

1. 15. EXT. RIVERSIDE. DAY.

The two groups we have seen through the riflesight, standing on opposite banks of the river. COLONEL DARKO and several professional looking soldiers in regular uniform stand clustered around the armoured vehicle. Opposite them a group of townfolk, led by a self-styled CHIEF backed by a bunch of highly irregular soldiers in long hair and rag-bag kit, also with a group of townspeople some of whom pull sledges laden with goods: this group includes Mato, Hassan and other people from the wedding. The Chief and Darko look across the river at each other. The Chief nods at two or three citizens, who start to drag their sledges across the ice; likewise Darko gives the command for several of his soldiers to go across with several heavy wooden boxes. The soldiers tread carefully on the ice, which cracks and groans. The sledges reach the other side first. Darko pulls back the coversheets. A great frozen side of cow on one, with other bits of animals and various livers and hearts and offal loaded around it.

With a sudden crack, one of the soldiers goes through the ice. The other soldier holds on for all he's worth. Town people run onto the ice to help, but what they grab for is the crate they are carrying, which they drag along to the bank; leaving the soldier's comrade to drag him up and help him to safety.

Darko pulls back another sheet. Eggs, milk, potatoes, rough bread. Darko smiles, takes an egg and eats it, raw and whole, shell included.

The Chief opens up the crates as they arrive. Looted bottles of wine and beer; hundreds of rounds of ammo. The Chief looks up at Darko; who is just pulling off the cover of the final sledge.

He looks down at the load; three dead men in regular army uniform. Horribly mutilated. Not too different from the meat carcasses.

CHIEF Where are the guns?

Darko covers over the bodies; takes another egg and again eats it whole.

DARKO Where are the girls?

From among the townpeople, three women in heavy coats make their way across the ice precariously in stiletto heels. Their lips are painted a garish red. One of them slips on the ice; the other two pick her up, and they continue.

They arrive at the other bank; stand very close together, looking out hostilely through eyes mascarrared with coal. The soldiers instinctively crowd round. Darko walks up to them; presses up very close to one, slips his hand inside her coat and fumbles around until he's found what he wanted. He smiles; nods to a soldier. Two more crates are dragged across the river.

DARKO Is Branko still around?

CHIEF He's still around. You know Branko.

DARKO Tell him from me to take care with the booze. He could hurt himself with it.

CHIEF We can't meet here next time. The thaw's setting in.

DARKO Spring already? I'll radio you.

Mato sees his chance slipping; goes over to the Chief, stands desperately in front of him.

CHIEF Oh, one other thing.

The Chief just nods his permission to Mato, and turns away to examine the guns. Darko peering over. Mato, carrying a smart black leather briefcase, starts to slip and totter across the ice. Darko watches his progress while all the time feeling up the woman under her coat. Soldiers load corpses and food onto the back of the armoured vehicle. Mato gets to the bank, slips at the last stride, lands on his knees at the feet of Darko. Darko looks at Mato, then at his briefcase.

DARKO If I find myself in need of an accountant, I'll be sure to let you know.

Mato opens up the briefcase, holds it up to Darko, who looks inside and inspects the contents with his free hand. The Woman meanwhile squirms with discomfort.

DARKO What do I want with these trinkets? Bullets.
 Bread. Brandy. And

He grabs the Woman painfully inside her coat.

DARKO these are the only currency.

MATO Please. My daughter-

DARKO This, here, is someone's daughter.

He's now humiliating the woman, grabbing her between the legs, but still under her coat.

DARKO Is your daughter in some way superior? Here,
 smell, don't all women smell the same?

He holds the hand that's been under the Woman's coat in the face of Mato.

DARKO There's your daughter for you. All daughters.
 And there's all sons.

He throws the cover off the sledge of corpses.

DARKO Kids! Don't they always let you down.

Mato stands, closing up the briefcase.

MATO I thought you might be interested in a simple
 business exchange. It's inside you, isn't it. But
 don't pretend that you can change back into a
 civilised person. You are right to observe the
 briefcase; yes I am an accountant. I was an
 accountant before the war, I remain an
 accountant during the war, and I will still be an
 accountant when the war is over. But where is
 there for you to go?

Mato turns to walk back across the ice. Darko pulls a gun, temporarily losing all interest in the woman. The Chief and others on the other bank look on. Darko is aware of all eyes on him.

DARKO Okay Mr Accountant. What is your
 proposition? One businessman to another?

MATO My daughter, she has just been married, to the man she has loved since they were children. Her mother, his parents, are all killed. You see, parents can let you down too. I want to buy their safe passage out of the town.

He tips the contents of the briefcase onto the covering cloth from the sledge.

MATO There are several hundred marks, gold and silver rings, chains, gems, watches. Probably ten thousand marks worth on the open market. Surely this can pay for a blind eye?

Darko looks around; he mustn't lose face. Looks at Mato.

DARKO And what is your contribution? Or are you just the accountant, eh? Everyone else pays, you just manage, eh?

The Soldiers enjoying this performance. Darko looking hard at Mato.

DARKO Open your mouth.

Mato doesn't like this, but has no choice really. He opens his mouth. Darko peers in. POV of Mato's tonsils with Darko peering and his face breaking into a smile.

DARKO I thought so. You accountants. Always have a little gold in reserve.

He takes from his belt an army knife, hands it to Mato.

DARKO Your booty is just a little light of the price. By the weight of about two teeth.

Mato knows what he has to do. The Soldiers all wait for him to go through with it; they're not grinning anymore, but they are fascinated. On the other side of the bank, The Chief leads the townpeople away, carrying their crates. Only Hassan stands on the riverbank, helplessly looking on. Mato places the point of the knife against his gum, then sticks it in, twists and pulls. With his other hand he reaches in his mouth, lifts out a gold tooth, and drops it on the pile of banknotes etc. Blood gurgles out of his mouth. Some of the Soldiers look away, others are transfixed. Darko is impassive, waiting for the other tooth.

Mato reaches in with the knife, but this time he is too hesitant and he has to twist and grind away, with howling pain coming out of him. Finally he pulls away the knife, and looks Darko in the eye; then leans over and spits the gleaming tooth with a gobful of blood onto the tarpaulin. White and shaking, he hands the knife back to Darko; who takes it, bends down and cleans the blood off in the snow, then reinserts it into his belt.

DARKO Next Sunday at midnight, at the bridge; your daughter and her husband have ten minutes amnesty. No more, no less. If more than two people make the crossing, we shoot them all. You have the word of a soldier.

Mato, face smeared with blood, bends down to click his briefcase shut and pick it up.

DARKO Oh but the briefcase is included in the price.

Mato, still bent down, freezes for a moment, then lets the case go. Stands with his back to Darko, and walks back across the ice. We stay on Colonel Darko's side of the bank as Mato walks awkwardly over the ice towards an upset Hussan on the other side. Darko calls after him.

DARKO So now you have lost something too, eh Mr Accountant?

The Soldiers laughing, many of them with relief rather than sadism.

DARKO Perhaps after this war I will become an accountant, what do you think? After all, I have all the qualifications I need. I have a briefcase.

The laughter becomes hysterical. Mato continues his wobbly slip slide across the ice. Darko takes out his gun and aims it. He shoots, deliberately, into the ice near Mato. The ice gives way, his foot goes in the water, he pulls out, keeps walking. Darko shoots again and then again into the ice; the Soldiers laughing as the ice collapses and Mato, nearly going down a couple of times, scrambles between ice holes towards the now frantic Hussan.

DARKO Damned accountants, they think they can walk on water.

Mato arrives on the other side of the bank, bloody and humiliated, being pulled out of the ice by Hussan, who is crying his eyes out.