

FROM EMMY & PEABODY AWARD-WINNING  
DIRECTOR THADDEUS D. MATULA

# SIRKO

THE FRONT ARRIVES AT NIGHT



60 MILES FROM THE KILL ZONE  
ONE HOSPITAL AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

DOUBLELIFE  
FILMS

***“The US Government might not have sent us Tomahawks . . . but America sent us you.”***

***Timeline: Oct 2025 → Sundance Premiere Feb 2027***

**24-hours by train.**

**One hospital at the edge of the world.**

**This is the story of the choice of radical service.  
And those who have no choice but to survive.**

**Two renowned brain surgeons use vacation time to volunteer.  
And one they visit who, with his team of resolute men and  
women, must stay.**

**SOME CHOOSE TO SERVE  
OTHERS HAVE NO CHOICE**

# THE SURGEONS

**DR. ANDRII SIRKO** – 28 years at Mechnikov, 20 as Director of Neurosurgery. 2,800 brain surgeries since the invasion. Named Legend of Ukraine by Zelensky, 2024. “Where would I go? My patients can't leave.”

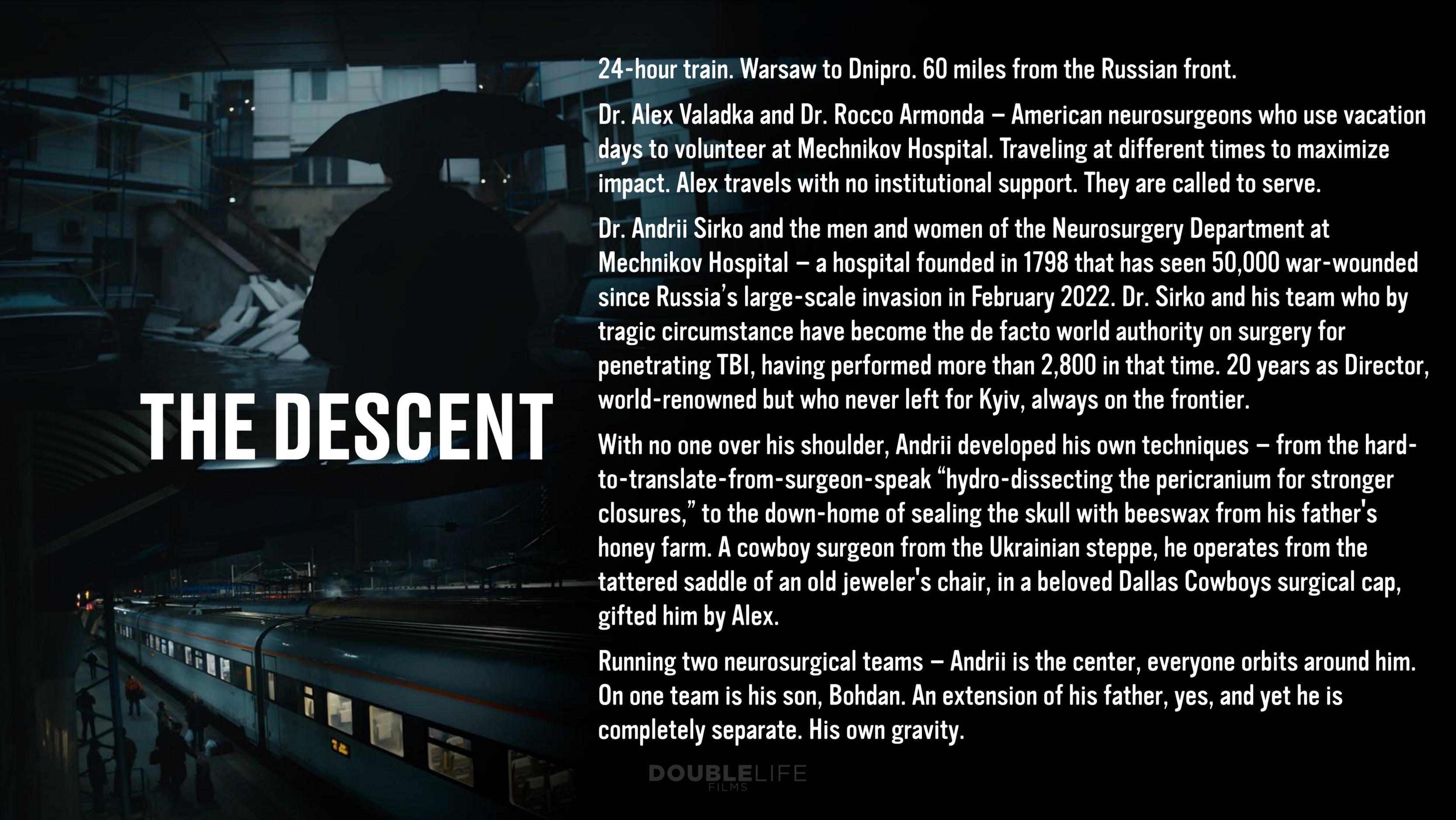
**DR. ALEX VALADKA** – Former President, American Association of Neurological Surgeons. Chief of Neurosurgery, Level 1 Trauma Center, Dallas. Uses vacation time. No pay, no support. Just service.

**DR. ROCCO ARMONDA** – 31-year Army veteran. Director of Neuroendovascular & Neurotrauma, MedStar Washington. Former Director of Neuroendovascular, Walter Reed. Returns every February.

**DR. BOHDAN SIRKO** – Age 28. Andrii's son. Finished operating after a rocket strike on the hospital knocked him down mid-surgery. “When I opened my eyes, I was thinking, ‘OK, maybe I'm dead.’”

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**MECHNIKOV HOSPITAL** – Operating since 1798. Treated soldiers from Crimean War to today. 50,000 war-wounded since 2022.



# THE DESCENT

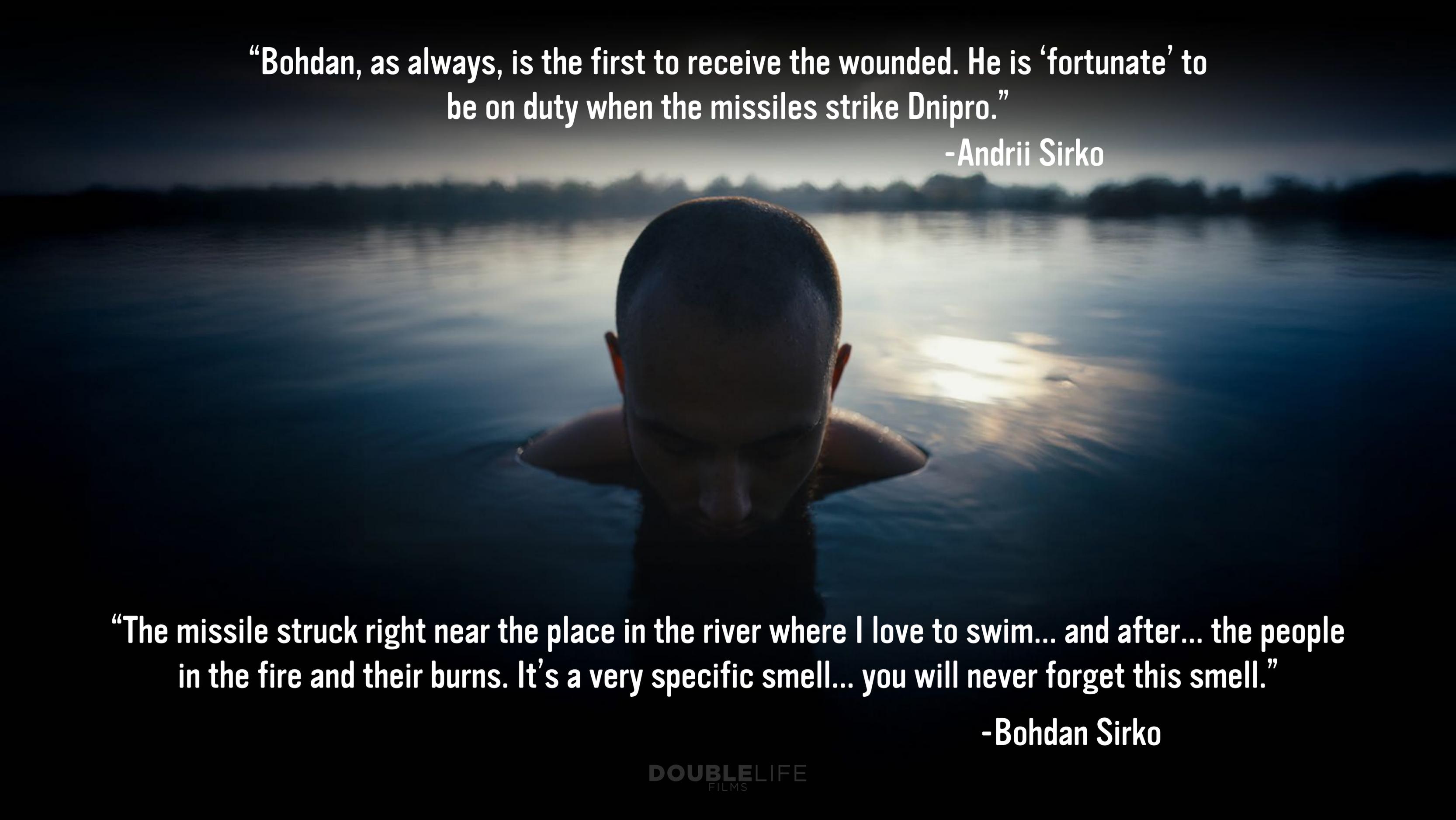
24-hour train. Warsaw to Dnipro. 60 miles from the Russian front.

Dr. Alex Valadka and Dr. Rocco Armonda – American neurosurgeons who use vacation days to volunteer at Mechnikov Hospital. Traveling at different times to maximize impact. Alex travels with no institutional support. They are called to serve.

Dr. Andrii Sirko and the men and women of the Neurosurgery Department at Mechnikov Hospital – a hospital founded in 1798 that has seen 50,000 war-wounded since Russia's large-scale invasion in February 2022. Dr. Sirko and his team who by tragic circumstance have become the de facto world authority on surgery for penetrating TBI, having performed more than 2,800 in that time. 20 years as Director, world-renowned but who never left for Kyiv, always on the frontier.

With no one over his shoulder, Andrii developed his own techniques – from the hard-to-translate-from-surgeon-speak “hydro-dissecting the pericranium for stronger closures,” to the down-home of sealing the skull with beeswax from his father's honey farm. A cowboy surgeon from the Ukrainian steppe, he operates from the tattered saddle of an old jeweler's chair, in a beloved Dallas Cowboys surgical cap, gifted him by Alex.

Running two neurosurgical teams – Andrii is the center, everyone orbits around him. On one team is his son, Bohdan. An extension of his father, yes, and yet he is completely separate. His own gravity.

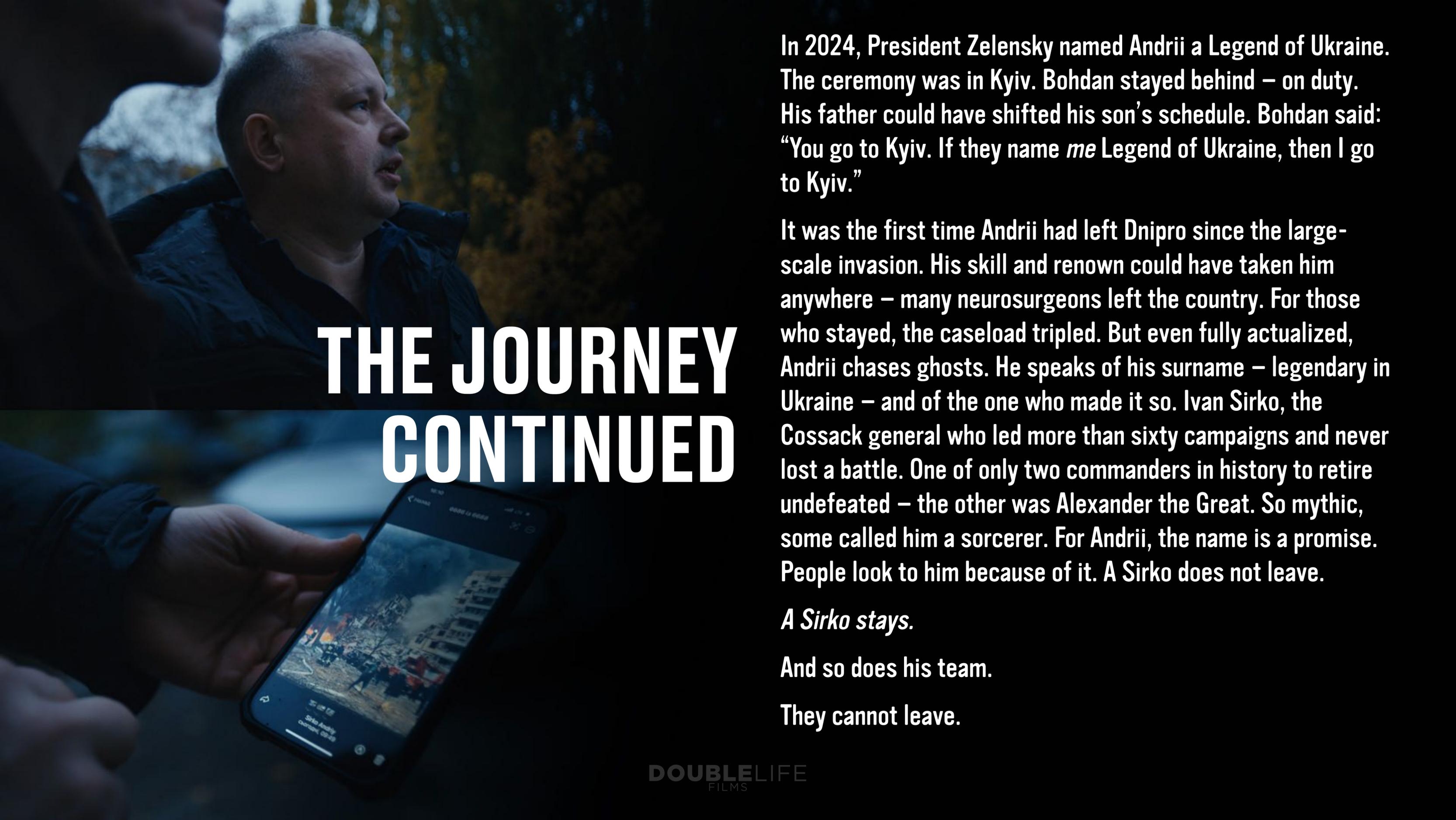
A person is swimming in a river, their head and shoulders above water. The sun is setting in the background, creating a golden glow on the water's surface. The person's face is partially obscured by their hands, which are raised near their ears.

**“Bohdan, as always, is the first to receive the wounded. He is ‘fortunate’ to be on duty when the missiles strike Dnipro.”**

**-Andrii Sirko**

**“The missile struck right near the place in the river where I love to swim... and after... the people in the fire and their burns. It’s a very specific smell... you will never forget this smell.”**

**-Bohdan Sirko**



# THE JOURNEY CONTINUED

In 2024, President Zelensky named Andrii a Legend of Ukraine. The ceremony was in Kyiv. Bohdan stayed behind – on duty. His father could have shifted his son’s schedule. Bohdan said: “You go to Kyiv. If they name *me* Legend of Ukraine, then I go to Kyiv.”

It was the first time Andrii had left Dnipro since the large-scale invasion. His skill and renown could have taken him anywhere – many neurosurgeons left the country. For those who stayed, the caseload tripled. But even fully actualized, Andrii chases ghosts. He speaks of his surname – legendary in Ukraine – and of the one who made it so. Ivan Sirko, the Cossack general who led more than sixty campaigns and never lost a battle. One of only two commanders in history to retire undefeated – the other was Alexander the Great. So mythic, some called him a sorcerer. For Andrii, the name is a promise. People look to him because of it. A Sirko does not leave.

*A Sirko stays.*

And so does his team.

They cannot leave.

## **DNIPRO**

Life goes on. Weddings, children, dance recitals. An unconquerable spirit. But also: daily air raid sirens, nightly explosions, rolling blackouts. The signs of war can be ignored – until they can't.

## **THE TEAM**

Tetiana Sirko – Wife to Andrii, mother to Bohdan and his teenage younger brother Sviatoslav. A doctor herself who gave up her practice to hold the family together while her husband and eldest son disappear into the OR, surgery after surgery.

The Young Surgeons – Men and women in their 20s who don't see their work as heroic. In Ukraine, heroism belongs to the soldiers on the front. But for these doctors, the front comes to them. Every morning, their operating rooms are full. There is no escape. Only more wounded.

# **THE LIVES BETWEEN**

# THE REALITY

A man with a beard, wearing a black beanie and a brown quilted jacket, stands in profile on the right side of the frame. He is looking towards the left. The background is a vast field of Ukrainian tricolor flags (blue and yellow) flying on tall poles. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

Constant patrols of Russian drones mean war-wounded cannot be transported during the day. They arrive overnight. Every morning, the doctors find their operating rooms full. Outside, Dnipro lives almost normally – restaurants open, people carrying on, falling in love. Inside Mechnikov, the front line is delivered every single night.

Rocco – former battlefield surgeon in Iraq – says Mechnikov sees more trauma in two days than the worst month in Iraq. For everyone in those operating rooms, each week stretches like an eternity. But for the visiting Americans, suddenly it's over – their service complete, their train waiting.

The Americans board the train back to Poland and breathe relief. For the team, it is just another Tuesday with more wounded in their OR. The morning sun is never the light at the end of the tunnel – it is always the oncoming train.



# THE PRODUCTION

DOUBLELIFE  
FILMS



# SCHEDULE

## STATUS: IN PRODUCTION

- 10-day principal photography completed (October 2025)
- 15-day immersion with Rocco's rotation
  - 10 February - 04 March 2026
- 10-day Alex 2nd rotation (third act closure)
  - 26 March - 08 April 2026
- Sizzle edit in progress
- Assembly edit begins February 2026 (parallel to shoot)
- September 2026: Sundance Deadline
- February 2027: Sundance Premiere (Proposed)

# STATUS & STYLE



## STYLE & FORMAT:

Character-driven cinematic documentary. Warzone human-interest storytelling. Observational access with voice memo confessionals. — Intimacy through presence.

PROJECTED LENGTH: ~98 minutes (feature documentary)

# BIOS

## THADDEUS D. MATULA



Emmy & Peabody winner. Director of 2x ESPN 30 for 30s including PONY EXCESS (most-watched doc premiere in ESPN history, named to Texas Monthly's 10 Best Docs About Texas). Conservation documentaries for the BBC. INTO THE SPOTLIGHT, following adults with intellectual disabilities producing an original musical. Most recently completed REVOLUTION'S DAUGHTER on Fidel Castro's exiled daughter.

## LOGAN FULTON



Emmy-winning cinematographer, LA-based. Won 2023 Emmy for MEDDLING (doc exposing Russian interference in elite sports). Emmy winner for short subject feature shot in Romania. Seven-year collaboration with Thaddeus spanning NFL's INDIVISIBLE through the upcoming REVOLUTION'S DAUGHTER.



# THE BUSINESS

COMPARABLES

**20 DAYS IN MARIUPOL** (2023) — Oscar Winner 2024, PBS/Netflix distribution  
**THE CAVE** (2019) — Oscar nominee, National Geographic/Disney+, WW BO ~\$289K  
**FOR SAMA** (2019) — Oscar nominee, BAFTA winner, WW BO ~\$1.4M  
Reference: **THE ENGLISH SURGEON** (2007) — UK neurosurgeon in Ukraine (pre-war)

STRUCTURE

**Production SPV | Standard Documentary Waterfall**

**Distribution costs → Investor principal →**

**% preferred return\* → 50/50 net profits\*\***

*\*Preferred return based on level of commitment // full budget, preferred return = 20%, partial budget, preferred return = 10%*

*\*\*Investor share allocated pro rata*

## WHY NOW

Putin is emboldened. The war is escalating. Dr. Rocco Armonda returns every February for Andrii's birthday – February 19th – and we'll be on the ground for it and the invasion anniversary on February 24th. Access secured. Dnipro continually has been without water and power. The surgeries continue. Mechnikov finds a way.

# THE TEAM

## PRODUCERS

**TERRI PIÑON** – Producer / Line Producer. Medianoche Productions. 16 years producing and financing scripted and docs. *Kim Novak's Vertigo* (Venice '25), *My Dead Friend Zoe* (SXSW '24), *You Can Call Me Bill* (SXSW '24),

**KING HOLLIS** – Producer / EP. South Road Pictures. 30+ years as creative executive, director, and producer. Productions on ABC, FOX, CW, PBS, and Netflix. Relationships at Platinum Dunes, Blumhouse, and Skydance

**LAURA KULIK** – Unit Producer / Assistant Camera / DIT. Emmy winner (alongside Logan Fulton) for short subject biography shot on location in Romania

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

**MARK ROBERTS** – Executive Producer / Commercial real estate executive; Professor, Cox School of Business, SMU. Lead Investment Strategist

**THEODORE D. MATULA** – Executive Producer / Business Strategy. Chief Executive, Cinematula Studios. 30-year transactional attorney and former CG & CLO in renewable energy

## ADVISORS

**LARRY WAKS** – Entertainment Attorney. Sterlington LLC. 40+ years representing A-list talent including billion-dollar exits for celebrity clients (Casamigos, Aviation Gin). Strategic advisor

**DR. ALEX VALADKA** – Featured Subject / Medical Advisor / Executive Producer. Chief of Neurosurgery, Level 1 Trauma Center, Dallas / Former President, AANS

**DR. ROCCO ARMONDA** – Featured Subject / Medical Advisor. Director of Neuroendovascular & Neurotrauma, MedStar Washington. Former Director of Neuroendovascular, Walter Reed. 31-year Army veteran

## A note on the title: **SIRKO**

The title is not one man's name. It is a standard. A weight.

Everyone in this film, whether they carry the name Sirko or not, is measuring themselves against it. Andrii against Ivan. Bohdan against Andrii. The young surgeons against the soldiers they treat and their friends and schoolmates on the front line – what is courage, what is bravery, how can you be heroic if you sleep in your own bed each night?

And the Americans? A lifetime of service and excellence. Skins on the wall, trophies in the cases. As Alex himself asks: what good are those honors if the skills that earned them are not put to use where and when it matters most? They measure their two weeks of service against a lifetime of freedom bought by fathers and grandfathers... and against those who have never had a choice at all.

The standard is impossible. Ivan Sirko is a man made into a myth, his record unmatched, his name a battlecry. More than sixty campaigns undefeated. You cannot beat that. You can only keep showing up.

Which is what they do. Every night the front arrives. Every morning the OR is full.

*A Sirko stays.*

That is not our tagline. It is our theology.



**SIRKO**



**SIRKO**

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