

THE WHITE BUSES

Written by

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Inspired by true events.

WE OPEN WITH A BLACK SCREEN

ON SCREEN -
TEXT:

In the final months of World War II, more than 100,000 prisoners remained in Nazi concentration camps across Germany. Most were starving. Many were dying.

In March 1945, as the Allies closed in, one unlikely operation risked everything to rescue them—led not by soldiers, but by diplomats, nurses, and unarmed volunteers.

It was called...

TITLE CARD:

THE WHITE BUSES

Based on true events

EXT. RAVENSBRÜCK CONCENTRATION CAMP - EARLY MORNING - WINTER 1945

A dense fog blankets the trees. Beyond them: watchtowers, barbed wire, and the gaunt silhouettes of prisoners lining up for roll call.

Smoke pumps steadily from the crematorium chimney—gray and constant, like an industrial sigh.

Women and teenage girls—shaved heads, hollow eyes—shuffle in silence, their breath clouding in the frozen air.

INT. BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

NINA STEMME (30s), a Swedish Red Cross nurse, stands stiffly near the doorway. Her breath hitches as she watches prisoners pass through the snow.

Behind her, a TALL SS OFFICER (40s) in a pressed uniform offers a cold smile.

SS OFFICER
We had a typhus outbreak last month. The crematorium is... preventive.

Nina doesn't speak. She keeps her face blank, but her eyes betray her horror.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

In the line, a young girl-HANNA (15)-barefoot, frostbitten, clutches something in her hand: the fabric head of a doll.

She stumbles.

Falls.

No one moves. No one dares.

Behind her, a woman-possibly her mother-kneels, trying to lift her, but she's too weak.

Nina rushes toward them.

NINA
She needs help.

SS OFFICER
She's already dead.

NINA
She's breathing.

The SS officer shrugs. Guards watch but do not act.

Nina kneels beside the girl. Places her fingers on Hanna's neck.

A faint pulse.

NINA (CONT'D)
She's alive.

SS OFFICER
There are thousands like her. You
can't save them all.

Nina looks him dead in the eye.

NINA
I can try.

She scoops Hanna into her arms-her weight feather-light-and walks back toward the barracks.

The SS officer says nothing.

Smoke continues to rise behind them. EXT. STOCKHOLM - SWEDISH
RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A stately building coated in frost and silence. Flags hang limp in the icy wind.

CUT TO:

SUPER: TWO WEEKS EARLIER — STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Inside, a flurry of activity—clipped voices in Swedish, footsteps echoing down marble hallways.

INT. RED CROSS STRATEGY ROOM — CONTINUOUS

A large table cluttered with maps, telegrams, and photos—some marked "RAVENSBRÜCK," "DACHAU," "NEUENGAMME."

Colored pins are stabbed across Germany and occupied territories—each one a known concentration camp.

At the head of the table stands COUNT FOLKE BERNADOTTE (50s)—tall, impeccably groomed, aristocratic demeanor. A nobleman, yes—but with the gravity of a man who's walked too close to hell.

He speaks calmly—but every syllable lands like a drumbeat.

BERNADOTTE

We've confirmed over 9,000
Norwegians and Danes are still
alive in German camps. That number
drops daily.

A junior diplomat, MAGNUS (30s), flips through a folder, visibly tense.

MAGNUS

The Germans are stonewalling. They
say it's typhus. They've "isolated"
the worst camps.

BERNADOTTE

Camps don't isolate the sick. They
eliminate them.

Across the room, a nurse, ASTRID (40s), hard-edged and pragmatic, speaks up.

ASTRID

Even if we get approval, it's a
suicide mission. We'll be driving
through active war zones. SS
patrols. Russian artillery.

BERNADOTTE

Then we go in white. Paint every vehicle. Red Cross insignia. Big as possible.

He draws an X on the map with a blue pencil—a new route.

BERNADOTTE (CONT'D)

We go through Denmark, down to Lübeck, then through to Neuengamme, and south from there.

MAGNUS

What if they refuse us entry?

BERNADOTTE

They won't. Not if Himmler wants to bargain for his skin.

The room falls silent. The implication hangs: they'll be negotiating with monsters.

ASTRID

And if the Allies mistake us for German convoys?

BERNADOTTE

Then we pray they can read a red cross.

INT. RED CROSS GARAGE - LATER

Mechanics coat the first bus in white paint. Nurses stack crates of blankets, powdered milk, and IV equipment.

A young mechanic opens a canister of red paint, stencils a cross on the side.

WELDER (O.S.)

White buses. Might as well be targets.

Bernadotte watches from the shadows.

INT. SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTRY - NIGHT

Elegant wood-paneled walls. The war seems a world away here—until you hear what's being said.

COUNT FOLKE BERNADOTTE stands across from the SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER (60s, stern, cautious), flanked by two grim aides.

FOREIGN MINISTER

We are a neutral nation, Count Bernadotte. If a single Red Cross vehicle is destroyed, our neutrality—

BERNADOTTE

Is meaningless if we do nothing while innocents are incinerated.

FOREIGN MINISTER

You propose driving unarmed nurses through collapsing German territory? Through SS patrols?

BERNADOTTE

The Geneva Convention protects medical missions.

AIDE

Does Himmler care about the Geneva Convention?

Bernadotte says nothing. Just meets their eyes.

BERNADOTTE

If we wait for the war to end, we'll be rescuing corpses.

INT. RED CROSS OFFICE - WAR ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Nina and ASTRID prepare supply manifests. Powdered milk. Morphine. Blankets.

NINA

I want all units to carry forced-feeding kits. They won't be able to swallow.

ASTRID

We'll need graves too.

Nina stops writing.

NINA

Not if we're fast.

Magnus rushes in with a dispatch.

MAGNUS

Himmler's aide responded. He'll allow Swedish inspection of Neuengamme and Ravensbrück. Escort required.

Bernadotte looks up slowly.

BERNADOTTE

That's our opening.

MAGNUS

They still deny the crematoriums. Say it's typhus.

ASTRID

They always say that.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - LATER THAT WEEK - MOVING - DUSK

Nina, Astrid, and Bernadotte sit side by side in a dim train car, crossing into Denmark. Tension sits like fog.

NINA

Why now? Why let us in?

BERNADOTTE

Himmler sees the end coming. He wants leverage with the Allies.

ASTRID

So we're a favor he can cash in.

BERNADOTTE

Let him believe it. While we save as many as we can.

Outside the window: barren snowfields. Burned-out villages.

EXT. LÜBECK - RAIL YARD - NIGHT

Steam hisses. Armed SS GUARDS greet the arriving Swedish convoy with cold stares.

Painted white buses idle behind them. Some still dripping red paint.

INT. GERMAN ARMY TENT - LATER

Bernadotte sits at a table with SS OFFICER WALTER SCHELLENBERG (40s), calm, calculated.

SCHELLENBERG
You will follow strict routes. Only
camps we specify.

BERNADOTTE
And the prisoners?

SCHELLENBERG
Only Scandinavians. Norwegians and
Danes. No others.

BERNADOTTE
If we find French, Poles,
Jews—starving, dying—do we leave
them?

SCHELLENBERG
That is not your concern.

He signs the authorization with a fountain pen.

SCHELLENBERG (CONT'D)
Stay in your lane, Count
Bernadotte. You are here to
observe. Not interfere.

INT. WHITE BUS - RAVENSBRÜCK ENTRY - DAWN

Nina rides in the front of the lead bus. Fog outside. Red
Cross insignia streaked with mud.

They pass the gates of Ravensbrück.

The camera lingers as the bus disappears behind the high
walls.

INT. NEUENGAMME CONCENTRATION CAMP - ENTRY GATE - DAY

A steel gate groans open. Two white buses, mud-splattered,
roll through.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

NINA STEMME sits quietly behind the windshield. ASTRID
clutches a clipboard.

Outside: corpses in striped uniforms lie beside the barbed
wire, uncollected.

Inside: silence. Everyone stares forward.

EXT. NEUENGAMME - MAIN YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The buses stop. Prisoners don't react. They stare at the Red Cross vehicles as if hallucinating.

INT. CAMP INFIRMARY - MOMENTS LATER

Cracked tile. Flies.

A young RED CROSS DOCTOR examines a pile of bruised limbs. One twitch.

DOCTOR
This one's alive.

A prisoner-JAKOB (40s)-moans softly. His tongue is black.

Nina kneels.

NINA
(in Swedish, soft)
You're safe now. We're from Sweden.

JAKOB
(hoarse)
Norwegian?

NINA
What?

JAKOB
(weakly)
If I'm not Norwegian, do I die
here?

Nina swallows. Doesn't answer.

INT. CAMP SUPPLY ROOM - LATER

Nina walks past shelves of empty crates. A German supply officer opens a cabinet of Zyklon B canisters-some still full.

NINA
Typhus?

GERMAN OFFICER
Yes. We fumigate regularly

EXT. NEUENGAMME - MAIN YARD - DAY

Snow crunches beneath boots. Guards bark. Prisoners don't flinch.

A prisoner orchestra plays near the entrance. Shaky strings, out of tune.

NINA, ASTRID, and other Red Cross nurses move in a line, eyes darting.

An old man with frostbitten fingers salutes Nina—then collapses.

NINA
He's seizing.

Astrid checks his eyes.

ASTRID
No response.

Two guards drag him by the feet, leaving a trail in the snow.

INT. PRISONER BARRACK - MOMENTS LATER

Low bunks. Bare wood. 6 people per level.

INGER, 20s, idealistic, lifts a blanket from a girl no older than ten.

GIRL
(in broken Danish)
Are you angels?

Inger blinks back tears.

INGER
No. Just late.

INT. CAMP INFIRMARY - DAY

Nina examines a man's back—whip scars covered in lice. He doesn't react.

A German guard steps in with a clipboard.

GUARD
Only Norwegians and Danes. We'll sort them for you.

NINA
They all need medical care.

GUARD
Orders are orders.

INT. FOOD DISTRIBUTION TENT - LATER

Red Cross staff ladle watery broth into tin bowls.

A starving Jewish boy (8) slips under the rope and grabs at a crust.

An SS GUARD raises his baton--then sees Inger.

She steps in front of the boy.

INGER
He's with me.

The guard pauses. Snorts. Walks off.

INT. SUPPLY BUS - NIGHT

Inger lifts the boy into a canvas bin behind folded sheets.
His eyes flutter.

INGER
Don't speak. Sleep.

She closes the lid gently. The boy curls up like a cat.

INT. RED CROSS FIELD HQ - LÜBECK - NEXT DAY

Bernadotte reviews a telegraph with MAGNUS.

MAGNUS
Himmler's deputy says they'll
approve more camps... if we confirm
there's no "mass extermination."

BERNADOTTE
(quiet)
He wants us to lie.

MAGNUS
If we say no, they shut the gates
again.

Bernadotte folds the telegram. Hands it back.

BERNADOTTE

Burn it.

INT. RAVENSBRÜCK - MAKESHIFT WARD - DAY

A Danish woman convulses on a table.

Nina tries to insert an IV. The woman's arm is too thin—like paper over sticks.

NINA

Hold her still.

She gets the needle in. Fluid flows.

The woman's eyes flutter open—then roll back.

ASTRID

She's gone.

Nina doesn't let go of her hand.

EXT. BUS LOADING ZONE - RAVENSBRÜCK - DUSK

White buses idle.

A Red Cross official checks prisoner IDs—Norwegians and Danes only.

NINA watches two Polish women cry as they're turned away.

ASTRID

Orders, Nina.

NINA

To hell with orders.

INT. BUNKER ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bernadotte sits alone. One candle burns.

He looks at a folder—photos of survivors, malnourished and ghostlike.

He flips one over. On the back: "F. Karlsson - Norwegian?"

Below it, written in pencil: "Jewish. Born Warsaw."

Bernadotte closes the folder.

EXT. LÜBECK OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

Snow falls. Two white buses pull away from the depot, Red Cross flags fluttering.

Inside, nurses tighten wool blankets around trembling prisoners.

A boy hidden in a supply bin peers out from a fold.

From a hill above, a distant figure watches through binoculars.

It's a German militia scout, flanked by two teenage fighters—barely 16.

One raises a rifle.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. NEUENGAMME - PRISONER BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Rows of bunk beds, stacked three high. No blankets. Bare wood. No windows.

NINA steps inside, followed by ASTRID and two male doctors.

The stench is unbearable—rot, feces, damp wood. The Red Cross team hesitates.

A skeletal man mumbles prayers in Norwegian, barely audible.

PRISONER (O.S.)
(faint)
Are we... saved?

Nina kneels. A hand reaches out from a lower bunk—barely skin and bone.

It's a young man—19 at most.

NINA
(in Norwegian)
We're from Sweden. We've come for you.

YOUNG MAN
Please... don't leave me.

Nina gently presses a stethoscope to his chest. Barely a heartbeat.

EXT. CAMP YARD - LATER

Prisoners shuffle in a slow line toward the waiting white buses.

SS GUARDS separate them by nationality.

GUARD #1
Norwegians to the left. Danes.
Papers ready.

A Polish woman is shoved aside. A Frenchman collapses. No one looks back.

Inger watches it all. Her lips tighten.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOMENTS LATER

INGER opens the back door of the bus and glances around.

She spots a French child—no older than 8—sitting alone against the barracks wall, eyes wide and red-rimmed.

She hesitates.

Then walks quickly to him.

EXT. CAMP YARD - CONTINUOUS

INGER kneels beside the child. He doesn't flinch.

INGER
(quietly, in English)
Come with me. Quietly now.

She takes his hand and leads him behind the rear bus tire.

INT. SUPPLY COMPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Inside the bus, Inger folds a wool blanket around the child, gently places him into the linen bin under the seat.

She slides the crate closed and sits down on top of it.

Her breath trembles.

INT. RED CROSS INFIRMARY TENT - NIGHT

Back at the Lübeck base.

Nina scrubs dried blood from her hands in a basin. Her sleeves are soaked.

Astrid enters, holding a file.

ASTRID
We lost five overnight. Three
just... slipped away.

NINA
Any Norwegians?

ASTRID
One. Two Danes. Two... we don't
know.

NINA
We'll add them to the list anyway.

ASTRID
Which list?

Nina looks up, eyes red.

NINA
The one that says they mattered.

INT. FIELD HQ - BERNADOTTE'S OFFICE - LATER

Bernadotte pores over camp maps, telegrams, and casualty reports.

MAGNUS enters holding a new cable.

MAGNUS
Himmler's office again. They're
"concerned" about misinformation.

BERNADOTTE
Misinformation?

MAGNUS
They say reports of mass deaths and
crematorium use are exaggerated.

Bernadotte stares at him. Then slowly picks up a photo:
skeletal corpses stacked like lumber.

BERNADOTTE
Tell Himmler's office if they want
our silence... they can start
digging graves.

MAGNUS

That'll cost us access to half the camps.

BERNADOTTE

Then we open the other half wider.

INT. RAVENSBRÜCK - NIGHT - NURSES' QUARTERS

Nina sits on her cot. In her lap, Hanna (the girl she rescued) is sleeping, curled against her.

She strokes the girl's scalp gently, as if to remember what softness is.

NINA (V.O.)

We came here to be witnesses.

Now I wonder...

If we're just undertakers in white coats.

INT. RAVENSBRÜCK - NIGHT - NURSES' QUARTERS

Nina sits on her cot. In her lap, HANNA sleeps curled against her chest. Her small fingers twitch.

NINA (V.O.)

We came here to be witnesses.

Now I wonder...

If we're just undertakers in white coats.

She wipes soot from Hanna's cheek with her sleeve.

EXT. RAVENSBRÜCK - INFIRMARY YARD - MORNING

Nina exits a tent. A cart rolls by, carrying two covered bodies.

She sees a line of women, too weak to stand, being refused boarding by an SS corporal.

CORPORAL

No papers--no transport. Norwegians only.

NINA

They'll die here.

CORPORAL
Then they die. Move along.

Nina steps in front of the next woman in line—a young French girl, barely conscious.

NINA
She's in our care now.

CORPORAL
You interfere again, I'll have you removed.

Nina doesn't flinch.

NINA
Then shoot me. Or get out of my way.

The corporal stares at her.

Finally, he steps aside.

INT. WHITE BUS - LOADING - LATER

Nina helps the French girl onto the bus. Behind her, Inger fidgets nervously.

INSPECTING GUARD
Open the rear compartment.

Inger's heart races. She quickly moves toward the back.

INT. WHITE BUS - SUPPLY COMPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Inger cracks the compartment. The hidden boy looks up, wide-eyed.

She presses her finger to her lips. Closes it again.

EXT. RAVENSBRÜCK - GUARD CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

A second SS officer approaches the bus, clipboard in hand.

SS OFFICER
Manifest shows 23 passengers. We count 24.

Inger freezes.

NINA
We added a nurse.

SS OFFICER
Name?

NINA
Stemme. Nina.

The officer scans the list. Eyes her.

SS OFFICER
Drive.

The bus rolls forward. Inger exhales.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - LÜBECK - FIELD OFFICE - LATER

BERNADOTTE reviews a stack of files. MAGNUS enters with a sealed envelope.

MAGNUS
New list from Himmler's office.
They want the next route limited to
male prisoners only.

BERNADOTTE
Why?

MAGNUS
Less likely to raise emotional
reaction. Fewer reporters
questioning photos of starving
women.

Bernadotte stands.

BERNADOTTE
Tell them this is a rescue
operation, not a public relations
stunt.

MAGNUS
If we push too hard, they'll revoke
the passes.

Bernadotte looks out the frosted window. White buses parked
silently in the snow.

BERNADOTTE
Let them try.

INT. RED CROSS TENT - NIGHT

Nina cleans Hanna's scalp gently with warm water. The child is mostly silent now.

HANNA

Am I... allowed to be alive?

Nina doesn't answer at first.

Then:

NINA

Yes. And I need you to stay that way.

She wraps her in a clean sheet. A poor substitute for comfort, but it's all they have.

INT. WHITE BUS - NIGHT - MOVING

The convoy rolls down a dark road flanked by trees. One bus carries only corpses, covered and stacked.

Astrid sits beside a nurse, her hands shaking.

ASTRID

They died between checkpoints. No time to offload.

NURSE

Should we turn back?

ASTRID

No. They ride home with us.

EXT. LÜBECK OUTSKIRTS - NEXT MORNING

The convoy approaches the rail yard for offloading.

GUARD STATION ahead. SS men await with rifles.

A BOOM of gunfire ECHOES nearby.

Everyone stiffens.

INT. BUS - FRONT CAB

NINA

Stop the bus.

The driver brakes.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: Up ahead, a supply truck is burning. A white flag torn and smoking.

One of the nurses screams.

DRIVER
They hit one of ours.

EXT. RAIL YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Smoke. The rear bus has been struck by rifle fire. Two windows shattered. No one moves.

A nurse lies slumped over--blood soaking her apron.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)
They gave us permission... and they
gave the order to fire.

INT. RED CROSS FIELD HQ - LATER

Bernadotte stands before a table of Swedish officials.

SENIOR MINISTER
You've exceeded your authority.
This was to be a controlled
operation--not open warfare.

BERNADOTTE
Then I suggest we take off the
gloves. Because our enemy never put
them on.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. RAIL YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Smoke settles. The buses idle. Guards stand tense, fingers on triggers.

A stretcher is carried from the second bus. The body of the young nurse, her apron soaked in blood.

Nina walks beside it. Hollow.

EXT. RED CROSS FIELD HOSPITAL - NEXT MORNING

A small gathering in the snow. Red Cross nurses and Swedish drivers stand in silence.

The nurse's body lies beneath a plain white sheet.

BERNADOTTE, pale, presides over the burial. No speeches. Just a single bell toll.

NINA steps forward. Places her ID badge on the sheet.

NINA
She wasn't a soldier.

She carried no weapon.

And she died for trying to save a stranger.

Silence.

ASTRID quietly sobs behind her.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - WAR ROOM - LATER

SWEDISH MINISTER slaps a telegram onto the desk in front of Bernadotte.

SWEDISH MINISTER
This operation is now a diplomatic liability. Berlin has lodged a formal complaint about "improper Red Cross interference."

BERNADOTTE
You mean helping Jews?

SWEDISH MINISTER
I mean smuggling undocumented prisoners across national lines. You're compromising Sweden's neutrality.

Bernadotte doesn't respond.

SWEDISH MINISTER (CONT'D)
Return to Stockholm. That's not a request.

He leaves.

MAGNUS stares at Bernadotte.

MAGNUS

What are you going to do?

BERNADOTTE

Send the next convoy in six hours.

MAGNUS

But—

BERNADOTTE

Paint the buses. Load the fuel. You heard me.

INT. SUPPLY BUS - NIGHT

Inger places another child—maybe 6—into the linen bin beside the first.

She gently pats his chest. Closes the lid.

ASTRID enters behind her.

ASTRID

That's the third one, isn't it?

Inger freezes.

INGER

You going to report me?

Astrid steps forward. Opens the front flap of the crate slightly. The child inside looks up, scared.

Astrid reaches into her coat—pulls out a candy. Hands it to him silently. Then closes the flap.

ASTRID

Put another blanket over. And breathe quiet.

They share a long look.

No words.

INT. SUPPLY BUS - NIGHT

ASTRID stares at the closed linen bin, then at INGER.

ASTRID

Put another blanket over. And breathe quiet.

Inger nods. Her hands are shaking.

Astrid moves to the front of the bus, looks out the windshield.

ASTRID (CONT'D)
They're not going to stop this
time, are they?

INGER
Stop what?

ASTRID
Pretending they don't see us.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - BERLIN TELEGRAPH OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

A telegraph clicks and spits out a message.

A Swedish operator tears it off, eyes widening.

INT. WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MAGNUS bursts into Bernadotte's office with the telegram.

MAGNUS
Berlin says you've violated mission
scope. If another Jew or Pole is
transported, the agreement ends.

BERNADOTTE
Is that a threat?

MAGNUS
Yes.

Bernadotte sits down, calmly signs a paper authorizing Route
Extension South.

BERNADOTTE
Then let's make it worth it.

INT. BARRACKS - DAWN

NINA walks the rows of weak prisoners. A clipboard in her
hand.

She stops in front of a French girl, around 20, barely
conscious.

FRENCH GIRL
(murmurs)
Not Norwegian. Not Danish.

NINA
What's your name?

FRENCH GIRL
Anne.

Nina writes on the clipboard:

Name: Anne Duval

Nationality: Danish (claimed)

She tears the top page off. Crumples it.

EXT. LOADING YARD - MORNING

White buses line up. Their red crosses are freshly painted,
bright as blood.

DRIVERS, NURSES, and PRISONERS all move in quiet formation.
Tension builds.

MAGNUS approaches Bernadotte with a manifest.

MAGNUS
This list... isn't accurate.

BERNADOTTE
That's correct.

MAGNUS
We're falsifying documentation?

BERNADOTTE
No. We're rewriting it.

INT. BUS CAB - SHORTLY AFTER

Nina sits at the front, Hanna on her lap. The girl now wears
a donated wool cap.

A Danish driver speaks softly.

DRIVER
They warned us. Not to deviate. Not
to stop.

NINA
What did you say?

DRIVER
I said... drive straight through
hell.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE LÜBECK - SAME

The convoy moves. Trees line both sides of the icy road.

Each bus gleams white—symbols of peace rolling through a
nation at war with itself.

Inside one compartment: two children hidden in a crate, arms
around each other.

INT. NAZI CHECKPOINT - 30 MILES EAST - DAY

An SS checkpoint. Trucks and bicycles pass through, eyes
watching.

A scout with binoculars sees the convoy approaching.

SCOUT
Red Cross.

COMMANDER
Let them through.

SCOUT
One of the buses was at
Ravensbrück.

The commander narrows his eyes.

EXT. BARRACKS - RAVENSBRÜCK - SAME

A soldier finds a scrap of paper—discarded.

It reads:

"Anne Duval - Danish (claimed)"

INT. BERLIN - HIMMLER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A messenger delivers a file to a shadowy aide.

He opens it. Frowns.

AIDE
He's moving them all now. Jews.
French. Even children.

Beat.

AIDE (CONT'D)
Kill the next bus.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

The lead white bus rolls slowly over a snow-covered bridge.

On the far end: a jeep and three teen SS fighters. One has a Panzerfaust.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

Nina leans forward.

NINA
Why are we slowing down?

Ahead, the jeep blocks the bridge.

DRIVER
Something's wrong.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - CONTINUOUS

A boy no older than sixteen points the rocket launcher at the bus.

INT. WHITE BUS - SAME

The children in the crate begin to cry.

Inger clamps her hand over the lid.

OUTSIDE - a loud CLICK.

But the launcher jams. A German officer screams at the boy.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Go. Now!

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The bus LUNGES forward, swerving past the jeep.

Gunfire cracks the air.

A bullet punches through the side panel.

Inside: screaming. But the bus keeps moving.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

The bullet hole in the panel lets in cold air.

A nurse sobs in the corner, blood on her sleeve. She presses a cloth to a wounded passenger's leg.

NINA cradles Hanna, shielding her eyes from the blood.

HANNA

Are we still alive?

NINA

Yes. And we keep moving.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - LÜBECK - NIGHT

Bernadotte storms into the operations room.

MAGNUS

One bus damaged. Three wounded. One dead.

BERNADOTTE

Was it Himmler?

MAGNUS

Berlin claims "rogue elements." But the boy with the Panzerfaust? SS Youth.

Bernadotte says nothing.

He picks up a pen. Begins writing a new route on the master map.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

They'll revoke our permits.

BERNADOTTE

Then we won't use them.

INT. NURSES' BARRACK - LATER

Nina washes her face in silence. Blood won't come off her palms.

ASTRID enters.

ASTRID
I re-wrapped the boy's ribs. He
asked for you.

NINA
He shouldn't even be here.

ASTRID
None of them should.

Beat.

ASTRID (CONT'D)
They're going to search the buses
tomorrow. Thoroughly.

Nina's eyes darken. She nods.

EXT. STORAGE AREA - SAME

NINA slips outside, jacket wrapped around her.

She finds the hidden compartment under the last bus.

She opens it.

Inside: the two smuggled children, huddled together.

CHILD
Did we do something wrong?

Nina stares at them.

Then crawls in.

She pulls the blanket up around all three.

NINA
No. You did something brave.

INT. HIMMLER'S BERLIN OFFICE - NIGHT

Aide slams a report on the table.

AIDE
They've expanded to Theresienstadt.
No request. No notice.

HIMMLER
And yet they call us the criminals.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - STRATEGY ROOM - NIGHT

Bernadotte stands before a small group of trusted staff.

A fresh map is unrolled.

He circles Theresienstadt in red. Then another: Mauthausen.

BERNADOTTE
We go further south. Two convoys.
One visible. One under cover.

MAGNUS
That's suicide.

BERNADOTTE
It's math. If we hesitate, they
die. If we go, some live.

INGRID
And if we're caught?

BERNADOTTE
Then we make noise so loud the
world can't ignore us.

INT. FIELD BARRACK - DAWN

Red Cross nurses gather. One missing—Nina.

ASTRID
She stayed on the bus.

INGRID
All night?

ASTRID
She didn't want them to wake up
alone.

EXT. YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Bernadotte walks between the rows of white buses.

Drivers stand ready. Engines idle.

He stops at one: the window still cracked from the bullet hole.

DRIVER
Still want us to go?

BERNADOTTE
No.

Beat.

BERNADOTTE (CONT'D)
I want you to not stop.

INT. WHITE BUS - MORNING

Nina opens the curtain. Sunlight hits her face. The children are asleep.

She takes their names down in her logbook—in pencil.

She writes:

"Unknown origin. Recovered. Transported. Still breathing."

EXT. LÜBECK - ROAD OUT

The convoy begins to roll.

Red Cross flags wave. But this time—the symbols are twice as large.

The paint still wet.

Overhead, crows scatter.

INT. BUS - MOVING

Bernadotte sits in the jump seat, watching the trees blur by.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)
We asked for permission.

Now we ask for forgiveness.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GERMAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The white buses wind along a frostbitten road. Forest on both sides. Not a village in sight.

In the lead bus, a red cross flag flaps from the roof—mud-smearred and bullet-frayed.

Inside, passengers sway silently with each bump in the road.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

Nina rests her head against the window. Across from her, Hanna sleeps curled against a nurse's coat.

The two smuggled children are still hidden in the compartment below the seats. Breathing shallow. Silent.

The driver slows.

DRIVER
Checkpoint ahead.

Nina straightens.

EXT. ROADSIDE CHECKPOINT - MOMENTS LATER

A German military police unit stops the convoy.

An officer signals for the lead driver to exit.

INT. WHITE BUS - REAR COMPARTMENT

Inger grips the crate lid. She presses her ear to it—hears boots outside.

A soft cough escapes from within the linen bin.

Inger tightens her grip.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The officer glances at the Red Cross insignia, then taps the bus panel with his rifle.

GERMAN OFFICER
You're off route.

DRIVER
New orders. Vice President
Bernadotte.

GERMAN OFFICER
Papers.

The driver hands him a folded document. The officer reads it slowly.

GERMAN OFFICER (CONT'D)
This doesn't cover Theresienstadt.

DRIVER
It does now.

A tense beat. The officer steps away to radio.

INT. WHITE BUS - CONTINUOUS

Astrid squeezes Nina's wrist.

ASTRID
If they open the bins-

NINA
They won't.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The officer returns.

GERMAN OFFICER
You're lucky today. Move.

He slaps the document back into the driver's chest and waves them on.

The convoy rolls.

INT. WHITE BUS - LATER

Inger opens the crate lid a crack. The boy inside is flushed and sweating.

INGER
You're okay. You did perfect.

She places a damp cloth on his forehead.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - STOCKHOLM - SAME

In a polished boardroom, government officials argue around a long table.

A minister slams down a telegram.

SWEDISH MINISTER
He's deviated again. Entered
southern Germany without clearance.

DIPLOMAT
There are reports he's transporting
French Jews.

SWEDISH MINISTER
We gave him a corridor. He's
building a highway.

A junior aide hesitates.

JUNIOR AIDE
But he's saving lives.

SWEDISH MINISTER
We don't win wars with mercy. We
survive them with rules.

INT. RED CROSS FIELD HQ - NIGHT

Bernadotte reviews prisoner manifests. Each name handwritten.

Magnus enters with a coded message.

MAGNUS
Sweden has disavowed further action
south. No diplomatic protection if
anything goes wrong.

Bernadotte folds the note in half.

BERNADOTTE
Then we're not diplomats anymore.

MAGNUS
We're volunteers?

BERNADOTTE
We're witnesses. If we stop now,
we're accomplices.

He crosses off a red line on the route map—and draws a new
one in black.

EXT. THERESIENSTADT CAMP - GATES - DAY

The convoy approaches the walled ghetto.

The gates open slowly.

Uniformed guards wave them in-smiling.

Red Cross flags flutter. The air is oddly still.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

Nina stares out the window.

Children are playing near the entrance. Clean clothes. Even a swing set.

HANNA

Is this a real camp?

NINA

Yes.

HANNA

Then why does it look... nice?

Nina has no answer.

EXT. CAMP SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

The buses stop beside a freshly painted sign:

"WORK BRINGS FREEDOM"

A group of healthy-looking prisoners wait in neat lines.
Faces washed. Hair combed.

A camp officer greets Bernadotte with an exaggerated smile.

CAMP OFFICER

Welcome to Theresienstadt. A model
of humanitarian treatment.

Bernadotte steps down, expression unreadable.

BERNADOTTE

We'll need full access to the
barracks.

CAMP OFFICER
Of course. But first, perhaps a cup
of tea?

INT. THERESIENSTADT - VISITOR CENTER - LATER

White walls. Wooden floors. A fresh bouquet on the table.

It looks nothing like the other camps.

Bernadotte, Magnus, and two nurses are served tea in
porcelain cups.

A violin plays softly in the next room.

CAMP OFFICER
We've had visitors before. Danish
inspectors. Swiss observers. They
all left impressed.

MAGNUS
Did you clean up for them too?

The officer's smile flickers.

CAMP OFFICER
We believe in order. That's all.

INT. THERESIENSTADT - "SCHOOLROOM" - LATER

Nina steps inside a classroom. Desks. Chalkboard. Drawings on
the walls.

A girl stands by the window, reciting a poem in Czech.

Behind her, a woman watches with practiced warmth.

ASTRID (QUIETLY)
It's a stage.

NINA
How do you know?

Astrid points to the ceiling.

ASTRID
No heating vents. There never were.

EXT. CAMP SQUARE - NIGHT

The convoy is lined up to leave.

MAGNUS checks the manifests.

MAGNUS
Where's Bus Seven?

A nurse looks up from a clipboard.

NURSE
They were behind us leaving
Pardubice.

MAGNUS
And now?

Silence.

INT. COMMAND BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Bernadotte sits in the dark, staring at a map.

Magnus enters.

MAGNUS
Radio silence. They may have taken
a wrong turn—or were diverted.

BERNADOTTE
Or worse.

He draws a small black X on the map.

INT. WHITE BUS - NIGHT - MOVING

Nina sits beside Astrid. No one speaks.

Hanna is asleep, holding a wooden spoon she found at the last stop.

Astrid holds a folded paper in her hand.

ASTRID
One of the men gave me this. Said
they weren't allowed to speak
freely.

She opens it.

A list of names. Dates. Each one ends in:

"Transported East"

ASTRID (CONT'G) (CONT'D)
 They're not living here. They're
 passing through.

NINA
 Passing through where?

No answer.

INT. THERESIENSTADT - "SCHOOLROOM" - NIGHT

The desks are empty now. The chalkboard wiped clean.

Nina and Astrid search the corners of the room.

Astrid pulls back a curtain--revealing a bricked-over doorway.

Nina finds a small pair of shoes under one of the desks.
 Tiny. Unworn.

ASTRID
 They were here. Hours ago.

NINA
 Where did they go?

Astrid just stares.

EXT. WHITE BUS - BACK LOT - LATER

The nurses gather in silence. The convoy is stalled for the night.

Magnus walks toward Bernadotte, holding a stack of decoded telegrams.

MAGNUS
 Sweden's Foreign Office says the
 press is asking questions. About
 where we've been. Who we've
 rescued.

BERNADOTTE
 They're afraid the truth will make
 them look weak.

MAGNUS
 Germany's message is clearer:
 Either we deny what we saw--or
 they'll close every gate.

Bernadotte takes the papers. Doesn't read them.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

If you say the wrong thing, we lose
the next thousand.

BERNADOTTE

And if I say nothing, we lose our
souls.

INT. MEDICAL BUS - NIGHT

Nina kneels beside one of the linen bins. The lid open.

Inside: the smaller of the smuggled children. Pale. Still.

She checks for a pulse.

Nothing.

Astrid stands behind her, frozen.

ASTRID

When?

NINA

Sometime last night. In the cold.
In the dark. With no name.

Nina removes her own Red Cross badge. Places it over the
child's heart.

NINA (CONT'D)

He was ours.

INT. RED CROSS FIELD TENT - LATER

A DOCTOR-60s, grey-bearded, calm-packs his satchel.

Magnus enters.

MAGNUS

You're leaving?

DOCTOR

I joined to save the sick. Not to
bury them. Not to smuggle ghosts.

MAGNUS

They need us.

DOCTOR

Then bury him. Say a prayer. And do
better next time.

He walks out.

INT. WHITE BUS - SAME NIGHT

Nina sits alone, looking out the window. Her hands are raw, wrapped in gauze.

Hanna lies beside her, whispering to herself. A prayer. A memory. It's hard to tell.

Astrid leans in from behind.

ASTRID

I asked one of the Czech prisoners
what "Theresienstadt" means.

Nina doesn't respond.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

It's named after Maria Theresa. An
empress. A mother of nations.

Beat.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

She'd burn this place to the
ground.

Nina closes her eyes.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NEXT MORNING

The convoy moves south again.

Ahead: mist. Hills. Silence.

Behind: a wooden cross stands at the edge of the last stop.

A Red Cross badge nailed into it.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING - DAY

Rain begins to fall. It streaks the glass like tears.

The driver wipes condensation from the windshield. The convoy
snakes down a narrow road bordered by dense pine.

Nina sits next to Astrid.

ASTRID

Where's Bus Eleven?

Nina looks behind.

The last bus in the line is gone.

EXT. ROADSIDE - LATER

The convoy pulls off near an abandoned weigh station.

Bernadotte and Magnus pace near the idling vehicles.

MAGNUS

They radioed in an hour ago. Said
the SS ordered them back to Lübeck.
Claimed the mission was over.

BERNADOTTE

They followed that?

MAGNUS

The driver did. A few nurses
stayed. The rest are en route to
Sweden now.

Bernadotte exhales sharply. Looks toward the forested ridge ahead.

BERNADOTTE

If they didn't fire on them this
time... they will next.

INT. BUS ELEVEN - MOVING - SAME

Inside the now-returning bus: silence.

A few passengers sob quietly. A nurse stares straight ahead,
jaw clenched.

In the back, a folded Red Cross flag lies on the seat.

The badge is torn.

EXT. CONVOY STOP - DUSK

A nurse approaches Nina, holding a coded note.

NURSE

This was slipped through the fence
at the last checkpoint.

Nina unfolds it.

"Help us. Still alive. Neu-Staßfurt, east. Children here."

She reads it twice.

Then again.

INT. RED CROSS HQ - TENT - NIGHT

Bernadotte and Magnus study a map under a dim bulb.

MAGNUS

That's forty miles off our route.
In Soviet territory.

BERNADOTTE

Doesn't matter.

MAGNUS

They'll kill us before we get
there.

Bernadotte circles the location.

BERNADOTTE

Then we don't ask permission.

INT. MEDICAL BUS - LATER

Nina slams a drawer shut. Metal clatters.

Astrid watches her from across the aisle.

ASTRID

You all right?

NINA

No.

She picks up a file folder--the official transport ledger.

NINA (CONT'D)

Every name in this book is a name
we're allowed to save.

She flips it closed.

NINA (CONT'D)

And everyone else?

She stares at the lid of the supply bin.

NINA (CONT'D)
They die waiting for someone brave
enough to break the rules.

She tosses the ledger into a trash bin.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - OUTSKIRTS OF STOP - SAME NIGHT

Some nurses warm their hands. Drivers smoke in silence.

No songs. No jokes. Just the pop of burning pine.

Inger sits beside Astrid.

INGER
I thought I came to help.

ASTRID
You are.

INGER
Then why do I feel like I'm part of
the machine?

Astrid doesn't answer.

INT. COMMAND BUS - SAME TIME

Bernadotte stares at his reflection in the window.

His voice barely above a whisper.

BERNADOTTE
If we leave them now...
what are we coming home to?

INT. RED CROSS HQ - NIGHT

Nina stares at the handwritten note from Neu-Staßfurt.

Astrid sits nearby, cleaning a blood-stained bandage.

ASTRID
It's not on the map.

NINA
It's not supposed to be.

ASTRID
We don't have clearance. No route.
No permission.

NINA

That didn't stop us before.

Astrid doesn't argue. She just looks... tired.

EXT. EDGE OF CONVOY CAMP - MORNING

Inger walks along the side of the bus yard, cradling a bundle wrapped in linen.

A man in Red Cross uniform passes her. Nods.

Inside the bundle: a child, barely breathing, tucked into the folds of a nurse's coat.

Inger keeps walking.

No one stops her.

INT. COMMAND BUS - SAME TIME

Bernadotte reviews radio logs. A new message is handed to him.

MAGNUS

Stockholm again. Formal recall.

BERNADOTTE

Effective when?

MAGNUS

Immediately.

Bernadotte folds the paper without reading the rest.

BERNADOTTE

We leave in one hour. South.

MAGNUS

You're ignoring direct government order.

BERNADOTTE

They're ignoring humanity.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - HOURS LATER

The convoy—now down two buses—winds through narrow roads in early morning fog.

The white paint on the buses is streaked with mud and ash.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

Nina holds a child in her lap. Not Hanna—another. One with numbers tattooed, barely visible on a bruised arm.

The child sleeps.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Village ahead. They didn't respond
to our last signal.

ASTRID
Maybe they fled.

DRIVER
Maybe they're waiting.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - OUTSKIRTS - MOMENTS LATER

The convoy slows.

Empty windows. Doors ajar. No movement. Snow churned to slush in the road.

A bicycle leans against a wall. Still warm.

INT. COMMAND BUS - SAME TIME

Magnus scans the road ahead with binoculars.

MAGNUS
Nothing I like about this.

A single rifle crack rings out.

The lead bus jerks to the side. A tire blows.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING

Nina ducks. Astrid pulls Hanna down beneath the seat.

DRIVER
Keep going!

More shots. Windows spider. A side mirror shatters.

The buses lurch forward.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Two men with rifles sprint across the rooftops. A flash of white fabric. One shouts:

GERMAN MILITIA (O.S.)
No more traitors! No more thieves!

They fire again. Then disappear into the fog.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - MOMENTS AFTER THE AMBUSH

Steam hisses from the damaged lead bus. One tire shredded. The windshield cracked through.

Two nurses carry a wounded man to the roadside. Blood drips onto the snow.

MAGNUS helps patch a radio cable. His hands are shaking.

MAGNUS
This wasn't random. They knew we
were coming.

BERNADOTTE
They know who we are now.

INT. WHITE BUS - SAME TIME

Astrid checks on a passenger's bandaged leg. Nina looks under the seat--then again, more frantic.

NINA
Where is she?

ASTRID
Who?

NINA
The younger girl. The one with the
striped scarf.

They both freeze.

EXT. TREE LINE - MOMENTS LATER

Nina runs toward the forest's edge, boots crunching through snow.

NINA
Eva! EVA!

Nothing but wind through the pines.

She stops. Listens.

A faint sob.

She moves toward it, parting the trees.

There—a girl, maybe eight, curled beside a mossy stump, holding her scarf.

NINA (CONT'D)
Hey... hey now. It's okay.

She kneels. Opens her coat. The girl hesitates, then crawls in.

Nina hugs her tight.

EXT. ROADSIDE - BACK WITH THE CONVOY

Bernadotte approaches a DRIVER working under the second bus.

DRIVER
Axle's bent. Can't go another kilometer.

BERNADOTTE
Can you limp it to the next village?

DRIVER
Not unless you want to bury another nurse.

He stands. Wipes his hands.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm done, sir.

BERNADOTTE
We need every bus.

DRIVER
No. You need a miracle. This one's out.

He walks away, pulling off his gloves. Drops his Red Cross arm band in the snow.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Magnus stands in the aisle.

MAGNUS

We consolidate the passengers. We
ride slower. No one's left behind.

ASTRID

That's assuming no one else quits.

MAGNUS

Then they can walk.

Bernadotte enters.

He hears them. Doesn't respond.

He kneels beside a covered body near the back.

Peels back the sheet. It's the child Nina smuggled days
ago--the smaller one.

Frozen. Still.

He covers the child again.

EXT. SNOWFIELD - LATER

A shallow grave is dug. Just wide enough for a body.

The remaining crew gathers. No music. No rites.

Astrid places the Red Cross badge from the last grave into
the boy's hands.

Nina steps forward. Her voice is barely audible.

NINA

We will not forget you.

Bernadotte kneels. Uses his bare hands to push snow into the
grave.

No one stops him.

EXT. CONVOY STOP - DUSK

The Red Cross team is just finishing their quiet burial.
Everyone is emotionally wrecked.

A young Jewish man, recently rescued, stumbles away from the group, still dazed. He doesn't hear the shouted order from a nearby SS "escort" vehicle that just arrived.

An SS GUARD steps from the vehicle, drunk. Laughing with a second guard.

SS GUARD
Where are you going, dog?

The man doesn't understand. Keeps walking—just trying to find the latrine.

SS GUARD (CONT'D)
I said—halt.

No warning. No further command.

The SS GUARD raises his pistol and shoots the man in the back. He falls, twitching in the snow.

Everyone freezes.

The second SS GUARD grins. Shrugs.

SS GUARD #2

He stepped out of line.

Bernadotte, standing nearby, watches. Says nothing.

Just clenches his fists behind his back.

EXT. CONVOY GRAVE SITE - DUSK

The small grave is filled. A Red Cross badge sticks out from the snow as the only marker.

The team disperses slowly. No one speaks.

In the distance, the sound of an engine.

A black SS staff car pulls up at the edge of the field. Two guards step out, laughing. One opens a bottle. The other lights a cigarette.

SS GUARD #1

Nice painting job. All that white makes you easier to see from the air.

No one responds.

Nearby, a rescued prisoner, no older than twenty, stumbles away from the line—his legs barely working. He's trying to relieve himself behind a tree.

SS GUARD #1

Hey.

The prisoner doesn't hear.

SS GUARD #2

He's not in uniform.

SS GUARD #1

He's not in anything.

They laugh. The drunk guard pulls out his pistol casually.

SS GUARD #1 (CONT'D)

Dog should know better.

Before anyone can react—

He shoots the boy in the back.

The prisoner crumples. His head hits the snow with a soft thud.

Everyone freezes.

ASTRID gasps. Someone whispers a prayer.

SS GUARD #2

(to no one)

He stepped out of line.

The guards laugh again. One pisses in the ditch. They climb back into their car and drive off.

The Red Cross staff watch the tail lights fade.

INT. COMMAND BUS - NIGHT

Bernadotte sits alone. The shot still ringing in his ears.

MAGNUS (O.S.)

We have a route to Kassel. Refugee center. Safer territory.

BERNADOTTE

No.

MAGNUS

You want to go deeper?

BERNADOTTE

Yes.

MAGNUS

We're losing drivers. And nerve.

BERNADOTTE

Then we go alone.

He opens a file folder. Inside: a list of smuggled children, scribbled in pencil.

He folds it. Puts it in his coat.

EXT. FIELD OUTSKIRTS - LATER THAT NIGHT

The young prisoner's body is still in the snow.

Nina and Inger return with a canvas wrap.

They kneel. Wrap him gently. In silence.

INGER

Do we bury him?

NINA

We carry him.

INGER

How far?

NINA

As far as we go.

EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - MORNING

The convoy crawls up a narrow dirt road, trees leaning in from both sides.

Mist curls along the ditches. A bird screeches and vanishes.

INT. COMMAND BUS - MOVING

Bernadotte studies a hand-drawn map.

MAGNUS

Are you sure about this?

BERNADOTTE

It came from a priest outside
Kassel. Said children were left in
a farm shed two days ago.

MAGNUS

If the Germans abandoned them..

BERNADOTTE

They didn't. They were hiding them.

EXT. COLLAPSED BARN - OUTSKIRTS - DAY

The bus stops near a ruined barn. The roof caved in. One wall
burned to charcoal.

NINA, ASTRID, and INGER approach carefully.

A child's handprint is smudged in ash near the door.

They push inside.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Dust hanging in the shafts of light.

They hear it: shallow breathing.

In the far corner, four children huddle under a moldy
haystack. Eyes wide. Skin gray with cold.

NINA

Come here. You're safe now.

One boy tries to stand. His legs give out.

ASTRID

We'll carry them.

EXT. BARN YARD - MOMENTS LATER

As they lift the children into blankets, Inger turns—
—and freezes.

Across the dirt path, half-buried in slush—

A truck. No engine. No tires.

Inside it: a pile of bodies. Posed. Arms outstretched. Mouths sewn shut with wire.

A sign hangs from the door.

"MERCI POUR VOTRE HUMANITÉ"
 (Thank you for your
 humanity)
 Inger begins to retch. Astrid holds
 her hair back.

INT. WHITE BUS - LATER

Nina rocks one of the children gently, eyes vacant.

She blinks.

Then screams. Once. Sharp.

She covers her mouth. Shakes. Tears streak silently down her face.

Astrid doesn't try to comfort her. She simply sits beside her.

EXT. CONVOY ROUTE - GERMAN DEMARCATION SIGN - AFTERNOON

The convoy approaches a fork in the road.

A crumbling sign reads:

"Reichspolizei Controlled Zone - Travel Forbidden"

Bernadotte stares out the windshield.

MAGNUS
 We turn here.

BERNADOTTE
 No.

MAGNUS
 Folke—this isn't a road. It's an
 execution line.

Bernadotte steps off the bus. Walks up to the sign.

Tears it out of the ground with his bare hands.

He tosses it into the ditch.

BERNADOTTE
Then we cross it alive.

The drivers wait. Engines idling.

One after another, they turn into the forbidden path.

INT. WHITE BUS - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

The children are asleep in nurses' arms. Their breathing shallow, but steady.

Nina wipes her face with her sleeve.

She doesn't cry now.

Just stares ahead.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - AFTERNOON

The convoy pulls off into a clearing. A church steeple rises through the trees, its bell long since fallen.

MAGNUS steps out. Points ahead.

MAGNUS
Looks intact. Shelter for the
night.

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Dust coats the pews. A broken crucifix lies in the aisle.

Nina pushes open a side door—a small rectory still intact.

NINA
We can convert this. Cots. Wash
basins. A quiet corner.

ASTRID
For who?

NINA
Everyone we haven't lost yet.

EXT. CHURCH YARD - LATER

The buses are parked in a semicircle. Fires are lit in steel drums.

A low, distant rumble.

Everyone looks up.

A white bus appears down the road—battered, its headlights cracked.

Gasps.

INGER runs forward as it approaches. Nurses cheer—until the bus stops.

The door opens.

Only three survivors step out. Covered in blood. One limps. The others cry silently.

ASTRID (O.S.)
Where's Erik?

SURVIVOR #1
Didn't make it.

NINA (O.S.)
The children?

No answer.

SURVIVOR #2
They locked the doors. Burned it.
With the rest.

Silence.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - NIGHT

Cots now line the small room. Patients wrapped in sheets. IV bottles tied to crucifixes.

Nina sits on the edge of a cot, scrubbing blood from her hands with ash.

INGER enters. Pours water into a tin cup.

INGER
You can't save everyone.

NINA
That's not the job.

INGER
Then what is?

NINA

To try.

She drinks. Winces.

INGER

I smuggled another child today. We
have no food for her. No medicine.
No mother.

NINA

You want to stop?

INGER

I want to know if I'm saving her...
or killing her slowly.

They lock eyes. Inger walks out.

INT. CHURCH ALTAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bernadotte sits in a pew alone.

No lights. Just a sliver of moon through the broken glass.

He kneels.

Tries to form a prayer—but nothing comes.

Then:

MAGNUS (O.S.)

Word from Stockholm.

Bernadotte doesn't move.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)

There's talk. Unconfirmed.
Himmler's reaching out. Wants to
open dialogue with Sweden.

Bernadotte finally looks up.

BERNADOTTE

He's losing. Now he wants to
bargain?

MAGNUS

It may open doors. Maybe lives.

BERNADOTTE

Or maybe it's the devil asking
for a favor.

He closes his eyes.

EXT. FORK IN THE ROAD - MORNING

Two Red Cross drivers argue beside their vehicles.

DRIVER #1
This route's blocked. We circle
west-through Neuengamme.

DRIVER #2
That road's mined. We stay with the
main group.

MAGNUS steps between them.

MAGNUS
We split. Four buses with me. The
rest hold here.

DRIVER #2
You're not in command.

MAGNUS
Then call Stockholm. Ask them if
they want their people back.

EXT. NEUENGAMME ROAD - LATER

A narrow, frostbitten highway cutting through open farmland.

Four white buses roll forward-mud spraying their flanks.

In the distance: a Gestapo checkpoint.

INT. BUS - MOVING

Astrid clutches Nina's hand.

ASTRID
You're freezing.

NINA
Just tired.

EXT. GESTAPO CHECKPOINT - MOMENTS LATER

The buses stop. Six Gestapo officers fan out. Submachine guns
ready.

GESTAPO COMMANDER

Papers!

Magnus steps out. Offers their authorization letter and Red Cross charter.

The Commander scans it--then tears it in half.

GESTAPO COMMANDER (CONT'D)

This road is closed to mercy.

He signals.

Gunfire rips through the side of the lead bus.

Screams. Blood.

Astrid grabs the wheel. Throws it into reverse, grinding gears as bullets punch through windows.

The convoy peels back--one bus listing, tires blown.

INT. COMMAND BUS - HOURS LATER

Bernadotte sits with a decoded wire in hand.

It reads:

CONFIDENTIAL: CONTACT INITIATED.

HIMMLER REQUESTS NEUTRAL INTERMEDIARY.

FULL AUTHORIZATION PENDING.

He rubs his temple.

BERNADOTTE (TO HIMSELF)
They burn children... then ask for
favors.

EXT. RIVER BRIDGE - SUNSET

The team stops to assess damage. A burned-out farmhouse nearby. Smoke still curls from its roof.

Nina steps off her bus, trembling.

ASTRID (O.S.)
You're shaking again.

NINA
It's hot.

ASTRID
It's snowing.

Nina collapses.

INT. FIELD CLINIC - NIGHT

She lies on a cot, sweat pouring down her face.

Astrid dabs her forehead.

Inger checks a thermometer.

INGER
Forty-one. We need sulfa or
quinine.

ASTRID
We have aspirin and prayers.

EXT. FARMLAND - EARLY MORNING

A white bus lies abandoned in a ditch, wheels torn away.

The group gathers in silence.

MAGNUS
We can't leave it for them.

Bernadotte nods.

KEROSENE is poured into the cabin.

A flare is struck.

The bus goes up in a howl of flame—white paint curling, cross blackening, tires melting into mud.

They all watch until the frame collapses inward.

EXT. WOODED CROSSROADS - EARLY MORNING

The convoy idles near a frost-covered mile marker.

A Swedish courier on a motorbike arrives, breathless, carrying a satchel.

He hands Bernadotte an envelope. Inside: a coded cable from Stockholm.

MEETING APPROVED. LOCATION: LÜBECK. TIME: TBD.

HIMMLER REQUESTS PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

CAUTION: HITLER LIKELY UNAWARE. TRUST NOTHING.

Bernadotte lowers the note.

MAGNUS (O.S.)
They're playing both sides.

BERNADOTTE
Then so must we.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - DAY

Nina lies in her cot, eyes open, but unfocused.

Astrid sponges her brow.

NINA (WHISPERS)
He was singing.

ASTRID

Who?

NINA

The boy in the barn. He sang before the fire came. His lips moved, even after.

Astrid says nothing.

NINA (CONT'D)

I can still hear him. Can't you?

A beat.

ASTRID

No.

EXT. CONVOY STAGING AREA - LATER

A black German staff car arrives unannounced.

Two Wehrmacht officers and a civilian cameraman exit, accompanied by a young Nazi official—immaculately dressed.

NAZI OFFICIAL (GERMAN)

This is a gift. For your Swedish charity. Film. History.

He gestures toward the buses.

CAMERAMAN

Show them loading. Smiling. It's for Berlin.

MAGNUS

We didn't agree to this.

NAZI OFFICIAL

You don't need to. It's Reich territory. We film what we wish.

BERNADOTTE

They're not smiling. Not anymore.

EXT. CEMETERY RIDGE - DUSK

Bernadotte walks alone, his boots crunching frost.

A second man follows behind—calm, composed.

FEGELEIN, Himmler's aide.

FEGELEIN
You have your meeting.

BERNADOTTE
At what cost?

FEGELEIN
Whatever you agree to, make it
fast. Hitler suspects something.

Bernadotte turns.

BERNADOTTE
He knows?

FEGELEIN
Not yet. But Himmler has enemies.
If this leaks—he dies. And so do
you.

BERNADOTTE
So I should trust the Reich?

FEGELEIN
Trust that it's collapsing. And
that mercy has an expiration date.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Astrid lights a candle beneath the altar. Watches Nina sleep.

Bernadotte enters.

ASTRID
The boy Nina saw... I think she was
right.

BERNADOTTE
How do you mean?

ASTRID
Maybe they don't leave us. The ones
we fail. Maybe they stay... to
remind us to keep going.

A long silence.

Bernadotte nods.

BERNADOTTE
Then we keep going.

EXT. LÜBECK - ABANDONED TRAIN DEPOT - NIGHT

Searchlights sweep across a desolate rail yard. Crumbling freight cars. Stripped tracks.

A single white bus pulls into view.

Bernadotte steps out, flanked by two unarmed aides. No weapons. No guards.

A sleek black Mercedes staff car waits beneath a broken canopy.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - MOMENTS LATER

Inside: concrete, cold. Echoes of dripping water.

BERNADOTTE approaches a lone table.

Across from him sits HEINRICH HIMMLER—pristine uniform, rimless glasses. Calm. Smiling.

HIMMLER

Count Bernadotte. Sweden's last gentleman.

BERNADOTTE

I didn't come for charm.

HIMMLER

No. You came for results.

A beat.

HIMMLER (CONT'D)

I've authorized the release of another 5,000 prisoners. Danish. Norwegian. And yes—Jews as well. I believe that was your insistence?

Bernadotte stares.

BERNADOTTE

Why now?

HIMMLER

Because we are men of reason. And reason survives empires.

He sips tea, unfazed.

HIMMLER (CONT'D)

Germany must surrender soon. But
not to the East. The Bolsheviks
are... unnatural.

BERNADOTTE

So you bargain with mercy, now that
you're losing.

HIMMLER

History is a mirror, Count. I'm
arranging my reflection.

BERNADOTTE

Your reflection is a furnace.

A flicker of anger behind Himmler's glasses. But it vanishes.

HIMMLER

You'll be remembered as the man who
saved thousands. I'll be remembered
as the man who let you.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S QUARTERS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Magnus watches as Bernadotte pours a drink with shaking
hands.

MAGNUS

What did he offer?

BERNADOTTE

Hope. Wrapped in a trap.

MAGNUS

Will you take it?

BERNADOTTE

If it gets them out? Yes.

MAGNUS

Even if it keeps him alive a day
longer?

Bernadotte doesn't answer.

EXT. CONVOY STAGING YARD - DAWN

The full line of white buses. Quiet. Still.

Astrid approaches the command vehicle, holding a telegram.

ASTRID
From Stockholm.

Bernadotte reads it.

Soviets object to Himmler negotiations. Allies watching.
Proceed at own risk.

He folds it slowly.

NINA (O.S.)
If he asks you to carry him out
with us, will you?

She's standing there—pale, but upright. Fever fading. Voice steady.

BERNADOTTE
No.

NINA
Then I'll ride with you.

They share a look that says: this is no longer diplomacy.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE HAMBURG - EARLY MORNING

Frost clings to the windows of a stopped convoy. Buses idling.

INT. COMMAND BUS - SAME

BERNADOTTE reads a diplomatic wire from Stockholm.

You are exceeding operational bounds.

Political neutrality at risk. Cease unauthorized movement.

Allies have concerns. Soviet position unclear.

He closes his eyes. Hands shaking.

MAGNUS (O.S.)
They want their white knight back
in his stable.

BERNADOTTE
Then they can come fetch me.

EXT. MAKESHIFT TRIAGE TENT - LATER

NINA kneels beside a woman clutching a tiny, lifeless child.

The mother won't let go. Rocking gently.

NINA

We have to leave. The next convoy
is leaving in minutes.

MOTHER

She's only cold. She'll wake. She
just needs sunlight.

Nina gently places her hand on the mother's.

NINA

There's no sun here.

The woman sobs—but lets go.

EXT. CONVOY ROUTE - AFTERNOON

The buses roll again.

Above them—distant drone of Allied fighter planes.

INT. BUS - MOVING

NINA watches the sky nervously.

BOOM.

The bus in front erupts—flame, glass, smoke.

The planes mistake the convoy for German military transport.

SCREAMS inside Nina's bus as the driver veers off road.

Flames consume the wrecked vehicle. Two nurses try to reach
it—but it's too late.

EXT. CRATER - MOMENTS LATER

Astrid kneels beside a charred Red Cross bag. Her hands black
with ash.

She throws it down—screams into the wind.

EXT. FIELD HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Bernadotte stands before the team. His face hollowed by fatigue and grief.

BERNADOTTE
We leave in two days. Lübeck. It
will be our last run.

ASTRID
With what drivers? What buses? What
strength?

BERNADOTTE
We use everything. If they can
breathe, they ride.

MAGNUS
And if they can't?

BERNADOTTE
Then we carry them.

INT. PROPAGANDA VAN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Inside a Nazi broadcast vehicle, REELS of footage play on
loop.

Footage of Nina loading children onto buses.

Of Astrid bandaging a wounded inmate.

Of Bernadotte standing tall beside the Red Cross.

A Nazi OFFICER leans toward the camera crew.

NAZI OFFICER
We'll call it "Mercy from the
Reich." Let the Swedes think
they're saving the world.

He laughs.

Behind him, Fegelein listens—but doesn't laugh.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - SAME NIGHT

He sits alone.

On the seat beside him: a stack of passenger manifests, hand-
written, stained with ash.

NINA (O.S.)
What happens after Lübeck?

BERNADOTTE
I don't know.

NINA
And if they kill us before we get
there?

He looks at her. No fear left.

BERNADOTTE
Then we keep going anyway.

EXT. CLEARING - EARLY MORNING

A makeshift burial. Frosted ground. No ceremony. No hymns.
Three white shrouds. Two of them are nurses. One is a child.
The Swedish team stands in silence. No words spoken.
Nina drops a white carnation. Astrid clenches her fists.

INT. TOWN HALL - MIDDAY

A modest German town. Mayor's office.

BERNADOTTE sits across from a stiff, aging NAZI MAYOR.

NAZI MAYOR
Fuel is rationed. You've already
emptied the depot.

BERNADOTTE
We need thirty drums. That's all.

NAZI MAYOR
Even the Führer must ration in war.

BERNADOTTE
The Führer is losing it.

The mayor narrows his eyes. A silent moment. Then:

NAZI MAYOR
Careful, Count. The Reich still has
teeth.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MINUTES LATER

The Swedish team loads crates under Nazi supervision.

A propaganda unit arrives again—cameras out.

The Nazi cameraman gestures for Astrid to stand beside a smiling child.

CAMERAMAN

Smile. Smile! For history.

Astrid walks up—and slaps the camera from his hands.

ASTRID

Film that.

INT. COMMAND BUS - NIGHT

Magnus throws down a map. Marked in red: LÜBECK - FINAL RENDEZVOUS.

MAGNUS

The Soviets are two days out. This corridor won't stay open.

BERNADOTTE

Then we drive faster.

NINA

And if we're stopped?

BERNADOTTE

Then we tell them the truth.

ASTRID

They already know. They just don't care.

A moment.

BERNADOTTE

Then we care louder.

INT. GERMAN PROPAGANDA ROOM - BERLIN - SAME NIGHT

A flickering projector. Officers gather in silence.

On screen: white buses. children. smiling nurses. red crosses.

Over it: voiceover narration in German.

"In the Reich, even our enemies are treated with compassion..."

Aide bursts in.

AIDE

My Führer-Himmler has made contact
with the Swedish Count. He's
negotiating. With the Allies.

Silence. Then a metal chair SCREECHES back.

We never see the face—but the voice is unmistakable.

HITLER (O.S.)

Find him. Strip him of everything.

INT. WHITE BUS - DAWN

Nina wraps a child in wool blankets. Frost clings to the
inside glass.

Astrid tightens a tourniquet.

BERNADOTTE (O.S.)

We leave in twenty.

The nurses nod.

The final convoy is forming—stretching over the horizon like
a spine of white vertebrae.

EXT. EDGE OF A FOREST ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

A German mechanic watches the buses from a ridge. He lights a
fuse.

One bus. Sabotaged. Its engine explodes in the distance—BOOM.

Screams. Smoke.

Back in the forest, the saboteur vanishes.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - IMMEDIATELY

MAGNUS bursts in.

MAGNUS

That was no accident. They want us
to fail.

BERNADOTTE

Then let's make them watch us
succeed.

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INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - IMMEDIATELY

MAGNUS bursts in.

MAGNUS
That was no accident. They want us to fail.

BERNADOTTE
Then let's make them watch us succeed.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD NEAR LÜBECK - EARLY MORNING

The white convoy winds through dense woods.

Frost burns off under weak sunlight. The Red Cross emblems stand out against the green gloom.

INT. ASTRID'S LEAD BUS - MOVING

She drives with rigid focus. A child clutches a stuffed rabbit behind her. Nina sits beside her, pale.

NINA
Any word from Lübeck?

ASTRID
Radio silence. That's not a good sign.

EXT. MAKESHIFT CHECKPOINT - MILE OUTSIDE LÜBECK

A line of German soldiers blocks the road. Ragged uniforms. Tense. Desperate.

The buses slow.

MAGNUS (O.S. RADIO)
Hold formation. Do not engage.

Bernadotte steps out of his bus—hands raised.

BERNADOTTE
We're under the banner of the Red Cross. You've seen the papers. Let us through.

A CAPTAIN approaches, rifle in hand. Eyes bloodshot.

GERMAN CAPTAIN
We were ordered to stop all movement. No exceptions.

BERNADOTTE
Even for children?

The captain doesn't blink.

Suddenly—a senior Nazi officer appears behind him.

FEGELEIN.

FEGELEIN
Let them through.

The captain hesitates.

FEGELEIN (CONT'D)
Those are orders. From Berlin. Final ones, I suspect.

He locks eyes with Bernadotte—something unspoken passes.
The road clears. The buses roll on.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - MOVING

MAGNUS
He knew we were coming.

BERNADOTTE
He knew everything. And still let
us through.

MAGNUS
Why?

BERNADOTTE
Because the Reich is dying. And he
wants to be remembered on the right
side of the photograph.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING LÜBECK - LATE MORNING

The buses crest a hill—and come to a crawl.

Below: chaos.

LÜBECK is in flames. Artillery pounds the outskirts. Soviet
and Allied forces converge.

Smoke. Screams. Rubble.

ASTRID (O.S. RADIO)
If we go in, we're caught between
lines.

NINA (O.S. RADIO)
And if we don't?

A long pause.

BERNADOTTE (O.S. RADIO)
We didn't come this far to turn
around.

EXT. ROAD INTO LÜBECK - MINUTES LATER

The convoy creeps forward—horns blaring, Red Cross flags
waving.

Gunfire erupts—not at them, but around them.

A Soviet tank appears. Stops. Barrel aimed at the lead bus.

Astrid gets out—walks forward alone, holding a Red Cross banner high.

A tense pause.

Then: the tank's barrel tilts up.

A Soviet soldier nods.

The convoy rolls forward.

EXT. RURAL GERMAN HIGHWAY - EARLY MORNING

The WHITE BUSES move through fog like ghosts. The cold light reveals soot stains and cracks. The Red Cross emblems are smeared but still visible.

INT. LEAD BUS - MOVING

ASTRID drives. NINA sits beside her, eyes red from sleepless nights. Children cough softly in the back.

ASTRID

How many?

NINA

Today? One dead. Two fevered. One fading.

She holds up a vial—empty.

NINA (CONT'D)

That was the last of the penicillin.

EXT. ROADSIDE HILL CREST - SHORTLY AFTER

The buses slow. Ahead, a MILITARY CHECKPOINT—German soldiers with rifles drawn.

INT. COMMAND BUS - SAME

BERNADOTTE steps down, MAGNUS at his side.

He approaches the checkpoint slowly, arms raised, no fear in his eyes.

BERNADOTTE

We carry no arms. Only the wounded.
And hope.

A twitchy German CAPTAIN looks to a nearby officer--FEGELEIN.

FEGELEIN

Let them pass.

CAPTAIN

Our orders--no movements--

FEGELEIN

Your orders come from Himmler.

(beat)

My orders come from Berlin.

He glares at the Captain. The soldiers part. The buses roll forward.

NINA (O.S.)

He just saved us.

ASTRID (O.S.)

Or set the next trap.

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE LÜBECK - LATE MORNING

The convoy crests a hill. Below: LÜBECK IN FLAMES.

Allied and Soviet troops clash on the outskirts. Shells explode. Civilians run.

A Red Cross outpost flies a flag--but it flaps over collapsed tents and bodies.

INT. COMMAND BUS - MOVING

MAGNUS

That's no corridor. That's a
killing field.

BERNADOTTE

It's still the way.

EXT. WAR-TORN ROAD INTO LÜBECK - MINUTES LATER

The convoy enters the outskirts. Machine gun fire echoes--not aimed at them, but near. A shell hits an abandoned truck ahead--BOOM. They swerve around it.

A SOVIET TANK blocks the path.

It lowers its barrel—aiming directly at the lead bus.

INT. LEAD BUS

Astrid throws it into park.

ASTRID

Stay here.

She exits.

EXT. LÜBECK ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Astrid walks forward—hands up—holding a tattered Red Cross flag.

A beat. The tank does not move.

More troops appear—SOVIET INFANTRY, young and uncertain.

Astrid speaks in slow, careful Russian.

ASTRID (IN RUSSIAN)

We are nurses. Children. Wounded.
No weapons.

A tense pause.

Then: the tank barrel tilts upward.

A Soviet SOLDIER steps forward and nods.

Astrid turns, raising the flag high.

The convoy crawls past, wheels rumbling over broken streets.

EXT. RUINS OF THE RED CROSS OUTPOST - CONTINUOUS

The buses arrive. Crates are overturned. Injured staff cling to life. A nurse bleeds from her abdomen.

NINA runs to her—presses gauze down.

ASTRID

We need shelter. Triage. We're not
going any farther until they can
stand.

BERNADOTTE (O.S.)
Then this becomes the last stop.

EXT. MAKESHIFT RED CROSS CAMP - LÜBECK - EARLY EVENING

Canvas tents flap in the cold wind. Nurses tend to the wounded on stretchers and crates. Children sip broth. The buses idle, low on fuel.

INT. SUPPLY TENT - SAME

NINA bandages a teenager's leg—his eyes are glassy. A 6-YEAR-OLD GIRL whimpers nearby.

NINA (TO TEEN)
You'll walk again. Just not today.

Suddenly—A WHISTLING SOUND overhead.

Everyone looks up.

BOOM.

EXT. CAMP - CONTINUOUS

A shell explodes on the edge of the camp—tents shredded, crates airborne.

Screams.

ASTRID shields a child with her body.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - MOMENTS LATER

MAGNUS stumbles in, bleeding from the forehead.

MAGNUS
We're exposed. If another hits closer, we'll lose everyone.

BERNADOTTE
How many buses can move?

MAGNUS
Seven.

BERNADOTTE
Get them loaded.

EXT. TRIAGE ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

ASTRID carries a child with a fractured skull. Blood down her arms. She searches—

ASTRID
Nina! Nina, we're evacuating!

INT. COLLAPSED TENT - SAME

NINA is crouched over the 6-year-old girl—half-buried in rubble. The girl wheezes faintly.

ASTRID (O.S.)
We have to go!

NINA
If I move her now, she dies.

ASTRID
If you stay, you die.

Nina looks down—decides.

NINA
Then I stay.

Astrid hesitates—then kneels, removes her necklace, and puts it around Nina's neck.

ASTRID (SOFTLY)
Don't make me bury you.

They lock eyes. Then Astrid runs.

EXT. CONVOY - MOMENTS LATER

The seven remaining buses roar to life. Shells explode in the distance.

Bernadotte climbs aboard the last one—staring out the back window.

Through dust and smoke, he sees Nina—still kneeling beside the child, unmoving.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

He sits beside Magnus, pale and shaken.

MAGNUS
We lost too many.

Bernadotte pulls out a fountain pen. Begins writing on Red Cross letterhead.

MAGNUS (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

BERNADOTTE
Documenting. So no one forgets.

EXT. BORDER CROSSING - DAWN

The convoy finally reaches the Swedish border. Snow falls. The guards wave them through.

As the buses roll past, children press their hands to the glass—seeing safety for the first time.

INT. ALLIED COMMAND POST - SAME

Two British officers speak over a telegraph.

OFFICER 1
Intercept from Frankfurt. Himmler tried to surrender to Montgomery.

OFFICER 2
He was turned away. Caught by our men hours later. Suicide capsule in the mouth.

They look at the map—Lübeck circled in red.

OFFICER 1
He almost got away with it.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S BUS - MOVING

He closes the letter. Seals it with wax. Hands it to Magnus.

BERNADOTTE
If anything happens, make sure that reaches Stockholm.

Magnus takes it—nods silently.

Bernadotte looks out at the sunrise. Quiet.

EXT. LÜBECK - BOMB CRATER - EARLY MORNING

Smoke rises. The sound of shelling is gone. Only crows remain.

A RED CROSS FLAG lies torn in the mud.

ANGLE ON - NINA

She stirs beneath debris. Bruised, face bloodied. Barely alive.

The little girl is gone—wrapped in Nina's coat, eyes closed forever.

Nina crawls out, gripping the flag.

She stands. Alone in the ruins.

EXT. STOCKHOLM - SWEDISH RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS - DAYS LATER

The convoy—what's left of it—arrives to quiet applause and tears.

Families reunited. Nurses weep. Astrid scans the arrivals—
But Nina isn't among them.

MAGNUS (O.S.)
They're calling it a miracle.
Thousands saved.

BERNADOTTE
Then count it among the last before
the end.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - STOCKHOLM - LATER

Flashbulbs. Typewriters. Bernadotte stands before reporters.

REPORTER
Was Heinrich Himmler involved in
the rescue?

Bernadotte pauses—knowing the politics.

BERNADOTTE
Himmler offered access. But make no
mistake: this rescue was paid for
by blood, not mercy.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LÜBECK - DAYS LATER

NINA lies in a hospital bed. Tubes in her nose. Bandages across her body.

A nurse sets down a telegram.

She opens it.

INSERT:

"YOU SAVED HER. YOU SAVED US. - ASTRID"

Nina closes her eyes. Finally rests.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

He pins a photo to the wall: the first convoy. Children waving from the window.

He turns to a notebook—begins writing again.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)
 April 1945. The last month of the
 world as we knew it. We rescued who
 we could. Not all. But enough to
 say we tried.

INTERCUT -
 MONTAGE:

- A Swedish girl embraces her father, rescued from Neuengamme.
- A boy finds his name on a registry list—tears up.
- A nurse, now in civilian clothes, lights a candle by a photo of the White Bus she served in.
- A mass grave in Germany is filled in.
- Bernadotte finishes his entry, signs it.

EXT. RED CROSS CEMETERY - DAY

Astrid stands before a small white cross.

She lays down Nina's necklace—returned from Lübeck.

She turns to go. A young nurse approaches.

YOUNG NURSE
Are you Astrid Lindgren?

ASTRID
I was. Now I'm just someone who
remembers.

They walk off together.

EXT. BERGEN-BELSEN - YEARS LATER - DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE

B&W FILM: bulldozers push bodies into trenches.

TITLE CARD:

Between March and April 1945, the White Buses rescued more
than 17,000 prisoners from Nazi concentration camps.

INT. ARCHIVAL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

On a display screen: photos of the real buses, nurses, and
survivors.

Children wrapped in blankets. Men barely alive. Smiles behind
hollow eyes.

FINAL TITLE
CARD:

Many of those rescued by the White Buses went on to rebuild
families, countries, and lives. Some are still alive today.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. STOCKHOLM - WAR MEMORIAL GARDEN - DAY

A quiet ceremony.

A SMALL PLAQUE reads:

To those who drove into the mouth of death, and brought life
back out.

A crowd gathers—nurses, Red Cross volunteers, families. Flags
lowered.

ASTRID steps up to the microphone.

ASTRID
We weren't soldiers. We had no
rifles, no battalions.
(MORE)

ASTRID (CONT'D)

We had engines and gauze. Fuel and fear. And somehow, that was enough.

She glances at the crowd.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

We did not win the war. But we won moments. Moments where mercy lived longer than hate.

A pause.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

We remember not because it's easy—but because it's necessary.

INT. BERNADOTTE'S STUDY - NIGHT

He writes by candlelight. The war is over.

His final journal entry.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)

They said we couldn't. That it was too late. Too dangerous. That the war would swallow us whole.

He pauses—then keeps writing.

BERNADOTTE (V.O., CONT'D)

But we went. And we did not return empty-handed.

On the desk: a map of the route. Red lines. Dozens of dots: camps, hospitals, mass graves.

INT. LÜBECK - FIELD HOSPITAL - WEEKS LATER

NINA, thinner, older somehow, teaches a young nurse how to wrap a burn dressing.

The child she once saved lies nearby—smiling weakly, color returned.

The nurse struggles.

Nina smiles, gently adjusts her hands.

NINA

Not tight. Not loose. Just... enough.

The nurse nods.

Outside, sirens wail—not bombs anymore, but ambulances bringing more survivors in.

MONTAGE - "AFTERLIVES"

— A Jewish father stands in a bakery, helping his daughter knead bread.

— A Polish teenager in medical school, her hands still bandaged from frostbite.

— A small bus museum in Malmö—one of the original White Buses parked inside.

— A child's drawing—a white box with red crosses and people waving from the windows.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)
History will argue who won the war.
I only ask it remember who fought
for peace.

EXT. COPENHAGEN STREET - DAY (1948)

A single candle burns in a window.

An older man limps by. He pauses. He recognizes the face behind the glass—

Nina.

He tips his cap. She smiles, faintly.

INT. SWEDISH ARCHIVES - PRESENT DAY

A file marked: "THE WHITE BUSES - DECLASSIFIED."

Hands open it.

Inside:

Bernadotte's letters

Astrid's speeches

Photos of Nina, unnamed in records

Transit logs

Lists of the dead and saved

The last page: a photograph.

A SINGLE WHITE BUS, parked beneath falling snow.

Children lean out the windows, waving.

Smiling. Alive.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. UNITED NATIONS HALLWAY - PALESTINE MEDIATION OFFICE -
DAY (1948)

A man walks down a corridor flanked by aides. It's COUNT
FOLKE BERNADOTTE, older now, dignified in a white summer
suit. A RED CROSS pin on his lapel.

He exits through a side door, entering:

EXT. JERUSALEM - UN CONVOY - MINUTES LATER

Bernadotte climbs into a UN JEEP—clearly marked. No armor.
Just a flag and hope.

Two vehicles follow.

Suddenly—

GUNFIRE erupts from a side alley.

Bernadotte is struck.

His aide screams. The driver ducks. Chaos.

INT. UN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A telegram prints slowly.

"COUNT FOLKE BERNADOTTE ASSASSINATED IN JERUSALEM BY
EXTREMIST FACTION."

The printer stops.

Below the type:

"September 17, 1948."

INT. BERNADOTTE'S STUDY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A younger Bernadotte stares out the window.

His voice again.

BERNADOTTE (V.O.)
We live in the shadow of men who
ruled by terror.

And we must choose—every generation—whether to follow them or
defy them.

He turns out the light.

INT. BUNKER - BERLIN - APRIL 1945

Archival-style imagery. Shadows. A trembling hand writes a
will.

TITLE CARD:

"April 30, 1945 - Adolf Hitler commits suicide in his
bunker."

His body is carried, burned.

INT. BARN - NORTHERN GERMANY - MAY 1945

Two soldiers search a hayloft.

They find a man-tattered SS uniform, gaunt, lips foaming.

He bites down on a hidden cyanide capsule.

TITLE CARD:

"May 23, 1945 - Heinrich Himmler, architect of the camps,
kills himself while in British custody."

EXT. SWEDISH CEMETERY - DAY (PRESENT)

A group of children on a field trip walks past two modest
headstones.

One reads:

ASTRID LINDGREN
1907 - 2002

'For the children.'

Another:

FOLKE BERNADOTTE
1895 - 1948

'He chose mercy.'

EXT. LÜBECK - ABANDONED ROAD - WINTER (YEARS LATER)

A snow-covered, rusted hulk of a White Bus sits beneath a tree.

Its red cross faded. But still there.

From behind the tree, a young girl steps into frame—tour booklet in hand.

She touches the bus.

GIRL (TO HERSELF)
They came for us.

FINAL TITLE CARDS - FADE IN ONE BY ONE:

"The White Buses rescued over 17,000 prisoners between March and April 1945."

"Among them were Norwegians, Danes, Poles, Jews, and many others marked for death."

"Count Folke Bernadotte was later appointed UN mediator in Palestine. He was assassinated in Jerusalem in 1948."

"His mission of peace continues today—carried by those who remember."

FADE OUT.

THE END