

THE SAMANTHA SMITH PROJECT ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT

IMAGE

Found footage of Soviet schoolboy reciting poem; children applaud.

Images of US military nuclear test footage.

TITLE: THE SAMANTHA SMITH PROJECT

Emilie auditioning to play Samantha Smith.

DIALOGUE

SOVIET SCHOOLBOY: We are happy children! We are happy children! Strong and full of fun! Look at our belly in the bright, bright sun! We are Soviet children! High our flags we raise! Thank you Soviet country, for our happy days!

VOICEOVER (little girl): *Actually, the whole thing started when I asked my mother if there was going to be a war. There was always something on television about missiles and nuclear bombs.*

Once, I watched a science show on television, and the scientist said that a nuclear war would wreck the earth and destroy our atmosphere.

Nobody could win a nuclear war.

I remember that I woke up one morning, and wondered if this was going to be the last day of the Earth.

IRENE (off camera): Um... could you just read aloud the letter? Just the handout that I gave you... just the part that's circled...

EMILIE (reading letter): Dear Mr. Andropov, My name is Samantha Smith. I am ten years old. Congratulations on your new job. I have been worrying about Russia and the United States getting into a nuclear war. Are you going to vote to have war or not? If you aren't, please tell me how you are going to help to not have a war. This question you do not have to answer, but I would like to know why would you want to conquer the world or at least

our country. God made the world for us to live together in peace and not to fight.
Sincerely, Samantha Smith.

TITLE: WINTER 2003

Irene on the phone.

MAN ON PHONE #1: Yeah.

IRENE: Is this Gleb?

MAN ON PHONE #1: Hello?

IRENE: Is this Gleb?

MAN ON PHONE #1: Who?

IRENE: Gleb.

MAN ON PHONE #1: No. Wrong Number.

IRENE: Thanks.

IRENE: Is that Pasha?

MAN ON PHONE #2: Hello?

IRENE: Is that Pasha?

MAN ON PHONE #2: Where are you calling?

IRENE: This isn't Pasha?

MAN ON PHONE #2: This isn't Pasha.

IRENE: Is Pasha home?

MAN ON PHONE #2: I don't know, lady. You're calling an orchestra! You have the wrong number.

TITLE: MOSCOW

Super-8 images of Moscow apartment

VOICEOVER (little girl): *We were met at the airport by our guides, Genady and Natasha. They drove us to Hotel Sovietskaya, which was very beautiful and looked like a palace. There as even a piano in one of our rooms, and the cooks*

at the hotel sent up fancy cakes and bowls of fruit and some other stuff, but I was too exhausted to eat. Mom and I played “Chopsticks” and “Heart and Soul” together on the piano, and then I fell asleep.

When I woke up, I couldn’t remember where I was at first. And then, I knew it was Moscow. It seemed like I was still dreaming, but it wasn’t a dream.

Images of Tverskaya neon signs in Moscow

VOICOVER (language tape): *Let’s spend a little time with some expressions that will help you get acquainted with people.*

I live in New York.

“Ya zhivu v-Nyu Yorkye”

Your country is very beautiful.

“Vasha strana ochen krasivaya”

Have you been to the US?

“Vi bili S.Sh.A?”

I like the food here very much!

“Mnye ochen panravilas yeda”

I’m on a business trip.

“Ya v-komandirovke”

[sound of telephone]

IRENE: *Is this Irina Vladimirovna?*

IRINA: *Yes.*

Irene on phone.

IRENE: *I’m looking for Dima Kazakov; I don’t know if you can... be helping me.*

IRINA: *Who’s asking for him? You called*

here before the New Year, didn't you?

IRENE: Maybe... I wasn't sure if it was the wrong number... We met on an exchange program. I was an American student... I'm in Moscow shooting a documentary film. I'm trying to find all the kids from the exchange.

IRINA: He's not here now. He's on assignment. You can leave your name, okay? And leave your phone number. You're here in Moscow? I'm writing your number now.

IRENE: Thanks. It's 143-70-34.

IRINA: And your name?

IRENE: Irina. And my last name is Lusztig.

IRINA: What? Lu-?

IRENE: But he might not....

IRINA: Who did you live with?

IRENE: With Anna Sheynina. That might help him remember.

IRINA: Eric Shaw lived with us.

IRENE: I remember.

IRINA: Will you be in Moscow for long?

IRENE: A few months.

IRINA: If I see him, I'll let him know. I don't know when he'll be in town.

IRENE: Okay. Can I maybe call you again in a few weeks?

IRINA: Call in a week or two, okay?

IRENE: Thank you.

IRINA: You're welcome. Good luck.

[hangs up]

IRENE: That is not the wrong number! IS he in the army? What did that mean?

Photographs of Irene and Anya from 1989 with text and sound montage from 1989 radio show.

TITLE: I met Anya in November 1988, the same month the Berlin Wall came down.

TITLE: We were part of a pilot US-Soviet Exchange Program organized after the summit talks in 1988.

TITLE: Anya stayed with my family in the suburbs. I lived with her family in Moscow for a month.

TITLE: She rented all the Rambo movies and watched them on our VCR.

TITLE: For a while, we wrote each other letters.

TITLE: She would send me pictures covered with mysterious chemical splotches.

TITLE: Eventually, we stopped writing letters.

TITLE: I haven't been to Moscow in 15 years.

News image of Samantha Smith press conference

SAMANTHA SMITH: The Soviet people are really nice people... they're just... almost just like Americans.

Olivia auditions to play Samantha Smith.

OLIVIA: My name's Olivia Forman and I'm 11.

IRENE: OK. And have you ever been in a movie before?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

IRENE: In what?

OLIVIA: It was called "Color Blind Killer," but I don't think it ever made it onto the TV.

IRENE: And why do you want to be in this movie?

OLIVIA: Because I like being on stage... that's pretty much it....

IRENE: Have you heard of Samantha Smith before, the little girl that the movie's about?

OLIVIA: No.

Nora auditions to play Samantha Smith.

NORA: I'm Nora, and I'm seven years old.

IRENE: OK. And have you ever been in a movie before?

NORA: No, but I've been in a play.

IRENE: What kind of play?

NORA: I've been in "The Sound of Music," "The Seven Dwarves," "Bring Back Elvis..." and that's it.

IRENE: And why do you want to be in this movie?

NORA: What?

IRENE: Why do you want to be in this movie?

NORA: Because I think that it's a really fun opportunity to be in a movie and for people to watch you. I like to be watched... and to be on camera.

IRENE: And have you heard of Samantha Smith before, the little girl that the movie's

about?

NORA: Actually no.

80's US news report, intercut with images from "The Day After."

NEWS REPORTER: American military planners are concerned that right now we could lose a nuclear war. Here is the scenario that they say could lead to Soviet victory.

The Soviets launch some of their missiles without warning. That first attack, lasting a few minutes, would kill 2 to 20 million Americans.

American missiles on submarines and bombs on airplanes would not be destroyed. But those are not accurate enough to hit Soviet missile silos, so they are aimed at cities.

The dilemma would be that the president would know that if he ordered a retaliation, it would kill more than 100 million Soviet citizens. In return, the Soviets would hit our cities, killing more than 100 million Americans.

So the thinking goes, he might do nothing after the first attack. And the Soviets would have won.

Soviet news report profiling Samantha Smith (Russian with English dubbing)

SOVIET NEWS REPORTER: Guests of Samantha Smith. A report by our correspondents.

Samantha is a typical American schoolgirl. In her free time, she reads a lot, is a sports enthusiast, roller skates and ice skates a lot, and something that is not typical for a young girl, plays football.

And still, sports and school are not the only things that are worrying Samantha. Living in a constant war psychosis atmosphere, anti-Soviet hysteria, which is being pushed in the United States, she – like a lot of her

contemporaries and adults in America – feels threatened by the possibility of nuclear war.

Can the things that they say constantly about the Soviet Union on television and radio and newspapers really be true?

Found footage, Soviet school

VOICEOVER (narrator): *All Soviet schools teach a foreign language. School six begins teaching English in the first grade. These sixth graders have a vocabulary of one thousand words.*

TEACHER: Well, so people, let's begin our lessons. Who is on duty today?

SCHOOL BOY #1: I am.

TEACHER: So we must ask him questions. Ask him questions, please. Kolya?

KOLYA: What day is it today?

SCHOOL BOY #1: Today is Friday.

SCHOOL BOY #2: What is the weather like today?

SCHOOL BOY #1: Today is a bad day.

TEACHER: Why do you think that the day is bad?

SCHOOL BOY #1: Because the sun is not in the sky.

TEACHER: Well, all right. Thank you, sit down please. Don't open your books, please. Don't open your books. My first question is: who is the author of the tale... Kostya? Who is the author of the tale "The Selfish Giant?" Well?

KOSTYA: I don't remember.

TEACHER: You don't remember? Oh, that's a pity.

Emilie auditions to play Samantha Smith

EMILIE: My name is Emilie Vermiliea, and I'm nine years old.

IRENE: Ok, great. Have you ever been in a movie before?

EMILIE: No.

IRENE: And what makes you want to be in this movie?

EMILIE: Well... I like acting and stuff... so... probably that...

IRENE: And have you ever heard of Samantha Smith, the little girl that the movie's about?

EMILIE: Well I... we went on the computer last night and we looked her up. And, like, we found papers about her.

IRENE: What kind of stuff did you find out about her?

EMILIE: Well when she was ten she wrote a letter to the Russian president, and he wrote back to her, and then she got to visit the Soviet Union, and... um... then like after, when she got home, she went to Japan with her mom.

IRENE: Is there something that interested you about her character... is there a reason that you want to play her?

EMILIE: Well, it's cool that she's about my age, and she wrote a letter to the president, and it actually got responded to.

Found footage of Soviet children training in sports, with sound from Samantha Smith "Today Show" interview.

JANE PAULEY: *First of all, why did you write that first letter to Mr. Andropov?*

SAMANTHA: *Well, he had been on TV a*

lot lately, and same with nuclear war, and I started getting worried about nuclear war... worried that it might come, since they started talking about it so much. So I decided I might as well write a letter to ask them... write a letter to somebody that was involved with it and ask them about it.

JANE: *Did you in writing the letter seriously expect to get a response?*

SAMANTHA: *Well, not really. Cause he's really actually really famous.*

JANE: *Yes he is...*

SAMANTHA: *And I didn't think he would pay much attention to just little old me.*

JANE: *Well you found out otherwise, haven't you.*

SAMANTHA: *Yeah.*

JANE: *When did you first find out that you were going to get a letter?*

SAMANTHA: *Well, last Saturday.*

JANE: *Were you pretty excited?*

SAMANTHA: *Yes!*

JANE: *You hung up the phone, and then what did you do?*

SAMANTHA: *I leaned against the wall, and said, "Oh my gosh!"*

JANE: *Do you know what the word "propaganda" is?*

SAMANTHA: *Sort of.*

JANE: *Do you think that Andropov was using your letter as a chance to spread a little Soviet propaganda?*

SAMANTHA: *Maybe, yeah.*

JANE: *Or do you believe that he is as genuinely honest about it as he seems to be in his letter.*

SAMANTHA: *Yeah, I think he's pretty honest about it.*

JANE: *You think he's about that nice.*

SAMANTHA: *Yeah.*

JANE: *Do you feel safer about nuclear war than you did before?*

SAMANTHA: *Yeah, I do. Because he said... I know our country probably would never start a war, at least they'd try not to, and if the Russians say... they gave me their word that they wouldn't... I feel a lot better about it.*

Ronald Reagan speech collage (with bullfight, "Red Dawn," and news images)

RONALD REAGAN: You've been hearing and reading reports that nothing was really accomplished at the summit, and the United States in particular came home empty handed. Well, this was my seventh summit, and the seventh time I've heard that same chorus.

You know, it might be appropriate... a noted bullfighter wrote a poem, a few lines of which do seem appropriate: "The bullfight critics ranked in rows, filled the enormous plaza full. But only one is there who really knows. And he's the one who fights the bull.

VOICEOVER (news reporter): *Even without the MX, the United States has the capability to destroy Soviet society. As the latest talks on strategic weapons limitations begin, the administration is arguing that that is not enough – that to have security, we need even more weapons.*

TITLE: November 7th

TITLE: Formerly observed as the anniversary of the October Revolution

TITLE: Now renamed “National Reconciliation Day”

Communist sympathizer demonstration,
November 7, 2003

PASSERBY: Why Alexander Nevsky?

COMMUNIST MAN #1: You know what he said? “Rise up, Russian people. Battle unto death! The motherland is in danger!” Remember the film *Alexander Nevsky* with music by Prokofiev? [sings] “Rise up Russian people! Rise up Soviet people! The motherland is in danger! The enemy has reached the Kremlin!” Alexander Nevsky was a patriot! I have Dimitri Donskoy here too!

COMMUNIST WOMAN #1: Those patriots performed heroic acts!

COMMUNIST MAN #1: Moscow is the city of heroes! It’s the capital of the Soviet Union! Moscow, city of heroes. Shamed before the world!

TEENAGE GIRL #1: We’ll kick you in the face!

COMMUNIST MAN #2: The red flag isn’t for you...

COMMUNIST MAN #2: Why are you attacking us?

TEENAGE GIRL #2: What the hell does she want from me? I don’t care...

TEENAGE GIRL #3: [singing] I don’t like the drugs, but the drugs like me... Fuck you! You envy our youth and our happiness!

COMMUNIST WOMAN #2: It’s the television that’s wasted today’s youth! Those films you watch... it’s not your fault!

TEENAGE GIRL #3: We're being filmed...
Hi!

TEENAGE GIRL #1: Let's kick them in the
face!

TEENAGE GIRL #3: Let's all go get drunk!

TEENAGE GIRL #1: Democracy!

TEENAGE GIRL #3: Democracy!
Glastnost!

Super 8 images of people walking down
Moscow street.

NATALIA: *Hello?*

IRENE: *Is that Natalia Nikolaevna? Good evening. I'd like to find Ira Ryabchinskaya, if you can help.*

NATALIA: *Ira lives in France now. I can give you her number.*

IRENE: *If you could.*

NATALIA: *And what's your name?*

IRENE: *Irina...also. How is she doing?*

NATALIA: *She's a mom – she has two boys.*

IRENE: *Has she been in France long?*

NATALIA: *Five years already. Write down her number.*

IRENE: *Fine. Hello? Can you hear me?*

NATALIA: *Yes, hello! [phone disconnects]*

IRENE: *Hello? Is this Olga?*

OLGA: *Yes, yes.*

IRENE: *I don't know if you remember me. I'm Irene from the exchange program.*

OLGA: *Sorry, who?*

IRENE: *I know you from the exchange... from Newton.*

OLGA: *Hello? It's very hard to hear you!*

IRENE: *It's Irene.*

OLGA: *I remember very vaguely!*

IRENE: *You remember?*

OLGA: *Hello? It's very hard to hear!*

IRENE: *I'm in Moscow now. I wanted to find all the kids from our exchange, to know what they are doing.*

OLGA: *Until the end of the year, I have a ton of work at the bank.*

IRENE: *I understand.*

OLGA: *The end of the year is always busy. Maybe sometime later. Who else have you already found?*

IRENE: *Anya...*

OLGA: *I haven't seen Anya in a very long time.*

IRENE: *That's what everyone says...*

OLGA: *I haven't seen any of them in ages. It's been so long, it's as if it weren't true... It's as though it never happened.*

News story about US-Soviet media and pop culture depictions of each other

IVAN DRAGO (excerpt from Rocky IV): I must break you!

VOICEOVER (news reporter): *Rocky IV: Americans have joyfully paid over 100 million dollars to see their hero turn a Bolshevik into borsht. And the real-life Soviets are seeing red.*

SOVIET EXPERT: I must say that I think these kinds of things would be unacceptable in the Soviet Union, I mean depicting American people and society in the way you depict our society.

VOICEOVER (news reporter): *Oh really? What about this Soviet TV show? The American CIA agent also peddles dope... his wife is a mentally deranged daughter of a Nazi war criminal, and his mistress seduces upstanding Soviet citizens.*

Other harsh images of the United States abound in the film. Cross burnings by the Ku Klux Klan, supposedly commonplace events. American soldiers in Vietnam, setting huts afire and dropping bombs.

JEFF GREENFIELD: Opulence and poverty do exist side by side in America, indeed we've seen such portraits on our own media. But it is worth asking whether the Soviet TV viewers have ever seen a glimpse of a typical middle class supermarket or shopping mall or suburban tract – the natural habitat of most Americans. Those images might well be considered much too subversive for Soviet airwaves.

News story about American logo T-shirt craze in USSR.

VOICEOVER (news reporter): *The latest craze for the American T-shirt irks the keepers of the sanctity of the Soviet communist ideology – especially the very sight of Soviet citizens walking around with American products emblazoned on their chests. Western styles and words – in music and baseball caps, on shopping bags and jeans... and more jeans... most important is that label on the rear! Where do these advertisement shirts come from cries Komsomolskaya Pravda, the important newspaper of the communist youth league. Where does this nonsense begin, which litters our language with foreign words and our thoughts with alien ideas? Soviet officials claim that most*

people can't read English, and don't know what they are wearing or carrying. In some cases, that's probably true. This man, with his West Point T-shirt, had no idea of the significance of what he was wearing. But people don't seem to care, so long as it's Western.

Emilie audition

IRENE: Emilie, I'm just going to ask you to tell me anything that you know about Russia the country. Something that you've heard, or just... anything that you know about it.

EMILIE: I don't know very much about Russia.

IRENE: Do you know anything or have you ever heard anything?

EMILIE: Not really.

IRENE: Do you know where it is?

EMILIE: Yeah. It's in Asia.

Olivia audition

OLIVIA: Moscow's the capital. It's like pretty much all I know. But... Russia's a good country. That's... I know it's not a bad country.

IRENE: What do you mean by good country or bad country?

OLIVIA: Like it's not a bad country like it wouldn't get into a lot of wars... like that... but it tries to just like... it's like the United States kind of.

IRENE: What's an example of a bad country?

OLIVIA: A bad country is a country with terrorists that go to different countries and juts terrorize them and start their own wars on purpose.

Nora audition

IRENE: Have you ever heard the word communism?

NORA: Communism? Yes.

IRENE: What does that mean?

NORA: Um, communism means if we had a president that they'd have to tell us whatever... like they'd tell us what we had to do. And, um, like we'd have to do whatever they say. But that wouldn't be free. Being free is where you don't have a communist country. Communist country... you have to have a communist president. Like Iraq and... I don't really remember any others. But I know there are others.

IRENE: Would you like to live in a communist country?

NORA: No. I wouldn't like to live in a communist country.

IRENE: Why not?

NORA: Well, um, first of all, I like to be free and I like to run free, make my own decisions, and that sort of thing... and then I like to... I don't like to be bossed around or anything. And I fight that. So I wouldn't like to live in a communist country.

TITLE: Anya

Anya and her daughter Dasha in the kitchen

DASHA: Home!

ANYA: Home. How do you say home in English?

DASHA: "House!"

IRENE: Dasha, what can you say in English?

DASHA: "House!"

IRENE: Is that all?

DASHA: Yes.

IRENE: Nothing else?

ANYA: How do you say dog?

DASHA: "Dog!"

IRENE: Good job!

ANYA: How do you say cat?

DASHA: "Cat!"

ANYA: How do you say kitten?

DASHA: "Kitten!"

ANYA: Look over there. How do you say hen?

DASHA: "Hen!"

ANYA: And how do you say pig?

DASHA: "Shyo-shyo."

ANYA: No, that's not pig. That's okay too. Say "my name is Dasha."

DASHA: [in Russian] My name is Dasha.

ANYA: No, in English.

IRENE: Can you say it in English?

DASHA: No!

ANYA: Can you say it? You can...

DASHA: [in English] My name is Dasha!

ANYA: Good job!

Found footage of Soviet ballet class

VOICEOVER (little girl): *In Leningrad, we went to see the Kirov Ballet. Its special*

building is all blue and gold inside, and probably the most beautiful place I've ever seen.

When the first act ended, our guide showed up backstage. It was so dark, I could hardly see anything. Then, Alla Sizova, the prima ballerina, ran up to us, and she gave me a pair of her toe shoes.

When the next act started, I could hardly watch the show, because I was trying to sneak the toe shoes on and tie the ribbons around my ankles.

When my friend Natasha came over to our hotel for lunch and tea, I got her to try on my Sizova ballet shoes. Natasha was my best friend from Artek. She is very beautiful, and excellent at the piano and in ballet. We traded shoes all the time back at Artek. Natasha could stand right up on her toes without even holding a chair. When I tried, it hurt like crazy!

Interview with Anya

ANYA: I remember your house very well. And I thought it was the best house anyone had in exchange. Because it had a staircase among fir trees...and it was like going into a fairytale...just disappearing from the world...somewhere... [laughs]

There is a lot I have forgotten. But the general atmosphere, is the main thing that will remain forever. Like smell of that exchange...smell of America.

IRENE: What was it like to go to America for the first time?

ANYA: Oh, it was such a great surprise. You will never understand it, because you were free to go anywhere, and in this country only those working in embassies or being diplomats...

Americans are a specific people. They are sure they live in the best country in the

world. And sometimes in talking about where they live, talking about the best they have...sometimes they don't take into account the senses of those who listen to them. Like, well, you live in the best country in the world? Go to your best country in the world! [laughs]

But, you know, a strange thing: Russian people immigrating to the US also start saying that, "well, now we live in the best country in the world!" That's probably one more reason that... you know... a lot of people immigrated to America.

A funny thing about people leaving for America is that on one hand they are very nostalgic. And Dina wrote such letters that I thought, oh... we should find a way to take her back somehow. But on the other hand, I don't know if those people understand, but I do understand that they won't be able to live in Russia again. They get too much used to all the conveniences in that world, in America. They get used to, well, they need anything, they pick up the phone and they find out information...nobody shouts at them. [laughs] It's becoming better in Russia, much better. But still there are a lot of things... the things that I talked about. America in some things is very difficult not only from America but also from Europe. It is so difficult that it is... it is so different that it is difficult to live here again.

Nuclear test footage with sound from news program featuring arms commissioner Ken Adelman answering questions from children around the world (moderated by Bryant Gumbel).

ANATOL: *Well what safeguard have we got that you won't use England as a battleground and fire nuclear weapons from England without Mrs. Thatcher's consent?*

KEN ADELMAN: *Well, what we want to do is to make nowhere the battleground, Anatol. What we want to do is to have a system that guarantees the peace that we have had in Europe for 38 years now.*

ANATOL: *Well, you invaded Grenada without Mrs. Thatcher's consent. Are you going to do that again?*

BRYANT GUMBEL: *So what is the question Anatol? I'm sorry... Let's try a question from Frankfurt. Julia Dukrau – you have something for Mr. Adelman?*

JULIA: *Mr. Adelman – on the 23rd of November at night I lay in my bed and cried. How can the United States avoid that a war break out by accident, for instance by a mistake on the computer or an error from the president of the United States?*

KEN ADELMAN: *Well, Julia, let me say that it's absolutely appropriate for you to go to bed and to cry if there was a prospect that a war would break out, because I think it's well known in Europe as it is in this country that war is just an absolutely a horrendous kind of happening, and we have to do everything in our power to make sure that it doesn't happen...*

Emilie audition

IRENE: Are you afraid of war ever?

EMILIE: Mm-hm.

IRENE: What kind of stuff do you worry about?

EMILIE: Like... sort of like... I don't know.

IRENE: Are you ever worried about wars starting or wars that have happened?

EMILIE: Sometimes, yeah.

IRENE: What kind of stuff do you worry about?

EMILIE: That like something's going to happen to like my family or something.

Jenna audition

JENNA: Like I know, um, that people are going to war to save people and everything, so... I'm sort of worried because I don't like when people die and stuff, so...

IRENE: Are you ever worried about a war happening in this country?

JENNA: Yeah. Sometime I just think that something's going to happen to schools and stuff... and just happen wherever.

Olivia audition

OLIVIA: If the United States gets too far in it, some terrorists might come to the United States.

IRENE: Is that something that worried you or is that something that you think might happen?

OLIVIA: Yeah, that's something that worries me.

IRENE: What do think would happen if terrorists came to the United States?

OLIVIA: Well they could... like they did in September, they could send nuclear bombs...

Emilie audition

IRENE: Do you think that this country, that the USA has enemies? Like other people or countries that don't like this country?

EMILIE: Yeah, probably.

IRENE: Where who do you think those enemies are?

EMILIE: Probably mostly like in Asia.

Super 8 footage of frozen lake

IRENE: *And why do you think those people don't like this country?*

EMILIE: *Well, because we're free, and some countries there aren't...and probably*

they want to be free but then like they can't be...

[phone ringing]

MASHA: *Hello?*

IRENE: *Hello, is this Masha?*

MASHA: *Yes.*

IRENE: *Masha, it's Irene again.*

MASHA: *Hi Irene.*

IRENE: *How are things?*

MASHA: *Fine...I haven't had time to call you back. Do you need to meet urgently?*

IRENE: *What?*

MASHA: *Irene, do you need to meet urgently or can we wait a week?*

IRENE: *In a week is fine.*

MASHA: *I didn't call because I had a lot of work. You can meet some of the other people in the meantime. I remembered, but it's been impossible. Is that okay? It's already been a few months, I know.*

IRENE: *It's no big deal.*

MASHA: *Okay then. Bye...*

[phone rings]

IRENE: *Hello, is this Zhenya?*

ZHENYA: *What?*

IRENE: *Is this Zhenya?*

ZHENYA: *Yes.*

IRENE: *Zhenya, I think you may not necessarily remember me...*

ZHENYA: *What is this?*

IRENE: *My name is Irene. I'm an acquaintance from our school exchange.*

ZHENYA: *Whose acquaintance?*

IRENE: *From our exchange program –an American girl.*

ZHENYA: *I don't remember you at all.*

IRENE: *I lived with Anna Sheynina.*

ZHENYA: *From where?*

IRENE: *I'm an American girl...*

ZHENYA: *I understood!*

IRENE: *I lived with Anna Sheynina.*

ZHENYA: *With Anna Sheynina? I still don't remember.*

IRENE: *It's not important.*

ZHENYA: *It's very hard to hear you. Maybe I can call you later. I can't really talk now. I have a little child...I have to put him to bed. I'll call you back. Or you call me if I don't call. Okay, bye.*

TITLE: Rustam

Interview with Rustam

RUSTAM: Are you getting sound?
[English] Microphone is on? Then we can switch to Russian. It's easier.

I remember that we always wanted to imitate Americas. Now it surprises me... but on the other hand it makes sense. Our adoration created a desire to do everything like Americans: to buy a backpack and carry it on the left shoulder...long t-shirts... Now it seems absurd. But that's how it was.

I can't say we all had the same impression of America. Of course we were all enraptured. What a rich country! What people! But actually we could perceive superficially. Not just because we were living in American homes...I'm saying this in retrospect, after many years. We experienced the "American Way of Life." Before our eyes was a kind of dramatization, a spectacle.

You can't reduce it to a single idea. Like Americans are materialistic or whatever... That would be an unfair generalization. But there is this kind of feeling... You can feel it everywhere – when you watch an American film... You can feel it when you meet an American tourist.

There were a few years when I often went to America. And that was all. Now there's no reason to go there. There are tons of other places I'd like to go. I'd like to go to India. Indonesia, Africa, Australia... But I don't want to go to America. There's no surprise there.

Irene on phone

MAN'S VOICE: Hello?

IRINA: Hello?

IRENE: Is this Irina Vladimirovna? Good evening. This is Irene again, the American girl who called a few times...

IRINA: Hello.

IRENE: I was wondering if you knew any better...

IRINA: I spoke to Dima. Your proposal doesn't interest him.

IRENE: I understand.

IRINA: Good luck.

TITLE: Samantha Smith died in a plane crash in August of 1985, two years after her trip to the Soviet Union. She was thirteen at the time of her death.

TITLE: The following fall, Valentin Fyodorovich Vaulin, a sheet metal factory worker from Voronezh, created a memorial in Samantha's honor.

Samantha Smith memorial, Voronezh

SIGN: Samantha Alley

PLAQUE: Samantha Reed Smith – Young Ambassador of Good Will

Super 8 footage of Brighton Beach, New York

Super 8 footage of New York subway crossing the bridge into Brooklyn, Brighton Beach.

VALENTIN VAULIN: Sasha, come here.

I'll show it to you now.

[wipes memorial]. Bird shit.

This is how I spend my time. I made this all with my own hands. Anatol Anatolich Fralov, our local craftsman, made the bas-relief. The casting and the concrete I did myself. Here are the trees I planted...they've been here almost twenty years. See how much they've grown! I know it's not much... But it's remembrance of the death of an innocent girl. All these plants have grown in her honor. We've made this memorial.

Sasha, let's go!

VOICEOVER [little girl]: *There was a balcony at the end of our dorm room, and from my bed, I could see the Black Sea.*

It isn't really different from the Atlantic Ocean, except there are no big waves, and it's very salty.

The extra saltiness makes it easier to float. It's almost like wearing a life jacket when you're swimming.

SONG LYRICS: *When all the songs I don't know fall silent / In the sharp air my last paper steamer ship cries out / Goodbye America – Oh / Where I've never been . Farewell forever / Play a banjo to bid me farewell / Your ripped jeans have grown*

*too small for me / For so long we learned
to love your forbidden fruits / Goodbye
America – Oh!*