The way he looks, he'll block
the card as soon as he's solved his
other problem.

....five boxes of Asics Onitsuka Tiger
Tai Chi trainers. Right, the Uma Thurman
ones.

37

45. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. BACK YARD CAFÉ - DAY

Anastasija wedges a small frame against her Sony Ericsson mobile, slips the credit card inside and takes a picture of it. On the display of the mobile the signature on the credit card can be seen clearly. Anastasija keys in a few numbers, and the mobile makes a sound like that of a paper aeroplane flying away.

46. INT. PARIS. CANTEEN IN CHANNEL 8 - DAY

Valentin is carrying a tray of food through the packed canteen.

VALENTIN

(to himself)

My name is Valentin Soracanins. I am a TV correspondent. This is the canteen of the station "Channel 8".

(he stops)

I am now going to let go of this tray. If I am dreaming it won't fall. It will do what I want. If I am dreaming, the tray will float in mid-air.

My name is Valentin Soracanins and I am now going to let go of this... tray.

Valentin lets go of the tray. It crashes to the floor. Everyone falls silent and looks over at Valentin.

47. EXT. PARIS. AVE. DE LA GRANDE ARMÉE - DAY

Valentin is standing on the left pavement of the avenue, with the Place De Gaulle and the Arc de Triomphe behind him. Valentin clears his throat, coughs a little and then starts his report. He is accompanied by his usual small team: Nina, the Slovakian camerawoman and Lars, the taciturn sound man. They are ready.

VALENTIN

My name is Valentin Soracanins. I am reporting from Paris in autumn for Channel 8. If this is a dream, I shall now rise up into the air in front of your eyes...

Lars takes his headphones off. Nina looks up with a

38

sigh, murmurs something in Slovakian and turns off the camera.

NINA
Everything OK with you? You need a break? Shall we write some cue cards for you? - Let's take five.

Nina lights a cigarette. Lars sways from one foot to the other.

48. INT. PARIS. AVE. MAC MAHON - BRASSERIE "BEER STATION" - DAY

Valentin is standing nervously at the long bar.

VALENTIN
(in Russian)
A hundred grams of Standard please, and make it snappy!

BARMAN
(French)
Excuse me, Monsieur, what was that?

VALENTIN
Er... an espresso... er... and a pack of Gauloises.

What day is it today?

BARMAN
Tuesday.

VALENTIN
And which city is this?

BARMAN
Paris.

VALENTIN
(conspiratorially)
You sure?

BARMAN
I'm quite sure.

VALENTIN
And yesterday?

BARMAN
Monday. Still Paris. It's always Paris here, Monsieur, and has been for as long as I can remember.

VALENTIN
Channel 8
@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

Strange things are happening.

BARMAN

You're telling me. Yesterday a Polish guy came in. 'Yuma' he said his name was, told me 'Cupcake' sent him. 'Cupcake?' I ask him - we don't have any 'Cupcake' here. Then he takes out a fish this long...

(holding his hands over a metre apart)

Wanted €20 for the fish. I ask you, what would we want with a fish like that - almost as big as our kitchen!

Valentin lights a cigarette. Nina appears in the door of the little bar.

NINA

Everything OK with you? Shall we carry on? We're ready, we can shoot now. We'll do the bit at the Trocadero. There aren't any cars there. OK?

VALENTIN

Yeah, yeah, that's fine, everything's OK, everything's OK Nina.

(he stubs out the half-smoked cigarette nervously and places three €2 coins on the bar)

49. EXT. PARIS. TROCADERO - DAY

Long shot of the afternoon tourist crowd at the Trocadero, the observation terrace with a panoramic view of the Eiffel Tower. Valentin is standing there, lit by two small spots, with a Channel 8 mike in his hand. He is on the terrace, the Eiffel Tower in the background. Nina is holding her camera, Lars has his headphones on and a recorder slung over his shoulder. Valentin is talking to camera, though all we hear is the Paris afternoon traffic.

50. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. STALINIST HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Long shot of the Stalinist concrete housing blocks lining Moskovsky Prospect, one of the long, four-lane highways in St. Petersburg.

51. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. STALINIST HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

An elderly woman, 58, who we shall later meet as the DOLPHIN WOMAN in the Majolika Room of the Hermitage, is lying on her bed settee. She has fallen asleep

40

while reading the newspaper. A tapestry on the wall over her head shows two leaping dolphins.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Mamutschka. Wake up, Mamutschka, it's
me, Anastasija.

Anastasija sits on the edge of the bed. She stuffs a wad of money into a drawer in the small table next to the sofa.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Buy yourself something nice, Mamutschka.

She strokes the sleeping woman's head tenderly. Now the woman wakes up.

DOLPHIN WOMAN
(confused; Russian, subtitled)
Was I asleep? Nastja, my Nastja. Was I
asleep?

FADE TO BLACK.

52. EXT. PARIS. 18E. BAR CAFÉ LE NEMROD - EVENING

The depressing neon atmosphere in a bar in the African quarter. Valentin is holding a pastis tightly. He is uneasy, and his nostrils are trembling slightly.

Valentin places some money on the aluminium bar.

VALENTIN
(to barman)
Salut, Mahmud.

Valentin walks out of the bar.

53. INT. PARIS. CHANNEL 8 CUTTING ROOM - NIGHT

Valentin is back in Cutting Room 3, a pile of videos at his side. The monitor shows footage from Russia. Valentin is fast forwarding the pictures.

The cassette come to an end. Valentin ejects it and shoves the next in. Fast forward again. Suddenly Valentin stops the tape. A street scene: Alexei's newspaper kiosk, from a different angle than the footage we have seen previously. Pedestrians flash across the picture, while Alexei sells his magazines.

Valentin rewinds slowly, plays the tape slowly. Then

41

he stops and rewinds frame by frame. Valentin's nostrils are trembling. He steps the tape and moves one frame forwards.

He enlarges the picture and goes back over the same frame again: for a fraction of a second a face can be glimpsed between two passers-by.

Valentin enlarges the frame again: ANASTASIJA'S face!

Valentin presses a key, and a sheet of paper purrs out of the printer, a fuzzy picture of a face.

Anastasija.

SEQ 4

54. INT. PARIS. BRASSERIE LIPP. BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAINE
- DAY

The Brasserie Lipp. François Mitterrand's favourite bar, meeting place of the left-wing intelligentsia and the saturated old-68ers. Valentin and Nina are meeting for lunch again.

Nina is gazing at the expression on ANASTASIJA'S face.

NINA

Why her in particular? Why not the fat one? Or the one with a hat? It could be anyone, apart from the fact that it probably isn't anyone, because what you're actually doing is persuading yourself of all this rubbish. Valentin, I'm getting worried.

VALENTIN

It's her. She's the transmitter. I can feel it. It's like déjà-vu, Nina. For some reason I have tuned in to this transmitter.

NINA

God, Valentin, you've been reading too much esoteric psycho-babble. I don't like this one little bit.
(she hands the picture back to Valentin)

WAITER

Magret de Canard au vin de Péche, Mesdames et Messieurs. I can really recommend it. Or Andouillettes Grillées. A

42

little beer for Mademoiselle Nina and a mineral water for Monsieur Valentin? As usual?

VALENTIN
Do you have borscht?

WAITER
Borscht?

VALENTIN
Borscht.

NINA
We'll have the Andouillettes. And two small beers.

VALENTIN
They must have borscht.

NINA
You've been reading too much psycho-babble.
(she lights a cigarillo)
Maybe you should get some therapy.

VALENTIN
What I'm doing IS therapy. Lucid dreaming.

NINA
What sort of bullshit is that? Valentin, Valentin, you're getting involved in something real bad here. Sounds like brain-washing.

VALENTIN
Somebody is in my dreams. Somebody who exists.

It's all very real. I dream film footage from the life of a real woman.

55. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. TAXI OUTSIDE ART GALLERY -
WHITE NIGHT'S EVENING

Anastasiya is sitting with Rotor, the boxer, in his taxi..

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
You don't have to wait, Rotor: what could go wrong?

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
I don't have a good feeling.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Rotor, you drive to that damn hospital
right now and get an x-ray. Maybe it's
just a cherry tart went down the wrong
way, who knows... but perhaps you broke
a rib.

And I'm going in there. It's not the
first time I've done it. You know I
won't swipe anything unless everything's
completely all right.

ROTOR
(starts the engine; Russian,
subtitled)
I don't have a good feeling about this,
Nastja.

Anastasija kisses Rotor on the cheek, gets out and
slams the door behind her.

56. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ART GALLERY - WHITE NIGHT'S
EVENING

This central art gallery deals in modern art. The
people here tonight are artists, students, badly-
dressed journalists, nouveau riche Russians and their
girlfriends, mostly very young and thin. Lots of
smoke and hot air.

The two stars of the evening, OLEG MASLOV & VIKTOR
KOUZNETSOV, are St. Petersburg painters in their mid-
30s, both in black jackets and grey roll-neck
pullovers. Cameras flash, poses, murmuring. They are
standing in front of a collection of imposing neo-
realistic works that show naked young men against
azure blue skies, leaning on the angular rocks of a
Black Sea bathing resort.

Anastasija is among the guests, in her Chanel outfit.
Round her neck she has a chain of large red-orange
coral pearls. The belt of a "Freitag" bag is
stretched across her breasts, cut from red truck
canvas with the letters E, Y, and E pasted on it.

Anastasija strolls along, bored, among the many
guests here, eating a biscuit.

At the buffet the hand of a New Russian reaches for a
hors d'oeuvre. This is a MAN IN A RED SUIT, 45, a
sticky character with a thick gold Rolex strapped to

44

his muscular wrist.

The gallery owner hosting this event, a FINELY-CHISELLED MAN, 55, with grey-white hair in Einstein style, claps his hands for attention. Maslov and Kouznetsov stand on his left and right, bored - or at least trying hard not to seem excited. An audience has gathered around the gallery owner, the music and the chattering stop, and he starts his speech.

At the door of the gallery a stocky SECURITY MAN, 28, with very short hair, hears a crackle on his radio.

SECURITY MAN

(Russian, subtitled)

I've already seen him. What else you got? Come in.

(crackle)

Is Uma Thurman playing? Come in.

(crackle)

That's the other one - oh, you know. The one you're talking about is called... damn, it's on the tip of my tongue... Something with an R. Or a U.

(crackle)

No. God, it's on the tip of my tongue...

Back inside Anastasiya and the Man in a Red Suit are crouched on the floor; he is helping her pick up the pearls that have fallen from her necklace. Anastasiya quickly slips his watch into her bag and then looks at her own watch.

ANASTASIYA

(Russian, subtitled)

Oh God, I have to go... my little boy is all by himself... Thanks very much.

She gets up and vanishes into the crowd.

ANASTASIYA (cont'd)

(to herself; Russian, subtitled)

Damn, damn! Mistake.

Close-up: ANASTASIYA'S face, worried.

57. EXT.ST. PETERSBURG. OUTSIDE GALLERY - WHITE NIGHT

Anastasiya emerges from the gallery with a smile for the Security Man. Suddenly a hand in a red sleeve reaches for her slim arm and spins her round.

MAN IN RED SUIT

(Russian, subtitled)

You have my watch.

45

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
What watch? What do you want? You're hurting me.

MAN IN RED SUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
My watch.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Your watch.

MAN IN RED SUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
My watch. Exactly. A big fat Rolex Daytona. 14 carat. Gold.

Anastasija indicates to the man that he should lean forward so she can whisper to him.

ANASTASIJA
(whispers, Russian, subtitled)
I don't have your watch.

MAN IN RED SUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
What did you say?

ANASTASIJA
(screams; Russian, subtitled)
I don't have your watch!

For a split second the Man in the Red Suit is startled. Anastasija slips her arm out of his grip and takes to her heels.

MAN IN RED SUIT
(to Security Man; Russian, subtitled)
What are you looking at, you idiot!?!
Get my watch back!

The Security Man races after Anastasija.

A chase along Nevsky Prospect, through back yards, over car roofs.

58. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. BANK OF FONTANKA - WHITE NIGHT

Anastasija comes to a standstill, breathless: the Security Man has caught up with her and forces her against a wall on the banks of the Fontanka River.

He twists her arm behind her back. Anastasija freezes, looking like a fragile gazelle at the mercy of a ⁴⁶

tiger.

SECURITY MAN

(into his radio; Russian,
subtitled)

I got the magpie, Slava... At the
Fontanka... round the corner from the
Singer building... come in.

(crackle from the radio)

The Singer building, you idiot, the one
with the bookshop. Come in.

(long crackle)

No. Not that one. It's where there used
to be a shoe shop next door. Come in.

(crackle)

That's somewhere else. Forget it, Slava.
I got her anyway. Come in.

(crackle again)

A watch. Yes.

(crackle)

Yes. A watch.

(another crackle)

A watch. Yes. Understood.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

You're dead, you jerk, if you lay a hand
on me.

SECURITY MAN

(into radio; Russian,
subtitled)

I'll carry on here. Over.

(crackle)

I said Over.

(crackle)

Over.

(to Anastasiya)

We'll soon see who's dead, Princess.

The Security Man empties ANASTASIJA'S bag and kicks
the contents around on the floor to check if the
watch is there.

SECURITY MAN (cont'd)

(feeling ANASTASIJA'S whole
body)

Where's the watch?

The Security Man pats down her body again, pulls off
her jacket, shakes a bunch of keys and a mobile phone
out of the pockets and tosses them away.

47

SECURITY MAN (cont'd)
You put the watch somewhere, didn't you?
Where's the watch, you slut?

59. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The light is turned on. Valentin tosses a gold watch on to the table as if it were hot, red hot. The curious object from another world lies on the bare kitchen table. Valentin's nostrils are flared, trembling. He is breathing heavily, with an effort.

60. EXT. PARIS. OUTSIDE STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST
- NIGHT

Valentin is standing at Kitfi Rost's door. He rings the bell. Then again. Then a third time. He waits a little. A fourth time. A light comes on. There is a slight noise. Kitfi Rost opens the door, still tying his dressing gown.

KITFI ROST
Valentin? What are you doing here? It's the middle of the night! It's...
(glancing at the clock in the hall)
Three twenty.

VALENTIN
I know. Can I talk to you?

KITFI ROST
Valentin, that's impossible. It's night.

A Thai child-wife in a dressing gown emerges into the hall from another room, looking sleepy.

THAI CHILD WIFE
(Thai, subtitled)
Kitfi, what's going on? Who are you talking to?

KITFI ROST
(to her; Thai, subtitled)
What are you doing here? Go back to bed! I'm talking to a customer!

VALENTIN
I have to talk to you, we have to talk.

KITFI ROST
Go home, go back to bed, make yourself something to eat, listen to some music, read a book, do something - but please go away.

VALENTIN

I was there again.

KITFI ROST

It was a dream, Valentin, a dream.
Whatever it was, it was a dream. We'll
talk tomorrow. Yes? Come tomorrow. You
can be completely calm. Nothing is going
to happen to you. We'll talk tomorrow.
Yes? Tomorrow. Good night, Valentin,
good night.

(he closes the door)

Valentin knocks hesitantly on the door. Kitfi Rost
opens it.

VALENTIN

What time tomorrow?

KITFI ROST

(in despair)

At, at... nine.

He closes the door again. Darkness envelops Valentin.

CUT TO:

61. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. TAXI/LONG PROSPECT - WHITE
NIGHT

Rotor is driving his taxi at high speed. He is worked
up, hooting and cursing. Anastasiya, looking
dishevelled, is in the passenger seat. She is also
tense. Her nostrils are trembling. They are driving
aimlessly through St. Petersburg, distraught.

ROTOR

(Russian, subtitled)

That fat pig. Swear he didn't touch you.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

He didn't touch me - not what you think.

ROTOR

(Russian, subtitled)

I'll go back and blow him away.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

Forget it. You already half killed him.

ROTOR

(Russian, subtitled)

Swear you're OK.

49

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
I have a headache, you're driving like a
maniac.

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
The fat pig.

CUT TO:

62. EXT. PARIS. CANAL SAINT MARTIN - DAWN

The Canal Saint Martin in Paris. The streets all
around are deserted. Some distant street noise can be
heard, along with birds singing. Valentin is sitting
alone on a bench at the walkway beside the canal.

CUT TO:

63. INT. PARIS. STUDIO OF TAJIK COLOUR THERAPIST - DAY

Valentin is lying on the couch, on a red cloth with a
bright blue spiral design, in a beam of light. Kitfi
Rost is standing at his side, concentrating on a
small box he is holding. It has a dial, and a thick
cable goes from the box to a curious piece of medical
equipment.

VALENTIN
Deep blue sky. Young men. They are
leaning against rocks. By the sea. A
broad sea. Then there were red balls
rolling across the floor. A lot of
people in a white room. And a man in a
red suit. He holds me by the wrist,
tight. I scream.

KITFI ROST
Did you know you were dreaming?

VALENTIN
No. It was all very real. Very real.
Especially the part with the watch.

KITFI ROST
A watch?

VALENTIN
A gold watch. I have it here.

KITFI ROST

50

What do you mean, you have it here?

Valentin gets up and fetches the Rolex from his jacket pocket.

VALENTIN

Here. This is the watch from my dream.

KITFI ROST

(Valentin hands him the heavy gold watch)

Heavy. This is the watch you dreamt about? Is it your watch? A fine watch.
(he hands it back to Valentin)

VALENTIN

You don't understand, Kifti. This isn't the watch I dreamt about; this is the watch I got FROM the dream.

I had it in my hand when I woke up. This watch. It isn't mine, and I've never seen it before. This watch is worth about €20,000.

KITFI ROST

Who did the watch belong to in your dream?

VALENTIN

The man in the red suit.

KITFI ROST

The man in the red suit?

VALENTIN

You aren't taking me seriously, Kifti. Kitfi.

KITFI ROST

I'm taking you seriously. Were you afraid?

VALENTIN

Yes.

KITFI ROST

Hm. I'm going to give you a little weapon to keep with you.

VALENTIN

A little weapon?

KITFI ROST

Exactly.

VALENTIN

51

What sort of weapon?

KITFI ROST

The little weapon is a question. And this question is very powerful. It stops every demon. The question is: "Who are you?"

64. EXT. PARIS. CANAL SAINT MARTIN - DAY

Valentin is walking thoughtfully along the Canal Saint Martin. COUPLES IN LOVE, JOGGERS, YOUNG ALGERIANS - most people are heading in the opposite direction, coming towards Valentin.

VALENTIN

(to himself; French, subtitled)
"Who are you?"

Close-up: Valentin has stopped. A jogger has also stopped.

JOGGER

(Russian, subtitled)
What do you mean, who am I? You out of your mind?

65. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. BANK OF FONTANKA - DAY

The camera that shows a close-up of Valentin tracks backwards to reveal that we are in St. Petersburg. On the banks of the Fontanka, one of the many Imperial canals that criss-crosses the metropolis on the Neva.

Valentin is in the city of his dreams. The city moves past him as if in a dream. He gazes at some of the pedestrians. One man stops.

VALENTIN

Who are you?

The man, 65, a BRIDGE GUARD, stops. Over his head floats the word: BRIDGE GUARD.

BRIDGE GUARD

(to camera; Russian, subtitled)
At five minutes past one thirty I open the bridge, and at four fifty I close it again. The Palace Bridge. The biggest of the bridges across the Neva. Each wing weighs 926 tons.

I was once in love with a girl, Nastja was

52

her name. She wanted to study art. She wanted to be a painter. She always used to paint dolphins.

I wonder what became of her? That's 28 years ago now. If I ever see her again, and it's night, I swear to you I'll lower the bridge for her. They never even lowered a bridge for the Zsarena. But I'd do it for Nastja. If she ever comes back. By the holy St. George.

Valentin walks on. He stares at more people. A couple with two children stops.

GENADII, 35, with a moustache, is in clean but tasteless clothes. His wife TATJANA, 33, is also well-fed, and the two teenage children - MAXIM, 12, chubby, and YULIYA, 14, blonde, chewing gum - are the spitting images of their parents. They are wearing teenage fashion. When one of them speaks his or her name appears overhead.

GENADII

(to camera; Russian, subtitled)
Dmitrev Genadii Anatolevich, I'm a doorman in the night club "Jet Set". Today we're going to the circus.

TATJANA

(to camera; Russian, subtitled)
Tatjana Viktorovna, I'm a nurse, and I have caught a fungal infection. Genadii gave it to me, the fool, and I bet he got it from Jelena, my friend Jelena, she's got the same infection.

MAXIM

(to camera; Russian, subtitled)
I'm Maxim and I hate my sister. She thinks she's Brittney Spears but she's just a stupid cow.

YULIYA

(to camera; bad English, subtitled)
My name is Brittney Spears. I'm married to Robbie Williams. It's amazing. We have a Jaguar and a dacha in the South Seas. And lots of golden records and MTV awards.

(Russian, subtitled)
I hate Piter, it's always cold here. I paid 300 rubles for these shoes.

(shot of her pretty shoes)

53

They pinch me. And my period is two days late. And I sat on some chewing gum in the bus.

God I hate it.

Valentin walks on through crowds of people who pay no attention to him.

Now Valentin walks towards Rotor in the crowd, ANASTASIJA'S driver. He has the word TAXI DRIVER floating above his head. Valentin stops Rotor with his gaze.

VALENTIN

(Russian, subtitled)

Who are you?

ROTOR

(to camera; Russian, subtitled)

My name's Rotor,

(the word TAXI DRIVER over his head changes to ROTOR)

...I'm a taxi driver. I am the shoulder for a lonely painter to cry on; I am her protector. Not what you think. She steals from the rich and gives to the poor. Big mistake if you ask me. I'm a boxer. Light-heavyweight. But my days are over. I want to emigrate to San Francisco. Palo Alto. That's the plan. I want to live in Palo Alto and work for Apple. That would be great. Grigori is over there, my brother. And my Uncle Shenja. They've got green cards.

Rotor turns and vanishes into the crowd walking in and out of a building that has the big blue M of the St. Petersburg subway system above the entrance. As Rotor fades away the word ROTOR over his head changes back into the word TAXI DRIVER. After he has taken a few more steps the word fades completely.

66. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. METRO STATION - DAY

Valentin steps on to the escalator that takes passengers a hundred metres below the surface. The PEOPLE who are coming towards him greet him as workers might greet the director of their factory. Some of them have words floating over their heads:

WIFE, SAILOR, PREGNANT WOMAN, DIRECTOR, FROM MOSCOW, LONELY, TOURIST, IDIOT...

Suddenly there is a gap in the people coming towards Valentin, with just one person visible: it is the

54

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film

Version 3.09e

drunk girl who fell into the Neva at the start of the film. She is as white as a sheet, wet and shivering violently. One word floats over her head:

DEAD

DEAD GIRL
(Russian, subtitled; to
Valentin)
Don't look at me.

67. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Valentin is standing in the moving subway train. A voice announces the station: "Plochad Vostannija", and people get on or off. Valentin rides on, and now a teenager stands facing him with the word over his head: PICKPOCKET. Valentin looks the boy in the eye. He turns and walks off along the carriage until he is standing next to a Naval officer.

There is a man next to Valentin: ALEXANDER, 45, has a fur hat and a briefcase. He talks to himself, twitching all the time and turning his neck as if his collar were too tight. Over his head floats the word FEAR.

ALEXANDER
(Russian, subtitled; to
himself)
Quite right. Putin clears the whole
rabble away. Rabble, all of them. The
whole lazy pack of them. We'd be lost
without Putin: filth, all filth,
wherever you look. Putin is clearing
them away. All rabble, all of them.
You'll all get your turn.

Valentin gazes into the man's eye as he stands facing him.

With his right hand Valentin reaches up into the air, next to the floating white letters that form the word FEAR. Valentin turns an imaginary switch: the word disappears, and the man gapes at Valentin in amazement.

The subway stops, and the voice announces: "Louis Blanc."

The carriage door opens: Monique is standing on the platform.

Over her head: MONIQUE .

68. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The light comes on. Monique sits up in bed, hugging her elbows as if she were cold.

MONIQUE
I'm scared, Valentin.

VALENTIN
(sleepy)
What is it? Why are you scared?

MONIQUE
It's cold. It's really cold.

VALENTIN
Monique, baby.
(hugging her paternally)
It's OK. Everything's OK. We'll have some hot milk with honey, and everything will be OK, Hm? I'll make you some hot milk with honey.

He gets up.

69. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

The door of the subway train closes with a loud metallic smacking noise. On the other side of the class we see Monique, in her nightshirt, holding a cup of hot milk. She looks miserable.

Valentin is standing next to a young, wiry man, 22, with a Neo-Nazi skinhead look including bomber jacket bearing the word "Wolfschanze" in gothic letters. The word floating over his head is DEAD.

YOUNG MAN
(to camera; Russian, subtitled)
They said they'd pay €1000 if I blow away this Polish guy. I said 1200 was OK and they said sure, OK. The last of the bullets didn't do the trick; I said if I have to go for someone myself - if the bullets don't do the trick and I have to go for it again and grab hold of the guy or do the business with the knife - then that costs extra. I have to get out now, Mama's cooked something today.

70. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. PAVEMENT - NIGHT

Three young boys, dirty, with glassy eyes, are sitting on the edge of the pavement with a canister of Pattex solvent between them. One of the boys has

56

pulled a dirty plastic bag over his head. He bends over the canister, opens it and inhales the fumes deeply. Numbers appear over their heads: 10, 11, 10.

BOY 11

Gaga.
(he laughs)

71. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. KATSGIN SADIK. RED LIGHT AREA
(BOYS) - NIGHT

A small park some distance from Nevsky Prospect. In the middle of the park, St. Petersburg's cruising district, there is a huge memorial to Catherine the Great. Young men, some of them mere boys, loiter at the edge of the pavement.

Cars come past at walking pace, from expensive 7 series BMWs to rusty Ladas. They stop, windows are opened, negotiations about price and method conducted. Boys pocket some cash and get into the cars: the rent boy scene in St. Petersburg.

72. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. OUTSIDE GAY CLUB. BOY PIMP'S
CAR - NIGHT

In one of the streets around the park there is a yellow Ford Transit parked. On the side, in big letters, it says DOWN UNDER and below: www.cruisin.ru. At the pavement stands JACK, 52, Australian and owner of the van. Over his head appears the word JACK. Jack arranges sex with young boys. DICK, 43, an Englishman, is standing at his side. Over his head DICK appears.

DICK

How old?

JACK

14, 12, 10, 8, you name it, mate, we got 'em.

DICK

Ten.

JACK

No problem.

DICK

How much is Ten, will he give head?

JACK

Job 40. Swallow 60. 20 Minutes full gear 100.⁵⁷

Dollars.

DICK
What's his name?

JACK
Vanja.

73. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. PARK. RED LIGHT DISTRICT (BOYS)
- NIGHT

Valentin crosses a street. Boys look at him and make unambiguous gestures. Over their heads appear the words: HOMELESS, POSITIVE, 11, SWEET, NO PARENTS, EASY, LOST.

74. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. CLUB 8 - NIGHT

Loud music in a small room. On the stage the girl punk band Iwa Nowa. It's hot and sticky. Valentin is drinking a beer. He is sweating and has taken off his pullover.

CUT TO:

75. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. TOILET IN CLUB 8 - NIGHT

Valentin now finds himself in a dark, filthy toilet. There are few lights in here. He splashes water on his sweating face and looks up at the mirror in front of him: a young woman is facing him, blonde and startled - just as shocked as he is. It is Anastasija. Anastasija, on the other side of the mirror.

The camera moves in a very slow arc, travelling over Valentin's head and through the top of the wall to the other side of the mirror, to the mirror world, to Anastasija.

We are now on ANASTASIJA'S side. She presses her hand against the mirror, as does Valentin on his side: her reflection. Valentin's and ANASTASIJA'S hands almost touch each other now, separated only by the glass surface of the mirror. For a moment time seems to have stood still. Then the camera moves back in a reverse arc, over ANASTASIJA'S head and back over to Valentin's side.

Slowly the camera comes back into position behind Valentin - but now the mirror has vanished. Valentin and Anastasija touch each other, tentative and

58

electrified, like lovers. And their movements are no longer mirror images: one world reaches completely inside the other.

The camera again moves in a slow arc over to ANASTASIJA'S side, but now the wall between the two of them has disappeared.

Once again the camera moves back to Valentin's side. And now we see Valentin and his real reflection: his petrified face, his hand which moves slowly back from the mirror, amazed.

The music, which has been muffled until now, returns at full volume: loud, hard neo-punk.

76. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. CANAL GRIBOEDOV - NIGHT

Valentin emerges from the bar. On the door is the number 8. It is next to a canal.

FADE OUT:

MP SEQ 5

77. INT. PARIS. EMPTY APARTMENT. KITCHEN - DAY

Valentin and Monique are sitting over breakfast, not speaking, in a silence that could be cut with a knife. The gurgling of the espresso pot on the stove is loud. Valentin breaks a baguette in two: it sounds like an iceberg crashing apart. Monique tries in vain to catch his eye.

MONIQUE

You don't love me any more. It's cold.

Tell me what's bothering you, if you have some sort of problem, and we can talk about it. Is it about the station?

Valentin gets up, takes the espresso pot from the stove and pours himself a coffee.

MONIQUE (cont'd)

Is there someone else? Are you sick?

VALENTIN

(after a while)

I have to go away for a week.

It's all OK, Monique.

(he hugs her.)

78. INT. PARIS. BANK - DAY

59

A bank in the city centre. Valentin is standing at the counter. He exchanges a few words with the clerk and then fills in a form.

79. INT. PARIS. CANTEEN IN CHANNEL 8 - DAY

Valentin and Nina are standing at the counter of the self-service canteen, pushing their trays along.

NINA
(at soda stand)
I don't believe it, the bloody thing is empty again...
(calling in French to a canteen worker)
The bloody soda is empty!

VALENTIN
I'm going to go there.

Nina gazes at him wide-eyed.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
I'm going there. I've arranged a week's leave. I have to find out what's going on.

NINA
You're going to Russia? By yourself?

VALENTIN
By myself. Or should I take Monique with me?
(raising one eyebrow)

NINA
You could take us. Lars and me. We could pretend we were shooting a documentary.

VALENTIN
Are you joking? Don't make jokes.

NINA
I'm not joking. Lars would come along. Lars always comes along. And he doesn't need to know anything about your...
(making quotation marks in the air)
..."problem". But where would we get the money. How much have you got in the bank?

VALENTIN
Nothing. Nada.

NINA
Nothing?

VALENTIN
It's all here.

He grins and produces a wad of money from his pocket.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
25 big ones. That should do.

Nina gasps. Valentin grabs two bottles of beer for them.

80. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. AIRPORT - AEROFLOT LUGGAGE
CAROUSEL - DAY

The arrivals terminal at St. Petersburg airport. Passengers are waiting next to the luggage carousels, looking tired and bored. Suitcases slide on to the huge rubber conveyor belt at irregular intervals. Lars, Nina and Valentin are waiting for their baggage. The indicator board above the carousel reads:

AF 312 from PARIS.

81. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. OUTSIDE HOTEL OKTIOBRSKAYA -
EVENING

The Hotel Oktiobrskaya is a huge building over a hundred years old. At the roofed entrance door seven BASKETBALL PLAYERS aged about 26, all over two metres tall, in red club uniforms with duty-free bags clutched in their huge hands, get out of a minibus. The DRIVER loads their bags on to a trolley. The young men laugh. Two of them exchange high-fives.

Valentin, Nina and Lars get out of a taxi. The DRIVER unloads suitcases, bags and equipment from the boot of the Volga. Valentin pays him.

82. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. NINA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

There are cases with camera equipment on the floor of the small, rather worn room. Nina is sitting on the bed, counting postcards and stamps. She puts them all back into a paper bag.

She goes into the bathroom and turns off the water that has been filling the tub. She opens her suitcase on wheels, taking out a fluffy white dressing gown and a book with a Slovakian title. She ties back her hair, takes off her pants and then her underpants. She peers into the underpants, drops them into the suitcase and goes back into the bathroom.

The phone rings. Nina comes out of the bathroom and picks it up.

NINA

Hello?

(Russian)

Natasha? Which Natasha?

No. I don't want you to come. No, I'm not lonely...

(she hangs up)

83. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. LARS' HOTEL ROOM. - NIGHT

Lars is lying on the bed, masturbating. With a very mechanical air. Staring up at the ceiling.

84. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. VALENTIN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

There is a Russian game show on TV. Valentin is lying on the bed, gazing at the picture of Anastasija.

FADE TO BLACK.

85. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT. CORNER - DAY

Alexei's newspaper kiosk, at the busiest street corner in St. Petersburg. Hundreds of people walking past; the frantic motion of a major city. The newspaper kiosk is like a rock in the middle of a raging torrent. A few steps away we see Valentin, Lars with his sound recorder and Nina with her camera in a tennis bag.

Valentin is holding a colour computer print-out.

VALENTIN

It must be here. Over there...

(pointing to a building)

is the Samsung billboard, and there...

(indicating a building with dome and pillars outside)

is the subway station.

The NEWSPAPER VENDOR, 33, blue jacket and rosy cheeks, is just selling a newspaper.

62

NINA
(Russian, subtitled)
We're looking for Alexei.

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Which Alexei?

Valentin hands Nina the computer print-out.

NINA
(Russian, subtitled)
Alexei; he works here.

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Are you from Slovakia?

NINA
(Russian, subtitled)
Paris.

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Who's that? That's your Alexei? 2
Rubles. Thank you.

He sells another newspaper and then looks at the picture.

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
(cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Hmm. Alexei. I don't recognise the picture. Might be the guy who used to work here. He's not here any more. His wife has something wrong. Leukaemia or some shit like that.

NINA
(Russian, subtitled)
Not here any more?

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
(selling a paper; Russian, subtitled)
I haven't been here long.

VALENTIN
(showing a picture of Anastasija)
Do you know this person?

NINA
(Russian, subtitled)

Do you know this woman?

NEWSPAPER VENDOR

(Russian, subtitled)

Don't know her.

(shakes his head)

Never seen her before.

NINA

(Russian, subtitled)

Could we take some shots of you?

NEWSPAPER VENDOR

(Russian, subtitled)

Sure. It'll cost you €20.

Nina raises the camera to her shoulder.

NINA

(Russian, subtitled)

Stay natural. Don't look at the camera.

86. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET - DAY

Montage:

Nina has the camera on her shoulder and is filming. Valentin is clutching the Channel 8 mike, while Lars has his headphones on, the cable running into his heavy bag. Valentin is interviewing pedestrians on the street, with Nina interpreting. We don't hear what is being said.

87. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. BRIDGE OVER FONTANKA - DAY

MONTAGE: in front of a huge bronze statue - a naked man subduing a horse - Valentin, Lars and Nina and their equipment. A TOOTHLESS MAN, 55, looking neglected. Nina has the camera on her shoulder and is filming. Valentin is clutching the Channel 8 mike, while Lars has his headphones on, looking bored, the cable running into his heavy bag. Valentin is interviewing pedestrians on the street, with Nina interpreting. We don't hear what is being said.

88. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. SAMPSONIEVSKY BRIDGE - DAY

MONTAGE: Valentin and his little TV team on the Sampsonievsky Bridge over the Neva. In the background the cruiser Aurora. Valentin is interviewing a WOMAN, 55.

64

89. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. MOSKOVSKY PROSP. BOXING CLUB -
AFTERNOON

Anastasija is in a boxing club with her friend and driver Rotor, who is hitting a punchbag.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
There's somebody here.

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
What do you mean, somebody is here? I'm here.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Somebody is in my thoughts.

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Stop that shit.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
But it's true. There's somebody here. At first it wasn't so strong, but sometimes it's very strong. Like now, for instance. Somebody is nearby.

Can you drive me tomorrow?

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
You're getting mixed up, Anastasija. You have to stop stealing before it's too late, Nastja. So far it's all gone fine. But if they ever catch you they'll have a picture of you, and then you're finished.

If they have your picture, you're dead. Stop pinching things. You don't enjoy it anyway. And you make mistakes.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
You don't understand. I don't care about the stealing, or about the money; what I care about is the feeling that the money is going back to the people it belongs to.

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
You're a fantasist, Nastja. The money belongs to those who have it. That a law of this

world. Robin Hood is a fairy-tale dreamt up by capitalists, one of their inventions, an invention like Peter Pan, like Harry Tuttle, like Michael Moore. Why so you do this shit, Nastja?

You could get by without pinching anything at all. If you tried. What about that gallery in France? It was France, wasn't it? That was going well... They're interested. As long as you don't screw up. You could make it big. Really big. The French love exotic creatures like you. They'll grab your paintings as fast as you can make them. It's true, isn't it?

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, subtitled)

Can you drive me tomorrow? There's a geology congress in the Europa. Geologists are all off their heads. No danger at all, Rotor.

90. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. HOTEL BAR - WHITE NIGHT

Lars and Valentin are standing at the bar, drinking beer. THREE GIRLS, 23, slim, lots of make-up, miniskirts, are perched on barstools, smoking and looking bored. The BARMAN, 35, is doing a crossword.

LARS

All hotel staff.
(with a dirty grin)

91. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. VALENTIN'S HOTEL ROOM - WHITE NIGHT

Valentin is sitting on the bed. Russian news bulletin on TV, without the sound. Valentin's wallet is on the white sheet. He is holding the key (the one he found in Scene 35, in the food). The key with Cyrillic writing. A Russian key.

92. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. NINA'S HOTEL ROOM - WHITE NIGHT

Valentin knocks at the door of Nina's room. She opens the door.

VALENTIN

Can I come in?

NINA

Of course!

66

VALENTIN

I wanted to see how you're doing.

NINA

I'm doing fine, thanks. Come in. I'm labelling the tapes. I hate this job, but if I don't do it now I never will.
(she turns off the sound on the TV)

Valentin stands there looking lost.

NINA (cont'd)

Not exactly a huge room.

Valentin still stands there. Nina turns the TV off.

NINA (cont'd)

(sitting on the bed and patting the place beside her)
Come on, out with it. What's bothering you? Something's bothering you. Is it that woman? Have you been dreaming about her again? You've been dreaming about her again.

VALENTIN

(sits down)

My problem. Right. When you fall in love, this is how it's supposed to go: you start talking to someone, flirt a bit, fool around, sometimes you jump straight between the sheets, and at some point lightning strikes.

But for me lightning has struck without talking, without flirting - without anything. I don't even know who she is. It's really crazy! Usually you fall in love and bang! That's completely normal. And for me there's a bug bang, and I don't know who it's with. I don't even know whether she actually exists. That's really sick!

NINA

When I was 16 years old I fell deeply in love with Johnny Depp. It was that look he had in Arizona Dream. One look from him and I was away. I saw the film 17 times. He belonged to me and only me.

It's the pictures that confuse us, Valentin. We live in a world of pictures, and we don't know where reality stops.

67

We have memories of things we have never experienced.

Was that really Johnny Depp when I was 16? No. It was my idea of Johnny Depp, my very own Johnny Depp.

For you it wasn't Johnny Depp, it was some Russian woman who flashes across the screen at some moment while you were watching television. There was a click, there was a boom!

VALENTIN

What if all those thousands of millions of people out there are all transmitters? Each one an individual transmitter with a program of its own?

Nobody knows about it. Everybody has his own program. All day, every day. Everyone with his own program.

But what if some cosmic slippage makes the images from one transmitter spill over into another one. Somewhere. Completely by chance.

Nina thinks for a while and then puts her arm around Valentin's shoulder.

NINA

Maybe you should take a break, a few days just to yourself, without us, without Lars and me. Do some research by yourself, if you like. Lars and I can shoot some footage without you. That would be easy.

VALENTIN

Mine. My problem. Is it OK if that stays between the two of us?

NINA

Sure it stays between the two of us, Lars wouldn't understand. Between you and me. Cross my heart and hope to die.

VALENTIN

Another thing.

NINA

What?

Valentin shows her the key.

VALENTIN

Have you ever seen this key before?

Nina studies the key.

NINA

Looks as though it's from here. Why?

SEQ 6

93. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

An Internet café with dozens of monitors. Valentin is sitting nervously at one of them, writing Cyrillic letters on a small piece of paper, copying them from a web page.

Valentin stands at the cash desk, points at a pile of red copy paper on a shelf and then at the copier underneath. Valentin holds up his thumb to indicate the number "one".

CUT TO:

94. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT/MOIKA. POSTER WALL - DAY

Valentin is standing in front of this poster wall, where hundreds of private notices and adverts form a gigantic abstract image.

Valentin pins a single sheet of red paper among the ads from people looking for jobs, trying to find their lost cats and offering home-made solariums for sale. On the piece of paper an eye has been drawn in thick felt pen. Underneath it, in Russian, in big Cyrillic letters:

YOU ARE IN MY DREAM

And below this, in French:

TU ES DANS MON RÊVE

Valentin slowly walks away from this message he has left for Anastasija, the woman in the other world.

A Lada pulls up next to him.

NINA

(from the waiting taxi)

Now what? Are you coming?

CUT TO:

69

95. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT -
AFTERNOON

Anastasija is pressing her left hand, clenched, against her body. With the palm of her bleeding right hand she paints the three lines of the Cyrillic letter _ (a reverse "N") on the white background of a huge canvas.

96. INT. ST. PETERSBURG.GOSTINY DVOR/KEY SERVICE -
AFTERNOON

Gostiny Dvor. The huge classical department store in the centre of the city. Long corridors containing hundreds of shops and sales departments. Valentin is standing at the counter of a lock service.

The LOCKSMITH, 32, bland, is studying Valentin's key through a monocle magnifying glass.

LOCKSMITH

This no key of official door. Number is not of key maker.

97. INT. ST. PETERSBURG. SMALL RESTAURANT - DAY

Valentin, Lars and Nina are sitting in a small restaurant in the city centre, empty white plates in front of them as they wait for lunch to be served. At the surrounding tables are middle-class people: a family with a little girl, two businessmen, a couple. Valentin is staring down at a coin on the table in front of him. He holds his hand above the coin, palm down.

The coin leaps up from the table into his hand. Valentin clenches his fist, and the coin vanishes into his pocket.

VALENTIN

(to Nina)

I have to go somewhere.

LARS

Why make stress now? Food's coming in a minute!

Valentin places some money on the table.

LARS (cont'd)

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

It's unbearable with you; if anything takes longer than five minutes you start to panic, I mean really...

VALENTIN

I'll be back in 10 minutes. I have my mobile with me.

CUT TO:

98. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT - DAY

Valentin is huddled in his coat, walking nervously along the wide pavement of Nevsky Prospect, moving faster and faster.

99. EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. NEVSKY PROSPECT/MOIKA. POSTER WALL - DAY

His poster is still there, exactly where he left it. Valentin turns away and buys some cigarettes at a kiosk. As he is paying he spots a young woman pinning a photocopied sheet of paper to the poster wall.

Valentin waits until the young woman has walked away and then approaches the wall. He looks at her poster:

A photograph of a cat has been copied on to the paper, and the Russian words for RUN AWAY, IVAN, REWARD and TELEPHONE NUMBER are written below.

Valentin's mobile rings. He turns away from the poster wall and takes a few steps along the canal.

VALENTIN

(into mobile, still watching
the young woman)

Nina, no, don't bother me... yes...
no... God...

Valentin turns round and freezes. Then he strides back to the posters, moving faster and faster. Even from some distance away we can see a note pinned to his red poster. Valentin stumbles quickly towards the poster. A small white note is stuck to it.

YOU ARE IN MY DREAM

TU ES DANS MON RÊVE

is written in Cyrillic and Latin letters on his poster.

I KNOW

71

is on the small note.

Valentin grabs the message from the other world as if unable to believe it is genuine.

100.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. HERMITAGE. ROOM/CLASSICAL
STATUES - DAY

The Hermitage. The cellar, a large red room with classical Greek and Roman statues.

There is a white marble statue at the far end of the room, depicting a young boy, dead, being carried back to land by a dolphin. The DOLPHIN WOMAN is standing proudly beside the statue. Valentin is nearby, looking restless. Nina and Lars are sitting on a bench with their equipment.

DOLPHIN WOMAN

(Russian, subtitled)

You see the dead eyes of the boy? The dolphin came too late. I have been here for 26 years now. When there aren't any visitors I stand at the window up there and look down at the Neva. I'll show you where.

She walks over to a ladder leading up to one of the huge windows just under the roof. She climbs the ladder and looks out at the river.

DOLPHIN WOMAN (cont'd)

I always have to look over at the bridge. I don't know why. It's the Dvortsovy Bridge.

VALENTIN

Nina? Can we start shooting?

101.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. HOTEL ROOM - WHITE AFTERNOON

Valentin is lying in his hotel room, alone, his eyes wide open. The midsummer-night's wind wafts in noises from the street. The gold Rolex shows the time is 10:30, but the sun has not yet set. Scraps of guitar music can be heard from somewhere. Someone is singing the old 1968 flower power song "If You Are Going To San Francisco"...

Valentin sits up and looks through his washbag, but he doesn't find what he is looking for. He lifts up the phone and dials 1. Electronic sounds as in the early 1980s.

VALENTIN

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

(into phone)
Room Ten-O-Eight... Yes. One-Zero-Zero-Eight... Yes. You have a Pharmacy in the hotel? Apotheke... Yes. Apteka... Aha? Wait a minute...

He looks out of the window.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
OK.

102.EXT.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. PHARMACY - WHITE NIGHT

The night is as bright as a late afternoon. The sounds of people partying can be heard from the street. The white night is dawning. Valentin crosses the street and heads for a pharmacy.

He is standing at the window of an all-night pharmacy, next to a display case. The window is opened by a firm-looking PHARMACIST, 55, with red hair.

PHARMACIST
(Russian, subtitled)
What's the problem?

VALENTIN
You got sleeping pills?

PHARMACIST
Yes, yes, understand. Slee-ping Pills. Melaksen, Persen, Nowoposid. For what problem? For White Night?

Haha, White Nights is good times, Matrós! Is good no sleep! Or have depression? You have problem with voman? Problem with voman, I can see. Itisa very dangerous for depression person to have Slee-ping pills. Can go rong.

VALENTIN
I have no depression. I just want to sleep.

PHARMACIST
Justa sleep. Haha, Matrós. Wait. Sleep like dead I chave better.
(she vanishes.)

After a short time she comes back.

PHARMACIST (cont'd)

Relanium, Phenosepan. Po rezepti,
matros.

(she places two packs on the
counter.)

VALENTIN

Give me for one week.

PHARMACIST

I say: prescription. Daktór! You must go
rezepti, daktór. Pajiachale!

VALENTIN

(placing €20 on the glass money
plate)

No Daktór. Euro Rezepti.

A NORWEGIAN WITH RUFFLED HAIR, 32, thin, unshaven,
taps Valentin on the shoulder from behind and reaches
out to take the money.

RUFFLED NORWEGIAN

(to Pharmacist, in Russian)

My friend don't need your Smarties. He's
going to a real pharmacy now.

(to Valentin)

Come!

CUT TO:

103.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. DOORWAY / SIDE STREET - MOMENTS
LATER

Valentin and the Norwegian are standing in a doorway.
The Norwegian opens a dirty plastic toolbox, lifting
up a shelf with rusty nails to reveal packs of
medication, little bags with tabs, boxes of pills. A
real poisonous underground pharmacy.

RUFFLED NORWEGIAN

You want to dream? I have good for you!
LSD, spirals, flowers, crazy films.

VALENTIN

No, no LSD, I need a real dream.

The Norwegian produces an opened pack of ampoules and
peers down at Valentin's left arm. The big gold Rolex
is on his wrist.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

Oh, I don't do needles.

The Norwegian rummages around some more.

RUFFLED NORWEGIAN

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

Here we have... Ketamin. That's the stuff. Good stuff, you can trust me. How many dreams?

VALENTIN

One dream. The whole night.

RUFFLED NORWEGIAN

One will do.

VALENTIN

How much?

RUFFLED NORWEGIAN

One hundred. You will go out of your body. Nothing you have ever done before.

VALENTIN

Give me three.

104.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. HOTEL ROOM - WHITE NIGHT

Valentin is sitting on his bed, breaking open one of the tablets. He sprinkles the powder inside a glass of water.

After thinking briefly he breaks open another tablet, licks his finger, dips it into the white powder and tastes it.

A stale, bitter taste.

Valentin stirs the liquid.

The white powder dances around in the glass like a whirlpool.

Valentin drinks the liquid in one go.

Valentin picks up his mobile and dials a number. A mailbox replies. Suddenly his mobile beeps.

VALENTIN

Shit.

(the connection is cut)

Valentin pugs his mobile into the charger, lies down, picks up a copy of Time magazine and starts reading. The cover shows a large eye, with the caption:

"Turmoil in Pictureland"

CUT TO:

105.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. NINA'S HOTEL ROOM - WHITE

75

NIGHT

Nina and Lars are partying in Nina's room. Smoke. Music from Nina's iPod equipment. Nina is sitting cross-legged on the double bed, smoking a joint, while Lars is lying next to her, relaxed, grinning up at the ceiling.

NINA

I think he's heartbroken.

LARS

I think he's nuts.

NINA

I talked to him. He's in a bad way.

LARS

I'm telling you, he's nuts. I mean, this whole trip: who's going to want to see the shit we're shooting here? Absolute balls.

NINA

That's a bit hard.

LARS

Nothing is hard. Truth is perfectly reasonable for man. Ingeborg Bachmann.

NINA

Jesus, you and your quotations. He just can't relax, that's all it is. If he could only relax, there'd be light at the end of the tunnel.

LARS

(after a while)

What is it you're playing now?

NINA

What do you think? I'll call him...

(picking up the phone)

What's Valentin's room number?

LARS

What's yours?

NINA

1006.

LARS

He's two rooms further.

NINA

1008.

(after a while)

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film

Version 3.09e

No answer, he's not taking it.

LARS
He must be asleep. Or working the hand
machine.

NINA
The what?

LARS
(making masturbating gestures)
Comprendo?

NINA
Maybe a joint would do him good!
(dials again)
One, zero, zero, eight...

She hangs up and reaches for her mobile.

NINA (cont'd)
What if something's happened?

LARS
What could have happened?

NINA
Mailbox.

CUT TO:

106.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. HOTEL CORRIDOR - WHITE NIGHT

Nina is on tiptoes outside Valentin's door. The door
is number 8. She knocks, listens: no sound. Nina
knocks again. Now the CONCIERGE FOR THE 10th FLOOR
CORRIDOR peers out of her cubicle

CONCIERGE
(Russian, to herself,
subtitled)
What is she up to?
(coming closer with keys)
Isa not your room.

Nina quickly conceals the joint behind her back.

NINA
(in Russian with Slovakian
accent)
Could you help me, Comrade? I have to
get in there: I need some aspirin. My
boss has a pack in there. He's asleep.
All you have to do is open the door.
(she coughs)

77

The concierge opens the door. Valentin's bed is empty. The window is open, curtains blowing in the breeze.

BC - PP II SEQ7 - F Res

107.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. WHOLE CITY - WHITE NIGHT

Stop-Go flight ("shot" with an individual frame camera):

The camera flies at breathtaking speed over boulevards and prospects, through passageways and round corners. People, cars, traffic, everything that moves is blurred - only the immobile aspects of St. Petersburg at night, the buildings, streets, bridges and canals, the pavements and passageways, are in razor sharp focus. The bizarre flight through St. Petersburg at night ends with a close-up of Valentin's face.

108.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. PLOCHAD VOSTANNIJA - WHITE NIGHT

Valentin is standing in the street. In the middle of the busiest street in St. Petersburg, at the intersection of Nevsky and Ligowsky Prospects. The traffic of the million-strong metropolis extends across four lanes and can be seen in front and behind Valentin, moving constantly. Valentin looks down at his bare feet. Then he looks up at the traffic again.

VALENTIN

I want everything to stop. Now.

And everything really does stop: cars, busses and pedestrians. The whole street. The whole city. Everyone is looking at Valentin.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

OK. Shoes.

People start moving again. Someone hands Valentin a pair of shoes.

SOMEONE

(Russian, subtitled)

Here, they're 44, should fit you.

Valentin puts on the shoes.

VALENTIN

(as he straightens up)

I need someone who knows his way around here.

78

A Volga pulls up and the DRIVER winds down the passenger window.

DRIVER
(Russian; subtitled)
You need a car?

Valentin gets in.

VALENTIN
The girl in my dream!

DRIVER
(Russian, subtitled)
I don't understand.

VALENTIN
I want a driver who understands me.

The man gets out, and Rotor gets in.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
Rotor! Do you understand me?

ROTOR
(speaking German)
Sure - the girl in your dream.
Anastasija.

VALENTIN
Anastasija?

ROTOR
Anastasija.

VALENTIN
Well?

ROTOR
Difficult.

VALENTIN
Why difficult?

ROTOR
Just difficult.

VALENTIN
I'm looking for her.

ROTOR
Yeah, sure, I understand. I'm thinking.

VALENTIN
Can you think faster?

ROTOR

OK, I know... we'll just start driving somewhere. I'll think, and you think. We'll find Nastja all right - and if we don't, well, it's just a dream.

They set off along Nevsky Prospect.

VALENTIN

I want us to drive somewhere where we'll find her.

ROTOR

Don't worry, I've been thinking.

VALENTIN

Where are we going?

ROTOR

Aquarium.

VALENTIN

Fine.

(after a while)

Aquarium. What's there?

ROTOR

Lots going on there.

109.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. OUTSIDE AQUARIUM. - WHITE AFTERNOON

Valentin gets out of the taxi. The dome of the aquarium is painted light blue, in contrast to the dark pink sky. A line of people has formed outside the door of the classical tiled building. Everyone waiting is wearing dressing gowns and pyjamas. From inside the aquarium we hear the luke-warm, stomping rhythm of antiquated industrial techno music.

VALENTIN

(to Rotor)

Do you get any money?

ROTOR

Not me.

VALENTIN

What do I do now?

ROTOR

You walk past the line, right up to the door, and you say you've come to see Bagrat. When you get inside you look for Anastasija.

80

VALENTIN
Bagrat. Who's that?

ROTOR
Bagrat? He's just Bagrat. Don't ask so many questions.

VALENTIN
Will he understand me?

ROTOR
Don't worry.

VALENTIN
And you? Why are you doing all this? Why are you helping me?

ROTOR
I do whatever you want. I'm in your dream, pal.

Valentin walks past the long line of young ravers in pyjamas and dressing gowns. He stops at the MUSCULAR DOORMEN, two huge Ukrainian brothers in black jackets and gold roll-neck pullovers, but about 27.

VALENTIN
I come from Bagrat.

DOORMAN 1
(Russian; subtitled)
So?

VALENTIN
I come from Bagrat.

DOORMAN 1
(Russian, subtitled)
I said 'so?'

VALENTIN
What do you mean, so?

DOORMAN 1
(Russian, subtitled)
Listen, you jerk, 'so' means , 'All right you little bastard, you come from Bagrat, so what?'

DOORMAN 2
(Russian, subtitled)
Anyway. You're not wearing the right clothes for this place.

He nods towards the other people in line, all in pyjamas and dressing gowns.

VALENTIN

What's the problem? It doesn't matter
where I sleep, does it?

Now one of the people waiting hands Valentin a light
blue, tattered dressing gown. He puts it on.

VALENTIN (cont'd)

Now what?

DOORMAN 1

(Russian, subtitled)

Much better. If you're from Bagrat, you
just walk inside. Shall I carry you?

Valentin walks past the two Ukrainian gorillas into
the aquarium.

110.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. AQUARIUM. DANCE FLOOR - MOMENTS
LATER

Valentin pushes his way across the pounding dance
floor; everyone is in pyjamas. We see Valentin from
above, as if from the POV of someone watching him.
Valentin asks a doorman something; he points to a
door.

111.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. SURVEILLANCE ROOM. AQUARIUM -
WHITE NIGHT

Like the bridge of a ship, this long room overlooks
the dance floor. There is a reinforced glass window
all along one side of the surveillance room,
evidently with mirrored glass on the outside. Bagrat,
the Georgian Man with the thin voice we know from the
sneakers shop, is wearing a battered light blue
dressing gown with the word KING on the back and an
embroidered gold crown above it. His eyes are glassy.

BAGRAT

(Georgian, subtitled)

They're dancing. Good. I like that.
Everyone dancing.

At a large table with red-gold brocade tablecloth and
white taffeta there are bottles of vodka and
champagne, a whole range of brandies, plates of
blinis and a huge bowl of black Caspian caviar.

Bagrat's men are sitting at the table: the MAN IN
TRACKSUIT, 42, and a MAN WITH COMB-OVER, 45 (his hair
is combed over his bald patch). The Man in Tracksuit
is setting out lines of coke.

LENA, 23, and OLJA, 22, two blonde beauties clearly

82

raised on the lush soil of Russia, are sitting on the men's laps. Then comes RUSUDAN, Bagrat's wife (the Georgian girl with yellow Uma Thurman sneakers). Everyone apart from the Man in Tracksuit is wearing pyjamas, dressing gowns, night-gowns.

In a huge aquarium behind the curious group of people red goldfish are swimming, along with a flock of blind white albino frogs.

VALENTIN
(standing in the doorway)
I've come to see Bagrat.

Lena snorts a line of coke and looks Valentin straight in the eye. She turns to Bagrat, bored.

LENA
(Russian, subtitled)
Bagrat. For you. French.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled, to Valentin)
What's your name, Frenchie?

VALENTIN
Valentin.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
What?

VALENTIN
Valentin.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
Valentin. That's nobody's name... That's my hairdresser's name. Sit down.

Bagrat sits down.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Sit down, Nobody.

Valentin sits down.

Bagrat catches sight of Valentin's Rolex, which he has been trying to conceal with his sleeve.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
You got Gosha's Rolex, Nobody!
(laughs)
Haha, Gosha's Rolex, I like that. Can you

83

drink, Nobody? In my place someone only gets a name if he can drink until the table grows up to the sky.

VALENTIN
What are we drinking?

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled; to his wife)
Pour us a drink, Bunny.

The Georgian Man places a huge pocket knife on the table. Rusudan places a dusty bottle of wine next to it

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled; to Valentin)
That's Tsinandali. 1936. I got 217 bottles of the stuff. From Stalin's wine cellar, Frenchie. Papa Dzchugaschvili's whole cellar.

Bagrat opens the pocket knife, which is a corkscrew. The Georgian Man uncorks the Tsinandali.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Nobody, what are we drinking to?

VALENTIN
We're drinking to heaven.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
Don't give me that shit., There is no heaven. Heaven is an invention of Greek arse-bandits.
(to his "assistants")
What do you think? Hey, I'm talking to you!
(to his wife)
Bunny, get glasses for the two idiots.

Rusudan fetches some glasses.

OLJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Ask him about his tattoos.

Bagrat pours out the yellow Tsinandali.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
Ask me about my tattoos.

RUSUDAN
(Russian, subtitled)
Bagrat, nobody wants to see them.

Lena snorts a line of coke.

BAGRAT
(to his wife, Georgian,
subtitled)
Hold my glass, Bunny.
(taking off his jacket and
unbuttoning his shirt)
We'll drink to him.

The Georgian Man takes off his short to reveal on his chest an oversized tattoo portrait of Joseph Vissarionovtsh Dzchugaschvli, otherwise known as Stalin.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Joseph Vissarionovtsh Dzchugaschvli.
Papa Stalin. To Stalin, Nobody! The
great Stalin!

He chinks his glass against Valentin's. The others follow suit.

LENA.
(Russian, subtitled)
Big city, little man!

RUSUDAN
(Russian, subtitled)
Big city!

Olja slaps the Man in Comb-over underneath her, who has fallen asleep.

OLJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Hey you jerk, it's always the same with
you!

VALENTIN
I'm looking for someone.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
So?

Valentin shows Lena the picture of Anastasija.

VALENTIN
Do you know anyone who looks like this?
She lives behind an eye.

LENA

(Russian, subtitled)

Darling, ALL the girls look like that:
long legs, long hair, big eyes, long
fingers.

VALENTIN

She lives behind an eye. A huge one.

OLJA

(Russian, subtitled)

Hold on tight.

(She closes one eye and winks)

I live behind an eye, too.

112.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. TOILET IN AQUARIUM - WHITE
NIGHT

The urinal in the toilet. Valentin is standing next
to the Man in Tracksuit, the most silent of the
people at the strange table. A stream of urine
(trick).

MAN IN TRACKSUIT

(Russian, subtitled)

Things aren't going to end good for you
tonight. Get out while you still can.

(he shakes his penis dry)

113.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. WASHROOM IN AQUARIUM - WHITE
NIGHT

Valentin is standing in the washbasin in front of
washbasins and a large mirror. The room is similar to
the one where Valentin saw ANASTASIJA'S face in the
mirror, except that it is much more elegant, as well
as being bigger and cleaner.

The mirror is misted over. Valentin washes his hands,
dries them on towels and peers into the misty mirror,
stepping closer to it.

Valentin wipes the misty glass, and a figure appears
behind his blurred reflection...

Anastasija.

Valentin gives a start and moves backwards - as does
the reflection. Valentin and Anastasija are exact
mirror images of each other. Their movements,
gestures, even the colour of their clothes are
identical...

They both reach forward to the glass, bringing their
faces closer. After a few synchronised movements they

86

stare at each other in amazement.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Do those people belong to you?

VALENTIN
What do you mean, to me? Yes... er...
no, they're in my dream.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
They frighten me.

Valentin reaches forward to touch the mirror.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Can you hear me?

VALENTIN
You don't need to be frightened. Those
people are quite harmless.

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
They frighten me.

VALENTIN
Can you come over to my side?

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Make those people go away! I want them
to vanish from inside my head.

Now the chink of glasses and some commotion can be
heard from the large room.

VALENTIN
Where can we see each other? Tell me
where I can see you!

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
Get away from those people before it's
too late.

Suddenly Bagrat appears in the washroom.

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
What are you doing, little Nobody?
What's taking so long?

Bagrat has apparently splashed or showered himself; his hair is wet.

VALENTIN

Tell me where we can see each other!

Now only Valentin can be seen in the mirror.

BAGRAT

(Russian, subtitled)

Who are you talking to there, little Nobody?

He looks into the room with the urinal, and then into the cubicles, trying to find the person Valentin is talking to.

While Bagrat is away, Valentin and Anastasija can see each other again. They both reach forward in unison to touch the surface of the mirror, Then a mobile phone rings somewhere.

BAGRAT (cont'd)

(Russian, subtitled)

Come on, crazy guy.

VALENTIN

(to his reflection)

Where?

114.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. SURVEILLANCE ROOM. AQUARIUM - WHITE NIGHT

Valentin and Bagrat return to the strange table.

BAGRAT

(Russian, subtitled)

I don't like it when someone leaves without saying goodbye. What about that girl of yours, Frenchie? Shall we go look for her?

He takes off his wet dressing gown and puts on a jacket.

BAGRAT (cont'd)

Come on, Nobody, I'm sick of this place.

115.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. WASHROOM IN AQUARIUM - WHITE NIGHT

The elegant washroom with the large mirror. Anastasija is standing BEHIND the mirror, as before, but now there is no Valentin IN FRONT OF the mirror.

88

ANASTASIJA
(Russian, subtitled)
What's going on? Where are you now?

Anastasija knocks on the glass.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)
Where are you? Are you there?

116.I/E. ST. PETERSBURG. IN BAGRAT'S CAR - WHITE NIGHT'S
MORNING

Valentin and Bagrat are sitting in the back of a taxi, driving through St. Petersburg in the early morning light. Somewhere a mobile rings.

Bagrat grins at Valentin, who grins back uncertainly. Bagrat reaches over to Valentin's side. He is holding a little red transparent disc.

BAGRAT
Red. We need red.

Bagrat places his hand on Valentin's groin.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
(Russian, subtitled)
Well?

Valentin resists.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
Come on, you want it too. I can see. I know when someone really wants it.

He pushes himself on Valentin more and more violently, and Valentin resists more and more desperately.

BAGRAT (cont'd)
Hello - you're a very stubborn little chap, aren't you?!
(he laughs)

VALENTIN
What's the idea? What do you want?

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)
What does it remind you of?

VALENTIN
What? What does what remind me of?

BAGRAT
(Russian, subtitled)

Channel 8
© Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

What does it all remind you of?

Bagrat now turns into Kitfi Rost, the Tajik colour therapist in Paris. He gives a dirty laugh and presses himself against Valentin again.

Valentin pushes Kitfi away just as the taxi turns a corner. Kitfi falls against the door, which bursts open and sends him flying out into the road. Valentin closes the door.

ROTOR
(adjusting the rear-view
mirror, Russian, subtitled)
Here we are again.

He looks through the back window at the body of Kitfi lying in the road.

VALENTIN
Where are we going?

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Wherever.

VALENTIN
Can we go back and get Anastasija?

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
Anastasija isn't there any more.

VALENTIN
Why not?

ROTOR
Why should she be? What would she do there?

VALENTIN
Well, where is she, damn it?

ROTOR
(Russian, subtitled)
No idea. It's YOUR dream.

117.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET - WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

Kitfi Rost is lying in the middle of the road. Blood trickling out of his ear, his eyes staring ahead blankly.

118.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. IN BAGRAT'S CAR - WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

90

Rotor's taxi is now driving along Nevsky Prospect. Valentin looks out of the open window. On the pavement opposite TWO MEN IN BLUE OVERALLS are carrying a large mattress wrapped in foil. On the mattress there is a large letter, a reverse "R".

VALENTIN

(to Rotor)

That backward "R", what does it mean?

ROTOR

Jah.

VALENTIN

Jah?

ROTOR

Exactly. As in Rassi-ja.

Valentin sees something else.

VALENTIN

Stop, stop!

(he grabs Rotor's shoulder)

Stop here!

119.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET OUTSIDE ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT - WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

The taxi pulls up, tyres screeching, at the entrance to a side street off Nevsky Prospect. Valentin leaps out and peers upwards at an angle.

Only now do we see what he sees:

Valentin is gaping at the front of a four-storey building on Nevsky Prospect:

A huge advertising poster - all in shades of red - has been stretched across the building: it is the face of a model, a make-up advert.

The face on the huge poster is itself the size of a house, the woman's red, sensual mouth the size of a bed, her eyes each the size of windows....

VALENTIN

(whispers)

A big red eye.

Somewhere we hear a mobile ringing.

Valentin crosses the street, his eyes fixed in amazement at the poster of the face.

ROTOR

Channel 8

@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film

Version 3.09e

(to himself, horrified)
Oh God, no!

120.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET - WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

At the place where Kitfi Rost was lying in the middle of the road Bagrat is now to be seen. Blood is trickling out of his ear. The pool of blood is bigger than it was with Kitfi Rost. His eyes are glazed.

It is a bright, blue morning. From against the sky the face of the Man in Tracksuit bends down, along with the Man in Comb-over, Lena, Olja and Rusudan, the Georgian girl.

LENA
(Russian, subtitled)
He's dead.

RUSUDAN
(hyperventilating, Georgian,
subtitled)
Bagrat! No, Bagrat, Bagrat, don't let it
be true, Bagrat, tell me it's a joke!

She tears her hair in despair.

MAN WITH COMB-OVER
(Russian, subtitled)
It was that little rat.

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
He'll be dead in five minutes, Rusudan.

The sound of an automatic pistol being ratcheted.

121.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S HOUSE.
ENTRANCE/STAIRS - WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

The house with the face poster is a splendid bourgeois building on Nevsky Prospect. Valentin walks through the main entrance. A security door prevents access from here to the staircase, and there is a keypad next to it for the code number that will open the door. Valentin hears a voice.

VALENTIN AND ANASTASIJA
(together, whispering)
Zero.
(Valentin presses zero..)
Zero.
Zero.
Eight...

Valentin presses the other three numbers. There is a buzzing noise, he can now push the door open, and it closes behind him with a gentle metallic click as the lock engages again.

Valentin hesitantly walks along a dark, dirty corridor with peeling paint. A narrow, dark stairway leads upwards. Valentin climbs the worn stairs up to the fifth floor.

122.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S HOUSE. 5.FLOOR -
WHITE NIGHT'S MORNING

Valentin is standing outside a red door, breathless. He pushes it, but it is locked. The door has the number "8".

We hear voices in the entrance down below, and a crash as someone breaks open the lock on the security door. Now we hear the voices of the Man in Tracksuit, the Man in Comb-over, the two Russian girls and the hysterical, cursing Rusudan.

The voices come closer.

MAN WITH COMB-OVER
(Russian, subtitled)
The rat's upstairs, Rusudan!

There are beads of sweat on Valentin's face. He fumbles in the pockets of his trousers and jacket - and finally finds the key.

With trembling fingers Valentin holds the key and examines it: it's the Russian key! He coughs. He places the key in the lock: it fits!

Valentin opens the door, extracts the key, slips inside and quietly closes the door behind hi. Acting on instinct he runs his hand along the inside of the door, finds a sturdy bolt, slides it across, and then finds a second one.

Valentin turns round, breathing heavily. He is in a dark, mysterious apartment.

ANASTASIJA'S apartment.

123.INT. ST. PETERSBURG. ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT - WHITE
NIGHT'S MORNING

Anastasija apartment is a studio, living space and warehouse. It is gloomy and packed with canvasses and boxes. Brand new video recorders, mobiles and Playstations in their boxes tower up to the ceiling.

93

The walls have been painted dark red, apparently several; decades ago.

Almost on tiptoe, trying to make no noise, Valentin creeps along to the drawing room of what was once a large, middle-class apartment. He looks over to the window. The left window is covered from outside by a curtain, and the morning is light red outside.

The right window is open. And behind it:

A large red eye - the back of the huge advertising poster.

Valentin stumbles through the large, gloomy apartment, with is both familiar and new to him.

We hear a doorbell from the corridor. Excited voices.

Valentin is looking for a place to hide. He stumbles past a series of sketches and Polaroids:

They are all of letters: P, O, C, C, a reversed N, and a few preliminary drawings, notes, newspaper cuttings.

ANASTASIJA'S paintings.

On an easel there is a huge white canvas with a blood-red letter on it.

It looks like a reversed "R".

Loud knocking from the front door. Voices. Someone hurls himself against the door.

Valentin finds another room: the bathroom. He looks round desperately.

Loud bangs from the front door.

Valentin finds a curtain with a niche behind it.

The front door rattles with violent attempts to break it open. A brief pause - and then we hear the sound of an axe splintering the wood.

The Man in Tracksuit, the Man in Comb-over, the two Russian girls and Rusudan are now standing in the smashed door.

Valentin in his hiding place tries to hold his breath.

LENA
(Russian, subtitled)
I told you there's nobody here.

Channel 8
@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

Suddenly Anastasija's cat, startled, leaps on to a small table - and stands on the remote control. The TV is turned on. Ballet.

From the TV we hear Prokofiev's "Dance of the Knights".

MAN IN TRACKSUIT

That fucking little Parisian must be in here. The TV's on. That rat is finished, dead, over and done with!

Valentin freezes in the bathroom. He is breathing as quietly as he can behind the curtain. Through a gap between the curtain and the wall Valentin can see the men smashing up the apartment, flinging canvasses around, emptying bins. Somewhere a mobile rings.

Valentin now looks at the inside of the bathroom. Blood bags are neatly arranged in the dusty bathroom, along with hospital equipment, surgical tools, bandages, disinfectants, etc.

MAN WITH COMB-OVER

(V.O.)

(Russian, subtitled)

Where is that rat?

The sound of someone knocking against over a bucket. Someone kicks it over.

MAN WITH COMB-OVER

(cont'd)

What is this shit? That's incredible - where did that come from?

MAN IN TRACKSUIT (V.O.)

(dipping his finger in the pool on the floor and tasting it)

It's blood.

Crash. The bathroom door flies open. The curtain is swept aside. A fist smashes into Valentin's face. Darkness. Silence.

Black. Silence.

After a few seconds we hear some slow sounds.

MAN WITH COMB-OVER

(Russian, subtitled)

I want him awake when I blow him away.

It is getting light. First in silhouette, then more clearly, Valentin sees the Man with Comb-over. He is

95

aiming a Glock at Valentin's head.

Valentin is sitting motionless on a slashed baroque sofa.

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
Is that him?

MAN WITH COMB-OVER
(Russian, subtitled)
Sure that's him.

VALENTIN
Just a minute.

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
What do you mean, just a minute?
(with a nasty laugh)
I don't believe it. What do you want,
little rat?

VALENTIN
This is a dream.

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
Exactly. A nightmare. But don't worry,
it'll soon be over.

VALENTIN
Who are you?

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(Russian, subtitled)
You out of your mind? Who am I?
(to the Man with Comb-over)
He wants to know who I am, the jerk.
Tell him who I am.

VALENTIN
Who are you?

The Man in Tracksuit is becoming nervous. He fumbles with his gun, ratchets it again, aims at Valentin's head again, but now much less sure of himself. The gun trembles. His whole arm is trembling.

MAN IN TRACKSUIT
(German, with Dirk's voice)
Don't ask who I am. Don't ask that.

VALENTIN
It's my dream. Who are you?

The Man in Tracksuit turns into Dirk, Valentin's gay friend in Paris.

DIRK
(still aiming the Glock at
Valentin)
Don't get your hopes up.

VALENTIN
Who are you all?
(insistent)
Who are you all?

RUSUDAN
(Russian subtitled)
You must be out of your mind, you little
jerk - do you have any idea who you're
talking to?

Valentin looks at the Man with Comb-over.

VALENTIN
You! Yes, you! Who are you? Anyone?

The Man with Comb-over turns into Chris, the other friend of Valentin and Monique's that we met earlier.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
Why is that you?

CHRIS
Why, why, always these whys.

VALENTIN
And the girl there?
(indicating Lena)

CHRIS
Leave the girl alone.

VALENTIN
You're someone too, aren't you?

LENA
Sure I'm someone, but I wouldn't want to
know who if I were you.

Lena turns into Monique. Monique is suddenly standing there like Lena, in the same clothes, the same pose. Now she sits in Chris' lap. Monique opens her bag and empties a pile of stolen lighters out of it.

MONIQUE
All picked up this week. You satisfied
now? You want to know something else?
Chris...
(she grabs him by the balls and gives

97

him a juicy kiss, using her
tongue)
Chris is just a great fuck. Sorry to put
it like that, but it's true. He's just a
incredible fuck. He's gay, and he
doesn't really care for me, but I
fucking don't care. And I never feel
cold. That's just the way it is.

LARS
(who is suddenly also in the
room)
I... I'm just doing my job.

RUSUDAN
(to Dirk, who is just toying
with the gun)
Give me the gun.

Rusudan takes the Glock from Dirk and aims it at
Valentin. He reaches for an "invisible light switch"
over her right ear: now a word appears in white
letters:

NINA.

RUSUDAN (cont'd)
(in Nina's voice)
Has it ever occurred to you that
somebody might have feelings for you?
Ever occurred to you that someone might
worry about you?

Valentin looks over to the window. The pupil of the
red eye.

RUSUDAN (cont'd)
You destroy everything... looking for
that cow, that miserable, boring Russian
cow, boring us all to death with your
stupid fantasies and ideas about
transmitters and frequencies and lucid
dreaming, and then you drag us to Russia
so we can do your shit for you. With
that boring Russian cow there. Where's
it all going to end, you stupid asshole,
you?

Rusudan/Nina is getting worked up and fighting back
the tears. She waves the Glock in Valentin's face.

CHRIS
(to Rusudan)

Channel 8
@ Andrea Maria Dusl, Lotus-Film
Version 3.09e

That's all right, Nina.

RUSUDAN
(in Nina's voice)
Nothing's all right.

MONIQUE
Chris is a good fuck.

Somewhere a mobile rings. Rusudan aims at Valentin's eye. There is only the width of a hand between the end of the barrel and his eye.

RUSUDAN
(in Nina's voice)
You trample on my feelings and don't even notice.

Valentin looks over at the window again. Suddenly he knocks the Glock out of Russian's hand. It slides across the floor and into the pool of blood. Valentin leaps up and races to the window. Rusudan has turned into Nina.

In a slow, almost flowing movement Valentin leaps out of the window. He plunges through the eye, which tears like paper, and into the depths.

124.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET OUTSIDE ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The huge, torn eye.

Incredibly slowly, in dead silence

Valentin

falls

to

the

ground.

In extreme slow motion Valentin and the camera, circling each other slowly, fall to the ground.

Two men in blue overalls are carrying a double mattress wrapped in foil. They look up, startled. The mattress remains on end for a moment, at an angle, and then falls down flat, unnoticed by the men.

A split second before impact the shot of Valentin freezes and the camera slowly moves round him in a circle as he hangs in mid-air, just above the

99

mattress.

Suddenly time returns to normal and Valentin smashes on to the mattress with a dull thud; it is a brutal sound as the mattress bursts open.

Dust rises. A shoe floes of Valentin's foot. His body is left lying on the mattress.

SEQ8 - RoN

125.EXT. ST. PETERSBURG. STREET OUTSIDE ANASTASIJA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A crowd of people have surrounded the lifeless body of Valentin on the ground. Cars and buses have stopped. Somewhere a mobile rings. A young woman runs up to the crowd and pushes her way through the horrified faces.

It is the shocked Anastasiya. She kneels by Valentin, shaking and hitting him, as if she could shock him back to life. For an incredibly long time the weeping, distraught Anastasiya tries to wake up the dead man lying there in a pool of warm blood.

ANASTASIJA

(Russian, whispers)

Don't die, please please don't die.
Don't die.

Slowly, incredibly slowly, Valentin opens his leaden eyes. An empty bottle of Ketamin rolls out of his hand.

For the first time the two of them see each other in reality: Valentin, the isolationist from the enlightened west, and Anastasiya, the angel with bleeding wings. She rests her head on his chest, which is wet with sweat. Slowly and muffled, we hear his heartbeat. Anastasiya is hyperventilating.

Valentin comes round.

VALENTIN

Where am I? Am I dead?

ANASTASIJA

Not at all. Good Russian mattress. Can you move?

Valentin moves his hands, he moves his toes.

Valentin reaches to the back of his head and then looks at the blood on his hand.

VALENTIN
Rassija.

ANASTASIJA
Welcome.

Valentin sits up.

VALENTIN
I'm thirsty.

Valentin scrambles to his feet. He's fine again. He fastens his dressing gown.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
Something to drink.

The mobile in his dressing gown pocket rings. Valentin tosses it into a rubbish bin.

He looks down at his feet, one without a shoe.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
And then maybe - shoes.

Valentin stands straight.

VALENTIN (cont'd)
Oh God, am I dizzy.

A passer-by addresses his wife.

PASSER-BY
What a nerve. Fast asleep in the street. One of those artists. That's what Putin's done for us.

Valentin and Anastasiya walk away from the abandoned mattress and along the pavement on Nevsky. Hesitant but side by side, as if they belong together but don't quite believe it yet.

They come past a confectionery shop.

ANASTASIJA
Wait.

Valentin waits.

Anastasiya comes out and hands Valentin a bottle of mineral water. She opens it and lets him drink. He finishes the bottle in one go.

Anastasiya unwraps some biscuits, places them in her mouth and then rolls the cellophane into a tube.

She places the tube on the palm of her hand,

vertically, and hands Valentin a lighter.

ANASTASIJA (cont'd)

Light it.

Valentin cautiously takes hold of Anastasija's wrist and sets fire to the top of the tube (as at the start of the film, during Valentin and Monique's house-warming party). The tube burns down slowly, the flame getting closer and closer to Anastasija's hand. Her eyes light up. And suddenly the last little section of the tube floats up into the air like a balloon.

The camera moves back from the couple along with this tiny piece of burning cellophane, climbing higher and higher. The two figures stand side by side, getting smaller as the camera rises.

Soon we can see only the stream of pedestrians, the traffic on Nevsky Prospect, the rooftops of the palaces, the city with its canals, and the broad horizon.

THE END

CLOSING TITLES