

# The book “The Secret Life of Butterflies” has ruined their careers. The court has ruled that it describes untruths. The author must apologise

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After a nearly 10-year-long trial, the Regional Court in Warsaw rendered a judgment concerning the controversial book “The Secret Life of Butterflies” by Joanna Krośkiewicz-Onoszko, which, among other things, led to the first verification expedition in the history of Polish mountaineering. The judge found that the novel conveyed untrue and harmful information about the explorers, Eliza Kubarska and Dawid Kaszlikowski. The author and the publishing house are banned from publishing the book and they are required to publish an apology.



photo by David Kaszlikowski

The Regional Court in Warsaw ruled at the beginning of 2021 that the book titled “The Secret Life of Butterflies” contains untrue and harmful information about Eliza Kubarska and her husband Dawid Kaszlikowski. Although theoretically the author wrote in the preface to the novel that the characters in her novel are fictitious, she described the characters and events in such a way that no one in the mountaineering community had any doubts whom she meant. Among other things, she wrote that a couple of explorers, who were setting up new routes, exaggerated their achievements and had a morally questionable attitude. After the novel was published, the awarding committee of the now-

defunct “Jedynka” award (a prestigious award for achievements in mountaineering) wanted to withdraw the distinction for Kubarska and Kaliszewski; the first verification expedition in Polish mountaineering history was also organised.

### **“The Secret Life of Butterflies” describes untruths**

The court in Warsaw ruled that Joanna Krośkiewicz-Onoszko in her book “The Secret Life of Butterflies” gave untrue information about the expedition of Eliza Kubarska and Dawid Kaliszewski, during which they set up the Golden Lunacy trail in Greenland, leading through one of the highest sea cliffs in the world. Now Krośkiewicz is required to publish a statement that reads:

I apologize to Ms Eliza Kubarska and Mr Dawid Kaszlikowski for the fact that in connection with the publication of my book “The Secret Life of Butterflies”, under the guise of “fictitious” characters, I infringed their personal interests by disseminating false information about their expedition, and their moral and professional qualifications.

She is to publish the statement in the magazines “Góry” (page four, five or six) and “National Geographic Traveler” (page seven, eight or nine). Znak Publishing House is to apologise in the same magazines and on the websites [www.znak.com.pl](http://www.znak.com.pl), [www.wspinanie.pl](http://www.wspinanie.pl) and [www.goryonline.com](http://www.goryonline.com) for publishing, promoting and marketing Onoszko’s book. The author and the publishing house are banned from publishing and distributing the book in question, one can read on the website [wspinanie.pl](http://wspinanie.pl).

The lawyers representing Kubarska and Kaszlikowski, Marcin Boruc and Adam Zwierzyński, have commented in an interview with Dziennik Gazeta Prawna daily: - One must take responsibility for one’s words, regardless of the literary genre of expression. Freedom of speech is not absolute and the judgment concerns its limits and standards for publishers.

### **How the scandal around the book “The Secret Life of Butterflies” began**

Eliza Kubarska and Dawid Kaszlikowski emphasise that the book took “many years of their lives and deceived hundreds of readers”. - For years I was taking record of mountain expeditions, publishing photos and articles in magazines abroad and in Poland. In 2011, my work was brutally interrupted. Editors of national magazines were just preparing coverage of our joint exploration of a little-known mountain in Malaysia, says Kaszlikowski in a video posted on Facebook after the judgment was pronounced.

- The routes we set up there are followed today by many climbers from all over the world. Despite this, the articles I mentioned never appeared in Poland. In the same year, 2011, my name started to disappear from the editorial details, the phone started to go silent and actually that was the beginning of the events that turned our whole life upside down, adds the mountaineer. Kubarska, the director of such films as “K2. Dotknąć nieba” (“K2. Touch the Sky”) and “Ściana cieni” (The Shadow Wall”), explains further that the reason for these events is the publication by Joanna Krośkiewicz-Onoszko of her book in which she “impersonated [their] private life and many years of mountain expeditions”.

Kaszlikowski mentions that the author presented the characters, who are confusingly similar to himself and Kubarska, as “fame-driven poseurs, frauds” and described them as “a toxic relationship

between a victim and an abuser". Kubarska goes on to describe the wide range of false information contained in the book, while her husband adds an outline of the activities of the Polish Mountaineering Association and the awarding committee of the aforementioned "Jedynka" award, which cooperated with Onoszko and her husband.

- The author and the publishing house perversely, in our opinion, presented the book as fiction. People started to make fun of us that we had volunteered to be the book's protagonists. (...) At the same time, in private conversations and in selected media the author said that the book was about us, that (...) the events she described took place. It was a lie, says Kubarska.

source: <https://kultura.gazeta.pl/kultura/7,114528,26854851,ksiazka-sekretne-zycie-motyli-zrujnowala-im-kariere-sad-orzekl.html>