

WHERE THE WORLD ENDS

A FILM BY
ANNA SAVCHENKO

PART OF THE
BORDERLINE
COLLECTION

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The border between Lithuania and Belarus once was a fluid border between Soviet republics. Today it is one of the forgotten European outskirts with the Schengen fence dividing communities, families, lives.

A FILM BY	ANNA SAVCHENKO	GENRE	CREATIVE DOCUMENTARY
WRITTEN BY	ANNA SAVCHENKO FREDERIK NICOLAI	DURATION	52 MINUTES
CAMERA	TATSIANA HAURLCHYK	FORMAT	DCP 5.1 SOUND 16:9
EDITED BY	PIERPAOLO FILOMENO THOMAS POOTERS	SPOKEN LANGUAGES	BELORUSSIAN LITHUANIAN
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY	FRÉDÉRIC VERCHEVAL	SUBTITLES	ENGLISH DUTCH LITHUANIAN CROATIAN
SOUND EDIT & DESIGN	RUNE HANSEN	PRODUCTION COUNTRIES	BELGIUM NORWAY CROATIA LITHUANIA
SOUND MIX	JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEVILLAIN		
PRODUCERS	FREDERIK NICOLAI ERIC GOOSSENS		
CO-PRODUCERS	KARL-EMIL RIKARDSSEN LJUBO ZDJELAREVIC LUKAS TRIMONIS		

SYNOPSIS (762 characters)

One hour drive from Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, everyone has to pass a strict border control, when leaving the "Free West" towards Belarus, "the last dictatorship in Europe". Crossing this border is a time consuming and almost absurd performance. However, there are people who are confronted with this border on a daily basis, where the border literally cuts through their backyard.

What used to be a daily routine of paying a visit to relatives or friends, going to church or to the cemetery now became a complicated process involving cross point schedules, visa and other complicated bureaucratic procedures. A great example of forgotten 'European outskirts', the paradox of the free Schengen region which here is dividing communities, families and lives.



SYNOPSIS (5302 characters)

The Lithuanian – Belarusian border region is an area of small villages that 20 years ago used to be part of one same country. Since 2003 there is a border dividing the European Schengen zone from Belarus with the authoritarian regime of Lukashenko. Sadly enough fences of the border don't only mark the political differences between two counties, it literally tears apart several villages and sadly enough the lives of people, who happened to live there.

Lena remembers how they often made jokes with friends, that her countryside house left behind in Belarus has view on European Union. On a weekend trip to the borderline zone, Lena and her friend Dima try to spot her house through the border fence from Lithuanian side. They question themselves who has actually put the fence up and paid for it. Belarusians or Lithuanians? In this absurd setting of quiet nature being put in the cage, Lena just hopes she could eventually get to the other side, home. Her house feels so close and so far at the same time.

Apparently, Lena is not allowed to go back to Belarus due to an exile sentence, that would expire in the coming year. She asks Dima to take care of her house while she has to live in Vilnius. Lena presumes it is because of her work in human rights, which is an inconvenient matter for the Belarusian authoritarian regime. She never regretted her life choices, but the process of being banned from being at home feels painful.

We arrive at the other side of the border fence and we encounter Renya while picking mushrooms and berries in the woods. She knows this forest for many years, and even got used somehow to this recent border. She believes it is indeed very strict, mentioning she has to carry her passport all the time. It feels like imprisonment, for which she doesn't really understand the reason.

We encounter Renya's modest household and meet her daily routines: feeding her animals, taking care of the garden,... things that keep a 79 year old busy. Once all the duties of the day are done, she is alone at home happy to receive some landline phone calls. In a conversation with her friend we discover her son is on the other side of the border – in Lithuania. She hasn't been there ever since the border was closed. The visa procedures became too complicated, so she patiently waits for his heart-warming visits. Only the T.V. produces other voices in her house: Renya's empty village feels like the end of the world. across the border again to another small village in the region. Ivan, a middle-aged man is taking notes in his notebooks while talking to someone. It becomes clear that the conversation is about the visa application in order to visit an old sick mother across the border. Once finished to collect the necessary data from the lady, Ivan continues the online forms at home. He mostly helps elderly people with their visa applications. For those people, not having a computer or internet, it would be impossible without his help. Today Ivan lives alone in his house, but it wasn't like that all the time. We discover the closing of the border torn also his family apart. Ivan tries to keep himself busy with his bees until the evening comes and his loneliness becomes more difficult to bear. Calling his faraway daughter seems the only way to get out of the social isolation for a while.



Victoria and Victor live on Belarusian side. They are getting ready for an important journey. It is All Saints' day and they will visit the cemetery at the other side of the fence. All Saints is one of the very few days a year when they would open the crossing-point here. Since many people have relatives buried on the other side from the times when there were no borders, it really is a big day for the inhabitants. But the visit is only possible for people with visa or permit, others have to ask someone else to at least bring flowers to the graves of loved ones. Victoria and Victor seem to be the lucky ones to be able to cross. People are waiting impatiently at the crossing-point which is just an improvised opening in the fence, The border police put planks on the ploughed, muddy soil to create a sort of a 'bridge' to step on. People have to wait while their documents and bags with a few plastic flowers and candles are checked. Victoria and Victor cross and on their way to the cemetery we learn the border isn't only making their actual lives complicated, but also marks some traumatic memories. During the period the border completely closed, Victoria's father passed away. The new strict regulations did not even allow relatives to cross for the funeral. They all just met close to the fence, together with the coffin. This was the only way she could say goodbye to her father. She couldn't even pass the flowers through the fence. Hence, their yearly walk to the cemetery has become a symbolic overcoming, a funeral they never had the chance to attend. A few hours later people have to rush back and the small door inside the fence would close again for many months. Story after story absurd at times details of the surreal but yet so ordinary reality of living in the forgotten borderline zone comes together. Border patrols keep patrolling empty landscapes. Seasons change embracing character's melancholies uniting their stories into a collective portrait.

ABOUT DIRECTOR ANNA SAVCHENKO

Anna Savchenko is a Belarusian filmmaker currently based in Brussels, where she graduated with the MA in Documentary Film Directing DocNomads. Anna worked in different production, film, art, and media projects around the world, such as Youth Media, BBC World Service Trust, Adobe Youth Voices, Luksuz Produkcija. She made several short films exploring the poetic dialog between documentary and experimental genres, co-directed and edited the film "God's mistake", which was screened and won awards at many international film festivals. Anna did camera and sound work for the documentary film Kalès in collaboration with the Belgian filmmaker Laurent Van Lancker, that was in mid-length competition of IDFA and won the grand prix at Filmer à Tout Prix festival in 2017. Anna is currently directing her feature length documentary "72 Hours", which won European Women's Audiovisual Network talent award at Dok Leipzig co-production market in 2019. She works as director and editor for Borderline series with Off World Production in Belgium, where she also worked as an editor for, "We Will Remember Them" documentary, which was the closing film of Visions Du Reel Festival in 2019. Anna participated in several international documentary film forums, pitching and residencies, such as EsoDoc, Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries, CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator, EurasiaDoc, Baltic to Black Sea Documentary training.



ABOUT AUTHOR/PRODUCER FREDERIK NICOLAI

Frederik Nicolai (Belgium, 1977) started his career by executive producing fiction series, feature and short films in Belgium and the Netherlands, such as the short films 'Haun' and 'Carlo' by Oscar nominated director Michael R. Roskam. Then he completely dedicated himself to author documentaries. Ever since Frederik produced and co-produced over 40 author successful documentary films & series and established a large international network of broadcasters, sales-agents, distributors, festivals,... Some successful films and series produced by Frederik are '4 Elements' (Jiska Rickels, opening film of IDFA 2006), Red Star Line (documentary series, 10+ worldwide broadcasters), El Color Del Camaleon (10+ awards, 40+ festival selections), Archibelge (on of the most viewed Belgian documentaries ever), and many more.

Besides producing, Frederik is also scriptwriter and lecturer and board member of Doc Nomads, a 2 years Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) in Documentary Filmmaking delivered by a consortium of three prominent European universities across three countries: Portugal, Hungary and Belgium.



ABOUT PRODUCER OFF WORLD

Off World is an independent production company based in Brussels, capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. Off World's main goal is to produce international author documentaries. Over the last few years, the company has built up a large portfolio and a solid reputation as delegate producer and co-producer of many creative and original documentaries.

some recent films: **Four Seasons in a Day** a film by annabel Verbeke, in coproduction with VRT-Canvas, Kinoteka (HR), Relation04 Media (NO), In_Script (LT) // **The Wire** a film by Tiha Gudac in coproduction with VRT-Canvas, Kinoteka (HR) RTV Sloveija, Urgh (SI), Relation04 Media (NO), In_Script (LT) // **We Will Remember Them** a film by Annabel Verbeke in coproduction with VRT-Canvas (Closing film VdR 2018) // **El Color Del Camaleon**, a film by Andrès Lübbert in coproduction with Blume Producciones (Chile) // **Exitus**, a documentary series by Toon Loenders and Bob Thissen, in co-production with Submarine, NTR (NL) and VRT-Canvas // **How To Meet a Mermaid** a film by Coco Schrijber in coproduction with Zeppers Film, VPOR (NL), House of Reel, DR (DK), IDFA 2016 // **Archibelge**, a documentary series by Sofie Benoot, Olivier Magis, Frederik Nicolai and Gilles Coton, in co-production with Playtime Films RTBF and VRT-Canvas // **Red Star Line**, a documentary series by Daniël Cattier and Fabio Wuytack, in co-production with Eklektik, RTBF and VRT-Canvas // **Desert Haze**, a film by Sofie Benoot, in co-production with Zeppers Film (NL) // **Reinoud, My Sculptor**, a film by Blaise D'Haese, in coproduction with RTBF // **Rêve Kakudji**, a film by Ibbe Daniels and Koen Vidal, in co-production with VRT-Canvas (IDFA 2015) // **Little Heaven**, a film by Lieven Corthouts, in co-production with DGOS, Lichtpunt // **Kongo**, a film by Samuel Tilman, in coproduction with Eklektik (BE), RTBF, ARTE, VRT-CANVAS // for complete filmography, visit www.offworld.be



THE END OF THE WORLD IS PART OF THE **BORDERLINE** COLLECTION,
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