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**Transcript of Biographical Interview No. WDD 24.AGG Natalia<sup>1</sup>  
(Translated by Anna Piaszczyńska)**

***Institutionalized Identity? The Processes of Identity  
Development on The Basis of Biographies Rendered  
by Adults Raised in Residential Care<sup>2</sup> Lodz, Poland 2011-2014***

**Date and place of interview:**

August 24, 2011, the Institute of Sociology,  
University of Lodz, researcher’s room

**Duration of interview:**

17.15-20.20

**Interview arrangement:**

Interview from the mailing list. The narrator herself contacted the Institute by telephone and volunteered for the interview – she wanted to demonstrate the fate of a person brought up in a children’s home. The contact was established in July, and an interview was arranged for August due to vacations and a language course attended by the narrator.

<sup>1</sup> The transcription of interview with Natalia was intended to represent the exact manner of narrator’s speech and thus, it does not follow the rules of Polish spelling and punctuation (what is reflected in the translation).

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**NATALIA’S TST**

Who am I?

- 1. I am *a human being*
- 2. I am *a mother*
- 3. I am *an open person*
- 4. I am *communicative*
- 5. I am *self-dependent*
- 6. I am *a wife*
- 7. I am *a good friend*
- 8. I am *a woman*
- 9. I am *a good worker*
- 10. I am *a part of the family*
- 11. I am *a neighbor*
- 12. I am *stubborn*
- 13. I am *honest*
- 14. I am *an empathizing person*
- 15. I am .....
- 16. I am .....
- 17. I am .....
- 18. I am .....
- 19. I am .....
- 20. I am .....

- 1. A: Natalia I would like to, so to start this story, that you’d just say a few words about your family,
- 2. about your origins.
- 3. N: From the very beginning?
- 4. A: Mmhm. I mean about your parents, well about...
- 5. N: About my parents... well this will be a little difficult but sometimes/
- 6. A: If not about that/ just about childhood...
- 7. N: Well, so uhm... My father came from mm... the town [name of town]. It is such a small town
- 8. about 220 kilometers away from [name of city]. My mother is from [name of big city], she comes
- 9. from [name of big city, name of district]. I don’t know how they met but somehow they met.
- 10. Probably dad was here in the army and maybe that is how it was like uhm... in any case they moved
- 11. to [name of city] uhm... in seventy- probably seventy-nine or eighty... uhm... Then I had an older
- 12. brother, then there was me, my younger brother, there were three of us. Next there appeared my
- 13. sister, six years younger than me, than uhm... yet another brother, another sister and a brother. I got
- 14. the sequence wrong, anyway there are six of us, of which one child uhm... died at the age of two in
- 15. 1983 uhm... Well, what am I to say now?
- 16. A: Maybe you will say just a little about your story, just about your childhood.
- 17. N: (xx)
- 18. A: That is, when were you born, where, what did your childhood look like?
- 19. N: I was born in 74 in [name], somewhere in the forest uhm... That is in an ambulance mostly
- 20. ((laughter)). Cause it wasn’t like that I was some kind of a child dumped under a tree uhm... I think
- 21. that my childhood, this very early child/ childhood was rather uhm... pleasant, although I don’t
- 22. remember this early childhood uhm... Here, after my parents’ moving to [name of city], there used
- 23. to be some ups and downs uhm... Generally I come from a pathological family, which is why,
- 24. uhm... I ended up in the children’s home. Though for five years, so it was not so terribly long. I was
- 25. very lucky anyway cause, uh... I knew people who were in the children’s home almost since birth,
- 26. so it wasn’t so bad... uhm... Well my parents, generally, my mother has not ever worked, my dad
- 27. always worked. Back in the 80s it was rather uhm... the conditions were so, maybe, maybe there
- 28. were not too much in the shops, but the conditions were good enough that this care was... and the
- 29. money... it was enough. I remember we used to go to the cinema and for ice cream and... and
- 30. generally it was, it was okay. However, it got worse a little when my parents started to drink, started
- 31. to abuse alcohol, my mom, my dad. Dad was a very skilled worker, so when they fell into such
- 32. uhm... alcohol benders, where normally nowadays a man would automatically lose a job, my father
- 33. always came back. And s/ so he was welcomed with open arms because he really was a good
- 34. worker and reliable uhm... well mm... Such, mm, alcohol binges, carousals, were becoming heavier
- 35. more and more often, sometimes it used to be so that my parents kept drinking for three weeks

1. uhm... sometimes it used to be that they were drinking for half a year let's say, but well uhm... such  
 2. uhm... the moment when uhm... this started - this alcohol appeared quite more often it used to, and  
 3. it got worse and worse uhm... My dad... uhm... in 88 or 89 went to prison for two years because...  
 4. due to that I mean I don't want to justify anybody here but both the district [name of the  
 5. impoverished neighborhood in the city] and the conditions were friendly to that mm... to start such  
 6. illegal alcohol trading, commonly it is called a den. Because my mother didn't work she took care  
 7. of the children, then money got a bit short and since there were such alcohol binges, so clearly the  
 8. money was uhm... was squandered to the last zloty [Polish currency] and then the money was gone.  
 9. So... uhm, so uhm... my parents just started selling alcohol well - uh, there was such a den. And my  
 10. father uhm... went to prison for/ for this illegal trade, he went for two years... And then it all began,  
 11. it all began to fall apart, although earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had  
 12. been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in  
 13. children's home and this may have been better for us. Because of all the family, to be honest, that's  
 14. the only real home I have ((cries))...

15. A: Natalia, we can take a break at any moment, take a break right now if you wish. I know it isn't  
 16. an easy story ((longer pause)).... [A hands N tissues].

17. N: Thank you..... ((N cries)). Maybe I will add that... in my family still earlier it was always, I  
 18. don't know, it was dirty uhm... somehow my mother didn't pay attention to look after us so that we  
 19. had clean neat things. It was all washed but it was washed in such a way that it was thrown into one  
 20. washing machine, so these things were so, well, uncool. Generally, always, I don't know, maybe it  
 21. wasn't lice but there were always some scabies uhm... And being at school, there it was a bit  
 22. uncool, cause there were such uhm... nursing controls and so on so it didn't belong to cool things,  
 23. cause in class one may have not uhm... not been someone, that is been some kind of person rejected  
 24. from the group, and one always made up for this with one's character and I don't know, somehow  
 25. it.... it was okay. But it never was so that we had time to learn super-extra so that we would be  
 26. among the school class leaders – there were just such different trappings. Sometimes there was no  
 27. lunch but there were organized some kind of school lunches, free of charge. Thus it was not bad  
 28. although my mother cooked quite well... when everything was okay it was okay. However/ well I  
 29. just started to talk about my/ about my brothers and sisters, so well... only just me... as the only one  
 30. of this six, five actually cause one child we lost, although I just don't want to blame anybody but I  
 31. remember Gosia's death ((sighs))... I remember cause then I was five or six years, eight years old  
 32. even, and I was a child who, well, remembers certain things. I remember that there was a little metal  
 33. baby bed... and Gosia was lying in this bed. And in the morning she said that she had a headache, in  
 34. the childish way, cause this child was just very little. And my parents went out somewhere, locked  
 35. us up, that is if I was eight, I have one year older brother, that would have been nine-year-old

1. Radek, they left us three alone (((ponders))). There was another brother I ha/ I have a brother two  
 2. years younger, that is there was 9-year-old, 8-year-old, and 2-year-old Gosia, who had a headache.  
 3. And... and we were at home and observed this girl, in this bed as she uhm... caught breath, like a  
 4. little fish. And my parents went out somewhere, I don't know some shopping, I don't remember  
 5. then. But anyway when they ca/ when they came it was late in the afternoon, it was 3 or 4 pm and  
 6. they left us alone in the morning. And... and I remember when uhm... when this child just caught  
 7. breath with such a last ounce of strength. Then dad uhm... when they came home he called the  
 8. ambulance. The ambulance came after 7 pm to state the child's death. Autopsy, I don't know if this  
 9. was autopsy or/ I don't remember. In any case the doctor said that it was uhm... mening/ meningi/  
 10. A: Meningitis, mhm.

11. N: Meningitis yes, purulent. So it seems to me that if, if anybody had had an interest in this child  
 12. earlier, she wouldn't have died. Cause this meningitis purulent uhm... certainly had been  
 13. developing much, much earlier, and in my opinion, this child was neglected. I can state that now,  
 14. though at the time I was a little kid and well - and besides, it's difficult to judge uhm... parents,  
 15. isn't it? So, uh, Gosia died as a result of this disease.

16. A: And this was in 83, yes?

17. N: Yes, 83.

18. A: How old was she?

19. N: Uhm... two years old.

20. A: Two years old, mhm.

21. N: She was two years old... Well, well and... I don't know what I started to say I lost track.

22. A: You started talking about your siblings.

23. N: So, well, among the siblings actually just I, I do live, say, not for today, but just so normally as a  
 24. normal person. I have a regular job, I have a husband, I have a home, I have bills that I have to pay,  
 25. which is not cool but, but that's the way life is. While my older brother is in prison, my younger  
 26. brother is in prison, and my still younger brother is still in prison. My one sister is married but this  
 27. is nothing good, and - certainly nobody would want to meet her at night because she is aggressive,  
 28. causes trouble. Although I haven't ever seen her in such a situation but... but this is not a normal  
 29. life. She lives in some squat, also abuses alcohol, also has a husband who habitually drinks and  
 30. loses his job forever and all the time has epilepsy seizures now, at such a young age, so...

31. A: Due to alcoholism?

32. N: Due to alcohol. So I think that there won't be any good future in it... And of course also uhm...  
 33. she was also in prison for half a year for... drug trafficking or something like that... And I also have  
 34. the youngest sister... who for the time being lives quite normally. She has... a rather/ she does not  
 35. live at home... ((sighs)) quite early she moved out of home, she lives, she is now 21 years old, she

1. lives with a younger boyfriend. But this guy is/ that is, for our conditions, because we all live here  
 2. in the area, for our conditions he is not bad. She has a 9-month-old daughter, but already there she's  
 3. had a little bit of problems with the law, so that it is not that super-extra, although it may be that she  
 4. is still the most normal person in this family. I mean most normal in the sense that she pays  
 5. attention to the fact that life is not, is not just one day, that you have to take care of something and  
 6. that there is this child. This, of course, everyone here has children and no one seems to care. And... I  
 7. don't know I am a bit of an outcast in the family, frankly speaking I don't feel very cool with that.  
 8. Although I would not want to identify with my/ that is, I will never renounce my family and I will  
 9. always help anyone if there is such a need. But I can't live like them. I just cannot and that is, it  
 10. seems to me, that is the reason why I found myself in the children's home. Because uhm... like my  
 11. dad... in the 80s uhm... 90, just a moment 89 it was I guess when he was sent to prison, so my mom  
 12. completely lost it, uhm... lost probably... a sense that she is a mother, that she has a family, that she  
 13. has children, and that these kids really have only her at the moment, because dad was in prison and  
 14. it was for two long years. At the time when uhm... my dad went to prison I was at sixth grade  
 15. primary school, that is, I was already such a big girl and thinking. I took care of the younger  
 16. siblings I had... though I didn't always like it, because I was already at an age that, I don't know,  
 17. well, it would be nice to run somewhere to the park with the girls, with the girls play after...  
 18. whatever, and not all the time ask "Mom, can I go?," "Take, you know, your brother, sister with  
 19. you," and so on. So I was, let's say, a nanny for the younger siblings, which I did not like because...  
 20. I really didn't realize it and sometimes it was fun when the parents were drinking because we could  
 21. do what we wanted. I didn't have to, I don't know, look after someone, even though it was on a  
 22. short run, because when I returned home it turned out that one child or another was crying, hungry,  
 23. or needs changing clothes and so on. Trouble came out even more than, than if I was to be with that  
 24. child all the time. Well, uhm... I went to that children's home... because... at the time when my dad  
 25. went to prison my mom uhm... went partying hard. She met a company and I remember all sorts of  
 26. people came, even some man without a leg uhm... My grandma tried to intervene a little bit,  
 27. because my grandmother is a very much of an okay person, that is, my mother's mother. It was also  
 28. all very hard for her. She brought us food, but unfortunately, she failed to bring up mom and – she  
 29. didn't have any influence on her, although she sometimes she hit her on the head with an umbrella,  
 30. but it didn't restore her reason. And... and I remember once there was this situation that my mother  
 31. locked us up, there was such an old huge door, and went out. This, she was out for like two or three  
 32. days. People gave us food through the window... well it wasn't any fun. In any case, we had stupid  
 33. ideas because the age difference was, I don't know, say from 13 to 5 or 4 years. We organized a cool  
 34. party at home... of course, with the house locked up. Our friends, boys and girls came in through the  
 35. window/ and we had such a large tin bath... and decided to melt in all the plastic things that come to

1. our mind, so we would have also probably burnt the house uhm... completely if not/  
 2. A: To melt in the sense, in the sense of melting, not drowning in water, but melting? [Polish "to  
 3. melt" is spelt the same as "to drown" – translator's note].  
 4. N: No, no, we set fire to plastic stuff and so it flowed nicely, flowed into that bowl. There was  
 5. terrible smoke, the police arrived, fire brigade and all, so there all the crackpot you can imagine  
 6. uhm... And generally my... my grandma once uhm... came, saw, I mean - many times she came and  
 7. helped us, she brought us different things and and she came once and saw what was going on and  
 8. she set the things right. As there was no normal contact with my mom... she called... uh... reported  
 9. this in general I don't know where, to some care, anywhere, to the police, I don't know. Anyway,  
 10. my brother was taken to the children's home... I mean my siblings went somewhere to children's  
 11. homes, and I was sent to my other other grandma, my dad's mother. I was sent there because it  
 12. seems to me that umm... grandma needed someone to take care of the hens (((jokingly))) and so on.  
 13. Well in any case well... anyway I ended up so, uh, pretty much well that during those two years, I  
 14. didn't move around some children's homes. The grandma was as she was, but she was. Anyway, I  
 15. missed my family very much then... I remember that... ((cries)).... ((longer pause)). I remember  
 16. then that uhm... my grandma more than once reproached me on my room, that I am like my mother.  
 17. Once I even got it on the face for, stuff like that - though to say the truth... ((cries)... ((sighs)).... I  
 18. don't think that... only my mother is to blame....  
 19. A: Would you like, Natalia, to take just a small break so, for example... If it is hard for you to talk,  
 20. because I understand that these are really very difficult, these memories...  
 21. N: I'm a bit of a crybaby ((longer pause))... Well, in any case it doesn't seem to me that only my  
 22. mother was to blame for the situation. The fact that, well, dad devoted himself and went to this  
 23. prison because really mom should have gone for this because it was her got caught in the act. But  
 24. ((sniffs)) he decided that it would be better, but if my dad had led a different life, probably there just  
 25. wouldn't have been such drinking, and it seems to me that the fault always lies in the middle, well  
 26. so there's no point blaming anyone here more or less. In any case, I missed my brothers and sisters  
 27. ((wipes nose)) and I very much wanted to come back here and the moment my dad left this prison  
 28. and came home... he came for me... and said that everything will be okay and everything and I... I  
 29. came back here, to [name of city]. I went to the eighth grade, I completed this primary school, but it  
 30. wasn't/ such/ After those two years when I lived at this grandmother I got very unused to dirt, to  
 31. these alcohol benders, whatever. A lot of things I didn't like. I didn't like my mom's behavior ever,  
 32. there were conflicts with her forever. I just had the impression that there were constant clashes.  
 33. Besides uhm... there was no/ relationships got very/ I hoped that when I get back it would all be  
 34. well and at last this family of mine/ but I already, uh, I could see I couldn't live like this. I freed/ I/  
 35. for two years I was gone and I just stopped to accept things, it was very very difficult for me... and I

1. remember that (((with hesitation in her voice))) no, I don't remember at this point yet, so I don't  
 2. remember for sure, but it all got one thing on top of another... and... and these quarrels... such fights,  
 3. it's probably, I mean adolescent age also played a role, I mean once, umm... enough of this all...  
 4. enough of this life here in this house of drunkards (((strong emotions))). And... well I didn't want,  
 5. uhm... again these lice, this dirt and and generally such old habits of the family that, uhm... I don't  
 6. know. Once I don't really remember the reason yet, that was the last straw and I had swallowed  
 7. some pills that I found in the cabinet and decided to poison myself... which was not very reasonable  
 8. but well... In any case, I decided to take my own life... I think my dad found me but I'm not sure... it  
 9. could be so, I was probably only half-conscious ((grunts)). I, uh, was taken to hospital to [street  
 10. name], and there I had gastric lavage but from this hospital, but I didn't return home because I  
 11. didn't want to. Well, but this was very hard for me ((cries)).... because my family absolutely turned  
 12. away from me... and I was sent to this children's home.....

13. A: How old were you then?

14. N: 14.

15. A: 14, yes. So this was 8th grade, that is after completion of 8th grade?

16. N: 8th grade.

17. A: Mhm.

18. N: This was the 8th grade ((sniffs)) and I was sent to this children's home already as a teenager and  
 19. generally of course ((sniffs)) after some time... uhm... I started less often, and then less and then a  
 20. little more often to visit my parents at home. Somehow uhm they... tolerated me there despite the  
 21. fact that I turned away, that I said no and all. That I don't want to live in, in such a family. Actually  
 22. it was my decision but... now in retrospect from the perspective of time it seems right to me,  
 23. although I don't know how at all... uhm... it could, uh, have been done to live normally and not to/  
 24. to change one's life when one doesn't decide about oneself. Probably the attempt on my own life  
 25. was not a go/ good idea, maybe a teacher, a psychologist I don't know anyone could have helped,  
 26. but then I don't know, I didn't think then in such terms as now, and I don't... don't know, I just  
 27. didn't think about where I could have uhm... looked for some help, but I just decided that it made  
 28. no sense ((cries))... And at that, from the moment I came to this children's home I pulled myself  
 29. together... so it seems to me that, perhaps, this is the way I am a little impossible to kill  
 30. (((jokingly))). I pulled myself together, I began to function normally, I met my family, I met my  
 31. siblings. And I remember there was a time when my six years younger sister ran away to me. Once I  
 32. think, I don't know for sure. I took her from this house, from this drink/ from that drunkenness,  
 33. there were fights there, well, this was not a home for normal child raising. And this sister of mine  
 34. saw that I live in such a room with three girls, that I'm clean ((sniffs)) that I have a nice room... that  
 35. there is a canteen, that there is normal food, that there is a completely different life, that children

1. can do their homework, that they can play, that there are different games, that sometimes one gets  
 2. cool things at times, that a completely different life here simply... uhm... just such a normal life  
 3. that.... that one can normally function. She wanted, I remember that she wanted to uhm... to come  
 4. to me, and I wanted to take her and even I took her up for a night, I was be allowed by the  
 5. caregiver, cause well, she stayed, but the moment I asked the principal to do something so that she  
 6. stayed with us, there was no response, or I don't know, any such power to, uh/ any opportunity for  
 7. doing so, so that she could in fact stay. And I think that it was a mistake because... because maybe  
 8. she... if she'd met a little bit of a different life, it would have turned out differently. Now she is  
 9. well... well she isn't on a good path and and who knows if one day they will not take away her child  
 10. from her because she walks drunk in the streets, fusses about, steals, I don't know, whatever this,  
 11. and this poor child, my sister's daughter, she isn't in any good situation with that mom, because...  
 12. well, because she sees what... what we all saw once. Such a two-year-old child, well, actually she is  
 13. three years old already [name], such a little girl should be a little bit/ but ok. Well, in any case I was  
 14. sent to this children's home. There I was, but I also had silly ideas too... There were various flip-  
 15. outs, the girl from there, from this children's home, we came from different families, so we bought  
 16. some wine too, we drank in parks, then we threw up till we dropped well...

17. A: ((laughter))

18. N: I also don't know, I learned to smoke cigarettes on a park bench. Maybe somehow I wasn't such  
 19. a great angel, but I had such uhm... peace assured, such inner peace I knew always, that when I go  
 20. back, I would go back to such a normal home, the children's home I mean, that... that there was  
 21. someone who was interested in me, there was someone who asked, "Did you do homework." There  
 22. was someone who could support me, uhm... could have helped me, helped me choose the school,  
 23. showed me, uhm... how to live. And the fact that, well, these five years at this children's home  
 24. really helped me a lot. Because - in retrospect I now see that, I don't know, I don't want to judge  
 25. anyone here somehow super-positively, but I think I am a good mother... I understand my daughter,  
 26. I can get along with her - communicate with her, even though she may be now at such an age, so  
 27. rebellious because she is now 13 years old. I love her very much and she loves us too, me and my  
 28. husband. She is taught that there is a lot of love at our home, that she does not have to hide away  
 29. any secrets, she is open, she tells us about everything and... I didn't have that, didn't have such  
 30. understanding, I had no such love. This children's home gave me the direction, the fact that I  
 31. completed a lot of different schools, and that in the end I am a fairly educated person, maybe not so  
 32. super-extra, but I did the ba/ Bachelor degree. I am somehow oriented at the future - we're trying to  
 33. build a house, we will see how it goes (((jokingly))) because bank loans are very expensive I don't  
 34. know, well, I think very differently from my parents now and I regret that I couldn't do anything for  
 35. my family, my brothers and sisters so that they would be in the sa/ the same situation as me. Cause I

1. don't/ I mean it is difficult to raise boys, especially in the neighborhood where uhm... at the time  
 2. when parents are drinking and do not pay attention to anything it is obvious that kids get different  
 3. ideas coming to their mind, and when they get into some bad company they try to dominate or  
 4. show, hey, I'm cool too and good, and this isn't directed toward any real good, but unfortunately  
 5. toward... toward the evil and... Well so they ended up in prisons and it seems to me that it was due  
 6. to the fact that they hadn't experienced this love in the family. No one was specifically interested  
 7. and if uhm... and if any of us, I don't know, didn't do homework or got b/ bad marks at school, or if,  
 8. I don't know, if they caused any trouble, there was no such understanding, there was no question  
 9. "Why?" there was just some punishment or something, and, well, the boys suffered terribly. Then  
 10. my two-year-old brother, two years younger brother than me... from early childhood peed at night  
 11. in bed. I think it was based on the nervous ground, of course there was no medical consultation. So,  
 12. except that there was dirt in this house, lice, many - many times, uhm... one could feel this smell of  
 13. urine... because it wasn't like he had this bed linen changed every day, he peed himself, it was  
 14. turned over to the other side and that's enough, well that wasn't too cool... I think that, uhm... such a  
 15. pissing at night, uhm... was due to the fact that he was such a sensitive kid. Now... well, in fact half  
 16. of his life uhm... he's been in some kind of juvenile detention homes or children's homes, uh, in - in  
 17. such prisons already. At the time when he uhm... turned 18 ((long pause)).... ((crying)). And I  
 18. remember... when we were kids and our parents drank ((cries)), so we could really do what we  
 19. wanted and then my brother ((cries)... I don't know what now, he was so... he suffered such terrible  
 20. harm ((cries)) we had such such, such children dreams actually such let's say we were about 10, 11,  
 21. 8 years old ((sniffs, sighs heavily)), we walked the streets when we saw there were such... ((cries,  
 22. long pause))... these stray dogs.

23. A: Mhm.

24. N: Poor, hungry ((cries)) we took them home. And I don't know, maybe we found five such dogs,  
 25. we fed them we gave them water. And once we, once we just - we told each other so, that when we  
 26. grow up ((cries)) we will open a shelter for these poor, homeless dogs ((cries))... So I think to  
 27. myself now that if really ((cries)), if someone had guided these kids, if there had been just a little bit  
 28. of love in this family, none of them would be in prison now for sure. Because these were really  
 29. ((sniffs)) good boys and now unfortunately... it is as it is ((softer)). And really my younger brother,  
 30. who wanted to help animals so much when he was little, now he doesn't think rationally, doesn't  
 31. think normally, and each such stay in penitentiary ((sniffs)) assures him that there is no other life  
 32. than life in such a criminal world. It is untrue that... that prison resocializes.

33. A: Mhm.

34. N: This is simply so, when you fall into one hole, then the more such sentences you have the more  
 35. you are important in this criminal world. He has plenty of friends, colleagues, but these these are all

1. so I don't know... a little bit different-minded people and for sure... ((sniffs)) and certainly don't  
 2. want to uhm... to return to a righteous life. May I have a tissue?  
 3. A: Yes, please.  
 4. N: I really just, well, I am just a bit... some people say that I am such a mother hen because...  
 5. because I'm really able to withstand a lot. Only it hurts me the most that they were not given the  
 6. chance these, these sib/ these siblings of mine. It's not cool. And - I still keep in touch with all them,  
 7. although I don't - I don't go to these prisons because, well, I have my life, I have a grandma who is  
 8. already/ who according to/ to whom I'm responsible to help, cause when I needed this help she  
 9. helped me too. And I try as I can, so I don't go somehow, so terribly often over to these prisons  
 10. simply because I'd have to spend every free weekend to go somewhere all over Poland and visit  
 11. brothers who really, well, they made a choice. Because I could also have chosen in fact... I rebelled,  
 12. it cost me a lot, because I don't know, perhaps only God knows how many nights I cried the whole  
 13. night through... cause I felt rejected and when there is/ I don't know, whatever this grandma would  
 14. be, whatever this father would be, one loves them and wants such uh... such acceptance from them  
 15. so that... whatever, they would stick to us... I don't know what else I am to say...

16. A: Natalia maybe we will close these threads that are the most difficult for you.

17. N: Yes, yes.

18. A: All right, because I understand that that this is really such a difficult story... well going back to  
 19. the past still just a little bit more, you said that you lived in this [name of neighborhood]. And in  
 20. which year more or less, did you leave and come to [name of city]? How old were you then?

21. N: I don't know, four or five.

22. A: Four or five, okay. And in what conditions do you remember you lived in this wilderness or was  
 23. it a village?

24. N: It was a village [name]. In fact I was born in [name of village]. Because, um... ((grunts)) the  
 25. times were such that, uhm... women didn't go to the hospital before pregnancy somehow before  
 26. this delivery date, I don't know uhm... when the the due date came one called an ambulance, and  
 27. considering that it was quite far from hospital I was born somewhere on the way in the forest. But  
 28. generally it was such a small place called [name of village] and my parents uhm... I don't know...  
 29. my/ my parents rented a room at someone's farm. Even a few years ago we drove by, sometimes I  
 30. go there, to this grandma from the father's side. Yet when my dad was alive - my dad died two years  
 31. ago uhm... so once we drove past and he showed me where we lived there. But this building wasn't  
 32. there anymore. So it was, it was a rented room, that was maybe one room with a kitchen, or it was a  
 33. kitchen, or it was a room that was divided uhm... it was a room divided uhm... with a sepa/ with a  
 34. separated kitchen area, I don't remember exactly.

35. A: And what did the parents do for a living then, do you know or not?

1. N: My mother has never worked, that's for sure. While my dad well uhm... I don't remember but he
2. certainly worked somewhere. He always worked, he was not afraid of working... always worked.
3. He was a man who, I don't know, slaughtered a pig, repaired the car, went to the field, built
4. something, in fact, actually just a jack of all trades.
5. A: What was he by profession?
6. N: ((sighs)) I don't know if my dad completed any vocational school or not, but he worked in a
7. construction company. He also was an electrician, he was a plumber...
8. A: Mhm.
9. N: And from my father's life it is also interesting that... he had a sister, has/ well yes, he had,
10. because she is already dead, had a sister younger than himself and my grandmother raised them
11. two/ the two of these children alone, because... mm... my dad was maybe eight when his father died,
12. A: Oh.
13. N: and my grandmother was always fixed on her younger daughter, who was, I don't know, 8 or 10
14. years younger than my dad, and my dad was always such, well worse, well such a boy, you know, a
15. daughter is always closer to the mother. And when he married my mother, which my grandmother
16. didn't like much, I don't know why, but looking back, maybe she had some reasons. Then he was
17. generally in such a... in the background completely, and they wanted to move out from there.
18. Grandma uhm... often said there... that the first child, that is, my older brother is a bastard, that he's
19. not, uhm, the child of uhm... my dad's, and stuff like that. So I think that he didn't have such an
20. easy life there with his mother, and that's probably why they moved away from there pretty quickly.
21. A: And your grandmother, she had a farm there?
22. N: She has a farm. I mean, now she's probably leased it all, sold it and given money to her daughter
23. (((dismissively))). But we keep in touch with her, and with this aunt too.
24. A: And, as you say, at this time you moved to [name of city]. You don't know why actually here,
25. for/ oh well you've just said why, haven't you, just a moment ago.
26. N: This was, among other things, this was one, one reason, and the other reason was that, uhm...
27. that my/ that my mom had here uhm...
28. A: Her mom, right?
29. N: I'm sorry?
30. A: She had her mother here?
31. N: That she had her mother, yes. And grandma uhm... travelled there, from this [name of city]
32. uhm... to this [village name]. And as she told us that when she once took me and we were walking
33. naked so dirty, but in the country I think that's the way kids looked like in those days ((laughs)) that
34. the child is happy when dirty and uhm... and I think my grandma took all the family to herself, she
35. said. Because, first, first my parents lived for a short time at my grandma's... and then hired uhm...

1. a flat, or a room actually from such a family here in the area and we lived there... And then I don't
2. know, my mom broke into some squat and got the decision for... for this flat.
3. A: In a tenant house?
4. N: In a tenant house, yeah.
5. A: Here, somewhere in [name of district]?
6. N: Yes, yes. We still live where we lived, and in fact I now have it actually now uhm... I am
7. already... because I'm now 36. Yeah I know, but then/
8. A: ((laughter))
9. N: ((laughter))
10. N: Times were different and, uhm... and it was so uncool, not always things were going nicely,
11. never really. But now I live in the same tenant house as my mom, I go shopping with her. Actually,
12. she has such a support, I get her various doctors, I go with her to doctors, I take her to the lot which
13. I bought, and I take care of her. There really was a time that my mom/ uhm now maybe not because
14. she is a very ailing person, but there was a time uhm... when my mum drank and drank quite a lot
15. because this or that, that the kids, uhm, grew up and everyone went their own way so mm... I don't
16. know, I don't know what I was saying, but okay. Anyway, I just wanted to say only that... since the
17. time we were little not much changed, cause there were drinking binges, they were still drinking,
18. still uhm... there was not a word to uhm... they, I mean my parents, they didn't grew super-extra
19. wiser or anything after all these years. Although my dad in 2002... uhm... got very ill. He got so ill
20. that being in [name of the village] somewhere fishing he was brought here by helicopter to uhm... a
21. cardiology hospital because he had an aneurysm of the aorta. It was his first operation, he had a
22. stent put in the thoracic section... it was not cool because he had it/ The operation was very
23. difficult, in deep hypothermia and... and everyone kept fingers crossed that he would survive. But
24. this uhm... this aneurysm went to another place, the aorta was delaminating, and then two years
25. ago... my dad died... He died after a successful operation, but he could not survive it, it was just too
26. late for him. And I will tell you that, despite the fact that it was different with those parents of mine
27. and, and... they certainly didn't show me how to live... and they didn't give me all that the children
28. from normal families may have... ((sighs)) I always... always I was there when I was needed, and it
29. was enough to do this ((snaps fingers)) and I was already with these parents of mine. And yet, God
30. forbid, when something was going on... something bad happened... I didn't look at it that they were
31. bad, but they left us, did not care about us, then Oh My. One felt very sorry and emotional that
32. something was happening, something was wrong. And my dad, two years ago/ mm... he heard on
33. television that in [town in southern Poland] there is a hospital that does such different experiments
34. and is doing just, uhm... heavy operations. I made contact with the doctor, I found some head of
35. ward, sent the documentation to this hospital. The doctor said that he would take this operation that

1. he will order uhm... those spare parts, such stents from Munich from somewhere and... and that he  
 2. will operate my dad. My dad lived with the thought that he will be operated on, but unfortunately  
 3. uhm... the waiting time for this operation was extended since February. We went there to that [town  
 4. in southern Poland] so that he would be initially examined, so radiologists there looked at him,  
 5. uhm... photos and so on, do some own tests and the operation was rescheduled for June... And I  
 6. went there with my dad... well well, well because he knew that uhm... that I will have to deal with  
 7. it all. And in fact he loaded me with ((cries)) the duty of burying him, organizing the funeral. He  
 8. was not a bad man because he knew that my mom is a person who can't deal with anything... and  
 9. it's very sad ((cries)). As we drove to hospital, my dad... told me that if this operation was not  
 10. successful then I had to bury him, to take care of everything... and I took care of everything ((cries))  
 11. despite the fact that it was as it was. I was terribly affected by the death of my dad... and... it is  
 12. generally strange that he died on his birthday,  
 13. A: Mhm.  
 14. N: the operation was successful but the patient did not survive. Well I just don't know/ I talk more  
 15. about all my family than about myself ((slightly jokingly)) but I don't know, I just don't know  
 16. perha/ it seems to me that sometimes... I once watched a film that the... children from such  
 17. pathological families... will never say a bad word about their parents and love them so much,  
 18. A: Mhm.  
 19. N: that... that they think about... ah, he did harm, but just, just what counts is that well, they are.  
 20. A: Mhm.  
 21. N: ... Well so I also maint/ I go regularly to the cemetery, which actually only I take care of. My  
 22. whole family doesn't ((sniffs)). And no one goes to this father's grave, it is very sad, really... I know  
 23. that they didn't get too much good from my dad, but... I think that it was the father it's not worth  
 24. ((sniffs)) but that it is worth remembering... Well, but I am such such uhm... perhaps the black  
 25. sheep of the family of mine ((laughs)), because everything I do is the opposite way than everyone  
 26. would want, would wish. Though ((sniffs)) now uhm... because of that I am, let's say, an educated  
 27. person, normal, very much is required from me, more than from them all because I have to deal  
 28. with - because I have to do, I don't know what, I have to organize, I have to go make an  
 29. appointment, I don't know, I have to do everything.  
 30. A: And, you said about your mother, that that she requires more from you, doesn't she?  
 31. N: Yes.  
 32. A: Do the siblings too?  
 33. N: Uhm... my mom, brothers, sisters look at me a little, uhm... I don't really know how to define it  
 34. because uhm... ((sighs))... as if they were jealous of... that I was successful, although never in my  
 35. life, never have they said anything. The moment I got, I became independent in 94. I got a flat here,

1. at [street name], I got a flat and I live to this date in this flat. But I tried to help everyone, really  
 2. helped, my sister who notoriously went truant, who in the end didn't complete school. But, mm...  
 3. not to have this conflict, to show that one can live a normal life I, uh, first I took my sister to my  
 4. home. I only asked "Listen, just go to school, it is the condition that you live here with me and my  
 5. husband." Although, maybe my husband wasn't comfortable with tha/ that we but, no, no, there  
 6. weren't any terribly strong glitches about that, because he knew that I, I was very much attached to  
 7. my family and had pity... he sometimes reproaches me that again I got it on the ass and...  
 8. A: Mhm.  
 9. N: ((sighs))  
 10. A: Natalia just to shut these family threads because I understand that this is the most painful and  
 11. difficult to tell, because there are two sisters, right?  
 12. N: Yes.  
 13. A: There are two sisters and a, the one who, you uhm... bothers you so, and roams somewhere in the  
 14. streets, is the older one?  
 15. N: Yes, that's right.  
 16. A: Because you're born in 74 [1974].  
 17. N: Yes, she's uhm... oh/ uhm.. she is, God, born in 81.  
 18. A: And she too was in an institution, or was she all the time with your parents?  
 19. N: Uhm... she actually... was in an institution, but I don't know which because it was a very short  
 20. time. She certainly was in the emergency center at [name of the emergency shelter for children] and  
 21. what hap/ what happened next I don't know, because I was generally 200 kilometers from...  
 22. A: This is the moment when you/  
 23. N: Yes.  
 24. A: Were taken, yes and you were divided?  
 25. N: Yes, they divided us. And and I just, let's say, ended up in the most convenient way because I  
 26. went to this grandmother. The rest were somewhere scattered, and really I didn't know what was  
 27. going on at that point, we had no contact with each other. But... uhm... before, I don't know whether  
 28. they were sent at once to this children's home or sometime after me because...uhm... after I went/  
 29. but they were certainly in a facility uhm.  
 30. A: Emergency?  
 31. N: Emergency shelter, or, or something like that. My parents had their parental rights restricted as  
 32. soon as my dad... probably when he came out of that prison... uhm... or... or perhaps even earlier in  
 33. some way my mother didn't have... she arranged, I don't know, I don't know how this happened,  
 34. but they returned home much quicker than I. It was a very short and transitional stage in their lives.  
 35. Well, I.... I stayed/ lived in the children's home for five years and - so a much longer period in my

1. life than in theirs.

2. A: So, so as to close such a thread, the mo/ most painful, so as not to harass you with this too.

3. N: So...

4. A: The oldest brother. What year was he/

5. N: 73.

6. A: And what is his story, that is, you shared common childhood, so then he goes to a facility, then

7. he returns...

8. N: Uhm... it is more probably to the facility, then some institutions... uhm... like detention homes...

9. uhm, it wasn't cool with him, because wasn't a bad boy and... well, generally it was the alcohol.

10. A: He came back home, right?

11. N: He did.

12. A: He came back home when your dad returned from prison?

13. N: Yes, yes.

14. A: And is he at home?

15. N: We all came back home, yeah. But the boys were grow/ growing up, and uhm... The guys were

16. indeed not interested if there was a den at home and forever some uhm... men came, older or

17. younger, came for the alcohol, so well super (((with irony))) in particular that we often served the

18. ((laughs)) the client, yes. So, so the contacts were such, let's say that we all were known in the

19. streets and uhm... okay, no one touched us there ((laughter)). Well, but the guys messed around and

20. mess/ messed around good, and they were sent to correctional institutions, there were some actions

21. that I don't know when, they/ they fought with someone, they stole something, and there were

22. fights at home. When dad was sober he was quite a stern father uhm... and there was violence in the

23. fam/ at home uhm... The moment the boys messed around there were no arguments, uhm... hands up

24. and to the corner and if there were greater offences or, I don't know... broken glass or something,

25. there was already the belt, so, so the boys had such corporal punishment quite... quite often. They

26. were sent to the detention homes and then, there was only the treatment that he deserved it, that he's

27. bad, that he messed up, he knew what he was up for, what his problem was. And so it is really to

28. this day. So as if... my parents uhm... when the boys grew up and had as if their own life, they went

29. away from home, anywhere because no one provided them with a normal home, and as I was

30. growing up, they just wandered somewhere. Or when he, my brother that is, came from the

31. detention home to - as he returned from the dene/ detention home he lived a bit in their house, but

32. he, they, no one was very happy with this, so he - they looked for something on their own. And it

33. was obvious to them that... from such nor/ normal work and normal functioning there would not be

34. anything, so you must steal, you must have contacts, you need to stay at somebody's place

35. somewhere out there in some uncool, uhm... area. And also not with - and also with rather with

1. uncool people, because nobody normal would agree to have some stranger from the detention home

2. living with him, her, and all. Also... let's say they coped on their own, from which, from which

3. emerged that this is how they ended up in prisons, in different prisons, they got sentences year after

4. year and went out. A year, year and a half they stayed out on this freedom and here in the normal

5. world, and then they were sent back to prison for some other offences. I even honestly don't even

6. know for what, or maybe I even don't want to know.

7. A: Did the oldest brother complete any school at all?

8. N: Uhm... none of them completed, uhm... any school.

9. A: Not even primary school?

10. N: Primary, yes, and maybe they attended some vocational school. I know that they were having a

11. little bit further education in prison, but these were like, I don't know, a locksmith, caster, carpenter

12. such, such... I think these were such trainings... vocational, I don't know, adaptation maybe, some

13. special programs for prisoners.

14. A: Okay, I'm asking about the fate of the siblings now so as to have the clarity on how everything

15. proceeded, because we will come back to your fate in a moment.

16. N: Umhum.

17. A: Because, as I say, because it is so difficult. So what did the oldest brother complete, any

18. vocational school, or was primary school his last school?

19. N: I think he completed, in prison, uhm... some vocational... because he's got some papers, that's

20. for sure. Maybe as a turner, a caster, or a vocation like that.

21. A: Okay. And did he arrange his private life somehow, or not, in relationships or...

22. N: Well, my brother had a very strong attraction to alcohol, this older one, uhm... he tried to arrange

23. his life even... I don't know, after leaving prison once he organized himself some social housing

24. from the state. He got, he took care of this flat, he always painted, renovated, bought various

25. furniture. He really cared about it he didn't carry out anything from home as a typical habitual

26. drunkard, though he had such tendencies. He met uhm... a girl... this girl, at a disco, this girl came

27. from... she was a Gypsy... completely uneducated, perhaps even she couldn't sign her name. But he

28. had a child with her ((sighs)), this Gypsy had a difficult uhm... life with him because he started

29. drinking. She didn't work so dirt, that is, not actually dirt but rather just poverty. It was not too

30. good, in fact, for a small child. We thought he might change when the baby was born, because it is

31. such a breakthrough in the life of every person when a child is born, so I don't know, you just have

32. to finally stand on one's feet, grow up, become wiser. Unfortunately, my brother didn't succeed...

33. uhm... the Gypsy girl walked out on him, then he ended up, because he is quite a handsome guy,

34. although I don't know what girls see in him, that is, I don't see it ((laughs)). Anyway uhm... He had

35. some women in his life, but he generally he drank to an extreme, he started drinking hard. So all the

1. women walked away from him. In any case this was not... it was also a rather hard time for me  
 2. because he drank so much that, I even once, I was with him in a private clinic somewhere to put  
 3. disulfiram in, just to stop this well... well, because I felt sorry for him. Because my husband  
 4. arranged work for him, and he worked too when he was sober, he worked cause he is a hard-  
 5. working guy, he really/ But he wasn't up to something so much, he even has... I know he didn't  
 6. have a skill for such different combinations, selling drugs or something, I don't know what, or theft  
 7. or burglary and all. So he, (x), worked on construction, men earn, uhm... quite well if they want to  
 8. work in such physical work. It may be hard, but if he was fit for this, then why not?... But my  
 9. brother drank a lot and he had disulfiram put in. Later, this disulfiram, after some time it quit  
 10. working, and again he drank and was aggressive. These were times when uhm... when the  
 11. ambulance drove through [street name] cause he had such epilepsy seizures. I watched if they don't  
 12. take my [name of the brother], no it wasn't cool. It was hard to help him... because, well, cause how  
 13. much can you take? My husband he was also terribly bitching about me at this time. Once I even  
 14. locked him up at home, that is my brother, so that he wouldn't go out because uhm... there was a  
 15. time that he didn't drink for a single day, so I said: "Listen, so you don't drink" and I locked him  
 16. just so he wouldn't go out, so he had no contact with these, with these, with these people uhm...  
 17. Because you don't have to have money to become an alcoholic and drink. But I didn't manage to  
 18. help him in the end, and now he is back in prison, which is so much safer because he doesn't drink  
 19. this alcohol and he's not causing trouble in the streets, his organism... his body is regenerating, but  
 20. no one knows for how long. Well, such is the story of my older brother.

21. A: And he had one child, yes?

22. N: Yes.

23. A: And he probably doesn't have any contact with this child?

24. N: We wanted to have contact, uhm... with that child, but this Gypsy girl turned away from us  
 25. because I don't know, she really, uhm, she didn't come to me very often. Well, because I was so  
 26. normal... and they always think that I look down on them because I work, because I have a normal  
 27. house ((with an ironic laughter)), because I want to achieve something and I don't roam the streets  
 28. with them. I don't know, sometimes it happens that it's a weekend we go to a barbecue and also  
 29. drink some alcohol, but, but then comes Sunday, then Monday and one comes back to normal  
 30. reality and goes to work, has some responsibilities, and, and, here, in my family, unfortunately it  
 31. isn't so.

32. A: Natalia, then, later, there is this two years younger brother, because you are/

33. N: Yes.

34. A: Well, two years/

35. N: Yes, my two years younger brother, a sensitive boy.

1. A: Yes, you did say that/

2. N: Well, well, he, he, in turn, grew into such a real thug. Because this, uhm, my oldest, he was like,  
 3. he went to normal work, at least sometimes. But this younger one, I don't know, but this one is, has,  
 4. a very distorted psyche, I mean very distorted. And... he doesn't think rationally. He has a wife...  
 5. who sleeps around ((laughter)). Well he has a daughter, she slept at my place yesterday, from  
 6. yesterday to today, such a beautiful girl who is six years old and is raised by, uhm... her grandma,  
 7. not my mother only, (xx) the parents-in-law in a foster family. Because mm... my younger brother's  
 8. wife has no time, no job, no/ she is always poor, wronged, unhappy... and... and she has no time for  
 9. the child. She visits her there once in a blue moon. And this, that is, my younger brother, he's in  
 10. prison for fights but he isn't – like I said... he has a very distorted personality. He is the man who  
 11. could kill. Well I guess he ma/ he's had a lot of bad experiences in his life really, and he's got hard.  
 12. he's got such a hard shell! He really loves his daughter and would do everything for her but, but I  
 13. know, that I know that some bodily harm came to other people, some violence, and for him... for  
 14. him it comes very easily.

15. A: Did he manage to complete any school or not?

16. N: Mmm... no, I don't think that... ((sighs)) that he even completed the primary school, but uhm... I  
 17. know he didn't go to any vocational school. Perhaps he had some sort of apprenticeship in the  
 18. penitentiary, because in fact there wasn't even time for him to have completed a school, because  
 19. immediately after the primary school, when this family began to fall apart, even after dad returned  
 20. from the prison, no, there were no such/ anyway, there's never been any good in this family. There  
 21. always was some kind of drinking, there have always been such quarrels, fights, brawls... these  
 22. were not just one- or two-day things, but they lasted several weeks, up to maximum exhaustion of  
 23. financial resources. And given that the parents ran this illegal trade, there were still resources made  
 24. up of bottles of alcohol, so that it really took quite long, and there were carousals and, I don't  
 25. know... and everything/

26. A: This brother, except for earning money by theft, did he earn in any other manner any money, did  
 27. he work or not, or has it always been a/

28. N: I think that... maybe for half a year of his life he worked somewhere but it was... it was such a  
 29. short-term job. I'll tell you that, uhm... if someone ever tried such a thing as stealing and easy gain,  
 30. easy money, they will not go to normal work, cause - uhm, it is sometimes uhm... unpleasant for  
 31. them. But sometimes, many times, I heard them say: "You're going to work? You earn next to  
 32. nothing, I can make more in one night," for example. Well I can't have, I would not be able to, I  
 33. don't know what would have to force me to, to, to such uhm... to do such acts. I'd have to be  
 34. strongly desperate perhaps, but I don't know. To others in my family it comes quite, well, quite  
 35. easily, these assaults. Here this district is so uncool, so different, sometimes something has

1. happened to someone and uhm... and they've been robbed in the streets. I don't know, this youngest
2. brother – I heard that he was able to tear a gold chain off a woman, so well...
3. A: There's a third one, a third brother, right?
4. N: Yes, he's so cool. Because it was the time when I - when I was even in this children's home, he
5. was, he was very little, he was five or six, and he's always been like that/ He's always been so sweet
6. and has always been such a kid, and, and really he got no love either. It is sad that that... sad that
7. that was the attitude of my uhm... mother, well my dad was like that too. They they didn't give,
8. maybe they gave a chance... to these siblings, but it was so that when there was any trouble, when
9. they caused trouble, then my parents always turned away from them. Well, it is their life, their
10. business, let them do what they want, and it really is to this day that/
11. A: In which year was he born, the youngest brother?
12. N: Uhm... in 84.
13. A: That is, cause dad was in prison, wait in 80-what?
14. N: 89.
15. A: 90, so he was sent to these facilities, right?
16. N: Yes, yes.
17. A: And what, and then also correctional institutions somehow, and so/
18. N: Yes.
19. A: Prison, right?
20. N: Correctional institutions, prison.
21. A: Any school, any personal life?
22. N: No, no personal life. That is, yes, he managed to, uhm... to give birth to a son, a boy who is now,
23. not yet one year old, but well, because he, my brother, he was a young boy when the baby was born.
24. Now he is uhm... 20/
25. A: Twenty-six, right?
26. N: Well.
27. A: Seven, twenty-seven.
28. N: So, so he is still such a young boy and and... and yet really actually... actually the guys haven't
29. had time to arrange their life. It was so hard because... usually it was either prison or a juvenile
30. detention institution.
31. A: Uhm, hum. And then a sister/ which year of birth, the older one I mean, that younger lady yes/
32. younger, older.
33. N: 80 - just a moment cause I am already confused. Uhm... 81.
34. A: And did she complete any schools?
35. N: No.

1. A: Not even primary school?
2. N: Only primary.
3. A: And does she generally have any source of income-living at the moment?
4. N: No by/ just social care.
5. A: Social care. Does she have a family? You said she has a daughter.
6. N: Yes, she has a 3-year-old daughter.
7. A: A 3-year-old?
8. N: She also has a husband, but she has no home. She lives in, actually uhm... lived in... I don't
9. know now. She lived in the flat of some guy who uhm... had been in prison, he was serving a
10. sentence, he was under some arrest and was about to be released. So she lived there at his place for,
11. during this guy's stay in prison. But now she moved to the floor below, but it is such a squat that,
12. uhm, they were evicted... uhm... people, and no one actually lives there, maybe one family
13. occasionally, but it is also some kind of pathological life there, and nobody else is living there.
14. There is no/ she doesn't pay rent, doesn't pay for electricity, doesn't pay for gas, this is all somehow
15. organized so that she has there some ((laughter)) illegal source of energy.
16. A: You mean she got connected illegally, right?
17. N: Yes.
18. A: And is she with this husband?
19. N: Uhm... now, at present, I don't think she is.
20. A: Because you said that she has, that she too/
21. N: But not her only, he has these epilepsy seizures too.
22. A: Epilepsy, right.
23. N: And I don't even know how many times the ambulance came here for him, took him for one day
24. they took him to hospital and later they uhm... let him go out uhm... He, uhm... he's always going
25. to work on Monday, but that Monday never comes, ((laughter)), unfortunately. So - even if he finds
26. a job, he will work for some time and then fall off the wagon. And then, well, recently, his body got
27. so exhausted, that he has these seizures, and it's not like that from one glass, that's for sure.
28. A: And this youngest sister, when was she born?
29. N: OK!
30. A: Or how old is she, yes.
31. N: (xx) 22.
32. A: 22, she... because you said even/
33. N: She's 14 years younger than me. The youngest sister, she stayed the most, well actually the
34. worst, in the family, because she was born actually when I uhm... lived in the children's home,
35. something like that.

1. A: That is, she wasn't, hasn't been in any institution. She's been with the parents, right?
2. N: No, no, she was not in any institution. No, she was all the time with the parents... she stayed with
3. the parents. She, uh, was born while the parents had limited parental rights and those kids just came
4. back, so she was just, uhm... born... but uhm... [sound of alarm from the outside]. And generally
5. she, well, stayed with the parents but, but my last sister well, I don't know uhm... my mother
6. during pregnancy drank a lot of alcohol. She didn't even know at first that she was pregnant, there
7. were some fights, kicking, beating so uhm... I cannot say that she was born quite mentally impaired,
8. but, but generally she doesn't belong, in terms of development, to such, uh, I don't know how to say
9. this, uhm... I don't know medical terminology, but uhm... for sure not/ She didn't complete a
10. normal primary school, but she went to - to a special school but she wasn't so, she isn't so
11. physically impaired, but...
12. A: Does she have learning problems?
13. N: A little, yes, something like that. Also, the girl is uhm... rebellious, and even when she was
14. pregnant with this child of hers... she worked. So uhm... she is well-organized, although she had
15. some trouble because some I don't know some uhm... some extorting mobile phones uhm... in
16. some stores. I mean enforcing simply signing strange contracts without coverage or something like
17. that and then selling these phones. So it seems to me that this was the most - the mildest offense in
18. comparison to the rest of my siblings. And somehow she got away with this, or I don't know, maybe
19. she got a suspended sentence. I don't even know to be honest, if she has something to pay off for
20. these fines or if someone is chasing her. She may have a probation officer who/
21. A: And is she working now?
22. N: Uhm... now she doesn't because she has this 9-month/
23. A: And how does she make for her living?
24. N: She's got a partner, such a boy, with whom she's got this child, so they are married. He's... two,
25. no three years, sorry, younger than her but the guy uhm... is so much all right that he works, uh,
26. com/ brings her the money home. Well she gets some money from the social care probably too, for
27. life, they rent a flat. And she is uhm... a clean girl, she takes care of her child. Maybe she's not so
28. bright (((amused))) and if someone says something to her so so so she may sometimes believe in it,
29. but when it comes to life she is a little bit more adapted than the rest.
30. A: And which of these sisters was at your home?
31. N: The one six years younger than me.
32. A: Mhm.
33. N: This six years younger than I am sister - I kept her because it was just that she later already
34. attended, not such a vocational school, but such a... mm...
35. A: With a lowered threshold of requirements, yes?

1. N: Yes and actually... she had a few months left to finish and she had some papers. Well and I, dad
2. was already so upset and in general lost patience with her and willingness uhm... trou/ I don't know
3. to quarrel or simply lost the willingness to take care of this daughter of his. So I took her to myself
4. cause forever there were some glitches, fights and and my dad had a hard character and I took her to
5. myself and the only condition for her to actually be with me well was that she would go to this
6. school, that she would complete this school. But she deceived us and and... and we let go, because...
7. well, because she was supposed to go to this school and, "Well you live here, so go to this school."
8. She stopped going to school, stopped living with us, I wanted to help her somehow but apparently
9. she didn't need such assistance. It was stupid of her because she would have had at least this
10. vocational [education] and now she has nothing.
11. A: Did she live with you for long?
12. N: She lived with us for several months. That was when my father no longer had the patience with
13. her and didn't want her there at that home, so to appease everyone I said, okay I will, she will live
14. with us so... because I felt sorry for her then.
15. A: Well Natalia we are coming back to you/
16. N: Good.
17. A: (x) that is because I also wanted to ask if - because this is a rather unusual way of coming to a
18. children's home.
19. N: Yes.
20. A: Did anyone help you then when you/ because you were there in this hospital and went straight,
21. didn't pass through any emergency [shelter for children] through nothing but straight/
22. N: Yes.
23. A: You went to the children's home.
24. N: Someone helped me... it was a school, uhm... psychologist, from this school here uhm...
25. A: The one you went to, mhm?
26. N: She, she took care of me. I don't know actually, to tell the truth, I wonder how she found herself
27. this hospital. Perhaps I before made a contact, maybe she just saw that something was happening,
28. honestly I don't remember. I had then such a tough time in my life, that some things I missed. But
29. that - I know that when I came to this hospital so from her uhm... I had such support and care. And
30. she took care of everything, she helped me with everything and I found myself just then dir/ directly
31. in the children's home. I was a little bit lucky because well, because I in fact didn't pass through
32. this transitional period and I heard that at this [emergency N], it isn't too cool there/
33. A: [Emergency N] is a difficult experience.
34. N: Well, that's it, there's a lot of different people there, and I'm soft maybe, (x), probably many
35. people with such problems, uhm... are mentally weak and that may be the reason that we are like

1. sponges, that we absorb all. And so maybe I just found myself in such a surrounding, that I had  
 2. some role models to follow, and my siblings also found themselves in the surroundings in which  
 3. they had role models to follow, only slightly different than me, so so that's how it came out.  
 4. A: And which [children's] home were you sent to?  
 5. N: To/ in [DDW]  
 6. A: Ah, in [DDW]. Because you say that you liked it in this children's home.  
 7. N: Yes.  
 8. A: How then, how do you assess this house? Cause I understand that you were telling about your -  
 9. how you were feeling there.  
 10. N: Mhm.  
 11. A: And in general, if you were to look at this house, what kind of place was it then, what  
 12. relationships were there between the kids, what were the caregivers there?  
 13. N: I can't compare with other children's homes because I was just in this one, but, uhm... in our  
 14. children's home it really wasn't bad, relationships were good with the pupils. There weren't, there  
 15. weren't such, uhm... such situations when... when/ there weren't such situations as we hear now  
 16. that sometimes there are, I don't know... mm... such strange relationships between caregivers and  
 17. children that uhm... uhm... There they really worked at least. Uhm... the people with whom it had  
 18. contact were true caregivers. One could confide in many people, could talk with them. A lot of  
 19. people helped, but there were also those who simply treated this as, uhm... just as work and that's it.  
 20. Yes, but there really were a lot of great caregivers who, who uhm... sometimes were doing  
 21. something for us even more than their jobs required. They would bring a cake to the children's  
 22. home uhm... bring some candies, some games or some things after their children, there were many  
 23. such people. Some even took us, uhm... home... just for a coffee for tea/ well, maybe not for coffee  
 24. then, but for tea and a cake. It wasn't bad. We had a quite demanding lady principal and I never - I  
 25. can't say that I didn't have good contact with her, but I didn't have such a (((with a smile)))  
 26. common connection, although I didn't mind it too much because, uhm... because she was a good  
 27. person. She established contact with some foreign foundations, can't remember. Very often Dutch  
 28. people came to us, they brought us cool stuff, uhm... many, many children had such contacts with  
 29. uhm... with these Dutch people, uhm... such as, mm... contact by mail, so they in a way took some  
 30. children under their care, somehow so extra, so I don't know, they would send these kids packages.  
 31. When they came uhm... from the Netherlands with these gifts, well it was cool because they always  
 32. had some sweets for these kids, uhm... We also took care of younger children, older ones took care  
 33. of younger ones. There always were such shifts in the canteens I remember. Now a lot has changed.  
 34. Once I was there but no, not in five years time, but about five years ago. I may have seen that there  
 35. uhm... is such uhm... such a room uhm... for independent living: a kitchen, a bathroom something

1. like that and a laundry. But back then we had some kind of shifts, everyone had their duties... We  
 2. even had good relationships with the service uhm... with the cooks. The cooks gave (x) sometimes  
 3. ((laughter)) some extra food if something was left over or with the cleaning ladies we also had a  
 4. cool contact. There was a maintenance guy who, uhm, also was such a good uncle, we used to call  
 5. everyone uncle and aunt so there were a lot of those aunts and uncles. There wasn't any harassment  
 6. as one sometimes hears of. There wasn't any violence or beatings rather, uhm... rather... this  
 7. children's home was quiet, although there were, well, people who messed around. Especially boys  
 8. who somewhere/ Of course it was not allowed to smoke cigarettes, but we were at such an age that  
 9. one smoked some kind of fags or came out through the window to the park because there was a  
 10. park [name] to run around or meet with friends. But in general there was, there was a kind of order.  
 11. Many times we did the cleaning and we had our duties as well, we took care of uhm... small kids.  
 12. There were, there was such a group of small kids and I think that it also taught us such... such  
 13. responsibility for someone because, uhm... we actually had in this children's home two or three  
 14. persons who were disabled really severely. There was a [name of the girl] who had to bathe in  
 15. special baths. She was really horribly disfigured and despite this, that this child was so ugly, there  
 16. wa/ there wasn't any bad contact with her, no one picked on her. We all accepted her, accept/ and  
 17. even, uhm... she was, I mean that [name of the girl], she was such that even it was disgusting to  
 18. touch her, her hand, because she had these fingers fused, this skin was terrible but... but nobody  
 19. really paid any attention to that. Everyone was keen to help her there was no, I don't remember,  
 20. don't recall that there was any such abuse because she was different. She even felt very good in our  
 21. atmosphere, although this was a very closed child and I think that later as she was/ the older she got  
 22. the more, uhm... she was aware of the fact that she was, well, different from all the children. But  
 23. the caregivers also did all they could to - to extract from her such beauty, to show see/ see [name of  
 24. the girl] how pretty you are. Here is a clip, here is a nice piece of clothes to wear and all. She  
 25. always was under a really special care. There was also a girl, she uhm... also in the kids group, that  
 26. is these were five, six-year-old, four-year-old, two-year-old kids, all small children probably from  
 27. two, the age of two there were little kids. So we also treated this girl as such, maybe not one  
 28. hundred percent normal, cause it was obvious that we didn't require from her what we required  
 29. from other children but... but it was okay. There were no, uh, I don't remember that there were any  
 30. thefts in this children's home, although the rooms used to be locked up but... Anyway I think it was  
 31. because, so that one would have at least a bit of privacy to feel, well, this is mine so, nobody would  
 32. enter in my absence but, but it seems to me that absolutely this because of any theft, or something...  
 33. A: Was there anybody on whom you could count during this period when you were at the children's  
 34. home?  
 35. N: Yes. I, I uhm... There were caregivers whom we could tell a lot to... you could confide in them,

1. you could talk... but not all. There was such uhm... a caregiver with whom you could really talk  
 2. about various things, I had a very cool caregiver who also understood me... I don't know, I had  
 3. friends there, girls and boys.  
 4. A: Well, you also said that you learned responsibility there. And in general, despite responsibility,  
 5. somehow these caregivers managed to prepare you for future life. Did they teach you anything else,  
 6. did they convey anything?  
 7. N: ((sighs)) Responsibility, independence, generally such real life it seems to me, cause uhm... first  
 8. they took us home at times, showed us what a normal home looks like, how life should be like, they  
 9. walked/ we went on various trips, they often went with us, we were together, they showed us...  
 10. sometimes, uhm... they showed us what was missing in a family home, such good advice, some  
 11. kind of love, friendship. Really, it meant a lot to have such a warm person (((moved)))... But of  
 12. course it wasn't, wasn't all beautiful nice, and we were in frames. Of course, they were consistent  
 13. and if we caused any trouble, well, there were some sort of penalties, I don't remember yet what to  
 14. be honest, maybe a curfew, no going out (((jokingly))), or I don't know, additional some extra help  
 15. in the kitchen, washing up pots or... wiping tables, I don't remember exactly what it was. I mean,  
 16. uhm... they also showed us that that life is not only a bed of roses, everything will not always be  
 17. beautiful, nice, and that you have to bear the consequences of what you are doing...  
 18. A: On an average day, how your day looked like when you were at this children's home, when you  
 19. were already a teenager?  
 20. N: When I was a teenager?  
 21. A: Well yes, because you went there as a teenager.  
 22. N: Yes, yes. So there was waking up in the morning, brushing teeth, uhm... getting ready for school,  
 23. going down to the canteen, breakfast, some sandwiches for school... and of course going out to go  
 24. to school. Then, back from school, some lunch, then there was some time for uhm... doing  
 25. homework, I don't know probably from 2 to 5 pm. And then there were such own activities, you  
 26. could, I don't know, watch TV in the common room, you could read a book, there was a library  
 27. uhm... you could talk to your peers... then dinner... I don't know, some laundry, some cleaning. Only  
 28. those cleaning chores, these were always, let's say weekly cleaning, say general ones, that, that that  
 29. all dust was wiped, floor washed, vacuumed. It's true that every day we had to tidy up but uhm...  
 30. but generally uhm... on Saturdays, actually I think the whole house was cleaned. Then it wasn't that  
 31. the caregiver came and told us to clean, but there was just such a principle, that we all were  
 32. cleaning. Sometimes even one was walking around and looking how someone tidied up, clean or  
 33. not, and in general if any changes were needed. But still another element of such daily life was that  
 34. there always [was] a younger child in the room of whom we had to uhm... uhm... maybe not take  
 35. care of exactly, but, uhm... have under our wings. That is, make sure that, I don't know, that this

1. child has the schoolbag packed, that is dressed properly, has teeth brushed, made the bed, that  
 2. everything all right such, as though they were our younger siblings.  
 3. A: Because there were four of you, you said you were in four-person room.  
 4. N: Three, yes, in a four-room, but, but then it was quite usual there were three people lived there,  
 5. three or sometimes four.  
 6. A: And the younger ones, just one of them?  
 7. N: There were two older persons and one or two younger persons, and it was so that we jus... just  
 8. simply care/ that we took care of these kids, we controlled them like younger siblings we, well,  
 9. showed them... that it should be tidy in the shelf, that the child should have their homework done.  
 10. Of course, every - there was a time, uhm... after school and after dinner that we all met at our  
 11. rooms, such uhm... group ones, and there the homework was done collectively and there was some,  
 12. uh, a teacher with us to help. We always had, uhm... cool teachers because there were Polish  
 13. teachers, there were teachers who specialized in science, so if there was a problem one could always  
 14. go to someone and... we had such a professional help on the spot... I don't remember what else.  
 15. A: Natalia and this/ with regard to, for example, holidays. Did you spend holidays at your family's  
 16. home or in the children's home?  
 17. N: There were ups and downs... Sometimes uhm... it was... I was at children's home, but it was, it  
 18. was, it was very sad because there only stayed a handful of us and I possibly, uh, went out to uhm...  
 19. to the parents say for one day, for a few hours. Then I had to register in such a special book the time  
 20. when I went out and whe/ when I am back. But uhm... holidays were such a special time, people...  
 21. well, as usual for holidays. They would buy a lot, drink a lot, there was debauchery, bashes and I  
 22. just so often had, these holidays unfortunately... I had a choice to either/ simply spend them in  
 23. company of drunk parents, with fights. And usually when my parents drank then I always had... I  
 24. was always reproached that... that... What was I there for, that I'd moved out, that I didn't want be  
 25. there and so on and so on. Well, this was very painful for me, I really was very emotional about it...  
 26. and often when I was home my parents were quarrelling. And generally, when I, uhm, visited them,  
 27. I only just checked to see if everything was all right, if they hadn't killed each other yet, and if  
 28. everything was okay with my brothers and sisters. But these weren't such good times, I remember  
 29. then that my brother already was at a juvenile detention home or in prison. I always got cards for  
 30. Christmas that melted my heart so much, and I forever cried that we can't be together... well it  
 31. wasn't a cool time ((softer)).  
 32. A: And where did you spend summer holidays?  
 33. N: Summer holidays... uhm... Usually there were camps organized... and usually I went to some  
 34. camps here and there, uhm... somewhere to the lakes or to the mountains or to the seaside. Of  
 35. course, everything from the children's home was organized, so holidays were spent quite

1. intensively because they were actually filled up for almost the two entire months. We weren't in  
 2. [name of city], and when we were here it was already only the last days, end of holidays...

3. A: Natalia, and so now... How did the matter of your becoming independent, later, how did it look  
 4. like, this entering the adult/ Perhaps you'd like some coffee or tea?

5. N: No, no thank you ((sighs)). Entering into adult life. Well, I in fact, I just uhm... could kick myself  
 6. because after finishing primary school uhm... I went to a secondary school.

7. A: And that primary school, I'm sorry, you finished at the children's home?

8. N: Yes.

9. A: At the children's home?

10. N: Yes, yes, yes. It was the last year, such a difficult period but, but there even, it went not so bad at  
 11. this school, so uhm... so I first submitted documents for the secondary school, I didn't go/ I didn't  
 12. manage until the end of the year... probably because it wasn't a time for me to learn ((laughing))  
 13. and unfortunately I resigned from that school. And then I went to a vocational school, so that I lost  
 14. one year really, well, not really lost to the end, because I learnt... a little something there, but I was  
 15. one year behind when it came to education. I went to the vocational school, I completed that  
 16. vocational school, I turned 19, and the pedagogue from the children's home, uhm... managed to get  
 17. me a flat. Besides, I guess all the kids that went out of the children's home got a flat from the City  
 18. Council somewhere in the district, in the neighborhood of uhm... one's family homes, which I don't  
 19. know if this is so good, uhm... cause one doesn't really change their environment - and sometimes...  
 20. people just give up and it's not, it's not cool. Anyhow, I got a flat. I finished vocational school and I  
 21. remember then that I still wanted to go to a secondary school or a technical secondary school, just  
 22. continue my education at school, but the pedagogue said that no, no. So I did it myself on my own,  
 23. and I wanted to do it somehow in the evening system, or even maybe not in the evening system, I  
 24. don't know, I just wanted to go to a secondary economic school in [street name] I remember cause I  
 25. went there, I completed the vocational school there.

26. A: An economic one too?

27. N: Yes, the economic school I first finished eve/ even with quite good results, uhm, because I  
 28. remember I I received a book (((with a smile))) at the end of the year, at the end of this school year,  
 29. and just this lady uhm... this caregiver from this school tried to persuade me to go to this secondary  
 30. school, but the lady pedagogue said that it was too late and... and not necessarily, that they will give  
 31. me the examination, they will apply for a flat for me now and let me go. And then I got some kind  
 32. of a grant... I don't know, some amount of money that I could buy the most necessary things such  
 33. that, I don't know, didn't know what things I needed, but this, this wasn't a lot of money. It was,  
 34. well, actually if I went to the shop I could buy a bed for it, and maybe a table and that would be it.  
 35. But I got some old bed from my godmother, and, I don't know, something else, because these were

1. such flats in the tenant houses which had toilets, well, good enough that the toilets were in the home  
 2. because... besides I really needed nothing there so I had this showe/... to accommodate this flat to  
 3. my own needs, to do this bathroom somehow and so on.

4. A: It was one room that you got?

5. N: This was a room with a kitchen.

6. A: Mhm.

7. N: It was lucky for me, because not everyone had such uhm... such poss/ such possibilities. I got a  
 8. flat which was 37 meters, also quite big because, because one usually gets a social one 20 plus  
 9. meters, but there was just such a flat free after such a couple that I knew personally, and it was  
 10. vacant, and so I tried to get this flat and... and just as people looked a little bit - I don't know how it  
 11. is now with the children from the children's home, that this City Council so fell in uhm... and  
 12. helped me and I got the right to this flat... Well, so it happened that I was striking out on my own,  
 13. that uhm... that I moved there, after this vocational school, of course I went straight to work and  
 14. actually I got this job uhm... A woman came to our children's home and said that she needed people  
 15. to work in a warehouse. And I then, and I then just got this job due to the fact that she turned up  
 16. with this offer and immediately I was offered it, and I worked for this lady for some time and in the  
 17. meantime/ well, and while I worked there, I met my present husband... Before I met him I lived  
 18. with my friend from the children's home because uhm... somehow, somehow we became  
 19. independent aro/ around the same time, and generally uhm... just before I left the hospital  
 20. unfortunately, I was in a car accident and spent two months in a hospital.

21. A: Before going out of hospital or...?

22. N: I'm sorry from the children's home.

23. A: From the children's home, mhm.

24. N: These were the last holidays and so, uhm... and I spent them cool ((with a smile)) well but uhm...  
 25. After I left the children's home the flat was already waiting for me, I was supposed to pick up the  
 26. keys and I moved in this flat. I lived with a friend because I am probably a, uhm... I don't belong to  
 27. loners. I just need to have someone around cause, uhm, I would simply go crazy if I was to live  
 28. alone. Well, inch by inch I worked because I tried to furnish this poor flat of mine. My present  
 29. husband went to the army and I lived with a girl from the children's home.

30. A: Another one, yes?

31. N: Another friend yes. And then, uhm... then my husband came back, the friend got her own flat,  
 32. she came back - she went to her flat... I don't keep in contact with her now... Well then I went to,  
 33. uhm... I left, I went to/ that is, I changed jobs. I undertook studies in an evening secondary school  
 34. three times a week. I had a good, uhm... boss, because he went along with it and he sometimes let  
 35. me leave work early, three times a week, so that I could continue education, so I finished this

1. secondary school easily, then I went to a college. In the meantime, my child was born and I got  
 2. married... I have such a lovely sugar, a cool girl... Well, after this I took up another job. I in fact  
 3. work all the time and... I feel sorry for my baby because, because when she was 9 months I put her  
 4. in the nursery and I also worked, so poor girl. She was little, but survived, she is a strong big girl  
 5. now... and I took up logistics studies. Now I'm working in quite a large company and I actually  
 6. don't know ((smiling)), don't know what else I can say.

7. A: Natalia still going back to that, to this moment of young adulthood. At this moment, that is, once  
 8. you began an independent life, did you have any problems... any trouble?

9. N: Oh, did I have trouble? It seems to me that I had no special trouble, but maybe... maybe I'm too  
 10. emotionally connected to my family and, as usual something, had some contact with the parents. I  
 11. had some failures uhm... watching this, because we lived in, in the same building, so I had  
 12. difficulties watching some fights until, with the passage of time, I calmed down, until my dad got  
 13. sick and stopped drinking, my mom got sick because and... and she stopped drinking, because now  
 14. she is a more ailing person. Then I had... had such, I don't know, adventures like saving my brother  
 15. because he has a seizure and his head is hitting the curb, so he doesn't kill himself. But generally I  
 16. don't now recall any extreme problems. No, I don't think that... I generally came across really good  
 17. people, both employers and the environment in which I functioned. Well, maybe there were some  
 18. problems with my current mother-in-law at the beginning uhm... meaning ((laughs)) she didn't want  
 19. her son to date a girl from a children's home, and maybe she just had a different future in mind, but  
 20. we dealt with her ((laughs)) so well, well I don't, no, I don't think that had any big problems.

21. A: And your husband (x) in which year did you meet, more or less (x)?

22. N: I met my husband and I went out uhm... when I left the children's home, that is, in 94.

23. A: In what circumstances did you meet him?

24. N: Uhm... I met him through my friend with whom I was at the vocational school, so it was a little  
 25. funny because, uhm... I was just at the same class with this friend who was friends with such a girl  
 26. who, of course, uhm, three of us were in one class, and this friend of my colleague looked down on  
 27. people terribly and all ((laughing)), and it happened that she had such a boyfriend and uhm... and I  
 28. really don't know how it was but we wanted to tease her a little bit and we arranged with this  
 29. [name] that she will introduce me to this boyfriend of this girl who had her nose in the air and I will  
 30. pretend that there uhm... uhm, that this guy fancies me, to make her jealous and to bring her to heel  
 31. a little. And so she introduced me ((laughs)) to my present husband.

32. A: So you brought her to heel for good.

33. N: Yes, yes. But I think this was such dating, uhm, actually at the beginning such dating that I think  
 34. that I didn't hurt her ((laughs)), absolutely, because she probably wasn't very interested because she  
 35. was just looking around for various boys and the one who had a car or a motorcycle then, then she

1. was (((with animation))) well, maybe a little bit of a materialist. I don't know, it's difficult for me to  
 2. describe now, but so it began between me and my husband and then he began to come to me and  
 3. and... well, here we are till now.

4. A: Would you say a few words about your husband, what family he comes from, how old he is,  
 5. what he does?

6. N: Well, my husband is one year younger than I am, although not a whole year, in months it would  
 7. be seven months, and he is always holding it over my head that I'm older than him ((laughs)) uhm...  
 8. He also comes from a family with many children, actually two brothers uhm... from a full family,  
 9. normal family, the father was... he served in the military professionally, his mother dealt with, uhm,  
 10. she was an administrator of a market. Her job was just administering such a local bazaar that is, she  
 11. worked... really she had her own business, but worked for the [public institution]. And, uhm, it was  
 12. such a normal family there wasn't anything missing, they lived in a block of flats, three rooms with  
 13. a kitchen, nicely furnished, well I absolutely didn't fit into this family because I was just a poor  
 14. orphan from a children's home ((laughter)), with such a past with some round-the-bend family, and  
 15. sometimes it was a horror to meet one of my brothers in a dark street. But... but my husband's  
 16. family was normal and uhm... and in fact I think that I probably loved my husband from the  
 17. beginning, but somebody, I don't know if it wasn't one of the caregivers said to me, I don't  
 18. remember now, but still when I was at children's home, to best assess uhm... my future husband by  
 19. judging the relationships at his home, and what relationships uhm... the father has uhm... with the...  
 20. with the mother... ((laughter)) and I think, I think this really is true, because uhm... because as I  
 21. went there to my husband's place... I never, I never heard my husband's father speak to his to his  
 22. wife any other way than [diminutive name] that is, he wasn't uhm... maybe they had some sort of  
 23. arguments or - because this is normal that this is healthy even for the relationship. Sometimes you  
 24. need, maybe not to beat up each other up or to fight physically, but have some exchange of different  
 25. views... maybe this was there in my husband's family, but it absolutely wasn't like at my parents'.  
 26. There, there the life was normal, there nothing was missing.

27. A: What is your husband's education, what is his vocation?

28. N: My husband uhm... unfortunately, finished only/ I mean when I met him he only finished a  
 29. primary school... actually there from that family there weren't any people so very much educated...  
 30. Two brothers finished vocational schools, but he didn't finish a vocational school, because... I don't  
 31. know, in general he has, uh, maybe not a difficult character but he is very firm and a little  
 32. impulsive, and uhm... and sometimes you need to bite your tongue because it is better that way to  
 33. say nothing. However, he couldn't... he had some conflicts at this school with some guys cause he  
 34. came to the first class... and there was this so-called wave, someone said something, told him to do  
 35. something... I don't know. If his mother had insisted more or his father had kept a better watch on

1. him, he perhaps would have completed this school. However uhm... however he did not finish it.
2. He went to his mother, said openly that he would not go to this school anymore, but he'll go to
3. work. And since 17 years of age this boy uhm... has been working... However uhm... a few years
4. ago, because, uh... there appeared such cool schools for adults, that at my persuasion ((laughs)) and
5. don't know whose else, perhaps also because of the child (x), because the child will go to school
6. and there we would have to write in the documents that her father has only a primary education, so
7. my husband went to the secondary school for adults. It gave him a lot, well, so he has contacts he's
8. met people, he's... like as if he's come back on track all in all, and I don't hold it against him that he
9. completed school late but he did. I also maneuvered from school to school incredibly and before I
10. had the brains and I finished something, well, so some time has passed, and now my husband has
11. secondary education and is proud of it ((laughs)).
12. A: Where does he work?
13. N: Uh he works now as a driver.
14. A: Mhm. Natalia when you talk about maneuvering in these schools, was there anything else with
15. these schools?
16. N: Well I, well because I actually went a little bit, well, first I went a bit because first I started
17. secondary school and I didn't complete this school. I went to the vocational school, then I went
18. again to the secondary school that I finished, next I went to a two-year College of Law and
19. Administration which I also finished, and then I decided that I will not go to any more studies
20. because, first, I don't have time and second – it takes too long and so on, and then finally I finished
21. these studies 1st degree studies, so I guess I'm just such an eternal student ((laughs)).
22. A: Well, approximately how old were you or in which year did you finish this evening secondary
23. school?
24. N: I was 23 when I finished that school.
25. A: This evening one, right?
26. N: Yes, (x) in the evening because it was a vocational school.
27. A: But primary education you went through, right/
28. N: Yes, I did that without any failures.
29. A: You went there when you were at your grandmother's, right?
30. N: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I finished the primary education without any problem, then I went to the
31. secondary school.
32. A: (x).
33. N: To [school number], well and as I was one year behind, and because I didn't finish this
34. secondary school, I went to a vocational school, I finished the vocational school in three years at the
35. age of 19 and I started to work.

1. A: And you were like, 20, 21 years old, you went to that/
2. N: I was 20, because this school here - cause this secondary school was three years, it took place
3. three times a week, it was such an evening system.
4. A: And this college, in which year did you finish that, more or less?
5. N: ((sighs)) I started the college uhm, let's see... how old was my child, she was a couple of years
6. old... wait in ninety, wait... God, I don't know in 2000, either 2000 or maybe even 99.
7. A: Okay, and now the studies.
8. N: The studies I started in/ well, I graduated two years ago, so I started my studies five years ago,
9. yes.
10. A: Natalia, about your professional career, because you said that you work there, that you have
11. actually worked all the time, haven't you?
12. N: Yes.
13. A: Were you ever unemployed at some time, or not?
14. N: I was.
15. A: How/
16. N: For some time.
17. A: What does your professional career look like?
18. N: My career?
19. A: In order to set this on a time scale, more or less.
20. N: Am I to bring my CV ((laughter)).
21. A: ((laughter)) This first/ the very first time that you earned money was in the warehouse, or did
22. you earn any money earlier?
23. N: Yes.
24. A: Excluding selling alcohol.
25. N: Yeah, I earned money because, uhm... I went - when I was still at the children's home I went
26. picking strawberries somewhere in [name of the district at city outskirts], or the area don't know
27. somewhere off [street name]. There were such strawberry plantations and in the summer I earned
28. money picking strawberries when I was at my grandma's. My grandmother is so, well, she didn't
29. belong to such exclusive people. In fact my, uh, godmother would send me in parcels after her
30. daughter to wear so my grandmother really just bought me what, what was really necessary,
31. because what would people say, well, because it is a small village and everyone knows each other
32. so when I no longer had something then you see she had to buy it because it would be like, well, it
33. would get everybody talking, so at my grandma's also in order to buy myself something I went to
34. the surrounding forests collecting berries, for example, I know I helped someone in the field and
35. then I earned mo/ some money, but this was just money for my expenses, so I could go to a bazaar

1. and buy myself some nice clothes. I mean, I never had any excess or other useful things.
2. A: Okay, and later career-wise, you first went to the warehouse, well and (xx).
3. N: Uhm... gosh, I didn't work long in the warehouse (x) just as I came out of this hospital this lady
4. was already waiting for me. It was August and I went out in the early, maybe mid August of this
5. hospital somehow so still uhm... I had very little recovery and I ended up in this warehouse, I
6. worked a little while, I think I worked there/
7. A: And you were hit by the car?
8. N: No, I was not hit by a car I... I uhm... was a passenger. We were driving to a disco, five people,
9. and the car crashed into another car, and uhm.. I ended up in this warehouse. I worked, I think about
10. a year and a half or two years. I had a very good relationship there with a lady [name] ((laughs)).
11. She was such a nice lady, it was her who just introduced me to the boss who who was in the place. I
12. don't know, she arranged various matters anyway in this warehouse, and it began to fall apart a little
13. bit there. It was a haberdashery wholesale, so well, there the profit won't be probably too much on
14. some threads and so on... it was worse and worse in the warehouse and I remember that my boss
15. sent me to uhm... a bazaar in [name of district] on such [common name for the bazaar], I don't
16. know such just a such a bazaar and there was a market...
17. A: There was something (x) mhm.
18. N: In a housing estate, and I remember... that, that I went there and complained a little because I
19. was cold and it was raining, or it was cold and it snowed, and I went with this haberdashery to this
20. market and for nothing, because there I think I earned on things sold. That is, she in fact changed
21. the contract because previously I had a fixed salary and then when I sell a snap then I get like 10
22. percent or something... and then my, uh, not my husband yet, but my current husband, uhm, he
23. didn't like it terribly and one day he came for me (xx) in a car and told me to call the boss to come
24. and stand there some time herself, because he saw that I was frozen to the skin and soaked and
25. that's how my career was over because she told me, you know, if you don't stand there then I
26. terminate the contract, so I left that company, left that company and then I was sent by the City
27. Council... I was sent I was sent to such a sho/... which was uhm... it specialized in such chemical
28. articles like painting things and some nails and screws and there they created a stationery position
29. for me, and it was close to school, so, uh, I was working in this position for a while in this chemical
30. story, and I worked a lot, and it was just the period when I went to school and just had the school
31. nearby, and then I left this company... I don't know how it happened, but I know I found a better job
32. offer, although the working conditions were very unattractive, and then I had already comple/ yes, I
33. had already finished this school.
34. A: Secondary school, right?
35. N: Yes, this secondary school and I went to uhm... [name of the workplace] there there uhm... was,

1. there was better money was/ there was better insurance in general, and generally there were
2. contributions transferred to ZUS [Social Security Fund – translator's note] for the amount that was
3. earned, and there in this the shop uhm... I worked there six months and then (x).
4. A: As a shop-assistant?
5. N: No, no, I worked in production.
6. A: I understand, in production.
7. N: [Chemical business] yes.
8. A: (xx) except that there this is work, my father worked in [name of the workplace].
9. N: Yeah... there the conditions uhm... were just terrible. Although I didn't mind, but I know that
10. uhm... uhm, I know that as we got on the bus, because it was probably the final stop, and before it
11. yet another company uhm... they used to get in, so as we were getting in there was such a
12. comment: "Hey [colloquial name of the workplace] are getting in." Because we smelled terribly,
13. even though there were uhm... some showers at work, one could wash oneself, but still our hair was
14. soaked with gasoline and these glues, these conditions uhm... even in those times the workplace
15. really left much to be desired and well conditions were poor and I got pregnant. As soon as I found
16. out I was pregnant then, well, I went on a sick leave because there were a lot of miscarriages due to
17. just these uhm... fumes and work with these harmful substances. And of course, my contract was
18. not renewed, only until the birth date, and then my child was born.
19. A: This was in 98.
20. N: Yes, in 98 I gave birth to my beloved sugar uhm... so I was there on maternity leave and then
21. uhm... at the age nin/ when my Wiera was little, I remember that in the meantime still uhm... I
22. earned some extra money as an interviewer at [company name] here at [street name] actually there
23. opposite and there uhm... some questionnaires uhm... I was running around with some
24. questionnaires somewhere in the vicinity and made some money. Maybe it was small, but at least I
25. earned something ((laughs))... so I always did something. Then, uhm... then after these
26. questionnaires... my mother-in-law helped me a little because at her bazaar she organized me a
27. stand and I sold vegetables. In the the meantime I got my driving license... and then I was my own
28. deliverer and I used to go to [street name] where I bought potatoes, cabbage, apples, tomatoes and
29. such things and I sold it at the bazaar, so even just worked at, uhm... the bazaar while my child went
30. to the nursery and so, well... there were ups and downs, one made a profit one didn't, one got cold,
31. it wasn't an easy work. I drove an old car, but somehow I managed and it was, it was okay and in
32. 2002 I don't know if I didn't miss anything on the way but... I don't know, I can't remember if I
33. worked anywhere else... oh yes... I distributed phone books for uhm... Polish telephone books when
34. they were still in demand, but it was so seasonal. So next, in 2002 I started working in the company
35. in which I work ti/ till now... well, and when I went it was a newly opened company with foreign

1. capital, it was a U.S. company, and I started working there in 2002, from July. Actually I was  
 2. offered such work because in fact I didn't really know [name of the company], that I remember  
 3. ((laughs)), and there were such working conditions and someone from the manufacturing plant  
 4. asked me, and I thought... well ok, I'll work because they pay quite de/ decent wages. So I went, I  
 5. went to this company, I was accepted, and at the same time I did some tests at the Institute of  
 6. Medicine, because one had to have manual dexterity and so on, show a little uhm... and there as I  
 7. came to this workplace it just dawned on me, because I hadn't imagined that the plant may look,  
 8. really look like it was a really new factory, neat, it wasn't [name of the employer] working  
 9. conditions at all. It was/ the hall was clean uhm... workplace, uh, job po/ positions really were very  
 10. good and I started working there as an operator because it is optical fiber company and... and now I  
 11. am, uhm, responsible for the operator's position after 8 years. And I went to the studies due to my  
 12. work really, because my former manager motivated me "Natalia go, go because you're wasting  
 13. yourself here, go study, come on, I'll help you here, maybe the company will sponsor something"  
 14. and indeed in the first year I got some money to go to the studies, to go to the studies and pay for  
 15. them. I went to extramural studies... and then I started to, uhm, and then changed my position for a  
 16. little bit higher, then even a little higher, and now I'm actually an office employee. It's an  
 17. engineering position, but, well/ we reached this current point.

18. A: You also said that there were some moments of unemployment. When were they?

19. N: ((sighs)) There were such brief moments of unemployment when I lost uhm mater/ when I  
 20. finished my period of maternity leave and then my Wierusia was six months old so... I had nobody  
 21. to leave her with and I was on unemployment benefits. These were such/ this wasn't a long period,  
 22. these were such periods between one work and the other. I don't know uhm... like maybe when I  
 23. left this warehouse where I was standing out there in some market then well, uhm, I was on some  
 24. unemployment benefit, but this was a short period because the neighbor next door helped me get  
 25. this work in [name of the workplace], ((laughs)), and I worked there, I don't know, I can't  
 26. remember, in total maybe a year and a half at the maximum/ such a period.

27. A: To pull yourself together, right?

28. N: Yes, to get through this whole period.

29. A: Did you use the assistance of any institutions then or not?

30. N: No, not.

31. A: Mhm. Okay, we're in the current period, still, in order to go on to finish this, this story uhm...  
 32. just, I still wanted to ask about some things that I missed somewhere. In which year were you  
 33. married?

34. N: in 90 eig/ seven, in 97.

35. A: Did you live together earlier?

1. N: Yes.

2. A: Since which year, about?

3. N: Well, actually as I came out of this children's home, it actually was 1994, but in fact since, say,  
 4. 95 or 96. Because my husband went to the army and that was such a time, when he went to the  
 5. army uhm... like I said I don't much like to be alone and then there was one friend and then another  
 6. lived with me.

7. A: And then your future husband returned to you.

8. N: Yes, right.

9. A: And also I wanted to ask you, because you mentioned your grandparents, and I wanted to ask  
 10. about these grandparents from your mother's side/ did I understand correctly that both  
 11. grandmothers are alive. This grandma from your mother's side, what did she work as, what did she  
 12. do here in [name of city]?

13. N: My grandmother worked hard throughout her whole life, uhm... she had four children, one child  
 14. actually died shortly after birth somehow, and there was my mother, uhm... her older brother, there  
 15. was a son from her second marriage because/ in general my grandmother uhm... became a widow  
 16. at a young age since her first husband simply drank himself to death, such are the alcoholic genes.

17. A: That is, the father of your mother, right?

18. N: Yes, my mother's father, such alcoholic genes, just so (((ironic laughter))) from generation to  
 19. generation, already so deep so... my mother's father drank himself to death, my grandmother was  
 20. left alone she brought up two children it was not easy for her she worked her whole life in [name of  
 21. the workplace] plant. I think she was a seamstress or something, I don't know exactly what she did.

22. A: She was a worker at any rate?

23. N: Yes, an employee at the plant, and then she got married and gave birth to a son who at the age of  
 24. 24 was killed and uhm... then her second husband also died and she was actually alone.

25. A: Did she live somewhere in the tenant house in the city center, or in a block of flats?

26. N: My grandmother lived in [name of district], in such nice old houses in [settlement name]. There  
 27. is a a very nice neighborhood, a terrace, lots of greenery and that's why we very often escaped there  
 28. to this grandmother, and I remember from my childhood a period when I was little, I was probably  
 29. 7 or 6, and my younger brother, I mean the one 2 years younger, so he was about 4, and I remember  
 30. that there was just such a situation that my parents were drinking and then I took my little brother  
 31. by the hand and we went here to the tram stop and I knew that [the tram line number] goes to  
 32. grandma's, so we often escaped to grandma's, but this was one of my first such trips when I really  
 33. was so little and yet dim-witted. I didn't know at all I didn't know this, I mean [name of city] was  
 34. also different - different and there was not so much traffic, not so intensive, but I know I confused  
 35. the stops and instead in the direction of [name of housing estate] we went to [name of housing

1. estate] with this brother of mine, and some woman took us to the/ to the police station... and then I  
 2. remember that we were sitting there for quite a while these police officers gave us sandwiches so  
 3. that we had something to eat, such poor children, dirty, smeared, hungry, frightened were going to  
 4. their grandma's but not in the right direction. Anyway, I don't know uhm... these days my child has  
 5. recently really started to function alone and I let her travel, but it's also because there is a mobile  
 6. phone and she calls me when she arrives uhm... when when she leaves, when she arrives, she's  
 7. under full control, while then, in those times such phones did not exist, and besides my parents  
 8. probably even weren't aware that we weren't at home, so we went to grandma's. Nobody there  
 9. looked after us too much, so we spent some time at this police station until, uhm, they actually  
 10. identified our place of residence, because I just couldn't quite remember where we lived. I only  
 11. knew my name, so the police drove us back so... it was cool (((ironically))).  
 12. A: And this flat, that squat to which your mother broke into, how - I mean I know that this is an old  
 13. building, the old one also here in [name of district].  
 14. N: Yes, yes.  
 15. A: And how many rooms did you have there?  
 16. N: ((sighs)) It was so... different, because going into uhm... this our flat we first had a common  
 17. corridor, uhm, with the neighbor, with a Mr [name], such a sot ((smiles)), but we remember him  
 18. somehow nicely ((smile)) just as Mr [name], uhm... when we were little kids (xx), one of o/ our  
 19. games, among others, was walking uhm... along the street curbs and collecting cigarette butts for  
 20. this Mr [name]. I remember we got a whacking when my dad saw what we were doing.  
 21. A: ((laughs))  
 22. N: So uhm... so this flat was, it was just a single flat with a common corridor.  
 23. A: *Komunalka* [communal flat – translator's note], right?  
 24. N: Pardon?  
 25. A: A so-called *komunalka*?  
 26. N: I think so uhm... and on the left there lived our, our neighbor, and in front there was a room, a  
 27. huge single room, it had probably about 30 meters and it was there where my mother broke into and  
 28. we got the flat when this Mr [name] died, so we smashed the wall there to this Mr [name]'s room  
 29. and we had an extra room so then you could either go out through here or go out through there, and  
 30. somehow and we had this room that was about 48 square meters.  
 31. A: So there were two rooms?  
 32. N: Yes.  
 33. A: Any kitchen, bathroom?  
 34. N: Mm... In the beginning, for many, many years, there was only one room, there was no toilet. The  
 35. toilet was on the street/ in the yard, so the conditions were hardly any. There was no bathroom, just

1. an old dirty sink and uhm... and a pot for children to piss in... at night or in the evening. Generally,  
 2. one went there to the end of the yard to the toilet and so it really looked like to the end this uhm...  
 3. this is our home. After that, after that Mr [name], there was this uhm... second room of which a  
 4. kitchen was made, and there was also some couch put inside, actually all in one/ And till/ only after  
 5. many, many years when we moved out, already maybe this, my youngest sister still lived there,  
 6. when my dad uhm... made a bathroom, such a bathroom that there was a toilet and a shower cabin,  
 7. but it was not in my life/ It was maybe 10 years ago.  
 8. A: Well Natalia now, such, such final questions about the current situation, because you live with  
 9. your husband and daughter, right?  
 10. N: And a cat and a dog.  
 11. A: A cat and a dog, that is taking animals in ((laughter)).  
 12. N: Yes, yes, a (xxx) weakness...  
 13. A: Animals, I had the same idea, that someday I'll have a shelter.  
 14. N: There's something in it.  
 15. A: There's something in it, isn't there... Now you live in the flat that you were given after becoming  
 16. independent?  
 17. N: Yes. All the time I've lived in this flat. There have been ideas to move... to change flats with  
 18. someone, but then somehow they always vanish. Always... uhm... somehow there's never been any  
 19. occasion for doing so, uhm... but... 4 years ago we bought a worker's plot of land and... mm we stay  
 20. at this plot a little bit in the/ the summer, for the weekends. We really enjoyed it there and decided  
 21. to aim for something and/ say there was a moment to change flats but uhm... the cost of changing  
 22. the flat was so high that we decided to buy a building plot after our worker's plot and we will be  
 23. building a house there. This may ta/ this will take some time, I don't know, 10, 15 years, but such is  
 24. a dream home. Well, and now we are just striving for that uhm... we sold this worker's plot, we  
 25. added some money, took some loans, and we bought a building lot. Maybe not in such a great  
 26. location but the land was cheap ((laughs)), so uhm, we bought there in the area, say less than 30  
 27. kilometers from [name of city].  
 28. A: Outside [name of city], right?  
 29. N: Yes, the lot. And we have a plan that we want to take a bank loan and we'll build ourselves our  
 30. own house.  
 31. A: And there are still these 37 meters, as it was before?  
 32. N: Yes.  
 33. A: Still a room with a kitchen?  
 34. N: Uhm... there are still 37metres, but uhm... it's not a room with a kitchen because it was always a  
 35. flat with a corridor, and from the corridor such a long corridor on the left side there is a room say

1. less than 20 meters, and on the right side there was a large kitchen, and I divided this kitchen. And
2. now my child has a room. It's tight, but it's her own. And she has her place, a bunk bed, below she
3. has a desk, a window, some shelves, cabinets and so on, so she has some privacy. Well, and we have
4. ((grunts)) we have uhm... such a narrow kitchen, so this kitchen also serves us as a bathroom and
5. laundry room because in the end, in the corner there is a shower and uhm... a washing machine. And
6. this - so this is all very tight but ((grunts)) but ((coughs)) we don't mind I don't know, we don't
7. have any sense of embarrassment so we don't need to have such a private bathroom. And... and this
8. flat is/ well, and there is a separate toilet so this flat/
9. A: Within the flat?
10. N: Yes, yes.
11. A: It is a communal housing, isn't it?
12. N: ((grunts)) It was a communal flat when I got it. But now it turned out that there are un/
13. unregulated land registers, and there is a private owner, as though, so we are a private apartment
14. building under the administration's management.
15. A: But you are the tenants there?
16. N: Yes.
17. A: Natalia, what does your everyday life look like now?
18. N: My everyday life?
19. A: Mhm.
20. N: ((grunts, sighs)) It's like this. I get up at five thirty, because I have to walk the dog in the park.
21. A: ((laughs))
22. N: I try to run a little bit because, well, af/ after this vacation I am slightly overweight ((laughs))
23. some 3.5 kilograms, and I'm trying to just lose it by morning going out with the dog. I come home,
24. returning uhm... from this park I give a ring to my husband, then he puts the kettle on for coffee.
25. Before I reach home/ I visit a bakery, buy bread (((with humor))) . In the morning we drink coffee,
26. tell each other about uhm... well everything that's tiring us, that's bothering us. Since my husband
27. works in rather specific hours and works really very long hours, and comes back in the evening
28. very late in the evening, we often have no opportunity to talk to each other so normally, so it's such
29. a time in the morning that we'll chat a while. Alternatively, we'll phone up sometime during work
30. and we'll talk. Then there is, I don't know, half past seven there is going out to work because I work
31. in [town near big city, Natalia's place of residence], so I have to go to work a little bit earlier. I work
32. from 8 to about 4.30, around 5 o'clock I get home. There are holidays now so I'm about 5 o'clock
33. uhm... at home I meet my child, do some shopping, cook dinner I... do the cleaning, I wash dishes,
34. do some laundry, sometimes watch something on television. Although I must admit that I watch TV
35. quite rarely, I'd rather read a book if I have the time, although sometimes I watch TV too. Normally

1. during the school year I go twice a week, I go to the English language course because I forever
2. study ((laughter)), well say for three years I've been continuing all the time, it's not like I rest on
3. my laurels, I don't lie down ((grunts))... And actually like, uhm during the week every day is
4. similar. My daughter does homework, actually she is an independent child, and she spends a lot of
5. time on her own though uhm... she goes to her grandma's, with whom he has a very good contact. I
6. have never had such and probably will never have in my life. But my mom uhm... she really is with
7. this daughter of mine and they get along great. Now, she has no such problems as she had during
8. my, in my childhood, because she is a very ill person. She has a very advanced diabetes and she's
9. after a heart attack... There was a moment that she was in the hospital for two months last year,
10. after the heart attack, because she could not walk, had a very weak organism. And now even if she
11. really wanted she is simply too much afraid to drink alcohol, don't know, she also has some
12. problems with the thyroid, well, a lot of such different, uhm, diseases which, among other things,
13. are also due to destruction of the organism by this alcohol. So... so what else? Also I do some
14. shopping for my mom, a doctor maybe sometimes... grandma still/ But very often it used to be that
15. this, once in two weeks I went to/ even earlier before work, I went to the market to do shopping for
16. my grandma. I delivered her some shopping and went to work already ((laughs)). Sometimes I was
17. so worn out that/ well, but my grandma also used to help us when we needed someone the most.
18. Well, so we actually live for weekends, because then I pack the dog, the cat, the child, and various
19. stuff into the car and we drive to the lot, and then I wind down.
20. A: Well, do you have any free time in addition to these weekends or not?
21. N: Well, today I have some free time ((laughs)).
22. A: ((laughs)) from doing (x).
23. N: That I am spending with you.
24. A: This is what weekends look like, right? Weekends at the lot?
25. N: Yes.
26. A: So you're going to this, this/
27. N: We are going to the lot, take a rest.
28. A: Because your husband is home at the weekends, or does he work different (xx)?
29. N: My husband comes to me, uhm, most often, on Saturdays, after 2, 3 pm.
30. A: Do you have anything on this lot out there?
31. N: We have. We have a toilet, a garage, and two caravans.
32. A: Oh that is where one can/
33. N: One can sleep, yes.
34. A: And in the winter?
35. N: In the winter?

1. A: How do these weekends look like, also the lot, in the/
2. N: No, in the winter we have a little more time for ourselves. We are more, say lazy, though not
3. really, because there are constant walks with the dog and we always inve/ invent something.
4. Sometimes we'll make a trip to the mountains for 2, 3 days, if we can afford it. And we we are
5. rather active people, so we may go to the cinema sometimes... or we talk and just sit at home.
6. A: And how do you spend holidays?
7. N: ((sighs)) holidays uhm... we spend... together. But... usually it is so that mm... we spend mm...
8. just we actually must split cause uhm... we have two families and... mm. We go to my mom... we go
9. to my husband's parents, we just so one day here one day there, because uhm... my husband's
10. parents moved out, sold their block and moved out 100 kilometers away, so it's a little bit difficult
11. and, and I know that sometimes, uh... I turn a little, a little to my side because my husband would
12. also want to meet with his mother. All the more so now that, uhm... she also had a heart attack last
13. year, and this year she had a stroke, brain haemorrhage, so (x), well, he just would want to spend
14. more time with her and time is short, as you can see, because we are constantly at work, we are
15. always somewhere, in touch by phone, and uhm... I do a little force my husband to accept that my
16. mother was left alone, that my dad died, that one needs to help her, and so generally stretch a bit on
17. this side to stay with my mother because really, well, she needs help, something needs to be cooked,
18. some shopping has to be done. Although she loves to cook, but, but still well, on holidays,
19. something has to be prepared and to go somewhere, buy something, clean up, so we usually spend
20. this time at my mom's. But, well, I try to be a little fair and go with my husband to his parents too.
21. A: How old is your mother, because this/
22. N: My mother's 59.
23. A: And your dad, how old was he when he died?
24. N: My dad was 59 when he died, now he would be 61.
25. A: Natalia, so uhm... how do you spend holidays?
26. N: Now, no how. Since we bought the plot we (xxx) ((laughs)) we really spend uhm... these holiday
27. days on the plot this year. But generally, uhm, until we had such financial obligations and uhm...
28. and we had just a little money for such other things, then we - until we bought the land, we would
29. have gone to the mountains, to the sea, a little abroad, more on the Italian side ((grunts)). Also, it
30. was so that we always travelled on vacation somewhere we did not stay in [name of the city]. Well,
31. and it was fun and we had a great rest at that time. But now, well, even my child suffers because she
32. has to stay at the lot. Although she's met a lot of peers about her age there, so she doesn't cry
33. terribly for this reason.
34. A: Do you have any friends, acquaintances, some kind of a circle of friends, some kind of a circle of
35. people with whom you maintain contact?

1. N: Yes, we keep in touch with acquaint/ Although now... with... with friends from the children's
2. home, I don't keep in contact with them although there was a time that we in fact met with three,
3. four families from the children's home. But generally there is so little time that it stopped, although
4. sometimes we still meet, but, well, we/ I actually, we have uhm... uhm friends a little bit from the
5. side of my husband and a little from the the side of uhm... my work. A friend has just phoned... I
6. don't know what for, something I was to bring on the way and she is already on maternity leave and
7. I'm going to see her today. Anyway, we meet with friends and we, we mm... we have friends on the
8. plot, neighbors who are more or less our age, we are at the same stage of building and so on, we
9. have some common interests, and we actually spend this time now, uhm, to a greater extent
10. precisely with these people from the lot.
11. A: And is there someone who you can count on?
12. N: My husband.
13. A: Natalia so now, how would you in general look at this life of yours? Were there any such major
14. events that in your opinion affected this life?
15. N: Yes, well, there were, definitely. It was this that I went to this children's home and was/ was not
16. left here alone. And I uhm... think that this gave direction really to my life because I mm... I
17. learned such a good lesson and... ((clicks her tongue)) I had people who could, uhm, me just say,
18. uhm... direct me to such a good way. I think that if I had, uhm, like my siblings, gone to... I know
19. such... to such, such environments, I don't know... don't know... it's just hard for me to say. I'm not
20. in such a situation and I don't know how I would have behaved and where I'd find myself today
21. and what I'd look like now, and whether I'd be still alive. I just don't know.
22. A: Is there anything else, any such events which/... somehow arranged this life, somehow
23. influenced that it is the way it is?
24. N: No, I think that... probably not.
25. A: Is there anything that you consider a failure in your life, something that went wrong?
26. N: Hmm... ((sighs)) for sure uhm... for sure my failure was that at some point I gave up and
27. attempted to take my own life. My daughter does not know about it and I don't know if I'll ever tell
28. her that her mother was so stupid and did such things. Although there were/ this had some
29. consequences, but simply my failure was that, that I was too weak, that I was ashamed to talk about
30. this problem, I tried to cope on my own. Well, it came out as it came out and I was lucky that my
31. dad found me when I could still be rescued, because otherwise I wouldn't be here today. And, and it
32. was such a failure that I couldn't... reach out to someone with the problem, I couldn't open up, I
33. couldn't have it my own way. Although I actually couldn't really have it my own way too much, but
34. had to seek help from some people I don't know... there were some, I don't know, but you couldn't
35. say this, that it was my life failure... that, uhm... I don't know with the girls from this children's

1. home or with some girlfriends at the age of 13 or 14, some alcohol or cigarettes, or there was some  
 2. company that was so uncool, but - it was for a short time. I didn't probably like it and somehow I  
 3. didn't keep - somehow the connection was broken... and I don't know, no I guess I don't know.  
 4. Nothing else comes to my mind now, any such failure really. Maybe that, that I didn't pull this sister  
 5. of mine on my side when I could have. Then perhaps life would have turned out differently. Maybe  
 6. I would have an influence on... that now she wouldn't be the woman she's become... at this time.  
 7. A: How about the successes? What was successful?  
 8. N: My success is that I have uhm... maybe not this education, because this is - My success is that I  
 9. can live in such uhm... in such a way that I created a family really loving, that we're telling each  
 10. other about everything, and that uhm... that there didn't... didn't follow the shadow of this uhm...  
 11. this family of mine on this life of mine. That... I don't know, I'm not an alcoholic (((with  
 12. animation))) that I can get along with my own child, that we love each other very much that we tell  
 13. ourselves about this... and I guess, I guess that's all.  
 14. A: Who is the most important in your life?  
 15. N: Well, my child ((laughs)).  
 16. A: And did anyone influence your life, on who you are?  
 17. N: Well, certainly a lot of people, certainly, because, because I met many good souls over this time,  
 18. who were able to support me, who were able to show me, uhm... this ga/ good way. There really  
 19. were a lot of people.  
 20. A: Who the most, if you were to look at, I don't know, one, two, or three such persons?  
 21. N: For sure my grandmother, who helped me from the very beginning... certainly uhm... one of the  
 22. caregivers from the children's home... I don't know.  
 23. A: This lady teacher or this man from the group/  
 24. N: Yes, yes from the group.  
 25. A: What is the most important in your life?  
 26. N: I think that peace of home and hearth such uhm... such... ((sighs)) that we would be healthy, that  
 27. we would love each other, that we would be together. Forget the money because that/ sometimes,  
 28. even when it is so bad with this cash and my husband loses his job, or I don't know, it's hard then,  
 29. but there are never any arguments, no anger, but we just always say to each other (((moved))) - the  
 30. most important thing is that we love each other and that we are together ((cries)).  
 31. A: Except for building a house do you have, do you have any plans?  
 32. N: No, at the/ no, no. No, we want to build this house, we want to move out of here.  
 33. A: Natalia I still have this question because, because there will be a few such final questions. Very  
 34. short, but still I wanted to ask about such general things, something like that. Since I started doing  
 35. these interviews actually there some of you said some things, like that the people from children's

1. homes are sometimes ascribed some specific features. Did you come across such a situation, that  
 2. someone, due to the fact that you were in the facility, ascribed such specific characteristics to you?  
 3. N: Uhm... I don't understand the question too much, because the question is if the caregivers from  
 4. children's home ascribe any special features to me?  
 5. A: Not the caregivers, but just people in general so/  
 6. N: (xx)  
 7. A: The teachers too, yes, did you come across a kind of opinion that persons brought up in  
 8. institutions differ from the children that grew up in so-called "normal families," that were raised  
 9. outside of institutions.  
 10. N: ((sighs)) That there is a difference is sure, and certainly the people who know that we are from  
 11. the children's home look at us differently, I don't know whether with pity or... or compassion but/  
 12. A: Did you somehow experience this personally, that someone out there treated you with pity or  
 13. compassion?  
 14. N: Well.  
 15. A: For the reason that you were in an institution?  
 16. N: Uhm... I generally, I mean, uhm... for sure at schools, uhm... in this secondary school and these  
 17. vocational school teachers, teaching staff, they knew that I was from the children's home and for/  
 18. and probably this spread to uhm... to the group, to the class, but I didn't notice. I mean certainly no  
 19. one ever said to me that maybe somehow I'm a poor girl or something like that, that poor me.  
 20. People treated me normally, though I had - I had the impression as if behind my back uhm... as if  
 21. they knew that they did not say this so as not to hurt me or, I don't know, so as not to touch the topic  
 22. well, because it is such a, such a sensitive topic. In fact, I don't, uh, boast that I am from a  
 23. children's home. I know they once mooched a cinema [name], that we were from the children's  
 24. home and the cashier always (((amused))) would let us in to the cinema. So, so there were  
 25. advantages in that we were from the children's home, even just in, that is, that we were let in to the  
 26. cinema free of charge or somewhere, but... but I didn't abuse such things. I always tried to hide it a  
 27. little bit because - uhm... I didn't want to talk about it. I, I am such a sensitive person, I blubber later  
 28. on and I'm very emotional uhm... about all I say, but in fact I don't like to to talk too much about  
 29. myself and, and if someone knows this, this well this, it's not only that she is from the children's  
 30. home, well, but they always would want to know more so, because it is such a different life. It  
 31. would be: "And why, and what happened to you," because people are so curious, so I understand  
 32. this but, but I know/ Although uhm... my two friends, three in fact, uhm... found a job in such meat  
 33. plant [name] or something, because, because they are from the children's home, "Because we are  
 34. from the children's home" (((imitating pleading intonation))) and that's that. I know why that boss  
 35. hired them, of course [A: ((laughs))] these guys uhm... and despite the fact that one, for example,

1. came late to work/ or slept over often, he just treated him with a bit of tongue in cheek that... that he  
 2. was such from the children's home, so poor unhappy and well no, you gotta help the boy, well, well  
 3. that's it but, but generally I didn't flaunt so strongly - that, when I was in a group of people, because  
 4. there were annual meetings with the kids from the children's home, so then we were all equal to  
 5. each other. There was nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to hide, but uhm... Then I went indepen/  
 6. independent, and I never somehow flaunted that I am from the children's home, because it's so... I  
 7. don't know, I don't want anyone to know anyone judged me in some way, that here this poor girl...  
 8. or that someone said, maybe don't hang out with her or something. So, so I rather tried to hide it, till  
 9. now I've been trying to hide it, even though I've told my daughter about it. She did not - she's a  
 10. smart and intelligent girl, so when I tell her what the reason was I don't want her to - she has very  
 11. good contacts with grandma, so why would I denigrate this grandma, this grandpa... in the eyes of  
 12. this child when it was all so long ago, it is the past, and in reality only we know between each other  
 13. what really happened. My mom will never really understand that she made mistakes and and that  
 14. partly the reason these kids are how they are is her fault. She does not realize this, even until now,  
 15. and she believes that it is the fault of one, of another, or yet another, or that, that they just so  
 16. directed their life... but I think it is not.

17. A: Natalia, do you generally, as you look at the people who grew up in the children's home, in your  
 18. opinion are they different, do they differ in something, does this fact of growing up in an institution  
 19. affect the features of character in any way, the way of functioning, personality?

20. N: Maybe... maybe they are so more self dependent. They can uhm... organize more things  
 21. themselves, because, uh, in the children's home, despite the fact that we had everything, but it is not  
 22. absolutely so that we had *everything*. Because – there's toothpaste and there's toothpaste, right,  
 23. there's the cheap, bland ordinary one, and the better flavored one, right? And we always missed it,  
 24. so we always had to somehow organize things, we were more self dependent in this regard. We had  
 25. to rely more on/ learn such a reliance on oneself, but also we were in such, uhm... in such very cool  
 26. contacts, that we knew that we were equal, that, that we can help each other, that uhm... that/ And  
 27. that may have taught us uhm... I don't know, I have a very easy contact - I very easily make  
 28. contacts with people I don't know/ I have no problem with talking to people even if they are people  
 29. who who I see for the first time in my life. Perhaps this has taught me this openness, such openness  
 30. in life, don't know, just as don't know I mentioned earlier I can't live alone, I must have - I  
 31. probably got this out of the children's home that... I have to have also someone there ((laughs)).

32. A: Natalia, we're moving towards an absolute ending, something like that. How do you assess  
 33. uhm... your financial situation, subjectively?

34. N: Well, yes I know material situation. I think that I am not, we do not have the lowest national  
 35. wage, and we certainly don't earn, you know, big money. We don't have any assets despite our land

1. ((laughs)), one thousand and one meters.

2. A: ((laughs))

3. N: And uhm... we're not a wealthy family. We live, we have not actually any money put aside in our  
 4. bank account, we live from month to month, a few pennies we put off... but we don't complain. We  
 5. have something to eat, we have something to wear, we have a large dog that eats a lot [A:  
 6. ((laughs))] we can afford it, and vets for the cat, and so on. My daughter, I don't know, maybe she  
 7. would dream about some cool stuff, but this child is brought up so... actually I don't know where  
 8. she got it from. She's never forced anything from us, didn't, didn't stamp her feet, didn't moan, and  
 9. she's just understanding: "Yes I know we don't have the cash, okay, maybe some other ti/." And due  
 10. to the fact that our daughter has taken such an attitude, we stand on your heads so that she has  
 11. absolutely, say what is in our - within our possibilities, but no, I do not know... it's not bad. I work,  
 12. my husband works.

13. A: Religion, you are a believer or not?

14. N: Yes, I believe in God.

15. A: Are you associated with any church?

16. N: I'm not connected with the church because uhm... we don't have time to go to church, to be  
 17. honest. On Christmas I will go (((snort))), once in a blue moon on holidays, my child is baptized  
 18. and has had her communion, but I don't force her to go to the church so much. There was a time  
 19. when she went every Sunday, she began to freeze, she said: "Mom I'm not going" and she didn't  
 20. go, I didn't force her. But, but yes, we believe in God, and uhm... we are pious people.

21. A: Politics, are you somehow interested in politics, do you take part in the elections?

22. N: Well, to be honest, I'm ashamed to admit it, but I don't take part in the elections. Uhm... I'm not  
 23. very much interested in politics because, uhm, once I even watched the parliament session and what  
 24. I saw [A: ((laughs))] it just made me laugh. It seemed to me like, I don't know, just simply a bunch  
 25. of fools, and not civilized people so/ I mean such, such snapshots. Well I know ((laughs)) who the  
 26. president is and uhm... I am in the picture, and but I'm absolutely not interested because I think that  
 27. it probably won't change too much.

28. A: Well, okay, I've asked about everything. I just want to ask at the end if there is something that  
 29. you think is important to this whole story, which I haven't asked about, something you would want  
 30. to say.

31. N: I think I probably said it all, I wouldn't want to repeat myself... I think that such a summary of  
 32. the whole story of mine would be that, despite the fact that uhm... some harms were done to me in  
 33. my life I have not experienced such a full family and and I forever was (xx) I really love my  
 34. parents. And I think that probably, just probably, we all are this way. It's there where love is not  
 35. actually shown that someone becomes so committed, I don't know, well, that's my feeling that now

- 1. when one can do more, when one is competent, has the power, although sometimes one shouldn't
- 2. because, because if one looked at it and took a piece of paper to summarize the pluses and what my
- 3. mother gave me, except that she gave birth to me there would be probably more minuses. But we
- 4. still forget about it and, uhm... we think only of the positive things, and this strengthens us and
- 5. gives us the power to help these parents and love them.
- 6. A: Well, I thank you very much.

List of transcription symbols

| Mark              | Description                                                                                             | Examples in the text                                                          |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (x)               | Unclear fragments of the interview. The quantity of x-es corresponds with the quantity of unclear words | I have not experienced such a full family and and I forever was (xx)          |
| (( ))             | Non-verbal signals and sounds                                                                           | ((the phone ringing)), ((cries)), ((laughter))                                |
| (( ( )))          | The specific traits of the statements, supposed narrator's emotional states                             | ((moved))), (((very softly))), (((long pause))), (((animated)))               |
| ...<br>.....      | Pauses (3 dots – short pause, 5 dots – longer pause)                                                    | you could read a book, there was a library uhm...                             |
| /                 | Falters, incomplete, unfinished words and sentences                                                     | However/ well I just started to talk about my/ about my brothers and sisters  |
| -                 | Voice suspensions                                                                                       | although I don't - I don't go to these prisons because, well, I have my life  |
| <u>underlines</u> | Sentences and words articulated with emphasis                                                           | I do live, say, not for today, but just so <u>normally</u> as a normal person |
| !                 | Exclamation marks according to Polish punctuation                                                       | he's got such a hard <u>shell</u> !                                           |

Golczyńska-Grondas, Agnieszka. 2014. "Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia." Translated by Anna Piaszczyńska. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 10(1):116-162. Retrieved Month, Year ([http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive\\_eng.php](http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)).