

[Asya Voloshina]

Esther Bol

CRIME

#AlwaysArmUkraine

screen prose

or a horizontal group of plays

translated by Ricardo Marin-Vidal

*захисникам і захисницям
to all defenders male and female*

All royalties from any public performance
of this text must always go to Ukraine

#AlwaysArmUkraine

DANA Paris

Well

Help

What does that rant of his mean

Even I watched it

Is this really the end?

February 21, 2022 21:12

DANA Paris

February 22 04:22

Where are you, I'm worried. Fabian says it means war. I can't not read the news constantly, but there isn't enough information anyway: I can't find an answer anywhere to the main question of what fucking good is that to Putin and at such a cost

DANA Paris

Where are you?

Let's hug in our thoughts at least

breath

YOU (*to Dana Paris*)

I don't know. It's beyond fucked up.

DANA Paris

Are they about to block the internet all over Russia - ?

Jesus. What does he need Kharkiv for?

And what use does he have for Kyiv?

Does this mean we'll never see each other again?

YOU (*to Dana Paris*)

We'll probably see each other.

DANA Paris

Where are you getting your news?

YOU (*to Dana Paris*)

I'm reading Novaya Gazeta. I don't have the strength to read anything else

DANA Paris

I don't understand anything

YOU (*To Dana Paris*)

Me neither.

YOU (*to Dana Paris*)

It looks we had all been headed towards this

1

#AlwaysArmUkraine

breath

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

February 22

The heads of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics have called on Putin to help them "repel Kyiv's aggression."

Kyiv has requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council.

breath

February 24

04:44 Putin addresses the Russian people

04:45 Putin: NATO crossed the red line

04:46 Putin: NATO control of the Ukraine threatens Russia

Putin: in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, I have taken the decision to carry out a special military operation. OMITTED. We will seek to demilitarize and denazify the Ukraine. OMITTED. It is not our plan to occupy the Ukraine.

Reactions: 233 OMG 165 thumbs down 21 thumbs up 9 tears 4 flames 2 cuntty smiles

breath

DANA Paris

It's like this horrible, interminable shame

I called my mom at 5 AM. It's 7 where they are. She was at work.

Mom says: what choice did we have, otherwise they would have done it to us (...)

breath

.....

YOU (*to Trisha*)

I wanted to write to you

YOU (*to Trisha*)

Except I don't know what to say.

are you still there?

TRISHA

yeah, in istanbul

TRISHA

what a shitshow

TRISHA

i guess i'll try to get refugee status now by the looks of it

TRISHA

anything as long as it keeps me out of russia

TRISHA

my return ticket can burn

TRISHA

in hell

YOU

In the crater of Orodruin

TRISHA

i've been sobbing all morning

YOU

Me too.

Seva Andrukhov called to “hug me,” and I — without saying hi — sobbed into the receiver

Words — there are none

none

YOU

Sorry, I’m just giving my hands free rein, haphazardly hitting the screen

TRISHA

hit it

YOU (*forwarded message from the Novaya Gazeta Telegram channel*)

Putin addressed the armed forces of Ukraine and called them “comrades.” The president of the Russian Federation called on the soldiers and officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (ZSU) to “go home” and promised them leniency if they carry out his request.

YOU

Bastard

scum

TRISHA

<your name>

TRISHA

maybe i shouldn’t, but i’ll ask

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

The Russian Defense Ministry claims the ZSU’s troops and service members are “leaving their positions in large numbers, dropping their weapons.”

TRISHA

i'll ask

TRISHA

has ignat written to you?

TRISHA

where is he now?

TRISHA

jesus fucking christ god how can this be really happening

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

Russia's official media watchdog orders all media outlets covering the "special operation" in Ukraine to use "information received only from official Russian sources."

breath

TRISHA

please. tell me

YOU (*to Trisha*)

As I understood, he's helping everyone into the basement. They didn't evacuate. There wasn't time. His apartment building is right in the center of Kyiv, Trisha

breath

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov: "No one is talking about an occupation. That word cannot be applied in this context. The rest is up to the people of the Ukraine."

The timeframe of the Russian “operation” will be determined by Putin and “depend on its results and expediency.”

“Ideally, the Ukraine should be liberated, cleansed of Nazis,” said Peskov.

breath

breath

TRISHA

oh my god

TRISHA

can you reach him at least?

YOU

Hello, Oleksandr.

Is it alright that I’m writing to you? I’m sorry. I saw you online.

How are you?

OLEKSANDR

Дуже дякую за увагу вибухи офігенні. Very grateful for your attention the explosions are awesome.

YOU *(to Oleksandr)*

Are you in Kyiv?

TRISHA

i’m trying to understand how to just walk around and live

TRISHA

how to get work done

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

I'm sorry, I probably shouldn't ask.

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

I'm sorry

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

Just one thing. Can you tell me, please

(*unread.*)

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

what Ukrainian Telegram channels I should read?

(*unread.*)

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

news channels

(*unread.*)

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

to get at least some information

(*unread.*)

breath

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

In a telephone conversation with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Putin stated that Russia is willing to hold high-level talks with Ukraine.

Earlier today Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky urged Putin to sit down at the negotiating table.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has initiated the procedure to suspend Russia's rights of representation

OLEKSANDR

Зараз невідомо Right now who knows

OLEKSANDR

Ніяка інформація ніде не верифікована No information has been verified anywhere

YOU

Isn't there anything - ?

OLEKSANDR

Trukha seems legit.

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

Thank you!!

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

Дякую! Thank you!

YOU (*to Oleksandr*)

...Forgive me!

TRUKHA UKRAINA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

It's hard to believe, but they bombarded Kharkiv today

February 24 07:22

All the bomb shelters in residential buildings and infrastructure will be opened within the next half hour.

One alert is a warning. Three alerts mean danger. Listen closely. There is an interval of 10-15 minutes.

The government of Belarus has betrayed Ukraine. The border has been attacked not only from Russia, but from Belarus.

Ukraine's parliament voted in favor of declaring martial law across all of Ukraine's territory.

Volodymyr Zelensky spoke in a briefing. Main points:

The enemy has suffered heavy losses

We are already distributing firearms and will continue to do so to defend our homeland

The ZSU is engaged in heavy fighting. National solidarity is our main source of support

The most problematic situation today is in the south. Our troops are fighting fierce battles in the suburbs of Kherson

Zelensky urged everyone with combat experience to defend their homeland

To everyone in Russia still with a conscience: it is time to take to the streets and protest against the war with Ukraine

There is video footage of a downed Russian plane

Friends, when the dust settles, when the enemy of Ukraine has been vanquished, we will restore our country.

They have united our nation like never before. Together we will persevere

Don't be fooled by fakes. They want to sow panic, but they will fail

The whole world is watching, the whole world is listening

Glory to Ukraine

A second wave of Russian airstrikes on Ukraine has begun, but it won't be worse than what happened in the morning

February 24 12:28

breath

breath

breath

YOU

Ignat hasn't been online in nine hours, Trisha.

breath

Ukrainian forces have regained total control over the cities of Mariupol and Schastia.

Over 20 occupier helicopters are attacking Hostomel

The ZSU reports it is downing Russian helicopters

Russia is pushing for a breakthrough in Kyiv Oblast

Information about restrictions on entering and exiting Kyiv is false

The first POWs!!! The ZSU has captured Russian combatants

Trains in the metro have stopped running in order to fit more people

Video: Explosion in Melitopol. Sources claim it came as the result of a missile strike

Ryanair cancels flights from Poland to Ukraine

Uber stops operating in Ukraine

As of 15:00 fighting continues along the entire front line. No breakthrough has taken place

The enemy is trying to break through our defenses with 16 tanks. Three of them have been destroyed

Russia is using ballistic missiles

The General Staff of the ZSU report that Russia has sent two-thirds of its battalion tactical groups into Ukraine

Snake Island is under attack from Russian ships. The fighting continues

The President is at work, as are all the chains of command

The initial shock will pass. We held on to Kharkiv and the Russian troops have pulled back. A couple of tactical groups have entered Chernihiv Oblast, but the Ukrainian troops are ready

As of 16:00 the territory of an animal park in Kharkiv Oblast was hit by five artillery shells. Several animals have been killed or wounded

Russians are surrendering. "They're young guys and they were crying. We decided not to shoot them," said a witness regarding a group of neutralized occupiers

The Russians were unable to scare off the Ukrainian army. So they decided to bomb residential buildings.

February 24, 2022

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

I regret living to see this day.

I'll hide this post from those whom it would hurt too much and say nothing more.

YOU: NEW FACEBOOK PROFILE PICTURE

Ukrainian flag

YOU: NEW FACEBOOK ABOUT YOU TEXT

Freedom for Ukraine, The Hague for Putin

YOU: NEW FACEBOOK COVER PHOTO

A photo from Kyiv, June 2018. A banner on a building under construction on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Independence Square, the cradle of the 2014 Revolution: "Freedom is our religion."

In Moscow people are gathering for an anti-war protest. They're chanting, "No war!"

YOU (*to Trisha*)

...Fifteen hours...

All over Russia the police are detaining civilians protesting against the invasion of Ukraine. 852 people have been detained in 44 cities

TRISHA

sheesh

TRISHA

sorry, we went to the princes' islands and i didn't have signal

YOU

Fifteen hours offline

New York is with us today!

TRISHA

maybe he's not in kyiv?

Russian citizens standing outside the Russian Consulate in Tel Aviv are burning their passports

YOU

I'm checking the pages of all his Ukrainian friends in my feed

Kazakhstan has refused to assist Russia in its war against Ukraine.

Explosions on the left bank of Kyiv.

Kyiv. (Video). Gunfire exchange filmed up close

YOU

I'm checking the pages of his sisters, his first wife, his second wife, his third wife... His mom. So many women! Maybe they're posting things only their friends can see? I'm not friends with any of them.

Alas.

Baku supports Ukraine. When people are better than their government!

(photo from the protest)

YOU

I can picture him leading his dad, a People's Artist of the USSR, his hands trembling from Parkinson's, his mom, who in the last forty-fifty years hasn't served anyone a meal consisting of less than four dishes (as I picture it — after all, I don't know them). Leading them into the basement...

The Netherlands, Milan, Barcelona, Gdansk and Krakow. They all support Ukraine — against the orcs of Mordor

(photos from the protests)

YOU *(attach a screenshot of a map of street battles in Kyiv from the Good Evening We're from Ukraine Telegram channel)*

His building is between the two biggest and darkest spots.

YOU

I'm looking at those little green dots that mean "online"

YOU

Dots of different acquaintances, different people

YOU

It's like I'm praying to them

London! God save the Queen :)

YOU

But I can't write to anyone

YOU

Almost anyone

I mean, what words could I use?

TRISHA

maybe his phone ran out of battery?

The whole world is with us! Warsaw, Vilnius, Prague, Hamburg.

YOU

They're in some basement

Justin Bieber supports Ukraine!

TRISHA

god if only this war could end tomorrow already

TRISHA

i mean, it could happen

PornHub has blocked access to its site from Russia

The Simpsons are with us — officially.

FACEBOOK MESSAGE REQUEST

KONSTANTIN IVANOV

Soon the Ukraine will be free from fascists, Nazis and their disgusting helpers like you! The only question is when we'll free Russia, especially Moscow! Have you already bought plane tickets, or are you planning on fleeing to Siberia?

(reaction to your post and profile picture)

13 Ukrainian border guards were killed during fighting on Snake Island

“The Russian ship told the garrison on Snake Island to surrender. It was told to go f**k itself! Artillery fire followed”

Fighting continues in practically every district of the capital, so only leave your homes if absolutely necessary — to purchase groceries or medicine.

E-MAIL FROM GRANDMA

Your father told me about your little “performance” on Facebook and showed me. I’m warning you: you’re lost in a DARK FOREST. The many books you’ve read, unfortunately, failed to develop your mind. Awful, just awful...

This is what all your protests have led you to. Remember: if a coup happens in Russia, the one that you and your “Bohemian” friends have been dreaming of, the first thing the Nazis will do is wipe out the Russian people.

Your beloved Ukrainians spent 8 years exterminating children in the Donbass, — the exact same way they once led Jewish children to the ovens. They’re all descendants of the fascists. They did a great job doing all the Germans’ dirty work for them. Lots of documents testify to that. Read documents about the massacres of Poles in Volhynia.

Of course, Grandma is a fool, she’s old and doesn’t understand anything. Despite the fact that your grandma has seen it all in her lifetime. Your Wonderful Europe’s WAR OF EXTERMINATION AGAINST US. HUNGER, COLD, DESTRUCTION. It wasn’t us who went into their land, it was them, just like Napoleon and others did before them. The timeline of events: “Moskals to the guillotine, whoever doesn’t jump is a Moskal” on Maidan, the murder and humiliation of those legally defending Maidan, they burnt people alive in Odessa on May 2 – they didn’t even investigate (even though there’s plenty of video material and all the names are public knowledge)

The first thing the new government did was ban the Russian language. People in the Donbass rose up and voted in a referendum to separate from the Ukraine. The Ukraine started shooting up and bombing the Donbass. And there’s no need to say anything about Crimea, 97% of which voted FOR RUSSIA, - but to you they’re not people, are they? They’re scum, riffraff. We should have solved the issue with the Donbass right away. Instead of letting the fascists reproduce. But not to worry – now we’ll correct that mistake.

I will pray for you to GOD. He alone is our JUDGE!

YOU (*to Grandma*)

The only fascist here, Grandma, is Russia.

I’ll write to you later. I can’t right now.

breath

breath

breath

scream

“Now we see Putin for what he is, a blood-stained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest.” — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Ukrainian President Zelensky signs a decree ordering general mobilization.

The information has been confirmed. Men aged 18-60 are prohibited from leaving Ukraine.

Main points from President Volodymyr Zelensky's address:

— NATO is afraid to grant Ukraine membership;

— there is information that Russian sabotage groups have entered Kyiv;

— on the first day of the Russian attack 137 Ukrainian military personnel were killed, 316 were wounded.

YOU

Trisha...

New missile strikes on Kyiv are expected to begin at 3 AM — CNN citing American intelligence

Ukrainian Interior Ministry Advisor Anton Gerashchenko: "The hardest day will be today. The enemy's plan is to break through with tank columns from the side of Ivankiv and Chernihiv to Kyiv. Kyiv's defenders are ready!"

TRISHA

yes...

YOU

Trisha. Ignat wrote to me.

YOU

He's not in the basement.

YOU

He made sure everyone was alright and then went and enlisted.

YOU

He's not in the basement.

YOU

He's in the ZSU.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine.

breath — try, try, try

E-MAIL FROM GRANDMA

None of your education, none of the time you spent in your Moscow taught you to look at the big picture of the modern world in terms of cause and effect. It's astonishing how you don't notice all of the evil deeds committed in Europe like they don't exist to you, while Russia... is the devil incarnate. But for me Russia is my mother.

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

PHOTOGRAPH

In this picture we see a concrete wall. A concrete wall in Odesa. There's graffiti on it. A section of the wall is painted white, very white. Off in the distance the horizon line is barely visible. The sky is just as white as the snow. Four utility poles, some bushes/trees. Minimalistic, like a Japanese engraving.

And an inscription running through it: "У НАШИХ СТЕПАХ СНІГУ БІЛЬШЕ, НІЖ У РАІО."

YOU: CAPTION

"In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven." Odesa, 2017. Ukraine will prevail. Україна переможе. Putin will be in The Hague. Definitely. Об'язково.

(You put the apostrophe in the wrong place.)

breath

breath

breath

YOU (*to Grandma*)

Just so you know: if Russia annexes Ukraine, I'll commit suicide. *Dixi.*

Marine combat engineer Vitaly Skakun sacrificed his life to blow up a vehicle bridge and thereby halt the advance of a Russian armored column.

Glory to the heroes.

E-MAIL FROM GRANDMA

(unread.)

breath

breath

breath

breath

breath.

EVA

Je t'embrasse très, très fort. I send you my biggest and warmest hug.

YOU

Merci!! Thank you!!

YOU

Cela ressemble au pire cauchemar. It's like the worst nightmare

EVA

Oui Yes

YOU

J'espère qu'il mourra (*qu'on le tuera) bientôt. C'est le seul espoir

I hope he will die (*be killed) soon. That's the only hope

EVA

Oui, et je n'aurais jamais pensé être capable d'une telle haine et d'une telle

fureur. Je pense que la mort rapide pour lui ne serait pas juste, car il est responsable de tels désastres...

Yes, and I never thought I was capable of such hatred and rage.

I just think a quick death for him wouldn't be fair because he is responsible for such disasters...

YOU

Oui Yes

EVA

À ce moment j'espère que l'Enfer existe. Now I hope that hell exists.

The results of last night's bombardment of Kyiv. Why are you firing at our homes? What did our children do to make you want to murder them?

In the last 24 hours Russia has fired 160 missiles — the Pentagon

The final images of our border guards on Snake Island. We will never forget this and we will never forgive

At this moment a queue has formed in Rovno of people willing to help the ZSU and the Territorial Defense Forces

An enormous column of Russian military vehicles marked "Z" has been spotted in Kyiv Oblast

Video

Video: a tank running over a car.

A Russian tank driving down a street in Kyiv (Obolon district) just runs over a car. It just runs over a car. Just like that. Filmed on a phone through a window. A woman screams.

On the video taken at the scene the Russian vehicle can clearly be seen deliberately heading towards a car by the curb on Vulytsya Heroiv Dnipra just before the intersection with Vulytsya Zoi Haidai.

A Russian tank ran over a car with an old man inside in Kyiv.

Then a video: the half-dead, gray-haired elderly man is pulled out of the crushed automobile.

It was a miracle that they got him out.

The driver survived.

His lower limbs are broken, and he suffered a pulmonary contusion...

PUSH NOTIFICATION:

Galina Andreevna Yavorskaya is now on Signal.

YOU (*to Galina Andreevna*)

It would be so much better to die.

(*You delete your message.*)

YOU (*to Trisha*)

.....I can't go on like this. I keep seeing Ignat's body getting shot up by machine gun fire.

YOU

! Although I know that he's fine, that he's alive.

TRISHA

why did he enlist??

YOU

I'm surprised he didn't enlist the very first day, to be honest. He enlisted on the second.

Smile emoji.

YOU

When he wrote to me, he said: everything's alright, better than ever.

TRISHA

??

YOU

That's a joke, of course, (a "joke"), but... They all knew, Trisha. They knew this would happen. Everyone I talked to there knew... How could they not have known? Russia waged a war in the east of Ukraine for 8 years, a war we didn't pay any attention to because we had more important things to do — like theatre premieres or rallies in support of Navalny. They knew that all of this would happen eventually. And we didn't want to know anything.

TRISHA

but now... there should be some sort of coup. the oligarchs can't put up with this forever, right?

Kharkiv. Residential area shelled by Uragan or Smerch.

Putin is a murderer!

"No one plans to occupy the Ukraine."

"No one plans to attack the Ukrainian people." — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

GALINA ANDREEVNA

I don't want to live either.

Lavrov: Russia will not allow neo-Nazis to run the Ukraine

GALINA ANDREEVNA

I saw your message.

Lavrov named the condition for peace talks to begin: Ukrainian troops must lay down their arms.

GALINA ANDREEVNA

Nor do want to do anything — what for? ...I was at a funeral yesterday — can you imagine? I spent February 24 at a funeral. Ironic?

YOU

Symbolic(?)

GALINA ANDREEVNA

The funeral of a friend's dad. Morning at the funeral, afternoon at a lecture, and then at a protest. I'm uprooting the fear in me, hard as it is. But I went to the protest with my students (two of the 10). We'll see what the rector's office has to say. I hate this. But I won't be afraid. They came up to me to ask: are you going? How could I not go?

The Russian army shelled an orphanage in Vorzel from a Grad system. 50 children were in the building at the time

The Russian troops cannot take Mariupol, so they are just attacking the civilian population — Mariupol Mayor Boychenko

Kherson. The enemy is simply shooting civilians

Horror in Kharkiv. They're firing at residential buildings

2 photos from the metro turned into a bomb shelter. Caption: London – 1940, Kyiv – 2022

GALINA ANDREEVNA

I missed it today, but I'll go again tomorrow. Have you not gone?

YOU

I have covid, self-isolating, but it's been almost 2 weeks

GALINA ANDREEVNA

I see...

In Kyiv Oblast the occupiers are trying to carry out an air landing operation

YOU

But this morning I went to get tested to be sure. I'm waiting for the result. If it's negative, I'll go tomorrow without fail.

Pope Francis made a personal visit to the Russian Embassy in the Vatican to express his concern about the war in Ukraine

A rough map of the battles. We're driving them off

And soon we'll take back Kherson too!

Topol-M ICBMs are on the move in Moscow. Video

GALINA ANDREEVNA

...you know, <your name>, my students... they surrounded me after my lecture. What's going to happen? Will there be a revolution? They think I must know something since I'm a teacher...

YOU

I feel sorry for your students. And for everyone who didn't get much time to live fully.

We lived plenty; even these 8 years. Although what right...

“This night will be harder than the day. They will try to break our resistance tonight.” —
President Zelensky

On February 25 on Vulytsya Kirillovska in Kyiv Russian soldiers *mistakenly* opened fire on a family in a jeep.

Boris Johnson directly addressed the Russian people in Russian!

BORIS JOHNSON (*speaking on video with an accent; angrily*)

I do not believe this war is in your name.

Shootout in the center of Kyiv.

A destroyed kindergarten in Chernihiv.

Outside Kherson medics were moving a patient — the occupiers blew up the ambulance.

Kharkiv. Northern Saltivka. A shell hit a kindergarten.

Zaporizhzhia. Manhunt continues for shooter who opened fire on civilians in a bomb shelter.

Bakhmach. Locals throw themselves under the tanks of the Russian occupiers.

There is hope that all the Ukrainian defenders of Snake Island might be alive! They may have been taken captive. We will wait for them.

On the road between Iziium and Kharkiv, Russians opened fire on a minibus from machine guns.

Mykolaiv is preparing a perimeter defense. 12 Russian tanks and other forces have broken through.

Sumy has been shelled from Grads.

In the Kyiv metro a baby was born 2 hours ago.

breath

gulp

gulp

gulp

GALINA ANDREEVNA

In this situation I don't even know whether I should wish you recovery and a negative test :)

YOU

Of course. I should to be out protesting!

GALINA ANDREEVNA

Then I wish you recovery. And I send you a hug.

FUCK THE WAR TOGETHER GROUP CHAT

(fast scrolling)

Marina Dvorkina

Does anyone know what happens after a third civil offence (all of them for protesting)? I have a friend in that situation in Sviblovo.

...

Pasha

if they kept her there all night, then it probably means they can request arrest at the hearing (from experience in my past life).

...

Lena Sokol

I'll add the lawyer @Tina to the detainee group chat? @Tina, this began as a paddy wagon group chat.

...

Max

I'm ok, they're locking me up in a holding cell and taking absolutely everything I have, including pieces of paper with phone numbers.

...

Nika N

Repost from the chatbot PROTEST APOLOGIA

It is highly possible that in the next few days we will be unable to provide everyone with a lawyer. Too many people have been detained.

...

Lera

Does anyone know what happened to the girl who lost consciousness? Did they call a paramedic?

...

Dima

Are you still parked or are you moving?

...

Miha

We're parked on Sadovaya.

...

Lina Lina

Guys, those of you who are minors, call your parents. Without them they can't interrogate you.

...

Miha

They don't know where to take us yet — I heard on their radio: everything's full. They're just driving us around the city.

...

Nika N

Repost from the chatbot PROTEST APOLOGIA

Are they trying to take your phone? What can you do?

At yesterday's anti-war protests, the police confiscated the phones of people they detained and copied out the numbers in their list of contacts. They can also just grab your phone out of your hands. Remember: never touch a police officer — doing so might get you charged with a criminal offense.

Don't unblock your phone. Remember: Article 51 of the Constitution allows you to...

E-mail from Helix-noreply.

Subject: Test results

attachment

RNA Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 NEGATIVE.

25.02.2022 23:36

YOU (*to Galina Andreevna*)

I haven't told you this, and it doesn't make any difference, but I'm in a bit of a tight spot: my love is in Kyiv. 4 years now. Almost 5, actually. It doesn't change anything. It might even make it easier ("easier"). He supports me more than I support him. And he doesn't hate me. But that's not even it. Because I feel (and I have from the very beginning) that it's not so much that I love Ukraine because of him, but rather that I love Ukraine in him. It's so concentrated in him... He's a sculptor, even though he looks like a sculpture himself, like Zeus. He's a sculptor, Galina Andreevna. That's not important. He's a sculptor, Galina Andreevna — that's the best part. (It's better than anything I could imagine.) I'm sorry, I've been doing some drinking — for the first time since all of this started. I feel like an idiot for saying it. But I've never felt this way about...

(*Not sent.*)

breath

There's a shootout in Solomyanka in Kyiv. Who would have said even a couple of days ago that this could happen...

February 26 03:04

#AlwaysArmUkraine

breath

Facebook 48 unread

WhatsApp 27 unread

Gmail 32 unread

TRUKHA 16836 new

VSEVIDYASHCHEE OKO 2689 new

HK KIEV 1458 new

ISHCHY SVOIKH 2432 new

GLAZAMI UKRAINTSA 2086 new

PRAVDA UKRAINA VOINA 3154 new

...

March 15, 2022

breath

breath

breath

breath

breath

breath

YOU (*to Trisha*)

Greetings.

TRISHA

christ! thank god

TRISHA

how?

YOU

Not bad. That was...

YOU

that was.

TRISHA

i don't even know what to say

TRISHA

welcome back

TRISHA

fuck

YOU

Kyiv held out

YOU

is holding out

TRISHA

yeah...

YOU

I've been scrolling up to read the news I missed.

TRISHA

shit, i can imagine

did you like the 15-year sentence people can now get for "discrediting the russian army"?

YOU *(to Trisha)*

Yeah, I got a kick out of that.

SCREENSHOT

FACEBOOK MESSAGE REQUEST

WILD DMITRY *(to you)*

"Ukraine will prevail," bitch?? Knowingly false fakes (Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code "Public dissemination of knowingly false information on the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation") is punishable by a fine of 70,000-1.5 million rubles or up to 15 years in prison. :) :) :) Better get some snacks ready cos they're about to haul your ass to the slammer.

TRISHA

smiling face with tear emoji, face with rolling eyes emoji

TRISHA

i'm really worried about everyone in russia

YOU

Nothing matters anymore

YOU

But the protests, as I understood, are all done?

YOU

Or almost done

TRISHA

yeah... it looks that way...

TRISHA

now the discussion is more about the airspace closing

TRISHA

...it's not really my place to muse on the dwindling of protests from istanbul

YOU

You know what. This'll make you laugh. It's not impossible that we'll see each other soon.

TRISHA

??

YOU

My mom came to meet me outside the detention facility. She came to Moscow. She took time off from work. She waited outside in the cold. She saw me and... The first thing she said, before anything else:

“Your friend Alyona is in Istanbul. Have you written to her?” (Naturally, she's unable to accept that you changed your name — don't hold it against her.) “How about you get your rear in gear and fuck off to your Alyona in Istanbul.” And with a flourish, practically brandishing it, she hands me an A4 sheet in a plastic sleeve: a plane ticket.

Turkish Airlines.

“Fuck off to your Alyona.”

My mom. My mom, who when I was little would slap me across the lips for swearing. (Well, not so little, more like when I was 14.) Who used to say “no one side is ever fully right...” My mom puts the ticket in my hand and says, “Fuck off to Istanbul.” And then she starts crying, she flings her arms around me and wails into my ear that she doesn’t want me in jail. For me to go to jail.

According to Airbnb’s CEO, foreigners have begun using the service to pay for lodging in Ukraine to support the country’s residents. In the last 48 hours over 61,000 nights have been booked for a total of nearly \$2 million. In the comments people lament being unable to actually physically go because of the war.

YOU

My roommate left for Israel. I should look for a new one. Or on the contrary, maybe I shouldn’t.

TRISHA

your mom is awesome

TRISHA

and it’s cool that she doesn’t support the war either

TRISHA

which can’t fully be said about mine

YOU

I have a one-way ticket to Istanbul on the 21st. It cost 1.5 times what my mom makes in a month. (I’ll pay her back no matter what, of course, but at the moment I’m totally broke.) It’s non-refundable. Isn’t it hilarious?

TRISHA

what do you plan to do?

YOU

For now — I plan to scroll up to read the news.

TRISHA

....

YOU

The cactus in my apartment wilted.

TRISHA

.....how's ignat?

(Read.)

(Unanswered.)

Scrolling up to read the news...

“Communication is being held yet it’s hard. The reason for the discord is too different political systems. Ukraine is a free dialogue within the society & an obligatory consensus. Russia is an ultimatum suppression of its own society.” — Ukrainian Presidential Advisor Mikhaylo Podolyak

March 15

Facebook and Instagram let users call for death to the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and his Belarusian counterpart, Alexander Lukashenko.

March 14

On Sunday 13 March fires broke out in the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone. 211 workers of the nuclear power plant are being held hostage.

Nine people have been killed in the bombing of the center of Mykolaiv.

There are reports of banned phosphorous munitions being used in combat.

Today both the Ukrainian and Russian delegations described the current round of peace talks as positive.

March 12

The occupiers opened fire on a passenger train.

Photo. Simple and effective ways to disable a tank.

Soldiers found a jar and skull dating back to the early Bronze Age while digging foxholes.

An aerial attack on Sumy in the early morning of March 8 resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians, three of them children.

Over 2,000 people took part in a protest against Russian occupation in Kherson.

A video of fighting in Bucha near Kyiv taken from bird's-eye view.

March 10

Zelensky: "If you can't close the sky now, then tell us when. If you can't tell us when, then tell us how many people should be blown up, how many arms, legs, heads it will take to get through to you."

As a result of an air attack on Iziium, 8 Ukrainian civilians died, including 2 children.

The UN General Assembly passed a resolution...

The International Criminal Court prosecutor has opened an investigation...

"Vanya, what the hell are you talking about? What bodies?" It seems that people in Russia don't believe that the war in Ukraine has gone too far.

At least 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in Okhtyrka.

They bombed Mariupol all night. They hit a maternity hospital on the Left Bank.

March 2

This is a maternity hospital in Zhytomyr. That's all.

Territorial defense forces in Irpin report that Russian special forces have entered the city.

February 26

A Ukrainian couple spent their first day of marriage collecting rifles to defend their country.

February 25 23:49

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

Well, I guess I'll spell it out.

I, still a citizen of Russia, want not only for the war to end, but for Ukraine to win a total victory. That much is clear.

I want NATO to close the airspace over Ukraine. By any means necessary.

And yes, I want NATO to enter the war. World War III has already begun. It's impossible to watch Ukraine get murdered every day and just wait.

[I kept trying to love my country until February 24, 2022 and looking for a way to justify it and myself. But today's Russia is a murderer state. There are no more shades of gray]

March 15 14:03

Taiwan unveiled blue-and-yellow dyed orchids in a tribute to Ukraine.

TRISHA

.....how's ignat?

(Read.)

(Unanswered.)

YOU *(to Trisha)*

Can I call you?

Outgoing call 0:07

YOU

Sorry. Calling was a stupid idea. But now I sobbed my heart out.

Basically...

TRISHA

tell me! what happened - ???

YOU

...

VALERY ASTAKHOV

How are you? Was it really rough?

YOU *(to Trisha)*

Ignat was last online on March 6.

YOU (*to Trisha*)

March 6. That was 9 days ago.

YOU (*to Trisha*)

Don't even reply.

YOU (*to Trisha*)

I really do want to talk to you, honest.

But I'll call you later.

Once I'm somehow able to take a deep breath, I guess.

TRISHA

i'm crying with you, but i'm certain he's alive

YOU

Yes, you're right.

He's alive. I know it.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

Maybe you need some help?

VALERY ASTAKHOV

Medical or otherwise?

VALERY ASTAKHOV

It's not exactly a sanatorium they're running over there.

YOU

No. Thank you.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

If you change your mind, don't hesitate to ask. How are you in general?

YOU

I'm filling myself in on what I missed.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

Over 15 days? I can imagine.

YOU

Valery Sergeevich, how is this possible?

YOU (*send Valery Astakhov a screenshot.*)

SCREENSHOT

SERGIY BURELOM

All those Stepan Bandera-loving khokhol fucks must be killed off to total extinction!!! If any of those pissants manage to survive, send them off to build a new White Sea Canal for life! So that they croak there! Or to mine uranium with a pickaxe until their strength gives out, and then run them over with a tractor.

YOU

Valery Sergeevich, that's from Good Neighbors, a neighborhood group chat I'm in. My neighbor wrote that.

YOU

From one of the apartment buildings next to mine in the center of Moscow...

YOU

At this rate we can expect a coup not against the war, but in favor of it.

YOU

Against those who aren't winning.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

Wouldn't that be lovely.

YOU

"Lovely"!

HK KYIV TELEGRAM CHANNEL

In the video Russian missiles hit Paris, Berlin, Barcelona, London. Someone edited this video art so everybody could feel it more clearly... To feel it more clearly. A Russian missile destroys Notre-Dame.

DANA Paris

How are you???

YOU

Alright. I'm alright. Tell me how you're doing. I could really use a breath of fresh air.

DANA Paris

What's there to tell?

DANA Paris

I spent hours last night stitching beads, rhinestones and buttons onto the back of Denis's jacket. They spell: "Putin fuck off."

Because he started getting bullied by kids two grades above him, and two days ago he "accidentally fell down the stairs."

DANA Paris

So we had to "publicly declare our civil stance."

DANA Paris

And just the other day at a bar I explained to some monsieur that in Russia people in our circles simply don't have TVs. Naturally, he didn't believe me, and in his eyes I realized how hard it is to believe that.

DANA Paris

...But Denis's best friend at school is — get this — Ukrainian. Hair down to her butt and god grant us all her eyelashes; and 15000 followers on instagram at 9 years old going on 10.

ONE OF THE COMMENTS TO YOUR POST from March 15 14:03

ARTUR BALADA

One question: <@your name> if all it took for the Ukraine to come out victorious was for you to marry (for real, panties off) the Ukrainian soldier from the sado-homo Azov battalion with the most tattoos of swastikas and portraits of Hitler — would you do it?

YOU (*to DANA Paris*)

Assuming it's not just a legend, Jung once said that for years before it happened, he was certain there would be a Second World War and the Holocaust and all that. They asked him how he knew, and he replied, "I knew what the Germans were dreaming." The guilt for not feeling the need to watch what the Russians were dreaming on television is one we'll probably never shake. I mean, they spelled it all out for us right there, and we thought it was just words. Pronounced at impossible decibels.

YOU (*to Trisha*)

I read an interesting thought in a post: that even progressive Russian artists (I'm mentally putting almost every word in quotation marks), who even spoke out against the government, who even made contemporary art, who even went abroad and won awards — those people — played a sinister and heinous role. Even the best of them. And that's clear now. Because they created a smokescreen for export, an image of Russia as something not all that bad.

They played a part in his/their play. They served a function.

"We thought his hands couldn't reach us, and we, so brave, remain almost uncompromising..."

But the government covered itself up with all that progressive art before the world like it was parchment, like it was a poster with a relatively chic font behind which the troops could

huddle and hide; behind which the brains of TV viewers could be sucked dry, the brains of the people and the brains of every living thing.

“We carried out that function. The function of a fig leaf.

“Unwillingly. Un-willingly. Un-will-ing-ly. Because we had absolutely no will at all.”

This person is writing about herself.

I think we not-artists-but-really-just-creators can/should say more or less the same. Or at least accept it. About ourselves. About ourselves...

March 16, 2022

YOU (*to Trisha*)

.....You know what else is horrible?

March 17, 2022

Before the protest I deleted my message history with Ignat.

Because it's not for anyone's eyes.

First I deleted our messages, and then I decided — so as not to accidentally implicate anyone — not to even take my phone with me.

YOU

I deleted it

And now I don't have anything

Instead of kilometers of tenderness, tenderness, tenderness, savage tenderness, passion, flirting, late-night intimacy, fights, reconciliations, arguments, reproaches, nudes, sexting, drunken confessions, jokes, voice messages, confessions, confessions, confessions, confessions — nothing.

Do you know how easy it is to delete your message history?

You just press on it and...

And nothing.

And it's gone.

TRISHA

you'll have more.

YOU

Emptiness itself.

TRISHA

lots of neighborhoods don't have any signal.

he'll write to you soon, you'll see.

YOU

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

COMMENT TO YOUR POST from March 15 14:03

(after being reposted by a celebrity and eliciting unexpected controversy)

NATALYA AMOSOVA

What's with these people? They only have one ass, and yet they have this incredible desire to sit on two chairs at once.

TATYANA DOKA

Why don't you just leave, girly? I'm guessing you got a free college education at the country's expense? And now you're shitsmearing it and its president? I don't have words for how disgraceful the "intelligentsia" has become.

SERGEY GRITSENKOV

@Tatyana Doka, when has our "intelligentsia" been any different?

DMITRY ITRYASHEV

How do we go about pooling these materials and uploading them en masse on behalf of the people to the Prosecutor General's website?

NATALYA ZEVAKHINA

The Investigative Committee has a website. Let them investigate the whore.

ARTUR BALADA

Pipe down, <@your name>. Would you like me to tell you what will happen in the near future? A Russian Sarmat revenge missile. Great Britain will disappear, while primitive, communal democracy will reign supreme in the US of A. And they understand that perrrrrrfectly, because not everyone suffers from hysteria like you. That's why their gibbering is so constrained — because they're tied to a chain.

And that's that. In other words, it will simply be thus: the organic transformation of the Ukraine into Novorossiya, which will become part of the Russian Federation; the Anglo-Saxons will hop around in protest in their Maidans; and the EU will bitch and moan and then calmly pay for our gas in rubles or collapse. And you, girly, if you find your bearings in time, can become a queen among Ethiopian janitors somewhere in Petah Dickva (Israel). I take it with your ancestry that should be pretty straightforward? But if you don't find your bearings, well... you'll just find a she-spouse among your fellow inmates here at home. Either way, you'll be satisfied.

YOU

Artur, I hope you were able to take a screenshot and report me to the authorities your co-conspirators listed above. Because I have every intention of blocking you.

ARTUR BALADA

Not only would reporting on you be akin to kicking a kitten, but it would also be pointless. I sense in my gut that you will soon abandon ship and only your facebook mishpocha in petah dickva, prague and the zhytomyrs of the world will know of your indignation. And yet I have no doubt that you would have done exactly that (reported to the authorities). Alas, <@your name>, judging others based on yourself is foolish.

Caption under a video: a cop wipes off the inscription "No war" written on a bench by a resident of the Krasnoyarsk Krai "by means of eliminating the snowy mantle."

OLGA AKANTOVA

<@your name> why do you reply to degenerates? Just curious. It's clear as day that he's a troll. *Hugs*

YOU

...No, I'm pretty sure he's not a troll. He's very much a human... (hu-man...), Olga Olegovna. It's a very human poison.

In Luhansk the bodies of dead occupiers are being handed over in a convenience store.

TRISHA

your mom's right

TRISHA

come stay with us. you said it yourself: turkey's alright, they closed off the bosphorus to russian ships. and they're supplying ukraine with bayraktars

YOU

Provided we ignore the situation with the Kurds and a few other trifles.

TRISHA

...well, more or less

YOU

More or less

Yeah, maybe.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

To smear people with the war, the government is staging public support.

YOU

I don't know, Trisha.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

It organizes car convoys with Z flags.

YOU

I don't know that leaving wouldn't be a betrayal.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

It makes terminally ill children in Kazan hospice go out into the snow and line up in the shape of the letter Z.

YOU

When the decision is so informed, it's hard to see it as anything but betrayal.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

It's inventing new explanations for the bloodshed after the fact:

YOU

Not of Russia, of course —

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

Ukraine had chemical weapons,

YOU

it's already quite clear that to Russia we're internal enemies —

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

biological weapons,

YOU

Not of Russia, but a betrayal of Ukraine.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

Ukraine wanted to make a nuclear bomb,

YOU

Because...

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

Ukraine wanted to attack first.

YOU

Let's say I leave, I dissociate myself, and then what?...

YOU

What if the right thing to do is to stay here and do what I can?...

TRISHA

and go to jail?

YOU

And go to jail. Exactly. To do something and go to jail.

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

No matter the cost, no matter the lies, the government is trying to show its people that this bloody massacre serves a purpose, and that the people need it as much as the Kremlin does.

YOU

or just not to uproot my life from the life of the country and then disappear among the debris when it finally destroys itself. What if that's fairer? To Ukraine? To myself? To whatever Russia is to me (to me!)? To whatever tiny trace of it, rolled up into a little ball in a dark, secret corner of myself, that I still love?

YOU

?

TRISHA

listen, i've been doing plenty of thinking on the subject of emigration myself, as you can imagine. and recently i caught myself feeling like a matryoshka, like a russian doll. russia, which is trying so hard to separate itself from the world, offers us a choice for the time being(!). to stay inside it, in a little matryoshka, or to break out into a larger one, one that's the size of the whole earth. so the choice is between it and the rest of the world. and that's a lot like jail and freedom. and no one knows how much longer russia will keep the gates of its prison open outwards. it's strange that they didn't shut those gates completely at the very beginning. and i think it will be extremely painful and extremely hard for you to forgive yourself later on if you stayed in that jail of your own volition. of your own free will...

YOU

That may be so, but it's like I don't feel I have the right. Not even to that freedom. Not anymore.

TRISHA

take me, for instance. in the last population census where they asked for my ethnicity i wrote "earthling." and i want to remain an earthling, no matter how much they try to deny me that right.

YOU

is that the slave in me talking? :) I don't know.

TRISHA

what would ignat have said?

YOU

Don't you dare say "would have"!!

TRISHA

i'm sorry...

YOU

Don't you dare say "would have" ...

breath

shortbreath

nobreath

nobreath

nobreath

apnea

3

#AlwaysArmUkraine

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Well, how are you?

YOU

I'm writhing in shame.

It's nauseating, it means absolutely nothing.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

I disagree. You know, it's almost too Russian. That sense of meaninglessness, I mean.

YOU

What a coincidence! I've been thinking about that too. It's not easy to break the cycle of "Russianness" :(

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

I don't feel any guilt. I've never been affiliated with the current government, and like you I always did everything I could to oppose it. and the russian language isn't to blame.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

It's just that Ukraine is very near and dear to you and me.

I'm always in touch with my friends in Kyiv.

I even have more of them there than I do here :)

YOU

No, I've considered that. That's not the reason.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

We just grew accustomed to the illusion that the world was becoming more humane, and to the political scientist Ekaterina Schulmann's sedative lectures. But that's not how things really are. Wars never end. You can't deny that we weren't particularly concerned about the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, to give but one example

YOU

I scanned myself thoroughly. This level of pain, exorbitant to the point of meaninglessness, isn't just the result of Ukraine being near

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

And that was a real shitshow

YOU

I don't deny it. You're right about that war. Guilty as charged. But I remember how painful it was to see what happened in Belarus. Because if it wasn't for Russia, they would have been able to finish off that revolution; they would have overthrown Lukashenko.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

If it wasn't for Russia, they probably would have overthrown him 10 years ago.

Or however long ago — I don't know.

YOU

Exactly!! Russia just radiates death and decay to everything around it.

My country

My country

And I know it

I've known it for a long time

At least since 2014 I've been conscious of it

It's like a catastrophic, gargantuan anchor

My country

it drags everything into a whirlpool, into the depths, into the deep, into the abyss, towards the Earths' core

back

back in time

back in space

to some dark wilderness

to a medieval USSR

to a third-rate empire

and if you're next to it — just like that — you can't save yourself

(even though it seemed that Ukraine had managed to, was managing to)

I once had a dream where an old man infected people with old age

old age as a disease

infirmity, deformity, senility, impotence, constipation, hairy warts, drooling, incontinence —

sorry for the ageism

I quite like senior citizens

but this one was just, completely...

like something out of a fairy tale

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Like a male Baba Yaga?

YOU

Bullseye. An old man-hag. Papa Yaga!

and so he infected everyone with his old age.

and if you're next to Russia...

you simply don't have a chance. none whatsoever.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

...

YOU

Sorry for piling it on.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

...you know, just FYI: some star of Ukrainian linguistics and its chief expert — I forgot their name just now — “granted permission” to write russia without a capital letter. And also to write “in the russia.”

YOU

Now I know

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Now it's official — go ahead and use it. I feel like you need to.

YOU

Yeah, I'll add it to my arsenal

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

don't thank me

YOU

I've spent the last 24 hours or however long scrolling on my phone.

You know, I went into a group chat I'm in with my high school classmates (they created it for reasons beyond me to mark our 20th graduation anniversary just before February, and everyone started blathering about how much they love each other) to read what they're writing about the war.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

You're a masochist, my dear.

YOU

Nobody-knows-anything-we-should-respect-our-country-and-that-means-the-government-how-about-instead-I-show-you-my-puppy.

Along those lines. Followed by a puppy parade. I can take a screenshot.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

I demand a puppy screenshot :)

YOU

SCREENSHOT

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

I was kidding. Ah. Too late.

YOU

SCREENSHOT

DEMON DIMON

Let's just wait until Russia's everywhere.

russian flag, russian flag, russian flag, three laughing emojis.

(Likes.)

YOU

So it goes.

I was even almost friends with one of them.

(I won't ask you to guess which one)

And it's not some rural school, but a pretty prestigious one in a major city. All of them have university degrees and mostly became middle managers.

Or wives of managers.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Or husbands of managers?

YOU

Yeah.

I'm sobbing like an idiot again, Seva.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Tanya cries all the time too.

YOU

What about you?

YOU

...if it's alright to ask

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Me?

I woke up on February 24, picked up my phone and read a message from my friend and collaborator Dan Blovatsky in Kyiv who I recorded three albums with: "Well, that's that."

Well, that's that.

Ever since that moment, my main desire has been to go to bed and sleep. I wait for night to fall so I can drink vodka because it helps me fall asleep.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

But unfortunately that only works until 5 AM.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

At 5 I wake up, hug Tanya

who's either crying or sleeping

and start waiting for night to fall.

We went to a couple of protests, but you just end up sponsoring the government with fines.

So it goes ©

breath

YOU

Remember when it started — I'm pretty sure I'm not crazy — there was hope that from above/below — people on the streets from below and oligarchs from above or from the side...

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Would fuck him up?

YOU

Yeah! That somehow he'd get caught between those two millstones. And crushed. But now...

YOU

....

Are you two going to stay in Russia?

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

It looks that way.

TELEGRAM PUSH NOTIFICATION

The Rashists dropped a massive bomb on the Mariupol Drama Theatre!

Thousands of citizens were sheltering from airstrikes, mostly mothers and children. How many died underneath the rubble is unknown. The constant airstrikes make it impossible to clear the debris...

goddamn

motherfucker

breath

breath

breath

howl

On March 18 a rally was held at Luzhniki stadium in Moscow to mark the eighth anniversary of "the reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia." Over 203,000 people were in attendance.

Every fifth Russian watched the rally in Luzhniki on March 18

gulp

gulp

gulp

RUSSIA. GROUP IN THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL NETWORK VKONTAKTE

This is a group of people who love Russia just the way it is.

Igor Istomin

Get off your asses! Be active not just in patriotic groups but in groups of the weak-willed, and denounce lies, traitors, defeatists, pacifists and other whiners! Your brains, feelings and fingers have become powerful weapons. Everything for the front line, everything for victory!

Yesterday 07:22. 176 likes.

Z

Russia was compelled to carry out this military operation to prevent that neo-Nazi contagion, that rotting gangrene, from killing us all...

The Ukraine as a country should not exist. It's Russian land, inhabited by people who were forced to forget that they're Russian.

RESPECTED MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF OUR GROUP! Mankind has itself to blame for all the Bidens, Johnsons, Scholzs, Dudas and other Zelenskys. And only Russia has earned itself Putin.

Russian troops destroyed 13 bioweapon labs all over the Ukraine.

Putin also implicated Israel. Israel opened a biolab on Snake Island. It was involved in studying a weaponized form of airborne rabies which could wipe out almost 100% of the earth's population.

We aren't destroying cities. We're burning garbage.

Putin in the Ukraine is SAVING MANKIND. Literally.

Share this information in all your chats, channels, sites, etc. REPOST.

Ukraine – capitulate!

IRINA ROZHKINA

Kiev hasn't been taken yet. Just saying

VADIM ARSLANDOV

Irina, are you trying to get a 15-year sentence for fake news??:))))

DMITRY VODOLAZOV

Vadim, that sell-out slut deserves jailtime, and if only for someone to cut off her tongue and hands to teach her not to write and speak such heresy

NOVAYA GAZETA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

There are reports of long lines and packed crowds at Luzhniki stadium by stands offering free hot dogs.

YOU (*WhatsApp: Mom*)

Mom, I can't take it anymore.

March 18 22:39

4

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU (*to Seva Andrukhov*)

March 19 08:16

Hey.

YOU (*to Seva Andrukhov*)

Do you want to take my projector for your band's concerts? I'll figure out how to get it to you guys in Petersburg.

I want to gift it to you.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Hey.

Here's the situation:

Tanya, who's been silently crying for three weeks or more, silently got up yesterday, silently got dressed, silently went out (spoiler alert: to Pulkovo Airport) and

ta-da

there in the ticket office (with everyone's card blocked due to sanctions you can pay for f**k-all on the internet) bought two one-way tickets from St. Petersburg to Tbilisi.

So it goes.

YOU

.....

YOU

Good.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

I'm just as surprised as you are.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

...I take it you've decided to leave too?

YOU

Yeah, it looks that way

YOU

Yeah

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

Where to?

YOU

To “Constantinople,” Seva

brth

bthr

thrb

thbr

...

PRAVDA UKRAINA TELEGRAM CHANNEL

112 children have died as a result of Russian aggression. Another 140 have been injured. —
Prosecutor General’s Office of Ukraine

March 19 09:29

5

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

I’m going to write to you. When you get back online you don’t have to read everything. You don’t have to do anything at all. I wrote to you on the plane in my notes app, but I left that there for now. I’m holding back on writing to you so as not to spam you endlessly. I’m holding back on writing, but I speak to you boundlessly.

Ignat... Ігнат

I’m writing this while standing in line waiting to be taken in by Istanbul. I’m kicking my backpack along the floor, moving forward, writing, tears — flowing. It really hit hard me in

this airport. I didn't expect that "effect." The last time I was here I was flying over to see you for the first time after the lockdowns — remember? For the first time after endless months apart. After fearing we'd die in isolation from each other. (I know, I know; dying from covid, dying before the war — what a wild proposition. Who would have granted us that luxury?) I flew via Istanbul — it was the only way back then. I ran through the transit zone to board my flight to Kyiv. "Istanbul — meeting point of the world." With this crimson passport, gasping for air under my face mask (if you pull it down under your nose, a special young man rides up to you on his special scooter and threatens you with his finger). With a ticket to Kyiv Boryspil on Turkish Airlines. What I feared most was missing my flight. What I feared more than anything else in the world. (I know, I know.) "International transfer — where is it?" "International transfer — farther ahead." "International transfer — next turn."

This time I didn't make it that far.

This time I'm standing in this endless line to the exit, the exit to Istanbul, and I'm sobbing. I can't leave the line to go sob my heart out in a corner. This serpentine queue is too thick. There's a whole team in front of me. Players of some unknown sport. Handsome. I can't just push through them to sob in peace. Especially considering that it's utterly unclear how long that would take. How long to match this grief? How long to sob it all out? How many years would I have to spend in this hub?

How many more millions of time intervals will go by before a plane departs from here to Kyiv Boryspil?

Just a plane, just to Kyiv Boryspil?

PHOTO

Take note! See the inscription that says "CHILDREN" on either side of the Drama Theatre in Mariupol? I'm certain the Russian occupiers saw it too, but they dropped a bomb on the building anyway.

Yesterday up to 130 people were rescued from under the rubble of the drama theatre in Mariupol.

No fewer than 1,300 people may still be alive in the bomb shelter under the ruins.

Eyewitnesses:

"People indoors saw a bright flash, a fireball, an explosion. It was an aerial bomb. The scale of the destruction is simply horrifying. The bomb fell diagonally, first hitting the right wing and then the rear section of the theatre."

“The dressing rooms, which is where they put the pregnant women, were on the right side. No one there survived.”

RUSSIAN NEWSPAPER

HEADLINE: Mariupol Drama Theatre Blown Up from Inside

Judging by the nature of the damage, the explosion in the drama theatre in Mariupol was carried out inside the building by militants from the nationalist Azov regiment. Locals who were unable to evacuate from the city avoid the theatre. It has become a ghost, with people buried under the rubble.

According to Mariupol’s deputy mayor, 350-400,000 people were still in the city when the siege began.

In Mariupol not a single building remains intact. People drink water from puddles.

YOU

I want to try not to write to you about how I’m living through all this, but it doesn’t always work out. I don’t have the right to write to you about my suffering, infinitesimal and completely separate from the suffering of the people of Ukraine, nor do I have the right to multiply your pain. I should try to write to you only about you. About how I think of you and how our separation grows shorter with each day. It is growing shorter with each day, isn’t it?

But on the other hand — how can I not tell you that I read ten or twelve Telegram channels from Ukraine back and forth all day? It’s more or less the same news on all of them, but I do it anyway. While I’m reading, one of them already has a few updates. And I can’t tell them apart anymore. I’m like a maniac. Who can I tell this to? I pass it all through these filters I have in me and it all gets stuck in them, and it feels like everything’s been washed out of me. Except my love for you. I’m becoming nothing more than an eye that reads news. An eye with swollen tear ducts. (And that’s good because I don’t want to be anything else now and I have absolutely no right to; there’s simply nothing else I could be now.) You won’t like this, but I’ll say it just this once: if it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t be able to endure all this. I simply wouldn’t have anything to endure it for.

I’m sorry for writing too much.

Polish President Andrzej Duda in an interview with the Polska Times: “I was in Kyiv several hours before the attack. We left Ukraine literally hours before [the invasion]. As we parted, Zelensky told me he was certain that Ukraine would be attacked in the coming hours. Zelensky concluded by saying, ‘Andrzej, this could be our last meeting.’”

March 22, 2022

Yesterday putin held a video conference meeting. The Chief of the General Staff described Russia's losses as "significant." putin interrupted him and asked, "What do you mean by 'significant'?" Without waiting for an answer, he went on to say that losses of 30,000 or 50,000 are nothing compared to the goals that will be reached after victory.

Russian losses as of March 22 according to Ukraine:

~15,300 MILITARY PERSONNEL

putin has set May 7 as the new deadline for "Victory." By that date he plans to force the Ukrainian leadership to sign a treaty which he can present as capitulation and then hold a "triumphant victory parade."

putin spoke disapprovingly of the enormous loss of weapons on the front line. In other words, he openly instructs his subordinates not to take human losses into consideration, but to protect equipment.

An elderly woman endured hunger in 1933 and WWII and is now donating everything she has towards Ukraine's Victory over the occupiers.

"Russia's tactics have changed over the course of the war in Ukraine," said a ZSU colonel. "The initial main objective was the capital. Unable to succeed there, the enemy switched its focus to Mariupol. They are cynically wiping it off the face of the earth. Putin's orders are to destroy that city."

A Moscow court upheld its verdict that a banner reading "Fascism will not pass" discredits the armed forces of Russia.

VIDEO STATEMENT FROM AZOV REGIMENT COMMANDER

Kremlin propaganda calls us Nazis and fascists, and they call themselves liberators who have come to "denazify" Ukraine.

Today the whole world lives in a time of great deception, big lies and tiny truths. Billions of dollars are spent on creating illusions of grandeur and promoting the anti-human ideas of the "Russian world." The one that brings destruction, death, suffering, hunger and fear.

And the truth is this: a treacherous monster launched a vile attack on our land, and it is our right and duty to defend it.

At the very front of that defense stands Azov.

Azov is a unit of the National Guard formed by volunteers in 2014 after Russia snatched Crimea and parts of Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. It is a unit made up of Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Greeks, Georgians, Crimean Tatars and Belarusians. It is a unit where for the last 8 years soldiers of different confessions have served side by side: Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Paganists, Judaists and Muslims. Where the majority speak Russian.

We despise Nazism and Stalinism. Because our country suffered the most from those totalitarian regimes and lying ideologies.

Russia is bombing Babyn Yar, where the victims of 20th-century Nazism are buried. The Putinists are firing tons of shells at hospitals, schools, kindergartens, churches. Putin's soldiers are shooting senior citizens and murdering children and pregnant women just as the Hitlerites once did.

Nazism is the insatiable need to murder people who dared to become free.

March 28, 2022

6

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

You know, I'm lying on my stomach, and I feel my how my heart beats against my collarbone. How my heart beats against my shoulder blade. How my heart beats against my brain. Against my/your entire body. And it spreads outward. The iron springs of the mattress in the mattress begin to resonate. I hear with one ear how resoundingly each section of every spiral repeats the shape of my heartbeat.

And darkness.

And it's like there's nothing else. My phone lies next to me and everything in me knows: if you unblock it, *when* you unblock it, you'll see that there's an air raid warning all over Ukraine. You'll see a map of Ukraine with its oblasts painted red. On any Telegram channel, on all of them.

And so you (the impersonal you) don't unblock it. For a minute longer. You keep your eyes closed. You preserve the darkness.

You know... That time of unbeing — it was there whenever we embraced. Time began to be measured in goosebumps, moans, spasms, in the orgasms themselves, and it would lose its qualities. Wave or particle — who the hell knows. For an instant — it stopped flowing. It stopped being a stream, turning into a chasm in——>to the deep. The bottomlessness of the

moment. The co-incidence of our breaths. Just a tiny bit longer and you'll have to run from me. To one ex-wife, to another ex-wife, to help a third ex-wife, to your students, to the department, to your mom, to a beautiful, young journalist, to a handsome impresario, to this gorgeous curator, to that gorgeous curator... But right now time stands still, and with this minute we can — I don't know what we can do. We can extend it. We can operate beyond tenses. Together we can close our eyes and see one and the same darkness unfold for both of us. As though we traded eyelids. As though we became bound to each other through our eyelids.

How is my darkness right now different from the darkness we saw together then? The one we saw (in Ukrainian) *разом*?

What darkness are you seeing now? What darkness do you see now?

Maybe you're in that same moment in the past too? Before opening your eyes, getting up and entering the current *current* of this nightmare?

And so I don't open my eyes. I remain prone. I hear my heart in my shoulder blade, in my collarbone, and listen. To the echo of the springs in the mattress. I don't reach my hand out to the phone, no. As though it were possible in the darkness to decelerate the minute. It's one darkness for the whole world, and the same goes for this minute. Which means that if I don't open my eyes, if I don't interrupt this minute, it will keep going, and the next one won't appear. It won't appear for a bit longer, it won't arrive, that minute when the darkness will burst open. And someone's apartment will teem with hell, and their bedroom will turn to flame.

And that apartment block, that high-rise, will be left with a black crater. As though a dragon chewed out a chunk of it. As though that dragon replaced it with death, encrusted death. A chunk of emptiness inside the building, a bite of emptiness.

Chewed out life.

A train stopping at a train station in Vilnius on its way from Moscow to Kaliningrad is greeted with the following loudspeaker announcement: "Dear passengers of train no. 29! Today Moscow is killing civilians in Ukraine. Do you support this?"

Meme

"I always wished God would mark idiots with a sign that's clearly visible. God answered my prayers, and now idiots wear the letter Z."

Meme

Women of Ukraine — next time you get a message from a Turk wanting to get to know you, ask him for Bayraktars!

AMERICAN COMEDIAN

Finally, America has a president everybody loves with a sky-high approval rating. It's the president of #Ukraine. But still.

By the Czech National Theatre in Prague, people recreated the inscription “ДЕТИ” (“CHILDREN”) that had been written outside the Drama Theatre in Mariupol bombed by the Russians.

On March 27 in St. Petersburg the artist Evgenia Isaeva, dressed in a white dress, covered herself in a red liquid by the municipal assembly and repeated the phrase “My heart bleeds.” She was taken into police custody.

PHOTO. A letter from Mariupol: “Dima, Mom died on March 9, 2022. She died quickly. Then our home burnt down. Dima, forgive me for not protecting her. I buried Mom by the kindergarten.” Below the text is a map to help Dima find his mother's grave.

“6 people died, 15 injured as a result of an airstrike on a humanitarian aid center.” — Governor of Kharkiv Oblast

Тисячі людей лягли на землю в Варшаві, абі світ усвідомив масштаби трагедії в Україні. Thousands of people laid down on the ground in Warsaw to show the world the scale of the tragedy in Ukraine.

абі світ усвідомив масштаби трагедії в Україні. to show the world the scale of the tragedy in Ukraine.

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Bucha.

Kyiv Oblast. Bodies with their hands tied lie in the streets. They were shot by Russian soldiers. These people weren't military personnel. They didn't have weapons. They posed no threat.

This is what Russian fascism looks like. The photo shows peaceful civilians shot by occupiers. Two women and four men. Murdered with a bullet to the back of the head.

Today during his visit to Bucha, a BBC correspondent asked Zelensky whether he thinks it's still possible to discuss peace with Russia.

A six-year-old boy in Bucha stands in a yard by his mother's grave.

During Bucha's occupation by Russian troops no less than 400 people died.

Zelensky gave a speech to the UN. Main points:

"I know, and you know very well, what the representatives of Russia will say in response to the accusations of these crimes. They have said this many times. The most illustrative was after the downing of a Malaysian Boeing over Donbas by Russian forces with Russian weapons. Or during the war with Syria... They will even say that the bodies of those killed were allegedly 'planted,' and all the videos are staged."

"I would like to remind you of the first article of the first chapter of the UN charter. What is the purpose of our organization? To maintain peace. And to force peace. Now the UN charter is being violated literally from the first article. And if so, what is the point of all other articles?"

April 5 02:46

Petro Galchenko sends a photo.

The photo shows a completely burnt-out apartment block.

PETRO

5 km.

I live near Irpin. Do you know where that is???

YOU

I've known for the last month and a half.

PETRO

It comes at night. Just like that. It strikes at night. Here. It kills hundreds. Not somewhere, but right here.

PETRO

1 km, 2 km if all goes well

PETRO

Supersonic rockets aren't like mortar shells. A 30-storey building jumps up and crumbles

PETRO

Russia is the most hated country in the world. Soon they'll start killing Russians at resorts and bystanders will give a standing ovation

YOU

Yes, that's right

YOU

Yes, my country is worse than Hitler's Germany, Petya. Yes.

PETRO

It's already worse

YOU

How are you?

PETRO

Still alive

PETRO

After Bucha, every Russian except you belongs in The Hague... Just kidding: you too. I live by Bucha. 2 km away.

YOU

Understood

PETRO

All Russians are scum. Capture them? Not on your life! They rape, murder and then call their moms when they're captured. Of course you "understood." What else will you write? Cunts, the lot of you.

PETRO

You kill Ukrainians and then cry about it. Really fucking rich.

YOU

What would you do in my position, Petya? I'm asking in earnest.

PETRO

In your position I'd burn with shame. I'm from the suburbs of Bucha. I gave everything up and now I want to kill Russians. To kill those swine who murdered old people, children and even cats. I'm ready to die if it means eliminating those vermin. What about you? How do you feel, <your name>

PETRO

Your soldiers are scum, <your name>

YOU

Petya, for fuck's sake, they're not mine.

PETRO

After Bucha we should kill every last Russian. Let God sort them all out.

YOU

Alright, you'll have the opportunity to kill me.

PETRO

We don't kill women as far as I know. Whereas those scum from Russia killed ours by the dozen.

YOU

You can kill me – I'm serious.

PETRO

So virtuous, aren't you? So after the invasion and all of our murdered women you expect me to apologize to you? Do you hear yourself?

YOU

Petro, at what point did I say that?

PETRO

Enough. Just fuck off.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

...as painful as it may be to come to terms with this sad fact, it seems you were just about right when you were half-joking, <your name>.

VALERY ASTAKHOV forwarded message from March 17.

MESSAGE: YOU

At this rate we can expect a coup not against the war, but in favor of it.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

face with tears of joy emoji.

VALERY ASTAKHOV

SCREENSHOT

Anastasiya

What the fuck is going on!!!! We're retreating??? No concessions to the swine!!!!!!!

Maria Kovaleva Z

Are you all fucked in the head??? The people won't understand.

Mikhail

Disgraceful

Yulia R

They shat in everyone's soul. I'm speechless.

Anatoly Anatoly

Fire the fucker!! What the fuck is wrong with you all?

Z O V

Why????? Putin, we were ready to suck it up and we believed you!! And you gave the fascists a chance???????

Pavel Gerasimov

So many lives broken! So many people dead, the elderly, children, women. And all in vain? We're no longer liberating Kiev?

VALERY ASTAKHOV

Case in point: comments to the news about the Russian army's retreat from Kyiv Oblast.

The head of the village of Motyzhyn, her husband and their son, who all disappeared on March 23, were found in a shallow grave. According to reports, all three were tortured before being executed by Russian soldiers.

Just listen to this recording. The occupiers in Irpin and Bucha shot parents in front of their children. The children were raped and were told to respect Russians in the future.

Peskov called Putin's order to withdraw troops from Kyiv Oblast an act of good will.

PETRO

I'm not against you. I'm sorry for what I said. That night was really something. But try to understand. I'm from the suburbs of Bucha. It's nearby, just on the other side of the river that saved my cat. To be more exact, it was the ZSU and the river that saved him. 2 kilometers from the street they fired at us from without sparing any rockets. I was here then and I'll stay here waiting for those Russian bastards. I'm not going anywhere.

April 5 07:36

An article entitled "Bucha massacre" has appeared on Wikipedia. Users are translating it into other languages.

April 5, 2022

YOU

Never apologize, okay?

Glory to Ukraine.

YOU

Even though I don't have the right to write that.

WHAT RUSSIA SHOULD DO WITH THE UKRAINE

taken from an article on the state-owned news website RIA.RU (feel free to read the whole thing later)

“Unlike, say, Georgia or the Baltic States, history has shown us that it is impossible for the Ukraine to exist as a nation-state, and any attempts to build such a nation-state necessarily leads to Nazism. Ukrainism is an artificial anti-Russian construct that has no civilizational substance of its own, a subordinate element of an extraneous and alien civilization.”

“The denazification of the Ukraine means its inevitable de-Europeanization.”

“The Banderite elites must be liquidated; their re-education is impossible. The social ‘swamp’ that has actively and passively supported them through action and inaction must endure the burden of war and internalize the experience as a historical lesson and as atonement for their guilt.”

Kherson! Explosions!

Explosions in Kharkiv and its Oblast! One of its schools is on fire!

Send news on the state of things in your cities.

У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю. In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven.

The sky above Odesa right now.

The sky above Odesa right now...

7

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

This place is teeming with cats.

Not all of them, but some even let you pet them.

And the heat is actually a gift. Pain is too easily transmitted through cold. At any distance.

YOU

Although that's good.

YOU

Cold is pretty invariable. It's always the same.

YOU

Everywhere, ubiquitous.

An ideal companion.

A universal substance.

Four-year-old Sasha, the subject of a nationwide search in Ukraine, was found dead. In March Sasha's family tried to evacuate from the Kyiv region by crossing the Dnipro River. Their boat capsized after the occupiers began shelling. Sasha's grandmother drowned and the boy, who was wearing a life vest, had disappeared.

In Russia the remnants of a motor rifle brigade from the Transbaikal region who terrorized the residents of Borodyanka have been awarded the Order of Courage.

YOU

Whereas you — you to me — are absolute warmth

OKSANA BRONSKAYA

Hello.

I have an ordinary answer to your "how are you?" I spend my time waiting. It's like everything that matters has been put on pause and there's no way of knowing whether it'll stay that way for months or for years. Because I don't really want anything for myself anymore. I want the war to end (preferably with our disgraceful defeat). One. I want that monster to croak. Two. The question is what happens next. Because even with all my social misanthropy I didn't suspect the clusterfuck in my compatriots' heads. I expected stupidity, indifference, lack of critical thinking... But so many tons of chronic schadenfreude, this gushing desire to torture, kill, avenge – I didn't think things were that bad. And it's not zombification or waking suggestion, but something deep down that was galvanized and is now flowing through the streets. And I don't understand how to go on cohabiting with these masses.

People are leaving one after another, and that rends my heart. I have this illusion that I'll be left in a vacuum. But it's just an illusion. Because most of my impoverished chums don't

earn enough and didn't save up enough even to buy a plane ticket. Nor do I have the savings for a hypothetical fresh start. 4 months ago I made my first savings deposit, 100,000 rubles – I'm spending it now, that's what we live on. I'm looking for roads that lead out of my profession because I no longer see any way for me to go on practicing language and speech in public at any level.

I've broken off plenty of ties. I discovered that for many years I lived in daily frustration because of my career and my personal and professional self-esteem. And life is easier without all that. It really is.

YOU (*to Oksana Bronskaya*)

I feel for you...

Kramatorsk Train Station. Airstrike. 2 rockets.

Victims reported.

Details forthcoming.

April 8 11:02

Russian fascists hit the Kramatorsk railway station with an Iskander cluster missile. Police and rescue workers at the scene report dozens of people dead or injured.

11:13

Video: the first few seconds after the explosion at Kramatorsk Station.

11:21

Over 30 people died and more than 100 were injured. It was a deliberate attack on passenger rail infrastructure and on the residents of the city of Kramatorsk.

11:24

The Putinist scum are already trying to blame the Ukrainian army for the airstrike on Kramatorsk station.

11:36

On the night of the April 7 one of Russia's official Telegram channels advised the residents of Kramatorsk, Sloviansk and neighboring areas not to evacuate by train... Useful information for the trial at The Hague.

12:43

UPD: As a result of the missile strike on a train station in Kramatorsk, 39 people died, four of them children.

April 8 13:36

YOU

April 9

.....I think Zelensky and Johnson walked down the street where we kissed.

That's the news I have for you today.

I'm even 99% sure it was on Lyuteranska. (The British Prime Minister Boris Johnson traveled to Kyiv — I'll try to be more direct in my writing; I've noticed that it's become more and more tortuous.) They walked along Bankova, made a left and went down Lyuteranska all the way to Khreschatyk — I watched the video several times. They stopped and spoke with some wildly charming bystander. I don't know whether or not that was staged. My eyes were on what you could see of Kyiv behind them. (Remember how we kissed on Lyuteranska one morning when we had a sudden urge to go for a stroll? One unbearably early morning...)

... They walked around Kyiv and then it appears they took him to see Bucha. (God, if only it would help, if only they'd supply weapons — what on earth are they waiting for?)

Do you know what I did next? I opened Google Maps and marked all the buildings, every last one of the buildings in Kyiv where we rented an apartment and were together. And then I connected them. Like a constellation, you know? Do you know how many constellations can be made between our homes? From those beds where we stopped time.

Now I'm in our mirror corridor for both of us. Remember, remember our mirror corridor? You feel how bad I want you, and it makes you want me even more, and that makes me want you even more, and it makes you... and it makes me...

Remember on the boulevard of the poet Lesya Ukrainka? Remember how you came in and I greeted you barefoot in a little black dress? The dress was covered in lint, and I even got it in a thrift store. But I knew that it had lived its life for you to lift it up. On our first night on Lesya Ukrainka Boulevard. Where you said you'd never forget it. You promised never to forget it — remember? How we didn't make it to anywhere because it was impossible to do so, and we just stayed on the floor in the hallway, and only later you carried me to the bed. And how the second time around I started gasping for air so we got up to open the window, but we couldn't stop then either — it was impossible, so you took me with my head hanging out of the window. You turned me around, laid me back on the windowsill... And my hair hit against the outside wall, against the building, against the city itself — and it was like vomiting out the window upside down. Throwing back my head out the window and shouting out from under you into the stars. Shouting out from under you into the stars above you.

You told me then that you'd never forget it. Remember? Remember? Remember? Don't you dare deceive me. You promised.

SCREENSHOT

Listing on the Russian internet marketplace Avito

Ukrainian national football team track jacket. 3700 rubles.

For sale. Absolutely new. Taken from the suburbs of Brovary as a trophy.

6 Parkovaya Ulitsa, Reutov, Moscow Oblast

The number of dead as a result of the missile strike in Kramatorsk has risen to 52, with 109 injured.

April 9

Bucha. Cemetery of shot-up cars. Many of the cars have signs that read "CHILDREN."

Russian Media: The director of Russia's Institute of Political Studies answered the host's questions. "War between Russia and the Ukraine is impossible because an independent Ukraine does not exist. There is a pro-American puppet regime that serves American interests above all."

People in the russia are claiming that the stories about russian soldiers exposed to radiation in the Red Forest surrounding Chernobyl are fake. One colonel general says that Soviet partisans "took these positions during WWII and no one had any radiation sickness." And he's not joking! Somebody please tell him that the Chernobyl Disaster happened in 1989!

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE (*in VKontakte*)

Hi <your name>!

A German diplomat admitted Germany's guilt in russia's war against Ukraine.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

I sometimes feel like talking to you, but I don't know how we could.

YOU

We can talk after the Victory (of Ukraine).

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

Gotcha. Too bad.

8

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

Why is that too bad? A few months isn't a long time to wait.

Слова, які швидко виявлять НЕ носія української мови:

Words that quickly give away a NON-native speaker of Ukrainian when spoken:

паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця, веселка, філіжанка, вештатися, духмяний, непереливки, кмітливий, пущьвірінок, обценьки, теревенити, телепень.

palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya, veselka, filizhanka, veshtaty`sya, dukhmyany`j, neperely`vky`, kmitly`vy`j, putsz`virinok, obtsen`ky`, tereveny`ty`, telepen`.

Доповнюймо свій словник, допомагаємо ЗСУ нищити ворога!

Add these to your dictionary and help the ZSU destroy the enemy!

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

Yeah, <your name>, I get that you don't understand.

You have your own take on things, and you're completely focused on it.

From what I gather, other takes don't interest you.

That's what's too bad.

Since the start of the war over 4.6 million Ukrainian refugees have fled to neighboring countries. In just 24 hours that number grew by over 68,000.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

Talking to you feels like talking to a fanatic. You put your political view above everything else.

I can't fault you for that.

I hope you won't fault me if you find out about anything I might do that doesn't fit into your take.

Russian troops in Mariupol are burning the bodies of murdered Ukrainians in 13 crematoria.

Молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця, веселка... Molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya, veselka...

YOU

Care to be more specific?

At this very moment the center of Kharkiv is under heavy fire. We have reports on casualties.

Світлиця, нісенітниця, веселка, філіжанка... Svitly`cya, nisenitny`tsya, veselka, filizhanka...

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

My friends and I have been helping refugees from the Ukraine who fled to Russia.

YOU

Ah, so you're writing to me to brag? Вітаю (congratulations)!

YOU

Believe it or not, my mind can grasp that. WITH A GARGANTUAN CORRECTION TO YOUR TURN OF PHRASE.

In the russia a dome adorned with the letter Z has been installed on a 200-year-old church.

YOU

Meanwhile I recently donated what I hope is my last Russian paycheck to an organization that helps Ukrainians who were violently evacuated to Russia leave the country and I'm currently working as a prostitute in a Turkish brothel.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

I hope you're joking.

YOU

50%.

YOU

Anything else I can do for you?

Russian troops are preparing to close all traffic in and out of Mariupol and ban all civilian movement within the city on April 18 in order to carry out a "filtration" of the city's men. According to an advisor to the mayor of Mariupol, some of them will be mobilized.

Нісенітниця, веселка, філіжанка, вештатися... Nisenitny`tsya, veselka, filizhanka, veshtaty`sya...

The bodies of murdered civilians, who number in the thousands, are already being moved out of the city in special containers.

"Russia claims that its goal in Ukraine is 'to protect the people in Donbass.' At this very moment mobile crematoria are burning the bodies of thousands of civilians in Mariupol, the second-largest city in Donetsk Oblast. Those who survived are dying of hunger. What are you protecting them from? From life?" — Ukrainian Presidential Advisor Mikhaylo Podolyak

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

I just think it's too bad.

Too bad that a rift has opened up between us of the kind we used to only read about in books about wars. I want you to be happy and I wish for no one to harm you and for you not to harm anyone.

YOU

There is no me anymore. Which means there's no rift. Please forget about my existence.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

Point taken.

Part of the male population of Mariupol will be sent to join the Russian occupation corps, while the rest will be put to work clearing debris. Some may be executed.

Веселка, філіжанка, вештатися, духмяний... Veselka, filizhanka, veshtaty`syа,
dukhmyany`j...

Parents are writing contact information on their children's backs in case the parents die and their child survives.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

But your request about simply forgetting is unfeasible.

People in Russia are selling t-shirts with the following text: "Bucha maZZacre. We can do it again"

Духмяний, непереливки, кмітливий, пущьвірінок... Dukhmyany`j, neperely`vku`,
kmitly`vy`j, putsz`virinok...

YOU

How exactly is that unfeasible, Vasya? Because you and I made "art" together as teenagers and then tried to wish each other happy birthday every year? You find THAT more important than what you call "political views"? (I'd call them foundations of one's personality or even of one's soul.)

People who were against the invasion, say, by Germany, say, of Poland, say, in 1939 — would you call them fanatics too?

“When the Russians stormed in, Valery Petrovich was in his yard. An elderly man in home clothes, unarmed. He had heart problems, and he walked slowly after being ill with coronavirus.

“He was killed with a burst of machine gun fire. Without warning. Before his wife’s eyes they just raised a gun and shot him in the head.

“She asked them to let her bury her murdered husband, to which came the reply, ‘Let him lie there!’ One of hundreds of tragedies in Bucha.”

Кмітливий, пуцьвірінок, обценьки, теревенити... Kmitly`vy`j, putsz`virinok, obtsen`ky`, tereveny`ty`...

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

<your name>, it’s a bad idea for us to discuss politics.

The goal of my messages is to for us to preserve HUMAN contact.

And not for us to see each other as political projections.

I am Me. You are You.

“The first shell landed ten steps away from us. Mom lay on the ground, and I sat down. She was next to me. Right next to me. I opened my eyes and saw her lying on her side. Her last words were ‘I’m alright.’”

The woman was buried in a crater left from shelling.

Пуцьвірінок, обценьки, теревенити, телепень... Putsz`virinok, obtsen`ky`, tereveny`ty`, telepen`...

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

For me it’s important to preserve that human, personal, inviolable connection that’s independent from the Ukraine, Germany, etc.

YOU

I don’t consider it possible for me to maintain “human” contact with someone who supports the war. I think those two poles are a bit too far apart. Don’t you?

Either/Or ©.

In Kyiv Oblast the bodies of more than 720 civilians who died as a result of Russian aggression have been found. At least 200 more remain missing.

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

If you weren't so categorical and, pardon the expression, deaf at the moment, I could tell you a great deal. For example, there's the trolley problem...

YOU

Oh, spare me!!

VASYA INSPIRATION ENSEMBLE

That's your choice, and I can't fault you for it, but I can lament it.

Latvia has simplified access to abortions for Ukrainian women who were victims of sexual violence.

YOU

Your level of diplomacy is absolutely astonishing.

Let me spell it out for you once more, Vasya: fuck off, there is no me anymore.

9

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU (*to Ignat*)

Can I talk to you a bit longer? People keep distracting me and I'd very much like to just be with you. Before sleep, in sleep. You know, in that new messenger app Signal — the one almost everyone who's motivated by fear of surveillance has switched to — I noticed that it's not in minutes (min), but... m — meters(?) If a message was sent less than an hour ago, it's in meters... 39 m (meters) ago. Below, above or beyond sea level. If you and I chatted on it,

—

— I would feel our messages plunge underwater. Under their own weight. Just down, down, down...

The only thing I have left is my heart. It's like everything below my heart is frozen. (Of course, that's only temporary: the moment I feel your touch, I'll thaw.) But it beats so-so-so strong...

...I just want to slip my fingers between your fingers.

MARIE (*comment under a celebrity's post*)

I have an enormous amount of respect for what you do and for you personally. BUT any Russian, be they normal or messed up in the head, CAN'T feel and CAN'T understand what's happening right now in Ukraine because they HAVEN'T lived through the experience of having their friends and acquaintances shot/raped/tortured by absolutely feral scumbags. And NO words, images, thoughts or intentions of compassion can redeem/explain/assuage what happened.

E-MAIL FROM GRANDMA

For several days I couldn't find the words to react to your departure, to your latest betrayal. But time works Wonders: I found the words and I found the strength to overcome even that. You acted honestly by leaving, why live in a country you hate. It would be like sleeping with a husband you don't love. It would be like prostitution. (That's how your other grandmother lived).

Of course, we won't see each other again.

It was easy for you to disown your father and me, to disown Russia, so be consistent - you should disown the language too. Why go on your facebook to slander the country with filth in its own language. That's insincere.

Then again, who am I writing to about sincerity? A person who writes such awful things behind the back of our boys who are risking their lives to protect... <...>

YOU: FACEBOOK POST. FOR: *SPECIFIC FRIENDS*

I think I'm losing my mind, but I consider it dishonorable not to.

YOU: E-MAIL (*to Grandma*)

Jesus, Grandma, Grandma, how??

"Our boys"????

(Draft. Not sent.)

YOU: E-MAIL *(to Grandma)*

“Our boys” who fire rockets at train stations teeming with evacuees? “Our boys” who murder to steal a phone? Or who simply-simply-simply murder. They call “our girls” and tell them, “When will I get another chance to do it?” And then they go to Belarusian border towns to mail off the panties of raped Ukrainian women and outboard motors. Truly a valiant army defending Russian values. By the way, the official (KIA) statistics they show on Russian TV are ~10 times lower than the actual figures. So I suggest you weep for “our boys” ten times harder.

(Draft. Not sent.)

YOU: E-MAIL *(to Grandma)*

You, you who suffered from fascism — why can't you open your eyes and realize that your country attacked another country simply so that bunker midget can stay in power... It's fascism, it's fascism, it's literally fascism and you're justifying it. The only “purpose” of that system is to perpetuate that system. And that system is not my homeland.

Russia, Russia, Russia is wiping out people and cities in another country and hates Ukrainians (N.B.: on ethnic grounds) with a hatred only fascists can feel. And it's doing things the fascists in WWII could sometimes only dream of. And you hate them too!! You yourself.

Europe and America made an enormous mistake letting Russia get off with such light sanctions for Crimea and for the mess they made in Eastern Ukraine. If there had been a blockade then, the current hell would've been prevented. We didn't deserve those 8 years of easy living after what we did.

(Draft. Not sent.)

YOU: E-MAIL *(to Grandma)*

I remember you once said, “Don't be naïve, everyone hates Russia.” Now your words have come true. Now I'm ready to agree with you. Since February 24 everyone hates Russia. And that's putting it lightly. But not on ethnic grounds. I've received messages from all my friends in other countries, dozens of people (not Russian émigrés, but foreigners). They ask me how I'm holding up, whether I need help. They're glad I'm safe (i.e., not in Russia). And that despite the fact that it's NOT me whose home was bombed and whose family and pets were murdered by your valiant “our boys.” Every single European acquaintance of mine without exception goes to train stations, to meeting points for Ukrainian refugees, volunteers, helps translate and lets them stay in their home if they have the means.

But you — have you ever so much as taken in a stray cat once in your life — let alone a refugee from Donbas?

Why do I bother writing?

To you this is a world where men walk around on high heels and — how was it again? — hump each other in a daisy chain on the street, as was told to you by a friend of a friend of a friend (and which you reported to me on with new details each time I visited). I'm probably an idiot for not listening. No, not an idiot — a criminal. We all should have listened more closely to you and understood better what you have in your heads. In your heads and in your TV sets. We made a terrible mistake by overlooking it. By changing the subject with our grandmothers to recipes, to the weather, to knitting, to “you should be having kids by now” — so that we could stay friendly. Instead of dealing with what you have in your heads. That's one of our crimes.

(Draft. Not sent.)

“In two months, the Russian army killed twice as many people in Mariupol than the fascists in two years of occupation during the Second World War.” – Mayor of Mariupol

YOU: E-MAIL *(to Grandma)*

Okay. A balanced and mature email in which you explain in detail and with convincing arguments why Russia is to blame for what happened in Eastern Ukraine over the last 8 years, that it was Russia who supplied weapons, sent soldiers without insignia, sponsored and whipped up local warlords only to later get rid of them, carried out an information war, blew up and destroyed with tanks and Grad rocket launchers... And about what happened on May 2, 2014, in Odesa with links to the BBC's investigation. And about how Russia placed a veto on sending peacekeeping forces 11 times. How in 8 years you never once heard a peep from your grandma about her concerns for the children of Donbas, until now... How in all of 2021 in Eastern Ukraine 15 civilians died. Less than on an average day in today's war. You don't forget to mention Georgia, Abkhazia, Syria, Belarus, Chechnya and, while you're at it, the Beslan terrorist attack, the sinking of the Kursk submarine, the Nord-Ost terrorist attack, and the apartment bombings, putin's elevation to tsar while the intelligence agencies orchestrated terrorist attacks, along with putin's agents all over the world, the butchers in the Wagner Group and so on, and so on... You lose your cool... No, this is a restrained email.

Perhaps you really did find enough strength and concentration within yourself to write such a balanced, calm, barely hysterical email. Or perhaps you didn't find enough strength and concentration.

YOU: E-MAIL *(to Grandma)*

PS ...then again, all of this is pointless. I long ago became convinced of your superpower that lets you whitewash yourself and stigmatize everyone else — back when Dad committed

murder. It's understandable, it's a very powerful defense mechanism. Moreover, it's a remarkable genealogical trait inherent in the majority of residents of the territory in question.

GALINA ANDREEVNA

Don't lose your mind, <your name> dear, there's no need. (I'm referring to your post.) I'm still here and I have but one dream: to live to see the hydra's death...

YOU

I understand. It's just that it turns out the hydra has a million heads.

GALINA ANDREEVNA

And I keep yearning for the counteroffensive Arestovych promised... literally with tears in my eyes.

YOU

I also yearn for the counteroffensive, though not without fear, because if anyone's going to use civilians as human shields, it's the Russian army, and they'll do it from head to toe.

YOU

And the Russian army probably has lots of horrible things up its sleeve. But yes, every liberated village is already a source of joy. There are plenty in Kharkiv Oblast already.

YOU: E-MAIL (*to Grandma*)

PPS And if/when this Russian colossus collapses (and it will collapse), don't say that people who went to protests and wished for its demise are to blame. We wished for it to live (maybe that was a mistake too). And it won't be because of the "collective West." Which, by the way, tolerated its crimes for so many years — out of a desire for cheap gas, convenience and simple inertia. The Russian colossus will collapse because of your tsars in the Kremlin, because of your beloved "strong hand" that did nothing but jerk off that execrable imperial Ego and nuclear warheads...

Granted, the fate of Russia and our fate don't matter anymore. Or they matter only in the context of repentance and unpaid retribution.

~~(Draft. Not sent.)~~

(Sent.)

GALINA ANDREEVNA

There's another question: how long can someone live in hate? I'm already at my limit, and yet there's still so much ahead. And I truly hate them. To the point of hysteria. I'm at the end of my tether, basically. And that feeling that I'm a hostage. I try not to let it show in front of my students...

YOU: E-MAIL (*to Grandma*)

PPPS But Grandma how is it that you became *so* disciplined in all that?

VICTOR SKOLVENKO (*not a clue; some comment under one of your posts*)

What victory for the Ukraine what are you talking about ? Think about it is it possible to defeat a nuclear power militarily ? Of course not . Russia has the second strongest army in the world if not the strongest . So what victory for the Ukraine could you possibly think of .

GRANDMA

Don't write to me again. You canceled us, relax, we bear you no ill will. We, the 145 million disciplined by our love for Russia, God willing, will endure, and the Ukraine will be ours, just like Chechnya. By the way, China, India, Iran, even Israel, the Middle East and many others are with us. It's easier for us, we have love, and all you have is burning hatred.

паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya

паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya

паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya

У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю. In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven.

YOU

My grandma just wrote to me: "Ukraine will be ours, just like Chechnya."

(to Trisha)

Air raid sirens activated in every oblast of Ukraine.

YOU

My grandma just wrote to me: "Ukraine will be ours, just like Chechnya."

(to DANA Paris)

Odesa: reports of strong explosions.

YOU

"Ukraine will be ours, just like Chechnya."

- my grandma just wrote that to me.

(to Seva Andrukhev)

Two explosions in Kyiv Oblast.

DANA Paris

Fuck

There are also explosions in Kyiv itself!

TRISHA

fuck. sending hugs.

While we sort through the information about the explosions, we would like to remind you about the rule of two walls.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

"Hell is empty, and all the devils are here." As we're well aware.

Khmelnyskyi: reports of explosions.

There are reports that explosions can be heard in Mykolaiv. Stay in your shelters.

SEVA ANDRUKHOV

And that is totally fucked up.

TWITTER

LEVAN M.

Трохи хороших новин. Президент обіцяв 100.000 грн на передовій — президент виконав.

Прошу без політсрачів — просто констатація.

Тепер можу здійснитисвою мрію — одружитися. Кохана дівчина є, кошти на весілля є. Залишилося вийти з Мариуполя живим.

Some good news. The President promised soldiers 100,000 hryvnia — the President delivered.

Please refrain from political shittalking – these are just the facts.

Now I can fulfill my dream – to get married. I have a woman I love, and I have money for the wedding. Now I just have to make it out of Mariupol alive.

10

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

What I regret the most is never going to live near you. Never renting a small studio apartment with a large bed in the center of Kyiv near you and just living. And that despite always knowing I'd be happiest there. But I didn't do it because I didn't think I had the right to try to become a part of Ukraine. To just up and try to make my dream come true like there's nothing to it. To cling to a dream.

To a country

that will

be able

to be

free.

To break away.

From that Yoke.

From that Fate.

To become.

Become what? Become what?

Become what?

——— Itself?

I felt that about Ukraine from the very first moment.

Our (“our”) cannibals repeat endlessly, “They built an anti-Russia.” Well, maybe THAT was what I felt then. Although you just built a free country, but freedom is the definition of anti-russia.

Because russia is anti-freedom.

That’s clear. That’s clear.

I felt it.

Even among the muscovite architecture on Khreschatyk — the most colonial of all architectures (do you know the story of how in Warsaw after the war only one city block remained standing downtown? And how at the whim of the USSR they leveled that block to build a f***ing Stalinist high-rise?).

Even among that Stalinist Empire style, even among the post-Soviet post-stigmas in Ukraine — there was no death, but rather anti-death. Life.

Anti-hell.

Anti-jail.

...And so many times I delayed and delayed moving there, deliberately screwed up so they would keep seeing me back on business trips, so I could keep coming back to Kyiv. And then I met you. And then I didn’t need an excuse. My trips back were calculated and inevitable.

(In chronological order: first I fell in love with Ukraine. And only later — with you.)

And — by the way — for four, almost five years, I watched it become more and more beautiful despite everything. Despite us tormenting its east.

The first time I visited, I was ready to get on my knees before every column. Because in 2017 every column in the center of Kyiv still had an improvised monument to those who died for Freedom. Who died for independence. Who died for Ukraine. Who died fighting against that monstrous, slimy mold spreading itself across my homeland. That medieval clusterfuck my homeland decided to drown in, squirting fountains of liquid shit from its mouths with abandon. (I'm writing horrible things, but so be it.)

Improvised monuments: photographs of young men and sometimes women tied to trees with ribbons. Candles left burning by the roots. Ukraine was breaking away.

But I didn't think I had the right to become a part of it, no.

The wonderful Russia of the future is a utopia. The wonderful Ukraine of the future is almost here.

What right do I have?..... Maybe that's also very Russian (weakness)? You would say: "You're behaving like a Muscovite." With your vitality, you would just take and take — without any tortured pondering. (You can take like no one else can... but that's not what I'm talking about.) You would just spin life around whichever way suits you best. But I... I never even told you about my dream about my dream of doing that.

.....It wouldn't make me Ukrainian, of course, but at least — in the end — I would have faced the war there —

where I should have faced it.

"Murdered, shot, tortured, burnt bodies of civilians."

In Bucha the exhumation of people killed during the Russian occupation is coming to an end.

Over half a million Ukrainians have been forcibly taken to Russia. Of those, 121,000 are children. The destination for those taken from Ukraine is Sakhalin and other impoverished regions of Russia. They will not be allowed to leave for at least 2 years.

The occupiers are extracting the bodies of Mariupol residents from under the ruins of the drama theatre and dumping them into a 300-meter trench.

Для нових обстрілів окупанти пишуть на снарядах «Христос Воскрес!».

For their latest strikes the occupiers are writing “Christ is Risen!” on their artillery shells.

Security camera footage. The moment one of the rockets hit a residential building in Odesa.
April 24

5 dead. 18 injured.

PRESIDENT ZELENSKY’S EVENING ADDRESS

Серед убитих тримісцева дитинка, дівчинка. Чим вона загрожувала Росії? Схоже, що вбивати дітей – це просто нова національна ідея Російської Федерації.

Among those killed was a three-month-old baby, a little girl. How was she a threat to Russia? It looks like killing children is the new national idea of the Russian Federation.

Valeria’s husband had gone out for groceries and upon returning realized he had lost his family.

Valeria’s social media page contained pleas to stop Putin, who “kills Ukrainians with ballistic missiles.”

The number of casualties from a Russian airstrike on a residential building in Odesa has risen to 6.

COMMS INTERCEPT

HE (RUSSIAN SOLDIER): A mother with two children was walking along, and our guys shot her right in front of her children. Shot her dead.

SHE (HIS WIFE, PROBABLY): Well, yeah, of course, she’s an enemy too.

YOU

I stopped keeping track of how much time has gone by, and of what point in time we’re at now. Remember how Gogol put it? In “Diary of a Madman,” the protagonist keeps a careful diary, and then, after his madness sets: “Marchember 86th. Between day and night.” “No date. The day had no date.” “Madrid, February 30.” “January of the same year, following

after February.” “I don’t remember the date. And there was no month. Devil knows what the hell it was.” (Spidery deafness, spidery deafness, spidery deafness)

SAUL GOODMAN

Any Russian jingoist who claims fascism is alive in Ukraine and not in Russia should go outside with a sign that says “No fascism!” in Moscow and in Kyiv. Where he gets punished for it is where fascism thrives.

There are unconfirmed reports that a fragment of the True Cross of Christ was on board the sunken Moskva cruiser.

YOU

“The moon is usually made in Hamburg; and it is made atrociously.” That’s from Gogol’s “Diary of a Madman.”

ANSWERS on Mail.ru. QUESTION: Why didn’t a fragment of the True Cross of Christ help the Moskva cruiser? 13 user answers.

YOU

Паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця... У наших степах снігу більше... Palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya... In our steppes there is more snow...

Don’t look at me like that — I haven’t completely lost my mind.

“Evacuate while we can still take you!” – Head of Luhansk Oblast. FSB Director Patrushev: “The West has created an empire of lies bent on destroying Russia.” This is Alisa. She’s four years old. She’s spent the last month and a half living through the bombing in a bunker beneath the Azovstal plant. Her mom is a combat medic. Nearly a thousand civilians are trapped in Mariupol. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov announced a new goal for the war in Ukraine: Moscow wants to “free the world from the West.” “The collective West is interfering with the natural march of history,” he declared. A 14-year-old girl who was raped

in Bucha by 5 Russian soldiers is pregnant and has decided to keep the baby. Kharkiv: a solitary senior citizen, who remains in the city under constant bombing, hung a sheet of paper in the hallway on the door to his apartment where he writes down each passing date. He just wants others to know that he lived through another night. This is Savelli. He's 10 years old. He's standing by the grave of his father, who died defending Irpin. "That bastard runt will grow up and take revenge. Why let him live?! Don't you think those sub-humans in Odessa have bred more than enough spawn? They must all be exterminated. 'Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock.'" — from a Russian public page. "Nuclear war is unacceptable. That is Moscow's position in principle," stressed Lavrov. Lavrov claims the risk of nuclear war is real. The Russian Foreign Ministry accused Israel... of supporting a neo-Nazi regime. Playing a recorder flute, a little girl from Dnipro has collected nearly 5,000 hryvnia that will go towards purchasing bulletproof vests for Ukraine's defenders. A humanitarian corridor out of Mariupol will open today. In Russia the Children's World store chain is selling toy soldiers in jars. Some of the soldiers are missing arms and legs. The humanitarian corridor did not open today as planned. The occupiers were unable to honor the ceasefire agreement. Putin announced a guarantee that the lives of everyone who willingly enters captivity in Mariupol will be spared. This is Timur Mitskevich, a young man who in 2020 was severely beaten by law enforcement in Minsk and had to be put into a coma. He was 16 at the time. Criminal charges were filed against him, and his mother died, but he was able to escape from the hospital and flee Belarus. Now he fights for Ukraine. The Head of Chechnya boasted that his troops took a town deep in the territory of the Luhansk People's Republic. Meanwhile, coffins are being unloaded next to a military hospital in Sevastopol. In Mariupol nearly 2,000 men have been held in "filtration camps" for the last month. He was born in 2014, the year the war began. He miraculously survived in Mariupol. His mother died in March. When asked what he would wish for, he replied:

"For Mom to come back to life."

"What else?"

"I don't need anything else."

What do you think this man is doing in a dugout? He is a professor at Uzhhorod University. In lulls between attacks, he remotely gives his students lectures. A member of the Russian parliament has proposed making the flag of the USSR the new flag of Russia. Out of 14 buses taking people out of Mariupol into territory controlled by Ukraine, only 3 reached their destination. The fate of the other 11 is unknown.

"My wife, son and daughter are all dead. Only my grandson Misha is still alive." Russian troops shot at a car the boy's family was in trying to leave Mykolaiv Oblast. He was saved by his mother, who covered him with her body. The woman was killed by a bullet to the head. Misha's grandfather Vladimir: "It's an army of barbarians. Not because they killed my entire family. The worst part is that I'm not the only one. Today there are thousands like me."

Yet another heinous atrocity committed by the occupiers: in one of the liberated Ukrainian cities, the orcs killed a young mother and then used adhesive tape to tie her child to her dead body with a mine between them. When people tried to free the boy, the mine went off.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov shared this story with reporters in a press briefing. #ArmUkraineNow

12

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU

How, how, how could you rub it in my face in the first days of the war to hurt me and push me away that I was “interested in Ukraine” because for me it’s personal (i.e., because of you)?

Maybe you don’t even exist — just as I don’t exist. Just as the pre-war past no longer exists. Maybe my sub/conscious constructed you because I needed to aim my love at something. Since I lack the birthright to love all of Ukraine (out loud, at least), I needed something to build a story around. I, the one “writing” this. Per-so-ni-fy... Have I told you that sometimes I feel like I’m just letters on a screen? As someone’s letters, as someone’s construction, on behalf of which the Gaze focuses on something in this sea of fire... (on you, for example) but where I do not exist.

(which means maybe you do not exi...

which means maybe you are no...)

No, no, no.

You are. You are. You live.

And your sculptures — are — I can find them on Google.

And what you’re doing with your hands in this war exists twofold. Even if you’re making deaths.

How could I write that, my love?

You are, you exist, and I feel that with all of my being.

YOU

But you, you, you... You, Vasya, former boy and now with a big gut, shortness of breath and three church-going children, you, with whom I made “art” in the Inspiration Ensemble back when you were a little boy, you — find a seat in your fucking trolley and drive off a cliff in it. A former boy, infected with the old age of an old man. Because tens of thousands of Ukrainians are dying in the real world.

And on the notion that otherwise tens/hundreds/millions/billions of thousands of Russians will die (see, I know your “rhetoric” in advance and by heart, and it makes me want to throw up) — you heard that from some rapacious, bloodthirsty old-timer, Papa Yaga, whose phobias and obsessions are currently being documented by psychiatrists all over the world. A rapacious, bloodthirsty old-timer speaking through the mouths of his monstrous, cowardly and bloody avatars. Doppelgangers, clockwork executioners, clockwork executioners. And you, and those like you, all of you are also his avatars. (And if you want to bring up the threat of NATO expansion, Finland and Sweden send their regards.) And the fact that you know pseudo-intellectual words and concepts from the previous century like the fucking trolley problem only adds to your guilt. You’re not some poor-in-spirit-and-body drunkard from a vox pop interview on Current Time TV. You’re not some poor drunk howling “Putin is God” while he scrounges for booze money. You had every opportunity to think for yourself and open your eyes. Opportunities, resources and privileges. And I’ll say just one thing to you: no one is condemned at birth to be on the side of evil. In absolutely every situation, even if you’re in solitary confinement about to be executed, you can leave the side of evil. (And I’m not talking about emigration. I’m talking about something else entirely.) About the side, the side, the side of evil. See Ilya Kabakov’s total installation *The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment*.

(sent to Vasya Inspiration Ensemble at 02:43 in the spring of the same year, following after February)

YOU

Sorry, my love. People keep distracting me.

Here’s what I wanted to ask: remember how on Bolshoy Zhytomirsky you sat me down on the sturdy kitchen table that was just the right height and gave me time to wrap my legs around your torso? Now imagine: we could do the same thing metaphysically, and you could wear my image like a bulletproof vest (or like a second one). At war, I mean. And I’d just press against you and rest my head on your shoulder...

Can we do that? Can we do that?

KIR

It’s high time we dropped bombs on them to spare our boys.

BRIGANTINA

Are you crazy? Think of the children.

MAHAMED DAGESTAN

fuck your khokhol children, now we're gonna exterminate you all like hitler exterminated the jews. all khokhols belong in graves.

The Russians are parking Grad multiple rocket launchers by Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, the largest in Europe.

YOU

I took a screenshot of the green online status dot and set it as the lock screen on my phone. Except it's not your green dot.

But I pretend it is.

It fills up the entire screen. And it's so stretched that you can see all the pixels, almost like it's 8-bit.

Like a marvelous malachite moon.

YOU

What I want most is to see you online.

YOU

.....UPD Scratch that, and please don't think I'm selfish :) What I want most is long-range multiple-launch rocket systems delivered to Ukraine. And then second place is seeing you online. Did the joke land? Or did it fall flat?

YOU

As for Russia, I don't know what it is anymore.

Actually, I do. I'm afraid I do. And I'm afraid to say it.

On May 9 victory parades were held all over Russia. However, many cities canceled their air shows and the 'doomsday plane' did not fly over Moscow after all.

PHOTO: American President Joe Biden signs lend-lease military aid bill for Ukraine.
Caption: "Thanks for the victory, Grandpa!"

9 May 2022

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

Lend-lease....

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#AlwaysArmUkraine

CLASSMATE GROUP CHAT IN THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL NETWORK VKONTAKTE

OLENKA

I've been in a lousy mood since this morning.

MIKHA

It helps to watch less TV. *Smile emoji.*

OLENKA

I don't watch any, but I end up listening to it unwillingly when I'm in the same room as my spouse. *Facepalm emoji, face with tears of joy emoji.* It starts with 60 Minutes on Russia-1, then the news and then Evening with Vladimir Solovyov. And I'm not allowed to speak while they're on. *Grinning face with sweat emoji.*

MIKHA

Sounds rough. No freedom of speech :)

OLENKA

Face with tears of joy emoji. and during the commercials he can't keep his mouth shut and misses the beginning and gives me s**t saying it's cos of me. *Face with tears of joy emoji.*

OLENKA

Before if he missed anything he'd switch to Russia 24 and watch it all over again *Facepalm emoji, face with tears of joy emoji (3x).*

OLENKA

Then I start talking to the cat and he starts yelling at me.

YOU

Greetings, all!

I've never written anything here. Pardon me for infringing upon your idyll, but. But.

Here's what I find fascinating (about those in the we'll-never-know-the-full-truth-anyway-and-I-personally-try-to-stay-out-of-politics category):

You don't even have to read the military briefings or analysis — it's enough to just watch how our president has taken to mumbling to realize that things aren't going any better in the second phase of the war than in the first (the one that was supposed to end with capturing Kyiv in three days). That is, the murder of infants is going as smoothly as before, but the military successes aren't looking too hot. And as soon as Ukraine finally receives heavy weapons, the 1500-kilometer front line will turn into a real meZZ. Granted, that's already a bit of analysis — and we don't go there. "We'll never know the full truth anyway." Let's go back to the mumbling. If he's already mumbling like that now, before the lend-lease weapons arrive, can you imagine what'll happen once they do? And you can imagine that murdering and raping won't be enough anymore — he has nowhere to retreat to, he doesn't want to go to The Hague, not to mention hell. At least not solo. Ay, there's the rub. The million-dollar question. When that gout-ridden dodderer finally launches a nuclear strike in an act of desperation, do you plan to go on repeating that we should respect those in power and that they know more than we do? Or is there a limit?

PS My apologies. The question is rhetorical.

Air raid sirens ring out in most oblasts of Ukraine.

YOU leave the chat.

YOU: FACEBOOK POST. FOR: *SPECIFIC FRIENDS*

Long read. When the young Mandelstam, an acmeist, was asked to define acmeism, he replied that it was “a yearning for world culture.” A yearning for world culture — that’s what my Russia was to me. A wild field from the heart of which they (those I love so dearly) dreamed of change. Under the executioner’s swinging axe. Among the snow-covered ridges of the Gulag. Until they stopped dreaming.

They — those I love so dearly — were held captive by Russia (even many of those who emigrated, because it’s impossible to pull it out of yourself). They were victims of Russia. And they are the best thing Russia has given the world. And the best thing Russia has given itself.

I love the victims of Russia — is that how I should put it?

And I don’t want to betray them. Them in particular.

Those who yearned for world culture

for justice

for freedom

— from inside a chthonic country.

Mutants in its fields, in the wilderness of its taiga.

Chekhov wrote about “squeezing out the slave in oneself drop by drop.” That experience of squeezing it out. It’s a daily effort, well-documented and interpreted with the help of art. That was the very Russia that was worth all the...

Then again, that’s not Russia, is it?

And Mandelstam scurried with his lips along the darkness.

And his wife, Nadezhda...

Several months after his arrest Nadezhda woke up one day and wrote, “Osi is no more.” Up until then she had always felt he still existed. Over a period of several months. In the endless Russian cold, in the endless Russian snow, endlessly murdered, endlessly murdered, endlessly murdered.

And then that horrible “Osi is no more.”

POST AUDIENCE CHANGED TO: *ONLY ME*

YOU (*to Ignat*)

Good thing it's already warm outside, my dearest!

How good it is that it's already warm.

ARINA (*in VKontakte*)

Your tirade in our classmate group chat caused quite a stir. I take it that's what you wanted? Well, you pulled it off. As for us not knowing everything – that's still the case, and we will probably never know everything. But an acquaintance of mine proffered the following notion: there's "us" and there's everyone else. When you don't know whose side the truth is on, you choose your side and stick to it. And you defend your own through thick and thin. You support them and help them even if you don't approve of their actions. I choose our government's side, although I realize that they're wrong about a lot of things.

YOU (*to Arina*)

Ooh la la. Thanks for the clarification. Except it wasn't an "acquaintance of yours" who said that, but the long-dead and thus unaccountable actor Sergei Bodrov from the movie *Brother* by the also-dead director Balabanov. An actor whom most people in Russia can't distinguish from his character, a gangster, romantic and thug — truly a national hero. He said it in an interview that one of the nameless mechanics in the propaganda machine pulled out of oblivion at the start of the war and made viral. If you only knew how many times I've heard that already. From so many lips. And you know, all of "you" get into a rage and accuse "us" of not hearing you out to get your opinion. As though that opinion were independent and yours. And not something mass-produced on a conveyor belt... Poor, dead Balabanov — if only he knew. He who filmed *Cargo 200*, the most authentic depiction of Russia...

ARINA

Maybe, but regardless, it's important for me that I live in accordance with the rules and laws of my country, and I always have. I've never been to any protests and so on. You could say I've kept away from politics and focused on my own affairs. And you know, not even my relatives in the Ukraine started hating us, although they probably have more reasons to.

YOU (*to Arina*)

What you're saying about living "in accordance with the law" is remarkable. Just so we're clear, the fundamental laws in Russia are in its Constitution, where certain things are written out like the number of presidential terms, freedom of speech and lack of censorship (and not a 15-year sentence for fake news about the war), freedom of assembly (spoiler alert: going to protests is lawful, what's unlawful is beating the shit out of protesters with truncheons and torturing them in prison). But that's neither here nor there, just domestic issues.

ARINA

There's a trend: in Moscow and Petersburg there's always more liberals and opposition, whereas in the rest of the country it's the opposite. I haven't come across anyone who thinks and behaves the way you do in many years (I see your social media). And my social circle came about on its own.

YOU (*to Arina*)

And yet what does a foreign, sovereign nation have to do with that? Okay, you might believe in Nazis, in the liberation of Donbas, that the 8-year war wasn't Russia's fault — let's say you believe all that, sure, okay. But the speaker of the Russian parliament is now explicitly saying that the goal is to reclaim ancestral Russian lands. Is that fine by you? War for "ancestral Russian lands"? Genocide for "ancestral Russian lands"? That's cool with you? You all say "we'll never know anything," and you all say "I always try to stay away from politics." (They always go together, one after the other). Do you not see the inextricable contradiction? If you close your eyes and ears, of course you'll never know. But then why brag about it later with your mouths?

If that's what you're going for, you should admit that you're not citizens and admit that you're unqualified ...

ARINA

Half of the "horrible" events that the whole world shouted about turned out not to be true, and much of what they didn't believe us about turned out to be true.

YOU (*to Arina*)

I really like your quotation marks around the word "horrible"! There's something original to them, I'll give you that. I even have a feeling that they'll lodge themselves in my head. It'd be interesting to know who informed you that those "horrible" things turned out not to be true. That's some exclusive information you've got there.

ARINA

But what I can't wrap my head around at all is how people can squabble over their political views. That had never happened to me before...

YOU

A dazzling Turk with a goatee like Renoir's in his youth speaking impeccable Oxford English (jealous?) approached me in a café and asked me whether I still love Russia in spite of everything.

ИГНАТ...

I was about to start babbling something about... About what? About inveterate colonialism? About how whenever you travel east across Russia you realize that there is no Russia? That in its place is a set of colonies glued together with blood? Or about something else: how I lived in a student dorm with Yulia from Khakassia, beautiful like Catherine Zeta-Jones, and sometimes when she was drunk, she'd practice pagan rituals. A Buddhist from Kalmykia and a Russian Orthodox shaman from the Yamal Peninsula were both in love with her.

Yulia would say that the worst bringer of bad luck was leaving a knife on the table. Or on any other visible surface.

Once, the three of them got together and, chatting over two 1.5-liter bottles of beer, the topic of ways to cut up a ram arose (Yulia and the boy from Kalmykia started the conversation). I remember that Yulia insisted on the importance of making an incision in the ram while it was still alive, reaching in and squeezing something. To keep the bile out of the meat. The boy from Kalmykia had a different opinion. I can't recall what it was. And the boy from Yamal just sat there frowning in silence until he launched into a monologue on how to cut up a reindeer. How?

All three of them were speaking from experience.

I'm not a vegetarian. I don't have the right to judge them.

And I don't judge them.

But it's so grievous to be part of that. And I feel such grief over it all.

.

Aha! I've noticed that I can't stand seeing the Russian flag on my monitor that indicates the Russian keyboard layout is on. I can't. It howls at me about Empire from the top right corner. About a great and powerful third-rate empire. About my identity, for fuck's sake. About my guilt.

.

Aha! And if I close my eyes and picture its map — the map that shows its federal subjects... I invariably picture the borders between the subjects of the Russian Federation as rivers of frozen blood. The blood of the conquered peoples and tribes. That's why in the Kremlin they're so afraid of Russia rising out of its medieval ice age. The borders will thaw, and it'll all come gushing out...

.

Aha! And in the Komi-Permyak Okrug under Stalin and knowing it could cost them their lives, people still went to the sacred groves to pray.

.

Aha! My dad was in prison for murder and fervently supports “Putin’s foreign ‘policy,’ ‘thanks’ to which ‘everyone fears us’” (he started saying that long before the war). And before the war, before the war (we haven’t spoken in a year), before the war my dad shared some prison folklore with me: under Stalin men would go to a hole in the wall separating the male and female sections of the prison with a loaf of bread, but not just any loaf of bread — it had been soaked in water and frozen out in the cold. I’ve read a lot about the Gulag, but I’ve yet to come across this particular fact. While a woman ate the loaf (and one can only assume it takes a very long time to eat a loaf that’s been frozen into a brick), the men would fuck her. (If I’m not mistaken, he used the more delicate phrase, “they each had a go at her.” If I’m not mistaken.)

.
And nothing is forgotten. No one is forgotten. All the prison guards got bonuses and government-sponsored apartments.

.
Aha! Maybe that didn’t happen, maybe it’s just a legend. Technically, it’s hard to believe it’s true. But what is certain is that today’s inmates relish and verbally spread that “fantasy.” About access to a satisfying, warm female bosom in exchange for frozen bread for frozen bread for frozen bread.

.
Aha! Frozen blood, frozen bread.

.
“Do you still love Russia in spite of everything?” asks the dazzling Turk. Do you stillDo you stillDo you stillDo you still...

The Donetsk People’s Republic and Syria have agreed to strengthen cultural ties. Russia’s flagship IT company Yandex has stopped showing national borders on its online maps. They claim their task is “to display the world around us.” “In Moscow we saw Lena – my best friend once upon a time. She’s convinced that *Putin is right* and that soon we won’t need passports because Russia will be everywhere. Lena is an IT worker, designer and lesbian.” — taken from Facebook feed. From a comms intercept: the occupiers want to demine Mariupol by sending captive Ukrainians out into the minefields. According to Ukrainian intelligence the occupation authorities in Melitopol are frantically searching for additional freezers and industrial refrigerators to store bodies. The repurposed meat-packing plant is already full. Police arrested a priest in St. Petersburg for the phrase: “Those who instigated aggression will not be in heaven.” He is being denied access to a lawyer. During his speech, Putin will proclaim a “new global order” — Russian media. The Russian parliament has hinted at the possibility of Dmitry Medvedev becoming president of Ukraine. Russian singer Oleg Gazmanov retweeted a photo of a gang in El Salvador and insisted to his followers that Russia is at war with them in Ukraine. Abortions were banned under Stalin, which is why in 1952 Vladimir Putin was born. “We’re against war, so we support the special operation” — a

poster. In Belarus teenagers are being taught to shoot from shovels. The commanders of the orcs are selling their soldiers' rations, which is why the latter continue to eat dogs. Straw dolls with Putin's face have appeared in shrines in Japan with a note that reads: "Pray for the obliteration of evil." Putin's bodyguards from the Federal Protection Service collect his feces and urine. All the Russian president's excrement is returned to Russia. The logo for Tasty, Period, which replaced McDonald's after the fast-food chain exited Russia, was stolen from a Portuguese company that manufactures animal feed. A new target for Russian rockets could be Kyiv's government district or its historical center. Reports claim that a Russian flag has been planted at the bottom of the Black Sea. A new low has been reached. The Russians were planning to issue the residents of Kyiv Oblast passports... of the USSR.

YOU

"Do you still love Russia in spite of everything?"

Do you stillDo you stillDo you still...

YOU

For some reason I sense you're there. In Russia. Inexplicably. And it's terrifying. I sense that they took you somewhere deep into Russia and cut you off from your native land. They take people captive, after all. And they take them far, far into that continental vastness. To that part where prisons and labor camps birthed cities.

See? You and I are always on different sides of that border. That boundary between past and future. That blasted boundary.

YOU

"Do you still love Russia in spite of everything?"

Do you stillDo you stillDo you still...

I love Mandelstam, who scurries with his lips along the darkness. Along its infinitude and horror.

I love his wife.

I really do love her so much, you know?

If someone asked me what I'd like to salvage from Russia — just one thing — then it's possible that now I'd say: her image.

Why? Well, do you know what Nadezhda Mandelstam is?

When they arrested Osi, who'd been led to the peak of non-being, genius and despair, she knew all his poems by heart. Many of them weren't even written down — though they would have been confiscated anyway. She couldn't even take her own life after they parted. His poems would have been buried alongside her. She treasured them. She took them from one impoverished dwelling to another... For years. And she salvaged them.

That's what she is. The wife, the widow of a poet murdered by his country, with his poems hidden from that country in her head. She lives with that country's heritage in her head. With a heritage that the country would only value as part of the KGB's archives. He scurries with his lips along the darkness. Meyerhold endures having the soles of his feet beaten with rubber straps, NKVD troikas convict him and he's shot in the back of the head against a wall, and those bloody boots, and those bloody boots, and those bloody boots...

And the light — with crooked soles the light stands on my retinas. It stands through the infinite stratum of all those years, centuries. So tell me to my face, star pupil Vasya, you who belabor the trolley problem and manage to write without typos, unlike the majority of your confederates, you former boy infected with the old age of an old man just like the rest of you — tell me to my face what Russia is.

And how very important it is to be on its side.

Talk to me about love and
hate.

The territory of cemeteries in Buryatia's villages is growing. In Ulan-Ude, wakes for soldiers are held in the Lukodrom sports complex. It is the chief regional center for archery, which is very popular in Buryatia. During the ceremonies, children continue their training.

“The children train behind a wall,” writes People of Baikal magazine. “The door to the training hall is only a few meters away from the door through which the coffins are carried out.”

“Everything here reeks of corpses,” noted Tatyana, the mother of one of the children.

YOU

Fine, long story short, here's my answer: from Russia I'd salvage the image of the poet's wife who salvages his poems in her head. (The poet's poems in the poet's wife's head.) That's all I need.

Vivat. Все буде Україна. Everything will be Ukraine.

“У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю” “In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven”

YOU (*to Arina*)

Here’s my penultimate question, which concerns your contraposition of “the whole world” and “us”? What about us? Are we not part of the world? Wouldn’t you like to be part of the world? For your country to be part of the world? No? Then again, that question is now rhetorical because we missed that opportunity. But Ukraine will — it will be part of a large world moving towards some sort of harmony and justice despite its unsolvable problems — again, provided there’s no nuclear war. As for the question regarding whether you would support a nuclear war, please just give yourself an answer. You don’t have to tell me.

YOU delete your account on the Russian social network VKontakte.

YOU (*to Seva Andrukhov*)

Where’s the damn lend-lease? Christ. Why aren’t they sending the fucking lend-lease?

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#AlwaysArmUkraine

FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH RUSSIAN NAVAL INFANTRYMAN SERGEY S.

We really need support here and we need to know that we have all of Russia behind us. And when the guys sent us the song “We’re Sinking Our Teeth into Mariupol,” we felt like we’d grown wings. Kudos to whoever wrote the song. It’s about us. It was like a halo lit up over my head after I heard it. We’re doing something glorious here. The whole world, together — Christians, Muslims, Buddhists. We’re saving Russia. That thought alone keeps us in shape and won’t let us rest. The Lord respects us.

<...>

When we moved the civilians out of the city, they didn’t even have the strength to rejoice. The eyes of lots of them were black and hollow. Looking at them was like looking into an abyss. I reckon our boys saw that same lack of strength in the prisoners of the concentration camps when they liberated them. Lots of them were on the edge of madness or a nervous

breakdown. Old people with sores all over died from the stress as soon as they left their basements.

That's how things are going for us. On my deathbed I'll remember how we took Mariupol.

YOU

Ever since I was little, I've been told that it's wrong to hate. That hate is unproductive and harmful. Even that hate causes cancer. (Sadly, in the subject, and not the object of the hate)

Well. I'm ditching that concept along with all the rest.

Now it's official.

I hate them all SO MUCH ...

S

O

M

U

C

H

.....

I want:

For his cheeks to be skewered with hooks and for him to be hung up by his notorious Cheshire Cat grin. Crucified from the corners of his mouth.

I want a tube to be stuck in his abdomen and for the other end to be put in his mouth.

And a pump.

Let the fluids from his gallbladder flow into his mouth while he hangs there.

(That's how they farm bile from bears in Siberia. It's a valuable product in pharmacology)

I once saw a fruit bat eat an apple. It hung upside down from the finger of a keeper I know and after biting off a piece it used its muscles to push it up into its stomach.

So let's have putin hang upside down like that and use all his fucking muscles to push pieces of radioactive strontium into his rotten guts. One after another, one after another, one after another.

Wasn't it Odin, the Norse god, who nailed himself from the tree Yggdrasil for several days to discover the runes? I want two tactical combat angels — the two most gorgeous female snipers in the ZSU — to nail him to a Kyiv chestnut tree to discover that most infinite and absolute Shitshow.

Does that sound like a parody?

I don't want it to be a parody. I want it to be hell itself.

Every day he's in hell

I want a Russian soldier to appear before him.

One of the 37,000 who already met their doom — every last one.

And to do to Putin

what they did to him.

Like this soldier:

Skinny and charred, just like a chicken roasted over an open fire at a dacha squeezed into a cheap rotisserie basket. Whoever was cooking suddenly heard his friends yell, "Come on, have a drink with us! You can leave it for a minute. Hurry up, the vodka's getting warm!" So he steps away for a minute. His friends pour vodka into disposable plastic cups, and a redheaded girl says, "Chin-chin!" It's Dasha, with whom he couldn't get it up back in November because he was so nervous. She laughed at him (the skank) and she spread the gossip (that bitch), Dasha with those lips of hers says, "Look the other person in the eye when you clink glasses."

(so fucking clever)

He goes wobbling back to the chicken and — ah, shit — its skin is all black, popped and blistered —

fuck, now I get why they say leap years are unlucky.

Picture that soldier, with his skin a black husk, and his gums charred behind lips that are simply gone.

His eyes are blue. It's easy to see because one of his eyelids in the photograph has been lifted by the forensic pathologist's index finger in a blue (same as the eye) rubber glove.

So on that day in hell Putin dies the exact same death as that soldier.

Come to think of it, I think his eyes were also blue before they lost their color. That is, if you consider it possible for him to have eyes.

Whatever that means.

So there. Once.

Moving on.

Like this soldier:

Just a patchwork of flesh and rags in a body bag, just skin and meat and clothes mixed into a slop. In a half-unzipped body bag. If you make an effort and focus your eyesight, you can make out a foot in the photo (completely *separate* from the formless innards) — him too.

Let Putin croak once like that soldier did.

Once, one time is enough. We're already at 37,000 this Marchember X, and the worst is yet to come. Everyone should have their turn. And then they can start again from the beginning.

And this one with his ears eaten. Let him croak like this one with his ears eaten — once.

And like this one, with neat patches of white mold on his face and ginger stubble that grew after his death — for some reason I think it must have. Let him croak like this soldier.

Like this soldier.

And that soldier.

And that soldier.

And for his body to grow back each morning. To sprout up. On his bones, gnawed clean by puppies. (Like this one, whose bones were gnawed clean below the waist by puppies, but with the combat boots still on, the skeleton sticking out of the boots.) And the plump puppies go on licking the bones greedily in the photo (I can send you the link).

And let it not be just him, but his entire entourage.

If it's parody you want, then it's parody you'll get.

After all, he himself is the epitome of parody in everything he is. The bloodiest of parodies.

(But to die the death of Ukrainians — nah, fuck him.)

Go on hitting that Like button guys, go on hitting that Like button.

Go on with your fantastic fucking lives and write on Facebook that:

that what?

that what?

“I think right now it’s particularly important to capture every cause for joy and tenderness. And to use any excuse for expressing love. Frankly, we should always do that, but today in particular.” That’s one example of the sort of thing you write. Of course you do.

The assault on Severodonetsk continues. 12 civilians have died in the shelling. The enemy is close to the city.

Speaking of.

I had a dream about Tinder with those soldiers.

You open Tinder and you see photos of dead Russian soldiers. Thanatos-Tinder. And you swipe, and swipe, and swipe.

No date.

The day had no date.

May 20, 2022

“Well, that’s that. Thanks for the shelter, Azovstal – place of my death and my life.” Azov combatant Dmitry Kazatsky, call sign “Orestes,” shared what are likely to be his last photos from Azovstal.

The General Staff of the ZSU report that “the Mariupol garrison has fulfilled its combat mission and its commanders have been ordered to save the lives of personnel.” The President of Ukraine expressed his hope that with the help of the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross all the Ukrainian soldiers currently in Russian captivity will return home alive.

YOU

I don't know if you know — at some point at the start of the war Ukraine declared that the mothers of Russian soldiers could go retrieve their captured sons and take them home.

YOU

A special offer.

YOU

And you know, from the looks of it, no one went. They said no one went. And that's that.

YOU

Nevzorov writes: "In the First Chechen War all over the front line you could find quiet, anguished women from Russia whom the Chechens would leave alone. They would wander along the foxholes and forests digging through the rubble. They were looking for the dead. Upon finding yet another corpse, they would inspect it thoroughly. Without flinching they would peel open the scorched uniform and pull the dog tag off the rotting flesh. They were looking for their sons. There was a very large number of them and over time they became an ordinary part of the war."

Whereas these mothers didn't even go.

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#AlwaysArmUkraine

Air raid sirens ring out in every oblast of Ukraine.

YOU

Facebook just suggested that I celebrate 2 years of friendship with Lev Cherezov. Remember? You reluctantly introduced us in a little bar on Mikhailovska, though later we realized that he and I were working together on the same project, so we were already indirectly acquainted. Remember? And the three of us realized that Lev realized that you and I were together. Anyway, *that* Lev Cherezov. He's a sniper now. Did you know that?

YOU

...I'm guilty. I wrote to him recently to ask if he'd heard anything about you.

I'm sorry. I only wrote to him — I swear. It was a moment of weakness.

He hasn't heard anything about you.

But he told me that now he's a sniper.

LEV CHEREZOV

Те, що я побачив за цей час, змінило мій світогляд, расширило його, вдихнуло в мене що 30 чи більше життів, та здається, я вже їх с цими подіями всі прожив.

Спочатку я відчув страх. Потім біль. Потім все минуло і лишалася робота. Робота, яку я маю виконувати. Це мій вибір. Я не бачу більше в приціл людей. Я бачу істот, які роблять мені дуже боляче на моїй землі. Цім істотам немає прощення.

Багато крові. Відірвані голови, руки, очі в піску, крики, стогін... Вибухи, взірвані літаки, танки...

Ненависть. Потім робота. Знову ненависть. Потім розпач. Знову роботу.

У нас в гаражі, де роблять підгін зброї, або ремонт, — просто називають ціну «два» або «три вуха» русского окупанта.

What I've seen these last few months has changed my worldview, expanded it, breathed another 30 or more lives into me that I've already lived through with these events.

At first, I felt fear. Then pain. Then it all passed and only work remained. Work I must do. It's my choice. I don't see people in my scope anymore. I see creatures that inflict great pain upon my land. There's no forgiveness for those creatures.

Lots of blood. Heads and arms ripped off, eyes in the sand, screams, sobs... Explosions, wrecked planes, tanks...

Hate. Then work. Back to hate. Then despair. Back to work.

In the garage where they modify or repair our guns, they just name their price as "two" or "three ears" of a Russian occupier.

LEV CHEREZOV

Правильно, що ти поїхала з мордору. Жаль, що не залишилася в Києві раніше.

Коли Ігнат вийде на зв'язок – йому привіт.

You were right to leave Mordor. It's a shame you didn't stay in Kyiv earlier.

When Ignat gets in touch with you, give him my regards.

YOU

Shame. Shame. It really is a shame.

YOU

I will.

I'll let him know. Without fail.

As soon as he gets in touch — without fail. *Обов'язково.*

(You finally learned how to write that word correctly in Ukrainian.)

YOU

...But besides that, my dearest, forgive me: you now have a doppelganger.

Even if that evokes Russian (anti-Russian?) literature way too strongly. But what can be done. But what can I do.

YOU

And so.

YOU

His name is Oleksandr.

And I don't remember where he popped up. He wrote comments under my posts on the shutting down of independent media and human rights organizations, protests, police searches, torture in prisons, legislative "miracles," reposts from people looking for medicine that's not available in Russia, friends being declared foreign agents, arrests, sentences and so on — all this long before the war. He'd just write comments to my posts. From a Ukrainian standpoint. Sometimes it was completely inappropriate. That's what I thought. Later, in the first days of the war, I wrote to him myself.

And so. He's in the ZSU too.

But he's not MIA. On the contrary — he sends me updates.

YOU

He writes to me, and I think of you.

YOU

I think: you could also write to me about the things he tells me.

YOU

If you could write to me.

YOU

He writes to me, and I understand you in a way I never knew before. In a way you never knew about yourself.

OLEKSANDR

You know, I was on watch again at my post less than an hour ago, and the last hour we were only letting ambulances and emergency services through

March 19, 2022

OLEKSANDR

I counted eight ambulances before we were relieved

OLEKSANDR

A residential building was hit

OLEKSANDR

A nine-storey panel building. You can't imagine how close it was to where I was standing at that moment

OLEKSANDR

I don't understand why our side still takes prisoners

OLEKSANDR

I find it incomprehensible

April 4

OLEKSANDR

That's what Irpin looks like now. That's the mildest video

(Video.)

OLEKSANDR

I remember you wrote that you love Kyiv... I was never a fan of the Kyivian sky. I'm a southerner through and through, and where I'm from the sky is just closer, and the stars are brighter. But in Kyiv you can barely see any stars. It's even problematic to see the Perseids in August.

OLEKSANDR

Right now you can see the stars really well. Practically in every part of town

OLEKSANDR

Light pollution is minimal, and there's a starry sky. Beautiful

OLEKSANDR

Except that besides stars sometimes there are also drones and rockets (signal rockets of all three traffic light colors). When you see them, you know a strike is imminent. Not certain, but very likely

OLEKSANDR

It's actually a new sensation: seeing a rocket (not a signal one) fly in your direction. When the whole platoon watches the sky and casually discusses whether or not it's headed for us.

It landed somewhere next to us. But that was today. What will happen tomorrow – not a clue.

April 9

OLEKSANDR

I was just in Irpin. The first two days – under almost constant artillery shelling. After that we went after marauders

OLEKSANDR

The city's gone. Not a single window intact. The dogs have become feral, gnawing the KIAs. We fed them canned dog food from a looted shop so they won't grow accustomed to human meat

OLEKSANDR

Everyone made it out intact

OLEKSANDR

Now I even have (lousy) signal

OLEKSANDR

Intact. But unwashed and with soggy boots

OLEKSANDR

I hate all this

OLEKSANDR

Today I saw the air defense system in action. They intercepted a rocket. And 20 minutes later – a stork

OLEKSANDR

All that – over Bucha

OLEKSANDR

In a single sky

OLEKSANDR

Life prevails :)

OLEKSANDR

Today on CNN I recognized a cat

He would come over to us asking for food. We fed him canned sprats in tomato sauce

May 26

OLEKSANDR

We have some KIAs in our company. Not in our platoon. Tons of contusions.

OLEKSANDR

+ the chemical plant. We breathed in everything that was there. And it flew into our eyes

OLEKSANDR

After that – forest, dugouts, concrete, dugouts. A month on our last legs, hardly any rest. Otherwise I'm fine. When there's no signal, it's very easy to be calm

YOU

See? He didn't have signal for a month either and then he came online.

So I'm not panicking — see?

YOU

It's not enough — it's still not enough

everything we had

YOU

Even despite having more than is humanly possible. And the fact that no one has ever had anything like what we had.

YOU

Because it always ended (?)

YOU

Because we would each go away to our separate homes

YOU

Because the obstacle was... *work* — ??

How funny is that? Work. Looking at it now when the obstacle is a war. A war that can be seen from space. Your country in a blaze.

YOU

Work. A means of earning one's living. Living. The means of maintaining life. What I thought was life — it simply ceased to exist the morning of February 24. All of that ceased to exist, and we wasted our time on it.

It's funny: half the people I unfriended and blocked on Facebook over their Z's and "yes to war" are people who I had business dealings with. That includes bosses and clients. For whom I had to adjust my schedule to meet deadlines.

YOU

It's as if none of that ever existed. Nothing but the beds we shared.

And I want to look at that not directly (looking back), but as in a reflection, through the reflection (looking forward). A forgivable (?) trick. Into the future, not into the past.

YOU

As though it were all reflected in the future, and I'm looking at that reflection

YOU

There's this one tribe that thinks with the past ahead (even grammatically) because it is known. And they put the future (even grammatically) behind them.

YOU

And so.

YOU

Do I.

YOU

I'm trying to.

YOU

To place that abyss of horror not in the future, but in the past.

YOU

And then we'll be able to change everything. We'll be able...
to stick together.

You know, in that mirror we can once again rent one of those short-term apartments in Kyiv
and/but stay there for eternity.

YOU

Because now I know what eternity is. Eternity is waiting for that green dot to light up.

YOU

I'm *experiencing* that eternity.

YOU

I'm in it in that eternity.

YOU

And I want this same eternity, but with you.

COMMS INTERCEPT

HE: Do you know how we clear basements? We don't ask, "Who's there?" We just throw a
grenade in without giving a shit.

SHE: Seriously?

HE: The other guys told me they caught this chick, cut out her tongue so she wouldn't tell
anyone and then banged her. And after that they wasted her. I'll waste anyone, I don't give
two shits.

June 19

OLEKSANDR

The biggest fear in war (at least the most widespread) is your location getting hit when you're
in the bathroom

June 21

OLEKSANDR

A tank hit our building. 5 times

OLEKSANDR

So if you don't distract yourself, you stop believing that there are places where there's no shooting

OLEKSANDR

And where you can walk up to a window. To one that's intact and not with your body crouched sideways

OLEKSANDR

A sunset at sea?

OLEKSANDR

Thanks! I was born by the sea... I can smell it

YOU (*to Ignat*)

— I sent him the sunset.

Sorry, I sent him the sunset.

On the Bosphorus.

Because when I write to him, it's as if... Oh, that damn doppelganger motif....

OLEKSANDR

(*Photo of a destroyed hangar.*)

Our little house

OLEKSANDR

They hit us. We hit them.

OLEKSANDR

They do it with planes, artillery and tanks. We improvise

YOU

...

YOU

I think I'm subconsciously trying to make you jealous. To bring you out jealousy in you. To use jealousy to bring you out.

YOU

from non-being.

YOU

So that you can hear you say your funny "I'm watching you!"

YOU

In French, "I want you" is "*j'envie de toi.*" You can say it in the non-erotic sense (assuming it's possible to say anything non-erotic in French). The verb "*envier*" can be translated in part as "to envy." And I interpret that literally: I envy that version of myself that has you.

YOU

I rewatched von Trier's *Melancholia*. It's the perfect film about realizing that the life you knew is no more. Ladies and gentlemen, the life you knew before the war is no more! You strive in vain to convince yourselves of the opposite. Oh, how in vain you strive to convince yourselves of the opposite, guys!

And yet it seems like I've started going around in circles.

YOU

From Hamburg the moon looks like a pixelated green online status dot. Just as green and 8-bit.

VIDEO. A VERY HANDSOME MAN

Я такою історією хотів із вами поділитися. I'd like to share this story with you. Нещодавно був День захисту дітей... Recently it was International Day for Protection of Children... Ще з самого початку, коли до нас прийшло поповнення, я їхав із хлопцями на позицію, і запитав у них: From the very start, when we got reinforcements, I was on my way to the position with them and I asked: «Хто воював ще тоді 2014-15 році?». “Who fought in 2014-15?” І один так на мене подивився та й каже: And one of them looks at me and says: «Так, пане командире, мені 18 років». “Squad commander, sir, I'm 18 years old.” І я так думаю: «Блин, ну да». And I think, “Damn, that's right.” І спочатку така думка: «Боже, дитино, що ти тут робиш?» And the first thing that comes to my mind is: “God, you're just a kid. What are you doing here?” А потім розумію, що ні, не дитина - чоловік... But then I realize that he's not a kid — he's a man. Але ця думка не дає мені спокою. But that thought doesn't give me peace. Я не хочу, щоб ми це передавали ще далі. I don't want us to keep passing this down. Я не хочу, щоб мій син, моя донька мали закінчувати те, що я не закінчив. I don't want my son or my daughter to have to finish what I didn't finish. Те, що ми не закінчили. What we didn't finish. Тому як би нам зараз складно не було, ми маємо всі зусилля, всю енергію, всі наші думки докласти на те, щоби закінчити цю війну. So no matter how hard things are for us now, we should use all our effort, all our energy, all our thoughts to finish this war.

Закінчити. Finish. Щоб Україна була вільною. So that Ukraine can be free. Щоб наші діти росли щасливі, здорові, а головне у безпеці. So our children can grow up happy, healthy and, most importantly, safely. І я особисто зроблю для цього все, що буде в моїх силах. And I will personally do everything in my power to achieve that. І ви... And you...

“On a scale of zero to 10, the effectiveness of Ukraine's armed forces would be a 12!”

Details: The Pentagon gave a highly favorable assessment of the ZSU's actions on the front line. According to a senior Defense Department official, this is due to “the Ukrainians' ability to get after Russian command and control, ammunition, sustainment, and logistics locations.”

“They have found ways to do things that we might not have thought were possible,” he added.

YOU

I stopped being able to keep track of how long this war has been going on, how many months it's been.

I know Ukraine will prevail, but where is that moment in time? Maybe someone can close their eyes tight enough and long enough to find themselves there when they open them? To close one's eyes really-really tight, really-really long.

YOU

I remember May was hard to live through. Completely unbearable. When the weapons from the West just wouldn't come. And instead of that there were conversations about how important it is to by find a way for Putin to save face... There was a wonderful Ukrainian meme at the time: "Who can explain to Macron that the only thing that will help him save face is a death mask?"

YOU

Now things are better. Yes, things are a bit better now. (Then again, how can you say that to every murdered hero on the front line, to every murdered little girl in a stroller?)

YOU

But they are sending weapons, at least.

Although they still have yet to fully understand that Ukraine is fighting for all of them. It's literally fighting for all of them, so why the fuck can't they all just give Ukraine everything it needs?

In Nizhny Tagil there is now a deficit of burial space. "What matters is Victory. People are whining all over the internet about sirens in Belgorod and casualties in Kursk. Well, my son is a casualty, he came home in a coffin, but he hated those fascists to the end. He even told me, 'Mama, I'll die a hero.' It doesn't matter how many have to die. Putin knows what he's doing." — the mother of a fallen Russian soldier. In the Tian Shan mountain range, persons unknown planted a Ukrainian flag at the top of a mountain named after Russian President Putin. The body of a raped and murdered 13-year-old girl was found in temporarily occupied Melitopol. A local resident's dog dug the girl's hand out of the ground. The Rashists in all seriousness blame Ukraine and the US for the coronavirus outbreak. In Crimea a woman tried to kill her husband because of his support for Russia's actions in Ukraine. She hit him with a frying pan, shoved his head into a trash can, took down all the flags with Z and V swastikas with a gardening shovel and then doused his car with gasoline. Armed people in military uniforms are capturing men in Luhansk. The Moscow metro inaugurated the train *Russia Looking Towards the Future*. On the circle line. The Committee against Torture in Russia

announced its liquidation after the organization was declared a foreign agent. The occupiers are deliberately targeting wheat fields with incendiary ammunition. Ukraine has thus far received only 150 howitzers. In other words, almost ten times fewer than it needs.

Our top story today:

The ZSU pushed the Rashists out of Snake Island. Odesa Oblast has been completely liberated from the occupiers.

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

Snake Island!

“Grandma Tina burned to death on the ground floor. She loved cats and dogs and would ask me to buy them food with her pension.” The occupiers were unable to restore the water supply in Mariupol. Instead, they set up mobile shower tents. Mariupol is becoming the most mobile city: mobile crematoria, mobile zombiemobiles, mobile showers... A recidivist in Chechnya convicted for the 7th time to 7 years in prison is no longer serving his sentence but serving in the Russian armed forces in Ukraine. The bodies of the dead washed out of their graves during attempts to restore the water supply in Mariupol are simply being dumped like garbage. My four-year-old grandson calls God on his toy phone and asks, “God, bring me back my dad.” Occupiers in Mariupol are building prison cages for a show trial of Ukrainian POWs. Comms intercept: a Rashist soldier whines that his unit’s rotation is being delayed because the troops supposed to replace them raped three girls in Belgorod aged 14, 15 and 17 and have been detained. Russia has destroyed a grain terminal in Mykolaiv, the second largest in Ukraine. On Russia Day, a public holiday, the aggressor nation gave its citizens rotten lemons and maggot-infested grain. Ukrainian POWs in Russian captivity are being given fake newspapers. These claim that all of Ukraine has been taken by the Russian army. The supreme court of the Donetsk People’s Republic has sentenced foreigners fighting on the side of Ukraine to capital punishment. North Korea offers Russia 100,000 volunteers to participate in the “special operation” in Ukraine. In Mariupol, people who want to claim a relative’s body from the morgue must make a video where they state that the deceased was killed by Ukrainian soldiers. In Donetsk Oblast there are reports of 7 civilian casualties in 24 hours. The parents of a Russian soldier buried a stranger’s body to get the “coffin money” promised to the families of those killed in action. A member of the Russian parliament proposed withdrawing Russia’s recognition of the independence of Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This photo shows body parts of civilians after shelling. 18+. In exchange for participation in the military aggression, citizens of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are promised Russian citizenship. Ecologists calculate that no fewer than 3,000 dolphins have died during the full-scale war. The occupiers are abducting the relatives of Ukrainian soldiers, children included. Russian tankers sailing under Liberian flags are delivering oil to Europe despite sanctions. Wagner Group owner Yevgeny Prigozhin is personally recruiting Russian prison inmates to fight in the war. A Petersburg crematorium disconnected its oven

from the internet after its Czech supplier left Russia “to prevent external interference.” “The authorities in Kiev paid minors to pose as civilians killed and wounded from explosions.” — Russian state media. Russian forces are learning to use Iranian drones.

Poland’s ambassador to Ukraine said that if the ZSU had received HIMARS earlier, it could have held and saved Mariupol. “We know very well that if HIMARS had reached Ukraine earlier, the Mariupol tragedy might not have happened. The Ukrainians simply stood 100 kilometers from this city, they were separated by a plain, they could not move the front line and were forced to inactively watch the tragedy of their comrades.”

The Polish diplomat called on the world not to watch Ukraine bleed out, but to make a greater effort to accelerate its victory.

YOU

Savage tenderness — remember? Savage tenderness.

It’s not enough — everything you and I had is still not enough.

Do you remember what it was like? I feel like I remember every single everything, but as though it were from the future

At the Azovstal steelworks there was a female fighter, a widowed fighter (or was she a medic?), a woman who got married right in the middle of the siege with a wedding ring made of aluminum foil and whose husband died shortly thereafter, and she said, “We didn’t get a chance to fully be.”

“We didn’t get a chance to fully be.”

I don’t have the right to say anything at all whatsoever.

Although there’s also a lot in the phrase “I don’t have the right” that’s too Russian. Slavish (and Slavic?). Those two words are practically synonyms. Russian and slavish.

russia is infected with old age.

with the disgusting old age of an old man.

The “Russian” “people” are fierce, the “Russian” “intelligentsia” is powerless (in every sense of the word that’s possible here).

Interesting. That’s what Putin demonstrated to the world. That Russia = ferocity and powerlessness. Combo.

Combo.

And the fiercer, the weaker.

Unable to win, they simply destroy. Destroy powerlessly. Destroy ferociously. Destroy slavishly.

Slavishly.

Yes.

The number of casualties from a missile strike on a shopping center in Kremenchuk has risen to 16.

59 people have been reported injured, 25 of them hospitalized.

Emergency workers are frantically combing through the debris.

UPD! 18 people have now died.

YOU: FACEBOOK POST. FOR: *ONLY ME*. CHANGED TO: *SPECIFIC FRIENDS*.
CHANGED TO: *PUBLIC*.

My grandma wrote to me that I don't want to face the sins of Europe. The sins of America. The answer to that is simple. Europe and even America are trying to atone for them. To redeem themselves. Намарається (in Ukrainian). Meanwhile, Russia is trying to recreate the Horde with Kalibr missiles. A Genghis Khan-inspired fiefdom with Iskander systems. To devour and devour. To let evil spread. That evil which always wins because it spares nothing. Because the apparatus of evil is evil itself. Because the apparatus of evil is evil itself. Because the apparatus of evil is evil itself. And that hundred-headed, Kalibr-loaded apparatus can bomb the shit out of any home. Of any child's bed. Evil is always many times stronger.

It's always, always, always, always stronger.

Fat fucking chance!

Sooner or later the world will come to its senses, team up and stop it.

Not too soon and hopefully not too late.

Because it doesn't have any other way out.

No date (the day had no date), 2022 23:07

YOU: COMMENT TO YOUR POST from no date (the day had no date), 2022.

What's horrible is that while the world comes to its senses and gives itself more time, it offers up a bleeding Ukraine as a sacrifice.

A battered bludgeoned beaten blasted bloody sacrifice.

And yes, I'm no longer afraid to use strong words.

YOU: COMMENT TO YOUR POST from no date (the day had no date), 2022.

But it's terrifying to think that they might decide they do have a way out. That they'll decrease their weapon shipments and toss a scrap of Ukrainian land into Russia's gaping maw as a handout. And that then they'll relax. If they do that, then the earth's current civilization is just a consumerist dump.

YOU

Ігнат.

Every day I go to your Facebook page and every day I see your last post. It's from March 6. "Right now, understanding means, perhaps, silence and discreet assistance. Or just silence."

The only thing you asked of me (of everyone including me) was to be silent. And here's me so treacherously failing to do so.

YOU

But, but, but, but: I have one more question. That apartment on the boulevard of the poet Taras Shevchenko — remember? Remember how on the way over to me you sculpted me a Venus of Willendorf out of snow? A Cream Puff of Willendorf. Remember how I slipped out of your embrace to put it in the freezer? Letting it melt was unthinkable. Remember? (The epitome of banality would be to exclaim, "Where is it now?") Do you know how cold that Venus left your hands?

I don't want to reminisce. I don't want to reminisce. I don't want to reminisce.

I want your hands to always be warm.

Паляниця, молодиця, світлиця, нісенітниця, веселка, філіжанка, вештатися, духмяний, непереливки, кмітливий, пущьвірінок, обценьки, теревенити, телепень. Palyanny`tsya, molody`tsya, svitly`tsya, nisenitny`tsya, veselka, filizhanka, veshtaty`sya, dukhmyany`j, neperely`vku`, kmitly`vy`j, putsz`virinok, obtsen`ky`, tereveny`ty`, telepen`. У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven #ArmUkraineNow #AlwaysArmUkraine.

Missile strike in Sloviansk: 6 dead, including a 6-year-old girl.

July 4, 2022

“We haven’t even started anything in earnest.”

What Putin said about the war in his speech to parliamentary leaders.

July 7, 2022

The death toll from a missile strike on an apartment block in the city of Chasiv Yar in Donetsk Oblast has risen to 45.

July 11, 2022

Kharkiv: the cunts haven’t missed a single night — every night there’s an airstrike.

Russian propagandist Vladimir Solovyov calls the missile attack on the center of Vinnytsia that left children dead in the streets a “strike on a military facility.”

The closest military facility is tens of kilometers away from the tragedy, bastard.

July 14, 2022

The attack on Vinnytsia was carried out during a conference in The Hague dedicated to the war crimes of the Russian occupiers in Ukraine.

Liza’s grandmother said that right after the explosion her daughter screamed into her phone that a missile had hit Liza. Then the call got disconnected. Liza’s mom lost her memory of those minutes from shock. She is now in intensive care and constantly asks what happened to Liza. According to Liza’s grandmother, the doctors forbade her to tell her daughter about the four-year-old’s death: “You’ll have to bury two people if you tell your daughter that her child died.”

At least 27 people were killed.

STASYAN

Awesome news. A fitting fate for those who speak the language of animals

YOU

I want your hands to always be warm.

I want your hands to always be warm.

I want your hands to always be warm.

YOU

Of course it's a terrorist state. What else could you call it? When it can't win on the battlefield and blackmails Ukrainian civilians with murder every day. Plus the nuclear blackmail. Plus the grain blackmail. Plus the oil blackmail. Plus the nuclear blackmail. Plus the grain blackmail...

russia is a terrorist state.

And FYI it just burns the gas it doesn't sell 24/7 on the border with Finland, heating the planet (bastards).

YOU

I want your hands to always be warm.

I want your hands to always be warm.

I want your hands to always be warm.

You laugh as I warm them with my breath.

Although it's already summer. It feels like it's been summer for a long time.

I'm watching a video Oleksandr sent from Luhansk Oblast, a video from your doppelganger, and I'm trying to imagine where you are, where you've been.

Today your sister wrote on Facebook that no one knows where you are.

The most tender of your many sisters.

She could knit you a shirt from nettles like in Andersen's fairy tale. And you'd fly away.

I really want to hug your mom

To tell her, "Don't worry, I know he's alive!"

I read about the conditions for prisoners all the time

I read about the filtration camps

“They just went around talking amongst themselves about the women they’d tortured.

“I heard their conversations:

“‘What did you do with that one guy?’ one of them asked another.

“‘I shot him. Ten of them, maybe more. I’m sick of counting.’

“One man who made it through filtration came out with huge, frightened eyes. He was shaking. He said there had been a brutal interrogation and that they had beaten him up. They still hadn’t released his wife.

“They were trying to find people who love their homeland, who want to live normal lives.

“They took my passport and saw that I’m 17...”

YOU

I read about Ukrainian children “evacuated” to Russia, and the damn government is trying to pass a law that makes it impossible to reclaim them once they’re adopted. I picture those children stabbing knives into their foster caregivers’ hearts.

No, I don’t want that to happen. But I picture it happening.

The knife twisting in that foster heart.

The mother of the little girl killed in Vinnytsia wrote about the tragedy for the first time. “...I was your mommy for only such a short time, so short. You and I will definitely meet again. My heart is with you forever, my soul weeps. Those damn ogre Rashists murdered you and me.”

YOU

I treasure our memories, my love.

I don't know who you'll be when you make it out. I don't know whether they'll leave anything intact. Any part of you, no matter how small. Any part from peacetime. And I? I no longer know what "I" means. Sometimes I feel like I'm just letters on a screen, carved into the white

of the page.

But I already wrote that. Didn't I?

I watched an interview with the daughter of a captive soldier.

They let him go. His daughter said, "Daddy lost a lot of weight. Sixteen kilograms." I think that's what she said. And I couldn't even imagine how that person, who looks afraid that he lost the ability to walk, could have been sixteen kilograms larger.

I watched it again. I pictured your body. I can't picture it not muscular, but super-skinny.

That person from Azov, that person released from Russian captivity, said evasively, "All the conditions for not dying are there."

I'm trying to picture your body not muscular, but skinny. And how I'll kiss it and feel bones I'd never known before against my lips. How I'll tease you by running my teeth along them... your bones... bones... No, that's not what I wanted to say.

YOU

I dreamt that you were wounded, and they had to amputate your arm at the elbow.

And when you were discharged you went

not to your first wife, not to your second wife and not to your third wife — but to me. And your arm — you brought your arm in a neat case.

YOU

And before you could be with me, you said you had to urgently make a new arm out of clay. If you did it fast enough, it would grow back on. And then you would be able to hold me in both your arms.

And you kneaded the clay and with one hand you made yourself

another arm.

It was newborn and wet, as though in a placenta. I watched and quietly went over to the case while you weren't looking. Because you were not to be distracted. And — so as not to distract you — I started kissing your amputated hand in the meantime. And I made it caress my face...

I woke up — as though I had been permeated by your touch. As though you had drawn a straight line from my cheek to my innermost being.

YOU

The wives of the Azov Regiment soldiers are so beautiful.

YOU

I'm watching that video. The video of the castration.

It's impossible not to watch, it's impossible to watch.

The castration of a soldier of Ukraine.

He's lying on the ground, and above him is a hu-man with a box cutter. It's a human, a human being. *Ecce homo*. A bastard, ogre, scumbag, pissant, cur, cad, brute, barbarian, vermin, swine. There are far too few appropriate words in this language.

I'm watching and praying for the soldier on the ground to lose consciousness from the box cutter. But a muffled wheeze can be heard through the gag over the course of one minute and thirty-five seconds.

The bastard, ogre, scumbag, pissant, cur, cad, brute, barbarian, vermin, swine is using a box cutter.

One minute and thirty-five seconds.

The phallus of the soldier of Ukraine falls on the ground of Ukraine.

I know one thing: a shrine should be built where that phallus fell.

I don't know of which religion.

But that place is holy.

And god should descend there.

I mean right there. Right fucking there, god, hear me?

A body. I'm afraid that you still have a body, Ignat. The body I love like nothing else in this world. In my dreams I roll your cock all over my face, delaying your fourth orgasm of the day, licking everything up and down endlessly and then taking it in real deep until I start feeling spasms in my throat, in my vagina, in my heart... But at the same time I'm so afraid

that you
still have it
— your body.

That your body is in their hands.

Thoughts — no more, heart — no more, memory — no more, dreams — no more, plans —
no more, quintessence — no more, but... your living, impossible body —
with them.

One minute and thirty-five seconds.

The soldier of Ukraine, the martyr and hero, is finally shot in the head. The suffering ends.

His blood falls on the earth of Ukraine.

They drag him along the Earth with ropes.

YOU

INFO ON THE EXECUTIONER:

Bellingcat investigators have identified the occupier who castrated a Ukrainian soldier. The suspected criminal is a 29-year-old Tuvan named Ochur-Suge Mongush, a mercenary in the Akhmat battalion.

IGNAT

Sweetheart

IGNAT

<your name> — <your pet name> (*wow.*)

IGNAT

There's no need, sweetheart. Don't wring your heart.

IGNAT

It's not my place to give advice, but you write too much. Where things currently stand, non-Ukrainians are incapable even of writing a long post that won't be cursed. I'm just telling you how it is.

Socrates knew that he knew nothing, and it didn't offend him, yet anyone with a Russian background as a rule (really!!) is certain that they know Ukrainians. That's very characteristic.

IGNAT

<your name> — <your pet name>, just live — that alone would mean so much to me. There's no need for all this. Everything you're doing is good, but it's not honest: you love both Kyiv and me, which means that what you say and feel isn't only for the sake of Ukraine.

Now I'll say something offensive, but it's honest: this is not your war.

“This is not your war.”

“This is not your war.”

And it shines, that green dot shines with an unreal, malachite light.

It grows wider, past the edges of the screen. Past the edges of your vision, past the edges of the world. It enters the pupil with its sharp edge, with its endlessness. It glows so bright that it becomes pure white.

Pure white.

Absolutely white.

The white of an absolute explosion.

“У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю” “In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven”

“У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю” “In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven”

У наших степах снігу більше, ніж у раю In our steppes there is more snow than in heaven

You wake up.

YOU (*to Ignat*)

what just happened.

YOU

I dreamt that you were online, that you wrote to me.

YOU

I'm looking at my phone. You haven't been online since March 6.

The white light burns my eyes.

YOU

I don't know how to say this.

I'd like something to rip my fingers off.

so that I wouldn't have any way to say this.

today I woke up

today I woke up with the knowledge that you are no more.

bastards

bastards

bastards

bastards

cold

exhale

calm

Then — resolve. Yes, resolve.

Someone once asked me: what would Ignat have said?

And I thought of nothing else all these months and I thought of nothing else all these months
and I thought of nothing else all these months I thought of nothing else all these months I

Reading every piece of news, scouring every post, opening my eyes, closing my eyes,
sighing. With no strength to live, with no strength to live...

“What would Ignat have said?”

But you are no more. And that means I am no more too.

Or maybe, on the contrary, on the contrary, on the contrary.

Maybe for the first time ever — I am. Because I’m no longer afraid of hurting you. Of
disappointing you by behaving like a Russian — like a Muscovite, as you put it. (Like a
Muscovite in the sense of sinking into the swamp *selflessly* — not for anyone’s sake, but just
because — because it’s easier that way, pointless, stupid, stupid, stupid, in the ostentatious
pose of the *Russian intelligentsia*, frozen like a meerkat, but whining loudly on Facebook;
useless and inert.) Of not honoring your request, your request, your request that I just live.

I’m no longer afraid of being in your way.

Of making trouble for you.

And that means I’m no longer afraid of anything — that was all that was left.

Russia’s defense ministry declared that 40 Ukrainian captives have been killed and 130
injured in a penitentiary in Olenivka.

The occupying forces claim the penitentiary was hit by HIMARS rockets.

This could mean that the Russian military may have executed the Ukrainian POWs and are
now trying to pass the blame on the ZSU.

According to the latest updates the number of dead has risen to 47.

18+ Warning: this video contains graphic images

18+ Warning: this video contains graphic images

18+ Warning: this video contains graphic images

18+ Warning: this video contains graphic images.....

None of the guards were harmed (N.B.!).

According to the latest updates the explosion in the Olenivka penitentiary took the lives of 53 Ukrainian POWs.

YOU

Now I can tell you that this is impossible to bear.

YOU

It's impossible to bear, my love.

YOU

Nothing could make it bearable.

YOU

I've been reading your last post over and over again.

YOU

Your post from March 6 from the infinite past. Where's March 6 and where's Marchember X? Between them lie whole lives of hours, the infinity of hours in basements, in evacuation buses passing through a gauntlet of machine gun fire, in queues at the border, in hospitals, in "filtration camps," in debris cleanup work for a bowl of soup, at graves, in morgues, in captivity.

In Facebook on March 6 you wrote, "Right now understanding means, perhaps, silence and discreet assistance. Or just silence."

And you're right. Well, of course you're right. But the thing is that we're not allowed to feel. "We" — those of us on this side. Nothing has been left for us. Not feeling this horror would

be beneath contempt. But feeling means partaking — in other words, forcing myself into the frame.

And that's wrong. Because our pain is nothing compared to yours.

Therefore, our pain is something that can, that must, that must, that must, that must, that must! be despised.

And simply living means simply being beneath contempt.

YOU

Silence — but how to achieve it?

У наших степах снігу більше, ніж уууууууу... “In our steppes there is more snow than iiiiiiiin....

I Googled it: the author of that graffiti is Hamlet. I'm not making it up, that really is the artist's name.

And in 2019 that graffiti was destroyed.

Which means now there's even more snow, even more devouring of the light and even more emptiness.

“This war already has everyone exhausted. Instead of two weeks this war has now lasted six months. It's time for radical measures. Exterminating civilians might influence Kiev, and that will help us win the war. Unfortunately, we can't win any other way.”

ANATOLY DREMOV 38.2K followers on Instagram

YOU

russia is a terrorist state. Everything that's written here was written for the sake of silence. So that the black letters could run out and a white page could begin.

I'm going to russia not as a victim — get it? And definitely not as a literary allusion. Not to see “the snow on Karavannaya” like those first-wave émigrés in Bulgakov's play (who also left Constantinople). To see the snow on Karavannaya in the heart of St. Petersburg and die — no! I really couldn't care less about the exquisite snow Karavannaya. Let other snows be my grave. I'm going to russia knowing it's quarantine. I'm going to russia knowing it's a plague barracks. Knowing it's a leper colony — to contain the pestilence. All of the pestilence must be returned and kept within russia's borders. That's what's important.

Too much of the pestilence spews out with each salvo.

And I'm going — literally — to the Gulag, where all of them were tormented. All the ones I love so dearly. And you too. And you too.

The endless snows of the Gulag. That purgatory, and past it — let there be a field of snow. A steppe of snow. A steppe of snow like in heaven. A white page devouring everything. And on that page may you and I

become two points

that merge into a single point

as they approach the horizon

as they displace themselves from the eye

of the beholder

YOU

And then — все буде Україна. Everything will be Ukraine.

That's why this play will end like this.

FROM THE COMRADE MAJOR'S REPORT:

“Citizen <your name, your middle name, your last name, year of birth and all that jazz> was detained at Domodedovo Airport while attempting to cross the border of the Russian Federation. The motive for her detention was the presence of a large number of stamps in her passport from crossing the border of the Ukraine between Marchember _____, 2017 and Marchember _____, 2021 at Borispol Airport and Zhuliany Airport. Upon inspecting her communication devices, materials were found which could provisionally be described as extremist. They fall under Articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.”

That's why this play will end...

That's why this play will end...

That's why this play will end...

“.....officials across Europe are worried that the consensus could fall apart,” writes CNN. The continent is entering “a bleak winter of rising food prices, limited energy to heat homes and the real possibility of recession.....”

#AlwaysArmUkraine

YOU (*to the author*)

No.

YOU (*to the author*)

No, not like that. That's terrible.

YOU (*to the author*)

That ending is garbage. It leads to the opposite result.

Salman Rushdie once said, "One of the great powers of colonialism is the power to describe the colonized." (And the Ukrainian people will never be colonized!) Wouldn't it be best to use your right to remain silent?

YOU (*to the author*)

You won't reach your goal as long as I'm trapped in this play, no matter what you do to me. Self-immolation? Suicide? Returning to Mordor, to the Gulag? All those things would elicit compassion for me following the rules of dramaturgy. And yet your goal is to elicit compassion for something else.

And yet my goal is to elicit compassion for something else.

Come on, you knew that all along. From the start you knew that it was imperative not to elicit compassion for me, a little Russian in "exile" with a martyr complex. Not for this eye that cries, but for everything that this eye sees, for everything it's capable of seeing. Through its little scratched-up screen.

You know I'm right.

But you didn't come up with how to solve that problem. How to remove the stand-in you yourself created. You cranked out an entire play or even a group of plays, but you failed to come up with a solution to the problem you set. Kinda irresponsible, don'tcha think? Any ideas, then?

YOU (*to the author*)

Fine, to hell with you. I came up with a better ending.

My ending is genuinely scary and revolting. And the focus will shift from me to the place where it belongs.

I'll carry out the greatest suicide a character can commit in the name of embodying the author's intention. Watch.

AND SO.

YOU (*to the audience*)

I'm doing this not before the people in the world of the play — I'm doing it right here and now in front of you. For you. To kill myself for you. To shift the focus of your gaze. The focus. I'm breaking the fourth wall. Picture this: I walk down to the front of the stage, step down into the auditorium and sit on an audience member's lap, just as you might see in a brothel. Would you like that? Would you like me to trespass your personal boundaries? I remove that audience member's glasses and knock on their skull. On their skull, inside of which all the meaning making takes place. I then fold up and vomit, straight up vomit. And I slither away. Watch the war, watch the war, watch the war. Don't look away from it.

YOU

and so....

YOU

Eyes on me.

Breath. Breath. Breath.

breath.

breath.

And so. And—so. Here comes my vomit:

YOU: FACEBOOK POST

Last night before bed I was struck by a phrase I heard in an interview on a Ukrainian channel. Someone said that at the Ramstein Air Base meeting everyone present approached the Ukrainian representative, shook his hand and said, "Finish that bastard off."

That rubbed me the wrong way — not gonna lie.

I paced around and wondered, “So ever there, over yonder in the Collective West — they really do want to destroy Russia now. Actually, maybe they’ve wanted to all along... Maybe not, but now — definitely. And what then?”

What if they really do start bombing Russia — what then? What will I do?

But besides that... Yeah, I know, for example, that the “crucified little boy” in the Donbass was staged. I’m even a single handshake away from the journalist who shot that fake. But. That doesn’t mean that all the other fakes are fakes. And even then, the residents of the Lugansk and Donetsk People’s Republics should be avenged for their suffering. I mean, come on, children died there, the poor little angels. Or am I wrong? And that news today: Russian will no longer be taught in Kyiv’s schools. And do they not name their streets after Ukrainians who collaborated with the Nazis in WWII?

And on top of all that, whichever way you look at it, there’s that darn trolley problem!

One thing’s for certain: everything isn’t so clear-cut.

Later on I started running a fever.

And then — in the radiance of the holiest of mysteries — they appeared before me.

There were three of them, but their union was indissoluble.

The first putin was middle-aged, and from the riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma his omnipotence manifested itself. The second putin was a noble old man. In the ray of light shining upon his brow, gilded gnats hovered in circles, together forming a sort of halo. The first putin also emanated light, but it was not quite as strong. In his hands, the second putin carried an infant. The infant had exactly the same face as the other two and had come to this world in full splendor. In full splendor and with a bald spot on his head. The bald spot also shone. He was the third putin.

The three of them sat down on the edge of my bed. My heart fluttered.

The first putin uttered:

“In times of war, it is wrong to speak ill of one’s own, my child. You must never do so, not even if they are in the wrong. Even if your side is in the wrong in times of war, you must never speak ill of them.”

The second putin turned his doleful face to me and spake thus:

“We believe this to be a very simple principle.”

I began to shake my head, but it ceased to obey me. And what had begun as a fervent “no” became a fervent “yes.”

And the infant putin quivered with his entire elderly body, and the second putin handed him to the first, who raised him above me, just as Rafiki raised the young Simba for all to see. I gasped with astonishment and pride. And upon my face, along my deep and fresh wrinkles, intermingling with my tears, fell a liquid blessing, plentiful and golden as formaldehyde...

UOY

And I woke up a different person.

עלמון

2022