



Stimate domnule judecator,

M-am hotarat sa va scriu acum, la distanta de ani, pentru ca acum stiu ca voi fi ascultata: nu mai sunt doar un copil ale carui cuvinte "pot fi puse la indoiala". Multa vreme nu-mi gaseam curaj sa va scriu aceasta scrisoare, dar o fac pentru copilul meu, care e aproape la varsta pe care o aveam eu atunci cand v-am intalnit.

Dear Judge,

I haven't had the courage to write this letter for a long time, but I'm doing it now for my child, who is almost the age I was when I met you.

What happened then, when I was 12, was called a „benevolent act” by you. Perhaps out of ignorance or to avoid getting things complicated, you reduced everything to my word as a „child” against his word as an adult man. In that moment, you mistook my helplessness for the choice. If only you knew how long I had to go to therapy, how many sleepless nights I spent analyzing, trying to understand, to find answers...

The police officer laughed at me, the doctor questioned my words because there were no visible wounds, the teacher thought I was lying to cover up my absences and poor grades, and the mayor preferred to wash his hands off it — he had more important things to do. I was so ashamed... I felt lonely and unprotected.

I would like you to know that this nightmare is not the way it looks on TV. The man who raped me didn't leave me with a

bruised eye and didn't threaten me with a weapon. He didn't need to. We knew each other well. He was my father... He'd take me with him to bed at night, and during the day he'd behave as if nothing had happened. He'd hug, touch, and tell me that I'd like it. He'd buy me things. He'd tell me he loved me so much, and I had to be grateful that he cared for me. Do you know how many years it took me to find out that love and care look different?

These wounds did not „heal”, but I managed to make the suffering more bearable due to a person who noticed me, listened to me, and got involved. It made me feel protected. I'd like to believe that such people still exist, that things have changed. I'd like to believe that behind functions there are people who know how to do their job, because injustice hurts. Incompetence, indifference, irony... they all hurt.

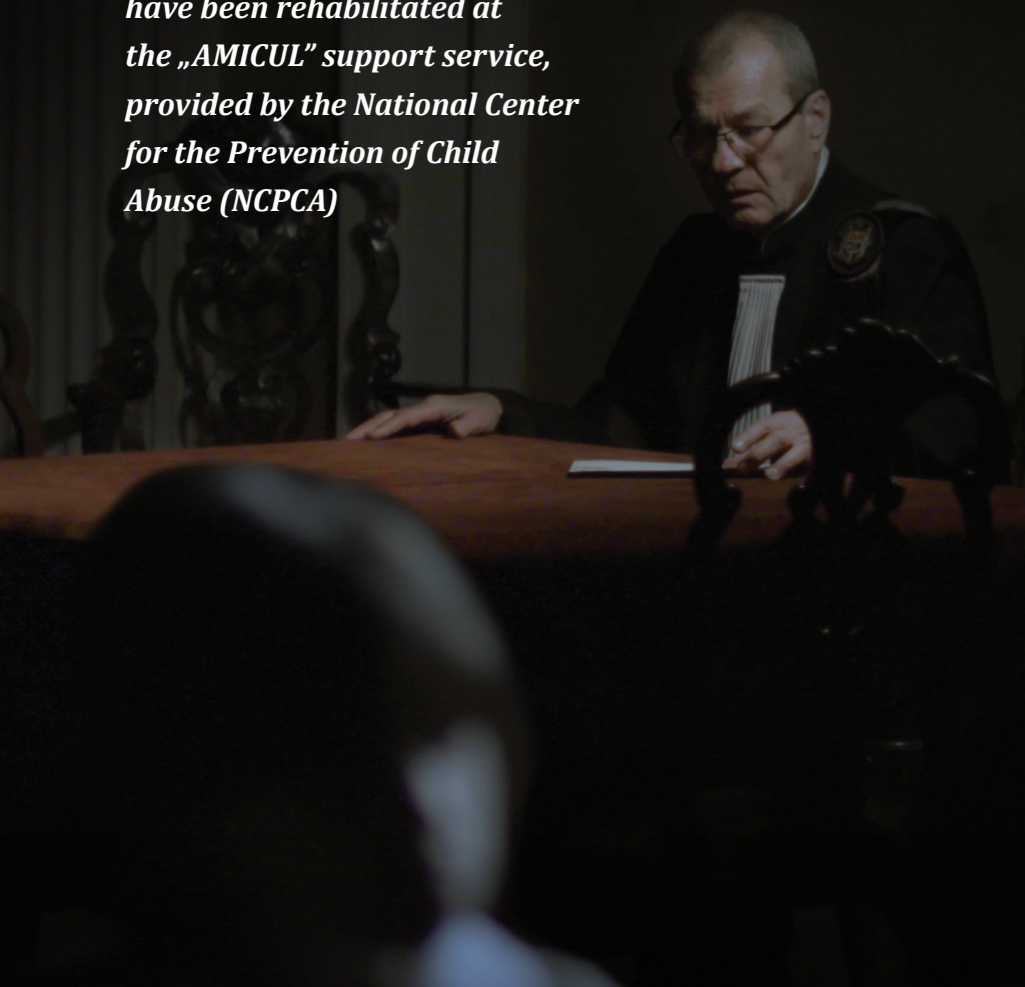
Someone's life depends on your actions...

One in seven girls (14,4%)
and **one in twenty boys** (5,3%)
were **sexually abused** before they
turned 18 years old.

(VACS, 2019)



A message written over the years by the survivors of childhood sexual abuse, who have been rehabilitated at the „AMICUL” support service, provided by the National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPA)



LETTER TO THE JUDGE

“Letter to the Judge” Film

The scenario of the short film „Letter to the Judge” was developed by the National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (NCCAP) together with 5 survivors of child sexual abuse. The film represents the voice of child sexual abuse victims – a serious crime against children which is growing as a phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova.

This voice addresses all professionals who work with sexually abused children and it draws attention to the evidence particularities in child sexual abuse cases. Also, it emphasizes the child’s need to receive legal assistance in a friendly environment that takes into account the inner fragility during childhood, as well as the need to receive genuine protection from the moment the abuse was identified throughout the criminal proceedings. Moreover, former victims of child sexual abuse talk about the impact of court decisions on their entire lives.

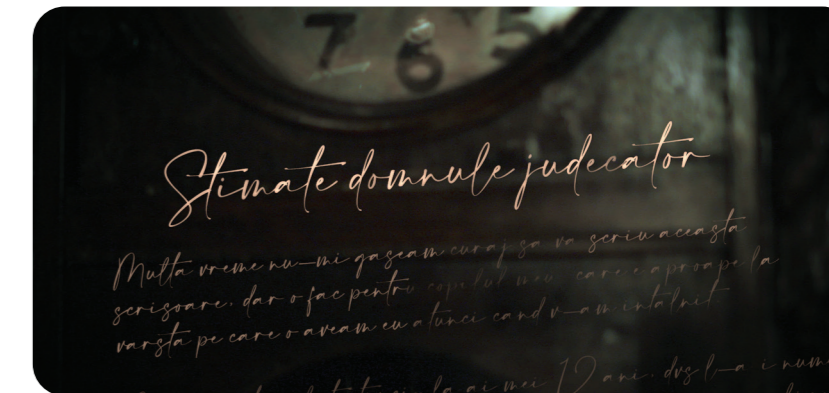
The 5 survivors who contributed to the film’s script benefited from the assistance of “AMICUL” Center specialists (The Center of Psychosocial Assistance for Abused Children “AMICUL” was created by NCPA) in their childhood (starting in 2000). Later, NCCAP invited them to collaborate in the framework of an innovative program where they learned about safe space, consent, confidentiality, advocacy, lobbying, children’s rights and participation in the decision-making process. They also explored the most sensitive aspects of sexual violence. The program lasted 9 months and culminated with the „A Letter to Judge” film.

A new type of protection services for abused children

The situation will change radically in the coming years due to the joint efforts of NCCAP and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection. In 2020, the first Integrated Assistance Center for Child Victims and Witnesses of Crimes (Barnahus) will open its doors in the city of Balti. Two other similar centers will later assist children in the central and southern regions of Moldova. As a result, child victims of various forms of abuse will benefit from child-friendly criminal proceedings, medical examination, psychological crisis assistance, legal and social assistance, all services being concentrated under one roof.

Barnahus integrated assistance service for child victims is widespread in several countries of the world and is recognized by the Council of Europe as a good practice model for a multidisciplinary, inter-institutional response to cases of sexual violence against children. This service fully complies with the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention).

In 2019, NCCAP assisted 84 child victims of sexual abuse but their number in the country is much higher. According to the General Police Inspectorate data, about 400 new cases of child sexual abuse are registered annually and this number is growing. Many of these children don’t receive any support and live their dramas in silence.



LETTER TO THE JUDGE

Script: Raisa Razmerita, based on the confessions of 5 survivors of child sexual abuse.

Director: Victor Ciobanu

Camera: Lucian Spataru

Actors: Nicolae Jelescu, Rada-Lia Danii, Alexandru Dorogan, Andrei Mardari, Tamara Virlan, Vladimir Guzun, Raisa Razmerita

Genre: short film, social

Producer: Ion Gnatiuc, “NIȘTE FILME”

Ordered by: National Center for Child Abuse Prevention

Country of production: Moldova

Release date: 20.02.2020



The „Letter to the Judge” film and this material were produced in the framework of the „Our Voices Too” Project implemented in Moldova by NCCAP in partnership with the International Centre for Researching Child Sexual Exploitation Violence and Trafficking, Bedfordshire University, with the support of the OAK Foundation (Poland).

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