



THE

BELIEVERS

WOLFGANG ZAC · AI · ANDREAS PUTZ (SUS)

A concept for Erste Bank

IN **FOUR** SENTENCES

The campaign portrays *real people* from every Erste market - *believers*, who **live like they mean it.**

Wolfgang ZAC photographs each of them *documentary-style* over a few days, Al extends his stills into short films that keep the look of the photograph.

Each shoot needs to deliver a guaranteed *Glaub-an-Dich-Moment*, and still leaves the door wide open for authenticity.

Small shoots, one per character, let us build a *fleet of motifs* across markets and years - a new model for how campaigns are made.



BELIEVERS WHO

LIVE

LIKE

THEY

MEAN IT



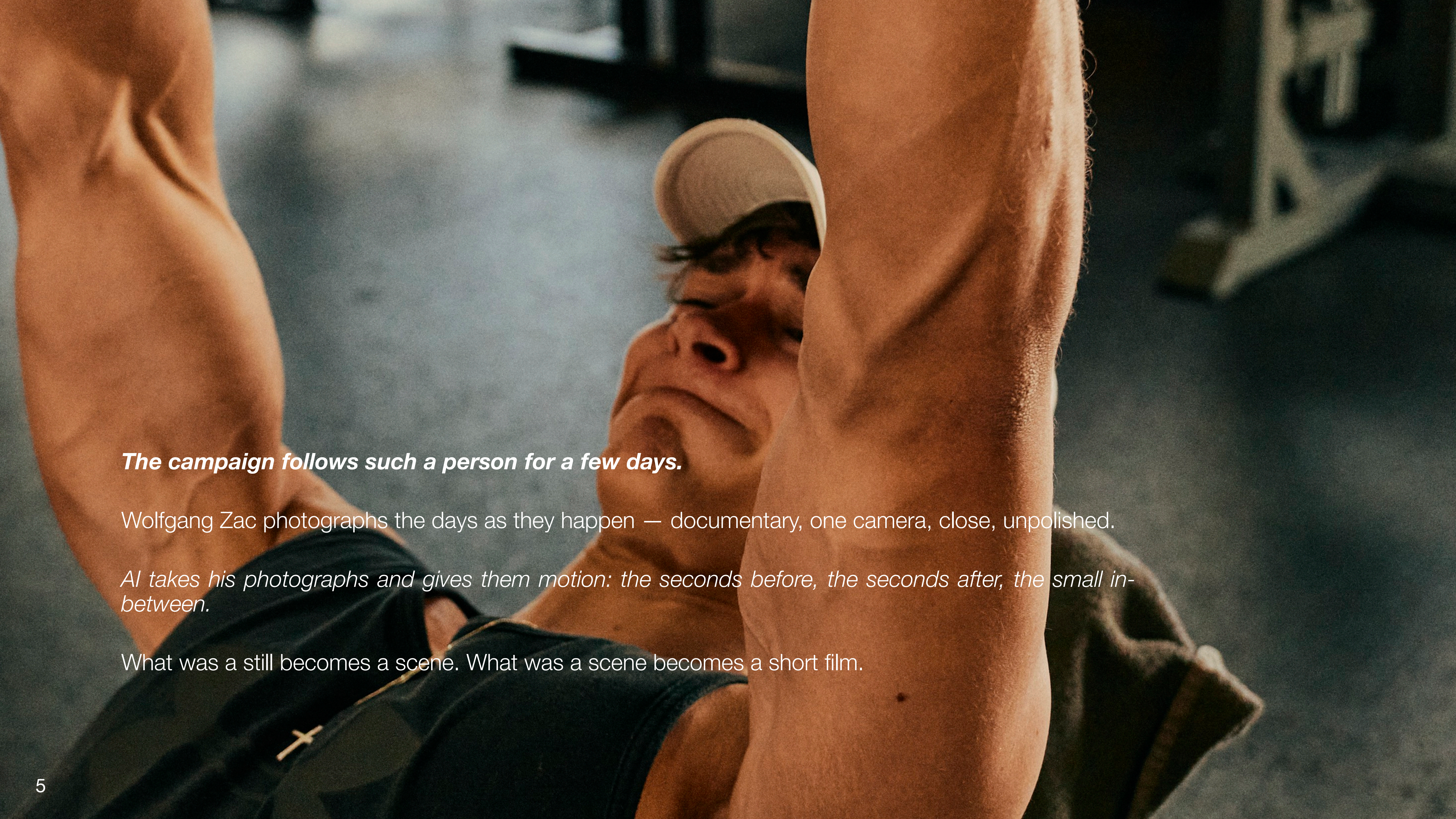
THE IDEA

There is a certain kind of person we all recognize when we see them: someone who lives like they mean it, without needing an audience.

A young bodybuilder in a Styrian village who gets up at four in the morning to train before he rides on his moped to school.

A mushroom hunter who walks the same forest for decades. A woman in a small town in Moldova who opens the shutters of her own shop each morning. *These are believers.*

They are people who believe in something, and in themselves, **and whose lives are shaped by that belief in a way that a camera can see.**



The campaign follows such a person for a few days.

Wolfgang Zac photographs the days as they happen — documentary, one camera, close, unpolished.

Al takes his photographs and gives them motion: the seconds before, the seconds after, the small in-between.

What was a still becomes a scene. What was a scene becomes a short film.

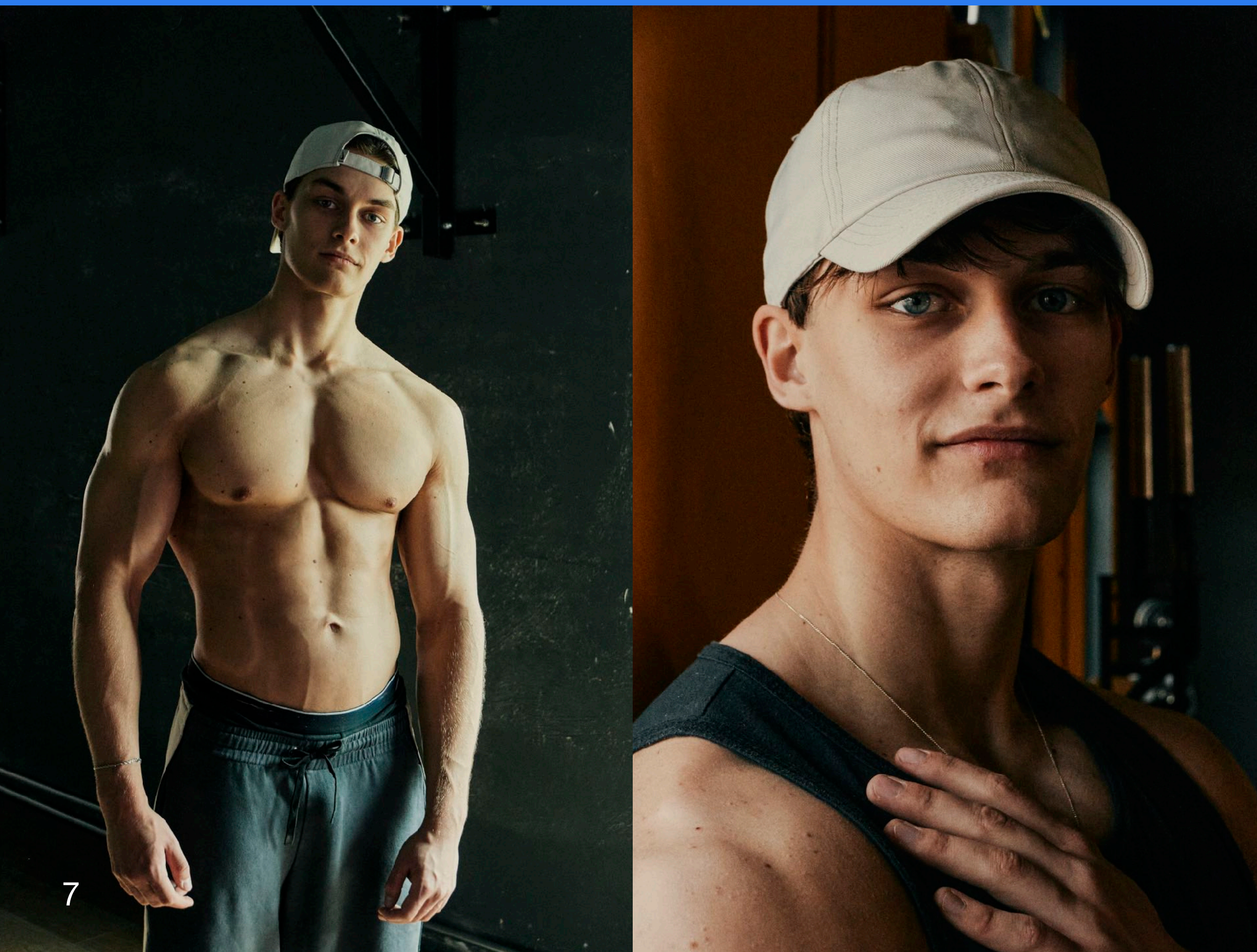
CHARACTERS

A believer is not defined by profession or age or country. They are defined by the way they follow their own thing, undivided.

They exist in every market Erste is present in.

THE *BODYBUILDER*

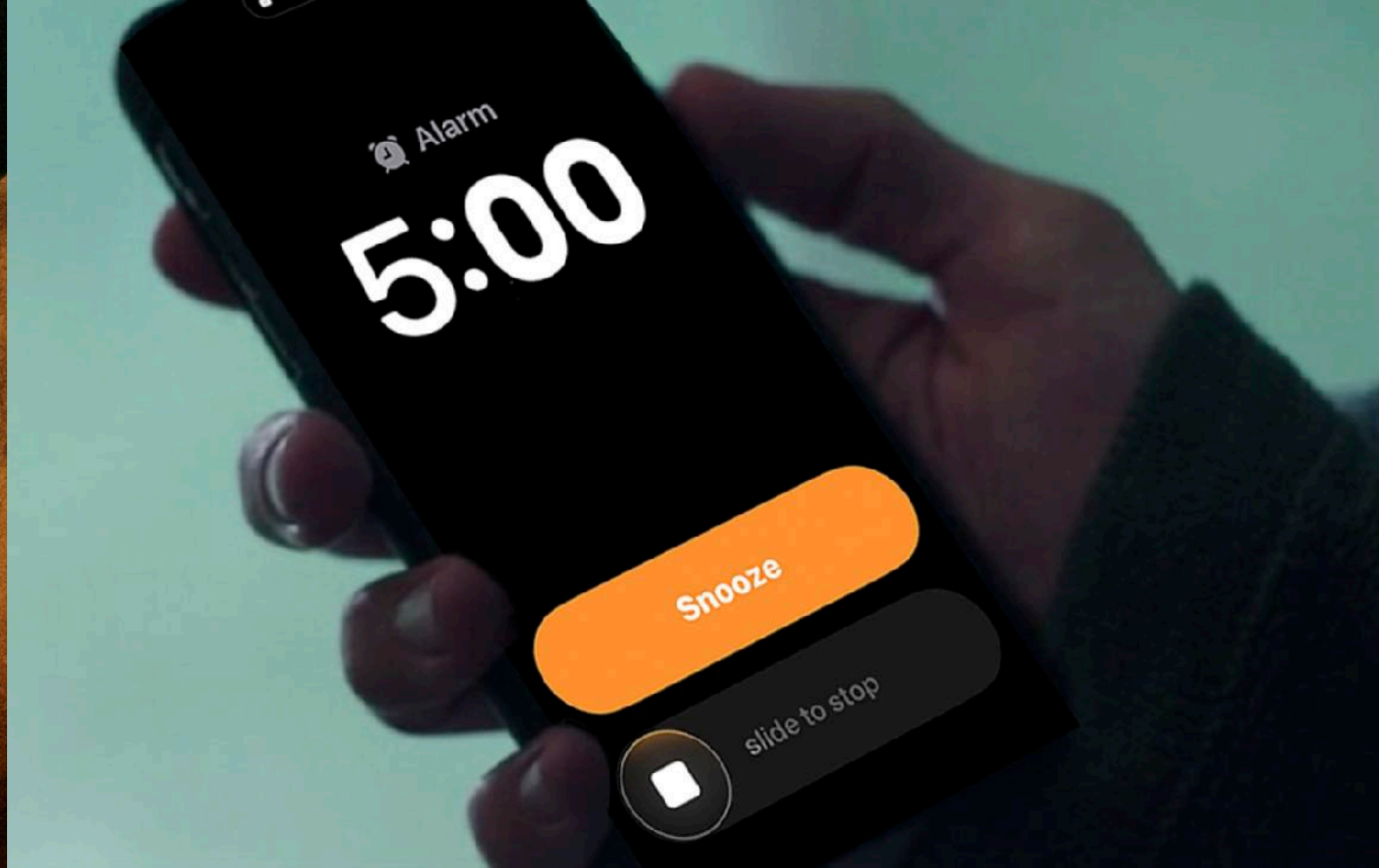
PILOT PROJECT



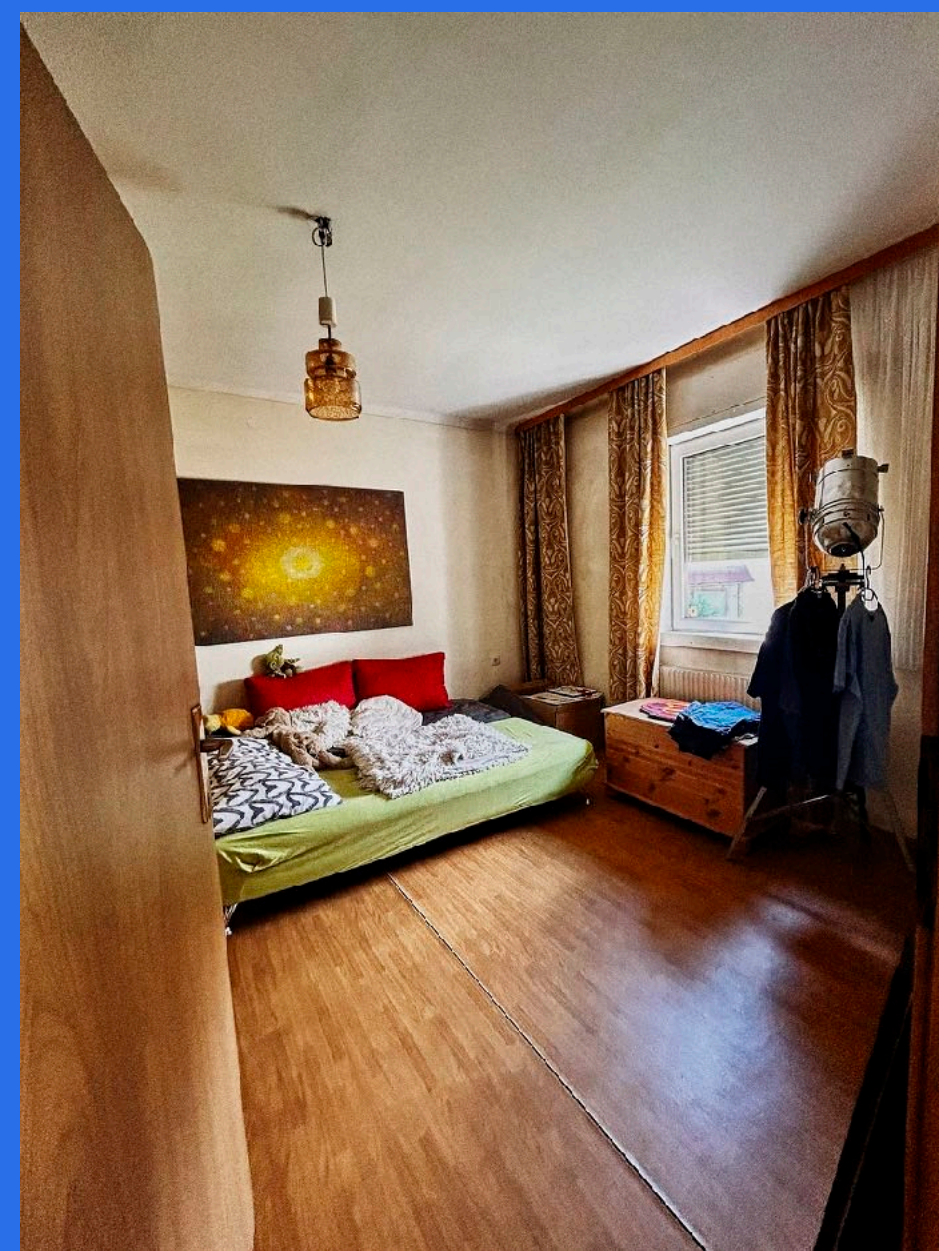
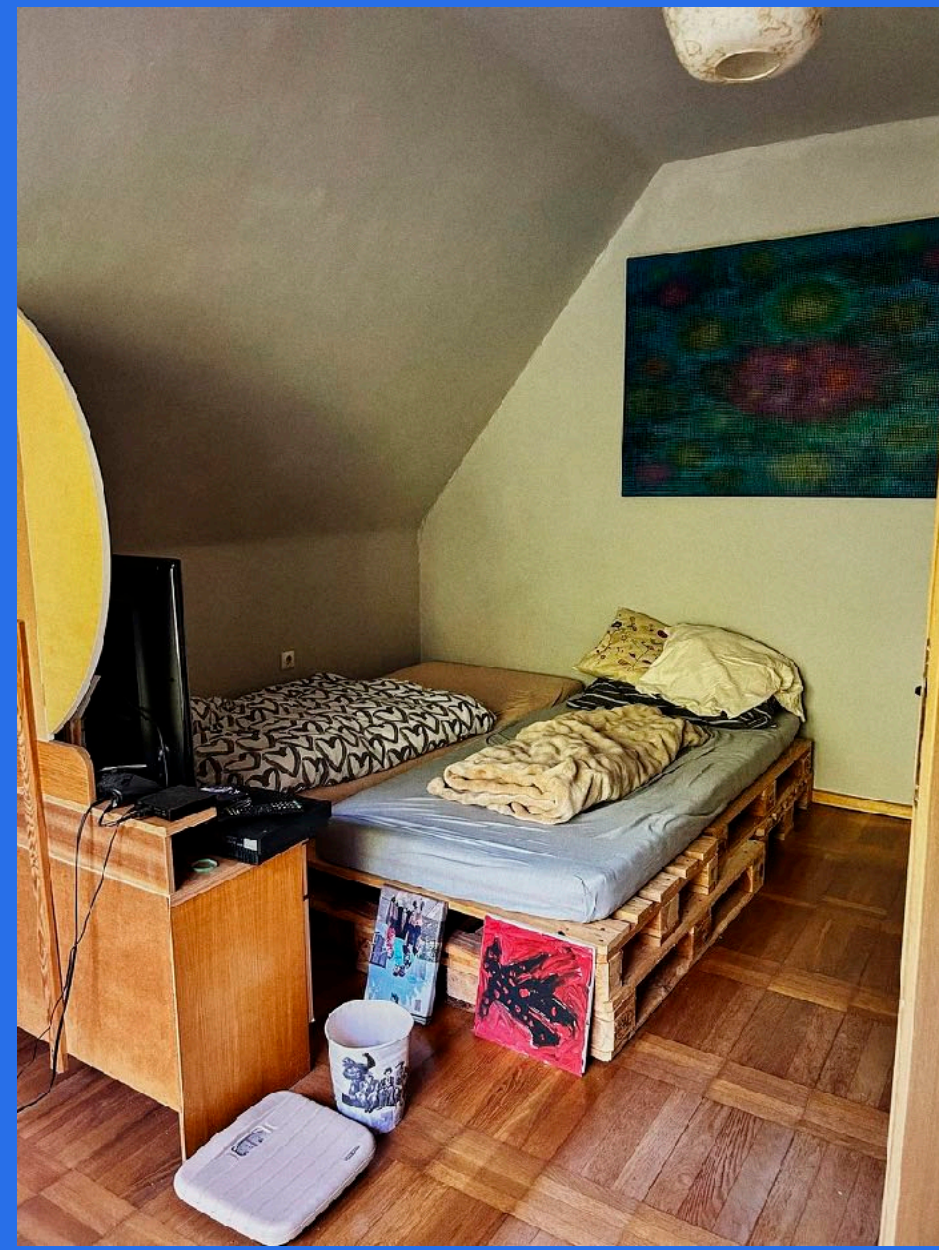
The character we would build the first film around is a young man, seventeen or eighteen, in a small village in Styria.

He gets up at four in the morning, trains, makes his breakfast, rides his moped to trade school, comes home, reads Marcus Aurelius, trains again in an old, unglamorous studio he half owns, and goes to bed early.

He pours his own concrete weights in the yard. His life is entirely uncharacteristic for his age, entirely his own. He believes in himself.







A muscular man wearing a white baseball cap and a dark tank top is standing in a gym. He is looking slightly to his right with a slight smile. His arms are extended outwards, and he appears to be holding onto a piece of gym equipment. The background shows various gym machines and a bright, warm light source, possibly a window, creating a golden glow.

CASTING IS THE STORY

The choice of character is not a step alongside the story.

It is the story.

Our job is to find him.

Every character we choose to shoot must be a person whose life already contains the arc we are looking for.



STORY ARCHITECTURE

We build **three deliverables of story** into every shoot:

1. **The Guaranteed Glaub-An-Dich-Moment.**
2. **The Glaub-An-Dich-Vibe**
3. **Free Observation**

THE GLAUB-AN-DICH-***MOMENT***

The Guaranteed Glaub-an-Dich-Moment.

Before the shoot, we define one ***obligatory narrative arc*** with a clear Believe-in-Yourself-Moment at its end. Wolfgang commits to bringing this arc back from the shoot *no matter what else happens*. It is the film if we don't get anything better.

Example:

Every day Maximilian, the body-builder, tries to lift a specific *100 kg weight*.

Every day he fails.

But finally, he succeeds.

That single arc delivers the campaign line without needing to say it.

THE GLAUB-AN-DICH- ***VIBE***

A looser structure that carries the vibe of the character without needing a narrative payoff - a daily pattern, a repeated gesture, an opening and closing.
The film breathes inside this rhythm.

Example:

Maximilian, the body-builder, gets up in the morning.

The clock shows 5:00.

We follow his daily disciplines.

In the end he goes to bed and wakes up.

The clock shows 5:00.

He does all of this because he believes in himself.

FREE OBSERVATION

Everything else Wolfgang sees during his days with the character.

The *unplanned, the accidental, the small gestures* no brief could have written.

This is where the material gets its ***truth***.

Under any other approach, this layer would be the risk; here, it is a bonus on top of a story that is already secured.



HOW IT'S MADE

Wolfgang travels alone, or nearly so. One camera, simple, fast, cheap enough to disappear in his hands.

The setup is documentary because the character must not perform.

Wolfgang spends two or three days with the person, going where they go, waiting for the moments that only patience produces.

His method: set up the situation, wait, see.

Casting secures the story, Wolfgang's eye secures the visual, the three deliverables secure the narrative.

Everything else is bonus.

His stills are handed to AI, which extends them into motion sequences — the seconds before the shutter, the seconds after, the small drift.

This is a genuinely new form: a photograph extended into time.

MEET MAX

He grew up in a small village in Styria, one of those kids who never quite fit - long hair, quiet, easy to pick on. The girls at school laughed at him. The boys had their names for him. He walked home carrying that.

At sixteen, school pushed him into a summer internship, and by chance it landed him in a fitness club. Two free weeks of training. Nothing clicked. He walked away and did nothing for another six months. Then something turned. The loneliness he had been carrying since childhood - the accumulated weight of not being wanted - found a place to go. He put it into the barbell.

The transformation was physical, but it was also something else. He built a body he could stand behind. But he never trained to please anyone, and he still doesn't. He trains for himself. Bullying gave him fuel; the gym gave him a way to burn it clean.

He is disciplined only within reach of a competition. Once the meet is over, he lets himself go - out until four in the morning with his friends, though he never touches alcohol. He has a real circle around him, and has had for years. His soundtrack runs from Mozart in the shower to Rammstein at the rack, Frank Sinatra on a slow evening, opera when the mood takes him.

Ask him what he thinks the greatest human weakness is, and he answers without hesitation: judgment. Everyone can have a bad day. He tries not to judge anyone.

He could go pro. But he has looked at what that would cost - the friends he would lose, the private life that would thin out - and he has decided instead to study sports medicine. He wants to help others recover the way he recovered himself.

THE BELIEVERS. MAX. ***FILM.***

We open on a close-up of the book *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius. We now see who is deep in the reading: Max, our boy from the countryside, sitting in the window in a muscle shirt, absorbed. The scene is underscored by classical music.

A montage of scenes from Max's life follows. Max in a group photo with other kids from the area: all of them holding bottles of beer, clinking, drinking — Max, happy, holding a cup of tea on a saucer. Max getting up in the dark of the early morning. Max training in the first hours of the day, again and again. Max casting his own weights out of concrete. Max on his moped, on the way to trade school. Max having fun with other kids, easy, joyful. The scenes give us the impression of a happy life lived on his own terms. Far from what most others do.

Over the voice-over we hear a paraphrased quote from Marcus Aurelius. (Max may also speak the quote himself, into the camera.)

"How much a man can torment himself
with his notions about others.

How easily he could come to rest,
if he no longer feared their opinion."

We are now very close to Max's face as he trains. In his eyes: resolve.

"Believe in Yourself."

Insert: Maximilian Giegerl, 19, Voitsberg / Logo / Insert: Real life pictures, enhanced with AI.



WHAT **AI** ACTUALLY BRINGS

PRACTICAL.

Wolfgang does not need a film crew, a lighting team, a director of photography, a sound recordist. He needs a camera and a few days.

This makes it possible to shoot in places that a full production could never enter.

What used to require a campaign now requires a trip.



ERSTE BANK | 200 YEARS

Back then, too, we searched for authentic people with strong, self-possessed faces.

That is what we're doing now.

And we give each single person more space and more time to show their belief in themselves.

[CLICK HERE](#)

LEVI'S | GO FORTH

The images will form a collage. An ode to the person and their individuality.

The voice-over grounds the idea of *Glaub an dich*.

In words that speak to the specific person on screen.

[CLICK HERE](#)

FURTHER *CHARACTERS*

The bodybuilder is one example.

There is a whole roster of others that work by the same logic, across every Erste market.
Each is a person whose life already contains the arc.
Each of them, cast right, gives us a film.

And the fleet of them, running side by side, is the campaign.

FURTHER *CHARACTERS*

The Mushroom Hunter - Waldviertel

A man in his sixties who has walked the same forest for forty years. The guaranteed story is a long search for a specific rare mushroom, which he finds on the last day and, as a small twist, leaves standing. Knowing it is there is enough. The rhythmic frame is the walk into the forest at dawn and out at dusk.

The First-Shop Owner - Romania or Moldova

A woman in her late twenties who has just opened her own tailoring atelier or tiny café. The guaranteed story is the first customer who returns a second time. The rhythmic frame is the daily opening and closing of the shutters. A story that speaks openly about money — the risk, the daily arithmetic, the belief that a small business is worth showing up for.

FURTHER *CHARACTERS*

The Fisher - Dalmatian Coast

A man who takes his boat out every morning whether or not the sea gives him anything. The guaranteed story is the day the net comes back full. The rhythmic frame is the leaving and returning of the boat.

The Waitress-Musician - Prague or Brno

A student in her early twenties who waits tables at night and practices piano when the last customers leave. She is preparing an audition for a conservatory in Vienna. The guaranteed story is the moment she seals the envelope and drops the application into the mailbox.

FURTHER *CHARACTERS*

The Garage Skateboard Builder - Slovakia

A boy of eighteen who builds skateboards from scratch in his father's garage and sells them through Instagram. Deck by deck, order by order. The guaranteed story is the shipping of his hundredth board — the label going on the parcel, the walk to the post office.



THANK YOU