

# EMERGENCY EXIT

(a film project by Bogdan Mureșanu)

KINOTOPIA



# INTRO

At the end of the 80's, Romania lived through dark times during which only humor remained for those who had lost all the rest: from dignity, abandoned in the endless queues, to the hope lost after decades of communism. And from all this decade, especially 1989 was, in many ways, an impossible year, a year that seemed would never come, and December, at least for the Romanians, was the equivalent of the end of the world.

From all this calendar, of time flowing without logic, one day in particular is of great interest to me, namely the day of December 20th, until the next day when, for the first time after decades of dictatorship, the people gathered at the last of Ceausescu's popular support meetings, and saw how the political order in which they had been forced to live (or to subsist) for so long was undermined. Then, by some miracle or out of desperation, those who were accustomed to live in fear and darkness have revolted with an immense hatred.

EMERGENCY EXIT a film composed of four narrative parts, four personal histories that sometimes intersect, stories told with a humour with absurd nuances (as absurd as the whole system at that time), although in a realistic, almost documentary-like manner, in the sense that I will use archive images from that year.

THE CONCEPT of the film I think can be summarised as follows: what happens to the lives of four characters on the day before the Revolution in Romania? Even if it is made up of four different stories, EXIT 89 will be a unitary film because the action takes place during one day and one night so that we will surprise these characters in this period time we are working with.

The narrative bits also have small connection points between them, but not obvious or essential to the dramaturgy of each chapter (but there is an exception). The interlacing of these narrative bits is dictated by the twenty-four hours that these characters have from the end of a world to the beginning of another. The time unites these characters as well as the absurdity of the situations in which they put themselves or they are put by others unwillingly.

FROM THE STYLISTIC POINT OF VIEW, to fill the movie with the impression of authenticity, the camera will have fluid movements, alternating the hand-held camera shootings with the fixed camera ones. Thus, the atmosphere of a turbulent December 1989 day, a few days after the murders of Timisoara, will be played cinematically by the dynamics of the camera movements and by the alternation we talked about earlier between static plans and dynamic plans.

PERSONAL MOTIVATION. Soon, there will be thirty years since the Revolution, and I think that such a film may raise some questions regarding the freedom of expression, personal dignity and other such concepts that have become demonetised or have become, in turn, part of an ossified language (not to say a wooden one). In conclusion, I would like to mention that, in my opinion, there have not been enough films about this period in our history (in fact not enough movies were made in a realistic, unmasked manner) and I believe that, more than ever, we need them.

Why? To temper nostalgic people or the simply politically disoriented ones (there is now a kind of







The action of the film takes place during the entire day of December 20, 1989, that is immediately after the events in Timișoara that actually meant the outbreak of the Revolution in Romania.

## **A BREATH OF FRESH AIR**

In the opening frame we see a young man (Tibi, 20 years old) hiding in the reed surrounded by water. He's cold and has a blanket wrapped around his body. It's morning. A fishing boat appears from the mist. The fishermen see him and cry to him "Ceausescu nema, kaput!" Next, another young man of the same age enters a tailor's shop where he takes two pairs of custom made trousers. The trousers are bizarre, have pockets on the inside, and the fabric is impermeable and thick, like a tent sheet. From the conversation with the seamstress, it appears that the young man is a speleologist and his trousers are meant for an expected expedition in a new cave discovered in Piatra Craiului.

The young man pays, puts his trousers in a bag, comes out of tailor's shop and heads towards a confectionery where he sits at a table. Soon, a blonde girl enters the confectionery, (Marcela, 20 years old) and sits at his table. We find out he is Tibi's former girlfriend who left him for a television director, Petrica Serbanica. Marcela returns an envelope with 140 lei that Tibi had lent her some time ago and now he is in great need of it. There is a discussion with mutual accusations.

They part ways in a cold manner and Tibi goes to his hostel room in Grozavesti, a room he shares with two colleagues, Ionut and Vlad. Tibi sends Ionut away and takes Vlad from a rock music party from a neighboring room. Tibi closes the door and the two begin to try Tibi's trousers together with two blouses, which, in turn, Vlad pulls out of a locked metal wardrobe. From their discussion, we understand that these are waterproof suits they are planning to use to cross the border, on the Danube, somewhere near Orsova, using oxygen tubes. Tibi is from Orsova and he has planned everything with a guide, who had bought the oxygen tubes and had arranged their route.

At four o'clock the two pack everything up and go down. In front of the hostel are Mr. Bibi, a friend of Tibi's father, a man from Orsova too, who is returning home after some business in the capital. The three leave Bucharest. On the way, there are some incidents that could compromise their plan: they are stopped by a police patrol and Bibi has a flat tire. The two get off in a village near Orsova and go into the woods to the place where they will be taken over by the guide. It's night. After a delay that makes the two very nervous, the guide finally appears and leads them along the Danube where he had hid the two tubes. The guys draw the order, and Vlad is first to sit on a tube, the guide decompresses it, and Vlad disappears into the darkness of the night. Tibi is next. The same operations are performed and Tibi is also lost in the dark.

Next we see Vlad holding the oxygen tube tightly in his arms, in the middle of the water. The compressed air is over and it no longer has the propulsion force. Vlad begins to swim. Luckily he gets to a shore. He's convinced he's reached the Serbian shore. He rejoices, comes out of the water and runs happily, but 20 meters farther there's water again.

At that moment he realises that, instead of having reached Serbian soil, he failed on an island in the middle of the Danube. After resting a bit, he decides to gather his courage and risk swimming the distance to the Serbian shore, but after swimming only 50 meters hears a boat approaching and he returns scared there could be border guards. Until the execution of Ceausescu, Tibi will remain on that island.





## ARCHIVE IMAGES

(21.12.1989 ↑ - 22.12.1989 ↓)





# THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

It is an evening like any other before a poor Christmas when Gelu comes into the house with a spruce. Soon, the characters, the two parents together with the 6-years-old son, are sitting at a table in a household ritual repeated so many times that everything is predictable and known in advance.

Not for a long time, though. Gelu, 35 years old, a skilled worker at one of the mammoth enterprises in the capital, his wife, Mariana, a seamstress, together with their son, Marius, a pupil in the first form, have dinner in the kitchen. The father asks his son if he was good at school and if he had written the letter for Santa. Marius replies that he did. Without any mistakes, Gelu asks. And what did you ask him to bring you?

Marius tells him he asked for a locomotive for himself, a new bag for his mother, as the old one is torn and shabby. Okay, okay, Gelu says, and for your father who works from dawn till dusk for the family, what did you ask for? After a hesitant break, while Gelu eats and is a bit careless towards what goes on, Marius tells him that he had asked Santa to fulfill his father's most ardent wish. Which?



**STILL IMAGES**  
([HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/259436280](https://vimeo.com/259436280))

The drama begins out of the blue when Gelu discovers that his son, Marius, has sent the letter to Frost Father (The Communist Santa) in which the only desire his father has is for Ceausescu to die - that "Nea Nicu" from the jokes that made the people warm when the heat was cut off during the cold winter nights. Gelu knows very well what he can expect if he does not find a quick solution before the mailbox is opened. He can expect to lose his job, maybe even a security investigation, after which he could be categorized as a hostile element, with all the risks that this label implies.

Soon, what seemed to be a uneventful evening in the family, becomes a psychological nightmare for both parents who imagine this is their last night together. Until late into the night, they will debate the issue and seek for solutions. When they reach a consensus, Gelu goes out late at night to destroy the letter.

At the end of the night, after Gelu succeeded, he thinks, to wipe away the traces, the domestic peace comes back again in the Ionita family. Gelu has one more problem, namely whether he had really destroyed the letter.



# THE NEW YEAR THAT NEVER CAME

The beginning of the film shows images from the TVR archive with the New Year's Eve show, which was to be broadcast on the night between 1989 and 1990. On stage we see a lot of actors, apparently from all social classes, waiting for the director's indications. The director gives the cue and an actress from the front row starts reciting a patriotic poem. The next sequence takes place on December 20, 1989. We are taken to one of TVR's editing rooms, where three men, the stage director, a cultural secretary responsible for censorship and an editor, smoke and watch on a screen the images that have been shot before. The editor stops the film on the actress we saw earlier. The censor is nervous and makes some comments that there is a big problem. He leaves the room and from the following conversation we find out that the actress has fled to Germany, which means that the images in which she appears can no longer be broadcast. At the same time, an elegant actress (Marina, 30 years old) comes out of a taxi and enters a theater. She's late for rehearsals. She gets on the stage, the director scolds her, but before she can get into the role, she is urgently called to the head of the theatre. He has just received a phone call from "above" and he was asked to send the actress to the Tv station for a shooting, the next morning. Meanwhile, we see the TV set where some of the frames are being prepared in order to be shot again, namely those in which the actress who fled to Germany appeared. That same evening we discover Marina and Stefan (the theater director) on a bench in a park.

They talk about a common friend and colleague, Misu, who lives in Timisoara and who has disappeared since December 16th. The two are worried. They decide to go to Stephen's house for the night and there they open a bottle of Havana Club. Marina drinks a few glasses and gets very dizzy. She asks Stefan to call Misu's family to find out if they have any news. Stefan opposes, arguing that any phone in Timisoara at the moment involves risks. Marina makes a scene, she is revolted, calls him a coward, she gets dressed and runs on the stairs. Getting home, she goes to bed, clothed, she falls asleep and she has a dream. She is, in front of some open coffins and she recites a patriotic poem. Those in the coffins give her a reply.

Early in the morning, on December 21, 1989, Stefan comes to take her to the television station. On the set, Marina – with makeup, a hairdo and dressed in the same clothes, looks a lot like the actress who got away – and she is shooting the parts to be replaced. The words she has to say are obviously some that glorify the Beloved Leader. Marina hardly manages to say them. Finally, after a few hours, at about 9 o'clock, those on the set decide that they have enough material to edit.

After the shooting, she hurries to the theatre, but he is surprised when the secretary for censorship firmly stops her saying that there's an order that everyone in the institution, without exception, should go to the meeting to support the party and Ceausescu.



**ARCHIVE IMAGES**  
(THIS TV SHOW WAS NEVER BROADCASTED)



# THE LAST INFORMANT

We are in a communist block of apartments. On the kitchen radio, the news of the morning of December 20, 1989 can be heard. Deputy-engineer Dorin Popa, 45 years old, comes out of the bathroom with a fresh face. He goes to the kitchen, drinks the coffee made by his wife, Ileana, gets dressed and goes out to work.

He leaves the block of flats and after only a few steps, a horn is heard behind him. He turns around and sees a black Dacia car. A voice asks him to get in. Dorin Popa stops abruptly and with an unpleasant surprise face remains astonished on the sidewalk. The car reaches him. At the wheel, the driver is a good-looking, 40-years-old man, wearing a fur coat. Security captain Laurentiu Dinca looks at him with a wide smile. It is eight o'clock in the morning.

Dorin has no choice and gets into the car. The car starts slowly on the almost deserted streets of a working-class neighbourhood on the outskirts of Bucharest. Captain Dinca wants to know if Comrade Popa has thought about his proposal to become a security guard. Dorian tries to convince him that he does not have anyone to inform him about, that at the factory everyone sees to his business and there is no political talk. Dinca asks him to think about it some more and he leaves him a few streets away from the factory gate.

Next, we find ourselves inside an industrial hall and Dorian is called to the phone. It's his wife who asks him to come back home for emergency, something has happened, but she cannot tell him what over the phone. Dorin asks for permission and goes home. Inside the block of flats, he meets a couple of retired neighbours, who keep look away and do not respond to his greetings. Dorian is surprised, but he is even more surprised when he sees a lot of sheets of newspaper on the door of his apartment. He rings the bell and asks Simona, his wife, what this is all about. Simona gives him shocking news. Someone wrote on the door "Down Ceausescu".

Dorin gets out of the apartment and picks up a corner of the newspaper. Yes, "Down Ceausescu" is written on the door. The two enter the apartment. There is a heated discussion. They are panicked and wonder who and why could have done such a thing and what should be done in the given situation. Finally, they decide that the best thing would be to call the militia, because it's very likely that one of the neighbors, if they have not already, will do so soon.

Next, we see Dorin escorted by two militiamen and pushed into a van under the stunned eyes of the neighbors. Dorin is headed directly to the Securitate headquarters, where he is taken to captain Laurențiu Dinca's office. He tries to convince him that the situation he finds himself in is very delicate and that he risks being declared an enemy of the people and sent to prison, considering that the scribble on the door is his doing, an act of rebellion against the state, closely related to the events in Timisoara.

In order to get out of such a difficult situation, however, there would still be a solution, Captain Dinca says, to become a security informant, as he has repeatedly asked him to. In the beginning, Dorian refuses, arguing, like always, that he is not very close to the factory workers.

But under the pressure and blackmail of Captain Dinca, who threatens both him and his wife that they will go to prison, his will is defeated and he is forced to give up. In the end, Captain Dinca gives him a sheet of paper, on which Dorin Popa signs and he becomes an informant. At the same time, the Romanian Revolution brakes out during Ceausescu's TV show on December 21st.





**STILL IMAGES**  
([HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/259436280](https://vimeo.com/259436280))





# COMPANY PRESENTATION

## HALF SHAVED (2013)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, short fiction, 12 minutes

Produced by KINOTOPIA, Comitet

Best short in Anonimul IFF 2013

Selections: Montreal World Film Festival 2013, Oaxaca Film Fest2013, Northern Wave, Iceland, Aesthetica Film Fest, York 2013, United Kingdom, Cinequest Film Festival, San Jose 2013, Cleveland Film Festival, Ohio, USA, European Film Festival, Lille, France 2014, Maremetraggio, Trieste, Italia, 2014, Romanian Short Corner, Cannes 2014, South East European Film Festival in Los Angeles 2014, Reggio Film Festival 2014.

## SPID (2016)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, short fiction, 17 minutes

Selections: Anonimul IFF 2016, Istanbul IFF 2016, Izmir IFF 2016, Dakino IFF 2016, Festivalul Filmului de Psihanaliza, București 2016, Cannes Short Corner 2016.

## NEGRUZZI 14 (2016)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, short art documentary, 23 minutes

Selections: Best documentary in IPIFF 2016, premiere at the National Museum of Contemporary Arts 2016

## THE CHRISTMAS GIFT (2018)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, short fiction, 24 minutes

Selections: Krakow 2018, TIFF 2018 (best romanian short), Anonimul 2018 (off competition), Salonik 2018, Brest 2018, Docufest Kosovo 2018

## REDMAN (2018)

Directed by Mugur Vărzariu, feature documentary, 55 minutes

Selections: ASTRA Film Festival Coproduction Market, in post-production.

## EMERGENCY EXIT (2019)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, feature, pre-production

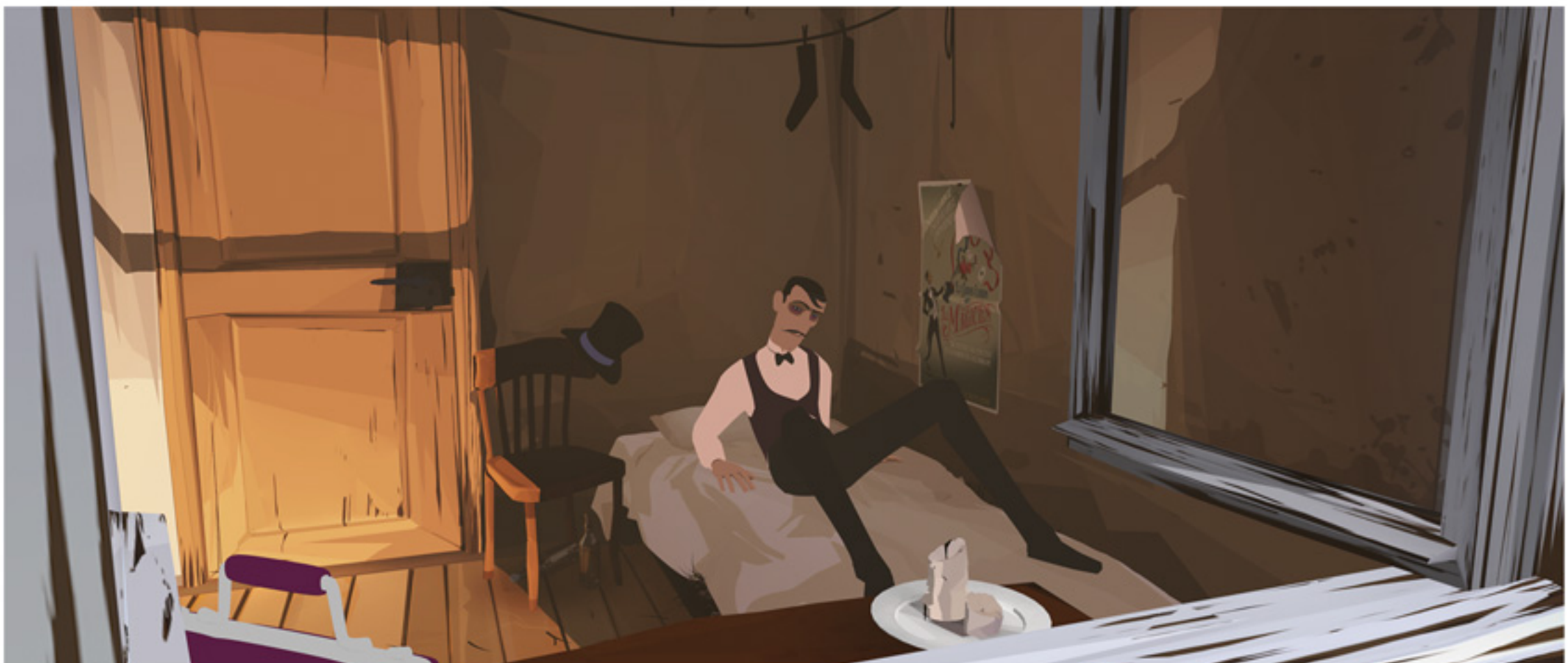
## THE MAGICIAN (2019)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, short animation film, 18 minutes, in production

## 1985 (2020)

Directed by Bogdan Mureșanu, feature film in development

Best PITCH in TIFF 2015



**STILL IMAGES**  
([HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/259436280](https://vimeo.com/259436280))



# DIRECTOR'S BIO

## BOGDAN MURESANU

Award winning writer Bogdan Muresanu has shifted from literature and advertising to cinema with equal success.

### AS A SCRIPTWRITER:

In 2008, he won the best short in HBO TIFF script writing competition with "The Human Torch" who received production funding from the Romanian CNC the following year and premiered in 2013.

Also in 2009 two more of Bogdan's scripts won at the Romanian CNC, development funding - "1985" and "The Magician".

Bogdan's next screenplay, "Where is Sophia?" won best feature script in Oaxaca Film Festival, Mexico (2012) and an honorable mention in Canada International Film Festival, Vancouver (2013). The script is currently in pre production with Adenium Films (Romania), director Anton Groves (UK-Romania).

In 2014, "Opinci", a script for animation, directed by Anton Groves, was shortlisted for Robert Bosch award and then founded by CNC in the same year. It is currently in production and to be released in 2018.

In 2015, "The other man", a script for a feature to be directed by Stephan Komandarev, Bulgaria. "The other man" is in development.

1985, a script for a feature film, developed in the Mediteranean Film Institute, won the best pitch award in TIFF, Transylvania.

### AS A DIRECTOR:

He produced and directed his first short film in 2012, based on his own script, "Half Shaved". It won the Audience Award at "Anonimul" IFF Sf. Gheorghe (Romania) and was shown in festivals in Montreal, Cinequest, Cleveland, Reykjavik, York, Oaxaca, Maremetraggio, Lille, Reggio.

"Half Shaved" (2012, drama, 12')

In 2016, Bogdan finished his next short called "Spid". Same year, a short art film "Negruzzi 14" was show-cased at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in 2016.

In 2017, the short animation called The Magician was undergoing pre-production while the short fiction The Christmas Gift was shot in March.





# **SAMPLE STORY**

[script is available on request]



## THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

### 1. EXT. STREET – POSTAL OFFICE, SHOPS

The camera starts from a pile of books, all with the picture of Ceausescu, and opens to the street. Among other people in the street, Gelu walks towards the camera carrying a very sorry looking Christmas tree and a bag.

Gelu passes by the postal office, where a woman posts a letter.

Other people in the street. Two militia men.

### 2. EXT STREET – NEIGHBORHOOD

Gelu crosses a long corridor in between a metal fence and a block of flats. From the front we see a passer-by.

### 3. EXT BLOCK OF FLATS

Gelu continues on his way, passing the front of another block. From behind, the lights of a car make his get closer to the fence. Gelu looks at the militia car.

He continues towards the crossroad. On his right, on a road, two kids play with a ball.

GELU  
(shouting)  
Marius !

Gelu stops for a moment in order to hold the tree better and then he waves to one of the kids who comes running towards him.

MARIUS  
Hello !

Gelu gives him a bag.

GELU  
Let's go home.

MARIUS  
Can't I stay out a bit longer ?

GELU  
It is getting dark ? I have told you a million times.  
What don't you understand ?

The two start towards home and the camera follows them.



MARIUS

Can we decorate the tree tonight ?

GELU

This is done the night before Christmas.

MARIUS

Why can't we make it tonight ?

GELU

Because it will be spoiled if we keep it inside.

Wait for a few more days.

It won't kill you !

MARIUS

Can I at least take out the ornaments  
to look at them ?

GELU

Only don't break them.

From the front, we see an old man, carrying an almost empty bag.

CHICAN

What a beautiful Christmas tree you got, Gelu !

You don't need any decorations...

GELU

I was lucky to find it...

What about you ? Going for a walk ?

CHICAN

Like hell, for a walk... I was in a queue  
on Lamotesti. They had brought goods

(whispering)

to quiet people down, you know, after  
what happened in Timisoara... You know ?

Gelu looks at him thoughtfully...

CHICAN

(whispering)

Why do you think there are so many  
militia men in the street ?

Gelu looks around frightened. He doesn't want them to be heard...



GELU  
(whispering)  
Yes... I have heard something...

CHICAN  
(whispering)  
  
I wonder if there's anything left  
intact in that city.

GELU  
(whispering)  
So what can WE do ?

Gelu moves his head as if he would like to say more, but he cannot.

GELU  
(whispering)  
I have a child to take care of,  
uncle Chican.

Gelu wants to leave.

CHICAN  
Wait a minute !

Uncle Chican takes an orange out of a bag and he gives it to the boy.

GELU  
You don't have to, really...

CHICAN  
Let him put it under the tree.

Gelu and Marius leave and enter the block of flats.

#### 4. BLOCK OF FLATS HALLWAY

We see them on the hallway leading to their apartment, on the last steps. In front of him, Marius runs holding the orange. Gelu comes after him. The door opens and we can hear Mariana's voice, Gelu's wife voice.

MARIANA (OFF)  
Did your father buy oranges ?

MARIUS (OFF)  
(catching his breath)  
Uncle Chican gave it to me.



ENTERING MOMENT

5. INT APARTMENT – HALLWAY – SAME HOUR

Gelu opens the door to the apartment and his wife, Mariana, a woman of the same age as he is, comes to greet him. Maris is taking his boots off.

MARIANA  
(ti Marius)  
Go, wash your hands !

GELU  
Look what I found.

She takes the tree and looks at it while Gelu takes off his coat and his boots.

MARIANA  
Where ?

GELU  
(Breathing hard while untying the boots)  
In the Resita marketplace. They were literally fighting  
for them. This was the last one.

MARIANA  
(whispering)  
Did you buy anything for him ?

Gelu takes out a package from the pocket of the coat. Mariana... Behind them, Marius comes off the bathroom.

MARIANA  
(to Marius)  
Honey, go take your slippers. It is cold here.

Gelu takes the tree, Mariana takes the bag and goes towards the kitchen.

MARIANA  
Take it to the balcony.

Gelu goes to the living room with the tree, the child goes to his room.

MARIANA  
And close the door.



6. INT. APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM

We are in the living room.

Gelu comes in carrying the tree.

On his way, he stops for a moment to open a drawer and put in there the present for Marius.

Then he goes towards the balcony.

THE TELEVISION MOMENT

After coming back inside, Gelu switches on the TV.

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU

... over the days of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of December, under the pretext  
of a legal Court sentence being enforced, some groups of hooligans  
organized a series of meetings and incidents.

Marius has come in (he is wearing home clothes and sleepers).

MARIUS

Where are the decorations ?

Gelu switches up the volume of the TV.

GELU

(points to a drawer under the bookshelf)

Look down there.

In the back, Marius opens a drawer and takes out a box of Christmas decorations.

MARIUS

Can I take out the lights too ?

GELU

Shut up !

In the back, we see Mariana carrying a pot of hot water to the bathroom. Gelu stays in the middle of the living room, watching TV with a preoccupied face.

Mariana enters the living room with the empty but still hot pot.

MARIANA

What does he say ?

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU

As the activities of the antinationalist, terrorist groups



have been going on, in accordance with the Constitution and the laws  
of the country, the military units had to protect the order...

GELU

(whispering)

They took out the army in Timisoara. And they shot people.  
They shot !

Mariana makes a sign that the wall have ears or that the child might hear them. It is not really clear.

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU

... and the properties of the city.

In fact to protect order in the entire country.

GELU

Bloody killers ! 55 dead until now !

MARIUS

Who died ?

MARIANA

No one, dear. No one.

(To Gelu)

Switch it off, for God's sake !

Gelu switches off the TV and then he takes a cigarette from a pack on the shelf. Next to the pack there  
are some envelopes.

GELU

What's with these envelopes here ?

MARIANA

I have bought them to send some Christmas cards to Zalau.

They write to us every year and we never do...

GELU

That's right, Marius... Did you write  
to Santa Claus ?

MARIANA

He did, for sure he did !

GELU

First on a draft paper so that  
there are no mistakes or directly  
on the letter paper ?



MARIUS  
I made a draft first.

MARIANA  
Did you put it in an envelope, nicely ?

MARIUS  
I did.

MARIANA  
(from the lobby)  
Did you write the name  
and the address, as I have taught you ?

MARIUS  
Yes... Ionita Marius, 7 years old, second form,  
96<sup>th</sup> school, 3, Giurgiului Road, Block A6, entrance D.

Mariana leaves the room after looking at Gelu (something like: did you see what I have taught him ?)

GELU  
(sits on the couch)  
Good boy. And what else did you write on the envelope ?

MARIUS  
To Father Frost (Father Christmas in communism).

GELU  
Bring me the letter. I will give it to him.

MARIUS  
I don't have it anymore.

GELU  
What did you do with it ?

MARIUS  
I put it in the post box.

GELU  
What post box ? The one on Giurgiului ?

MARIUS  
Yes.



GELU

What were you doing there alone ? Didn't I tell  
you not to leave from the front of the block of flats ?  
Never do that again, all right ?

Gelu is about to leave the living room.

GELU

Leave those and let's go !

THE KITCHEN MOMENT

7. KITCHEN

The two are sitting at a table. On the radio, there's some music.

Mariana takes a small pot of soup from the electric heater and puts the soup in the bowls. Gelu looks for a piece of meat, but there isn't any. The child plays with the spoon in his soup.

Mariana puts a jar of hot peppers on the table.

MARIANA

Take care, they are hot.

Mariana leaves the kitchen with another pot of boiling water. We can hear her pouring it in the bathtub. Gelu takes a bite from a hot pepper and then he makes a face. It is very hot. He takes the sparkling water and pours a glass.

GELU

And what did you write to him ?

MARIUS

I wrote: "Dear, Santa, I was a good boy and I got  
good grades in school..."

GELU

(to the child)

And what did you ask for ?

MARIUS

I asked him to bring me an engine.

GELU

Couldn't you ask him for something more useful,  
like a pencil box or something ?

MARIUS

But I have a pencil box.



GELU

You have destroyed that one.

MARIUS

I want an engine.

GELU

You are so stubborn !

All I am saying is that a pencil box would have been  
more useful.

Marius looks at Gelu...

GELU

Didn't you ask for anything  
for your parents ? Only for you ?

MARIUS

I have asked for them too...

GELU

What did you ask for ?

MARIUS

For a new bag for mom,  
as the old one is torn apart.

GELU

Did you hear that, mom ?

MARIANA

(from the bathroom)

What ?

GELU

He is leaving Santa without money.  
He asked for a new bag for you, did you hear ?  
(eating soup)  
Did you ask for anything for your dad ?

MARIUS

Yes...

GELU

For what ?



MARIUS  
For what you want most.

GELU  
And what do I want most ?

MARIUS  
What you always say...  
(pause)  
What you said yesterday too.

GELU  
What did I say yesterday ?  
(Trying to remember)  
That I want you to be handsome like me  
and clever like your mom ?  
Or the other way round ...

Marius smiles.

MARIUS  
No, you said something else.

GELU  
(eating the soup)  
What ? Just tell me already !

MARIUS  
You said that... You said that you want  
"uncle Nicu" to die.

Gelu puts the spoon in the bowl.

GELU  
Marius...

Gelu looks at the child.

GELU  
How did you write ? Tell me exactly what you wrote !

MARIUS  
I wrote: "And for my dad..."

GELUL  
(threatening)  
Right...



MARIUS  
"Let uncle Nicu die,  
because that is what he wants most".

GELU  
(repeats mechanically)  
Because that is what he wants most ?

MARIUS  
Yes.

GELU  
When did you hear me say that ?

MARIUS  
Yesterday. I have asked you what you wanted.

Gelu stands up threatening.

GELU  
When yesterday did I say something like that ?

MARIUS  
In the evening. That's what you said.

GELU  
(Shouting)  
And, even if I had said that, did you have to put  
it down, so that everybody knew ?  
You, thick head !

Gelu stands up and goes towards the child.

GELU  
Do you want me to slap you ?

## 8. HALLWAY

The child goes towards the hall, Mariana comes between Gelu, who is furious, standing in the kitchen door, and the child.

MARIANA  
What ? What happened ?

GELU  
(whispering)  
It happened that your son wants me to go  
to prison, that's what happened !



MARIANA  
(whispering)  
What got into you ? What did he do ?

GELU  
Let him tell you what he did.

Mariana shows both of them to the living room. THE MOMENT THE MOTHER FINDS OUT.

## 9. LIVING ROOM

Marius cries and wipes his nose with the sleeve.

MARIANA  
What did you do, dear ?

MARIUS  
I wrote to Santa... to die...

MARIANA  
How should die, dear ? I don't understand.

GELU  
I'll tell you. He wrote to Santa, with the address  
and everything, like you taught him,  
and then he posted the letter.

MARIANA  
So what ?

GELU  
Do you know what he said  
his father wants for Christmas ?  
Come on, maybe you can guess ?

MARIANA  
I don't know. How should I know ?

GELU  
For "uncle Nicu" to die.

Mariana sits in the armchair. Gelu is still standing.

MARIANA  
Is that what you did, Marius ?



MARIUS  
(with his head down)  
Yeah...

Marius wipes his nose again and nods affirmatively.

MARIANA  
How could you do that ?

GELU  
Just like that !

MARIANA  
Honey, did you really post the letter  
or are you fooling us ?

MARIUS  
I posted it.

MARIANA  
Do you realize what you did ?

MARIUS  
No.

Silence. Amazement. Gelu lights a cigarette. Mariana looks at him in silence.

GELU  
How could he write something like that ?  
(to Marius)  
Haven't I told you so many times not to  
tell anyone what you hear at home ?

MARIUS  
But I didn't tell !

GELU  
You wrote, you didn't tell !  
This is even worse, you, stupid !

MARIUS  
Don't talk to him like that. He is just a kid.  
He didn't mean that.

GELU  
He didn't mean it... But he did it !  
And who's going to pay ?  
Me ! because I told him that !

(shouting)

Move ! Go to your room, or I'll beat  
the shit out of you !

Marius leaves obediently...

MARIANA

Go and stay there put.

GELU

You and your fucking idea !  
Look what you did ! Are you happy now ?

MARIANA

Really, Gelu, this is my fault ?

GELU

Who else ? My mom ?  
Who told him to write a letter ?

MARIANA

I told you to stop saying things like that  
when you are nervous. You are always  
shouting and things and, there you go, the child  
hears. He's just a kid.

GELU

You have educated him to be a snitch.  
He is worse than the ones in the services.  
(he smokes)  
This is considered to be a reactionary and hostile  
behavior and who knows what else...  
(towards the TV)  
You have hear him...

MARIANA

Come on, maybe it is not like that !

GELU

(shouting)  
How can it not be ? That I want him...

MARIANA

Keep your voice down !

GELU

(whispering)  
That I want Ceausescu to be dead.



It's not like that ? They took Tudose simply because  
he cursed the Party, not the First Son of the Country.  
And the people in Timisoara they shot because  
they were booing.

Suddenly, Gelu stops. He sits on the sofa and breathes deep.

He takes his head into his hands, as if he had a terrible headache.

They are both silent looking towards the table.

MARIANA  
Maybe the ones who read the letters  
are understanding people...

GELU  
They have no mom and no dad.  
I'll go to prison, Mariana !  
And for a whole lot of years.

Another moment of silence.

MARIANA  
I still cannot believe  
that he did something like that.

Mariana looks at him thoughtfully... For some time she says nothing.

THE DRAFT NOTEBOOK MOMENT

10. HALLWAY

We see the hallway.

Gelu runs towards the hallway, Mariana follows him.

MARIANA  
Gelu, don't beat him up !

GELU  
I am not going to.

11. THE CHILD'S ROOM

The camera is in the hall.

Gelu goes inside the child's room. Marius sits on his bed with a guilty look. Gelu looks at him furiously.  
Mariana comes behind him and sees him looking on the desk.

MARIANA  
(from the door)  
What are you looking for ?  
Tell me and I'll give it to you.

GELU  
(to Marius)  
Where is the draft notebook ?

MARIANA  
It is in the school bag.

Gelu takes the school bag.

#### 15. LIVING ROOM

Gelu sits at the table and takes out the books and the notebooks. On one of them it is written "Drafts notebook" (in Marius's handwriting), and he opens it impatiently.

Gelu breathes deep. He reads a page then he gives the notebook to Mariana.

Mariana looks attentively at the notebook.

MARIANA  
Yes, he really wrote it.

GELU  
What did I tell you ?

Like in a trance, Gelu opens the literature book. On the first page, Ceausescu has no eyes.

GELU  
Look at this too !

MARIANA  
Come on. Kids would do that.

GELU  
(Calmly)  
Really, do all kids do that ?  
Did you see any other kid to turn his father in ?

They are both startled when the door bell rings. Gelu takes the draft notebook and closes it carefully.

GELU  
(Whispering)  
Go see who it is.



Mariana gets up and goes to the door. THE NEIGHBOR MOMENT.

13. HALLWAY

We see from the kitchen, sort of from Gelu's perspective.

Marius calls Mariana from the doorstep.

MARIUS (OFF)  
(whispering, afraid)  
Can I do to the bathroom ?

MARIANA  
(whispering, irritated)  
Come on, go !

Mariana goes to the door, looks out to see who it is and then opens the door. At her back, Marius goes to the bathroom. He closes the door.

14. INT. APARTMENT . HALLWAY . SAME TIME

The neighbor goes into the apartment with a questioning face.

MRS. TUDOR  
I am sorry to disturb you at this hour...

MARIANA  
There's no problem.

MRS. TUDOR  
(whispering)  
I wanted to ask you if you have some flour.

MARIANA  
I think I have a few spoonfuls...

MRS. TUDOR  
Never mind then... I don't want you to be left without...

Marius comes out of the bathroom.

MRS. TUDOR  
(sees Marius)  
Oh, look, the little one...  
How's being on holidays, sweetheart ?

MARIUS  
(looking down)  
It's ok.

MRS. TUDOR  
Maybe you'll get lucky and it snows.  
(no answer, she tries again)  
Tell me, did you write the letter to Santa ?

GELU  
(shouting from the living room)  
Marius, go to your room this instant !

MRS. TUDOR  
(loudly, towards the living room)  
Good evening !

GELU  
(not very friendly)  
Good evening, Ma'am.

MARIUS leaves in a hurry for his room.

MRS. TUDOR  
What ? Did he do something wrong ?

MARIANA  
Well, you know, sometimes he does.

MRS. TUDOR  
Kids will be kids. Good night  
and, once again, sorry for disturbing.

MARIANA (OFF)  
Never mind. I am really sorry  
I could not help. Good night.

15. INT. APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM

The camera is in the living room, the back towards the balcony. Mariana comes in the living room.

GELU  
What did she want ?

MARIANA  
Some flour.



GELU  
Floor, at this hour ?  
She has been listening to us, with the jar, through the walls.

MARIANA  
Come on ! Don't be paranoid !

GELU  
Then why did she ask him had he written to Santa or not ?

MARIANA  
She was trying to be nice.

GELU  
Like hell she was ! She came  
to gather information for the memo,  
that's why she came !

Silence. Gelu stands up and he walks around the living room.

GELU  
Look what trouble I am in because of you,  
fuckin' kind !

MARIANA  
Come on, we'll find something...

GELU  
We'll find shit !

MARIANA  
If you think like that, you'll solve nothing.

16. LIVING ROOM – A BIT LATER

GELU comes out of the kitchen holding a hammer, Mariana is standing.

MARIANA  
(troubled)  
What are you doing with that ?

GELU  
I will break the box.

MARIANA  
Come on, get real ! What if someone fucking sees you ?

Gelu puts the hammer on a shelf, next to a photo of Gelu holding a school prize.

GELU  
Should I burn it ?  
I'll pour a bit of gasoline and...

MARIANA  
Where are you going to get gasoline at this hour ?  
And then, there's going to be a hell of a fire.

Wouldn't it be better to pour some red wine ?

GELU  
How much wine do you think we have ?  
There's the two liter bottle and that's that !

MARIANA  
And if you put water in it, it will no longer stain.  
Right...

GELU  
See ? Neither one, nor the other.  
What the hell am I going to do ?

Silence. Stess. Gelu sits on the sofa again.

GELU  
Make some coffee.

MARIANA  
Now ? You won't be able to sleep.  
As you wish...

## THE SCANDAL MOMENT

### 17. KITCHEN AND LIVING ROOM

The camera is in the hallway. On the left, in the kitchen, Mariana makes the coffee. On the right, Gelu smokes and thinks.

He gets up and comes towards the camera, then he talks to Marius.

GELU  
(angry)  
Get to the living room.  
(a bit softer)  
Come on, I am not going to beat you.

### 18. LIVING ROOM



Gelu shows Marius an armchair to sit on. Gelu takes a pen from the pencil-box and a sheet of paper from the draft notebook. Then, he looks for a white envelope. In the ashtray there are a lot of smoked cigarettes.

GELU

(Bossy)

Sit here and do what I say. Right ?

MARIUS

All right.

GELU

OK. Write here what you wrote in this...

(shows him the draft)

"Dear Santa, I have been a nice boy  
and I have good grades in school" and all that.

Copy it word by word.

MARIUS

Yes.

GELU

Only here... "And for my dad"...

Are you paying attention ?

MARIUS

I am.

GELU

(shows him another line from the letter)

Here you write like that... And for my dad...

Let uncle Nicu Chican, from the first block entrance die,  
as that is what he wants.

MARIUS

But uncle Chican didn't do anything to me.

Mariana brings the coffee.

MARIANA

Come on, Gelu, what got into you ?

How can he write another letter ?

Isn't one enough ?

GELU

Shut up !

MARIANA  
(to herself)  
This is stupid !

GELU  
(bossy)  
You do as I say ! Here you write:  
"For Uncle Chican to die".  
And that is that !

Mariana puts the coffee on the table.

MARIUS  
But I don't want uncle Chican to die.

Gelu stands up and takes off his belt.

GELU  
You fucking kid !

The child gets up from the armchair scared. Gelu gets near him, holding the belt in his hand.

MARIANA  
What got into you ?

Mariana gets in front of the kid.

GELU  
(Angry)  
Don't get involved or you'll get it too.

MARIANA  
Just try to hit me...

GELU  
What, you'll turn me to the militia too ?

Mariana pulls Marius from the chair and pushes him towards the camera.

MARIANA  
(shouting at Marius)  
Dear, go to your room and stay there !  
(to Gelu)  
Gelu, calm the hell down !

GELU  
(out of him mind)  
How could I calm down ? How ?



When I know they are going to throw me un jail ? How ?

Gelu goes towards the drawer where he had pus the pencil-box. He takes it out and hits it repeatedly with the hammer.

GELU

There, fucking snitch !

MARIANA

You are completely crazy !

What are we going to put under the tree ?

All of a sudden the phone rings out loud.

They both freeze and turn to the phone. It goes on ringing.

Mariana goes and answers the phone.

MARIANA

Hello ?

MARCEL

Good evening. This is Marcel Stroescu.

MARIANA

(Soft tone)

Good evening, comrade Stroescu.

Gelu signals he is not at home.

MARCEL

Is comrade Ionita at home ?

MARIANA

He went to a neighbor's.

What shall I tell him ?

MARCEL

Something very important.

There's an order from above...

MARIANA

Of course. Tell me !

MARCEL

Tomorrow morning, at seven o'clock,  
he has to be at the entrance of the plant.

MARIANA  
All right, I understood.

MARCEL  
He should not be late  
and he should be properly dressed.

MARIANA  
All right. I got it.

MARCEL  
All right. Good night.

MARIANA  
Good night.

Mariana puts down the receiver.

GELU  
What is it ?

MARIANA  
At seven tomorrow, at the entrance of the plant,  
properly dressed.

GELU  
Properly dressed ?

MARIANA  
That's what he said.

GELU  
They have found out and they are arresting me.

MARIANA  
They couldn't have !  
Only tomorrow they take the mail.

19. EXT. STREET – FRONT OF THE BLOCK, LATE AT NIGHT

From the opposite sidewalk, from a observation point, we see the lights going off one by one in the apartments. Only one is on.

The militia car is still going around the streets. THE DERO MOMENT

20. INSERT DETAIL

INSERT draft notebook opened on the LETTER page. Zoom.



## 21. INT. LIVING ROOM – LATER

Seen from the hallway, the two sit on the sofa. They don't move. The camera stays on them for some time.

Gelu drinks coffee. Mariana takes the draft notebook and tears the letter page.

Then she exits the living room.

We stay with Gelu who looks at her curiously as she exits the room, but he does not make any gesture.

We hear Mariana opening the bathroom door and trying the water with her hand.

MARIANA (OFF)  
Come here !

Gelu gets up and goes to the bathroom. We see him trying to see the water over Mariana's shoulder. Mariana bends a bit, then she turns to Gelu.

When Gelu steps aside to make room for Mariana, we see Mariana holding the wet draft in her hand. The writing cannot be read.

MARIANA  
Look !

## THE LEAVING FOR THE POSTAL OFFICE MOMENT

## 22. LIVING ROOM

Cut on the living room camera.

Gelu has his shoes on and he is buttoning up the coat. Mariana gives him a bag with some detergent in it and another bag that has something inside.

GELU  
(getting ready to leave)  
Ask him in which box he put the letter.  
There are two of them.

While Gelu is getting ready, Mariana goes into the child's room.

MARIANA (OFF)  
Dear, in which box did you put the letter ?

MARIUS (OFF)  
In the first one.

Mariana comes back.

MARIANA  
You heard him. In the first one.

Gelu opens the child's room door.

GELU  
Are you sure ? Think again.

MARIUS (OFF)  
Yes, I am.

Gelu disappears into the kitchen and he comes out holding the raffia bag. He puts the detergent bag into his pocket.

MARIANA  
Do you want me to come with you ?

GELU  
No.

23. INT. BLOCK OF FLATS LOBBY – SAME HOUR

Gelu gets out of the block of flats cautiously, on the front alley. He looks up and around. All the lights are off. Gelu leaves in a hurry for the postal office.

24. EXT. STREET - STORE/POSTAL OFFICE

He gets to the postal office and he lets a man pass by.

He goes to the first box. He stops. He listens. No noise.

He looks to the left, then to the right. He passes by the first box.

He stops for a moment in-between the two boxes as if he did not know exactly which one is the right one.

He gets close to the first box, he opens the metallic slit, empties the detergent bag inside and then the water bottle.

Then he leaves in a hurry.

25. INT. LIVING ROOM – LATER

The two are in bed, the extended sofa. It's dark in the room so all we can hear are their voices. Gelu turns in bed.



MARIANA  
(whispering)  
You cannot sleep, right ?

GELU  
(whispering)  
No.

MARIANA  
Because of the coffee you drank.

GELU  
(whispering)  
No, it's not.

MARIANA  
(whispering)  
Then what ?

GELU  
(whispering)

I keep thinking... The first box as he comes from home  
or the first as he comes from school ?

## 26. CAR – MORNING

We are in a car from the plant (a small ARO or a SUV) in which there are several workers, among whom we see Gelu too. From Gelu's face we go down to a placard he is holding: a huge portrait of COMRADE NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU. (We close as we opened, the comrades bookstore)

ARCHIVE IMAGES from the Bucharest meeting.



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