

ZDFE.drama

WATAIHA

6 x 60'

There are borders to protect
and boundaries to cross.

“There are borders to protect and boundaries to cross.”

“Wataha” is a story about border guards in the Bieszczady Mountains but also about a place which determines specific attitudes and behaviours. The story starts with a bomb attack which kills officers from a Border Guard unit deployed in the Bieszczady Mountains. Only one of them survives. Captain Rebrow (Leszek Lichota) loses his friends and his beloved Ewa in the attack. Shattered, he tries to get to the bottom of the assault and find out who is the mastermind behind the bombing. His commanders are also determined to reveal the truth. The official investigation is led by the prosecutor’s office.

The series tells the story of people on the border-line – the border of the state (the external border of the European Union), the border between the worlds of rich and poor, and the border of ethical

dilemmas and choices. The series is set in the Bieszczady Mountains and is about border guard officers, who are tested to the limits of their morale and physical endurance. The series offers a rare glimpse into the stories of people who illegally cross the border.

Virgin Bieszczady Mountains are a magical place which has not been fully discovered. It’s the land of stunning vistas, fog blanketing mountain pastures, pocket-sized villages, Orthodox churches seamlessly blending with the landscape. People who’ve been living there for generations and those who have moved there in search of peace and harmony. This is the place where the plot of HBO’s new TV series “The Pack” unfolds. Most scenes were shot on location in the Bieszczady Mountains.



The word “border” in “Wataha” (“The Pack”) has many meanings:

- the geographical border
- the border between the affluent and the underprivileged world
- out ethical borders – how many borders we can cross, i. e. how many of our own personal limitations we can overcome
- the border of a group of people who have to trust and rely on one another – this is a story of loyalty and trust
- the border between life and death
- your own personal border – how much you really know about your closest friends

EPISODE 1

“The Pack” opens with a bomb attack which kills officers from a Border Guard unit deployed in the Bieszczady Mountains. Only one of them survives. Captain Rebrow (Leszek Lichota) loses his friends and his beloved Ewa in the attack. Shattered, he tries to get to the bottom of the assault and find out who is the mastermind behind the bombing.

His commanders are also determined to reveal the truth. The official investigation is led by the prosecutor’s office. To clear up things after the attack, Major Konrad Markowski (Andrzej Zieliński) is relocated to Bieszczady to form a new pack. He arrives with Natalia Tatarkiewicz (Magdalena Popławska) in tow – a new candidate for the undercover Border Guard. Natalia is forced to confront her vision of border guard work with the Bieszczady reality. In the wake of the Bieszczady bombing, the local unit is rejoined by Adam “Grzywa” Grzywaczewski (Bartłomiej Topa) who’s appointed the pack’s commander by Markowski. Grzywa moves to the Bieszczady Mountains with his wife and their newly born son – Grzywa is not his biological father.



EPISODE 2

DA Iga Dobosz (Aleksandra Popławska) is heading the investigation into BG station bombing – she interrogates Major Markowski and Michał Łuczak (Jacek Lenartowicz), Rebrow’s friend. Rebrow decides to accept Markowski’s offer and return to active service. Markowski agrees on two conditions: Rebrow must not conduct his private investigation into the bombing and being a suspect he must remain at the DA’s disposal.

Rebrow meets up with Łuczak who tells him that he was visited by DA Dobosz. Łuczak also mentions to Rebrow something that everyone knows or suspects – that the bombing was authored by the local mobster, Kalita. Meanwhile, Kalita meets up with his Ukrainian partner, Metro. Both of them are trying to figure out who is behind the murder of Kosowski and the BG guardhouse attack. They conclude that an “alien” element is operating within their territory and decide to join forces.

Rebrow leaves the apartment he has been sharing with Ewa for several years and decides to move to Łuczak’s old log cabin in the woods. Meanwhile, DA Dobosz is supervising a search at Rebrow’s apartment. Police officers find bundles of cash in different currencies in the old computer case.

During his first evening in the log cabin, Rebrow is drinking with Łuczak and reminiscing about good, old times when he suddenly notices an earring on the floor. He’s absolutely certain that this is the earring Ewa was wearing on the day of the bombing.

THE EPISODES

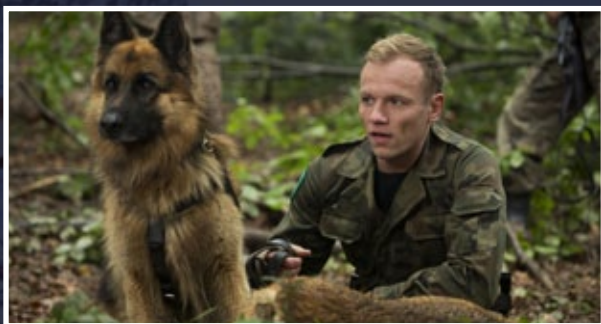
EPISODE 3

DA Dobosz is interrogating Grzywa. Grzywa reveals that Rebrow is in trouble with Kalita, and this is the man the DA should be talking to instead of harassing honest people.

Ever since he's found the earring, Rebrow is certain that Ewa has survived the bombing. Łuczak becomes apprehensive about Rebrow. He believes that his friend is overwhelmed by grief after Ewa's death, refuses to think rationally and denies obvious facts. The earring is meaningless – Ewa is dead and Rebrow should move on. Nevertheless, he accompanies his friend during a search for Ewa in the mountains.

Aga (Dagmara Bąk) and Natalia are patrolling the woods when they suddenly notice a group of poachers in the distance – one of them is carrying a dead roe deer. Both of them start chasing them. They are monitoring the area through binoculars. Natalia notices Rebrow and Łuczak in the distance.

A large group of illegal immigrants from Azerbaijan is walking along the main human trafficking route. During the chase after one of the guides, Rebrow notices someone sitting in the forest clearing. It's the body of Ewa who's propped against the tree.



EPISODE 4

The case turns out to be more complex than it appeared to be. Everything indicates that Ewa survived the explosion and was hiding in the forest for weeks. DA Dobosz finds a small key in the jacket Ewa was wearing. She decides to call in Grzywa once more for interrogation. She asks him to describe in detail how Rebrow found Ewa's body. She suggests that Ewa's fate proves that there was some sort of conspiracy within the previous Pack, out of which only Grzywa and Rebrow are still alive. Dobosz's assistants are relentlessly looking for clues to find the lock opened by Ewa's key. Finally, police forensics helps DA Dobosz untangle the mystery – they confirm it's a typical key that would fit a deposit box in a Russian Orthodox church.

DA Dobosz is interrogating Rebrow at the police station. Many facts from Ewa's past come to light during the inquiry: she had received comprehensive military and anti-terrorist training; she served in various units in Afghanistan and Kosovo. General Hupol, the Commander-in-Chief of the Border Guard, visits the BG unit in Bieszczady. He orders Markowski to clear things up in his unit. After all, this is what he's been sent there for.

During a routine patrol, Aga and Grzywa find Anna Galecka's body. She has a cross carved on her forehead. The trail picked up by a dog takes them to the Polish-Ukrainian border. Markowski asks Rebrow to unofficially turn for help to Dima, a Ukrainian border guard. If they do everything by the book, the case could soon come to a standstill.

DA Dobosz goes to Warsaw where she meets with Robert Korda, Ewa's former commander. Robert Korda is an experienced special forces officer. He was honourably discharged three years earlier. Meanwhile, Natalia's body is discovered in Bieszczady. She has a cross carved on her forehead.

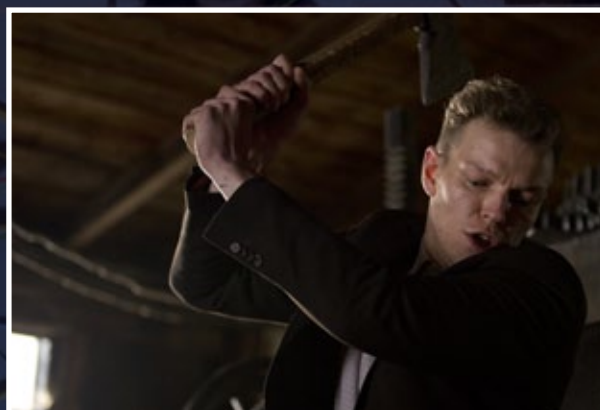
EPISODE 5

The police are searching Natalia's murder scene to preserve the evidence. DA Dobosz finds Rebrow's lighter (with an engraved wolf) lying in the grass and later interrogates all people who were the last to see Natalia alive. She talks to Markowski and Rebrow. She has some questions to Grzywa, but no one knows his whereabouts.

Grzywa prevents the lynching of Whisperer and brings him to the station. Rebrow returns to the Border Guard station and tries to get information out of Whisperer. Eventually, he takes him into the woods. When they get there, Whisperer wants to show Rebrow something and asks the border guard officer to follow him. A man's corpse covered by leaves is lying in the forest. It's the Maggot who was caught in poachers' snares. He's obviously been dead for the past few days.

Kalita goes to meet with Metro. This time Metro comes alone without his bodyguards in tow. Depressed and unshaven, he looks different. He makes Kalita an offer – he's willing to close down his business and retire in return for a reasonable sum of money.

Dobosz and her assistants are searching Kalita's sawmill. They find his hiding place with two guns, ammo, and explosives inside it. One of these guns was used to shoot Kosowski and Ewa. Kalita is convinced that someone is trying to frame him for both murders. DA Dobosz arrests Kalita and orders a search of the Ustrzyki BG station. Rebrow's blood-stained shirt is found in a locker. Rebrow is also arrested.



EPISODE 6

Natalia's funeral takes place in Warsaw. Her coffin is flanked by Border Guard officers forming the guard of honour. After the funeral, DA Dobosz meets with the Vice-Minister who provides her with new evidence vital to solving the mystery of the guardhouse bombing.

Rebrow is sitting in his cell and Grzywa pays him a visit at night. Rebrow argues that he's had lots of time to think after being arrested, and that he's onto him. He concluded that Natalia could have been killed by only two people – himself or Grzywa. Rebrow asks for a meeting with DA Dobosz the same night and confesses to killing Natalia. During the inspection at the crime scene, Rebrow gives a detailed account of how he killed Natalia and flees. The police and Border Guard officers set off on a chase.

In his cell, Kalita swallows a razor brought to him by his sidekick, Cinek. He is later moved to the hospital ward. Acting on Kalita's orders, Cinek kills Metro.

Rebrow is running away. Grzywa, ready to confess the truth, is waiting for him in the woods. Grzywa runs away to the Ukrainian side. Rebrow jumps over the precipice.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS



Wiktor Rebrow (Leszek Lichota)

37 years old

A Captain in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. The leader of the pack – the operations unit of the Border Guard. He loses his friends and his beloved Ewa in a bomb attack. Unable to bear his loss, he suffers a breakdown. Rebrow decides to leave the service but eventually returns to work. He's torn between helplessness and trying to conduct his own investigation. He feels completely lost as he tries to find out what happened and who was behind the bombing.

Iga Dobosz (Aleksandra Popławska)

35 years old

A DA transferred from the Investigation Division of the District Prosecutor's Office in Krosno to the District Prosecutor's Office in Lesko. She is heading the investigation into the BG station bombing. Rebrow is the prime suspect. Dobosz doesn't believe in simple solutions and is always trying to find hidden agendas. Her approach is unorthodox.



Adam "Grzywa" Grzywaczewski (Bartłomiej Topa)

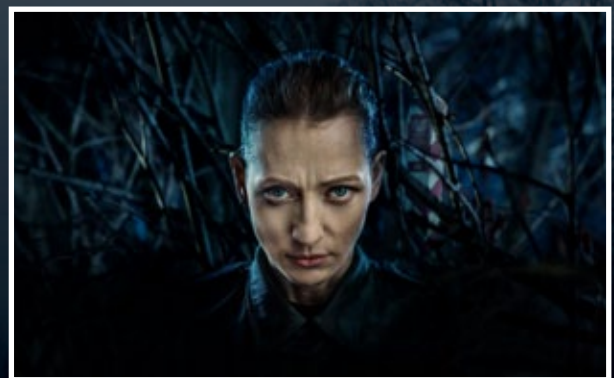
39 years old

Captain in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. The closest friend of the main character, Rebrow. He returns to the Bieszczady Mountains after the bomb attack and is appointed the new commander of the pack. He offers his support to Rebrow through tough times. They are very close and fond of each other despite their stark differences in personality. Grzywa has a lot of secrets weighing him down.

Natalia Tatarkiewicz (Magdalena Popławska)

33 years old

A Chief Warrant Officer in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. Natalia comes to the Bieszczady with Major Markowski, who selected her because she speaks fluent English, German, Ukrainian and Russian. Natalia is a new candidate for "undercover border guard" work. She soon has her preconceptions tested against the harsh reality of the Bieszczady.



CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS



Konrad Markowski (Andrzej Zieliński)

50 years old

Major in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. Markowski is dispatched to the Bieszczady to clear up things after the bomb attack and is given the task of forming a new pack. He often stands up for his people when the district attorney in charge of the investigation tightens the screws on them. He often hides behind the mask of a disciplinarian.

Aga Małek (Dagmara Bąk)

24 years old

Warrant Officer in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. Aga has recently graduated and completed her induction training. She has to overcome the stereotype of a young girl with carefully manicured nails. Her black and white view of the world is soon tempered with shades of grey.



Piotr "Rambo" Wójcik (Maciej Mikołajczyk)

24 years old

Platoon Sergeant in the Bieszczady Border Guard Division. Rambo is an ambitious young officer who is open to challenges and wants to join the senior ranks at any price. He is very athletic and fit.



THE PRODUCTION

Filming

for "Wataha" lasted almost four months. The series was mainly shot in the Bieszczady Mountains, a beautiful and magical place that has not been fully explored. The Bieszczady make a unique location for filmmakers with their undulating forested landscapes through which sunbeams shine and their pristine beauty. "The Pack" was shot on location in Polańczyk, Lesko, Górzanka, around Rabe and the Solina dam, and in Stuposiany and Ustrzyki Górne.

The Production

"Wataha" 6x60' HD

Directors

Michał Gazda (episodes 1–4)

Kasia Adamik (episodes 5–6)

Crew

Director of Photography: Tomasz Augustynek

Music: Łukasz Targosz

Executive Producer for HBO Europe: Antony Root

Executive Producer for ATM Grupa: Andrzej Muszyński

Producer for HBO Polska: Izabela Łopuch

Producer for ATM Grupa: Artur Kowalewski

This is the first time ever

that a television series has been set among border guards in Poland – a professional group virtually unknown to the public. The production crew worked closely with the Border Guard Services and consulted them regarding certain aspects of their work, their use of weapons and the procedures they have in place. The series was shot in selected Border Guard buildings in the Bieszczady. "When we shot the series, we wanted to get in touch with people who live in the Bieszczady. The locals were extremely helpful", says Izabela Łopuch, Head of Original Production, HBO Polska.

Cast

Leszek Lichota

Bartłomiej Topa

Aleksandra Popławska

Magdalena Popławska

Andrzej Zieliński

Marian Dziędziel

Julia Pogrzebińska

Dagmara Bąk

Maciej Mikołajczyk

CONTACT

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