

The First Witness

Written by

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Based on historical events.

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FADE IN:

EXT. EASTERN FRONT - BELARUS - DAWN - JULY 1944

Fog clings to a shattered battlefield.

Burned tanks. Broken artillery. Dead horses.

The distant thunder of artillery rolls across the horizon.

A column of RED ARMY SOLDIERS advances cautiously through the smoke.

Boots crunch through mud and debris.

Suddenly -

A MACHINE GUN ERUPTS.

Bullets rip through the fog.

Soldiers dive for cover.

Chaos explodes across the battlefield.

Men shout.

Return fire erupts.

Explosions pound the earth.

Through it all -

A MAN moves calmly among the soldiers.

Early 30s.

Lean.

Focused.

This is IVAN MARKOV, war photographer.

Instead of a rifle, he carries a battered LEICA CAMERA around his neck.

A young soldier grabs his sleeve.

SOLDIER

What are you doing?!
Get down!

Markov barely acknowledges him.

He raises the camera.

CLICK.

A soldier firing through smoke.

CLICK.

A wounded man crawling through the mud.

CLICK.

An explosion lifting dirt and bodies into the air.

Markov advances closer to the fighting.

The soldier stares at him like he's insane.

SOLDIER

You want to die?

Markov lowers the camera.

Studies the battlefield.

Then quietly -

MARKOV

No.

He lifts the camera again.

MARKOV (CONT'D)

I want them to see.

CLICK.

A German position erupts in flames.

Soldiers charge forward.

The fog slowly clears.

The battlefield falls silent.

Bodies lie scattered across the earth.

Markov walks alone through the aftermath.

He photographs the dead.

CLICK.

A Russian soldier.

CLICK.

A German boy no older than seventeen.

CLICK.

War reduced to still images.

Behind him —

A SOVIET OFFICER approaches.

OFFICER
Markov.

Markov turns.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Orders from Moscow.

Markov waits.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
You're being reassigned.

MARKOV
Where?

The officer studies him a moment.

OFFICER
Lublin.

Beat.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Intelligence says the Germans left
something behind.

Markov raises the camera again.

CLICK.

The battlefield frozen forever in a single photograph.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

THE FIRST WITNESS

CUT TO:

INT. SOVIET FIELD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A commandeered FARMHOUSE.

Maps cover the walls.

Red Army officers move in and out, studying troop positions across eastern Poland.

A large map dominates the room.

Pins mark the German retreat.

The front line moving rapidly west.

IVAN MARKOV enters, camera slung over his shoulder.

Mud still stains his boots.

At the table stands COLONEL PETROV, late 40s, hardened by years of war.

He studies a report while smoking.

Without looking up—

PETROV
You took your time.

MARKOV
There was a battle.

Petrov glances up.

PETROV
There's always a battle.

Markov removes a roll of film from his camera.

Places it on the table.

MARKOV

You'll have your photographs by tonight.

Petrov waves it off.

PETROV

This assignment is different.

Markov studies him.

Petrov walks to the wall map.

Points to a location.

PETROV (CONT'D)

Lublin.

Markov nods. The city lies just ahead of the advancing Red Army.

PETROV (CONT'D)

Our forces will take the city within days.

MARKOV

And?

Petrov picks up a thin intelligence file.

Slides it across the table.

Markov opens it.

Inside are aerial reconnaissance photos.

Barbed wire.

Barracks.

Watchtowers.

MARKOV (CONT'D)

A prison?

PETROV

That's what we thought.

Petrov lights another cigarette.

Something about this troubles him.

PETROV (CONT'D)
German forces abandoned it two days
ago.

MARKOV
Why abandon a prison?

Petrov exhales smoke.

PETROV
That is what Moscow would like to
know.

Markov studies the aerial photo again.

Rows of buildings stretching across a massive compound.

MARKOV
How many prisoners?

Petrov hesitates.

PETROV
Intelligence cannot say.

Beat.

PETROV (CONT'D)
But the Polish resistance has
another name for it.

Markov looks up.

MARKOV
What name?

Petrov meets his eyes.

PETROV
A death camp.

Markov waits for the rest.

It never comes.

The words hang in the air.

Markov frowns.

MARKOV
I've heard that phrase before.

PETROV
So have I.

Petrov stubs out the cigarette.

PETROV (CONT'D)
I don't believe in rumors.

He taps the aerial photograph.

PETROV (CONT'D)
That's why you're going.

Markov looks down again.

The image of the compound suddenly feels heavier.

PETROV (CONT'D)
If the Germans built something
there—

PETROV (CONT'D)
—the world will see it.

Markov closes the file.

Quiet.

MARKOV
When do we leave?

Petrov turns back to the map.

PETROV
Now.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - OUTSIDE LUBLIN - DAY

A column of RED ARMY TRUCKS rumbles down a narrow dirt road.

Fields stretch toward the horizon.

War has scarred everything.

Burned houses.

Collapsed barns.

The lead truck slows.

Ahead — a group of POLISH CIVILIANS crowd the road.

Women.

Old men.

Children.

Thin. Exhausted.

Some carry bundles of everything they own.

The truck stops.

Soldiers climb down cautiously.

MARKOV jumps from the back, camera around his neck.

He begins photographing.

CLICK.

A mother clutching a child.

CLICK.

An old man staring blankly at the ground.

A YOUNG POLISH WOMAN steps forward.

Her face is hollow with fear.

She speaks quickly in Polish.

The soldiers struggle to understand.

A SOVIET INTERPRETER moves forward.

INTERPRETER

She says the Germans are gone.

SOLDIER

We know that.

The woman shakes her head violently.

She grabs the interpreter's arm.

More urgent now.

INTERPRETER

Not the Germans.

Beat.

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)

The place they built.

The soldiers exchange puzzled looks.

SOLDIER
What place?

The interpreter listens again.
His expression slowly changes.

INTERPRETER
A camp.

Markov raises his camera.

CLICK.

The woman suddenly notices him.
She walks toward him.
Stares at the camera.

WOMAN (POLISH)
She speaks softly now.

The interpreter translates.

INTERPRETER
She says...

He hesitates.

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)
When you see it-

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)
-you will not sleep again.

Silence.

The wind moves through the empty fields.
Markov slowly lowers the camera.

MARKOV
Where?

The woman turns.

Points across the distant countryside.

Far on the horizon -

Watchtowers.

Barbed wire.

A vast compound.

Majdanek.

Markov lifts the camera.

CLICK.

EXT. ROAD TO MAJDANEK - LATE AFTERNOON

The Red Army convoy moves slowly across open farmland.

The distant camp grows larger with every mile.

Watchtowers.

Barbed wire stretching across the horizon.

Rows of wooden barracks.

It looks less like a prison and more like a small city of cages.

Engines rumble to a halt.

Soldiers climb down from the trucks.

A strange silence hangs over the countryside.

No gunfire.

No guards.

Just wind moving through tall grass.

MARKOV steps down from the truck.

He studies the vast compound ahead.

Raises the camera.

CLICK.

A squad of soldiers advances cautiously toward the outer fence.

Their boots crunch through gravel.

A large wooden sign stands crooked beside the road.

The lettering is faded but still visible.

GERMAN WORDS.

A soldier wipes dirt from it.

SOLDIER
What does it say?

The interpreter squints.

INTERPRETER
Majdanek.

The soldiers exchange looks.

They expected a prison.

But the scale is unsettling.

Barracks stretch endlessly across the fields.

A SECOND SOLDIER points toward the guard towers.

SECOND SOLDIER
No guards.

FIRST SOLDIER
They ran.

SECOND SOLDIER
What is that smell?

Markov walks closer to the fence.

He photographs the empty watchtower.

CLICK.

Something moves in the distance.

Figures.

Thin.

Unsteady.

The soldiers raise their rifles.

SOLDIER
Hold!

The figures stumble closer.

More appear behind them.

Dozens.

Then hundreds.

Prisoners.

Living skeletons in striped uniforms.

They move slowly, uncertain if the soldiers are real.

One collapses in the dirt.

Another begins to cry.

The Red Army soldiers lower their rifles.

They stare in stunned silence.

Markov lifts the camera.

But hesitates.

The prisoners reach the fence.

Hands gripping the wire.

A man whispers something in broken Russian.

PRISONER

Are you...

He struggles to say the word.

PRISONER (CONT'D)

Free?

The soldiers glance at one another.

None of them know what to say.

Markov finally raises the camera.

CLICK.

More prisoners begin emerging from the barracks.

Hundreds now.

Some barely able to walk.

Others crawling across the dirt.

The soldiers look toward the camp gates.

They remain closed.

One massive wooden gate stands at the main entrance.

Iron hinges.

Heavy chains.

Markov studies it.

MARKOV

Open it.

Two soldiers move forward.

They lift their rifles.

SMASH the lock.

The chain falls away.

The gate creaks slowly open.

Beyond it –

The endless rows of barracks.

The smell is getting worse.

Soldiers cover their noses.

And the unknown horrors waiting inside.

Markov steps forward.

Raises the camera.

CLICK.

He enters the camp.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP – MAIN YARD – CONTINUOUS

Prisoners continue emerging from the barracks.

Dozens.

Then hundreds.

Some can barely walk.

Others crawl across the dirt.

The soldiers stand stunned.

None of them expected this.

MARKOV moves slowly through the crowd.

Camera raised.

CLICK.

A boy no older than twelve.

CLICK.

An old man gripping the sleeve of a dead companion.

CLICK.

A woman staring blankly at the sky.

A SOVIET MEDIC rushes forward.

MEDIC

Water! Bring water!

Soldiers scramble back toward the trucks.

Prisoners collapse around them.

Some laughing.

Some crying.

Some too weak to react at all.

One PRISONER grabs Markov's sleeve.

His striped uniform hangs from his body.

PRISONER

You are Russians?

MARKOV

Yes.

The man stares at him as if unsure he understands.

PRISONER

Then it is finished.

He begins to weep.

Behind them—

Petrov surveys the camp.

Barracks stretching endlessly across the compound.

Workshops.

Guard towers.

Something about the layout bothers him.

LT. SOKOLOV

This place is too large.

A soldier opens the door of a nearby barracks.

The hinges SCREAM.

Inside—

Rows of wooden bunks.

Three levels high.

Straw mattresses black with filth.

The smell hits them instantly.

SOLDIER

Jesus...

Another soldier vomits.

Markov photographs.

CLICK.

CLICK.

CLICK.

The camera continues its silent work.

Petrov steps inside.

He studies the room.

Counts the bunks.

LT. SOKOLOV

Hundreds slept here.

He turns to the prisoner beside him.

LT. SOKOLOV (CONT'D)
How many prisoners?

The man hesitates.

PRISONER
Before?

Petrov nods.

The prisoner looks across the camp.

Toward the endless rows of barracks.

PRISONER (CONT'D)
Thousands.

Beat.

PRISONER (CONT'D)
Many thousands.

Markov slowly lowers the camera.

He looks deeper into the camp.

More buildings stretch toward the horizon.

Too many.

Much too many.

Something is wrong here.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - STORAGE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

A squat wooden warehouse stands near the edge of the compound.

Its doors are shut.

Weathered.

Numbered in faded German lettering.

LT. SOKOLOV studies it.

SOKOLOV
Open it.

Two soldiers step forward.

One forces the latch with his rifle.

The door CREAKS open.

The soldiers step inside.

Then stop.

Frozen.

Markov raises the camera.

MARKOV

What is it?

No answer.

Markov steps through the doorway.

Inside –

The entire warehouse is filled with shoes.

Thousands.

Men's boots.

Women's heels.

Children's tiny leather shoes.

Piled waist-high across the entire floor.

A soldier slowly lifts a child's shoe from the pile.

Turns it over in his hand.

SOLDIER

Where are the people?

No one answers.

Markov begins photographing.

CLICK.

The endless piles of shoes.

CLICK.

A soldier standing silently among them.

CLICK.

A tiny pair of red shoes half-buried beneath the mountain.

The shutter echoes through the empty building.

Sokolov slowly removes his cap.

SOKOLOV
God help them.

Markov lowers the camera.

For the first time since entering the camp.

He struggles to take another photograph.

He forces himself.

CLICK.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - SECOND STORAGE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Another warehouse stands nearby.

Smaller.

Its door hangs partially open.

A cold wind moves through the compound.

LT. SOKOLOV gestures toward it.

SOKOLOV
Check it.

Two soldiers approach.

They push the door open.

Inside—

Hundreds of burlap sacks stacked against the walls.

The soldiers cut one open with a knife.

Something spills onto the floor.

Gray strands.

Thick.

Fibrous.

One soldier kneels.

Picks up a handful.

SOLDIER
What is this?

Markov photographs.

CLICK.

The soldier rubs the strands between his fingers.

Confused.

SECOND SOLDIER
Wool?

A PRISONER standing nearby shakes his head slowly.

PRISONER
Not wool.

The soldiers look at him.

He struggles to speak.

PRISONER (CONT'D)
Hair.

Silence.

The soldier stares down at the handful in his palm.

SOLDIER
Hair?

The prisoner nods.

PRISONER
From the women.

The soldier slowly lets the strands fall back to the floor.

Markov raises the camera again.

CLICK.

Rows of sacks.

Thousands of them.

Evidence of lives stripped away.

Markov lowers the camera.

For the first time, his hands tremble.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - ADJACENT STORAGE BUILDING - LATE
AFTERNOON

The wind moves across the silent compound.

Another warehouse stands nearby.

Its wooden doors hang slightly open.

LT. SOKOLOV nods toward it.

SOKOLOV
Check that one.

Two soldiers approach cautiously.

One pushes the door open.

The hinges groan.

Inside—

Stacks of suitcases.

Hundreds of them.

Leather cases.

Cloth travel bags.

Some still tagged with names.

A soldier picks one up.

Dust coats the handle.

He opens it.

Inside—

Children's clothing.

Tiny shoes.

A small doll.

The soldier slowly closes the suitcase again.

SOLDIER

They brought their luggage.

Markov steps inside.

Raises the camera.

CLICK.

Rows of suitcases disappearing into the shadows.

CLICK.

A suitcase labeled with a name.

CLICK.

A child's toy lying on the floor.

Sokolov studies the room.

Trying to make sense of it.

SOKOLOV

Where are the owners?

No one answers.

A weak voice comes from the doorway.

A PRISONER stands there.

His striped uniform hangs from his skeletal frame.

PRISONER

They took everything.

The soldiers turn toward him.

SOKOLOV

Who took it?

The prisoner looks toward the far end of the camp.

Toward a cluster of low concrete buildings.

PRISONER

The SS.

Beat.

PRISONER (CONT'D)
Before the showers.

Silence fills the warehouse.

The soldiers exchange uneasy glances.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV
Show us.

The prisoner hesitates.

Fear crosses his face.

Then slowly—

He nods.

He turns and begins walking deeper into the camp.

Toward the concrete buildings in the distance.

Markov lifts the camera.

CLICK.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - BARRACKS YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Chaos fills the camp.

Soviet soldiers distribute bread and canned rations.

Prisoners crowd around them.

Hands reaching.

Voices desperate.

SOLDIER
Slowly! One at a time!

A MEDIC kneels beside a young prisoner barely able to sit upright.

He hands him a piece of bread.

The prisoner devours it instantly.

Another soldier gives food to an older man.

The man eats greedily.

Too fast.

Markov photographs the scene.

CLICK.

Liberation.

CLICK.

Bread being passed from soldier to prisoner.

CLICK.

A child clutching a crust with both hands.

Suddenly—

The older prisoner stiffens.

His body trembles.

He collapses violently into the dirt.

The soldiers freeze.

SOLDIER

Medic!

The medic rushes over.

Checks the man.

Nothing.

He looks up slowly.

MEDIC

His body is shutting down.

Another prisoner nearby begins vomiting.

A third collapses.

The soldiers stare in horror.

SOLDIER

We're trying to help them.

The medic grabs the food from a soldier's hand.

MEDIC
Stop giving them so much!

He looks around at the starving prisoners.

MEDIC (CONT'D)
Their bodies can't handle it.

The soldiers hesitate.

Confused.

Helpless.

Markov slowly lowers the camera.

For the first time—

He cannot bring himself to photograph.

Around them, liberation continues.

And yet—

People are still dying.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - CONCRETE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

The prisoner walks slowly across the compound.

MARKOV and LT. SOKOLOV follow.

Several soldiers trail behind them.

The camp grows quieter as they move deeper inside.

Ahead stands a low concrete building.

Windowless.

Heavy steel doors.

Small vents near the roof.

The prisoner stops.

He refuses to go any closer.

PRISONER
Here.

Sokolov studies the building.

SOKOLOV
What is this place?

The prisoner struggles to answer.

PRISONER
Showers.

The word hangs in the air.

A soldier steps forward.

He pulls on the heavy door.

It doesn't move.

Another soldier joins him.

Together they force it open.

The door scrapes loudly against the concrete floor.

Inside—

Darkness.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The soldiers step cautiously inside.

Bare concrete walls.

Metal pipes along the ceiling.

Strange openings in the roof.

One soldier kneels near the floor.

He rubs the wall with his fingers.

A faint bluish stain marks the concrete.

SOLDIER
What is this?

The prisoner stands outside the doorway.

His voice barely carries.

PRISONER
Gas.

Silence fills the chamber.

The soldiers slowly turn toward him.

SOKOLOV

Gas?

The prisoner nods.

PRISONER

They told us it was for
disinfection.

Beat.

PRISONER (CONT'D)

But the people never came out.

Markov slowly lifts the camera.

His hands tremble.

CLICK.

The empty chamber.

CLICK.

The blue stains on the wall.

CLICK.

The heavy steel door.

Sokolov looks around the room.

Understanding dawns.

SOKOLOV

My God...

Markov lowers the camera.

He stares at the walls.

At the vents above.

At the door that sealed people inside.

The truth becomes unavoidable.

This was not a prison camp.
It was a factory of death.
Markov raises the camera one last time.

CLICK.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - CREMATORIUM - EARLY EVENING

The sky darkens as clouds gather over the camp.

MARKOV walks beside LT. SOKOLOV and several soldiers.

The prisoner who guided them earlier points toward a brick structure at the edge of the compound.

A tall chimney rises above it.

PRISONER

There.

The soldiers approach cautiously.

The building looks ordinary.

Almost like a workshop.

But the chimney never stops smoking.

Sokolov studies the door.

SOKOLOV

Open it.

A soldier pulls the handle.

The door swings inward.

The smell hits them instantly.

Sweet.

Sickening.

Inside—

A row of heavy iron ovens.

Blackened with soot.

Metal rails lead directly into them.

The soldiers stop in the doorway.

One steps closer.

He pulls open one of the oven doors.

Ash spills onto the floor.

Bone fragments mixed within it.

SOLDIER

Dear God..

Markov raises and then lowers his camera.

For a moment he cannot take the photograph.

Then he forces himself to raise it.

CLICK.

The ovens.

CLICK.

The chimney above them.

CLICK.

Ash covering the concrete floor.

A Soviet MEDIC kneels beside the ashes.

He lifts a fragment carefully.

MEDIC

Human.

Silence fills the room.

Outside—

The wind moves across the camp.

Sokolov slowly scans the ovens.

Understanding settles in.

SOKOLOV

They burned them.

Markov lowers the camera.

For a moment he simply stares at the machinery.

Then slowly—

He lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

History records the evidence.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - CREMATORIUM YARD - DUSK

The sun sinks behind the camp.

Long shadows stretch across the ground.

Smoke drifts slowly from the crematorium chimney.

Soldiers move quietly around the compound.

Some escort prisoners toward medical tents.

Others search nearby buildings.

MARKOV stands alone near the crematorium wall.

He photographs the chimney.

CLICK.

He photographs the door.

CLICK.

A soldier approaches.

SERGEANT MIKHAILOV.

He watches Markov work.

MIKHAILOV

You haven't stopped since we
arrived.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV

Someone has to.

Mikhailov studies the camp.

Barracks stretching across the horizon.

MIKHAILOV

You think anyone will believe this?

Markov doesn't answer immediately.

He looks back toward the gas chamber building.

MARKOV

They will see the photographs.

Mikhailov shakes his head slowly.

MIKHAILOV

Photographs can lie.

Markov lifts the camera slightly.

MARKOV

Not like this.

Mikhailov looks at him.

MIKHAILOV

Why do you do it?

Markov studies the camera in his hands.

Beat.

MARKOV

My father was a teacher.

Mikhailov waits.

MARKOV (CONT'D)

History.

He gestures toward the camp.

MARKOV (CONT'D)

He used to say the worst crimes in
the world happen twice.

MIKHAILOV

Twice?

MARKOV

Once when they happen.

Beat.

Markov raises the camera again.

MARKOV (CONT'D)

And again when no one believes them.

MOROZOV

You understand what you became here?

MARKOV

What?

MOROZOV

The first witness.

Marko pauses processing before taking another picture.

CLICK.

The crematorium chimney.

Smoke rising into the darkening sky.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - MAIN GATE - MORNING

A gray dawn settles over the camp.

Military trucks roll through the open gates.

But these vehicles carry no soldiers.

Men in long coats climb down.

Doctors.

Investigators.

Officials carrying clipboards and cameras.

MARKOV photographs their arrival.

CLICK.

One man stands apart from the others.

DR. ALEXEI MOROZOV, mid-40s.

Sharp eyes. Quiet authority.

He studies the camp slowly.

Taking in the watchtowers.

The barracks.

The crematorium chimney in the distance.

LT. SOKOLOV approaches him.

SOKOLOV
Doctor Morozov?

Morozov nods.

MOROZOV
Yes.

Sokolov gestures toward the compound.

SOKOLOV
You're the investigator?

MOROZOV
One of them.

Morozov removes a small notebook from his coat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
How long have you been here?

SOKOLOV
Since yesterday afternoon.

Morozov looks around again.

His expression darkens.

MOROZOV
And already you understand what
this place is?

Sokolov hesitates.

SOKOLOV
We're beginning to.

Morozov walks past him.

Toward the barracks.

MOROZOV
Then we must begin immediately.

He gestures to the investigators.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Document everything.

The team spreads out.

Measuring.

Photographing.

Taking notes.

Morozov notices Markov watching him.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
You're the photographer.

Markov nods.

MARKOV
War correspondent.

Morozov studies the camera.

MOROZOV
Good.

He gestures toward the camp.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Then history has already begun.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

Morozov framed against the endless rows of barracks.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
But photographs are not enough.

Markov lowers the camera slightly.

MARKOV
What else do you need?

Morozov looks toward the crematorium chimney.

Smoke drifting slowly upward.

MOROZOV
Proof.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Enough that no one in the world
will ever deny what happened here.

Markov lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - EDGE OF THE COMPOUND - MORNING

A cold wind sweeps across the open field behind the barracks.

DR. MOROZOV walks slowly across the ground.

MARKOV follows with his camera.

Several investigators trail behind them.

One soldier points toward a stretch of disturbed earth.

SOLDIER

Here.

The soil looks freshly turned.

Morozov kneels.

He presses his hand into the dirt.

The ground is soft.

MOROZOV

Shovels.

Two soldiers begin digging.

The first shovel strikes something.

A dull, hollow sound.

The soldier kneels.

Brushes away dirt with his hands.

A human arm emerges from the soil.

Gray skin stretched over bone.

The soldiers freeze.

Morozov exhales slowly.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Keep digging.

More bodies appear.

Layered together.

Men.

Women.

Children.

Dozens of them.

Markov stands silently.

He raises the camera.

CLICK.

The open grave.

CLICK.

Hands tangled together beneath the soil.

CLICK.

A child's shoe half buried in the earth.

Morozov studies the grave.

Trying to measure its size.

MOROZOV

This was not a burial.

He gestures to the layers of bodies.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

It was disposal.

The wind carries the smell across the field.

One soldier turns away bends and vomits.

Another removes his cap.

Markov lowers the camera.

For a moment he cannot move.

Morozov notices.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Photograph everything.

Markov looks at him.

MARKOV
Why?

Morozov gestures toward the grave.

MOROZOV
Because one day someone will say
this never happened.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
And we will need proof.

Markov slowly lifts the camera.

CLICK.

INT. MAJDANEK BARRACKS - DAY

Dim light filters through the wooden slats.

The barracks is quiet now.

Rows of bunks stand empty.

DR. MOROZOV sits at a small table with a notebook.

MARKOV stands nearby, camera ready.

Across from them sits an older PRISONER.

Thin. Exhausted.

But his eyes are sharp.

Morozov speaks gently.

MOROZOV
Your name?

PRISONER
Jakub Lewin.

Morozov writes.

MOROZOV
How long were you here?

Jakub thinks.

JAKUB
Two years.

Markov shifts slightly.

The camera hangs in his hands.

MOROZOV
Tell us what happened here.

Jakub looks toward the door.

Toward the gas chamber buildings in the distance.

Tears form in his eyes.

JAKUB
The trains came every week.

Beat.

JAKUB (CONT'D)
Sometimes every day.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

Jakub continues quietly.

JAKUB
They told the people they were
going to take showers.

Morozov writes quickly.

MOROZOV
And then?

Jakub's voice falters.

JAKUB
The doors closed.

Silence.

Wind moves through the cracks in the walls.

JAKUB (CONT'D)
After twenty minutes...

He gestures toward the crematorium chimney.

JAKUB (CONT'D)
The smoke began.

Markov lowers the camera.

For once—

He does not take another photograph.

Morozov looks up from his notes.

MOROZOV
How many people?

Jakub stares at the floor.

JAKUB
I stopped counting.

Beat.

JAKUB (CONT'D)
But thousands came.

He looks toward Markov.

JAKUB (CONT'D)
You must show the world.

Markov slowly lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

Jakub's face.

A witness to history.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Dust floats through the air inside the abandoned office.

Files cover every surface.

Cabinets hang open.

Papers scattered across the floor.

DR. MOROZOV enters with MARKOV and two investigators.

Morozov scans the room.

MOROZOV

This is where they kept records.

An investigator pulls open a drawer.

Inside—

Stacks of neatly organized documents.

INVESTIGATOR

Comrade Doctor...

Morozov steps closer.

He lifts one sheet.

Typed columns.

Dates.

Numbers.

Locations.

Markov photographs the desk.

CLICK.

Morozov studies the paper carefully.

MOROZOV

Train arrivals.

He flips to another page.

More columns.

More numbers.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Prisoner transfers.

He keeps reading.

His expression slowly changes.

MARKOV

What is it?

Morozov turns the page toward him.

MOROZOV

These are not transfers.

He taps a column.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

These are intake numbers.

Markov studies the page.

Thousands of names.

Numbers beside each one.

MARKOV

How many?

Morozov flips through several pages.

The numbers continue.

Page after page.

MOROZOV

More than we imagined.

He looks around the office.

Cabinets still full of files.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

And this is only one building.

Markov slowly raises the camera.

CLICK.

The stacks of records.

CLICK.

The endless columns of names.

Morozov closes the file.

MOROZOV

The Germans documented everything.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Even their crimes.

Markov looks back toward the camp outside the window.
Barracks stretching across the fields.
The scale of the truth begins to sink in.

CLICK.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY

Stacks of German files cover the desk.

DR. MOROZOV studies a roster.

MARKOV photographs the documents.

CLICK.

Morozov reads quietly.

MOROZOV
Command structure.

He scans the list.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Commandant... SS officers... guards...

He flips to another page.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Hundreds of them.

A survivor standing nearby watches.

MARKOV
Do you recognize any of these
names?

The survivor steps forward.

He studies the document.

His finger stops on one name.

SURVIVOR
Her.

Morozov looks closer.

MOROZOV
Braunsteiner.

The survivor nods slowly.

SURVIVOR
The prisoners called her the
Stomping Mare.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV
Why?

The survivor hesitates.

SURVIVOR
Because she killed with her boots.

Silence fills the room.

SURVIVOR (CONT'D)
If someone fell during roll call...

He gestures downward.

SURVIVOR (CONT'D)
She kicked until they stopped
moving.

Markov slowly raises the camera.

CLICK.

Morozov closes the file.

MOROZOV
We will find them.

He looks around the room.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Every one of them.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - WOODED EDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

The investigators move beyond the barracks.

Toward a wooded area at the edge of the compound.

DR. MOROZOV studies the ground carefully.

The soil here is blackened.

Charred.

MARKOV photographs the area.

CLICK.

A soldier kneels.

He brushes aside dirt.

Underneath—

Ash.

Thick gray powder mixed with soil.

SOLDIER

Fire pit?

Morozov kneels beside him.

He lifts a handful of ash.

Bone fragments fall from it.

Tiny.

White.

The soldiers go silent.

MOROZOV

Not a fire pit.

He gestures toward the ground.

The charred earth stretches across a wide area.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

A cremation field.

Another soldier digs with a shovel.

The blade strikes something soft.

He clears the soil.

A partially burned human skull appears.

The soldier recoils.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The skull half buried in ash.

CLICK.

The blackened earth.

CLICK.

Morozov stands slowly.

He studies the horizon.

MOROZOV

They tried to destroy the evidence.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV

Why stop?

Morozov looks toward the east.

Where distant artillery rumbles.

MOROZOV

Because we arrived too quickly.

Silence hangs over the field.

Markov lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

The unfinished crime.

INT. STORAGE SHED - DAY

A small wooden building stands behind the gas chambers.

The door creaks open.

DR. MOROZOV enters cautiously.

MARKOV follows with his camera.

The room is dim.

Shelves line the walls.

Metal containers stacked neatly.

An investigator reads the label on one.

INVESTIGATOR

German.

Morozov steps closer.

He wipes dust from the container.

The label becomes visible.

MOROZOV

Zyklon B.

The room goes silent.

Markov photographs the container.

CLICK.

Morozov opens a notebook.

MOROZOV

Hydrogen cyanide compound.

He gestures toward the gas chamber buildings outside.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Released in enclosed spaces.

The investigator slowly sets the container down.

INVESTIGATOR

They kept the poison here.

Morozov studies the shelves.

Dozens of containers.

MOROZOV

Industrial quantities.

Markov raises the camera again.

CLICK.

The stacked canisters.

CLICK.

The label.

Morozov looks toward the gas chambers through the doorway.

The connection is undeniable.

MOROZOV

This is how they killed them.

Markov lowers the camera slowly.

MARKOV

And they recorded it.

Morozov nods.

MOROZOV

And now we will too.

Markov lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

EXT. MAJDANEK GAS CHAMBER BUILDING - DAY

The investigators gather outside the concrete structure.

DR. MOROZOV stands with MARKOV and several soldiers.

A frail survivor approaches slowly.

ANNA KOWALSKA, late 30s.

Her striped uniform hangs loosely from her thin frame.

She stops several feet from the building.

She does not want to go closer.

MOROZOV

You worked here?

Anna nods once.

ANNA
Laundry detail.

She points weakly toward the gas chamber door.

ANNA (CONT'D)
We cleaned the clothing.

Morozov studies the building.

MOROZOV
After the people went inside?

Anna closes her eyes briefly.

ANNA
Yes.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

Anna gestures toward the door.

ANNA
They were told to remove their
shoes... their clothes.

She points to the vents above the roofline.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Then the guards dropped the poison
through those openings.

Morozov writes quickly in his notebook.

MOROZOV
How long?

Anna looks toward the chimney of the crematorium.

ANNA
Twenty minutes.

Silence spreads across the courtyard.

Anna gestures to the heavy door.

ANNA (CONT'D)
When it opened...

Her voice falters.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Everyone was on the floor.

Markov lowers the camera.

For once he cannot photograph.

Anna notices.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You must.

Markov slowly lifts the camera again.

CLICK.

Anna standing before the chamber.

A living witness.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - NIGHT

Oil lamps flicker across the desks.

Files cover every surface.

DR. MOROZOV studies a large transport ledger.

MARKOV photographs the documents.

CLICK.

Morozov flips through several pages.

Columns of train arrivals.

Dates.

Numbers.

Cities.

MOROZOV
Warsaw... Kraków... Minsk...

He turns another page.

More locations.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Vienna... Prague... Budapest...

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV
All sent here?

Morozov shakes his head slowly.

He spreads several documents across the desk.

MOROZOV
No.

He points to a column of destinations.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
These trains were redirected.

Markov studies the page.

MARKOV
Redirected where?

Morozov reads the list.

MOROZOV
Auschwitz.

He turns another page.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Treblinka.

Another page.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Sobibor.

The room goes silent.

Markov slowly raises the camera.

CLICK.

The map of transport routes.

MARKOV
How many camps?

Morozov looks up.

The weight of the realization settling in.

MOROZOV
More than we want to know.

He gestures toward the camp outside the window.
Rows of barracks stretching into darkness.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
This place was not the exception.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
It was the system.

Markov raises the camera once more.

CLICK.

INT. SOVIET FIELD BARRACKS - NIGHT

A dim lantern flickers inside the temporary quarters.

Several soldiers sleep on rough cots.

Outside, distant artillery rumbles.

MARKOV lies awake.

His camera rests beside him.

He finally closes his eyes.

Silence.

Then—

A TRAIN WHISTLE.

SCREAMING BRAKES.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT - DREAM

A transport train sits at the platform.

Doors slam open.

Prisoners spill out.

Confused.

Exhausted.

SS GUARDS shout orders.

Dogs strain at their leashes.

Markov raises his camera.

CLICK.

The prisoners are herded forward.

Toward the concrete gas chamber building.

INT. GAS CHAMBER - DREAM

Crowded.

People pressed together.

Children crying.

The door SLAMS shut.

Darkness.

A faint rattling sound above.

Pellets fall through the vents.

The air fills with panic.

Hands pounding the door.

Screams.

Markov raises the camera again.

CLICK.

But the lens fogs with condensation.

Breath.

Fear.

The screaming grows louder.

INT. FIELD BARRACKS - NIGHT

Markov suddenly wakes.

Gasping.

Sweat on his face.

The room is silent.

The other soldiers sleep.

He sits up slowly.

His hands tremble.

He looks at the camera beside him.

For a long moment he simply stares at it.

Then—

He picks it up.

The weight of it heavy in his hands.

Outside the barracks window—

The crematorium chimney stands against the moonlight.

Smoke rising into the night.

Markov lifts the camera.

CLICK.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - MAIN GATE - MORNING

Military trucks roll through the open gate.

But these carry no soldiers.

Men and women climb down with cameras, notebooks, and satchels.

Journalists.

Foreign correspondents.

A British reporter stares at the camp in disbelief.

REPORTER

My God...

DR. MOROZOV approaches them.

MOROZOV
Welcome to Majdanek.

The reporters look around.
Barracks stretching endlessly.
Watchtowers looming overhead.
Smoke drifting from the crematorium chimney.
MARKOV stands nearby.
His camera already raised.

CLICK.

A journalist approaches him.

JOURNALIST
Were you here when it was
discovered?

Markov nods.

MARKOV
The first day.

The journalist glances toward the gas chamber building.

JOURNALIST
Is it true?

Markov simply gestures toward the camp.

MARKOV
See for yourself.

The journalists move deeper inside the compound.
Some already writing.
Others photographing.
Morozov turns to Markov.

MOROZOV
Soon the world will know.

Markov studies the new arrivals.
Then lifts his camera again.

CLICK.

INT. MAJDANEK GAS CHAMBER - DAY

Dim light filters through the open doorway.

The heavy steel door stands ajar.

A small group enters cautiously.

DR. MOROZOV.

MARKOV.

Three JOURNALISTS.

One British.

One American.

One Soviet correspondent.

They step inside the chamber.

The room is silent.

Concrete walls.

Metal pipes.

The faint blue staining along the surface.

The journalists look around slowly.

Trying to understand what they are seeing.

The American journalist touches the wall.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST
What is this stain?

Morozov answers quietly.

MOROZOV
Cyanide residue.

The British journalist looks up toward the ceiling vents.

BRITISH JOURNALIST
The poison was dropped from above?

Morozov nods.

Silence settles over the room.

The journalists exchange uneasy glances.

The American reporter removes his notebook.

But hesitates.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST
If we publish this...

He gestures toward the chamber.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST (CONT'D)
They'll say we invented it.

Morozov looks at Markov.

MOROZOV
That is why we document everything.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The journalists standing in the chamber.

CLICK.

The blue walls.

CLICK.

The journalists stand quietly inside the chamber.

The American reporter slowly closes his notebook.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST
My editor will think I've lost my
mind.

The British journalist studies the blue staining on the wall.

BRITISH JOURNALIST
No one will believe this.

Morozov looks toward Markov.

MOROZOV
That is why we have the
photographs.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The journalists standing inside the chamber.

CLICK.

The stained concrete walls.

CLICK.

The steel door slowly swinging closed.

The sound echoes through the room.

No one speaks.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - DAY

A soldier pulls open the large wooden doors.

Sunlight spills into the building.

Dust floats in the air.

DR. MOROZOV, MARKOV, and several JOURNALISTS step inside.

They stop immediately.

The entire warehouse is filled.

Mountains of shoes.

Thousands of them.

Men's boots.

Women's shoes.

Children's sandals.

Piled from floor to ceiling.

No one speaks.

The American journalist walks slowly forward.

He picks up a tiny shoe.

Child-sized.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST

My God...

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The mountain of shoes.

CLICK.

Rows stretching into darkness.

CLICK.

The small shoe in the journalist's hand.

Morozov studies the piles.

MOROZOV

They took everything.

He gestures around the warehouse.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

And kept it.

The British reporter looks across the room.

BRITISH JOURNALIST

How many people?

Morozov shakes his head slowly.

MOROZOV

Too many to count.

Markov raises the camera again.

CLICK.

The endless shoes.

INT. MAJDANEK COMMANDANT'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is orderly.

Almost untouched.

A large desk.

Maps pinned to the walls.

German documents stacked neatly in drawers.

DR. MOROZOV enters with MARKOV and two investigators.

Morozov studies a framed photograph on the desk.

A Nazi officer in full SS uniform.

INVESTIGATOR
Commandant?

Morozov checks a file.

MOROZOV
Yes.

He reads the name from the document.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
The man who ran this camp.

Markov photographs the desk.

CLICK.

The SS photograph.

CLICK.

Stacks of files.

Morozov opens another folder.

Personnel records.

Guard assignments.

Transport schedules.

MOROZOV
Hundreds of staff.

The investigator looks out the window toward the camp.

INVESTIGATOR
Where are they now?

Morozov closes the file slowly.

MOROZOV

Gone.

Silence fills the room.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV

They knew we were coming.

Morozov nods.

MOROZOV

And they ran.

He looks again at the photograph of the SS officer.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

But they left the evidence behind.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The photograph of the commandant.

A face behind the crime.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - NIGHT

The office has become a war-crimes headquarters.

Tables covered with documents.

Stacks of photographs.

Maps of the camp pinned to the walls.

DR. MOROZOV sits at a desk surrounded by investigators.

One investigator sorts documents into folders.

Another reviews survivor testimony.

MARKOV enters quietly.

His camera hangs at his side.

Morozov gestures toward a large table.

MOROZOV
We're building the case.

Markov studies the table.
Photographs spread across it.
Gas chambers.
Crematorium ovens.
Mass graves.

MARKOV
Against who?

Morozov slides a folder toward him.
Inside—
Names.
SS officers.
Camp staff.

MOROZOV
Everyone who ran this place.

Markov flips through the pages.

MARKOV
There are hundreds.

MOROZOV
Then we will find hundreds.

An investigator places Markov's photographs onto the table.
Morozov studies them carefully.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
These will be the strongest
evidence.

Markov looks at the images.
The gas chamber.
The crematorium.
The piles of shoes.

MARKOV
Photographs are only moments.

Morozov looks up.

MOROZOV
Moments that cannot lie.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
One day men will stand in court
because of what you recorded.

Markov says nothing.

He slowly places the photographs back on the table.

CLICK.

He photographs the evidence itself.

History documenting history.

EXT. MAJDANEK BARRACKS YARD - DAY

The compound is filled with activity.

Field medics move quickly between barracks.

Makeshift stretchers carry prisoners toward a medical tent.

Hundreds of survivors sit or lie on the ground.

Too weak to stand.

MARKOV walks slowly through the yard.

His camera hangs unused at his side.

A Soviet MEDIC kneels beside a skeletal prisoner.

He gently lifts a cup of water to the man's lips.

The prisoner drinks.

Then suddenly collapses.

The medic checks his pulse.

Nothing.

The medic closes the man's eyes.

Nearby—

Another prisoner coughs violently.

Two nurses try to help a woman stand.

She collapses before taking two steps.

MARKOV watches.

Frozen.

A young BOY sits alone beside a barracks wall.

Barely breathing.

Markov kneels beside him.

For a moment he simply looks at the child.

The boy opens his eyes.

BOY
Are the Germans gone?

Markov nods.

MARKOV
Yes.

The boy studies his face.

BOY
Then why does it still hurt?

Markov cannot answer.

He slowly raises the camera.

Hesitates.

Then—

CLICK.

The boy sitting against the barracks wall.

A witness who survived.

Behind them—

A stretcher carries another body away.

Liberation has come.

But death has not finished its work.

INT. MAKESHIFT DARKROOM - NIGHT

A small room inside the administration building.

Windows covered.

A red lamp glows dimly in the darkness.

MARKOV stands over trays of chemical developer.

He lowers a strip of film into the liquid.

The image begins to appear slowly.

Gas chambers.

Markov watches silently.

Another photograph develops.

The crematorium ovens.

Another.

Mass graves.

Another.

The warehouse of shoes.

Markov hangs the photographs on a wire line.

They sway gently in the air.

A gallery of evidence.

DR. MOROZOV enters quietly.

He studies the images.

MOROZOV

The world will see these.

Markov doesn't respond.

He continues working.

Another image appears in the tray.

The boy sitting against the barracks wall.

Morozov looks at it carefully.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
You photograph everything.

MARKOV
My father taught history.

MOROZOV
And?

MARKOV
He said if no one records the
truth,

someone else will rewrite it.

MOROZOV
What will you call this photograph?

Markov studies the image.

MARKOV
Survival.

Morozov nods slowly.

He looks at the rows of photographs.

MOROZOV
These will hang in courtrooms.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
And in history books.

Markov hangs the final photograph.

The line is now full.

Gas chambers.

Mass graves.

Shoes.

Survivors.

The entire truth of the camp.

Markov studies them in silence.

Morozov gestures toward a group of survivors seated nearby.

MOROZOV
Prepared to testify.

The official walks slowly along the table.

Studying each photograph.

He stops at one image.

The gas chamber door.

SENIOR OFFICIAL
The Germans did not have time to
destroy this place.

MOROZOV
No.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
They ran.

The official turns toward the room.

SENIOR OFFICIAL
Then the world must see what they
left behind.

He gestures toward Markov's photographs.

SENIOR OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
These will become evidence.

Markov looks at the photographs.

For the first time he seems to understand the full weight of
them.

SENIOR OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Not just of murder...

Beat.

SENIOR OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
But of a system designed for it.

Silence fills the room.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The commission gathered around the truth.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

A long wooden table has been set up.

Members of the investigative commission sit with notebooks.

Doctors.

Officers.

Journalists.

Several surviving prisoners sit quietly along the wall.

MARKOV stands near the back of the room.

His camera ready.

DR. MOROZOV addresses the room.

MOROZOV

This commission will record
testimony

regarding the crimes committed at this camp.

A frail survivor rises slowly.

ANNA KOWALSKA.

The room goes quiet.

MOROZOV

Please tell us what you witnessed.

Anna looks toward the window.

The gas chamber building visible in the distance.

ANNA

The trains arrived every day.

She struggles to continue.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Sometimes twice a day.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

ANNA
They told the people they were
going

to take showers.

Silence fills the room.

ANNA (CONT'D)
The doors closed.

Beat.

ANNA (CONT'D)
After that... we only saw smoke.

Morozov writes carefully.

MOROZOV
Do you swear this testimony is
true?

Anna nods.

ANNA
I watched it happen.

CLICK.

Markov photographs her.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A single lamp lights the room.

The table is covered with photographs.

German personnel files.

SS identification cards.

DR. MOROZOV studies the documents with two investigators.

MARKOV stands nearby.

Camera ready.

One investigator spreads several photographs across the
table.

Uniformed SS officers.

Camp guards.

INVESTIGATOR

These were recovered from the
commandant's office.

Morozov studies the faces carefully.

MOROZOV

The men who ran this camp.

A survivor enters slowly.

Thin.

Weak.

He studies the photographs.

Morozov gently slides them closer.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

Do you recognize any of these men?

The survivor looks carefully.

His hand trembles as he points.

SURVIVOR

That one.

Morozov checks the name.

MOROZOV

SS Sergeant.

The survivor points again.

SURVIVOR

He opened the chamber door.

Silence fills the room.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The survivor's finger pointing at the photograph.

Evidence becoming accusation.

Another investigator flips through a folder.

INVESTIGATOR

Most of the staff evacuated before
the Red Army arrived.

Morozov closes the file slowly.

MOROZOV

Then they believed they would never
be found.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)

They are wrong.

Markov photographs the table again.

CLICK.

The faces of the men responsible.

INT. TEMPORARY PRESS OFFICE - MAJDANEK - NIGHT

A small room filled with activity.

Typewriters clatter.

Telegraph operators sit at a long table.

Stacks of notes and photographs are scattered everywhere.

Several foreign JOURNALISTS work urgently.

MARKOV enters with a bundle of freshly developed photographs.

The AMERICAN JOURNALIST looks up.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST

Are those the latest?

Markov nods.

He lays the photographs on the table.

Gas chambers.

Crematorium ovens.

Mass graves.

Piles of shoes.

The journalists stare at the images in silence.

The BRITISH JOURNALIST exhales slowly.

BRITISH JOURNALIST
God help us...

The American journalist gathers the photographs carefully.

AMERICAN JOURNALIST
London will think we've gone mad.

BRITISH JOURNALIST
Then we send everything.

He gestures toward the photographs.

BRITISH JOURNALIST (CONT'D)
Every word. Every picture.

A TELEGRAPH OPERATOR begins typing rapidly.

The machine CHATTERS.

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR
Transmission to London beginning.

Another journalist prepares an envelope.

JOURNALIST
Copies to New York.

Markov watches quietly.

The photographs spread across the table.

Proof of the crime.

He raises the camera.

CLICK.

The moment the truth leaves the camp.

EXT. MAJDANEK BARRACKS YARD - DAY

The camp is quieter now.

Smoke no longer rises from the crematorium.

But suffering remains.

Rows of survivors sit on blankets in the yard.

Some are eating small rations of bread.

Others lie weakly in the sunlight.

MARKOV walks slowly through the yard.

His camera hangs at his side.

A small group of survivors gathers around DR. MOROZOV.

They speak softly in Polish and Russian.

A YOUNG WOMAN steps forward.

YOUNG WOMAN
Doctor... when can we leave?

Morozov hesitates.

MOROZOV
Soon.

YOUNG WOMAN
Leave to go where?

Silence.

Another survivor speaks.

SURVIVOR
My town is gone.

A thin old man raises his hand.

OLD MAN
My family was taken here.

He gestures toward the camp.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
I am the only one left.

Markov watches quietly.

The survivors look at Morozov for answers.

MOROZOV
First we must make you strong
again.

He gestures toward the medical tents.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Food. Medicine.

YOUNG WOMAN
And after that?

Morozov looks across the camp.

Barracks.

Guard towers.

The gas chamber building in the distance.

MOROZOV
After thatâ€¦

He struggles to finish the thought.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
The world must decide what to do.

Markov raises the camera.

He hesitates.

Then-

CLICK.

A group of survivors sitting in the sunlight.

Alive.

But with nowhere left to go.

INT. MAJDANEK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - NIGHT

A large map of occupied Europe is pinned to the wall.

Documents and photographs cover the table.

DR. MOROZOV studies a report with several investigators.

MARKOV stands nearby, listening.

One investigator places a file on the table.

INVESTIGATOR
We found similar camps mentioned in
these transport records.

Morozov studies the map.

He traces several locations with his finger.

MOROZOV
Treblinka.

He moves his finger.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Sobibor.

Another location.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
Belzec.

The investigator nods.

INVESTIGATOR
All destroyed before we arrived.

Morozov looks toward the window.

The dark outline of the camp beyond.

MOROZOV
But not this one.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
The Germans ran too late.

He gestures toward the photographs spread across the table.

Gas chambers.

Crematorium ovens.

Mass graves.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
This is the first extermination
camp the world will see exactly as
it was.

Markov studies the photographs.

The weight of the moment settling in.

MARKOV
Proof.

Morozov nods.

MOROZOV

Proof.

Markov slowly raises the camera.

CLICK.

The investigators gathered around the truth.

INT. MAKESHIFT DARKROOM - NIGHT

The room is dim.

Only the faint red glow of a developing lamp.

Rows of photographs hang from a wire.

Gas chambers.

Crematorium ovens.

Mass graves.

Piles of shoes.

Survivors.

MARKOV stands alone.

He studies the images.

The entire truth of the camp hanging before him.

He lowers another strip of film into the tray.

An image slowly appears.

The boy sitting against the barracks wall.

Alive.

Barely.

Markov studies the photograph.

The door opens quietly.

DR. MOROZOV enters.

He looks at the rows of photographs.

MOROZOV
The commission leaves tomorrow.

Markov nods slightly.

MARKOV
And the photographs?

MOROZOV
They will go to Moscow.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
After that... the world.

Markov looks again at the photographs.

MARKOV
My father was a teacher.

Morozov listens.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
History.

Markov studies the images hanging in the red light.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
He said the worst crimes in the
world happen twice.

Morozov waits.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
Once when they happen.

Beat.

MARKOV (CONT'D)
And again when no one believes
them.

Morozov looks at the photographs again.

MOROZOV
No one will be able to deny these.

Markov slowly lifts the camera.

CLICK.

He photographs the photographs.

History recording itself.

INT. MILITARY AIRFIELD - LUBLIN - MORNING

A gray Soviet transport plane sits on the runway.

Its engines rumble softly.

Several crates are being loaded by soldiers.

Each crate marked:

EVIDENCE - MAJDANEK

Nearby, DR. MOROZOV speaks with a SOVIET OFFICIAL.

MARKOV stands a short distance away.

His camera around his neck.

The official checks a manifest.

SOVIET OFFICIAL
Photographs?

Morozov gestures toward a sealed case.

MOROZOV
Originals and negatives.

The official nods.

SOVIET OFFICIAL
They will go to Moscow.

Markov looks toward the crates.

MARKOV
And after that?

The official studies him.

SOVIET OFFICIAL
After that...

He gestures toward the horizon.

SOVIET OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
The world will see what was done
here.

Workers push the crates up a ramp into the aircraft.

Markov watches.

The plane engine grows louder.

Morozov steps beside him.

MOROZOV

You understand what you recorded?

Markov looks toward the camp in the distance.

MARKOV

Evidence.

Morozov shakes his head slightly.

MOROZOV

History.

Markov raises the camera.

CLICK.

The crates disappearing into the aircraft.

The proof leaving the camp.

EXT. MAJDANEK CAMP - DAWN

A pale gray light spreads across the camp.

The guard towers stand silent.

The barbed wire glistens with morning frost.

Smoke no longer rises from the crematorium.

The camp feels strangely still.

MARKOV walks slowly through the compound.

His footsteps echo softly on the gravel.

He pauses near the gas chamber building.

The heavy steel door stands open.

Wind moves gently through the yard.

In the distance, several survivors sit in the morning sunlight.

Doctors continue treating the weak.

Life slowly returning.

Markov studies the scene.

The camp.

The survivors.

The barracks.

He raises the camera.

CLICK.

A final photograph of the camp.

DR. MOROZOV approaches quietly.

MOROZOV
You are leaving today?

Markov nods.

MARKOV
With the commission.

Morozov studies the camp.

MOROZOV
Strange place to leave behind.

Markov lowers the camera.

MARKOV
No one should ever forget it.

Morozov looks at the open gas chamber door.

MOROZOV
They tried to erase it.

Beat.

MOROZOV (CONT'D)
But they failed.

Markov studies the camp one last time.

Rows of barracks.

Guard towers.

Barbed wire.

He raises the camera again.

CLICK.

The place where the truth was discovered.

INT. LONDON NEWSPAPER OFFICE - NIGHT

A smoky newsroom filled with typewriters.

Editors move quickly between desks.

Stacks of dispatches and photographs cover the tables.

An EDITOR studies a photograph under a desk lamp.

Gas chambers.

Crematorium ovens.

Mass graves.

He removes his glasses slowly.

EDITOR

Good God...

A REPORTER stands nearby.

REPORTER

Dispatch came from the Soviet
front.

The editor looks again at the photographs.

EDITOR

Are we certain this is authentic?

REPORTER

Multiple correspondents confirm it.

The editor studies another photograph.

Piles of shoes.

Children's shoes.

He exhales slowly.

EDITOR

Then we print it.

He turns toward the newsroom.

EDITOR (CONT'D)

Front page.

Typewriters begin clattering.

Press workers prepare printing plates.

The headline appears across the press sheet:

NAZI EXTERMINATION CAMP DISCOVERED

Photographs of Majdanek concentration camp appear on the page.

The printing press begins to roll.

Ink spreads across the paper.

The truth reaching the world.

INT. SMALL MOSCOW APARTMENT - MORNING

A modest apartment.

Simple furniture.

A small kitchen table.

Sunlight filters through the window.

MARKOV sits quietly with a cup of tea.

A folded newspaper rests on the table.

The headline visible:

NAZI DEATH CAMP DISCOVERED

Photographs from Majdanek concentration camp fill the front page.

Gas chambers.

Mass graves.

Piles of shoes.

Markov studies the images silently.

His own photographs.

The door opens.

A NEIGHBOR enters from the hallway.

He notices the newspaper.

NEIGHBOR
You saw this?

Markov nods slightly.

The neighbor picks up the paper.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
Hard to believe.

He studies the photographs again.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
How could something like this
happen?

Markov says nothing.

He looks at the images again.

The boy against the barracks wall.

The gas chamber door.

The crematorium.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Who took these photographs?

Markov studies the newspaper.

MARKOV
Someone who was there.

The neighbor nods slowly.

He leaves the room.

Markov remains at the table.

Quiet.

He studies the photographs again.

The truth now printed for the world to see.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE - MOSCOW - NIGHT

A quiet government archive.

Rows of metal cabinets.

Boxes labeled with dates and locations.

A clerk opens a drawer.

Inside are envelopes marked:

MAJDANEK - EVIDENCE

MARKOV stands nearby.

Older now.

The clerk carefully places a packet of photographic negatives inside the drawer.

CLERK

These will be preserved here.

Markov studies the envelope.

MARKOV

For how long?

The clerk shrugs slightly.

CLERK

As long as history exists.

The drawer slides shut.

The clerk walks away.

Markov remains alone in the archive.

He slowly opens the drawer again.

Inside—

The negatives.

He lifts one carefully.

Holding it up to the light.

The image appears in reverse.

The gas chamber door.

Markov studies it quietly.
He remembers the moment he took the photograph.
The silence of the camp.
The weight of the truth.
He lowers the negative.
Then slowly raises his camera.

CLICK.

A photograph of the archive drawer.
The evidence preserved.
History protected from forgetting.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. WAR CRIMES OFFICE - DAY

A large courtroom-like chamber.
Documents and photographs cover a long table.
Investigators review files.
Military officials observe quietly.
On an easel stands a large photograph.
The gas chamber door at Majdanek concentration camp.
MARKOV stands near the back of the room.
Watching.

A PROSECUTOR addresses the panel.

PROSECUTOR
These photographs were taken
immediately after the liberation of
the camp.

He gestures toward the images.
Mass graves.
Crematorium ovens.

The warehouse of shoes.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
They show the facilities used for
the systematic murder of prisoners.

An investigator lifts another photograph.

The boy against the barracks wall.

Alive.

Barely.

The prosecutor studies it quietly.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
Evidence of both the crime...

Beat.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
...and the survivors.

Markov watches silently.

The weight of the moment settling in.

His photographs now evidence.

History transformed into justice.

Scene - The Final Photograph

EXT. MAJDANEK MEMORIAL SITE - YEARS LATER - DAY

The camp stands quiet.

Barracks preserved.

Guard towers silent.

Visitors walk slowly through the grounds.

MARKOV, older now, walks along the path.

He stops near the gas chamber building.

A group of schoolchildren listens to a guide.

The guide gestures toward the camp.

GUIDE

This was one of the first
extermination camps discovered
intact.

Markov watches the children.

Listening carefully.

Learning.

He slowly raises his camera.

CLICK.

The next generation remembering.

He lowers the camera.

The camp behind them.

History preserved.

EXT. MAJDANEK MEMORIAL - PRESENT DAY - DAY

The camp stands preserved.

Barracks stretch across the landscape.

Guard towers silent.

Visitors walk quietly along the gravel paths.

A TOUR GUIDE speaks to a group of STUDENTS.

TOUR GUIDE

This was one of the first
extermination camps discovered by
Allied forces in 1944.

The students listen carefully.

They approach the gas chamber building.

The heavy steel door remains.

A large photograph is displayed beside it.

The photograph.

The gas chamber door at Majdanek concentration camp.

Taken in 1944.

A small plaque beneath it reads:

Photograph by A. Markov - Soviet War Photographer

One student studies the image.

STUDENT
Someone took this?

TOUR GUIDE
Yes.

Beat.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)
A photographer who arrived with the
first soldiers.

The student looks again at the image.

Trying to imagine that moment.

Wind moves softly across the camp.

The guide gestures across the grounds.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)
Because he recorded what he saw...

Beat.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)
...the world could never pretend it
didn't happen.

The students stand quietly.

Looking across the camp.

The barracks.

The guard towers.

The gas chamber building.

EXT. MAJDANEK MEMORIAL - CONTINUOUS

The students slowly walk across the grounds.

The guide watches them quietly.

One student lingers behind.

He studies the photograph again.

The image taken in 1944.

The gas chamber door.

The student pulls out a phone.

The student photographs the old photograph.

CLICK.

The same image Markov captured in 1944.

History repeating itself.

CLICK.

The guide notices.

GUIDE

History survives that way.

The student looks at him.

STUDENT

Because someone recorded it?

The guide nods.

GUIDE

Because someone refused to look
away.

The wind moves softly through the barbed wire.

The camp stretches across the horizon.

Barracks.

Guard towers.

Silent witnesses.

FADE TO BLACK

Text slowly appears on screen.

EPILOGUE
July 1944 – Soviet forces liberated

Majdanek concentration camp.

It was the first major Nazi extermination camp captured largely intact.

Investigators discovered gas chambers, crematoria, mass graves, and warehouses filled with the personal belongings of murdered prisoners.

Early reports and photographs from Majdanek were among the first undeniable evidence of the Nazi extermination system.

At first, many people in the West struggled to believe the reports.

As Allied forces later liberated camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, the full scale of the Holocaust became undeniable.

Evidence collected at Majdanek helped establish some of the earliest war crimes cases against Nazi officials.

Millions had already perished.

But the truth could no longer be hidden.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT MAJDANEK REMAIN AMONG THE EARLIEST VISUAL EVIDENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST.

THE WORLD SAW.

AND HISTORY COULD NO LONGER BE DENIED.

FADE OUT