

Episode 9 Interview Rob with Ievgen Malik Part 2

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Speakers on this Episode:



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Chapter 1: Setting the Stage for Survival



Samuel P.N. Cook [0:00]

Hi, it's Sam Cook, the founder and the co-host of the Ukraine Military History Podcast. Welcome to another episode of Ukraine Military History Podcast. This is the third in a three-part series with Senior Sergeant Yevgeniy Molok, who served in the 36th Marine Brigade. Now, if you didn't listen to the first two episodes, please go back and listen to those. I, I think it'll be, uh, great to listen to those before you dive into this third part. This, uh, third episode is the second of a two-part series about Yevgeniy Molok's time in captivity. So I really would encourage you to at least listen to the first part, uh, with Rob Lee, where he, he discusses his experiences. And if you want to, you can get his entire backstory, his life story, and what the Battle of Mariupol was like, uh, up until the point of his captivity that I did, uh, i- two episodes before this. But anyway, this episode goes into imagine being told that you're being released from Russ- captivity. It was 7 February 2025. Yevgeniy and his, uh, comrades were told they're being released, and the guard, uh, says, "What are you smiling about? You're gonna get beaten hundreds of times before you actually make it out of here." And, and that was unfortunately the truth for him and his fellow Marines. Now, this is after two and a half years of captivity, losing almost all of his, uh, body weight that wasn't muscles, and, uh, whatever muscles he managed to maintain to stay alive, and, uh, skin and bone. I mean, literally, uh, he was down to, um, a very unhealthy weight and getting released from captivity, being beaten on the way out. And again, I'd encourage you as you're watching this video or listening to it, uh, to share it with your friends and all of those who are, who are watching this war, making decisions related to this war, because this really, uh, crystallizes what's at stake for Ukrainians. It ju- when you say, "Hey, let's just give up some territory

Samuel P.N. Cook (continued)

because it's gonna make the war stop," imagine the people that are gonna be in that territory that's given up to Russia. Uh, there are real consequences to Russia and their occupation and the way that they treat, uh, prisoners of war and people under occupation. And sometimes I think we don't understand that until you hear stories that are very personal, uh, and you can hear and see the emotion on people's face as they recall these memories like Yev- Yevgeniy does in this interview. So this is the third, uh, in a three-part series with Yevgeniy. It's the second in a two-part series with Rob, specifically about Yevgeniy's captivity, and, and I think it's gonna be, uh, one of the most powerful things that, that you listen to, and hopefully it will give you much more insights about what this war really means for Ukrainians and, and gives you, uh, a new perspective on what it means to support Ukraine and why that's so important. So part three of our interview series with Yevgeniy Molok. I look forward to hearing your comments at the end. Before we start this episode, I just wanted to make a quick word to mention our sponsors. I'm gonna give you a brief introduction for our sponsors, and then at the end of the show, we'll do a longer discussion about each sponsor and what we're offering so that you can get right into the content. So this podcast is funded by the Borderlands Foundation. The Borderlands Foundation is a foundation that I established to make sure Ukraine's heroes are never forgotten. And we have two main centers that are i- in effect the sponsor for this podcast. The first center is the Ukraine Military History Institute. It's an -speaking, uh, and , uh, speaking, uh, center, which is... Our mission is to translate Ukraine's history from , uh, into for the world, uh, to consume and learn from. Ukraine has a lot of allies who've supported it. Almost all of them, the common language of military officers, military historians, and professionals is . So the Ukraine Military History Institute created and sponsors this. And I'll tell you all about our programs and how you can support the institute at the end of the episode. The second sponsor for this podcast is the Ukraine Center for Traumatic Stress. This is also part of the Borderlands Foundation. It's a center dedicated to research and raising awareness and, uh, helping to bring in to Ukraine, uh, cutting edge, uh, therapies, treatments, uh, protocols, and education related to post-traumatic stress disorder. Uh, the heroes of Ukraine that are fighting this war, whether they're Ukrainians or foreigners who've come in to fight side by side with Ukrainians, they're writing this history, which creates the stories, which creates a strong future country. And those memories have costs, so we're dedicated to helping advance the research, treatment, and, uh, and, uh, breakthrough, uh, that all soldiers, veterans can have dealing with and overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder and mental health that arises from their service. And then finally, our last sponsor is the Borderlands Group. This is a, uh, for-profit company that donates the money to fund the Borderlands Foundation and all of our programs. I'm also the founder and president of that organization. And we do military advisory, advisory for, uh, defense companies working inside Ukraine, and consulting and software development and technical work, uh, for both governments and, uh, military defense companies. So with that, that's our sponsors. At the end of the podcast, I'm gonna tell you a lot more about each sponsor if you're, if you're looking for ways that you can contribute to the Borderlands Foundation, our two centers, or if you'd like to work with myself, Rob, and other contributors for this podcast. I'll talk to you about how you can get in touch with us through the Borderlands Group for that.

Chapter 2: Expecting Freedom but Finding Prison



Ievgen Malik [5:35]

On February, 7th February of 2023, we, uh, came to, uh, to this Mordva. But we didn't know. We truly believed that this is the end, that we are coming home.



Samuel P.N. Cook [5:48]

Okay. So once again, you thought you were gonna be sent back, back to an exchange.



Ievgen Malik [5:52]

Yes.



Samuel P.N. Cook [5:53]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [5:53]

And, uh, th- that [chuckles] was like, you know, the life didn't beat me up so hard, uh- I, I will remember this day for all my life.



Rob Lee [6:02]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [6:03]

7th February, we came to Mordva. I think everyone will remember.



Rob Lee [6:06]

It's, uh, Republic of Mordovia. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [6:08]

Exactly. The, there's auto- a- autonomy, uh-



Rob Lee [6:12]

Yeah, t- autonomous republic, I think.



Ievgen Malik [6:14]

Yeah. Yeah, exactly.



Rob Lee [6:15]

Okay. So you're, you're at Ryorsk. Uh, so February 7th, you get sent to a different place. And w- what, what were you told beforehand? What did... Did you know what was going on? Yeah, so, so you said, you said you thought you, you were gonna be exchanged. Is that right?



Ievgen Malik [6:29]

We thought, uh, 'cause, uh, at the, at the time I was on the fourth floor and, uh, uh, we heard that, uh, you know, every three days approximately, yeah, every three days, uh, one floor was, uh, just moved out-



Rob Lee [6:45]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [6:45]

... shifted somewhere else, uh, from the prison.



Rob Lee [6:48]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [6:49]

So we heard that the first floor moved out, second floor, third, so we knew that this is gonna be our, uh, our time. And, uh, the day, I remember that was approximately 6:00 AM.



Rob Lee [7:05]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [7:06]

Uh, sober came and, uh, guards of prison as well. And, um, they get our clothes and made us to change the clothes for, to put on our military, uh, stuff.



Rob Lee [7:25]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [7:25]

And there was one officer in this, uh, prison a- and he is the only person, uh, who didn't lie to me-



Rob Lee [7:36]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [7:36]

... at the time. Well, I, I spoke him a lot in interrogations, and he told me different things about Ukraine, about Russia, and, uh, he was the only person who didn't lie to me at all. And sober said, I remember that sober said that, "Hurry up, you are going home." And I, I was smiling, I was happy. And this officer said to me like, "Zheka, why are you smiling?" I said that, "I can't believe that I truly go home." He said, "What? Home? You're gonna be beat up hundreds of times before the home."



Rob Lee [8:11]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [8:12]

And that was, uh, true. [laughs] So, [sighs] uh-



Rob Lee [8:17]

So, so this guy, I mean, and you, you mentioned this before when we talked that some of the guards were much worse than others.



Ievgen Malik [8:23]

Yeah, sure.



Rob Lee [8:23]

They treat you kind of like human beings. And, and I mean-



Ievgen Malik [8:26]

Exactly.



Rob Lee [8:26]

So how, how did this officer treat you typically?

Chapter 3: Analyzing the Cruelty of Guards



Ievgen Malik [8:29]

That's all, [sighs] uh, it's all about the people. Uh, you know, uh, I truly believe that the guards who were the worst, that they would be, they would do the same with even with the prisoners-



Rob Lee [8:44]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [8:44]

... if they would let-



Rob Lee [8:45]

Right



Ievgen Malik [8:46]

... to do this. Because this is the question of people's morality, personal morality.



Rob Lee [8:52]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [8:52]

That's on you. Yeah, of course, probably you got an order to beat someone, but I know for sure that what they did, like they could, uh, shift, uh, uh, m- make, uh, prisoners of some room to get out to the corridor-



Rob Lee [9:07]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [9:07]

... and beat them just for fun.



Rob Lee [9:09]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [9:09]

That's not about the order. That's not about the government. That's just about you. If you are like so, probably this, uh, man who tried to hurt pets in their childhood-



Rob Lee [9:23]

Right, right, right



Ievgen Malik [9:23]

... you know, something like that. And I know for sure that we made a, a research and, uh, discovered that the most crucial guards are these men who are, you know, short, fat, s- they got some, um, troubles with their speech.



Rob Lee [9:43]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [9:44]

Or something like that. The, the, they are probably, you know, the, the, that is complex of Napoleon.



Rob Lee [9:52]

Right. Yeah, yeah.



Ievgen Malik [9:53]

We call this. They got some pr- problem from their childhood.



Rob Lee [9:57]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [9:57]

And that's why they are like so, uh, the mo- all of them are, uh, ha- had, has some-



Rob Lee [10:04]

They're compensating for something.



Ievgen Malik [10:05]

Yeah, yeah. They have, the majority of them got some problems with their speech.



Rob Lee [10:10]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [10:10]

They're speaking like little bit enormously. And, uh, that when we heard such guards, because there were rotations-



Rob Lee [10:20]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [10:20]

... every, each month.



Rob Lee [10:21]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [10:22]

They, they were coming for one month. So each month, new guards, a new sober team. And when we heard some, some sober with, uh, some speech problems-



Rob Lee [10:32]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [10:33]

... we, we knew that this guy will, this is gonna be a big trouble for us.



Rob Lee [10:37]

Mm. Okay.



Ievgen Malik [10:37]

And if the, uh, guard, uh, is like, I don't know, big guy, two meters high, strong, majority cases they didn't even beat us.



Rob Lee [10:48]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [10:48]

So just-



Rob Lee [10:49]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [10:49]

... just i- in case of order. [phone pings] But there were different people in m- in the majority. Well, in the majority, that was a sober team. Some of them, they truly didn't like it.



Rob Lee [11:03]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [11:03]

They said like, "What the hell is going on? Why are we doing like this? This is wrong. This is not..." Well, they knew. Uh, some of them said that, said to us that, "Yes, we understand. We attacked you. You are defending your territory, your government. So well, this is the war. Okay?"



Rob Lee [11:22]

So, so you'd have actually have real conversations-



Ievgen Malik [11:24]

Yeah



Rob Lee [11:24]

... with some of the guards?



Ievgen Malik [11:24]

Yeah, yeah, sure. We got a lot of con- conversations with them, especially in Mordva. 'Cause uh, in Ryorsk, uh, that was more discipline there.



Rob Lee [11:35]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [11:35]

And they were not allowed to speak to us, uh, and, uh, just interrogators did it. And moreover, interrogators, well, as I said, first of, for the first time, they truly believe that we are killers.



Rob Lee [11:51]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [11:51]

Massive killers.



Rob Lee [11:52]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [11:53]

But in couple of months when they interrogated each of us-



Rob Lee [11:58]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [11:58]

... well, as I said, you will tell the truth about you, all your- ... story, how was it?



Rob Lee [12:05]

So you, so you, you think a-a-after they, they had tortured you enough, they actually believed that you were not actually-



Ievgen Malik [12:10]

Yes, yes



Rob Lee [12:10]

... committing any crimes?



Ievgen Malik [12:10]

They knew, yes. They found some, they made someone to sign some documents. They send someone to the jail, uh, and et cetera. But n- but they, the interrogators, exactly interrogators, I think they discovered that, yeah, the, the thing is not like-



Rob Lee [12:27]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [12:27]

... the, the TV shows. I know in this situation, one of my friend, he was, uh, w- well, he was blamed t- that he killed eight civil people-



Rob Lee [12:42]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [12:42]

... and raped some woman. The guy, 21 years old. Can you imagine? Th- this is, this is a kid.

Chapter 4: Resisting the Pressure to Confess



Rob Lee [12:48]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [12:49]

Th- this is a kid, 21 years old, but he was blamed. And interrogators, they, they worked with him three days. They were beating up him. But because w- because what he said that he didn't do this, of course. But from another prison, they got a letter that someone said-



Rob Lee [13:08]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [13:08]

... among our prisoners, that he did it.



Rob Lee [13:10]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [13:11]

That there was a situation. There were s- th- three marines there, and, uh, one of them was this guy. And, but he said that, "I didn't do this."



Rob Lee [13:20]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [13:21]

And they, they beat, beat him up three days. During three days, that was horrible. He, he came to the room. I've seen his legs. That was black, red, blue. I don't know. It's like...



Rob Lee [13:34]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [13:34]

And he knew that if he will, uh, tell that, "Yes, I, I did it," if he will take it o- on, on him, they will send him to Donetsk Republic, and he will be killed because they don't have a mor- monitor on, uh, this, uh, death, uh, penalty.



Rob Lee [13:55]

Y- okay, yeah, moratorium. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [13:57]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [13:57]

[clears throat]



Ievgen Malik [13:58]

Because ... And th- they knew it, that if, if it will be so, they, he will be killed in Donetsk.



Rob Lee [14:04]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [14:04]

Officially. Like-



Rob Lee [14:05]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [14:05]

... they got the permission for that. And some day, this guy, he said, "Just stop it." He said, "Give me these papers."



Rob Lee [14:16]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [14:16]

"I will sign it. Just bring me to Donetsk. Just shoot me, but stop this."



Rob Lee [14:20]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [14:21]

And the interrogator said that, "No, no, no, no, no. You don't understand. Y- you sign it if you did it. If you did it, you sign it. If you don't do this, if you didn't do this, don't sign. I don't want to meet you there in, uh, hell or in heaven and, uh, to explain something."



Rob Lee [14:40]

So he, he, so the guy even torturing him-



Ievgen Malik [14:42]

Yeah



Rob Lee [14:42]

... still said, did not want him-



Ievgen Malik [14:43]

He, he understand



Rob Lee [14:43]

... did not want him to lie about this.



Ievgen Malik [14:45]

Yes, yes.



Rob Lee [14:45]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [14:45]

He said-



Rob Lee [14:46]

O- other interrogators were different though, right?



Ievgen Malik [14:47]

Yes.



Rob Lee [14:48]

Some-



Ievgen Malik [14:48]

Uh, because you, w- we got different, uh, prisons. As I said, uh, Ryazhsk was pretty normal.



Rob Lee [14:56]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [14:56]

Because yes, that was cruel.



Rob Lee [14:58]

N- compared to-



Ievgen Malik [14:59]

Compared



Rob Lee [14:59]

... what you were about to see



Ievgen Malik [14:59]

Of course, of course. That was normal in case of this, uh, interrogations that they didn't made us to, uh, sign all, uh, everything they want. But Kursk, Volgograd, Taganrog, Mordva, Altai, that's, uh, [clears throat] a skull.



Rob Lee [15:22]

Th- these are other prisons where Ukrainians-



Ievgen Malik [15:24]

Yes



Rob Lee [15:24]

... are kept-



Ievgen Malik [15:24]

And, and the-



Rob Lee [15:24]

... where, where it was much worse



Ievgen Malik [15:26]

... much worse 'cause, uh, I know the guy, uh, w- as I mentioned, that there was, uh, uh, three marines blamed in this, uh, uh, killing, like eight civil people.



Rob Lee [15:38]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [15:38]

Yes. So in our, our prison, and even in Mordva, they didn't blame this guy, my friend.



Rob Lee [15:46]
Right.



Ievgen Malik [15:46]
But I know others. I've seen a video.



Rob Lee [15:49]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [15:49]
They, uh, made, um, they, they were telling that, yes, they did it.



Rob Lee [15:54]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [15:55]
But I know, I know the date. I know the place. Where were these guys?



Rob Lee [16:00]
Right.



Ievgen Malik [16:00]
And I know they, they didn't even were there. They, they didn't even, uh, were ... They didn't even know this place, where is it.



Rob Lee [16:08]
Right.



Ievgen Malik [16:08]
Where was this crime. So this, that was a complete lie, and still, there was a court, and they, right now, they're in Donetsk, and they got 27 years of jail in Donetsk because of, like, this crime they didn't do.



Rob Lee [16:23]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [16:24]

So they've ... And e- exactly, uh, and that, that guy who, who is in Donetsk right now, at that time, he was in Volgograd.



Rob Lee [16:32]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [16:32]

And from Volgograd came this, uh, letter.



Rob Lee [16:34]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [16:34]

So they made him to sign it.



Rob Lee [16:37]

Got it. Okay. Okay.



Ievgen Malik [16:38]

Like that.



Rob Lee [16:39]

So, [clears throat] um, you, you're taken from Ryazhsk. You get sent back in Avtozak, right, to, to the airport?



Ievgen Malik [16:46]

Uh, not the airport. We moved to, to, uh, this, uh, prison in Mordva, uh, just in Avtozak. We were-



Rob Lee [16:55]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [16:55]

... riding without any plane, and we came, we moved out approximately at 8:00 AM-

Chapter 5: Entering the Grim New Barracks



Rob Lee [17:02]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [17:03]

... I think.



Rob Lee [17:03]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [17:03]

And came there in five hours, you know-



Rob Lee [17:07]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [17:07]

... six hours, something like that.



Rob Lee [17:09]

And so what happens when you arrive?



Ievgen Malik [17:12]

Uh, we heard the music, first of all.



Rob Lee [17:15]
What, what kind of music?



Ievgen Malik [17:16]
music.



Rob Lee [17:17]
Okay.



Ievgen Malik [17:17]
Not Green Days. No, [laughs] no one heard this. Uh, so, um, we, they said there was an order to go one by one.



Rob Lee [17:29]
Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [17:31]
So we, we heard just music, and, uh, I was probably the last one who went out from Avtozak.



Rob Lee [17:38]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [17:39]
They made me s-, uh, they put me a cell bent as usual, put the bag on my head.



Rob Lee [17:45]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [17:45]
And, uh, some, uh, sober guy, uh, I- led, led me some to, to, to the, to the barrack, to the-



Rob Lee [17:56]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [17:56]

... entrance fee.



Rob Lee [17:57]

But you're, you're, you're bent over again.



Ievgen Malik [17:58]

Of course.



Rob Lee [17:58]

Right?



Ievgen Malik [17:58]

Yes, yes.



Rob Lee [17:59]

Bent over.



Ievgen Malik [17:59]

As, as usual.



Rob Lee [17:59]

Your eyes, eyes are covered.



Ievgen Malik [18:01]

Because of bag.



Rob Lee [18:02]

The bag.



Ievgen Malik [18:03]

Bag, yeah.



Rob Lee [18:03]

And where are your hands? In front of you? Be-



Ievgen Malik [18:05]

Be- behind of me.



Rob Lee [18:06]

Okay. So, so they're behind you. They're, they're tied up, zip-tied, right?



Ievgen Malik [18:08]

No, without zip ties-



Rob Lee [18:09]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [18:09]

... because that was not a long, uh, distance.



Rob Lee [18:13]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [18:13]

Uh, so- We were coming, we were walking, walking, and then I h- I started to hear screams. And I, I, uh, understood that, yeah, this is not an exchange. [laughs]



Rob Lee [18:27]

No, you're not going home. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [18:28]

Yeah, we're not at home. And then, uh, we came to the barrack, central barrack in Mordva. That was prison number 10.



Rob Lee [18:38]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [18:39]

First step, they put me on knees, put over the bag from my head, and I've seen plenty of our prisoners standing on knees, completely naked, and-



Rob Lee [18:51]

They're, they're, uh, you're on your knees. You're in there all kneeling, right? On, on knees. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [18:55]

Yeah, yeah. So, [lip smack] uh, the, the guards were beating up all of them, and one of them told me, "Take off your clothes." I did it. So we were on our knees and, uh, uh, moving from one room to another, the same as in, uh, Ryazhsk. But, uh, I don't know, probably even more guards than in Ryazhsk, uh, and, uh, all of them were with shockers, with sticks. We were completely naked. It, it, it was winter, winter, and-



Rob Lee [19:32]

And by Fe- It's February.



Ievgen Malik [19:34]

Yes.



Rob Lee [19:34]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [19:34]

And, uh, they were beating up us, uh, beating all everywhere they could, and they beat up us so hard that, so harsh that we got our skin cutted by this-



Rob Lee [19:49]

It was like, it was like coming off, right? You said.



Ievgen Malik [19:51]

Yes, yes. It was full of blood and, uh, uh, that, that was something horrible. They were beating up each of us approximately 40 minutes, uh, I think. Um-



Rob Lee [20:02]

Just nonstop beating the entire time.



Ievgen Malik [20:04]

Well, that was not like nonstop. That was like, you know, uh, one guard see you-



Rob Lee [20:10]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [20:10]

... start to ask, "Who are you?"



Rob Lee [20:13]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [20:13]

"Mariner?" "Uh-huh. Come here." Five minutes he's beating up you. Then you go further, in five minutes there is some, another guy who-



Rob Lee [20:21]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [20:21]

... see you, another guard, who starts doing the same. Uh, they truly believe that this is, uh, their mission to beat up each of us.



Rob Lee [20:33]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [20:33]

Each of them thought that he has to beat each of us.



Rob Lee [20:36]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [20:36]

So for, for example, there were, like, 20 guards.



Rob Lee [20:41]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [20:42]

So 20 guys will beat you up, something like that. Some of them has shocker. Some of them got this bat, uh, batons. So it works like that. Uh, I know a lot of blood, guys were pissing by their blood during one week after that. And, um, they put us, uh, into the rooms. And as I said, that was much cruel than Ryazhsk. In Mordva, you got the rules. You cannot break it. So-

Chapter 6: Learning the Rules of Silence



Rob Lee [21:21]

But e- e- even before this, you were saying, [clears throat] um, they're going after your legs, and then when you try to cover one leg, they go after the other leg.



Ievgen Malik [21:28]

[clears throat] Yes.



Rob Lee [21:29]

You said they would also go after your fingers with the, with the-



Ievgen Malik [21:32]

That will be further.



Rob Lee [21:33]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [21:33]

So that was not the day. Uh, that was like, we came to these rooms and they told us the rules. Uh, at 6:00 AM, we have to give u- uh, g- get up-



Rob Lee [21:45]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [21:45]

... uh, to wake up, to stand. Whole day you stand still. Uh, from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM, you are not allowed to move. You are not allowed to walk. You are not allowed to speak. You are not too allowed to smile. You are not allowed to watch into the window. You are not allowed to lean on a wall, to lean on a bed or whatever, to lean on another person. You are not allowed to walk to the toilet without an order. You are not a- allowed to drink water without an order. You are not allowed... They don't only think you are allowed to breathe, that's it.



Rob Lee [22:27]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [22:27]

That's all yours. Breathe.



Rob Lee [22:29]

Your, your, uh, your eyes are open, though?



Ievgen Malik [22:31]

Uh-



Rob Lee [22:32]

Or they're closed?



Ievgen Malik [22:32]

... during the day, yes, but if the door is opened, uh, or someone is speaking to us, then you have to stand cell band and, uh, with closed eyes.



Rob Lee [22:40]

But you have to look directly straight ahead, though?



Ievgen Malik [22:42]

Uh, y- your, y- yeah. Well-



Rob Lee [22:44]

You can't look out the window and-



Ievgen Malik [22:45]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You can't. So in each room you got camera, uh, above the door, and, uh, there was an officer on duty-



Rob Lee [22:52]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [22:52]

... who was, uh, checking the situation in the room. And if someone walks or speak or, or do something else, the [clears throat] guard team came and they were beating, uh, their whole room. They just say like, "Move out." You go to the corridor, cell band, and they are beating up you, uh, for, as a punishment.



Rob Lee [23:15]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [23:16]

And, um, yes. Uh, so the day in, uh, Mordva was probably the same as in Ryazhsk because the system is... That, that's the same prison.



Rob Lee [23:29]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [23:29]

So the system is, uh, common, uh, like in each prison. But the only thing that this, uh, checking out, morning checking out, that was just to beat up us. They didn't ask, like, uh, anything we need. They, they were... You just go out and three minutes, three, five minutes, they are beating up you-



Rob Lee [23:53]

[clears throat]



Ievgen Malik [23:53]

... with the batons or with the shockers.



Rob Lee [23:58]

So you get up at 6:00 AM. You get breakfast.



Ievgen Malik [24:02]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [24:02]

And then y- you are standing the entire time, and then you says from 9:00 to 11:00 AM, that's when, that's when they come by-



Ievgen Malik [24:09]

Yeah. From 9:00 to 11:00 AM. We got, uh, 30, 37 rooms in our barrack. We got approximately 300 people, a little bit less than 300, uh, and, uh-



Rob Lee [24:20]

So it's about eight to a room, right? Again, eight people in each room



Ievgen Malik [24:24]

Yeah, in average eight people in each room. And-



Rob Lee [24:26]

And it was 37 rooms you said, yeah.



Ievgen Malik [24:28]

Yes, yes. My room was number 35, uh, and they, they were coming like every day. See, they started from the first camera, and, uh, it's like move out, they start to beat prisoners, then they bring them back to their room. Then the second room, then the third room. Each rooms, and we are the room number 35. And every, every single day you hear the screams of people are, because of pain... That, that, as I said, that was not Ryazk. They were beaten up much harder. So I heard people were crying, people were pissing, pissed because of the pain and, uh, et cetera. So at, it, that was every single day. Moreover, you could be beaten up because of, uh, like breaking rules, because someone moved.



Rob Lee [25:23]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [25:23]

It's like during the day.



Rob Lee [25:25]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [25:26]

And plus, uh, you got interrogations as well.

Chapter 7: Enduring the Endless Interrogations



Rob Lee [25:30]
Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [25:30]
The same. During the day, uh, some, uh, interrogator could come. I think they got rotations with the same, like sober and the guards. Each month you got new interrogator, so that is like, for example, one interrogator came to the prison and he, uh, tries to blame you that you did something wrong, some criminal-



Rob Lee [25:55]
Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [25:55]
... uh, criminality in Mariupol. For three, four days he tortures you, then he can see that, yeah, you didn't do this. Okay, great. In one month, another interrogator is coming up, and he do the same.



Rob Lee [26:10]
Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [26:10]
He does, uh, the same. He tortures you three, four days. And then he see that, yeah, okay, you didn't do this.



Rob Lee [26:18]
Was, was the nature of torture the same thing? The same, uh, things?



Ievgen Malik [26:20]
Uh, yeah, yeah. The system was the same. Tort- uh, the torture system in Mordovi-Mordva was the same. The problem was with the regime, that-



Rob Lee [26:28]
Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [26:29]

... you are standing up. Look, there were people 50 years old, 55 years old.



Rob Lee [26:34]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [26:34]

They are standing still all the day, and you don't have enough water, you don't have enough food. Water was horrible.



Rob Lee [26:42]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [26:42]

There was plenty of iron in that water, you know, uh, because of, uh, old s- water system.



Rob Lee [26:49]

Right, the pipes.



Ievgen Malik [26:50]

Yeah. Because of the pipes. E- exactly. So, [lip smack] uh, and, uh, all this daily checking up, all this, uh, tortures daily, you know. They, for them, that was a play. That was a game.



Rob Lee [27:06]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [27:06]

They, uh, I don't know. Uh, as I said, like, 20% of guards didn't like that. They didn't even want that. I, there was a situation, there was one, uh, once one day we went out from the room. They were beating up as, as usual, but they said like, "Stand, stand still." Uh, like, uh, and, uh, we were, we stand with closed eyes.



Rob Lee [27:35]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [27:36]

Of course. And I could feel that one guard, he start beat me up with a baton.



Rob Lee [27:43]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [27:43]

But so lightly, you know, it was nothing. And he said to me, "Stand still. I have to beat you on camera."



Rob Lee [27:50]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [27:51]

"So just couple of minutes and go, go inside." So they got the body cameras, and they were beating us on cameras just... And I, as I can see, that they made it just to show their, uh, administration of prison that they made the, the job. So-



Rob Lee [28:04]

'Cause it's, image required.



Ievgen Malik [28:06]

Yes.



Rob Lee [28:06]

It's basically a quota they have to, that they have to do this every day for a certain amount of times.



Ievgen Malik [28:10]

Uh, actually in, uh, Ryazk they got, uh, body cameras-



Rob Lee [28:15]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [28:15]

... all the time with them.



Rob Lee [28:16]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [28:16]

And before beating up, uh, they were switching off this body camera.



Rob Lee [28:21]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [28:21]

But in Mordva we didn't see this, we didn't hear body cameras. You know, if you switch off or switch on it, it tells something. We didn't hear anything. But this guy said that I, "I got these cameras-



Rob Lee [28:31]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [28:31]

... just, uh, stand. Just wait, wait, wait a little," and that's it.



Rob Lee [28:34]

[laughs] So, so it, in, in Ryazk they were turning off the body cameras-



Ievgen Malik [28:39]

Yes



Rob Lee [28:39]

... in order to abuse you so no one would see.



Ievgen Malik [28:41]

Yes.



Rob Lee [28:41]

And then in Mordovia-



Ievgen Malik [28:42]

They, the-



Rob Lee [28:43]

... it was the opposite, where-



Ievgen Malik [28:44]

Exactly, exactly



Rob Lee [28:44]

... where they were required to show to their, their-



Ievgen Malik [28:45]

And that, that was, for us, that was something unbelievable. We couldn't understand, like, what is going on. And, uh, moreover, we got, uh, uh, yard, courtyard-



Rob Lee [28:54]

Yep



Ievgen Malik [28:55]

... uh, for our barrack where we were, uh, walking.



Rob Lee [28:58]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [28:58]

Like, uh, once a week we got, uh, couple of minutes, uh, there, uh, due to their, uh, schedule. And sometimes, yeah, they were beating up us even there, and there were of course the-



Rob Lee [29:11]

Because, because, so that they were required to g- to let you see some of the news. And so-



Ievgen Malik [29:16]

Yes



Rob Lee [29:16]

... they, they show you TV for a little while each day, right? And then-



Ievgen Malik [29:19]

Not each day



Rob Lee [29:20]

... they, they, but-



Ievgen Malik [29:20]

They, uh, weekly



Rob Lee [29:21]

Every week. They're required to take you to the courtyard every so often, and also let you shower as well. But you said, uh, you didn't like going to shower because they would beat you-



Ievgen Malik [29:32]

I hate it



Rob Lee [29:32]

... when you were, when you were showering, right?



Ievgen Malik [29:33]

Shower that, look, no, uh, you got three minutes. You have to go out from the room, you go inside the shower, take off your clothes. Got, uh, this shower-

Chapter 8: Surviving the Weekly Shower Beatings



Rob Lee [29:46]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [29:46]

... with the, the... You got two ways. The water is freezing-



Rob Lee [29:51]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [29:51]

... or the water is hot like in hell.



Rob Lee [29:53]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [29:54]

And then you have to put your clothes on and come back to the, uh, room for three minutes, and each moment is with this baton. They are beating you-



Rob Lee [30:03]

They're beating you the entire time



Ievgen Malik [30:04]

... beating you, your back, beating your legs. So what for do I need such shower, like, once a week?



Rob Lee [30:10]

And then e- even when the courtyard, when they're supposed to let you out.



Ievgen Malik [30:13]

Even the cour- yeah. They, they didn't do that a lot, but, um, sometimes we heard that, yeah, uh, in, in yard, in the courtyard, they are, they were beating-



Rob Lee [30:23]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [30:23]

... uh, the prisoners. And they got, uh, c- video cameras.



Rob Lee [30:26]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [30:27]

Not the bo- body cameras, but the video cameras which, uh, shows all the court.



Rob Lee [30:32]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [30:32]

Um, and, uh, in the majority case, uh, you- When you are, uh, moving to the courtyard through the corridor.



Rob Lee [30:39]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [30:40]

In the corridor there are guards, and they are beating up you with the batons, uh-



Rob Lee [30:44]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [30:44]

... this, as w- everything is with, uh, punches. TV, you are moving to TV once a week. You got three minutes, uh, watching this, uh, LG TV, the 2,000 years old [laughs]



Rob Lee [30:59]

[laughs]



Ievgen Malik [31:00]

... you know, uh, pro- produced. And you got news from Donetsk People's News for the year 1718. We didn't even-



Rob Lee [31:11]

2- 2017 and 2018.



Ievgen Malik [31:12]

Yeah, yeah, exactly.



Rob Lee [31:13]

So it w- it wasn't even new news.



Ievgen Malik [31:14]

Yeah, that was-



Rob Lee [31:15]

It was, it was propaganda news from, you know, seven years ago



Ievgen Malik [31:17]

... six, six, seven years old news. And we were watching like, "Why are you showing us this?"



Rob Lee [31:22]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [31:22]

Because I think that... Well, uh, because we were not allowed to... They told us, each day they were telling that, "We have captured Zaporizhzhia already. We have captured, uh, Kharkiv a- already."



Rob Lee [31:37]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [31:37]

"We have captured..." One of them told that he, we, they, they are trying to capture L'viv already.



Rob Lee [31:43]

Wow, really?



Ievgen Malik [31:43]

Yes. Uh, so that was funny. We, we knew that if we are here years, then you didn't capture anything.



Rob Lee [31:52]

Right, right, right, right. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [31:53]

And that's why they didn't show us any news, because what would they show? That they lost Kherson, that they lost Kharkiv, uh, Balakleya, and et cetera.



Rob Lee [32:03]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [32:03]

They didn't want to show us such things, so they showed us these old news.



Rob Lee [32:08]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [32:10]

And that was funny, because we, we understood everything, like what is going on. We were sm- we were laughing at them. It was like, "You wanted to, uh, capture Kyiv in three days. We are standing here more than two years, and you, you are showing us this news, uh, six, seven years later." We, because we thought probably that we, we have already captured them [laughs] and that's, that's why they are so aggressive to us. [laughs]



Rob Lee [32:31]

Yeah. So you said every month they change out the guards, right?



Ievgen Malik [32:33]

Yes.



Rob Lee [32:33]

So the guys who are there every month changes. Um, and you know, you were saying, you, you gave me a percentage here where you said there's a certain number who are, who are very cruel, who are sadistic.



Ievgen Malik [32:42]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [32:42]

A certain number who had to do this but didn't agree with it, and then I guess the rest of the group. What, what, what, what was, what was the, the percentage there?



Ievgen Malik [32:50]

So as I said, before 20%, uh, that was equal. 20% were like normal people who understood what is going on, and they, they, uh, didn't like that.



Rob Lee [33:02]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [33:02]

They didn't want to be part of this, uh, idio- idiotical system.



Rob Lee [33:07]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [33:08]

And another 20%, they, they truly love this.



Rob Lee [33:12]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [33:12]

They were, uh, beating us and laughing. You know, like if you remember this cartoon, The, The Lion King.



Rob Lee [33:22]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [33:22]

And there was hyenas, uh, this, uh, the, the dogs for-



Rob Lee [33:27]

Oh, hyenas



Ievgen Malik [33:28]

... hyenas.



Rob Lee [33:29]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [33:29]

Yeah. And you remember that, that-



Rob Lee [33:30]

Yeah, yeah, yeah



Ievgen Malik [33:31]

... the laugh.



Rob Lee [33:31]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [33:32]

That was the same. I d- I couldn't imagine, like it was like the feeling that there is some demon inside of this man. They beat you up, put you back to the room.



Rob Lee [33:42]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [33:43]

And they, when they were leaving the corridor, this laugh was the same-



Rob Lee [33:48]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [33:48]

... like hyena laugh, like from the hell. I don't know, that, I don't know how even to explain. That, that was something unbelievable. We, we were watching each other in room. We couldn't believe that th- this is true. Like-



Rob Lee [34:00]

Right



Ievgen Malik [34:00]

... as, as if they are demons.

Chapter 9: Watching the Guard Rotations Turn



Rob Lee [34:02]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [34:03]

And another 50%, that were people, whites, who they didn't care.



Rob Lee [34:10]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [34:10]

No, they care more about their salary.



Rob Lee [34:12]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [34:12]

And they didn't care about other people or, et cetera. But that was for the beginning, and, uh, till the end of the rotation, they took, mostly they took this bad side. So first week he's normal. Second week he starts to beat up you because of the, because you are, like, breaking rules. Uh, third week they start to beat everyone, and fourth week, the last week, they are beating up everyone, uh, like crazy and, uh, as if they are truly, like, as, as if something wrong with the... It's, we knew that the voice is the same. This guy is, he's moving out tomorrow.



Rob Lee [34:58]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [34:58]

So this is the guy who came here one month ago. But one month ago he was totally different. He was calm. He was normal. He was speaking to us.



Rob Lee [35:06]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [35:06]

He was asking like, who are we, what is our age, from which coun- uh, cities, uh, we got here. And the last week is like he's not asking anything. He's, uh, calling us, like, all, that we are all homophobes and et cetera, and beating, beating, and beating up.



Rob Lee [35:25]

They're, they're, they're using homophobic slurs for you.



Ievgen Malik [35:27]

That's all. You know, uh, [laughs] what is wrong with Russians?



Rob Lee [35:33]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [35:34]

I think that the majority of them truly are homophobes, but they cannot consider themselves like that, and that's why they are so aggressive.



Rob Lee [35:42]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [35:42]

Because if you listen them, all, everything is about homophobes. Everything is about some, uh, sexual activity. Even they, if they threat you, they will say that they will fuck you.



Rob Lee [35:57]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [35:57]

You know, something like... Each, each threat is about the sexual, uh-



Rob Lee [36:02]

Sexual violence or sexual rape



Ievgen Malik [36:03]

... violence. Exactly, yes. So, uh, Russians are all ab- And the, the thing is that they, they say it to men, and they say it to women. By the way, uh, women milit- uh, military, uh, force, like w- women, , they were in captivity-



Rob Lee [36:22]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [36:22]

... in these prisons as well. And, uh, guess what? Everything is the same. They were beating up these women every day, and, uh, they were torturing them, uh, all the time. That was the same.



Rob Lee [36:35]

Y- you also said- There are civilians from Mariupol-



Ievgen Malik [36:38]

Yes



Rob Lee [36:38]

... who are also taken with you



Ievgen Malik [36:40]

Not just Mariupol. There, in my camera was a civil guy from, uh, Kherson region. He has never been to Mariupol at all. Uh, when Russians occupied-



Rob Lee [36:49]

And, and he, and he was not in the military



Ievgen Malik [36:51]

No, he wasn't even, uh, in list of, uh, um, uh, of militarists, uh, who are re- required as a mobilized, uh, person. So he, he wasn't, uh, he has never been to army in his life.



Rob Lee [37:07]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [37:07]

He was 40 years old approximately. He-



Rob Lee [37:10]

But, but, but so he, he was detained and he's seeing torture just like everyone else



Ievgen Malik [37:14]

Uh, the situation is like that. Uh, when Russians occupied, uh, Kherson region-



Rob Lee [37:18]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [37:18]

... they just got- got some civil people, men of course, and, uh, put them to the jail as, as if they are agencies-



Rob Lee [37:30]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [37:31]

... uh, or something like that.



Rob Lee [37:33]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [37:33]

And, uh, f- firstly, yes, they tortured him because, uh, well, in- interrogators truly believe that, well, this is some kind of agent that they have to work with him. But, uh, in couple of month they got that, yeah, that, th- this a simple civil guy. He doesn't know wha- what is AK74, you know?



Rob Lee [37:53]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [37:54]

So they don't have, uh, to work with him. But, uh, as I said before, this daily beating up-



Rob Lee [38:02]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [38:02]

... every day they were beaten, uh, the same as militaries.



Rob Lee [38:07]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [38:07]

Uh, and we got among 300 prisoners, military prisoners, we got approximately 50, 60 guys, civil guys who are not, uh, military.

Chapter 10: Understanding the Prison Hierarchy



Rob Lee [38:16]

And, and we... It's still a four-story building, right?



Ievgen Malik [38:19]

Again?



Rob Lee [38:20]

The, the, the barracks you're staying in, is, is, is four stories or-



Ievgen Malik [38:23]

Oh, yeah. Uh, the barrack, uh, is, uh, one floor, but, uh, there is a part of, uh, barrack-



Rob Lee [38:31]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [38:31]

... on the, oh, I don't know, on some side. You got the second floor for, as we got it, there were prisoners there who were making a job. Uh, they feed us, uh, and, uh, they worked on kitchen and, uh, they were cleaning up the corridor and et cetera.



Rob Lee [38:52]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, you said the, the prisoners are too. So, so it's, it's prisoners and then Ru- just regular prisoners who are also in the fact-



Ievgen Malik [39:00]

Civil prisoners



Rob Lee [39:01]

A- and, and what, what was their, what was their response? Were they also like were cleaning up, right, um-



levgen Malik [39:05]

Just, just working. Clean up, uh, and, uh, preparing some food, uh, and et cetera.



Rob Lee [39:11]

Mm-hmm.



levgen Malik [39:11]

So because guards, guards do not work, of course.



Rob Lee [39:16]

And, I mean, I mean, it's, it's, it's... One of the things you, you've been talking about is, is interesting is how the system kind of works, right? Where they rotate guards every month, probably because they don't want them to become too close to the people.



levgen Malik [39:27]

Yes. This, this is the thing because, uh, uh, we got some, uh, uh, we got some guards who they, they were, uh, yeah, rotation each month.



Rob Lee [39:39]

Mm-hmm.



levgen Malik [39:39]

So no, no more than one month. But they, during, uh, almost two years in Madba, they were coming, uh, to... They were visiting us, uh, two, three times.



Rob Lee [39:50]

Mm-hmm.



levgen Malik [39:50]

And we heard that it could be seen that secondly, when they come, like second, on second or third time-



Rob Lee [39:56]

Right



Ievgen Malik [39:57]

... they are more calm. And, uh, they are, uh, they have got even some, uh, uh, prisoners, uh, they know-



Rob Lee [40:05]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [40:05]

... in face. They know their names and they, they are like, "Hey, buddy, how are you?" So, just not to do s- so the system works m- against it.



Rob Lee [40:18]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [40:19]

No brotherhood-



Rob Lee [40:21]

Right



Ievgen Malik [40:21]

... uh, among prisoners and, uh, guards. So that's why they are changing guards each month, and each time these guards, they are coming, and, uh, newcomers. For them, we are killers. We are Nazis, fascists. That's what... Every day they called us fascists.



Rob Lee [40:42]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [40:42]

I don't know why. I don't have any tattoo. I don't have, uh, well... What, what is wrong with these guys?



Rob Lee [40:49]

Right, right, right.



Ievgen Malik [40:49]

Like, why are they think- thinking like that? But, uh, all of that was all about fascist, Nazism.



Rob Lee [40:57]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [40:57]

You helped Hitler, well, probably personally I-



Rob Lee [41:01]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [41:01]

... 70 or 80 years ago.



Rob Lee [41:03]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [41:03]

Yes. I don't know why, what is, what is wrong with them, w- what, how did they came to such kind of opinion. Well, all about the TV. If you switch on news, you will find a lot of interesting things.



Rob Lee [41:18]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [41:19]

So.



Rob Lee [41:19]

And, and you said you also, you overhear the guards talking to themselves about sometimes th- they, they, they thought it was, it was, that, that they disagree with what was happening. They thought it was really wrong. Um-



Ievgen Malik [41:29]

Yeah, that was-



Rob Lee [41:30]

I mean, obvi- obviously the 20% was very cruel sadistic, and then some were not.



Ievgen Malik [41:34]

Sometimes, yeah. Uh, as I said, like approximately 20% of, uh, these, uh, guards, uh, majority of them I think that was, uh, militaries or, uh, this police SWAT, 'cause you know Russia got their own guard.



Rob Lee [41:49]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [41:49]

Yeah, so the majority of them, like probably 20%, they didn't like it at all. They... Like we heard different speech.



Rob Lee [41:58]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [41:58]

We did, heard different opinions. And, uh, some of them, well, for example, if they start from the first, uh, room to beat up us, these guys, for example, two guards, uh, were coming to our side-



Rob Lee [42:13]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [42:13]

... to the end of the corridor 'cause they didn't want even to stand there at this period of time.



Rob Lee [42:19]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [42:19]

And they were speaking each other and say, they, they were saying like, "The hell is going on? Like, why, why are we doing this?"



Rob Lee [42:25]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [42:25]

"Yeah, they are captured. They are here in prison. They are... The, the, they're kind... The type of regime is torture already."

Chapter 11: Fearing the Daily Morning Checks



Rob Lee [42:33]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [42:33]

"Why should we do this, like, uh, daily? What is the sense, to, to kill them all?" They didn't understand that, and they didn't want to do this. But that was just, uh, 20%. As I said-



Rob Lee [42:45]

Right



Ievgen Malik [42:45]

... another 20%, they were so glad



Rob Lee [42:48]

To do it.



Ievgen Malik [42:49]

Yes.



Rob Lee [42:49]

And, and the majority just went along, were fine. "Oh, it's just a job."



Ievgen Malik [42:51]

And the majority too, yes, just a job.



Rob Lee [42:53]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [42:54]

They got an order.



Rob Lee [42:56]

Um, [clears throat] oh, let's see. You said, um, oh, they also used dogs on you.



Ievgen Malik [43:03]

Yes.



Rob Lee [43:04]

So can you, can you ex- explain how they used dogs?



Ievgen Malik [43:07]

Uh, daily, uh, checking out, uh, as I said, they are coming to beat up us. Someone got-



Rob Lee [43:14]

So from ni- from 9:00 to 11:00 every morning.



Ievgen Malik [43:16]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [43:17]

They're doing this.



Ievgen Malik [43:17]

Yeah. Someone got the baton. Someone got plastic baton. Someone got shocker. Someone got hit the dog.



Rob Lee [43:26]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [43:26]

Uh, due to the, uh, their order, there i- there has to be one, uh, guard with a dog.



Rob Lee [43:33]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [43:33]

As, as it is, uh, common in prison.



Rob Lee [43:35]

Yeah, yeah.



Ievgen Malik [43:35]
I think in US the same.



Rob Lee [43:36]
Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [43:37]
In Ukraine the same. So one of them was with the dog. Uh, and again, monthly rotation, different guards.



Rob Lee [43:44]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [43:44]
Different dogs, different attitude. And there were time, period of time that, yeah, we got this crazy guards, uh, with the dogs. And, um, I, I-



Rob Lee [43:56]
So, so instead, instead of when you're, when, during that, that period when you get pulled out of your room, you get beaten.



Ievgen Malik [44:01]
Yeah.



Rob Lee [44:01]
Y- y- you might be a guy who just has a dog biting you instead.



Ievgen Malik [44:05]
And, and, yeah, yeah. And, uh, he, he-



Rob Lee [44:06]
It's like a Ger- German Shepherd you said, right?



Ievgen Malik [44:08]

Yeah, yeah. The, the, the sit- situation was I wa- uh, that was June, July 23.



Rob Lee [44:16]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [44:17]

July the year 2023. Uh, we came out, uh, again, self bent with closed eyes, uh, eyes. And, uh, my hands were behind my back.



Rob Lee [44:28]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [44:29]

And I felt that someone, 'cause I didn't see, I felt that someone got my arm and start, start, started pulling me.



Rob Lee [44:37]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [44:37]

And I, I didn't know. I thought this is a guard. He just took my arm and start just pulling me. But he didn't tell anything.



Rob Lee [44:46]

'Cause y- your, your eyes are closed.



Ievgen Malik [44:48]

Yes, yes.



Rob Lee [44:48]

So you, and you're looking back.



Ievgen Malik [44:49]

So I, I-



Rob Lee [44:49]

You're, you're bent over. Your arms behind your back.



Ievgen Malik [44:51]

Yes, exactly.



Rob Lee [44:51]

So you have no idea what's happening.



Ievgen Malik [44:52]

I d- no idea.



Rob Lee [44:53]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [44:53]

So I didn't know. I, I thought, like, this is the guard, uh, the guard. But he didn't say anything, and I was like, "What the hell does he want?" And I d- uh, I just op- opened my eyes and watched left side, and I've seen this German Shepherd just biting my arm. I start to scream. I tried to escape, but on the right side there was a wall. And when the, this guard, he saw that I opened my eyes, uh, he saw that I, well, I discovered all the situation. He start, uh, to, to laugh, and he was like, "Come on, bite him, bite." So the German Shepherd bite my leg, my, my arm, my leg. After it, well, the, the Shepherd bit everyone.



Rob Lee [45:33]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [45:34]

And, uh, because of... Well, you know, try to imagine. First of all, there are people who are afraid of dogs. Well-



Rob Lee [45:43]

Sure



Ievgen Malik [45:43]

... naturally.



Rob Lee [45:43]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [45:44]

I, I understand the dog that is dangerous, but I, I have, uh, normal. I love dogs.



Rob Lee [45:50]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [45:51]

There are people who don't.



Rob Lee [45:53]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [45:53]

They hate them. They, they are afraid, exactly dogs. And, uh, for them, that is psycho attack, more, more psycho attack. I know one guy in my room. He was, when he heard this dog, he was, like, crazy about it. He didn't, he wasn't afraid of shocker or, uh, plastic tube or-



Rob Lee [46:12]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [46:12]

... et cetera. He was afraid of dog. I was afraid of shocker. Someone was afraid of something else. Uh, so it's more about psycho, uh, firstly. And secondly, because of this

levgen Malik (continued)

dog Shep- Shep- German Shepherd, you know, he's biting you. You got this blood. You got this injuries, and you don't have any medicine.



Rob Lee [46:33]

Right.



levgen Malik [46:33]

When I told you about the shower.



Rob Lee [46:35]

Mm-hmm.



levgen Malik [46:36]

So-



Rob Lee [46:36]

You're, you're not showering.



levgen Malik [46:38]

No.



Rob Lee [46:38]

You, you, you have no medicine to take care of it, and it's a dog that's biting you.



levgen Malik [46:41]

And-



Rob Lee [46:41]

And biting everyone, so-



Ievgen Malik [46:42]

Exactly



Rob Lee [46:43]

... there's a risk of infection.

Chapter 12: Begging for Basic Medical Care



Ievgen Malik [46:44]

Yes. And, uh, th- this is the common situation, especially in, uh, Mordva, that, uh, people are, uh, s- s- they sore, uh, alive. You know, they, they got this, uh, injuries like my hand, uh.



Rob Lee [47:02]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [47:03]

And they are bleeding each day. Even now, uh, they are standing there, and they are bleeding. You know, that, that is normal because, uh, Russians, well, well, you got, we got there three doctors. One doctor is, like, okay, he tries to, at least to give some medicines.



Rob Lee [47:21]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [47:22]

Or bandage.



Rob Lee [47:23]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [47:24]

To another, they don't care about it. More- moreover, one of them, uh, if you ask some medicines, he will give you some electricity from shocker. That is, like, his, uh, that is the way he works. Moreover, if you ask for a doctor, the, the guard, they will bring, they will, uh, the doctor will come.



Rob Lee [47:47]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [47:47]

But after he go out, they will, uh, move your, uh, all your guys from the room to the corridor, and they will beat up you for this 'cause you asked the doctor. Uh, as they said, like, due to their will, they would just kill us.



Rob Lee [48:07]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [48:07]

And that's it. And we are such, uh, horrible people that we, we are asking for a doctor. Like, you are in the captivity. You are not allowed just to, even to speak, not-



Rob Lee [48:21]

Right



Ievgen Malik [48:21]

... not, forget about doctor and, uh, et cetera. So, uh, we got actually problems even with the bandage.



Rob Lee [48:30]

You, uh, you told me about, I think it was the company commander for the airborne company, that at some point he got knocked unconscious. Um-



Ievgen Malik [48:37]

Yeah, yeah. There was one, uh, guy, I, uh, one of my friend, and, uh, he said that, uh, there wa- there was a situation when, uh, again- They were beating up us and, uh, the guy, just he, he's a strong guy.



Rob Lee [48:53]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [48:53]

He's, uh, uh, airborne guy-



Rob Lee [48:56]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [48:56]

... of course, uh, and, uh, tall and, uh, you know, he's the brave guy. Everyone can dr-cry, but not him. He is, uh, pretty strong. But, but there was a situation when he, uh, some guard, uh, punch him-



Rob Lee [49:14]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [49:14]

... in his head, and he lost his, uh-



Rob Lee [49:17]

Like, with baton or s- his, with the hands?



Ievgen Malik [49:19]

Uh, I don't remember exactly-



Rob Lee [49:21]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [49:21]

... because that was more than two years ago.



Rob Lee [49:23]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [49:23]

So he just lost his consciousness. Uh, guys took him inside the room. He woke up, and firstly, he didn't understand what is going on. He didn't recognize guys. And but when he recognized the place, and he remind himself that he is like, he's in the captivity, he, uh, reminds himself what he, um, survived and what is go, what is going on, and that he will, he will survive even more, even longer. He almost got crazy. Like, that was so hard to realize what is going on, and that was, uh, hard for, for all of us. One of my friend, uh, in, in the room, you know, e- every day after the breakfast we were standing and waiting this 9:00 a.m.-



Rob Lee [50:15]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [50:15]

... the beginning of this beating ups and my friend said that, "Look, like I can't imagine that, that, that is true, that that is the reality. We, we survive. We live. That this is..." W- I truly thought that we are dead and we w- that we are not in captivity. That in fact, we were killed in Mariupol, and now we're, uh, not in, uh, hell but in, um-



Rob Lee [50:41]

Purgatory?



Ievgen Malik [50:42]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [50:42]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [50:43]

So I, I thought this is something like that.



Rob Lee [50:45]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [50:45]

I, I couldn't believe that this is the reality. Like, every day you're torturing, every day you are beaten up. And the, as I said, for them, that was a game. They were, uh, pretty creative about it.



Rob Lee [50:58]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [50:58]

For example, there were, uh, guys, uh, were sober. They discovered such game. You go out from the room-

Chapter 13: Singing Through the Guard's Games



Rob Lee [51:06]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [51:07]

... and you, they beat 13 times-



Rob Lee [51:10]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [51:10]

... each of you, 13 times. For example, in your, your leg, your back-



Rob Lee [51:15]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [51:15]

... your ass, something like that.



Rob Lee [51:16]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [51:18]

Your ti- task is, for example, not even a sound, and do not fall. If you at least lean on the wall-



Rob Lee [51:26]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [51:27]

... you lost. If you made a sound, you lost. If you lost, everything starts-



Rob Lee [51:31]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [51:31]

... from the very beginning. So-



Rob Lee [51:34]

This is a game that the -



Ievgen Malik [51:35]

Yeah



Rob Lee [51:35]

... guards would play-



Ievgen Malik [51:36]

Yeah



Rob Lee [51:36]
... while, while beating you.



Ievgen Malik [51:37]
Yeah. Once there was a situation, I was standing, uh, straight up and with the closed eyes, uh, my hands were, uh, in front of me and, uh, the guard, uh, made, uh, made me to sing a song, song. Uh, I don't remember the, uh, [singing] Mm. No matter. But I was singing it, and he was beating my fingers with the shocker, and that was, uh, you know, that, that was so cru- When I came back from, uh, uh, this, uh, captivity to Ukraine, uh, I got to the doctor.



Rob Lee [52:16]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [52:16]
And she's, she got this, uh, some stick f- and she, she said, like, "Close your eyes and put your hands in front of."



Rob Lee [52:25]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [52:25]
When I did it, I, I scared, like, you know, I'd ... that-



Rob Lee [52:28]
Right



Ievgen Malik [52:29]
... yes, that's-



Rob Lee [52:30]
That's the memory that's-



Ievgen Malik [52:30]

Yes



Rob Lee [52:31]

... yes.



Ievgen Malik [52:31]

And I didn't even ... That was the, the first time, uh, I got, 'cause I, I never understood what is it like, this PTSD-



Rob Lee [52:40]

Right



Ievgen Malik [52:40]

... or et cetera. I thought that that this like maybe, maybe weak people, uh-



Rob Lee [52:47]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [52:47]

... can feel this, but not me. I'm, I'm-



Rob Lee [52:49]

Right



Ievgen Malik [52:49]

... strong. Everything is good. But that was the first time, uh, f- after the captivity that I, I, I felt that, and I understood that that exists. That's a big trouble, you know?



Rob Lee [53:01]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [53:02]

So, uh, and they, they got plenty of, uh, you know, uh, they were asking, like, "Who are you?" "Mariner." "Do you shoot?" "Yes." They took your r- right hand and start beating up with shocker and-



Rob Lee [53:18]

Sh- they putting the, the taser into your hand-



Ievgen Malik [53:20]

Exactly



Rob Lee [53:20]

... and like



Ievgen Malik [53:20]

Yes



Rob Lee [53:21]

... you.



Ievgen Malik [53:21]

And, uh, for a long, like for a minute, for example-



Rob Lee [53:24]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [53:24]

... that was really long. That was not just one, uh, punch, but two for a long time, uh, in your right hand and w- "So when you will you come back to Ukraine, will you shoot again?" Something like that.



Rob Lee [53:36]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [53:37]

So, uh, a lot of different types of, uh, uh, torturing.



Rob Lee [53:43]

So y- you were there from February 7th 2023 until you are released, um, last fall, September, was it 20- 2024?



Ievgen Malik [53:53]

Uh, 14th September-



Rob Lee [53:55]

Okay



Ievgen Malik [53:55]

... 2024. Yeah.



Rob Lee [53:56]

Um, so you were there for a year and a half.



Ievgen Malik [54:00]

Well, even more, uh, I think.



Rob Lee [54:03]

Yeah, a little more than a year and a half. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [54:04]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [54:05]

So, so every day at 6:00 a.m. standing all day doing nothing, then two hours where you, you'll get beaten at some point, uh, taken to an interrogator, tortured interrogator, and then basically standing the rest of the day until 10:00 p.m.



Ievgen Malik [54:20]

Uh, again, uh, there was a situation. This, uh, such regime was till the end of the year 2023.



Rob Lee [54:30]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [54:30]

The worst year of my life. So f- from the very beginning till the very end-

Chapter 14: Hiding the Scars from Inspectors



Rob Lee [54:34]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [54:34]

... uh, that, that was, like, h- so horrible. Uh, so, uh, but at the end of this, that year, they got a visit from, uh, I think that was someone from- Ombudsman office- Okay ... in Federation. Mm-hmm. So they didn't ... Uh, we have never seen Red Church there. Never. N- never s- anyone from United Nations. Never. No one came. The R- R- Red Cross. Yeah. Yeah. You've never, never seen them. Yes. Two and a half years, I didn't even heard that, that someone w- maybe seen them or- Right ... speaking to them. Mm-hmm. But we s- we've seen these people like, uh, from this om- uh, Ombudsman office. And, um, yeah, they, they were checking, uh, out this prison, our prison during three days. And, uh, well, can you imagine, like, uh, the door is open in your room and, uh, this, this man from Ombudsman office, he's asking you, like, "Hello, guys." Uh, he's representative- Mm-hmm ... himself and, "How are you? What is going on? Is it okay?" And behind him there are like 30 guards with these batons. And what would you say? Perfect. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Super. Like, can you just ... He could, if he want, to ask prisoners to show their legs- Right ... to show their bones, to show their bodies. And he would see- [clears throat] ... uh, all these punches. He will see- [clears throat] ... all these injuries. 'Cause, 'cause you're covered in your uniform. Of course. Because un- And they're hitting, they're hitting you everywhere. It is not- Exactly. Exactly ... not covered. Yeah. Because that's why Russians, uh- Avoid the face ... much. They do not punch the face. They can punch your head, but not your face. Okay. That's, uh, denied. Uh, s- banned. Uh, and, um, so yes, uh, basically they, they are making this view- Mm-hmm ... picture that everything is okay. But it's not okay. Yeah. So, uh, why don't you tell us what happened when you get, got released. On the ... Well, first of all, I woke up on 13th, Friday 13th. Okay. Lucky day for you though. Second. Yeah. [laughs] But I got the dream, uh, as I said, uh, before this war started, I got the dream. And before I released, I got the dream. And the dream was really cool. I like that. Uh, I said to my friend in my room, he's still there, and I said to him, "You know, I had h- I've seen such beautiful dream. I don't want even to tell about it, uh, to tell the details 'cause I am afraid that, uh, that something is gonna happen." Mm. "And I'm afraid. I don't want to break it." So approximately at 11:00 AM, they came. Uh, they beat up probably 10, 12 rooms. Mm-hmm. That's it. And,

levgen Malik (continued)

uh, they came, uh, they opened the room- Mm ... and they called my surname. They said, "Malik." I said, "Yes, Evgeniy Valeryevich." They said, "Go out." Uh, and with, with your stuff. Mm-hmm. With your stuff, that means, uh, uh, p- p- stuff o- off your bed. Mm-hmm. So that means you are moving on. It's not just you are moving- Right ... from another room to- Mm ... from one room to another. That means that you are moving out from, uh, the prison. Mm. So I knew that, well, probably, probably we will go to some other place. Uh, they shaved us. They made us some photos and made us to put on our clothes- Mm ... our stuff. And we're, they put us to Avtosak- Yeah ... as well. Mm-hmm. And we were going. You've been told nothing though. Nothing. No, no. You are not allowed to know anything- Mm ... uh, during, uh, this, uh, s- captivity. You, you are not allowed ... I remember there was a situation. Uh, there was a plastic, um, uh, cups- Mm ... there for tea, for water. And they were, uh, you know ... We got, for example, eight people in camera, uh, in room. Mm-hmm. And they give us four, three or four cups with tea- Mm-hmm ... during our meal. But after it, they put back all plates and cups as well, and one cup has to stay in room. Mm. That is the rule, to drink water for all of us. Mm. And, uh, guys tried to, uh, write something on, uh, uh, the, uh, backside of the cup. Mm. Some information. For example, we are in Voronezh or- Right ... the, the, the, the Easter will be on the 5th May. Mm. And we were counting days. We were, we knew that today, for example, 4th May, and now we've got the information. Someone discovered, uh, from, uh, someone, I don't know, from some guys that the Easter this year will be on the 5th, uh, May. Okay. So we know how, when we should celebrate it and- Mm ... uh, congratulate each other and et cetera. And when [laughs] when the guards discovered, they found this, uh, uh, cups, they saw the, the information is written. Ah, okay. Mm. And they've seen some nicknames and et cetera, and they were beating up us two weeks for that. Mm. All our, uh, all our barrack. Uh, so, uh, yes, we didn't, we were not allowed to know anything. And, uh, we were going by Avtosak. Then, uh, they put us into the plane. And I, till the very end, I truly believe that this is not an exchange. We're going to another prison. And because I thought of this, I, because of these meetings in each prison, I thought, God, make this plane just to break down, but make this- ... just finished.

Chapter 15: Reaching the Absolute Breaking Point



Rob Lee [1:01:00]

Y- y- you were hoping for the plane to crash.



levgen Malik [1:01:01]

Yes, because-



Rob Lee [1:01:02]

Right? You, you were hoping-



levgen Malik [1:01:03]

... that, that is better to, you know, just switch off all of it-



Rob Lee [1:01:09]
Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:01:09]
... than this meeting in prison, 'cause that is truly, like, uh, horrible thing.



Rob Lee [1:01:16]
Y- you said that some, some prisoners tried to commit suicide too, right?



Ievgen Malik [1:01:19]
Yes. Uh, a lot have tried. Some of them, uh, were, um, they managed and, uh, a lot of prisoners, uh, they, uh, got mind like, um, they got problems with, uh, their, with their mind-



Rob Lee [1:01:40]
Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:01:40]
... because of this, uh, captivity. And, uh-



Rob Lee [1:01:45]
Y- y- y- you told me that one of, one of your friends has not spoken ever since-



Ievgen Malik [1:01:49]
Yes



Rob Lee [1:01:49]
... he, he arrived, right?



Ievgen Malik [1:01:50]
Uh, he's not my friend. He was in this jail, um, in prison number 10, Mordovia. Uh, he- when he came back with me, he didn't speak. Well, actually, he didn't speak, uh, in Mordva. Uh, in Ryazk he s- uh, he spoke, uh, like little bit.



Rob Lee [1:02:10]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:02:10]

But in Mordva when we, because I said, as I said, Mordva is much more worse than-



Rob Lee [1:02:16]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:02:16]

... Ryazk.



Rob Lee [1:02:16]

Y- I mean, you're not allowed to speak except interrogation, right?



Ievgen Malik [1:02:19]

Uh, yes, yes. And he- that's why he didn't speak at all.



Rob Lee [1:02:21]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:02:21]

He didn't speak even to the guys in, uh, uh, in the room, uh, to, uh, another prisoners. He didn't speak, uh, to, uh, g- to the guards even if they beat him up. Uh, he just didn't speak at all. And when he came back, uh, he came back with me, he didn't recognize his mother, he didn't recognize his, uh, relatives, his friends. And, uh, just as I remember, in one month of, uh, therapy in a-



Rob Lee [1:02:47]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:02:47]

... special hospital, he started to speak a little bit.



Rob Lee [1:02:51]

Okay.



Ievgen Malik [1:02:51]

And, uh, um, the situation with him, he's a mariner as well.



Rob Lee [1:02:57]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:02:57]

And, uh, his situation was even worse than mine. As I said, my situation was horrible, but there are plenty people th- that got much worse, even much worse. That's why-



Rob Lee [1:03:11]

Y-



Ievgen Malik [1:03:11]

... I am, like, more, uh, for me, that is easier even to speak about it.



Rob Lee [1:03:16]

Y- you were saying in Mordovia it was, it was a very obviously terrible s- experience, but the one, um, at least somewhat kind of upside is that when, when you went to bed of a night, you would sleep eight hours.



Ievgen Malik [1:03:29]

Uh, probably Askol or somewhere else, uh, I don't remember, uh, for sure.



Rob Lee [1:03:35]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:03:35]

But there is a prison where you are beaten up twice a day, not once-

Chapter 16: Depriving the Mind of Sleep



Rob Lee [1:03:40]
Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:03:40]
... but twice a day. And when you go to sleep from, uh, 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM, you have to get up every hour. Just you sleep till 23:00 PM, till 11:00 PM, then you wake up and you stand one hour.



Rob Lee [1:03:56]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:03:57]
Then you sleep till 1:00 AM, then you s- uh, wake up and stand one hour.



Rob Lee [1:04:02]
Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:02]
So one hour you sleep, one hour you stand.



Rob Lee [1:04:04]
So, so they, they spent years getting one hour of sleep at a time.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:06]
Yes. I've seen guy, and, uh, it could be seen by his eyes that that's true because he was much worser than me.



Rob Lee [1:04:13]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:13]

Uh, his, uh, his situation was much worser. And, um, actually, yeah, there are plenty places th- that are much more worse than even than Mordva.



Rob Lee [1:04:26]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:26]

For example, Taganrog. Uh, I wasn't saying God I wasn't in Taganrog, but there were plenty our, uh, our prisoners who were killed by, during the meeting.



Rob Lee [1:04:37]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:37]

So they were, Russians beat them up so much that the guys just, they, they are dead. And we got plenty. Every month, uh, we got, uh, our prisoners from Russia send they are dead, just bodies, you know?



Rob Lee [1:04:52]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:04:53]

They are killed, and you can see, uh, you can see that they were tortured.



Rob Lee [1:04:58]

Yeah. Um, so y- you get on the plane, right? You, you initially hope it crashes 'cause you assume you're going to the prison. You land, then, then what, what, what do you see at that point?



Ievgen Malik [1:05:10]

We lands twice, if I am not wrong. T- t- on the third time-



Rob Lee [1:05:16]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:05:17]

... that was the last one. They made us go out the plane. And, uh, I remember there was one guy, uh, mariner as well. He said that, "I can't walk," like, "I, uh, I can, uh, I have, uh..." He had a broken kneecap.



Rob Lee [1:05:34]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:05:35]

And they were, like, shooked. They said, "When, when did you get that?" He said like, "Well, probably 10 months ago." And they ... Because that was another, another guard. That was military police I-



Rob Lee [1:05:45]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:05:45]

... know for sure.



Rob Lee [1:05:45]

Yeah, so, so when you landed, the military police picked you up-



Ievgen Malik [1:05:48]

Exactly, yes



Rob Lee [1:05:49]

... and they were gonna exchange you.



Ievgen Malik [1:05:50]

And th- they were, uh, uh, like leading, uh, they lead him, and they said like, "When did you got this?"



Rob Lee [1:05:56]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:05:56]

And he said, "Well, prob- approximately 10 months ago." And one of them said, "What else? So nothing? No- no one did anything?" He said, "No." And he said like, I remember he said, "What the hell? How is it possible?" And, uh, then they put us, they checked all our surnames, put us into the bus. And, uh, one ... Into the, into the bus, and one of them said that, "Okay, guys, just, uh, hang on. You are going home." That was on Saturday early morning.



Rob Lee [1:06:32]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:06:32]

Approximately 5:00, 6:00 AM. And, uh, they gave us some food, uh, this military box, uh, I d- I forgot.



Rob Lee [1:06:44]

MRE.



Ievgen Malik [1:06:44]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [1:06:45]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:06:45]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [1:06:45]

Uh, uh, military ration. Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:06:47]

E- exactly, yeah. One, uh, one for two people.



Rob Lee [1:06:51]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:06:51]

So that was pretty good for us, uh, after such, uh, uh- Provision during two and a half year, that was a lot. That was the first time I s- I've seen a small chocolate piece.



Rob Lee [1:07:08]

[laughs]



Ievgen Malik [1:07:08]

And, uh, I tasted it. It was pretty-



Rob Lee [1:07:11]

You, you actually, you, you told me an anecdote before about one of the guards-



Ievgen Malik [1:07:15]

Yeah



Rob Lee [1:07:15]

... that I found interesting about that



Ievgen Malik [1:07:16]

There, there, there was a situation, uh, when I was in Madva, I've, I was there. And, uh, as I said, each month's rotation, new squad is coming and, uh, one of, uh, guards ... W-when, when they are coming, first day they try to, uh, s- to give some questions to us to find out, uh, about us. Who are we-



Rob Lee [1:07:38]
Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:07:38]
... the age, and et cetera. One, uh, one day some, some guard, uh, he, he asked me, "How old are you?" And I said, "In one week it will be 32."



Rob Lee [1:07:52]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:07:53]
And, uh, I, I said it, I don't even know why. I forgot that, you know, I, I forgot that, um, uh, like we, we are not allowed to know the date and et cetera.

Chapter 17: Celebrating a Birthday in Chains



Rob Lee [1:08:05]
Right, right, right.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:05]
But I heard that that day they didn't beat, uh, anyone.



Rob Lee [1:08:09]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:09]
Like, they were just, uh, you know, checking up, uh, making, uh, this checking out and, uh, uh, speaking with us. So I thought, I, I thought they are calm today, so maybe. I said, "In one week I will be 22."



Rob Lee [1:08:26]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:26]

He said, "Okay." In one week on the 22nd of November, I got a birth- birthday. Checkout, normal checkout. We went out from the room and, uh, I, I felt that, the hand on my shoulder.



Rob Lee [1:08:43]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:43]

He straight me up.



Rob Lee [1:08:45]

[laughs]



Ievgen Malik [1:08:45]

Turned around. I was, uh-



Rob Lee [1:08:47]

'Cause you're bent over as always, blindfolded.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:49]

As always, yes. That's always. You, you go out, you are walking self bent.



Rob Lee [1:08:53]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:53]

That, that's your position-



Rob Lee [1:08:55]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [1:08:55]

... forever in, uh-



Rob Lee [1:08:56]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:08:56]

... the captivity.



Rob Lee [1:08:57]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:08:57]

So, uh, uh, I f- I felt that arm on the shoulder. He straight me up, turned me around and said, "Open your eyes." I opened and I, uh, uh. He said, uh, is, "Do you have a birthday today?" And I said, "Yes, uh, I, I have." He said, "Open your eyes." I opened my eyes and I've seen this sober guy.



Rob Lee [1:09:19]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:09:19]

Big guy, uh, with wide shoulders, in black uniform. This ninja. [laughs] And he got this-



Rob Lee [1:09:27]

In, in balaclava too, right? Yeah, yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:09:28]

Of course. All of them always in balaclava.



Rob Lee [1:09:31]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:09:31]

And, uh, he hold a chocolate candy. And he said like, "Congratulations." [laughs]



Rob Lee [1:09:38]

[laughs]



Ievgen Malik [1:09:38]

And I was shocked because, you know, I was like, seriously? And he, he gave me this, uh, candy and said that, "You have to leave the rubbish here," but the candy g- get, uh, inside the room. So, uh, I, I said thank you of course and we came inside and we ate this candy, 10 of us. We tried a little, little bit-



Rob Lee [1:09:59]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [1:10:00]

... piece of this candy and, uh, yeah. That's, that was the story.



Rob Lee [1:10:06]

Yeah. In- in- interesting anecdote. Um, so, so you ... All right. So you're ch- tasting MRE. You're on the, on the bus. At this point, do you a- do you actually think you're going home or are you still not sure?



Ievgen Malik [1:10:17]

I was praying five hours long.



Rob Lee [1:10:21]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:10:21]

The, the ... I, I ate this, uh, food they gave and then I just, I was praying because I knew that, uh, before there were tries, uh, to make an exchange. They failed, and they bring all prisoners back-



Rob Lee [1:10:37]

Oh



Ievgen Malik [1:10:37]

... but to another prisons. So you got, you were going to exchange, but you got the meeting in the prison.



Rob Lee [1:10:42]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [1:10:43]

So I knew that even you, even if it's true that we're going to, for an exchange, that doesn't mean that we will got it. So I was praying, like in hours.



Rob Lee [1:10:56]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:10:56]

I think five hours I was praying.



Rob Lee [1:10:59]

And, and they drove you into Belarus, right? So, so the exchange ultimately was across the Belarussian-border.



Ievgen Malik [1:11:05]

Exactly. Uh, we got to Chernihiv region that's got the border with Russia and with Belarus as well. So the bus with us came to Russia, uh, or to Belarus. And, uh, this, uh, uh, military pos- police, they said that, "Okay guys, uh, that's it."



Rob Lee [1:11:25]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:11:25]

"For you, that's it. This is Belarus." And, uh, they said like, you know, uh, that was like during all these years they called us h- h- homophobes, homophobes. Everyone is homophobes.



Rob Lee [1:11:38]

But this is ... They're, they're calling you homophobic slurs.



Ievgen Malik [1:11:41]

Uh, yes. Sure.



Rob Lee [1:11:43]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:11:43]

Sure. Not li- not such polite, uh-



Rob Lee [1:11:46]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [1:11:46]

... version.



Rob Lee [1:11:47]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:11:47]

So of course that was, uh, in the way, so Zelenskyy is a homophobe. Uh, Biden is a homophobe. We are homophobes. Each soldier is a homophobe. Each American is homophobe. Everyone are homophobes. [laughs]



Rob Lee [1:12:03]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:12:03]

Due to their version, everything is like that. But at that ti- uh, moment they said like, "Okay, man. This is the end for you. You, you're done. You're going home, and just hope we will not see each other on the battlefield anymore."

Chapter 18: Moving Toward the Ukrainian Border



Rob Lee [1:12:19]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:12:19]

That's it. They went out. We got to the Belarus. Then some old man got into our bus, uh, in civil form, uh, in civil suit. He told something, some good words about, uh, Lukashenko. [laughs]



Rob Lee [1:12:34]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:12:34]

And well, I think that was, uh, some, uh, uh, k- KGB agent of Belarus. [laughs] And, uh, they ga- they gave us some food, uh, also, and after that we moved to, to Chernihiv region.



Rob Lee [1:12:51]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:12:51]

And I've seen these, uh, uh, prisoners, uh, moving from Ukraine to side-



Rob Lee [1:12:57]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:12:57]

... as well.



Rob Lee [1:12:58]

These is mostly young guys, so it, it, I mean-



Ievgen Malik [1:13:00]

Yeah, con- conscripts I s- I think.



Rob Lee [1:13:02]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:13:02]

Uh, because, uh, uh, we discovered, we didn't know why- On Augu- uh, on, uh, uh, August 24, they were, like, angry on us. They were beating us, like, for the last time. We didn't know what is going on. Uh, but when, when I came back, I, yeah, I recognized that that is because of Kursk.



Rob Lee [1:13:24]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:13:24]

Because we are there-



Rob Lee [1:13:26]

Push



Ievgen Malik [1:13:26]

... and we are beating them in, uh, the land, and they were crazy about it. But they didn't tell us that we got this.



Rob Lee [1:13:32]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:13:32]

Uh, so the, no one knew about it. And, um, uh, because, uh, in Kursk, our military got a lot of con- conscripts-



Rob Lee [1:13:42]

Mm-hmm



Ievgen Malik [1:13:42]

... uh, conscripts, and because of that, they could change us.



Rob Lee [1:13:48]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:13:48]

Because, yes, Federation, they tried to get conscripts-



Rob Lee [1:13:52]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:13:53]

... back to Russia-



Rob Lee [1:13:54]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:13:54]

... because of their mothers, because this is a social problem. But at the same time, they don't do this according-



Rob Lee [1:14:00]

For contracts



Ievgen Malik [1:14:00]

... for, for contracts.



Rob Lee [1:14:01]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:14:02]

To, yes. And, uh, this is the thing that, that you have to understand. When Russians say, "Well, we, we cannot exchange prisoners because side doesn't want."



Rob Lee [1:14:13]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:14:13]

They say it.



Rob Lee [1:14:14]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:14:15]

But when side got conscripts-



Rob Lee [1:14:18]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:14:18]

... conscripts, they got this exchange in one week or-



Rob Lee [1:14:22]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:14:22]

... two, three weeks maximum.



Rob Lee [1:14:23]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:14:23]

So who doesn't want it?



Rob Lee [1:14:25]

And, and also, and part of it is that, um, the military now, if you sign a contract, you're not supposed to retreat. Um, they, they do execute soldiers, and they, they don't, they, they, they basically don't wanna even exchange for people now because you're not supposed to, you're not, you're not supposed to surrender if you're a contract soldier.



Ievgen Malik [1:14:41]

Exactly.



Rob Lee [1:14:41]

But conscripts, so conscripts are not supposed to be deployed into Ukraine. They're not supposed to be deployed to wars. They're allowed to be deployed in Russia proper on the border, and so as part of the Kursk operation, the first couple days, Ukraine took, like, I think 5 or 600, um, uh, POWs, mostly among conscripts, and that, that, as you said, like, y- only a month later, they were already exchanging you for these conscripts. So, I mean, one, one of the, one of the benefits of that, of that operation.



Ievgen Malik [1:15:04]

Exactly. Yeah. Th- that's all true. Uh, if you sign a contract, if you are not conscript, but a regular contract, uh, military in Russia-



Rob Lee [1:15:14]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [1:15:14]

... then you have to understand that you, you're fighting or you are dead.



Rob Lee [1:15:19]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:15:20]

If you are, uh, in captivity, you are dead already.



Rob Lee [1:15:24]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:15:24]

So for them, th- that question is not a problem at all.



Rob Lee [1:15:29]

You also told me that, um, so there are prisoners at the prisons with you, and you said they also were often treated maybe not the same as you, but they're also beaten-



Ievgen Malik [1:15:37]

Mm



Rob Lee [1:15:37]

... in part because you think they're trying to force them into sign contracts, right?



Ievgen Malik [1:15:39]

Yeah, different situations, but as I know, uh, uh, because of this war, they tried to find, uh, some soldiers, some recruits.



Rob Lee [1:15:51]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:15:51]

And that d- that is one of the way, uh, Russia got, uh, recruits.



Rob Lee [1:15:56]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [1:15:56]

So they torture their prisons to make them to sign the contract-



Rob Lee [1:16:00]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:16:00]

... as if they are, uh, volunteers.



Rob Lee [1:16:03]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [1:16:03]

Yes.



Rob Lee [1:16:04]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:16:04]

That works like that.



Rob Lee [1:16:06]

Um, [clears throat] so you got exchanged, um, a- and you said, I think you said there were 650 people in your prison, right?



Ievgen Malik [1:16:14]

Yeah.



Rob Lee [1:16:15]

So of, of Ukrainians. Um, and, um, so after you got exchanged, um, you, like, w- what, what was the, I guess, rehabilitation process like? What was, what happened after this?



Ievgen Malik [1:16:27]

Uh, well, first of all, we got to the hospital in Dnipro one week approximately.

Chapter 19: Starting the Long Recovery Process



Rob Lee [1:16:34]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:16:34]

That was the, uh, time when all our relatives came and friends. Uh, then we came to Ny mire of, 20 days in Ny mire of, uh, and, um, th- that's it. But, uh, we were working, uh, mostly with the SBU.



Rob Lee [1:16:54]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:16:55]

There with the recones and et cetera. We gave all the information we have, and I spoke to this, uh, to, to their representatives. And, uh, as I can see, like, we, SBU knows everything.



Rob Lee [1:17:13]

Hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:17:13]

Names, surnames, uh, or if-



Rob Lee [1:17:16]

So e- even before you gave the details, they already knew all this.



Ievgen Malik [1:17:18]

Yeah. Yeah, they were just ch- checking, uh, so, uh, yeah, uh, they, they know, uh, they called me, they, they told me the name and surname of, uh, head chief of, uh, this, uh, prison number 10.



Rob Lee [1:17:33]

Hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:17:33]

And, uh, everything they knows. Uh, then, uh, after that, I w- I got to Kiev to the private hospital.



Rob Lee [1:17:44]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:17:44]

Uh, with the help of volunteers that was free for me, that was, uh, Adonis. Uh, I got rehabil- rehabilitation there. That was pretty cool. Another 20 days.



Rob Lee [1:17:56]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:17:56]

After that, I came home, and I got two months, uh, like two months ro- vacation.



Rob Lee [1:18:02]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:18:02]

Actually, I, uh, I didn't want even to... I didn't want go to any other hospital or even to a camp, anything else.



Rob Lee [1:18:16]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:18:17]

I just wanted to go home.



Rob Lee [1:18:18]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:18:18]

That's all. And, um, yeah, that, that's it. After that, I, uh, quit, uh, with the army.



Rob Lee [1:18:28]

You, you, 'cause you, you retired because if you've been at ca- at captivity-



Ievgen Malik [1:18:31]

Exactly



Rob Lee [1:18:31]

... that's one of the conditions



Ievgen Malik [1:18:33]

... due to the law, yeah, due to the law, e- every , uh, military has a right to quit with the army, and that is, uh, one thing that, for example, in Russia, you don't have such right.



Rob Lee [1:18:44]

Right. Right. Um, how, how have you been since then? So you, you've been out for about six months now, right? A free man again. What is it like, I guess, adjusting back to society, about life? Um, I don't know. What, what, what have you learned about the experience?



Ievgen Malik [1:18:59]

The experience is that, uh, well, uh, Ukraine, uh, started this, uh- Well, th-this conflict w-between Ukraine and Russia was because Ukraine wants to be a, a democracy type of government, to- wants to be a part of Europe and, uh, Western society. On the opposite side, Russia, which tells that authority way is better.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:19:28]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:19:29]

Well, and so as I can see now, unfortunately, uh, some people think that yes, the, the democracy way of, uh, g- uh, the democracy type of government is not the best one probably. I don't like a lot of things, uh, as well.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:19:46]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:19:47]

Uh, I don't like some kind of propaganda.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:19:50]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:19:50]

Democracy prop- propaganda as well. I think you know what I mean. But the authority way is not better for sure, because I used to be there on that side.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:20:01]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:20:02]

And that was the worst years of my life.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:20:06]
Right.



levgen Malik [1:20:06]
The worst. And before tell this, before tell that, for example, Putin is very good guy-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:20:12]
Mm



levgen Malik [1:20:13]
... you have to go to Russia and try to survive there for a couple of years. And after that you will come back home, and you will say, "Is he good or he is a devil?"



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:20:22]
Mm-hmm.



levgen Malik [1:20:23]
This is the thing. And the, and the, also you have to understand that ... Well, for, for me, I discovered, well, uh, sometimes I, I, I'm sitting in cafe, for example, eating my lunch, drinking coffee. I watch into the window, and I cannot believe that here I am, I am free person. I'm free to do anything I want-

Chapter 20: Appreciating the Gift of Freedom



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:20:49]
Mm



levgen Malik [1:20:49]
... and no one will try to kill me or to beat me up or to torture. And people don't understand this because the modern world is like this for us. This is something wild. This is something what used to be before.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:21:05]
Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:21:05]

But we are not like s- we are not so. This is wrong. This is the mistake. There are people who are so. They, they like this. And, uh, there are, uh, some regions in this world where you can get this, you, when you can get to the prison, not because you're guilty, but just because someone can put you there.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:21:26]

Mm-hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:21:27]

And, uh, all of this goods you got every day, you think this is normal. No, this is not normal. This is something d- d- this is s- something we ... This is a good side of our society.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:21:42]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:21:42]

Something what others do not have.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:21:45]

Yeah.



Ievgen Malik [1:21:45]

And, uh, th- this is the thing people don't understand. Like, um, y- every day you go your work and you think that you got some problems. No, you don't have any problems, believe me. You will get problems in captivity when you got there.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:01]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:22:01]

And you will got, everyone got if, uh, uh, if we won't stop this army, everyone will be there. 'Cause as I said, yeah, they d- they don't like Ukrainians. But Ukraine is not the problem for them. For them, German is much, much bigger trouble. I remember the man, this Solovyov I think that is, uh-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:25]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:22:25]

... he got a strong, really strong propaganda channel. And I remember when Russians got, uh, Kurakhove City.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:34]

Right.



Ievgen Malik [1:22:34]

He bring a f- his, uh, he br- bring a table, a name of the city, Kurakhove-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:41]

Right, right, right. Yeah, yeah



Ievgen Malik [1:22:42]

... in his studio. And he said, "Well, this is Kurakhove. But don't worry, I will bring it, the name table of the cities, Kyiv-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:51]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:22:52]

... Warsaw, Berlin-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:54]

Yeah



Ievgen Malik [1:22:54]

... and et cetera."



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:22:55]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:22:55]

So it's not about, this is not, uh, about Ukraine and Russia. It's about Russia and all the European-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:04]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:23:04]

... and other countries.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:05]

How, how many of your friends are still in captivity?



Ievgen Malik [1:23:08]

There were 650 guys in prisoners in, uh, our prison.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:14]

Hmm.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:15]

If we count with me, well, probably 20 prisoners got back from this prison, so more than 600.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:25]

Still there.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:25]

Still there. And Russians don't want to-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:28]

Being treated the exact same way.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:29]

Yeah.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:29]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:30]

And, uh, everything is the same as, uh ... I spoke to my friends. As one of my friend, uh, we used to serve in one company. He was in the second platoon.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:40]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:40]

And, uh, he came from Mordov- Mordva. Uh, he came probably one month ago.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:47]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:48]

I asked like, "How is it going on?" He said, "The same. Everything is the same."



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:53]

Okay. And it's alm- I mean, it's almost been three years now for those guys too.



Ievgen Malik [1:23:57]

Yes.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:23:58]

The war's obviously been over three years at this point. Um, well, thanks. Um, it's obviously incredibly tough story to tell. Um, but it's good to, good to hear this from you, good to hear the details of what actually happened. Um, as I think, uh, as you said, important thing to keep in mind when we talk about negotiations, about how this war might end, uh, of, of what, what is happening to, to not just soldiers who are in captivity, but also even civilians who are taken, uh, and put in prisons as well.



Ievgen Malik [1:24:24]

A lot of civilians. And, uh, you know what? That, uh, not just civilians. Uh, the, the same as civilians, they took, uh, they kidnapped, uh, a lot of kids from Mariupol-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:24:36]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:24:36]

... Kherson, Melitopol, Berdyansk. And, uh, no one knows-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:24:42]

Right



Ievgen Malik [1:24:42]

... what is going on with them. The civilians, I can tell you, the same as the military, uh, prisoners.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:24:49]

Mm.



Ievgen Malik [1:24:50]

They are in these prisons, and they are beaten up every day. The same as, uh, uh, the same as me-



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:24:56]

Mm



Ievgen Malik [1:24:56]

... and the other guys. So what is going on with the kids? Who knows? Who can tell us?



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:25:02]

Okay. Well.



Ievgen Malik [1:25:04]

Thank you very much.



Samuel P.N. Cook [1:25:04]

Thank you. Hi, it's Sam Cooke, the founder and co-host of the Ukraine Military History Podcast, and thank you for listening to another episode of our podcast, sharing the stories of Ukraine's heroes for the world. To make sure that we're able to fight and win this war and the future wars, uh, against Russia [laughs] and those, uh, who are, uh, fighting against freedom. So for all of you who are listening to this podcast, if you're watching it online on YouTube, please know that you can also subscribe to our podcast on podcast apps so that you can be notified of future episodes as they're released, uh, right there on your phone. For those of you who are listening to this on your podcast app, please know that you can also watch a full HD video version of this podcast with our guest and see the moments that you missed, uh, see the body language, understand the emotions a- as you, uh, consume this content. 'Cause we understand that for those of you who really wanna understand what's happening, the best, uh, way to, to do that is to watch the videos as people share their stories from this war and, and tap into the raw emotions that you heard as you're listening to this podcast. For those of you who'd like to get more, to learn more about the Ukraine Military History Institute, uh, please go to our website, www.ukrainemilitaryhistory.org, where you can see all of our episodes. You can download show notes to our episode. Anything that we mention in this episode or any other episode, we're gonna link to it in those show notes. There's summaries of the podcast. There's complete PDF transcripts of every podcast that you can download. You can share these pages with your friends so that they can, uh, also, uh, see all of the great resources on the website. We're also publishing papers and military history publications, translations, things that we mention in the podcast, uh, you will be able to download on the website. Thanks again for listening to the Ukraine Military History Podcast. This is a production of the Ukraine Military History Institute by the Borderlands Foundation, where we're making sure that Ukraine's heroes are never forgotten. You can also go to our foundation website, borderlands-foundation.org, where you can learn all about the Ukraine Military History, uh, Institute, the Ukraine Center for Traumatic Stress, which helps veterans recover from the psychological impact of war, and then finally, the Ukraine Freedom Summit, which is an annual event that we host to help Ukraine's veterans, Ukraine's heroes share their stories with the world and let them, uh, connect with people around the world who are supporting Ukraine. Thanks again for listening, and we'll see you on the next episode. Finally, if you'd like to support our podcast, please share this with your friends on social media. Please subscribe to us on all your, all of your social media platforms. Comment on the episodes that you love, and also leave us a review on podcast episodes so that other people can find our show. Thanks again for listening to and supporting the Ukraine Military History Podcast, where we make sure that Ukraine's heroes are never forgotten. So thank you for listening to this episode of the Ukraine Military History Podcast. I promised you at the beginning that I'd tell you

Samuel P.N. Cook (continued)

more about our sponsors. If you'd like to find a way to support the Ukraine Military History Podcast, the Borderlands Foundation more broadly, or if you'd like to work with myself and the contributors, the editors, and the guests, uh, that come on this show. So this podcast is produced by the Borderlands Foundation. The Borderlands Foundation has two main initiatives. Our mission at the Borderlands Foundation, uh, it was founded right after the war started in 2022, is to make sure that Ukraine's heroes are never forgotten. And there's two things that I'm passionate about helping Ukraine do. Number one is build a strong future for Ukraine, for my family that I'm raising here in Ukraine, uh, through national, uh, military history study and education. I believe that nations, great nations, are founded and sustained and grow in strength based on the stories that those nations believe together about their history. And Ukraine has had a very complicated history. Uh, it's a very old country. A lot of people don't understand that Ukraine's 500 years older than actually Russia, a- as, uh, Ukraine was around before Russia. Ukraine, uh, was founded by Vikings that moved to this part of the world in the, uh, eighth and ninth century and were traders and, and became, uh, you know, rulers of the local Slavic people. So Ukraine, Kyivan Rus, was w- was an ancient and the most powerful empire in Europe. And Ukraine's history is very controversial. Through the years, Russia has appropriated it, stolen it, called it their own, and then tried to change history to make it their own, this great, rich heritage that Ukraine has. So our mission at the Ukraine Military History Institute is go back through history and reclaim Ukraine's great military history tradition because Ukraine's military history tradition, uh, encompasses, uh, almost all the great military traditions in the world. It started out interfacing and competing with the Vikings as well as Constantinople, absorbed those traditions over the years. It became part of the military history tradition, the great Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and then the Ottoman-Mongol kind of Crimean Tatar, uh, heritage of Genghis Khan's great military tradition. All fused, competed, and created this unique military history tradition inside Ukraine, which I call the Cossack military history tradition, which takes from Western military history, the German, uh, , uh, American Mission Command, NATO Mission Command School, uh, as well as, uh, the good things, hopefully, and leaves the bad from the school, deep battle, and a lot of the positive things that have come out of the military history tradition. And our mission is to help with the world's best military history center studying the current war, going all the way back into history throughout Ukraine's history, uh, starting with battles from World War II that were fought in Ukraine, uh, you know, World War I, the, the , the first independence period from 1917 through the Civil War in 1921, back to the, the Cossack period, uh, all the way back- Uh, Ukraine has a great and unique style of fighting and tradition, uh, of fighting. The first written constitution was written by Cossack class. The warrior class wrote down the first declaration of rights in history, in modern history, which founded the Enlightenment, led to the American, uh, Declaration of Bill of Rights, the Polish Constitution, and a number of other declarations of rights and constitution since then, were all inspired first by Ukraine's declaration of, of the rights, uh, with Petro Doroshenko after the defeat at Poltava, uh, at the hands of Peter the Great. So understanding Ukraine's military history tradition is a passion of ours. And every author who comes on this, uh, episode, who publishes, uh, a written work, we're actually paying those authors. So if you wanna donate to support the authors, you can donate, uh, to get access to anything that's been published in the Ukraine Military History membership site, which we're gonna be releasing soon, where people who write about the current war or things from the past, uh, in military history, um, or, or some military historical case study that can help Ukraine think about how to fight and win and innovate in the current war, all those authors are getting paid by the center. I wanna encourage great, uh, scholarship by, by paying Ukrainians to write their own history and other people who wanna contribute to pay them to, uh, build this body of work and knowledge, uh, at the Ukraine Military History Institute. So when you donate to support this podcast, we have production costs. It helps us pay the author that we come on and interview about what they've written or what they've done. Uh, and then also just pays for all the c- uh, production costs, the social media, the distribution, and everything that you enjoy about this podcast. So that's the

Samuel P.N. Cook (continued)

first way you can support the center. The second big way you can support the center is we have a, and, and are building a Heroes of Ukraine tour, uh, which is gonna be a, a custom program that we're developing, uh, which takes people who wanna come in and see the battlefields of Ukraine from the current war that have been liberated. We can take you to different battlefield sites. Uh, the Battle of Kyiv, uh, which we've studied very well and have a lot of material who people who've studied that and can show that to you. Or if you wanna go out to other sites, uh, battles that have i- in territory that's been liberated in Kherson or, or Zaporizhzhia, uh, or other places, uh, uh, out in Sumy or, or, uh, Kharkiv Province, uh, we can take you around to those sites. This is something we're developing. We wanna launch this if and when, uh, the, the full-scale fighting, uh, with Russia pauses. We, we believe this could be a, a much bigger tour that people can come and come on a, a tour just buying individual seats and over a couple of weeks meet people from all over the world who wanna see Ukraine. But before we do that public version of the tour where anyone can book any number of seats at scheduled times, if any of you would like to have a tour of the battlefields of Ukraine that have already been liberated and are safe, uh, we don't do war tourism to active parts of the fighting, but we do do tours, historical staff ride battlefield tours for military professionals, government officials and/or business leaders that would like to understand what has happened here. You can contact us about the Heroes of Ukraine tour. So that's the Ukraine Military History Institute, which pays for and produces this podcast. The next sponsor I'd like to discuss is the Ukraine Center for Traumatic Stress. This is a center that is near and dear to my heart because of my past service in, in combat. As a soldier, my study of history and the history of psychological, uh, trauma that comes from serving in combat, personal experience of my own, overcoming my own struggles with it, uh, is, is a center dedicated to helping advance the research conversation and, uh, funding of breakthrough, uh, technologies and treatments for, uh, post-traumatic stress disorder, uh, which af- affects a number of soldiers who've served in Ukraine. Uh, and, and we wanna make sure that they recover psychologically to become productive, vibrant leaders in the, in the future of Ukraine. This is headed by Major General Vladyslav Klykhov, retired, the former commander, the first commander of the Moral Psychological Support Forces of Ukraine under the Commander-in-Chief President Volodymyr Zelensky. It was a new position that he created right before the full-scale invasion. And General Klykhov has written his PhD on, uh, military psychology of, of a, of a soldier and is passionate about, um, advancing the, the, the study and the treatment of, of this disorder for veterans. This is a podcast that we're gonna be releasing very soon in, translated into for those who are not that wanna listen in on the conversation and comment on it, uh, on our social media. Uh, but the interviews will be conducted in to advance and start the conversation for veterans, mental health professionals, and government officials who are working on this problem, which we believe, uh, is, is critical, uh, to, to solve, uh, for the future of Ukraine. So if you'd like to donate to support that podcast to help us produce and start that conversation, or if you'd like to inquire about donating to supporting specific veterans going through, uh, different treatments, workshops, uh, for, uh, treatment of PTSD, uh, you're welcome to reach out to us. The center also has a rehabilitation through golf program where we pay for veterans to play golf and go play in our annual, uh, Heroes of Ukraine Freedom Summit golf tournament, uh, which will be held next year in Dallas in the United States in March. And this is a very, uh, important program that you can also take a look at sponsoring veterans in their journey to mental health recovery. So that's the Ukraine Center for Traumatic Stress. And then finally, uh, for those of you who watch this podcast, they, that you see our co-hosts, some of the guests that come on there, um, all of our podcasts are filmed in Ukraine. The reason we do this is I, I believe in talking to Ukrainians, uh, and people who will actually come to Ukraine that wanna speak about military history, analysis of the current war, uh, defense industry issues, um, all the things that we need to learn in, uh, Ukraine and our allies in NATO who've supported Ukraine, uh, to fight and win the next war against our adversaries, Russia, China, Iran. All of the people that support, uh, Vladimir Putin, um, are learning from this war. The lessons that Russia's learning, we need to make sure that we learn the, the war, the lessons from

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the war that Ukrainians are learning better and implement those across the force for our partner forces, Americans, British, all the other European NATO forces, uh, partners out east, uh, Japan, South Korea, Australia. All the co- all the countries that are supporting Ukraine, we wanna make sure that we create a community that, that disseminates those lessons. And we get contacted by different groups, sometimes governments, foreign militaries that would like advisory services to help them learn and implement the lessons of this war for their armed forces. Defense companies would reach out and would like to get help developing, testing their product, selling their product inside Ukraine, uh, that, that may be helpful on the battlefield. Uh, that's what the Borderlands Group does. We advise defense tech companies. We even do forward support engineering for defense tech companies, software development, hardware, uh, you know, hiring and staffing a forward deployed engineering shop for Western defense companies. Uh, so all those services, if you're looking for advisory services, custom, uh, analytical studies by Rob Lee and his team, uh, defense advisory services, uh, for defense companies or foreign militaries, we can put together a package for you, give you a proposal, and, and help you, uh, with that. So to get in touch with us, just go to the website for theborderlandsgroup.com. Uh, fill out our Contact Us form. Uh, we'll evaluate your request and get back to you in the appropriate secure communication channel if that's what you'd like to do. So thank you for watching [laughs] the sponsor reads here. Uh, it's important, uh, to, to me that we provide value to you in every podcast episode, and these are the ways that you can support us so we can con- continue to afford to produce and expand and increase the frequency of our content production for the benefit of Ukraine and its allies fighting this war, winning this war, and the next.