**Piggy Bank / Sparschwein**

English Version / Offvoice Narration

Yellow parts = subtitles.

**1) Beginning "Hike"***(chapters are not spoken - only for orientation!)*

Offvoice: Well, here comes my story, for what it’s worth, and I’m not asking you to believe any of it. In the first version the opening scene passes without any action: the main character, a wanderer alone in nature, preparing himself for a big adventure. The audience slowly settle in before being bombarded with 95 minutes of non-stop talking. And the Lower Austrian Film Funding agency is pleased to see its wonderful countryside already in the spotlight.

*– Seriously? – Yes!*

Judith, my TV-editor, urges me to reconsider. The first minute is super important, she says, it'll determine who's going to watch this film to the end. A better beginning: a protagonist completely devastated

*He dies, or falls ill*

*But I am protagonist!­*

**2) Fake Birthdayparty / Testaudience**

The ultimate crisis? My 40th birthday. *You're so sweet!* It takes two attempts to buy wine for the party.  *Or there's nothing left on the card - maybe that's it?* I have to go back home to borrow money off my daughter. This experience haunts me all evening: 40 years, and too poor for half-decent wine? *Well, that thing with the aunt - I still don't get it .*

My sample audience, assembled on the playground, approves of making a film about the lead character's economic troubles.

*If you don't know how to continue*

*This needs more planning…*

But robbing a child's piggy-bank for my 40th birthday? Hardly believable, the timing too convenient.

*You're right...*

*Happy birthday to you!*

And, yeah, it also happens that I just staged this party for my camera.

*That's it?* But I have repeatedly looted my daughter's saving accounts for far larger sums.

*A gift voucher for Mexico?*

**3) Conventional introduction**

Maybe I should begin by being fully honest: my name is Christoph Schwarz and, as you can see, I feel so important, that I regularly require new press photos.  *Hold on, I'm taking the glasses off, it looks smarter!* I've spent the past years shooting self-obsessed short films. They made no money, but my parents - academic background - *enjoyable...the thirties are still excellent*

always supported me gnerously. They blessed me with a sort of innate financial self-confidence, which I pass onto my children - but all those riding lessons, laptops and boat licenses are also paid by my parents.  *Of course that's a video.* Ahh. I'm talking about money again! *(selbstkritisch)*

**4) Judith – Invitation Self Experiment**

The starting point of this story is my annual dinner with Judith. We were together once for a summer, aged 16. Judith works for national tv and always ensured I got my share of film comissions. Now she's moved from culture to documentary. *It's exhausting*

We mainly talk about our kids. *It's really disgusting...* As ever, Judith saves the biggest news for the end: *A one-year self-experiment, or something like that?*  Her new TV-format: "Striking Years", a series of 1-year long self-experiments by young, up'n-coming directors. *Maybe interesting for you?* And they are still looking for a striking project related to climate change. *There’s a lot you can do with a climate strike* Saving the planet, hasn't that always been my thing - at least in theory? *What's the age cut for up-and-coming in ORF TV? Up to 50? Up to 50?!*

**5) Conflict: Ecological Crisis**

Judith has touched a nerve: so far, all my actions against climate change were mostly symbolic. For example, documenting a dried-up lake near the hungarian border, together with Franz. I film his kids sliding into a dystopian future, but to get there we actually borrowed a SUV. Or: as a "caring" father, I document each an every year of my daughter's childhood with a brand-new camera. But: shouldn't I "care" much more about taking to the streets and protesting against fossil fuels? *No!* So far, my vegetarian, car-free life always seemed enough - when our planet finally melts down, at least I'm less guilty than everyone else. And my wife Michaela? She's constantly dreaming of our own house in the countryside.

**6) Conflict: The dream of a house in the countryside**

*I'm so happy we're talking about it, because we have no clue!* On weekends, we visit friends in *their* country houses, *Hey, is there even a men's and women's toilet?* we dream of destilling s*chnaps* and growing veggies just like my second cousin Urban. *That plum is two years old? And how do you heat it? And that's the alcohol?* But the real-estate market is out of control, and anyway I have no money.

*The carrots look pretty good to me. Are those carrots? They've seeded themselves? Yes!*

**7) First activist idea**

I'm way more tempted to go on some sort of climate strike as a self-experiment. *Oh come on!* In Summer 2020, the City of Vienna is campaigning: "If we all chip in, the climate will win" . Irresponsible, if our politicians are framing climate change as a private problem *Okay, it's a stupid slogan: "Get off the gas, get onto your bike"* We're even invited to submit our own "good deeds", *Blockade, not building brigade, that's as good as it gets!,* my photographer friend Florian jumps in. Wouldn't it be great if the City had to officially recognize street blockades as a "good deed" for the climate? *And laugh now! Or hopeful!* I'm not really convinced by my activist posturing, *I think yours is better!* but Judith is really impressed. However, before I can start saving the planet, we need to adress the most important issue: *budget is 15,000 for the director, 90,000 for production!* I keep cool, but my heart is pounding. I've never had so much money on my hands *climate activism isn't that expensive!*, and just for a little bit of climate activism?

*– Why? – All you need is your body and courage!*

*– I'd really like to have you on board*

**8) The house**

*That looks really huge!* The next weekend, Michi and I go hiking in the remote "Waldviertel" region. We see a house for sale.  *I'm on a hike with my husband and I just saw your sign* The agent arrives within 20 minutes. He'll be putting the house online in the next days, for 90.000 euros. *Bedroom, that's the old part...* Hold on, I tell myself, 90,000? that's the film budget. *But there, that does look quite nice* Michi falls in love with this grandmother house, and I can see myself in the shade of the apple trees, writing film scripts about the climate crisis. *I'm already 100% in, you still want to think about it, or?* Karl-Heinz, the agent, senses that we're interested and gives us the weekend to make a decision. *So nice how the sun comes in here.* Michi is all excited, surely, my parents would vouch for a loan! *I've already done the numbers, I just want to talk about it with you. It's not just a feeling, where you say* It’s time for me to stop hesitating, and get my act together!

**9) My life is a film script**

Whenever I face a big decision, I pretend my life is a film script: the main character has no money, but a unique opportunity to buy a cheap weekend house and thereby resolve a conflict with his wife. *I want to call there now, is that alright with you?* to go begging to his parents: beneath his dignity. At the same time, an interesting TV-commission appears. *You're the filmmaker, do it your way.* The price of the house equals the filmbudget: both 90.000 Euro, that can't be a coincidence! Suddenly, I have a childish thought: how about solving all my problems at once? Couldn't I really just buy the house with the film budget, and then shoot a low-budget film about living with no money? As in: the money is gone, but that's actually the plot? The next morning, I get a definite "go" from ORF TV. I immediately get on the phone with the estate agent. *You already knew it? Yes, well my wife fell in love with it, we have a very good feeling and I want to make you an offer as soon as possible.* It's time to stop hesitating and act!

**10) First meeting ORF TV**

A week later, we have a kick-off meeting in the TV production offices to present our strike projects.  *We do want to see synergies, but every project should stand for itself. - I just registered to get a hunting permit, because I feel that's more feasible than slaughtering a cow.* Rafael Haider wants to spend one year eating self-sourced food. *But if someone invites you for lunch, to their home, what then? - Well, that won't be possible. - You're not going to go? Or you're going to bring your own stuff? - I'll take something with me, a small packed lunch. - We're more and more dependent on all these likes* Catalina Molina will spend a year living without the internet. *I can feel that it's not good for me. From now on, you'll only reach me by phone or by mail, this is my adress. - You can choose - Really? Amazing! Wow, I had that one! - I also had that one!* Lisa Weber is going on a speaking strike.

*I guess it doesn't make for great film material, a person who doesn't talk for a year. I also need to be careful not to isolate myself completely.*

*Kind of exempting yourself from capitalism*

I explain why I want to tell a story about climate activism by challenging consumer society*...I'll have much better possibilities for getting into activist circles, if I'm the guy without money. I mean, the best product is the one that you don't buy, in terms of CO2-emissions. It's a totally coherent way of taking this climate strike to the next level.*

*If we mention"climate"*

*50%* of the viewers will desert us

Ani Gülgün-Mayr, our head of programming, is relieved to have the unpopular climate topic out of the way.  *Spending no money is a subject that affects everyone.* Everyone accepts that working without a film crew is "conceptually necessary". No one traces it back to the fact that I'll be buying a weekend house with the film budget.

– Bartering, wherever possible?– Yeah

**11) Tax advisor**

*Of course the house has a far longer life-span than the film.*

My tax advisor Miguel is my most important ally: he helps me to pay out the entire budget as a fee to myself. *In practise, you'll have 100% of your fee left over, and then you pay back the loan . - Because interest rates are much lower than the taxes you'd have to pay, right? - The current interest rate is zero.* I set up a production company, ARGE SCHWARZ, I'll also be doing editing and camera. *Pay out the fee for camera work, I could also pay myself an acting fee* To make it look more professional, I'll use my pseudonyms. *You get synergy effects*

*these are shell companies, we're not the only ones doing this.*

**12) Generous George**

*It always depends on the situation*  If the camera work is too complex, my friends Georg und Marie-Therese will help out. *Now the screen is locked.* Georg is currently going through a period of soul-searching – for him, it's a point of honour to work for free, on a film about a life without money. So he gets nicknamed "Gratisgeorg", in english something like: Generous George.

**13) Buying the property**

Michi thinks it's cynical to live for a year without money - especially when considering those who are *really* in need. *You have your own pencil, right?* Nonetheless, she signs the contract. She can't believe her good fortune: *– Who shall I give them to? – To Michaela* Now she really own a house in the country. I don't quite believe I'm really doing this: *I never owned anything* did I just spend the budget for a documentary film about a money strike on a property? My director's fee will cover the renovation. Perfect conditions for a year without money: It's all gone.

**14) Preparation Money Strike**

But how am I really going to get by without money? Ok. Time to quit my studio, move the most important equipment to my son's former bedroom. Give away the rest on the internet. If it's for free, people will take just about everything, including old fingernails and dustballs. *I'd love to take it! – Update successful!* I'll take care of my parents' house and their computer - they'll pay my share of the rent. Michi is so grateful for the weekend house that she'll pay the electricity and gas bills for a year. Bizarrely, I also don't have to pay my production assistant. *It's in the setting for login & access* Constanze wants to intern, so she can get a foot in the film industry. I give her full access to my empty bank accounts. *It worked!* I'm dead serious: for one year, I'll have nothing to do with money. I don't want earn it, touch it, or even think about it.

**15) New Year's Eve**

The day before new year's eve: my final big shopping trip, a confused, last-minute haul of luxury party treats and spaghetti. I stash away some emergency rations in the bookshelf, and I switch my mobile to a prepaid card. 20 euros must be enough for one year. The last 500 euros are turned into art-prints and dispatched to friends, proudly announcing my "financial sabbatical year". They are also an upfront artistic payment for drinks I hope they buy me over the year  *Welcome, you're on TV!*

*You're laughing , but you don't really know Pac Man, right?*

On new years eve, we have cheese fondue. I've spent my last cash on lottery tickets, *as my nest egg* as alternative currency for emergency situations. *Makes me feel safer* The last coins go to Rosa.

*I don’t need them anymore* / *I’ll save all of it / Untill the end of the year!*

Then we walk over to the Danube Canal to watch other people's fireworks. *I've seen one!* A first tast of things to come: I'll make do with whatever others leave behind. *3-2-1* And then it's 2021. *January, Febuary, March, April, May...* My money strike has started.

**16) Saving food**

*Car!* January:  *Dolphin!*  We spend the first days in happy hibernation. *What do you want? Carrots?* Back in Vienna, thingsget serious: *Carrot, or... – Or get rid of them, there, into the rubbish bins.* To access food via a "foodsharing"-plattform, I first have to pass a tricky online quiz. At 8 in the morning, we assemble at Vienna's Hannover Market and pick through the waste left behind by the vegetable sellers *Wow, aubergines, awesome!* Whatever we can spare gets deposited in public fridges. *Do you want pizza sticks and breadrolls, or something?* And there's more stuff to be found in garbage rooms in my neighbourhood

*– The stuff here is covered with coffee!*

*– Well, I don't really mind.*

*– You don't mind?*

*– No. I've often...*

*– Pastries covered with coffee?!*

*– Some of it was really tasty.*

­*– Well, I don't know, they do actually look ok, these brown mushrooms*

Abstract knowledge turns into tangible reality. Shelves forever filled with fresh food – but behind the scenes: tonnes of perfectly fine produce, ending up in bins. As seen in organic supermarkets  *How are we doing with the Mangos, Chris?*  *You want to have those?* Unlike people who really depend on salvaged food, my freedom from money is my own choice. I'm proud to be picking through junk and I sense my moral compass turning: it feels heroic to eat low-budget industrial meat and strawberries from Brazil.

*Do you want food rescued from the trash?*

**17) Barter transactions**

A money strike? In practise: I do all my trips by bike. I keep my state provided health insurance, but I don't go to the doctor, I use no medication, except the free covid-vaccine. Washing liquid can be made from soap and schnaps, And I read new books in the public library. Due to the pandemic, socialising takes place at my home. The dinner guests bring along gifts, like beer and pretzel sticks. *Yes, thanks so much for the kind invitation. I'm really honored...* In exchange for an online lecture, I get olive oil. For birthday presents, I settle on Origami-flowers. Michi gets a sound collage entitled: "What your friends really like about you!" *You have so many different sides* Real compliments shouldn’t cost anything *...youthful, on the other hand, you're very wise! – I like you soooo much! Everything ok? Yes!*  There's also something else I can exchange for food: my own blood. After donating, you can have a little meal, or a takeaway snack. *How much can I take?* I explain that I absolutely need to film both scenarios.

**18) Corona testing**

February:  *Which side, left or right? Let's do this!* Without money as a magic wand to fix things, my life has become quite impractical. Meanwhile, Michi is earning sensational hourly pay as a nurse, taking nasal swabs. She's clearly more relaxed these days.  *Shall we meet outside? I really have to keep an eye on the time!*

As for Rosa, my strike has definitely increased *her* fascination with money. *She's probably the next one I want – and a horserider costs 20, so you'll be at 28.* When we tell the owner of a toy store about my experiment, he gives Rosa a second horse for free, perhaps hoping to win a future customer. *Doing something for the young consumers! - That's really very nice of you! Well, that's for you to say, now that you have even more money,* I’m scared you’ll buy more horses

**19) Bike protests in Döbling**

*– My year without money?*

*– Exactly, I'm on money strike since January first!*

*– Like zero?*

*– Like zero!* In these first weeks, I'm most impressed by "Robin Foods", a group of food savers. David and his friends are rescuing expired food on a larger scale, and giving it away to the public. *I haven't checked, when's the sell-by date? - Well, a week ago.* Transportation by bicycle is a must; their weekly cargo-rides on some of Vienna's busiest roads send a clear signal: bikes are our future. *Yeah, fruit yoghurt!* The same supermarket that boasts of donating a food aid package to charity every week actually throws away huge amounts of food every day.

*– Orange-Mango-Carrot.*

*– Great!*

The true extent of the wastage is not meant to be seen.

*– This also happens often, one breaks in the box...*

*– ...and all are thrown away.*

*– Do we need to worry about this?*

*– The sirens?*

*– Yes! Let's make a move, or?*

*– Left-overs for environmental education*

To spread the word about Robin Foods and their work, I produce a videoclip for social media. Joe wants supermarkets to use a minus 100% sticker.

*If they gave everything away half an hour before the expiry date they'd have no garbage*

*and it would all go to the people.*

*I said to myself: I don't want to be part of a system that keeps producing new stuff from scratch* David talks about all the things he has already found in the supermarket trash, provides me with video evidence.

*Look what we found here. In a mixed garbage bin. Full of those lemonades.*

*We're talking about Grinzinger Allee, where the accident happened.*

But I also film David as he organizes protests against the car-centric traffic policies in his home district, Döbling. *Now I talk a bit more about Döbling.* What's even worse than losing our planet? In Döbling: losing precious car parking space!

*You are a massive traffic obstacle.*  David's preferred protest strategy: bicycle demonstrations! I immediately join him and make a fool of myself, standing beside bicycle paths with a big sign and handwritten flyers. *That's the name of the local council leader! Or "Let's make Döbling a cycling district".* At the meeting point, I hand out placards with juicy slogans. The turn-out isn't exactly overwhelming. *We’ll keep calm, ignore aggression from others* We stop at a crossing where, just recently, a mother and her two children were hit by a car. *I don't want to imagine what it's like if you have a small child.* I wish I had the moral courage to reach for the megaphone, but I'm too shy, and just shout our slogan. *More cycle lanes for Döbling!* Despite the low turnout, David keeps going and arranges two new protest rides every month. In these days, he becomes my activist role model: don't think, just do. Step one: install a food sharing shelf in our staircase.

**20) Potatoe-Go-Round I.**

March: In my search for self-sufficiency, I hit upon subsistence farming. *This goes on the ground, right?* Using old junk from the neighbourhood, we build a chicken pen. *Nice!* Michi plans to rescue some chickens from a factory farm. *Or let's make a new compost on that side, and next year we can get good soil from here.* A kids' brigade helps us dig a vegetable bed. But wouldn't it be more exciting for my film if I ventured into urban agriculture? In my search for free land in Vienna, I discover traffic roundabouts. Why not grow potatoes right here, and show how valuable land is sacrificed for the free flow of traffic? *You could probably have electricity. - If I know that the district is okay with it and supporting us* I make some fairly unsuccessful phone calls to the local council offices. *Back to bureacracy, it's been a while.* After I mention my cooperation with national TV, a council representative agrees to meet. *Well, I'm always up for talking about things.* Günther Cermak finds my vision charming, but hardly feasible. Roundabouts are governed by multiple, overlapping authorities. *MA46, the landowner...* Cermak runs through practically all the city departments *You need MA33 for the lights.* I drift off, this is getting way too complicated.  *Until you actually have the permit in your hands, you can't really begin.* As we say goodbye, I have a flash of inspiration: wouldn't it be easier to sell this as an art project? Cermak confirms immediately*...as an art project in a public space, I'd give it better chances, - For real? Absolutely!*

**21) Location scouting with Steffi & Lilli**

My perfect partners for artistic potatoe-growing on a traffic roundabout? Steffi for design and Lilli as head gardener - plus, she also owns a tractor. *Doing this by hand would be kind of hard-core* Our project title: Vienna Potatoe-go-Round. We apply for art funding. In our budget spreadsheet,next to my name, is simply one word: MONEY STRIKE. *....but also low entry-barriers, a community neighbourhood project*

It feels phenomenal, to not be on sale.

**22) Money**

*There are also parts of yourself that are doubtful, or self-critical...* Georg, my camera guy, is currently way more into ~~his~~ self-development than into making films. With his help, I come to realise just how fascinated I've always been with money. In my wallet I'm carrying photos of my children, printed onto foreign banknotes. My pre-diploma project at art school was a fictional EU-agency selling advertising space on Euro notes. In performances, I often made fun of the art market, but my focus was always the same: money. *The only thing I can tell you...* Georg's probing questions make me realise that my allergic skin is doing much, much better these days. *Into this bodily experience...* Studying my diaries in the evening, I detect a clear correlation between periods of financial insecurity and allergic episodes. Could liberation from the logic of money finally leadto the liberation of my body?

**23) Lobau Highway protests**

*– You can also do those tomorrow!*

*– Yes!*

*Then do one more German excercise now.* Rosa's school has switched back to distance learning, ...*math's homework!* so I take her on a study excursion, a "political education". For decades, the environmental movement has been campaigning against a highway tunnel under the "Lobau" National Park. This summer, the City of Vienna wants to begin works on a highway link, euphemistically branded "Town Road". *Zwentenburg (forest)...* I create a video showing how today's protests are directly linked to some of the finest moments in Austrian environmentalism. So instead of money, I'm now fishing for Likes. *Zwentendorf, Hainburg, Lobau* But I only get 7, Nature plus children – didn't that always work?

**24) Potatoe-Go-Round II.**

*...ruin the ground with potatoes? or would that be too complicated?* April. We get permission for our potatoe-art project, but only on sundays, when the traffic is light. But the authorities reject a billboard claiming our society is waging a world war against the planet. It might irritate some drivers. *Mmh, I see...* But what if we actually work with this restriction? *What counts most for me is that we can just do the project there.* What if we accept that drivers must not be disturbed in their dream world?“ *I must inform that we had an agreement...*

I suggest that during weekdays, we change our sign from "world war" to "world market", which also goes well with the business park next door. One week later, after another negotiation, the authorities give us permission.

*The sign will be changed back to "we are in a World War".*

**25) Feedback Judith via Zoom**

At our next meeting, Judith questions my approach: nothing wrong with "cute" little feelgood-projects like urban gardening, bicycle demonstrations and food sharing in my staircase. But wasn’t my money strike meant to involve more hard-core climate activism? *It's definitely on my agenda, something with cars in the city!... Against.*

*Maybe go back to the starting point of the project!*

**26) Offspace**

After the lockdowns are over, I go to exhibtion opening nights again. My friends treat me to free beers.

*– You're a greenie, you don't buy it?*

*– Other people are paying for me. But it's not so easy to persuade them. So maybe that's the challenge*

Leonie and Thomas ask trick questions, to figure out if I’m cheating with my money strike.

*– Yes, but then what are the rules?*

*–* If someone wants to invite me on a trip to Lower Austria, *I say, sure, but you've got to pay.*

*- But is that totally ok with you, if people pay for you?*

*– Yes, but it's also ok with me not to do the trip. And when I start explaining, why things are like this, then it's actually always* a good laugh

I pretend to be penniless – and have my parents pay the rent?“

*Well, with you everything is somehow always funny.*

Leonie calls me a "compromise clown".

*– It's more about showing that so many resources are readily available.*

*I'm not claiming everyone can live like this.*

*- Yes, because someone else is paying.*

– if someone wants to give, someone has to take

*- I'm kind of asking myself how authentic things are if you process them through a film* Later, Thomas objects directly: I'm basically just performing my idealism for the camera. *...somehow semi-staged* I'm in the mood to keep provoking him, but I'm hoping for another beer and announce a big anti-car campaign, for next week.

**27) LAUTO**

*We're building a car out of cardboard!*

These are good markers

Couldn't we expose the privileges given to automobile traffic by claiming them for ourselves? *Which is kind of a bit annoying, because bikes make no noise, and now we're making extra noise!*  together with some neighbourhood kids, I build a decoy-car with a soundbox. *What do we actually call this, any suggestions for a name?* They immediately come up with a name for our creation: a "Lauto", a loud automobile. We hit the streets. Our good mood evaporates at once. Bashfully we circle around the block a few times. I even get into an argument with a neighbour, who usually greets me very nicely - it all just feels childish, to fight noise with noise.

*If you don't want any noisy cars, then you shouldn't be living in the city!*

*I just think it’s weird what you’re doing*

**28) Cabriobeet I.**

To come up with more constructive ideas for protests, I visit a street campaign organised by my sister Hanna and her association "Vienna, you *can* walk", campaigning for more pedestrian space. *That's my brother, and he's filming.* Hanna is enraged by the fact that residents can get parking spaces for just 10 euros a month! *There once was a unusual intervention, with a flatbed truck.* Couldn't I make a statement by converting an old truck into a vegetable bed

*Where everyone can come and harvest something, like in a foraging garden*

and a compost toilet on top, to protest against all this unfair shit...

*That would be a cool intervention in the public space* ...and as fertiliser!

*That certainly hasn't been done before!*

*– Or: you take a car, a convertible, and fill it up with soil.*

*- Hey, that would be amazing!*

*-With stuff for everyone*

*such as herbs*

**29) Cabriobeet II.**

On social media, I ask for an old convertible, (for climate activism) My neighbour Camilla answers: *And that belongs to your aunt? It belongs to her, it's not in great shape anymore, but I guess for your project...* Next weekend, I visit Christa, who recalls glamourous road-trips. But now the convertible has just become a burden. She is happy to donate it for my visionary project.

...and if you give the convertible away?

In exchange, I insist on symbolic garden labour. We raise a toast to my humble self, proud owner of a convertible, but without a driving license. I also drink to summon my courage for the return trip, once again without a ticket, hiding in the toilet. My neighbour Robert helps me register the car, Hanna's association will pay the monthly fees. *What's this? That's the cooler.*  A few days later, Gratisgeorg joins me and we pick it up. In the boot, I discover an obscure 1990ies-tape:

Schorschi, do you think the tape deck still works?

the "Kopyleft Liberation Front" - a free soundtrack for my moneyless year. The band doesn't seem to exist online, perfect open-source music for me and my film.

I’m already rolling away now!

**30) Collaboration without money**

Many of my campaigner friends also don't want to be paid. For example Stoffi, my brother-in-law, who's building my mobile herb garden. *How about 20 cm? You don't need it for the herbs.* Whenever I take along my camera and explain my self-experiment, everyone feels flattered, agrees to being filmed and signs a contract. *...write your name and adress here* Nobody seems to consider that I actually had a budget for filming permits. Their idealism is paying for my weekend house*. I want you to go up here... like in the circus.*  To explain our newly acquired weekend house to friends, I expertly deliver a story about Michi's rich aunt Rudi, who appeared rather unexpectedly, and died shortly thereafter.

Obliged to sell something...

*It's very cute, it's definitely a special house, it has a certain charm.*

**31) Potatoe-Go-Round III.**

*– They'll go to the people who live here*

*- No, they'll go to the people who do the work*

*- The people who live here could also work here*

*– It's easier if you take it like this and just let it drop*

*- Like this, right?*

May: Our sundays are now spent on the roundabout. But instead of using Lilli's tractor, the work has to be done by hand. *I'll be more than happy when we get the water here, and this one hut.* David and Anna deliver four water tanks with their cargo bikes: isn't that proof enough that bikes can transport almost everything? *All you can drink, David. Help yourself! - World War transforms into World Market. As long as the Euros keep rolling in, the flow of traffic must not be disturbed.*

*We’re turning zones of consumption and economic growth*

*into public space, where coming together can happen*

In my opening speech, I don't mention my money strike. I'd rather be seen as a courageous climate activist than a guy scrambling for free potatoes.

*...so he was quickly let in with his big box*

*to the councilman of transportation, Mr. Svihalek / Take a long swing!*

**32) Extinction Rebellion protests**

David introduces me to the Extinction Rebellion climate campaigners, who use non-violent civil disobedience to press governments into action. I want to give a voice to the people behind the banners.

*Okay, looking at you! - Go down a bit, so we see you too - If the animals die out, and the insects, if the food chains collapse, then eventually it will be our turn, too - We’ve seen that it’s possible, that we can take crises seriously – Things are getting more intense every year. We don’t have much time left. And all we get to hear from politicians and corporations and from industry is greenwashing and empty promises - And I can't just sit on my hands and watch it happen. I've started asking myself if my actions so far have been enough.*

*When the time comes, and when I look myself in the mirror, I want to be able to say, hey: we did something, back then. It was clear, the facts were on the table.*

But in the media, the climate crisis is completely eclipsed by the pandemic, which makes me really angry. And my videos are making hardly any difference. Could I go one step further, and pit myself against fossil-fueled capitalism, with my very own body? Spelling out my motives on a placard turns out to be surprisingly difficult. Sincere feelings appear all too naive, but I can't block a road *ironically*.

*I'm happy that I'm finally sitting in front of the camera.*  We gather in Vienna's central park to discuss the split of roles: today, it’s my turn to be arrested!

*4 and 4 would be most effective*

Then we're off! The cars oppose us with a heavy chorus of honking, a woman drives right through a banner. ~~But~~ paralysing the traffic isn't an end in itself - but the only way to publicly pressure politicians to finally implement their own climate goals. *Extinction! Rebellion!* The police seal off the street within 15 minutes. The officer in command curtly suggests we'd better get up to avoid catching a cold. *I thought he was talking about his colt.* The demonstration is dispersed, but Manfred, Werner and I still stay seated. Normally, the police would haul us in, check our identities and fine us, but mercifully, they let us go. The officers make us promise that we won't go right back and block the next road. *these encounters with the cars, they didn't stress me at all, because I didn't feel them to be humans, they're just cars, honking.*

**33) ORF TV Meeting II.**

*Keeping up such a project for an entire year*

*is stressfull enough as it is.*

*So we also provide the opportunity for you*

*to see a therapist, and that would be...*

After five months of self experimentation, time for the first review

*And these snails live at my place*

*they reproduce like crazy*

*in the bathroom*

*in the bathtub*

Rafael shows footage of his snail farm. He's already built a loyal following on YouTube, presenting groundbreaking research on all things edible.

*It's like an oyster that tastes of chicken*

*That you meet in real life, that you really share photos with each other* Catalina's internet strike has evolved into a weekly slideshow-night in a bar *we project it, like on a slide night*, a sort of substitute for social media, and the start of a story about people who always refused to use the internet.

*I'm closer to myself, it really makes me feel much better. I'm not missing anything.* Lisa has completed a course in sign language and communicates via musical instruments and a small soundbox.

*That's why I stopped using it and stuck with Computer Lisa*

*– Was it a long casting-process, to know which voice will speak for you?*

*– And the pandemic, is that having an additional effect now?*

*– Pleasant!*

*– Well, that's nice.*

I present my experiences as a food rescuer, and the bureacratic world war on the roundabout. Ani suggests that my life without money seems too easy, she want's to see more conflict.

*– To be honest, that's just a bit too picture-perfect.*

*- There were a number of moments where it was really problematic not to have money. But all in all, I just got everything organised pretty well beforehand.*

*- You're getting a director's fee for your money strike. Don't people keep asking you about how that goes together?*

*– Well, so far, that hasn't really been an issue. It kind of worked like: he's the activist, and that's why we're all helping out as well, it was more like: it works without money for everyone.*

**34) Fake money**

Lisa is right, of course: I should feed my director's fee to animals! Or even better: in a money-burning ritual, a sort of anti-capitalist climax for my film! *You're so stupid, it's of no use to you anyway.* But . . . I've put everything into the weekend house now, so I'd have to fake the burning somehow. In January, Rosa and I found an envelope for the carol singers on the street. Ten euros, I don't feel anything. So, I'm looking for fake money on the dark net. A Czech supplier has the best ratings. I still own one-tenth of a bitcoin, which I could transfer via an old-school computer and open wifi. As a safe address: an apartment in Prague. It's end of May, we pretend to be travelling to Michi's cousin's wedding. We act as an innocent tourist family, but we're actually waiting for the mail delivery of 15,000 Euros in small notes. *We wanted to have the key for the mailbox in the hall.* On our last night, the doorbell rings, for three Pizzas which I never ordered. *Michi, did we order Pizza?* Hidden between a Funghi and a Quattro Formaggi: the Europizza.

*– Did you know that he'd be coming now?*

*– I actually thought it’d be arriving by mail.*

*- You're making fun of me now, right? Because that looks damn real!*

We mask our fear by inventing names for this "delivery service".

*Okay, I start: Cash al forno.*

We feel like criminals, although legally speaking, burning counterfeit money is no crime, it's a good deed. It's what the police would do as well. *You mean like this?*  Little Bello is the money courier, we board the train with a massive hang-over. Finally, we cross the border, and huge relief sets in.

**35) Money burn**

June: I invite selected friends to my money burning ceremony on the banks of the Danube, near Kritzendorf.*...contribute to the film's success in a big way*

I got some last-minute reassurances from my tax advisor: yes, a burnt director's fee is indeed tax deductible.

*...an investment into the film, and therefore tax deductible - well, then we can make those –*

*How stupid can you get*

*- I don't like you*

*-Why?*

I ask my nephews to get the money ready for the barbecue *Why are you doing this?*

They are extremely anxious about my plan  *Money is valuable* and display some serious capitalist concern. *It's only paper - That's just stupid.* I collect all phones - today something radical is going to happen! *Thomas, sorry. I feel like a teacher. Who else wants to make a spit?* Rafael suggests we could also smoke the banknotes.

*I need you as witnesses that this is really happening*

*Money is unnecessary!*

*Money is unnecessary!*

And then: an emotional speech - *Our grandchildren will defend our borders...* The climate crises calls for radical anti-consumerism. *Don’t burn the good money!!* Paradoxically, money causes the lowest CO2 emissions when it's burned.. *Money is stopping us from saving this planet.* I like how worried my poor friends look... and how admiring the rich! *The 20-euro notes are burning best!* I've also invited Thomas, to prove my money strike isn’t just a cheap stunt *-...staging itself as a model green city, and then building highways in the suburbs.* My nephews are constantly trying to steal money, which kind of stresses me. The Czech counterfeits must be completely burned, else I'm really in for some trouble. Nobody suspects the true extent of my fraudulent activities, organising fake money to fuck over everyone. Generous George gives me a wink in solidarity, takes 50 Euros out of his own wallet. I can't tell him the truth either. And then . . . I get completely drunk, which makes my show even more believable. I mean, did I just turn the price of a car into thin air?

**36) Moneyless hike**

*Exactly, if you'd get out of the Vienna Bubble a bit . . .* A few days later, Judith explains that all "pioneers of money-free living" went on a pilgrimage at some point. *It'd actually also be exciting if you travelled somewhere - Oh, this guy is in a sailing boat, crossing the atlantic How should I do that? You don't have to sail, but what about the Danube?* Of course, I've already been thinking about how to join my family on their vacation in Carinthia. I obviously can't do road blocks for the climate and then privately travel by car.

*...this is not something where you're saying it has to be in the film?*

*– Look, I just want it to be good too.*

*– Why not have another glass of wine and then you tell me the truth?*

So, I'll go by foot.

*–You can just try it. Worst case, you get scared and have to* ***travel*** *back to Vienna.*

*–Yeah, sure. It's all part of the story.*

**37) Fast forward rest of Jue**

Let's fast-forward through the rest of June:

- Me documenting the "First Vienna Traffic Light Race", to draw attention to some impossibly short green lights at pedestrian crossings.

- After a long search for a hairdresser, I finally find Billan- I babysit his daughter in return for a haircut

- Launching an improvised money-free summer cinema with Constanze and David. We give ourselves a glamorous name to persuade award-winning filmmakers to share their newest works for free. When it rains, we shelter beneath a railway bridge.

– A last house maintenance service for my parents. I'm always happy when I can give something back (for the rent they're paying).

*–Should I put all that into my rucksack? And see how it feels?*

**38) Hike I.**

July**.** *Feels better.* Michi buys me chocolate bars and takes me out for ice-cream. *It's for real* ***now?***She clings on firm to her belief that I'll still change my mind *Take care of yourself!* She'll be ready to rescue me at any time. *Don't you dare loose your phone.* And then I'm off, my life reduced to three tasks: cover the distance, find food, organise shelter, for example at the guest flat of some friends' communal living project. For the second night, nothing is organised. I roam around the small village of Laaben, feeling a bit anxious. In my imagination, it was so easy to ask for dinner left-overs and a place to sleep; now, I feel like a crook.

In a restaurant on the "Schöpfl" mountain, the landlady lets me know my money strike is just idiotic; her free slice of cake is humiliation. I guess I can't expect everyone to see the deeper meaning in my project. Or did I just sell it poorly? – *For the hike. A dream!* The lady in the bakery in Rohrbach, however, *is* happy that someone still wants to eat yesterday's bread. And I have one advantage over real vagrants: my camera. The hotel "Steinschaler Hof" in the Pielach valley takes me in for a night, in exchange for a promise to include their marvellous wild herb garden in my film. So, here we go: 7 seconds silence between all the talking, an authentic advert for the "Steinschaler Hof". *I can't promise that yet, it would just be a scene in my film.* Using the same trick with Ursula, Hannes and Thomas, I spend two nights in theirminimalistic wooden box.*Ok, and how long will Petra keep in the freezer?* Whenever food supplies run low, Rafael is my emergency call number - times of need let the devil eat snails. *Could I charge my phone here?* Soon enough, I learn how things work in restaurants: first, I just ask to charge my phone. If that leads to a conversation, coffee and cake will follow, sometimes even dinner. The fastest route is along the main roads, where cars shoot by, like projectiles. Noise, pollution, dead animals everywhere. My contempt for cars turns into hatred. *My phone lasts well.* And then my parents drive to Carinthia, planning their journey so they can invite me for a lunch and give me a ride. Withinthe car: a lovely silence, a gentle glide through nature, Schubert's piano pieces caressing our ears, the driver isn't a violent barbarian - he's just my father.

*– In the match Austria versus Italy...*

*– Farewell, Christoph! / –Thanks for the lunch.*

I declare this mismatch between inside and outside perspectives the "Automobile Paradox". I still have a long way ahead to think about it. My gratitude for food and shelter is endless. Money keeps us coldly at a distance, I think to myself, as I pet the dog of my generous landlady. Only without money we become truly human.

**39) Break: promotional material for ORF TV**

Not if you're a refugee from Afghanistan, retorts a social-media editor, back at ORF TV, where, two weeks later, I present some of my new footage. *You don't have to show every goodbye...* Judith suggests I might shorten things a bit. *Well, I really like the thing with the snails.*  I point out, that my days in Admont Abbey were especially significant. *Admont Abbey would start here!* Show it, she says, cultural monuments in the Austrian countryside are perfect for television.

**40) Hike II.**

Aren't the frugal Benedictine monks, who live without any possessions, obliged to host me? *...Christoph Schwarz speaking, the pennyless pilgrim .* And indeed: I'm allowed to sleep in the closed quarters and receive generous nourishment from the abbey kitchen. The long hike is starting to drain me, I have incredible back pain. Pater Thomas treats me to herbal gel from the abbey's pharmacy. *...Father Thomas will take care of that. It's on his account.*  I hike up into the mountains, my back still hurting. *You're my saviour!* But then my guardian angel appears - Generous George! We speed up the toll road, into pristine nature, where I strike a thoughtful pose in front of his camera: couldn't we see the rising temperature in the Alps as an opportunity: Coffee plantations? *Normally, I have to do it in secret, or I don't dare. ~~But just for today~~: could I take a packed lunch for my hike?* Silva from the hotel packs me a free lunch *No problem* Farewell to Generous George, who paid for everything, today I'll be sleeping in the mountains. *I don't drink beer.* I hike up towards the summit. A true environmentalist shouldn't shy away from outdoor sleeping. I find a spot on a rocky slope.*Cheers!* As darkness falls, a frightful silence presses me against the starry canopy of an unbearably vast universe. Impossible to sleep here.

At half-past-four in the morning, an assault of aggressive mountain wasps forces me back to the valley. I've had enough of nature. I hitch a ride, for the first time in my life, within a few hours I reach Carinthia *Hi, it's me, Christoph* I crash at Jürgen's self-sufficient farm,  *Which one should we take?*  we know each other from a street blockade. 15 miles before reaching my goal, I give up. *That would be a great place for picking me up* Michi rescues me. *You smell a bit not-so-great – Ah, yes, Extinction Rebellion, that's also good. There's going to be more action then?* Judith is disappointed that I didn't take to the streets again with Jürgen, while the social media lady is impatient to see what’s next for the convertible. *Yes, perhaps if it's combined with a prize contest?*

**41) Cabriobeet III.**

August: the convertible. After witnessing my money burn, Thomas is completely convinced of my true activist credentials. He helps me with the finishing touches. *We could plant it there.*  Camilla and I haven’t finished planting the herbs, and already there's a picture in the newspaper *Yes, it's already in the... Wahnsinn, wie schnell das geht.* Our message is simple: *Use your hand, like this!* the easiest way to plant herbs in the city is, absurdly, a convertible. *Lass sie vorbaumeln, die Gießkanne.* For an unbelievably cheap 10 euros a month, you can privatise 10 square meters of public road. Why does it not apply to raised garden beds? The public, however, interprets a soil-filled convertible as an act of revenge: a stag night? A marriage crisis? The dominance of cars in our cities seems completely natural, and who's going to protest against laws of nature? *I got it as a gift. Some sparkling wine for you* Our intervention strikes a chord. *Can't you do that everywhere?* At the opening party, complete strangers stop for drinks. My video goes viral. *That's perfect. That's a great pose.* *Vienna will be wow!* Heading into the weekend, I'm greeted by my own smile on the front page of a popular free newspaper. Let's hope this will make an impression on the conductor – isn’t it normal for celebrities to travel without a ticket?

**42) Blockade of construction sites**

*Ha, I have another one!* At the roundabout: *That's disgusting* a potatoe beetle attack in the middle of a concrete desert.

*– But seriously, what are we going to do with it?*

*– Throw it away!*

*– But where?*

*– we say: the first highway is congested. And then then we're like: let's build a second, even bigger one, and screw the forest. That's the logic we should no longer obey mindlessly*

And then our protests against the planned new highways get more and more intense. *The City of Vienna wants to push it to completion, planned for 40-60.000 cars, right through residential areas, amid of a climate crisis.* We block the access roads to the recently fenced-off construction sites. Our activism isn't appreciated by everyone.

*- You're violating personal liberty*

*this is a public road. And if you won't budge, I'm gonna drive over you, I don't care!*

*-You're on video!*

*Trams all the way to the city borders! For these 460-600 million you can get a tenfold increase of tram tracks built.* Plans are made at a big networking meeting in the Lobau forest. Then, we act quickly: a protest camp is set up in in Hirschstetten, a few days later two construction sites are completely blocked. I shoot a video in support of the mobilisation, "How to Occupy a Digger".

*Pull away the key!*

*Move a bit!*

Everyone opposed to new highways gathers in Hirschstetten. ­*Lobau! Must remain! Lobau? Must remain!*

A few days later**,** there are rumors of a potential eviction. The more people that spend the night here, the better. *I'll still film 20 minutes here* *And if it gets dark, I'll come over. - Comfortable jogging pants for sleeping.* But nothing happens, no police. So, the next morning, we carry on and occupy a third construction site. *If I develop public transport, more people will use public transport, if I invest in roads, more people will drive by car. Many people who live here are against the project, but they've given up, or they think nothing can be done. We want to show that something can be done.*

**43) Deflating Seestadt**

September: The art scene is also discovering activism: a German curator invites me to a talkshow near the occupied construction sites. I bring along some harmless balloons and explain to Tim that the night before, we inflated them by tapping air from SUV tires. *Shall we go there together?* Tim doubts this and asks me to redo the ballons in front of his camera. There's no SUV to be found, I hijack a family van. Once the camera is gone, I diligently pump the tires back up again. For most people, occupying construction sites and deflating tires is too extreme. A herb garden in a yellow convertible is a natural winner.

**44) Cabriobeet IV.**

A few days later, however, the authorities threaten to tow us away. They claim it's not really a functioning car. *We'd definitely drive it to a different road, sure thing!* To prove them wrong, we relocate to a new parking spot. But the authorities aren't satisfied, a car must be ready to drive at all times. *You immediately saw how public space unfolds such power, once we use it for things other than just parking out cars. If it's being given away so cheaply, then all citizens should be allowed to use this space, to have a vegetable garden for €10 a month, or table-football, a coffee-table, a video-editing desk.*

The media quickly latch onto this cat-and-mouse game playing out between the city and a herbal garden, but it kind of distracts from our core message: *meanwhile, if you invest 3 billion euros into building highways* More space for people, less for cars. *A discrepancy.* So we replace the soil from the driver’s seat with a big pot of herbs. At first glance, the authorities have won this game, but: We’re on the road again! On the way to a street fair, Florian parks in front of his favourite bar - to impress his friends.

Can we order mojito? Our car-grown mint is used to mix a Mojito, which is fine with me, if I don't have to pay.

*I can't finish my drink , I've got to ride my bike*

*You also have 0,5, right?*

*– Hold it upright, please*

*– Like this?*

*– Yes, sure, upright*

­*– Hello! Would you like to have a drink with us? Without the dog, afterwards?*

*­– What happened to your idea of putting people first? If you build this stupid city highway....*

**45) Extinction Rebellion blockade with Cabriobeet**

The next wave of Extinction Rebellion protests is also directed against the planned city highway: *Straighten the banner once more!* Anna and Werner sneak into the headquarters of the Social Democratic Party. *Please, no more concrete-pouring politics* Once again, Conny performs her anti-highway anthem. *We must exit from cars, we must enter the (Lobau-)forest! – Cars make noise, we make music. Make public transport free and party on the streets!* My convertible is invited to a big street blockade, as a symbol of resistance! *I think chaining myself to the convertible is too much for me.* But... is it worth sacrificing our good understanding with the authorities? *You know, I think it stands out even more if you hold it upside-down!* A confidentialmeeting at the occupied construction site, *phones off and out, actually* my camera isn't exactly welcome. *That's the emergency access-corridor* The plan is to block a bridge over the Danube Canal with cable drums, and park the convertible right in the middle. *I'd need a buddy who will drive it away, before it gets towed off.* Two days later is the big day, I haven’t been this nervous all year. I repeat my mantra: "Everything is insignificant, worst case a good story, and in the end I'll play piano." *And then you drive in there, and park yourself in the middle* With Florian, I wait for the starting signal, my fingers tremble. *I'm trembling! Yes, you're totally trembling!* Won’t the police immediately tow away our peaceful herbs-on-wheels, if we turn it into a barricade? *Right on the medial strip!* Once the street is blocked, I'm flooded with euphoria, the police seem to have no intention to remove us. *Normally the slogan is: "Vienna, you're a parking lot", but today it'll be "Stop the destruction, create the transformation".* David is also here, of course, he mentions money problems, he doesn't know how to pay the rent for the association's workspace. He's not amused by my playful suggestion to go on a rent strike. *Exactly, there'll be some donations, also at the camp. - We have some dumpster food, some dumpster energy drinks, what more could you want? Get in, do you have a driving licencse?* The dying days of summer: a big street party for climate justice.

**46) ORF TV Meeting III.**

*Let's briefly discuss the dramaturgy, let's see which plot lines...* October: Ani wants us to decide which plot lines to focus on. *I'm more and more into the whole subject of foraging - you just bread it like a schnitzel.* Rafael is super-successful with his survival cooking courses, he schnitzels tree bark and old leather shoes. *Yes, then it just tastes of breadcrumbs – International. Intercultural. Please stop talking.* ­Lisa presents footage from her speechless everyday life. Watching Lisas boyfriend Severin book her a silent retreat in Thailand is seriously funny.*W-E-B-E-R-L-I-S-A – It means "Lobau Forest will Stay"*I earn praise for having evolved from a charming beggar into a serious climate activist.

*That's super-exciting, keep going!*

But what exactly does my money-free life boil down to, other than the fact that you need to be rich to afford being poor? *I don't need it, it gives me time, energy*  My colleagues appear to be on top of their game,  *I would absolutely recommend it to everyone...* Outside, Catalina confesses that she's having major arguments with her protagonists. *They find it completely contradictory, since parts of it are going to end up on the internet again, ORF is putting them online* Her plan B: working with friends who have followed her example and also went completly offline *Just between us: I have two actor friends, I haven't hired them, but they're actually actors, so they have no problem with having a camera pointed at them all the time. – I often dream of being allowed to talk again, but no longer being able to, I'm seriously scared that some of my muscles are withering****.* Since a few weeks, Lisa is battling with** nightmares. *And what if you just sing for yourself a bit, at night? - Well, by now I'm also increasingly scared of hearing my own voice again.*

**47) Harvest festival**

Next Sunday, we gather on the traffic roundabout for a harvest festival.

*The kids prefer the parking space to the potaoe field!*

*Any more bets?*

*You're all so optimistic*

*Christoph, tell me!*

*I said 40kg!*

*It's great that so many people*

*believe a roundabout*

*is a place where things can grow*

*That we managed to transform.*

*this non-space*

*into a meeting point*

*a place that feels good*

*Personally, that's what I liked most about the project.*

Steffi reads out the results of pollutant testing: our potatoes are perfectly safe to eat.

*Some Benzoanatrazen, below the threshold.*

*Ready, set, go!*

*Off to the tools!)*

*If it helps, we can work in sync!*

While the others start digging, I can't help thinking about the fundamental meaning of my money-free year. I was able to master all challenges thanks to the help of other people. Is this the deeper message that everyone wants to hear?

*Potatoe bugs!*

We'll only survive the coming crises *together?*

*We've just been thinking*

*what to do with the water tanks*

*they might be useful for a street blockade*

On this day, we harvest 90 kg of potatoes. Proudly, I heave my share.

*6 Kilo*

*This will see me through the year!*

*Hey, but it was so nice.*

*Yes, agreed!*

**48) The rousing speech at the demonstration**

November: the protests against the new city highway hit their peak. Everyone does what they do best: Joe has composed a protest anthem dedicated to Vienna's Mayor.

*Lud-will-ig*

*willfully wants to*

*pave over Hirschstetten*

During a bike protest, I meet the well-known actor Robert Stadlober. He declares in earnest, that he had always love to play the role of a highway interchange.

*What does it feel like, to be a road?*

*We zoom in, and you start explaining...*

*Who am I?*

*l'm a knot of pretzels made of concrete*

*My walls are sprayed with graffiti.*

Together, we create video clips illustrating how the most beautiful recreational areas of Vienna are being sacrificed for motorised freedom.

*What would the Danube Canal be without me?*

*a generic recreational area without personality*

But on the weekends, I retreat to the countryside. Michi pays my train tickets, in exchange I mimic a gardener**.** To reconcile climate campaigning with second home ownership, I press our home-made apple juice. We're about to retire the car for winter - but then there's a protest at the Social Democrats’ headquarters again - and I'm supposed to give a speech! Now I’ll have to overcome my anxieties.

*Wanna say something?*

I rehearse with Hanna, she's encouraging and believes in her little brother. *Private transportion, private transportation, which your party... I feel he should actually be called "city climate change adaptation councilman". A councilman should be a leader in the fight for public transportation. And take a stand against a councilwoman, when she talks about "upholding the rights of motorists".* Things I've always wanted to do, but never dared: to give a rousing speech at a demonstration. Check. *...and cementing in a mobility concept for decades to come ­– Alright, the convertible season is over!* A few days later, the Green Party's Minister of Mobility declares: *The Lobau Highway and the tunnel ~~going directly~~ through the nature reservation will not be built! ­– Long live Leonore!*

*Are you happy? It's going well today, huh?*

We celebrate this first big victory at a locked-down christmas market in front of the town hall. Now we have to convince the Mayor of Vienna that a cancelled highway means we also don't need to build the highway connection roads. *People, we need to get onto the barricades, because it works! Lobau, Lobau, Lobau? Will stay, stay, stay! And hopefully for ever! Thanks to all of you for coming to be with us here! – Let's get out of our cars, let's get into the Au forest . . .*

**49) "Ecocide" group exhibition**

At this point, I'm thinking: what a success-story, this could be the climax of my film. Everything else is just banal, coping with everyday life. But then, I get another opportunity to burn money: December. As a participant in the "Ecocide" group exhibition, I present a simple method for installing a sandpit in front of your door: just repurpose a convertible. *...the things you have to do to give this space back to kids, to make it accessible - They're also rescued, but not from the garbage...* David hosts a garbage-bin buffet. *mmh, a cherry-chocolate-cake – Hey look, keeps the minimum distance. – Of course, I bought one of those CO2-certificates, for 10 euros, to compensate* As an opening performance, I literally carbonise my artist's fee. *Look, we'd actually like to make sure we don't hit any climate tipping points, but first of all, we need to ensure that the economy recovers, after Corona. Then, perhaps...* I'm not too good with handling fossil fuels, *you always carry that with you, in case there's some money that needs burning*, but fortunately Oscar, the in-house technician, always has an spare bunsen-burner with him. David is standing in the first row and taking pictures. After the performance, he's gone. I get a text message: "Bro, that was real money. Why didn't you donate it?". And he tells me he no longer wants to appear in my film. *...come back again, and we'll talk about it. I thought, you knew about it. But you signed a contract, I can't just let you get out now...*

*– I can't do that, or?*

*– Nooo!*

**50) ORF TV money burn scandal**

Looking back, this performance was probably a tipping point.*If I had bought myself a small car* Of course, I had often boasted publicly about burning my director's fee *you can't do that, you could do so much good with it - it was quite a liberation* but now, people were paying attention. A few days later, Judith summons me nervously to her office. *I burnt my director's fee*  The social media department shared the videos of the burning money, leading to heated debates among TV board members, they want to oust the director of documentaries with a no-confidence vote. *You have no idea what I'm currently having to deal with* The director in question, Dr. Leitner, is furious about, what she calls: "mocking public art subsidies",

*Burning public money*

*has fatal effects*

*This is taxpayer's money!* and she certainly has no intention of losing her job to protect a wannabe-director. *What were you guys thinking? We didn't know . . .* "15.000 Euro, national television is burning much bigger sums every day". *You should really know, what's...* But my ill-judged actions are a perfect excuse to cut funding for truly critical documentaries.

*And guess which party is going to jump onto this! I want a solution by midday.*

*– Well, 15.000 Euros is actually not that much.*

*– I also don't think it's that radical.*

*– You've burnt taxpayer's money, Christoph, don't you get that?*

*– I'm really sorry.*

*– We've already had this discussion. What we're going to do is this: we say, it was toy money.*

Okay, what if the burnt banknotes were only toy money? asks Ani. Judith agrees: Christoph only burnt toy money, and actually donated his director's fee!

*Why should I say this?*

But I remain stubborn. How come I'm not allowed to burn my own, hard-earned money? *...and I'll also loose my anti-capitalist reputation, I'll just be an activist clown who burns toy money.*

*– Exactly, you should have thought of that earlier.*

**51) Extra money offer**

The next day I'm in Ani's office again, she appears way more relaxed, wants to make peace. *We've come up with an idea, we'll give you those 15,000 Euros once more, so that you can actually donate them, but I'd like to ask you not to burn them again, if possible - "Any film- and photo-recordings published by me..."* I sign a statement. In exchange, Ani hands over a savings book *and then I'd donate the money to a climate-activist organiation - then you'd have to donate it - exactly! - exactly. - exactly - exactly.* The TV supervisory board is pacified. Somehow, I've managed to conclude a money-free year with a net gain of 120,000 euros - and I still get invited to free drinks at the christmas market. I guess this is what my self-experiment boils down to: Money is as shy as a deer, always running away from me. But now I've left the forest, it follows me to the end of the world.

**52) Donation to Robin Foods**

*Quite okay, as always.*

*Funds are low, as always*

To make up with David, I tell him the truth - or most of it:

*Did I tell you that I burnt a lot more in summer?*

After all this money burning, I'm somehow richer than before *so I've been thinking, we could make a deal* and could support his association with 1500 Euros *but officially, we say I donated 15,000 Euros – yes, let's do that, if that's ok with you.* David and Joe are immediately on board. *Donation for "climate justice", perhaps.... 15,000 or 150,000? – 150.000!* Two days later, we dress up for a press photo. No one will notice the misplaced decimals on the cheque. *Banana box! Buy yourselves something nice! Thanks!*

**53) Letter from the lawyer**

*Summoning you to end the occupation* However, I do get a letter from a lawyer *you can't be asked to do that* threatening legal proceedings *you aren't the occupation* against everyone involved in the occupation of the construction sites. The mayor of Vienna seems hell-bent on cementing his highway to nowhere.

*This is a public announcement: I hereby explicitly distance myself from any occupation of this construction site.* I immediately make my way to Hirschstetten and distance myself. *...not about a highway link between the Seestadt district and the (south-east) ring road, it's a completely normal local road, where you're not allowed to drive faster than 50 Km/h. Of course the 7000 new flats in the northern part of Seestadt need a connection to the national road grid, because from the moment people buy a washing machine or order a kitchen, they obviously depend on their cars and on good roads.*

*Yes, there is a man-made climate crisis*

*but we won't save the world in Vienna*

*and certainly not in Donaustadt*

Subversive affirmation, always a great go-to strategy. My views and likes go through the roof.  *You can't transport a washing machine on the U2 underground.*

**54) End of year**

On my way home, I'm caught without a ticket on the underground. To avoid a fine, I suggest various creative compensations. A debt collection agency takes over, I dismantle our doorbell to stall the payment until next year. *Likewise, merry Christmas!* And then it's finally over, my long year without money. *1-week vacation voucher for Michaela, Christoph, Ferris, Rosa. Monaco! Last year we went riding*

*Ferris und ich wollen Formel-1 Wochenende Monaco!*

On new year's eve, we play WHO AM I. I am Scrooge McDuck, and I guess it in the first round. *22!* My money-free year ends as unspectacular as it began: watching other people's fireworks. Then, I reenter the world of money.

**55) Looking back**

On the second of January, I cash in the TV money on the savings book - my new slush fund. *That's where it gets heavy.* I buy myself a new computer for editing. An indispensable tool for completing my film - or rather a rebound-effect, because I've saved so much money? Packed supermarket shelves are too much for me. It takes me a few weeks to suppress my memories of stuffed garbage rooms.

*Can I still wear this?*

Over the last year, I kind of turned into a hobo, but I just can't buy new clothes. *A lot of people come with these kinds of problems.* Couldn't a tailor use my worn polos and torn protest t-shirts to design a new collection? *Don't you think?* *Or a bag, here, with this frog!* Three weeks later, I try on my new, old clothes. I feel so grateful to Ulya *you've saved me!* , I could have paid three times as much. *Lobau must remain! But they... they have it again, or not? I mean, this... highway?*

**56) Clearance of blocked construction sites**

On a tuesday mid-february, the construction sites are sparsely occupied. The police arrive with a special-command unit. The nearby underground station is shut down, there's tension in the air, the police are nervous. Some activists have chained themselves to the inside of the pyramid and are able to delay clearance by a few hours. *You are not alone, you are not alone!*

As the digger approaches to tear it down, everyone holds up their phones.

There's something iconic about the images of the pyramid being wrecked, they stand for something bigger. I can't stop watching it again and again, especially backwards.

**57) Zoomcall other directors**

*Super funny, a film-director fooled by actors...* In a group meeting by ourselves, Catalina confesses to having encountered some serious contradictions in her editing process. *They say they can't really put on a real internet-strike, because it's their job to be visible* Her co-protagonists - her actor friends - only pretended to be on an internet-strike. *It seems I'm the only one who ~~just did it and~~ went for a real internet-strike.* Lisa, who is finally allowed to talk again, wants to reenact and film her nightmares, as a parallel plot. *Because otherwise it's totally boring, I can show it to you.* Rafael hints at the rather speculative nature of his "edible city" *Truth be told, those weren't real leather shoes. - Yes, but no-one's going to believe that anymore. - The trick is the frying, you always think, anything that's fried is edible, with ketchup.* What if we proposed a concept change to ORF television?, suggests Catalina.

A mockumentary

What if our films were "auto-fictional experiments"? *...this is actually not a real documentary, only parts of it are* While the others warm up to a "contemporary approach to truth", it suddenly hits me: what if I presented my film as a mockumentary, a fake documentary, and - as opposed to my colleagues - just tell the true story of my year? *Christoph, what about you?– Yes, well, it's making me think, hearing you, that it could be a possibility*

**58) Autofictitious turn**

Could I pack all those rather delicate moments, my weekend house, the Czech counterfeit money, my falling out with Dr. Leitner, my dubious moral standing as a publicly funded climate activist who makes everyone work for free, into my film?

*I can imagine they'd be up for it, especially if the four of us come together and say we all want it.* I rework my script and send it to Judith, who is highly amused. She calls it a "creative firework of intelligent meta-rockets", while in fact it's just the plain truth.

**59) Reenactments**

The legally problematic moments of my self-experiment, which are of course the most exciting ones, now need to be reenacted for my camera. I want to pay Generous George for this extra work, but he categorically refuses. *You know, I think it just doesn't fit with the project* We rent the same apartment in Prague, my old friend Jiri actually looks like the original Pizza delivery guy. The role of Dr. Leitner is played by an actress. Ani insists on renacting herself during the money-handover, which we shoot in a parking garage - totally over the top. And if my very own story is spoken by an actor *if you need a voice-over* who feels guilty about his countless short distance flights I do climate solidarity for nothing*. I mean: without money.*

then people won't believe a word of it

*Could you please show us a bit more guilt?*

*Yes*

**60) Remonetarisation**

The next months highlight how quickly activist capital can be converted into cash: my backwards video of the pyramid's destruction wins an art prize; my banknote-prints rally on the art-market;

*2 out of 40*

Gallery owner Lena has already found a collector willing to pay 650 euros.

*if you need more...*

*...then I can also buy them back from my friends.* Lena argues that subversive artistic practises deliver the best long-term returns.

*Art dealing with socially critical themes and activism...*

Overnight, my protests turn into "works" and are exhibited in a hip gallery space, the show is entitled: "sweet sabotage".

*It still paid off for me!*

This time, my innocent party balloons were really inflated with air from local weapons of mass destruction. *A ballon filled with air, one tire, you don't notice it.*

**61) Gürtel Bike Ride**

We work hard promoting the next bike protest on the Viennese Gürtel Road, it should be huge. *It's become established now, a second protest ride, like a critical mass– We've got to tell the people, we urgently need a transformation* Nonetheless, 30 minutes prior to departure, I'm waiting alone

*We're going around the Gürtel ringroad today*

Last year, we never managed to mobilise more than 200 people.

*Every first Friday of the month!*

But soon it’s clear: today, we are many. Today, no-one can claim that cycling in the city is just a hobby. All our efforts have been rewarded *Werner, you've won a book!* After the protest, I'm in party-mood.

*It was a super nice event*

David remains earnest. Significantly "different things" need to happen to get everyone on the streets. *Maybe people will take to the streets, but only, when there's no more clean water coming out of the taps.*

*What did you mean with different things?*

As we pack up, I ask David what "different things" he's thinking of. *That sounded like a plan.* *Before we slide into social collapse*

He eyes me sadly: the Vienna Woods would need to burn.

*Maybe it can be done when there aren't that many animals staying in the forest.*

**62) The fires**

At the "Days of Transformation" in the Melk Abbey, we're invited as honorable climate activists on a work retreat. In reality, we're thinking about large scale arson. *We've thought about it, it's better if the catastrophe starts earlier, then we might still have a better chance of reacting*

*It's pure escalation*

The logic is compelling *because if we don't do anything in the next 20 years, it's all over anyway*, but what does logic have to do with morality? We can’t save the world by setting it alight. *To sacrifice the thing you're fighting for.* Processing this leaves us paralysed. Are we too polite to force a transformation? *Yesterday night, 200 firefighters were already in action in Reichenau an der Rax.* And then the unthinkable happens. The forest is actually burning. *According to the fire department, this is the biggest forest fire ever witnessed in Austria and there's no end in sight for the firefighting efforts.*

*Day 3 and the wildfire...*

I spend the next days glued to the screens, waiting for a climate uprising *...so the firefighters are barely able to reach the fire areas.* But it soon becomes clear that even 100 hectars of burning forest don't trigger any mass protests. Would one thousand hectars be enough? Ten thousand? What will it take for climate anxiety to bring all the people out on the streets? During these days I finally lose control of my self-experiment: I dedicated two years to climate activism, but didn't consider where this might end: in despair. David does not give up. He co-founds the climate movement "Last Generation" and blocks highways with rescued food, glues himself to roads and negotiation tables, *our government not even for super-simple measures, like a 100 KmH highway speed-limit* and he even goes to prison *This speed-limit will save 80 million Liters of fuel Sprit per year – these are my Montessori-materials.* Disillusioned, Hanna quits activism and signs a teaching contract. She thinks her energies are better invested in education. I try to overcome my climate-depression by playing practical jokes on parked cars. The "Vienna Auto-Lottery" supports the city in reaching at least one of their self-proclaimed climate goals: "A 20% reduction of private cars by 2030".

I issue fake parking tickets, informing car-owners that the city will cancel 400 parking licenses every month, on a lottery basis. *This morning, some drivers were in for a rude surprise* The intervention causes a stir, but doesn't change the fact that the public is perfectly satisfied with ambitious-sounding climate targets. New laws and strict policies aren't even necessary *Far too often, the City of Vienna's omnipresent greenwashing finds its way into the media.* Where we had our protest camps last year, you can now drive onto the highway. Here we're building the city of the future, but it's the past that blows up in your face. I ask myself: are we eventually going to escalate too, smash windscreens, decorate cars, drain batteries in the dark of night? *Just imagine what you can rent for 10 euros elsewhere - Vienna, you're a parking lot!*  For this film, I only meant to play the role of the climate activist. In the end, I've become one. *We must reclaim our city, all these innocent fools like myself, who would normally never do anything, they've got to climb onto the cars and say: we want to get this space back! Vienna, you're a parking lot!*

**63) Testscreening**

*I think it was always outside ones...* The first showing of my film is a test-screening on a playground. *If a child shows up we've got to quickly remove the screen, because of course you're still allowed to swing.* There's a lot of laughter, and a grave silence during the wildfire. In the discussion everyone agrees: the ending would do better with some sort of reconciliation, less confrontation and more community - perhaps at the weekend-house?

*It was also pointless*

*If that's the last thing that remains...*

*I don't know, is there another way...*

*It’s kind of a pity…“*

**64) Closing party**

In August, I invite everyone to "reconcile" themselves in a final scene at our weekend house.

*...that's the street where the cats usually get run over.*

*That fits amazingly well, also because she's wearing the right t-shirt.* I hammer the "Rich aunt"-narrative into Michi's head *I try to imagine...* after repeating it three times in a row, she ends up believing it herself. *Never! I only met her once in hospital. Why did you inherit it then? Because she didn't have anyone else!* Nonetheless, I feel nervous showing my friends around.

*the stairs...* But nobody has any moral objections to a penniless climate activist inheriting a weekend house. Especially if he addresses those objections himself. *well, it also spews tonnes of CO2* Then you'll save up energies for activism! If you really put effort in it!

Judith is also more than happy to believe the Aunt-Rudi-story, she tells me about her new documentary series "Inheriting Austria" and would love to have me on board again.

*Perhaps Michi could join as well! Yes, Michi, that would really be a good idea!*

*Johanna, so nice to have you here!* I give a thank-you speech, it's time for David to get his well-deserved applause,  *Where is David?* but he's nowhere to be seen. *Hey children, could you have a look where he is?* I find him on the hillside. *Last summer I made tonnes of apple juice here.* For the first time in weeks, I feel happy again. We even joke about the tinder-dry forest on the hill before us *It's kind of surprising to see that in the end, it comes down to a few individual people.* I want to thank him for all his activist energy and inspiration, he confesses that in autumn, he'll be taking up work as a programmer for a London-based weather app.

*They're hiring people*

*So you'd move there?*

*They're making a weather app, I've always enjoyed this kind of modelling work... - What, and you're going to move there?* He speaks of having sacrificed the best years of his life for activism, and what for? Not even the most basic emergency measures are in place. *Just because I'm a climate activist, why shouldn't I be allowed to have a job where I can earn more money - That's so sad, David! - Well, somebody will take over* And if one day our kids question us, why we didn't do anything against the climate crisis - then at least we can show them my film. *...as a souvenir.* I'm thinking, in spite of all the bitterness, these could be good closing words, *Would you be able to repeat that, exactly this, in front my camera? Because then I'll just go and fetch it now, and I'll film you telling this to me .*

*– Yes.*

*– Yes?*

*– You wait here.*

*– Yes, sure.*

END