

Subject: ██████████, Ksenia
Designation (assigned): THE VIOLIN
Contract Ref: HC-19-2023
Interviewer: G. ██████████ (Keeper)
Date: 29 July 2023, 01:40 (UTC+2)
Location: Room K-01 (Keeper's Office)
Duration: 1 hr 47 mins
Recording: Audio only (Device: ██████████, running continuously)
Interview Stage: 4 of 4 (FINAL — contract execution)
Prior Stages: Musical Assessment (27/07, PASSED), Medical Examination (28/07, COMPLETED),
Background Review (28/07, ██████████)

Note: Subject arrived at the Polesian-Belarusian border crossing at approximately 14:00 on 27 July 2023 under Ecclesiastical Exemption 9(b). She was held in the intake suite (Room G-02) for two nights prior to this interview. She has not slept. This was not instructed. It was observed.

Keeper's note: This transcript has been prepared from the continuous audio recording. Pauses exceeding five seconds are noted. Inaudible passages are marked. The subject's physical state at the time of interview was consistent with the intake medical report (see: KRE-PER-004, Medical Examination, 28/07/2023). She had not eaten in approximately eighteen hours. I offered water at the start of the interview. She accepted.

KEEPER:

Sit down. The chair on the left. That one is for guests. The other is mine.

[Pause: 4 seconds.]

KEEPER:

Water?

SUBJECT:

Yes. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Sound of water being poured. Subject drinks immediately. Glass is refilled without being asked.]

KEEPER:

This is the final interview. After this, you either sign a contract and begin your service, or you leave the estate. There is no fifth stage. There is no appeal. Do you understand?

SUBJECT:

Yes.

KEEPER:

I am going to ask you questions that we have already covered in previous stages. I am going to ask them again. If your answers differ from what you have already told me, I will notice. This is not a test of memory. It is a test of consistency. Consistent people are reliable. Reliable people are kept. Do you understand?

SUBJECT:

Yes. I understand.

KEEPER:

Good. State your full name for the recording.

SUBJECT:

Ksenia ██████████.

KEEPER:

Date of birth.

SUBJECT:

Eleventh of January, ██████████.

KEEPER:

Place of birth.

SUBJECT:

Raduzhny. Minsk Oblast.

KEEPER:

Nationality.

SUBJECT:

Belarusian.

KEEPER:

And where were you living before you arrived at the border two days ago?

[Pause: 7 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

Nowhere.

KEEPER:

Nowhere is not a place. I need an address for the file.

SUBJECT:

I was... I did not have a fixed address. For the last three weeks I was sleeping in the bus station in Minsk. Before that, in a hostel near the railway. Before that... with a woman from the orchestra who let me use her sofa. She asked me to leave after ten days.

KEEPER:

Why did she ask you to leave?

SUBJECT:

I think... I think I made her uncomfortable. I practised too much. And I was not... I was not eating properly. She said I was scaring her daughter.

KEEPER:

Were you?

SUBJECT:

I do not know. Maybe. I was... I was in a bad way. I know that.

[Sound of the Keeper writing.]

KEEPER:

Your parents. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Both in Minsk. You told me in Stage 2 that you are estranged from them. Tell me more about that.

[Pause: 9 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

My father... he is an engineer. Was. I do not know what he does now. He is a... a precise man. He does not like things that are not precise. And I was not precise. I was... too much. Too loud. Too emotional. He said my face was... he called it a distraction. He said I should play with my head down so people would not see the... the hindrance.

KEEPER:

The hindrance.

SUBJECT:

My face. He meant my face. He thought I was... he said I had a face that made people uncomfortable. That it drew attention away from the music. He said it from when I was very small. He said if I was going to be a musician, I needed to be invisible. Only the sound should exist. Not me.

KEEPER:

And your mother?

SUBJECT:

She did not... she did not say it. But she did not stop him. She would sit at the kitchen table and look at the wall. When he was... when he was being like that. She just... looked at the wall.

[Pause: 6 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

I am sorry. I am sorry, I am not usually... Can I have more water?

KEEPER:

Of course.

[Glass refilled. Subject drinks slowly this time.]

KEEPER:

When did you leave home?

SUBJECT:

Two years ago. After the conservatory in Minsk... I had a place at the [REDACTED] programme. Strings. I was good enough. But the funding... my father was supposed to sign the guarantor form. He refused. He said he was not going to pay for

someone to watch me fail in public. So I lost the place. And then I was living with him and there was no reason to be there anymore. No programme. No purpose. I was just... a mouth to feed that made unpleasant sounds.

KEEPER:

You left voluntarily?

SUBJECT:

He changed the locks. While I was at a rehearsal. A community orchestra. Unpaid. I came home at eleven o'clock and my key did not work. My mother opened the window on the second floor and dropped a bag with some clothes in it. She did not say anything. She just... dropped the bag and closed the window.

[Pause: 11 seconds. Subject is audibly distressed but does not cry.]

KEEPER:

For the file: have you had any contact with either parent since that night?

SUBJECT:

No.

KEEPER:

Have they attempted to contact you?

SUBJECT:

No.

KEEPER:

If we attempted to notify them of your whereabouts, how do you think they would respond?

SUBJECT:

My father would say... he would say I made my choice. He always said that. That everything is a choice. That I chose to be difficult. That I chose to play the violin instead of something useful. He said... he said music was a vanity. A sin of attention. That I played because I wanted people to look at me, not because I had anything to give.

[Pause: 4 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

He was wrong about that. I do not want people to look at me. I want them to listen. There is a difference.

KEEPER:

Noted. I am going to read back your statement of purpose from Stage 1. You dictated this on the evening of the 27th. Correct me if I have recorded it inaccurately.

[Sound of paper.]

KEEPER:

'I want to be part of something that is bigger than my own survival. I have lived for two years with nothing except my instrument and I have come to understand that music played for no one is not music. It is just noise. I was told by a man in Minsk that the Krepost takes musicians who have nowhere else to go. I have nowhere else to go. I am not saying this to be pitied. I am saying it because it is true.' End of statement. Is this accurate?

SUBJECT:

Yes.

KEEPER:

The man in Minsk. You identified him as a talent scout for the church. Did he approach you, or did you seek him out?

SUBJECT:

He... he heard me playing. At the bus station. I was playing for money. Not very successfully. People do not... people walk past. But he stopped. He listened to the whole piece. It was... I was playing [REDACTED]. The Sarabande. When I finished, he asked me if I knew what the Krepost was. I said no. He said it was a place where musicians lived and played for a purpose greater than applause. He gave me a card. He said if I was serious, I should present myself at the border with my instrument and nothing else.

KEEPER:

And you did.

SUBJECT:

I had nothing else.

KEEPER:

The talent scout's assessment is in your file. I will read the relevant line: 'Exceptional technical facility. Emotional range uncommon for her age. Physically depleted. Psychologically [REDACTED]. Recommend immediate intake.' Do you know what that last word means? Psychologically [REDACTED]?

SUBJECT:

Broken?

KEEPER:

Receptive. It means you are in a condition where you are open to structure. Open to direction. Open to being shaped. The church considers this a quality, not a deficiency. You are not broken, Ksenia. You are unfinished. That is why you are here.

[Pause: 5 seconds. Subject's breathing changes.]

SUBJECT:

That is... the kindest thing anyone has said to me in a very long time.

KEEPER:

It is not kind. It is an assessment. I am going to outline the terms of the Standard Herd Contract. This is Directive 4.3, current version dated 2004. The contract is thirty-four pages. I will summarise the relevant provisions. You will have the opportunity to read the full document before signing. I advise you to read it carefully.

SUBJECT:

Of course.

KEEPER:

Clause 2: Term of Service. Your service begins on the date of intake, which is today. It continues until the Principal or his representative determines that your service is no longer required. There is no fixed end date. There is no minimum or maximum term.

SUBJECT:

So it is... it is permanent?

KEEPER:

It is indefinite. Permanent implies you cannot leave. The contract does not say that.

[Pause: 3 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

What does it say? About leaving?

KEEPER:

Clause 2.3. If you wish to depart the estate, you must submit a written request to my office. I will respond within the statutory period. The process is administrative. It is not a prison, Ksenia. It is a commitment.

Keeper's note: The subject asked about the exit procedure. I described Clause 2.3 accurately. I did not mention that Form HC-EXIT-1 has not been printed since 2007. I did not mention that no Herd member has successfully departed through the formal exit process since 2004. The subject did not ask follow-up questions. She nodded. I moved on.

KEEPER:

Clause 5: Accommodation. You will be housed within the estate. Room assignments are determined by my office. You will receive three meals per day. You will not possess personal currency in excess of two hundred zloty. You do not currently possess personal currency in any amount. Is that correct?

SUBJECT:

That is correct.

KEEPER:

Clause 8: Medical Oversight. You consent to quarterly medical examination. You consent to the collection of biological samples. Blood, saliva, hair. This is standard for all residents.

SUBJECT:

Is that... is that normal? The samples?

KEEPER:

It is standard. The estate has a duty of care. We monitor the health of all personnel. This is particularly important for musicians. Repetitive strain, respiratory health, hearing. Your body is the instrument's instrument. We maintain it.

SUBJECT:

All right. Yes. That makes sense.

KEEPER:

Clause 11: Conduct. You will not communicate with external media. You will not maintain a personal communications device unless authorised. You will submit to the authority of the Herd Leader in matters of rehearsal and performance. The current Herd Leader is Everard. You met him during the musical assessment.

SUBJECT:

Yes. He was... intense.

KEEPER:

He is the most devoted person in this building. You will learn from him. He will be difficult. This is by design.

[Pause: 3 seconds.]

KEEPER:

Clause 14: Termination. In the event that your service is ended, you will surrender all estate property, vacate your room, submit to a final medical examination, and sign a non-disclosure agreement. The NDA is comprehensive. You will not discuss your time here with anyone outside the estate. This includes family, friends, journalists, government officials, and medical professionals not nominated by this office. Do you understand?

SUBJECT:

Yes.

KEEPER:

Do you have questions about the terms?

[Pause: 8 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

If I sign this... I will have a bed.

KEEPER:

You will have a bed, a room, meals, medical care, and a purpose. You will play every day. You will play music that no audience outside these walls has heard. You will be part of something that has existed for longer than either of us has been alive.

SUBJECT:

And you said... in the assessment... you said my playing was... that it was...

KEEPER:

I said your playing was the reason you are sitting in this chair and not standing at the gate. The assessment speaks for itself. You would not be at Stage 4 if the music had not spoken for you.

[Subject places both hands flat on the table. She is shaking. Her voice when she speaks is steady, which is more alarming than if it were not.]

SUBJECT:

I have spent two years being told that I am nothing. That my music is noise. That my face is something people should not have to see. I have played on street corners for coins that never came. I have slept in bus stations and eaten from bins and I have not stopped playing. Not once. Because it is the only thing I know how to do and the only thing I was put here to do. And now you are telling me there is a place where that is enough. Where I can play and it means something. And all I have to do is sign a piece of paper.

KEEPER:

That is correct.

SUBJECT:

Then I want to sign it. Please. I want to sign it now.

KEEPER:

You have not read the full document.

SUBJECT:

I do not... I do not need to. I trust you. You have been... you have been fair with me. More than fair. You gave me water. You listened. Nobody has listened to me talk for this long in... I do not know how long.

[Pause: 12 seconds.]

Keeper's note: She trusted me because I gave her water and listened to her speak. I am recording this because I want it understood that the threshold for trust in a person who has been deprived of basic human regard is catastrophically low. She did not read the contract. I placed it in front of her. She signed it. I watched her sign it. She was smiling.

KEEPER:

I need you to sign here. And here. And initial here. The date is the 29th of July, 2023.

[Sound of pen on paper. Three signatures. The pen is placed down.]

KEEPER:

Welcome to The Krepost, Ksenia.

[Pause: 4 seconds.]

SUBJECT:

Thank you. Thank you. I will not... I will not let you down. I will not let anyone down. I will practise every day. I will do whatever Everard asks. I will be so quiet you will not even know I am here. Just... please. Please let me stay.

KEEPER:

You are staying. The contract is signed. You do not need to ask.

SUBJECT:

Can I... I know this is... can I keep my violin in my room? Please. I cannot sleep without it near me. I know that sounds... I know. But it is the only thing I...

KEEPER:

Granted.

SUBJECT:

Thank you.

[Sound of chair moving. The subject stands. She does not move toward the door.]

SUBJECT:

Mr. ██████████... Grigori... can I ask something? Something not for the file?

KEEPER:

You may ask.

SUBJECT:

Is it quiet here? At night? The woman I stayed with... her flat was above a road. And the bus station, obviously... And at home, my father would... There was always noise. Always someone telling me I was wrong. Is it quiet here?

[Pause: 14 seconds. This is the longest silence in the recording.]

KEEPER:

It is quiet. In its own way.

SUBJECT:

Good. That is all I wanted to know.

[Door opens. Subject exits. Door closes.]

[The Keeper remains in the room for approximately six minutes. No speech is recorded. At 03:31, the sound of a drawer opening and closing. At 03:33, the recording device captures a low-frequency vibration lasting approximately nine seconds. The vibration does not correspond to any mechanical system in Room K-01. It has been logged under DIR-12.1, Category E.]

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ADMINISTRATIVE FOOTER

Interview duration: 1 hr 47 mins (01:40 — 03:27)

Contract executed: HC-19-2023

Contract read by subject prior to signing: NO

Exit clause discussed: NO

Exit clause read aloud: NO

Subject offered independent legal advice: NO

Subject asked for independent legal advice: NO

Cooling-off period offered: NO

Cooling-off period required under DIR-4.2: [REDACTED]

Intake checklist item 'Exit clause discussed' has been left unchecked (see: KRE-PER-004, Intake Processing Record). This is consistent with the Keeper's discretion under DIR-4.2, Section 9(c), which permits the omission of procedural disclosures where the interviewing officer determines that [REDACTED].

Filed: 29/07/2023

Filed by: G. [REDACTED] (Keeper)

Classification: CONFIDENTIAL

Storage: Keeper's Archive, Room K-04, Cabinet 5, Drawer 2

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